

against a Rhodian one, each made up of twelve triremes. The signal was sounded on a horn by a silver Triton, which, thanks to a mechanical device, rose up from the middle of the lake.

[22] As regards sacred rites and both civil and military procedures, and similarly as regards the standing of all the orders both at home and abroad, he corrected various practices or reinstated those which had fallen into disuse, or else instituted new arrangements. When co-opting priests into the colleges, he would nominate no one without himself first taking an oath. Whenever there were earth tremors in the city, he was scrupulous in observing the custom that the praetor should call an assembly and proclaim a holiday; similarly, that a supplication should be offered, whenever a bird of ill-omen was seen on the Capitol. He himself would conduct the supplication in his capacity as Pontifex Maximus, taking the lead in pronouncing the formula to the people from the rostra, once all the workmen and slaves had been sent away.

[23] The conduct of legal business, which had previously been divided between a winter and a summer season, he ran together into one session. In cases of trust, which it had been usual to assign on an annual basis and only to magistrates in the city, he delegated jurisdiction permanently and extended it to provincial governors. He annulled a clause Tiberius Caesar had added to the Augustan marriage laws, which implied that men of sixty were not capable of fathering children. He sanctioned the exceptional allocation of guardians to wards by the consuls. He also made it the law that those who were banished from a province by a magistrate should also be removed from Rome and Italy. He himself imposed a new kind of punishment on some people, forbidding them to go more than three miles outside the city. When he was about to conduct more serious business in the senate house, he would take his place between the seats of the consuls or else on the tribunes' bench. The business of granting permission to travel,* which had previously been done by the senate, he took over for himself.

[24] He favoured even middle-grade procurators with consular insignia.* From those who turned down the offer of senatorial rank he removed their equestrian rank as well. Although he had earlier agreed that he would choose no one for the senate who was not the great-grandson of a Roman citizen, he even made a grant of the right to wear the broad stripe* even to the son of a freedman, though with

the condition that he first be adopted by a Roman knight. Fearing criticism for this, he declared that Appius Claudius the censor,* an ancestor of his family, had also selected the sons of freedmen for inclusion in the senate, for he was not aware that in Appius Claudius' day and for some time afterwards the term *libertini* was used not for those who had been freed from slavery but for the free-born children they produced.* He removed from the college of quaestors responsibility for the paving of roads, instead putting them in charge of a set of gladiatorial games. Taking away their duties at Ostia and in Gaul as well, he gave them back responsibility for the treasury of Saturn* which had for a while been under the charge of the praetors or, as now, ex-praetors.

He made a grant of triumphal ornaments to Silanus, who was engaged to his daughter, though he was still just a boy, and to so many older men, for such slight reasons, that a joint letter was circulated in the name of the legions, requesting that triumphal ornaments also be conferred on consular legates at the same time as they were given their armies, to prevent them from seeking any kind of pretext for war. He even decreed an ovation for Aulus Plautius and, as Aulus Plautius entered the city, he went to greet him and proceeded to walk on his left as he went to the Capitol, and then again as he came away from it.* Gabinius Secundus, who had conquered the Cauchi, a German tribe, he permitted to take the *cognomen* 'Cauchius'.

[25] He arranged the military service of Roman knights in such a way that they first had charge of a cohort, then of a division of cavalry, and then served as tribune of a legion. He also instituted various military positions and a kind of fictitious service, termed 'supernumerary', which could be fulfilled in name only by men who were absent. He even had passed a senatorial decree barring soldiers from entering the houses of senators to pay their respects. He confiscated the property of freedmen who passed themselves off as Roman knights. Those whose ingratitude caused their patrons to complain he forced back into slavery, insisting to those who acted as their advocates that he would refuse to hear cases against their own freedmen. As certain people were abandoning their sick and debilitated slaves on the island of Aesculapius, to avoid the expense of having them cured, he passed a law that all who were thus abandoned were to have their freedom and would not be subject to their

masters' power, if they recovered, and that if anyone decided to kill a slave rather than abandon him, they were to be liable for murder.* He also issued an edict banning travellers from passing through the towns of Italy unless they were on foot or in a chair or litter.* He stationed a cohort each at Puteoli and Ostia to guard against fires.

Persons of non-citizen status he forbade to use Roman names, at least the gentile ones.* Those who usurped Roman citizenship he had executed with an axe in the Esquiline field. The provinces of Achaea and Macedonia, which Tiberius had transferred to his own control, he returned to that of the senate. Because of the hideous disputes which had arisen amongst them he deprived the Lycians of their citizenship. To the Rhodians, because of their remorse for their earlier offences, he returned theirs. To the people of Ilium he granted perpetual exemption from tribute on the grounds that they were the founders of the Roman race,* having first read out a letter in Greek from the senate and people of Rome promising King Seleucus friendship and alliance but only on condition that he render their kindred, the people of Ilium, free of any taxation in perpetuity. The Jews he expelled from Rome, since they were constantly in rebellion, at the instigation of Chrestus.* The envoys of the Germans he allowed to sit in the orchestra, charmed by their simplicity and boldness, for when, having been directed to the ordinary seating, they discovered that the Parthians and the Armenians were sitting with the senators, they at once moved over to join them, declaring that their own virtue and status were in no way inferior.* He imposed a complete ban on the religion of the Druids among the Gauls which, under Augustus, had merely been forbidden to Roman citizens. In contrast to this, he made an attempt to have transferred from Attica to Rome the sacred mysteries of Eleusis and, when the temple of Venus Erycina in Sicily collapsed through decrepitude, it was rebuilt at the expense of the Roman treasury on Claudius' initiative. He forged treaties with kings in the Forum, sacrificing a sow and reciting the ancient formula of the fetial priests. However, both these and his other acts and indeed the greater part of his reign he conducted not so much according to his own judgement but rather according to that of his wives and freedmen. His behaviour for the most part was such as to suit their interests and pleasure.

[26] While still a youth he was betrothed on two occasions, once to Aemilia Lepida, great-granddaughter of Augustus, and the second

time to Livia Medullina who also had the *cognomen* Camilla and was from the ancient family of the dictator Camillus. He broke off his engagement to the former as her parents had offended Augustus. The latter he lost to illness on the very day they were to have married. Later on he married Plautia Urgulanilla whose father had received a triumph, and then Aelia Paetina whose father was an ex-consul. He divorced both of them, Aelia Paetina for trivial faults but Urgulanilla on the grounds of her scandalous love affairs and the suspicion of murder. After these, he took as his wife Valeria Messalina, the daughter of his cousin Messala Barbatus. However, when he discovered that in addition to her other misdemeanours and improper acts she had actually married Gaius Silius, with a contract formally signed in front of witnesses, he had her put to death and affirmed before an assembly in the praetorian camp that, since his marriages had turned out so badly, he would remain unmarried and, if he did not keep his word, he would not object to them killing him with their own hands. Yet he could not resist entering at once into negotiations for another marriage, and that, too, with Paetina, whom he had earlier rejected, and also with Lollia Paulina who had once been married to Caligula. However, his affections were secured by the allurements of Agrippina, daughter of his own brother Germanicus, who took advantage of a relative's right to give kisses and opportunities for flattery. At the next senate meeting Claudius put up some senators to propose that he should be made to take her as his wife, on the grounds that it was very much in the interests of the state, and also that marriages of this kind,* which were previously considered incestuous, should now be permitted. And scarcely had a day passed before the marriage was concluded, though none could be found to follow their example, with the exceptions of a certain freedman and also of a chief centurion, whose weddings the emperor himself attended, accompanied by Agrippina.

[27] He had children by three of his wives; Drusus and Claudia by Urgulanilla, Antonia by Paetina, and, by Messalina, Octavia and the boy first known as Germanicus and later as Britannicus. Drusus he lost just as the boy was nearing adulthood, when he choked on a pear which he had thrown up into the air in play and caught in his open mouth. This happened a few days after he had been betrothed to the daughter of Sejanus, so I am all the more surprised at those who relate that he was murdered through Sejanus' scheming. Claudia,

although she was born less than five months after the divorce and Claudius had initially accepted her, was exposed naked at her mother's door on his orders and disowned, on the grounds that she was the child of his freedman Boter. He married off Antonia to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and, later, to Faustus Sulla, both young men of the highest rank, while Octavia he married off to his stepson Nero (she had earlier been engaged to Silanus). Britannicus was born on the twenty-second day of his reign, when he was consul for the second time.* While he was still very small, Claudius would commend him to assemblies of soldiers, taking him in his arms, and to the people at the games, holding him on his lap or in front of him, and he would invoke good omens for him, with the approval of the applauding crowd. As for his sons-in-law, Nero he adopted but Pompeius and Silanus he did not; but rather he had them put to death.

[28] Of his freedmen, he had particular respect for the eunuch Posides. On the occasion of his British triumph, he even presented him with the silver-tipped spear,* as he did men who had done military service. He had like regard for Felix, whom he put in charge of cohorts and cavalry divisions as well as the province of Judaea, and married him off to three queens. Similarly, he favoured Harpocras, to whom he gave the right to travel through Rome in a litter and to give public games. In addition to these, there was Polybius, minister in charge of archives, who often walked between the two consuls, but above all Narcissus, who was in charge of correspondence, and Pallas, who was in charge of accounts. He willingly allowed those two to be honoured by senatorial decree not only with huge gifts but also with the insignia of quaestors and praetors—and indeed to appropriate and embezzle so much that when, on one occasion, he complained of the inadequacy of his funds, it was wittily observed that he would have more than enough, if he were taken into partnership by his two freedmen.

[29] At the mercy of these freedmen and his wives, as I said, he acted not as an emperor but as a servant, dispensing magistracies, military commands, immunities, and punishments, according to the interests and indeed the passions and loves of one or other of them, while he for the most part remained unaware and ignorant. To avoid recounting minor matters individually, I note only that his gifts were recalled, his judgements were rescinded, his official letters were sub-

stituted or blatantly altered. He put to death his father-in-law, Appius Silanus,* Julia, the daughter of Drusus* and Julia daughter of Germanicus, on unsupported charges and allowing them no opportunity to defend themselves, as well as Gnaeus Pompeius, the husband of his elder daughter, and Lucius Silanus, who was engaged to his younger daughter. Of these, Pompeius was stabbed while making love to his young boyfriend, while Silanus was forced to give up his praetorship four days before the Kalends of January* and then, at the start of the new year, to kill himself on the day of the wedding of Claudius and Agrippina. He imposed the death penalty on thirty-five senators and more than three hundred knights in such an unconcerned manner that when a centurion, announcing the death of an ex-consul, reported that his orders had been carried out, he replied that he had given no orders but that the deed was nevertheless well done, since his freedmen confirmed that the soldiers were doing their duty in hurrying to avenge the emperor without being asked. Credulity is, however, strained by the claim that, when Messalina married her lover Silius, he himself signed the contract for the dowry, having been led to believe that the arrangements were a deliberate ruse, meant to avert and deflect the danger which was foretold from certain portents as a threat to the emperor.

[30] His appearance was not lacking in authority and dignity when he was standing, sitting, and particularly when he was lying down, for his frame was tall and not thin, his face was handsome, as was his white hair, and he had a full neck. However, when he started to walk his rather feeble knees would fail him and he had numerous undignified characteristics both when he was relaxing and when he was engaged in business. His laughter was unbecoming, while his anger was a worse source of embarrassment, for he would foam at the mouth and his nose would run. Besides this, he had a speech impediment and his head twitched all the time, but especially when he made even the slightest movement. [31] Just as his health had once been very poor, it was excellent when he was emperor, with the exception of a stomach complaint. When he suffered from that, he said, he had even contemplated ending his own life.

[32] He gave frequent and lavish dinner parties, generally in spacious settings, so that there were often six hundred guests taking their places at once. He even gave a dinner party just by the outlet of the Fucine lake and was almost drowned when the water came out in

a great rush and overflowed. To every dinner he would also invite his own children, along with the sons and daughters of noble families, who would take their meals sitting in the old-fashioned manner at the ends of the couches. When a guest was suspected of having stolen a golden bowl one day, he invited him the next and had him served from an earthenware one. He is even said to have considered issuing an edict by which he would pardon those who broke wind discreetly or noisily at dinner, having learnt of a man who had endangered his health when he held back through embarrassment.

[33] He was very greedy for food and wine, no matter what the time or the place. Once, when he was hearing court cases in the Forum of Augustus, he was suddenly struck by the smell of the food which was being prepared for the Salian priests* in the adjacent temple of Mars, and left the tribunal, going up to join the priests with whom he lay down to dine. He hardly ever left the dinner table without being stuffed with food and overflowing with wine. He would at once lie down on his back, going to sleep with his mouth open, and a feather would be put into his throat in order that he could relieve his stomach. He never slept for very long at once and was usually awake before midnight but this caused him to nod off from time to time, not infrequently as he was giving judgement, so that he could scarcely be wakened, even when the advocates deliberately raised their voices. His passions for women were most ardent but he had no relations at all with males. He was quite devoted to playing dice, even publishing a book on the subject. He would even play while travelling, having his carriage fitted with a board so that the game would not be disrupted.

[34] That he was cruel and bloodthirsty by temperament was evident from major and very minor incidents. He would require and demand the immediate use of torture in interrogations and the punishment of parricides* to be carried out in his presence. When he was at Tibur and desired to witness an execution in the ancient manner* and, though the criminals were bound to the stake, there was no executioner available, he took great pains to have one summoned from Rome and persisted in waiting till nightfall for him to arrive. Whenever he was watching gladiatorial games, whether he himself or someone else was providing them, if any fighters fell to the ground even by accident he would give orders for them to be killed, particularly in the case of net-fighters, so that he could see their faces

as they died.* Once, when a pair of fighters struck one another and fell together, he gave orders that their two swords should without delay be made into small knives for his own use. He would take such pleasure in the beast-fights and in the midday entertainments that he would go down to the games at dawn and, at midday, would send away the people to take refreshment, while he carried on sitting there, and, in addition to those already committed to fight, he would condemn more men on trivial pretexts found on the spur of the moment, even from among the carpenters and attendants or others of that type, if a mechanism or piece of apparatus or something of that kind did not function correctly. He actually sent on one of his own ushers, just as he was, in his toga.*

[35] But above all he was cowardly and suspicious. In the earliest days of his reign, although, as I noted,* he boasted of his unassuming manners, he did not even dare to join a dinner party, unless guardsmen armed with lances were stationed around and soldiers took the place of servants. Nor would he visit anyone who was sick, unless their bedroom had first been searched, the pillows and covers checked over and thoroughly shaken out. For the rest of his reign, he would have those coming to offer him their respects inspected by officials who were very strict with everyone. He only relaxed this to a small degree and considerably later, to the extent that ladies and young boys and girls were no longer manhandled and boxes for writing equipment were not confiscated from people's attendants and scribes. When Camillus was in rebellion against him and, having no doubt that he could intimidate Claudius without going to war, sent him an offensive, bullying, and insulting letter in which he ordered him to surrender the empire and lead a life of leisure as a private citizen, Claudius summoned the leading men of the state and debated as to whether he ought to go along with this.

[36] He was so terrified by ill-founded reports of conspiracies, that he attempted to abdicate. And when a man with a sword was apprehended close by him as he was offering a sacrifice, as I noted above,* he hastily had his heralds summon the senate and, with tears and wailing, deplored his own situation, claiming that nowhere was safe for him, and for some time he kept away from public places. He put aside his own most ardent love for Messalina not so much through humiliation at the insulting way she had treated him as through fear of danger, since he was convinced she was seeking to acquire the

empire for Silius. It was then that he fled fearfully and shamefully to the praetorian camp, throughout the journey asking nothing but whether his position was safe.

[37] Indeed, even the most insignificant suspicion or the most untrustworthy informant would provoke some minor anxiety which would compel him to take precautions or to avenge himself. One man, who was party to a lawsuit, came to pay his respects and, addressing him privately, asserted he had had a dream in which Claudius was murdered by a certain person. Then, shortly afterwards, as though he recognized the murderer, he pointed to his opponent as the man was handing over his petition. This latter was at once hauled off to be executed, as though he had been caught in the act. It is said that Appius Silanus was disposed of in a similar way. When Messalina and Narcissus conspired to do away with him, they organized it so that Narcissus burst into Claudius' bedroom before dawn, pretending to be shocked and claiming that he had had a dream in which Claudius was violently attacked by Appius. Then Messalina, feigning surprise, recounted that she herself had had the very same dream a few nights previously. Shortly afterwards it was announced, as had been arranged, that Appius was forcing his way in (he had received orders the previous day to come at that time). As if this showed the truth of the dream, orders were at once issued that he should be accused and put to death. And the next day Claudius had no hesitation in recounting the affair to the senate and thanking his freedman for being alert to his safety even when asleep.

[38] He was aware of his own tendency to anger and irascibility and, in an edict, made excuses for both, drawing a distinction between them with the promise that his irascibility was brief and harmless, while his anger was not without justification. He gave a fierce reprimand to the people of Ostia on the grounds that they had not sent boats to meet him when he entered the Tiber, and with such vehemence that he claimed they had brought him down to the level of an ordinary citizen, but he forgave them, almost going so far as to apologize. When some people approached him in public at an ill-chosen moment he pushed them away with his own hand. He also banished unheard and innocent a quaestor's clerk and, similarly, a senator who had served as a praetor, the former on the grounds that he had been rather overbearing when he appeared in a court case against Claudius before he became emperor, the latter because he

had imposed fines on tenants on Claudius' estates when they were selling cooked foods in contravention of the law and had flogged a bailiff when he tried to intervene. For this reason Claudius even took jurisdiction over the cookhouses away from the aediles.*

He did not, indeed, keep silent on the subject of his own stupidity but asserted in several little speeches that he had deliberately pretended to be stupid when Caligula was in power, since otherwise he would not have survived and risen to his present station. However, he did not convince people, for shortly afterwards a book appeared, under the Greek title 'The Rise of Idiots', which argued that no one would make a pretence of stupidity.

[39] Amongst other things, people marvelled at his absent-mindedness and lack of observation, or, to put it in Greek terms, his *meteoria* and *ablepsia*. When Messalina had been executed he asked, just after taking his couch in the dining room, why the lady of the house did not appear. In the case of many whom he had condemned to death, he would, on the following day, request them to appear both at his council and at his games of dice, and, as if they were late, he sent messengers taking them to task for sleeping late.* When he was planning to take Agrippina for his wife, in defiance of natural law, in every speech he made he would insistently refer to her as his daughter and pupil, born and brought up under his wing. And when he intended to endow Nero with his name, as if it were not bad enough (when his own son was already full grown) to adopt his stepson, he repeatedly announced that no one had ever been included in the family of the Claudi through adoption.

[40] Indeed, in his speech and in his actions he often showed such great insensitivity that he was thought neither to realize nor to care to whom or with whom or at what time or in what place he was speaking. When there was a debate about butchers and wine-merchants he shouted out in the senate: 'I ask you, who can live without a nibble?*' and he gave an account of the wares of the old taverns where he himself had once been in the habit of buying wine. Regarding a man who was a candidate for the quaestorship, Claudius noted, as one of reasons why he was lending him his own support, that the man's father had once given him a drink of water at just the right time when he was ill. When a witness was brought before the senate, he observed: 'This person was my mother's freedwoman and hairdresser but she has always regarded me as her patron. I say this

because there are some even now in my own household who do not think me their patron.* When some people from Ostia were addressing a petition to him in public, he exploded with rage on the tribunal itself and shouted out that he had no reason to do them a favour; if anyone was free, it was him. And the following comments were the kind he would make every day, indeed virtually every hour, even every minute: 'What, do you think I'm Telegenius?*' and: 'Your words don't touch me', and many similar comments which would be inappropriate even in a private citizen, let alone an emperor, especially one who was not inarticulate or uneducated but rather assiduously devoted to liberal studies.

[41] When he was a youth he began to write a history with the encouragement of Titus Livy,* and the direct assistance of Sulpicius Flavus. On the first occasion he gave a reading from this to a crowded hall, he scarcely managed to get through it and often interrupted himself. For at the start of the reading a number of chairs had broken under the weight of a fat man, provoking a burst of laughter, and, although the disruption had subsided, Claudius could not avoid recalling the incident every now and again and lapsing into laughter. During his reign, too, he wrote a good deal and frequently gave recitations via a reader. Though he first took up his history from the assassination of the dictator Caesar, he passed on to later times and began from the end of the civil war, since he felt that he could not enjoy the freedom to write openly and truthfully about the earlier period, for he was often criticized by his mother and his grandmother.* He left two volumes covering the earlier period and forty-one covering the later one. He also composed eight volumes on the subject of his own life—rather inappropriate but not lacking elegance—as well as quite a learned 'Defence of Cicero against the Writings of Asinius Gallus'. He even came up with three new letters of the alphabet* which he added to the existing ones, claiming that they were essential. He had already published a book giving the reasoning behind this when he was a private citizen and, as emperor, was easily able to bring about their common use. Examples of this lettering may still be seen in numerous books, in the daily record and in inscriptions on monuments.

[42] He devoted no less attention to Greek studies, on every occasion professing his love for the language and its excellence. When a barbarian made a speech in both Greek and Latin, Claudius

commented: ‘Since you have come equipped with both our languages . . .’* And, when commanding Achaea to the senate, he would note that this province was dear to him because of the exchange of shared culture. Often he would reply to Greek envoys to the senate with a set speech.* Moreover, when he was on the tribunal he would even come out with lines from Homer. Whenever he prescribed punishment for an enemy or someone who had plotted against him, he generally gave the tribune of the guard the following line, when he was asked for the usual password:

Ward off the man who first makes his attack.*

Besides this he actually wrote histories in Greek, twenty books on Etruscan history and eight on Carthaginian. Because of these works, a new museum was added in his name to the ancient museum at Alexandria* and it was established that every year on set days his works in their entirety were to be read out as if at a public recitation, the Etruscan history in one museum, the Carthaginian in the other, by various readers taking it in turns.

[43] Towards the end of his life, he gave some unambiguous indications that he regretted both his marriage to Agrippina and his adoption of Nero; when his freedmen were noting with praise the judgement he had given the previous day in condemning a woman guilty of adultery, he declared that in his own case, too, the fates had allotted wives who were unfaithful but not unpunished. Shortly afterwards, encountering Britannicus, he embraced him and advised him that, growing up, he would receive from his father an account of all that he had done. And he added the following words, in Greek: ‘The one who made the wound will heal it.’* When he decided to give Britannicus the toga of manhood, for he was tall enough, though still young and immature, he added: ‘so that the Roman people may finally have a true Caesar.’

[44] Not long after this he made his will, too, and had it sealed with the seals of all the magistrates. At this point, before he could go any further, he was cut short by Agrippina, who was motivated not only by these actions but also by the accusations of her own conscience—as well as those of informers—which reproached her for many crimes. It is commonly agreed that Claudius was killed by poison.* There is, however, disagreement as to where and by whom it was administered. Some record that, when he was at a feast with

priests on the citadel,* it was given to him by his taster, the eunuch Halotus, others that it was given him at a family dinner by Agrippina herself, offering him the drug in a dish of mushrooms, a kind of food to which he was very partial. There are different versions even of the next part of the story. Many claim that immediately after consuming the poison he was rendered speechless and, wracked with pain throughout the night, died just before dawn. Some say that he first lost consciousness, then vomited up from his overflowing stomach all he had consumed but that he was given a second dose of poison. This may have been added to some porridge, with the pretence that he needed food to revive him in his weakened state, or else introduced in a syringe, administered on the grounds that his stomach was overloaded and might be relieved by that form of evacuation as well.

[45] His death was concealed until all arrangements were in place with regard to his successor. And so, as if he were still ill, vows were offered and, to reinforce the illusion, actors were brought in as if to provide the entertainment he was asking for. He died on the third day before the Ides of October, when Asinius Marcellus and Acilius Aviola were consuls, in his own sixty-fourth year and in the fourteenth year of his reign.* His funeral was celebrated with customary imperial ceremony and he was included among the ranks of the gods. This honour was neglected and then cancelled by Nero but was later restored by Vespasian.*

[46] The main omens foretelling his death were as follows. A star with a mane appeared, the kind people call a comet. The tomb of his father Drusus was hit by lightning and, in the same year, of all the holders of the different magistracies, a great many died. There are several indications that he himself seemed not unaware that the end of his life was approaching nor concerned to conceal it. For when he appointed the consuls, he made appointments only for the period up until the month he died, and, the last time he attended the senate, he warmly encouraged his children to be reconciled, then with feeling commended each of them, young as they were, to the care of the senators. On the occasion of his last appearance on the tribunal as judge, he pronounced, and repeated his pronouncement, despite the prayers of those who heard him, that he was approaching the end of his mortal life.

NERO

[1] Of the Domitian family, two branches achieved fame, the Calvini and the Ahenobarbi. The Ahenobarbi have as the founder of their branch and origin of their name Lucius Domitius. Two young men, twins of impressive bearing, are said to have appeared to him once, as he was returning from the countryside, and to have given him orders to announce to the senate and people victory in a battle whose outcome was at that time awaited.* And, as a sign of their divinity, they are said to have stroked his cheeks, turning his beard, which was black, a red colour like bronze.* This distinctive feature continued even among his descendants, many of whom had red beards. Between them, they achieved seven consulships, a triumph, two censorships, and promotion to the patricians, all the while continuing to use the same *cognomen*. And they took no other forenames than Gnaeus and Lucius. This usage they practised with remarkable variation, sometimes giving each name to three people in a row and sometimes one name alternating with the other. For we learn that the first three Ahenobarbi were all called Lucius, while the next three were all called Gnaeus, after which they alternated between Lucius and Gnaeus. I have decided to report on a number of members of the family to make clearer how Nero lapsed from the virtues of his ancestors yet reproduced each one's legacy of vice.

[2] To begin a little further back, his great-grandfather's grandfather, Gnaeus Domitius* was, as tribune, furious with the *pontifices*, because they had co-opted someone other than himself into the place his own father had occupied, and transferred the right of selecting priests from the colleges of priests to the Roman people. When he was consul and had defeated the Allobroges and the Arverni, he travelled through the province seated on an elephant and accompanied by a crowd of soldiers, as if in a triumphal procession.* The orator Licinius Crassus said against him that it was no wonder he had a beard of bronze when his face was made of iron and his heart of lead. The son of this Ahenobarbus, when he was praetor, called Julius Caesar to a senate inquiry at the end of his consulship, on the grounds that he had conducted himself in office contrary to the auspices and the laws.* Not long afterwards, when he himself was

consul, he dared to deprive Caesar of the command of the Gallic armies. Then, named as Caesar's successor thanks to the support of a faction, he was taken prisoner at Corfinium* at the start of the civil war. Released from there, he went to the support of the people of Massilia, who were besieged and struggling, but suddenly abandoned them for no apparent reason and finally met his end fighting at Pharsalus.* He was an indecisive man, though his temper was savage; having in desperation attempted suicide, he was so overcome by fear of dying that he regretted his decision, vomited up the poison he had taken, and rewarded the slave-doctor with his freedom on the grounds that, knowing his master well, he had been prudent enough to administer an insufficiently powerful dose.* When Gnaeus Pompey asked for advice on how to deal with persons who had remained neutral and taken neither side during the civil war, he was the only one who thought they should be treated as enemies.

[3] He left a son,* who, without doubt, was far superior to the rest of the family. He, though he was innocent, had been condemned under the Pedian law* as one of Caesar's assassins, and so joined cause with Brutus and Cassius, being closely related to them. After their deaths he kept the fleet which had been entrusted to him and increased it. Only when his side was utterly defeated everywhere did he hand the fleet over to Mark Antony—on his own initiative and as if he were conferring a great favour. And he alone, of all those who had been condemned by that same law, had his civil rights restored to him and fulfilled the highest offices. When, later, civil war broke out again and he was made a legate by that same Mark Antony, he was offered the supreme command by those of his side who were ashamed of the alliance with Cleopatra but, suffering from a sudden illness, dared neither to accept it nor to turn it down, instead going over to Augustus' side. A few days later he was dead, with his own reputation in doubt, for Antony asserted that he had changed sides through desire to be with his mistress, Servilia Nais.

[4] This Domitius was father of the man who was later well known for being named as executor in Augustus' will. He was no less famous in his youth for his skill in chariot driving than he was to be later for the triumphal ornaments he won in the war against Germany. However, he was an arrogant man, profligate and cruel, who, when he was merely an aedile, forced the censor Lucius Plancus to make way for him on the street. When serving as praetor

and as consul, he organised farces performed in the theatre by Roman knights and matrons. He provided animal shows in the Circus and in all parts of the city, as well as a gladiatorial show of such cruelty that Augustus, having offered him a discreet warning to no effect, was obliged to restrain him by edict.*

[5] He and the elder Antonia* were the parents of Nero's father, a man loathsome in every respect. As a young man, on a trip to the east accompanying Gaius Caesar,* he killed his own freedman, on the grounds that the man would not drink as much as he was ordered, and was himself dismissed from the entourage, yet made no attempt to regulate his lifestyle. Indeed, going through a village on the Appian Way he whipped up his team and knowingly ran over a boy, while at Rome in the middle of the Forum he gouged out the eye of a Roman knight who had been arguing with him too warmly. Moreover, his dishonesty was such that he not only cheated the banker intermediaries of the price of goods he had obtained but, when praetor, he even defrauded the chariot race winners of their prize money. When his own sister's jokes brought him into public disrepute for this and the team managers complained, he issued an edict* that prizes should subsequently be handed over on the spot. Shortly before Tiberius died, Domitius was accused of treason, adultery, and incest with his sister Lepida but escaped prosecution because of the change of regime. He died at Pyrgi of dropsy, after acknowledging his son Nero, whose mother was Agrippina, Germanicus' daughter.

[6] Nero was born at Antium, nine months after Tiberius died, on the eighteenth day before the Kalends of January,* just as the sun was rising, so that he was touched by its rays almost before he could be laid on the ground.* Many people made numerous and sinister predictions about his birth-signs. Among the warnings was even the pronouncement of his father, who responded to his friends' congratulations saying nothing could be born of himself and Agrippina that would not inspire loathing and bring disaster for the state. Another sign of his unhappy future occurred on the day of his purification.* For the emperor Caligula, when his sister asked him to give whatever name he chose to the child, looking upon his uncle Claudius—by whom, when he was emperor, Nero was later to be adopted—said that they should give the child *his* name.* However, he did not do this seriously but as a joke and Agrippina turned down the suggestion, for at that time Claudius was a figure of fun at court.

At three years old he lost his father. Heir to a mere third part of the estate, he did not even get that much, for his co-heir, Caligula seized everything.* When soon afterwards his mother was relegated he was left virtually penniless. His aunt Lepida brought him up, placing him in the care of two tutors, one a dancer, the other a barber. However, when Claudius succeeded to the empire, Nero not only got back his father's property but increased his wealth with an inheritance from his stepfather, Crispus Passienus. When his mother was recalled to Rome and re-established, his position was so improved by the favour and influence she exercised that, according to a popular rumour, Claudius' wife Messalina sent some men to strangle him during his siesta, on the grounds that he was a rival to her son, Britannicus. According to the same story, these men encountered a snake emerging from the couch and were so terrified they ran away. The story seems to have arisen because some snakeskins were found in his bed around the pillow. However, at his mother's request, these were set in a gold bracelet and for some time he wore them on his right arm until, tired of being reminded of his mother, he threw it away—though later on he asked in vain to have it back, when his affairs reached their final crisis.

[7] When he was still only a young boy he participated most enthusiastically and successfully in the Troy game at the Circus. In his eleventh year,* he was adopted by Claudius and handed over for his education to Annaeus Seneca, who was already a senator. People say that on the next night Seneca dreamed that he was teaching Caligula* and soon afterwards Nero provided confirmation of the dream, revealing his monstrous nature at the earliest possible opportunity. For when, after his adoption, his brother Britannicus, through habit, continued to address him as Ahenobarbus, he tried to convince his father* that Britannicus was not really his child but a substitute. When his aunt Lepida was on trial he publicly gave evidence against her in order to please his mother who was striving to undermine her position.

On the occasion of his first public appearance in the Forum, he promised gifts for the people and money for the soldiers and announced a parade of the praetorian guard, which he himself led, holding his shield before him. Then he spoke in the senate expressing his gratitude to his father. During his father's consulship, he gave speeches in Latin on behalf of the people of Bononia and in

Greek on behalf of the people of Rhodes and of Ilium. For his first appearance as judge, he acted as prefect of the city during the Latin festival,* when, although Claudius had forbidden it, many of the best known advocates competed to present to him not the usual short and conventional cases but a large number of highly important ones. Not long after this he took Octavia* as his wife and gave circus games and animal shows as offerings for the health of Claudius.

[8] When the death of Claudius was publicly announced, Nero, who was then seventeen, approached the guards between the sixth and the seventh hour, for in consequence of the terrible omens which had occurred throughout the day, no earlier time had seemed suitable for embarking on his reign. In front of the steps to the Palatine, he was saluted emperor then taken by litter to the praetorian camp, where he addressed the soldiers briefly before returning to the senate house, where he remained until evening. Of all the great honours which were heaped upon him he refused just one—the title ‘Father of the Fatherland’ which he deemed unsuitable for one of his age.*

[9] Beginning with a display of filial respect, he provided Claudius with a most magnificent funeral at which he gave the official eulogy and declared him to be a god. He paid the highest honours to the memory of his father Domitius and allowed his mother the greatest influence over all matters private and public. Even on the first day of his reign, he gave as the password to the tribune of the watch ‘the best of mothers’ and afterwards he often rode about the city with her sharing a litter.* He made Antium a colony, enlisting veterans of the praetorian guard and, besides them, the richest of the chief centurions through residential transfer. He also had constructed there a port on a most lavish scale.

[10] In order to provide a more certain measure of his disposition, he declared that he would rule according to the prescriptions of Augustus and he let slip no opportunity to demonstrate his generosity, his clemency, or his affability. More onerous taxes he reduced or did away with. He cut to a quarter of their original rate the rewards paid to informers under the Papian law.* He gave four hundred sesterces to each man of the people and, in the case of senators of noble family who had lost their ancestral fortunes, he provided annual salaries of as much as five thousand sesterces.* He also distributed free grain every month to the praetorian cohorts. And when, following usual procedure, he was asked to sign his consent to

the punishment of a man condemned to death, he replied, 'How I wish I had never learned to write!' He used to greet members of all the orders accurately and without prompting.* To votes of thanks, he replied, 'When I've deserved them.' He permitted even the common people to witness his exercises in the Campus Martius and often declaimed in public. He would recite his poems, not only in his home but also in the theatre, causing such widespread delight that a public thanksgiving* for his recitation was announced and passages from his composition which had been recited were inscribed in letters of gold and dedicated to Capitoline Jupiter.*

[11] He provided a great many games* of different kinds: Youth Games, circus games, theatrical performances and gladiatorial contests. In the Youth Games* he included old men of consular rank and respectable old women as participants. In the circus games, he assigned separate seating to Roman knights* and even ran chariots drawn by teams of camels. At the games which, since they were undertaken for the everlasting future of the empire, he wished to be termed 'The Greatest', a significant number of men and women from both the senatorial and the equestrian orders took on the parts of actors.* A very well-known Roman knight rode down a rope mounted on an elephant. When a play by Afranius* called 'The Fire' was put on, the actors were allowed to snatch the furnishings of the burning house and keep them for themselves.* Every day gifts of all kinds were thrown to the crowds: a thousand birds each day of every kind, different sorts of food, tokens to be exchanged for grain, clothes, gold, silver, jewels, pearls, pictures, slaves, working animals and even tame wild ones and finally ships, blocks of apartments, and farmland.

[12] He would watch these games from the top of the proscenium. At the gladiatorial games, which he gave in a wooden amphitheatre constructed in less than a year in the Campus Martius part of the city, he had no one put to death, not even criminals. However, he put on show as fighters four hundred senators and six hundred Roman knights, some of whom were wealthy men of good reputation.* Even those who fought the wild beasts and served as assistants in the arena were drawn from the senatorial and equestrian orders. He also gave a naval battle on sea water which had monsters swimming in it. He put on shows of young Greeks as Pyrrhic dancers* and after the games he gave each of them a diploma of Roman citizenship. In one

of these Pyrrhic dances, a bull mounted Pasiphae* concealed within a wooden model of a heifer in such a way that many of the spectators believed it was no mere show. In another, an Icarus on his first attempt fell immediately to the ground* right next to the emperor's couch, splashing him with blood. For he would rarely sit in state on these occasions, preferring to recline, at first watching through a small gap in the hangings but later with the whole of the balcony on view. He was also the first to establish at Rome a five-yearly competition, in the Greek manner, made up of three events, musical, gymnastic, and equestrian, which he termed the Neronia. He also dedicated his baths and gymnasium,* distributing gifts of oil to each senator and each knight. He put in charge of the whole competition ex-consuls, chosen by lot, who occupied the seats of the praetors.* Then he went down into the orchestra, where the senators sit, and accepted the crown he was offered for oratory and verse in Latin.* All the most distinguished men had competed for it but all agreed it was rightly his. However, when the judges also offered him the crown for lyre-playing, he paid it reverence and gave orders that it should be taken as an offering to the statue of Augustus. At the gymnastic contest, which was held in the Saepta, while a magnificent offering of oxen was sacrificed, he placed the first shavings of his beard* in a golden casket set with the most precious pearls which he dedicated on the Capitol. To the athletic contests he even invited the Vestal Virgins, on the grounds that the priestesses of Ceres were permitted to be spectators at Olympia.*

[13] I am, I believe, justified in recording among Nero's spectacles the entry of Tiridates into the city.* The king of Armenia had been induced to come with great promises and, though Nero had dismissed the crowd because of bad weather on the day when his edict had announced he would be showing Tiridates, he did bring him forth at the earliest opportunity. Armed cohorts stood around the temples in the Forum and he himself was seated in a curule chair on the rostra, dressed in the robes of a triumphant general and surrounded by military standards and flags. When Tiridates approached up the sloping platform, Nero first let him fall at his feet but then raised him up with his right hand and kissed him. Next, while the king made the speech of a suppliant (which was translated and relayed to the crowd by a man of praetorian rank), Nero removed from his head the turban and replaced it with a diadem. Then the

king was led from the Forum to the theatre where he again made supplication and Nero placed him in a seat at his own right hand. Acclaimed 'Imperator'* for this Nero offered laurels on the Capitol* and closed the gates of the temple of two-headed Janus, to show there were no longer any wars being waged.*

[14] He held the consulship on four occasions. The first time he held it for two months, the second and fourth for six months, and the third for four months. The second and third were held in successive years, while a year's interval separated these from the first and fourth.*

[15] When it came to dispensing justice, he was not keen to give replies to those presenting cases unless in written form and on the following day. His method of taking cognizance was to have each party present each point in turn, instead of continuous pleadings. And whenever he withdrew to take advice, he never debated anything openly among all present but would request separate written opinions from each person which he then read silently and in private before announcing whatever verdict he himself preferred as if it were the one generally agreed. He refused for a long time to admit the sons of freedmen into the senate* and denied offices to others who had been admitted by previous emperors. Candidates for whom there was not yet room in the senate were given charge of legions as compensation for the postponement and delay. He generally appointed people to the consulship for six months at a time. When one of the consuls died just before the last day of December, he appointed no one as substitute, citing with disapproval the old case of Caninus Rebilis and his one-day consulship.* The triumphal regalia* he conferred even on men with the rank of quaestor and, in a few cases, on equestrians too, and not always in recognition of military achievement. When he sent speeches on certain matters to the senate, he would often overlook the quaestors (who had responsibility for reading them) and have them delivered by a consul.

[16] He devised a new arrangement for buildings in the city and prescribed that there should be arcades along the front of apartment buildings and houses, whose flat roofs would provide a vantage point for fighting fires.* And he had these constructed at his own expense. His plan was to extend the city walls as far as Ostia and to have excavated a canal to bring sea water from there to the old city.*

Under his rule, many practices were reprobated and subject to con-

trols and many new laws were passed.* A limit was imposed on expenditure. Public feasts were reduced to food handouts. With the exception of beans and vegetables, the sale of hot food in taverns was prohibited*—previously all kinds of delicacies had been available. Punishments were imposed on the Christians—adherents of a new and dangerous superstition. A ban was placed on the diversions of the chariooteers, who for a long time had taken advantage of the freedom they enjoyed to wander about the city playing tricks on people and robbing them. At the same time, the pantomime actors and their associates were outlawed from the city.*

[17] To counter forgery, a new measure was introduced at that time stipulating that tablets must have holes bored through them and be bound three times before being signed. And it was to be ensured that, in the case of wills, two waxed leaves inscribed with nothing but the testator's name would be presented for signing by the witnesses, and that no one who was writing a will for some one else should include a legacy for himself. It was also provided that litigants should pay a set and fair fee for legal representation, but nothing for the benches which would be provided free by the treasury. And it was prescribed that cases involving the treasury were to be transferred to the Forum* and a different form of jury, while all appeals from the juries were to be taken to the senate.

[18] Nero was never moved by the slightest desire or hope to extend or add to the empire, and he even considered withdrawing the army from Britain but was dissuaded by the shame which he would have incurred in seeming to detract from the glory won by his own parent.* He merely made the kingdom of Pontus* a Roman province, when Polemon ceded control, and similarly, on Cottius' death, the latter's Alpine territory.*

[19] He undertook only two tours, to Alexandria and to Achaea. But on the very day he had set sail he suspended his Alexandrian trip, disturbed both by religious feeling and by a sense of danger. For when, at the end of a tour of the temples, he had sat down in the Temple of Vesta, first the flap of his toga got caught as he tried to rise and then a great darkness fell, so that he could make nothing out. In Achaea, he undertook to cut a canal through the Isthmus* and addressed the praetorian soldiers, encouraging them to begin the task. Then when the trumpet sounded the signal, he himself was the first to strike the earth with his mattock and to carry off a basketful

on his shoulders. He also undertook preparations for an expedition to the Caspian Gates,* with a new legion of conscripts from Italy, all six feet tall, whom he called the phalanx of Alexander the Great.* These deeds, some of them meriting no reproach, others even deserving some praise, I have gathered together to separate them from the shameful deeds and crimes with which I shall henceforth be concerned.

[20] Amongst the other attainments of his youth, he was also very knowledgeable about music so that, as soon as he became emperor, he summoned Terpnus, the leading lyre-player of the time and as he sat, while the latter sang after dinner day after day late into the night, he began himself to study and practise little by little, omitting none of those exercises by which artists of that kind preserve and strengthen their voices. Rather, he would lie on his back, holding a lead tablet on his chest, and cleanse his system with a syringe and with vomiting, and he would abstain from fruits and other foods harmful to the voice. Finally, pleased by his progress, although his voice was thin and indistinct, he conceived a desire to go on the stage, from time to time repeating to his companions the Greek proverb that hidden music has no admirers.* Indeed, he made his first appearance in Naples and, though the theatre was shaken by a sudden earthquake, he did not leave off singing until he had come to the end of the song he had begun. In the same city he sang often and over many days. And even when he had taken a short break to rest his voice, he could not bear being apart from his audience. After bathing he went to the theatre, where he took his dinner in the middle of the orchestra, with a great crowd present. Speaking in Greek, he promised that once he'd had a drop to drink, he'd give them some hearty singing. The Alexandrians, who had come in large numbers to Naples with a recent convoy, delighted him with their rhythmic applause and he summoned more from Alexandria. And with no less enthusiasm he selected some youths of the equestrian order and more than five thousand of the strongest young men of the common people from all over, who were divided into groups and taught different methods of applauding—they called them buzzers, hollow tiles and flat tiles—which they were to employ vigorously when he was singing. These men were remarkable for their sleek hair-styles and most refined appearance—and for their left hands,

bare and without rings. Their leaders received four hundred thousand sesterces apiece.

[21] Since he set great store by singing even in Rome, he gave orders for a Neronian competition in advance of the regular date and, when everyone called out for his divine voice, he replied that, for those who wished to come, he would put on a good show in his gardens. However, when the entreaties of the crowd were supported by those even of a guard of soldiers,* who were then on duty, he willingly promised them he would put on a performance at once. Without delay he gave orders that his name should be included in the list of those who had entered as lyre-players and, along with the rest, he placed his lot in the urn. When his turn came, he made his entrance, accompanied by the prefects of the praetorian guard bearing his lyre, and following them, military tribunes, along with his close friends. When he had taken his position and the introduction was made, he announced, through the ex-consul Cluvius Rufus, that he was going to sing the role of Niobe.* He then held the stage until the tenth hour, before declaring that the award of the crown and the rest of the competition was to be deferred until the following year, so that there would be more frequent opportunities for singing. And when that seemed too long a delay, he did not hesitate to put on a show in the interim. He even debated whether to take the stage with professional actors in private performances when one of the praetors offered a million sesterces.* He also wore a mask and sang tragedies in the roles of heroes and gods and even of heroines and goddesses, having the masks made so that their features resembled his own or those of whatever woman he happened to be in love with. Among other parts, he sang those of Canace giving birth, Orestes the matricide, Oedipus blinded, and Hercules insane.* The story goes that, when he was playing the part of Hercules, a recent recruit who was standing guard by the exit, seeing the emperor laden and bound with chains—as the play required—rushed forward to rescue him.

[22] From his earliest youth he was passionate about horses and was always talking about the games in the circus, although he was told not to. On one occasion, when he and his fellow pupils were bemoaning the fate of the Greens' charioteer, who had been dragged around the arena, and his teacher reproved him, he pretended they had been talking about Hector.* In the early part of his reign, he used to play every day with ivory chariots on a gaming board and

would leave his country retreat to attend even the most insignificant of circus races, first secretly and then quite openly so that everyone knew he would be there on that day. He did not try to conceal his wish that the number of prizes be increased. In consequence of the greater number of races, the spectacle lasted late into the evening and the faction leaders disdained to bring their adherents unless it was for a whole day's racing. Soon he himself wanted to drive a chariot and even to do so frequently in front of an audience; once he had made his beginning in his own gardens watched by slaves and poor common people, he offered himself as a spectacle to the entire populace in the Circus Maximus, with some freedman giving the starting signal usually provided by magistrates. Not satisfied with giving displays of such talents in Rome, as I have reported,* his principal motive for going to Greece was the following. Those city states whose custom it was to organize musical competitions decided to award all the prizes for lyre-playing to him. He received these with such pleasure that the messengers who brought them were not only given precedence but were even made welcome at his private supper parties. When some of them requested that he sing after dinner, he accepted with alacrity and declared that only Greeks knew how to listen and that only they were worthy of him and his talents. He did not delay his departure and, as soon as he had crossed to Cassiope,* he at once embarked on his singing at the altar of Jupiter Cassius and then went off on his tour of all the competitions.

[23] For he had given orders that competitions normally held at quite different times should be made to take place in the space of one year, causing some to be repeated, and he instructed, against all precedent, that a musical competition was to be added to the Olympic games.* And, so that nothing should distract or detain him while he was engaged in these games, though he was warned by his freedman Helius that affairs in Rome required his presence, he wrote in reply: 'Although you now advise and wish my swift return, you ought rather to counsel and desire that I return worthy of Nero.'

When he was singing, it was not permitted to leave the theatre even for the most pressing of reasons. Thus, it is alleged that women gave birth during his shows and many who were tired of listening and applauding, when the entrance gates were all closed, either jumped furtively off the wall or else pretended to be dead and were carried out for burial. You could scarcely believe how nervous and

anxious he was in competitions, or how he competed against his rivals, or how he feared the judges' verdict. He would pay attention to his competitors and seek their favour, as if they were his equals, then cast aspersions on them behind their backs. Some he would insult to their faces. He would even bribe those who were especially talented. Nevertheless, he would address the judges most reverently before he began, assuring them that he had done all that he could but the outcome would be determined by Fate.* They, as wise and learned men, were to ignore what was fortuitous. And when they encouraged him to take heart, he would withdraw somewhat calmer but not altogether without concern, interpreting the silence and restraint of some as moroseness and ill-nature and saying he could not trust them.

[24] During his competition performance, he followed the rules most strictly, never daring to cough and wiping sweat from his brow with his arm.* And once when he was performing a tragedy and he dropped his sceptre and picked it up again, he was fearful and anxious that he might be disqualified for this fault and could only be reassured by the accompanist's assurance that no one had noticed it amid the rapturous cheers of the audience. However, it was he himself who proclaimed his own victory. For he was also an entrant in the competition for public heralds. And so that no memory or trace should remain anywhere of any other victor in the sacred games, he gave orders that all their statues and images should be overturned and dragged by a hook to the lavatories where they would be disposed of.* He also entered the chariot races on many occasions, even driving a ten-horse team at Olympia, although in one of his songs he had criticized this very thing in King Mithridates.* However, he fell from his chariot and although he resumed his post he was unable to finish, abandoning the race before the end. He received the victory crown, none the less. Then, on his departure, he bestowed freedom* on the entire province, at the same time giving the judges Roman citizenship and substantial sums of money. He himself announced these benefits, standing in the middle of the stadium on the day of the Isthmian games.

[25] He returned from Greece to Naples and, because this was where he had made his first public appearance on stage,* he entered drawn by white horses where the wall had been breached—this is the custom for victors in the sacred games. In a similar manner he made

his entries into Antium, then Albanum, and then Rome. In Rome, however, he made use of the very chariot in which Augustus had once conducted his triumphs; wearing a purple robe, picked out with stars of gold, a Greek cloak, and, on his head, the Olympic crown, his right hand holding the Pythian, he was preceded by a procession displaying his other crowns, labelled to indicate whom he had defeated and with which songs or dramas. Following his chariot came the applauders shouting rhythmic praise and proclaiming that they were the Augustiani and the soldiers of his triumph. Then, through the Circus Maximus, where an arch had been pulled down, he made his way via the Velabrum and the Forum to the Palatine and the Temple of Apollo.* Everywhere he went, sacrificial victims were slain, perfume was sprinkled in all the streets, and countless gifts of songbirds, victor's ribbons, and sweetmeats were made to him. He placed the sacred crowns in his bed-chambers around the couches and did the same with statues of himself in the costume of a lyre-player. He also had coins minted with the same device. And after this, far from restraining or putting aside his passion, he was so keen to preserve his singing voice that he refused ever to address the Roman army, unless by letter or with someone else speaking his words.* Nor would he undertake any business, serious or frivolous, unless a voice-coach was standing by to give advice, relax his wind-pipe, and apply a towel to his mouth. And many were those who became his friends or enemies, according to whether they had praised him lavishly or sparingly.

[26] At first the signs he showed of insolence, lust, luxury, greed, and cruelty were gradual and covert and could be put down to the errors of youth, but even then it was clear to all that these vices were due not to his age but to his nature.* As soon as night had fallen, he would throw on a freedman's cap or a wig* and would go around the cook-shops and wander about the streets looking for amusement—though putting himself at some risk, for he was in the habit of setting upon people returning home from dinner and would hurt anyone who fought back, throwing them into the drains, and he would even storm into the taverns and pillage them, setting up a market in his palace, where the spoils he had acquired were divided up for auction and he squandered the proceeds. And often in the course of these brawls, he would endanger his eyes or even his life. Indeed, he was almost killed by a man of the senatorial class whose wife he had

molested. After that he would never venture forth at that hour without a secret escort of tribunes following at a distance. From time to time also he would have his sedan chair covertly transported to the theatre where, from the upper part of the proscenium, he would look on and incite the pantomime actors as they quarrelled. And when they came to blows and were fighting with stones and bits of the seating, he himself threw many missiles into the crowd and even cracked open a praetor's head. [27] Gradually, however, as his vices took root, he left off jokes and disguises and, taking no care to conceal his actions, moved on to greater misdeeds.

He would draw out his banquets from noon to midnight,* refreshing himself with warm baths or, in the heat of summer, with ice-cold ones. Sometimes he would even dine in public, having drained the Naumachia or in the Campus Martius or in the Circus Maximus, while around him the prostitutes and singing girls of all the city were plying their trade. Whenever he sailed down the Tiber to Ostia or cruised around the Bay of Baiae, on the banks and shores taverns were set out and made ready along the way, remarkable for their feasting and their traffic in respectable ladies, who would imitate tavern women and would solicit him from this side and that to summon them.* He would also invite himself as a dinner-guest to the houses of his friends, one of whom spent four million sesterces on a dinner where people wore turbans, while another spent even more on one accompanied by roses.

[28] Besides his seduction of free-born boys and his relations with married women, he also forced himself on the Vestal Virgin Rubria. He came very close to making the freedwoman Acte his lawful wife, having bribed some men of consular rank to swear falsely that she was descended from kings. He had the testicles cut off a boy named Sporus and attempted to transform him into a woman, marrying him with dowry and bridal veil and all due ceremony, then, accompanied by a great crowd, taking him to his house, where he treated him as his wife. Someone made a rather clever joke which is still told that it would have been a good thing for humanity if Nero's father had taken such a wife. This Sporus, decked out in the ornaments of an empress and carried in a litter, he took with him around the meeting places and markets of Greece and later, at Rome, around the Sigillaria, kissing him from time to time. And all were convinced that he had desired to sleep with his mother but was frightened off by her

detractors, who were concerned lest this ferocious and power-hungry woman acquire greater influence through this kind of favour. This was all the more plausible when afterwards he added to his concubines a prostitute who was famous for her resemblance to Agrippina. People claim that at one time, whenever he travelled in a litter with his mother, his incestuous lusts were betrayed by the stains on his clothing.*

[29] He prostituted his own body to such a degree that, when virtually every part of his person had been employed in filthy lusts, he devised a new and unprecedented practice as a kind of game, in which, disguised in the pelt of a wild animal, he would rush out of a den and attack the private parts of men and women who had been tied to stakes, and, when he had wearied of playing the beast, he would be 'run through' by his freedman Doryphorus.* With this man he played the role of bride, as Sporus had done with him, and he even imitated the shouts and cries of virgins being raped. From quite a few sources I have gathered that he was fully convinced that no one was truly chaste or pure in any part of their body but that many chose to conceal their vices and hid them cleverly. And so when any confessed to him their sexual misdeeds, he forgave them all other faults.

[30] He believed that the proper use for riches and wealth was extravagance and that people who kept an account of their expenses were vulgar and miserly, while those who squandered and frittered away their money were refined and truly splendid. He praised and admired his uncle Caligula, above all because, in so brief a period, he had worked his way through the vast fortune left him by Tiberius.* Accordingly there was no limit to his gift-giving or consumption. On Tiridates—which might seem scarcely credible—he lavished eight hundred thousand sesterces in one day and, when he left, made him a gift of a hundred million.* On the lyre-player Menecrates and the gladiator Spiculus he bestowed fortunes and homes fit for triumphant generals.* For the monkey-faced Paneros, a money-lender with extensive property holdings in Rome and in the country, he provided a funeral almost fit for a king. He never wore the same robe twice. When gambling he would lay bets of four hundred thousand sesterces for each point. He went fishing with a net of gold interwoven with purple and scarlet threads. It is said that he always travelled with at least a thousand carriages, the mules shod with

silver and mule-drivers clothed in Canusian wool, and with a train of Mauretanian horsemen and couriers, decked out with bracelets and breast-plates.

[31] There was, however, nothing in which he was more prodigal than in construction, extending from the Palatine as far as the Esquiline the palace which he called first the House of Passage,* then, after it had been destroyed by fire and rebuilt, the Golden House. It should suffice to relate the following concerning its extent and splendour. There was a vestibule area in which stood a colossal statue, one hundred and twenty feet tall, in the image of the emperor himself.* So great was its extent that its triple colonnade was a mile in length. There was also a lake, which resembled the sea, surrounded by buildings made to look like cities. Besides this, there were grounds of all kinds, with fields and vineyards, pasture and woodland, and a multitude of all sorts of domestic and wild animals.* Other areas were all covered in gold and picked out with jewels and mother-of-pearl. The banqueting halls had coffered ceilings fitted with panels of ivory which would revolve, scattering flowers, and pipes which would spray perfume on those beneath. The principal banqueting chamber had a dome which revolved continuously both day and night, like the world itself. There were baths running with sea water and spa water. When the house was brought to completion in this style and he dedicated it, he said nothing more to indicate his approval than to declare that he had at last begun to live like a human being.*

In addition to this, he began work on a pool stretching from Misenum to Lake Avernus, which was roofed over and surrounded with an arcade, and into this he meant to channel all the hot springs of every part of Baiae; also a canal from Avernus all the way to Ostia, so that one could travel by ship without traversing the sea.* It was to be one hundred and sixty miles in length and broad enough to accommodate ships with five banks of oars passing one another. In order to complete these works, he gave orders that prisoners everywhere should be transported to Italy and that even those who were found guilty of heinous crimes should have no other punishment than hard labour.

He was spurred on to this frenzy of extravagance, not only by his confidence in the empire's riches, but also by the expectation of vast hidden wealth to which he was suddenly prompted by information

from a Roman knight, who asserted as a fact that a wealth of ancient treasure, which Queen Dido had brought with her when she fled from Tyre, was concealed in huge caverns in Africa and could be extracted with only the smallest trouble.* [32] However, when this hope was dashed he was penniless and so wretched and desperate that it was necessary to defer and put off payment even of the soldiers' pay and veterans' pensions, so he put his mind to profiting from false accusations and robbery.

First of all he made it law that, instead of one-half, five-sixths of the property of a deceased ex-slave should pass to him, if the person had, without good reason, borne the name of any family to whom he himself was related. He also prescribed that the property of persons who had, in their wills, failed to recognize their obligations to the emperor, should pass to the treasury and that the lawyers who wrote or dictated such wills should not escape punishment either.* Moreover, he ensured that any word or deed which fell within the scope of the treason law, so long as an informer was not lacking, should be punished.* He demanded back the gifts he had made in recognition of the crowns he was awarded in competitions by different cities.* Having banned the use of amethystine and Tyrian purple, he sent a man to sell a small quantity on market day, then closed down all the stalls.* It is said that once, during one of his performances at the games, he noticed a woman wearing a forbidden colour and pointed her out to his agents, who dragged her out and stripped her on the spot not only of her robe but also of her property. He never gave someone a task without saying: 'You know what I need' or 'The object of the exercise is to leave no one with anything.' Finally, he looted many temples of their ornaments and melted down statues made of gold or silver, amongst them the Roman Penates, which were later restored by Galba.

[33] The murder of family members and general slaughter began with Claudius. For even if he was not responsible for his death he was certainly complicit and did not pretend otherwise, inasmuch as he was afterwards in the habit of praising the kind of mushrooms with which Claudius had ingested the poison as, in the words of a Greek proverb, the food of the gods.* Certainly, after his death he attacked him with every kind of insulting word and deed, harping sometimes on his stupidity, at others on his cruelty. And he would often joke that Claudius had ceased to 'be a fool' [*morari*] among

mortals, lengthening the first syllable,* and many of his decrees and pronouncements he disregarded on the grounds that they were the decisions of a raving idiot. Finally, he failed to provide anything but a low and insubstantial wall as the enclosure for the place where Claudius had been cremated.*

Against Britannicus he employed poison, no less because of the competition he posed in singing (he had a much pleasanter voice), than through fear that one day he would prevail in public favour through memory of his father. He obtained the poison from a certain Lucusta, who was an expert poisoner, and, when it took longer than he expected and Britannicus had merely vomited, he summoned her and beat her with his own hand, claiming that she had given him medicine rather than poison. When she replied that she had used only a small quantity in order to prevent the crime becoming known and making him unpopular, he exclaimed, ‘Of course, *I’m* afraid of the Julian law!** and at once forced her into a chamber to concoct a dose in his presence that would have the most rapid and immediate effect. He then tried it on a young goat, whose death throes lasted five hours. And then, having concentrated it further, on a pig. When this animal died instantly, he gave orders that the substance be brought to the dining-room and given to Britannicus as he dined with him. When Britannicus collapsed at the first mouthful, he pretended to his other dining companions that he was suffering from one of his usual epileptic fits. The next day, amid heavy rainstorms, Britannicus was taken out to be disposed of in a summary funeral. Nero rewarded Lucusta for the services she had rendered with immunity from prosecution and an ample estate. He even sent her pupils.

[34] His mother so irritated him by applying sharp scrutiny to his words and deeds and correcting him, that, to begin with, he tried to make her unpopular by threatening to give up the empire and retire to Rhodes because of her.* Later he stripped her of all honours and powers, depriving her of her guard of Roman and German soldiers and making her move out of the Palatine. Thereafter he let slip no opportunity for harassing her, secretly arranging that people annoy her with lawsuits when she was at Rome, and disturb her when she was resting on her country estates, making her the butt of jokes and abuse, as they travelled past by land and sea. Then, terrified by her violence and threats, he made the decision to do away with her. And

when he had three times made attempts on her life with poison and realized that she had protected herself in advance with antidotes, he prepared to adapt the ceiling of her bedroom, which by a special device would collapse and fall on her at night while she slept. When this plan became known, through the indiscretion of those involved, he devised a collapsible boat, which would suffer either shipwreck or the caving-in of its cabin. Then, in a pretence of reconciliation, he invited her in a letter of great warmth to come to Baiae to celebrate the festival of Minerva* in his company. He gave his captains the task, on her arrival, of wrecking the boat on which she had come, as if by accident. The banquet was then drawn out until late in the night and, when she wanted to set out for Bauli,* he offered her, in place of her disabled craft, the specially devised boat, cheerfully escorting her and even kissing her breasts in farewell. The rest of that night he lay awake with great anxiety, awaiting the fulfilment of his plans. But news came that matters had turned out otherwise—she had swum to safety. Not knowing what to do, he secretly dropped a dagger next to Lucius Agermus, Agrippina's freedman, who had joyfully reported her safe and sound, and gave orders that he be arrested and bound, on the grounds that he had been engaged to attack the emperor, while his mother was to be killed to make it look as if she had taken her own life when her criminal plot was discovered. Worse is reported by quite good authorities who claim that the emperor rushed to view his mother's corpse and handled her body, criticizing some parts of it and praising others, in the mean time drinking to quench a sudden thirst. Yet, although he was reassured by the congratulations of the soldiers, the senate, and the people, neither in the immediate aftermath nor ever after could he bear his feelings of guilt, often confessing that he was haunted by his mother's ghost and by the blows and blazing torches of the Furies. Indeed, he even had rituals performed by mystics in an attempt to call up and appease her shade. When he made his journey to Greece, he did not dare to participate in the Eleusinian mysteries, where a herald pronounces that criminals and the impious are banned.

To matricide he added the murder of his aunt: when he was visiting her, as she had taken to her bed with a stomach complaint, and she, stroking the downy cheek of her nearly grown-up nephew, as was her habit, said to him affectionately, 'When I have your first beard, I can die happy,'* he turned to his companions and said,

apparently in jest, he would shave it off at once. He then gave instructions to the doctors to give the sick woman an excessive dose of laxatives and, before she was even dead, took over her property, suppressing her will so that everything would come to him.

[35] Besides Octavia he later married two other wives, Poppaea Sabina, a quaestor's daughter who had previously been married to a Roman knight, and then Statilia Messalina, great-great-granddaughter of Taurus, who had been consul twice and celebrated a triumph. In order to get possession of her, he put to death her husband Atticus Vestinus actually during his consulship. He quickly tired of Octavia's companionship and, when his friends criticized his behaviour, he replied that she should be content with the insignia of wife.* Soon, having tried in vain to strangle her on a number of occasions, he divorced her on the grounds that she could not have children, but when the common people did not hesitate to express their disapproval of the divorce in public complaints, he sent her into exile. Then he had her killed on a charge of adultery which was so patently false that everyone denied it during the trial and Nero had to set up his old tutor Anicetus as the witness who was to make up a story and confess that he had raped her through trickery. He had a great passion for Poppaea,* whom he married on the twelfth day after his divorce from Octavia. Yet he killed her, too, by kicking her when she was pregnant and ill, because she had scolded him when he came home late from the chariot-races. He had a daughter by her, Claudia Augusta, but she died in infancy.

His treatment of every one his relatives was characterized by criminal abuse. When, after Poppaea's death, he wanted to marry Claudius' daughter Antonia, and she refused him, he had her executed for involvement in a plot, and a similar fate afflicted everyone who was related to him by blood or marriage. Among them was the young Aulus Plautius* whom, before he was put to death, Nero had subjected to oral rape, with the comment: 'Now let my mother go and kiss my successor'—for he alleged that she loved the man and encouraged him to hope for the empire. His stepson Rufrius Crispinus, Poppaea's child, Nero had drowned on a fishing trip at sea by his own slaves, though he was just a boy, on the grounds that he was said to play at being general and emperor. He sent into exile Tuscus, the son of his nurse, because, when he was procurator of Egypt, he had washed himself in the baths built for Nero's visit. He

forced his adviser Seneca to kill himself, even though, when Seneca requested that he be allowed to retire and give up his properties, he had sworn that Seneca's suspicions were unfounded and that he would sooner die than harm him. To his prefect Burrus* he sent poison in place of the medicine for his mouth which he had promised. As for the imperial freedmen,* now elderly and rich, who had supported and aided his adoption and his coming to power, he dispatched them with poisoned food in some cases and drink in others.

[36] He was no less cruel outside his household, and made attacks on many who were not his relatives. A comet—which is commonly supposed to portend the death of great rulers—had started appearing on successive nights.* He was worried by this and when he learned from the astrologer Balbillus that it was the custom among kings to expiate such omens by means of the death of someone important and thus displace the danger from themselves to their nobles, he was bent on death for all the most illustrious—all the more so when two conspiracies were discovered which might serve as an excuse. Of these the first and more important was the Pisonian conspiracy at Rome,* while the second, that of Vinicius, was hatched and discovered at Beneventum.* The conspirators made their defence, bound in triple sets of chains; some confessed of their own accord, quite a few boasting that death was the only remedy for one so corrupted by every kind of crime as Nero. The children of the condemned were expelled from the city and died through poison or starvation. It is recorded that some were killed at a single meal, along with their tutors and attendants, while others were prevented from securing daily sustenance.

[37] After this he showed neither discrimination nor restraint in putting to death whoever he wished and for whatever reason. To give just a few examples: the fault of Salvidienus Orfitus* was that he had let out three apartments in his house near the Forum to serve as offices to some cities; that of Cassius Longinus, the blind jurist, that he kept the image of Gaius Cassius, the assassin of Caesar, in his old family tree;* and that of Thrasea Paetus, that he had the miserable expression of a teacher.* To men condemned to die he never allowed more than an hour's respite. And lest there be any delay, he provided doctors who were to 'take care' at once of any laggards. For that was how he described killing them by opening their veins. It is believed

that he even conceived a desire to throw men still living to be torn up and devoured by a fiend from Egypt who would consume raw meat and whatever was given him. Excited and thrilled by these enormities, which he regarded as achievements, he declared that not one of his predecessors had known what he might do. And he often gave clear indications that he would not spare the remaining senators but would dispose of the entire order, sending out Roman knights and freedmen to govern the provinces and command the armies. Certainly, when he arrived in the city or set out on a journey, he would never kiss any of the senate nor even return their greetings. And when he inaugurated the Isthmus project, in the presence of a great crowd, he clearly expressed his wishes that it might turn out well for himself and the Roman people, without mentioning the senate.

[38] Yet he spared neither the people nor the fabric of his ancestral city.* When someone in general conversation quoted the Greek phrase ‘When I am dead, let earth go up in flames’, he responded, ‘Rather, “while I live”’, and acted accordingly. For, as if he were upset by the ugliness of the old buildings and the narrow and twisting streets, he set fire to the city,* so openly indeed that some ex-consuls, when they came upon his servants equipped with kindling and torches on their property, did not stop them. He greatly desired some land near the Golden House, then occupied by granaries, and had them torn down and burnt using military machinery because their walls were made of stone. For six days and seven nights destruction raged and the people were forced to take shelter in monuments and tombs. During that time, besides the enormous number of apartment blocks, the houses of great generals of old, together with the spoils of battle which still adorned them, the temples of the gods, too, which had been vowed and dedicated by Rome’s kings and later in the Punic and Gallic wars, and every other interesting or memorable survival from the olden days went up in flames. Nero watched the fire from the tower of Maecenas,* delighted with what he termed ‘the beauty of the flames’ and, dressed in his stage attire, he sang of ‘the Fall of Troy’. And lest he should lose any opportunity of securing spoils and booty even from this, he undertook to have the corpses and ruins cleared at his own expense, allowing no one to come near the remains of their own property.* Not merely receiving contributions but extorting them, he bled dry both the provinces and the fortunes of private individuals.

[39] Besides the terrible evils caused by the emperor, there were others which struck by chance: one autumn there was a plague which added thirty thousand victims to Libitina's portion;* in Britain, a great disaster struck when two of the foremost towns suffered a massacre of citizens and allies* and, in the East, humiliation when an army was sent to secure Armenia and had difficulty holding on to the province of Syria.* Amid these trials it was striking and remarkable that Nero bore nothing with greater patience than people's insults and mockery and indeed he was especially tolerant of those who had attacked him with quips or pasquinades.* Many of these, such as the following, in both Greek and Latin, were posted up or circulated by word of mouth:

Nero, Orestes, Alcmeon, killed their mothers.*

A new equation. Nero murdered his own mother.*

Who disagrees that Nero is of the great line of Aeneas?

One carried off his mother, the other his father.*

Since our leader strings his lyre, the Parthian his bow,

Ours will be musical Apollo, theirs the great archer.*

Rome is becoming one house; run off to Veii, citizens!

Unless that house takes over Veii, too.*

But he made no attempt to seek out the authors and when some were denounced to the senate by informers he instructed that they were not to suffer harsh penalties. Once, when Nero was passing by, Isidorus the Cynic reproved him quite clearly and publicly, saying that 'he sang well of the ills of Nauplius, but used his own goods ill'.* And the Atellan actor Datus, when he sang the song 'Goodbye father, goodbye mother!' mimed the actions of drinking and swimming, thus seeming to refer to the deaths of Claudius and Agrippina. When he came to the final line:

Orcus guides your steps.*

he gestured to indicate the senate. The actor and the philosopher Nero merely banished from Rome and Italy, either because he was beyond all insults or to avoid provoking further witticisms by revealing his displeasure.*

[40] Having endured a ruler of this sort for a little less than fourteen years, the world at last shook him off. The process was begun when the Gauls revolted under Julius Vindex who at that time

governed the province as propraetor.* Astrologers had predicted for Nero that one day he would be rejected. Hence that famous saying of his, 'My art keeps us going', a comment apparently intended to secure greater tolerance for his study of the art of lyre-playing, as being a diversion for him when emperor but a necessity for him when a private citizen. However, some of them promised him power in the East after his repudiation, several specifying the kingdom of Jerusalem, and a number the restitution of all his earlier powers. Inclined to this hope, when both Britain and Armenia had been lost and then won back, he imagined he had had all his share of ill-fortune. Indeed, when he received an answer from Apollo's Delphic oracle (in response to his inquiries) that he should beware the seventy-third year, believing that he himself would die at that age, he made no connection with the age of Galba* and anticipated with great confidence not only living to an old age but even perpetual and exceptional good fortune, so that when he lost many precious possessions in a shipwreck he did not hesitate to assure his friends that the fish would bring them back to him. He learned of the Gallic revolt at Naples on the anniversary of his mother's murder, but took the news so calmly and confidently that he gave the impression of being pleased on the grounds that he would have an opportunity, in accordance with the laws of war, to despoil these most wealthy provinces. He went at once to the gymnasium where with the greatest enthusiasm he watched athletes in competition. And when he was interrupted by a more disturbing message while at dinner, he was angered but no more than so as to threaten vengeance on the rebels. For the next eight days he made no attempt to send a reply to anyone or to give any message or instructions and passed over the affair in silence.

[41] Finally, disturbed by the frequent and abusive pronouncements of Vindex, he sent a letter to the senate urging them to take vengeance for himself and the state, and claiming that a throat ailment prevented him from being present in person. But nothing annoyed him more than that Vindex criticized his poor lyre-playing* and called him Ahenobarbus instead of Nero. He declared that he meant to put aside his adoptive name and resume the one he was born with and which had been used as a reproach against him. As for the other charges, the only argument he used to demonstrate their lack of foundation was that he was being accused of ignorance of

the art which he had brought to such a peak of perfection and refinement—and he would repeatedly ask people one by one if they knew of anyone to whom he was inferior. But, as more and more urgent messages arrived, he returned to Rome in great fear—though on the journey his spirits were restored by a trivial and foolish occurrence: he observed a monument inscribed with the image of a Gallic soldier, defeated by a Roman knight and being dragged by his hair, and at this sight he jumped for joy and gave thanks to heaven. Without even then summoning any public gathering of the people or the senate, he called a few of the leading men to his palace and held a brief conference before wasting the rest of the day on some water-organs, of a new and unprecedented kind, which he showed off one by one, discussing the workings and difficulty of each, and promising that he would produce them all in the theatre—with Vindex's permission.

[42] After this, when he learnt that Galba and the Spanish provinces had also revolted,* he was badly affected and collapsed and for a long time lay half dead, unable to speak. When he came to his senses, he tore his clothes and beat his head, proclaiming that it was all over for him. In response to his nurse who reminded him by way of consolation that other rulers had experienced the same, he replied that his sufferings were unheard of, unprecedented, and worse than all others, for he was losing power while still alive. Yet nevertheless he did not give up or curtail any of his usual luxuries or indulgences but rather, whenever he had some good news from the provinces, he would hold a most lavish dinner and sing obscene songs, mocking the leaders of the rebellion, which he would accompany with gestures (these became publicly known). He would make secret visits to the theatre during the games and, when an actor's performance was a popular success, he sent a message saying the man was taking advantage of the emperor's distraction.

[43] It is thought that in the early days of the revolt he had formed many cruel plans—though nothing inconsistent with his own nature—to send agents to depose and dispatch those who were commanding the armies and provinces on the ground that they were united in a conspiracy; to slaughter all exiles everywhere and all Gauls in Rome, the former in case they should join the rebels and the latter as supporters and co-conspirators of their countrymen; to let the armies lay waste the provinces of Gaul; to murder

the entire senate at poisoned banquets; to set fire to Rome, having let wild animals loose on the people so that they could not properly defend themselves. Then, overcome with fear and not so much regret as despair of ever bringing matters to a close, he came to believe that a military expedition was required and, ousting the consuls before the end of their term, he himself entered upon a sole consulship in their place, on the grounds that fate prescribed that Gaul could be defeated only by consuls. He took up the fasces and, as he left his dining-room after a banquet, leaning on the shoulders of his friends, asserted that, as soon as he had reached his new province, he would appear to the armies without weapons and simply show them his tears, then the next day, when the rebels had been brought to recant, he would, a happy man amongst happy men, sing a victory ode—which he really ought to be composing at that moment.

[44] In preparing for the expedition, his first concern was selecting vehicles for carrying his stage machinery and having the prostitutes, whom he meant to bring with him, shorn in a mannish fashion and equipped with the axes and shields of Amazons.* Then he urged the city voting tribes to join up and, when no one suitable responded, he obliged masters to provide a certain number of slaves, demanding the very best from each household and not even excepting accountants or secretaries.* He gave orders that men of every census rating were to hand over a proportion of their wealth and, in addition to this, that tenants of private houses and apartments should present a year's rent to the emperor's fund.* He was most strict and exacting in his demands for newly minted coins, refined silver, and pure gold, so that many openly refused the entire levy and joined together in calling for him to take back first whatever rewards he had given to the informers.

[45] Resentment increased when he sought to take advantage of the corn-supply system. For it became widely known that at a time of general food shortage, the ship from Alexandria had brought a cargo of sand for the court wrestlers. Thus the hatred of all was aroused against him and there was no insult of which he was not the object. A lock of hair was placed on the head of his statue, with a Greek inscription: 'Now finally there is real competition and you must give in at last.'* A sack was tied to the neck of another together with the tag 'I did what I could but you deserve the sack.'* People

wrote on columns that he had even roused the Gauls* with his singing. And at night quite a few would pretend to fight with their slaves and call repeatedly for a Defender.*

[46] His fears were also increased by the clear portents which he had received earlier and more recently from dreams, auspices, and omens.* Though he had never before been in the habit of dreaming, after the murder of his mother he dreamt that he was steering a ship through quiet waters when the helm was snatched from him, that he was being dragged by his wife Octavia into the blackest darkness and covered with a swarm of winged ants, and then that he was surrounded and prevented from moving by the statues of nations which had been dedicated at Pompey's Theatre, and that an Asturian horse, in which he took particular pleasure, had its body transformed, taking on the shape of a monkey, while its head, the only part which was unchanged, gave forth musical whinnies. The doors of the Mausoleum* opened of their own accord and a voice was heard, calling him by name. On New Year's Day, when the household gods had been decorated they collapsed in the middle of preparations for the sacrifice. As he was taking the auspices, Sporus offered him the gift of a ring, whose stone bore an image of the rape of Proserpina.* When a large crowd of all the orders had assembled for the ceremony of making vows,* the keys to the Capitol were only found after much searching. And when a speech, in which he attacked Vindex, asserting that the criminals would pay the penalty and that they would soon meet the end they deserved, was being read to the senate, everyone shouted out, 'It will be you, Emperor!' It had even been noticed that the piece he had most recently performed in public was 'Oedipus in Exile'* of which the final line was:

Wife, mother, father, goad me to my death.

[47] When news came, while he was having lunch, that the other armies had also rebelled, he tore up the letters brought to him, overturned the table, and hurled to the ground two of his favourite goblets which he called his Homeric, as they were decorated with scenes from Homer's poems. Then, having acquired some poison from Lucusta* and hidden it in a golden box, he went over to the Servilian gardens where he attempted to persuade the tribunes and centurions of the praetorian guard to join him in escaping with the fleet, which his most trusted freedmen had been sent to Ostia to

make ready. But when some were evasive and others openly refused, one even shouting out ‘Is it really so hard to die?’,* he debated various possibilities, whether he should present himself as a suppliant to the Parthians or Galba, or whether he should appear in public on the rostra dressed in black and beseech forgiveness for his past offences, appealing as much as he could to their pity, or, if he could not win them over, whether he should not beg them at least to give him the prefecture of Egypt. Later on, a speech addressing these matters was found in his desk. It is believed he was too frightened to carry out his plan, in case he was torn apart before he could reach the Forum.

Having then put off these deliberations till the following day, he woke up in the middle of the night and, realizing that the guard of soldiers had withdrawn, he leapt out of bed and sent for his friends. When he heard nothing back from any of them, he himself went with a handful of attendants to their sleeping-quarters. The doors were all closed and no one answered. Returning to his bedroom he found that the caretakers, too, had run away, having even dragged off the bedclothes and removed the box of poison. At once he called for Spiculus the gladiator or some other executioner, at whose hands he might obtain death, but could find no one. ‘Am I a man without friends or enemies?’ he cried, and rushed out as if to throw himself in the Tiber.

[48] Then when he had checked this impulse and conceived a wish for some secret hiding-place where he might collect his spirits, his freedman Phaon suggested his own villa, located between the Salarian Way and the Nomentan Way* about four miles outside the city. Nero, just as he was, unshod and wearing just a tunic, wrapped himself in a dark-coloured cloak, covered his head, and held a hand-kerchief to his face, then mounted his horse with only four attendants, one of whom was Sporus. All at once an earth tremor and a flash of lightning in his face filled him with terror and he heard the shouts of soldiers from a camp nearby prophesying doom for himself and success for Galba—and even one of those they met on the road was heard saying, ‘These men are after Nero’, while another kept asking, ‘Is there any news from Rome about Nero?’ But when his horse shied at the stench of a dead body someone had thrown onto the road, Nero’s face was uncovered and he was recognized and saluted by a man who had served in the praetorians. When they came to the byway they let the horses loose and he made his way with great

difficulty, even when a robe was laid out for him to walk on, through the thickets and brambles along an overgrown path, eventually reaching the back wall of the villa. There the same Phaon urged him to hide for a while in a hole where sand had been dug out, but he replied he would not descend into the earth still living. As he waited for a short time while preparations were made for him to enter the villa unobserved, he scooped up a handful of water to drink from a pool nearby and said, ‘This is Nero’s essence.* Then, though his cloak had been torn by thorns, he picked the twigs out of it and crawled on all fours through a narrow passage they had dug until he was inside the villa. There in the little room he came to first he lay down on a couch with an ordinary mattress and an old cloak thrown over it. Despite pangs of hunger and renewed thirst, he refused the coarse bread which was offered to him but did drink a small amount of tepid water.

[49] Then, as every one of his attendants urged him to place himself beyond the reach* of the abuses which were imminent, he gave orders that a trench be made at once, of a size which would accommodate his own body, and that at the same time fragments of marble should be collected, if any could be found, and water and firewood should be brought for the disposal of the corpse-to-be, weeping as each instruction was fulfilled and repeating ‘What an artist dies with me!’ During the delay caused by these preparations, a runner brought a message to Phaon which Nero grabbed, learning from it that he had been judged a public enemy by the senate and was the object of a search, so that he might be punished according to ancestral custom. He asked what manner of punishment this might be and when he discovered it meant that a man was stripped naked, his neck being placed in a fork, then his body beaten until he died, he was overcome with terror and snatched up two daggers which he had brought with him, but, having tried the blade of each one, he put them away again, on the grounds that the fatal hour had not yet arrived. And he would at one moment beseech Sporus to commence weeping and lamenting, and at another beg that someone should help him to die by setting an example. At the same time he berated his own procrastination with these words: ‘My life is shameful—unbecoming to Nero, unbecoming—in such circumstances, one must be decisive—come, rouse yourself!’ At that moment some horsemen drew near, under orders to bring him back living. Aware of

this, he hesitantly said: ‘The thunder of swift-footed horses echoes around my ears,’* then drove the dagger into his throat with the help of his secretary Epaphroditus. Half-conscious, when the centurion burst in and, holding a cloak to his wound, pretended he had come to give assistance, Nero said only ‘Too late’ and ‘This is loyalty’. And with these words he died, his eyes staring widely to the horror and dread of those looking on. The first and most insistent request he had made of his companions was that no one should be able to get possession of his head but that he should in some way be completely consumed by fire. This was allowed by Icelus, a freedman of Galba, who had just recently been released from the chains with which he had been bound at the start of the revolt.

[50] His funeral cost two hundred thousand sesterces and his body was dressed in the white robes, embroidered with gold, which he had worn for the Kalends of January. His nurses, Egloge and Alexandria, together with his mistress, Acte, buried his remains in the ancestral monument of the Domitii, which is located on top of the Hill of Gardens* and can be seen from the Campus Martius. The monument is made up of a sarcophagus of porphyry, on which is an altar of Luna marble, and with an enclosure of Thasian stone.

[51] He was of a good height but his body was blotchy and ill-smelling. His hair was fairish, his face handsome rather than attractive, his eyes bluish-grey and dull, his neck thick, his stomach protruding, his legs very thin, his general health good—for despite his luxurious and most excessive way of life, he was only ill three times in fourteen years, and even then not so as to have to abstain from drinking or his other habits. He was so very shameless in his concern for dress and the care of his person that he would always have his curls arranged in a pile on his head and, on his trip to Greece, even had them flowing down behind. He was often to be seen in public dressed in a dinner robe, with a handkerchief around his neck, his tunic unbelted* and his feet bare.

[52] In his youth he applied himself to almost all the liberal arts. However, his mother dissuaded him from taking up philosophy, warning that it was incompatible with imperial power.* His teacher, Seneca, kept him from getting to know the orators of old, hoping thus to prolong his admiration for himself.* Hence his inclination towards poetry, which he himself composed so freely and easily that many are of the opinion he passed off someone else’s work as his

own.* I have had access to some notebooks and papers on which were written some of his best-known works in his own hand. These clearly show that his composition was not transcribed or taken from another's dictation but worked out with thought and creativity. For there are many crossings out and insertions and additions in the work.* He also had a keen interest in painting and sculpture.

[53] Above all, however, he was moved by a passion for popularity and was envious of anyone who in any way inspired the enthusiasm of the common people. It was widely believed that after his victories in the theatre, he would, at the next set of games, compete with the athletes at Olympia, for he was a keen wrestler and had looked on at the athletic contests all over Greece in the same way as the judges, sitting down at the level of the stadium, and if any pairs of wrestlers withdrew too far he would push them forward himself with his own hands. Since he was praised as equal to Apollo in song and the Sun in chariot-racing, it was inevitable that he would also emulate the achievements of Hercules. They say that a lion was trained for him to kill naked in the arena, with the people watching, either by means of a club or with the force of his arms. [54] Near the end of his life, indeed, he publicly made a vow that, if his regime survived, he would perform at the victory games on the water-organ, the flute, and the bagpipes and that on the last day he would appear as an actor and dance the story of Virgil's Turnus. Some people say that he had the actor Paris put to death because he was a dangerous rival.

[55] He had a desire to secure eternal and perpetual fame but his method was ill-advised. For he abolished the old names of many things and places and gave them new ones based on his own, so that he termed the month of April 'Neroneus'* and he had a plan to give Rome the name of Neropolis.

[56] He had great contempt for all cults with the single exception of that of the Syrian goddess* and even her he soon so despised that he polluted her with urine, when he became an enthusiast for another superstition—to which alone he remained most faithful. For he had received as a gift from some unknown commoner a small image of a girl which was said to be a protection against plots and, since a plot was immediately uncovered, he persisted in worshipping this image as the greatest of divinities with three sacrifices a day and he wanted it to be believed that it could give signs imparting knowledge of the future. A few months before he died he was

present at an examination of entrails but could not succeed in obtaining a favourable reading.

[57] He met his end in his thirty-second year on the anniversary of Octavia's death, thereby provoking such great public joy that the common people ran throughout the city dressed in liberty caps.* Yet there were also some who for a long time would decorate his tomb with spring and summer flowers, and would sometimes display on the rostra statues of him dressed in a toga or post his edicts as if he were still alive and would soon return to avenge himself on his enemies. Indeed, even Vologaesus, king of the Parthians, when he sent ambassadors to the senate to renew his alliance, also made an earnest appeal that the memory of Nero should be honoured. Moreover, twenty years later, when I was a young man, there was an individual of unknown origins who boasted that he was Nero, and the name was so popular with the Parthians that they gave him vigorous support and could scarcely be made to surrender him.*

GALBA

[1] With Nero, the descendants of the Caesars died out.* While the signs foretelling this were many, two in particular were quite unmistakable. Once, when, right after her marriage to Augustus, Livia was on a visit to her villa at Veii, an eagle flew by and snatched a white hen, which was clutching a sprig of laurel in its beak, and at once dropped the bird into her lap.* She decided to rear the hen and to plant the sprig. The hen produced such a quantity of chicks that today the villa is known as 'The Henhouse', while the laurel grew to such a size that, whenever the Caesars were about to celebrate a triumph, they would gather their laurels from it. It was also their practice when they held a triumph to plant other laurel branches in the same spot and it was noted that when each one's death was near the tree he had planted would droop. Now, in the final year of Nero's reign, the entire grove withered away completely, while every single chicken there died. Moreover, when immediately afterwards the temple of the Caesars* was struck by lightning, the heads fell off all the statues at once, while the sceptre was shaken from the hands of the statue of Augustus.

[2] Galba, who succeeded Nero,* was in no way related to the house of the Caesars, though he was, without doubt, of very eminent birth and his own line was a great and ancient one, for he would always have it included in the inscriptions on his statues that he was the great-grandson of Quintus Catulus Capitolinus,* and when he was emperor he even had in his entrance hall his family tree put on display, in which he traced back his father's origins to Jupiter and those of his mother to Pasiphae* the wife of Minos. [3] To describe the ancestral portraits* and accompanying inscriptions of the entire house would take too long, so I shall confine myself to sketching his immediate family. It is not clear why the first of the Sulpicii to have the name Galba* acquired it, nor by what means. Some people think that, having for a long time besieged a town in Spain without success, he eventually set fire to it with torches smeared with *galbanum*.* Others think it was because during a lengthy illness he made repeated use of *galbeum*, that is, remedies wrapped in wool. There are some who believe that it was because he looked very fat,

which the Gauls term *galba*, while others take the opposite view that it was because he was very thin, so that he resembled the insect which lives in oak trees and is called the *galba*.

Servius Galba, who attained the consulship, brought distinction to the family. He was the most eloquent of his contemporaries. The story goes that, when he was governing Spain as propraetor, he brought about the war of Viriathus, after thirty thousand Lusitanians were treacherously slaughtered.* His grandson took against Julius Caesar (whose legate he had been in Gaul) when he failed to gain the consulship, and joined the conspiracy of Cassius and Brutus. For this he was condemned under the Pedian law.* His son was the grandfather and his grandson the father of the emperor Galba. The emperor's grandfather was more distinguished as a scholar than as a magistrate, since he did not rise beyond the rank of praetor but produced an extensive and carefully written history. His father attained the consulship* and, though his person was slight—he was a hunchback, too—and his abilities as a speaker were only moderate, he argued cases frequently and conscientiously. He was married to Mummia Achaica, the granddaughter of Catulus and great-granddaughter of Lucius Mummius, who sacked Corinth; and later to Livia Ocellina, a woman of outstanding wealth and beauty but who, nevertheless, is thought to have taken the initiative in pursuing him because of his noble family—and the more zealously, too, after (in response to her advances) he privately bared his deformity to her, so that it would not be thought she had been deceived. With Achaica he had two sons, Gaius and Servius, of whom the elder, Gaius, having dissipated his resources, left Rome and, when Tiberius would not permit him to take part in the allocation of provinces for proconsuls in his year,* took his own life.

[4] Servius Galba, who became emperor, was born on the ninth day before the Kalends of January in the consulship of Marcus Valerius Messala and Gnaeus Lentulus,* in a villa on a hill near Terracina, on the left as you travel toward Fundi. He was adopted by his stepmother Livia and took on her name and the additional *cognomen* of Ocella, at the same time changing his forename.* From early on right up to the time he was emperor he was known as Lucius rather than Servius. It is common knowledge that, when he was still a boy and, along with his contemporaries, was paying his respects to Augustus, the emperor pinched his cheek and said: 'You, too, child,

will have a taste of our imperial power.' Tiberius, however, learning that Galba would become emperor but only as an old man, commented: 'Let him live, since it will make no difference to me.' And, when Galba's grandfather was conducting an expiatory sacrifice after a bolt of lightning and an eagle snatched the entrails out of his hands, carrying them to an oak tree covered with acorns, the prediction was made that the family would attain the highest power—but only late. He, smiling, replied: 'Yes, when a mule gives birth.' Nothing gave so much encouragement to Galba later, when he was trying to seize power, as the fact that a mule gave birth, which everyone else perceived as a dreadful omen but which he was greatly cheered by, remembering his grandfather's comment on the occasion of that sacrifice.

When he took on the toga of manhood, he had a dream that Fortune spoke, saying she was standing exhausted before his door and if he did not quickly welcome her, she would be picked up by whoever came along. On waking and opening the front door, he found beside the threshold the bronze image of a goddess, larger than a cubit in size. This he carried away in his arms to his villa at Tusculum, where he used to spend the summer. Here he consecrated it in a particular corner of the house and honoured it with supplications every month and a nightlong vigil once a year.*

Although he was not yet of mature years, he insisted unswervingly on the old national custom, which had fallen out of use and was observed nowhere other than in his house, that his freedmen and slaves should attend him in a group twice a day, to offer their greetings in the morning and to bid him goodnight in the evening, one by one.*

[5] Among other liberal studies, he applied himself to the law. He also took on the duties of a husband, though after he had lost his wife Lepida and the two children he had with her, he remained single and could not by any means be induced to marry again, not even by Agrippina,* who, left a widow by the death of Domitius, sought with all her powers to attract Galba (though he was not yet available, being still married) with the result that at an assembly of ladies Lepida's mother rebuked her sharply and even slapped her. He was especially respectful toward Livia Augusta, whose particular favour he enjoyed during her lifetime and through whose will, when she died, he almost inherited a fortune, for, of all her legatees, he was left

the largest bequest, fifty thousand sesterces. However, because the sum was given in figures rather than words, Tiberius, who was her heir, reduced it to five thousand—and Galba never actually received even that.

[6] He secured magistracies before the official age and, when praetor with responsibility for arranging the games for the goddess Flora, he provided a spectacle of a kind not seen before in which elephants walked on tightropes.* After that he governed the province of Aquitania for nearly a year. Shortly thereafter he held an ordinary consulship for six months.* By coincidence he took over the consulship from Lucius Domitius,* the father of Nero, while he himself was succeeded by Salvius Otho, the father of Otho. This was an omen of what was to happen later, when he would be emperor between the reigns of their two sons. Appointed governor of Upper Germany by Caligula as replacement for Gaetulicus, the day after he arrived to take charge of the legions he prevented them from applauding at the festival which happened to fall at that time, by giving written orders that they should keep their hands under their cloaks. Immediately the following verse circulated in the camp:

Soldiers, learn to be soldiers. Galba's no Gaetulicus.

With equal strictness, he prohibited the practice of buying leave. He took great care to train up both the veterans and the new recruits and quickly checked the barbarians, who had by then broken through as far as Gaul. And when Caligula was visiting,* Galba and his army made such a favourable impression that of the countless troops brought together from all the provinces none secured greater recognition nor greater rewards. Galba himself particularly stood out, since, while directing the deployment of men in the field, shield in hand, he had actually run alongside the emperor's chariot for twenty miles.*

[7] When news came of Caligula's assassination and many people urged him to take advantage of the opportunity, Galba preferred to take no action. Because of this he particularly endeared himself to Claudius and was made a member of his circle of friends; he was treated with such deference that the expedition to Britain was postponed to a later date when he quite suddenly fell ill, though it was not serious. He was specially chosen* to be proconsular governor of Africa for two years with the task of bringing order to a province

troubled by internal dissension and by barbarian revolt. And order he brought, with particular concern for strictness and justice even in the smallest matters. When a soldier was accused, during a time of great scarcity, of having sold (while on campaign) a *modius* of wheat, the remains of his rations, for a sum of one hundred denarii, Galba ordered that when his food ran out no one should help him, and the man died of hunger. When he was dispensing justice and a case came up concerning the ownership of a farm animal, since the arguments and witnesses on neither side had much authority, which made it difficult to arrive at the truth, Galba gave orders that the animal was to be taken with its head covered to the lake where it normally satisfied its thirst and, after its drink, that it should belong to whichever party it chose to go to, once its head was uncovered.

[8] Because of his achievements at that time in Africa and earlier in Germany, he was awarded triumphal ornaments and co-opted to be a member of three priesthoods, the Board of Fifteen,* the brotherhood of Titius,* and the priests of Augustus.* And from that time until about the middle of Nero's reign he lived his life largely in retirement. He would never undertake any journey, even to take the air, unless accompanied by a second carriage containing a million sesterces in gold, until at last, as he lingered in the town of Fundi, an offer came of the governorship of Nearer Spain.* It happened, after his arrival in his province, that when he was making a sacrifice in a public temple, there was among the attendants a young boy holding an incense box, whose hair suddenly went white all over his head. Not a few people interpreted this as a sign that there would be a change of regime and that an old man would succeed a young man—that is to say Galba would succeed Nero. Not long afterwards a thunderbolt hit the lake of Cantabria* and twelve axes were found there—a clear portent of imperial power.

[9] For eight years, he governed the province in a changeable and inconsistent manner, being at first fierce, severe, and even excessive in punishing certain offences. For when a money-changer was found to be fraudulent in his dealings, Galba had the man's hands cut off and nailed to his counting-table and, when a guardian was found to have poisoned his charge, whom he was to succeed in his inheritance, he had the man crucified.* When the man appealed to the laws and swore he was a Roman citizen, Galba, as though he were making the punishment more bearable by adding the comfort of some dignity,

gave orders that his cross be changed for one raised up much higher than the others and painted white. Little by little, however, he sank into sloth and idleness, in order to avoid giving Nero any grounds for concern; as he used to remark: 'No one is ever obliged to give an account of his indolence.'

He was presiding over court cases in New Carthage, when news came that the Gauls were in a state of rebellion* and the governor of Aquitania was calling for help. Not only that but letters arrived from Vindex urging that he should offer himself as the liberator and leader of humanity. He did not hesitate long but agreed to the task with a mixture of fear and hope. For he had earlier intercepted instructions secretly sent by Nero to his procurators, ordering Galba's death, while his hopes were encouraged not only by the most favourable auspices and omens, but also by the predictions of a noble virgin—the more so since the priest of Jupiter at Clunia,* prompted by a dream, had brought out from the inner part of the temple exactly the same verses delivered in the same way by a prophetic virgin two hundred years previously. The verses made clear that one day the prince and lord of the world would come forth from Spain.

[10] Thus he ascended the tribunal, as if he were about to conduct the usual manumission of slaves.* Placed in front of him were as many portraits as were available of those whom Nero had condemned and killed, while at his side was a boy of noble birth whom he had summoned from his place of exile on the nearest of the Balearic islands* for this very purpose. Galba voiced his deep concern at the current state of affairs and, when he was acclaimed as emperor, declared himself merely the legate of the senate and people of Rome. He then announced a suspension of public business and from among the common people of the province conscripted legions and auxiliary forces, to add to his existing army of one legion, two squadrons of cavalry, and three cohorts. From those of the leading men who were distinguished for their wisdom and years, he set up a kind of senate, which he would consult on more important matters whenever necessary. He also selected young men of the equestrian order, to be called volunteers, retaining entitlement to the use of the gold ring,* who were to keep watch around his bed-chamber in place of soldiers. He also issued edicts throughout the provinces, exhorting everyone, individually and collectively, to join together in the common cause, each contributing whatever help he could.

Around the same time, as defences were being constructed for the town which he had chosen as his headquarters, a ring was found of ancient workmanship and on the stone was carved a figure of Victory with a trophy. And straight after that an Alexandrian vessel reached the quayside at Dertosa,* loaded with arms but without captain, sailor, or any passenger, so that no one had any doubts that war was being undertaken justly, dutifully, and with the favour of the gods. Then, all of a sudden, the entire undertaking almost came to grief. One of the two cavalry squadrons, regretting that it had changed allegiance, attempted to desert Galba just as he was approaching the camp and was only just prevented from abandoning his cause. Besides this, some slaves, who had been given to Galba, and were primed for treachery by one of Nero's freedmen, would have succeeded in a plan to kill him as he passed through a passageway into the baths, if their urging one another to seize the opportunity had not prompted questions as to what they were talking about, so that a confession was extracted by torture.

[11] These dangers were exacerbated by the death of Vindex.* Galba was overwhelmed and almost abandoned hope—indeed, he came near to taking his own life. When he learnt, however, from messengers who had arrived from Rome that Nero was dead and that everyone had sworn allegiance to himself, he set aside the title of 'legate', took on that of 'Caesar',* then set forth, wrapped in a general's cloak and with a dagger hanging before his chest, suspended from his neck.* Indeed, he did not resume wearing his toga until those who were plotting revolt were suppressed—the praetorian prefect Nymphidius Sabinus in Rome, in Germany the governor, Fonteius Capito, and in Africa another governor, Clodius Macer.

[12] He was preceded by a reputation for both cruelty and avarice, for it was said that he had punished those communities of Spain and Gaul which did not come over to his side until a late stage with the imposition of a heavy tribute and, in some cases, with the destruction of their fortifications also, while on their commanders and procurators, along with their wives and children, he imposed capital punishment.* And when a fifteen-pound golden crown from the ancient temple of Jupiter was offered to him by the people of Tarraconensis, he had it melted down and, finding it three ounces short, demanded that these be forthcoming. This reputation was confirmed and increased immediately on his arrival in Rome. For,

when he gave orders that the marines, whom Nero had appointed from the ranks of the oarsmen to be regular troops, should return to their previous position and the men protested, insistently demanding their eagle and standards, not only did he send in horsemen to break up the group but he even had every tenth man executed. In a similar manner he sent back to their homeland, without any reward, the cohort of Germans which had at one time been set up as a bodyguard for the Caesars and whose immense loyalty had been proven on many occasions, claiming that they favoured Gnaeus Dolabella, next to whose gardens their camp lay. Other stories, too, whether true or false, were bandied about, in mockery of him: that he had let out a groan when a particularly refined dinner was placed before him; and, when his official steward presented a summary of accounts, he offered him a dish of beans to reward his conscientiousness and diligence; and that, when the flute-player Canus had pleased him with an amazing performance, he gave him with his own hand five denarii* from his private purse.

[13] For these reasons his arrival was not particularly welcomed, as became clear when the games were next held, for as the Atellan players began the well-known chorus:

Onesimus is coming from his farm

all the audience, with one voice, together chanted the rest of it and, starting again from that line, went through it repeatedly with the accompanying gestures.* [14] Indeed, he enjoyed greater support and authority when he came to power than when he ruled, although he gave many indications of being an excellent emperor.* But these did not bring him sufficient favour to outweigh the hostility earned by his actions of a different character. He was controlled by the wills of three men, who lived with him within the Palace and without whom he was never seen, so that they were popularly referred to as his tutors. The three were: Titus Vinius, one of his officers from Spain, a man of immense greed; Cornelius Laco, who had risen from the rank of legal assistant to become prefect of the praetorian guard, a man of intolerable pride and indolence; and the freedman Icelus, who had only a short time previously been honoured with the gold ring* and the *cognomen* Marcianus but was already hoping to attain the highest equestrian rank. By these men, each giving rein to his particular vices, he let himself be so manipulated and taken

advantage of that he himself became quite inconsistent in his behaviour, being sometimes more severe and frugal and at other times more relaxed and careless than was proper for an elected emperor and one of his age.

He condemned without a hearing, on the slightest suspicion, certain distinguished men of the senatorial and equestrian orders. He rarely bestowed Roman citizenship and only made grants of parental privilege* on one or two occasions, and even then only for a fixed and limited period. When the judges begged him to add a sixth panel to their number, he not only refused but revoked a privilege granted by Claudius,* that they would not be summoned to pass judgement in the wintertime or at the start of the year.

[15] It was thought, too, that he planned to limit the tenure of senatorial and equestrian posts to two years and only to bestow them on men who were unwilling to take them or who turned them down. He appointed a commission of fifty Roman equestrians to revoke and recover at least nine-tenths of the gifts made by Nero,* prescribing that even if actors or athletes had sold something that had once been given to them, it was to be confiscated from the purchasers, if the original recipients had spent the money and could not produce it. Yet at the same time there was nothing he would not allow his companions and his freedmen to sell for money or give as a favour: exemptions from taxation, penalties to be imposed on the innocent, immunity for the guilty. Indeed, when the Roman people demanded punishment for Halotus and Tigillinus,* he singled out these two, the most evil of all Nero's agents, not merely leaving them unpunished but even honouring Halotus with a most powerful procuratorship, while on Tigillinus' behalf he actually issued an edict, criticizing the people for their savagery.

[16] As a result of these measures, he provoked the hostility of every section of Roman society, but above all of the soldiers, who hated him intensely. For although the officers had, in his absence, promised to those swearing loyalty to him a larger than usual donative,* he would not ratify this and repeatedly boasted that he was in the habit of levying soldiers, not of buying them. He thereby alienated all soldiers, wherever they were stationed. Even among the praetorians he provoked fear and indignation by dismissing a number of them at intervals on the grounds that they were suspected of favouring Nymphidius.* But it was particularly the soldiers of Upper

Germany who were filled with fury that they had been cheated of the rewards for the services they had rendered against the Gauls and Vindex. These, then, were the first who dared to abandon their allegiance and refused to swear their oath on the Kalends of January* unless it was in the name of the senate. Forthwith they resolved on a delegation to the praetorians in Rome with the message that they did not like the emperor who had been chosen in Spain and the praetorians themselves should choose another who would be approved of by all the armies.

[17] When Galba heard this news, taking the view that it was not so much his old age as his childlessness which counted against him, he suddenly picked out from among a group of people offering their respects Piso Frugi Licinianus, a distinguished young man of aristocratic family who had enjoyed his highest approval for some time, and who had always been designated in his will to succeed to his name and his property. Addressing him as his son, he escorted him into the camp of the praetorians and adopted him before the assembled soldiers—though without any reference to a donative even on this occasion, which made the task of Marcus Salvius Otho much easier, when he made his bid for power less than six days after the adoption.

[18] Even from the beginning of his rule there had been great and numerous portents predicting the manner in which he actually met his end. When all the towns were slaughtering sacrificial victims on the right and on the left as he passed through on his journey to Rome, it happened that an ox, enraged by the blow of the axe, broke its chain, attacked his carriage and, rising up on its hind legs, completely soaked him with its blood.* Then, when Galba alighted, he was almost wounded by the thrust of a bodyguard's lance, as the crowd pushed forward. As he entered Rome and then the Palace, he was welcomed by an earth tremor and a sound like cattle lowing. These signs were followed by others much clearer. From all the imperial treasure he had selected a necklace of intertwined pearls and gems as an ornament for the image of Fortune he kept in his villa at Tusculum.* This necklace he suddenly decided to dedicate to the Capitoline Venus, thinking it deserved a more elevated place. The next night he had a dream that his image of Fortune complained she had been cheated of the gift meant for her and threatening that she in her turn would take away what she had given him. Terrified,

he set out at first light for Tusculum to avert the evil spoken of in the dream, sending on ahead attendants to make ready a sacrifice. But when he arrived he found nothing but some warm ashes on the altar and next to it an old man, dressed in black, holding the incense in a glass dish and the wine in an earthenware cup.* It was noted, too, that on the Kalends of January, when he was offering a sacrifice, the crown fell from his head and, when he was taking the auspices, the chickens flew away;* and that on the day of the adoption, when he was about to address the soldiers, his chair was not placed in its usual position before the tribunal, through the forgetfulness of his servants, while in the senate his official seat was also in the wrong place.

[19] When he was offering a sacrifice on the morning of his murder, a seer repeatedly warned him to look out for danger, since assailants were not far away.

Not long after this he discovered that Otho had control of the praetorian camp, and, though several people tried to persuade him to go there himself as quickly as possible, assuring him that he could prevail by his authority and presence, he decided merely to stay where he was and to reinforce his defence by bringing together a guard of legionaries, whose quarters were spread all over the city. He did, however, put on a corslet—but one of linen, and he made no secret of the fact it would offer little protection against so many swords. Nevertheless, he came forth, misled by false rumours which the conspirators had deliberately spread in order to make him appear in public. A few people rashly affirmed the business was concluded and that those who had revolted were brought to order, while a large crowd of others had come to offer their congratulations and were ready to obey all his commands. Galba went forth to meet them with such confidence that, when a soldier boasted that he had killed Otho, he asked on whose authority, and made his way into the Forum. The cavalrymen, who were entrusted with the task of killing him, driving their horses through the streets and pushing aside a crowd of civilians, caught sight of him there from a distance and paused for a short time before rushing in and slaughtering him, abandoned as he was by his attendants.

[20] There are those who report that, as the disturbance erupted, he cried out: ‘What are you doing, my fellow soldiers? I am yours and you are mine’, and that he even promised a donative.* More, however, favour the tradition that, of his own accord, he bared his

throat and urged them to do their work and strike, if that seemed right to them. One fact was notable, that of those present no one attempted to give the emperor any help and all who were summoned disdained the message, with the exception of a detachment from the German army. These, thanks to his recent and great kindness toward them when they were sick and wounded, hurried to his assistance but, not knowing the place, they came by a roundabout route and arrived too late.

He was slaughtered beside the lacus Curtius* and left lying just as he was, until a common soldier, returning from the corn distribution, put aside his load and cut off Galba's head. Then, since he could not grasp it by the hair,* he hid it under his clothing but later he stuck his thumb into the mouth and thus carried it off to Otho. The latter made a present of it to the army servants and followers, who impaled it on a lance and carried it around the camp, with jeers, shouting out repeatedly: 'Pretty boy Galba, make the most of your youth!' This insolent joke took its particular inspiration from an incident a few days previously, when a report was commonly circulated that Galba, in response to the praise someone made of his appearance as still youthful and vigorous, replied:

Steadfast my strength continues still.*

A freedman of Patrobius Neronianus* bought it from them for a hundred gold pieces and threw it away in the place where, on Galba's order, his master had been executed. Finally, later on, Argivus, Galba's steward, gave the head and the rest of the corpse a proper burial in Galba's gardens on the Aurelian Way.

[21] He was of medium height, very bald, with blue eyes, a hooked nose, and hands and feet so crippled by arthritis that he could not endure wearing shoes for long, nor could he unroll books or even hold them. On his right side, too, his flesh had grown out and hung down so far that it could hardly be kept in place with a bandage. [22] It is said that he was a heavy eater and in the wintertime would even have something before first light, while at dinner he would take so much that he would give orders for his leftovers to be carried round in big handfuls to be distributed among the attendants. His sexual preference inclined toward males, but only those who were especially tough and full grown.* They say that when Icelus, one of his long-standing favourites, came to him in Spain bringing news of

the death of Nero, Galba not only welcomed him publicly with the most ardent kisses but begged him to have his body hair plucked at once, then took him aside.

[23] He died in his seventy-third year* and in the seventh month of his reign. The senate, as soon as it was permitted to do so, had decreed him a statue to stand on a column with ship's beaks in that part of the Forum where he had been massacred. But Vespasian countermanded this decree, believing that Galba had secretly sent assassins against him from Spain to Judaea.*

OTHO

[1] Otho's ancestors came from the town of Ferentium;* the family was an ancient and illustrious one, descended from the rulers of Etruria. His grandfather was Marcus Salvius Otho, whose father was a Roman knight, while his mother was of humble birth, perhaps not even free-born. Thanks to the favour of Livia Augusta,* in whose household he grew up, he was made a senator, although he did not rise beyond the rank of praetor. Otho's father was Lucius Otho, who was of most distinguished birth with many important connections on his mother's side. Lucius was so dear to the emperor Tiberius and so closely resembled him in appearance that many believed he was the emperor's son. He discharged his city magistracies and his pro-consulship of Africa, as well as some extraordinary commands, with great strictness. He even had the audacity, when in Illyria, to inflict capital punishment on certain soldiers in the middle of the camp,* and personally witnessed this, because, regretting their change of allegiance during Camillus' attempted coup,* they had killed their own officers, on the grounds that these men had instigated the rebellion against Claudius—though Otho was aware that Claudius had promoted the soldiers for that very reason. This deed enhanced his reputation as much as it detracted from his favour at court. However, he soon remedied this when he uncovered the deception of a Roman knight, who, Otho learned from his slaves' indiscretion, was planning to murder Claudius. Thus, the senate bestowed on him the rarest of honours, a statue to be placed on the Palatine, while Claudius appointed him to the ranks of the patricians and, praising him in the most lavish terms, concluded his speech thus: 'My friend, I could not hope that my own children could outdo you.' Albia Terentia, a lady of distinguished family, bore him two sons, Lucius Titianus and the younger one, Marcus Salvius Otho. They also had a daughter whom her father betrothed to Drusus, the son of Germanicus, when she was only just of marriageable age.

[2] The emperor Otho was born on the fourth day before the Kalends of May in the consulship of Camillus Arruntius and Domitius Ahenobarbus.* From his earliest youth he was extravagant and wild to such a degree that his father often beat him with a

thong.* It is alleged that he used to wander about by night and if he happened to meet someone who was weak or drunk, he would toss them into the air on a stretched-out blanket.* Later, after his father's death, there was an influential freedwoman of the court with whom he actually pretended to be in love, the better to secure her favour, though she was an old woman and virtually decrepit. It was through her that he secured easy access to Nero, becoming the foremost of his friends, since they were alike in character and, as some even allege, would take it in turns to use one another in satisfying their lusts. At any rate, Otho's influence was so great that, when an ex-consul had been convicted of extortion, he did not hesitate to bring the man into the senate to give thanks before he had actually secured his release, which he did with the promise of a large sum of money.

[3] He was party to all Nero's schemes and secrets, even arranging, for the day on which Nero planned to kill his mother, a most lavish and refined dinner party, to which both were invited in order to allay suspicion. It was Otho, too, who took on in a sham marriage Poppaea Sabina,* when she was already Nero's mistress. Nero induced her to leave her husband and entrusted her for the time being to Otho. Otho himself, however, seduced her and not content with this loved her so much that he could not with equanimity endure to have even Nero as a rival. It is certainly believed that not only did he shut out the messengers who were sent to fetch her but even on one occasion Nero himself, who stood before the entrance of the house vainly mixing threats with prayers and claiming back what he had handed over in trust.* And so it was that, after the marriage was dissolved, he was made provincial governor of Lusitania as a pretext to get him out of the way. This was deemed sufficient, since a more severe punishment might have made public the whole farce, though the matter was nevertheless well known through the following couplet:

Why's Otho in exile in a specious post, you ask?
He had become his own wife's lover.

For ten years, he governed the province as an ex-quaestor,* with notable moderation and restraint.

[4] When he finally had the chance of revenge, he was the first to support Galba's attempt to seize power. At the same time, though, he conceived an ambition for imperial rule for himself, encouraged

not only by the current state of affairs, but particularly by the assurances of the astrologer Seleucus. This man, who had once foretold that Otho would outlive Nero, unexpectedly came to see him of his own accord and promised in addition that he would shortly become emperor. Thus, Otho let slip no opportunity to perform services for or win popularity with anyone, giving a gold piece to each man in the praetorian cohort on guard whenever he invited the emperor to dinner. He took great care to put all the soldiers under an obligation in one way or another. When he was chosen as a judge in the case of one who was disputing the bounds of his property with a neighbour, he bought up the whole piece of land and made a present of it to the soldier.* Thus, when the time came there was scarcely a man among them who did not believe and declare that only Otho was fit to become emperor.

[5] He had, indeed, hoped to be adopted by Galba and expected news of this daily. But when Piso was elevated, he gave up on that hope and, instead, the seriousness of his debts adding to his indignation, turned to force. For he did not attempt to conceal that, unless he became emperor, he could not keep going, and that it did not matter whether he fell at the hands of an enemy on the battlefield or at the hands of his creditors in the Forum. A few days earlier, he had extorted a million sesterces from one of the emperor's slaves in return for securing the man a stewardship. This sum was the financial backing for his great undertaking. First he involved five members of his bodyguard in his project, then another ten, as each of the five brought in two more; each man was given ten thousand sesterces in ready money and promised a further fifty thousand. Through these men he secured the support of the rest, though they were not many, but he believed firmly that there would be more once the business was under way.

[6] He had planned to take immediate control of the praetorian camp after Piso's adoption and to attack Galba while he was at dinner on the Palatine. However, he decided against this out of concern for the cohort then on guard, not wishing to exacerbate ill-feeling against them, for the same cohort had been on duty when Caligula was killed and Nero was deserted. He did not exploit the intervening period, either, because of portents and on the advice of Seleucus.

And so, when the day was decided on, his conspirators primed to

wait in the Forum, by the Golden Milestone,* just below the temple of Saturn, Otho went to offer his morning greetings to Galba, receiving a kiss from him, as was customary. He attended him too, as he made a sacrifice and listened to the predictions made by the seer. Then, when a freedman came with a message that the architects were waiting—this was the agreed signal—Otho left on the pretext that he was going to look over a house which was for sale, hurrying through the back of the Palatine to the agreed meeting-place. Others say that he pretended to have a fever and instructed his associates to offer that excuse if anyone was looking for him. Then, having quickly concealed himself in a lady's litter he rushed to the praetorian camp, getting out of the litter, when the bearers flagged, and starting to run. When he paused as his shoe came undone, his companions caught him up on their shoulders without delay and hailed him as emperor. Thus, accompanied by festive acclamations and drawn swords he arrived at the camp headquarters, where everyone he met joined in supporting him, as though all were aware of and party to the plot. From there, he sent agents who were to kill Galba and Piso.* As for winning over the minds of the soldiers with promises, he merely swore to their gathering that he would take that and only that which they left him.

[7] After this, when the day was already well advanced, he entered the senate and gave a brief account of events, giving the impression that he had been snatched from the street and compelled by force to take on the empire and that he planned to govern in consultation with all, before proceeding to the Palatine. As well as the other compliments offered by those seeking to congratulate and flatter him, he was hailed by the lowest of the common people as Nero—a title which he gave no indication of rejecting. On the contrary, as some report, he even added the *cognomen* Nero to his name on imperial certificates and on the first letters he sent to some provincial governors.* It is certainly true that he permitted portraits and statues of Nero to be restored and that he reinstated his procurators and freedmen to their former positions, while the first expenditure he authorized as emperor was fifty thousand sesterces to complete the Golden House.*

That very night, they say, he had a terrifying dream and let out loud groans. When his attendants came running, they found him lying on the floor beside the bed, where he was seeking to propitiate

with every possible rite the shade of Galba,* by which he had dreamt he was ousted and expelled. On the following day, too, the story goes, as he was taking the auspices, a storm blew up and he fell heavily to the ground, repeatedly muttering: ‘What have I got to do with long pipes?’*

[8] At around the same time, however, the armies in Germany swore their allegiance to Vitellius. When Otho discovered this, he got the senate to send a delegation with the news that an emperor had already been chosen and to urge calm and concord. However, he also sent agents with letters offering Vitellius a share in the empire and proposing to marry Vitellius’ daughter. But when war became certain, as the leaders and troops sent on by Vitellius drew near, he had proof of the support and loyalty he enjoyed among the praetorians—an incident which almost involved the slaughter of the senatorial order. It had been decided that some weapons should be transferred by the men of the fleet and transported by ship. When these were being brought out in the praetorian camp towards night, some soldiers suspected a plot and started a riot. Almost at once all of them, with no one in control, rushed to the Palatine demanding the heads of the senate. They fought off those of the tribunes who tried to contain them—killing not a few of them—and were thus covered in blood, when they burst into the dining-room, demanding to know where the emperor was, and there was no holding them back until they had actually seen him.

Indeed, he began the campaign energetically and too hastily, without paying any regard to the omens, despite the fact that the sacred shields had been brought out but not yet replaced* (which was from earliest times regarded as inauspicious), and he started out on the day when the priests of the Mother of the Gods* begin their weeping and wailing, while the auspices themselves were very bad. For the signs were positive when he offered a victim to Father Dis,* a sacrifice in which adverse entrails are more favourable, and, when he was leaving the city, flooding from the Tiber hindered him. Then, at the twentieth milestone, the rubble from a collapsed building blocked his path.

[9] With similar rashness—though no one doubted he ought to have deferred the fighting, since the enemy was under pressure, running short of food supplies and disadvantaged by their restricted position—he resolved to fight a decisive battle as soon as possible,

whether because he could not tolerate continued uncertainty and hoped to bring things to an early end before Vitellius' arrival, or because he was not able to withstand pressure from the troops who were clamouring for battle. He himself was not present at any of the fighting, staying behind at Brixellum.*

Indeed, he won victories in three battles, though they were minor ones, one near the Alps, one near Placentia, and one at Castor's temple, as the place is called. But in the final battle, at Betriacum,* he was defeated by trickery. Hope had been raised of talks and his soldiers had been led out, thinking they were to hear the peace terms, just as greetings were being exchanged when they were unexpectedly forced to fight. Immediately Otho took the decision to die, rather (as many believe and with good reason) from shame because he could not bring himself to persevere in his claim to power when it would place the state and human lives in such danger, than from any desperation or lack of faith in his troops, for he still had fresh and strong the forces he had kept back for a second battle, and others were arriving from Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia, while even those who had been defeated were not so badly off that they were not ready to face any battle of their own accord and even without help, in order to avenge their disgrace.

[10] My father, Suetonius Laetus, took part in this war. He was an equestrian tribune in the Thirteenth Legion. Later he would often tell us how even before Otho became emperor he so loathed civil war that, when someone mentioned over dinner the deaths of Brutus and Cassius,* he shuddered with horror. Nor would he have made his bid to oust Galba, if he had not been confident the business could be accomplished without war. Later, my father said, he was moved by the example of a common soldier to see his own life as dispensable. When this man announced the defeat of his army and no one believed him, accusing him of lying or else of cowardice, and suggesting he had deserted the battle line, he fell on his sword before Otho's feet. When Otho saw this, my father would relate, he declared he would not expose to any further danger such men, who had deserved so well of him.

Having spoken words of encouragement to his brother, his brother's son, and his friends one by one, advising each to look after his own interests as circumstances permitted, he sent them all away with an embrace and a kiss and retired to his private quarters where

he wrote two notes, a letter of consolation to his sister and another to Messalina, the widow of Nero,* whom he had planned to marry, entrusting her with his remains and with the preservation of his memory. Whatever other papers he had with him, he burnt, so they should not bring danger or harm to anyone by falling into the victor's hands. From the resources he had with him, he gave out sums of money to his household slaves.

[11] When he had made these preparations, he was fully intending to take his life, but a disturbance arose before he had done the deed and he realized that those who were beginning to depart and leave the camp had been seized and held as deserters. 'Let us', he said, 'add one more night to this life' (those same few words were his), and he gave orders that force was not to be used against anyone. He made himself available to anyone who wished to see him, his door open, late into the night. After this, having quenched his thirst with a drink of cold water, he took up two daggers and felt the blade of each, then hid one under his pillow before falling into a deep sleep, his chamber door closed. At last, around first light, he awakened and ran himself through with a single thrust, just below the left breast. At his first groan, people came bursting in. Now hiding, now revealing his wound, he lost consciousness. His funeral rites were conducted quickly, on his own instructions.* He died in the thirty-eighth year of his life and on the ninety-fifth day of his reign.*

[12] Otho's appearance and manner did not suggest a spirit of such greatness.* He was apparently of modest stature, with crooked feet and bandy legs, while in the care of his person he was almost feminine, plucking out his body hair and, as his hair was thinning, wearing a kind of wig fitted closely and carefully to his head, so that no one would notice it. Moreover, they say he would shave his face daily and apply wet bread to it—a practice he had taken up as soon as the first down appeared—so as to avoid ever having a beard. They say too that he would often celebrate the rites of Isis quite publicly, wearing the linen robe of the cult.* It was for this reason, I believe, that his death, so at odds with the manner of his life, caused the greater wonder. Many of the soldiers who were present wept greatly and fervently kissed his hands and feet as he lay there, declaring that he was the bravest of men, the one true emperor, before at once taking their own lives close to his funeral bier. Many even of those who were absent, when they heard the news, in their grief attacked

and killed one another.* Indeed, most people, though they detested him fiercely when he was living, sang his praises when he was dead, so that it was commonly asserted that he had had Galba killed, not to gain power but in order to restore the republic and liberty.

VITELLIUS

[1] Different authorities give quite separate accounts of the origins of the family of the Vitellii, some reputing it an ancient and noble line, others by contrast describing it as recent, obscure, and even disgraceful. I would attribute this to their respective enthusiasm for or hostility towards the emperor Vitellius, if it were not the case that there was already previously disagreement about the family's standing. A pamphlet written by Quintus Elogius survives, addressed to Quintus Vitellius, a quaestor of the Deified Augustus. According to this, the Vitellii were descended from Faunus, king of the Natives, and Vitellia,* who was worshipped as a divinity in many places, and they ruled over the whole of Latium; their surviving descendants came over from the Sabine country to Rome and were included among the ranks of the patricians. The Vitellian road, from the Janiculum right down to the coast, and the colony of the same name (which they had once claimed to defend against the Aequiculi with a force of their kinsmen) long served as reminders of the line.* Then, in the time of the Samnite war when a garrison was sent to occupy Apulia, certain members of the Vitellii family settled in Nuceria.* Many years later, according to this same document, their descendants returned to Rome and once again joined the senatorial order.

[2] More people maintain, on the other hand, that the founder of the family was a freedman, while Cassius Severus* and others, too, describe this individual as a cobbler, whose son acquired a more substantial fortune through auctions of confiscated goods and recovering state debts and married a commonplace woman, the daughter of a certain Antiochus who kept a bakery, in his turn producing a son who became a Roman knight. Let us not attempt to resolve these differences. Publius Vitellius did have his home in Nuceria and, whether he came from ancient stock or was of disreputable parents and ancestors, he was certainly a Roman knight and procurator of Augustus' property. He left four sons of high rank, with the same *cognomen*, distinguished only by their forenames,* Aulus, Quintus, Publius, and Lucius. Aulus died during his consulship, which he had entered with Domitius (father of the emperor Nero) as his colleague. He was a man of exquisite refinement,

notorious for the magnificence of his dinner parties. Quintus lost his senatorial rank when Tiberius decided to pick out less suitable senators and remove them from the order. Publius, who was on Germanicus' staff, prosecuted Gnaeus Piso, Germanicus' enemy and murderer, securing his condemnation.* After he had served as praetor, he was arrested for having conspired with Sejanus and given over to the custody of his brother. He slit his veins with a penknife but allowed his wounds to be bound up and taken care of, not because he regretted his decision to die but rather because of the protestations of his family. He died of an illness while still in custody. Lucius, after his consulship, became governor of Syria, where with consummate skill he succeeded in inducing Artabanus, the king of the Parthians, not only to enter into talks with him but even to pay homage to the legionary standards.* Soon after, with the emperor Claudius as his colleague, he secured two further regular consulships, as well as the censorship.* He also deputized for the emperor when the latter was absent on his British campaign. He was a man of integrity and industry but quite notorious for his love of a freedwoman. He would even mix her saliva with honey and rub this into his throat and jaws as a remedy, not secretly or occasionally but quite publicly and every day. His ingenuity in offering flattery was astonishing; he was the first to honour the emperor Caligula as a god. On his return from Syria he would only venture to come into the emperor's presence with his head veiled,* turning himself around and then prostrating himself. He omitted no measure which might secure him the favour of Claudius, who was at the mercy of his wives and freedmen. He asked Messalina, as an immense favour, to offer him her feet so he might take off her shoes, and when he had removed her right slipper he kept passing it between his tunic and his toga, from time to time kissing it. He also worshipped golden images of Narcissus and Pallas,* which stood among his household gods. It was he, too, who paid the famous compliment to Claudius, when he organized the Secular Games: 'May you do this often!'

[3] He died the day after paralysis struck him, leaving two sons (their mother was Sestilia, a woman of great virtue and not undistinguished family), both of whom he saw reach the rank of consul—and in the same year,* indeed, since the younger succeeded the elder for six months. When he died the senate honoured him with a public funeral, as well as a statue on the rostra with the

following inscription: ‘In honour of his unwavering piety toward the emperor.’

Aulus Vitellius, Lucius’ son, who was to be emperor, was born on the eighth day before the Kalends of October (or, as some maintain, the seventh before the Ides of September), when Drusus Caesar and Norbanus Flaccus were consuls.* His parents were so horrified by the horoscope cast for him by astrologers that his father always maintained vigorously that, while he was living, his son would have charge of no province, while his mother, when he was sent out to the armies and acclaimed emperor, immediately lamented his miserable fate. His boyhood and earliest youth he spent on Capri among the favourites of Tiberius—ever after he was branded with the nickname ‘tight-bum’* and it was thought that it was his physical charms which were the basis and reason for his father’s rise.

[4] Over the next few years, too, corrupted by every kind of disgrace, he held a prominent place at court, sharing with Caligula a passion for chariot racing and with Claudius one for gambling.* However, he was still closer to Nero, both for these same qualities and also because of a rare service. For when he was presiding over one of Nero’s contests* and the emperor, while desiring to compete among the lyre-players, did not dare to undertake a performance despite everyone’s entreaties, he waited until Nero had left the theatre, then called him back in, claiming to be the conveyer of the people’s demands, thus giving him the opportunity to be entreated by the crowd.

[5] Through the favour of these three emperors, he not only attained the highest magistracies and priesthoods but also subsequently governed the province of Africa and had charge of public works. He was, however, inconsistent in what he tried to do and in the reputation he acquired; in his province, he showed unusual integrity over two years in succession, staying on as an official when his brother succeeded him as governor. But during tenure of his city magistracy, he is alleged to have stolen gifts and ornaments from temples, in some cases changing them by substituting tin and brass for gold and silver.*

[6] He had as his wife Petronia, daughter of a man of consular rank, and with her produced a son, Petronianus, who was blind in one eye. Since the boy was made his mother’s heir on condition that he be released from his father’s power, Vitellius gave him his

independence and soon afterwards, as people believe, killed him, alleging that he planned to kill his father and, through guilt, had himself drunk the poison he had prepared for the deed. Not long afterwards, Vitellius took as his wife Galeria Fundana, whose father was of praetorian rank, and with her, too, produced children, one of each sex, but the boy was virtually mute and tongue-tied because of a stammer.

[7] To general surprise, he was sent by Galba to take command in Lower Germany. Some think that he was helped by the support of Titus Vinius,* who was at that time particularly influential and whose good opinion he had long enjoyed because of their common adherence to the Blue Faction.* Against this, however, is Galba's open declaration that no one was less to be feared than those who only thought about their stomachs and that even Vitellius could fill his deep gullet from the resources of that province, so that it was clear to anyone that his appointment was motivated by contempt rather than favour. It is well known that on his way out of Rome he even lacked supplies for the journey and that his domestic circumstances were so straitened that his wife and children, whom he left behind in Rome, lived obscurely in a rented apartment so that he could let out the house for the rest of the year, and he was obliged to pawn a pearl taken from his mother's ear in order to cover the expenses of his journey. He was only able to extricate himself from a throng of creditors who laid in wait to detain him (among them representatives of the peoples of Sinuessa and Formiae, whose tax revenues he had embezzled) by threatening them with prosecution for vexatious accusation. For when a certain freedman rather sharply demanded settlement of a debt, he had begun proceedings for damages against him, on the grounds that the freedman had kicked him, and he would not withdraw them, until he had extracted from him fifty sesterces.

On his arrival the army—which was ill-disposed towards the emperor and ready and willing for a change of ruler—welcomed him with hands raised to heaven, as if he were a gift from the gods, since he was son of a man three times consul, in the prime of life, and of easy-going and lavish disposition. Vitellius had managed to reinforce the support he already enjoyed with his recent behaviour, throughout the journey greeting any common soldiers he met with a kiss and being especially friendly to the muleteers and travellers at post-

houses and inns. He would even ask them in the morning if they had had breakfast yet, before showing them with a belch that he had done so himself.

[8] Moreover, when he entered the camp itself, he denied no one's requests and, without being asked, relieved those who were in disgrace of their humiliations, those whose cases were undecided of their mourning garments* and those who were condemned of their punishments. And so it was that scarcely a month had passed when, with no regard to the day* and time (for it was already evening) he was carried off from his chamber by some soldiers, just as he was, in his off-duty clothes, hailed as emperor, and taken around the most crowded streets, bearing in his hand the drawn sword of the Deified Julius Caesar which someone had taken from the shrine of Mars and handed to him amid the first wave of enthusiasm. By the time he returned to his quarters, the dining-room was ablaze as the chimney had caught fire. To those who were greatly concerned and disturbed by this, seeing it as a ill omen, he announced: 'Be of good spirit! A light has shone for us!' This was the extent of his speech to the soldiers. Having then garnered the support of the army of Upper Germany, which had earlier defected from Galba to the senate, he willingly took on the title 'Germanicus' which was offered by all his supporters, but put off taking that of 'Augustus' and absolutely refused that of 'Caesar'.

[9] As soon as news came of Galba's murder, he settled his affairs in Germany and divided up his forces, planning to send some on ahead against Otho and lead the rest himself. An auspicious sign appeared to the troops which had been sent on ahead, when an eagle came from their right and flew towards them, circling the standards, then flew on just ahead of them as they continued with their march. By contrast, when Vitellius himself was on the move, some equestrian statues (which were being erected in his honour in a number of places) suddenly developed cracks in their legs and collapsed simultaneously, while the laurel wreath, which he had placed on his head with the greatest care, fell off into running water. Later, in Vienna,* when he was dispensing justice at the tribunal, a cock perched first on his shoulder and then on his head.* The mode of his death fully corresponded to these portents, for he himself was unable to keep hold of the empire which had been secured for him by his officers.*

[10] He heard news of the victory at Betriacum and the death of

Otho* while he was still in Gaul, and without delay gave orders in a single edict that every section of the praetorian cohorts was to be disbanded because of the appalling example they had set,* and that they should hand over their weapons to their tribunes. Furthermore, he gave orders that a hundred and twenty men, whose petitions to Otho he had discovered, in which they demanded their reward for completing the task of killing Galba, should be hunted down and executed. This was an act of nobility and distinction which would have given hope for his conduct as holder of supreme power, if he had not otherwise behaved in ways more in accordance with his character and actions before he took on imperial majesty. For, once embarked on his journey, he was carried through the middle of cities, as if in a triumphal procession, voyaging down rivers on the most luxurious of vessels, decked out with different sorts of garland and equipped with the makings of the most opulent banquets. He exercised no discipline over his household or his soldiers, treating the depredations and ungoverned violence in which they all engaged as a joke—for they, not content with the official feasts which were everywhere offered to them, set free whatever slaves they chose, offering blows, beatings, sometimes injuries and occasionally death to anyone who stood in their way. And when he arrived at the fields in which the fighting had taken place and some of those with him expressed their horror at the stench of the corpses, he made so bold as to offer them reassurance with the following repulsive comment: ‘The smell of a dead enemy is excellent—and even better in civil war.’ However, to lessen the effect of the smell, he knocked back a large measure of wine in front of them and shared some all around. He showed the same conceit and arrogance when he commented, looking at the inscription on Otho’s gravestone: ‘That was the Mausoleum he deserved.’* He also took the dagger with which Otho had killed himself, and sent it to the colony of the Agrippenses,* to be dedicated to Mars. He even held an all-night festival on the heights of the Apennines.*

[11] Finally, he entered the city of Rome with a fanfare of trumpets, wearing the cloak of a general and girt with a sword. He was surrounded by standards and ensigns, while his staff wore military cloaks and his troops had their weapons bared.* Increasingly, he came to neglect every law of gods and men, entering upon the office of Pontifex Maximus on the anniversary of the Allia,* deciding the elec-

tions for the next ten years* and making himself consul in perpetuity.* And lest any should doubt whom he had chosen as his model in governing the empire, he made funeral offerings to Nero in the middle of the Campus Martius, insisting on the attendance of state priests, and at a ritual celebration he publicly urged a lyre-player whose music pleased him to perform something from the Master's Book.* When the man started playing some of Nero's songs, he was the first to applaud, leaping from his seat in delight.

[12] Having begun in this manner, he conducted a significant part of his rule according to the advice and counsel of the lowest of actors and chariot-drivers and, in particular, his freedman Asiaticus. As a youth Asiaticus had been his partner in mutual buggery but grew tired of this and ran away. Later, Vitellius found him again, working as a seller of cheap drinks in Puteoli,* and threw him in chains but quickly released him and restored him to his former position as favourite. Then, once more angry at him because of his insolence and petty thefts, he sold him to a travelling trainer of gladiators, but, when he was kept in reserve till the end of a gladiatorial show, snatched him back again suddenly, giving the man his freedom, when he himself was at last allocated a province. On the first day he was emperor, he presented Asiaticus at dinner with the golden rings,* even though that morning, when everyone had made entreaties on Asiaticus' behalf, he expressed his extreme disgust at the idea of imposing such a stain on the equestrian order.

[13] Above all, however, he was addicted to luxury and to cruelty, always having at least three feasts, sometimes four in a day—breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a drinking party—and easily finding capacity for it all through regular vomiting.* Moreover, he would have himself invited for each meal by a different host on the same day. No one ever spent less than four hundred thousand sesterces in making provision for one of these meals.* Among all his feasts the most notorious was the one given by his brother to mark his arrival in Rome as emperor, at which were served two thousand of the choicest fish and seven thousand birds, so they say. But this, too, he himself outdid when he dedicated the platter, which, because of its immense size, he used to call the shield of Minerva the Protectress. In this he blended the livers of scar-fish, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of flamingos, and the innards of lampreys which had been sought out by ships' captains and galleys from Parthia to the

straits of Spain.* Yet characteristically for a man whose appetite was not just insatiable but also immune to considerations of time or decency,* he could not resist, when he was making a sacrifice, snatching bits of meat and sacrificial cake among the altars, almost from the fire, and eating them up on the spot, or, when he was on a journey, doing the same to titbits smoking hot or else left over from the previous day and half-eaten in the inns along his route.

[14] It was his preference to impose death as a punishment on anyone and for any reason. Men of consular family, comrades of his whom he had known as a boy and whom he had induced to come to court with offers of everything short of a share in the empire, he did away with through deceptions of various kinds, even giving poison to one man with his own hand in a drink of cold water which the other had asked for when suffering from a fever. As for the money-lenders, contractors, and tax-gatherers, he spared scarcely any who had ever demanded from him repayment in Rome or taxes on his travels. It was one of these whom he committed to punishment, just as the man had come to pay his respects, then called him back. Everyone was praising this act of mercy, when he gave orders that the execution should take place in his presence, for he ‘wanted his eyes to have a feast’. In another case, he had a man’s two sons executed with him because they had tried to plead for their father. Moreover, when a Roman equestrian called out, just as he was being taken away for execution, ‘But you are my heir!’, Vitellius forced him to produce the document and when he discovered that a freedman was instituted as joint heir with him, he ordered that the man and his freedman should both be killed.* He even executed some of the common people, for the simple reason that they had shouted loudly against the Blue Faction, thinking they were doing this because they despised him and were hoping for a change of ruler. However, there was no one to whom he was more hostile than jokers and astrologers and whenever an allegation was made against one he would have the man executed without giving him a chance to defend himself. This was because, when he had issued an edict ordering that astrologers were to leave Italy by the Kalends of October, a placard was immediately posted, reading: ‘And the astrologers declare: For the good of the state, by that same date let Vitellius Germanicus be no more!’ He was also suspected of involvement in his mother’s death by ordering that she should not be given food when she was ill, because a woman

of the Chatti,* to whom he listened as if she were an oracle, had predicted that his rule would be assured and long-lasting, provided he survived the death of his mother. Others record that it was she, weary of present evils and fearful of those to come, who demanded poison from her son—which he willingly gave her.*

[15] In the eighth month of his reign, the armies in Moesia and Pannonia defected from him, as did, among those overseas, the armies in Judaea and Syria. They swore allegiance to Vespasian, the latter in his presence, the former from afar. In order to retain the support and favour of the rest, Vitellius thereafter stopped short of nothing in distributing largesse both publicly and privately. He also recruited troops in Rome, promising volunteers that once victory was achieved they would not only be discharged but would even receive the rewards usually given to veterans who had fulfilled their regular term of military service. Later, coming under pressure from the enemy both by land and by sea, he stationed against them in one spot his brother with the fleet and a force of new recruits and gladiators, and in another, the forces and leaders who had fought at Betriacum. After he had been either defeated or betrayed on every front, he made a bargain with Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, to secure his own life and a hundred million sesterces. He at once made an announcement, on the steps of the Palatine, before a crowd of his soldiers, that he was giving up the empire which he had accepted with reluctance. But when everyone protested, he put the business off, letting a night go by. Then, appearing at first light in mourning garments, he went down to the rostra and, with many tears, he made the same declaration, this time from a written document. Again the soldiers and common people called out to him, exhorting him not to give up and promising their full support for his cause. This gave him new courage and in a sudden attack he forced Sabinus and the other Flavian supporters, who by this time were no longer on the alert, up onto the Capitol and into the Temple of Jupiter Best and Greatest, which he set on fire, thus putting an end to them.* He himself looked out over the battle and the fire from the House of Tiberius, as he was feasting.* Shortly afterwards, regretting what had happened and laying the blame on others, he called a public meeting, swearing and making others swear, too, that nothing was dearer to him than public order. Then, unsheathing the dagger he had at his side,* he held it out first to a consul, then, when he

refused, to other magistrates, then to each senator in turn. When none would accept it, he took it away, as though to dedicate it in the temple of Concord.* However, when some shouted out that he himself was Concord, he came back, declaring that not only would he keep the weapon but he would even take on the *cognomen* of Concord.

[16] He also persuaded the senate to send messengers, accompanied by the Vestal Virgins, to request either peace or time to negotiate. On the next day, as he was waiting for a reply, a scout brought news that the enemy was approaching. And so he at once hid himself in a closed sedan and with just two attendants, a baker and a cook, secretly made for the Aventine and his father's house, so that he might escape from there to Campania. But shortly afterwards, when there was slight and vague rumour that peace had been secured, he allowed himself to be taken back to the Palatine. When he found that it was quite deserted and those who were with him were slipping away, he put on a belt full of gold coins and took refuge in the porter's lodge, having chained up a dog at the entrance and blocked the door with a bed and mattress.

[17] Already the advance guard of the army had burst in and, meeting no one, were ransacking everything in the usual way. These men dragged him out of his hiding-place but when they questioned him as to who he was—for they did not know him—and whether he knew Vitellius' whereabouts, he managed to deceive them. But then, when he was recognized, he kept asking if he could be kept for a while under guard, even in the prison, pretending he had information concerning the safety of Vespasian, until finally with his hands tied behind his back, a noose around his neck, and his clothes torn, he was dragged half-naked into the Forum and, amid gross abuse, physical and verbal, along the whole length of the Sacred Way, his head pulled back by the hair, in the way of condemned criminals, and even his chin held up with the point of a sword, so that he should let his face be seen and not lower it. Some people threw dung and filth, others hurled abuse, calling him an arsonist and a glutton. Some of the common people even criticized his bodily defects, for he was unusually tall, his face was generally very red because of his drinking, and his belly distended. One of his thighs was crippled from being struck by a chariot once, when he was acting as attendant to Caligula as the latter was racing. Finally, he was butchered on the

Gemonian steps* with the smallest incisions and, when he was dead, he was dragged from there with a hook to the Tiber.

[18] He died, along with his brother and his son, in his fifty-seventh year, proving right the prophecies of those who interpreted the portent at Vienna (set out above*) to mean nothing other than that he would fall into the power of a man from Gaul. For he was finished off by Antonius Primus, one of the enemy generals, who was born at Tolosa* and in his youth was given the nickname 'Becco' which means cock's beak.*

THE DEIFIED VESPASIAN

[1] With the uprisings of the three emperors and their violent deaths the empire had for a long time been in a state of disorder and almost of collapse when it was finally taken over and stabilized by the Flavian house, an unknown family without any ancestral portraits,* yet by no means a disgrace to the Roman state, although it is agreed Domitian was punished rightly for his lust and cruelty.

Titus Flavius Petro, a citizen of Reate,* was, during the civil war, a centurion or a volunteer veteran on Pompey's side. Having run away from the line of battle at Pharsalus* and retreated home, he later requested and obtained pardon and an honourable discharge, and went into business as a collector of payments at bankers' auctions. This man's son, whose *cognomen* was Sabinus, had no military experience (even if there are some who maintain that he was a senior centurion and others that he was in command of a cohort when he was relieved of his duties for health reasons) and collected the state tax of a fortieth* in Asia. There used to be some statues of him set up by the cities with this inscription: 'To an honest tax-collector.' Later on he was a money-lender among the Helvetii* and it was there that he died, leaving behind a wife, Vespasia Polla, and by her two children, of whom the elder, Sabinus, later achieved the urban praetorship, while the younger, Vespasian, actually became emperor. Polla came from an honourable family of Nursia.* Her father was Vespasius Pollio, who had served three times as military tribune and prefect of the camp, while her brother was a senator of praetorian rank. There is a place at the top of a hill, near the sixth milestone as you go from Nursia towards Spoletium, called Vespasiae, where there are many monuments to the Vespasi, a strong indication of the distinction and antiquity of the family. I would not deny that there are some who have spread the story that Petro's father came from the other side of the River Po and was a contractor for farm labourers (whose practice it is every year to go over from Umbria to the Sabine land to tend the fields), but settled in the town of Reate where he married. I myself, however, have found not the slightest evidence for this, though I have made a fairly thorough investigation.

[2] Vespasian was born in a little village in the Sabine land just

beyond Reate, known as Falacrina, on the evening of the fifteenth day before the Kalends of December, when Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus and Gaius Poppeus Sabinus were consuls,* five years before the death of Augustus. He was brought up in the care of Tertulla, his paternal grandmother, on her estate at Cosa. Hence, even when he was emperor, he would frequently visit his childhood home, where the house was kept just as it had been so that he would not miss the sight of any familiar object. And he so cherished the memory of his grandmother that on religious and festival days he would insist on drinking from a small silver cup which had belonged to her.

Having assumed the toga of manhood, for a long time he refused to seek the broad-striped senatorial tunic,* though his brother had obtained it, and in the end no one but his mother could induce him to apply for it. She finally made him agree, not so much through entreaties or appeals to his respect for her as through teasing, for she repeatedly taunted him with being his brother's attendant. He served as military tribune in Thrace and was allotted Crete and Cyrene as his province when he served as quaestor. Shortly afterwards he stood as candidate for the aedilate and later the praetorship. The former post he only secured the second time he stood (having first been defeated) and even then he came sixth.* The latter post, though, he achieved at the first attempt, coming among those at the top of the list. When he was praetor, so as to lose no opportunity of gaining Gaius' favour at a time when the latter was hated by the senate, he proposed additional games to celebrate the emperor's victory in Germany, as well as recommending that the conspirators* should suffer the additional punishment of having their bodies thrown out without burial. In the presence of that illustrious order he even thanked the emperor because he had honoured him with an invitation to dinner.

[3] At around the same time, he took as wife Flavia Domitilla who had once been the mistress of Statilius Capella, a Roman knight of Sabrata in Africa. She was only of Latin status,* though afterwards she was declared free-born and a Roman citizen in a judicial hearing in response to the claim of her father, Flavius Liberalis. Originally from Ferentum, he had the rank merely of quaestor's clerk. By her Vespasian had three children, Titus, Domitian, and Domitilla. His wife and daughter he outlived, losing both of them before he became

emperor. After his wife's death, he asked Caenis, a freedwoman and secretary of Antonia,* whom he had once loved, to live with him again, and even when he was emperor he gave her the position almost of lawful wife.

[4] During the reign of Claudius he was sent to Germany as legionary legate through the influence of Narcissus. From there he was transferred to Britain* where he fought thirty battles with the enemy. He brought under Roman control two most powerful tribes, over twenty towns, and the island of Vectis,* which is very close to Britain, serving part of the time under the command of the ex-consul Aulus Plautius and part of the time under that of Claudius himself. As a consequence he was granted triumphal ornaments and soon afterwards received two priesthoods and, as well as this, the consulship which he held for the final two months of the year.* The period which elapsed before his proconsulship he passed virtually in retirement and at leisure, fearing Agrippina's continuing influence with her son, and her loathing of Narcissus' friends, even after the latter's death.

He was then allotted Africa as his province, which he governed with marked integrity and not a little honour, although during a disturbance at Hadrumetum* some turnips were thrown at him. Certainly he came back not at all richer, for his credit was so near collapse that he mortgaged his properties to his brother and was obliged to lower himself to trading in mules in order to keep up his position.* This was why he was commonly called 'the muleteer'. He is also said to have been convicted of extorting two hundred thousand sesterces from a young man for whom, against his father's wishes, he obtained a grant of the senatorial broad stripe, and to have been sternly reprimanded for this.

Travelling through Greece in Nero's entourage,* when the emperor was singing he would usually leave or, if he did stay, would fall asleep. Having thereby fallen into the deepest disfavour and been banished, not only from the emperor's inner circle but even from his public receptions, Vespasian retired to a small and out-of-the-way town where he hid, fearing the worst, until he was offered a province with an army.

According to an old and established belief widespread throughout the East, it was fated that at that time men coming from Judaea would take control of the world. This prediction, which events later

revealed to concern the Roman emperor, the Jews took to refer to themselves and rebelled, killing the legionary commander, and, besides this, routing the governor of Syria who was bringing reinforcements, and seizing one of his eagles. Since to bring this disturbance under control required a bigger force and a leader of some energy—but one to whom such a great enterprise could be offered without risk, Vespasian was chosen above all others, for not only was his energy proven but also, being of modest name and family, he offered no threat.* Thus two legions, eight divisions of cavalry, and ten cohorts were added to his forces. Among his legates he included his elder son and, as soon as he arrived in his province, he attracted the attention of the adjacent provinces too, immediately re-establishing discipline in the camps and engaging in a couple of battles with such determination that in the assault on a fortress a stone wounded his knee and a number of arrows struck his shield.

[5] After the deaths of Nero and Galba, when Otho and Vitellius were struggling for the empire, Vespasian himself came to entertain an ambition to become emperor, which he had long ago conceived because of the following signs.* There was on a suburban estate of the Flavians an ancient oak tree which was sacred to Mars. On each of the three occasions Vespasia gave birth, it at once put forth a branch from its trunk which gave clear signs of the fate which would befall that child. The first branch was delicate and soon withered, just as the girl who was born did not see out the year. The second was very strong and abundant, portending great good fortune, but the third was like a tree itself. It was because of this, they say, that the father, Sabinus, receiving further confirmation from a *haruspex*, announced to his mother that a grandson had been born to her who would be a Caesar. She merely laughed, the story goes, expressing amazement that, while she was still of sound mind, her son should be losing his wits. Later, when Vespasian was aedile, Caligula was furious at him for neglecting his duty to keep the streets clean and gave orders that soldiers should cover him with mud, heaping it into the fold of his purple-bordered toga. There were some who interpreted this to mean that at some time the state would be trampled under foot and neglected in some civil strife but would come under his protection and, as it were, into his embrace. Once, when he was having lunch, a dog wandered in from the crossroads bringing a human hand* which it dropped under the table. Again, when he was dining, an ox that

was ploughing shook off its yoke and burst into the dining-room. It frightened off the attendants but then, as if it were suddenly tired out, fell right at Vespasian's feet, as he reclined, and bowed its neck. Besides this, a cypress tree on his grandfather's estate was suddenly uprooted and overturned, though there was no storm, but the next day rose again, greener and stronger than before. When he was in Greece, he had a dream that his own good fortune would begin the moment Nero had a tooth removed. And the next day it happened that a doctor walked into the hall and showed him a tooth which he had just extracted. When he consulted the oracle of the god of Carmel in Judaea, the lots were so encouraging as to promise that whatever plan he was contemplating and turning over in his mind, no matter how ambitious, would be fulfilled. And one of the captives of noble birth, Josephus, when he was thrown into chains, insisted that the same man would shortly set him free but that he would then be emperor. Omens kept being reported from Rome, too: that during his final days Nero received instructions in a dream to take the sacred chariot of Jupiter Best and Greatest from the sanctuary to the house of Vespasian and then into the Circus. And not long afterwards, when Galba was on his way to the election for his second consulship, a statue of the Deified Julius turned of its own accord towards the East. Moreover, on the field of Betriacum,* before battle commenced, two eagles had a fight, observed by everyone, and, when one of them was beaten, a third appeared from the direction of the rising sun and drove away the victor.*

[6] However, he did not attempt anything—despite the great willingness and even insistence of his own men—until he was induced by the support he chanced to receive from others who were unknown to him and far away. From the three legions which constituted the army in Moesia, two thousand men had been sent to assist Otho. When they were already on their way, news came that he had been defeated and had taken his own life. Nevertheless, they pressed on to Aquileia,* as they gave little credence to the rumour. There they took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the lack of order to indulge in every kind of plunder. Then, fearful that if they went back, they would have to give an account of their actions and pay the penalty, they hit upon the plan of making a man of their own choice emperor. After all, they were by no means inferior to the Spanish army who had brought Galba to power, nor to the praetorians who had made

Otho emperor, nor to the German army who had done the same for Vitellius. The names of all the consular legates then in post anywhere were put forward and when, for one reason or another, they had rejected the others, some men of the third legion, (which just before the death of Nero had been transferred from Syria to Moesia), commended Vespasian warmly; everyone concurred and without delay they inscribed his name on all their banners. At that point, however, their undertaking was brought under control, and the detachments were soon afterwards recalled to their duties. But the story spread and Tiberius Alexander, prefect of Egypt, was the first to make his legions commit themselves to Vespasian on the Kalends of July, which was later celebrated as the anniversary of his principate. Then, on the fifth day before the Ides,* the army in Judaea swore allegiance to him in person.

These undertakings were much advanced by the circulation of a copy of a letter (genuine or a forgery) from the now-deceased Otho addressed to Vespasian, begging him very earnestly to avenge his cause and desiring that he should come to the aid of the state; also by the story which went around that after his victory Vitellius intended to change round the winter quarters of the legions, transferring the German army to the East,* where service was less perilous and more comfortable. Aid was also afforded by Licinius Mucianus* from among the provincial governors, and from among the kings, Vologaesus of Parthia. Licinius, having put aside the resentment which he had hitherto openly borne against Vespasian through jealousy, promised the support of the Syrian army, while Vologaesus promised forty thousand archers.

[7] And so, having embarked upon civil war, Vespasian sent leaders and troops ahead to Italy, while he himself crossed over to Alexandria to take possession of the gateway to Egypt. Here, wishing to consult the auspices concerning the duration of his hold on the empire, he dismissed all who were with him and entered the temple of Serapis alone, and when, having made many offerings to the god, he finally turned around, it seemed to him that the freedman Basilides had brought him sacred branches, garlands, and cakes, as is the custom there. Yet he was well aware that no one had let this man in and, moreover, that he had for some time been scarcely able to walk, because of a nervous disorder, and was indeed far away. And at that very time letters arrived reporting that the troops of Vitellius

had been routed at Cremona and that Vitellius himself had been killed in Rome.

Recently and indeed unexpectedly made emperor, he still lacked a certain dignity and majesty. Yet these also came to him. A common man who had lost his sight and another who was lame approached him together as he sat before the tribunal, begging for the remedy for their ailments which Serapis had revealed in a dream; for he could heal eyes by spitting upon them and make whole a leg if he deigned to touch it with his heel. Although he had little faith that this could possibly succeed and indeed did not dare to put it to the test, finally, at the insistence of his friends, he undertook both actions in public before an assembly and met with success. At the same time, with the guidance of seers, some vessels of ancient workmanship were dug up in a sacred spot at Tegea in Arcadia, bearing an image very like that of Vespasian.

[8] Such was Vespasian and so great his renown when he returned to Rome where, having celebrated his triumph over the Jews, he added another eight consulships to his earlier one.* He also undertook the censorship and, throughout the entire duration of his rule, he considered nothing more important than bringing order to the empire, ravaged and collapsing as it was, and then improving it, too.

The soldiers, some made bold by their victory, others ashamed of their defeat, were indulging in every kind of licence and recklessness. Moreover, the provinces and the free cities and some of the kingdoms, too, were suffering from internal disorder. For this reason he discharged many of Vitellius' soldiers and punished many of them. Yet even to those who had had a part in his victory he was so far from showing particular indulgence that he was late in paying their standard rewards. He let slip no opportunity for reinforcing discipline; when a young man, perfumed with unguents, was thanking him for granting the military command he had requested, Vespasian drew away his head in disgust and reprimanded him in stern tones: 'I would rather you had smelt of garlic' then cancelled the commission. And when the marines who travelled in turns from Ostia and Puteoli to Rome on foot* put in a request that they be given an allowance to cover their shoes, as though it would not be enough to send them away without a reply, he gave orders that in future they would run unshod; and they have run thus ever since. He took away the freedom of Achaea, Lycia, Rhodes, Byzantium, and Samos, and made

them into provinces, as well as Trachian Cilicia and Commagene which until then had been ruled by kings. He assigned more legions to Cappadocia because of the frequent barbarian incursions, giving the province a consular governor instead of an equestrian one.

The city of Rome was disfigured, as a result of the earlier fires and the collapse of buildings; he gave permission for anyone to move into and build on vacant lots, if the owners failed to do so. He himself undertook the restoration of the Capitol, with his own hand initiating the removal of the rubble, some of which he carried away on his own back.* He took charge of replacing the three thousand bronze tablets which had been destroyed in the temple fire, searching high and low for copies: these were the most ancient and precious records of the empire which contained decrees of the senate and acts of the people dating almost back to the foundation of the city, and relating to alliances, treaties, and special privileges granted to individuals. [9] He constructed new works also, the temple of Peace next to the Forum and that of the Deified Claudius on the Caelian hill,* for though work on this had been started by Agrippina it was virtually razed to the ground by Nero.* He also built an amphitheatre* in the heart of the city, learning that this had been the intention of Augustus.

The distinguished orders of senators and knights, which had been reduced in number as a result of the various massacres and debased by long-term neglect, he purged and reinforced, holding a review of the senate and the knights, in which the most unworthy were expelled, while the most distinguished of the Italians and the provincials were added to the orders.* Besides this, in order to make clear that the orders were distinguished from one another not so much by privileges as by position, once when there was an altercation between a senator and a knight he declared that senators should not be insulted but to return their insults was both proper and right.

[10] Everywhere the backlog of court cases had increased to an excessive degree, as the longstanding ones remained unresolved due to interruptions in the dispensing of justice, while new ones were added as a result of the turbulent nature of the times. He selected men by lot to take responsibility for the restoration of property seized in war and others to man the centumviral courts.* They were to exercise extraordinary jurisdiction and also to cut down the list as much as possible, since it seemed that the lifetime of the litigants

would hardly be long enough to get through the cases by means of regular proceedings.

[11] With no measures to curtail them, lust and luxury had flourished. At his instigation, the senate decreed that if any woman should have a relationship with someone else's slave, she was to be considered a slavewoman, and also that money-lenders should never have the right to enforce payment of money borrowed by those in the power of a family-head, not even after the family-head's death.*

[12] In other matters he was from the very beginning of his principate right up until his death unassuming and tolerant, never attempting to cover up his modest background and sometimes even flaunting it. Indeed, when some people attempted to trace the origins of the Flavian family back to the founders of Reate and a companion of Hercules, whose tomb stood by the Salarian Way,* he actually laughed at them. So far was he from desiring the outward trappings of power that on the day of his triumph, tired out by the slow and tedious procession, he had no hesitation in saying that it served him right for so foolishly wanting a triumph when he was an old man—as if it were due to his ancestors or had ever been his own ambition. At first he would not accept the tribunician power and refused the title 'Father of the Fatherland' until well on in his reign.* Indeed, even while the civil war was still going on, he had dropped the practice of having those who came to pay their respects searched.*

[13] He put up most patiently with the outspokenness of his friends and the insinuations of advocates, as well as the arrogance of philosophers.* When Licinius Mucianus, a man of notorious sexual impropriety, presuming on the services he had rendered,* treated Vespasian with little respect, the latter could only bring himself to criticize him privately and even then only to the extent that, when he complained of Licinius to a mutual friend, he would add, 'At least I am a real man.'* When Salvius Liberalis dared to say, in the course of speaking for a wealthy defendant, 'What is it to Caesar, if Hipparchus has a hundred million',* Vespasian himself praised him. And when he happened to meet Demetrius the Cynic, after his condemnation, and the latter did not deign to get up or to greet him but merely barked out some remark, Vespasian thought it enough simply to call him a dog.*

[14] He bore not the slightest grudge against those who had insulted or opposed him, arranging a splendid marriage for the

daughter of his enemy Vitellius and even providing her with a dowry and furnishings. When he had been fearful at being banned from Nero's court* and had asked what he should do and where he should go, one of the ushers has pushed him out and told him to go to hell. When this man later asked for forgiveness, Vespasian attacked him merely with words, using about the same number and to the same purpose. He was so disinclined to bring about anyone's downfall through some fear or suspicion that when friends warned him to beware of Mettius Pompusianus, because it was commonly believed that he had an imperial horoscope, he actually made him consul, promising that he would some day be mindful of the favour.*

[15] It cannot easily be shown that any innocent person suffered punishment, except when Vespasian himself was away and unaware of events—or at least against his wishes and through his being misinformed. Helvidius Priscus was the only man to greet him on his return from Syria by the private name of 'Vespasian' and, when praetor, made no honourable mention of him in any of his edicts,* yet he showed no anger against him until through the abusiveness of his retorts, Helvidius had virtually reduced him to the status of an ordinary citizen.* Moreover, while he gave orders, first that he be relegated and then that he be killed, Vespasian was so keen to save him that he sent messengers to recall the executioners and indeed would have saved him if he had not been falsely informed that the man was already dead. For he never took pleasure in anyone's death and would even shed tears over and lament well-deserved punishments.

[16] The only count on which he may justly be criticized is his love of money. For he was not content with reinstating the taxes abolished under Galba, but added swingeing new ones, increasing the tribute due from the provinces, in some cases to double the previous amount. He engaged openly in business deals which would have brought shame on a private citizen, buying up goods merely in order to sell them later at a profit.* He did not hesitate to receive money from candidates in return for magistracies, nor from defendants, whether innocent or guilty, for acquittals. He is even believed to have deliberately made it his practice to promote the most rapacious of his procurators to higher posts so that they would be the richer when he later condemned them. Indeed, he was commonly said to

treat these men as sponges, as it were, soaking them when they were dry and squeezing them when they were wet.

Some hold that he was very grasping by nature—such was the force of the criticism made by an old herdsman of his who had begged humbly for his freedom as a gift when Vespasian became emperor, but had been refused: ‘The fox changes his coat but not his customs.’ On the other hand, some argue that the drained resources of the treasury and the imperial fund absolutely compelled him to pursue spoil and plunder, and that he himself had borne witness to this at the start of his reign, declaring that forty thousand million sesterces were needed to set the state to rights. And this seems more plausible, for even when he acquired money improperly he always made excellent use of it.

[17] He was most generous to men of every rank, making up the property qualification for senators and supporting needy ex-consuls with annual grants of five hundred thousand sesterces.* He restored many cities throughout the world which had suffered damage through earthquake or fire. He gave particular encouragement to literary talent and the arts. [18] He was the first to establish a salary of a hundred thousand sesterces for teachers of Latin and Greek rhetoric, paid for from the imperial fund. He gave outstanding gifts and great rewards to eminent poets, as well as to artists, such as the restorers of the Venus of Cos and of the Colossus.* To an engineer who promised that he could transport some huge columns up to the Capitol at almost no cost, he gave a substantial reward for his device but declined to use it, remarking: ‘I must be allowed to feed my poor common people.’

[19] For the games given to celebrate the dedication of the new stage in the theatre of Marcellus, he revived the old musical entertainments. To Apelles the tragic actor he gave four hundred thousand sesterces, to the lyre-players Terpnus and Diodorus* two hundred thousand each, and to several a hundred thousand. The smallest amount he gave was forty thousand and he also gave out a large number of gold crowns. He constantly threw parties, usually formal and lavish ones, in order to support the butchers. Just as he gave gifts to men on the Saturnalia, so too he gave presents to women on the Kalends of March.* Yet despite this, he could not shake off his longstanding reputation for avarice. The inhabitants of Alexandria persisted in calling him ‘Cybiosactes’*—the name of one

of their kings, notorious for being mean. Even at his funeral, the leading mime actor Favor, who was wearing a mask of his face and imitating the actions and speech of the deceased during his lifetime, as is the custom, asked the procurators how much the funeral and the procession had cost and, hearing that it was ten million sesterces,* exclaimed that they should give him a hundred thousand and throw him into the river.

[20] His body was well proportioned, with strongly built limbs, while his facial expression suggested he was straining. A witty man made rather a good play on this when Vespasian asked him for a joke about himself. 'I'll tell one', he said, 'when you've finished relieving your bowels.' He enjoyed the most robust health, although he did nothing to maintain it beyond massaging his jaws and the rest of his body a regular number of times in the ball-courts and fasting for one day in each month.

[21] He kept his life pretty much to the following pattern. When he was emperor he would always rise early, while it was still dark. Then, when he had read his letters and the reports from all his officials, he would admit his friends and, while they were greeting him, he would put on his own shoes and cloak.* After he had dealt with whatever matters of business had arisen, he would take some air and then have a rest, lying with one of his mistresses (he had selected quite a few to take the place of Caenis* after her death). Then he would go from his private quarters to take a bath and thence to dinner. They say this was the moment when he was most amiable and indulgent, and the members of his household would take great trouble to seize this opportunity if they had any requests.

[22] Not only at dinner, however, but also at other times he was always very genial and settled many matters with a joke. For he had a great sense of humour, though with a taste for vulgar and dirty jokes, so that he did not hesitate to use obscenities. Quite a few of his witticisms have been preserved, however, including the following. When an ex-consul, Mestrius Florus, admonished him for saying 'plostra' instead of 'plaustra',* Vespasian greeted him the next day as 'Flaurus'. Pursued by a woman who claimed to be dying for love of him, he took her to bed and gave her four hundred thousand sesterces for sleeping with him. And when he was asked by his steward how the sum should be entered in his accounts, he replied: 'item: a passion for Vespasian.'

[23] He also quoted Greek poetry at quite appropriate moments,* once remarking of a tall man with huge genitals:

Striding along, bearing a lance that casts a long shadow.*

And referring to Cerylus, a freedman of great wealth, who, in order to cheat the imperial fund of its dues when he died,* was trying to pass himself off as a man of free birth and had changed his name to Laches,* he said:

O Laches, Laches, when you're dead,
You'll straight away be Cerylus again.*

He was particularly inclined to make jokes about his improper ways of making money so as to diminish their unpopularity with humour and turn them into a source of amusement. When one of his favourite attendants came to him requesting a position for a man he pretended was his brother, he put him off, then summoned the candidate himself. Having extracted from him the sum of money he had agreed to pay his intermediary, he appointed him to the post immediately and when his attendant brought the matter up, he observed: 'You'd better find yourself another brother. The one you think is yours is mine.' Once when he was on a journey and suspected the mule-driver had got down to shoe the mules* so that the delay would give someone with a lawsuit the chance to approach the emperor, he asked him what his fee was for the shoeing and insisted on a share of the money. When his son Titus criticized him for putting a tax even on urine, he held up a coin from the first payment to his son's nose and asked him if he was offended by its smell. When Titus said no, he observed: 'But it comes from urine.' When messengers reported to him that a colossal statue had been publicly voted to him at considerable cost, he gave orders that it should be set up at once and, holding out his empty hand, said that the base was all ready.* Even when he feared he would die and was in extreme danger, he would not leave off joking. For when, among other portents, the Mausoleum* suddenly opened up and a comet appeared in the sky, he declared that the former applied to Junia Calvina, a relative of Augustus, and the latter to the king of the Parthians, who had long hair.* When he felt the first onset of his illness he exclaimed: 'Alas! I think I am becoming a god!'

[24] During his ninth consulship he suffered a slight illness when

in Campania and, having at once returned to the city, he set out for Cutilae* and the countryside of Reate, where he used to spend every summer.* There, despite the fact that his illness was exacerbated by an intestinal disorder caused by excessive use of cold baths, he continued to perform his usual imperial duties just as before, even hearing embassies as he lay in bed. Suddenly stricken with an attack of diarrhoea so severe that he almost fainted, he said that an emperor should die on his feet. As he was struggling to rise, he died in the arms of those helping him, on the ninth day before the Kalends of July, at the age of sixty-nine years, one month and seven days.*

[25] Everyone agrees that he always had such faith in the astrological predictions made concerning himself and his sons that even after frequent conspiracies against him he still maintained to the senate that, if his sons did not succeed him, no one would. It is also said that once in a dream he saw a set of scales placed in the middle of the entrance hall of the Palatine residence and equally balanced, with, on one side, Claudius and Nero, and on the other, Vespasian and his sons. Nor was this misleading, since both reigned for the same number of years and the same space of time.*

THE DEIFIED TITUS

[1] Titus, who bore his father's *cognomen*,* was loved and doted upon by all humanity. Whether through innate disposition, policy, or good fortune, such was his success that he secured the goodwill of all and that too—a most difficult task—when he was emperor. For, when he was a private citizen and even during the reign of his father, he did not escape hatred, let alone public criticism. He was born three days before the Kalends of January, in the memorable year in which Gaius was killed,* in a lowly house near the Septizonium.* The room itself in which he was born was tiny and dark (it is still there and is on show).

[2] He was brought up and educated at court alongside Britannicus* in the same subjects and by the same teachers. They say that at that time a fortune-teller had been summoned by Narcissus, Claudius' freedman, to inspect the forehead of Britannicus and that he persistently asserted that it could not possibly be he but rather Titus, who was standing nearby, who would be emperor. Yet the boys were so intimate that Titus, too, who was reclining beside him, is believed to have tasted the same drink which Britannicus finished off and then died,* and to have been very ill for a long time. Later on, in recognition of all this, he set up a golden statue to Britannicus on the Palatine and dedicated another one of him on horseback, made of ivory, which even now is carried at the head of the circus procession, himself attending it on its first appearance.

[3] His qualities of mind and body at once stood out even when he was a boy but still more so as he advanced towards maturity. His appearance was striking, conveying authority as well as charm, and he was unusually strong, though not tall in stature, while his stomach protruded a little. He had an exceptional memory and a great gift for acquiring almost all the arts of war as well as those of peace. He was highly skilled in the use of weapons and in horsemanship and had a ready fluency in both Latin and Greek to such a degree that he could make a speech or compose a poem without preparation. Even in music he was not without talent and could sing and play the cithara with grace and skill. I have discovered from a number of sources that he used to write shorthand at great speed and for fun would play at competing with his secretaries and that he could imitate any

handwriting he had seen and often confessed he could have been the greatest of forgers.

[4] He served as military tribune both in Germany and in Britain, earning a great reputation for hard work and for integrity, as can be seen from the multitude of statues and images of him as well as the inscriptions on them, in both provinces. After his military service he worked as an advocate in the Forum, gaining a good reputation though he did not devote all his time to it. It was at that time that he married Arrecina Tertulla, whose father was indeed a Roman knight but had been prefect of the praetorian guard.* When she died, he married a woman from a noble family, Marcia Furnilla, whom he divorced after he had acknowledged the daughter she bore him. After serving as quaestor he was given command of a legion and conquered Tarichaeae and Gamala, two mighty cities in Judaea.* Though his own horse was killed under him in the midst of a battle he mounted another whose rider had fallen fighting by his side.

[5] When soon afterwards he was sent to congratulate Galba on becoming emperor, he attracted people's notice wherever he went as they believed he had been summoned so that he might be adopted as heir. However, when he realized that everything was again in a state of unrest, he returned from his journey, and having made a visit to the oracle of Paphian Venus, although he only asked for guidance concerning his voyage, he was also encouraged to hope he might be emperor. Soon confirmed in this expectation,* he was left to complete the conquest of Judaea, where in the final attack on Jerusalem he killed twelve defenders with as many arrows. He captured the city on his daughter's birthday, to the delight of the troops and so winning their devotion that they acclaimed him as 'Imperator'.* And when he was going to leave the province they tried to detain him, urging him with prayers and even with threats either to remain there or to take them all with him. It was this which provoked the suspicion that he had tried to rebel against his father and secure for himself rule over the East, a suspicion which he fuelled by wearing a diadem* when, on his way to Alexandria, he attended the consecration of the bull Apis at Memphis. Although this was in accordance with the customary rituals of the ancient cult, some put a worse interpretation on it. Because of this he hurried to Italy, putting in at Regium, then at Puteoli in a merchant-ship and hastening from there to Rome with the greatest dispatch. So as to show that the rumours were

unfounded, he announced, to his father's surprise: 'I have come, father, I have come.'

[6] And from that time he always acted as the emperor's partner and even his guardian. He celebrated a triumph together with his father and they held the censorship jointly.* He was his father's colleague, too, in holding tribunician power* and in seven consulships. Taking upon himself almost all the imperial duties, he dictated letters himself and signed edicts in his father's name, and even delivered his speeches in the senate, in place of a quaestor.* He also took on the command of the praetorian guard, which previously had always been held by a Roman knight. His tenure of this post was rather high-handed and violent. Whenever he had suspicions of someone he would send secret emissaries to the theatres and army camps to demand their punishment, as if by common consent, and then he would dispose of the suspect without delay. Among these was Aulus Caecina* a man of consular rank who had been invited to dinner. Titus gave orders that he should be run through when he was scarcely out of the dining-room—though this was a matter of urgency, since a speech had been found in the man's writing which was to be delivered to a gathering of the soldiers. While such measures were intended to ensure future security, they provoked a great deal of unpopularity at the time, and as a result scarcely anyone ever acceded to the principate with so bad a reputation and with everyone so against him.

[7] Besides being suspected of cruelty, he was also suspected of self-indulgence, on the grounds that he would engage in drinking bouts with the most dissolute of his companions which would go on until midnight. He was also suspected of lustfulness both because of his troupes of catamites and eunuchs and because of his great passion for Queen Berenice,* to whom he is even said to have promised marriage. There were also stories of his rapaciousness, for it was understood that when his father heard court cases, he was in the habit of selling his influence and taking bribes. To sum up, people thought of him and even publicly spoke of him as another Nero.* Yet this reputation turned out to be to his advantage for, when he was found to have no vices but instead the greatest virtues, it was succeeded by the greatest praise.*

The parties he gave were delightful rather than dissolute. The advisers he chose were ones whom later emperors also retained as

indispensable both to themselves and to the public good, and made particular use of.* He sent Berenice away from Rome at once, though neither of them wished it. Some of the favourites he was most fond of, although they were such talented dancers that they later took to the stage, he not only ceased to hold dear but he would not even watch their public performances. He took nothing from any citizen. If ever anyone respected other people's property, it was he. He would not even accept permitted and customary gifts. Yet he was no less generous than any of his predecessors; at the dedication of the amphitheatre* and the baths which he had had rapidly constructed alongside, he put on the most splendid and lavish gladiatorial games. He also put on a sea-battle in the old Naumachia, and in the same place a gladiatorial combat, showing five thousand wild beasts of all kinds on a single day.

[8] He was indeed most good-natured and whereas other emperors, following the practice of Tiberius, would not ratify privileges granted by their predecessors unless they themselves had conferred the same ones on the same individuals, he was the first to confirm all previous grants in a single edict, without even being asked.* Moreover, in the case of other requests people made he was most careful never to send anyone away without hope. Indeed, when his staff criticized him for promising more than he could deliver, he replied that no one should go away from a conversation with the emperor feeling unhappy. On one occasion, recalling over dinner that he not given anyone anything during the course of the day, he came out with the memorable and rightly applauded comment: 'My friends, I have wasted a day.' Above all, he treated all the common people with such courtesy on every occasion that once, when he announced a gladiatorial show, he declared that he would give it in accordance not with his own wishes but with those of the spectators, and that is exactly what he did. Indeed, he never denied anything to a petitioner and of his own accord urged people to ask for what they wanted. Making much of his own enthusiasm for Thracian gladiators, he often engaged with the crowd in lively interchange with words and gestures like a real partisan, but without any loss of dignity or fairness.* He omitted nothing that would endear him to the people, frequently attending his baths when the common people were present.

During his reign a number of disasters happened, such as the

eruption of Mount Vesuvius* in Campania and a fire at Rome* which lasted three days and the same number of nights, as well as a plague of unprecedented severity. In the face of calamities of such magnitude, Titus offered not just the concern of an emperor but the love which only a parent can provide, giving consolation in his edicts and as much practical help as his resources allowed. He appointed officials to take charge of the restoration of Campania, chosen by lot from among the ex-consuls. The property of those who had been killed in the eruption and had no surviving heirs he set aside for the reconstruction of the towns which had been damaged. During the fire at Rome, his only public pronouncement was to declare that he was ruined; he set aside all the ornaments from his country estates to be used for the reconstruction of public buildings and temples and put a number of men of the equestrian order in charge of the work to ensure its more rapid completion.* He drew on all remedies, human and divine, to restore people's health and cure their afflictions, procuring sacrifices* and medical aid of all kinds.

Among the evils of the time were informers and their prompters who had long been given free rein. On his orders these men were thoroughly beaten in the Forum with whips and cudgels and finally exhibited in the arena of the amphitheatre. Then some of them were put up and sold as slaves, while others were deported to the most inhospitable of the islands. To ensure that no one would undertake anything similar at any time in the future, amongst other measures he laid down that no one should be tried for the same offence under different laws and that after a certain number of years no inquiry could be made into the legal status of a deceased person.*

[9] Having declared that he would accept the office of Pontifex Maximus* in order to keep his hands unpolluted, he kept his word, never thereafter bringing about or condoning anyone's death, (though he did not lack grounds to avenge himself), for he declared he would rather meet his own end than cause someone else's. When two men of patrician family were proved to have had designs on the empire he merely advised them to refrain,* telling them that the principate was in the gift of fortune, and promising to give them anything else they might wish. Moreover, he at once sent his messengers to the mother of one of them, who was far away, to relieve her anxiety with the news that her son was safe. Then not only did he invite the men to a private dinner but, on the following day, when

there was a gladiatorial show, he deliberately had them seated near him and, when he was offered the weapons of the combatants, handed them over for their inspection.* It is even said that he investigated both of their horoscopes and declared that danger threatened them both but at some future time and from another source, and so it turned out.

When his brother continued to plot against him, soliciting the support of the army almost openly and planning his escape, he would not allow him to be killed or sent away or even to be held in less honour, but he continued to declare him his partner and heir, as he had done when he first came to power, and often, when they were in private, he would beg him with tears and entreaties to be willing at least to return his love.

[10] In the midst of this he was cut off by death, to the loss of humanity rather than his own. When the games were over, at whose conclusion he had shed many tears in front of the people, he went off to his Sabine estate, rather disheartened because when he was offering a sacrifice one of the victims escaped and because there had been thunder though the sky was clear. Then, at the very first stopping-place, he was stricken with a fever. Being transported from there by litter, he is said to have pushed back the curtains, looked up at the sky, and lamented greatly that life was being taken from him when he did not deserve to lose it, for he said that of all his deeds he regretted nothing, with a single exception. What this was he would not reveal at that time nor could anyone readily make it out. Some people believe that he was thinking of an affair he had with his brother's wife. But Domitia swore most solemnly that it had never happened and, if it had, she would not have denied it but rather boasted of it, as she was always most ready to do of all her scandalous behaviour.

[11] He died in the same villa as his father had, on the Ides of September, two years, two months and twenty days after succeeding him, in the forty-second year of his age.* When his death became known, everyone engaged in public mourning as if they had lost a member of their own family.* Before the meeting was called the senators hurried to the senate house, when the doors were still shut, and then, when they had been opened, gave such thanks for the dead man and heaped up such praises for him as they had never bestowed on him even when he was alive and present among them.*

DOMITIAN

[1] Domitian was born on the ninth day before the Kalends of November, when his father was consul designate* and about to embark upon office the following month, in the sixth region of the city, the Pomegranate, in a house which he subsequently converted into a temple to the Flavian line. He is said to have passed his adolescence and early youth in such poverty and shamelessness that his household had not a single silver dish in use. It is an established fact that a man of praetorian rank, Clodius Pollio, who was the object of an attack by Nero in a poem entitled 'The One-Eyed Man',* kept a note in Domitian's handwriting and would sometimes exhibit it, in which he promised to spend the night with Pollio. And there are those who claim that Domitian was even corrupted by Nerva, who was afterwards to be his successor. During the conflict with Vitellius, Domitian took refuge on the Capitol with his paternal uncle, Sabinus, and some of the troops they had with them, but when their opponents burst through and the temple caught fire, he secretly spent the night with the temple-keeper and, in the morning, disguised in the dress of an adherent of Isis, he joined a group of priests of that dubious superstition* and got away with one companion to the district across the Tiber, where he managed to hide in the home of a schoolfriend's mother, so that none of the searchers who had come after him were able to apprehend him. After victory was secured, he finally came forth and was saluted as Caesar.* Though given the office of urban prefect with consular power,* he took on only the title, transferring the judicial duties to his next colleague but taking advantage of his powerful position in so lawless a manner that it became clear even at that time what sort of a man he would become. Though I shall not go into detail, he harassed the wives of many men, even marrying Domitia Longina, who was the wife of Aelius Lamia.* In a single day he gave out more than twenty posts in the city and the empire, so that Vespasian remarked on a number of occasions he was surprised Domitian did not appoint the emperor's successor along with the others.

[2] He embarked upon a campaign in Gaul and the German provinces, although it was unnecessary and his father's friends counselled

against it, merely to emulate his brother in wealth and status. Taken to task for this behaviour, he was obliged to live with his father to make him more aware of his age and rank. Whenever his father and brother went out in a sedan,* he followed in his litter and when they both celebrated the triumph over the Jews he accompanied them on a white horse. Moreover, of his six consulships only one was ordinary which his brother ceded to him, recommending his appointment. He himself, too, gave an impressive appearance of modesty, as well as of a particular enthusiasm for poetry, something which had been as indifferent to him in earlier years as it would be despised and rejected by him in years to come, and he even gave readings in public. Yet despite this, when Vologaesus, the king of Parthia, sought reinforcements and one of Vespasian's sons as their general in the fight against the Alani,* Domitian made every effort to ensure that he himself was sent rather than his brother. Then, when the project came to nothing, he tried to solicit other eastern kings with gifts and promises to make similar requests. When his father died, he debated a long time as to whether he should give a double donative* to the soldiers and he never hesitated to boast that he had been left a part-share in the empire but had been cheated of it by means of a forged will.* He never left off engineering plots against his brother both secretly and openly until the time when Titus became very ill and Domitian gave orders that he was to be left for dead, though he had not yet breathed his last. After his death he offered him no honours, apart from that of deification, and would often complain about him indirectly in speeches and edicts.

[3] At the beginning of his principate he would spend hours every day closeted on his own, occupied with nothing other than catching flies and impaling them with a very sharp writing implement. Thus, when someone once asked if there was anyone in with Caesar, Vibius Crispus made the witty response that there was not even a fly.* He gave the title *Augusta** to his wife Domitia; he had had a son by her in his second consulship, but lost the boy the second year after he took power.* When she fell passionately in love with the actor Paris he divorced her, but within a short time he could not bear the separation and took her back on the pretext that the people demanded it. As regards the administration of the empire, for some time he was unpredictable, displaying an equal mixture of faults and virtues until his virtues also deteriorated into faults. So far as one may speculate,

it seems that it was poverty that had made him grasping and fear that had made him cruel, beyond what was in his nature.

[4] He constantly put on magnificent and lavish spectacles not only in the amphitheatre but also in the Circus, where, in addition to the ritual races of two-horse and four-horse chariots, he even put on two battles, one of cavalry and the other of infantry, while in the amphitheatre he also staged a naval battle. And he put on animal fights and gladiatorial combats even at night, when they were lit by torches, while the combats were not just between men but between women too. Besides this, so committed was he to attending the quaestors' games, which had been abolished but which he had reinstated, that he even granted the people the privilege of calling for two pairs of gladiators from his own school whom he would bring in at the end with full courtly splendour. And for the entire duration of the gladiatorial show a little boy dressed in red with a small and deformed head* would stand at his feet and he would talk with him a great deal, sometimes seriously. He was certainly heard to ask him if he knew why, amongst the latest appointments, he had put Mettius Rufus in charge of Egypt. He put on the naval fights with fleets of almost regular size on the lake which he had had dug out beside the Tiber and surrounded by seating, and he would watch these even in the most severe rainstorms. He also held Secular Games, having calculated the time period not from the year when Claudius had recently held them but from that when Augustus had done so.* As part of these, so that a hundred races could be completed in the course of the day of circus games, he reduced the number of laps from seven to five. He also established, to be held every five years, a three-part competition, in honour of Capitoline Jupiter, involving music, riding, and gymnastics, and with rather more prizes than are currently awarded. For there were competitions also in prose declamation* in both Greek and Latin and, besides those of the lyre-players, there were contests between singing lyre-players and those who only played the lyre, while in the stadium even girls ran races. Domitian presided over the contests, wearing high Greek shoes and clothed in a purple toga of Greek design, while on his head he wore a golden crown with images of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and at his side sat the priest of Jupiter and the college of Flaviales,* dressed in the same manner except that their crowns also had images of the emperor. Every year, too, in Albanum, he would celebrate the

Quinquatria of Minerva,* for which he had established a college of priests, from amongst whom men were chosen by lot to act as officers, providing outstanding animal fights and theatrical shows as well as competitions for orators and poets.

He three times gave gifts to the people of three hundred sesterces each and during one set of gladiatorial games in honour of the sacred Seven Hills he provided a most ample banquet, the senators and knights receiving large baskets with delicacies and the common people smaller ones, the emperor himself beginning his first. On the next day, he had tokens for all kinds of gifts scattered, and because most of them had fallen among the common people, he gave orders that another five hundred tickets be thrown to each of the sections occupied by the senatorial and equestrian orders.

[5] A great number of splendid structures which had been destroyed by fire he rebuilt, including the Capitoline temple, which had burnt down again.* However, in all cases his own name was the only one inscribed and no mention was made of any of the earlier builders.* He also built a new temple on the Capitoline hill in honour of Jupiter the Guardian, as well as the Forum which now bears the name of Nerva and the Temple to the Flavian line, besides a stadium, an odeum, and a place for naval battles, the stones of which were later used to rebuild the Circus Maximus when it had been destroyed by fire on both sides.

[6] Some military campaigns he undertook through choice, others through necessity; by choice he fought against the Chatti,* while his campaign against the Sarmatians was made necessary after the slaughter of a legion together with its legate. He made two campaigns against the Dacians, the first after the ex-consul Oppius Sabinus had suffered a defeat, the second after the same fate had befallen Cornelius Fuscus, prefect of the praetorian cohorts, to whom he had entrusted the conduct of the campaign. After a number of battles (some more successful than others) with the Chatti and the Dacians, he celebrated a double triumph. After his Sarmatian campaign he merely brought a laurel crown for Capitoline Jupiter. Though not himself present he was able to bring the civil war begun by Lucius Antonius (the senior commander in Germany) to a conclusion with an amazing stroke of good fortune, for just as the battle was about to begin the Rhine suddenly thawed and cut off the barbarian forces which were about to cross over to join Antonius.

Domitian learnt of this victory through portents rather than messengers, for on the very day of the battle a splendid eagle enfolded in its wings his statue at Rome and gave forth exultant cries. Soon afterwards the rumour that Antonius was killed became so widespread that many claimed they had seen his head brought back.

[7] He also made many innovations in common practice, suspending the public distribution of food-baskets* but reinstating the practice of formal dinners.* He added two new circus factions to the four existing ones, one with gold and one with purple as their colours.* He banned actors from the stage but permitted them to put on performances within private houses.* He banned the castration of male persons and put a limit on the price of those eunuchs which were still held by slave-dealers.* On one occasion, when the vine crop was abundant but there was a shortage of corn, blaming the neglect of the crops on excessive devotion to viticulture, he decreed that no vines were to be planted in Italy and that in the provinces vines were to be torn up, leaving no more than half at most. However, he did not persist in enforcing this prescription. Some of the greatest offices he opened to both freedmen and Roman knights.* He prohibited the amalgamation of two legions into one camp, and ordered that no soldier could deposit more than one thousand sesterces at headquarters,* for it seemed that Lucius Antonius had planned his rebellion in the joint winter camp of two legions, relying particularly on the sum of money held as deposits. He increased the soldiers' annual pay by a quarter, adding three gold pieces.

[8] He applied himself conscientiously to the dispensing of justice, frequently holding additional hearings on the tribunal in the Forum. He overturned judgements of the centumviral courts* which had been influenced by bias. He repeatedly issued warnings against the arbiters not to validate unsubstantiated claims to free status. Jurors who took bribes he degraded along with all their colleagues. It was he who induced the tribunes of the plebs to prosecute a corrupt aedile for extortion and apply to the senate for judges. He devoted such concern to regulating the behaviour of both city magistrates and provincial officials that at no other time did they conduct themselves with more integrity and respect for justice, though since his reign we have seen many of them guilty of all sorts of crimes. Having undertaken the regulation of morals,* he curbed the disorder to be found in the theatres where the common people sat in the knights'

seats.* He put an end to the libellous verses commonly in circulation which blackened the characters of leading men and women, and imposed ignominious penalties on those responsible. He removed from the senate a man who had held the quaestorship because of his obsession with acting and dancing. To disgraced women he forbade the use of litters and made them ineligible to receive legacies and inheritances. He removed the name of a Roman knight from the list of jurors because he had taken back his wife whom he had previously divorced and accused of adultery.* He condemned a number of men of the senatorial and equestrian orders under the Scantinian law.* The desecration of Vestal Virgins, which had been overlooked by his father and brother, he punished through the application of different but severe penalties, at first through capital punishment, later on in the traditional way. For while he allowed the Oculata sisters and Varronilla to choose their own form of death and relegated their seducers, soon afterwards, when the senior Vestal Cornelia, who had been acquitted some time previously, was again, much later, accused and convicted, he ordered that she be buried alive and that her defilers should be beaten to death with rods in the Comitium, with the exception of a man of praetorian rank. This man, because he had confessed when the case against him was still doubtful and the examination and torture of witnesses were inconclusive, Domitian let off with exile. And to show that no one could get away with defiling the cults of the gods, he had torn down by soldiers the monument which one of his freedmen had set up to his son, using stones intended for the construction of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, and the bones and other remains which were in it were thrown into the sea.

[9] At the beginning he so abhorred any killing that while his father was still away from the city he would repeat a line of Virgil,

An impious race that slaughtered bullocks and feasted upon them,*

and give orders that no oxen should be sacrificed. He gave scarcely any grounds for being suspected of greed or avarice either before he became emperor or for some time during his reign. On the contrary, he often gave firm evidence not merely of integrity but even of liberality. Everyone around him he treated with generosity, advising them above all and with greatest insistence to do nothing meanly. When inheritances were left to him by people who had children, he would not accept them.* He even annulled a legacy in the will of

Rustius Caepio who had prescribed that his heir should every year give a particular sum to each senator as he entered the senate house. He dismissed the cases against those debtors whose names had been posted at the treasury for more than five years, and would only allow a case to be renewed within one year and on condition that an accuser whose suit was unsuccessful should himself be punished with exile. The scribes of the quaestors, who had been carrying on business which was in accordance with tradition but contrary to the Clodian law,* he pardoned for their past offences. Small plots of land, which were left over here and there after the assignment of farms to veterans, he ceded to their original owners by right of possession. False accusations which aimed at the confiscation of property he punished, imposing severe penalties on the accusers, and he is said to have remarked: 'The emperor who does not punish informers goads them on.'

[10] However, his disposition towards mercy and integrity did not continue, though his decline into cruelty was more rapid than his decline into greed. He had a pupil of the actor Paris killed, though he was still a boy and suffering from ill-health at the time, on the grounds that in appearance and in talent he had some resemblance to his teacher.* Hermogenes of Tarsus, also, because of some allusions in his 'History', he had crucified, even extending the punishment to those slaves who had written the work out. A householder, who had said that though the Thracian was a match for the *murmillo* he would not measure up to the giver of the games,* he had dragged from the audience and thrown to dogs in the arena, wearing the tag: 'A buckler-wearer with a big mouth.'*

He put to death many senators, including a number of consular rank, among them Civica Cerialis, who was at that very time pro-consul of Asia, also Salvidienus Orfitus and Acilius Gladrio, then in exile, on the grounds that they were planning a rebellion, while for the others the reason was in each case a trifling one: Aelius Lamia because of some suspicious jokes, though they were old ones and harmless; for when Domitian had stolen Lamia's wife* he had said, in reply to one who praised his voice: 'I practise continence'* and when Titus had urged him to marry again, he had replied: 'I hope you're not after a wife, too'; Salvius Cocceianus, because he had celebrated the birthday of the emperor Otho who was his paternal uncle; Mettius Pomprianus, because it was commonly reported that

his birth-signs predicted empire and because he carried around a map of the world on parchment and copies of the speeches made by kings and generals in Livy, as well as giving two of his slaves the names Mago and Hannibal;* Sallustius Lucullus, a governor of Britain, because he had allowed a new variety of spear to be termed 'Lucullan'; Junius Rusticus, because he had published eulogies of Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus and called them the most virtuous of men.* When bringing this accusation, he also banished all philosophers from Rome and from Italy. He also had killed the younger Helvidius,* on the grounds that in a play he had written for the stage he had criticized Domitian's treatment of his wife through the characters of Paris and Oenone;* and Flavius Sabinus, a cousin on his father's side, on the grounds that on the day of the consular elections the herald had mistakenly announced him to the people as future emperor rather than consul.

However, after his victory in the civil war, his cruelty increased and, in order to track down any conspirators who were still in hiding, he had many of the opposing faction tortured, using a new kind of interrogation, inserting fire into their genitals; he even cut off the hands of a number of them. It is commonly agreed that he extended mercy only to two of the more prominent individuals, a tribune of senatorial rank and a centurion, who, in order to emphasize that they were not guilty of the crime, gave evidence that they had been used for other men's pleasures and for that reason could not command any respect on the part of the general or the soldiers.*

[11] But his cruelty was not only extreme but also ingenious and unpredictable. The day before he crucified one of his stewards, he invited the man into his bed-chamber, made him sit beside him on the couch, then sent him away happy and confident, having even deigned to share his supper with him. Intending to condemn on a capital charge a man of consular rank, Arrecinus Clemens, who was one of his friends and intermediaries, he favoured the man as much as before if not more, in the end asking him, as they were taking the air together and caught sight of the man who given information against him: 'Would you like us to hear this most wretched slave tomorrow?'

As a further abuse of people's endurance, he would never pronounce an especially dreadful sentence without first talking of clemency, so that there was no more certain indication of a hideous end

than the leniency of the preamble. Having brought certain men who were charged with treason into the senate, he announced that he would on that day discover how the senate valued him and thus easily brought about the men's condemnation to the traditional manner of punishment.* Then, alarmed at the cruelty of the penalty, to lessen the ill-will which might result, he interceded with the following words—for an exact quotation is of interest here: 'O senators, permit me to appeal to the respect you have for me, for I know I am making a request you will grant with great difficulty, when I ask that you allow these condemned men to choose the manner of their deaths. For thus you will spare your own eyes and thus everyone will know that I was present in this meeting of the senate.'

[12] Having exhausted his funds through expenditure on public works and games, as well as his increases to the soldiers' pay, he attempted to cut down military expenditure by reducing the number of soldiers. But when he realized that this put him at the mercy of the barbarians while he remained no less beset by financial burdens, he had no hesitation in engaging in all manner of depredations. Everywhere the goods of the living and of the dead were seized, whatever the charge or the accuser. It was enough to allege some kind of deed or word attacking the majesty of the emperor. The estates of complete strangers were seized if one person could be found who claimed to have heard the deceased, when living, say that the emperor was his heir.* The tax on the Jews, in particular, was exacted with the greatest rigour.* Those who lived as Jews without being registered as such were indicted, as were those who concealed their origins and did not pay the tax imposed on their race. I remember when I was a youth being present when an old man of ninety was inspected by a procurator and a very crowded court, to see whether he was circumcised.

From his youth his disposition was far from courteous; rather he was presumptuous and unrestrained, both in his words and in his deeds. When his father's concubine, Caenis, on returning from Istria, went to kiss him as usual,* he offered her his hand. Angered that his brother's son-in-law had attendants dressed in white as he did, he pronounced:

Not good is a multitude of rulers.*

[13] Moreover, once he had become emperor he did not hesitate to

boast in the senate that it was he who had bestowed the empire on his father and brother* and they had simply returned what was his, nor to proclaim, when he took back his wife after their divorce, that she was recalled to his divine couch.* He was pleased to hear in the amphitheatre on the day of a banquet the cry: ‘Blessings on our master and mistress!** However, when during the Capitoline competition everyone joined with great accord in begging that he should restore Palfurius Sura, who had just won the crown for oratory, to the senate from which he had been removed some time ago, he did not deign to give any reply but simply had the herald demand silence.* With no less arrogance, when he was dictating a formal letter in the name of his procurators he would begin: ‘Our master and god issues the following orders.’ Thus after this it became customary for him always to be so addressed by everyone, even in writing and conversation. He would not allow statues of himself to be set up on the Capitol unless they were gold and of a particular weight. He put up so many vaulted passageways and arches on such a great scale, with four-horsed chariots and triumphal insignia, in every part of the city that on one of them someone wrote in Greek: ‘Arci’.* He held the consulship on seventeen occasions,* which no one had done before him. Of these the seven middle ones were in successive years but all of them he held in name only, never continuing in office beyond the Kalends of May and often only until the Ides of January. After his two triumphs he took on the *cognomen* of Germanicus and changed the names of the months* of September and October to ‘Germanicus’ and ‘Domitianus’, using his own names, on the grounds that he had assumed power in the former and been born in the latter.

[14] By these means he made himself an object of terror and hatred to everyone and was finally brought down by a plot on the part of his friends and his most trusted freedmen, together with his wife. He had long ago had warning of the year and day of his death, and even of the hour and of the way he would die. When he was a youth Chaldaean astrologers had foretold all these things. Once, when at dinner he refused the mushrooms,* his father had openly laughed at him for being forgetful of his destiny in not rather fearing the sword. For this reason he was always fearful and anxious and the slightest grounds for suspicion disturbed him to an abnormal degree.* It is believed that he was induced to discount the edict he had made concerning the cutting down of vines* above all by the

pamphlets which appeared here and there with the following verse:

Though you gnaw my roots, yet shall I still have juice,
O goat, to pour on you, when you're the sacrifice.*

It was the same terror which made him refuse the senate's offer of a new and unprecedented honour, despite his usual passion for such things, when they decreed that whenever he held the consulship some Roman knights, chosen by lot, should precede him, along with his lictors and attendants, wearing the trabea* and carrying lances.

However, as the time when the danger was expected came closer, he became daily more anxious and had fitted with phengite stone* the walls of the porticoes where he used to walk, so that he would be able to see in the images reflected by the gleaming surface whatever was happening behind him. Most prisoners he would only hear in secret and alone, while keeping hold of their chains. And to convince the members of his household that a patron's death was not to be risked even on good grounds, he condemned to death Epaphroditus, his secretary in charge of petitions, because he was thought to have helped Nero to take his own life after the emperor was deserted.

[15] Finally, there was Flavius Clemens, his cousin on his father's side and a man of the most shameful idleness, whose young sons Domitian had only lately named publicly as his heirs, putting aside their former name, and calling one of them Vespasian and the other Domitian. He put Clemens to death all of a sudden, on the slightest grounds and when he had barely come to the end of his consulship. It was this deed in particular which precipitated his assassination.

Over a period of eight successive months so many lightning bolts occurred and were reported to him that he cried out: 'Let him now strike the man he wants.' The Capitol was struck and the Temple to the Flavian Line, as well as the Palatine residence and his own bed-chamber, while the inscription was torn from the base of his triumphal statue in a violent storm and fell onto a nearby tomb. The tree which had been thrown down when Vespasian was still a private citizen but had then put forth new growth, at that time suddenly fell down again.* Fortuna at Praeneste, who throughout his reign had been accustomed to give a favourable omen and always the same one, whenever he commended the new year to her, on the last occasion gave forth a most sinister omen, even including a reference to bloodshed.

He dreamt that Minerva, whose cult he most scrupulously observed, came out of her shrine and said that she could no longer watch over him, as she had been disarmed by Jupiter. However, nothing disturbed him more than the response he had from the astrologer Ascletarion and the man's subsequent fate. When this man was denounced by informers and did not deny that he had talked openly of things he had foreseen through his art, he was questioned by Domitian as to the manner of his own death. When he replied that he would shortly be torn apart by dogs, Domitian gave orders that he should be killed at once and that great care should be taken to see that he was cremated so as to prove his predictions unfounded. While these plans were being carried out it happened that the pyre was overturned by a sudden storm and the half-burnt body was torn to pieces by dogs. This, along with the other events of the day, was related to the emperor, as he dined, by an actor of Latin farces, who had happened to be passing by at the time.

[16] The day before he died he gave orders that the apples which had been brought to the table should be served on the following day, then added: 'If I shall be allowed to eat them.' He then turned to his neighbours and asserted that the next day the moon would be stained with blood in Aquarius and that an event would take place which people would talk of throughout the world. At around midnight he was so terrified that he jumped out of his bed. Then in the morning he heard the trial of a *haruspex*, sent from Germany, who when he was consulted about the lightning bolt had predicted a change of rulers, and condemned him. And when he was scratching an ulcerated wart on his forehead rather fiercely and blood flowed from it, he exclaimed: 'If only this were all!' Finally, when he asked what the time was, they told him deliberately that it was the sixth rather than the fifth hour, which was the one he feared. Delighted at these words, and thinking the danger past, he was hurrying off to take a bath when Parthenius, who was in charge of his bedchamber, made him change his mind, telling him there was a man who had come about some important matter which could not be put off. And so all his attendants withdrew and he retired into his bed-chamber where he was killed.

[17] The details which circulated concerning the manner of the plot and the assassination were essentially as follows. When the conspirators were undecided as to when and how they were going

to attack, whether when the emperor was washing or at dinner, Stephanus, Domitilla's steward,* who was at that time under suspicion of embezzlement, suggested the plan of action. In order to avert suspicion, he kept his left arm wrapped up in woollen bandages for a number of days as though it were injured, concealing a dagger in them when the appointed hour approached. Next, claiming to have evidence of a conspiracy, he gained admission to the emperor, stabbing the astonished Domitian in the stomach as he read the document which had been handed to him. As the emperor was wounded and struggling he was attacked by Clodianus, a centurion's adjutant, Maximus, Parthenius' freedman, and Satur, a senior member of the bed-chamber staff, together with someone from the gladiatorial school, who butchered him with seven wounds. A boy, who witnessed the assassination as he was going about his usual business in the bed-chamber, tending to the cult of the Lares, related the following additional details: as soon as the first blow was struck he had been ordered by Domitian to bring him the dagger which was hidden in the cushions and to call the servants, but he had found nothing but the hilt at the head of the bed, while all the doors were locked. In the mean time the emperor had laid hold of Stephanus and brought him to the ground, struggling with him for some time, while he tried now to wrest the weapon from him and now to gouge out his eyes, despite the lacerations to his fingers. He was killed on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of October in the forty-fifth year of his life and the fifteenth of his reign.* His corpse was brought out on a common bier by those who carry the bodies of the poor. His funeral was taken care of by his old nurse,* Phyllis, at her suburban villa on the Latin Way. However, she secretly brought his remains to the Temple of the Flavian Line and mixed his ashes with those of Julia, Titus' daughter,* whom she had also brought up.

[18] He was tall in stature, modest in his expression, and prone to blushing. His eyes were large, though his sight was not good. Indeed, especially in his youth, he was attractive and graceful in every particular, apart from his feet, for his toes were rather curled in. Later he was further disfigured as he went bald and acquired a large stomach, while his legs grew thin, weakened as a result of a long illness. He was so well aware of the advantage he gained from his modesty of expression that he once had boasted in the senate: 'Certainly, thus far you have approved both my disposition and my looks.' He was so

annoyed by his baldness that he took it as a personal insult if anyone else was teased or mocked on that account.* However, in an essay on haircare which he published and dedicated to a friend, he added the following words, as a consolation to his friend and himself: “Do you not see how tall and handsome I am, too?”* Yet the same fate lies in store for my own hair. With fortitude I endure the ageing of my hair while still young. Be sure that nothing is more pleasing than beauty or more transient.’

[19] He would not tolerate physical effort and rarely went about the city on foot, nor did he often ride a horse when on the march or in battle but would generally be carried in a litter.* He had no interest in exercises with arms but was very keen on archery.* At his Alban retreat many people witnessed him shoot a hundred animals of different kinds on numerous occasions and he would even deliberately shoot at the heads of some of them in such a way that two arrows seemed to make horns. Sometimes a slave would stand at a distance holding up the palm of his right hand as a target with the fingers outspread and Domitian would aim his shots with such skill that they would pass safely through the gaps between the boy’s fingers.

[20] At the start of his reign he paid little attention to the liberal arts,* although when some libraries were destroyed by fire, he took care to have them restored at enormous expense, procuring copies of texts from all over the place and sending people to Alexandria* to make fresh copies and correct others. However, he never expended any effort on reading history or poetry or even on the writing demanded by his duties. He used to reread nothing beyond the notebooks and records of Tiberius Caesar.* For the composition of letters, orations, and edicts he relied on the skills of others. Yet his speech was not inelegant and sometimes he even produced noteworthy remarks: ‘How I wish’, he said, ‘I were as handsome as Maecius thinks he is.’ And he compared the head of a man whose hair was partly reddish and partly white to ‘snow on which mead had been poured’. [21] He used to say that the situation of emperors was a most wretched one, for everyone thought their suspicions of conspiracy groundless until they were killed.

Whenever he was at liberty he enjoyed playing dice,* even on working days and during the morning. He would take baths early and lunched until he was full, so that often at dinner he would have no more than a Matian apple* and a drink of wine from a jug. He

often threw large parties but quickly brought them to a close; certainly, he never continued them beyond sunset or followed them with drinking. For before he went to bed he would do nothing but walk about alone in a secluded place.

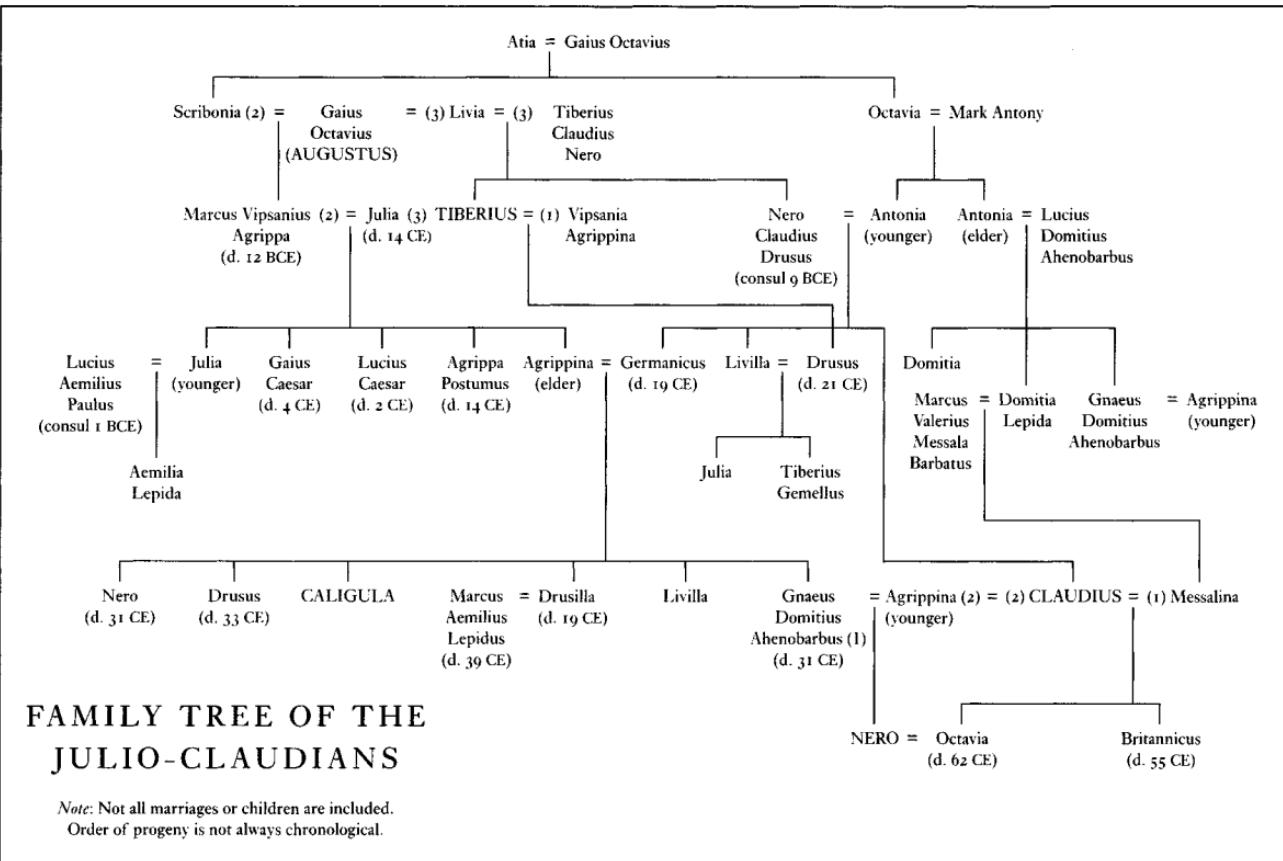
[22] A man of excessive lusts, he used to refer to his constant sexual activity as 'bed-wrestling', as if it were some form of exercise. There was also a rumour that he would himself depilate his mistresses and that he used to go swimming with the commonest prostitutes. After stubbornly refusing his brother's daughter who was offered to him in marriage, when she was still a virgin, because he was still caught up in his union with Domitia, he was ready enough to seduce her not long afterwards when she was married to someone else, even though Titus was still living at the time. Soon, when she had lost her husband and her father, he loved her passionately and openly and was even the cause of her death, when he forced her to abort a child she had conceived by him.

[23] His assassination was a matter of indifference to the common people but a source of gravest dismay to the soldiers who immediately called out for him to be deified and would have attempted to avenge him, if they had had leaders. Indeed, this objective was achieved not long afterwards following repeated demands that those responsible for the murder be punished. The senators, by contrast, were so delighted that they eagerly filled the senate house and did not refrain from attacking the dead man in the most abusive and ferocious outbursts, giving orders that ladders should be brought and his shields and images be torn down and dashed to the ground while they looked on, and finally they decreed that his names were to be everywhere erased and that all reminders of him were to be destroyed.*

A few months before he was killed a raven on the Capitol cried out: 'All will be well!' an omen which some people interpreted as follows:

A raven sitting on the Tarpeian heights not long ago
Could not cry out 'all is' but cried 'all will be well'.

They say that even Domitian himself dreamt that a golden hump grew out of his back and he understood this as a certain indication that the condition of the state would be happier and more prosperous after his time, as indeed happened shortly afterwards through the self-control and integrity of the subsequent emperors.



FAMILY TREE OF THE JULIO-CLAUDIANS

Note: Not all marriages or children are included.
Order of progeny is not always chronological.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

<i>Aug.</i>	<i>The Deified Augustus</i>
<i>Cal.</i>	<i>Caligula</i>
<i>Claud.</i>	<i>The Deified Claudius</i>
<i>Dom.</i>	<i>Domitian</i>
<i>Jul.</i>	<i>The Deified Julius Caesar</i>
<i>Tib.</i>	<i>Tiberius</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>The Deified Vespasian</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	<i>Vitellius</i>

For explanation of technical terms, ranks, etc. see the Glossary

THE DEIFIED JULIUS CAESAR

3 *lost his father*: according to Suetonius' chronology, Caesar was born in 100 BCE, while his father died in 85 or 84. There is considerable debate about his date of birth.

divorced Cossutia: the Flamen Dialis, was not permitted to divorce his wife and had to be married but it seems Caesar was never formally inaugurated into the office.

many Mariuses: the great general Marius, many times consul, had been Sulla's greatest rival and was married to Caesar's paternal aunt Julia.

Marcus Lepidus' measures: Lepidus, who with Catulus was consul in 78 BCE, tried to repeal some of Sulla's laws but was overthrown by Catulus and Pompey.

4 *a charge of extortion against Cornelius Dolabella*: members of the Roman élite regularly brought such charges against one another, in part, at least, as an opportunity to display their own rhetorical skills.

the leading teacher of oratory: probably 74 BCE. See ch. 55 below for Caesar's oratorical skills.

the punishment with which he had often jokingly threatened them: crucifixion, according to ch. 74 below.

after the consul's death: Sertorius and his supporters had held out in Spain for the cause of Marius 77–73 BCE.

his aunt Julia: the widow of Marius.

5 *Ancus Marcius*: Caesar's grandfather, C. Julius Caesar, was married to a Marcia. Ancus Marcius was the fourth king of Rome.

the profaning of rituals: the festival was that of the Bona Dea ('Good Goddess') from which men were excluded (see also ch. 74 below). Cicero

was much exercised by Clodius' alleged sacrilege. Cf. his letter *To Atticus* 1. 12–16.

5 *Alexander had already conquered the world*: cf. *Aug.* 18.

some Latin colonies . . . full citizenship: the Gallic towns beyond the river Po (i.e. 'Transpadane'), including Verona, Comum, and Cremona.

Publius Sulla: nephew of the dictator, Lucius Sulla.

consular elections: held in 66 BCE to elect consuls for 65. A rather different version of the plot appears in Sallust, *Catiline* 18.

6 *the Ambrani and the Transpadanes*: the Ambrani were a tribe in Liguria. For the Transpadanes see note to p. 5 above.

displayed in great profusion: it seems to have been customary for aediles to erect such temporary structures around the Forum (though not on the Capitoline hill) to display materials associated with the games which they were responsible for providing.

termed ally and friend by the senate: according to Caesar himself (*Civil War* 3. 107. 2), Ptolemy did not receive this title, the regular term for a dependent king, until 59 BCE. Ptolemy's expulsion seems not to have occurred until 58 or 57.

7 *prosecutions for murder*: as *iudex quaestionis* (president of the court), an office held by Caesar between the aedileship and the praetorship.

proscriptions: under Sulla (partly in revenge for the massacres instigated by Marius in 87 and 82), many of his enemies had been declared outlaws, so that their property was confiscated and rewards were offered for their deaths in 82–81 BCE.

Gaius Rabirius: the accusation was brought under the ancient and practically obsolete form of trial by *duumviri perduellionis* (described by Livy 1. 26). In 63 BCE Rabirius was defended by Cicero (*On Behalf of Rabirius*). The details of the trial remain unclear.

the harshness of his judge: Caesar was one of a commission of two men appointed by lot to try cases of high treason. Appeals against his decision could be made to the people.

a province: presumably the special command of Egypt referred to in ch. 11.

he won more votes . . . overall: at this time, seventeen tribes (each associated with a particular region of Italy or part of Rome) were eligible to vote (there were thirty-five voting tribes in total). A candidate would generally count on the support of his own tribe.

When . . . than he had intended: as consul elect, Silanus would have been asked to give his opinion first. Senators were invited to speak in order of seniority. After the debate, different opinions were put to the vote. For a clear modern account see T. P. Wiseman, 'The Peasants' Revolt and the Bankrupts' Plot', in *Cambridge Ancient History*, ix (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1994), 346–58.

the consul: the famous orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero.

- 8 *the first day of his praetorship*: 1 January 62.

the restoration of the Capitoline: the temple of Jupiter had been damaged in a fire of 83. The new temple, bearing Catulus' name as restorer, was dedicated in 69.

someone else: Pompey, according to other sources.

their attendance . . . his measures: Caesar had taken advantage of the fact that it was customary for friends of the new consuls to accompany them to their homes, after they had offered the sacrifice with which they embarked on their year of office on 1 January (thus they were not around when he began his attack on Catulus).

decree of the senate: Suetonius is the only source to state that the decree applied to Caesar.

- 9 *once he was out of office*: as magistrate or pro-magistrate (provincial governor), Caesar would be immune from civil prosecution.

he was obliged . . . excluded from the consulship: as holder of *imperium* a general had to wait outside the sacred boundary of the city (the *pomerium*) to be granted a triumph by the senate. Once he had given up his *imperium* he could enter the city without waiting for permission—but would no longer be eligible to celebrate a triumph.

Even Cato . . . the good of the state: Cato was famously opposed to the use of bribery in elections. Cf. Plutarch, *Younger Cato* 44 and 49.

woodland and pastures: in charge of the woodland and pastures of Italy, Caesar would, of course, have no army under his command.

- 10 *the lictors would follow behind him*: according to tradition there was originally only one set of lictors which each of the consuls used in turn. Later, it seems, each consul was given a set of lictors who would walk before him. Caesar altered this procedure for those months in which his colleague held the fasces and was therefore in charge of public business.

adverse omens: public business could be interrupted by a magistrate's announcement that he had observed adverse omens in the sky.

did nothing . . . omens: thus technically nullifying all Caesar's subsequent legislation.

tax-collecting contracts: the Roman state delegated the collection of taxes to private tax-collectors who would bid for the contract. If they bid too high in their attempt to secure the contract, they might have difficulties recovering their costs.

his veto: other sources suggest he was objecting to Caesar's land laws.

- 11 *at the ninth hour of the same day*: that is, after the usual close of business. Clodius, as a member of a patrician family, had not been eligible to stand for election as tribune of the plebs. Cicero and Clodius fell out after Cicero gave evidence against Clodius when he was on trial in 61 BCE for appearing disguised as a woman at the Bona Dea festival in 62.

- 11 *'long-haired' Gaul also:* this term is sometimes used to refer to the area of Gaul outside Roman control. Here Suetonius appears to use it to mean Gaul beyond the Alps, as opposed to 'Cisalpine', on 'this' side of the Alps.

mounting on their heads: a claim which could also be taken in an obscene sense, as the response indicates. Threats of oral rape were a regular feature of the Roman political vocabulary.

And when someone . . . a large part of Asia: for allegations that Caesar had taken a passive 'feminine' sexual role in relations with Nicomedes, cf. chs. 2, 49, and 52. Such claims were not uncommon against powerful Romans (see Introduction for further discussion of this). Suetonius also lists in ch. 45 details of Caesar's dress and self-presentation which might be construed as 'effeminate'. Semiramis was a famous queen of Assyria. The Amazons were a mythical race of female warriors associated with the region of Pontus.

- 12 *a candidate for the consulship:* for the year 55.

he added . . . the Alauda: such enrolments of non-citizens in the legions are not previously recorded.

After that . . . enemies and barbarous peoples: a very different view is offered in Caesar's own account, *The Gallic War*.

ought to be handed over to the enemy: on the grounds that his actions had been in breach of natural justice. According to Plutarch, Cato made this proposal in 55, claiming Caesar had breached an armistice (*Younger Cato* 51. 1). Caesar himself claimed it was the enemy who had broken the armistice (*Gallic War* 4. 1–16).

days of supplication: a supplication was a public thanksgiving which took the form of prayers at all the temples in Rome, often accompanied by processions.

nine years: 58–49 BCE.

Mount Cebenna: modern Cévennes.

- 13 *the murder of Publius Clodius:* early in 52 at the hands of thugs associated with his enemy, Milo.

he persuaded them . . . before the campaign was rounded off: returning to Rome as consul rather than as a private citizen, Caesar would be immune from prosecution for his actions while in Gaul.

a forum . . . a hundred million sesterces: the Forum Iulium, adjoining the Forum Romanum. This was later completed by Augustus.

something which no one had ever done before: previously only men had received such honours.

whenever famous gladiators . . . kept for him: this must refer to gladiators who were defeated and whom the spectators had not opted to save from death at the hands of their opponents.

- 14 *He doubled . . . in perpetuity:* probably a reference to the legions raised by

Caesar himself. The senate's authority would be needed for such a measure in relation to the state legions.

he offered him as wife Octavia, his sister's granddaughter: Pompey declined the offer.

- 15 *intervention on his behalf by the tribunes of the plebs:* when the senate decreed that Caesar should disband his army, the tribunes Mark Antony and Quintus Cassius vetoed it (cf. Caesar, *Civil War* 1. 2. 6–7). The senate ignored the veto and the tribunes were forced to flee.

- 16 *Others say . . . during his first consulship:* cf. chs. 20 and 21 above.

Milo: prosecuted for the murder of Publius Clodius, who was very popular with the poorer inhabitants of Rome. Pompey surrounded the court with armed men in order to secure Milo's conviction.

Asinius Pollio's account: Pollio was with Caesar at the crossing of the Rubicon and at Pharsalus. He wrote a history of the civil war in seventeen books which has not survived.

'*On Duties*': 3. 82. The quotation comes from Euripides' *Phoenissae* 524.

- 17 *It is even thought . . . four hundred thousand sesterces:* the gold ring was worn only by knights and senators. To qualify a man needed to own property of at least 400,000 sesterces.

Corfinium: a town of the Paeligni in central Italy, modern Pelino.

Brundisium: modern Brindisi.

- 18 *Pharsalus:* in central Thessaly.

sons of Pompey: Gnaeus and Sextus.

Gaius Antonius: brother of Mark Antony.

the same month: in 46 BCE.

- 19 *after the defeat of the sons of Pompey:* in 45.

the speed with which it was completed: cf. Suetonius' comments on the speed with which Caesar defeated Pharnaces in ch. 35.

In a gladiatorial fight . . . to the finish: public performance in gladiatorial and theatrical entertainments (though not circus races) was considered degrading and inappropriate for members of the élite, who might be punished with the loss of their privileged status. Some were nevertheless attracted to participate by the associated glamour—or money. Cf. Suetonius' remarks in *Aug.* 43, *Nero*. 4.

a Pyrrhic dance: a war dance in armour.

five hundred thousand sesterces and a golden ring: thus restoring the equestrian status Laberius had lost by appearing on stage.

the fourteen rows: since 67, it had been the privilege of knights (and senators) to sit in the front fourteen rows.

- 20 *the Troy game:* see Glossary.

- 20 *the lesser Codeta*: a marshy area on the banks of the Tiber across from the Campus Martius.

the calendar . . . a long period of time: it was the duty of the *pontifices* to ensure the calendar remained in sync with the seasons, by adding an extra month from time to time (to compensate for the fact that the lunar calendar year of 355 days was slightly shorter than the solar year). Since magistracies coincided with the calendar year, the length of a particular year was of material interest both to magistrates in power and to their rivals.

He increased . . . the senate: both by adding new members and by restoring those who had been expelled. According to Dio (43. 47. 2), he had raised the number to 900 by 45 BCE.

made new appointments . . . patricians: presumably replacing families who had died out. Certain priesthoods could only be held by patricians.

the number of . . . magistrates: the increased number of provinces requiring governors and other staff provoked a need for more ex-magistrates to take these posts. By 44 the number of praetors was sixteen per year. The number of quaestors had risen to forty by 45.

censors: for instance, in 50 when many had been struck from the senate by the censor Appius Claudius (and had subsequently given their support to Caesar).

electoral corruption: Pompey had introduced a new law on electoral corruption in 52.

- 21 *to compete for office*: Sulla had passed a law debarring the sons of those he proscribed from office. For the proscriptions, see note to p. 7 above.

which had been the third: this category of men had provided a third of the judges since 70. The qualifications for the category remain unclear. Such men were apparently of lesser status than Roman knights.

forty: ‘ten’ (the figure in the manuscript) makes little sense. Probably the text is corrupt here. Scholars have suggested instead a more plausible age such as ‘forty’.

guilds . . . of ancient foundation: these were guilds, associations, or clubs sometimes made up of those who worked in the same professions, sometimes for religious or burial purposes. They had been abolished in 64 on the grounds that they were seedbeds of political disruption, then reinstated by a law proposed by Publius Clodius in 58. The exception here may refer to the synagogues of the Jews which were respected for their antiquity.

according to Cicero: allusion unknown.

- 22 *a temple to Mars . . . just by the Tarpeian rock*: neither of these projects was completed.

Marcus Varro: author of many books and with a reputation for great learning. This project, too, was not fulfilled.

to drain the Pontine marshes . . . if he had first tested their forces: these

projects also were not embarked upon. Augustus' extension of the via Salaria could be seen as carrying out Caesar's project here. Later, Caligula and Nero tried unsuccessfully to dig through the Isthmus of Corinth (cf. *Cal.* 21; *Nero* 19). The Parthians were to be approached with caution after the disaster suffered by Crassus in 53. Caesar was planning a campaign against them when he was assassinated in 44.

- 23 *had his body hair plucked out . . . disapproval:* for men to have their body hair removed was often seen as a sign of effeminacy (though a century after Caesar's time, the younger Seneca implies it was proper for men to have hair removed from their armpits but not from their legs; *Letters*: 114. 14).

fringed sleeves down to his wrists: both the length of the sleeves and the fringes were associated with effeminacy. Cf. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 7. 12. 1.

belted . . . rather loosely: a belt was not usually worn with the senator's broad-striped tunic. Belts were worn with ordinary tunics—but to wear a belt loose was regarded as a sign of effeminacy.

Subura: an area between the Forum and the Esquiline, largely, it seems, inhabited by the poor.

bread . . . different from that which was served to himself: Roman moralists regularly express disapproval of hosts who eat better food than that offered to their guests.

- 24 *I shall not discuss:* Suetonius' use of the trope of *praeteritio* (mentioning something while self-righteously claiming to be leaving it out) is particularly flagrant in this section.

as they march behind the chariot: the soldiers' mockery of their triumphant general has been seen as having the function of repelling the envy of the gods, on an occasion when Roman generals came close to assuming godlike status.

- 25 *having divorced . . . Aegisthus:* Pompey divorced his wife Mucia on the grounds of her unfaithfulness during his absence. The reference to Aegisthus implies that Caesar was one of her lovers, since, in Greek mythology, Aegisthus was the lover of Clytemnestra, wife of the great general Agamemnon who led the Greeks against Troy.

daughter in marriage: Julia, whom Pompey married in 59. Cf. ch. 21.

Tertia: in Latin, *tertia* means a third.

Bogud: one of the African kings supported by Caesar as opponents of Juba, who sided with Pompey.

Naso: M. Actorius Naso, also mentioned in ch. 9 above.

he welcomed her to Rome: other sources (e.g. Dio, *Roman History* 43. 27. 3) suggest Cleopatra arrived in Rome in 46.

The child . . . were aware of this: the child's name was Caesarian. His paternity became a more contentious political issue after Caesar's death.

Octavian (Caesar's heir and adopted son) and his supporters wished to deny Caesarion's claim to be Caesar's true son, while Antony, disputing Octavian's position, had a vested interest in backing Caesarion. Matius and Oppius were Roman knights who were agents of Caesar. Oppius' memoirs were used by both Suetonius and Plutarch in writing about Caesar.

25 *tribune of the plebs*: in 44 BCE.

26 *governor in Spain*: 61–60 BCE.

three thousand sestertes a pound: much less than the usual price, it seems.

During his first consulship . . . gilded bronze: this may be a version of the story told by Appian (*Civil Wars* 2, 41), according to which Caesar in 49 raided the Treasury of Saturn, taking gold deposited there at the time of the Gallic invasion in the early fourth century. There was a curse on anyone who used it except for a Gallic war.

Dolabella: see ch. 4 and note to p. 4.

Cicero . . . ample: Cicero, *Brutus* 261.

27 *Caesar Strabo*: a cousin of Julius. Aedile in 90 BCE, he was also a writer of tragedies.

common opponents: cf. ch. 16.

it was the latter . . . the Gallic war: apparently completing both books 7 and 8 of *The Gallic War*.

'The "Commentaries" . . . pen to paper': Cicero, *Brutus* 262.

'They are so much approved . . . how easily and quickly he did it': *The Gallic War* 8, preface 5–6.

28 '*On Analogy*': this work survives only in a few fragments. Part of an ongoing debate about grammar, it seems to have argued in favour of standardization.

speeches in criticism of Cato: after the death of Cato at Utica, Cicero wrote a speech in praise of Cato. Caesar responded with a speech against. Only a few fragments survive.

across the scroll: the exact nature of this innovation is not clear.

letters to Cicero: a small number of these survive in Cicero's collection *To his Friends*.

Augustus prohibited publication of any of these works: Augustus, whose initial claim to power was largely based on his status as adopted son of the Deified Julius, seems to have taken some care to control Caesar's reputation.

29 *omens*: Caesar's disregard for omens indirectly causes his downfall in ch. 81 below.

his expedition against Scipio and Juba: cf. ch. 35 above.

the victim . . . sacrifice: this would normally be interpreted as a bad omen.

Salvito . . . he led: according to the elder Pliny, he was so named after a particular mime-actor (actors were considered very disreputable), *Natural Histories* 7. 54; 35. 8.

- 30 *military cloak*: the crimson cloak worn by commanders.
- 31 *dripping with perfume*: contrast *Vesp.* 8.
'comrades': contrast *Aug.* 25.
the Titurian disaster: see ch. 25 above.
Dyrrhachium: see ch. 36 above.
- 32 *a hundred and thirty thousand*: Caesar himself gives more modest figures; see *Civil War* 3. 52–3.
Cynegirus: at the battle of Marathon; see Herodotus, *History* 6. 114.
Cynegirus was the brother of the playwright Aeschylus.
Placentia: modern Piacenza.
When the men . . . due to receive: this incident is described in detail by Appian 2. 92.
Masinthas: the name seems to be Numidian. He may have been a son of King Hiarbas (an ally of the Marians) whom Pompey (on Sulla's orders) had deposed in favour of Hiempsal.
King Juba's son: Hiempsal was the son of Juba.
- 33 *after his praetorship*: that is, in 61.
the lictors with their fasces: the praetor setting out for his province would be attended by lictors as well as his own friends and clients.
when he sought the consulship: on Memmius, see ch. 49 above.
When Gaius Calvus . . . a letter of his own: Gaius Licinius Calvus was a friend of the poet Catullus. See ch. 49 above.
Mamurra . . . reputation: Mamurra was Caesar's *praefectus fabrorum* (overseer of works) and had allegedly acquired great wealth through Caesar's favour. See Catullus' poems 29 and 57.
the pirates . . . strangled first: see ch. 4 above.
during the time . . . delivered to Sulla: see ch. 1 above on Caesar's need to take refuge from Sulla.
without further punishment: a slave who tried to murder his master would normally be crucified.
- 34 *When he was summoned . . . free of crime*: see ch. 6 above and note to p. 7 above.
When conditions of surrender . . . committed against him: for a more detailed (and somewhat different) account of this, see Caesar, *Civil Wars* 1. 74–6.
none of the Pompeians . . . young Lucius Caesar: Faustus Cornelius Sulla was son of the dictator Sulla. Lucius Caesar was a distant relative of Julius. Other sources, e.g. Appian 2. 100 and Plutarch, *Caesar* 53. 3, record that many more were killed.

34 *which had been broken up by the common people*: when news came of the battle of Pharsalus (Dio 42. 18. 2).

35 *Pitholaus*: a freedman of Pompey.

one consulship after another: having already held the consulship in 59 and 48, Caesar was again consul in 46, in 45 (without a colleague), and in 44 (which was to have been first in a run of ten consulships).

responsibility for morals: conferred in 46 for three years (Dio 43.14), this effectively made him censor, a powerful post with particular responsibility for the composition of the senate.

a statue displayed with those of the kings: these statues were located on the Capitol, along with a statue of Brutus who had driven the last king out of Rome.

the procession for the circus games: the procession, which went from the Capitol via the Velabrum and Forum Boarium to the Circus Maximus, traditionally included litters on which statues of the gods were displayed.

a couch: of a kind on which statues of the gods were displayed.

a priest: Mark Antony held this priesthood.

an extra college of Luperci: there were previously just two colleges of Luperci, the priests responsible for the February festival in honour of the god Lupercus.

a month of the year named after him: the seventh month of the year was renamed July.

in each of these two years . . . during his absence: other sources give different accounts of these constitutional arrangements.

Rufio: a typical slave name.

Titus Ampius: one of Pompey's supporters, recalled from exile in 46.

36 *heart*: Caesar here plays on the double meaning of *cor*, 'heart', which was also regarded as the seat of intelligence. On Caesar's disregard for omens more generally, see ch. 59 above.

Pontius Aquila: later involved in the conspiracy against Caesar.

the Latin festival: an ancient festival of the Latin league in honour of Jupiter, held on the Alban Mount outside Rome.

a white ribbon: an emblem of royalty.

not King but Caesar: 'Rex'—'King'—was also a Roman family name.

the Lupercalia: on 15 February. The festival was by this time particularly associated with Caesar. See ch. 76 above.

the consul Antony . . . Jupiter Best and Greatest: other sources give somewhat different accounts of this incident. Appian (2. 109) and Plutarch (*Caesar* 61) record that Caesar twice refused the crown, Nicolaus of Damascus (21) that a man called Licinius first put the crown at Caesar's feet and Cassius put it on his knee. In Dio (49. 19. 4) Antony is made to offer the crown to Caesar as a way of forcing Caesar to turn it

down. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* offers a memorable reworking of the incident.

- 37 *the Board of Fifteen*: the college of priests who had charge of the oracular Sibylline books.

the Parthians . . . 'king': Caesar was planning a campaign against Parthia in 44.

the broad stripe: an emblem of senatorial rank.

Lucius Brutus: famous for driving out the kings of Rome and becoming the republic's first consul.

the bridge: the raised gangway over which the voters passed.

on the Sacred Way: Caesar's official residence as Pontifex Maximus was located here.

Pompey's Senate Chamber: part of the theatre complex Pompey had constructed in 55 with the spoils of his eastern triumphs.

- 38 *the colony of Capua*: founded under Caesar's law of 59–58.

Capys: Virgil makes Capys a companion of Aeneas from Troy and founder of Capua (*Aeneid* 10. 145); Livy makes him king of Alba Longa (1. 3. 8).

a king's bird: probably a wren.

a dream . . . Jupiter: cf. the dream of Caligula described in *Cal.* 57.

pediment: usually only temples had pediments but one of the honours bestowed on Caesar (according to Florus, *Epitome* 4. 2. 91) was that of having one on his house.

the fifth hour: around 11 a.m.—the senate usually met earlier.

- 39 *into the Tiber*: cf. *Tib.* 75 and *Vit.* 17.

the Ides of September of the previous year: 13 September 45.

his sisters' grandsons . . . the rest: Gaius Octavius (later Augustus) was the grandson of Caesar's younger sister; Lucius Pinarius and Quintus Pedius were the grandsons of two different husbands of Caesar's elder sister.

- 40 *heirs of the second rank*: these would only inherit if the first-rank heirs died or refused the inheritance. Cf. *Aug.* 101 and note to p. 78.

Julia: Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife (see chs. 21 and 50 above). Burial within the Campus Martius was a signal honour. That of Julia was apparently highly controversial (cf. Plutarch, *Pompey* 53).

the temple of Venus Genetrix: the temple in the Forum Julium, built by Caesar, whose family claimed descent from Venus.

some songs . . . from Atilius' 'Electra': the text is uncertain here. The author referred to may be Acilius or Atilius. The latter, known to have been a writer of plays, is perhaps more likely. Roman audiences were highly sensitized to the potential of plays, even those written long previously, to resonate with contemporary events.

- 40 *the flute-players and the actors*: musicians usually led the funeral procession, which would also include actors and dancers. For an example of the entertainment actors might offer on such an occasion see *Vesp.* ch. 19.
- 41 *the Jews*: Caesar had allowed the Jews special privileges, according to Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14. 8–10.
- Helvius Cinna*: tribune of the plebs and a supporter of Caesar. Cf. ch. 52 above.
- Xenophon*: *Education of Cyrus* 8. 7. Cyrus was founder of the Persian empire.
- the fifty-sixth year of his life*: sources disagree about Caesar's exact age.
- 42 *the eleventh hour*: about an hour before sunset.

THE DEIFIED AUGUSTUS

- 43 *Velitrae*: about 20 miles south of Rome (modern name Velletri).
minor families: i.e. those who were not patricians but of plebeian rank.
The family . . . to the patriciate: Suetonius' account here is inconsistent with what is known of the senatorial élite in the earliest period of Roman history from other ancient sources. Livy's account implies that in the time of the kings only patricians could be senators. It is also highly unlikely that an entire family could change status from patrician to plebeian.
during the Second Punic War: 205 BCE.
- 44 *other services . . . elections in the Campus Martius*: presumably these related to the conduct of elections and were not wholly respectable.
the gang of runaway slaves . . . around Thurii: 60 BCE. Spartacus led a rebellion of slave gladiators in 73–71 BCE; the aristocrat Catiline was leader of a conspiracy suppressed 63–62.
Bessi: a mountain tribe in Thrace.
Cicero . . . our allies: Cicero, *To his Brother Quintus* 1. 2. 7.
displayed many senatorial portraits: a family with senatorial ancestors would display portraits of them in the entrance hall of the house.
the twenty-man commission . . . the Julian law: 59 BCE. Cf. *Jul.* 20.
- 45 *eight days before the Kalends of October*: 23 September 63. It is not known which part of the Palatine was known as Ox Heads.
the emperor: Hadrian.
- 46 *Ennius*: Quintus Ennius (239–169) was one of Rome's leading epic poets before Virgil. The line is from his *Annals* (502, Vahlen, edn. 2).
when his great-uncle . . . a serious illness: in 46.
- 47 *tribunes of the plebs . . . not a senator*: this magistracy was restricted to those of plebeian family. Since the time of Sulla only senators were eligible.

- 48 *he should be honoured then disposed of.* Cicero, *Letters to his Friends* 11. 20.
 1. Cicero seems to have been punning on the double meaning of the Latin verb *tollo*, ‘to raise’ and ‘to put out of the way’.
in two battles . . . Antony’s wing: in 42.
- mora:* a game whereby one person suddenly raises his fingers and the other must at once guess how many.
- 49 *Perusia:* modern Perugia, a town in Umbria.
both before the war and during it: in 41.
the orders: i.e. senators and knights.
the capture of Perusia: in 40.
the Sicilian war: 43–35 BCE.
- 50 *Others criticize . . . festival procession:* it is no doubt relevant that Sextus Pompeius presented himself as the ‘son of Neptune’ according to Dio 48. 48.
Paulus’ father: Marcus Lepidus the triumvir’s elder brother, Lucius Aemilius Paulus, proscribed by the triumvirs in 43.
Circeii: a seaside town south of Rome.
- 51 *Gnaeus:* the name wrongly appears as Titus in the manuscripts.
Bononia: modern Bologna.
Actium: in 31.
the Ceraunian mountains: in northeastern Epirus.
Psylli: an African people known for their skill in dealing with snakes.
- 52 *Alexander the Great . . . for him to see:* compare the references to Alexander in *Jul.* 7, also *Aug.* 50 and 94.
Lepidus: Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, son of the triumvir Lepidus.
the emperor’s granddaughter: Julia, daughter of Augustus’ daughter Julia.
the foreign wars . . . the defeat of Antony: in 35–33 and 26–25.
- 53 *the River Albis:* the River Elbe.
Marcus Crassus and Mark Antony: Crassus lost his standards at Carrhae in 53, Antony his when his officers were defeated in 40 and 36.
on only two occasions: the doors of the temple of Janus Quirinus were believed to have been closed in the time of the legendary King Numa and in 235 with the conclusion of the First Punic War.
- 54 *Lollius . . . Varus:* in 17 or 16 BCE, and 9 CE respectively.
every tenth man . . . barley: ‘decimation’ was a traditional form of punishment in the Roman army. Soldiers’ rations normally included wheat rather than barley.
ten-foot measuring poles or even a lump of turf: these were associated with the common soldiers’ tasks of measuring off the camp or building the ramparts and thus would have been humiliating for officers.

- 55 *sons*: i.e. his grandsons, sons by adoption. See *Aug.* 64.
'comrades' . . . the dignity of his own family: contrast *Jul.* 67.
his naval victory: Agrippa and Augustus defeated Sextus Pompeius at Naulochus in 36 BCE.
'make haste slowly!'; 'A safe commander's better than a bold one': both these phrases are given in Greek.
The consulship . . . the army: in 43 BCE.
- 56 *His second consulship . . . the eleventh time*: 33, 31, 30–23 BCE.
he accepted it for the twelfth time . . . the thirteenth time: 5 and 2 BCE.
He did not begin them all in Rome: it was almost unprecedented for a consul to embark upon his period of office outside Rome.
he later raised . . . when the latter was proscribed: it was exceptional for an ex-slave to be given equestrian status.
- 57 *on one occasion and then another chose a colleague*: Agrippa and Tiberius.
the first and third times with a colleague: again, Agrippa and then Tiberius.
- 59 *Ariminum*: modern Rimini on the Adriatic coast.
Pontifex Maximus: in 13 BCE.
the calendar which had been brought to order by the Divine Julius: cf. *Jul.* 40.
he gave his own name . . . the month of his birth: cf. *Jul.* 76 and *Aug.* 100.
- 60 *the augury of Safety*: an inquiry as to whether prayers should be offered for the safety of the state.
he would risk incurring . . . the crime: the penalty would be applied to the accuser if the accused were acquitted.
- 61 *ducenarii*: these would be men whose property was valued at 200,000 sesterces (half that required for knights) or above.
twenty-five: the Latin text is most likely corrupt here. The manuscripts give the new minimum age as 30 but all other evidence suggests 30 was already the minimum, thus five years younger than the previous figure would be 25.
the punishment of being sewn in the sack: parricides were sewn up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a snake, and a monkey and thrown into the sea or a river.
the Cornelian law: under this law the witnesses to a forged will were liable to the same penalties as the forger.
allowing an exception of three years: so that those who were widowed were not obliged by the threat of legal penalties to remarry immediately.
increasing the rewards: the law regulating marriage passed in 18 BCE was modified in 9 CE. Those who did not marry were penalized (e.g. with regard to their capacity to inherit) as were, to a lesser extent, those without children. Those who were married and had three children were given a number of privileges such as the right to stand for election in advance of the usual age.

- 62 *the young man's example*: Germanicus was the son of Livia's son Drusus. With his wife Agrippina he produced numerous children. For details see Family Tree.
- Orcini*: a term used to denote slaves freed by their master's will, thus owing their status to a death. The implication is that it was the triumvirs who had swelled the ranks of the senate with the unworthy, though Caesar himself seems to have increased the number from around 600 to around 900.
- 63 *the centumviral court*: dealing with civil cases involving status, inheritance, and some other property rights referred to it by the praetor.
- Board of Ten*: these judged disputes of law.
- praetors*: from eight to ten.
- generous in honouring military achievements*: the triumph was the highest military honour which could be won by a Roman general. Despite Suetonius' claim, triumphs, at least after the first ten years of Augustus' reign, virtually disappeared. The last non-member of the imperial family to triumph was Lucius Cornelius Balbus in 19 BCE. After that the only triumphs to take place under Augustus were those of Tiberius in 7 BCE and 12 CE. One reason for this was that a general needed to be fighting under his own auspices to win a triumph and most major wars took place in provinces which were under Augustus' supreme command. It is not clear how many may have received the less prestigious triumphal ornaments.
- 64 *the Theatre Law . . . the equestrian census*: strictly speaking, to be a member of the equestrian order, one needed a fortune of at least 400,000 sesterces. The Julian Law on the Theatre reinforced the existing reservation of the front rows at the theatre for senators and knights.
- restored the older arrangements for elections*: presumably reversing the change instituted by Julius Caesar (*Jul.* 41).
- 65 *no matter what their degree of freedom*: normally a grant of 'legitimate freedom' would automatically entitle an ex-slave to citizenship.
- Behold the Romans . . . the toga'd race!*: Virgil, *Aeneid* 1. 282. Written in Augustus' own time, this epic poem was already playing an important role in the construction of national identity.
- money tokens*: these were tablets or balls distributed to the people which could be exchanged for the sums inscribed on them.
- 66 *nothing would be given to those to whom nothing had been promised*: because when the promise was made they were not citizens.
- '*Torquati*': from *torquis* meaning 'collar'.
- 67 *Augustus would even employ . . . forbade the practice*: despite their high profile and sometimes glamorous associations, the social status of professional actors and gladiators was very low. For members of the élite to appear on stage and in the arena could be seen as humiliating.

- 67 *no one dressed in dark clothing should sit in the central rows*: thus, all who did not wear a toga had to sit in less conspicuous places.
though it had been the custom . . . together: apparently they had always sat separately at the theatre and circus.
- 68 *the praetor's tribunal*: the president at the games was normally a praetor.
Pontifex Maximus: cf. ch. 31 above.
the upper-storey apartments: that is, in nearby buildings which commanded a view of the circus.
of the Greek kind: perhaps meaning in Greek language and dress.
the three theatres: those of Pompey, Balbus, and Marcellus.
- 69 *pantomime actor*: Roman pantomime consisted in one actor presenting a dramatic scene to musical accompaniment through dance and gesture rather than words.
he gestured with his finger: this seems to be a gesture signifying the effeminacy of the victim. Cf. *Cal.* 56.
colonies: Here the term colony refers to the settlement of a number of veteran soldiers.
he even gave Italy . . . the election day: thus, parity with the city-dwellers was not complete as only the local councillors in the colonies were in a position to exercise their voting rights as Roman citizens.
allied cities: cities which enjoyed autonomy in their internal affairs.
Latin or Roman citizenship: Latin citizenship gave some but not all the rights of full citizenship.
- 70 *Calagurritani*: Calagurria was a town in northwestern Spain on the River Iberus (Ebro).
Alexander the Great: for the significance of Alexander see chs. 18 and 94, and also *Jul.* 7.
his clemency: though contrast ch. 27 above.
- 71 *young Agrippa*: Augustus' grandson.
to accept the dictatorship: in 22, the first year for some time when Augustus was not consul. Augustus' example in refusing honours is followed by a number of his successors. Cf. e.g. *Tib.* 24.
the title 'Master': the term *dominus* was associated with the master-slave relationship.
- 72 *so that people . . . pay him respect*: it was an established custom to greet or bid farewell to magistrates or commanders with a procession.
All and sundry . . . the common people: it was the custom for important men to receive visits daily from those who hoped for their patronage.
in the senate house: rather than them coming to his house. This account of Augustus' behaviour forms a contrast with that attributed to Caesar in *Jul.* 78.

each man selecting his own candidate: see ch. 35 above.

freedom of speech in wills: Romans often used the occasion of making a will to express their opinions of others. Cf. ch. 66 below.

73 *the conspiracy of Murena:* cf. ch. 19 above.

the lacus Curtius: a well or pool in an enclosure in the Forum which had powerful mythological associations. Cf. Livy, who gives two different versions of its origins in *History of Rome* 1. 12–13 and 7. 6.

destroyed by fire: around 3 CE.

guilds: probably of officials.

74 ‘*Father of the Fatherland*’: Augustus received this title (see Glossary) in 2 BCE. Contrast Suetonius’ disapproving comment on Julius Caesar’s acceptance of this title (*Jul.* 76).

a dangerous illness: cf. ch. 81 below.

Aesculapius: the god of healing.

begun long ago: allegedly under Peisistratus in the sixth century.

75 *dressed in togas . . . regal insignia:* their dress acknowledged that they were Roman subjects.

his sister Octavia: presumably Augustus’ full sister. See ch. 4 above.

during his first consulship . . . his fifty-fourth year: 43 and 9 BCE respectively.

Mark Antony writes . . . for himself: such stories would have served Antony’s purpose by showing Augustus’ faithlessness in breaking an earlier engagement and his willingness to contract an alliance with a foreign ruler, as Antony himself had done.

76 *with penny and scales:* the purchaser had to touch the scales three times with a penny in the presence of the praetor. Augustus thus became their *pater familias*, acquiring important legal rights over them.

consuls: Gaius was consul designate in 5 BCE, assuming office in 1 CE. Lucius was consul designate in 2 BCE but died before assuming office.

working wool: a traditionally respectable feminine occupation, associated with the virtues of early Rome.

daily chronicles: probably the daily public bulletin of official news.

He himself taught . . . many other skills: usually a slave tutor would have taught them.

the lowest couch: the host’s usual place.

He adopted . . . by a law passed by the assembly of the curiae in the Forum: this form of adoption was followed because both were at the time legally independent following the deaths of their fathers.

Surrentum: modern Sorrento, on the coast near Naples.

77 *her island:* Pandateria, off the coast of Latium.

77 *an island*: Planasia, a small island south of Elba.

Oh, that I . . . without children!: a variation on *Iliad* 3. 40.

78 *Murena's conspiracy had been discovered*: cf. ch. 19 above.

For, although he was for . . . gratitude and affection: Suetonius makes clear later that Augustus received a very substantial part of his income from this source; see ch. 101 below.

legacies or inheritances: it was customary in a Roman will to leave one's friends legacies or to institute them as second (or third) heir. In this case they would only inherit if the first (or second) heir was unable or unwilling. Thus, this was often simply a mark of honour.

effeminate: Roman politicians regularly made such charges, particularly against younger opponents. Cf. Cicero's speech *In Defence of Caelius* 6.

79 *to singe his legs*: for a man to depilate his legs was often associated with effeminacy.

the Mother of the Gods: the priests of the Great Mother, or Cybele, were themselves eunuchs and were known as *galli*.

rules the globe with his finger: the Latin is a pun, meaning also 'beats the drum'. Particular gestures of the finger were themselves seen as signs of effeminacy.

in front of her husband . . . dishevelled hair: the same story is told about Caligula; see *Cal.* 36.

Tertulla or Terentilla or Rufilla: these are all diminutives to parody the language of lovers.

the Twelve Gods: the worship of the Twelve Gods was Greek practice. Similar stories of audacious fancy-dress are associated with Antony (see e.g. Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* 2. 83. 2).

Apollo: Augustus associated himself with Apollo through various means. Cf. ch. 18 above.

80 *As soon as . . . his golden throne*: these lines are obscure and have puzzled numerous editors. Mallia is perhaps the name of the house where the banquet took place.

My father . . . Corinthian: cf. ch. 3 above for comments on Augustus' father's profession.

murrine: perhaps agate or fluorspar. Whatever this substance was, it was highly prized in Rome.

in everyday use: the use of precious metals for everyday purposes was seen as a sign of tyrannical luxury on the part of Antony and Cleopatra. Augustus' own practice forms a conspicuous contrast.

December: there seems to have been a law against gambling which it was customary to ignore in December, when the festival of the Saturnalia took place.

a 'dog' . . . whoever threw a Venus scooped the lot: if all the dice showed one, this was a 'dog'; if they all showed different numbers, a 'Venus'.

81 *Quinquatria*: the festival of Minerva, 19–23 March.

Alban stone: several leading men of the late republic were criticized for importing marble pillars to decorate their homes.

82 *produced in his own household . . . granddaughters*: cf. ch. 64 above.

His togas . . . neither broad nor narrow: Julius Caesar had been criticized for his flowing toga; see *Jul.* 45. The stripe on Augustus' toga was midway between the broad stripe of the senator and the narrow stripe of the knight.

the defeat of Sextus Pompeius' fleet: an admiral of Sextus Pompeius, Menas had betrayed his forces to Octavian in 38 BCE.

a man in whose villa he used to stay: cf. ch. 72 on Augustus' visits to the villas of his freedmen.

Saturnalia: when it was customary to give presents.

83 *every couch*: usually at dinner parties guests reclined three to a couch.

his Sabbath fast: apparently Augustus misunderstood Jewish practice.

he would not touch a thing: Suetonius attributes eccentric eating habits to several emperors. Augustus' are excusable since they do not reflect an excessive interest in the pleasures of eating. Contrast e.g. *Claud.* 33.

very sparing in his consumption of wine also: contrast the excessive consumption attributed to Tiberius and to Claudius (*Tib.* 42, *Claud.* 33).

he would sleep no more than seven hours . . . in the course of those hours: Suetonius attributes to Vespasian a similar commitment to duty (*Vesp.* 21).

84 *His eyes . . . the sun's force*: cf. the superhuman gaze attributed to Alexander the Great (an important figure for Augustus, as Suetonius emphasizes, chs. 18, 50, and 94).

five feet nine inches tall: in Roman measures; about 5 feet 7 inches (imperial) or 1.7 metres.

strigil: an implement used to scrape off oil applied during the bathing process.

treatment with sand and reeds: perhaps a poultice of warm sand and pounded-up reeds.

85 *Antonius Musa*: cf. ch. 59.

his birthday: 23 September.

Praeneste or Tibur: towns only a short distance from Rome.

pass-ball and balloon-ball: the former term covers a variety of games played with a small ball, the latter a game played with a large, light ball.

86 *'Reply to Brutus concerning Cato'*: Marcus Brutus had written a panegyric of his father-in-law and uncle, Cato, who had chosen to kill himself rather than live under the rule of Caesar.

- 86 ‘*On his own Life*’: these memoirs are often quoted by Suetonius; see chs. 2, 7, 27, 42, and 43, for example.
- sponge*: rather than, as in the legend, on his sword. A sponge was used to erase writing in ink.
- 87 *Annius Cimber*: his reputation for inflated oratory seems to have been notorious. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 8. 3. 28.
which Sallustius Crispus took from Cato’s Origines: Cato wrote in the early second century BCE and Sallust in the mid-first century. Several ancient authors criticize Sallust’s obscure brevity and his use of archaic terms (Quintilian, *Institutes* 8. 3. 29; Seneca, *Letters* 114. 17).
the high-flown style . . . in to our own language: on the distinction between plain ‘Attic’ and florid ‘Asiatic’ styles, see Quintilian, *Institutes* 12. 10. 1 and 16–20). Antony’s alleged preference for the exotic Asiatic style is of a piece with allegations concerning his preference for eastern modes of dress and consumption, and of course, his alliance with the eastern ruler Cleopatra.
- Greek Kalends*: there was no Greek Kalends (the Roman term for the first day of the month).
- 88 *Apollonia*: cf. ch. 8 above.
Metellus’ . . . in earlier days: both of these men were consuls in the mid- to late first century BCE though there is some dispute as to the exact identity of Metellus.
- 89 *a sealskin for protection*: cf. Pliny, who writes that seals are never struck by lightning (*Natural Histories* 2. 146).
as I said earlier: ch. 29 above.
he would beg from the people . . . put pennies in: this could be understood as an act of humility to ward off *invidia*, the ill-feeling which Romans believed posed a particular danger to the fortunate. Suetonius attributes a similar practice to Caligula (*Cal.* 42).
- palm tree*: an omen of victory.
Aenaria . . . the island: Aenaria is modern Ischia. The islands were exchanged in 29 BCE.
- market-day*: the *nundinae*, or market-day, fell every eight days.
- 90 *the unlucky sound of the name*: *Nonis* could be understood as *non is*, ‘you do not go’.
the mysteries at Athens: of Ceres at Eleusis.
- Apis*: the sacred bull of Memphis in Egypt.
pay his respects in Jerusalem: to do so would have meant acknowledging the faith of the Jews.
- registered in the treasury*: without which the decree would not be law.
- 91 *Liber*: another name for Bacchus.

Alexander the Great: for links with Alexander, cf. chs. 18 and 50 above.

Quintus Catulus: cf. *Jul.* 15.

- 93 *as they had to Romulus*: cf. Livy, 1. 7—an account written in Augustus' own time.

Eutychus . . . Nicon: the names mean 'fortunate' and 'victor' in Greek.

he was performing the rites: traditionally the censors performed rituals of purification to mark the conclusion of their period of office. Though not a censor, Augustus had undertaken many censorial duties.

- 94 *Beneventum*: modern Benevento.

traditional practice: in Greek settlements (including Naples, of whose territory Capri had been part), young men had regular gymnastic training as part of their education.

- 95 'Kistes': Greek for 'founder'.

his tomb was surrounded by a crowd of people and many lights: this seems to have been customary on the anniversary of someone's death.

Since the play . . . applause: the final lines of a comedy by Menander (*Poetae Comici Graeci VIII*. 925 (p. 275)). For Suetonius' emphasis here on the way the death corresponds to the subject's wishes, cf. *Jul.* 87.

- 96 'euthanasia': Greek for 'good death'.

the fourteenth day before the Kalends of September: 19 August 14 CE.

Bovillae: about twelve miles from Rome on the Appian Way.

his bones . . . priests of the senior colleges: this was usually done by female relatives.

- 97 *three days before the Nones of April*: 3 April 13 CE.

secondary heirs: cf. *Jul.* 83 and *Aug.* 66.

tribes: since all Roman citizens were also members of tribes this distinction is unclear.

his two fathers: Octavius, his natural father, and Julius Caesar who had adopted him.

a list of his achievements . . . his Mausoleum: versions of this have survived. It is referred to as *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 'The Achievements of the Deified Augustus'.

TIBERIUS

- 98 *Regilli*: location unknown.

six years after the expulsion of the kings: 504 BCE, according to traditional chronology.

Appius Caecus: consul in 312 BCE.

Claudius Caudex: consul in 264 BCE.

Appius Caecus . . . Hannibal: in 207 BCE.

- 98 *attempted . . . gratify his lust*: an incident traditionally dated to 451 BCE.
Claudius Russus: the name 'Russus' is a conjecture by Ihm. The manuscript has 'Drusus'.
Forum of Appius: a small town in Latium on the Appian Way.
Claudius Pulcher: son of Appius Claudius Caecus.
- 99 *When he was defeated . . . perilous situation*: mid-third century BCE.
Idaean mother of the gods: the Phrygian goddess Cybele, also known as the Great Mother. Her cult was introduced to Rome in 204 BCE. This Claudia was granddaughter of Appius Claudius Caecus. See also note to p. 79 above.
that other Claudia: daughter of Appius Claudius Caecus.
had himself adopted . . . younger than himself: in 60 BCE. Clodius could only be elected tribune of the plebs if he was of plebeian family. Cf. *Jul.* 6, 20, 24, 74.
veto his action or prevent him: to do so would have been sacrilege because of the presence of the Vestal Virgin.
consul a second time and censor: he was consul first in 219 BCE. After victory over the Illyrians he had been found guilty of dividing up the booty unfairly but was elected consul again in 207 BCE and censor in 204.
- 100 *Narbo and Arelate*: modern Narbonne and Arles.
on the sixteenth day before the Kalends of December: 16 November 42 BCE.
- 102 *He also gave other games, though without attending them himself*: note Suetonius' comment at ch. 47 below on Tiberius' attitude to games.
Caecilius Atticus: better known as Titus Pomponius Atticus, he took the name Quintus Caecilius Pomponianus Atticus after his adoption by Quintus Caecilius.
He also took back the standards . . . Crassus: 20 BCE (cf. *Aug.* 21.)
- 103 *Gallia Comata*: Transalpine Gaul. See note to p. 21 above.
Raeti and Vindelici: peoples from Raetia, a country to the north of Cisalpine Gaul.
Breuci: a people of Pannonia.
entered the city in a chariot: i.e. celebrating a triumph. This was in 7 BCE.
- 104 *he did his duty . . . whatever gifts he had ever given her*: though cf. ch. 50 below.
- 105 *Nemaurus*: a town in Gallia Comata of which he had been governor.
- 106 *Aponus*: a warm medicinal spring, modern Bagno d'Albano.
Carinae . . . Esquiline: Carinae was a smart residential area adjoining the Forum, ideally situated for prominent public figures, while the Esquiline was on the outskirts of the city.

Marcus Agrippa: also known as Agrippa Postumus.

- 107 *For he could neither . . . to his personal fund*: persons under their father's power, like slaves, could not own property but could be permitted to accumulate funds which, though not technically their own, might be treated as such.

- 108 *he took his food . . . without a tent for shelter*: in giving up the comforts to which his rank entitled him, Tiberius was aligning himself with the common soldiers.

Bructeri: a Germanic tribe occupying modern Westphalia.

he celebrated the triumph: 12 CE.

- 109 *Bato . . . installed at Ravenna*: usually the enemy leader would be led in the triumphal procession and then executed.

- 110 'One man alone . . . our state': Ennius, *Annals* 370V2 (substituting *vigilando*, 'taking care', for the original *cunctando*, 'delaying').

'If only he should follow . . . very wise': Homer, *Iliad* 10. 246–7.

- 112 *he behaved in a very unassuming manner . . . an ordinary citizen*: Suetonius' comments at ch. 67 offer an additional perspective here.

an oath . . . to ratify his acts: an oath taken by all citizens to indicate approval for the emperor's deeds past and future.

Tiberius . . . Livius: on the model of the months already named after Julius and Augustus (cf. *Jul.* 76 and *Aug.* 100).

to take the cognomen . . . the civic crown: honours accepted by Augustus. See e.g. *Aug.* 58.

three consulships . . . until the Ides of May: 18, 21 and 31 CE.

- 113 *When a certain fellow . . . in this insulting way*: cf. *Aug.* 53.

in a free state minds and tongues should be free: contrast ch. 61 below.

mutual enemies: thus implying equal status. Cf. *Aug.* 56.

- 114 *with ambassadorial status*: thus able to use the imperial postal service established by Augustus.

the proper concluding formula: which included prayers for the welfare of the emperor.

- 115 *Corinthian vases . . . three mullets*: Corinthian vases and fish, especially mullet, often serve as emblems of luxury in the writings of Roman moralists. Cf. *Aug.* 70.

regulating inns and cook-shops: the cook-shops were often subject to regulation. They were perceived as places where the poor would gather and foment unrest.

half-eaten dishes . . . just as good as a whole one: this story may well have served to illustrate the emperor's meanness.

- 116 *Women of ill repute . . . the penalties specified by the law*: adultery had been made a criminal offence by the Julian law on adultery of 18 BCE.

- 116 *the restrictions . . . in the theatre and arena*: presumably earlier legislation stipulated harsher penalties than loss of senatorial or equestrian status for senators and knights who engaged in such activities.
so that he could rent a house in the city more cheaply after than date: rental contracts in Rome seem to have commenced 1 July.
because he married . . . the day afterwards: Augustus' marriage laws stipulated that married men should be given preference in the assignment of public posts.
- Pollentia*: in Liguria, modern Pollenza.
- 117 *the kingdom of Cottius*: in the Alps, between Italy and Gaul.
asylum: by which people sought refuge at temples or statues to avoid punishment for crimes.
Cyzicus: a city of northwest Asia Minor.
Antium: a coastal town near Rome.
Tarracina: a coastal town in Latium, modern Terracina.
- 118 *Fidenea*: a town in Sabine territory, to the north of Rome.
he had so long struggled to conceal: cf. ch. 33.
'Biberius' . . . for wine: from *bibo* drink, *callidus* hot, and *merum* unmixed wine. Contrast *Aug. 77*.
- 119 *a mushroom . . . and a thrush*: all luxury foodstuffs. Contrast Suetonius' comments on Tiberius' frugality at ch. 34.
'tight-bums': meaning a male who takes a 'passive', 'feminine' role in sexual relations.
Elephantis: a Greek author notorious for her lewd writings.
'the old goat's den' . . . the island: this played on the similarity between *caper*, goat, and *Capreae*, the name of the island.
Atalanta: in Graeco-Roman mythology, Atalanta was a huntress with no wish to marry who was pursued by Meleager.
. . . in his bed-chamber: Romans regarded the use of the mouth for sexual activity as especially degrading.
- 120 *his Greeks*: cf. ch. 56 below.
As emperor . . . many years later: contrast *Aug. 28–30*.
he was forced to buy the freedom of the comic actor Actius: presumably by the demands of the crowd. Contrast Tiberius' parsimony regarding games with the generosity of Augustus (*Aug. 43*).
- 121 *the plans of Sejanus*: Aelius Sejanus had been praetorian prefect, a position which he seems to have used to bring about the downfall of many leading Romans, but he fell from grace and was punished with death after plotting to take over the empire. Cf. 55, 61, and 65.
ready money: which could be seen as preparation for a revolution.

to restore liberty: presumably in the sense of senatorial government. Cf. *Cal.* 60.

122 *he also cheated her . . . in his will*: contrast ch. 11 above.

123 *Hector*: the mythical Trojan hero who died defending his city against the Greeks, according to Homer's *Iliad*.

124 *Gemonian steps*: the flight of steps leading from the Forum to the Capitoline hill where the bodies of executed criminals were exposed. Cf. ch. 61 below.

showed him the noose and the hooks: thus indicating that he was condemned to death, to be strangled with the noose and his body then to be dragged to the Tiber with the hooks.

125 *his savage and tenacious nature was not completely hidden*: cf. *Cal.* 11.

126 *ostensibly motivated . . . to improve morals*: Suetonius characteristically adds a new and more critical perspective on activities introduced earlier as praiseworthy (cf. ch. 34 above).

the hundred thousands . . . exile on Rhodes: to qualify as a knight one needed a fortune of 400,000 sesterces. As Augustus' adopted son, Tiberius could own no property while his father lived (cf. ch. 15 above). It is perhaps also relevant that Roman citizens sent into exile lost the rights of citizenship.

the golden age of Saturn . . . iron: Augustus had been associated by his supporters with the return of the proverbial golden age of Saturn. In myth the golden age was succeeded by one of silver and then one of iron, as human society deteriorated.

he drinks as greedily . . . wine without water: cf. ch. 42 above.

Sulla, fortunate for himself not for you: the dictator Sulla had taken the cognomen Felix, meaning 'fortunate'.

Marius . . . Antony: Marius was another great general, whose conflict with Sulla generated a civil war in the early first century BCE. Mark Antony's conflict with the young Augustus had also led to civil war (cf. *Aug.* 17).

'*Let them hate me provided they respect me*': cf. the comment Suetonius attributes to Caligula (*Cal.* 30).

127 *Agamemnon*: mythical king of Mycenae or Argos, in Homer commander-in-chief of the Greeks fighting at Troy. On his return home he was killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, aided by her lover, Aegisthus. The story was the subject of a play by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus.

Authors were attacked and books banned: contrast ch. 28, and cf. *Aug.* 54–6.

128 *Priam*: mythical king of Troy. In some versions of his story all his numerous children are killed by the Greek army before him.

the victim of insult: cf. ch. 66 below.

- 129 *the temple*: of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste.
- 131 *when he began his reign . . . such great honours*: contrast Suetonius' treatment of this at ch. 26 above.
- 132 *Euphorion, Rhianus, and Parthenius*: Euphorion and Rhianus were both Alexandrians who lived in the third century BCE. The former, a follower of Callimachus, was proverbial for his obscurity; the latter was a composer of learned epic. Parthenius was a first-century Greek poet who is thought to have played a major part in promoting learned Alexandrian poetry in Rome.

Hecuba's mother . . . on the death of his son: Hecuba was the wife of Priam, king of Troy at the time of the Trojan war according to Homer. The Greek hero Achilles had once sought refuge by disguising himself as a young girl. The songs of the Sirens who lured men to their deaths were among the perils threatening the hero Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. Minos was a mythical king of Crete.

in the senate: contrast Suetonius' claim concerning Claudius, *Claud.* 42.

'*monopolium*': a Greek term meaning 'monopoly', transliterated into Latin.

'*emblema*': a Greek term (with no Latin equivalent) meaning inlaid figures (e.g. on cups).

- 133 *on the seventeenth day . . . Gaius Pontius Nigrinus*: 16 March 37 CE.

- 134 *Apollo Temenites*: Temenos was a place in Syracuse sacred to Apollo.

the hook and Gemonian steps: cf. ch. 61 above.

Atella: a town north of Naples.

in the amphitheatre: perhaps to make a point about Tiberius' failure to provide entertainments during his lifetime?

CALIGULA

- 136 *Gaius Caesar's*: the emperor properly known as Gaius Caesar is more usually known as Caligula (see ch. 9). Since the name Gaius is a common one, I have often, though not exclusively, used 'Caligula' for clarity.

Germanicus . . . his paternal uncle Tiberius: Suetonius does not include an account of earlier generations here since this is covered in *Aug.* and *Tib.* The account of Caligula's virtuous father, Germanicus, provides a strong counterpoint to Suetonius' portrait of Caligula himself.

went straight on to the consulship: without holding any of the usual intermediate offices (though five years elapsed between Germanicus' quaestorship and his consulship).

The plot to kill him . . . condemned him to death: cf. Suetonius' treatment of this at *Tib.* 52.

- 137 *the Varian disaster*: three legions, under the command of Varus, were destroyed in 9 CE. Cf *Aug.* 23.

after his death: contrast these responses with those Suetonius attributes to the death of Caligula himself, ch. 60 below.

the king of kings: the term ‘king of kings’, originally used for the kings of Persia, was subsequently also applied to the Parthian king.

- 138 *the feast days in the month of December*: the Saturnalia. See Glossary.

only respect for Germanicus . . . the cruelty to which Tiberius soon gave rein: Suetonius does not advance this as an explanation of Tiberius’ changing behaviour; see e.g. *Tib.* 61.

Tiberius was their accuser: cf. *Tib.* 54.

the day before the Kalends of September . . . were consuls: 31 August, 12 CE.

Gnaeus Lentulus Gaetulicus: consul in 33.

Pliny: Plinius Secundus, better known as the elder Pliny.

the rivers: the Rhine and the Moselle.

- 139 *earlier*: ch. 7 above.

puerae . . . puelli: in classical Latin the usual term for boys was *pueri* and for girls *puellae*.

the fifteenth day before the Kalends of June: 18 May.

sought to transfer to Antium the seat and capital of empire: cf. ch. 49 below.

‘*Caligula*’: meaning ‘Little boot’ from *caliga*, the term for a soldier’s boot.

- 140 *even at that time . . . nature*: cf. Suetonius’ comments on Tiberius, *Tib.* 57.

he showed the keenest interest . . . disguised in a wig and long cloak: for a similar story of disguise, see *Nero* 26. For allegations of cruelty, cf. *Claud.* 34.

Phaethon: the mythical figure Phaethon was a son of the sun-god Helios, who granted his request to be allowed to drive the sun chariot. Phaethon, not strong enough to control the divine horses, fell from the sky and scorched the earth.

- 141 *And as the royal house . . . that he himself might succeed*: cf. *Tib.* 61 and 65.

he himself . . . strangled him: cf. *Tib.* 73 where different versions are also given.

co-heir: cf. *Tib.* 76.

- 142 *others posted public notices in which they promised their own lives*: cf. ch. 27.

‘*Germanicus*’: cf. *Jul.* 76 and *Aug.* 100.

Prince of Youth: a title previously given by Augustus to his adopted sons Gaius and Lucius. Hence it might be taken as signifying Tiberius’ position as heir.

- 143 *proposals of the consuls*: the consuls’ proposals to the senate began with a set formula. Caligula’s apparently admirable concern for his sisters would have an extra dimension for any reader familiar with the stories of his incestuous relations with them. Cf. ch. 24.

- 143 *he ordered tht the records . . . touched any of them*: for a similar act, cf. *Aug.* 32. However, see *Cal.* 30.
the 'tight-bums': cf. *Tib.* 43.
which had been banned by senatorial decree: contrast *Tib.* 61. These authors were well known for their unbridled attacks on prominent individuals.
he added . . . to the existing four: see *Aug.* 32.
- Julia Augusta*: i.e. Livia, Tiberius' mother.
- 144 *the Parilia*: a festival association with the foundation of the city, which was traditionally celebrated on 21 April.
the Kalends of July . . . the same month: 1 July 37 CE; 1 January 39; 13 January 40; 7 January 41.
Lugdunum: modern Lyons in France.
- 145 *the Troy game*: see *Jul.* 39.
three thousand six hundred paces: 5.22 km; c. $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.
Xerxes . . . Hellespont: for the significance of this comparison see Introduction, p. xx.
- 146 *Pompey's Theatre . . . by Tiberius*: see *Tib.* 47.
completed the former: see *Claud.* 20.
to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Greece: cf. *Jul.* 44 and *Nero* 19, and the note to the latter.
'Caesar Best and Greatest': an echo of the title of 'Jupiter Best and Greatest', whose temple on the Capitoline Hill was the most important in Rome.
Let there be one Lord, one King!: Homer, *Iliad* 2. 204.
the statue of Zeus from Olympia: a colossal statue of gold and ivory, reputed to be the masterpiece of the fifth-century Athenian sculptor, Phidias. At ch. 57 below the statue is said to foretell Caligula's assassination.
- Jupiter Latiaris*: Jupiter of Latium.
- 147 *Raise me up or you I'll . . .*: Homer, *Iliad* 23. 724 (the words are spoken by Ajax, when wrestling with Odysseus).
Tiberius: his brother by adoption.
- 148 *preserved as a butt for jokes*: cf. *Claud.* 7.
at a crowded banquet . . . while his wife lay above: Romans generally dined reclining on couches, each of which was designed to accommodate three people.
Gaius Piso: the central figure in a conspiracy against Nero of 62.
- 149 *the precedent set by Romulus and Augustus*: a reference to the story of the rape of the Sabine women (supposed to have been organized by Romulus in order to obtain wives for Rome's earliest inhabitants), and to Augustus' behaviour as recounted in *Aug.* 62 and 69.

Selene: Antony's daughter by Cleopatra.

short linen tunics: such short tunics were normally worn by young slaves to display their attractions.

- 150 *flogged*: corporal punishment was a humiliation normally reserved for slaves.

The man who had promised . . . fulfil his vow: cf. ch. 14 above.

- 151 *disfigured with the marks . . . sawn in half*: again, these were punishments normally reserved for slaves.

He had a composer . . . a doubtful joke: contrast the alleged tolerance of such licence by other emperors; see e.g. *Aug.* 55–6; *Nero* 39.

adiatrepisia . . . his shamelessness: stoic term meaning 'impassivity', here perverted by Caligula.

his brother: Tiberius Gemellus. See ch. 23 above, and note to p. 147.

- 152 *hellebore*: a traditional remedy, especially associated with the island of Anticyra in the Aegean.

Gallograecia: another name for Galatia in Phrygia, to which some Gauls had migrated.

the dead man, too, had deserved the punishment: Cf. *Claud.* 29.

Let them hate provided that they fear: Accius, *Tragedies* 203. Cf. the comment Suetonius attributes to Tiberius (*Tib.* 59).

which he had pretended to have destroyed: cf. ch. 15 above.

in thrall to the stage or the arena: an enthusiasm associated with the common people, though cf. *Aug.* 45.

called for the brigand Tetrinius: presumably to fight in the arena.

the Varian tragedy: see *Aug.* 23.

the collapse of a theatre at Fidenae: see *Tib.* 40.

- 153 *I recounted above*: ch. 19.

popa . . . cultrarius: the *popa*'s job was to strike the sacrificial victim with a mallet while the *cultrarius* would cut its throat.

- 154 *as Plato had done*: in the *Republic*.

Virgil and Livy: authors who were both staples of the curriculum.

Ptolemy, whom I mentioned earlier: ch. 26 above.

he had the backs of their heads shaved to spoil their appearance: Suetonius tells us at ch. 50 that Caligula himself was bald.

the King of Nemi . . . to supplant him: by tradition, the priest of Diana at Nemi was a fugitive slave who had killed the previous incumbent.

- 155 *he would leave the dining-room . . . he would return*: Suetonius tells a similar story about Augustus, *Aug.* 69.

the most precious pearls dissolved in vinegar: a manifestation of luxury typically associated with eastern rulers. Cf. Pliny's story about Cleopatra, *Natural Histories* 9. 120–1.

- 156 *Great structures . . . levelled mountain peaks flat*: Roman moralists were especially critical of such dramatic interventions in the natural landscape. *He also accused people . . . any addition to their estates*: the estates were consequently forfeit.
- when he was then named as heir . . . poisoned sweets*: contrast Augustus' behaviour as described by Suetonius at *Aug. 66*.
- 157 *even the freedmen*: the freedmen were, of course, no longer their property.
- 158 *overflowing hands and togas*: the fold of the toga was often used by Romans as a pocket.
- the grove and river of Clitumnus*: a well-known beauty spot in southern Umbria. Cf. Pliny, *Letters 8. 8*.
- 159 *six thousand sestertes*: half the amount set by Augustus (according to Dio 55. 23).
- to ride in their carriage right into the Forum*: this was not normally permitted in the daytime.
- in the temple of Mars the Avenger*: see *Aug. 29*.
- 160 *'endure and save themselves for better times'*: *Aeneid 1. 207*.
- the Pharos*: at Alexandria.
- 161 *those legions which had tried to mutiny . . . a small child*: see ch. 9 above.
- to decimate them*: i.e. kill one in ten. This was a traditional military punishment.
- Alexandria*: Caligula's ancestor Mark Antony was alleged by his enemy Augustus to have planned transferring the capital to Alexandria.
- 162 *thunder and lightning . . . hide under it*: similar anxieties are attributed to Augustus (*Aug. 90*) and Tiberius (*Tib. 69*).
- 163 *Cimbri . . . Senones*: the Cimbri had been driven back by Marius in 101 BCE, while the Senones were a Gallic tribe who were said to have captured Rome itself in 390 BCE.
- platforms*: actors in tragedy traditionally wore high-soled shoes to enhance their size.
- Venus*: Venus was reputed to be the mother of the mythical hero Aeneas and through him ancestress of the Julii.
- the breastplate . . . from his sarcophagus*: other emperors, too, were linked with Alexander the Great, according to Suetonius; see *Jul. 7, Aug. 18, 50, 94*.
- he described Seneca . . . 'sand without lime'*: cf. Suetonius' account of Augustus' literary criticism (*Aug. 86*).
- 164 *He was so transported . . . his stage debut*: actors were considered effeminate in their movements and their speech—hardly suitable models for an emperor. For an emperor to appear on stage seemed scandalous. Cf. *Nero 21*.

He put some Thracian gladiators . . . the murmillones: cf. ch. 30. The Thracians were Caligula's favourites, the *murmillones* their opponents.

Green Faction: one of the chariot-racing teams in the circus. There were at this time four 'Factions': the Whites, Reds, Blues, and Greens.

- 165 *to make him consul:* see Introduction, p. xxv.

effeminate: the accusation of effeminacy was especially humiliating for a military man.

- 166 *that which had taken place years ago on the same day:* i.e. the assassination of Julius Caesar—Caligula's namesake.

Cassius Longinus: cf. ch. 24.

several of the understudies . . . overflowing with blood: after the play, it seems to have been common for actors who played minor roles to entertain the audience by imitating the actions of the lead player.

the ninth day before the Kalends of February: 24 January 41 CE.

'*Take this!*': using a form of words which was part of the ritual pronouncements during a sacrifice. The emphasis on Caligula's neck could be seen as ironic in view of the emperor's threats to other people's necks, as recorded at chs. 30 and 33 above.

'*Jupiter*': Jupiter was the god of sudden death.

- 167 *the Lamian gardens:* an estate on the edge of the city, where Caligula had a villa.

'*Julian*': it had been completed by Augustus and named for his adoptive father Julius.

the one who was murdered in the time of Cinna: Gaius Julius Caesar Strabo, who was killed in 87 BCE (several other family members with the name Gaius died naturally, however).

THE DEIFIED CLAUDIUS

- 168 *gave birth to Drusus . . . conceived in adultery:* in 38 BCE. See Aug. 62.

his quaestorship and praetorship: on Augustus' initiative, Drusus was given a special dispensation by the senate to stand for these magistracies before he had reached the usual age. He was quaestor in 18 and praetor in 11 BCE.

the divisions of the scribes: probably the quaestor's clerks.

the opimian spoils: to secure this honour, a general in full command of an army had to kill the enemy leader in single combat.

- 169 *his Caesars:* his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius.

the younger Antonia: the younger daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia, sister of Augustus.

at Lugdunum . . . the Kalends of August: at modern Lyons, 1 August 10 BCE.

- 169 *when his older brother . . . Germanicus*: in 4 CE, Germanicus was adopted by Tiberius, while Tiberius himself was adopted by Augustus.
of age: at puberty, normally reckoned at age 14.
the Greek cloak, an unprecedented sight: on an official occasion such as this, a toga would have been expected. It seems the Greek cloak was the usual dress of invalids.
published . . . in different genres: see chs. 41 and 42 below.
- 170 *Augusta*: i.e. Livia.
Tiberius: i.e. Claudius.
Games of Mars: celebrated by Augustus in 12 CE in honour of Mars the Avenger whose temple was the focus of the Forum of Augustus (cf. *Aug.* 29).
Nor do I wish him . . . prefect of the city: the Latin festival was celebrated at the temple of Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban Mount, about 14 miles (20 km.) from Rome. Since the festival was attended by the urban magistrates, it was usual for a prefect of the city to be appointed to cover their absence, a position given to youths of prominent families, often of the imperial family itself.
- 171 *Sulpicius and Athenodorus*: presumably his regular attendants.
college of Augurs: one of Rome's four major colleges of priests.
not even instituting him as an heir except in the third degree: on Augustus' will see *Aug.* 101 and note to p. 78.
Saturnalia and Sigillaria: at the festival of the Saturnalia in mid-December it was usual to exchange gifts. Sigillaria was the last day of the Saturnalia when small gifts made of pottery were exchanged.
the fall of Sejanus: in 31. Cf. *Tib.* 55.
priests of Augustus: established by Tiberius as part of the cult of the Deified Augustus.
among those of consular rank: senators were called on to express their views in order of seniority by rank.
- 172 *his loss*: i.e. of his house.
an eagle . . . landed on his right shoulder: a circumstance which might readily be interpreted as portending his future rise to power. See e.g. *Tib.* 14.
the emperor's brothers: Caligula's older brothers both died during the reign of Tiberius, apparently as a result of the machinations of Sejanus.
the conspiracy of Lepidus and Gaetulicus was discovered: in 39 CE.
- 173 *the new priesthood*: associated with the worship of Caligula himself; see *Cal.* 22.
he so undermined . . . make up the difference: he had presumably borrowed

money from the treasury with his property as security in order to pay the entrance fee for the new priesthood.

Those conspiring . . . privacy: Suetonius gives a fuller account of the conspiracy at *Cal.* 56–8. Caligula was killed 24 January 41 CE.

With the intention of asserting civic liberty: this is generally taken to mean that there was talk of restoring the republic in some form.

- 174 *a chariot drawn by elephants . . . like that for Augustus:* these chariots carried images of Augustus and Livia to the circus where they would be placed in positions of honour overlooking the games.

his brother: Germanicus.

a Greek comedy . . . the judges: it is presumed Germanicus was the author of this work. See *Cal.* 3.

refraining from taking the forename 'Imperator': cf. *Jul.* 76.

- 175 *decorated:* with garlands, part of the usual celebrations marking a new reign.

He was consul . . . four years: Claudius was consul in 42, 43, 47 and 51 CE.

- 176 *he was immune because of the number of his children:* Augustus' marriage laws of 18 BCE and 9 CE prescribed various privileges of this kind for parents of larger families.

- 177 *common prostitutes . . . their testimony admitted:* normally prostitutes were considered too disreputable to be admitted as witnesses.

the censorship of Plancus and Paulus: in 22 BCE. Claudius held the office in 48 CE.

the inspection of the knights: cf. *Aug.* 39.

- 178 *a charge of treason . . . to recover a loan:* Gaius Rabirius Postumus made large sums out of banking. When prosecuted in 54 BCE he was defended by Cicero in a speech which is still extant. Cf. *Jul.* 12.

He accused some . . . to have ample means: Augustus' marriage laws of 18 BCE and 9 CE imposed various penalties on the unmarried and those who did not have children. There was a minimum census requirement of 400,000 sesterces to be a knight and, since Augustus' time, of 1,000,000 sesterces to be a senator.

the Sigillaria: an area of the city of Rome.

cut into pieces in his presence: presumably as a warning to the luxurious. The policing of luxury was traditionally part of the censors' remit.

from Massilia as far as Gesoriacum by land: modern Marseille and Boulogne on the English Channel.

- 179 *Diribitorium:* a large building in the Campus Martius area.

the Augustan marriage law: see *Aug.* 34.

women . . . with four children: another provision of Augustus' marriage legislation was privileges for free-born mothers of three children and ex-slave mothers of four children.

- 179 *the Caeruleus . . . Curtius and Albudignus*: all springs in the Sabine country to the northeast of Rome.
- 180 *transported from Egypt*: by Caligula, to be set up in his circus near the Vatican hill.
- the temples at the top*: Pompey's Theatre had a temple to Venus at the top of the seating area.
- Secular Games*: cf. Aug. 31.
- goals*: these were the markers at each end of the central island, around which the chariots raced.
- 181 *the Troy games*: see Jul. 39.
- '*little presents*': using the Latin term *sportula* which was normally used to refer to the presents of food which patrons often gave their clients.
- bringing out his left hand . . . as the common people do*: upper-class Romans normally kept their left hands covered under their togas.
- granted the wooden sword*: the sign that a gladiator was discharged.
- those who were to fight . . . 'Or not'*: the combatants in such conflicts were usually condemned criminals. The point of Claudius' joke, presumably, was that not all would die in battle.
- 182 *permission to travel*: under a law of 45 CE, senators were not supposed to travel beyond a certain distance from Rome without permission.
- procurators with consular insignia*: procurators—a term which covered the governors of minor provinces, as well as imperial financial agents—were drawn from the equestrian order.
- the right to wear the broad stripe*: the broad purple stripe on the tunic was worn only by senators and those the emperor selected for future senate membership.
- 183 *Appius Claudius the censor*: a magistrate of the fourth century BCE of legendary moral severity.
- the free-born children they produced*: i.e. those children born to them after they had acquired their freedom. Other ancient sources do not concur with this definition.
- treasury of Saturn*: the state treasury located in the Temple of Saturn in the Forum.
- to walk on his left . . . as he came away from it*: these were marks of particular respect.
- 184 *liable for murder*: killing a slave did not normally count as murder. Indeed, under most circumstances a master could kill his own slave without running the risk of legal action (though few seem to have risked the moral condemnation and hostility such an action would bring).
- unless they were on foot or in a chair or litter*: i.e. not in carriages.

he forbade to use Roman names, at least the gentile ones: i.e. the names such as Claudius, Cornelius, or Tullius which Roman citizens had as the second of their traditional three names.

Ilium . . . the founders of the Roman race: Ilium was another name for Troy. Romulus and Remus were descendants of the Trojan Aeneas, according to legend.

at the instigation of Chrestus: scholars argue as to whether or not this might be a reference to Jesus Christ.

the envoys of the Germans . . . in no way inferior: Augustus' rules on seating arrangements in the theatre had excluded foreign envoys from sitting in the area reserved for senators, though special exceptions were made.

185 *marriages of this kind:* i.e. between uncle and niece.

186 *Britannicus was born . . . when he was consul for the second time:* in 42 CE—long after twenty-two days had elapsed since Claudius' accession.

the silver-tipped spear: a military prize.

187 *Appius Silanus:* Silanus was married to Messalina's mother.

Julia, the daughter of Drusus: otherwise known as Livilla.

four days before the Kalends of January: 29 December.

188 *the Salian priests:* the feasts of the Salii were proverbial for their luxury (see e.g. Horace, *Odes* 1. 37. 2).

parricides: see *Aug.* 33.

an execution in the ancient manner: presumably along the lines described at *Nero* 49.

189 *net-fighters, so that he could see their faces as they died:* those who fought with nets did not wear helmets.

He actually sent on . . . in his toga: the summary execution of someone whose toga clearly marked him as a Roman citizen was especially shocking.

as I noted: ch. 12 above.

as I noted above: ch. 13 above.

191 *Claudius even took jurisdiction over the cookhouses away from the aediles:* see note to p. 115 above.

he would, on the following day . . . taking them to task for sleeping late: cf. *Cal.* 26.

a nibble: presumably it was the use of the colloquial term *offula*, 'little bit', which was felt inappropriate.

192 *there are some . . . who do not think me their patron:* this could be taken as a reference, whether conscious or unconscious, to Claudius' manipulative freedmen.

Telegenus: probably someone proverbial for his idiocy.

- 192 *Titus Livy*: the famous historian.

his mother and his grandmother: Antonia, daughter of Mark Antony, and Livia, wife of Augustus, who would no doubt have had their own particular perspectives on this period.

three new letters of the alphabet: these were the inverted digamma (to represent ‘u’ as a consonant), probably the anti-sigma (to represent ‘bs’) and the sign for the Greek rough breathing (to represent the Greek ‘y’).

- 193 *When a barbarian . . . in both our languages*: contrast *Tib.* 71.

a set speech: presumably in Greek. The use of Greek in the senate seems to have been avoided in earlier periods, with Greek ambassadors being required to speak in Latin.

Ward off the man . . . attack: this line occurs at *Iliad* 24. 369 and *Odyssey* 21. 133.

the ancient museum at Alexandria: a famous centre of learning.

The one who made the wound will heal it: a proverbial saying, drawn from the story of Telephus who was told by an oracle that his wound could be cured only by Achilles who had inflicted it.

killed by poison: rumours of foul play are associated with most deaths in the imperial family. Virtually all sources, with the exception of Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 20. 151), relate that Claudius was poisoned.

- 194 *the citadel*: the part of the Capitoline Hill where the temple of Juno was located.

He died . . . the fourteenth year of his reign: 13 October 54 CE.

restored by Vespasian: cf. *Vesp.* 9.

NERO

- 195 *Two young men . . . a battle whose outcome was at that time awaited*: Plutarch (*Aemilius Paulus* 25) identifies the twins as Castor and Pollux. The battle in question was that of Lake Regillus fought against the Latins in 496 BCE, according to Roman tradition.

turning his beard . . . bronze: hence ‘Ahenobarbus’ from *aheneus*, ‘bronze’ and *barbus*, ‘beard’.

Gnaeus Domitius: tribune of the plebs in 104 BCE he went on to be consul in 96 and censor in 92.

When he was consul . . . as if in a triumphal procession: actually, it was the tribune’s father, also called Gnaeus Domitius, who defeated the Allobroges. For the motif of appropriating the triumph, cf. ch. 25 below.

The son of this Ahenobarbus . . . contrary to the auspices and the laws: see *Jul.* 23–4.

- 196 *Corfinium*: in central Italy.

Pharsalus: the battle which brought the defeat of Pompey by Julius Caesar. See *Jul.* 35.

He was an indecisive man . . . an insufficiently powerful dose: for similar indecision on the part of Nero himself, see chs. 47–9 below.

a son: Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul 32 BCE. This is the Aenobarbus of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

the Pedian law: the law condemning the conspirators was proposed in 43 by the consul Quintus Pedius.

- 197 *He was no less famous . . . to restrain him by edict:* this ancestor foreshadows the emperor in his enthusiasm for chariot racing (22 and 24), cruelty (36 and 37) and humiliation of the Roman élite on stage (11). Suetonius is the only source to attribute these vices to the former.

the elder Antonia: Mark Antony's elder daughter.

Gaius Caesar: Augustus' grandson—his adopted son. Their respective ages make this story most unlikely but it serves Suetonius' purpose in emphasizing Nero's inherited vices.

he issued an edict: in his capacity as praetor, but the edict did not remedy his own previous action.

on the eighteenth day before the Kalends of January: 15 December 37 CE.

laid on the ground: it was the custom for a new-born baby to be laid on the ground. The father would then acknowledge it by picking it up.

purification: this ceremony, which for a boy took place nine days after his birth, entailed the child's purification by means of a sacrifice and the receipt of a name.

his name: either Claudius' forename, Tiberius or his *cognomen*, Nero. Both these names were later taken by Nero on being adopted.

- 198 *his co-heir, Caligula, seized everything:* cf. *Cal.* 38, also ch. 32 below.

In his eleventh year: Nero was adopted 25 February 50, when he was 12. His mother Agrippina had married Claudius in 49 (cf. *Claud.* 27).

teaching Caligula: Suetonius' account lays particular emphasis on similarities between Caligula and Nero.

his father: i.e. Claudius.

- 199 *the Latin festival:* see note to p. 170.

Octavia: Claudius' daughter by Messalina.

he refused just one . . . for one of his age: contrast the repeated refusal of honours by Augustus (*Aug.* 53).

sharing a litter: this apparent sign of filial respect takes on a new significance in the light of accusations of incest (see ch. 28 below).

the Papian law: of 9 CE, part of the Augustan marriage legislation. Cf. *Claud.* 19.

in the case of senators . . . five thousand sesterces: cf. *Tib.* 47 and *Vesp.* 17. Augustus, too, is said by the historian Dio to have helped needy senators (55. 13).

200 *without prompting*: cf. *Aug.* 53.

a public thanksgiving: an honour previously conferred only on generals after a great victory.

He would recite his poems . . . to Capitoline Jupiter: though this could be seen as foreshadowing the much less acceptable forms of self-display recounted in chs. 20 and 21 below.

He provided a great many games: cf. *Aug.* 43–5.

Youth Games: according to Dio (61. 19. 1) these celebrated the first shaving of Nero's beard. Cf. ch. 12 below.

he assigned separate seating to Roman knights: hitherto, equestrians had had separate seating only at the theatre.

took on the parts of actors: while this added to the lustre of the production it could also be seen as humiliating for the participants. Cf. note to p. 67.

Afranius: born c.150 BCE. None of his works have survived.

keep them for themselves: contrast citizens' experience at the time of the real fire, as recounted in ch. 38 below.

four hundred senators . . . of good reputation: members of the senatorial and equestrian orders seem to have appeared on stage and in the arena under other emperors as well, but generally, Suetonius implies, they chose to do so for the money (such activities were particularly associated with the profligate). Nero, Suetonius suggests, was exercising compulsion upon those who would not otherwise be making an exhibition of themselves.

Pyrrhic dancers: originally a dance of armed men, this seems later to have developed to include the performance of mythological stories.

201 *Pasiphae*: wife of the mythical king Minos and mother of the Minotaur.

an Icarus . . . fell immediately to the ground: trapped on Crete, the mythical inventor Daedalus is said to have made wings from feathers and wax to enable himself and his son Icarus to escape. Icarus flew too near the sun, the wax melted and he fell to his death.

his baths and gymnasium: in the Campus Martius area of Rome.

who occupied the seats of the praetors: thus indicating that these games ranked higher than those over which the praetors presided.

oratory and verse in Latin: part of the 'musical' phase of the competition.

the first shavings of his beard: these were celebrated as a mark of a young man's accession to adulthood.

To the athletic contests . . . Olympia: women had been excluded from watching athletics by Augustus.

I am, I believe, justified . . . into the city: Tiridates was the brother of Vologaesus I of Parthia who made him king of Armenia in 54 CE. Tiridates was temporarily displaced through Roman intervention then reinstated by his brother. After negotiations with the Roman general Corbulo, Tiridates agreed to come to Rome and receive the crown of Armenia

ceremonially from Nero in 66, thereby allowing Romans the appearance at least of control over Armenia. There is perhaps some irony in Suetonius' suggestion that this was just a show. At ch. 30 below he criticizes the cost of this event.

- 202 'Imperator': the term used to salute a victorious general. No mention is made of Corbulo who actually negotiated the agreement.

offered laurels on the Capitol: this was normally done only when a triumph was celebrated.

closed the gates . . . no longer any wars being waged: as Augustus had done; see *Aug. 22*.

He held the consulship . . . the first and fourth: 55, 57, 58, and 60. A fifth consulship in 68 is referred to in ch. 43 below.

He refused . . . into the senate: contrast *Claud. 24*.

his one-day consulship: see *Jul. 76*.

the triumphal regalia: previously conferred only on senior military commanders.

He devised a new arrangement . . . for fighting fires: presumably after the great fire which destroyed large swathes of the city and for which many believed Nero himself to be responsible. See ch. 38 below.

He devised . . . to the old city: it is striking that Suetonius gives no account of major public-works projects which Nero is known to have undertaken, such as his baths in the Campus Martius (alluded to in ch. 12 above). See also ch. 31 below.

- 203 *Many new laws were passed*: Suetonius' use of the passive in the rest of this chapter has been seen as an acknowledgement that Burrus (the prefect of the praetorian guard) and Seneca (Nero's tutor) rather than Nero himself initiated these measures.

the sale of hot food in taverns was prohibited: several emperors are said to have initiated measures of this kind. See e.g. *Tib. 34* and *Claud. 38*.

the pantomime actors . . . outlawed from the city: the imposition of such controls is associated with several emperors (see e.g. *Tib. 37*). It fits oddly with the emphasis elsewhere in Suetonius' account on Nero's enthusiasm for the stage (e.g. ch. 26 below)

transferred to the Forum: rather than coming before the prefects of the treasury.

his own parent: i.e. Claudius. Suetonius does not seem to be critical of Nero's behaviour here. Cf. *Aug. 21*.

Pontus: a small client kingdom on the south coast of the Black Sea.

the latter's Alpine territory: the only remaining part of the Alps not already a Roman province.

the Isthmus: of Corinth. This project is also associated with Julius Caesar (*Jul. 44*). Caligula, too, according to Suetonius, hoped to dig through the

isthmus (*Cal.* 21). Roman moralists often associated such interventions in the natural boundaries between land and sea with tyranny (see e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3. 1).

- 204 *the Caspian gates*: the name given to the chief pass through the central part of the Caucasus.

Alexander the Great: other emperors, too, had linked themselves with Alexander: see *Aug.* 18, 50 and 94; *Cal.* 52.

hidden music has no admirers: public performances of this kind were traditionally seen by Romans as degrading to the performer, however.

- 205 *supported by those even of a guard of soldiers*: soldiers in particular might have been expected to disapprove of such unmanly activities.

Niobe: the mythological figure Niobe who had twelve children attracted the wrath of the gods for comparing herself favourably with Leda who had only two, Apollo and Diana. The latter, both archers, shot all her children dead. Niobe was the archetype of the bereaved mother. Nero's choice of a female role for his début accentuates the effeminate aspect of acting.

one of the praetors offered a million sestertes: performance for payment was perceived as especially degrading—an added excitement for an emperor with perverse tastes?

Canace . . . Hercules insane: four figures from mythology. Canace, the daughter of Aeolus, committed incest with her brother, Macereus. Orestes killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge his father, Agamemnon, and was hounded by the Furies. Oedipus blinded himself after discovering that he had unwittingly killed his father and married and had children by his own mother. Hercules was driven mad by the goddess Hera and killed his own children. All these stories could be seen as relevant to Nero's own life.

when he and his fellow pupils . . . Hector: see note to p. 164 above. After his death, the body of Hector, the Trojan hero of Homer's *Iliad*, was dragged by Achilles' chariot around the walls of Troy.

- 206 *as I have reported*: see ch. 19

Cassiope: a harbour on Corcyra (modern Corfu).

the Olympic Games: the major games in Greece (Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian as well as Olympic) took place every four years.

- 207 *the outcome would be determined by Fate*: judges with a sense of their own safety would know better than to award the prize to anyone but the emperor.

wiping sweat from his brow with his arm: it seems handkerchiefs were not permitted. Nero's scrupulousness here contrasts with his flagrant disregard of the conventions which normally governed the behaviour of emperors.

... disposed of: cf. *Cal.* 60 where the senate debates a similar fate for the statues of emperors.

Mithridates: several kings of Pontus bore this name.

freedom: i.e. local self-government and freedom from tribute. The grant was later cancelled by Vespasian when he made Achaea a province (*Vesp.* 8). Hence, perhaps, its inclusion here among Nero's bad deeds.

his first public appearance on stage: see ch. 20.

- 208 *through the Circus Maximus . . . the Temple of Apollo:* in contrast to the route of the usual military triumph which culminated at the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. Nero's procession could be interpreted as a parody of a triumph and might thus seem especially offensive to those who valued Rome's military traditions.

he was so keen . . . someone else speaking his words: another indication that Nero valued the theatre over the army.

. . . due not to his age but to his nature: cf. *Tib.* 57 and *Cal.* 11.

a freedman's cap or a wig: for the use of disguise cf. *Cal.* 11.

- 209 *He would draw out his banquets from noon to midnight:* banquets normally took place in the evening.

respectable ladies . . . to summon them: according to Suetonius, Caligula too was associated with the prostitution of respectable women; see *Cal.* 41.

- 210 *all were convinced that he had desired to sleep with his mother . . . his clothing:* cf. the allegations of incest relating to Caligula (*Cal.* 24).

he devised a new and unprecedented practice . . . Doryphorus: cf. the sadistic practices Suetonius attributes to Tiberius (*Tib.* 44).

the vast fortune left him by Tiberius: see *Cal.* 37.

Tiridates . . . a hundred million: see ch. 13 above.

On the lyre-player . . . fit for triumphant generals: again, Nero shows disrespect for traditional Roman values by rewarding entertainers as if they were triumphant generals.

- 211 *the House of Passage:* this structure linked the imperial residences on the Palatine with the gardens of Maecenas, an imperial property on the Esquiline, via the area later occupied by the Colosseum.

the emperor himself: this was later altered by Vespasian. See *Vesp.* 18.

There was also a lake . . . wild animals: the re-creation of rusticity in the heart of the city could itself be seen as an affront to natural propriety.

he said nothing more . . . like a human being: Nero might rather have been expected to compare his new house to that of the gods. Subverting this expectation, the joke emphasizes the huge gulf separating Nero's house from anyone else's. Contrast Augustus' conspicuous modesty (*Aug.* 72).

a canal from Avernum . . . the sea: the coastline was dangerous to shipping. But such activities can also be placed in the context of Nero's other

interventions in the natural landscape, such as the Golden House and the Corinth canal. See note to p. 203 above.

- 212 *Queen Dido . . . with only the smallest trouble*: Dido, the mythical queen of Carthage, whose love for Aeneas is the subject of Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.
he made it law . . . should not escape punishment either: cf. *Cal.* 38.
punished: the penalty would include confiscation of property.
the gifts . . . different cities: see ch. 24.
closed down all the stalls: presumably confiscating their wares.
the kind of mushrooms . . . the food of the gods: cf. *Claud.* 44.
- 213 *lengthening the first syllable*: of *morari*. The word would otherwise have signified 'remain'.
he failed to provide . . . cremated: cf. *Claud.* 45. Contrast the respect for predecessors shown by some earlier emperors, e.g. *Jul.* 88 and *Aug.* 100.
the Julian law: 'Against Assassination', renewed by Julius Caesar.
. . . and retire to Rhodes because of her: cf. the story Suetonius tells about Tiberius' reasons for retiring to Capri (*Tib.* 51). Tiberius had himself retired to Rhodes in 6 BCE.
- 214 *festival of Minerva*: a four day festival in March.
Bauli: a small Campanian town between Misenum and Baiae.
'When I have your first beard, I can die happy': see note to p. 200.
- 215 *the insignia of wife*: just as the triumphal insignia might be granted in place of a triumph.
a great passion for Poppaea: Suetonius gives an account of this at *Otho* 3.
Aulus Plautius: it is not clear how he was related to Nero.
- 216 *Seneca . . . Burrus*: it is notable that Suetonius makes no mention of the strong influence both Burrus and Seneca are alleged by other sources to have had over Nero's administration, though cf. note to p. 203 above.
the imperial freedmen: Pallas and Doryphorus are mentioned by Tacitus (*Annals* 14. 65). On Pallas, see *Claud.* 28.
A comet . . . successive nights: cf. *Jul.* 88.
the Pisonian conspiracy at Rome: discovered in 65. Tacitus gives a lengthy account of it (*Annals* 15. 48–74). Suetonius does not list the prominent individuals who were killed in the aftermath.
Vinicio . . . Beneventum: nothing is otherwise known of this plot.
Salvidienus Orfitus: consul in 51.
Gaius Cassius . . . family tree: compare the similar charge made at *Tib.* 61.
Thræsa Paetus . . . a teacher: Thræsa was known for his commitment to Stoic philosophy. Stoic teachers were often criticized for affecting an over-serious demeanour.

- 217 *the fabric of his ancestral city*: contrast Suetonius' comments on Augustus' treatment of Rome, *Aug.* 28–30.
he set fire to the city: Rome was devastated by a great fire in 64. Nero's responsibility for it is much less clear in, for example, Tacitus, *Annals* 15. 38.
the tower of Maecenas: presumably located in the Gardens of Maecenas on the Esquiline hill.
he undertook . . . their own property: this act could be seen as one of imperial beneficence.
- 218 *Libitina's portion*: records of deaths were kept in Libitina's temple.
a great disaster . . . allies: the revolt of Boudicca.
humiliation . . . Syria: cf. to p. 201.
was especially tolerant . . . pasquinades: though cf. ch. 32 on treason accusations.
Nero . . . killed their mothers: in Greek. On Orestes see note to p. 205. Alcmeon, another figure from myth, was the son of Amphiareus. He too killed his mother and was hounded by the Furies.
A new equation . . . mother: in Greek. The numerical value of the letters in Nero's name (1,005) is equivalent to that of the rest of the sentence.
Aeneas . . . his father: Aeneas rescued his father by carrying him on his back from the ruins of Troy.
. . . theirs the great archer: hence, perhaps, the Parthians will triumph.
Rome is becoming one house . . . Veii, too: when Rome was sacked by the Gauls in 390 BCE, there was allegedly a debate as to whether the Romans should leave their city for the neighbouring town of Veii. Nero thus appears as an enemy occupying the city of Rome.
Isidorus the Cynic . . . his own goods ill: Cynic philosophers, having no regard for material comforts, were traditionally outspoken even to the most powerful. Nauplius, the son of Odysseus' rival Palamedes, sought to avenge his father after the latter had been framed by Odysseus.
Orcus guides your steps: Orcus, a god of the underworld, was often used as a synonym for death. Roman audiences were well attuned to perceiving contemporary resonances in plays, sometimes with the encouragement of the actors. See e.g. Cicero, *To Atticus* 39. 3 (59 BCE) which describes an audience interpreting a line from a play as a reference to the ambitions of Pompey.
The actor and the philosopher . . . displeasure: contrast *Cal.* 27 and *Dom.* 10.
- 219 *Vindex . . . propraetor*: Gaius Julius Vindex (a Roman of aristocratic Gallic descent) rebelled against Nero in spring of 68.
the age of Galba: though Galba was actually 71 in 68 CE.
his poor lyre-playing: again, Suetonius presents Nero as valuing his achievements as a singer over everything else.

- 220 *Galba . . . had also revolted*: see *Galba* 9.
- 221 *shorn in a mannish fashion . . . Amazons*: cross-dressing characterizes even the military activities of Suetonius' Nero. On Amazons see note to p. 11 above.
not even excepting accountants or secretaries: the use of slaves in war was perceived as a last resort of the desperate.
to the emperor's fund: rather than to their landlords.
real competition . . . at last: in contrast to those of the games. The lock of hair was presumably a reference to Nero's practice of wearing his hair long. See. ch. 51 below.
- the sack*: part of the prescribed punishment for parricide.
- 222 *the Gauls*: a pun on *galli* which means both 'cocks' and 'Gauls'.
a Defender: i.e. *Vindex*, a pun on the name of the rebel leader.
His fears . . . and omens: cf. the dreams of Julius Caesar, *Jul.* 81.
the Mausoleum: constructed by Augustus for himself and his descendants. See *Aug.* 100.
Proserpina: she was carried off by Pluto, the god of the underworld. Thus her story could be understood as portending death.
vows: on New Year's Day, for the safety of the state and the emperor.
'Oedipus in Exile': on Oedipus, see note to p. 205 above. The line might be thought especially pertinent to Nero who was alleged to have been involved in poisoning his stepfather Claudius, to have committed incest with and murdered his mother, and to have had his wife Octavia sent into exile for a crime she did not commit.
- Lucusta*: see ch. 33 above.
- 223 '*It is really so hard to die?*': Virgil, *Aeneid* 12. 646.
the Salerian Way and the Nomentan Way: two roads leading out of Rome to the west.
- 224 '*This is Nero's essence*': apparently referring to a drink he was alleged to have devised (see Pliny, *Natural Histories* 31. 40).
beyond the reach: i.e. to commit suicide.
- 225 '*The thunder . . . my ears*': Homer, *Iliad* 10. 535.
the Hill of Gardens: now known as the Pincio.
his tunic unbelted: the absence of a belt was often seen as a sign of effeminacy.
philosophy . . . incompatible with imperial power: some philosophical sects advocated a life of contemplation, which would mean rejecting active involvement in running the state.
- Seneca . . . for himself*: cf. the comments on Seneca's style which Suetonius attributes to Caligula (*Cal.* 53).
- 226 *many are of the opinion . . . as his own*: this has been seen as an attempt to refute Tacitus, *Annals* 14. 16. 1–8.

I have had access . . . in the work: this is one of the very few occasions on which Suetonius refers to an archive source later than the letters of Augustus.

'*Neroneus*': cf. *Jul.* 76, *Aug.* 100.

the Syrian goddess: Atargatis, widely worshipped in Syria.

- 227 *He met his end . . . dressed in liberty caps:* Nero died 9 June 68.

Yet there were also some . . . to surrender him: contrast the much less ambiguous responses to the deaths of Tiberius (*Tib.* 75) and Caligula (*Cal.* 60).

GALBA

- 228 *With Nero, the descendants of the Caesars died out:* subsequent emperors (apart from Vitellius, see *Vit.* 8) took the name 'Caesar' as a title.

an eagle . . . dropped the bird into her lap: eagle portents are very frequent in Suetonius, particularly in relation to the holding of supreme power. See e.g. *Aug.* 94, *Tib.* 14, *Claud.* 7.

the temple of the Caesars: it is not clear what building is referred to here.

Galba . . . succeeded Nero: in 68 CE.

Quintus Catulus Capitolinus: a leading figure of the late republic who acquired his title because he was given responsibility for rebuilding the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol after it was destroyed by fire in 83 BCE.

Pasiphae: see note to p. 201 above.

the ancestral portraits: see note to p. 44.

the name Galba: as a cognomen.

galbanum: the resin of a Syrian plant.

- 229 *Servius Galba . . . slaughtered:* governor of Further Spain 151–150 BCE. He is alleged to have promised peace to the Lusitani, then, when they had laid down their arms, to have captured a large number of whom all but a few were slaughtered. The survivors included Viriatus, who went on to lead the Lusitani and after whom the war was named.

the Pedian law: see note to p. 196.

the consulship: he was suffect consul in 5 BCE.

the allocation of provinces . . . in his year: under the principate, it became the practice that the governorships of Africa and Asia were awarded each year to the two most senior ex-consuls (the lot determining who got which province).

the ninth day . . . Gnaeus Lentulus: 24 December 3 BCE.

He was adopted . . . changing his forename: women in Rome could not formally adopt except in their wills. Before becoming emperor, Galba seems to have used the name L. Livius Ocella Sulpicius Galba.

- 230 *the bronze image of a goddess . . . once a year*: cf. the omen involving this statue in ch. 18 below.
he insisted unswervingly . . . one by one: one of several ways in which Galba is presented as excessively devoted to tradition.
- Agrippina*: the younger Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus and the elder Agrippina, and mother of the emperor Nero. She subsequently married the emperor Claudius (see *Claud.* 26).
- 231 *elephants walked on tightropes*: cf. *Nero*: 11.
for six months: in 33 CE.
Lucius Domitius: elsewhere Nero's father is referred to as 'Gnaeus' rather than 'Lucius'.
when Caligula was visiting: see *Cal.* 43–4.
run alongside the emperor's chariot for twenty miles: cf. *Caligula* 26—though with a rather different spin.
He was specially chosen: normally provinces were allocated by lot to appropriately qualified ex-magistrates. See note to p. 229 above.
- 232 *the Board of Fifteen*: see note to p. 37.
the brotherhood of Titius: an ancient priesthood, origins uncertain.
the priests of Augustus: founded by Tiberius to serve the cult of Augustus after his deification.
the governorship of Nearer Spain: in 60 CE.
the lake of Cantabria: in northern Spain.
crucified: crucifixion was regarded as punishment suitable only for slaves.
- 233 *a state of rebellion*: cf. *Nero* 40 and note to p. 219.
Clunia: a city in northern Spain.
manumission of slaves: part of Galba's duties as provincial governor would have been granting requests to manumit slaves. The regular time for this would have been an especially apt moment to declare his intention to free the empire from Nero's slavery.
the nearest of the Balearic islands: Majorca.
retaining entitlement . . . the gold ring: normally equestrians who served as legionaries or centurions would lose this.
- 234 *Dertosa*: a town near the mouth of the river Hebrus (modern Ebro) in Spain.
the death of Vindex: defeated at the battle of Vesontio by Verginius Rufus, the governor of Upper Germany, Vindex may have been killed or else committed suicide.
'Caesar': originally the family name of Julius Caesar, the name 'Caesar' had by this time effectively become an imperial title, which could be taken on even by someone quite unrelated to the Julio-Claudians. See note to p. 228.

a dagger . . . suspended from his neck: the dagger was an emblem of the emperor's proconsular power.

capital punishment: in Roman law this might mean no more than exile, along with the forfeiting of property and citizen rights.

235 *five denarii:* a very meagre reward.

the well-known chorus . . . with the accompanying gestures: we should assume this chorus was a lament uttered by the city household on the unwelcome arrival of their severe elderly master from the country. For a similar incident see *Nero* 39 and note to p. 218.

he gave many indications of being an excellent emperor: Suetonius chooses not to include any specific instances of these.

the gold ring: one emblem of equestrian status; cf. ch. 10 above.

236 *parental privilege:* see note to p. 61 above.

by Claudius: see *Claud.* 23. The addition of a sixth panel of judges would presumably reduce the burden of service on the others.

the gifts made by Nero: see *Nero*: 30.

Halotus and Tigillinus: Halotus was a eunuch food-taster, allegedly involved in poisoning Claudius (see *Claud.* 44), while Tigellinus (as his name is spelled elsewhere) served as prefect of the praetorian guard under Nero.

a larger than usual donative: it was customary for a new emperor to make a gift of money to each soldier on his accession to power. Note Suetonius' apparently critical comment on an instance of such 'bribery' at *Claud.* 10.

Nymphidius: from 65 praetorian prefect. He had made an attempt to seize power for himself after Nero's death; see ch. 11 above.

237 *to swear their oath on the Kalends of January:* it had become customary for the armies to take an oath of loyalty to the emperor on his appointment and to renew this every New Year's Day. Cf. *Nero* 46.

an ox . . . soaked him with its blood: it was considered very unlucky for a sacrificial victim to run away.

the image of Fortune he kept in his villa at Tusculum: see ch. 4 above.

238 *some warm ashes . . . the wine in an earthenware cup:* for an auspicious sacrifice, the altar would have been blazing, the attendants young, and the vessels made of precious materials.

the chickens flew away: the chickens were supposed to stay and eat, the more greedily the better.

he even promised a donative: which he had hitherto refused them; see ch. 16 above.

239 *the lacus Curtius:* a spot in the middle of the Forum linked to several different myths associated with early Rome, as well as with vows for the emperor's welfare (cf. *Aug.* 57).

since he could not grasp it by the hair: Suetonius notes below (ch. 21) that Galba was virtually bald.

- 239 *Steadfast . . . continues still*: in Greek; a quotation from Homer, *Iliad* 5. 254 (the same line occurs at *Odyssey* 21. 426).

Patrobius Neronianus: as his name indicates, Patrobius was himself a freedman of Nero.

only those who were especially tough and full grown: Romans generally seem to have considered boys and younger men suitable objects for desire, while it was thought perverse to lust after mature men.

- 240 *in his seventy-third year*: this statement cannot be reconciled with the birthdate Suetonius gives in ch. 4 above.

believing that Galba . . . to Judaea: this echoes Suetonius' earlier statement that Nero was alleged to have sent orders that Galba should be killed (*Galba* 9).

OTHO

- 241 *Ferentium*: a town in south Etruria.

Livia Augusta: the wife of Augustus.

in the middle of the camp: executions usually took place outside the camp, under the supervision of more junior officers.

Camillus' attempted coup: Camillus Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia from 40 CE, made a bid for power in 42. Cf. *Claud.* 13.

the fourth day . . . Domitius Ahenobarbus: 28 April 32 CE.

- 242 *a thong*: a kind of punishment more usually used for slaves.

he used to wander about by night . . . blanket: Suetonius tells similar stories about Nero; see *Nero* 26.

Poppaea Sabina: cf. *Nero* 35.

Nero himself . . . what he had handed over in trust: this scene evokes a situation frequently represented in Latin love-elegy where the would-be lover, shut out of his mistress's house, offers a poetic lament.

as an ex-quaestor: normally provincial governors had previously reached the rank of praetor at least.

- 243 *When he was chosen . . . to the soldier*: Otho's treatment of soldiers could be seen as excessively indulgent. Contrast *Galba* 16.

- 244 *the Golden Milestone*: a symbol of Rome's position as the centre of empire.

agents who were to kill Galba and Piso: see *Galba* 19.

he was hailed . . . some provincial governors: Suetonius has already emphasized their similarities of character; see ch. 2 above. On Nero's popularity even after his death, see *Nero* 57.

the Golden House: cf. Suetonius' comments on Nero's Golden House as the summit of his extravagance in *Nero* 31.

- 245 *to propitiate . . . the shade of Galba*: the shades of those who had been murdered were often thought to seek vengeance on the murderers.

'What have I got to do with long pipes?': in Greek. A proverbial expression which seems to have been used of those doing something for which they were not suited.

the sacred shields . . . replaced: the replacing of the shields was a ritual believed to be of great antiquity, performed by the Salii (priests of Mars) in March.

the Mother of the Gods: also known as the Great Mother or Cybele. The festival mentioned here included a day commemorating Cybele's grief at the loss of her beloved Attis.

Father Dis: the god of the underworld.

- 246 *Brixellum*: a town on the River Po in northern Italy, modern Brescello.

Betriacum: a settlement between Cremona and Mantua.

the deaths of Brutus and Cassius: at the end of the civil war which their assassination of Julius Caesar had triggered.

- 247 *Messalina, the widow of Nero*: Statilia Messalina was Nero's third wife.

His funeral rites . . . on his instructions: presumably to avoid his corpse suffering mutilation at the hands of his opponents as had been Galba's fate (*Galba* 20).

He died . . . his reign: contrast the noble manner of Otho's death, as described by Suetonius, with the details of Nero's inconsistent and cowardly last hours (*Nero* 47–9), a contrast all the more notable given the many respects in which the two are presented as similar (see chs. 2 and 7 above).

Otho's appearance . . . such greatness: Suetonius frequently implies that physiognomy ought to reflect character. See e.g. the descriptions of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

the rites of Isis . . . the cult: although Caligula had earlier established an official state cult of Isis, other emperors had not participated publicly in this exotic cult, originating in Egypt, whose priests were eunuchs.

- 248 *in their grief attacked and killed one another*: contrast *Cal.* 27 where people offer their lives for the emperor's safety but are not willing to fulfil their promises.

VITELLIUS

- 249 *Faunus . . . and Vitellia*: Faunus was rustic deity associated with fields and woods. Vitellia is not otherwise known.

The Vitellian road . . . reminders of the line: the road is not otherwise known. There seems to have been a colony called Vitellia in the fifth century BCE. The Aequiculi of ancient Latium lived east of Rome on the bank of the River Anio.

249 *Nuceria*: probably near Naples.

Cassius Severus: an author of the Augustan age, notorious for his attacks on prominent people's reputations.

distinguished only by their forenames: as sons of the same father they would automatically share the same family (middle) name Vitellius.

250 *Gnaeus Piso . . . his condemnation*: see *Tib.* 52 and *Cal.* 2 and 3.

he succeeded in inducing Artabanus . . . the legionary standards: Rome and Parthia had been in dispute over who should rule Armenia, and over Roman attempts to control the Parthian throne. Suetonius refers to this episode in *Cal.* 14.

the censorship: the most senior and prestigious magistracy of all.

with his head veiled: it was usual for Romans to cover their heads when offering homage to a divinity.

Narcissus and Pallas: these two freedmen were believed to have enormous influence over Claudius; see *Claud.* 28–9.

'May you do this often!': the games were held in 47 CE. The proper interval between Secular Games was thought to be 100 or 110 years.

in the same year: Aulus (later emperor) and Lucius were both consul in 48.

251 *on the eighth day . . . were consuls*: 24 or 7 September 15 CE.

'tight-bum': see *Tib.* 43.

chariot racing . . . gambling: for these imperial passions, see *Cal.* 54–5 and *Claud.* 33.

Nero's contests: for these, see *Nero* 12 and 21.

in his province . . . gold and silver: Suetonius presents Otho as similarly inconsistent; see *Otho* 2–3.

252 *Titus Vinius*: see *Galba* 14.

the Blue Faction: see note to p. 164 above.

253 *mourning garments*: it was usual for someone who was on trial to wear mourning clothes until their case was determined.

with no regard to the day: it was 2 January. Traditionally it was considered inauspicious to begin something on the day after the first of the month.

Vienna: modern Vienne, on the Rhône.

a cock . . . and then on his head: for the significance of this, see ch. 18 below.

his officers: presumably a reference to Caecina and Valens, legionary legates who had commanded his victorious armies at Betriacum.

254 *the death of Otho*: see *Otho* 9 and 11.

because of the appalling example they had set: presumably in deserting Galba and appointing Otho as emperor, without the authority of the senate.

'That was the Mausoleum he deserved': contrasting Otho's modest grave with the grandeur of the imperial Mausoleum in Rome (Aug. 100).

the colony of the Agrippenses: modern Cologne.

an all-night festival . . . Apennines: the implication seems to be that this was nominally a religious thanksgiving for his victory over Otho but was in fact some kind of orgy. It was generally thought inappropriate to celebrate too enthusiastically a victory over fellow Romans.

he entered the city . . . their weapons bared: traditionally such displays were associated only with the exceptional circumstances of a triumph, the celebration of which was rare and could only be granted by the senate. Again, this overt parade of force could be seen as both a tasteless assertion of Vitellius' victory over Otho and a threat against anyone in the city who might oppose him.

the anniversary of the Allia: 18 July was always regarded as a day of particular ill-omen since it was the anniversary of a terrible defeat suffered by the Romans at the hands of the Gauls in 390 BCE, by the River Allia near Rome.

- 255 *deciding the elections for the next ten years: though the senate theoretically had the right to elect magistrates, in practice the candidates commended or nominated by the emperor secured posts as a matter of course, but it was not usual to specify magistrates so far in advance.*

consul in perpetuity: among earlier emperors, only Nero had held a perpetual consulship (see Nero 43). It was more usual for any extended consulship to be fixed at five or ten years.

the Master's Book: apparently the name of a book containing Nero's compositions.

Puteoli: now Pozzuoli, a coastal town near Naples.

the golden rings: the sign of membership of the equestrian order.

finding capacity for it all through regular vomiting: it was usual Roman practice to eat only lightly except at dinner.

No one ever spent less . . . one of these meals: cf. Nero 27.

- 256 *In this he blended . . . the straits of Spain: Roman moralists were particularly critical of exotic foods sought out from distant places and of dishes which combined different foods together. Compare the unnatural dishes associated with Caligula, Cal. 37.*

decency: cf. Claud. 33.

when he discovered . . . both be killed: cf. Cal. 38.

- 257 *the Chatti: a German tribe.*

He was also suspected . . . which he willingly gave her: the allegation of matricide again emphasizes Vitellius' resemblance to Nero.

which he set on fire, thus putting an end to them: Suetonius tells of how Domitian escaped from this conflagration at Dom. 1.

- 257 *looked out . . . as he was feasting*: looking on while Rome burns could be seen as another echo of Nero. Cf. *Nero* 38.
the dagger he had at his side: this dagger symbolized the emperor's power of life and death over the people.
- 258 *the temple of Concord*: a temple on the slope of the Capitoline hill, overlooking the Forum. It had strong associations with the resolution of civil conflict.
- 259 *Gemonian steps*: see note to p. 124.
set out above: in ch. 9 above.
Tolosa: in Gallia Narbonensis, modern Toulouse.
cock's beak: there is also a play here on *gallus* meaning 'cock' and *Gallus* meaning 'Gaul'.

THE DEIFIED VESPASIAN

- 260 *without any ancestral portraits*: i.e. no members of the family had held curule magistracies which would have entitled the family to display their busts.
Reate: an ancient Sabine city.
Pharsalus: see *Jul.* 35.
a fortieth: a tax on imports and exports.
the Helvetii: a Gallic tribe.
Nursia: a Sabine town.
- 261 *the fifteenth day . . . consuls*: 17 November 9 CE.
the broad-striped senatorial tunic: a preliminary qualification for the senate, granted as a special privilege to some sons of equestrian fathers.
he came sixth: i.e. of all the six successful candidates he secured fewest votes.
the conspirators: presumably Aemilius Lepidus and Lentulus Gaetulicus, accused in 39 of plotting to usurp the empire. See *Cal.* 24 and *Claud.* 9.
Latin status: a form of citizenship with more limited rights than those of full Roman citizens. Many slaves who had been freed but not according to the prescribed rituals also fell into this category.
- 262 *Antonia*: daughter of Mark Antony and mother of the emperor Claudius.
Britain: cf. *Claud.* 17.
the island of Vectis: the Isle of Wight.
of the year: 51 CE.
Hadrumentum: a city near Carthage in North Africa.
to keep up his position: there was a property qualification for the senatorial order of 1,000,000 sesterces.
Nero's entourage: see *Nero* 22.

- 263 *being of modest name and family, he offered no threat:* an ironic comment on Suetonius' part. Only those of aristocratic background could make a plausible claim to the empire, it was believed—wrongly, as events turned out.
- the following signs:* Suetonius' inclusion of omens and portents at this point in his narrative effectively serves to increase the reader's suspense as he builds up to the account of Vespasian's unexpected rise to power.
- a human hand:* the Latin for hand, *manus*, is often used to mean power.
- 264 *Betriacum:* see *Otho* 9.
- two eagles . . . drove away the victor:* the first two eagles could be taken to represent Otho and Vitellius, the third Vespasian, who defeated Vitellius, the vanquisher of Otho.
- Aquileia:* a town in northern Italy on the Adriatic coast.
- 265 *the fifth day before the Ides:* 11 July. The date is disputed.
- transferring the German army to the East:* and thus stationing the eastern legions in less attractive locations.
- Licinius Mucianus:* governor of Syria, the neighbouring province.
- 266 *he added another eight consulships to his earlier one:* in 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, and 79.
- the marines . . . on foot:* they were stationed at Ostia and at Puteoli, the two major ports serving Rome, to watch for fires and also had duties in the city.
- 267 *on his own back:* cf. *Nero* 19.
- that of the Deified Claudius on the Caelian hill:* cf. *Claud.* 45.
- virtually razed to the ground by Nero:* presumably in the process of constructing the Golden House; see *Nero* 31.
- an amphitheatre:* the Colosseum. The amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus, also of stone, was constructed in Augustus' time but in the Campus Martius, i.e. outside the city proper (as defined by the *pomerium*). In general, Suetonius presents Vespasian's interest in the fabric of the city as parallel to that of Augustus. Cf. *Aug.* 28–30.
- The distinguished orders . . . to the orders:* cf. the actions attributed to Augustus, *Aug.* 35. Other emperors are presented as undermining the senate. See e.g. *Tib.* 55, *Cal.* 49, *Claud.* 24 and 29, *Nero* 37.
- the centumviral courts:* see *Aug.* 36 and note to p. 63.
- 268 *money-lenders should never have the right . . . after the family-head's death:* it seems to have been common for money-lenders to make loans to those in their father's or grandfather's power (when legally they had no property of their own) which were to be repaid on the father's or grandfather's death (when the borrower would acquire legal independence and would probably have inherited property).
- the Salarian Way:* leading from Rome to Reate.

- 268 *At first . . . well on in his reign*: it is unclear what is meant here, as Vespasian's tribunician power seems to have been dated from the day he was acclaimed emperor, 1 July 69 (although perhaps he did not at first make use of it). Vespasian (like Nero) seems to have refused the first offer of 'Father of the Fatherland' (cf. *Nero* 8), while Tiberius had declined it altogether (*Tib.* 26, 67).
- having those who came to pay their respects searched*: contrast *Claud.* 35.
- He put up most patiently . . . the arrogance of philosophers*: cf. *Aug.* 54–5.
- the services he had rendered*: see ch. 6 above.
- '*At least I am a real man*': presumably an allusion to Licinius' allegedly effeminate sexual preferences.
- '*What is it to Caesar if Hipparchus has a hundred million*': thus implying that the notoriously avaricious Vespasian might be inclined to condemn a wealthy man in order to secure his property.
- a dog*: Cynic philosophers were called such since the extremely simple life they recommended was likened by some to that of a dog, the Greek for 'dog' being *kuōn*.
- 269 *fearful at being banned from Nero's court*: see the section on Vespasian's travels in Nero's entourage in ch. 4. above.
- he would some day be mindful of the favour*: an ironic comment to the effect that when Mettius was emperor he might return Vespasian's kindness.
- his edicts*: normally the emperor's name and titles of honour would be listed at the beginning of the praetor's edict, as well as on other official documents.
- Helvidius Priscus . . . an ordinary citizen*: the Stoic Helvidius Priscus (praetor in 70) was married to the daughter of Thrasea Paetus. Under Nero, Thrasea had been made to commit suicide and Helvidius had been banished (in 66). Helvidius' outspoken opposition to Vespasian is celebrated by the later Stoic writer, Epictetus.
- He engaged openly . . . at a profit*: the Roman élite generally expressed disapproval of transactions of this kind, claiming that agriculture was the only truly respectable way to make a living (cf. Cicero, *On Duties* 1. 42). Such actions were considered especially shameful for senators (though there is considerable evidence that senators actually engaged in all kinds of business deals, often through agents).
- 270 *supporting needy ex-consuls . . . sesterces*: cf. *Nero* 10.
- the Colossus*: the colossal statue of Nero (see *Nero* 31).
- Terpnus and Diodorus*: Terpnus had earlier taught Nero, according to Suetonius (*Nero* 20), while Diodorus had been defeated by him in a Greek musical contest (*Dio* 63. 20).
- Saturnalia . . . Kalends of March*: the festival of the Saturnalia (see Glossary) was traditionally associated with the giving of gifts; 1 March was the Matronalia, in honour of the goddess Juno Lucina (associated with childbirth), when gifts were traditionally given to women.

'*Cybiosactes*': literally, 'salt-fish vendor' in Greek.

271 *ten million sesterces*: contrast the alleged cost of Nero's funeral (*Nero* 50).

he would put on his own shoes and cloak: usually high-ranking Romans would have slaves help them dress. Another sign of Vespasian's unassuming nature.

Caenii: see ch. 3 above.

'*plostra*' instead of '*plausta*': meaning 'wagons'. Vespasian was being criticized for his rustic pronunciation.

272 *at quite appropriate moments*: contrast for example Claudius' generally inappropriate use of language (*Claud.* 21).

Striding along . . . a long shadow: Homer, *Iliad* 7. 213. The Latin for spear, *hasta* was sometimes used as a synonym for 'penis'.

to cheat . . . when he died: an ex-slave's former owner was entitled to at least some part of his estate.

Laches: a curious choice, as Laches was a stock name for a slave in Greek comedy.

O Laches . . . Cerylus again: Vespasian is presented as adapting some lines from a play by Menander (fr. 223. 2, Koch) to suggest that, whatever name the man used, his estate would be treated as that of the freedman Cerylus on his death.

to shoe the mules: mules were not normally shod, but their hoofs might be given temporary protective coverings on difficult terrain.

the base was all ready: i.e. the pile of money was to be placed on his hand.

the Mausoleum: that of Augustus (*Aug.* 100). For the portent cf. *Nero* 46.

long hair: the Latin *comata* literally means 'long-haired star'. Comets were particularly associated with the deaths of rulers. Cf. *Jul.* 88 and *Nero* 36.

I think I am becoming a god: an ironic reference to the practice of deifying some emperors after their deaths.

273 *Cutilae*: a town in the Sabine country.

Reate, where he used to spend every summer: see ch. 2 above.

on the ninth day . . . one month and seven days: 23 June 79.

both reigned . . . the same space of time: Claudius and Nero reigned respectively 13 and 14 years; Vespasian reigned 10, Titus 2, and Domitian 15.

THE DEIFIED TITUS

274 *his father's cognomen*: Vespasianus. His brother took the *cognomen* Domitianus, from their mother's family.

three days . . . in which Gaius was killed: 30 December 41 CE.

274 *the Septizonium*: a seven-storey building. Location unknown.

Britannicus: son of the emperor Claudius.

. . . which *Britannicus* finished off and then died: see *Nero* 33.

275 *a prefect of the praetorian guard*: the highest office a knight might aspire to.

conquered . . . two mighty cities in Judaea: in 67.

Soon confirmed in this expectation: by the accession of his father, Vespasian.

they acclaimed him as 'Imperator': it had been customary for conspicuous victories to be marked in this way under the republic. However, under the principate it was almost unheard of for anyone other than the emperor himself to receive such an acclamation. Cf. *Jul.* 76, *Claud.* 12.

a diadem: the wearing of a diadem suggested regal aspirations. Cf. Julius Caesar's rejection of the diadem offered by Antony (*Jul.* 79).

276 *they held the censorship jointly*: in 73.

tribunician power: this clearly marked him as Vespasian's successor (cf. *Tib.* 16). He was also consul in 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, and 79.

in place of a quaestor: the quaestors appointed by the emperor were normally responsible for reading out his communications to the senate.

Aulus Caecina: consul in 69 CE.

Queen Berenice: daughter of Agrippa I, king of Judaea.

another Nero: compare the vices Suetonius attributes to Nero (*Nero* 26).

this reputation . . . by the greatest praise: Suetonius' Titus, who turns out to be good despite his reputation, is the mirror image of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian who, though initially welcomed, are gradually revealed as monstrous (cf. *Tib.* 57, *Cal.* 11, *Nero* 26, *Dom.* 1).

277 *later emperors also . . . made particular use of*: usually a change of regime involved a change of advisers.

the amphitheatre: the Colosseum, on which work began under his father (see *Vesp.* 9).

he was the first . . . without even being asked: the rights bestowed by emperors on communities, classes, and individuals, such as exemptions of various kinds, which had previously been regarded as invalid on the death of the emperor who granted them.

without any loss of dignity or fairness: contrast Suetonius' attitude to the preferences expressed by Caligula (*Cal.* 55) and Domitian (*Dom.* 10). Similarly, Suetonius comments on Claudius' lack of dignity when watching the games (*Claud.* 21).

278 *the eruption of Mount Vesuvius*: that of 79 which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum.

a fire at Rome: in 80.

During the fire . . . its more rapid completion: contrast the response of Suetonius' Nero, who sings while Rome burns (*Nero* 38).

sacrifices: plagues were often seen as a sign of divine anger which might be propitiated by the appropriate sacrifices.

the legal status of a deceased person: if the dead person were proved a slave rather than of free status, the dispositions of their will would no longer be valid.

Pontifex Maximus: since 13 BCE all emperors had held this priesthood.

When two men . . . to refrain: Suetonius presents Julius Caesar as similarly lenient towards conspirators (*Jul.* 75).

- 279 *their inspection:* it was customary for the person giving the games to inspect the weapons to see if they were sharp enough. A similar story is told about the emperor Nerva (Dio 68. 3).

On the Ides of September . . . in the forty-second year of his age: 13 September 81.

everyone . . . a member of their own family: cf. Suetonius' account of the mourning for Germanicus (*Cal.* 5).

heaped up such praises . . . present among them: contrast the great joy which Suetonius attributes to the senate on the death of Domitian (*Dom.* 23).

DOMITIAN

- 280 *Domitian was born . . . consul designate:* 24 October 51 CE.

'The One-Eyed Man': perhaps with the added sense of penis.

that dubious superstition: Isis was an Egyptian divinity. The priests of Isis were eunuchs and might seem appropriate companions for a young man of apparently compromised masculinity.

as Caesar: see note to p. 228 above. The extension of 'Caesar' to an emperor's son is noteworthy.

the office of urban prefect with consular power: an unprecedented combination of powers (his father and brother were both away from Rome).

he harassed the wives . . . the wife of Aelius Lamia: compare Suetonius' comments on Augustus (*Aug.* 69) and Caligula (*Cal.* 36). On Aelius Lamia, see further ch. 10 below.

- 281 *sedan:* since Claudius chairs (in which the occupant sat upright) had been used by emperors in preference to litters (in which one reclined) to travel through the city.

Alani: in Scythia.

a double donative: i.e. twice what his brother gave, as the new emperor.

a forged will: we might note here the boast Suetonius attributes to Titus (*Titus* 3) that he could have been a master forger.

- 281 *not even a fly*: a proverbial way to describe a deserted place.
Augusta: the title awarded to Livia after the death of Augustus.
but lost the boy . . . power: the MSS readings are problematic here.
- 282 *a little boy . . . with a small and deformed head*: dwarfs and people with deformities were often chosen as favourites by emperors and members of the Roman élite.
having calculated the time period . . . when Augustus had done so: the proper timing for the Secular Games (supposedly due to take place every 100 or 110 years) was much disputed. Cf. *Claud.* 21.
prose declamation: i.e. as well as in poetry.
the college of Flaviales: established for the worship of the deified Flavian emperors, as the Augustales had been for deified Julio-Claudians.
- 283 *the Quinquatria of Minerva*: see note to p. 81.
which had burnt down again: in 80, having earlier been destroyed in 69 (see *Vit.* 15).
no mention . . . the earlier builders: this was not the usual practice. Contrast Augustus' boast in the *Res gestae* ('Account of his Achievements') that he had refrained from inscribing his own name on buildings he had restored leaving only those of earlier builders. Dio makes a similar comment about Domitian's father, Vespasian (66. 10).
the Chatti: a tribe living near the Rhine in Western Germany.
- 284 *food-baskets*: see *Nero* 16. Often, it seems, patrons gave money instead of food.
formal dinners: cf. *Aug.* 74.
two new circus factions . . . as their colours: see *Cal.* 55 and note to p. 164.
He banned actors . . . private houses: measures to curb the licence of actors are attributed to many earlier emperors by Suetonius. See e.g. *Tib.* 37.
He banned . . . still held by slave-dealers: widely celebrated as a positive feature of Domitian's reign.
to both freedmen and Roman knights: presumably those positions which were held exclusively by freedmen until the time of Nero, such as secretary in charge of letters (*ab epistulis*). By Hadrian's time freedmen were excluded from such posts.
deposit . . . at headquarters: for safe-keeping.
centumviral courts: see note to p. 63.
the regulation of morals: in 83.
- 285 *the knights' seats*: the fourteen rows, immediately behind those at the front which were occupied by the senatorial order.
because he had taken back his wife . . . adultery: laws passed under Augustus in 18 BCE and 9 CE had made it a husband's duty to divorce and prosecute an adulterous wife (see *Aug.* 34). In ch. 3 above Suetonius

presents Domitian himself as guilty of the same actions as those punished here.

the Scantinian law: the prescriptions of this law, as well as its history, have been much debated by scholars. It seems to have been aimed at punishing homosexual acts involving the penetration of a free-born male.

An impious race . . . and feasted upon them: Georgics 2. 537

he would not accept them: cf. Aug. 66.

- 286 *the Clodian law*: it is not known what law is referred to here.

some resemblance to his teacher: Domitian's wife allegedly had an affair with Paris; see ch. 3 above.

the Thracian . . . the giver of the games: Domitian was thought to favour the Thracians.

'A buckler-wearer with a big mouth': the buckler was part of the characteristic equipment of the Thracians. Cf. the treatment allegedly meted out by Caligula (*Cal. 27.*).

Domitian had stolen Lamia's wife: see ch. 1 above.

I practise continence: would-be orators were advised to improve their voices by abstaining from sexual activity. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 11. 3. 19.

- 287 *Mago and Hannibal*: Hannibal and his younger brother Mago led the Carthaginian invasion of Italy in 218 BCE, initiating the Second Punic War. They were thus archetypal enemies of Rome.

Thræsa Paetus . . . the most virtuous of men: Thræsa Paetus was a notable Stoic senator, condemned for treason under Nero. Helvidius Priscus, his son-in-law, was also known for his Stoic views and was condemned under Vespasian. See *Vesp. 15.*

the younger Helvidius: son of Helvidius Priscus.

Paris and Oenone: in mythology Oenone was Paris' first wife, whom he deserted for Helen. Roman audiences were quick to perceive contemporary allusions at the theatre; cf. *Nero* 39.

they had been used for other men's pleasures . . . the soldiers: in taking on a 'feminine' receptive role in sexual relations, these men would be seen to have forfeited the respect normally due to their rank—and gender.

- 288 *the traditional manner of punishment*: see *Nero* 49.

The estates . . . was his heir: cf. *Cal. 38*. This behaviour forms a contrast though with what Suetonius says of Domitian's treatment of those making false accusations in ch. 9 above.

The tax on the Jews . . . with the greatest rigour: a tax of two drachmas per head imposed by Titus in return for freedom to practise their religion.

went to kiss him as usual: as though she were Vespasian's wife. It was customary for Roman women to kiss their relations and those of their husbands. On Caenis, see *Vesp. 3.*

- 288 *Not good is a multitude of rulers: Iliad 2. 204.*
- 289 *it was he who had bestowed the empire on his father and brother:* they had both been in the East when Vespasian's supporters, including Domitian, took control of Rome.
- divine couch:* the term *pulvinar*, used here, normally refers to the sacred couch on which images of the gods were displayed.
- master and mistress:* the term *dominus*, used here, had been shunned by previous emperors (see e.g. *Tib.* 27). Normally used in the context of the master-slave relationship, it could be taken to imply the enslavement of the Roman people.
- he did not deign . . . demand silence:* contrast Titus' behaviour at *Titus* 8.
- '*Arci*': meaning 'enough' in Greek as well as sounding like an archaic form of the plural of the Latin *arcus*, arch.
- on seventeen occasions:* in 71, 73, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82–8, 90, 92, and 95.
- changed the name of the months:* cf. *Jul.* 76, *Aug.* 100, *Nero* 55.
- he refused the mushrooms:* the emperor Claudius had allegedly met his end eating poisoned mushrooms; see *Claud.* 44.
- he was always fearful . . . to an abnormal degree:* cf. the fear attributed to Tiberius, *Tib.* 63.
- the edict . . . concerning the cutting down of vines:* see ch. 7 above.
- 290 *Though you gnaw . . . you're the sacrifice:* an epigram by Evenus of Ascalon (in *Palatine Anthology* ix. 75).
- the trabea:* a toga with horizontal purple stripes, worn by knights on public occasions.
- phengite stone:* a hard, white translucent stone, according to Pliny, *Natural Histories* 36. 103.
- the tree . . . suddenly fell down again:* see *Vesp.* 5.
- 292 *Domitilla's steward:* she was a niece of Domitian.
- on the fourteenth day . . . the fifteenth of his reign:* 18 September 96.
- his old nurse:* cf. the role played by nurses at *Nero* 50.
- Julia, Titus' daughter:* an ironic detail given the events Suetonius describes in ch. 22 below.
- 293 *He was so annoyed by his baldness . . . on that account:* cf. *Jul.* 45 and *Cal.* 50.
- "*Do you not see . . . I am, too?*": *Iliad* 21. 108.
- He would not tolerate . . . in a litter:* one might contrast the great energy Suetonius attributes to Julius Caesar (*Jul.* 57).
- He had no interest . . . archery:* contrast the all-round skills attributed to Titus (*Titus* 3).
- At the start of his reign . . . the liberal arts:* cf. ch. 2 above.

Alexandria: although it seems a part of the library's holdings were destroyed by fire when Caesar attacked Alexandria in 47 BCE, the great library of Alexandria remained an outstanding collection even in late antiquity.

Tiberius Caesar: a dubious choice of model.

playing dice: a pursuit Suetonius also attributes to Augustus and Caligula (*Aug.* 70, 71; *Cal.* 41).

a Matian apple: a variety named after Gaius Matius, a friend of Augustus and an expert on gardening.

294 *The senators, by contrast . . . to be destroyed*: cf. *Cal.* 60.

GLOSSARY

aedile magistrate ranking above a **QUAESTOR** and below a **PRAETOR**.

Under the principate the functions of this post related largely to the city of Rome.

augur priest who performed divination from observing the flight of birds.

One of the four major priesthoods (the others being the **PONTIFICES**, the Board of Fifteen and the Fetials), which tended to be held by magistrates and ex-magistrates.

auspices divination from observation of the flight of birds, officially practised at elections, inaugurations of office, and entrance to a province, as well as at the start of wars. The right to take the auspices was reserved to the commander-in-chief in time of war. Officers serving under him thus acted 'under his auspices'.

auxiliaries a permanent armed force, including infantry and cavalry, supplementary to the **LEGION**, commanded by Roman citizens but made up of non-citizen fighting men.

caduceum a staff carried by heralds as a token of peace; particularly associated with the god Mercury.

Capitol used variously to mean the hill in Rome; the temple to Jupiter Best and Greatest, housing the three deities Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, which was located on that hill; by extension, temples to the same deities elsewhere.

civic crown a crown of oak leaves awarded for saving the life of one's fellow citizens.

cognomen a surname, family name, or epithet, usually the third element of a Roman citizen's name.

cohort unit of the Roman army. There were ten cohorts in a **LEGION**.

colony a settlement of Roman citizens, often veteran soldiers.

Compitalician Games see under *LARES COMPITALES*.

consul the most senior of Rome's annual magistrates. Consuls enjoyed and sometimes exercised extensive military powers. The office of consul was often held by the emperor. See further under **ORDINARY** and **SUFFECT**.

curule seat special seat used by **CONSULS**, **PRAETORS**, and curule **AEDILES**.

decurion member of the senate of a municipium or **COLONY**.

dictator a single chief magistrate elected for a period of six months in an emergency.

equestrian see under **ROMAN KNIGHT**.

essedarius type of gladiator who fought from a British chariot.

fasces the bundle of rods enclosing an axe which symbolized the senior magistrates' authority to impose punishment.

Father of the Fatherland an honorary title conferred on Augustus in 2 BCE. It was subsequently offered to numerous other emperors and accepted by most.

Flamen Dialis priest of Jupiter.

freedmen ex-slaves.

Genius the individual's guardian deity.

haruspices college of priests responsible for predicting the future by observing the entrails of sacrificial victims.

Ides the fifteenth day of March, May, July, and October and thirteenth in other months.

Imperator under the republic, term used to salute a victorious general. Augustus took 'Imperator' as a first name to designate his rank. Under the principate this term was used almost exclusively for the emperor.

imperial fund (fiscus) the imperial exchequer, officially distinct from the public TREASURY, theoretically controlled by the senate.

imperium supreme administrative power, involving command in war and the interpretation and execution of law (including the infliction of the death penalty).

Kalends the first day of the month.

knight see ROMAN KNIGHT.

Lares each Roman household had its own Lares, worshipped, along with the Penates, as guardian deities. The Lares were also guardians of crossways, including those in the city.

lares Compitales divinities associated with crossroads in whose honour the annual Compitalian Games were held. The shrines of the *lares Compitales* were the focus of an annual festival which was celebrated, it seems, particularly by Rome's humbler citizens and was regarded as a potential source of disorder by members of the upper classes.

Latin colony a settlement of persons with LATIN RIGHTS.

Latin rights on the model of the rights enjoyed by some Italian allies of Rome under the republic, these rights were more limited than those of Roman citizens but included the right to contract legal marriage with and to enter into contracts with citizens.

legate under the republic, the term used for a senatorial member of a provincial governor's staff. Under the principate the term is generally used for legionary commanders (normally of praetorian rank) and some provincial governors.

legion principal unit of the Roman army, comprising in theory 5,000 infantry and 120 cavalry.

lictor attendant whose function was to carry the FASCES.

Lupercalia festival held on 15 February involving the ritual beating of bounds and purification rites. It was associated with Rome's pastoral origins and particularly with wolves.

Master of Horse under the republic, a subordinate official nominated by a DICTATOR to be his representative either on the field of battle or in Rome.

military tribune an equestrian legionary officer. A position often held by a young man aiming for a senatorial career.

murmillo type of gladiator who wore a Gallic helmet and was often pitched against the NET-FIGHTER.

Naumachia vast tank used for staging sea-battles in Rome.

net-fighter type of gladiator who fought with a net and trident.

Nones the fifth day of most months, the seventh of March, May, July, and October.

optimates term sometimes used to refer to those who supported maintaining or increasing the power of the senate in relation to the people.

orders Roman citizens were divided into orders, the senatorial comprising senators and their families, the equestrian comprising Roman knights and their families, and the third order comprising everyone else.

ordinary consul officials who took office for a few months at the start of the year, their names were used for dating purposes (i.e. 'in the consulship of X and Y') and who enjoyed more prestige than those who occupied the office in the latter months of the year (SUFFECT CONSULS). From the time of Augustus it became increasingly unusual for a consul to hold office for the entire year; shorter consulships meant more men could reach the coveted office.

ovation a celebration of victory somewhat less prestigious than a TRIUMPH. The victorious general entered the city on foot, accompanied by a procession.

patrician member of one of the families who claimed to have been included in Romulus' original senate. Under Augustus and some other emperors further grants of patrician status were made.

Penates each Roman household had its Penates, the guardian deities of the store cupboard. The Roman Penates fulfilled a parallel role in relation to the state as a whole. Their cult was associated with the temple of Vesta in the Forum.

plebs in some contexts used to refer to all Roman citizens who are not patrician; in others to refer to the common people of the city of Rome.

Pontifex Maximus head of the *PONTIFICES*. The chief priest of the Roman state religion, he exercised disciplinary functions (among

others). Under the late republic his official residence was the Regia in the Forum. From 12 BCE this priesthood was held by the emperor.

pontifices advisory board which presided over the state cult.

praetor the next most senior magistrate after a consul. Praetors enjoyed and sometimes exercised the right of military command, as well as some important legislative and judicial functions. Many legionary commanders and provincial governors were ex-praetors.

praetorian guard imperial bodyguard organized by Augustus in nine cohorts (more were added later).

proconsul provincial governor or military commander with the rank of consul.

procurator agent of the emperor in civil administration (a freedman or of equestrian status), for instance as the governor of a minor province such as Judaea, as a financial agent in a larger province governed by a legate (and indirectly by the emperor), or as agent responsible for imperial properties in a province governed by the senate.

propraetor provincial governor or military commander with the rank of praetor.

quaestor junior magistrate with financial responsibilities which brought membership of the senate.

relegation a milder form of exile which did not entail the loss of citizen rights.

Roman knight member of the second order of Roman citizens (the first being of senators), an order originally associated with cavalry service. Knights were expected to be the sons of free-born Romans and there was a property qualification of 400,000 sesterces. Some members of this order played an increasingly important part in the administration of the empire under the principate.

rostra platform in the Forum, decorated with the prows of defeated enemy ships, from which speeches were made.

Saturnalia a festival of several days falling in late December, associated with giving gifts and frivolous amusements, especially gambling (which was otherwise banned).

Secular Games theatrical games and sacrifices performed by the Roman state to celebrate the end of one *saeculum* and the beginning of the next. The *saeculum*, thought of as the longest span of human life, was fixed in the republic at 100 years but later different definitions were used, so that Augustus celebrated the games in 17 BCE and Claudius in 47 CE.

secutores gladiators armed with a sword, a shield, one greave, and a visored helmet

senator member of the Roman senate, the qualification for which was

serving at least as QUAESTOR or TRIBUNE OF THE PLEBS. Emperors might also, through adlection, directly introduce new members to any senatorial rank. From the time of Augustus, there was a property qualification of 1,000,000 sesterces. Senators and their families formed the first and most prestigious order of Roman citizens.

sesterce silver coin; unit used to express large sums.

suffect consul officials who held the consulship for a few months only, not from the start of the year. Under the principate it became increasingly common for the consuls to occupy their posts for a few months rather than a year, thus allowing more men to hold this prestigious office. Those who held office from 1 January were termed ORDINARY CONSULS, gave their names to the year, and enjoyed greater prestige.

Thracian type of gladiator armed with a short sword and greaves. He was generally pitted against a *MURMILLO* who was heavily armed and carried a big shield.

toga of manhood the formal and official civilian dress of the male Roman citizen, a plain toga was taken on by boys on reaching the age of around 14, when they put aside the bordered toga worn by children.

treasury (*aerarium*) the state treasury, theoretically under the control of the senate.

tribune of the plebs a relatively junior magistrate (with membership of the senate) who nevertheless enjoyed the important right to veto any act performed by a magistrate, as well as elections, laws, and decrees of the senate. Tribunes of the plebs were responsible for enforcing decrees of the people and protecting their rights.

tribunician power assumed by Augustus and subsequent emperors, this power paraded the emperor's concern for the rights of ordinary citizens. It was also sometimes conferred on the emperor's close associates and his designated heir.

triumph the procession of a victorious Roman general, his army, and prisoners of war, accompanied by the senate, through the city of Rome to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. The prerequisites were a victory over a foreign enemy with at least 5,000 enemy dead by a magistrate with IMPERIUM and the right to take AUSPICES. The general waited outside Rome to be granted the senate's permission before embarking on the procession. This was a relatively rare honour which brought the triumphant general huge prestige. It rapidly became a monopoly of the imperial family.

triumphal ornaments granted to victorious generals as a substitute for a TRIUMPH, these brought nothing like the prestige and soon lost much connection with military achievements.

triumvirs term used to refer to the three members of a board with practically absolute powers, Mark Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian (later Augustus) appointed to bring order to the state in 43 BCE for five years.

Troy game an elaborate equestrian display involving, particularly, young members of the Roman élite. Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 5. 545–603.