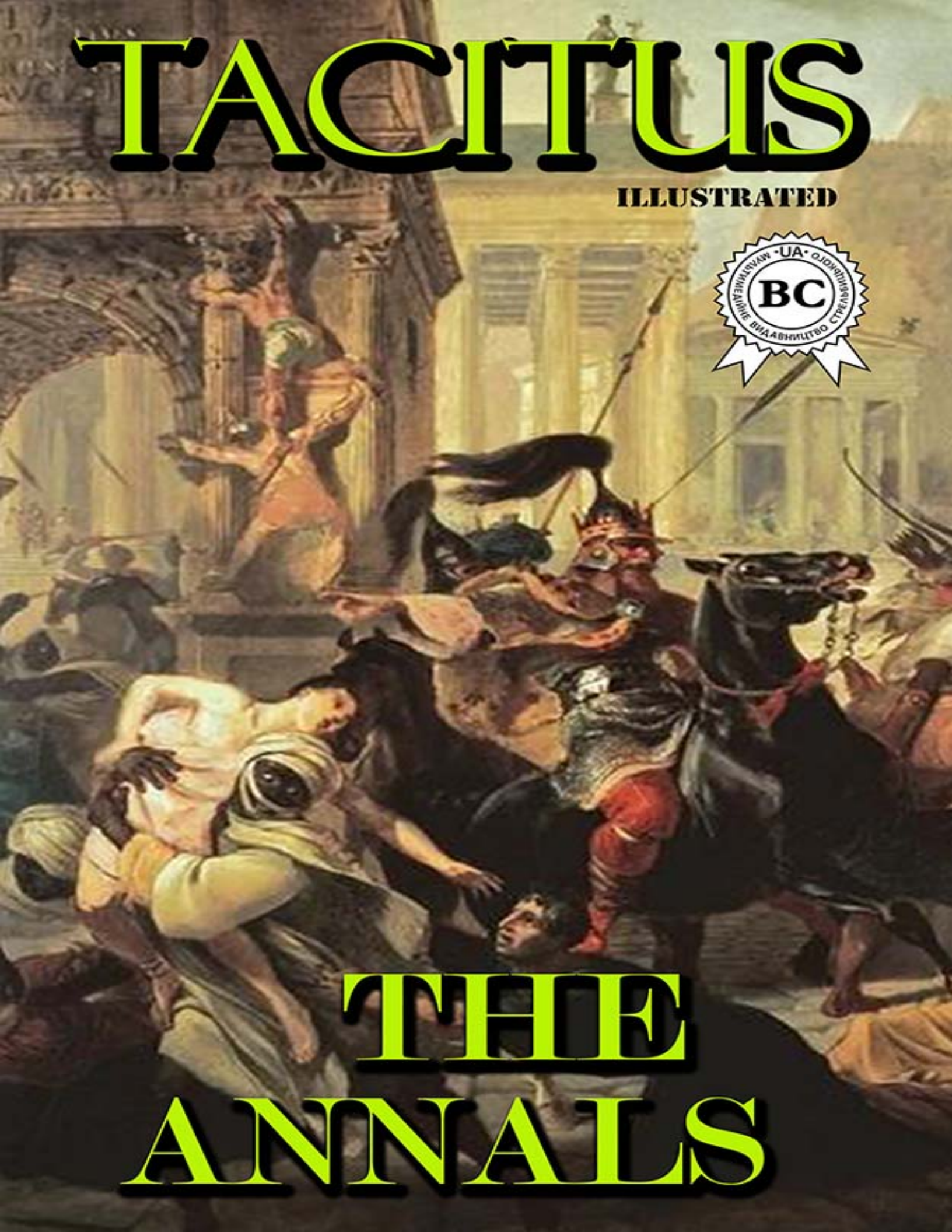


TACITUS

ILLUSTRATED



THE ANNALS

Tacitus
THE ANNALS
Illustrated

The Annals tells the story of the Roman empire under the Julio-Claudian dynasty, which ruled Rome from 27 BC to AD 68. It begins with the death of the first emperor Augustus (27 BC-AD 14), and then covers in detail the reigns of his successors, Tiberius (AD 14-37), Caligula (AD 37-41), Claudius (AD 41-54), and Nero (AD 54-68).

Tacitus was a Roman senator, who wrote the Annals in the early second century AD, during the reigns of Trajan (AD 98-117) and Hadrian (AD 117-138).

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Translated by John Jackson

Generally regarded as Tacitus' greatest work, *The Annals* covers the history of the Roman Empire from the reign of Tiberius to the fall of Nero, spanning the years AD 14-68. It is an important source to the modern understanding of the history of the Roman Empire during the first century. Although Tacitus refers to part of his work as 'my annals', the title of the work *Annals* used today was not assigned by Tacitus himself, but derives from its year-by-year structure. Tacitus wrote the *Annals* in at least 16 books, but sadly books 7-10 and parts of books 5, 6, 11 and 16 are now missing.

Of the eighteen books comprising *The Annals*, the reign of Tiberius takes up six books, of which only Book 5 is missing. These books are neatly divided into two sets of three, corresponding to the change in the nature of the political climate during the period. Another six books are devoted to the reigns of Gaius and Claudius. Of the remaining six books, three and a half books pertaining to the reign of Nero are extant, and cover the period from his accession to the throne in AD 54 to the middle of the year AD 66. The last four extant books cover all of Nero's reign except the last two years.

Tacitus documented a Roman Imperial system of government that originated with the Battle of Actium in September 31 BC. Yet Tacitus chose not to begin then, but with the death of Augustus Caesar in AD 14, and his succession by Tiberius. As in *The Histories*, Tacitus maintains his thesis of the necessity of the principate. He explains again that Augustus gave and warranted peace to the state after years of civil war, but on the other hand he shows us the dark side of life under the Caesars. The history of the Empire is also the history of the sunset of the political

freedom of the senatorial aristocracy, which he viewed as morally decadent, corrupt and servile towards the Emperor. During Nero's reign there had been a widespread diffusion of literary works in favour of this suicidal exitus illustrium virorum ("end of the illustrious men"). Again, as in his first work, the *Agricola*, Tacitus is opposed to those who chose useless martyrdom through vain suicides.

Tacitus further improves the style of portraiture that he had developed in *The Histories*. One of the most accomplished portraits is that of Tiberius, portrayed in an indirect way, painted progressively during the course of a narrative, with observations and commentary, with impressive and realistic details. Tacitus portrays both Tiberius and Nero as tyrants that caused fear in their subjects. But while he views Tiberius as someone that had once been a great man, Tacitus depicts Nero as simply despicable.

INTRODUCTION

Since the life of Tacitus has already been sketched in Mr. Moore's introduction to the Histories, a brief account may suffice here. Brevity, indeed, is a necessity; for the ancient evidence might almost be compressed into a dozen lines, nor has even the industry or imagination of modern scholars been able to add much that is of value to the exiguous material.

For the parentage of the greatest of Roman historians no witness can be called, nor was the famous name Cornelius, vulgarized by Sulla's numerous emancipations, a patent of nobility in the first century of the Christian era. The elder Pliny, however, was acquainted with a Roman knight, Cornelius Tacitus, who held a procuratorship in Belgic Gaul, and obviously there is a faint possibility that this may have been the father or an uncle of the historian. Be that as it may, a certain standard of inherited wealth and consequence is presupposed alike by his career and by his prejudices. The exact date of his birth is equally unknown, but he was senior by a few years to his intimate friend and correspondent, the younger Pliny; who states in a letter to him that he was in his eighteenth year at the time of the great eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii, Herculaneum, and his uncle, in the late summer of 79 A.D. Certainty is out of the question, yet the provisional date of 55 A.D., which harmonizes with the ascertainable facts of his life, can hardly be far wide of the mark.

Of his early youth nothing can be gathered but that he studied rhetoric "with surprising avidity and a certain juvenile fervour"; his principal heroes and instructors being Marcus Aper and Julius Secundus, two of the characters in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*. We have Pliny's testimony to his mastery of the spoken word, and throughout his works,

quite apart from the “Dialogue,” his unabated interest in the art is noticeable.



The first certain date is 77 A.D., the consulate of Cn.^o Julius Agricola; who was sufficiently impressed by the character and prospects of the young Tacitus to select him for the husband of his daughter, the marriage taking place on the expiry of his term of office (78 A.D.). Matters are less clear when we come to his official career, which he describes as “owing its inception to Vespasian, its promotion to Titus, and its further advancement to Domitian.” The question is whether the first step mentioned was the quaestorship or a minor office, but the balance of probability seems to be that he was *tribunus militum laticlavus* under

Vespasian, and quaestor under Titus: under Domitian, by his own statement, he took part in the celebration of the Secular Games (88 A.D.), in the double capacity of praetor and quindecimvir. Between the quaestorship and the praetorship, however, must have lain — still in the principate of Domitian — either a tribunate or an aedileship, which may be assigned roughly to 84 A.D.

Some two years after the praetorship, Tacitus with his wife left Rome, and in 93 A.D., when Agricola passed away — *felix opportunitate mortis* — they were still absent. Service abroad is a natural explanation: that the service consisted in the governorship of a minor imperial province, a highly plausible conjecture. In any case, the return to the capital followed shortly: for the striking references to the three last and most terrible years of Domitian are too clearly that of an eye-witness. He emerged from the Terror with life, also with the indelible memories of the few who “had outlived both others and themselves.” In the happier age of Nerva and Trajan, all — or virtually all — of his literary work was accomplished. His public life was crowned by the consulate in 97 or 98 A.D., when he pronounced the funeral panegyric on Verginius Rufus, who some thirty years before had crushed Vindex and refused the throne proffered by his legions. In 100 A.D. he conducted with Pliny the prosecution of the extortionate governor of Africa, Marius Priscus. This constituted the last recorded fact of his biography until it was revealed by an inscription from the Carian town of Mylasa that he had attained the chief prize of the senatorial career by holding the proconsulate of Asia (probably between 113 and 116 A.D.). The year of his death is unknown, but it is improbable that he long survived the publication of the *Annals* in 116 A.D.

So much for the man: as to the author, little space can be given here to the three minor works — the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, the *Agricola*, and the *Germania*. The first of these ostensibly reproduces a conversation held in the

house of Curiatius Maternus in the sixth year of Vespasian (74-75 A.D.), the discussion turning on the relative merits of the republican and imperial types of oratory: the author himself — described as *admodum adulescens* — is assumed to be present. The work, written in the neo-Ciceronian style, offers so sharp a contrast to the later manner of Tacitus that its authenticity was early called into question, first by Beatus Rhenanus, then by Justus Lipsius, with the full weight of his great name. Only in 1811 were the doubts dispelled by Lange's discovery that a letter from Pliny to Tacitus alludes unmistakably to the Dialogue. The date of composition presents one of those tempting, though ultimately insoluble problems, which hold so great a fascination for many scholars: the years proposed range from 81 A.D. (Gudeman) to 98 A.D. (Schanz), with Norden's 91 A.D. as a middle term.

For the fifteen years of Domitian historical composition had ranked as a dangerous trade, but in 98 A.D., in the early days of Trajan, Tacitus broke silence with the biography, or panegyric, of his father-in-law, *Agricola*. Ample justice, to say the least, is measured out to the virtues of the hero; and since he was numbered with those who declined to "challenge fame and fate" under Domitian, the light is naturally enough centred upon his administrative and military achievements in Britain. The brilliant, though perhaps too highly coloured, style shows already the influence of Sallust; and the work is described by its author as the precursor of one which "in artless and rough-hewn language shall chronicle the slavery of the past and attest the felicity of the present."

But before this undertaking was at least partially fulfilled, the *Agricola* was followed, still in 98 A.D., by the *Germania*, a monograph whose fate has been, in Gibbon's words, "to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times." Its more immediate *raison*

d'être is probably to be sought in the fact that the German question was, at the time, pressing enough to keep Trajan from the capital during the whole of the period between the death of Nerva and 99 A.D. Judged from the standpoint of the geographer and the ethnologist, the *Germania* must be pronounced guilty of most of the sins of omission and commission to be expected in a work published before the dawn of the second century; but the materials, written and verbal, at the disposal of the writer must have been considerable, and the book is of equal interest and value as the first extant study of early Teutonic society.

The foundation, however, on which the fame of Tacitus rests, is his history of the principate from the accession of Tiberius to the murder of Domitian. It falls into two halves, the *Annals* and the *Histories* (neither of which has descended to us intact), and the chronological order is reversed in the order of composition. To follow the latter, the *Histories* — as the name, perhaps, indicates — comprise a chronicle of the author's own time: they are, in fact, the redemption of the promise made in the *Agricola*; though the *incondita ac rudis vox* may be sought in vain, and the period there announced for treatment is in part expanded, in part contracted. For the *praesentia bona*, the golden years of Nerva and Trajan, are now reserved by the writer to be the "theme of his age," while the proposed account of Domitian's tyranny swells into the history, first, of the earthquake that upheaved and engulfed Galba, Otho, and Vitellius; then, of the three princes of the Flavian dynasty. Between what years the work was written, when it was published, and whether by instalments or as a whole, the evidence is as inadequate to determine as it is to resolve the endlessly debated question of the relationship between the narrative of Tacitus and that of Plutarch in the *Lives* of Galba and Otho. Pliny, writing perhaps in 106 A.D., answers the request of his friend for details of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.; and elsewhere, on his own initiative,

suggests for inclusion in the book an incident of the year 93 A.D. The exact number of books into which the Histories were divided is not certain, but is more likely to have been twelve than fourteen: the first four survive in entirety, together with twenty-six chapters of the fifth; the rest are known only by a few citations, chiefly from Orosius. The events embraced in the extant part are those of the twenty crowded months from January, 69 A.D., to August, 70 A.D.: we have lost, therefore, virtually the principate of Vespasian, that of Titus, and that of Domitian. The language is now completely "Tacitean."

The Histories were followed in 116 A.D. by the Annals (*libri ab excessu divi Augusti*); which, after a short introduction, open with the death of Augustus in 14 A.D., and closed in 68 A.D., not, however, at the dramatically appropriate date of Nero's suicide (June 8), but, in accordance with the annalistic scheme, at the year's end. The probable distribution of the books was hexadic, Tiberius claiming I-VI, Caligula and Claudius VII-XII, and Nero (with Galba) XIII-XVIII. Of these there remain I-IV complete, the first chapters of V, VI without the beginning, and XI-XVI.³⁵ Thus our losses, though not so disastrous as in the case of the Histories, include none the less, about two years of Tiberius' reign, the whole of that of Caligula, the earliest and best days of Claudius, and the latter end of Nero. Fate might perhaps have been blinder; yet posterity might well renounce something of its knowledge of Corbulo's operations, could it view in return the colouring of two or three of those perished canvases — Sejanus forlorn in the Senate, hope rising and falling with every complex period of the interminable epistle from Capreae — Cassius Chaerea, with his sword and his *hoc age* in the vaulted corridor — Sporus, Epaphroditus, and the last heir of the Julian blood, in the villa at the fourth milestone. Still, what has been spared — how narrowly spared may be read in Voigt — constitutes, upon the whole, a clear title to immortality: an amazing

chronicle of an amazing era, brilliant, unfair, and unforgettable. The Annals are not as Galba was — *magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus*. But the virtues are virtues for all time; the vices, those of an age. Exactitude, according to Pindar, dwelt in the town of the Zephyrian Locrians, but few of the ancients worshipped steadfastly at her shrine: they wrote history as a form of literature, and with an undissembled ambition to be read. It would have been convenient, doubtless, had the Annals been equipped with a preliminary dissertation on the sources, a select bibliography, footnotes with references to the roll of Aufidius Bassus or the month and day of the Acta Publica: but the era of those blessings is not reckoned *Ab Vrbe Condita*; and, with rare exceptions, we must acquiesce in the vague warranty of a *plerique tradidere* or a *sunt qui ferant*, or, if here and there belief is difficult, then suspend our judgment. In the main, however, it is not the facts of Tacitus, but his interpretations, that awaken misgiving. "I know of no other historian," said a latter-day consul and emperor, "who has so calumniated and belittled mankind as he. In the simplest transactions he seeks for criminal motives: out of every emperor he fashions a complete villain, and so depicts him that we admire the spirit of evil permeating him, and nothing more. It has been said with justice that his Annals are a history, not of the Empire, but of the Roman criminal tribunals — nothing save accusations and men accused, persecutions and the persecuted, and people opening veins in baths. He speaks continually of denunciations, and the greatest denouncer is himself." That a streak of truth runs through the wild exaggeration can hardly be denied. Tacitus had not, and could not have, a charity that thinks no evil: Seneca, in words prophetic of his style, spoke of *abruptae sententiae et suspiciosae*,⁹ in quibus plus intelligendum est quam audiendum; and never, perhaps, has that poisoned weapon be used more ruthlessly. Yet, of conscious disingenuity a dispassionate reader finds no trace: the man,

simply, has overpowered the historian. To write *sine ira et studio* even of the earlier principate, was a rash vow to be made by one who had passed his childhood under Nero and the flower of his manhood under Domitian. Nor, in any case, is it given to many historians — to none, perhaps, of the greatest — to comply with the precept of Lucian (repeated almost to the letter by Ranke): — Τοῦ συγγραφέως ἔργον ἔν, ὥς ἐπράχθη εἰπεῖν. For not the most stubborn of facts can pass through the brain of a man of genius, and issue such as they entered. — One charge, it is noticeable, Napoleon does not make: it was reserved for Mommsen to style Tacitus “the most unmilitary of historians” — a verdict to which Furneaux could only object that it was unjust to Livy. Both, it is true enough, lack the martial touch, and betray all too clearly that βυβλιακὴ ἔξις which Polybius abhorred. Yet even here they have one merit, generally withheld from the authentic military historian, that, when they describe a battle, the reader is somehow conscious that a battle is being described. Mox infensius praetorianis “Vos” inquit, “nisi vincitis, pagani, quis alius imperator, quae castra alia excipient? Illic signa armaque vestra sunt, et mors victis: nam ignominiam consumpsistis.” Vndique clamor, et orientem solem (ita in Syria mos est) tertiani salutavere — the hues are not the wear, but it is possible to find them striking.

It is usual to enumerate a few of the peculiarities of Tacitus and his diction: on the one hand, for example, his trend to fatalism, his disdain of the multitude, his Platonic affection for the commonwealth, his Roman ethics, and his pessimism; on the other, his brachylogy, his poetical and rhetorical effects, his dislike of the common speech of men, his readiness to tax to the uttermost every resource of Latin in the cause of antithesis or innuendo. Here no such catalogue can be attempted; nor, if it could, would the utility be wholly beyond dispute. The personality of the author and his style must be felt as unities; and it is a testimony to the

greatness of both that they can so be felt after the lapse of eighteen centuries. How long they will continue to be felt, one must at times wonder. There was a time when, as Victor Hugo sang of another Empire,

“On se mit à fouiller dans ces grandes années,
Et vous applaudissiez, nations inclinées,
Chaque fois qu’on tirait de ce sol souverain
Ou le consul de marbre ou l’empereur d’airain.”

That fervour of the pioneers is no more; the sovereign soil has rendered up its more glittering treasures, and the labourers, and their rewards, are already fewer. Yet, so long as Europe retains the consciousness of her origins, so long — by some at least — must the history of Rome be read in the Roman tongue, and not the least momentous part of it in the pages of Tacitus.

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The text of the first six books of the *Annals* depends entirely on the Mediceus primus (*saec.* IX); for the remainder, the authority is the Mediceus secundus (*saec.* XI); both are now in the Laurentian Library. For the details of their discovery the reader may be referred to Voigt (*Wiederbelebung u.s.w.* I *sqq.*). The text of this edition is eclectic. In the first book the variations from the manuscript are recorded with some fulness; afterwards, in order to economize space, obvious and undisputed corrections, especially of the older scholars, are seldom noticed.

BOOK I

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

² 1 When the killing of Brutus and Cassius had disarmed the Republic; when Pompey had been crushed in Sicily, and, with Lepidus thrown aside and Antony slain, even the Julian party was leaderless but for the Caesar; after laying down his triumviral title and proclaiming himself a simple consul content with tribunician authority to safeguard the commons, he first conciliated the army by gratuities, the populace by cheapened corn,⁹ the world by the amenities of peace, then step by step began to make his ascent and to

unite in his own person the functions of the senate, the magistracy, and the legislature. Opposition there was none: the boldest spirits had succumbed on stricken fields or by proscription-lists; while the rest of the nobility found a cheerful acceptance of slavery the smoothest road to wealth and office, and, as they had thriven on revolution, stood now for the new order and safety in preference to the old order and adventure. Nor was the state of affairs unpopular in the provinces, where administration by the Senate and People had been discredited by the feuds of the magnates and the greed of the officials, against which there was but frail protection in a legal system for ever deranged by force, by favouritism, or (in the last resort) by gold.

³ 1 Meanwhile, to consolidate his power, Augustus raised Claudius Marcellus, his sister's son and a mere stripling, to the pontificate and curule aedileship: Marcus Agrippa, no aristocrat, but a good soldier and his partner in victory, he honoured with two successive consulates, and a little later, on the death of Marcellus, selected him as a son-in-law. Each of his step-children, Tiberius Nero and Claudius Drusus, was given the title of Imperator, though his family proper was still intact: for he had admitted Agrippa's children, Gaius and Lucius, to the Caesarian hearth, and even during their minority had shown, under a veil of reluctance, a consuming desire to see them consuls designate with the title Princes of the Youth. When Agrippa gave up the ghost, untimely fate, or the treachery of their stepmother Livia, cut off both Lucius and Caius^o Caesar, Lucius on his road to the Spanish armies, Caius^o — wounded and sick — on his return from Armenia. Drusus had long been dead, and of the stepsons Nero survived alone. On him all centred. Adopted as son, as colleague in the empire, as consort of the tribunician power, he was paraded through all the armies, not as before by the secret diplomacy of his mother, but openly at her injunction. For so firmly had she riveted her

chains upon the aged Augustus that he banished to the isle of Planasia his one remaining grandson, Agrippa Postumus, who though guiltless of a virtue, and confident brute-like in his physical strength, had been convicted of no open scandal. Yet, curiously enough, he placed Drusus' son Germanicus at the head of eight legions on the Rhine, and ordered Tiberius to adopt him: it was one safeguard the more, even though Tiberius had already an adult son under his roof.

War at the time was none, except an outstanding campaign against the Germans, waged more to redeem the prestige lost with Quintilius Varus and his army than from any wish to extend the empire or with any prospect of an adequate recompense. At home all was calm. The officials carried the old names; the younger men had been born after the victory of Actium; most even of the elder generation, during the civil wars; few indeed were left who had seen the Republic.

⁴ 1 It was thus an altered world, and of the old, unspoilt Roman character not a trace lingered. Equality was an outworn creed, and all eyes looked to the mandate of the sovereign — with no immediate misgivings, so long as Augustus in the full vigour of his prime upheld himself, his house, and peace. But when the wearing effects of bodily sickness added themselves to advancing years, and the end was coming and new hopes dawning, a few voices began idly to discuss the blessings of freedom; more were apprehensive of war; others desired it; the great majority merely exchanged gossip derogatory to their future masters:—"Agrippa, fierce-tempered, and hot from his humiliation, was unfitted by age and experience for so heavy a burden. Tiberius Nero was mature in years and tried in war, but had the old, inbred arrogance of the Claudian family, and hints of cruelty, strive as he would to repress them, kept breaking out. He had been reared from the

cradle in a regnant house; consulates and triumphs had been heaped on his youthful head: even during the years when he lived at Rhodes in ostensible retirement and actual exile, he had studied nothing save anger, hypocrisy, and secret lasciviousness. Add to the tale his mother with her feminine caprice: they must be slaves, it appeared, to the distaff, and to a pair of striplings as well, who in the interval would oppress the state and in the upshot rend it asunder!"

⁵ 1 While these topics and the like were under discussion, the malady of Augustus began to take a graver turn; and some suspected foul play on the part of his wife. For a rumour had gone the round that, a few months earlier, the emperor, confiding in a chosen few, and attended only by Fabius Maximus, had sailed for Planasia on a visit to Agrippa. "There tears and signs of affection on both sides had been plentiful enough to raise a hope that the youth might yet be restored to the house of his grandfather. Maximus had disclosed the incident to his wife Marcia; Marcia, to Livia. It had come to the Caesar's knowledge; and after the death of Maximus, which followed shortly, possibly by his own hand, Marcia had been heard at the funeral, sobbing and reproaching herself as the cause of her husband's destruction." Whatever the truth of the affair, Tiberius had hardly set foot in Illyricum, when he was recalled by an urgent letter from his mother; and it is not certainly known whether on reaching the town of Nola, he found Augustus still breathing or lifeless. For house and street were jealously guarded by Livia's ring of pickets, while sanguine notices were issued at intervals, until the measures dictated by the crisis had been taken: then one report announced simultaneously that Augustus had passed away and that Nero was master of the empire.

⁶ 1 The opening crime of the new principate was the murder of Agrippa Postumus; who, though off his guard and without weapons, was with difficulty dispatched by a

resolute centurion. In the senate Tiberius made no reference to the subject: his pretence was an order from his father, instructing the tribune in charge to lose no time in making away with his prisoner, once he himself should have looked his last on the world. It was beyond question that by his frequent and bitter strictures on the youth's character Augustus had procured the senatorial decree for his exile: on the other hand, at no time did he harden his heart to the killing of a relative, and it remained incredible that he should have sacrificed the life of a grandchild in order to diminish the anxieties of a stepson. More probably, Tiberius and Livia, actuated in the one case by fear, and in the other by stepmotherly dislike, hurriedly procured the murder of a youth whom they suspected and detested. To the centurion who brought the usual military report, the emperor rejoined that he had given no instructions and the deed would have to be accounted for in the senate. The remark came to the ears of Sallustius Crispus. A partner in the imperial secrets — it was he who had forwarded the note to the tribune — he feared the charge might be fastened on himself, with the risks equally great whether he spoke the truth or lied. He therefore advised Livia not to publish the mysteries of the palace, the counsels of her friends, the services of the soldiery; and also to watch that Tiberius did not weaken the powers of the throne by referring everything and all things to the senate:—"It was a condition of sovereignty that the account balanced only if rendered to a single auditor."

⁷ 1 At Rome, however, consuls, senators, and knights were rushing into slavery. The more exalted the personage, the grosser his hypocrisy and his haste, — his lineaments adjusted so as to betray neither cheerfulness at the exit nor undue depression at the entry of a prince; his tears blent with joy, his regrets with adulation. The consuls, Sextus Pompeius and Sextus Appuleius, first took the oath of allegiance to Tiberius Caesar. It was taken in their presence

by Seius Strabo and Caius Turranius, chiefs respectively of the praetorian cohorts and the corn department. The senators, the soldiers, and the populace followed. For in every action of Tiberius the first step had to be taken by the consuls, as though the old republic were in being, and himself undecided whether to reign or no. Even his edict, convening the Fathers to the senate-house was issued simply beneath the tribunician title which he had received under Augustus. It was a laconic document of very modest purport:—"He intended to provide for the last honours to his father, whose body he could not leave — it with was the one function of the state which he made bold to exercise." Yet, on the passing of Augustus he had given the watchword to the praetorian cohorts as Imperator; he had the sentries, the men-at-arms, and the other appurtenances of a court; soldiers conducted him to the forum, soldiers to the curia; he dispatched letters to the armies as if the principate was already in his grasp; and nowhere manifested the least hesitation, except when speaking in the senate. The chief reason was his fear that Germanicus — backed by so many legions, the vast reserves of the provinces, and a wonderful popularity with the nation — might prefer the ownership to the reversion of a throne. He paid public opinion, too, the compliment of wishing to be regarded as the called and chosen of the state, rather than as the interloper who had wormed his way into power with the help of connubial intrigues and a senile act of adoption. It was realized later that his coyness had been assumed with the further object of gaining an insight into the feelings of the aristocracy: for all the while he was distorting words and looks into crimes and storing them in his memory.

⁸ 1 The only business which he allowed to be discussed at the first meeting of the senate was the funeral of Augustus. The will, brought in by the Vestal Virgins, specified Tiberius and Livia as heirs, Livia to be adopted into

the Julian family and the Augustan name. As legatees in the second degree he mentioned his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; in the third place, the prominent nobles — an ostentatious bid for the applause of posterity, as he detested most of them. His bequests were not above the ordinary civic scale, except that he left 43,500,000 sesterces to the nation and the populace, a thousand to every man in the praetorian guards, five hundred to each in the urban troops, and three hundred to all legionaries or members of the Roman cohorts.

The question of the last honours was then debated. The two regarded as the most striking were due to Asinius Gallus and Lucius Arruntius — the former proposing that the funeral train should pass under a triumphal gateway; the latter, that the dead should be preceded by the titles of all laws which he had carried and the names of all peoples whom he had subdued. In addition, Valerius Messalla suggested that the oath of allegiance to Tiberius should be renewed annually. To a query from Tiberius, whether that expression of opinion came at *his* dictation, he retorted — it was the one form of flattery still left — that he had spoken of his own accord, and, when public interests were in question, he would (even at the risk of giving offence) use no man's judgment but his own. The senate clamoured for the body to be carried to the pyre on the shoulders of the Fathers. The Caesar, with haughty moderation, excused them from that duty, and warned the people by edict not to repeat the enthusiastic excesses which on a former day had marred the funeral of the deified Julius, by desiring Augustus to be cremated in the Forum rather than in the Field of Mars, his appointed resting-place.

On the day of the ceremony, the troops were drawn up as though on guard, amid the jeers of those who had seen with their eyes, or whose fathers had declared to them, that day of still novel servitude and freedom disastrously re-wooded, when the killing of the dictator Caesar to some had

seemed the worst, and to others the fairest, of high exploits: —“And now an aged prince, a veteran potentate, who had seen to it that not even his heirs should lack for means to coerce their country, must needs have military protection to ensure a peaceable burial!”

⁹ 1 Then tongues became busy with Augustus himself. Most men were struck by trivial points — that one day should have been the first of his sovereignty and the last of his life — that he should have ended his days at Nola in the same house and room as his father Octavius. Much, too, was said of the number of his consulates (in which he had equalled the combined totals of Valerius Corvus and Caius Marius), his tribunician power unbroken for thirty-seven years, his title of Imperator twenty-one times earned, and his other honours, multiplied or new. Among men of intelligence, however, his career was praised or arraigned from varying points of view. According to some, “filial duty and the needs of a country, which at the time had no room for law, had driven him to the weapons of civil strife — weapons which could not be either forged or wielded with clean hands. He had overlooked much in Antony, much in Lepidus, for the sake of bringing to book the assassins of his father. When Lepidus grew old and indolent, and Antony succumbed to his vices, the sole remedy for his distracted country was government by one man. Yet he organized the state, not by instituting a monarchy or a dictatorship, but by creating the title of First Citizen. The empire had been fenced by the ocean or distant rivers. The legions, the provinces, the fleets, the whole administration, had been centralized. There had been law for the Roman citizen, respect for the allied communities; and the capital itself had been embellished with remarkable splendour. Very few situations had been treated by force, and then only in the interests of general tranquillity.”

¹⁰ 1 On the other side it was argued that “filial duty and the critical position of the state had been used merely as a cloak: dome to facts, and it was from the lust of dominion that he excited the veterans by his bounties, levied an army while yet a stripling and a subject, subdued the legions of a consul, and affected a leaning to the Pompeian side. Then, following his usurpation by senatorial decree of the symbols and powers of the praetorship, had come the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa, — whether they perished by the enemy’s sword, or Pansa by poison^o sprinkled on his wound, and Hirtius by the hands of his own^o soldiery, with the Caesar to plan the treason. At all events, he had possessed himself of both their armies, wrung a consulate from the unwilling senate, and turned against the commonwealth the arms which he had received for the quelling of Antony. The proscription of citizens and the assignments of land had been approved not even by those who executed them. Grant that Cassius and the Bruti were sacrificed to inherited enmities — though the moral law required that private hatreds should give way to public utility — yet Pompey was betrayed by the simulacrum of a peace, Lepidus by the shadow of a friendship: then Antony, lured by the Tarentine and Brundisian treaties and a marriage with his sister, had paid with life the penalty of that delusive connexion. After that there had been undoubtedly peace, but peace with bloodshed — the disasters of Lollius and of Varus, the execution at Rome of a Varro, an Egnatius, an Iullus.” His domestic adventures were not spared; the abduction of Nero’s wife, and the farcical questions to the pontiffs, whether, with a child conceived but not yet born, she could legally wed; the debaucheries of Vedius Pollio; and, lastly, Livia, — as a mother, a curse to the realm; as a stepmother, a curse to the house of the Caesars. “He had left small room for the worship of heaven, when he claimed to be himself adored in temples and in the image of godhead by flamens

and by priests! Even in the adoption of Tiberius to succeed him, his motive had been neither personal affection nor regard for the state: he had read the pride and cruelty of his heart, and had sought to heighten his own glory by the vilest of contrasts." For Augustus, a few years earlier, when requesting the Fathers to renew the grant of the tribunician power to Tiberius, had in the course of the speech, complimentary as it was, let fall a few remarks on his demeanour, dress, and habits which were offered as an apology and designed for reproaches.

However, his funeral ran the ordinary course; and a decree followed, endowing him a temple and divine rites.

¹¹ 1 Then all prayers were directed towards Tiberius; who delivered a variety of reflections on the greatness of the empire and his own diffidence:—"Only the mind of the deified Augustus was equal to such a burden: he himself had found, when called by the sovereign to share his anxieties, how arduous, how dependent upon fortune, was the task of ruling a world! He thought, then, that, in a state which had the support of so many eminent men, they ought not to devolve the entire duties on any one person; the business of government would be more easily carried out by the joint efforts of a number." A speech in this tenor was more dignified than convincing. Besides, the diction of Tiberius, by habit or by nature, was always indirect and obscure, even when he had no wish to conceal his thought; and now, in the effort to bury every trace of his sentiments, it became more intricate, uncertain, and equivocal than ever. But the Fathers, whose one dread was that they might seem to comprehend him, melted in complaints, tears, and prayers. They were stretching their hands to heaven, to the effigy of Augustus, to his own knees, when he gave orders for a document to be produced and read. It contained a statement of the national resources — the strength of the burghers and allies under arms; the number of the fleets,

protectorates, and provinces; the taxes direct and indirect; the needful disbursements and customary bounties catalogued by Augustus in his own hand, with a final clause (due to fear or jealousy?) advising the restriction of the empire within its present frontiers.

¹² 1 The senate, meanwhile, was descending to the most abject supplications, when Tiberius casually observed that, unequal as he felt himself to the whole weight of government, he would still undertake the charge of any one department that might be assigned to him. Asinius Gallus then said:—"I ask you, Caesar, what department you wish to be assigned you." This unforeseen inquiry threw him off his balance. He was silent for a few moments; then recovered himself, and answered that it would not at all become his diffidence to select or shun any part of a burden from which he would prefer to be wholly excused. Gallus, who had conjectured anger from his look, resumed:—"The question had been put to him, not with the hope that he would divide the inseparable, but to gain from his own lips an admission that the body politic was a single organism needing to be governed by a single intelligence." He added a panegyric on Augustus, and urged Tiberius to remember his own victories and the brilliant work which he had done year after year in the garb of peace. He failed, however, to soothe the imperial anger: he had been a hated man ever since his marriage to Vipsania (daughter of Marcus Agrippa, and once the wife of Tiberius), which had given the impression that he had ambitions denied to a subject and retained the temerity of his father Asinius Pollio.



¹³ 1 Lucius Arruntius, who followed in a vein not much unlike that of Gallus, gave equal offence, although Tiberius had no standing animosity against him: he was, however, rich, enterprising, greatly gifted, correspondingly popular, and so suspect. For Augustus, in his last conversations, when discussing possible holders of the principate — those who were competent and disinclined, who were inadequate and willing, or who were at once able and desirous — had described Manius Lepidus as capable but disdainful, Asinius Gallus as eager and unfit, Lucius Arruntius as not undeserving and bold enough to venture, should the opportunity arise. The first two names are not disputed; in some versions Arruntius is replaced by Gnaeus Piso: all concerned, apart from Lepidus, were soon entrapped on one

charge or another, promoted by Tiberius. Quintus Haterius and Mamercus Scaurus also jarred that suspicious breast — Haterius, by the sentence, “How long, Caesar, will you permit the state to lack a head?” and Scaurus, by remarking that, as he had not used his tribunician power to veto the motion of the consuls, there was room for hope that the prayers of the senate would not be in vain. Haterius he favoured with an immediate invective: against Scaurus his anger was less placable, and he passed him over in silence. Wearied at last by the universal outcry and by individual appeals, he gradually gave ground, up to the point, *not* of acknowledging that he assumed the sovereignty, but of ceasing to refuse and to be entreated. Haterius, it is well known, on entering the palace to make his excuses, found Tiberius walking, threw himself down at his knees, and was all but dispatched by the guards, because the prince, either from accident or through being hampered by the suppliant’s hands, had fallen flat on his face. The danger of a great citizen failed, however, to soften him, until Haterius appealed to Augusta, and was saved by the urgency of her prayers.

¹⁴ 1 Augusta herself enjoyed a full share of senatorial adulation. One party proposed to give her the title “Parent of her Country”; some preferred “Mother of her Country”: a majority thought the qualification “Son of Julia” ought to be appended to the name of the Caesar. Declaring that official compliments to women must be kept within bounds, and that he would use the same forbearance in the case of those paid to himself (in fact he was fretted by jealousy, and regarded the elevation of a woman as a degradation of himself), he declined to allow her even the grant of a lictor, and banned both an Altar of Adoption and other proposed honours of a similar nature. But he asked proconsular powers for Germanicus Caesar, and a commission was sent out to confer them, and, at the same time, to console his

grief at the death of Augustus. That the same demand was not preferred on behalf of Drusus was due to the circumstance that he was consul designate and in presence.

For the praetorship Tiberius nominated twelve candidates, the number handed down by Augustus. The senate, pressing for an increase, was met by a declaration on oath that he would never exceed it.

¹⁵ 1 The elections were now for the first time transferred from the Campus to the senate: up to that day, while the most important were determined by the will of the sovereign, a few had still been left to the predilections of the Tribes. From the people the withdrawal of the right brought no protest beyond idle murmurs; and the senate, relieved from the necessity of buying or begging votes, was glad enough to embrace the change, Tiberius limiting himself to the recommendation of not more than four candidates, to be appointed without rejection or competition. At the same time, the plebeian tribunes asked leave to exhibit games at their own expense — to be called after the late emperor and added to the calendar as the Augustalia. It was decided, however, that the cost should be borne by the treasury; also, that the tribunes should have the use of the triumphal robe in the Circus; the chariot was not to be permissible. The whole function, before long, was transferred to the praetor who happened to have the jurisdiction in suits between natives and aliens.

¹⁶ 1 So much for the state of affairs in the capital: now came an outbreak of mutiny among the Pannonian legions. There were no fresh grievances; only the change of sovereigns had excited a vision of licensed anarchy and a hope of the emoluments of civil war. Three legions were stationed together in summer-quarters under the command of Junius Blaesus. News had come of the end of Augustus and the accession of Tiberius; and Blaesus, to allow the proper interval for mourning or festivity, had suspended the

normal round of duty. With this the mischief began. The ranks grew insubordinate and quarrelsome — gave a hearing to any glib agitator — became eager, in short, for luxury and ease, disdainful of discipline and work. In the camp there was a man by the name of Percennius, in his early days the leader of a clique at the theatres, then a private soldier with an abusive tongue, whose experience of stage rivalries had taught him the art of inflaming an audience. Step by step, by conversations at night or in the gathering twilight, he began to play on those simple minds, now troubled by a doubt how the passing of Augustus would affect the conditions of service, and to collect about him the off-scourings of the army when the better elements had dispersed.

¹⁷ 1 At last, when they were ripe for action — some had now become his coadjutors in sedition — he put his question in something like a set speech:—“Why should they obey like slaves a few centurions and fewer tribunes? When would they dare to claim redress, if they shrank from carrying their petitions, or their swords, to the still unstable throne of a new prince? Mistakes enough had been made in all the years of inaction, when white-haired men, many of whom had lost a limb by wounds, were making their thirtieth or fortieth campaign. Even after discharge their warfare was not accomplished: still under canvas by the colours they endured the old drudgeries under an altered name. And suppose that a man survived this multitude of hazards: he was dragged once more to the ends of the earth to receive under the name of a ‘farm’ some swampy morass or barren mountain-side. In fact, the whole trade of war was comfortless and profitless: ten asses a day was the assessment of body and soul: with that they had to buy clothes, weapons and tents, bribe the bullying centurion and purchase a respite from duty! But whip-cut and sword-cut, stern winter and harassed summer, red war or barren