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THE ROMAN IMPERIAL SUCCESSION

UNDER THE

JULIO-CLAUDIANS, 23BC - AD69

by

Garrett G. Fagan

DEDICATION

To my parents
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university, that it is entirely my own work, and that it may not be lent or copied by the Library upon request until a five year period has elapsed from the time of submission.

Garret G. Fagan

August, 1987
SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the methods of succession that operated in the Julio-Claudian period, from Augustus' illness in 23 BC to the accession of Vespasian in AD 69. Attention will be paid to the succession schemes, if any, of each Emperor; methods of designation employed to mark out potential successors; the growth of military influence on the succession as seen in the interventions of the Praetorian Guard and the provincial armies; and major conspiracies and their impact on the succession.

Chapter I will show that Augustus, the first Emperor, whose actions in regard to the succession set the pattern for subsequent principes to follow, did not adhere to any single rigid scheme of succession as some scholars would have us believe. By means of adoption, marriage and conferral of privileges and powers, Augustus maintained a pool of imperial princes from which possible successors could be drawn. His motivation was two-fold: a concern for the continued stability of the State, and a desire to see his family, the Julian, remain in power. Tiberius (chapter II) remained loyal to his predecessor's intentions but these were thwarted by the intervention of the Praetorian Prefect, L. Aelius Sejanus. Conspiring to establish himself as Tiberius' successor, Sejanus effectively destroyed the house of Germanicus before being himself discovered and executed. Tiberius, old and virtually paranoid, did little in his last years to indicate a successor and Gaius Caligula rose to prominence with the help of Sejanus' replacement, Macro, and with minimal support from Tiberius.
The assassination of Gaius and the accession of Claudius (chapter III) was the first direct intervention in the succession by the military, in this case the Praetorian Guard. The Principate was shown to be a military autocracy, Claudius coming to power only by virtue of his military support and in the face of senatorial opposition. Once established, the Emperor returned to an Augustan-style succession scheme, elevating two men as possible replacements for his natural son, Britannicus. His marriage to Agrippina resulted in the eclipse of Britannicus in favour of her natural son whom Claudius was persuaded to adopt and elevate. This was the Emperor Nero who succeeded Claudius peacefully. Chapter IV will show how Nero, feeling insecure on the throne, annihilated all his rivals from within the dynasty and so weakened its position, for those rivals were also the very people who could have provided the childless Emperor with a possible successor. Finally, a movement in the provinces led to Nero's downfall and death, and the collapse of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. With the succession thrown wide open, the army commanders struggled for power in a year of civil war which concluded when Vespasian emerged victorious to found the Flavian dynasty. We will conclude that the question of the succession was not effectively solved by the Julio-Claudians who developed ad hoc methods to indicate successors. The military, always the true basis for the Emperor's power, gradually began to realise their potential and when the dynasty collapsed army commanders fought it out to determine the next Emperor. The succession remained a source of intrigue and violence throughout our period and beyond.
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PREFACE

A note on the annotation. Single or double references to ancient authors are included in parenthesis in the text. Multiple references, and all citations of modern works, are found in the notes at the end of each chapter. For the convenience of the reader, where modern works are referred to more than five times they are abbreviated. A list of these abbreviations is provided.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr B. McGing, for his patience and helpful comments; Professor T.N. Mitchell for some useful pointers; Dr J.B. Campbell of Queen's University, Belfast, for advice on the Praetorians; and Lee Guckian for the word processing.
ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient authors cited in the text and Notes are abbreviated according to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, (ed. 2, 1970) while scholarly journals follow the abbreviations used in L'Année Philologique except where listed below.


PIR 2


CHAPTER I

1

THE AUGUSTAN SUCCESSION

In 23 BC an event occurred that brought into sharp focus the problems of what would happen when Augustus Caesar ceased to rule the Roman State. For in that year Augustus fell so ill that he thought himself to be on his deathbed (Dio, 53.30.1; Suet. Aug., 28). Summoning the chief magistrates to his bedside, he gave the consul Cn. Calpurnius Piso a list of public revenues, and to M. Vipsanius Agrippa, his leading general, closest friend and most loyal supporter, he gave his signet ring. This gesture caused quite a stir, as Dio's account shows, for people had expected Augustus' nephew, M. Claudius Marcellus, to succeed him. Yet here the princeps had clearly favoured Agrippa.

Why did Augustus prefer Agrippa? Why was Marcellus considered as a possible successor? Why indeed was there a need for a successor to Augustus at all? To answer these questions we will have to look briefly at the rise to power of Octavianus - Augustus' name before 27 BC - and at his position within the State once power was attained.

Julius Caesar's death in 44 BC left his friend and henchman M. Antonius in an apparently dominant position within the Caesarian party. But in his will Caesar had adopted his nephew M. Octavius as his son and chief heir (Suet. Jul., 83). Octavius - thenceforth C. Julius Caesar Octavianus - was only a youth of nineteen in 44 BC and by all accounts hardly a threat to the experienced and mature Antonius. This presumption proved wrong. In due course the powerful Antonius was forced first to treat with and then to fight the young Caesar Octavianus, finally succumbing at the battle of Actium in 31 BC.
Octavianus' sole legitimation for this explosion on the Roman political scene was his appeal to pietas, "filial duty" (Tac. Ann., 1.9). It was by using the name Caesar that he raised a private army in Italy in 44 BC, the veterans respect for that name proving the crucial factor (RG, 1.1). Thus supported Octavianus had forced Antonius to reckon with him. It was not without some justification that Antonius could remark, no doubt bitterly:

"Et tu, puer, qui omnia nomini debes."

"And you, boy, who owes everything to a name."
(Cic. Phil., 13.11)

Having thus gained dominance through military supremacy, Octavianus set about giving his position a political identity. The result was the form of government called the Principate. The question of exactly when Octavianus (or Augustus, as he will henceforth be called) assumed the varius powers he came to wield in the State, or even what powers he actually did assume, is a vexed one and not our concern here. We will look only at the two that were to feature most prominently in the succession schemes of the Julio-Claudians and were, by no coincidence, the most important: the proconsular power and the tribunician power.

Augustus received a grant of imperium proconsulare in 27 BC as part of the constitutional settlement of that year. It was given definite limitations as it applied only to certain parts of the Empire. These were the provinces of Gaul, Syria and Spain, except Baetica. Dio is quick to point out that these were the very places where the vast majority of the army was stationed; Augustus, through his proconsular power, thus retain control of the troops (Dio, 53.12). Republican
precedent existed for such an extraordinary grant of power in the provinces, the first century being littered with examples from Sulla to Caesar. Augustus could therefore claim not to be acting illegally in accepting such a vast provincia, a point he is at pains to make in his Res Gestae (RG, 6.1). The other provinces were handed over to the control of the Senate although only one, Africa, had troops stationed in it. The proconsular power allowed Augustus to chose governors for the areas under his control whose authority was derived directly from his imperium of which they were legati, and so his control over the troops was very real indeed; their commanders were chosen personally by the princeps.

In 23 BC this imperium over the provinces was made maius, "greater", and extended over the whole Empire (Dio, 53.32.5). This did not mean that Augustus now undertook the daily administration of the provinces, and so made the Senate redundant in provincial affairs, but rather meant that in emergencies he had the right to interfere in any province by virtue of his holding more power (the literal meaning of imperium maius) than the governor on the spot. He was also in this year allowed to retain his imperium with the pomerium, Rome's sacred boundary. Some doubt exists as to whether or not this enabled him to exercise it in Rome but that is not our concern. In short, the proconsular power maius gave Augustus complete military and civil control over the provinces of the Empire, although that does not mean the princeps had to concern himself with the minutiae of provincial administration. He could interfere in any province, in any manner he saw fit but Augustus' natural tact ensured that discretion was always employed. Imperium maius was the princeps' most important power.
In 23 BC Augustus also received a grant of *tribunicia potestas* for life (Dio, 53.32.5). Between 31 and 23 BC he had maintained control in Rome and Italy by holding the consulship, Rome's supreme magistracy, every year. He desisted from this practice in 23 BC (Dio, 53.32.2-3). It is not difficult to discern his motive for doing so: he did not want to appear to be monopolising the highest office of State to the detriment, indeed exclusion, of other eligible candidates from among the aristocracy. The grant of tribunician power virtually gave him back what he had relinquished in resigning the consulship. Through it he could submit legislation to the People; convene the Senate; veto any measure that came before the Senate or People; gained certain, unclear, judicial powers. When combined with the *ius primae relationis*, the right to speak first on any matter, the tribunician power gave Augustus considerable influence over affairs in Rome.

These two were the twin pillars on which the constitutional position of the princeps rested. The *imperium maius* had a military character and as such was not broadcast by Augustus, a man who was eager to disguise the monarchic nature of his rule, having learnt the lesson of Julius Caesar well. It is not once mentioned in the *Res Gestae*. The tribunician power, with its civil connotations, was openly paraded before the populace as the Principate's principle power; it receives numerous reference in the *Res Gestae*, being used as a regnal year dating system (RG, 4.4, 6.2, 10.1, 15.1, 2).

Augustus' position was further augmented by other privileges he enjoyed, such as exemption from certain laws; the holding of numerous priesthoods, (the most important being the post of *pontifex maximus* (RG, 7.3)); the granting of honorific titles of which "Augustus" and
"Pater Patriae", voted to him in 27 and 2 BC respectively, were the most important - the latter he viewed as the final feather in his cap. In 19 BC he had received consular privileges. The princeps also extended his control over the Empire's finances.

All these powers and privileges lent to Augustus a quality the Romans called auctoritas, but as it does not impinge on the succession in any major way we will not indulge in a detailed consideration of it. Suffice it to say that auctoritas was a statesman's power of influence, his authority that stemmed not from the passing of any law but rather had its roots in many different sources: personal character, family background, wealth, military and civil achievements, and position within the State. Augustus derived his auctoritas primarily from the last source cited, but among the soldiery his link with name Caesar was an important consideration. The importance placed on the princeps giving his ring to Agrippa in 23 BC is an example of auctoritas at work: it was only a gesture but it was given political import because Augustus wielded such mighty auctoritas. Through this quality the princeps could effectively influence the course of events without the necessity of constantly exercising his imperium which would have only highlighted his dominatio of the State. His very name Augustus was derived from the same root as the word auctoritas, that is augeo.

In summary, we can say that the Principate was a military dictatorship thinly veiled by Republican constitutional forms (Tac. Ann., 1.1). Of those forms the two most important - the ones on which the princeps' legal position relied most heavily - were the tribunicia potestas and the imperium maius. These two gave Augustus virtually complete control over the civil and military affairs of the Empire, and
when they were augmented by other powers, privileges and honours ensured that his position was more or less unassailable. Although Augustus may have claimed to have "restored the Republic", contemporaries perceived the reforms that he introduced as a New Order, an autocracy.

As a tacitly accepted form of government with nothing written in the laws until Vespasian's time clearly outlining in detail the princeps' position in the State, the problem of what would happen on Augustus' death arose. In theory the Principate, a temporary office voted to one man by the Senate, would lapse and the Senate would decide what should be done next; would the system continue, and if so who would replace the dead princeps, or would there be a return to the old Republican system of rule by Senate and annual magistrates? In practice this simply would not work. If the Senate voted a return to the Republican system civil war was sure to break out. Men of ambition could call on Augustus' own revolutionary career as a precedent for their acts and demands. Similarly, should the Senate decide to continue the Principate and endeavour to choose one of their number as Augustus' replacement, what was stopping others from contesting that choice? Again, civil war seemed likely. To divide the powers of the Principate among two or more candidates was not the answer, Augustus himself realising the dangers this presented to the State (Suet. Aug., 28). It was therefore up to the princeps himself to make the necessary provisions that would ensure peace after his death. For Augustus this meant the continuance of the Principate; he cherished an ambition to be remembered as the founder of a New Order (Suet. Aug., 28). He even made reference in official documents to those who would succeed him.
If so, who would take over? As we have just seen, if the Senate chose a worthy candidate from among its members, who was to say that choice would not be challenged and civil war ensue? Augustus considered it his duty to try to ensure the continued stability of the State after his death, as the edict quoted by Suetonius shows. To him, the Principate was the only means of doing so. He therefore turned his mind to the succession.

As a product of the late Republic it was entirely natural and acceptable for Augustus to harbour ambitions for his male descendants. It had been traditional for families in the Republic to monopolise the highest offices of State - the consulship and the praetorship; a consul's son was expected to follow in his father's footsteps. In this way, the great family dynasties of the Republic arose: the Claudii, Aemilii, Cornelii etc. The Julii Caesares were no different in this respect, except that now the stakes were higher: Augustus sought to monopolise control not of particular magistracies but of the entire state.

Augustus, however, had no son, no direct male heir. His second wife Scribonia bore him a daughter, Julia, who remained his only natural child. Livia, his third wife, had already had two sons by her previous marriage to Tiberius Claudius Nero. They were: Tiberius Claudius Nero and Drusus Claudius Nero. These two were therefore Claudii and not Julii, so it is not surprising that Augustus channelled his hopes through Julia who was the only possible source of a Julian male heir.
In 25 BC Julia was married to M. Claudius Marcellus, Augustus' nephew (Dio, 53.27.5). Nobody appears to have paid much attention to this event, a coin issue from Africa standing alone in commemorating it. The next year Marcellus was aedile, the lowest Republican magistracy, but was voted the privilege of standing for the consulship ten years in advance of the legal age and of entering the Senate aged twenty-four. This was done under the auspices of Augustus (Dio, 53.28.3). These two events in conjunction were seen as clear indications of Augustus' intentions for his nephew. By 23 BC he was considered Augustus' successor potentiae, "successor in power" (Vell., 2.93.1).

Despite this, in the crisis of that year M. Agrippa was preferred. There can be little doubt as to why. Marcellus was young, inexperienced and had little or no military support. Agrippa was Augustus' right-hand man, mature, experienced and had the devotion of the armies won through many military successes. To have indicated Marcellus as the next princeps would have virtually guaranteed civil conflict; Agrippa was bound to oppose him (Vell., 2.93.1). This would have almost reproduced the situation that had obtained in 44 BC in which Antonius, Caesar's henchman, had been challenged by Octavius, Caesar's heir. Decades of instability and war had resulted from that situation, and it was precisely that which Augustus was seeking to avoid. The princeps' concern for the stability of the state overruled his dynastic hopes for Marcellus: he chose Agrippa.

But Augustus did not die in 23 BC. His recovery meant the revival of his dynastic ambitions for Marcellus. Shortly after his emergence from the illness, Agrippa received a substantial command in the East
and promptly left Italy. Rumours abounded concerning this series of events. They fall into two categories: Agrippa was sent to the East by Augustus to prevent trouble arising between himself and Marcellus (Dio, 53.31.2-4; Pliny, NH. 7.149); Agrippa left voluntarily, either as a rest from his labours (Tacitus), in pique at Marcellus' renewed preferement (Velleius, Suetonius, Aug.) or to leave Marcellus without a rival (Suetonius, Tib.)

We can discount the possibility of Augustus sending Agrippa away, an act implying displeasure. Agrippa received imperium proconsulare to enable him to carry out his Eastern mission. This certainly does not indicate a rupture between the princeps and his friend. Agrippa probably left out of mutual consent with Augustus to minimise the embarrassment to the imperial house caused by the events of 23 BC. Also, as we shall come to see, receiving a share in the Emperor's special powers - especially proconsular power and tribunician power - was actually a sign of preferment in the succession. Agrippa's grant of imperium proconsulare, in 23 BC was the first instance of this.

Within a few months of Agrippa's departure, Marcellus died (Dio, 53.30.4). Foul play was not suspected; Julia was left a widow. Agrippa's advancement now became rapid. In 21 BC he was recalled to Rome to supervise affairs there while Augustus toured the West. On his arrival in the city he received Julia's hand in marriage. This, coupled with his possession of imperium proconsulare, made it plain that now Agrippa was to succeed Augustus should anything happen to the princeps. If here was any doubt about this it was surely dispelled in 18 BC when Augustus had his powers renewed. At the insistence of the princeps Agrippa's imperium was also renewed and perhaps extended.
More importantly, Agrippa received a grant of tribunician power for five years which was renewed in 13 BC for five, or perhaps ten years. In 13 BC Agrippa was also given imperium maius, unless he already held it.

All this meant that Agrippa was Augustus' indicated successor. Should anything happen to the Emperor, Agrippa was in so strong a position as to be unassailable; he would naturally take over the reins of government. He was Augustus' co-regent, his partner in power, and the coins clearly show this. Dio is not entirely misplaced in attributing αὐτοκράτορ, "supreme power", to Agrippa (Dio, 54.12.2). None the less, Augustus was the senior of the two partners, his auctoritas alone would have ensured this. Agrippa's inclusion into the Julian family, through marriage to Julia, was another sign of imperial favour, and also acted as a vehicle for Augustus' dynastic hopes; any children born of Agrippa and Julia would be direct descendants of the princeps.

And children there were. In 20 BC Julia gave birth to a son, Gaius, and another, Lucius, followed three years later (Dio 54.18.1). Two daughters also were produced - Agrippina and Julia. On Lucius' birth, Augustus adopted both of Agrippa's sons as his own (Tac. Ann., 1.3; Dio, 54.18.1). Although this was a strictly personal move, its political implications were clear enough. As Augustus' sons, the two would inherit his estates. They would also inherit his political reputation and, with it, his supreme position in the State. The importance of Caesar's will in the political career of the young Octavius made this plain. Augustus therefore used his adoption of Gaius and Lucius as a means of indicating that they were to be his
political successors. The question then arises as to what this meant for Agrippa, at that time the co-regent and apparent successor of the princeps. We will address this problem presently.

Let us pause here to examine the careers of Augustus' stepsons, Tiberius and Drusus. Tiberius' public career began in 27 BC when Augustus led him into the forum to receive the toga virilis and have his name enrolled among the citizens (Suet. Tib., 7). In 24 BC he received the privilege of standing for the praetorship and consulship five years in advance of the legal age (Dio, 53.28.3-4). Quaestor in that year, he made many court appearances defending provincials and prosecuting Faenius Caepio in 23 BC. He was praetor in 16 BC. Drusus' career was similar. He was quaestor in 18 BC and received the same magisterial privileges that Tiberius had been granted in 24 BC. Tiberius was consul for the first time in 13 BC, an honour Drusus received in 9 BC. Tiberius had also held an important command in Armenia in 20 BC when the standards lost to the Parthians by Crassus and Antonius were returned, a decisive diplomatic victory for Augustus and one of his proudest moments (Dio, 54.8.1-2, 9.4-5; RG, 29.2). A grant of imperium proconsulare, limited in scope and duration, may be inferred from this mission although the sources do not mention it. In 15 BC the brothers were active in Rhaetia combatting Alpine tribes (Dio, 54.22.1). Tiberius had earlier married Vipsania, Agrippa's daughter by his previous wife, probably in 20 or 19 BC. Drusus wed Antonia, the daughter of the Triumvir Antonius.

These two, then, moved in the uppermost echelons of Roman society and enjoyed links with the imperial family outside of their mother's marriage to Augustus. At this early stage there is no clear evidence
of their inclusion in Augustus' succession plans, but as young imperial princes they cannot be ignored as possibilities. Indeed, circumstances were to militate in Tiberius' favour.

In 12 BC Agrippa died while in Pannonia. Julia, pregnant again, was widowed a second time (Dio, 54.28.3). Tiberius was then forced to divorce Vipsania and marry Julia which he did in the following year (Dio, 54.31.2). He did not take this well as his marriage to Vipsania had been very happy and he loved her dearly (Suet. Tib., 7). They had had a son, Drusus. However Tiberius' marriage to Julia heralded his overt inclusion in Augustus' succession schemes. This was made plainer in 6 BC when Tiberius received a grant of tribunicia potestas for five years and an extensive command in the East (Dio, 55.9.4; Suet. Tib., 9). Tiberius had simply replaced Agrippa as Augustus' successor.

Meanwhile, Gaius and Lucius Caesar were nearing the military age and were doted on by their grandfather (Suet. Aug., 64). The mob liked the princes, once shouting their approval when Tiberius sat the young Gaius on Augustus' right-hand side at a festival in 13 BC (Dio, 54.28.1). In 5 and 2 BC Augustus assumed the consulship to lead his sons into the forum and supervise their assumption of the toga virilis. There they were honoured by the ordo equester and hailed as the principes iuventutis, Leaders of the Youth. They were further allowed to attend meetings of the Senate from the day of their coming-of-age and had consulships designated for them five years from that day. Coins struck at the imperial mint at Lugdunum celebrate these events. An issue of 2 BC(?) shows the two princes on the reverse in their togae viriles holding the silver spears and shields given to them by the equites and reads C.L. CAESARES AUGUSTI F. COS. DES. PRINC. IUVENT.
"Gaius and Lucius Caesar, sons of Augustus, Consuls Designate, Leaders of the Youth". The elevation of these two was clear to all. What of Tiberius' position? What role was he expected to play? How could he be Augustus' successor when the princeps' adopted sons were being so clearly marked out in that role?

To answer these questions we will have to pause in our narrative to examine the theories that exist to explain Augustus' succession plan.

Firstly, a brief recap. We have seen how the Principate was essentially a unique office bestowed on an individual whose particular position within the State was not addressed in the laws. As such, no guidelines for its continuance or the appointment of a successor were available to the Romans, nor are such available to the modern scholar. It was left up to Augustus himself to make the arrangements for the succession, and he did so in the same spirit as he had established and maintained the Principate itself: he indicated a preference and let the Senate and People do the rest. His methods of indication should be clear to the reader by now: inclusion into the Julian family, either through marriage to Julia or, more directly, through adoption; a share in Augustus' special powers, especially tribunicia potestas; the granting of magisterial privileges. This last sign of favour does not appear to be as important as the others - Drusus, Tiberius' brother had received them and he cannot be seen as Augustus' successor - but when conferred in conjunction with one or more of the other signs, magisterial privileges could be seen as significant. It was by means of these methods that Augustus marked out first Agrippa, then Gaius and Lucius, and then Tiberius as people who were included in his succession.
plan. It is to explain the relative positions of these peoples to one another in this plan that two main theories have been posited.

The first is the "Regency" or "Caretaker" theory. This holds that Agrippa was to succeed Augustus not as the next princeps but as a Regent who would supervise the growth to maturity of Gaius or Lucius. When the two, or one of the two, was deemed fit for office the Regent would step down and let the Julian heir take his rightful place at the head of State. On the death of Agrippa in 12 BC Tiberius was elevated into this position, and simply replaced Agrippa as the potential Regent.

There are problems with this scenario. B. Levick points out that the powers conferred on a man by Augustus were virtually guaranteed for life, as they were renewed continually as long as the recipient wanted them. Not one case exists in the history of the Principate when a princeps' powers were removed from him while he still lived. This being so, how could Agrippa or Tiberius be quietly removed to make way for Gaius or Lucius? Moreover, the presence of a "retired" princeps would surely be a major threat to the security of the new Emperor. Such a man would be a natural focal point for conspiracies. Besides this, could we expect men of ambition such as Agrippa or Tiberius to relinquish the highest office of State without a struggle? If they decided to fight the incoming candidate there would be civil war. Latin has no word for "regency", the concept being alien to the Roman political mind. The whole scheme is more at home in the practices of the established monarchies of later ages than it is in the developing years of the Roman Principate. On these grounds I feel we must reject the "Regency" theory.
The second theory is the work of B. Levick and is more complicated. We will call it "Dynastic Collegiality". Basically it is this: Augustus set up pairs of princes from different generations whose elevation would overlap, so ensuring that there would be no hiatus between Emperors which could have resulted in civil war. In this way, Augustus would be succeeded by his "partner" Agrippa, and Agrippa by Gaius and/or Lucius. On Agrippa's death Tiberius was elevated from his pair (consisting of himself and his brother, Drusus Nero, which occupied the generation between Augustus and Agrippa, and Gaius and Lucius) to take Agrippa's place as Augustus' partner. Levick does not indicate any replacement for Tiberius in his generation. She also moots the possibility of the inclusion of Tiberius' son Drusus in Augustus' succession scheme, but we will deal with this presently.

Up to 6 BC, then, four pairs in three generations:

1st Generation:
Augustus
Agrippa

2nd Generation:
Tiberius
Drusus Nero

3rd Generation:
Gaius Caesar
Lucius Caesar

This changes to:
1st Generation:
Augustus
Tiberius

2nd Generation:
?
Drusus Nero

3rd Generation:
Gaius Caesar
Lucius Caesar

Levick's method for deducing pairs, at least those that are not immediately obvious (such as Tiberius and Drusus Nero), is to argue from parity in the careers of the two men involved. This applied to the elevation of Gaius and Lucius Caesar whose careers rose exactly parallel, three years apart in accordance with their age difference.

Levick extends this by arguing that if the careers of other imperial princes display parallelism, then they form a pair in her succession.
scheme. Naturally, any other honours or privileges conferred on the candidates only go to strengthen her claims.

I do not find this convincing. Levick is unclear as to the exact mechanics of Dynastic Collegiality. What would be done with the redundant member of a pair when his partner succeeded? It is most unlikely that Augustus thought in terms of a joint accession, that is both members of a pair succeeding at once. The princeps could have foreseen the dangers inherent in a situation when two men with equal power were given a position that was designed for only one man; civil war was a likelihood. Also, the Emperor had strong reservations about the wisdom of dividing the powers of the Principate between two or more successors (Suet. Aug., 28). Thus a joint accession, or indeed any situation in which sharing the powers of office is demanded, seems improbable. Given this, we must deduce that only one man could hold the Principate. If so, what about his erstwhile partner? Would not such a man, one who had enjoyed perfect parity with his partner in their parallel elevation but now found himself eclipsed, pose a dire threat to the stability of the State? The precise workings of the pair theory defy analysis.

More importantly, some of Levick's proposed pairs are doubtful. Augustus and Agrippa were a pair of sorts, but one in which Augustus retained the senior position. The nature of their relationship was unique, Agrippa willing to take the back seat as long as he was properly rewarded for his services. Augustus could not presume on a reproduction of this relationship in any of his succeeding pairs, if indeed there were any in the sense proposed by Levick. Gaius and Lucius Caesar were also a pair, their parallel elevation was very clear.
We will deal with Augustus' precise intentions for these two in due course. Tiberius and Drusus Nero do not form a convincing pair. Their elevation was clear, their position in the State as imperial princes virtually guaranteeing their receipt of honours, privileges and commands (see above, pp. 10-11). However, their parity is not a sure thing. Suetonius states that Augustus loved Drusus dearly (Suet. Claud., 1). Despite this, Drusus was a convinced Republican on record as having said that should he come to power he would restore the old system of government (Suet. Tib., 50, Claud., 1). Such a man was hardly suitable for the promulgation of Augustus' proposed New Order. Tiberius, by contrast, believed in the necessity of the Principate (Suet. Tib., 29). Between 13 and 12 BC Tiberius received signs of favour that Drusus did not. In 13 BC he was recalled to Rome while Drusus was given the command in Germany (Dio, 54.31.2). On the surface, it appears that Drusus has actually been preferred to Tiberius in that he received the senior command in Germany. However, a closer look at the circumstances surrounding these events reveals the opposite to be true. Tiberius returned to Rome with Augustus in 13 BC to receive his first consulship, still the highest office of State outside of the Principate itself. It was when Agrippa died in Illyricum in 12 BC that Tiberius received the command there as Agrippa's replacement. Agrippa had been sent to Illyricum in 13 BC (Dio, 54.29.1). This can only mean that in 13/12 BC Illyricum, not Germany, had been considered the more senior command, otherwise Augustus would have sent Agrippa to Germany; an Emperor's proclaimed partner could not be given a command inferior to a young imperial prince, that would have been a snub of the first order. Finally, Tiberius, not Drusus, received the hand of Julia.
Drusus' parity with Tiberius is thus not a proven point, the latter being apparently preferred certainly after 13 BC. Drusus' premature death in 9 BC leaves open the question of the degree of his inclusion into the succession scheme of Augustus but that he was Tiberius' equal in a pair of the sort proposed by Levick seems unlikely. Problems exist with another Levick's pairs, Germanicus and Drusus Caesar, (see below, pp. 29-31).

In brief, I would not reject Levick's "Dynastic Collegiality" theory entirely—Augustus and Agrippa, and Gaius and Lucius do form "pairs" of sorts—but I do not think it was a scheme which was as rigid and strictly defined as Levick would have us believe. Indeed this is the problem with both the theories outlined above. They adopt a retrospective stance, view the whole period and its events as a block and attempt to construct one overriding system to explain all those events. Suetonius described Augustus as "the most prudent and farsighted ruler" (circumspectissimus et prudentissimus princeps – Suet Tib., 21), and I believe that he was capable of far greater flexibility than Seager and Levick accredit to him.

If these two explanations are off the mark, what scheme can be discerned, if at all? I believe that Augustus did have a succession plan but that it was not nearly as complicated as Regency or Dynastic Collegiality. Augustus maintained a pool of imperial princes from which a successor could be drawn. Should the main candidate die, a replacement could be drawn from the remaining princes in the pool. Thus when Agrippa died in 12 BC Tiberius was quickly drafted in to replace him having already received various signs of imperial favour to indicate his potential candidature for the throne. In this way
Tiberius had acted as an insurance against fate during the years of Agrippa's ascendancy. This also seems to have been the role of Drusus, Tiberius' brother, although he died too early for this to become clear, as we shall see. Gaius and Lucius Caesar present a different dimension to this simple scheme. The signs of favour they received were far in excess of those conferred on Tiberius during his period as "substitute" to Agrippa (compare pp. 11 and 12 above). They were clearly to succeed Augustus in some capacity more definite than that indicated for Tiberius between 20 and 12 BC. The only possible explanation, given Agrippa and then Tiberius' place as Augustus' immediate successor, is that Gaius and Lucius were being marked out for the succession to Augustus' successor; that is, Augustus was indicating candidates for the second and third generations of the Principate.

In summary, the succession scheme that Augustus pursued between 23 and 6 BC was as follows. Agrippa was to succeed him until his death in 12 BC. Tiberius, who had received certain signs of imperial favour already, was then elevated to replace Agrippa. Drusus, Tiberius' brother, probably then took over Tiberius' former role as potential replacement for the heir apparent, in this case Tiberius. His death in 9 BC meant that he would never get the chance of performing this role to the full as his brother had done. Meanwhile, Gaius and Lucius Caesar were receiving more exalted signs of favour than were suitable for indicating mere "substitutes". The only possibility is that they were seen as successors to the third generation of the Principate, Tiberius being the successor to the second. Thus Augustus appears to have maintained a pool of princes from which successors could be drawn. The princes themselves existed at various stages of elevation, the fact
that those who were "substitutes" had received some recognition would make their further elevation easier and less dramatic, as was Tiberius' in 12-6 BC. This would help to keep the alarm of the noble class at the family of Augustus' monopoly of the control of the state to a minimum, a consideration that pervades all of Augustus' actions in regard to the position of the princeps.

However, in 6 BC the unexpected happened. Tiberius, Augustus' successor, refused his Eastern command and retired to private life on Rhodes. His reasons for doing so are variously given in the sources. Suetonius states the reason he gave at the time was that he was weary and wanted to rest (Suet. Tib., 10). This is plausible, Tiberius was to prove during his Principate that he was a morose and depressive character prone to black periods. It is possible that he went into one of these moods in 6 BC and acted on it. However, according to Suetonius, he later changed his story and claimed that he wished to avoid confrontation with Gaius and Lucius Caesar (Suet. Tib., 11). This considerably weakens the credibility of his first excuse but is in itself plausible. Tiberius might well have misunderstood the roles of the young princes and believed that he was merely a stopgap in Augustus' succession machinations, there to cover the two princes' growth to maturity. In this way, Tiberius might have thought that the princes were intended to be Augustus' successors and saw his own role as similar to that which he had played to Agrippa. Not wishing to confront the two, he retired. Velleius Paterculus, Tiberius' great admirer and virtually his panegyricist, records that Tiberius left because he did not want to outshine Augustus' sons (Vell., 2.99.2). We can discount this as yet another of Velleius' flatteries of Tiberius.
Tacitus blames Julia, also mentioned by Suetonius as a possible cause for Tiberius' actions (Tac. Ann., 1, 53; Suet. Tib., 11). Dio gives the fullest account. According to him, the misbehaviour of Gaius and Lucius drove Augustus to confer tribunician power on Tiberius to teach them a lesson (Dio, 55.9.1-4). This appears preposterous. Can we really imagine Augustus giving Tiberius tribunicia potestas merely to slap his grandsons on the wrists? All of the ancient sources' explanations are therefore at least plausible with the exception of Dio's. Which of them is correct is impossible to say with any degree of certainty. Julia's contribution cannot be discounted. Her marriage to Tiberius, given the latter's enforced divorce from his beloved Vipsania, was not a happy one, and Julia's adulterous behaviour, known to all except her father, was another factor to be considered.

Levick has proposed an ingenious political interpretation of this event. A "Julian" party headed by Julia, Augustus' daughter, and Scribonia, Augustus' wife before Livia and Julia's mother, organised popular agitation for the election of Gaius Caesar to the consulship for 5 BC. The people actually voted him into office, although Gaius was still a minor and had not even taken the toga virilis (Dio, 55.8.2). Their motive: fear that Tiberius, elevated to certain successorship by the conferral of the tribunician power and proconsular imperium in 6 BC, would prefer his own son Drusus (born in 13 BC) above Gaius and/or Lucius Caesar when it came to deciding the succession to himself. They therefore organised popular agitation in favour of Gaius as a vote of "no confidence" in Tiberius' integrity. The fact that Augustus merely deferred Gaius' entry into the consulship until he was twenty rather than quashing the whole proposal indicated to the
sensitive Tiberius that the princeps essentially agreed. Tiberius then left out of pique and pride, the "Julian" party emerging victorious.

This is a very clever reconstruction and makes sense of the evidence in light of subsequent developments but there is no direct ancient evidence for it. Levick would argue that, due to the nature of Julia's party and Augustus' wish to play down political dissension within the imperial house, none is to be expected.

Tiberius' departure from the political arena left the princeps in a difficult position: he had no successor. Nobody of Tiberius' maturity and experience existed in the dynasty to replace him, it being likely that had Drusus Nero lived he would have been elevated at this time. However, Drusus was dead; Tiberius was gone. Rightly could Augustus feel betrayed by his stepson (Suet. Tib., 11).

Augustus' answer to this problem seems to have been to place all his hopes on Gaius and Lucius Caesar. Signs of preferment continued: they attained their togae viriles in 5 and 2 BC, for which events the Emperor took up the consulship (see above, p. 12); consulships were designated for them for AD 1 and 4 respectively; Gaius received imperium proconsulare and a command in the East in 1 BC; Lucius was promised a command in Spain with, one presumes, an attendant grant of proconsular power but died en route at Massilia in AD 2 (Dio, 55.10.9). There can be no doubt that Augustus intended that these two should take over when he died.

But what did Augustus intend should happen when the two came to succeed? Would one or both take over? If one, which of the two? Given what we have seen of the perils inherent in a division of a
princeps' powers, it seems highly unlikely that Augustus thought seriously of a joint accession (see above, pp. 6-7). To have attempted such a move at the first ever transferal of the powers of one princeps to another would have made an already delicate situation potentially explosive. If the two should split, civil war was ensured. If we accept that Augustus did not intend the two to accede jointly, two questions require consideration: why were the careers of Gaius and Lucius kept so carefully parallel? Which of the two was to succeed?

The parallelism of the young men's public careers, which we have already noted above (see above, pp. 10-11, 11-12), would indeed seem to indicate intended collegiality in power. To this can be added a further point. Why did Augustus wait for three years between the births of Gaius, in 20 BC, and Lucius, in 17 BC, before adopting anyone? Even then he adopted the two at the same time. Had he wanted a single successor, he would surely have adopted Gaius in 20 and Lucius in 17 rather than wait in uncertainty after Gaius' birth until such a time as another son was produced, if ever. Their joint adoption can thus be seen as possibly foreshadowing their joint rule. This, however, would be a mistake. The joint adoption of Gaius and Lucius in 17 BC merely gave them parity in their relationship with Augustus. It can be seen only as the first step in their parallel careers. That parallelism can also be overestimated. Firstly, the two died too young for any clear distinction to be drawn between them or for any clear sign of intended joint successorship to emerge, such as joint grants of tribunicia potestas. Secondly, parallelism in the early careers of imperial princes is not a decisive sign of parity in Augustus' succession plans; one could be seen as a "substitute" for the other, as
was the case with Tiberius and Drusus. Thirdly, the parallel elevation of Gaius and Lucius could also have been intended to have left Agrippa and then Tiberius with a clear and equal choice between the two when they came to decide the succession to themselves; Gaius and Lucius would have come to them equally recommended. In short, the parallel elevation of the two princes is not a decisive indication of joint accession, and its importance is weakened further by their premature deaths which prevented any clear sign of Augustus' intention emerging, beyond the fact that they were to succeed him in some capacity.

As to which of the two was to succeed, no clear conclusion can be drawn. Again, their premature deaths prevented their respective positions from being clearly outlined. Of the two, however, Gaius can possibly be seen as the strongest candidate. He was the elder, received the more prestigious command in the East (similar to that which Agrippa had accepted in 23 BC), and was alone in the two in receiving a coin issue in which he was honoured separately from his brother. Furthermore, the cenotaphs in honour of Gaius and Lucius from Pisa draw an interesting distinction between the two. In that dedicated to Gaius, we read among his titles that of princeps designatus, one absent in the cenotaph dedicated to Lucius. However, two points have to be made here. Firstly, when the inscription to Gaius was erected in AD 4 Lucius was already two years dead, so Gaius was indeed sole princeps designatus. It cannot therefore be used as evidence for Gaius' preferment above his brother during the latter's lifetime. Secondly, the title itself is questionable. It is certainly not an official, imperially sanctioned title. Such a blatant indication of intended successorship would have been too monarchic for
Roman tastes. What it represents is the locals' view of Gaius' position and so can be taken as nothing more than an indication of how successful Augustus' methods of marking out potential successors were.

Another piece of evidence that may be adduced to support the thesis that Gaius was to succeed Augustus before Lucius is a letter of the princeps quoted by Aulus Gellius in which Augustus refers to his desire to see Gaius accede to his position in the State (Aul. Gell., 15.7). The letter is dated to Augustus' sixty-fourth birthday which would have been 23 September, AD 1 or 2 depending on whether or not Augustus counted inclusively of his first year of life. If it is the former, then Lucius was still alive and here we do have a clear sign of Gaius' preferment during Lucius lifetime; if it is the latter, then Lucius was dead and the letter is useless for this purpose. Aside from the present discussion, it is worth noting that this letter is the only piece of literary evidence we have in which Augustus explicitly states an intention regarding the succession: Gaius is to succeed him.

In short, a joint accession of Gaius and Lucius seems a most unlikely succession for Augustus to contemplate, given the dangers such an event would present to the stability of the State. The parallel elevation of the two throughout their short lives is not a decisive indication of an intended joint accession. Which of the two was to succeed is unclear, their premature deaths and the ambiguity of the evidence favours Gaius' preferment leaving this an open question. None the less, Gaius is perhaps the more plausible candidate, if for no other reason than his seniority.
In the event, all these questions were rendered obsolete. Lucius' death in AD 2 was followed years later by that of Gaius in Lycia, the young prince having been fatally wounded in a siege in Armenia (Dio, 55.10a.6-9). Augustus was devastated, the otherwise emotionless tone of the Res Gestae betraying some bitterness with the words,

"Filios meos, quos iuvenes mihi eripuit Fortuna, Gaius et Lucius Caesares......."

"My sons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar, who Fortune tore from me while they were still young men...."  
(RG, 14.1; my trans.)

In his will, the preamble of which is quoted by Suetonius, the Emperor showed similar emotion:

"Quonian atrox Fortuna Gaius et Lucius filios mihi eripuit...."

"Since cruel Fate has torn my sons, Gaius and Lucius, from me...."  
(Suet. Tib., 23; my trans.)

Gaius and Lucius remained Augustus' favourites even after their deaths.

All this time, Tiberius was in the political wilderness. On Rhodes he spent his time reading, and living as a private citizen. Despite this, governors en route to or from the Eastern provinces were wont to call in and pay their respects to the Emperor's stepson and one-time successor (Suet. Tib., 12). Tiberius must have realised his mistake and seen how an imperial prince imbued with proconsular power and tribunicia potestas languishing on an island close to the Syrian and Balkan legions could be perceived as a threat to Augustus. He attempted to be as innocuous as possible, even abandoning Roman dress (Suet. Tib., 13).
In 2 BC Julia fell from grace, banished for adultery. Levick sees this as a result of the further activities of the "Julian" party. On this occasion they were allegedly attempting to put Iullus Antonius, one of Julia's "lovers", into the place left vacant by Tiberius in 6 BC, that is, as Augustus' successor. That a political struggle underlay Julia's banishment is indicated by the fact that Iullus was the only one of her so-called lovers who was tried for treason and either put to death or forced to commit suicide, and that Scribonia, Julia's mother, went into exile with her daughter. These facts do imply some sort of political activity, but I would question Levick's motive for that activity, namely Iullus' inclusion in the Augustan succession scheme. In 6 BC the party is supposed to have been agitating for the rights of Gaius and Lucius in the face of Tiberius' ascendancy (see above, pp. 21-2). Why then were they not satisfied with the young princes' evidently secure position in 2 BC? Surely they had got what they wanted; to complicate matters further by pushing a new candidate for the succession on Augustus in the form of Iullus seems pointless, if not entirely stupid. Whatever their motives, Julia and Scribonia were most probably up to some political mischief in 2 BC and paid the price of discovery. It should be noted that this is the first in a series of punishments meted out to members of the imperial house that spans the Julio-Claudian period, in which political indictment is given the guise of arraignment for moral laxity or depravity. A princeps could not let it be known that the domus Augusta housed political dissent.

Tiberius was at first pleased with the news of Julia's demise but soon saw that with her went his only link with the imperial house.
outside of his mother. He began to petition for his return, his pleas savagely rejected by Augustus. His secession became exile (Suet. Tib., 11-12). The next year, 1 BC, his tribunician power expired along with his proconsular imperium; neither was renewed at Rome. Tiberius had reached his nadir. It was only through the repeated pleas of his mother that he received the vague title of legatus Augusti (Suet. Tib., 12).

When Gaius Caesar appeared in the East in the same year, Tiberius met him on Chios (or perhaps Samos). Velleius asserts that the young man recognised his superior in Tiberius (Vell., 2.101.1); we can discount this as another example of Velleius' pro-Tiberian flattery. Dio and Suetonius agree in portraying the meeting as frigid, perhaps not to the extent of Tiberius grovelling at the feet of all present, as Dio would have us believe (Dio, 55.10.18; Suet. Tib., 12). The presence of M. Lollius, an old enemy of Tiberius, as one of Gaius' advisors contributed further to the cold relations between the two men. Tiberius' unpopularity spread, and in Nemaurus in Gaul people threw down his statues while his head was offered to Gaius if the prince would only give the word (Suet. Tib., 13). Rumours were spread that Tiberius planned treason (Suet. Tib., 12).

With his life clearly in danger, Tiberius was left in uncertainty on Rhodes. Augustus left the decision as to his continued exile up to Gaius, a clear sign of the relative standing of the two in the Emperor's esteem at this time. Lollius' fall from grace in AD 2 and the rise of Sulpicius Quirinus, a friend of Tiberius, as the latter's replacement on Gaius' staff helped Tiberius' position considerably (cf. Tac. Ann., 3.48). In the same year he received his recall (Suet. Tib., 14). He remained in private life, making only one public appearance to
lead his son Drusus into the Forum. He then immediately retired back into obscurity, even moving house to a less central area of the city (Suet. Tib., 15). By all appearances Tiberius' public career was at an end.

AD 4 changed all this. Once again, Augustus had no successor. He was sixty-eight years old, by Roman standards, which considered a man of 46 a senex, very old indeed. His one remaining male grandchild was Agrippa Postumus, but he was only sixteen and had not even taken the toga virilis by AD 4. The princeps had no choice but to re-elevate Tiberius. Tiberius was called out of private life, adopted by Augustus as his son, being first forced to adopt Germanicus, Tiberius' nephew, and granted tribunicia potestas for five or possibly ten years. He also received a grant of imperium proconsulare and a command in Germany. Augustus himself adopted Agrippa Postumus.

What is going on here? One definite deduction can be made: Tiberius was reinstated in the role he had played between 12 and 6 BC, namely he was Augustus' successor. The problems lie with Germanicus and Agrippa Postumus. Seager, naturally, sees Tiberius as Germanicus' Regent. We need travel no farther down that road. Levick is slightly confused about her pairs at this point. She argues for two pairs: Augustus and Tiberius, and Germanicus and Drusus, Tiberius' natural son.

This last point requires a little elucidation. Due to the legal nature of Tiberius' adoption by Augustus, Drusus became Drusus Caesar, Augustus' grandson. Thus, Drusus and Germanicus were on a par in their relationship to Augustus. Levick then traces the two princes' public
careers and notes that tell-tale parallelism on which she places so much importance. Their birth dates are unsure, but their advancement is marked by a three year gap separating their tenure of the various offices. Both were exempt from holding the office of praetor, thus speeding their advancement to the consulship. Both held consulships, in AD 12 and 15 respectively (Dio, 56.26.1, 57.14.1). Both get imperium proconsulare, in AD 14 and 17 respectively (Dio, 56.26.1, Tac. Ann., 2.44). Their advancement under Tiberius we will deal with presently. Under Augustus, both princes also held various prestigious priesthoods.

I find this pair difficult to accept. That Drusus was adopted indirectly into the Caesarian family is certain. Much less so is his parity with Germanicus. In AD 9 the latter received ornamenta triumphalia and was twice hailed as imperator for his exploits on the Northern frontier (Dio, 57.17.2). Drusus, by AD 12, showed no comparable military honours. Levick dismisses this by arguing that Drusus was not a vir militaris, so Germanicus' honours are not important. I disagree. A crucial part of an imperial prince's training was his military experience, the martial Romans always seeing prowess in war as the highest virtue. Drusus did not receive a military command until his appointment to the suppression of the Pannonian mutiny in AD 14, after Augustus' death. Thus, his first military experience was earned under Tiberius, his father, not under Augustus. This is a telling omission in Drusus' elevation under his adoptive grandfather.

Levick's pair is thus problematical. Is it not more likely that these two stood in relation to one another in a manner analogous to
that in which their fathers, Tiberius and Drusus Nero, had done under Augustus some ten years previously? That is to say, Germanicus was set up as Tiberius' successor - hence the enforced adoption - while Drusus received sufficient advancement to mark him out as a candidate should anything happen to Germanicus. A pair of sorts they were, but Germanicus was the senior partner with Drusus acting as "substitute". Germanicus was also a vehicle for Augustus' dynastic hopes. He was married to Agrippina, Augustus' granddaughter, and it was only through this union that Julian heirs, carriers of Augustus' own blood, could be produced. However, a direct male heir of Augustus was already in existence: Agrippa Postumus.

Born, as his name implies, shortly after the death of his father M. Agrippa in 12 BC, this young man had been so effectively eclipsed by his brothers Gaius and Lucius that he had not even taken the toga virilis by the time he was sixteen, two years later than was normal. When he finally assumed the garment in AD 5, the ceremony was not ostentatious and he was granted none of the privileges other imperial princes had received on the same occasion (Dio, 55.22.4). Yet in AD 4 he had been adopted by Augustus as his son, legally Tiberius' equal in his relationship to the princeps (though in reality he was in a far inferior position, not holding any of Tiberius' powers). Birch has offered a plausible set of explanations for this move by Augustus. He proposes that Augustus adopted the prince out of a sense of pietas to the family of M. Agrippa; out of a fear that the Claudian line, in the form of Tiberius and Germanicus, would eclipse the Julian; as an insurance against fate, that is a "substitute" (but to whom Birch does not say); or, as a reaction against the alleged
libertarianism of the Claudian heirs (cf. Tac. Ann., 1.33). The last point is perhaps the least convincing; Claudian Republicanism was not a serious threat to the continuity of the Principate and Tiberius was not even a staunch Republican himself (Suet. Tib., 29). That Augustus adopted Agrippa to strengthen the Julian position in future successions appears the most likely reason for his actions. He could not have feared that Tiberius and Germanicus would actually supplant any future Julian heirs, as the latter's marriage to Agrippina would itself produce Julian candidates, but he perhaps felt that the adoption of Agrippa would further strengthen the Julian claim. Agrippa could also have been seen as a general insurance against fate, Augustus' recent bereavements undoubtedly warning him against complacency. The Emperor appears to have taken the step without much forethought, the adoption bearing the mark of spontaneity in view of the young man's total exclusion from previous consideration. It proved to be a mistake.

In AD 6-7 Agrippa suffered a demotion so crushing and final that he lost the name Caesar, his father's inheritance and his freedom, being banished to the island of Planasia. There he remained until AD 14 when, on Augustus' death, he was murdered (see below, pp. 33-5). The sources all agree that Agrippa was banished due to a ferocious character and bad behaviour. This sounds like an imperial smokescreen. The real reason, according to Levick, lies with the activities of the "Julian" party, now led by Julia the Younger, Agrippa's sister. Their aim was to ensure the succession of Agrippa above Tiberius and Germanicus and in the face of the rise of these two after AD 4. Agrippa could well have been little more than a figurehead who suffered punishment for the nefarious activities of his sister and
her allies. The party's agitation on his behalf continued after his banishment: Julia was sent into exile for "adultery" while her husband was put to death or forced to commit suicide. Tellingly, he was involved in alleged revolutionary agitation in AD 6 (Suet. Aug., 19). The exile of Julia and the death of her husband probably took place in AD 8 and would appear to indicate that the imperial house was once again torn by dynastic faction-fighting at this time.

Responsibility for the death of Agrippa has been variously attributed. Tacitus, not surprisingly, blames Tiberius (Tac. Ann., 1.6). Suetonius is not sure who gave the order. He does, however, cite Augustus as a likely culprit and points out that Tiberius strenuously denied all knowledge of an execution order on Agrippa when he was told of the murder (Suet. Tib., 22). Dio claims that Agrippa was killed on Tiberius' orders, issued from Nola, Augustus' death place, but that Tiberius then denied all complicity in the deed to allow suspicion to fall on Livia, Augustus and the centurion who dealt the blow (Dio, 57.3.5-6). Modern scholars are equally divided. Seager blames Augustus. Levick also thinks Augustus was ultimately responsible but hints at the involvement of Livia and Sallustius Crispus, Tiberius' tribune/companion. Jameson blames Crispus alone. Finally, Birth points the finger at Livia in collusion with Crispus.

This question will never be decisively resolved unless some new documentary evidence comes to light. Livia's possible involvement we will deal with in due course (see below, pp. 42-3). That Crispus could act alone in executing an imperial prince, albeit an exiled one, is highly unlikely. The risks to himself should Tiberius' reaction be
adverse — as indeed it was, according to Suetonius — were huge. Tiberius himself had little to gain from Agrippa's death, except perhaps greater unpopularity and more suspicion. Augustus appears to be the best candidate. Although it might seem improbable, as it did to Tacitus, that Augustus would order the murder of his grandson on his own death, it should be remembered that Augustus was a ruthless man and an implacable enemy. His career is littered with friends and associates, even family, who suffered at his hands. His daughter Julia, whatever her crimes, remained in exile throughout the rest of his reign — some sixteen years — and all pleas to allow her to return to Rome were totally rejected (Suet. Aug., 65). His granddaughter Julia was also exiled, as we have just seen. Tiberius' political faut pas in retiring to Rhodes turned into exile in the face of Augustus' lack of forgiveness and he was only allowed to return to Rome as a favour to Gaius Caesar. Agrippa's murder is therefore not out of character for the princeps. What is more, Augustus had a valid motive. Agrippa, an imperial prince in isolation on an island, presented a threat to the stability of the State as a possible focal point for conspiracies, and the stability of the State was Augustus' paramount consideration in all matters. That Agrippa was a threat was indicated to Augustus by the attempt to remove from his island in AD 8 or 9 when two vagabonds (?) attempted to take Agrippa and Julia, his mother, to the legions (Suet. Aug., 18). This could well have been the incident that drove Augustus to make the decision to have Agrippa eliminated lest he prove a threat to the peaceful succession of Tiberius. After Augustus' death another attempt was made to rescue Agrippa, this time headed by his slave Clemens, but it was too late and Clemens did not arrive on Planasia
until after Agrippa had been killed. However, Clemens then proceeded
to impersonate his dead master and enjoyed considerable popular support
until he was apprehended. This last episode proved that Agrippa's
execution was in fact a prudent political move. Rumours that Augustus
planned or actually effected a last minute reconciliation with Agrippa
were probably spread to add weight to the suspicion surrounding
Tiberius and Livia.

With the removal of Agrippa, Julia and her husband, the claims of
Tiberius to the succession stood unchallenged. Augustus died at Nola in
Campania on 19 August, AD 14. Tiberius, who had been on his way to
Pannonia, hurried to the scene (Dio, 56.31.1). He was the most
powerful man in the State, his tribunicia potestas having been renewed
the previous year and his imperium being made coextensive with that of
Augustus at the same time (Suet. Tib., 21; Vell., 2.121.1). His
accession was ensured.

There is evidence that Augustus did not relish the thought of
having Tiberius succeed him. Their personalities clashed: Augustus,
charming, tactful and humorous; Tiberius, dour, humourless and laconic
(Suet. Aug., 87; compare Suet. Tib., 68). Augustus also probably never
forgave Tiberius for his retirement from public life that had left him
in such an awkward position, that is without a successor, in 6 BC.
Despite the peas of ancient and modern students alike, it is difficult
not to feel that Augustus only adopted and elevated Tiberius to
successorship because there was nobody else available with his
experience, maturity and lineage. The preamble to his will implied
that Tiberius was only where he was because Gaius and Lucius had died;
that Tiberius was, at best, second choice (see above, p. 26). He had
added the words *hoc facio causa rei publicae*, "this I do for reasons of State", to the adoption formula when adopting Tiberius. This can be interpreted in two ways: as a compliment to Tiberius, implying that he was the best choice of successor for the State; or as an insult, inferring that Augustus' adoption of Tiberius was devoid of any personal affection. The two are not mutually exclusive and Augustus could have been saying, as I believe he was, that Tiberius was a good choice for the State but was not Augustus' personal favourite. The *Res Gestae* highlight this last point. In all Gaius and/or Lucius Caesar receive mention therein on five occasions, usually being described as *filii mei*, "my sons". Tiberius is referred to only twice, never as *filius meus* but rather coldly as *qui tum erat privignus meus*, "he who was at that time my stepson". Reading the *Res Gestae*, written in Augustus' last year on earth, one would have no idea that Tiberius stood at the gateway of his reign. Conversely, Gaius and Lucius stand out as his favourites. None the less, whatever his personal feelings for Tiberius, Augustus had had no choice but to instal him as his successor after the tragic death of Gaius. This shows clearly that the welfare of the State was uppermost on Augustus' mind.

Let us now stop and take stock of all we have seen about the Augustan succession. The nature of the Principate ensured that no overt machinery of succession could be established in the Roman State which would clearly delineate methods for choosing and installing future *principes*. It was up to Augustus, the first *princeps*, to do this, but as delicately as possible so as not to alarm the *nobiles* who theoretically still controlled the government.
Augustus had two sides to his character: Augustus the princeps whose desire was for the stability and prosperity of the State, and Augustus and paterfamilias of the Julian gens who harboured perfectly natural dynastic aspirations for his male relatives. It is not therefore surprising to find Augustus turning to his own family to find potential successors. This also served another purpose. Augustus' own early career showed the importance of family ties in Roman politics, so it was desirable that any successor to Augustus should at least have some connection with his house. His first choice came from within that house. Marcellus enjoyed the same relationship to Augustus as the latter had had to Julius Caesar—nephew—and was married to Julia, Augustus' daughter. However, in the crisis of 23 BC Augustus the princeps overruled Augustus the paterfamilias and made the more prudent factional choice of M. Agrippa. Augustus' friend and leading general whose experience and abilities far outstripped those of Marcellus at that time. Agrippa was then advanced by receiving a share in the Emperor's powers in the form of imperium proconsulare. The death of Marcellus in 23 BC left the way clear for Agrippa's further advancement and left Julia free to marry him. This was a masterful stroke by Augustus as he thus united his dynastic and stately aspirations: Agrippa was brought into the Julian gens, any factional tensions caused by Marcellus' advancement were resolved and the possibility of more Julian heirs arising out of the marriage existed. Between 23 and 12 BC Agrippa was to be Augustus' successor.

Augustus was not satisfied with that alone. He adopted Agrippa's sons, Gaius and Lucius, in 17 BC. With Agrippa in a position of dominance until 12 BC, the only reason Augustus should do this was to
indicate his choice of successors for the third generation of the Principate, that is, the generation after Agrippa. Gaius and Lucius were also direct male descendants of Augustus, so his dynastic aspirations were fulfilled. The princeps was thus attempting to ensure the continuation of the Principate for at least three generations while at the same time establishing the Julian gens as its sole agents. In one sense, Agrippa did act as a "caretaker" in that during his reign the Julian heirs would reach maturity and then be ready to succeed him. It is highly unlikely, however, that Agrippa was expected to relinquish his powers during his lifetime, such a thing being dangerous for the State - a retired princeps would surely attract the ambitious - and perhaps impossible: how did one dismantle a Principate? Years later the Emperor Nero would lament that he was suffering an unprecedented and unheard of fate: loosing the supreme power while still alive (Suet. Nero, 42). A Regency appears unlikely. Likewise Levick's suggested scheme, Dynastic Collegiality, is too rigid and complicated to be plausible; there are also problems with some of her pairs. Besides this, it is not clear exactly how such a scheme would actually operate, the likelihood of joint accession being remote.

Agrippa's death was an inconvenience but certainly not a crisis. A ready substitute was at hand in the form of Tiberius, Augustus' stepson, who was the Empire's top general after Agrippa and experienced in public affairs. He also had the right dynastic qualifications, being Augustus' stepson and Julia's new husband. He had already received some signs of favour, magisterial privileges and foreign commands, so his elevation into Agrippa's vacant place as Augustus successor was relatively simple. Between 12 and 6 BC Tiberius was to
be Augustus' successor with Gaius and Lucius rising behind him. Here
was the weak link in Augustus' scheme. Tiberius had a son of his own,
Drusus, for whom he would harbour aspirations as Augustus did for his
sons. The princeps himself did not seem to question Tiberius' loyalty
to himself and his adopted sons but it is quite possible that others
did and that a "Julian" party arose that sought to remove Tiberius or
at least secure the position of Gaius and Lucius. If Levick's analysis
of this group's activities is correct then it was to have considerable
influence on the course of events over the following years. Its first
move may have been to force Tiberius to retire from public life,
although this might just as easily have been done for entirely personal
reasons. Anyhow, in 6 BC Tiberius refused an Eastern command and
retired to Rhodes.

Augustus was now in a difficult position. He had no successor.
Gaius and Lucius were still too young for public responsibilities. He
could have chosen a replacement for Tiberius from outside the imperial
house, but refrained from doing so. His devotion to dynasty was
strong. Drusus Nero, Tiberius' brother who had also received some
signs of imperial favour, would probably have been coopted into
Tiberius' vacant place at this point but he had died three years
earlier. The princeps decided to risk his health and supervise Gaius
and Lucius' growth to maturity personally.

There is a problem here. Gaius and Lucius' strictly parallel
advancement makes it difficult to separate them in the succession
scheme. What did Augustus intend for them? A joint accession? If
not, which of them was to succeed? A joint accession is most unlikely.
It presented the State with a very real possibility of civil conflict
should the two split. To point to later successful joint rules such as M. Aurelius and L. Verus, the Gordiani or Balbinus and Papienus is not a sufficient objection. These took place when the Principate was the unquestioned mode of governing the Empire, not "at a period when rule by one man was a dynamically developing institution". To have attempted a joint accession at the first ever succession would surely have been a recipe for disaster. Gaius and Lucius both died too young for any clear indication as to which of the two was favoured by Augustus to emerge, but Gaius' candidacy is perhaps the stronger. Lucius' death in AD 2 left Gaius alone but then he too died and all of Augustus' machinations on behalf of his grandsons had come to nothing.

Augustus now had no choice. He reinstated Tiberius as his successor, adopting him and granting him powers. Augustus the princeps could relax, for whatever his personal opinion of his stepson, the princeps could rest assured that Tiberius would make a capable Emperor. Augustus the paterfamilias however, was not satisfied. That is why he forced Germanicus' adoption on Tiberius and himself adopted Agrippa Postumus, his previously ignored grandson. Through Germanicus would come future Julian heirs, and Germanicus was marked out for the succession to Tiberius. It was a lot less solid a plan than those that had gone before, but it was the best Augustus could do in the circumstances. Agrippa soon fell from grace, perhaps as a result of the continued activities of the "Julian" party. Augustus' dynastic hopes now lay solely with Germanicus.

Augustus' succession schemes were not the result of adherence to a single, unified scheme of succession, such as Regency or Dynastic Collegiality, but changed according to the circumstances. If any
single plan can be traced at all, it is a simple one indeed. It was the maintenance of a pool of imperial princes from which candidates for the succession could be drawn. The princes were kept at various stages of advancement to facilitate their further elevation, some, like Drusus Nero or Drusus Caesar, acting as substitutes for those currently in the ascendant. Tiberius himself had played this role to Agrippa, being "called into play" when the latter died. Augustus' prime consideration was for the welfare of the State, and this led him to make the third generation provision by which principes for the generation after that of his successor were indicated. This ensured the continuation of the Principate, the system that in Augustus' eyes guaranteed the stability of the State, well after his death. His choices for the third generation were also dynastic, thus ensuring the eventual succession of a Julian heir with Augustus' blood in his veins.

Such were the succession plans of Augustus, the first Emperor. The entire thirty-seven year period was covered by an immediate successor with a provision made during most of it for the third generation of the Principate. The successors were: Marcellus, 25-23 BC; Agrippa, 23-12 BC; Tiberius 12-6 BC; Gaius or Lucius, 6 BC-AD 2; Gaius, AD 2-4; Tiberius, AD 4-14. The third generation successors were: Gaius and Lucius, 17-6 BC; any sons of Gaius and/or Lucius, 6 BC-AD 4; Germanicus, AD 4-14. The third generation provision was a perfect union of the dynastic and stately aspects of Augustus' character. On the one hand it ensured the continuance of the Principate, on the other it provided for the eventual accession of a Julian heir to the purple.
Finally, we must consider one question hitherto unaddressed: did Livia, Augustus' wife and Tiberius' mother, exercise an influence on the succession of Tiberius? If she did, what was the nature of that influence? As Augustus' wife, Livia would surely have had an influence over her husband in certain matters, especially concerning her son, but it is impossible to quantify that influence. The only clear reference to her intervention on Tiberius' behalf is when she helped secure him the title *legatus Augusti* during his darkest hour on Rhodes (Suet. *Tib.*, 12). There is, however, a more sinister possibility. She is connected in the sources with nearly every death in the Julian household from Marcellus to Augustus himself (Dio, 53.33.2, 56.30.1). Particularly ruthless in this regard is Tacitus who consistently reports anti-Livian rumours without refuting them. His motive in doing so is quite clear: Livia, as Tiberius' mother, must have contributed in no small way to that man's evil character.

The facts alone may merit suspicion. Tiberius did eventually succeed. To allow this, many young men had to die: Marcellus, aged only twenty, of an illness; Gaius and Lucius, both young and away from Rome; Agrippa postumus, banished and murdered. Was Livia involved in these deaths? Her complicity in Agrippa Postumus' death is far from proven, the sources also citing Tiberius and Augustus as culprits (see above, pp. 33-5). The main motive that can be attributed to her for this crime is the rumoured reconciliation between Augustus and Agrippa. In fact, this is only a rumour and one that probably came into being to strengthen the suspicion of complicity in Agrippa's death surrounding Livia and her son. The death of Gaius cannot have been her work - he died of wounds received in a siege in Armenia - and the sources do not
even hint at her involvement. That leaves us with Marcellus and Lucius. Both died of illnesses while young, Lucius at Massilia. In such circumstances it was normal for the Romans to suspect poison, as the furore over the death of Germanicus in Syria was to show (see below, pp. 51-6). In the absence of proper post mortem techniques, poison was an allegation almost impossible to sustain or refute and therefore most amenable to rumour.

All in all, the case against Livia is not proven. We today should be careful to draw a distinction between her behind-the-scenes work on behalf of her son and asserting she killed anyone who got in his way. Her austere manner and the fact of her motherhood of Tiberius left her open to later malignment by cruel tongues. It is not impossible, but is rather unlikely, that she helped atrox Fortuna in the latter's ravagement of the young men of the Julian gens, but she was certainly not the heinous individual portrayed by Robert Graves. One only has to read Dio's long dialogue between herself and Augustus on clemency towards enemies to see this (Dio, 55.14-21).

In the end Augustus had to make do with Tiberius. His dynastic aspirations lay with the generation beyond him, no Julian successor being possible until the generation beyond that again. As matters transpired, a Julian did succeed Tiberius, one generation early according to Augustus scheme: Gaius Caligula, Germanicus' son and a great-grandson of Augustus, came to power in the spring of AD 37. The events that occurred in the interim could not possibly have been foreseen by Augustus.
The main literary sources for the Augustan succession are the following: Cassus Dio, 53-6; Suetonius, Augustus and Tiberius; Tacitus, Annales 1.1-13. Further information is also found in the Res Gestae Divi Augusti, Aulus Gellius, Seneca, Plutarch and Velleius Paterculus. Epigraphy, excepting the Res Gestae, has little to offer but is not entirely silent. Numismatics likewise. Modern works proliferate and will be cited in due course.

Ancient sources for Augustus' rise to power and consolidation of his position are: Dio, 45-50 (44-31 BC) and 51-4 (30-10 BC); Suet. Julius Caesar and Augustus; Plut. Antonius; Cicero, Philippics; Res Gestae; Tac. Ann., 1.2. R. SYME, The Roman Revolution, (Oxford, 1938) is still the best modern work.

It would be wrong to view Augustus' constitutional position as it emerged over the period 27-2 BC as the result of adherence to a preconceived and distinct plan. The Principate actually appears to have evolved. Cf. E.T. SALMON, "The Evolution of the Augustan Principate", Historia 5 (1956), 456-78.


Cf. HAMMOND, pp. 8-18.

F. MILLAR, "The Emperor, the Senate and the Roman Provinces", JRS 45 (1966), 156-66 has shown that the clear distinction drawn by modern scholars between "imperial" and "senatorial" provinces is largely illusory. However, the situation in 27 BC is obscure as we do not have the sort of evidence for this period that Millar uses for later ones.

Cf. HAMMOND, pp. 36-43; CHILVER, op. cit. in note 4, 427-31. See also the Cyrenaica edicts where Augustus appears to be doing just that, V. EHRENBERG & A.H.M. JONES (éd.), Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, (Oxford 1970), no. 311.

Dio, 53.32.5. Cf. HAMMOND, pp. 30-2.

Cf. HAMMOND, pp. 78-84; SALMON, op. cit. in note 3, 468-70; CHILVER, op. cit. in note 4, 433-5.

NOTES
11. The *Res Gestae* was patently written for the citizens of the *urbs* of Rome and so, it could be argued, would not be a suitable place to refer to the *imperium maius*, a power that affected the provinces (cf. BRUNT & MOORE, op. cit. in note 4, pp. 3-5). However, Augustus' failure to mention this power even once, especially when referring to provincial affairs (as in *RG*, 24.1, 25-33), is a telling omission; the princeps did not wish to publicise the raw *potentia* that stood at the base of the Principate. On the intended audience for the *Res Gestae* Z. YAVETZ "The *Res Gestae* and Augustus' public image" in F. MILLAR & E. SEGAL (ed.). *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 1-36.


14. Dio, 54.10.5 says "he took the power of the consuls for life" (τὴν ἐξουσίαν...τῶν ἰματων διὰ βόου ἔλαβεν ). This would seem to indicate a grant of *imperium consulaire*. In fact such a grant would have been unnecessary. Augustus' *imperium proconsulare*, perhaps made valid inside the pomerium, coupled with the tribunician power were sufficient in themselves. Cf. SALMON, op. cit. in note 3, 470-3.


16. Cicero's works are littered with references to *auctoritas* and its ingredients, eg. Cic. *Milo*, 12 and *Topica*, 73. In *RG*, 34.3 Augustus claims to have "surpassed all others in *auctoritas*". Such a monopolisation of *auctoritas* would have been opposed by Cicero who saw it as a quality worthy of all the States leading men, cf. Cic. *Off.*, 2.2. See also CHILVER, op. cit. in note 4, 420-7; BRUNT & MOORE, op. cit. in note 4, pp. 84-5.


23. Dio, 54.6.4-5; Suet. Aug., 63. It may be noted that Dio infers Agrippa's marriage to Julia was an expedient measure by Augustus to invest his friend with greater dignity, so enabling Agrippa to govern Rome more easily. In view of Agrippa and Julia's subsequent roles in the succession, this seems most unlikely.

24. The question of whether Agrippa received imperium maius in 23 BC or whether that came later is a vexed one. Dio, 54.28.1 implies he did not get it until 13 BC. The text of part of Augustus' eulogia of Agrippa, delivered at the latter's funeral and surviving in part in a papyrus, is ambiguous. E.V. Gray, "The Imperium of M. Agrippa", ZPE 6 (1970), 227-38 has considered this papyrus and drawn the conclusion that Agrippa got imperium aequum in 23 BC which was later extended to become maius. This seems appropriate; Augustus' hopes would still have been with Marcellus in 23 BC.


28. J.H. CORBETT, "The Succession Policy of Augustus", Latomus 33 (1974), 87-97 dates Augustus' decision to have Tiberius succeed him to this event. In my opinion, Corbett does not take proper account of Tiberius' retirement to Rhodes in 6 BC and its consequences.

29. Dio, 55.9.9-10; Suet. Aug., 26; RG, 14.2; Tac. Ann., 1.3.

30. SUTHERLAND; Coin. Pol., p. 71, pl V.19; EJ, no. 67; SUTHERLAND, RIC, pp. 55-6, no.s 205-12.


32. Cf. LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 31-2. See below, pp. 201-3 (Vitellius' attempted abdication in AD 69).


35. LEVICK, op. cit. in note 35, 235-6.

36. Cf. REINHOLD, op. cit. in note 22, passim.

37. Dio, 55.9.1-7; Suet. Tib., 10; Vell., 2.99.2; Tac. Ann., 1.53.
38. This becomes clear to anyone who reads Seager's biography of Tiberius, see above, note 27.


40. B. LEVICK, "Julians and Claudians", G & R 22 (1975), 29-38 argues for the adoption of other labels for the so-called "Julian" and "Claudian" factions in the imperial house. According to this thesis, the present party would be "Scribonian", named after its most senior leader. He will, for convenience, retain the traditional labels.


42. Dio, 55.10.9; Suet. Aug., 64; cf. Tac. Hist., 1.15.

43. They were however too young for such an honour when they died. M. Agrippa had been forty-five in 18 BC when he accepted that particular power, Tiberius thirty-six in 6 BC. Tribunicia potestas, the ultimate sign of intended successorship, was reserved for mature and experienced men.

44. Cf. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., p. 68, pl. V.18; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 54, no.s 198-99.

45. Cf. EJ, no.s 68, 69.


47. Cf. SALMON, op. cit. in note 4, 477.

48. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., p. 73 points out that the C.L. CAESARES issue at Lugdunum continued after the deaths of the two. As Augustus maintained strict control over the types for coins at Rome and Lugdunum, this must have been in accordance with his personal wishes. Cf. C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, The Emperor and the Coinage, (London, 1976), pp. 5-33; SUTHERLAND, RIC, pp. 23-4.

49. It is possible that Tiberius, realising his mistake in leaving Rome and public life, spent some time attempting to secure his position by utilising his family's clientela in the East. It is not difficult to see how such activity could be misrepresented to the Emperor. Cf. Suet. Tib., 6; G. BOWERSOK, "Augustus and the East: the Problem of the Succession", in F. MILLAR & E. SEGAL (ed.), Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects, (Oxford, 1984), pp. 169-88.


51. See above, pp. 21-2. For Julia's banishment, see LEVICK, op. cit. in note 34, 979-9; LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 41-2.

52. Cf. SYME, op. cit. in note 2, p. 429.
53. Dio, 55.13.1a-2; Suet. Tib., 15-16; Vell., 2.103.2-3; Tac. Ann., 1.3.


56. Dio, 56.17.2; Suet. Calig., 1 (Germanicus); Dio, 56.28.1 (Drusus).


58. Dio, 55.32.1-2; Suet. Aug., 65. The exact nature of the demotion is unsure. Levick argues for an abdicatio, an act undoing completely the ties of adoption. This appears insufficient to Jameson who couples an abdicatio with a senatus consultum aqua et igni interdictio, an official decree banishing Agrippa and declaring him a public enemy. Whatever his punishment, Agrippa's demotion was so severe that Augustus did not even have to mention him in a formal clause of disinheritance in his will; he had ceased to be a Julian long before. Cf. B. LEVICK, "Abdication and Agrippa Postumus", Historia 21 (1972), 674-97; S. JAMESON, "Augustus and Agrippa Postumus", Historia 24 (1975), 287-314.

59. Dio, 55.32.1-2; Suet. Tib., 22; Tac. Ann., 1.6.


61. Suet. Aug., 65 (Julia); Suet. Aug., 19; Dio, 55.27.1-3 (husband).

62. For the date, see LEVICK, Tib. Pol., p. 61.

63. SEAGER, pp. 48-50.

64. LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 64-5.

65. JAMESON, op. cit. in note 58, 313-14.

66. BIRCH, op. cit. in note 57, 455-6.


68. Tac. Ann., 1.5; Dio, 56.30.1; Pliny, NH, 7.150; Plut. Mor., 508, A-B.

69. Tac. Ann., 1.5; Dio, 56.29.2; Suet. Aug., 100.

70. Tiberius, not surprisingly, had a "party" of followers of his own. For its make-up, see SYME, op. cit. in note 2, pp. 419-39 and LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 52-4, 307. This group of followers helped his accession.

72. RG, 14, 20.3, 22, 27.2 (Gaius and/or Lucius); 27.2, 30.1 (Tiberius).

73. For the date of the Res Gestae, see BRUNT & MOORE, op. cit. in note 4, p. 6.

74. See Appendix II.


76. Tac. Ann., 1.3, 5, 10, 3.17, 4.71. The last reference is particularly vicious, detracting from an act of compassion on Livia's part.

77. See above, note 68.

Tiberius' accession, although peaceful, was anything but smooth. At the crucial meeting of the Senate on 18 September, AD 14 Tiberius put on such a show of reluctance that many, including Tacitus, saw it as gross hypocrisy. Dio offers a list of possible reasons for Tiberius' hesitation: he feared a revolt of the army; he wanted to hide Livia's central role in his coming to power; he wanted to abate his unpopularity; he was naturally indecisive. Dio, however, does not commit himself to any one in particular (Dio, 57.3.1-2). It seems probable that a simpler explanation is closer to the truth - Tiberius did not know what to do. This was an unprecedented situation, the passing of a position unique to one man onto another, and Tiberius did not know what role he was expected to play. He chose the part of the reluctant recipient of such honours - possibly in an attempt to ape Augustus' respectful treatment of the Senate - but, lacking Augustus' tact, he over-played it to such an extent that the senators became irritated and sceptical of his motives, some posing difficult questions, others making off-hand and embarrassing remarks (Tac. Ann., 1.12; Suet. Tib., 24). Finally, as was inevitable, he was goaded into accepting the burden.

Things were difficult not only in Rome. News soon arrived that the armies in Pannonia and Germany were in a mutinous state. Germanicus was already in Germany; Drusus was sent to Pannonia. Tacitus makes it plain that the soldiers' motives were not political but founded in genuine grievances concerning the conditions of service (Tac. Ann.,
He does, however, mention that certain elements in the German legions hoped to convince Germanicus to make a bid for the throne and that they were prepared to march with him against Tiberius. This was indeed an ominous portent of things to come. In the winter of 14, however, it was a view held only by a mischievous minority.

Drusus quickly dealt with the Pannonian mutineers with the minimum of bloodshed (Tac. Ann., 1.28-30). Germanicus, in contrast, quelled the German mutiny amidst scenes of deceit, bribery, largesse and, finally, wholesale massacre. This done, he led the troops against the Germans to vent their anger and shame on the tribesmen (Tac. Ann., 1.49).

What were Tiberius' succession plans following the death of Augustus? Augustus, by forcing Tiberius to adopt Germanicus before adopting Tiberius himself, had made plain his intention: Germanicus was to succeed Tiberius (see above, pp. 29-31). Did Tiberius follow this lead or did he prefer his own son Drusus above Germanicus, now that Augustus' staying hand was gone? All indications are that he remained true to Augustus' intention. Tiberius himself, we are told, viewed his predecessor's precedents as almost sacred precepts and adhered to them strictly. On Augustus' death, Tiberius asked the Senate to confer imperium proconsulare on Germanicus (Tac. Ann., 1.14), by which authority that prince carried out the repression of the German mutiny and the subsequent campaigns beyond the Rhine in 14-16. At the end of 16 Germanicus was recalled from the Rhine to celebrate a Triumph for his achievements, which he did in 17. Tacitus records that his recall caused considerable anger to Germanicus, as he believed himself to be on the brink of a great achievement on the Rhine, and that it resulted in there being some friction between himself and Tiberius (Tac. Ann., 51).
2.26,42). Personal enmity or not, Tiberius continued unabated with the elevation of the prince. In 17, Tiberius secured a grant of *imperium maius* over the Eastern provinces for Germanicus, and in the next year Germanicus held his second consulship with the *princeps* himself as colleague. This last point in particular was a clear indication of imperial favour.

Drusus, by contrast, received no grant of proconsular power in 14, but had to wait until 17 for that honour when he got a command over *Illyricum*. In 15 he held the consulship, though not with his father as colleague. The age difference between the two princes is not a sufficient explanation for this disparity in their elevation; Germanicus was clearly being preferred. Drusus, on the other hand, was not being ignored, as he had been under Augustus. With his father in power, Drusus' public career certainly received a boost but it is difficult to see him as a serious rival to Germanicus at this stage. Tacitus tells us that tension existed between groups of partisans that gathered around the two princes, and that Tiberius naturally inclined towards his son (although his actions indicate he saw Germanicus as his successor, as we have seen). Despite this, relations between the two princes were excellent (Tac. *Ann.*, 2.43). A further point in Germanicus' favour was his personality. He was affable, diplomatic and eminently popular; Drusus was irascible, cruel and viewed by the people with, at best, disinterest. Germanicus' character was thus more suited to rule than was Drusus'.

Germanicus, as heir apparent, set out for the East in 18, never to return. For he died in Antioch the following year (Dio, 57.18.9). Tacitus provides a long account of the circumstances surrounding his
death, the return of the ashes to Rome and their entombment in the Mausoleum of Augustus, and of the trial and death of the man accused of his murder (Tac. Ann., 2.53-3.19). In brief, it runs as follows.

Simultaneous with Germanicus' grant of imperium maius, the appointment of Cn. Calpurnius Piso to the governship of Syria was announced. Piso was Tiberius' friend, a haughty, violent and tactless Roman aristocrat who, Tacitus hints, was given the post in Syria to monitor Germanicus' movements or, perhaps, for a more sinister purpose (Tac. Ann., 2.43, cf. 3.16). Germanicus moved about the Eastern provinces settling affairs, sight-seeing and generally being popular. A visit to Egypt without the permission of the princeps earned him an imperial rebuke. Meanwhile Piso, while making his way to Syria, behaved in a boorish manner and offended the provincials, not least the Athenians (Tac. Ann., 2.55). The tension between these two men erupted into open enmity when they met on Cyprus, and in Syria they argued publicly (Tac. Ann., 2.57.69). Germanicus then fell ill and died, accusing Piso and his wife Plancina of poisoning him and exhorting his friends to ensure they were properly punished (Tac. Ann., 2.69-72). Piso, who had been ordered out of Syria by Germanicus, returned to the province and fell into open combat with Cn. Sentius Saturninus, the new governor, but was defeated and sent to Rome under military escort (Tac. Ann., 2.70, 74, 76-8). Germanicus' widow, Agrippina, then returned to Rome in ostentatious mourning with the ashes of her husband and he received a State funeral, being voted various extravagant honours by the Senate. Public grief was widespread and profound.

Piso, meanwhile, approached Italy cautiously, visiting Drusus in Illyricum and receiving a frosty reception. He finally entered Rome
with all the pomp of a returning governor, a typically tactless move, considering the very obvious air of suspicion that surrounded him (Tac. Ann., 3.8-9). Almost immediately he was indicted on several charges, including poisoning Germanicus. The case was heard in the Senate in the presence of the princeps and aroused considerable public interest. As it developed, it became clear to Piso that Tiberius would do little to save him, and his wife, having secured her own future through pressure exerted on the princeps by her friend Livia, gradually disassociated herself from her husband. Alone and in despair, Piso committed suicide. When the verdict was reached he was, ironically, acquitted on the charge of murder, but convicted on all other counts. Plancina and her sons were absolved of all guilt in connection with the charges (Tac. Ann., 3.10-19).

This is Tacitus' story. Dio places the guilt for Germanicus' death squarely on Piso and Plancina's shoulders, as does Josephus (Dio, 57.18.9; Jos. AJ 18.54). Suetonius blames Tiberius, using Piso as his agent (Suet. Calig., 2). The standard view today is that Piso was a scapegoat, sacrificed to public opinion. According to this stance, Piso did indeed receive instructions from Tiberius, written or verbal, to limit Germanicus' extravagances in the East but he misinterpreted them to such an extent that open conflict broke out. With public opinion so outraged at Germanicus' untimely death, and suspicion falling on Tiberius himself (Tac. Ann., 2.82,3.3), the princeps needed a quick end to the whole affair that would abate the popular demand for revenge. Piso's trial provided just such an escape route, so he was isolated and left to do "the honorable thing". It is difficult to argue against this interpretation of events, although some have
tried. In fact, there are three alternatives. First, that Germanicus died naturally. If this is the case, the argument that Piso was a scapegoat is the only possible interpretation that explains his trial and suicide. Second, that Piso did kill Germanicus. This seems highly unlikely, given that even the Senate did not find Piso guilty on this count and that they had at their disposal fuller sources on information concerning the case than we do today. Furthermore, that acquittal is even more significant when one considers the highly charged emotional atmosphere in which the case was conducted. Piso must have been very clearly innocent.

Finally, there is the possibility that Tiberius engineered the death of Germanicus using Piso as his agent and that he then abandoned his friend to face the consequences alone. One point against this is immediately evident: Piso, as we have seen, was acquitted and was very probably innocent. How then did Tiberius have Germanicus killed, if Piso did not do it? There are two possibilities here. Piso did do it and Tiberius arranged his acquittal to absolve himself of complicity; for if there was no murder at all, how could Tiberius have arranged it? Or, Piso did not do it and Tiberius used not Piso but Plancina as his agent. She escaped prosecution altogether, it will be remembered.

A few general considerations make this unlikely. The nature of communications in the Roman world would have made it imperative for Tiberius to have arranged with his agent — whether Piso or Plancina — a full and detailed plan of action well before that agent's departure to the East in 18. There could be no last minute adjustments once the agent was abroad. Communications with Rome from Syria would have taken weeks, even months. Plotters cannot afford such delays. For Piso's
part, it will be noted that his actions in the East did not appear to conform to any such plan; rather, they had the mark of spontaneity and ill-advised lack of tact, especially the confrontation with Germanicus and the war against Saturninus. Perhaps, as we have surmised, Plancina was the agent. Again, this seems unlikely for the communication reason just offered, and also for the following considerations. Why would Tiberius, if he was so bent on the murder of his adoptive son, wait until that prince was at the other end of the Empire before striking, thus risking failure and/or detection? Why did he not have him poisoned in Rome in 17 or 18 instead? Also, why did he invest his intended victim with proconsular power and then send him to an area where legions were stationed, a move that could have resulted in civil war had his plot been discovered by Germanicus? The whole scenario of Tiberius arranging the murder of Germanicus from Rome is too unlikely and requires the Emperor to make a series of potentially disastrous decisions. Lastly, Tiberius' official behaviour towards Germanicus - whatever their personal relationship - bore all the indications that he intended that prince to succeed him. Tiberius would benefit nothing by the death of Germanicus. We must conclude that the prince died naturally and that Piso was the scapegoat.

Germanicus' death, embarrassing though it may have been for Tiberius, did not present the imperial house with a dynastic crisis. The Palace, in the oft quoted phrase of Tacitus, was "full of Caesars" (Tac. Ann., 4.2). On the Claudian side there was Drusus, Tiberius' son, whose wife Livia Julia (or Livilla) had, in 19, given birth to twins - Tiberius Gemellus and Germanicus. This had caused delight to Tiberius at the rather inappropriate time of Germanicus' death (Tac.
An. 2.84). On the Julian side, Germanicus was survived by three sons - Nero (born in 6), Drusus (born in 7) and Gaius (born in 12) - and a brother, Claudius. The latter was commonly held to be a mental deficient, although Augustus had begun to suspect otherwise towards the end of his life (Suet. Claud., 4). All, except Drusus and Claudius, were minors in 19, and as Tiberius' opinion of Claudius was as low as his mother's, Drusus was the only choice as Germanicus' replacement (Tac. Ann., 6.46; Suet. Claud., 5). Moreover, it seems likely that Drusus' elevation under Tiberius' reign (see above, p. 52) had been effected to cater for just such an eventuality as Germanicus' death. Drusus, like his uncle before him, had been an insurance against fate. Now his time had come.

Tiberius acted quickly when the dust of the Germanicus affair had settled. In 20, after Piso's trial, Drusus celebrated a Triumph for his work in Illyricum. He was named as consul designatus for the next year and, on taking up the office for the second time, had Tiberius as his colleague, just as Germanicus had had in 18. In 22 came the ultimate sign of intended successorship - tribunicia potestas. Tacitus is at pains to point out that conferral of this power on an imperial prince made his succession a matter beyond doubt and that this had been Augustus' method of doing just that. Although Tacitus does not say so, it seems likely that the grant was for five years. In view of all this, we can say quite safely that on Germanicus' death Drusus took his place as Tiberius' immediate successor.

This, however, presented Tiberius with a problem. We have seen that partisans had attached themselves to Drusus and Germanicus, and it is quite likely that, as a result, the wives, Livilla and Agrippina,
were intense rivals. With the rise of the Claudian line in the form of Drusus' elevation to Germanicus' vacant place as heir apparent, it may seem natural for Agrippina to fear that her own sons would be overlooked by Tiberius or Drusus when the succession to Drusus came to be decided. Drusus, after all, had twin sons of his own.

This fear seems to be unfounded. There are signs that Tiberius expected Drusus to prefer the Julian heirs above his own sons, just as Tiberius had elevated Germanicus above Drusus. In 20 Nero Caesar, Germanicus' eldest son, took the toga virilis and was commended to the Senate by Tiberius who asked for the granting of magisterial privileges to the young man, that is, the right to hold the quaestorship five years in advance of the legal age. Tiberius called on Augustan precedent in this regard, pointing out that the same honour had been granted to him on the occasion of his reaching maturity. The drawing of this parallel between the princeps and Nero is significant. In addition, Nero received entrance to the pontificate and largesse was distributed to the lower orders to mark the whole event. The young prince was then married to Tiberius' granddaughter, Julia. When Nero's brother, Drusus, came of age the occasion was marked by similar privileges and honours (Tac. Ann., 4.9; Suet. Tib., 54). By 23, Tiberius had done all that precedent would allow to mark Nero as Drusus' successor and to draw attention to the young Drusus. Inscriptions survive honouring Nero, one pointing out his direct descent from Augustus, and a coin issue from North Africa honours the two princes. Furthermore, it was generally known that the elder Drusus held Germanicus' sons in genuine affection (Tac. Ann., 2.43; 4.4). That he would comply with his
father's intentions for the young men is, therefore, a strong likelihood.

But Drusus would never get the chance to prove Agrippina wrong. In 23 he died. Many commentators, ancient and modern, see this as marking the first direct intrusion into politics of a man who was to affect greatly the Tiberian succession and dominate Roman political life for the following eight years: L. Aelius Sejanus.

Sejanus was an eques, born in Volsinii in Etruria of L. Sejus Strabo, a man who, having attained the prefecture of the Praetorian Guard in 14, went on to occupy the highest post available to a Knight under the early Principate—Prefect of Egypt (Tac. Ann., 4.1; Dio, 57.19.5). Sejanus' early career is lost to us in detail but certain landmarks are discernible: he accompanied C. Caesar to the East in 1 BC, he joined Drusus Caesar in the suppression of the Pannonian mutiny of 14, and he became joint Prefect of the Guard with his father in the same year.

When Strabo went to Egypt, probably in 16 or 17, Sejanus was left sole Prefect (Dio, 57.19.6). His most significant move in this capacity was to move the nine Praetorian cohorts, previously billeted in towns around Rome, into one large camp in the capital, near the Viminal hill. Both Tacitus and Dio saw this as a move to strengthen his political influence. That he already enjoyed considerable influence is evidenced by the remarkable signs of imperial favour conferred upon him. In 20 his daughter was betrothed to Claudius' son, the marriage only being prevented by the young man's ludicrous death.

In 21 Sejanus' uncle, Q. Junius Blaesus, secured the proconsulate of
Africa over M. Lepidus primarily because of his kinship with Sejanus (Tac. Ann., 3.35). Tiberius publicly called Sejanus his socius laborum, "partner of my labours". (Tac. Ann., 4.1). The next year, a fire in the theatre of Pompeius resulted in Sejanus being praised by Tiberius for his part in extinguishing the flames. A statue was erected in the theatre in his honour. Shortly afterward, Blaesus was awarded triumphal insignia for his efforts in Africa, the princeps openly admitting that this was done to honour Sejanus.

By 23, the year in which the Praetorians moved into Rome itself, Sejanus enjoyed the high esteem of the Emperor and consequently exerted an influence over him, even if Tacitus is a bit hasty in backdating that influence to 14 (Tac. Ann., 1.24). Before describing and assessing Sejanus' later career, we must consider the two problems that dominate any interpretation of subsequent events: what were Sejanus' ambitions, if any, and who was conspiring against whom?

On the question of Sejanus' ambitions, the sources are remarkably vague. Tacitus merely states that he was imbued with a towering ambition and lusted after dominatio and regnum (Tac. Ann., 4.1, 3). Dio says that he sought κράτος, "power" (Dio, 57.22.4b). Suetonius claims he planned a revolution (res nova) to usurp the throne (principalis auctoritate subvertit - Suet. Tib., 5). Josephus comments that Sejanus led a "great conspiracy" (ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην) but does not provide a goal for that conspiracy (Jos. AJ, 18.181).

Modern scholars, given this vagueness in the sources, have drawn their own conclusions. Marsh and Seager see Sejanus as aiming at a Regency over one of the imperial princes, the most popular candidates
being Tiberius Gemellus or Gaius. We have seen above how the principles and practices of Regency are quite alien to imperial Rome, so this theory must be rejected (see above, p. 14). Smith sees Sejanus as an innocent minister of Tiberius who rose too high for his own good and had to be dispensed with. Levick thinks he was attempting to set himself up as Tiberius' M. Agrippa, that is, a confidante and friend who, through ties of marriage with the imperial house and close association with the princeps, would succeed Tiberius. We will assess this viewpoint in due course. We can dismiss, as most scholars do, the idea that Sejanus was plotting to usurp Tiberius and to set himself up as Emperor. One argument against this - that Sejanus, as an eques, could never hope to be Emperor - I do not accept as conclusive. Although debilitating, low-birth was not an insurmountable barrier to imperial power. M. Agrippa himself was a shining example of how one could attain the highest peaks of power despite obscure origins. Much more convincing an argument is simply this: throughout his career Sejanus depended on Tiberius to ensure his continued elevation. The death of Tiberius would be sure to bring the downfall of his favourite. If Sejanus ever plotted against Tiberius, it could only have been in the last months of his life when he felt his position threatened or, perhaps, when he had reached what he considered a sufficient degree of power to feel that he could dispense with Tiberius' patronage. This, as we shall see, is unlikely. Either way, nothing came of any such plot.

Two comments in the sources hold the key to what Sejanus' aims were. Tacitus, having introduced Sejanus and indicated his ambitious nature, points out the following fact:
"Ceterum plena Caesarum domus, iuvenes filii, nepotes adulti moram cupitas adferabant, et quia vi tot simul corripere intutum, dolus intervalla scelerum poscebat".

"Still, the imperial house, with its plentitude of Caesars—a son arrived at manhood, grandchildren at the years of discretion—gave his ambition pause: for to attack all at once by violence was hazardous, while treachery demanded an interval between crime and crime."

(Tac. Ann., 4.3; Loeb trans.)

The point to note is that successful realisation of Sejanus' plans required the removal of the successors to Tiberius. Dio is even clearer on this point:

πολλὰ γὰρ κατ' αὐτὴς ὁ Σειάνος παράξευμε τὸν τυρεύον, προσδοκήσας ἑκεῖνης μετὰ τῶν τεκνῶν ἀπολομένης τῇ τε Λυβίᾳ συναλήσειν τῇ τοῦ Δρούσου γυναικὶ, ἥς ἥρα, καὶ τὸ χρόνος ἔζευν μηδενὸς τῶν τυβερῶν διαδόχου τυγχάνοντος.

"For Sejanus had incensed Tiberius greatly against her [Agrippina], in the expectation that when she and her sons had been disposed of he might marry Livia [Livilla], the wife of Drusus, for whom he entertained a passion and might gain the supreme power, since no successor would then be found for Tiberius." (Dio, 57.22.4b; Loeb trans.)

These two passages combined show that Sejanus' ambition was to succeed Tiberius. To do this he attempted to establish a relationship with the princeps analogous to that which M. Agrippa had enjoyed with Augustus.

Sejanus' early career, like Agrippa's, had been marked by a close association with the imperial house. The parallel is not complete, however. Agrippa had been a lifelong friend of Augustus and had won a great military reputation under his aegis that Sejanus could never hope to emulate or even match. Lacking these achievements, Sejanus had to "sell himself" to Tiberius as a friend. How he did so initially we will never know, but by 23 he was already in the forefront of the Emperor's esteem (see above, pp. 59-60). An incident at a place called

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Spelunca in Campania in 26 perhaps demonstrates the Prefect's style. Tiberius and his court were dining in a villa built into a cliff face when there was a rockfall. Sejanus immediately covered the princeps' body with his own to protect his master, and then made sure that he remained in that position until help arrived and people could witness his devotion. The incident can, of course, be interpreted innocently as a genuine display of loyalty to Tiberius, but given our interpretation of the Prefect's ambitions it is not difficult to discern an ulterior motive. Other moves by Sejanus to portray himself as Tiberius' friend we will note when they arise.

Conclusions drawn concerning the first problem, that is, Sejanus's ambitions, naturally colour our conclusions drawn concerning the second, that is, the question of responsibility. For if Sejanus is seen as innocent of the accusation of conspiracy, as Smith and Syme would have us believe (see above, p. 61), or even as the victim of a plot hatched by Tiberius, then the whole notion of a "conspiracy of Sejanus" has to be discarded. This viewpoint requires the complete rejection of all the ancient sources' descriptions of his role and behaviour.

It is not my intention to get involved in a detailed description and assessment of every plot posited by modern scholars, as the permutations seem endless: Sejanus plotted against Tiberius; Tiberius plotted against Sejanus; Sejanus plotted against Agrippina; Agrippina plotted against Tiberius.

This last possibility requires brief elucidation. Rogers has very cleverly charted the progression of a conspiracy of Agrippina, aimed at Tiberius, but fails to provide a clear motive. Smith supplies it: Agrippina plotted against Tiberius to hasten or ensure the succession
of her children, particularly Nero. This, to me, seems unnecessary. Between 14 and 19 Germanicus, Agrippina's husband, was to be Tiberius' successor, that much is clear (see above, pp. 51-2). On Germanicus' death Drusus could have presented a threat to the ultimate succession of Agrippina's sons, but he apparently did not. As we have seen, during the period of Drusus' ascendancy Tiberius treated Nero and the younger Drusus with honour and drew the attention of the public to them (see above, pp. 58-9). When Drusus himself died in 23, Tiberius brought Nero and the younger Drusus into the Senate and entrusted them to the care of the patres, a move that can only be seen as meant to ensure their fitness for accepting the burdens of state (Tac. Ann., 4.8). Tacitus expressly states that the succession of Germanicus' children was beyond doubt (Tac. Ann., 4.12). Thus, any conspiracy of Agrippina had no logical motive and for that reason is improbable. That she would risk ruin and death by conspiring merely to hasten what was a certainty seems an act of extreme folly. Although arrogant and headstrong, Agrippina was not stupid.

The most likely conspiracy, the one described by Tacitus and Dio, is that of Sejanus against Agrippina. It is also a corollary of our conclusions concerning the ambitions of the Prefect: if Sejanus wanted to be a Tiberian Agrippa, then Agrippina and her sons had to go, particularly the eldest two, Nero and Drusus. The impossibility of Sejanus uniting with Agrippina was the reason for this. Agrippina despised the equestrian upstart and was immune to seduction (Tac. Ann., 4.12). Sejanus, therefore, allied himself to Livilla, opposing Agrippina as a result. We will trace the progression of the conspiracy against her and her circle shortly.
In summary, we have argued that Sejanus aimed at imperial power not as Tiberius' usurper, but as his successor. Due mainly to his low-birth, Sejanus set about establishing a relationship with Tiberius and the imperial house similar to that which M. Agrippa had enjoyed under Augustus. Since Agrippina was unapproachable as a consort, Sejanus attached himself to Livilla, Drusus' widow, and opposed Germanicus' circle. His ambitions required the removal of potential successors from within the imperial house who, after Drusus' death, numbered only three – Nero, Drusus and Gaius, all children of Germanicus. Tiberius Gemellus and the younger Germanicus were not a threat as they were Livilla's sons, while Claudius did not even enter consideration.

Sejanus' complicity in the death of Drusus Caesar in 23 is at best unproven. According to Tacitus, Sejanus first seduced Livilla and then persuaded her to join him in a plot to kill her husband. Eudemus, a doctor to Livilla, was made privy to the plan, while Sejanus divorced his wife Apicata (Tac. Ann., 4.3). Next, a eunuch, Lygdus, was employed to administer poison to the prince. All went well and Drusus died (Tac. Ann., 4.8). Tacitus assures us that this was the accepted version of events in his day, the various authorities from which he gleaned his material all deriving their accounts from a letter sent to Tiberius by Sejanus' divorced wife, Apicata (Tac. Ann., 4.10,11). Dio corroborates this and says that Apicata sent the letter shortly before her suicide after Sejanus' fall in October 31 (Dio, 58.11.6). This is immediately suspicious. For eight years nobody, including Tiberius himself, suspected that Drusus had been poisoned. This is indeed a curious phenomenon in a poison-conscious age. Moreover, where did Apicata get her information? Is it likely that Sejanus, having
divorced her, would then entrust so treacherous a plan as the murder of the heir apparent to her confidence? This is highly improbable. If the contents of her letter were not truthful, why should Apicata invent such a story when Sejanus was already dead by the time the letter was composed? Dio provides the answer—it was written to effect the downfall of Livilla, a woman Apicata had every reason to resent (Dio, 58.11.6). The fact that Eudemus and Lygdus confirmed the "truth" of the letter's contents is of no consequence: they did so under torture (Tac. Ann., 4.11). A further objection to Tacitus' account is, what were Livilla's motives? Why should she abandon certain prestige and influence as Drusus' wife and Empress in favour of uncertainty and peril as Sejanus' mistress and co-conspirator? The only other possibility, outside of ascribing her actions to genuine love for the Prefect, is that she was working on behalf of her sons. However, her sons would benefit nothing by the death of their father.

That a relationship between Livilla and Sejanus was underway prior to Drusus' death is not proven and seems improbable. If we have reason to doubt the veracity of Tacitus' account, based as it is on the dubious testimony of Apicata's letter, there seems no reason for Livilla to attach herself to the Prefect at this early stage. Drusus probably died naturally, the illness of 23 perhaps being a fatal recurrence of the life-endangering debilitation he had suffered in 21 (Tac. Ann., 3.49). If this is so, then Sejanus' relationship with Livilla probably began when she was a widow and facing possible eclipse by Agrippina and the sons of Germanicus. This would provide her with ample motivation to unite with the Prefect who could have lured her by promising imperial destiny for her sons. Although Drusus' death would
have been required by Sejanus' ambitions as we have interpreted them, the evidence for his complicity in the prince's demise is suspect. I prefer to see Drusus as having died naturally, the event then acting as a catalyst for Sejanus' ambitions. Perhaps the vacancy thus left in the succession scheme gave Sejanus the idea that he was the one to fill it, recent history providing the perfect precedent in the career of M. Agrippa.

By the end of 23 Tiberius had lost his son Drusus, his grandson Germanicus, his beloved ex-wife Vipsania, and his friends Cn. Piso, Sulpicius Quirinius and Lucilius Longus. He needed a friend. Sejanus presented himself in that role. Early in 24 the pontifices included the names of Nero and Drusus in their prayers for the Emperor's safety, offered at the outset of each year. Tiberius, long suspicious of Agrippina, saw this as her work and questioned the priests closely until he was satisfied Germanicus' widow was not involved. Sejanus then insinuated himself into the situation, warning the princeps of the power and ambition of "Agrippina's party", and urging swift and decisive action against its leaders (Tac. Ann., 4.17). This served a dual purpose for Sejanus. It helped get an imperial sanction for his intended attack on Agrippina and her sons, and it offered an opportunity for him to present himself as Tiberius' "friend", the ever vigilant guardian of his master's interests.

That Agrippina had a "party" is not to be doubted. Imperial princes and their mothers had long attracted partisans; even Tiberius had had a "party" of supporters prior to his accession in 14. It was these supporters of Agrippina that Sejanus first attacked. In 24 C. Silius and his wife Sosia Galla were indicted and convicted. Silius
committed suicide, Galla was exiled (Tac. Ann., 4.18-20). Both were friends of Germanicus and Agrippina and had, on the death of the former, remained loyal to the Julian side of the imperial house. It is not my concern in this study to discuss in detail the increase of cases heard under the *lex maiestatis*, the treason law, or to assess each and every trial that Sejanus is alleged to have initiated. Suffice it to say that this law was used by the Prefect as his chief weapon against Agrippina and her circle. How many such cases can be definitely ascribed to the machinations of Sejanus is uncertain. I will refer only to those that seem most pertinent. An indication of how great the Prefect's power in Rome was at this time is provided by the trial and conviction of the historian A. Cremutius Cordus in 25. He was indicted because he was an enemy of Sejanus and had earned the dislike of the Prefect long before. Here Sejanus was settling an old score through the medium of the courts.

Also in 25 came Sejanus' next major move. M. Agrippa had been linked to the imperial house by marriage to Julia, Augustus' daughter. Now Sejanus, confident that Tiberius looked upon him as a true friend and with proceedings against Agrippina well underway, applied by letter for the hand of Livilla. The authenticity of the letter and Tiberius' reply to it is disputed. For our purposes the question of authenticity is not crucial. Access to imperial correspondence is attested in the sources, especially in Suetonius, and even if Tacitus composed the actual text of the letters himself, there is no saying that he did not use arguments adduced by Sejanus and Tiberius. For this reason, the historical content of the letters is most probably reliable.
Sejanus' angle was a clever one. He first asserts his devotion to the princeps and reiterates his concern for the Emperor's safety. He regards it as a supreme honour to be considered worthy of an alliance (coniunctio) with the imperial house. Cleverly Sejanus, aware of Tiberius' high regard for Augustan precedent, then offers one: divus Augustus had once considered marrying Julia to an eques: would the princeps, should Livilla require a new husband, consider his friend (amicus) for such an honour? He himself would derive nothing but gloria from the marriage. Note how Sejanus insists that gloria is his sole motive in requesting Livilla's hand and presents himself as Tiberius' amicus. He closes the letter by restating the threat Agrippina posed to his family and children, and declaring that he is quite happy to live out his days in the service of such an Emperor as Tiberius (Tac. Ann., 4.39). It is a petition composed with consummate skill, playing on Tiberius' character and fears. Sejanus knew his master well.

Tiberius' reply was, typically, longer, even more cunning, and, on the surface, contradictory. He begins by stating that rulers have to be watchful of all their actions as everything they do affects the public interest. He could not allow Livilla decide for herself in this matter. The enmity (inimicitia) of Agrippina would only be inflamed still further if Livilla were to marry Sejanus; an already delicate situation would deteriorate in the face of such an event. Furthermore, Tiberius argues, Livilla herself would hardly be content "to grow old at the side of a Roman Knight" (cum equite Romano senescat). Nor would the situation be tolerated by the nobility. Tiberius then rejects Sejanus' citation of Augustan precedent: the great man may have
considered it but in the end he did not marry Julia to a Knight. He
gave her instead to Agrippa and then to Tiberius himself. This must
have stung Sejanus — the princeps here implies that he had not
succeeded in his goal, he was not yet a Tiberian Agrippa. Then comes an
apparent contradiction. Having just argued against a coniunctio
between Sejanus and Livilla, Tiberius says that he would "oppose
neither your decisions nor those of Livilla" (ceterum neque tuis neque
Liviae destinatis adversabor). Seager sees this as typical of
Tiberius' hesitant character, an encouragement for Sejanus to work
towards his own betterment. Promises of rewards in the future close
the letter, making Seager's interpretation all the more likely (Tac.
Ann., 4.40).

Tiberius' reply told Sejanus three things. Firstly, he was not
yet ready for the honour of a marital link with the imperial house.
Secondly, one barrier to that link was his low-birth. About that
Sejanus himself could do nothing but the closing sentences of the
letter offered hope that Tiberius would. Thirdly, the other barrier to
his proposed marriage to Livilla was Agrippina. About her Sejanus
could and would do something. Tiberius' promise not to oppose the
destinata of Sejanus apparently gave him an imperial mandate to
continue, if not accelerate, his assaults on Agrippina and her sons.
This Sejanus did. He replied to Tiberius' letter and reiterated his
loyalty to the princeps (Tac. Ann., 4.41).

The next year, 26, saw Sejanus getting closer to the heart of
Agrippina's party. Claudia Pulchra, Agrippina's cousin was indicted
on various charges and condemned. Agrippina's tactless and heated
petition to the Emperor on her cousin's behalf only helped to deepen
Tiberius' suspicions concerning her ambitions. Finding the Emperor sacrificing to the image of Augustus, Agrippina castigated him for paying homage to the statue of *divus Augustus* while persecuting his living descendants and declared that she was the living effigy of the great man, the carrier of his blood in her veins (Tac. *Ann.*, 4.52). This last statement must have recalled the cries of the mob at Germanicus' funeral that Agrippina was the last descendant of Augustus, and helped Tiberius to read ambition into Agrippina's actions (Tac. *Ann.*, 3.4). The *princeps* replied with a Greek epigram that clearly showed his interpretation of Agrippina's intent: "If you do not rule, my dear, do you think yourself wronged?" (Tac. *Ann.*, 4.52; Suet. *Tib.*, 53). Shortly afterwards a request for a husband issued by her was ignored, the political implications of such a marriage being all too clear to Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.*, 4.53). An incident at a dinner party at which Agrippina pointedly refused food offered by the Emperor, implying it was poisoned, must surely have sealed the fate of any chance that they would be reconciled. Tacitus is probably too fanciful in attributing the whole episode to the machinations of Sejanus, but, whether he was involved or not, the result was in his favour: Tiberius and Agrippina were permanently estranged (Tac. *Ann.*, 4.54).

The advantage Sejanus gained by this development - the total breakdown of relations between the heads of the Julian and Claudian lines of the imperial house - was further augmented by Tiberius' decision to retire to Campania in 26. The Emperor had long contemplated the virtues of solitude and respite; indeed he had only taken on the burdens of office when his proviso that he be allowed some peace in his old age had been accepted (Suet. *Tib.*, 24). Early in 21
he had withdrawn to Campania for health reasons and had not returned to Rome until 22 (Tac. Ann., 3.31,64). His decision to leave Rome in 26 seems, therefore, to have been his own, although Sejanus would certainly have encouraged him in that direction, being well aware of the benefits such a move held for him. With Tiberius not in Rome, Sejanus could hope to receive increased delegations of power from him and could control all access to the Emperor, as imperial correspondence was carried by the Praetorians. En route, the incident at Spelunca occurred, Sejanus' reaction only serving to convince Tiberius still further of his friend's unswerving loyalty to him (see above, p. 63). The princeps toured Campania and finally settled on Capri in 27, thus making access to him even more restricted and so playing further into Sejanus' hands (Tac. Ann., 4.67).

With Tiberius gone, the Prefect turned on Nero Caesar who had so far escaped direct involvement in his mother's feud with the princeps. Tiberius, in view of his increasingly jaundiced opinion of Agrippina, must have begun to harbour some suspicions concerning the prince. Sejanus, employing Nero's wife, Livia Julia, and brother, Drusus Caesar, played on this suspicion and used agents to report on the prince's every move (Tac. Ann., 4.59-60). This continued into 27, and despite being urged to act in their own defence, mother and son refused to do so (Tac. Ann., 59, 67). In 28 Sejanus arranged the downfall of another major figure in Agrippina's party - Titius Sabinus. In a letter to the Senate Tiberius referred to the suspected treachery of his enemies (suspectae inimicorum insidae) but mentioned no names. None the less, everyone felt that Agrippina and Nero were meant (Tac. Ann., 4.68-70; Dio, 58.1.1b-3).
The following year matters began to come to a head. After his mother’s death, Tiberius sent a letter to the Senate roundly denouncing both Agrippina and Nero but not indicating that he wanted them arrested. He charged them not with offending his *maiestas* or with a revolution, but accused them of moral depravity (Tac. Ann., 5.4). This should be a familiar convention to us by now, one employed to cover political indictment when members of the imperial house were involved. The Senate decided it was more prudent not to act until expressly instructed to do so, while the mob demonstrated outside in favour of the accused. Pamphlets attacking Sejanus were circulated, an interesting indication of the Prefect’s unpopularity among the plebs (Tac. Ann., 5.4). Tiberius then sent a second letter censuring the Senate for its failure to act and issued an edict rebuking the populace for rioting (Tac. Ann., 5.4-5).

At this point the text of Tacitus breaks off, not to resume until late in 31, after Sejanus’ fall. We have to rely on Dio, who survives only in epitome at this point, and Suetonius. Josephus and Velleius Paterculus provide some useful information.

Suetonius fills in the gaps as to Agrippina’s fate. She was arraigned on a charge of trying to take sanctuary with Augustus’ statue, or for attempting to reach the armies in the provinces (Suet. Tib., 53). The former charge seems ludicrous and may be confused with the story of Agrippina’s confrontation with Tiberius cited above, when the Emperor was castigated while sacrificing to Augustus’ image (see above, pp. 70-1). The latter charge seems more probable. It could be that Agrippina decided to act in her own defence when it was too late, and had made arrangements to flee to the armies in Germany, the ones
that Germanicus had commanded, or perhaps the charges were entirely false and served merely to remove her from the political stage. She was convicted and sent into exile on the island of Pandateria, the very place to which her mother had been sent in 2 BC. Tacitus tells us she died in 33 of voluntary starvation (Tac. Ann., 6.25; cf. Suet. Tib., 53). Nero and Drusus were both declared hostes, "public enemies", and imprisoned, Nero on an island, Drusus in the cellars of the Palace (Suet. Tib., 53, Calig., 7). Drusus was forcibly starved to death in 33, Tacitus painting a harrowing picture of the young man's last days (Tac. Ann., 6.23). Nero died before Sejanus' fall, probably in mid-31. He committed suicide, perhaps in the face of threatened execution (Suet. Tib., 54, 61).

The chronology of the indictments is not clear. Given the situation in 28, as outlined by Tacitus, a date somewhere between the end of that year and middle of the next seems most appropriate for the trials of Agrippina and Nero. We do not know if they were tried together or separately. According to Dio, Drusus was arraigned in 30 (Dio, 58.3.8). Thus, by the end of 30 Sejanus had removed all but one of the obstacles that the house of Germanicus had presented to him. That exception was Gaius Caligula. Sejanus most probably had designs on him also, but, for whatever reasons, failed to act. It is possible that the Prefect had a plan of attack ready to use against Gaius but, through complacency induced by success, failed to put it into operation.

Meanwhile, Sejanus' elevation continued. Dio says that in 29 his birthday was publicly celebrated and statues were erected to him in all the public places. He received his own envoys from the Senate. It
was probably in 30 that his betrothal to Livilla was announced, a major step forward for the Prefect, and confirmation that both the barriers to the marriage that had existed in 25 were now removed. If we believe Dio, Sejanus' power had grown so great that men saw him as the Emperor and looked down on Tiberius. The Prefect had complete control of the Praetorians and had won the favour of the Senators by means of bribery and intimidation (Dio, 58.4.1-2). Tiberius appointed him consul designate for 31 (Dio, 58.4.3). When this was announced statues to both men were erected; their names were written jointly on inscriptions; it was voted that they be joint consuls every five years; and finally sacrifices were offered to Sejanus' image along with Tiberius' (Dio, 58.4.4).

Sejanus' high position in the State at this time is echoed in the pages of Velleius Paterculus whose history was published in 30 while the Prefect was at the height of his power and who was virtually a panegyricist of Tiberius, praising his every move. Velleius portrays Sejanus in terms that must have been music to his ears. Sejanus, says Velleius, is to Tiberius what the Laelii were to the Scipiones, what M. Agrippa was to Augustus (Vell., 2.127.1-2). This is precisely what Sejanus had aimed for. Velleius then indulges in a protracted apologia for Sejanus' low-birth, a sign of how important an issue it was (Vell., 2.127.3,128.1-3). However his inclusion into the imperial house through the proposed marriage to Livilla would certainly disguise, even eradicate, any stigma attendant on low-birth. The fact that Velleius fails even to mention this is a curious omission and must be taken as a sign that his work was published before the announcement.
was made. Conversely, it shows that the betrothal did not take place before 30.

Because Velleius calls Sejanus adiutor, "helper", and not successor does not mean that the prefect was not intended to succeed Tiberius (Vell. 2.127.2). He was Tiberius' Agrippa; Tacitus even calls him the princeps' "colleague" (Tac. Ann., 5.6; cf. Dio, 58.6.2). That this refers only to collegiality in the consulship of 31 seems too narrow an interpretation. Also, the very fact that Tiberius took the consulship with Sejanus is a clear sign that the latter was intended to succeed him. On the two previous occasions during his reign when the Emperor had taken that office his colleague had been the man chosen as his successor: Germanicus in 18 and Drusus in 21.

In 31 Sejanus, son-in-law to be of the Emperor, his colleague in the consulship and in the administration of the Empire, was supreme. Small wonder that Dio can say that he appeared to be the true Emperor (αὐτοῦ ὁ ἄρχων) while Tiberius seemed nothing more than an "island-ruler" (νησίκαρχος) on Capri (Dio, 58.5.1). When the two laid down the consulship early in the year, Sejanus received a grant of imperium proconsulare (Dio, 58.7.4; cf. Suet. Tib., 26). All that the Prefect lacked was the tribunician power to seal his position as Tiberius' successor. Who could have foreseen that by the end of the year he would be dead, his family slaughtered, his name disgraced?

The downfall of Sejanus presents us with one fundamental problem: why did he fall? Stemming from this question is another: why did Tiberius at best condone, at worst orchestrate his favourite's ruin? It is Dio who provides us with the only continuous narrative account of
the fall of Sejanus (Dio, 58.5.5-11.5). As early as 30 Dio hints that Tiberius was beginning to doubt the Prefect's sincerity and question his position: having outlined signs of favour conferred upon Sejanus by Tiberius, Dio comments that "men were deceived by these signs and believed them sincere" (Dio, 58.4.4). Next he deceived Sejanus into going to Rome without him, presumably to be given an opportunity to formulate a plan of action (Dio, 58.4.9).

Dio records bad omens for Sejanus in 31 (Dio, 58.5.5-7, 7.1-3). Tiberius was now fully aware of what Dio calls Sejanus' "activities" and plotted his downfall but was unable to do so openly and safely (presumably because of Sejanus' powerful position). He therefore sent a barrage of letters to Rome, some praising, some rebuking the Prefect so that Sejanus did not know what to do. People in general were equally confused (Dio, 58.7.5). Tiberius made sure that Sejanus stayed in Rome and did not travel to Capri (Dio, 58.7.5). Meanwhile, he conferred proconsular power on Sejanus and gave him a priesthood along with Gaius Caligula (Dio, 58.7.4). This move was probably meant to quell Sejanus' rising fears concerning his position, but it could only have made them worse, as for the first time young Gaius had received some sort of imperial recognition. Indeed the beginning of young prince's ascent can be dated to this year. Gradually Sejanus' position weakened as Gaius' strengthened. Tiberius praised Gaius and indicated that he was to be his successor (Dio, 58.8.1). The reaction of the populace, delighted that a son of their hero Germanicus was at last receiving recognition, discouraged Sejanus from attempting a rebellion. The Emperor then quashed an indictment Sejanus brought against L. Arruntius (Dio, 58.8.2-3). In a letter to the Senate
Tiberius referred to the Prefect simply as "Sejanus", omitting his titles and other terms of favour he had previously employed (Dio, 58.8.4, cf. 58.4.3).

The final blow followed shortly afterward. Tiberius let it be known that Sejanus was to receive aedile, and secretly appointed Q. Naevius Cordus Surtorius Macro to the Prefecture of the Guard. He then sent Macro to Rome with a letter encompassing Sejanus' fate and with instructions to relay it to the Senate. In Rome, Macro made the consul Memmius Regulus privy to the plot as his colleague Fulcinius Trio was a Sejanian (Dio, 58.9.3; cf. Tac. Ann., 5.11). Graecinus Laco, the Prefect of the vigiles (the nightwatch), was also informed of the plan. The next day Macro met Sejanus outside the Temple of Apollo where the Senate was due to sit and told him of the impending grant of tribunician power. Delighted, Sejanus rushed into the Temple. Macro then sent those Praetorians who were present back to their camp, using his authority as the new praefectus praetorio, and replaced them with Laco's vigiles. Having delivered the letter to the Senate, Macro hastened to the Praetorian camp to prevent any possible disturbances that might follow in the wake of what was about to happen (Dio, 56.9.4-6). Inside the Temple the letter was read, long and rambling (Juv., 10.71). Towards the end it suddenly denounced Sejanus and requested that he be arrested (Dio, 58.10.1). No order of execution was contained in the letter as Tiberius feared a Praetorian backlash. He requested that one of the consuls travel to Capri to escort him to Rome (Dio, 58.10.2). The Senate, confused, was slow to react but Regulus soon took charge, summoned Sejanus forward, and had him arrested and despatched to prison (Dio, 58.10.3-8). The populace
reviled him and the Praetorians remained quiescent. Taking heart at this, the Senate reconvened and condemned the fallen favourite to death. The sentence was carried out without delay. Sejanus' family perished with him, his children executed, his ex-wife committing suicide.

Suetonius more or less agrees with this account in portraying Tiberius as deceiving Sejanus with honours and then ruining him. He adds the details that Tiberius ordered that preparations be made to have Drusus Caesar released from his cell under the Palace and confirmed as his successor, and that the old princeps, unsure of the outcome of events at Rome, had ships standing by to take him to safety should Sejanus' downfall backfire.

Dio claims that Tiberius ruined Sejanus because he had grown too powerful (Dio, 58.4.1). This seems ludicrous: Sejanus' elevation had at all times been dependent on signs of favour bestowed at Tiberius' instigation. We would have to believe that Tiberius never considered the implications of Sejanus' elevation until that man had grown so powerful that the Emperor was forced to resort to conspiratorial methods to remove him. Suetonius, claiming to be quoting from Tiberius' Res Gestae, states that the Emperor said he killed Sejanus on discovering a plot formed by the Prefect against the sons of Germanicus. Suetonius rejects this, pointing out that Nero and Drusus were killed during or after the fall of Sejanus (Suet. Tib., 61). We may add Agrippina who died in the same year as Drusus. However, as Levick points out, Sejanus' method had been to foment suspicion against Agrippina and her sons, suspicion that would not necessarily die with the Prefect. Elsewhere, Suetonius implies that the Prefect fell due
to excessive power and plotting against the Emperor (Suet. Tib., 65). Indeed a plot against Tiberius features in many of the sources' explanations for Sejanus' downfall. Tacitus refers to a plot against Gaius, as do some inscriptions.

Thus, the most frequent explanation found in the sources - including that used by Tiberius himself (if we believe Suetonius) - is that of a plot against the Emperor or against the sons of Germanicus, especially Gaius. It is not difficult to see how these two alleged conspiracies could have been confused in the Roman public's eye: a plot against the Emperor's potential heirs was tantamount to a plot against the Emperor himself. We must ask, is this likely? That Sejanus actively plotted against Tiberius seems improbable (see above, p. 61). Although his situation had changed by 30-31, and he had gained enormous power and influence, Sejanus was still dependent on Tiberius and would gain little by the latter's death at that stage. He still lacked the tribunicia potestas, the decisive indication of successorship. Even if he considered the position he had reached by 30-31 as sufficient to ensure his succession on Tiberius' death, he would have been uncharacteristically impatient and lacking in foresight to have embarked on a plot against his patron that, if discovered, would bring ruin and certain death in its wake. Tiberius was in his 70's and by Roman standards very old indeed. Sejanus did not face the prospect of decades in the wings as Tiberius had done under Augustus; the princeps could not be expected to live much longer. In the event he survived a further six years, but Sejanus was not to know that in 31.

That Sejanus plotted against Gaius Caligula is a definite probability. The young prince was 18 in 31 and had lived with his
grandmother Antonia after the death of Livia in 29. Sometime after 31 August, 31 he was summoned to live with Tiberius on Capri and was thus - intentionally or unintentionally - removed from Sejanus' sphere of influence (Suet. Calig., 10, cf. 8). As the last son of Germanicus, and one who was maturing every year, Gaius posed a definite threat to Sejanus' position as Tiberius' successor. However, beyond the accusations made after the Prefect's downfall, no evidence whatsoever exists to support the suggestion of a plot against Gaius. Sejanus, until the prince's removal to Capri a few months before his downfall, had ample opportunity to initiate actions against him but no source gives any indication of such activity. It is possible that Tacitus described such a plot (Tac. Ann., 6.3).

In short, a plot against Tiberius is most unlikely, one against Gaius a strong possibility although unsupported in detail by ancient evidence.

The medium through which Tiberius came to suspect his favourite was, according to Josephus and Dio, a letter he received probably in the summer of 31, from Antonia, Gaius' grandmother and the widow of Tiberius' brother, Drusus. She told him of the activities of the Prefect (Jos. AJ, 18.181-2; Dio, 65.14.1-2). What those "activities" were neither source says, but judging from Tiberius' claim that he moved against Sejanus on discovering a plot against the sons of Germanicus, we can suppose they were activities aimed at Gaius. This letters' very existence has been questioned by Nicols but the tradition is generally accepted by most modern scholars. It is not that important whether or not Antonia's information was correct, the point is that Tiberius believed it was and acted on it. Apicata's letter, as
we have seen, was undoubtedly a fraud but the princeps still punished those accused in it, not stopping to question his source (see above, pp. 65-7 and below pp. 83-4). Given this, it is tempting to agree with Levick in speculating that the letter was the product of Gaius' machinations in Antonia's house, that the young and cunning prince was ultimately responsible for the fall of the Prefect.

A more recent theory has been adduced to explain the sudden reversal in Sejanus' fortunes. According to this, the senatorial element in Sejanus' support fell away when it became clear that the Prefect was to succeed Tiberius. The haughty aristocrats would serve under, not for, Sejanus. This secession of senatorial support forced Tiberius to ruin his favourite and to resort to subterfuge due to Sejanus' elevated position. The "senatorial conspiracy" against Sejanus is accredited with the letters of Antonia and Apicata, and perhaps enjoyed the support of Gaius. It is an ingenious theory, but unfortunately there is not a single piece of ancient evidence to support it. This silence is indeed curious as nearly all our ancient sources, especially Tacitus, are senatorial in their origin and sympathies, and as such would surely not have missed the opportunity to highlight this victory of Senate over Emperor and Prefect, had such occurred. Without ancient evidence to support it, this theory must be seriously considered.

Sejanus' fall was followed by a witch-hunt for his supporters. A spate of prosecutions culminated with the massacre of all those still in custody on charges related to the conspiracy. This occurred in 33.

Let us now summarise all we have seen about Sejanus. Prefect of
the Guard, he harboured ambitions to be a M. Agrippa to Tiberius, ambitions that were probably sparked off by the death of Drusus in 23. This event gave him the opportunity he had previously lacked to insinuate himself into the succession scheme as Drusus' replacement. Allying himself to Livilla, Drusus' widow, he opposed Agrippina and her sons Nero and Drusus. Indeed the latter two would have to be removed if he was to be a successor to Tiberius. He most probably harboured designs against Gaius Caligula, Germanicus' youngest son. Tiberius, convinced of Sejanus' loyalty and devotion to him, patronised his elevation which culminated in a shared consulship with the princeps in 31, a grant of proconsular power and a promised marital link with imperial house in the form of betrothal to Livilla. Sejanus' plan had worked, his succession seemed certain. At this point Tiberius received a letter from Antonia, perhaps composed on information supplied by Gaius, informing him that his favourite was plotting against Gaius and perhaps against himself. Believing this to be true, Tiberius orchestrated the Prefect's downfall and Sejanus was executed on the same day he was arrested. A witch-hunt followed.

Between 23 and 31, especially after the retirement of Tiberius to Campania in 26, Sejanus had dominated Roman politics to such an extent that it would not be improper to talk of a "Principate of Sejanus" as being operative in this period. Sejanus' effect upon the succession to Tiberius had been devastating: the house of Germanicus had been all but erased from the scene, only the youngest son Gaius surviving to enjoy consideration. Sejanus' fall also had a terrible effect on Tiberius' mental condition. Learning that the man he had trusted so thoroughly had in fact been involved in the most nefarious political intrigues —
including the death of his own son Drusus, as Apicata's letter "revealed" - can only have caused the old man to become almost paranoid in his dealings with others. He spent long hours investigating the Drusus affair and punishing all concerned. He increasingly came to earn Dio's title of ἀναρχός, alone, isolated, disillusioned (Dio, 58.5.1).

The provisions Tiberius took for the succession subsequent to Sejanus' fall were virtually non-existent. Tacitus portrays him considering the problem during his last days on Capri in 37 (Tac. Ann., 6.46). Tiberius Gemellus, his natural grandson, was his obvious favourite but was only eighteen in 37. Claudius, then forty-six, was considered but rejected as a mental deficient (inminuta mens eius obstit). That left only Gaius, twenty-five, son of Germanicus, and so wildly popular. Tiberius would not chose anyone from outside the imperial house for fear of being seen to slight the name of Augustus and of the Caesarian house in general. He left the choice to Fate. He himself believed that Gaius would succeed him - Macro's attentions were increasingly directed towards the young prince - and that Gemellus would be killed as a result. Despite this he did nothing to favour his grandson.

Josephus records the highly unlikely story that Tiberius left the choice up to chance. He does not even mention Claudius. According to this account, Tiberius decided that he would appoint as his successor the grandson who came to him first one morning. Although he favoured his natural grandson Gemellus, he resolved to abide by Fate's decision. Naturally, Gaius arrived first and so succeeded (Jos. Ant., 18.205-14). This done, Tiberius feared for Gemellus' safety and exhorted Gaius to
spare him and rule the Empire with moderation. Gaius ignored him (Jos. AJ, 18.215-23). Given the general theme that pervades Josephus' historical writings - how man is subject to the rule of God - this story must be doubted, not only due to its inherent unlikelihood, but also as one that was probably used by Josephus to illustrate his main theme.

Suetonius is unclear as to Tiberius' provisions for the succession, but does mention that he hated Gemellus as the product of adultery and even thought of killing him (Suet. Tib., 62). Suetonius, alone in this last assertion, must be rejected in view of Tacitus' statement that Tiberius favoured Gemellus.

Dio presents a more balanced picture. Gaius, who had received a priesthood in 31, became quaestor in 33 with a promise to advance him to the other offices five years in advance of the legal age (Dio, 58.74, cf. 23.1). Dio claims that he disregarded Gemellus due to his age and because he doubted that he was Drusus' real son (Dio, 58.23.2). This corroborates Suetonius' claim cited above. Tacitus fails even to mention this possibility and so it must perhaps be doubted. In Dio, Tiberius at least makes a decision concerning the succession during the period 31-37 and does not leave it until his dying days or consign it to the choice of Fate. Dio also records that Tiberius felt that Gaius would kill Gemellus but did nothing to help his grandson (Dio, 58.23.3). We shall see that this is not entirely true. None the less at the time, as Dio says, Tiberius did nothing to secure Gemellus' position (we might have expected him to force Gaius to adopt Gemellus, on the model of his own forced adoption to Germanicus, but he did not). The tradition that Tiberius chose Gaius, whose heinous nature was known
to him, to ensure that his reign would appear as a golden age in comparison to the outrages that prince would perpetrate when Emperor, also finds mention in the pages of Dio (Dio, 58.23.4). This appears to have been a popular rumour, one obviously imbued with hindsight and so not current at the time, as it also appears in connection with Tiberius' choice as successor to Augustus (Suet. Tib., 21).

Either in 31 or 33 a pretender, claiming to be Drusus, the son of Germanicus, appeared in the East. Tacitus names him as the son of M. Silanus, possibly the future father-in-law of Gaius Caligula, but fails to elucidate or even to conclude the story, saying that he had not sufficient source material to do so (Tac. Ann., 5.10). Dio records that he was caught but does not tell of his fate (Dio, 58.25.1).

Between 31 and his death in 37 Tiberius did little or nothing to indicate a clear successor. The honours conferred on Gaius were not sufficient in themselves to ensure his accession on Tiberius' death; he still lacked the important privileges of the consulship - an office he did not hold at all under Tiberius -, proconsular power and with it a provincial command that would give him some military experience, and the tribunician power. He was perhaps too young for this last honour, but Tiberius' failure to bestow the other privileges on him must be seen as a major omission. Even Gaius' marriage to Junia Claudilla in 33 was politically innocuous (Tac. Ann., 6.10; Suet. Calig., 12). He received an Augurate and then a Pontificate, probably also in 33 or 34 (Suet. Calig., 12). These indications were still not enough to mark Gaius out as Tiberius' clear successor. This lack of movement on Gaius' elevation would seem to indicate an apathy on Tiberius' part concerning the succession. He had never been as concerned about this
issue as had Augustus: for instance, Drusus' death in 23 did not inaugurate a hastening of Nero and Drusus' advancement, as Tiberius' departure to Rhodes in 6 BC had done for Gaius and Lucius Caesar. Sejanus' downfall had left him a hollow man, perhaps even a little imbalanced, and this showed in his apathy about the succession. That left it up to Gaius and his new ally Macro to ensure a smooth transferral of power.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Tiberius are shrouded in legend. Gaius and Macro are variously blamed, but Seneca's account, reported by Suetonius, appears the most likely. According to this, the enfeebled princeps, resting, removed his signet ring but held it in his hand and then replaced it on his finger. Shortly afterwards he summoned some servants to bring him food. None arrived. Tiberius then rose to see what was wrong, collapsed and died. It is easy to see how stories of attempts to rob the signet ring, starvation and smothering could arise out of this series of events. The death of Tiberius, on 16 March, 37, caused widespread rejoicing.

Let us now summarise the Tiberian succession. Staying true to the intentions of Augustus, Tiberius maintained Germanicus as his successor in the period 14-19, and elevated his own son Drusus as a replacement for Germanicus should anything happen to the latter. This was a practise based on the succession scheme of Augustus which had been characterised by the maintenance of a pool of imperial princes from which replacements could be drawn should misfortune befall the current favourites. When Germanicus did die in 19, Drusus was quickly elevated into his position as heir apparent by a shared consulship with his father in 21 and a grant of tribunicia potestas the following year.
Between 19 and 23 Drusus was to be Tiberius' successor. Drusus' untimely death in 23 should have left the way clear for Germanicus' son Nero, (who had already received the first signs of imperial favour while still a boy), to replace him. However, Drusus' death was probably the event that encouraged the Praetorian Prefect L. Aelius Sejanus, already a man of influence, to make his own bid for power. He aimed at forging for himself a position in the State analogous to that of M. Agrippa under Augustus, that is, to be Tiberius' successor by virtue of his friendship, devotion and loyalty to his master. This would be further strengthened by a marital link with the imperial house. Livilla, Drusus' widow, would provide that link.

As a result of these ambitions, Sejanus set about the removal of any potential successors to Tiberius that still lived. These came from the house of Germanicus and were his sons Nero, Drusus and Gaius who were currently under the protection of their mother Agrippina. An arrogant, ambitious and headstrong woman, she had already earned the distrust of Tiberius and herself suspected the Emperor of involvement in the death of her husband. Sejanus played on these mutual suspicions to foment trouble, naturally taking Tiberius' side to ensure the ruin of Agrippina and her sons. Between 23 and 30 Sejanus gradually weakened Agrippina's position by attacking her supporters until he had secured the exile or imprisonment of herself and her two eldest sons, Nero and Drusus. Sejanus' position in Rome was greatly strengthened by the retirement of Tiberius to Capri in 26-7, and over the next three to four years he became so powerful as to be virtually princeps himself in all but name. The only obstacle still left from the house of Germanicus was the youngest son Gaius, against whom Sejanus most
probably harboured designs. However the Prefect does not appear to have acted on these designs, perhaps growing somewhat complacent in his success. If so, this was a mistake.

Sometime during the summer of 31 Antonia, Gaius' grandmother with whom the young prince was then living, sent a letter to Tiberius revealing to the princeps the plots of his favourite. It is possible that the contents of the letter were fraudulent, and maybe even the product of Gaius' intrigues, but, whatever the truth, Tiberius believed the letter and acted on it. Sejanus fell and was executed the same day. This left the Emperor a broken and paranoid old man, his mental health in question. He did not seriously consider or even care what happened on his death. He felt that Gaius would succeed but did little to mark him out for that honour. He further believed that Gaius, once Emperor, would kill his own grandson Tiberius Gemellus but did nothing during his last years to protect him. Tiberius' provisions for the succession in the period 31-37 are marked by a distinct apathy.

Given this situation, it was up to Gaius to provide for himself. The most important factor in his favour was the allegiance of the Praetorian Prefect Macro, Sejanus' successor. He also had the assets of the name Caesar, proximity to Tiberius (he had been summoned to Capri in 31) and descent from Germanicus. None the less, his accession would have to be carefully stage-managed.

Before leaving the Tiberian succession I would like to draw attention to one important development during this period: the rise of the military in politics. This has two distinct aspects. The first is the role of the provincial armies. During this period the armies
stationed on the frontiers remained quiet. They played no role in Tiberius' accession, beyond taking an oath of allegiance to him, and they remained quiescent throughout his reign. The mutinies in Germany and Pannonia in 14 were not politically motivated. However the offer of the throne to Germanicus in Germany issued by a mischievous element in the legions is something to note. At least some elements of the troops were aware of the political potential of the provincial armies. When this awareness became widespread the consequences would be catastrophic.

The second aspect is the Praetorian Guard. They will be examined in more detail in the next chapter but let it suffice to point out the growth of their influence under Tiberius, particularly when Sejanus was their leader. They were moved into a single camp in the capital in 23 and from then on their involvement in politics was ensured, if for no other reason than their presence at the heart of the Empire. Sejanus' career in itself was a watershed in Roman imperial politics. Here, for the first time in the imperial period, a military commander outside the domus Augusta had attempted to use his position to gain control of the Empire. Sejanus was, in this sense, a pioneer. He shunned direct action and as a result his attempt was tame in comparison with what was to come. His demise was a lesson to his successors in office and one that Macro learned well, at least during Gaius' rise to power. That prince's rule was to give rise to events that showed more clearly than any before the political potential of the Praetorians.
1. The main literary source for what follows are: Tac. Ann., 1-6; Dio, 57-59; Suet., Tib., and Gaius; Josephus, BJ, 2.204-17, AJ, 18.181-7, 205-25. References are also found in Velleius Paterculus, Pliny the Elder, Philo and others. As usual, coins and inscriptions are useful. The main modern works are referred to below.


3. Tac. Ann., 1.16-30; Dio, 58.4 (Pannonia). Tac. Ann., 1.31-48; Dio, 58.5-6.1 (Germany).

4. Tac. Ann., 1.31,35. Tacitus makes it clear that this was not a widespread feeling among the troops, a fact Dio and Suetonius fail to appreciate, cf. Dio, 57.5.1; Suet. Tib., 25.


10. Tac. Ann., 2.44. Tacitus says it was to ingratiate himself with the army and learn military practices. Later references imply a grant of imperium proconsulare was indeed involved, cf. 3.7, 19. See also LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 130, 148.


13. Tac. Ann., 2.53-4, 56, 58-9, 70-1. Perhaps Germanicus felt that, as holder of imperium maius, he did not need permission.


18. Tac. Ann., 3.31; Dio, 57.20.1; cf. EJ, p. 41.

19. Tac. Ann., 3.56: id summi fastigi vocabulum Augustus repperit.... ne successor in incerto foret, "This title of supreme power Augustus discovered.... so that his successor would not be a matter of doubt." Drusus' tribunician power is also mentioned on coins and inscriptions of 22-3, cf. EJ, no.s 90-1; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 100, no.s 84-8.


23. EJ, no.s 95, 96 (lineage), 96a (coin).


27. Tac. Ann., 3.29; Suet. Tib., 27; Dio, 58.11.5.

28. Tac. Ann., 3.72; Dio, 57.21.3. The erection of Sejanus' statue in the theatre of Pompeius was occasion for A. Cremutius Cordus to remark acerbically, tunc vere teatrum perire, "Then indeed did the theatre perish!" (Sen. Marc., 22). Cordus later paid the price for enmity with Sejanus, see below, p. 68 Blaesus' operations in Africa are described in Tac. Ann., 3.73-4.


34. On Sejanus' low birth see Tac. Ann., 3.29, 4.1, 3 (the memorable phrase municipalis adulter, "small-town adulterer"), 39-40. See also Velleius, protracted pleading on Sejanus' behalf - Vell., 2.95.1, 127.3, 128.1-3. M. Agrippa's humble origins are well attested: cf. Tac. Ann., 1.3; Suet. Calig., 23; Vell., 2.127.1; Sen. Contr., 2.4.12-13. Note Vell., 2.95.1: Agrippa was "nobilitated" by his glorious achievements.


36. See above, p. 59. For a description of M. Agrippa's rise to power with ample reference to the source material involved, see M. REINHOLD, M. Agrippa, A Biography, (Geneva, 1933; repr. 1965), pp. 1-62.


39. Except Suet. Tib., 55 where Sejanus is portrayed as Tiberius' agent in the destruction of the house of Germanicus in order that Tiberius Gemellus might succeed. This is outlandish in the extreme and contradicts Suetonius' statements concerning Sejanus made elsewhere, cf. Suet. Tib., 48, 65.

40. For a summary of the possibilities see A. BODDINGTON, "Sejanus. Whose Conspiracy?", AJPh 84 (1963), 1-16, esp. 5-12.


42. Tac. Ann., 1.33, 4.12, 52, 53, 54, 6.25.


44. The deaths of Piso and Drusus have been recounted in the text. For the others see Tac. Ann., 3.19 (Vipsania); 3.48 (Quirinius); 4.15 (Germanicus and Longus).

45. Tiberius' suspicions of Agrippina went back a long way. His mother, Livia, disliked her intensely (Tac. Ann., 1.33). Tiberius himself had his doubts as early as 15 (Tac. Ann., 1.69). Germanicus himself was well aware of his wife's capacity for inflammatory action (Tac. Ann., 2.72).

46. Cf. chapter I, note 70.

47. This subject is covered in most accounts of Tiberius' reign e.g. MARSH, pp. 289-95; LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 180-200. See also C.W. CHILTON, "The Roman Law of Treason under the Early Principate", JRS 45 (1955), 73-81.


51. E.g. Suet. Aug., 71, Tib., 21, Claud. 4; Aulus Gellius, 15.7.

52. SEAGER, pp. 197-9.


54. Dio, 58.2.7-8. Suet. Tib., 65 would appear to date the public celebration of his birthday and erection of statues to 30 or 31.

55. Dio, 58.3.9. Cf. Tac. Ann., 5.6, 6.8; Suet. Tib., 65. (betrothal); see above, p. 70 (barriers).

56. Sejanus' consulship is attested in inscriptions, though his name is erased from the consular Fasti. Cf. EJ, p. 32 and no.s 50a, 358a. On Sejanus' position see MARSH, pp. 187-92.


59. Suet. Tib., 65. D.C.A. SHOTTER, "The Fall of Sejanus - Two Problems", CPh 69 (1974), 42-6 makes sense of Tiberius' plan: Trio was lured to Capri to leave Regulus unimpeded in his actions; Drusus was prepared for release to divide the loyalties of any potential rebels among the populace or Praetorians.

60. LEVICK, Tib. Pol., p. 173.


64. LEVICK, Tib. Pol., p. 173-4. (Levick, as this implies, also accepts the letter tradition).


67. See Appendix I.


70. Cf. LEVICK, Tib. Pol., pp. 214-7. Before to this, in pp. 206-14, Levick posits her theory of Tiberius' succession plan: a pair consisting of Gaius and Gemellus. This is most unlikely - Gemellus was not advanced in any way whatsoever in 31-7 while Gaius at least received some signs of imperial favour, minimal though they were.

71. Tac. Ann., 6.50 (Macro has him killed); Dio, 58.28.1-4 (Macro and Gaius both kill him); Suet. Tib., 73 (various possibilities including Gaius poisoning him and starvation; Seneca's account); Suet. Calig., 12 (Gaius poisons and smothers him); Jos. AJ, 18.225 (Tiberius dies naturally), cf. AJ, 18. 187 (Herod Agrippa hints to Gaius that he should kill Tiberius).

72. EJ, p. 43 (date); Suet. Tib., 75 (rejoicing).

CHAPTER III

GAIUS AND CLAUDIUS: THE MILITARY INTERVENE I

To a lesser or greater extent, all problems in ancient history are problems of the sources. With Gaius, critical analysis of the source material is central to the picture a modern historian paints of this intriguing figure. We will not need to rehearse the various arguments involved in detail, as they impinge but slightly on the question of the Gaian succession. However, for the sake of completeness, I do feel constrained at least to draw attention to the main problems of the sources for Gaius.

Tacitus' account is entirely lost. The manuscript breaks off with the death of Tiberius and does not resume until 47, ten years later. It is a loss to be deplored, as Tacitus is usually regarded as a yardstick against which we can assess the reliability of Suetonius and Dio, whose accounts of Gaius' reign constitute the core of the source material. Scrutiny of these accounts — in conjunction with "external" literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources — reveals that falsification, generalisation and misrepresentation are not entirely absent from the pages of these two, and warns us that we must be on our guard when reading them. Their portrayal of Gaius as a man possessed, venting his wrath on an innocent and unsuspecting world, would seem to be largely a false or at least an exaggerated one. Moreover, they wrote at a time when a tradition about Gaius would seem to have been firmly established, a tradition that they convey to us without checking their facts.
We do have two contemporary sources: Seneca and Philo. Unfortunately, both have reasons to be hostile to the Emperor. Seneca, we are told, had his literary style cruelly abused by Gaius and may even have had his life endangered (Suet. Calig., 53; Dio, 59.19.7-8). Seneca also apparently had an affair with Julia Livilla, Gaius' sister (Dio, 60.8.5, 61.10.1). This would not have endeared him to the Emperor. Philo was a Jew from Alexandria, giving him two reasons for being antipathetic to Gaius: the Emperor had attempted to have his status set up in the Temple in Jerusalem, thus offending the Jewish race in general, and during his reign anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria had caused that people terrible hardship. Another source is Josephus and, despite Charlesworth's optimism, must also be suspect. He was a Jew and wrote at a time when the tradition about Gaius was in existence.

In short, all the literary sources for Gaius' reign have reason to be hostile to him or have inherited a prevalent tradition about him that depicted the young princeps as deranged. We must, therefore, bear this in mind when describing events and assessing motives in the forthcoming pages.

Tiberius died at Misenum in Campania on 16 March, 37 and was given a full public funeral in Rome on 3 April. On 18 March the Senate hailed Gaius as imperator in his absence, and voted him full powers on his arrival in Rome with Tiberius' corpse on 29 March. Balsdon points out three factors that made Gaius' accession easier than Tiberius', twenty-three years earlier: Gaius enjoyed all the popularity his father, Germanicus, had enjoyed, simply because he was his father's son; he had the vital support of Macro, the Praetorian Prefect; and there now
existed, as there had not in 14, a precedent for the transferal of the powers of office of princeps.

There had been one problem: Tiberius' will. According to that, Gaius and Tiberius Gemellus were to inherit all the dead Emperor's property equally: they were joint heirs (Suet. Tib., 76). Although the Empire was not Tiberius' property to bequeath, it is not difficult to see the political implications of the will, especially when one considers the importance wills played in the early career of Augustus and in Tiberius' own accession. It was an Augustan precedent that the princeps' chief heir was also his political successor. Certainly, Philo and Dio saw Tiberius' will as dictating a joint succession: Gemellus was to be Gaius' partner in power. Balsdon sees the will as a move by Tiberius that gave to the Senate a "liberty of choice" between two equally recommended candidates, thus allowing his successor to escape one source of Tiberius' own unpopularity — the image of a princeps forced on an unwilling aristocracy by clear signs of favour conferred by the outgoing Emperor.

We cannot accept that Tiberius envisaged a joint accession, unless we also accept that he had entirely lost political acumen by 35, when the will was drawn up (Suet. Tib., 76). The dangers that had prohibited Augustus from attempting that move between 6 BC and AD 4 still pertained in 37; the threat of civil war intervening in the delicate political climate of an imperial succession would be greatly increased by such a move. None the less, the fact remains that Tiberius had indeed named joint heirs and must have done so aware of the political implications of his actions. Balsdon's suggestion is
neat, but can we really picture Tiberius knowingly entrusting such an important decision to a body that he held in such low regard? Furthermore, Gaius and Gemellus did not come equally recommended: Gaius had at least received some advancement, Gemellus none at all (see above, pp. 84-90).

Tiberius had believed Gaius' claim to the throne was the stronger, and, if we believe our sources, thought Gaius would kill Gemellus (Tac. Ann., 6.46). By nominating Gemellus joint heir with Gaius, Tiberius was attempting to protect his grandson. He knew men would interpret this act as an indication that Gemellus was a political successor to himself, and thereby conferred on the boy a political identity and importance he had hitherto lacked. In 14, Agrippa Postumus, despite being a relegatus on a small island, had been judged a sufficient threat to the incoming administration to justify his murder; at the outset of a new reign, anonymity could be just as fatal to an imperial prince as recognition, if not more so. Tiberius did not want the same fate to befall his grandson. His knowledge of Gaius' character, which he had observed for six years on Capri, and Macro's increasing attention to the young man, convinced him that Gaius could overcome the obstacle of the joint heirship without the need for a civil war. Anyhow, as we have observed above (pp. 84-90), Tiberius was relatively apathetic about what happened after his death and so might have been not too concerned that by naming joint heirs he was risking political disorder. His main motive was the protection of Gemellus.

If my interpretation of Tiberius' intentions in naming Gemellus and Gaius joint heirs is correct, then he was to be proven at once right and wrong. Gaius did indeed accede without civil war, but
Gemellus would be dead before the year was out. However, Gaius could not act on Gemellus immediately as in this respect his hands had been tied by Gemellus' recognition in Tiberius' will. While still en route to Rome with Tiberius' body, Gaius had sent Macro ahead with the will. In collusion with the consuls, Macro had had the will declared null and void on the grounds of insanity - how could Tiberius have been sane, if he had been prepared to put a mere boy over the Senate? (Suet. Calig., 14; Dio, 59.1.2). He then clarified Gemellus' position in the new regime by adopting him and having him hailed as princeps iuventutis. The message was clear: Gemellus was to be to Gaius what Germanicus had been to Tiberius. Later in the year, Gemellus was forced to commit suicide or was killed, the "charges" offered in the sources being concealments for the simple truth that Gaius felt he could not afford to foster a potential rival to the throne who was a direct descendant of the dead Emperor. Perhaps Gemellus gave him an opportunity by some slight indiscretion.

After the long and uneventful reign of Tiberius, the world greeted the new Emperor with displays of unbridled delight as the Empire rejoiced at the accession of a son of Germanicus (Suet. Calig., 13-14; Philo Leg., 8-13). Gaius fostered his popularity with various acts, among them the paying of the bequests of Tiberius' will, despite its invalidation, which included a HS 1,000 donative to the Praetorians to which Gaius added a further HS 1,000 of his own. The people received a total of HS 45,000,000. He also displayed pietas by honouring his dead relatives and conferring privileges on his living ones. Tiberius' notes on the trials of Agrippina, Nero and Drusus were ostentatiously burnt in the Forum to allay the fears of those who had been involved in
their downfalls that Gaius would seek revenge. Exiles were recalled and money distributed to those who had been wronged by the imperial tax system. Gaius' popularity knew no bounds, (Suet. Calig., 14-16; Dio, 59.3.3-5).

Yet within four years Gaius was to lie in a bloody heap in a Palace corridor, murdered by tribunes of the Guard assigned to protect him. What went wrong?

It is not my intention to get involved in the debate concerning Gaius' mental condition, or to assess the various arguments and explanations proposed by ancients and moderns alike to account for the young man's sudden loss of support. Whatever the sources of the change in his behaviour, the result was the same: Gaius began to behave in an extreme and openly autocratic manner. He apparently looked to himself as the source of his own power and excluded the Senate and the People's opinions from consideration. His claim to divinity and the introduction of Eastern-style obeisance to the court are glowing examples of this sort of behaviour which, to the Romans, was deeply offensive. He would brook no attempt to advise or control him, as the fates of his father-in-law, M. Silanus and the Praetorian Prefect, Macro show: both were driven to suicide by Gaius for attempting to exert an influence over him.

Gaius' provisions for the succession on his death were minimal, if not non-existant. Nor should we expect many. He was only twenty-five on his accession in 37 and, not unreasonably, expected a long reign to lie ahead. Questions of succession were distant to say the least. His three sisters, Agrippina, Drusilla and Julia, were honoured in ways
that we could construe as indication of inclusion in a succession scheme. The three were included in the oath of allegiance sworn to the Emperor annually and appeared on the coins of Gaius' reign. Drusilla, on her death in 38, was consecrated as Panthea. However, I think it is correct to follow Balsdon in assigning these signs of favour to a different motive. Gaius was here emphasising the new unity of the imperial household after the calamitous divisions of Tiberius' reign. Furthermore, honouring his sisters fits into an overall pattern of respects Gaius paid to his relatives, dead and living. Suetonius states that during his illness of autumn 37, Gaius nominated his sister Drusilla as his heir, but no other source corroborates this (Suet. Calig., 24). It seems a most unlikely move - politically ludicrous - but if it is true, it is another example of Gaius' autocratic behaviour.

Indeed the illness that afflicted Gaius in 37 presented the State with an unexpected crisis: the young Emperor was apparently dying, who was to succeed? The natural choice was Gemellus but he was a mere boy and totally unprepared for the task. Philo links the deaths of Gemellus, Macro and Silanus with Gaius' illness or, more correctly, with his recovery from it (Philo Leg., 14ff). Is it possible that the three, perceiving the Emperor to be dying, had formed some sort of pact as to the succession to Gaius, a pact the Emperor on recovery did not appreciate? Or did Gaius use his illness and recovery to accuse the three of having formed some such agreement, thus removing men he saw as obstacles to his complete control of the State? These questions may never be answered as the sources nowhere hint at such a pact or such an accusation. None the less, they are points to be borne in mind when
considering the hasty deaths of these three men, all of whom were close to the Emperor.

Dio indicates another successor: Drusilla's husband, M. Aemilius Lepidus. According to Dio, Gaius allowed him to stand for office five years in advance of the legal age and often declared that Lepidus would succeed him. Beyond that, we know nothing, no other source mentioning Lepidus in this role. Finally, it is possible that Gaius' four marriages were motivated by a desire to produce a son and heir, but this is pure speculation. Even if they were, the Emperor failed in his search: when he died he left only a daughter, Drusilla.

In short, no clear moves on the succession were made by Gaius. Suetonius and Dio's vague references are open to question, while the honours paid to his sisters, and his numerous marriages, were probably not related to the succession. This is not surprising as Gaius was only a young man and there seemed no need to make immediate provisions for the succession. His death seemed a long way off. In this, he was to be proven wrong.

The discontent felt by the aristocracy at his rule is indicated by the proliferation of conspiracies which can probably be assigned to the last two years of his reign. By far the most important one was that of Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus, governor of Upper Germany. The whole affair is shrouded in obscurity due to the lack of source material, so Gaetulicus' motives cannot be clearly discerned. Certain inferences can be drawn, however, from those facts we do know. Gaetulicus was from the ancient senatorial Cornelian gens and had been consul in 26 with C. Calvisius Sabinus. He had been appointed to the
governorship of Germany in 30 and was still there in 39 (Dio, 59.22.5). A lax disciplinarian, he had won the soldiers' affections and this fact could have contributed to his acquittal on a charge of complicity in Sejanus' plot brought against him in 34. Tacitus tells us he also ingratiated himself with the legions of Lower Germany, whose commander, L. Apronius, was Gaetulicus' father-in-law. We do not know if Apronius was still in command in 39.

The Emperor was in Gaul in 39 for reasons that are debatable, but that the suppression of Gaetulicus' recently revealed plot was among them seems likely, given the speed of Gaius' actions. Shortly after his arrival in Germany, Gaetulicus was executed along with Lepidus, who had joined the conspiracy. Julia and Agrippina were sent into exile for "adultery" with Lepidus, the by now familiar formula for concealing political dissent within the imperial household (Dio, 59.22.8-9). Sulpicius Galba was appointed to replace Gaetulicus (Suet. Galba, 6).

This is an important episode. For the first time, a commander of a provincial army was apparently preparing to overthrow an Emperor using the troops as a lever. Gaetulicus' motives are lost to us, but it is not unlikely that his aim was to replace Gaius with Lepidus. Although the latter was allegedly Gaius' successor, he is described by Seneca as impatient and both men, Gaetulicus and Lepidus, could have been motivated by discontent at Gaius' autocratic behaviour (Sen. Ep., 4.7). They did not, therefore, pose a threat to the Principate as an institution, but that a provincial commander should try to overthrow an Emperor using his troops was an ominous portent of things to come. How great was Gaetulicus' support among the rank-and-file is impossible to
determine, but that there was no major mutiny or uprising following his fall indicates that they were still inherently loyal to the Caesars (cf. Tac. Ann., 2.76). Julia and Agrippina's involvement lent a lie to the "united imperial house" image that Gaius was eager to promulgate on the coinage and is a clear indication that the discontent with his rule spread even to within the domus Augusta. That they were motivated by ambition is not a sufficient explanation for their actions. Why should they abandon the certain privileges they enjoyed as the honoured sisters of the Emperor in favour of the ruin they risked as the co-conspirators of an imperial legate? There must have been serious discontent at Gaius' behaviour.

The plot that would prove successful was hatched sometime in 40 and had considerable senatorial support. More importantly, it also had military support in the form of three tribunes of the Praetorian Guard and the passive participation of at least one Prefect (see below, pp. 106, 108, 118). Motives varied.

The main mover, the main history would remember as the plot's instigator and chief executioner, was Cassius Chaerea, a tribune of the Guard. Dio describes him as "old-fashioned" and this certainly applied to his politics which were later to be revealed as Republican. This was but one of Chaerea's motives. At least two others are discernible: discontent at Gaius' behaviour in general, and a desire for revenge for indecencies suffered at the Emperor's hands. Gaius' cruel wit took advantage of the staid tribune and Chaerea was invariably forced to accept vulgar and suggestive passwords for the daily watch that resulted in his being ridiculed by the rank-and-file. Chaerea's henchman was also a tribune, called Cornelius Sabinus. Josephus says
that he was motivated primarily by disgust at Gaius' antics and later showed himself to be Republican to boot (Jos. AJ, 19.48,261). A third tribune, Papinius, took part, but to a lesser degree (Jos. AJ, 19.37). This man could also have had a personal motive, if he was a relative of the Sextus Papinius mentioned by Seneca as having been executed by Gaius (Sen. Ira, 3.18.3). Finally, there was the Prefect Clemens who, although reluctant to participate actively in the plot, made it plain that he was sympathetic to the cause (Jos. AJ, 19.37-46; cf. Tac. Hist., 4.48).

These, then, were the Praetorian plotters. The main senatorial conspirator was M. Annius Vinicianus. He was an Arval Brother and had been a close friend of the dead Lepidus. This last point is interesting as it opens the possibility that Vinicianus had been at least privy to the Gaetulican conspiracy, if not participant in it. If so, he escaped prosecution. Josephus ascribes a motive of revenge to him (for Lepidus' death) and adds that he feared for his own life due to his friendship with Lepidus (Jos. AJ, 19.49-51). Vinicianus also could have had a motive of personal gain. Josephus describes how, when Gaius was dead, some men laid claim to the Principate for themselves. Among them was one M. Vinicius, husband of Gaius' sister Julia, and possibly a relative of Vinicianus (Jos. AJ, 19.252). Dio states Vinicianus himself was forwarded as a claimant (60.15.1). This could be Dio becoming confused with Vinicius. This is not a certainty, though. Another senator named in our sources is Valerius Asiaticus. In Tacitus, he is accused of having been a prime mover in the plot (Tac. Ann., 11.1). Josephus does not ascribe any particular importance to him at this early stage of the conspiracy. If he was
deeply involved, a clear motive can be found, for Valerius also laid claim to the supreme power when Gaius was dead (Jos. *AJ*, 19.252). Only the restraining influence of Vinicianus kept him in check. Another cogent motive is revealed by Seneca. He tells of how Gaius violated Valerius' wife and then boasted of it at a dinner party, commenting on her sexual performance (*Sen. Const.*, 18.2). Here is a motive of revenge for Valerius. Two other senators, Cluvius Rufus and L. Nonius Asprenas, are named by Josephus as participants in the plot (Jos. *AJ*, 19.91-2, 98). The historian does not record their motives and none can be clearly discerned. They are probably part of the general senatorial support for the plot mentioned by Josephus but his picture of universal knowledge of and support for the conspiracy is not borne out by his description of events subsequent to the murder of the Emperor, as we shall see (Jos. *AJ* 19.62). However, that a great many senators considered the removal of the autocratic young princeps desirable, or even a necessity, seems likely.

Finally, there was the freedman Gaius who took part in the plot, Callistus. Suetonius says that his complicity was vital for the plot's success, but does not indicate his precise role (*Suet. Calig.*, 56). Tacitus merely mentions his participation but gives no details (*Tac. Ann.*, 11.29). Josephus says he took part because he feared Gaius in general and wished to protect his great wealth from the rapacity of the princeps (Jos. *AJ*, 19.63-9). However, Callistus does not feature at all in Josephus' narrative describing the plot's execution. His role could have been one of intelligence officer, telling the conspirators of the Emperor's planned movements and habitual routes through the Palace. This is speculation, but would be the kind of information to
which an imperial freedman would have access and which would be vital for the plotters.

In summary, the motives of the plotters differed but can be placed into three categories. The first is Republicanism. This can be discerned in the cases of Chaerea and Sabinus, and inferred in those of Vinicianus and Valerius. The Senate, naturally, looked to the restoration of the Republic. The force of this sentiment in driving these men to act is impossible to assess, but we can say at least that it did play some part in their motivation. The second is the personal motive. This varied, but it is noteworthy that every conspirator, except Clemens who did not take an active role, can be assigned a personal motive. A desire for revenge, personal gain or fear for one's life constitute the subdivisions within this category. Finally, there was the all-embracing motive of discontent at Gaius' behaviour. All the conspirators are said to have felt this. Given the nature of our sources for Gaius it is possible that this motive's importance has been exaggerated, but that there was discontent seems fairly certain, as indicated by Agrippina and Julia's involvement in Gaetulicus' conspiracy. Again, its force in motivating the plotters is inestimable.

The question of responsibility remains. Balsdon argues for the Senate as the driving force, portraying the senators as contracting the Praetorians to help them. Although plausible, this flies in the face of our sources who credit Chaerea with having organised the plot, and particularly Josephus, who is the only source to provide a continuous narrative account of the plot and its execution (Jos. AJ, 19.1-113).
Josephus states that there were three plots in progress: one of Chaerea, one of Vinicianus and one attributed to Aemilius Regulus of Cordoba in Spain (Jos. AJ, 19. 17-22). This last plot is not mentioned in any other source and as it plays no further part in Josephus' account, it remains a complete mystery. In Josephus, the conspiracies of Chaerea and Vinicianus are portrayed as running parallel, only to coalesce at Chaerea's instigation, not vice versa which is what Balsdon would have us believe (Jos. AJ, 19. 49-52). Due to his high rank and reputation, Vinicianus was chosen as leader (Jos. AJ, 19.53-8). However, Chaerea remained the driving force. A final point against Balsdon's picture of the Senate as the main force behind the plot is that body's reaction to the news of the Emperor's death. It was not that of an organised body controlling the crisis and making arrangements for a provisional government, but was rather that of a Senate taken by surprise and falling into confusion (Jos. AJ, 19.158-61, 167-84, 248-53).

With the plot formed, impatience to act soon consumed Chaerea, but he was restrained by more cautiously-minded colleagues (Jos. AJ, 19.70-4). Finally, it was decided to strike at the Palatine Games, held in honour of Augustus over seven days in January (Dio, 59.46.5; cf. Tac. Ann., 1.73). Final arrangements were made and Chaerea urged his fellow-conspirators not to lose heart now that they were so close to the completion of their plan (Jos. AJ, 19.77-85). On the 24 January, 41, they struck (Suet. Calig., 58). Gaius was debating whether or not he should interrupt his enjoyment of the Games to take some lunch and a bath, while the conspirators looked on, nerves fraying (Jos. AJ, 96-100). At last, the Emperor departed and, taking a short cut to the
baths, was caught alone in a seldom-used corridor. There he was cut to
dieces by members of the Praetorian Guard, Chaerea striking the first
blow (Jos. AJ, 19. 101-110). Dio adds little to this account, his text
surviving only in epitome at this point (Dio, 59.5-7). Suetonius is
full of gory details, but agrees with Josephus in all the essentials
(Suet. Calig., 58). In all accounts, Chaerea struck the first blow.

Gaius' wife and daughter were promptly murdered.

Before describing the aftermath of Gaius' death and the
circumstances that led to the accession of Claudius, we will pause to
examine in more detail the body of troops that played such a central
role in the events of 24-25 January, 41; the Praetorian Guard. By
way of definition, we will take the term "Praetorian" to refer only to
those troops that were established as Augustus' bodyguard and whose
strength was fixed at nine cohorts (Tac. Ann., 4.5). The other
components of the garrison of Rome - vigiles, cohortes urbani and
Germani corporis custodes - will be dealt with briefly in due course.

The Republican antecedents for the imperial Praetorian Guard are
not entirely clear but appear to go back to a Scipio Africanus; even
the derivation of the name "Praetorian" is unsure. The imperial
Praetorians were established in 41 BC after Philippi and made Augustus' personal bodyguard sometime between 31 and 27 BC when he established their higher rates of pay (App. B Civ., 5.3.13; Dio, 53.11.3). Their strength was fixed at nine cohorts, probably of 500 men each (guingenaria) rather than of 1000 (milliaria). Inscriptions indicate that this arrangement was altered by Gaius or Claudius either of whom increased the strength of the Guard to twelve cohorts. Thus in the
Julio-Claudian period the Praetorians numbered between 4,500 and 6,500 men.

These troops were originally stationed in the environs of Rome, only three cohorts actually stationed in the capital. An inscription from Ostia of this period attests the presence of the sixth Praetorian cohort in that town. In 23 Sejanus moved all nine cohorts into the castra praetoria situated near the Viminal hill. In terms of composition, the Julio-Claudian Praetorians were almost entirely of Italian stock. Based in Rome and Italy, recruitment was most conveniently drawn from the local communities. They were therefore all Roman citizens, like the legions.

The duties of the Guard were primarily concerned with the vigilant preservation of the Emperor's safety and security. One cohort was permanently on guard at the Palace, probably on a rota basis. They escorted the Emperor everywhere - to the Senate, on visits or when he went outside Rome: they went with Tiberius to Capri, Gaius to Baiae, Claudius to Ostia. They also guarded members of the imperial house - some went with Drusus to Pannonia in 14 (Tac. Ann., 1.24). Similarly, when Nero withdrew the Guardsmen assigned to his mother Agrippina in 55 it was seen as a sign of imperial disfavour (Tac. Ann., 13.18). Besides their guard duties, the Praetorians performed police duties in Rome and Italy. We hear of them restraining crowds, extinguishing major fires, combatting Italian brigands. They could even be employed to provide spectacle for the Roman mob, ever lustful for entertainment (Tac. Ann., 12.56, 15.33). Although Guardsmen were present on the Rhine with Gaius in 39 and accompanied Claudius to Britain in 43, they do not appear to have taken part in the campaigning.
as such; they were not an elite strike-force. The closest they came to active duty in our period was when Germanicus used them as reserves in his German wars of 16-17 (Tac. Ann., 2.16). Their participation in the chaos of 69-70 will be examined in due course, but then they fought in exceptional circumstances and were themselves a much altered force.

Their officers were organised along the lines of the legions with centurions, optiones etc. The major difference was the presence of tribunes as the cohort commanders, legionary cohorts being under the most senior centurion of that cohort. The Emperor was the technical commander-in-chief of the Guard but in reality the Praetorians' top officer, the praefectus praetorio, was the man in charge.

Dio tells us that Augustus created the prefecture in 2 BC when he appointed Q. Ostorius Scapula and P. Salvius Aper joint Praetorian Prefects (Dio, 55.10.10). A joint prefecture was politically sound - one Prefect could act as a check on his colleague's ambitions - and ensured that if ever one Prefect became indisposed his partner was at hand to continue the duties of office uninterrupted (Dio, 52.24.1-2). Both Prefects were equites as were all future holders of the post. The maintenance of collegiality in the prefecture throughout the Julio-Claudian period is not a sure thing, but some facts are clear enough. Sejanus and Macro were both sole Prefects in the period 16/17-37. Gaius may have returned to a dual prefecture, the hasty nature of Macro's death indicating at least some suspicion of the office on the Emperor's part. Claudius maintained joint Prefects until the appointment of Afranius Burrus in 51, and that was done through the influence of Agrippina (Tac. Ann., 12.24). Nero returned to two
Prefects; the events of his reign will be dealt with below.

There can be no doubt that the careers of Sejanus and Macro were instrumental in the extension of the role and influence of the prefecture. In Augustus' reign the Prefects would have been little more than military officers subordinate to the princeps with duties no more or less extensive than any other commander of a body of troops — daily administration, enforcing discipline, visiting the scattered Augustan cohorts. Sejanus, "le vrai fondateur du prétoire", radically altered this situation. The movement of the troops into the camp in Rome greatly increased the corps' political influence and with it that of its commander. During the next 20 years or so the duties of the Prefect undoubtedly expanded into new areas. The Prefect now became the Emperor's constant companion, his ever-present military attache: Sejanus went with Tiberius to Campania and Capri (Tac. Ann., 4.59; Dio, 58.4.9); Macro was at Misenum when Tiberius died (Tac. Ann., 6.50); Pollio accompanied Claudius to Britain, Tigellinus was with Nero in Greece (Dio, 60.23.2, 63.12.3). He carried out executions on the Emperor's orders, and apprehended and tortured important prisoners. It is not known to what extent the princeps consulted the Prefect concerning imperial policy, but we can imagine that powerful holders of the office — Sejanus, Macro, Burrus or Tigellinus — enjoyed the Emperor's confidence. By the end of the Julio-Claudian period the prefecture was still a long way from being the developed institution of the second and third centuries, but equally it had come a long way from the purely military posting it had been under Augustus.

The ambitions of a strong Prefect were a source of danger to any Emperor. However, the suspicions of a princeps were more often fatal.
to the Prefect - more holders of that office died at the instigation of
the Emperor than did Emperors through the intrigues of a Prefect. The
success of any Praetorian plot depended to a large extent on the
depth of support the Prefect enjoyed among the rank-and-file. What
were a Guardsman's motives?

The soldiers of the cohortes praetoriani were a pampered lot. They were
stationed in the capital of the Empire, not on some far-flung and
inhospitable frontier. Their uniform and equipment was attractive and
usually of the latest fashion. They enjoyed a close, almost personal
relationship with the Emperor himself. Besides these perks, they had
better conditions of service than any other soldier in the Empire: a
Guardsman served sixteen, not twenty, years and was paid three times
more per annum than was a legionary. Whenever donatives were
distributed, the Praetorians always received more than anyone else (cf.
Dio, 56.32.2, 59.2.1). Being thus a privileged force meant that the
overriding motive for any Guardsman was the maintenance of these
privileges. Usually this meant the preservation of the Emperor and the
imperial system. Thus it was that the news of Gaius' death was not
greeted with rejoicing in the castra praetoria (Suet. Calig., 58; Dio,
59.29-30). Similarly, and despite Dio's claim to the contrary, they
were not likely to have supported Sejanus had he attempted a coup by
force (Dio, 58.4.2); in the event they made no attempt whatsoever to
rescue him as he lay in jail awaiting death. The average Praetorian
soldier was dedicated to the imperial house; it was after all his
employer (Cf. Tac. Ann., 14.7). A second consideration that would
determine a Guardsman's course of action was one he shared with any
soldier of the Roman Empire: the possibility of personal gain that
would result from that action. The infamous auction of the throne, staged by the Praetorians in 193, was a long time coming, but the impression is that they would have perpetrated this cynical act at any time, had they been given an opportunity as golden as that offered by the circumstances which surrounded the death of Pertinax in that year (Dio, 74.8.1ff; Herodian, 2.65). The Guardsman's motives were thus entirely selfish: preservation of his privileged position, and the opportunity of personal gain. At no stage therefore can the Praetorians be said to have represented a distinct political entity in the Roman State; they adhered to no particular political doctrine beyond their desire to ensure the continuance of the Principate, the system which was their raison d'être. This will emerge most clearly in the events about to be described.

Three other bodies of troops were stationed in Julio-Claudian Rome: the vigiles, cohortes urbani and the Germani corporis custodes. The urban cohorts were created at the same time as the Praetorians and had their strength fixed at three cohorts, probably milliary. They were stationed in the Praetorian camp and were in every way an inferior force to their compatriots: they served more years (twenty), received less pay, had no cavalry attached to them and had no camp of their own. They also got less than the Praetorians when donatives were distributed (Suet. Aug., 101). They were commanded by the praefectus urbi, itself an office of disputed legal position, or, if there was none, by their tribunes. As the city Prefect was a senator, the urban cohorts were technically under the control of the Senate. As we shall see, this proved illusory.
The vigiles were more inferior still. Numbering seven cohorts of 500 men each, they were billeted throughout the city in hospitia and, with the cohortes urbani, were primarily a police force designed to keep the peace (Suet. Aug., 49, Suet. Tib., 37). Their commander was the praefectus vigilum, an eques who, though technically not subordinate to the Praetorian Prefect was, in fact, just that: witness Laco's role as Macro's subordinate in Sejanus' fall.

Finally, there were the German bodyguards. These were a purely personal force, numbering no more than 500, whose sole duty was to protect the Emperor. The Emperor could also assign them to members of the imperial house if he wished (Tac. Ann., 13.18). Republican antecedents for this force existed in profusion, from the Bardyaei of Marius to Caesar's Spanish cavalry (App. BCiv., 1.70-1; Suet. Jul., 86). They were reckoned among the Emperor's familia, household, and as such would have lived in or close to the Palace.

These were the troops that made up the garrison of Rome under the Julio-Claudians. Numbering about 12,000 men, they were the Emperor's immediate military wing at the heart of the Empire, ready for use should he ever need them. They certainly helped in cowing the Senate, Tiberius being less discreet in this regard than had been Augustus (Dio, 57.24.5). That body was given a sense of military capability by the creation of the urban cohorts, under the command of the senatorial praefectus urbi.

As the only troops in the capital, the Praetorians and their less-vaunted colleagues exercised a political influence while themselves not adhering to any one political ideal. Their employment depended on the
continuance of the Principate, so in one sense they were ardent supporters of that system. The praefectus praetorio himself wielded considerable influence, especially after the careers of Sejanus and Macro, but it was not as great as that enjoyed by the Prefects of the following two centuries. In short, the influence and role of the Praetorian Guard and their commanders in the Julio-Claudian period should not be overestimated. A role they had, an influence they did exercise, but they were not the "Emperor-makers" of popular imagination; their interventions into politics throughout their history were infrequent and not always decisive. The events we are about to examine - the accession of Claudius - are not typical of their activities in general and should be viewed as extraordinary and exceptional. As a result of these events they certainly increased their role in the succession process, but we must not think of them as cynically determining every succession after that of Claudius to their own advantage. They were, despite their selfish outlook, remarkably loyal to the ruling house and remained so throughout most of their history.

The news of Gaius' murder caused widespread panic and confusion (Jos. AJ, 19.127-37). The Germani custodes, the first to find the corpse of the princeps, ran amok in the Palace and killed anyone who crossed their path. In this way three senators, - L. Asprenas, L. Norbanus and Anteius - met their ends (Jos. AJ, 19.119-26). Josephus asserts their motive for doing this was revenge on those who had killed their benefactor (Jos. AJ, 19.121-2). With murder on their minds, the Germans then irrupted into the theatre where the Palatine Games were taking place and were quelled by the entreaties of the crowd,
especially those of an _ad hoc_ spokesman called Euarestus Arruntius (Jos. _AJ_, 19.138-52).

The reaction of the Praetorians is not recorded by Josephus, but Suetonius and Dio tell us they were not pleased; they faced unemployment (Suet. _Calig._, 58; Dio, 59.29-30). They did cause some disorder but were apparently quietened by one of the conspirators, Valerius Asiaticus. Chaerea is portrayed as attempting to get the soldiers to guard the safety of the leader of the plot, Vinicianus, but it is not clear to which soldiers he was talking (Jos. _AJ_, 19.153). Meanwhile, Vinicianus was brought before Clemens - indicating that the Praetorians had sought him out and so were actively hunting down the guilty - but was naturally released by his fellow conspirator (Jos. _AJ_, 19.152-6).

The Senate convened. At first it showed some enthusiasm for the cause of the people, who were eager to locate and punish the assassins, but it soon changed its tone and brought charges against the dead Emperor, urging the soldiers and people that must have thronged the Forum to go home. The consul Sentius Saturninus then made a lengthy speech on the evils of tyranny and the virtues of _libertas_, proposing honours for Chaerea. The speech was well received (Jos. _AJ_, 19.158-61, 167-84). The Republic was apparently restored, the watchword given to Chaerea being "Liberty".

However the fate of the Empire was being decided elsewhere than in the Senate. The most celebrated account of the circumstances surrounding the accession of Claudius is that in Suetonius. Claudius, terrified by the violence surrounding Gaius' murder and fearing for his
life, had hidden in the bowels of the Palace. There he was found by a wandering soldier, promptly hailed as *imperator* and carried off to the Praetorian camp (Suet. *Claud.*, 10). Dio corroborates this account in which Claudius' elevation to the purple is virtually an accident and in which he plays a totally passive role (Dio, 60.1.2-3a). Josephus tells the story twice, once in the *AJ* and again the *BJ*. The latter, written first, is more or less in agreement with the former except in one important feature: the role of the Jewish king Herod Agrippa, a close friend of the Julio-Claudian house. In the *AJ* Agrippa plays a vital role, actually persuading the passive and frightened Claudius to accept power and so all but orchestrating his accession; in the *BJ* Agrippa's role is that of intercessor between Senate and Emperor and is far less pronounced. We will examine the details below (pp. 121-4).

The account in the *AJ* is rather confused. While the Senate met and attempted to restore the Republic, the soldiers also convened and discussed the situation, presumably in the *castra praetoria*. They decided that democracy (that is, the Republic) was out and that the Principate must continue. It is not difficult to see why: in a Republic they would have no *raison d'être*, no Emperor to guard. But if the Principate was to continue, who would be Emperor? They decided on Claudius. He was an uncle of the dead princeps and a brother of Germanicus, was studious and would undoubtedly reward them for helping him to acquire the throne. This last reason was probably the most cogent for the soldiers, although Claudius' link with the ruling house would have marked him out clearly in the minds of the troops. His studiousness is not likely to have impressed the soldiers to any great
extent. Claudius was then kidnapped from the palace and hailed as Emperor (Jos. AJ, 19.162-5).

This is one account of the soldiers' actions in the AJ. In it, the men make a firm decision and act on it; Claudius was not accidentally found but was deliberately sought out and acclaimed to satisfy the soldiers' need for an Emperor in the face of a restored Republic. Yet elsewhere Josephus apparently paints an entirely different picture of these events, one that agrees more with the tradition found in Dio and Suetonius. This time Claudius is hiding in fear in the Palace, is found by a soldier called Gratus and carried off to the Praetorian camp (Jos. AJ, 19.212-20). Scramuzza conflates the two accounts: Gratus was one of the soldiers sent to find Claudius in the Palace by those who had made the decision in AJ, 19.162-5. This is a clever argument but is apparently contradicted by the following sections of Josephus in which the men carrying Claudius

... ταύτα πρὸς τε ἄλλους καὶ
dὲ ἐκείνους διεξήγαγαν καὶ τῶν ἀεὶ
προσπήπτουσιν ἄργον

"... expounded their views to one another, pondered them in their own minds and reported them to each group as they came in" (Jos. AJ, 19.226; Loeb trans.)

This is set in a context of general discussion among the troops about the situation, which results in Claudius being elevated as their candidate (Jos. AJ, 19.221-7). In other words, this version apparently reverses the order of events found in the previous account. Now the soldiers act first and make their decision to back Claudius second, that man's support gradually gathering momentum rather than being the
result of a definite decision made by the troops prior to his discovery. How can these two accounts be resolved?

Scramuzza's conflation appears to be the best answer. Josephus obviously draws on two different sources: **AJ**, 19.162-5 is one; **AJ**, 212-20 is the other. There is, however, no reason why the events in **AJ**, 19.212-20 cannot be seen as an elucidation of the last act mentioned in **AJ**, 19.162-5, that is, the kidnapping of Claudius. In other words the main part of **AJ**, 19.162-5 takes place before the events described in **AJ**, 19.212-20. It is Josephus' ineptitude in uniting his source material that causes the confusion. The soldiers decide to act in **AJ**, 19.162-5 and are said to have acted as the passage concludes. Josephus then gets sidetracked into describing events in the Senate, the murder of Gaius' family and Gaius' obituary. When he turns to describing Claudius' discovery in the Palace he uses a different source to that used in **AJ**, 19.162-5, one closer to the popular tradition found in Dio and Suetonius. Hence the confusion. Historically, the soldiers can still be seen as the instigators of Claudius' discovery; it was not a chance occurrence.

We can summarise the soldiers actions thus. They met in the camp and decided that the Principate must continue. Claudius was chosen as their candidate. Men were sent to the Palace to locate him and one, Gratus, succeeded in this, bringing the undoubtedly frightened Claudius out before those soldiers who were in the vicinity of the Palace. These men, having quickly assessed the situation, joined Claudius' support and the whole group headed for the camp.
Meanwhile, the Senate had fallen into confusion. Far from taking the decisive steps the circumstances demanded, the senators took to bickering and faction-squabbling. Some wanted monarchy, others the Republic while others made proposals as to who should be princeps. Into this scene came the news of Claudius' acclamation by the troops. About what happened next Josephus is again confusing (and confused?).

Having outlined the opposition between the people and the Senate—the latter wanting a return to its old position of dominance in the State, the former calling for an Emperor—Josephus describes the Senate's reaction to the news of Claudius' elevation (Jos. AJ, 19.227-8). He gives two accounts. In the first, the Senate sends two tribunes, Veranius and Brocchus, to demand that Claudius relinquish all claims to the Principate and submit to the Senate's authority. However, once in the camp, the two tribunes see the extent and ardour of the claimant's military support and modify their demands: would Claudius not accept power from the Senate rather than from the soldiers alone? (Jos. AJ, 19.229-35). In the second account, Josephus tells how the Senate, perplexed at Claudius' acclamation, summon Herod Agrippa from his house and ask his opinion on the situation. Agrippa points out the Senate's inferior military position and advises that an envoy, himself, be sent to Claudius to demand his submission. The senators agree and Agrippa goes to Claudius and advises him what to do (Jos. AJ, 19.239-45).

What we have here are two traditions about the Senate's reaction to Claudius' acclamation. One is Roman in origin and features the tribuni plebis, the other is Jewish and glorifies the role of Agrippa. Josephus, writing for a Roman audience but wishing to highlight
Agrippa's role, clumsily attempts to bridge the two by providing them with a false chronological relationship: the Senate send their tribune-envoys; Agrippa goes to Claudius of his own volition and, finding him perplexed and on the verge of capitulating to the Senate's demands, urges him to grasp with both hands the opportunity Fate has presented to him; Agrippa then goes home and is at that point summoned by the Senate (Jos. AJ, 19.236-8). This attempt at uniting the two traditions is patently unsuccessful. Why should Claudius be perplexed and on the brink of capitulation when the tribunes had already offered him the Principate, as long as he accepted it from the Senate (Jos. AJ, 19.238, cf. 235)? Why did the Senate ask Agrippa what to do and then accept his suggestion of an envoy to Claudius, if they had already sent an embassy to him in the form of Veranius and Brocchus (Jos. AJ, 19.244-5, cf. 229)? The two traditions are mutually exclusive and unsuccessfully reconciled by Josephus.

The BJ presents us with a different version of the Jewish tradition in which Agrippa's role is still important but not as pronounced as it is in the AJ. Here he is Claudius' ambassador (προσβευτής) and delivers his messages, acting as a mediator between claimant and Senate (Jos. BJ, 2.207-10). Nowhere do we read of Agrippa advising either party on what course of action to take as we do in the AJ. Claudius is firmly in control and uses Agrippa as his spokesman, not relying on his support to make decisions. Likewise with the Senate.

What actually happened? Which tradition is to be preferred? Dio records the Roman tradition, mentioning the sending of tribunes to urge
Claudius to submit to the Senate (Dio, 60.1.4). Elsewhere he refers to the fact that Agrippa helped Claudius secure the throne for himself, but does not supply details (Dio, 60.8.2). Suetonius omits mention of Agrippa altogether, but records that Claudius was summoned to the Curia by tribuni plebis to account for his actions (Suet. Claud., 10). The most likely course of events is as follows, although any reconstruction has to be speculative due to the scrappy nature of the source material. The Senate sent tribunes to demand Claudius' submission. Claudius sent Agrippa, who had made his own way to the castra praetoria, as his envoy to put his case to the patres. Agrippa's role was no greater than that of an emissary. Claudius' arguments which Agrippa delivered to the Senate are found in Josephus, Suetonius and Dio: he was a man of moderate character and would rule accordingly; the Senate had nothing to fear from him; he could not now refuse the soldiers' demands without risking his own safety.

This was the state of affairs as night fell on 24 January, 41. The delicate negotiations between Senate and claimant had not reached a decisive conclusion and the fate of the Empire still hung in the balance. During the night the Senate met in the Temple of Jupiter Victor but found its numbers greatly depleted - many had fled to their estates in the countryside (Jos. AJ, 19.248). Our sources agree on what happened next. The Senate had enjoyed some military support. Josephus in the AJ says they had four cohorts under their command; the BJ fixes the figure at three (Jos. AJ, 19.188, BJ, 2.205). Suetonius states that the Senate, using the cohortes urbani, took control of the Forum and the Palatine (Suet. Claud., 10). This seems entirely reasonable; we have seen how the urban cohorts were technically under
the command of the Senate, and that body would certainly have made use of them to maintain order in the city during the crisis. The Senate's troops would have numbered about 3,000 men, the urban cohorts being three in number (see above, p. 115). The senators may have planned to reinforce this small force with armed newly-liberated slaves (Jos. AJ, 19.242). They may even have attempted to bribe away Claudius' Praetorian support. If so, they failed. However, at this juncture whatever military support the Senate enjoyed defected to Claudius' camp. Their motive for doing so is not clear. Suetonius and Dio do not mention the defection at all. Josephus, in the AJ, indicates that they were not prepared to accept the Republican system of government. This seems unlikely: why did they not desert the Senate earlier, if their objection was to the restored Republic? In the BJ, Josephus claims that they were not prepared to fight their comrades in the Guard. They then left the Senate when it became clear that a confrontation was imminent. This is a possibility, but Roman soldiers in the past, and those of the future, did not and would not show similar scruples when facing civil conflict. A more likely explanation will emerge shortly. Whatever their motives, the Senate's troops now left the Curia and headed for the praetorian camp, ignoring Chaerea's attempts to restrain them (Jos. AJ, 19.254-9).

Claudius was now supreme. The senators, deprived of all military backing, had no choice but to look to their own safety and hurried off to pay their respects to the new princeps. At the camp they received such rough handling at the soldiers' hands that it required Herod Agrippa's intercession on their behalf to ensure their safety (Jos. AJ, 19.259-65, BJ, 2.212-4).
records that it was 5,000 drachmas (c. HS 20,000) for the Praetorians (σωματοφύλακες) with a promise of a similar amount to all soldiers everywhere (Jos. AJ, 19.247). Suetonius fixes the amount at HS 15,000 per man but does not mention any provision for payment to the provincial troops (Suet. Claud., 10). In both sources, the donative is distributed after an oath of allegiance had been taken to Claudius. Dio mentions neither oath nor donative. Tacitus refers to Claudius' distribution of a donative at the outset of his reign when describing a similar move by Nero in 54, but he gives no details (Tac. Ann., 12.69).

The timing of the donative is important. Josephus places it squarely in the evening or night of 24 January, before the soldiers defected from the Senate. If so, here lies our motive for the desertion. Once again the Roman soldier's greed determined the direction of his loyalty. Suetonius says it was given out "on the next day" (postero die), that is 25 January, but as he does not mention the defection of the Senate's military support at all, the importance of the donative in relation to that event cannot be gauged. However, the donative seems the most likely explanation for the sudden abandonment of the Senate by the soldiers who had remained loyal to it throughout the negotiations of the afternoon of 24 January.

Suetonius says the donative made Claudius

... primus Caesarum fidem militis etiam praemio pigneratus

"... the first of the Caesars to claim the loyalty of the troops with a bribe" (Suet. Claud., 10; my trans.)

Scramuzza argues against this, pointing out that Gaius had in fact been the first Emperor to issue a donative to the troops for services
Scramuzza argues against this, pointing out that Gaius had in fact been the first Emperor to issue a donative to the troops for services rendered (see above, p.100) and attempting to place Claudius' donative in a tradition of imperial beneficence to the Empire's soldiers. He also argues that Claudius did not distribute it as a bribe, but rather as a bequest from Gaius' imaginary will, one the dead Emperor had not had time to compose. This, argues Scramuzza, was in keeping with Gaius' actions in paying the bequests of Tiberius' will to the Praetorians even though that will had been declared invalid. This is a brave attempt to explain the donative in honourable terms but it must be rejected. The enormous size of the donative was totally out of proportion for the paying of an imaginary bequest from Gaius' nonexistent will. It would also have been in bad taste: Gaius had been murdered by elements of the Praetorians. This, coupled with the circumstances of the donative's distribution - Claudius' insecure position during those two days - must make Suetonius' conclusions justified. It was a blatant bribe and Claudius was indeed the first Emperor to use donativa in this way, that is, to secure support when his position as princeps had not yet been firmly established. This was a major difference between himself and Gaius, who had issued money only after attaining power.

Having thus ridden to power on the backs of the soldiers and in the face of senatorial opposition, Claudius was formally voted all the powers and titles of office, accepting all but the praenomen imperator and the title "Pater Patriae" (Suet. Claud., 11; Dio, 60.3.2). His indebtedness to the Praetorians was publicly acknowledged on two issues of aurei of 41: one depicts on the reverse Claudius clasping the hand
of a soldier with the legend PRAETOR. RECEPT., the other shows the castra praetoria with the legend IMPER. RECEPT. Both have the bust of Claudius with his titles on the obverse. These were re-issued every year to pay the HS 100 per man donative that was distributed on the anniversary of Claudius' accession.

One of the new Emperor's first acts was to punish the assassins of Gaius. Claudius stood in a difficult position in relation to these men. Without their actions he himself would never have become Emperor, and they certainly had done the State a service. Yet pietas demanded that he avenge the murder of his nephew, while common sense dictated that a princeps could not appear to condone the assassination of a predecessor; that would have acted as an encouragement to any individual disaffected with an Emperor's rule to try his hand. In the event, Claudius compromised: he proclaimed an amnesty for all those who had acted illegally during the two days of confusion, but he had Chaerea and Lupus - the tribune who had killed Gaius' wife and infant daughter - put to death. Chaerea had virtually ensured his own death by insisting that Claudius too should be killed along with his nephew and family (Jos. AJ, 19.258). Sabinus committed suicide (Jos. AJ, 19.273; Dio, 60.3.5).

Let us now summarise all we have seen about the accession of Claudius. In the confusion that followed the murder of Gaius, the Senate attempted to restore the Republic. The fact that the senators quickly fell into dissension and squabbling, and so completely failed effectively to take control of the situation, shows that they were not all involved in or even aware of the plot that had just succeeded. They reacted like men surprised which is precisely what they were. The
conspirators themselves had made no provisions for what should be done once the tyrant was dead. As Balsdon puts it,

"The conspirators of AD 41, like those of 44 BC, cherished the illusion that in some marvellous way the future would look after itself". (78).

And like their exalted predecessors, they found out that this was not the case. The ineptitude of the Senate and the plotters allowed the Praetorians to take matters into their own hands. They met in the camp and resolved that the Republic must not be allowed to survive, that the Principate must continue and that Claudius would be their candidate. The Senate made no attempt to secure the soldiers' loyalties until it was too late. Claudius was sought out, acclaimed and taken to the camp. His connection with the dead Emperor, and the likelihood that he would reward the men who had put him in power made him the soldiers' first choice. For the Praetorians especially, Claudius' kinship with Germanicus was virtually sufficient to mark him out as their choice: they remained loyal to Germanicus' memory even into Nero's reign (Cf. Tac. Ann., 14.7).

There followed a series of delicate negotiations between Senate and claimant in which the Senate tried to force Claudius to submit to its authority, while Claudius attempted to convince the senators of his worth. Sometime towards the end of 24 January or early in the morning of 25th, the soldiers swore an oath of allegiance to their new Emperor and received a huge donative from him: HS 15,000 per man with a promise of a similar sum for the provincial troops. It was probably on hearing this that the Senate's meagre military support - no more than 3,000 men - defected to Claudius' camp, leaving the patres helpless in the
face of the Praetorians' demands. They had no choice but to submit to those demands and vote the necessary powers of office to Claudius.

These events were of huge importance. They reasserted the fact that had been revealed during the last century of the Republic but disguised by the constitutional fabric of the Principate: the Senate was impotent in the face of naked military strength. Once more senators were reduced to ratifying the demands of soldiers. More importantly, the events laid bare the true nature of the Principate itself - a military autocracy. All the constitutional and legal niceties of the Augustan system fell away when the soldiers interfered directly. They showed themselves to be the true basis of the Emperor's power. Technically, as we have seen, it was in the Senate's power to vote the Principate out of existence and reinstate the Republic, but they were thwarted in this by the intercession of the troops in Rome. The troops themselves were not entirely representative of all the soldiers of the Empire - their privileged position and their dependence on the existence of an Emperor to ensure the continuance of that position made them perhaps more ardent supporters of the imperial system than their counterparts in the provinces - and they certainly did not act out of concern for the State's stability. Their motivation was simple and is expressly stated by Josephus as having been the hope of reward from the new Emperor. This they received. The Praetorians also, through long service, held an inherent loyalty to the Julio-Claudian house; they chose Claudius, not one of the other eligible candidates mentioned by Josephus.
Claudius himself had no validated claim to the Principate. He did not even bear the name "Caesar"; he adopted it on his official accession along with the other titles of office, thus initiating that word's long career as an imperial title rather than a family name. He had received no significant signs of imperial favour that we have come to associate with intended successorship during the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius or Gaius, except the holding of a consulship with Gaius in 37. This could even have been a joke on him, Gaius allegedly delighting in the humiliation of his infirm uncle. In the event, he only held it for two months. Beyond that, Claudius was appointed to no military or civil posting of any significance; received no share in any of his predecessors' powers; was adopted by none of his predecessors; was given in marriage to no imperial princess. In other words, Claudius had lived a totally sheltered existence up to 24 January, 41, devoting himself to historical and linguistic research. Dio was indeed correct when he said that he came to power

"...Without having been previously tested at all in any position of authority, except for the fact that he had been consul."

(Dio, 60.2.1; Loeb trans.)

On his accession, Claudius was therefore as inexperienced in imperial administration as Gaius had been but was unlikely to follow that young man's path to infamy and death: he was a mature man of fifty in January, 41, was by nature conservative and moderate, and, although inexperienced in the practicalities of administration, had a sound
knowledge of the methods of his predecessors gained through the study of history.

Despite this, the plain truth was that Claudius was in power solely because the Praetorians had decided that he should be. They had chosen him and then forced him on an unwilling Senate. Thus Claudius' claim to the throne was an unvalidated one and, as such, open to challenge. Many plots were formed against him during his reign (Suet. Claud., 13). The most important, from our point of view, was that of L. Arruntius Furius Camillus Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia.

The plot occurred in 42, and would appear to have been a clear reaction to Claudius' accession. It is sketchily recounted by Dio and Suetonius. Dio provides the fuller of the two accounts. He claims that Annius Vinicianus, the same man who had organised the plot that had proven fatal to Gaius, was also the main mover in this one. Vinicianus, alarmed at the sudden execution of the governor of Spain C. Appius Silanus, formed a plot against the new princeps. Lacking military support, Vinicianus then approached the governor of Dalmatia, Scribonianus, and general support for the plot increased. However, when Scribonianus told the troops under his command—two legions—of his plan to restore the Republic, the men deserted him. He was then forced to flee and finally committed suicide. Vinicianus followed suit (Dio, 60.15.2-4). Suetonius' account is even sketchier. He fails to mention the involvement of Vinicianus but does offer two interesting variations to Dio's account: Scribonianus was to be the new Emperor (novus imperator), and the soldiers abandoned him out of superstitious alarm at bad omens on the day they were to march. He adds that the whole affair was over within five days (Suet. Claud., 13). Tacitus merely
mentions the episode and adds the alternative ending that Scribonianus was murdered by one of his men, Volaginius, who was subsequently promoted by way of reward (Tac. Hist., 1.75, 89; cf. Tac. Ann., 12.52).

This is an important incident. It can be likened to the Gaetulican conspiracy of three years earlier in its methods: an imperial governor attempting to rouse his troops against the ruling princeps. Scribonianus' attempt does show some interesting developments. Vinicianus, a senator, initiated it. He had learned that a plot against an Emperor that lacked military support was virtually doomed from the start. That is why he had needed the help of the Praetorians against Gaius. However, they were unapproachable as allies against Claudius; he was "their" Emperor. Therefore, Vinicianus went to the provincial troops. The fact that they deserted their leader, Scribonianus, shows that their continuing loyalty was to the imperial house in general and to Claudius in particular. The motive of the plot impinges here. Dio states plainly that it aimed at restoring the Republic and that it was on hearing this that the troops deserted. If this is true, the troops' motive in abandoning Scribonianus was less loyalty to the Julio-Claudians and more dissatisfaction with the idea of a restored Republic. However, there are problems here. The tone of the accounts in Dio and Suetonius implies that Scribonianus enjoyed the support of the troops initially and then lost it. In that case, what motive for rebellion did Scribonianus offer the troops in the first place? Did he mislead them with a false motive and then spring the notion of restoring the Republic on them later? This would have been an act of extreme folly. Much more probable is the motive found in Suetonius: Scribonianus was to
be the novus imperator. The governor attempted a usurpation of Claudius, not an abolition of the Principate. Vinicianus himself is not a figure entirely free from suspicion of harbouring imperial ambition (Dio, 60.15.1). If this is correct - as seems likely - then the soldiers did indeed desert Scribonianus in favour of the domus Augusta. Suetonius' story of superstition being the reason is plausible - witness Drusus Caesar's exploitation of the soldiers' superstitions in the suppression of the Pannonian mutiny in 14 (Tac. Ann., 1.28-30) - but why then did the Emperor confer the titles Claudia and Pia Fidelis on the two legions involved, if they had not deserted Scribonianus out of loyalty to himself (Dio, 60.15.4)?

The whole episode, although lost to us in detail, can be sketched in outline. Vinicianus and Scribonianus attempted to usurp Claudius, an Emperor whose method of accession invited challenge, in favour of either of them, probably Scribonianus. They failed because the legions, perhaps initially enthusiastic in their support of their commander, ultimately stayed loyal to Claudius and the Caesars. Presumably they felt that Claudius, already proven generous, was a more secure focus for their loyalty than Scribonianus. Scribonianus and Vinicianus were forced to commit suicide or, perhaps, Scribonianus was assassinated by one of his men. The most important fact this episode revealed was that the soldiers of the provincial armies were being seen as potential weapons in internal political disputes. Fortunately for Claudius and the State, they were not yet prepared to interfere openly in politics.
The present study is not concerned with a detailed consideration of the spirit and various policies of the reign of Claudius. It will however have to form an opinion as to how great was Claudius' subservience, if any, to his advisers and wives. If Claudius was totally dominated by these parties, his decisions concerning the succession were not his own; if he was not, we have to search for reasons as to why he acted as he did in this direction. I believe that the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes.

Our sources are united in portraying Claudius as timid, gullible and entirely manipulated by his freedmen and wives. Scramuzza has challenged this tradition. He may go too far in considering the tradition as competely false, but he certainly blunts its cutting edge. Claudius does appear to have imposed a unifying personality on his administration, the coins of his reign bearing this out. However Claudius, inexperienced in political affairs, did require advice in making important decisions. Due to the nature of his accession, the Senate was not prepared to cooperate with him so he was forced to find advisers elsewhere. Eventually they came from within his familia in the form of the freedmen Narcissus, Pallas, Polybius and Callistus. These made up the so-called "secretariat" on whom Claudius depended for important advice. Even Scramuzza admits this much. Claudius' dependence on advice left the door open to a strong, cunning and manipulative personality that could effectively dominate the Emperor's decision making by means of influence given the guise of sound advice. We will see both these processes in operation presently.
Twenty-two days into his reign Claudius celebrated the birth of his son Britannicus, although not with a public display of exuberance. It is probably this event that lies behind the SPES AUGUSTA coin issues of this period. Claudius himself had been married three times by 41 and had three surviving children: Antonia, Octavia and now Britannicus. The latter was the Emperor's natural choice of successor and Claudius made this plain from the start (Suet. Claud., 27). However he was only an infant. What would happen if Claudius died suddenly? Who would succeed?

Ehrhardt has attempted to answer these questions. Briefly, his theory runs as follows. Claudius' position was a weak one and he faced many opponents and rivals. These came from four main sources. The first was from within the imperial house itself in the form of relatives of Augustus, mostly princesses: Agrippina and Livilla (Gaius' sisters); Julia (daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus); Aemilia Lepida (Augustus' great-granddaughter). The Junii Silanii presented Claudius with three young men, all great-great-grandsons of Augustus: M., D., and L. Silanus. The second source of rivals was from the surviving descendants of the great Republican dynasties, notably Cn. Pompeius Magnus. The third were those who had been proposed as principes in the Senate on 24-5 January: Vinicianus (?), M. Vinicius and Valerius Asiaticus. Finally, there were the strong provincial governors who might be tempted to try their hands: Sulpicius Galba in Germany, Scribonianus in Dalmatia and C. Appius Silanus on Spain. Claudius, argues Ehrhardt, resolved this whole problem by choosing a pair of Regents for Britannicus, one from within the imperial house, another from among the nobles. These were respectively. L. Silanus and Cn.
Pompeius, the former betrothed to Octavia, the latter married to Antonia (Dio, 60.5.7). Thereafter, points out Ehrhardt, their careers were strictly parallel. By doing this, Claudius appeased the two major sources of rivalry to his rule and solved the problem of Britannicus' youth at the same time. Ehrhardt goes on to plot the intervention of Messalina, Claudius' wife, on behalf of her children Octavia and Britannicus which resulted in the removal and deaths of Livilla, Julia and Pompeius.

Our main interest is not in Messalina's alleged activities but in Ehrhardt's proposed Claudian succession scheme outlined above. This appears to be no more than a revival and conflation of the Regency and Dynastic Collegiality theories posited by Seager and Levick respectively to explain the Augustan succession. We had reason, on general grounds, for doubting the validity of these theories as applied to the Augustan era and have no reason now to alter that opinion when they are applied to the Claudian: Regency appears to have been alien to the Romans in principle and practice; the precise mechanics of a "pair" method of succession defy definition (see above, pp. 14-18). Either Pompeius or Silanus were intended to succeed Claudius or they were not; there can be no Regency, no joint accession. The evidence adduced by Ehrhardt is not conclusive in proving that either of the two princes was seen as Claudius' successor. The various honours they received, and the parity in their careers, would have been attendant on their achieving a marital link with imperial house; as imperial princes, they would be expected to move in the highest circles. In fact, they lack the most decisive indications of intended successorship: neither held a consulship or had one designated for him; neither received a share in
the Emperor's powers (although they were perhaps too young for a grant of *tribunicia potestas*, they were not for proconsular power); neither was hailed as *princeps iuventutis*; neither was adopted by Claudius. Ehrhardt, in the face of these omissions, argues that Claudius stopped short of these honours for fear of overshadowing the claims of Britannicus. This means that even Ehrhardt tacitly admits the two were not to succeed Claudius, and as we do not accept the thesis of Regency we cannot see either Pompeius or Silanus in that role. Britannicus was to be Claudius' successor.

However, Pompeius and Silanus did receive two signs of favour that indicate their inclusion in Claudius' dynastic plans in some capacity: a marital link with the *domus Augusta* and the privilege of standing for office five years in advance of the legal age (Dio, 60.5.7-8). The importance of the marital link during Claudius' reign was diminished by the existence of Britannicus, the male heir. Marriage to an imperial princess - especially to an Emperor's daughter - was only a decisive sign of favour when that Emperor was without a son. Such had been the case with Julia under Augustus or Livilla after the death of Drusus in 23. Naturally, when the *princeps* did have a son he was seen as the first choice in the succession. Magisterial privileges were indeed part of the system for marking out possible successors, but they ranked among the lowest rungs on the ladder of elevation to successorship, being one of the first steps in the *cursus honorum* of imperial favours. They cannot be seen as decisive indications of intended successorship by any means. In other words, the honours and privileges conferred on Pompeius and Silanus were not clear indications that they were to succeed Claudius, but were sufficient to show that they were in some
way considered as possible successors. Their roles would then seem to be as insurances against fate, potential successors should anything happen to Britannicus. Pompeius and Silanus can be considered as following in the footsteps of Tiberius and Drusus between 18 and 12 BC or Drusus Caesar, Tiberius' son, between 14 and 19 when those men acted as potential replacements for the current heirs apparent, M. Agrippa and Germanicus respectively. In this way, Claudius followed the Augustan example of maintaining a pool of imperial princes from which his successor could be drawn. In Claudius' case the pool numbered only three: Britannicus, Silanus and Pompeius, and probably in that order of preference (Silanus' descent from Augustus would have made him preferable to Pompeius). As to the plan in the event of Claudius' sudden death, we can say there does not appear to have been one. The Emperor seems to have taken a gamble on his health - as Augustus had done between 6 BC and AD 4 - and determined to supervise the growth to maturity of Britannicus personally. This might not have been as irresponsible as it seems: Suetonius says that the Emperor's health was excellent at this period, a fact that may have induced him to follow that course (Suet. Claud., 31).

The Claudian succession scheme that pertained in the years 41 and 49 appears to have been as follows. Britannicus was to be the next princeps. Claudius risked his health to supervise the infant Britannicus' growth to maturity. Should anything happen to Britannicus, Claudius had two replacements ready who had already received the initial signs of imperial favour and had reached a position from which their further elevation was a straightforward matter. These two, Pompeius and Silanus, were therefore insurances
against fate.

In 48 Messalina, Britannicus' mother, who had been an active guardian of the child's interests, was executed. The circumstances surrounding her death were so bizarre as to prompt Tacitus to assure his readers that what they were reading was not in any way a sensationalised account of the actual events (Tac. Ann., 11.27). In brief, they were as follows. Messalina, ever lustful for new vices, became infatuated with C. Silius, a consul designate and the handsomest man in Rome (Tac. Ann., 11.12, cf. 11.5). When Claudius went to Ostia on a visit, the Empress actually went through a wedding ceremony with Silius, thus becoming a bigamist (Tac. Ann., 11.26-8). Narcissus, one of the Emperor's freedmen was instrumental in organising affairs so that the wayward Empress was quickly executed without trial (Tac. Ann., 11.28-37). Dio and Suetonius corroborate these facts (Dio, 60.31.1-5; Suet. Claud., 26).

What can we make of this? It is tempting indeed to see in these events a conspiracy to overthrow Claudius and replace him with Silius; indications of a political aspect to the anomalous marriage exist. One general consideration is that the marriage of any female member of the imperial house - never mind a ruling Empress - necessarily carried political import. More specifically, we read of Claudius asking whether or not he was still Emperor as he hastened back to Rome from Ostia (Tac. Ann., 11.31; Suet. Claud., 36). Suetonius expressly states that Messalina planned to replace Claudius with Silius as Emperor (Suet. Claud., 36). When Silius was executed, many others died with him, including the praefectus vigilum and some equites, indicating a plot of some sort was in existence (Tac. Ann., 11.35). Finally,
Claudius' reaction in general was consistent with that of an Emperor who had uncovered a plot against him.

Having said that, other considerations indicate that the marriage was not part of a plot to usurp Claudius. It is not listed with other plots mentioned by Suetonius in his section on conspiracies against Claudius (Suet. Claud., 13). This is a telling omission. Moreover, if it was a plot, we would have to accept that it was an extraordinarily inept one. This is curious, given the guile with which Messalina is accredited elsewhere in the sources. No attempt to assassinate Claudius was made by the "plotters". No attempt to secure the support of any troops, except perhaps the vigiles, was made. Even if the vigiles were approached, they were the weakest source of military support available in Rome, and their being approached was another sign of ineptitude on the part of the "conspirators". The marriage itself was conducted openly, and quickly became common knowledge in the Palace and thence in Rome (Tac. Ann., 11.28). Once the ceremony was complete, the celebrants gave themselves to revelry and banqueting (Tac. Ann., 11.31). This is not the sort of behaviour we would expect of people who were trying to overthrow the Emperor. Had they been attempting a usurpation, they would surely have taken more decisive action to consolidate their position than throwing a party. Finally, nobody connected with the marriage, including Silius himself, was accused of treason.

Balsdon considers the whole affair to have been a frivolous game that was used by the freedmen to ensure Messalina's downfall as they feared she would turn on them as she had on Polybius in 47. This is
plausible, but can we accept that Messalina, no matter how libidinous and frivolous a person she was, would not have been aware of the potentially fatal ramifications to herself that even a mock marriage to a consul designate would entail? I do not think we will ever know the precise truth about this episode, but it is worth noting that Claudius' political reaction to the news of the marriage, although perhaps justified, was based entirely on information supplied by Narcissus, Pallas and Callistus (Tac. Ann., 11.29-31, 34-5). It is very possible that the freedmen used the affair for their own ends.

Messalina's death devastated Claudius, for he had loved her dearly (Tac. Ann., 11.38). He vowed never to marry again (Suet. Claud., 26). This attitude soon dissolved. Claudius' behaviour in what followed illustrates his dependence on the advice of the secretariat not, as the sources would portray it, his domination by the freedmen. Aware that the decision on who should be his next wife was not a personal one, - an imperial marriage was an event of public importance - Claudius called in his advisers for their opinions on the matter. Narcissus backed the claims of Aelia Paetina, a former wife of Claudius and the mother of Antonia; Callistus supported Lollia Paulina, a former wife of Gaius; and Pallas proposed a union with Agrippina, Claudius' niece whom he had recalled from exile in 41. Agrippina's case won the day, not the least due to the woman's flirtacious behaviour around her uncle. Having had a senatorial decree passed legalising uncle/niece marriages - they had been previously considered incestuous - Claudius married Agrippina early in 49 (Tac. Ann., 12.6-8).

In Agrippina, Claudius had met the strong personality that would dominate him until his death. Whereas Messalina had been young,
licentious and had channelled her energies into the pursuit of vice, Agrippina was mature (thirty-three in 41), experienced and determined to wield real power. Tacitus himself draws this contrast when he characterised Agrippina's involvement in affairs as an "almost masculine tyranny" (quasi virile servitium) and states that she lusted after dominatio and regnum, words also applied to the ambitions of Sejanus. Agrippina was a woman experienced in the world of imperial dynastic politics. Daughter of Germanicus and the elder Agrippina, whose haughty and ambitious nature had facilitated Sejanus' assault on her house, she had not refrained from involvement in the Gaetulican conspiracy against Gaius in 39 for which she was exiled (see above, pp 103-5). She had married Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, a man of distinguished ancestry but despicable character, by whom she had a son, L. Domitius, on 15 December, 37. Agrippina took this son into her marriage to Claudius and immediately began working on his behalf. Her aim was to secure imperial power for him and thus wield real power herself, as Domitius would be too young to rule without help.

She made her first move even before her marriage to Claudius. L. Silanus, who was still betrothed to Octavia, was charged with incest with his sister and struck off the senatorial register. He committed suicide on the day Claudius married Agrippina. The latter was aided in this by L. Vitellius, then the most powerful man in Claudius' court (Tac. Ann., 12.4, 8). This left Octavia's hand free and it was not long before Domitius' betrothal to her was announced. Domitius' elevation had begun and enjoyed the support of all those who had ruined Messalina and feared the vengeance of Britannicus as a consequence (Tac. Ann., 12.9; Dio, 60.31.8).
The advancement of Domitius now became meteoric in its rapidity. In 50 he was adopted by Claudius. Tacitus paints an interesting picture of the events leading up to this adoption. Pallas, Agrippina's ally from the start, repeatedly pointed out Britannicus' tender years to Claudius and urged him to consider the welfare of the State. He recalled the precedent of Tiberius' adoption of Germanicus, and of Augustus' adoption of Tiberius, to show that Emperors could and did prefer outsiders to their own sons for the good of the State (Augustus' sons were presumably C. and L. Caesar, themselves adopted). Claudius must take a young partner to help him in the administration of the Empire. The princeps, faced with this advice, relented and adopted Domitius (Tac. Ann., 12.25). This shows Agrippina's use of apparently good advice to dominate Claudius effectively. Pallas was undoubtedly used as her medium in this case. His arguments were clever. The appeal to historic precedent was particularly devious, given Claudius' profound respect for history, and must have carried weight with the Emperor. The argument that Claudius needed a partner in power and that Domitius was the one for the job, was not so cogent. Domitius was only three years Britannicus' senior and not much more experienced than Claudius' son in public affairs. The historical argument must have been the more persuasive in Claudius' eyes. There is external evidence for this. In the Lugdunum speech, Claudius devotes considerable space to the succession methods of the ancient kings of Rome, pointing out that they were invariably succeeded by an externus or an alienus, not by one of their male descendants. We cannot place too much weight on this as indicating Claudius' precise attitude to the adoption of Domitius (it was written in 48, anyway), but it does show that the type of argument used by Pallas would have fallen on fertile soil, in that
the princeps was prepared to be swayed by citations of historic precedent. In the case of the succession, Claudius, aware of the activities of the ancient kings in this area, would not have found it difficult to justify the preferment of Domitius over Britannicus. Among the Julio-Claudians, adoption was almost the norm.

On his adoption Domitius became Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus, as the coins show (see below, p. 145). His advancement continued. In 51 he assumed the toga virilis early, had a consulship designated for him for his twentieth year, received proconsular power outside Rome, and was hailed as princeps iuventutis. His preferment above Britannicus was plain for all to see: at games in the circus, Nero paraded in triumphal robes while Britannicus still wore the toga of boyhood. Indeed, the young prince's position was systematically undermined by the removal of his tutors and any Praetorian officers who sympathised with his cause. These included the Prefects Lusius Geta and Rufrius Crispinus, whom Agrippina had replaced with a single Prefect, Afranius Burrus.

By the end of 51, Nero was set to succeed Claudius. That this had been achieved through the machinations of his mother (studii matris, in Tacitus' words, Tac. Ann., 12.9) seems certain, despite Scramuzza's pleas to the contrary. Agrippina's power during the last years was huge, far greater than that of any Empress before her. When Nero was adopted by Claudius, she received the title Augusta, the first living female member of the imperial house ever to do so (Tac. Ann., 12.26; Dio, 60.33.2a). Her power is attested on the coinage. Two issues (of aurei) of 50-1 are important. Both have Claudius with his titles on
the obverse. On the reverse appear respectively Agrippina's bust and the legend AGRIPPINAE AUGUSTAE, and Nero's bust with the legend NERO CLAUD. CAES. DRUSUS GERM. PRINC. IUVENT. By 52-4 Claudius is omitted altogether and Agrippina occupies the obverse, traditionally the Emperor's preserve, Nero the reverse. Nero also got issues all to himself, his bust and titles appearing on the obverse with a legend celebrating his being coopted into the sacred colleges, and his being honoured by the equites on the reverse. By contrast, Britannicus seems to have appeared only on provincial coins, not strictly official, and even then in conjunction with Nero, but these issues could be of Flavian date.

Claudius died suddenly in 54. Rumours abounded as to the cause of his death, the most popular being that Agrippina had arranged it. She is blamed by all our sources. Tacitus says that she was waiting for an opportunity to rid herself of Claudius and finally pounced when Narcissus, the main obstacle to her plan, went to a spa town for health reasons. Contracting the services of a poisoner, Locusta, and a doctor, Xenophon, she poisoned her husband's food. When he nearly revived, Xenophon finished him off with a deadlier dose of a more toxic poison (Tac. Ann., 12.65-7). Suetonius records the poisoning tradition as well (Suet. Claud., 44). Dio agrees with both of these accounts, also naming Locusta (Dio, 60.34.2-3). The sources disagree as to Agrippina's motives. Suetonius and Dio maintain that she acted because Claudius intended to elevate Britannicus as his successor (Suet. Claud., 43; Dio, 60.34.1). Tacitus does not mention Britannicus but says that Agrippina feared that Claudius was about to ruin her as he had made an offhand remark that it was his lot first to love his
wives and then to punish them (Tac. Ann., 12.64). Thus Dio and Suetonius portray Claudius' murder by Agrippina as the final move in her efforts on Nero's behalf and as being prompted by the threatened elevation of Britannicus. In Tacitus, it is almost an act of preemptive self-defence.

Scramuzza doubts the poisoning tradition and believes that Claudius died naturally. However, there can be no doubt that Claudius' death in 54 benefited Agrippina and Nero. The young man was by then Claudius' clear successor and that position could have been jeopardised had the princeps survived longer and become aware of his wife's activities.

Between 49 and 54 Agrippina dominated the question of the succession to Claudius. She removed a potential rival in L. Silanus, undermined Britannicus' position and ensured the elevation of her own son Nero. Claudius participated in this process, probably by being led to believe that he was acting in the State's best interest through arguments presented to him in the guise of advice. When Nero's position was secure, and perhaps when the Emperor began to regret his adoption of his wife's son and started to suspect her activities, Agrippina struck and had him killed. The way was now clear for the accession of Nero Caesar, last of the Julio-Claudian Emperors.
NOTES

1. The main ancient sources for the reign of Gaius are: Dio, 59; Suet. Caligula; Philo, In Flaccum and Legatio ad Gaium; Josephus AJ, 19.1-126 and BJ, 2.204. References are also found in Seneca and Tacitus. J.P.V.D. BALSDON, The Emperor Gaius, (Oxford, 1934) is still the most comprehensive modern account. For Claudius the sources are: Tac. Ann., 11-12; Dio, 60; Suet. Claudius; Jos AJ, 19.127-277 and BJ, 2.204-17. The two main modern works - A. MONIGLIANO, Claudius: The Emperor and his Achievement, (Oxford, 1934; rev. ed., 1961) and V.M. SCRAMUZZA, The Emperor Claudius, (London, 1940) - do not deal with the succession to Claudius in any detail. Coins and inscriptions are useful for both Emperors.


5. The dates are provided by the Fasti Ostiensis, cf. EJ, p. 43 (=SMALLWOOD, no. 31), and make nonsense of Dio's assertion that Gaius rushed Tiberius' funeral and dishonoured his predecessor: cf. Dio, 59.3.7-8.

6. Suet. Calig., 13-14 says Gaius accompanied Tiberius' body to Rome and so would not have arrived until 29 March, the date of the corpse's arrival given in the Fasti Ostiensis. The Acta Fratrum Arvalium record the imperatorial salutation as occurring in the Senate on 18 March. Cf. SMALLWOOD, no. 3.10-11.


8. Tiberius had been named as heir to 2/3 of Augustus' estate in the latter's will. Cf. Tac. Ann., 1.8; Dio, 56.32.1; Suet. Aug., 101.


12. Cf. Suet. Calig., 23 (Gemellus killed because he took an antidote to suspected poison); Dio, 59.8.1 (Gemellus had prayed for Gaius' death); Philo Leg., 23-31 (Gemellus driven to suicide as he was a political threat).


14. Here is a brief resume of the main explanations, ancient and modern. Seneca thought he simply went mad, Sen. Brev., 18.5-6 Hely., 10.4; Tranqu., 14.5; Ben., 7.11.2). Philo is alone among the sources in connecting his degeneration of his behaviour to the illness of 37, Philo Leg., 14, 22. Josephus agrees with Seneca in thinking him insane but also mentions that a love-potion administered by his wife Caesonia drove him mad, Jos. AJ, 19.193. Suetonius offers no simple explanation, once mentioning "brain sickness", Suet. Calig., 51. Dio attributes his faults to a contradictory character that led to a deterioration in his behaviour, Dio, 59.3-4. Tacitus, from surviving references, seems to have thought him impulsive and troubled in mind, Tac. Agr., 13, Ann., 6.20, 13.3. Modern opinions are equally divided. JEROME, op. cit. in note 2, pp. 418-21, blames drink. Medical explanations are also posited. R. KATZ, "The Illness of Caligula" CW 65 (1971-2), 223-5 proposes that the Emperor suffered from hyperthyroidism or thyrotoxicosis. This is rejected by M.G. MORGAN, "Caligula's Illness again" CW 66 (1972-3), 327-9. V. MASSARO and I. MONTGOMERY in Latomus 37 (1978), 894-909 and Latomus 38 (1979), 699-700 posit anxiety and mania as the causes of Gaius' behaviour. BALSDON, passim, rejects any possibility of mania, insanity or even irrational behaviour and portrays the princeps as attempting to autocratise the Roman government by means of logical policies. Given the admittedly biased but overwhelming evidence of the ancient sources, including Tacitus, that something was askew in Gaius' mental condition, it is very difficult to hold to this view.

15. This is amply illustrated by his moving the gold and silver mint from Rome to Lugdunum and coining by his own authority. Lack of concern for the opinion of the populace is demonstrated by his almost total failure to use the coins as vehicles for imperial propaganda, proclaiming the benefits of imperial government. Cf. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., pp. 105-22; SUTHERLAND, RIC, pp. 103-113.


17. On Silanus see Suet. Calig., 23; Dio, 59.8.4; Philo Leg., 62-5; cf. BALSDON pp. 37-8. On Macro and Ennia see Suet. Calig., 26; Dio, 59.10.6; Philo Leg., 32.61; cf. BALSDON, pp. 38-40. Also see below, pp. 102.


20. Dio, 59.22.6-7. On Lepidus' career see PIR A. 371. He was, in fact, a great-grandson of Augustus, see Appendix IV, Table III.


23. Cf. The account in BALSDON, pp. 66-76.

24. For Gaetulicus' career see PIR C.1390.


34. BALSDON, pp. 101-3.


36. Ancient sources for the Praetorians under the Julio-Claudians are disparate and will be referred to in the notes below. The most comprehensive modern account is M. DURRY, Les Cohortes Prétoriennes, (Paris, 1934; repr. 1968) which will be often referred to. Useful information is also found in F. MILLAR, The Emperor in the Roman World, (London, 1977) and J.B. CAMPBELL, The Emperor and the Roman Army, (Oxford, 1984).


38. Tac. Ann., 4.5. Cf. DURRY, pp. 81-9 arguing from Tac. Hist., 2.93 where the establishment of milliary cohorts during the Civil War is apparently exceptional.


40. The camp is examined in detail in DURRY, pp. 45-63; the pre-Sejanian billetings in DURRY, pp. 43-5. Cf EJ, no. 252 for the Ostia inscription. See above, p. 59, for the move into the camp.


42. Cf. DURRY, pp. 274-80; MILLAR, op. cit. in note 36, pp. 61-6. Tac. Ann., 1.13 tells how a senator was almost beaten to death by the Praetorians for tripping up Tiberius.


44. Tac. Ann., 1.7, Dio, 58.18.5 (Senate); Tac. Ann., 13.18, SO, 4, Tac. Ann., 14.15, 16.5 (visits); Suet. Tib., 60 (Capri); Suet. Calig., 19, Dio, 59.17.6 (Baiae); Pliny, NH, 9.15 (Ostia).


46. Suet. Calig., 43, 45 (Rhone); SMALLWOOD, no. 282 (Britain); cf. CAMPBELL, pp. 114-6 (strike force).


48. Most modern accounts of this post are concerned with the developed Prefecture of the second and third centuries (e.g. L.H. HOWE, The Praetorian Prefect from Commodus to Diocletian, (Chicago, 1942)). We will limit our comments to what little we do know of the Julio-Claudian Prefecture. Cf. DURRY, pp. 147-89, 3132-72; MILLAR, op. cit. in note 36, pp. 122-31.

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49. A. PASSERINI, Le Coorti Pretorie, (Rome, 1939), pp. 275-360 provides a list of Prefects from Scapula and After to Lucilius Crispus. See further DURRY, pp. 163-5 and Appendix II.

50. See above, pp. 101, 102-3. Suet. Calig., 56 implies the existence of two Prefects but Josephus, in his long account of the conspiracy against Gaius, mentions only one, Clemens, and fails to refer even in passing to another (Jos. AJ, 19.37-46, 152-6). If Clemens had a partner, we must ask what he was doing while his colleague was taking part in the plot against Gaius.

51. Dio, 52.24.3-5 implies that the Prefects had jurisdiction in Italy from the outset. This is undoubtedly a retrojection of the situation that pertained later in the Empire. Cf. M. HAMMOND, "The Significance of the Speech of Maecenas in Dio, Bk. LII", TAPhA 63 (1932), 88-102, esp. 94.


56. This is most clearly illustrated in the diplomata given out to discharged Praetorians. Although not introduced until the Flavian period, the closeness of the relationship between soldier and Emperor displayed in them must have gone back into the Julio-Claudian person. The Emperor addresses the retiring soldier in the first person, not the third as was the custom in other diplomata, and adds the words fortiter and pie, "bravely" and "loyally", when describing the soldier's service. Cf. DURRY, pp. 189-93; CAMPBELL, pp. 110-11.


61. Cf. DURRY, pp. 16-20.
62. The relative statuses of these three forces is amply illustrated in the dedicatory inscription to C. Gavius Silvanus from Augusta Taurinorum (SMALLWOOD, no. 282). Gavius was successively tribune of the second cohort of vigiles, tribune of the thirteenth urban cohort and finally tribune of the twelfth Praetorian cohort. The cursus of promotion is quite clear. Macro had been praefectus vigilum prior to his promotion to the Praetorian prefecture in 31, cf. SMALLWOOD, no. 254. On Laco’s role in Sejanus fall see above, pp. 78-9.

63. Cf. DURRY, pp. 22-3.

64. For the prefects of later ages, see HOWE, op. cit. in note 48, passim.


67. Claudius’ accession is covered in MOMIGLIANO, op. cit. in note 1, pp. 20-2 and SCRAMUZZA, pp. 51-63. Ancient sources will be cited in the text and notes below.

68. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 56-7.


72. Is this meaning of ἄρηματα ἐλεοῦεν in Jos. AJ, 19.242?


74. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 60-2. Cf. Dio, 59.2.1 (Gaius pays the bequests of Tiberius’ will to the Praetorians).

75. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., p. 126, Pl. XII.1, 2. SUTHERLAND, RIC., pp. 122 no.s 7, 11, 14, 23, 25-6, p. 123 no.s 29, 36.


78. BALSDON, p. 102.


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81. Suet. Claud., 2-9, 41-2; Dio, 60.2.1-7. Cf. the character sketches in MOMIGLIANO pp. 1-19; SCRAMUZZA, pp. 35-50.


84. Dio, 60.15.3, implicitly accepted in EHRHARDT, 62-4.

85. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 5-34.


89. Claudius' wives were: Plautia Urgulanilla who bore him a son, Drusus, and a daughter, Claudia. Claudius did not acknowledge the latter as she was the product of adultery, and Drusus died while still a boy. Next came Aelia Paetina who gave him a daughter, Antonia. Both Plautia and Aelia were divorced, the former for adultery, the latter for "trifling reasons", according to Suetonius. During the reign of Gaius, Claudius married Valeria Messalina who gave him Octavia and Britannicus. All this is found in Suet. Claud., 26-7. Cf. SCRAMUZZA, p. 38. Cf. EHRHARDT, p. 56 for Messalina's eligibility. Cf. Appendix IV, Table III.


91. See the family tree of the Silanii in PIR vol. 4, p. 351. Silanus Torquatus' marriage to Aemilia Lepida, Augustus' great-granddaughter, made all his descendents thereafter also descendents of Augustus, cf. PIR2 I.839. Cf. Appendix IV, Table III.

92. The various offices and privileges and the sources for said are found in EHRHARDT, 59-61.


94. EHRHARDT, 60-1.
95. Unless the rumoured ambush of Claudius en route to Ostia, reported in Suet. Claud., 12, is connected to the Silius affair. If so, Tacitus fails mention it.


97. Tac. Ann., 12.1-3; Suet. Claud., 26; Dio, 60.31.6. Cf. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 90-1. See also Dio, 60.4.4 (Agrippina's recall).


100. Tac. Ann., 12.25; Suet. Claud., 27, Nero, 7; Dio, 60.33.2.

101. Cf. SMALLWOOD, no. 369.8-27.

102. Cf. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 91-2 goes too far in belittling the claims of Britannicus.


104. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 91-2. Cf. SMALLWOOD, no. 102.

105. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., pp. 143-4, Pl. XII, 11, 12; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 126 no.s 75, 80, 82.

106. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., pp. 146, Pl. XII, 15; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 125, no. 75.

107. SUTHERLAND, Coin. Pol., pp. 14; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 125, no.s 76, and 77.

108. SMALLWOOD, no. 105; SUTHERLAND, RIC, p. 130, note.

109. SCRAMUZZA, pp. 92-3.
Claudius was dead. Nero's accession had to be carefully orchestrated so as to ensure a peaceful succession and a total suppression of Britannicus' claims to his father's position. Tacitus' account tells how the public, and more particularly the soldiers, were kept in suspense as to Claudius' precise condition until "the advent of the auspicious moment insisted upon by the astrologers" (Tac. Ann., 12.68). Finally, at noon on 13 October 54, the Palace doors were thrown open and Nero was presented to the cohort on duty. The presence of Burrus made the soldiers' acclamation of the young prince inevitable, and from there he was taken directly to the castra praetoria and hailed as imperator by the whole Roman garrison. Questions concerning the whereabouts of Britannicus, raised by some elements, were ignored. In fact, Claudius' son had been detained in the Palace along with his sisters by Agrippina who, under the guise of mourning, kept them in their rooms and so out of the public eye (Tac. Ann., 12.68). Meanwhile Nero, having received the soldiers' approval, went on to the Senate where he was voted the powers of the Principate. Claudius' will, undoubtedly containing politically embarrassing mention of Britannicus, was ignored and not even read (Tac. Ann., 12.69). Dio and Suetonius agree with Tacitus' account (Dio, 61.31; Suet. Nero, 8). Nero was seventeen years old.

This series of events is significant. The first thing to note is how the lesson of Claudius' accession had been learnt: the approval of
the Praetorians was of paramount importance; that of the Senate, secondary. Nero's conveyance to the camp prior to his arrival at the Curia Julia could not have been a more eloquent statement as to the Senate's position in matters relating to the imperial succession. The Fathers were clearly seen to be no more than ratifiers of a military fait accompli, a position, one could cogently argue, that had always pertained de facto but which now, for the second time in fourteen years, was made perfectly and publicly plain. The second point to note is the central role of the Praetorian Prefect in events, borne of the situation outlined above: if the Praetorian Guard's allegiance was the most important consideration in an accession, it followed that their commander's complicity was essential. In the case of Nero and Burrus there was no problem in this regard as Burrus was one of Agrippina's creatures (cf. Tac. Ann., 13.42). Finally, there was the suppression of Britannicus' claims, despite the existence of some support for him in the ranks of the Guard. Agrippina's earlier attempts to excise this pro-Britannicus element had obviously not been entirely successful (Tac. Ann., 13.41-2, cf.13.69). None the less, at the crucial moment their combined voice was not strong enough to present a major threat to Nero's accession and could be easily ignored. The soldiers' allegiance was, anyhow, particularly fickle. The suppression of Claudius' will was an important step as it saved Nero from the sort of political problem Tiberius' will had presented to Gaius (see above, pp. 98-100). However, it did not remove the belief that Britannicus had been robbed of his "rightful place" in the State. Exactly what the will stipulated for Britannicus we cannot say with any degree of certainty, but that it named him as heir to a considerable portion of Claudius' estate seems probable. He might even have been joint-heir with Nero,
if we believe the reports that Claudius, in his last days, had come to regret the adoption of Nero and was once again turning his attention to his natural son (Dio, 60.34.1; Suet. Claud., 4). Whatever his position in the suppressed will, Britannicus now became a threat to the new regime. Like Agrippa Postumus and Tiberius Gemellus before him, the young prince was viewed with suspicion by the Emperor; he was, after all a "dispossessed" direct descendant of the previous princeps, a possible focal point for conspiracies. It should therefore come as no surprise to us when we read that, in 55, he was openly and shockingly poisoned at a dinner party in the presence of the Emperor. It is interesting to note that Tacitus records that some men at the time justified this act on the basis of the indivisibility of the imperial power (insociabile regnum - Tac. Ann., 13.17).

As with our treatment of previous Emperors it will not be our concern to examine in depth the nature of Nero's reign in all its various aspects. Two events, or series of events, will require our consideration: Nero's ruthless treatment of his rivals, real or imagined; and his fall from power.

The new Emperor's violent suppression of all possible rivals to the throne is to be distinguished from his persecution of the so-called "Stoic opposition", if indeed such existed. His assault on the Senate began in earnest after the discovery of the Pisonian conspiracy in 65, while his distrust of potential rivals was present from the outset of his reign. Even before Britannicus' removal, Agrippina had organised the death of M. Junius Silanus, of the Silanii who were direct descendants of Augustus. Tacitus makes it plain that this deed was
done ignaro Nerone, without Nero's knowledge, and because Silanus was widely regarded as a possible princeps in view of his lineage, maturity, character and Nero's youth and inexperience. He comments that descent from Augustus "was a point to be regarded in those days" (quod tunc spectabatur - Tac. Ann., 13.1, cf Dio, 61.6.4-5). We shall see how pertinent this observation was. Although Nero was not involved in its execution, the murder of Silanus gave a clear example to the young Emperor of how one should treat rivals. He proved his capacity to learn by removing Britannicus the next year. The pattern had been set.

The next victim of Nero's suspicion was none other than Agrippina herself. She had, for a brief period in 54-55, achieved her goal of regnum when the inexperienced Nero had just come to power. However, she gradually lost influence to L. Annaeus Seneca, her son's tutor, and Burrus, the praefectus praetorio, both of whom owed their positions to her machinations. Their reasons for opposing her are not clear in Tacitus. He simply says that they had to face Agrippina's ferocia (Tac. Ann., 13.2). Perhaps they were displeased at such overt power resting in the hands of a woman, as most good Romans would have been. Perhaps they wanted a monopoly of influence over Nero, an aim that could not be achieved while Agrippina was dominant. Their motives will probably never be clear, but whatever they were the two men complied in the undermining of her position.

The year 55 saw a sharp decline in Agrippina's influence. Her strong opposition to Nero's youthful infatuation with a freedwoman, Acte, started the process (Tac. Ann., 13.12-13). Next, Pallas, Agrippina's staunch supporter since his advocating her case to Claudius...
in 49, was dismissed by Nero. Agrippina's reaction was ill-advised: she attempted to establish herself as the protector of Britannicus, even threatening to convey him to the Praetorian camp and referring to Nero as the *insitus adoptivus*, "adopted intruder" (Tac. *Ann.*, 13.14). Such behaviour virtually signed Britannicus' death warrant and the young prince, already in a delicate position, was promptly removed. Nero then withdrew his mother's personal bodyguard, allegedly on discovering that she had been involved in secret meetings with his wife Octavia (Tac. *Ann.*, 13.18). Agrippina had apparently been attempting to establish a faction around the children of Claudius, an obvious threat to Nero. If this was so, it was a reckless move, invited suspicion and perhaps contributed to the Emperor's later near-paranoia about possible rivals. Agrippina's position was now sufficiently weak to allow a charge to be brought against her by her one-time friend turned rival, Junia Silana. This woman was of the Silanus *gens* but not a member of the imperially descended branch. The charge was interesting: Agrippina was accused of trying to encourage Rubellius Plautus to "revolution" (*ad res novas*) with a view to capturing the throne (Tac. *Ann.*, 13.19). Plautus was the son of Julia, Augustus' great-granddaughter through adoption, and so held the same relationship to the great man as Nero, that is great-great-grandson. Nero's reaction to the charge is instructive. He planned to kill Plautus, Agrippina and Burrus, the latter because he owed his position to Agrippina. He also had a letter prepared ordering the mobilisation of the Praetorian cohorts. Burrus quickly cleared himself and Agrippina put up such a spirited defence that the charges were not only dropped but Silana and her helpers exiled, Agrippina's friends promoted and

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Plautus ignored (Tac. Ann., 13.20-2). The conclusion of this episode shows that Agrippina's power was far from being entirely extinguished. By the end of 55 Agrippina's position, although not as strong as it had been at the beginning of the year, had stabilised.

This decline in influence is remarkably well documented in the coins of 54-5. In the first issues, of late 54, the obverse bears the busts of Agrippina and Nero face-to-face with Agrippina's titles surrounding: AGRI PP. AUG. DIVI CLAUD. NERONIS CAES. MATER, "Agrippina Augusta, Wife of the Deified Claudius, Mother of Nero Caesar". Nero's titles occupy the reverse. In 55 the situation had changed. Agrippina and Nero still appear on the obverse but now jugate, with Nero's bust to the fore and the Emperor's titles taking their rightful place around the busts. Agrippina's titles have been relegated to the reverse. By 56 all mention of Agrippina had disappeared, her image is absent.

Between 55 and 59 there was little activity, Agrippina lying low. These were the good years of Nero's reign, the "Golden Age". However, Nero dealt with another rival during this period. L. Faustus Cornelius Sulla Felix, consul in 52, was a descendant of the dictator Sulla, of noble blood and had strong connections with the domus Augusta: he was the brother of Messalina, Claudius' third wife, and had married Antonia, one of Claudius' daughters. He was also an Arval Brother. In 55 Sulla was accused, along with Pallas and Burrus, of having designs on the throne. He was acquitted and the prosecutors punished (Tac. Ann., 13.23). Three years later, however, he was exiled to Massilia for allegedly attempting to set up an ambush for Nero. This was most probably a trumped-up charge, as Tacitus portrays it, the real reason being Nero's "great suspicion" of Sulla (Tac. Ann., 13.47). It
is not difficult to surmise what that suspicion was. As a nobleman with strong connections with the imperial house who had already been accused of revolutionary inclinations, Sulla must have been viewed by Nero as a restless rival. Removal from Rome was a precaution but not a cure; in 62 Sulla was murdered in exile, the Praetorian Prefect Tigellinus rousing Nero to action with suggestions that Sulla would make an attempt on the throne (Tac. Ann., 14.57).

In 59 Nero committed the crime for which posterity would abhor him: he murdered his mother. What prompted him to do so is not clear. Tacitus says he did it to free himself from Octavia and marry Poppaea Sabina, an aristocratic beauty for whom he entertained a passion (Tac. Ann., 14.1; cf. 13.45-6). Dio concurs with this judgement, while Suetonius portrays it as the final act in Nero's self-liberation from his mother's influence (Dio, 61.12.1-2; Suet. Nero, 34). Neither of these explanations will suffice. That Agrippina would have opposed Nero's divorce of Octavia, a union she had organised, in favour of Poppaea seems certain. However, the Emperor did not actually take this step until 62, a full three years after his mother's death. If he had murdered Agrippina to allowed himself to marry Poppaea, we should surely have expected the marriage sooner. There is no reasonable explanation for the delay. Furthermore, when Tacitus goes on to describe the circumstances surrounding the marriage he nowhere mentions the murder of Agrippina as a requisite act (Tac. Ann., 14.59-60). As to Suetonius' assertion, we can only say that by 59 Agrippina's influence had waned markedly and that murder was surely unnecessary, although Warmington would disagree. Of course Nero could have wanted to escape the restraining moral influence of his mother rather
than her political influence, and it is true that his behaviour became more extravagant after her death. However, this cannot be posited as a definite motive; his decline into depravity could easily have been his way of escaping from the enormity of his crime.

Given Agrippina's previous record and her ambitious nature, it is not impossible that she was, in 59, conspiring to remove Nero from the throne in favour of a more amenable candidate. She had already shown that it was not beyond her capabilities to remove an Emperor or, for that matter, to create one. Even if she was not actively plotting, Nero could have believed she was. She had been threatening to back Britannicus' cause in 55 and had, in the same year, been accused of plotting to put Rubellius Plautus on the throne, although nothing had come of this allegation (see above, pp. 159-61). Despite the lack of proof, Nero's suspicions could easily have been fired by these events. Yet another alleged plot involving Agrippina could have been afoot in 59, perhaps that mentioned by Suetonius which he says roused the hopes of one Aulus Plautius to the throne (ad spem imperii impulsus - Suet. Nero, 35). Plautius was a consular, one of the aristocracy and can perhaps be identified with the Plautius who had spearheaded Claudius' invasion of Britain for which he received the honour of an ovatio, the last person outside the imperial house to do so (cf Tac. Ann., 13.32; Suet. Claud., 24). No date is given by Suetonius for this "plot", but it could have been in 59. Tacitus does not mention it when describing this year, so it equally could have happened later. In short, there is no direct evidence that Agrippina was plotting against Nero in 59 but it is possible that she was or that someone led Nero to believe she was. Her past record would have added fuel to the Emperor's
suspicions. Nero himself justified the murder of his mother to the Senate by alleging that she had been conspiring against him but the 13 sources unite in portraying this as patently untrue. Whether it was true or not is not the main point; Nero, it seems, believed it was and acted on it.

Tacitus devotes considerable space to describing the death of Agrippina and how it was contrived. Briefly it runs as follows. Nero, having decided to kill his mother, rejected poison as, in the wake of Britannicus' murder, it was too obvious while plain murder was too difficult to conceal. Anicetus, a freedman and Prefect of the fleet at Misenum, suggested a collapsible boat that would make the deed look like an accident at sea. This plan was adopted, Agrippina lured to the seaside resort of Baiae and the boat used. It failed and Agrippina escaped to a nearby villa. Feigning ignorance of the plot, Agrippina sent a freedman to the Emperor to tell him of her lucky escape from the "accident" and awaited developments. Nero, nervous at not knowing how matters with the boat had turned out, was horrified at the freedman's tale and promptly had him framed by alleging that he had been sent by Agrippina to kill him after dropping a dagger at the unfortunate man's feet. The marines from Misenum were sent to dispatch the Emperor's mother, the Praetorians' loyalty to the imperial house making them untrustworthy for the task. Agrippina was then killed, urging her murderers to strike at her womb, the place that had nurtured Nero (Tac. Ann., 14.3-9). Dio and Suetonius agree with this account, Dio adding that Nero got the collapsible boat idea not from Anicetus but from a show in the arena (Dio, 61.2.1-13; Suet. Nero, 34).
The Emperor was congratulated for this deed by Burrus and those soldiers who were on hand, and then by the Senate (Tac. Ann., 14.10; Dio, 61.15, 1-4). Agrippina was not missed. Nero himself was haunted by the crime and probably never fully regained a clear conscience (Tac. Ann., 14.10; Suet. Nero, 34).

The following year, 60, Nero finally moved on Rubellius Plautus. Worried by omens indicating Plautus' acquisition of power, the Emperor had him exiled to Asia (Tac. Ann., 14.22). There he remained until 62 when, at the same time as Sulla in Massilia, he was put to death, ignoring the exhortations of friends to act in his own defence (Tac. Ann., 14.58-9). Indeed Nero was particularly active in 62. Firstly Burrus died. Although Dio and Suetonius assert that this was the work of Nero, Tacitus remains non-committal; he could have died naturally. The Emperor then appointed Faenius Rufus and C. Ofonius Tigellinus to replace Burrus, returning to the dual prefecture. The latter was a particularly cunning and depraved character who would exercise a considerable influence over Nero in the years to come. Indeed he showed his strength immediately by slandering his partner in the prefecture on a charge of association with Agrippina. He also began working on Nero's suspicions of Sulla and Plautus, who at that stage had not been killed, hinting at their potential for sedition (Tac. Ann., 14.57). After Burrus, Sulla and Plautus, the next to die was Octavia, Nero's wife. The Emperor, deciding to marry Poppaea, perhaps because his marriage to Octavia had proved childless, firstly divorced the unfortunate princess and then exiled her to Campania. Presently she was moved to the less comfortable environment of Pandateria where she received the order to die but, being unable to carry out the command.
herself, was suffocated in a vapour bath. Finally Pallas, Agrippina's longtime supporter, was poisoned at Nero's command. He apparently died for financial, not political, reasons although his closeness to Agrippina would have made him a political threat (Tac. Ann., 14.65).

So it was that in one year Sulla, Plautus, Octavia and Pallas were killed at the Emperor's instigation and he was suspected of poisoning Burrus. What prompted Nero to break out in such a fever of violence directed at those close to him in this year is not clear. The most plausible reason is the divorce of Octavia. She was a popular and inoffensive woman and her divorce would, and did, provoke a popular reaction in her favour. Sulla and Plautus had to be removed to ensure that no malcontents would try to use the divorce as an occasion to initiate plots centering on either of the two, while Octavia herself, once divorced, had to die for the same reason. Burrus' death was perhaps natural and Pallas was killed for his money although a political dimension to his murder should not be ruled out. Thus Octavia's divorce in 62 was the main cause of the widespread killing.

Another factor was undoubtedly Nero's growing distrust of the Senate. Tacitus would portray this break in good relations between the Senate and the Emperor as a clear one, one which occurred in 62. He introduces the year by giving an account of the revival of the *lex maiestatis*, Seneca's loss of benevolent influence subsequent to the death of his co-adviser Burrus, and the rise in status of Tigellinus, a man of questionable character to say the least (Tac. Ann., 14.48,51-7). This is probably a false picture, the roots of distrust actually stretching back into the "Golden Age" of 55-62 and
perhaps even into the very foundations of the Principate itself. Whatever the case, the Emperor's increasingly sharp suspicions of the Senate must have contributed to his decision to remove Sulla, Plautus and Octavia permanently.

When Nero married Poppaea Sabina shortly after Octavia's divorce he faced another threat, for Poppaea brought with her into their union a son by her previous marriage, Rufrius Crispinus. Nero might well ponder that he himself, like Tiberius before him, had been the stepson of an Emperor before attaining the purple. Rumours were current that Livia, Tiberius' mother, and Agrippina, his own mother, had actually poisoned their husbands to make way for their natural sons (see above, pp. 42-3, 145-6). Would the same fate befall Nero? Suetonius tells how the young Crispinus was drowned by his slaves while out fishing because he had played at being a general and Emperor. Nero had given the order (Suet. Nero 35). No date is given by Suetonius, but as it is not mentioned by Tacitus it probably occurred after 66 when Tacitus' text breaks off. Crispinus' father and namesake had earlier been banished in connection with the Pisonian conspiracy, discovered in 65, and was killed in exile the following year (Tac. Ann., 15.71, 16.17). He had once been Prefect of the Guard. Poppaea herself died during her pregnancy in 65, supposedly as a result of a kick, perhaps accidental, received from her husband. No clear political motive can be assigned to her death.

In 64 D. Junius Silanus Torquatus, brother of L. and M. Silanus and a great-great-grandson of Augustus, was accused under the treason law and committed suicide (Tac. Ann., 15.35). The following year L. Junius Silanus, son of the M. Silanus who had been killed at
Agrippina's instigation in 54 (see above, p. 158-9), was accused of the same crime along with his aunt Junia Lepida and her husband, the consular C. Cassius Longinus who was descended from Cassius the Liberator. Silanus was exiled but murdered en route and Cassius sent to Sardinia. Tacitus does not record the fate of Junia Lepida, and the episode is not mentioned in Suetonius or Dio (Tac. Ann., 16.7-9). It is possible that these three noble and well-connected people were in some sort of cabal, although Tacitus portrays the charges as entirely false. With the death of L. Silanus the line of Junii Silanii descended from Augustus came to an end. Finally Antonia, Claudius' surviving daughter and widow of Sulla, was killed for not agreeing to marry Nero after the death of Poppaea. Interestingly, she was firstly charged with revolution (Suet. Nero, 35). This probably occurred in 66.

In this way, between 54 and 65, Nero systematically eliminated, through accusation, banishment and murder, all possible rivals to his position from within the imperial house. There can be no doubt that this was the result of a conscious decision on the Emperor's part as to how to act in regard to these individuals and one that he pursued vigorously. Nero did, after all, have an alternative course open to him: he could have created a "pool" of imperial princes on the Augustan and Claudian model and begun elevating such men as Rubellius Plautus or the Junii Silanii as his possible heirs and successors. That he chose extermination instead shows just how insecure Nero felt on the throne and, perhaps, just how well he had learned to follow the example of his mother who had set the tone of the reign by having M. Silanus killed in 54 (see above, p. 158-9). Possibly Nero, like Gaius before him, felt that the succession was a distant irrelevance to one so young as
himself and need not concern him until he reached a more mature age. Perhaps he had his heart set on having a son succeed him which would have made those he killed threats to such a son's accession. In the event he had no living children by the time he fell from power. Whatever his precise motives, Nero probably reasoned that to start advancing those he obviously saw not as potential successors but as threatening rivals would only fire in them the very ambitions he feared so greatly. As a result he removed them.

Nero's actions in this regard had a disastrous effect on the Julio-Claudian dynasty: by the time of his death it had been stripped of all its male heirs. Nero, in persecuting his rivals from within the dynasty, was, ironically, weakening not only the overall position of the dynasty but was also undermining his own security. As the Julio-Claudian house survived, more and more people became connected to it through marriage, the offspring of which would be descendants of at least one of the previous Emperors. So it was with Rubellius Plautus or the Silanii. Such people could, in the absence of any precise State formulation of a procedure for succession, lay a claim to the throne based on their imperial lineage or on their connections through marriage with the imperial house. Thus, by its very continued existence, the dynasty was weakening its position by producing increasing numbers of potential rivals to its successive Emperors. This process came to a head in Nero's reign when the Julio-Claudian house, after almost a century in power, presented the Emperor with a veritable phalanx of well-born men who could claim some link with the ruling house. A not inconsiderable number of individuals could actually claim direct blood descend from the dynasty's great founder,
To this must be added another process that, in conjunction with the situation just outlined, contributed further to Nero's dynastic discomfort. Each Emperor had, in turn, removed relatives he felt to be a particular threat to his position. Usually, these relatives were close ones. So Augustus had had Agrippa Postumus killed on his death; Tiberius had removed his nephews Drusus and Nero (whether or not he did so at Sejanus' instigation does alter the process); Gaius had killed Tiberius Gemellus; and Nero had commenced his slaughter of his rivals by having Britannicus killed. Add to this the premature natural deaths of Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Germanicus and Drusus Caesar, Tiberius' son, and we can see that events conspired to remove the central figures of the dynasty by the time of Nero's accession. This then left the doors open to the claims of the more peripheral (and more numerous) members of the dynasty, such as Sulla or Rubellius Plautus. For instance, had not the house of Germanicus perished, it would undoubtedly have continued to furnish the *domus Augusta* with popular male heirs to the exclusion of the remoter house of the Silanii. Again, had Britannicus, son of the deified Claudius, lived, it seems doubtful that Rubellius Plautus could have seriously entertained any imperial ambitions, or be suspected of entertaining such. As it was, Nero was faced with an unprecedented number of possible rivals, the heart of the dynasty having been cut out by his predecessors and the dynasty having survived for so long, all the time accruing more and more members through marriage. His reaction, though reprehensible, is at least understandable.
The weakening of the dynasty, especially acute in Nero's reign, naturally helped to undermine the Emperor's own security: the more relatives he kills, the more rivals there are; the more rivals he kills, the less potential successors he has; the less apparent successors he has, the greater the likelihood of other groups taking matters into their own hands. These "other groups" number only two: the nobility and the army commanders.

The nobility, always a source of rivals to any Emperor, made their bid in 65. A large conspiracy was formed which aimed at replacing Nero with C. Calpurnius Piso, an affable senator of noble lineage who had no connection with the imperial house whatsoever (Tac. Ann., 15.48). Tacitus describes the course of the conspiracy at some length, but the details need not concern us. It is, however, worth noting that the conspiracy had the support of numerous senators, equites and elements of the Guard, notably the Prefect Faenius Rufus and various tribunes and centurions (Tac. Ann., 15.49-50). No provincial army commanders were approached, an interesting omission that shows the plotters took as their model the successful conspiracy against Gaius and restricted their actions to Rome. Unlike Gaius' assassins they had made provisions for what was to be done once Nero lay dead. Piso, who would be waiting near the place of assassination, was to be carried forthwith to the castra praetoria, there to be proclaimed Emperor (Tac. Ann., 15.53). Even the senatorial conspirators acknowledged the dominance of the soldiery in matters pertaining to an imperial succession. However, on the eve of the plot's scheduled execution, it was betrayed to the Emperor and, over the following weeks, the conspirators were hunted down and questioned. Many, including Piso,
met their deaths or were exiled. Disgracefully, the plotters gave way to informing on each other in order to save themselves, while Rufus attempted to cover up his complicity by posing as a cruel interrogator (Tac. Ann., 15.54-71). One victim of these days was Seneca who, undoubtedly innocent in his retirement, was accused of conspiring and committed suicide (Tac. Ann., 15.60-4). Finally, Rufus was discovered and arrested, and Nymphidius Sabinus was appointed to replace him (Tac. Ann., 15.66,72). Nero distributed a HS 2,000 per man donative to the Praetorians while many, including Sabinus and Petronius Turpilianus, received honours (Tac. Ann., 15.72). Thanksgivings were offered up by the Senate and People (Tac. Ann., 15.73-4).

The Pisonian conspiracy showed just how greatly disaffected the Senate was with Nero's increasingly unacceptable behaviour. The Emperor had always had a philhellenic streak but this had become more pronounced, if not dominant, throughout the early sixties. In 59 and 60 he had inaugurated the Juvenalia and Neronia respectively, games based on Greek models that promoted acting, music and verse. Men and women of noble birth were encouraged to participate. The ultimate shame came when the Emperor himself mounted the stage to perform with lyre and to take part in theatrical productions. Such Greek "effeminate" behaviour was completely unacceptable to the conservative and militaristic Roman upper classes, regardless of whether or not Nero was actually an accomplished artist. His unpopularity among the masses after the fire of Rome of 64, which he was undoubtedly innocent of starting, must have been a spur to act while the weakened position of the dynasty must have offered some hope of success. Concern over the succession cannot be definitely adduced as a main motive for the plot.
The nobility, undeterred, tried again the following year. The Vinician conspiracy is obscure in the extreme, receiving only scant mention in Suetonius and being entirely absent from the pages of Tacitus — whose *Annals* break off before his description of it — and Dio, whose epitomators omit it. Suetonius merely tells us that it took place at Beneventum in South Italy and it is probably to be identified with the *detecta nefariorum consilia*, "uncovered plans of the sinners", recorded in the Arval Brother's records for 66. Whether the epynomous leader was a Vinicius or a Vinicianus is impossible to say, but Griffin makes a good, if speculative, case for an identification with Annius Vinicianus, son of the man of the same name who had participated in the plots against Gaius and Claudius, and son-in-law of the powerful general Cn. Domitius Corbulo. The setting of the plot is interesting. Beneventum would have been a natural launching point for Nero's proposed tour of Greece, scheduled for 66, so the conspirators planned to kill him outside of Rome en route to Greece. Whether or not any army commanders were involved is impossible to say with certainty, although subsequent developments in Greece may indicate the complicity of some.

These two conspiracies constitute the nobility's main attempts at usurping Nero. They caused him to suspect the Senate more deeply but did not deter him from travelling to Greece in 66-7 for a protracted tour during which he accepted numerous prizes for artistic achievement (Dio, 63.8.2-19.2; Suet. *Nero*, 22-4). While away from Rome he left a freedman, Helius, in charge with full powers to convict, exile and execute in his name (Dio, 63.12.1-2). This must have given Nero a sense of security as his retinue in Greece was made up of freedmen and
politically "safe" individuals; Nero did not follow the example of Claudius who took all possible enemies with him when he left Italy for Britain.

While in Greece, Nero forced the deaths of three army commanders. Two were brothers, the Scribonii, who had been governors of the two Germanies and who the Emperor summoned to Greece and ordered to commit suicide (Dio, 63.17.2-4; cf. Tac. Hist., 4.41). Dio says Nero did this for financial reasons - he wanted their wealth - but he also notes that the two had been in command in Germany "for a long time". It is possible that Nero felt these two to be a threat and may have come to suspect their intentions when he considered the duration of their service in their respective provinces. This was undoubtedly the case with Cn. Domitius Corbulo. Between 55 and 62 this man had had a major command in the East, playing a power game with the Parthian Empire to gain control over the buffer state of Armenia. The successful conclusion of this mission had made the general famous and respected man, a man to be feared by Nero. The fact that Corbulo had been the first man outside the imperial house to hold imperium maius, allowing him to marshal the resources of the Eastern provinces more effectively, added still further to his public standing (Tac. Ann., 15.25). In 66 or 67 Corbulo was summoned by the Emperor to Greece and given the order to die. His last words, "Your due!", implied that he regretted not challenging Nero when he had had the chance (Dio, 63.17.5-6). It is possible that all three men, especially Corbulo, had been implicated in the Vinician conspiracy, hence their deaths. This is speculation but, if true, shows that the leaders of that obscure cabal had learned the lesson of Piso's failure and followed the example of Gaetulicus and
Scribonianus in looking to the provincial armies for military support. Subsequent events would show that this was indeed the right direction in which to look.

Let us now summarise all we have seen about Nero's reign so far. Nero, feeling insecure on the throne, came to suspect three main groups as possible sources of rivals to himself: his family and the dynasty in general; the Senate; and the army commanders. His answer was murder and in the period 55 to 65 he systematically annihilated all potential rivals, real or imagined, from within the imperial house. This had the effect of weakening the dynasty's position in general and Nero's in particular, as he was left with no eligible male heirs to be designated as successors. Given this, the nobility, armed with their own grievances against Nero but spurred on to action by the possibility of success afforded by the Emperor's lack of an heir, tried their hand. In two failed conspiracies - that of Piso in 65 and Vinicianus in 66 - they attempted to oust Nero and replace him with one of their own (although the aim of the Vinician conspiracy is not know, the most likely is usurpation of Nero in favour of one of the plot's leaders). Nero's assaults on the Senate increased as a result of these events and he retired to Greece to escape the air of intrigue at Rome. There he came to suspect some army commanders, possibly implicated in the Vinician conspiracy, and three were driven to suicide. The Emperor's suspicions can thus be seen to have extended beyond his family and the Senate to the provincial commanders.

Such was Nero's treatment of his rivals. However, the single most important event in his reign was his fall, to which the extermination
of the Julio-Claudian princes undoubtedly contributed. Our sources for Nero's fall are sparse. Tacitus' *Annals* break off two years before the momentous events while his *Histories* do not take up the story until 1 January, 69, six months after them. None the less, the latter work contains disparate references to the events of the spring and early summer of 68. Dio exists only in scant epitome at this point. Suetonius departs from his usual thematic format to provide us with a continuous narrative account of Nero's fall, but he concentrates on the Emperor and his demise to the detriment of the provincial developments that forced it. Moreover, the account is full of the dramatic and anecdotal material we have come to expect from him, so it cannot be taken at face value as complete and historically accurate. The early chapters of his life of Galba are useful, as is Plutarch's biography of the same man. Since the complicated events of March-June, 68 are unsatisfactorily treated in our sources, a heated scholarly debate has arisen as to who did what and why. We need not concern ourselves with the details of the various arguments involved as they are largely tangential to our study. The precise mechanics of Nero's fall do not impinge on this study; we are interested only in how this event affected the succession. Only in one particular will we be required to examine some details of the debate.

The main events of Nero's fall are clear from the sources only in outline. In March, 68, C. Julius Vindex, an Aquitanian of senatorial rank and governor of an unarmed Gallic province (probably Lugdunensis), renounced his allegiance to Nero. Shortly after, and possibly before, he revolted. Vindex petitioned Servius Sulpicius Galba, governor of Hispania Tarraconensis and commander of one legion, for
support. Vindex's aim was therefore to replace Nero with Galba. L. Verginius Rufus, governor of Upper Germany and commander of three legions, moved on Vindex and at the battle of Vesontio the Gaul was crushed and committed suicide. The Emperor's reaction to all this is presented as ludicrous in Suetonius, but some signs of clear thinking are discernible. He deposed the consuls and assumed sole control of the office himself, a logical move in such an emergency (Suet. Nero, 43). He recalled the troops he was going to send to the Caspian Gates on a military expedition; raised a legion from the fleet at Misenum; began assembling an army from among the slaves in Rome; and sent a force into North Italy under his generals Petronius Turpilianus and Rubrius Gallus (Suet. Nero, 44; cf. Tac. Hist., 1.6,70). Suetonius' description of his histrionic plans to throw himself at the mercy of the populace and the army accord well with his theatrical nature.

All Nero's preparations were in vain. Verginius declared for Galba and the Praetorians were suborned by their wily and ambitious Prefect, Nymphidius Sabinus. Galba was declared Emperor by the Senate while Nero was labelled a hostis, "public enemy", and orders for his arrest issued. Now totally without support, the erstwhile Emperor fled to a villa outside Rome where, attended by only a handful of freedmen, he committed suicide. Qualis artifex pereo!, "What an artist dies in me!" (Suet. Nero, 47-9; Dio, 63.27.3-29.2).

Such are the facts of Nero's fall as found in our sources. The scholarly debate has, in my opinion, made an interpretation of them unnecessarily difficult. As I see it, the roles of Nero, Vindex and Galba are sufficiently clear-cut so as not to merit controversy. Vindex was the instigator, the standard-bearer of the movement away
from Nero; Galba was the figurehead leader of the revolt; and Nero the beleaguered Emperor. The real problem lies with the role and motives of Verginius Rufus.

The scrappy nature of the sources makes it impossible to be absolutely certain of Verginius' motives so we have to have recourse to common sense. There are five possibilities in this regard, some of which have been posited by scholars, ancient and modern: Verginius was loyal to Nero throughout the events of March-June, 68; Verginius was loyal to Galba throughout; Verginius was loyal to one party and then defected to another; Verginius sought the purple for himself; Verginius was loyal to no party in particular, did not seek power, and acted as he did either out of a concern for the State's welfare or because he was incompetent.

That Verginius was loyal to Nero up to that man's death is most unlikely. Had he been so, he would surely have acted more promptly in putting down Vindex's revolt rather than delaying for some seven weeks before attacking at Vesontio. Furthermore, if Verginius' absolute loyalty to Nero was not in doubt, why did the Emperor feel constrained to levy troops and station them in North Italy? Verginius' German army, aided by the four legions of Lower Germany, would have been, and indeed proved itself to be, more than sufficient to deal with Vindex's makeshift force. Verginius' unswerving loyalty to Galba from the outset has also be questioned. Tacitus explicitly states that the German governor was slow in declaring for Galba (Tac. Hist., 1.8; cf. Plut. Galba, 6.2.4). Also, the new Emperor was quick in depriving Verginius of his command once he came to power, this hardly being the
action of a Galba who felt that Verginius' loyalty to him was concrete. Indeed Galba is said to have feared Verginius and may even have put him on trial. If so, the commander escaped the charge (Plut. Galba, 10.1-3; cf. Tac. Hist., 1.9).

That Verginius was motivated by a desire to capture the throne for himself is flatly denied by all our sources. After the battle of Vesontio he refused an offer of imperial power made by his legions (Dio, 63.25.1-3; Plut. Galba, 6.2). He did so again when Nero's death was announced, this time apparently being given a choice between acceptance of the imperial office and death. Only the timely defection of one of his legions to Galba saved him from making a decision (Plut. Galba, 10.2-3). The legions of Illyricum, some of which had been moved into Italy by Nero, made overtures to Verginius which were again rejected. The timing of these negotiations is not clear (Tac. Ann., 1.9). In April 69, when Otho was dead, the soldiers turned to Verginius and proffered the purple but were again thwarted in their designs by the general's refusal to accept (Tac. Hist., 2.49,51). These incidents clearly show that Verginius was not politically ambitious. In the spring of 68 he commanded the strongest force near Italy and could easily have challenged the claims of the distant Galba with a good chance of success. Why he did not do so is not clear. Dio proposes that he either did not believe it right for soldiers to choose Emperors or he was entirely high-minded and devoid of political ambitions (Dio, 63.25.3). Tacitus says that he claimed his ignoble lineage and insufficient ability debarred him from holding such high responsibility (Tac. Ann., 1.52). Plutarch maintains he was politically conservative and believed in the right of the Senate to
pick Emperors (Plut. Galba, 6.2, 10.2). Whatever his reasons, it is quite clear that Verginius did not seek the imperial power for himself.

That leaves us with two possibilities: Verginius was a turncoat and defected to one party having previously been loyal to another, or he was loyal to no party and acted out of a sincere concern for the welfare of the State or because he was incompetent. The first is almost impossible to prove. All we can say with any degree of certainty is that he eventually declared for Galba. What his allegiance was before this is not clear. It does, however, seem that he was neither a staunch supporter of Nero nor of Galba (see above, pp. 178-9). We are therefore driven to the conclusion that Verginius hesitated and delayed committing his forces out of a desire to remain aloof from the action for as long as possible, preferably until the situation had resolved itself. He initially declared openly for neither party and in the interim refused all offers of the purple for himself. His reasons for doing so are not, and will probably never be, absolutely clear. It may well be that he did not wish to destabilise the situation further by throwing the full weight of the German legions into the fray. If so, his paramount consideration was the State’s stability and he was indeed worthy of his later reputation. Alternatively, he may have been, as some claim, an overcautious and incompetent man who, while fearing personal involvement, could not sufficiently control his troops to prevent them from attacking Vindex’s army without orders. Whichever explanation is correct is not too important, for the result was the same: Verginius remained outside the main current of political events.
Nero's fall can be summarised thus. Vindex, having perhaps sounded out Galba and other provincial governors first, openly revolted and was soon joined by Galba. Verginius, commander of the strongest military force in the area, delayed in responding to the rebellion, a hesitation that must cast serious doubts on his loyalty to Nero. At the same time, he did not openly declare for the rebels. Advancing on Vesontio, perhaps with a view to forging an alliance with Vindex, Verginius actually destroyed the rebel force and sent Galba into despair (Suet. Galba, 11; Plut. Galba, 6.4). It is possible that Vesontio was as Dio and Plutarch portray it - a mistake (Dio, 65.24.1-4; Plut. Galba, 6.3). After the battle, Verginius refused all offers of imperial power and continued to remain aloof, awaiting developments. His legions, led by one Fabius Valens, a legate, declared for Galba and Verginius followed their lead. The other German legions, in Lower Germany, followed suit (Plut. Galba, 10.3; Tac. Hist.,1.53). The motives for Verginius' course of action - or inaction - are unclear but were either a desire not to destabilise the situation further by committing his troops, or the result of an incompetent nature.

The reasons for Nero's fall are multifarious and have been covered in detail recently by M. Griffin. Most are not of interest to our study. For our purposes the most important factor to note is Nero's total failure to indicate anyone as a possible successor. Indeed not only did he leave the question of the succession unaddressed, he actually killed all possible candidates from within the Julio-Claudian dynasty as rivals. This meant that others, especially the nobles and the army commanders - and the two groups were not by any means mutually
exclusive - would have felt a need to resolve the problem of the succession; an Empire needed an Emperor. As it transpired, the army intervened in the most direct and violent manner since the Late Republic. Before looking at the events of the Long Year it will be necessary to pause and examine in more detail the provincial troops and their commanders.

Much has been written about the Roman army's organisation, equipment and tactical deployment that does not concern us in our inquiry. Our interest is with the soldiers' motivation and political outlook (if any) and the factors that shaped it, and with those who commanded them and their political stance.

Firstly, the soldier. The army was broadly divided into two types of soldier, legionary and auxiliary. The latter was a non-citizen and usually of provincial stock who received citizenship on discharge. His political role was negligible so we can quickly pass over him. The legionary was a different creature altogether. A Roman citizen and, throughout our period, usually an Italian, the legionary held a relatively high status in society in general and was regarded as the backbone of the army whose exploits had forged an Empire. He could consider himself part of a highly trained, specialised fighting unit that might be able to trace its history back to a time before the first Emperor, Augustus. It is not therefore surprising if we find the legionary displaying a fierce pride in his unit and its previous achievements. This healthy rivalry between legions took on a more sinister aspect during the struggles of AD 69.
The conditions of service were, on the face of it, harsh. A twenty year commission was the norm but discharge was not always prompt, as the mutineers in Pannonia of AD 14 pointed out to their commanders. Pay was meagre at 225 denarii per annum throughout our period, less various stoppages for equipment, clothing etc. As Julio-Claudian defence strategy required the armies to be on or near the Empire's frontiers, the legionary could find himself posted to some semi-barbaric province with an inhospitable climate facing a menacing foe for the duration of his commission. Despite these apparent setbacks, there were distinct advantages. A legionary at least had a guaranteed income for a definite period and could look forward to generous emoluments on discharge. His income could be further increased by imperial donatives, distributed on special occasions such as an Emperor's accession (this becoming the norm especially after Claudius), death, birthday etc. Gradually anniversaries, the coming of age of imperial princes and special State occasions came to be marked by the distribution of donativa.

In short, the legionary's life was hard but not without its benefits. He would be a skilled soldier, proud of his legion and its history, and perhaps slightly disgruntled when conditions became particularly harsh. He would, like any man, be ready for any enterprise that might bring him personal gain, and this - greed - can be seen as his dominant motive force. Julius Caesar had realised this long before when he had maintained that money and military power were virtually inter-dependent (Dio, 42.49.4). The soldiery, if induced, could be made renounce previous loyalties if the rewards offered by the alternative were sufficiently great. That is why every Emperor set
himself up as, among other things, the guarantor of the troops' security of income. The army was thus virtually a mercenary force in the pay of the Emperor and as such could be attracted away from him by a better offer. This was a constant danger faced and feared by every princeps who took various steps, financial and otherwise, to ensure that it did not happen.

A soldier's loyalties were not secured by money alone. It is clear, from the sheer lack of successful army revolts in our period, that the troops felt a definite attachment to the Julio-Claudian house in general. Marcus Piso, son of the alleged poisoner of Germanicus, could tell his father when, in 19, the latter planned to suborn the loyalty of the Syrian legions that the men had a "deep-seated respect for the Caesars" (penitus infixus in Caesares amor - Tac. Ann., 2.76). This appears to have remained the case even during Nero's last days. Then only two legions - that of Galba in Spain and Macer in Africa - openly revolted while the Rhine army of seven legions was slow to desert its Emperor. The other armies - in the Balkans, the East and Britain - appear to have remained aloof. However, once it became clear that the Julio-Claudians were gone forever and that any army commander could claim the purple once he had sufficient military support, the legions all over the Empire entered into a brutally competitive race to put their commanders on the throne.

The soldier's political outlook was therefore unusual in that he did not have one as such. He remained loyal to the Julio-Claudian dynasty out of a respect for its heritage - stemming as it did from Julius Caesar and Augustus - , affection for certain of its members (especially Germanicus), but mainly because the dynasty represented a
stable and secure source for his income. The soldiery cannot be said to have adhered to any one political doctrine beyond supporting the Principate as an institution, as it was the Principate that guaranteed its continued employment. In this they shared a common outlook with the Praetorians (see above, pp. 114-5). There was, of course, one crucial difference: the provincial troops were far more numerous than the Praetorians. The army of 68-9 numbered about thirty-one legions: the twenty-five listed by Tacitus under the year 23 plus two raised by Gaius or Claudius, three levied by Nero and one by Galba. If we estimate the strength of each legion at between 5,000 and 6,000 men, the total number of legionaries under arms amounts to around 150,000-180,000. A like number of auxiliaries were also in existence. These troops were, as stated above, stationed in frontier provinces, the strongest being: Lower Germany (four legions); Upper Germany (three); Moesia, Pannonia and Illyricum (four between them); Syria (three); Judaea (three suppressing the Jewish revolt); and Egypt (two).

Naturally the men who commanded these forces constituted a political threat to an Emperor. What was stopping them from turning their forces against the government as the military dynasts of the Late Republic had done? This threat was apparently increased by two factors: the governors who commanded the armies were usually senators or equites, classes which could harbour political ambitions; and the growth of the practice, especially under Tiberius, of extending commands for up to six or more years. The longer a man was in command of an army, the greater the danger of his troops' basic loyalty to the Emperor being undermined, and governors were known to use certain methods to achieve this. Despite this, the actual instances
of attempted armed rebellion against an Emperor led by a provincial
commander up to March 68 were only two: Gaetulicus in 39 and
Scribonianus in 42. Both had failed, a point which in itself is
significant. The truth was that rebellion was risky. Failure meant
certain death. The soldiers had to be presented with the prospect of
definite rewards and a good chance of success before they would support
a potential rebel, this chance having to be sufficiently great to
overcome their basic loyalty to the Emperors. Obviously, as the facts
attest, this rarely happened. Moreover, an Emperor usually took
special care in choosing his army commanders and would often put trusty
relatives at the head of particularly strong armies (as was the case
with Tiberius in Germany and Pannonia under Augustus, or Germanicus
in Germany and Armenia under Tiberius). It was usually the case that,
a prince not being available (as under Claudius and Nero), politically
"safe" candidates were chosen above meritorious and competent ones
whose loyalty was unsure. So it was that, by and large, the
commanders of these large bodies of troops did not, in effect,
threaten an Emperor's security, though they had the potential to do so.
The Long Year would see this potential realised.

The most senior officers of the legions were also of senatorial or
equestrian stock, usually younger men doing their military service
which was held as essential for any man aspiring to higher office. These officers were: the legatus legionis, a senator and commander of
the entire legion and the tribuni militares or militum, six in number,
one being a senator (tribunus laticlavius), the other five being
equites (tribuni angusticlavii). Given the social backgrounds of these
men, they also could have political ambitions and could rouse their men
to rebellion if circumstances were propitious. It is noteworthy that it was a tribune who threatened Verginius with death if he would not take the purple after Vesontio, while legionary legates such as Fabius Valens, Caecina Alienus and Antonius Primus were to play not inconsiderable roles in the political and military turmoil of AD 69. The other senior officers, the centurions, were usually men promoted from the ranks and so, broadly speaking, they can be classed with the common soldiers in terms of their political outlook.

In summary, we can say that the army in our period provided, in general, a stable basis for the Emperor's power. The soldiers' inherent loyalty to the Julio-Claudian house, and their dependence on the Emperor's existence and beneficence to ensure continued employment with regular pay, led to a high degree of security for Emperor and Empire. Even the assassination of Gaius and the accession of Claudius were events not seriously challenged by the army at large; the dynasty survived. The commanders of these troops - spread out in the frontier provinces in large military bases such as Vetera or Moguntiacum in Germany - were restricted in their political ambitions by certain basic considerations. If they decided to rebel, would they succeed? If not, they would most certainly die and if they could offer little hope of success to their men, they would not get the military support they needed to challenge the Emperor in the first place. As well as this, the Emperor, who chose army commanders personally, was unlikely to choose a man who was patently ambitious, better to select someone who posed no political threat, or was unlikely to pose one.
Despite this, a definite danger existed. An army commander had to be competent to maintain effectively the Empire's security. Such a man could also consider himself, or be considered by others, *capax imperii*, "capable of ruling" (cf. Tac. Hist., 1.49, 2.77). The troops' loyalty to the Emperor could be distracted by promises of benefits and offers of money. A competent and rich commander could thus be a problem. It is interesting that Galba is accredited with both these qualities, although he did not display exuberant generosity in his distribution of donatives to the men. There was thus maintained a delicate balance between the soldiers' loyalty to the Emperor and their greed, and between an army commander's political ambitions and the Emperor's dominance. The death of Nero and the consequent collapse of the Julio-Claudian dynasty appears to have upset this balance and led to the virtual anarchy of the *longus et unus annus*, "the long and single year" (Tac. Dial., 17).

The main events of AD 69 - the movements of the armies, the campaigns and the major battles - do not concern this inquiry and excellent accounts, ancient and modern, exist for those interested. A brief outline of events will be necessary to enable us to pick out any pattern of succession that operated in this troubled time. We will then inquire into the backgrounds of the four emperors to see what kind of men, common or noble, came to power on the back of the army. Finally, we will look at some individual events in the year that impinge on the succession in general.

Firstly, the events in outline. Galba, in power since June, 68, received word early in January, 69 that the legions of Germany had renounced their allegiance to him and chosen Aulus Vitellius, the
governor of Lower Germany, as their candidate for the purple. The old princeps did not, however, have time to respond seriously to this threat before succumbing to a palace coup organised by one of his courtiers, M. Salvius Otho. Otho had used the disaffection among the Praetorians at Galba's refusal to pay them the donative promised when he was still a rebel to gain control of the troops and now turned them on their former master. The aged Galba, seventy-two years old, was savagely butchered in the Forum on 15 January. Galba's death did not, could not, deter Vitellius in Germany who now opposed Otho instead. His legions marched on Italy and the Othonian forces were overcome at the First Battle of Cremona on 14 April. Otho committed suicide; he had ruled barely three months. No sooner was Vitellius established than he faced a challenge from the East. On 1 July Ti. Julius Alexander, Prefect of Egypt, led his two legions in declaring T. Flavius Vespasianus, commander of the three legions suppressing the Jewish revolt in Judaea, Emperor. Vespasian's troops and the three legions in Syria followed the lead. Soon the armies of the Balkans, many of which had been supporters of Otho's cause and were thus no friends of Vitellius, had also joined the Flavian movement. A prolonged campaign began with the Second Battle of Cremona on 24-5 October which the Flavians won. Fighting continued as the Balkan troops advanced on Rome, the imperial capital itself experiencing the horrors of street combat as the two sides fought it out between themselves and together pillaged the populace. Vitellius was brutally tortured to death on the Capitol - itself ravaged and burnt by the warring factions - and his corpse thrown into the Tiber. He was fifty-seven years old and had ruled for just nine months. Vespasian's
accession, violent though it was, brought stability back to the government. For the next seventeen years the Flavian dynasty was in power.

A clear pattern of succession is therefore discernible for AD 69. An Emperor, having gained control of the State through insurrection, finds himself challenged by another who himself is challenged and so on. The reason why this deadly pattern stopped with Vespasian is not entirely clear. The soldiers were undoubtedly exhausted, perhaps even sickened, by the awful events of that year and wanted peace. Vespasian was one of them, a good soldier who commanded respect and would be acceptable to all the armies of the Empire. He also represented the cause of a dynasty, not a single opportunist: he had two sons of which the eldest, Titus, was considered capax imperii in his own right (Tac. Hist., 2.77). The accession of Vespasian thus heralded the establishment of a new dynasty with all the prospects for security of income for the troops that that entailed. Perhaps also the soldiers' greed had been stated by the loot and bounty won in the civil wars of the Long Year. The reason why the chaos erupted in the first place is equally as unclear. Tacitus and Plutarch would have us believe that the rank-and-file caused and relished the turmoil, revelling in the general indiscipline and the pillage of rich communities. Recently, some scholars have proposed the opposite: the soldiers merely followed the lead of what were effectively faction-fighters; the leaders, not the common soldier, initiated the turmoil. Even if this last contention were entirely true, a definite readiness, even eagerness, among the rank-and-file to embark on a violent course that would bring them rewards has to be admitted. At best, the soldiers and their
commanders can be seen to contribute in their own ways to the general depredation. Galba, Otho and Vespasian can be seen as leaders who manipulated the loyalties of their troops for their own ends. These men are indeed faction-fighters. Vitellius, on the other hand, was clearly offered the purple by the already disgruntled and disloyal German legions (Tac. Hist., 1.51-60). That he was not slow to accept shows an ambition on his part, a readiness to take advantage of the mood of the troops and turn it to his own ends. Verginius Rufus was also offered the purple by his men but, lacking Vitellius' ambition, he refused. Vitellius and Verginius can thus be seen as men who were, in a sense, led by their troops. Whether the movements in favour of the two began among the common legionaries or emerged from the senior officer class - the legati and the tribuni - is impossible to say. Chilver believes that Vitellius was indeed pushed by his average soldiers but cannot be sure in the case of Verginius.

The overall pattern of succession for the Long Year can now be summarised. A combination of the ever-present greed and readiness for action among the rank-and-file, and of political ambition among the senior commanders and governors led to a series of usurpations in this year. Galba had actively distracted the loyalties of his troops away from Nero in order to attain the imperial power. Otho had taken advantage of the disaffection among the Praetorians to stage his coup d'etat and had actively suborned the men's loyalty to their Emperor. Vitellius, on the other hand, had to be offered the candidacy before submitting to his ambition. While Otho and Vitellius fought it out in Italy, Vespasian and his ally, Mucianus, governor of Syria and commander of three legions, watched with interest from the East and
determined to challenge the victor. This they did successfully, having carefully gained the support of their troops in the interim. The stimulus for all this had come in 68 when Nero had committed suicide without indicating a successor. Since he had exterminated all the eligible candidates from within the Julio-Claudian dynasty, that house's control of the State lapsed. This threw the question of the succession wide open and it was Galba's usurpation that set the pattern. The soldiers, not surprisingly, took advantage of the situation to line their own pockets and support their own commanders in the hope of greater rewards should they succeed, and the result was chaos.

We must now ask, who were the four emperors? Were they all members of the nobility? If not, what sort of backgrounds did they have that marked them out as capaces imperii? Servius Sulpicius Galba had an eminent lineage indeed. He could count four consuls among his ancestors and many more who had held various magistracies and positions of responsibility. He thus had an aristocratic background. He had a long and distinguished career behind him before the call to the purple came in 68. He had been consul ordinarius in 33 and had governed Upper Germany, Africa and Spain with exemplary equity and efficiency. He had also received the ornamenta triumphalia for his activities in Africa and Germany and was a member of some of the most prestigious priesthoods. Galba, according to Suetonius, was "in no way" (nullo gradu) related to the Julio-Claudian house, but Plutarch states that he was distantly related to Livia Augusta, describing him as "in some way related to Livia, the wife of Augustus" and "one of Livia's house" (Suet. Galba, 2; Plut. Galba, 3.2, 14.3). Plutarch further
maintains that his consulship of 33 was the result of her influence while Suetonius says that the bequests of her will made him a rich man (Plut. Galba, 3.2; Suet. Galba, 5). Galba certainly honoured Livia during his short reign and may indeed have been related to her but, if so, it was a sufficiently remote connection to exclude him from consideration in the succession schemes of four Emperors. We cannot therefore say with any degree of certainty that Galba enjoyed a formal link with the Julio-Claudian house that commended him to Vindex as the desirable leader of his rebellion and to the world as a future Emperor. His noble lineage, distinguished career, experience, maturity and proven ability combined to make him eminently capax imperii. His brutal death and the simplistic verdict of the sources that he was simply too mean and greedy to be successful were perhaps, in the end, undeserved.

Otho's lineage was less impressive than that of the man he displaced, but he could claim descent from ancient princes of Etruria. His family had only reached senatorial status two generations before when his grandfather had been admitted to the Senate (also, it seems, through the influence of Livia). This is undoubtedly the man who was a triumvir monetalis of 7 BC and coined coppers for Augustus. He went on to attain the praetorship. His son, Otho's father, was consul suffectus for AD 33 and was an active courtier of Claudius' reign, being involved in the suppression of Scribonianus' adherents and uncovering another plot involving an eques. He was also proconsul of Africa and held extraordinaria imperia, "extraordinary military commands" (of an unspecified nature), under the same Emperor. Otho's brother L. Salvius Otho, was consul ordinarius in 52. Otho's family
was therefore one that, while not having a distinguished aristocratic heritage, was ennobled by imperial patronage. In terms of the old nobility, the Salvii Othones were quite definitely novi homines. Otho himself had had an extraordinary, if scandalous, early career. He attained no public position but quickly insinuated himself into Nero's circle of friends, emulating the theatrical inclinations of the extravagant princeps and earning his confidence (Tac. Ann., 13.12; Suet. Otho, 2). He formed one corner of the love triangle made up of himself, Nero and Poppaea Sabina and, because of this situation, fell out of imperial favour. He was sent in honourable exile to Lusitania in Spain as governor of that province where he remained from 58 to 68 and, remarkably, showed considerable responsibility in discharging his duties. Still smarting from the imperial snub his governorship represented, he was the first to join Galba's movement, although he had no troops to offer, and again insinuated himself into the court (Suet. Otho, 4; Plut. Galba, 20.2). It was as a courtier of Galba that he organised his coup. His reign was altogether too short to allow any firm judgement to be passed on his capacity to rule, but the sources unite in their admiration of his noble and courageous death. Otho had no formal link whatsoever with the Julio-Claudians but had he and his family had enjoyed their patronage.

Vitellius' ancestors are obscure and their origins were a source of dispute among the ancients. The first historical figure is Publius Vitellius, the Emperor's grandfather, who was an eques and the steward of Augustus' property. His sons all enjoyed senatorial rank with varying degrees of success: one was a consul sufectus for 32 but died in office; another was expelled from the Senate in a purge of
"undesirables" by Tiberius; a third was arrested for complicity in Sejanus' conspiracy and died in confinement; the fourth, Lucius, the Emperor's father, was the most successful. He was a consummate courtier who flourished under Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius. He held the consulship three times, twice with Claudius as colleague. He held the consulate of Syria, one of the most coveted posts in the imperial administration (Suet. Calig., 14). He was left in charge in Rome in 44 when Claudius went to Britain and later shared the censorship with the same Emperor. He was, as all this indicates, a gifted flatterer and had been the first to worship Gaius as a god. So adept was he at reading the currents of court that he could successfully transfer his allegiance from Messalina to Agrippina without appearing disloyal to either. Aulus Vitellius, the future Emperor, was himself consul ordinarius in 48 - a position undoubtedly secured for him through his father's influence with the Emperor - and stepped down after six months in favour of his brother, Lucius. Following in his father's footsteps, he showed sufficient skills of sycophancy to be an intimate of Gaius and a friend of Claudius and Nero. He was proconsul of Africa for two years under Nero, governing well, and was sent to Lower Germany by Galba as a replacement for Fonteius Capito in December, 68 (Suet. Vit., 5, 7). Galba's reason for choosing him was most likely political: a renowned glutton would hardly pose a threat to his security. He was wrong. The Emperor had obviously not banked on the disaffection of the Rhine legions. Vitellius can therefore be classed along with Otho as a man whose family's humble origins were negated by imperial favour. Again, no official connection with the defunct dynasty existed, but patronage was high.
Vespasian's origins were markedly humble. His grandfather had been a centurion in Pompey's legions, his father a *primipilari*s, "leading centurion", and a *publicus*, "tax gatherer". The paternal side of the future Emperor's family was thus undistinguished to say the least. His mother however was of the senatorial and noble family of the Vespasii Polliones and her brother, Vespasian's uncle, had held Praetorian rank (Suet. *Vesp.*, 1). This was not a particularly noble lineage, but at least there was a senatorial element. Vespasian's brother, Flavius Sabinus, attained senatorial rank through his mother's family, as did Vespasian himself but only after some encouragement from his mother to do so. His militaristic paternal background ensured his entering the army and he was a *tribunus laticlavius* in a legion in Thrace. From there he returned to Rome to hold the praetorship under Gaius. His skills of flattery helped him survive Gaius' unpredictable reign and under Claudius and Nero he flourished. He commanded the II Augusta legion in Britain, conquering the south-west part of England and the Isle of Wight. For this he was awarded the *ornamenta triumphalia*. He was *consul suffectus* in 41. The enmity of Agrippina retarded his progress temporarily but a governorship of Africa was conferred on him in 63. He proved a competent and fair governor. He offended Nero in Greece by falling asleep at one of his performances and was banished from court in punishment. At this low point came the appointment to Judaea and the command of three legions. His innocuous lineage and proven ability must have played a part in helping Nero choose him, but the absence of any other candidate for the post among Nero's retinue in Greece, the urgency of the situation in Palestine and perhaps the influence at Nero's court of two Romanized Jews, Ti. Julius Alexander and M. Julius Agrippa - both of whom were
well disposed towards Vespasian - are factors to be considered. Vespasian took his son Titus with him as a legatus legionis. He married only once, to Flavia Domitilla, and had three children, Titus, Domitian and Domitilla. Both wife and daughter died before he became Emperor. In 69, Titus was in his twenty-ninth year, Domitian in is eighteenth (Suet. Tit., 1, and Dom., 1).

All four Emperors, except Galba, were thus men of relatively humble backgrounds and all, without exception, had enjoyed the patronage of the Julio-Claudian Emperors. This last point is only to be expected as under the Principate imperial favour was the only route to advancement. None, except perhaps Galba, had any formal links with the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Even if Galba was a remote relative of Livia Augusta, the kinship was so distant as to be negligible. There were some common links. All four were senators, even if only recently attaining that status. The Roman world was not yet ready to accept a usurper of equestrian rank or lower. All four also had some experience of administration, even the dissolute Otho had been in Spain for a decade. However, the most important factor that these men had in common was that they had sufficient military support to challenge successfully the position of the ruling Emperor. This showed once again that it was military power that lay at the basis of the Emperor's position. No law, no constitutional procedure, no Senate could effectively defy the army's decision. After the Long Year, the army's approval of the Emperor was the most important consideration in the imperial succession. It could be argued that it had always been so, but the difference was that whereas the military factor had been disguised by the apparent constitutionality of the Julio-Claudians it
came increasingly to be revealed during the second century, the whole process culminating in the blatant military dictatorship of the Severan period and the subsequent anarchy of the third century.

Finally, we will look at two individual events in the Long Year that are of interest to this study. The first is the adoption of L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi Licinianus by Galba on 10 January. Galba had, for some time, been considering the succession to himself. He was very old by Roman standards so the question was indeed a pressing one. Furthermore, he believed that his unpopularity with the soldiers was partly due to his childlessness. He had, due to this condition, decided to designate a successor through adoption, but not on the Julio-Claudian model: the adoptee would not come from within his own family but would be chosen on the basis of merit. This decision naturally began a faction struggle within his court as various parties supported the claims of various candidates. T. Vinius, Galba's consular colleague and longtime supporter, backed the claim of M. Salvius Otho, the future Emperor. Cornelius Laco and Icelus, the Praetorian Prefect and a freedman respectively, supported anyone but Otho, whose emulation of Nero made him in their eyes undesirable as an Emperor. Despite this, Otho, perhaps only in his own mind, was the favourite (Tac. Hist., 1.13; Plut. Galba, 19.2-20.4). Another candidate was Cn. Cornelius Dolabella, a man of noble lineage who had numerous influential friends in Galba's court. However, the Emperor seems to have suspected his intentions: Suetonius reports that Galba disbanded the Germani custodes because they were apparently adhering too closely to Dolabella. Another possible candidate was Titus, Vespasian's son. His father sent him to Rome from Judaea ostensibly to
pay his respects to Galba, which sounds suspiciously like an excuse, but possibly to present himself to the aged Emperor as a potential successor. Galba was killed before Titus reached Rome and the young Flavian hastened back to his father. Galba was delaying over the adoption when news of Vitellius’ revolt in Germany forced the issue. Summoning his comitia, including Vinius and Laco, Galba announced that he would adopt Calpurnius Piso and did so there and then. Piso was a man of outstanding nobilitas, descended on his mother’s side from Pompeius Magnus and on his father’s side from Licinius Crassus, the rich magnate of the Late Republic. He was, in fact, lucky to be alive. His father and two brothers had been put to death under Claudius and Nero, such noble lineage attracting the unwelcome suspicions of those two Emperors (Tac. Hist., 1.48, 4.42). Piso himself had been a friend of Rubellius Plautus, a dangerous acquaintance, and languished in exile for a long period under Nero. In 69 he was thirty-one years old (Tac. Ann., 1.14, 48).

Tacitus records a long speech delivered by Galba on the occasion of the adoption. In it, Galba calls on the Augustan precedent for the adoption of a successor but claims to be improving on it, "Augustus looked for a successor within his own house, I in the whole state" (Tac. Hist., 1.15). This is not entirely true. Galba clearly picked a man from his own class, the old nobility. Piso’s background ensured that he was an unknown quantity, totally untried in any position of responsibility. Galba’s conception of merit was thus not experience in administration, but nobility of lineage. The young man may have had a fine character, but his ancestry was what commended him most strongly to the old aristocrat who adopted him. Indeed Galba’s speech stands in
contrast to that put into the mouth of Mucianus when the latter was urging Vespasian to claim the purple for himself later in the year. The governor of Syria exhorts Vespasian to enter the fray for no other reason than his suitability for the post and his evident competence in commanding people; the Flavian house can claim no other distinction than the nomen triumphalis, a far cry from the eminent lineage enjoyed by Piso. Galba and Mucianus' concepts of merit were poles apart.

Piso's adoption constitutes a new form of imperial succession previously untried or uncontemplated. The Julio-Claudians had used adoption to designate successors but the adoptees had always been relatives. Here Galba chose a man who was in no way related to him or any of his family and who was selected because the Emperor thought him fit to rule. This clearly foreshadows the adoption of Trajan by Nerva in 98 and the Antonine dynasty of the second century. On 10 January, 69 Piso became Ser. Sulpicius Galba Caesar. Otho, disappointed at not being chosen, turned to conspiracy and within six days Galba and his new son lay dead in the Forum. Galba, true to his principles about donatives, had failed even to offer a donative to the troops on Piso's adoption and the increased anger of the men that resulted facilitated Otho's scheme. Piso's one test of ability came too late to be effective when he was sent to address the cohort on duty at the Palace on the day he was to die. The troops, disgruntled and hearing gradually of the events at the camp, did not respond to his pleas for loyalty (Tac. Ann., 1.29-31).

The adoption of Piso was the most concrete move made by any of the four emperors, except Vespasian, to secure the succession to
themselves. As it was, the adoption was performed in an attempt to strengthen Galba's increasingly weak position and occurred too late to prevent the German legions' defection. Indeed that event was what finally spurred Galba on to act, so, it could be argued, the adoption was doomed from the outset. Otho appears to have intended his nephew, Salvius Cocceianus, to succeed him but his reign was far too short and fraught with difficulties to allow any clear indication to emerge (Plut. Otho, 16.2; cf. Tac. Hist., 2.48). Vitellius may have had imperial ambitions for his infant son Germanicus, but again was prevented from making this clear by the uncertainty of his position (Tac. Hist., 2.59). Vespasian, from the outset and then throughout his reign, made his intentions for his sons crystal clear. Coins of 69-70 depict Titus and Domitian with the legends CAESARES VESP. AUG. FILII 105 and TITUS ET DOMITIAN. CAES. PRIN. IUVEN. . During his ten year reign Vespasian, showing none of Augustus' reservations about monopolising the consulship, held that office eight times, on seven occasions being partnered by Titus. Domitian was consul suffectus five 106 times and ordinarius once . Titus also held the tribunicia potestas with his father from 70 onwards as his coins make clear, and was 107 Praetorian Prefect . Vespasian is said to have declared that either his sons would succeed him or no-one would (Suet. Vesp., 25). Titus likewise was determined that Domitian would follow him, although his preference over his younger brother during the reign of their father was clear enough (Suet. Tit., 9, Dom., 2). The Flavians thus intended to establish a dynasty from the outset, and during the reign of Vespasian in particular made this plain.
The second incident worth noting is Vitellius' attempted abdication on 18 December. Suetonius says that the Emperor tried on three occasions to abdicate his position: once on the Palace steps, once on the Rostra and again in the Senate or Comitia. Each attempt occurred on a different day (Suet. Vit., 15). Tacitus provides a fuller account. The Vitellian cause was hopeless, the provinces and even the Italian forces had declared for the Flavians. Vitellius, now only in control of Rome and a narrow strip of land to the north and south, looked to the future and saw only death. Yet the Flavian leaders, especially Flavius Sabinus the praefectus urbi, were promising him his life and a wealthy retirement in Campania should he surrender (Tac. Hist., 3.59-65). Vitellius' followers, when they heard this, objected that it was most unlikely that Vitellius would be allowed live once Vespasian was firmly established in power (Tac. Hist., 3.66). This is probably what Suetonius confusingly describes as the first attempt at abdication. It was, in fact, little more than a discussion within the Vitellian faction. On 18 December Vitellius, dressed in black and accompanied by his family, entered the Forum and formally laid down his powers, offering his dagger to the consul Caecilius Simplex in a symbolic gesture of abdication. Tacitus says it was a sight the people of Rome had "never before seen nor heard of". The consul, however, refused to accept the dagger and the assembled populace, intermingled with the elements of Vitellius' army still in the capital, was so vociferous in its support that the Emperor was forced to retreat back into the Palace (Tac. Hist., 3.68). This event had apparently been arranged by Sabinus and Vitellius at secret meetings held earlier by the two on the Palatine, for when Sabinus, en route to the Forum to take control of the city, was met by an angry mob.
of Vitellians he accused the Emperor of reneging on an earlier agreement to abdicate (Tac. Hist., 3.69-70), cf. 3.65). the result was the siege of the Capitol and the death of Sabinus. Tacitus makes no reference to another attempt at abdication.

This is a curious incident indeed. Did Vitellius make a sincere attempt to abdicate or was he just testing the depth of his support in Rome? Dio would have us believe that he was simply indecisive, wavering between abdication and asserting his sovereignty (Dio, 65.16.2-6). Tacitus and Suetonius would appear to think that the Emperor did indeed try to lay down his powers in a formal ceremony, albeit improvised, and was prevented from doing so by his supporters. Whether he did so in good faith or whether he was cynically playing on his followers' loyalties to test their resolve we will probably never know for sure. It does seem that he did try to abdicate and that this was done by arrangement with the Flavian representative in Rome, Sabinus. The unforeseen support of the people had upset the plan and Sabinus, on his way to the Forum to claim the city for his brother, had met with resistance which resulted in the debacle on the Capitol. Had Vitellius succeeded in abdicating he would have established yet another procedure for imperial succession. As it was, his attempt was almost certainly optimistic, even naive. We have mentioned elsewhere that it is most unlikely that any Emperor would accept the presence in his midst of a retired princeps (see above, pp. 14). Such a man would be a focal point for conspiracies. This much was pointed out to Vitellius by his supporters, but he chose to ignore them and make the attempt anyway (Tac. Hist., 3.66-7). As matters transpired only one Roman Emperor, Diocletian, actually abdicated peacefully and even then he felt
constrained to retire into a fortress-palace to protect himself from his successors. This, however, took place almost two and half centuries later. In 69 Vitellius' abdication, betraying a political naivety on the Emperor's part, was attempted at a time when the Roman world was not ready for it. One wonders if it ever was.

Before drawing our conclusions, two other events are worth noting in passing. The first is the attempted usurpation of Galba by the Praetorian Prefect Nymphidius Sabinus, staged in the early summer of 68 when Galba's position was not secure. The details need not concern us but it is notable that here, for the first time, a Praetorian Prefect attempted to gain control of the Empire for himself by military force. He failed because the soldiers were at that stage satisfied with Galba and looked forward to receiving the promised donative. Sabinus had inherited Sejanus' ambition but not his cunning. The other incident was the passing, sometime between 20 December, 69 and the end of the year, of the lex de imperio Vespasiani, "the law concerning the power of Vespasian". Only the tailend of the text of the law survives but its purpose is quite clear: for the first time the Emperor's precise powers were listed and a precedent cited from the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius or Claudius (Gaius and Nero were persona non grata in senatorial circles) and, as a result, his position in the State was clarified. We need not consider the law in detail but merely note that, on the evidence of subsequent events, it did not address the question of the succession, a State procedure for which was not established until the Tetrarchy, even then unsuccessfully. The law did make the procedure of accession a lot easier, the new Emperor had only to be voted the powers stipulated in the lex in one sitting, (no more
the piecemeal receipt of powers endured by Otho), but no State-sponsored scheme for choosing a successor was established. That was still each individual princeps' preserve. Because of this, the uncertainty and violence that had surrounded the imperial succession in the Julio-Claudian period continued to haunt Roman politics in later ages.
NOTES


4. Arguments for the existence of such a group are summarised in WARMINGTON, pp. 142-54; arguments against are found in GRIFFIN, pp. 171-7.

5. Agrippina had, in 49, secured Seneca's recall from exile in Corsica incurred eight years earlier for alleged adultery with Julia Livilla, Gaius' sister. He then became Nero's tutor (Tac. *Ann.*, 12.8; cf. Dio, 61.10.1). Afranius Burrus had been appointed sole Prefect of the Guard in replacement of Lusius Geta and Rufrius Crispinus in 51, also by means of Agrippina's influence (Tac. *Ann.*, 12.42; cf Appendix III).


7. Cf. WARMINGTON, pp. 34-42; GRIFFIN, pp. 50-66.


16. The reasons for this break are covered in GRIFFIN, pp. 83-99. Griffin would not, however, date the start of bad relations with Senate to 62 but sees instead a gradual process of deterioration stretching back even into the Golden Age.

17. Cf. GRIFFIN, loc. cit. in note 16.

18. See Appendix III.


21. The rivals and their claims are listed in GRIFFIN, pp. 193-6.


25. C.E. MANNING, "Acting and Nero's conception of the Principate", G & R 22 (1975), 164-75 proposes that Nero, through his public appearances on stage, was attempting to establish a Principate founded on popular support rather than on the military. This is unlikely: Nero would have to have been incredibly naive to have thought that such a scheme could work.


32. Suet. Nero, 40, Galba, 8-9; Dio, 63.22.1; Tac. Hist., 1.16 (Vindex had no army).


36. Suet. Nero, 47, Suet. Galba., 11; Dio, 63.27.1a, 2b; Plut. Galba 7.

37. Cf. BRUNT, op. cit. in note 33, passim. The older opinions that Vindex was either a Gallic nationalist or a Republican who wished to overthrow the Principate have been decisively disproved by C.M. KRAAY, "The Coinage of Vindex and Galba, AD 68, and the Continuity of the Augustan Principate", Num. Chron. 9 (1949), 129-49. Kraay makes ample reference to the proponents of the older views. BRUNT, op. cit. in note 33, 543-9, believes Vindex was revolting against Nero's oppressive provincial administration.

38. Cf. GRANT, op. cit. in note 1, p. 242.

39. Cf. L.J. DALY, "Verginius at Vesontio: the Incongruity of the Bellum Neronis", Historia 24 (1975), 75-100, esp. 84-7 argues that Verginius was openly pro-Galban from the outset. D.C.A. SHOTTER, "Tacitus and Verginius Rufus", CQ 17 (1967), 370-81, esp. 370-6 proposes that Verginius was privately disloyal to Nero while apparently, by his actions, retaining his official allegiance.

40. Plut. Galba, 10.2. J.B. HAINSWORTH, "Verginius and Vindex", Historia 11 (1962), 86-96, esp. 93-4 argues that Verginius' conservatism would not allow him accept an Emperor not chosen by the Senate. KRAAY, op. cit. in note 37, 144-6, in an argument that is often overlooked, proposes that he acted out of military considerations alone: Vindex's revolt posed a threat to the security of the Rhine frontier for which Verginius was responsible, so he crushed it. Verginius' alleged incompetence is found in BRUNT, op. cit. in note 33, 539 and G.B. TOWNEND, "The Reputation of Verginius Rufus", Latomus 20 (1961), 337-41, passim.

41. Cf. SHOTTER, op. cit. in note 33, 65-70.

42. Tac. Hist., 1.53 states that the Lower German army of four legions, under the governor Fonteius Capito, helped in the suppression of the Vindican revolt. Verginius' total force would therefore have been seven legions plus auxiliaries. For Nero's distrust of Verginius, see BRUNT, op. cit. in note 33, 540.
43. Verginius himself, not surprisingly, later claimed that this was the case cf. Pliny, Ep., 19.19.5. For Verginius' later reputation see Dio, 63.29.5; Plut. Galba, 10.3; Pliny, Ep., 12.2; and TOWNEND, op. cit. in note 40, passim.

44. Cf. the references in note 40 above.

45. Cf. GRIFFIN, pp. 185-234.


47. On the auxiliary element see WEBSTER, pp. 142-55.


49. WEBSTER, pp. 109-13 lists the legions and gives an approximate date of creation for each one. Of the legions listed, fifteen are pre-Augustan.


55. On donatives see, WATSON, pp. 108-14; CAMBELL, 182-5.

56. Cf. CAMBELL, 181-98.

57. Cf. CAMBELL, passim, esp. 17-156.


59. Tac. Ann., 4.5. Cf. WEBSTER, pp. 113-14. Galba did not recognise the legion raised from the fleet by Nero, so the number of actual legions was thirty. Nero's marines were, however, under arms. Cf. Plut. Galba, 15.3-4.


62. For instance, Lentulus Gaetulicus had been in Germany for nine years before he attempted his revolt in 39, Galba in Spain for eight before attaining the purple, see above, pp. 103-4 (Gaetulicus) and Suet. Galba, 9 (Galba).

63. The most common was relaxing discipline. Piso had done this in Syria in 19 (Tac. Ann., 3.13), Gaetulicus likewise in Germany in 30-39 (Tac. Ann., 6.30; Dio, 59.22.5; Suet. Tib., 41). Vitellius had employed the same method to gain the approval of his troops in December, 68 (Suet. Vit., 8).

64. Cf. CAMPBELL, pp. 421-4.

65. Galba had chosen Vitellius as Capito's replacement in Lower Germany because he was a glutton and would therefore, the Emperor thought, not pose a threat (Suet. Vit., 7). Hordeonius Flaccus, Verginius' replacement in Upper Germany, was old, gout-ridden and lacked authority (Tac. Hist., 1.9, 56).


68. Cf. WEBSTER, pp.118-20.

69. Cf. Plut. Galba, 3.1 (rich); Tac. Hist., 1.49 (competent). His most famous statement in connection with donatives was "I select my men, I do not buy them", cf. Plut. Galba, 18.2; Suet. Galba, 16; Dio, 64.3.3.

70. Cf. the references in note 1 above.

71. For Galba's fall and Otho's conspiracy see Tac. Hist., 1.14-49; Dio, 64.4-6.5(1); Suet. Galba, 16, 19-20 and Suet. Otho, 6-7; Plut. Galba, 19.2-29; WELLESLEY, pp. 15-33.

72. For Otho's fall and the First battle of Cremona see Tac. Hist., 1.50-90; Dio, 64.8-13.1(1); Suet. Otho, 8-12; Plut. Otho, passim, WELLESLEY, pp. 34-89.

73. For Vitellius' reign and Vespasian's rise to power, see Tac. Hist., 2.1-7, 56.101, 3.1-86; Dio 65 passim Suet. Vit., passim and Vesp, 6-7 Jos. BJ., 4.588-656 WELLESLEY, pp. 90-203.

74. Cf. CAMPBELL, p. 192.
75. Plut. Galba, 1-2. Tacitus' *Histories* is liberally spiced with references and accounts of the indiscipline of the soldiery, cf. 1.5, 26, 46, 51, 62-6, 80-5, 2.7, 12-13, 27-9, 37-8, 44, 51, 56, 66, 68, 93-4, 3.10, 19-21, 25-6, 49, 60, 71-4, 4.1. That Tacitus should have such a low opinion of the soldiers' behaviour in 69 is not surprising: his father-in-law's mother was killed by a band of marauding Othonians in North Italy, cf. Tac. Agr., 7.

76. For instance, TALB.ERT, op. cit. in note 58.

77. TALBERT, op. cit. in note 58, 80-1 would appear to deny even this: the men did not demand any changes in conditions of service in 69 nor did they attempt to alter society in general in their favour. I would simply argue that they expected benefits to come from the leader they had installed in Rome and therefore did not need to demand changes, and that the soldiers, devoid of a political awareness *en masse*, were not revolutionaries and were motivated by the more immediate desire for riches and booty.


79. Josephus' account of Vespasian's call to the purple in BJ 4.601-4 is almost certainly Flavian apologetic. The plea that the imperial power was forced on the unwilling claimant by his threatening soldiers was one also used by Otho, a man who had clearly conspired actively to get the troops allegiance, cf. Dio, 64.8.1 (Otho's claim) and Tac. *Hist.*, 1.21-6, 37-8 (Otho suborns the loyalty of the Praetorians). Tacitus makes it plain that Vespasian and Mucianus had been contemplating rebellion as early as February or March when Otho was preparing to face Vitellius' challenge, cf. Tac. *Hist.*, 2.1-7 and J. NICOLS, *Vespasian and the Partes Flavianae*, (Weisbaden, 1978), pp. 57-67.

80. Cf. CHILVER, op. cit. in note 78, 32-3 (Verginius) and 33-4 (Vitellius).


82. Cf. Suet. Galba, 6-9; EJ, p. 43 (consulship).


84. Cf. Tac. *Hist.*, 1.49; Dio, 64.2.1-3; Suet. Galba, 12, 13, 15; Plut. Galba, 16 (Galba mean and greedy). For a more balanced assessment see WELLESLEY, pp. 29-33.


86. For all this see Suet. Otho, 1 and EJ, p. 43 (cos. suff.)
87. Cf. SMALLWOOD, p. 4.


89. Tac. Hist., 2.50; Suet. Otho, 12; Plut. Otho, 18.2; cf. WELLESLEY, pp. 59-60, 89.

90. No Vitellius held any Republican magistracy, cf. BROUGHTON, op. cit. in note 80, II.635. For the dispute see Suet. Vit., 1-2.

91. Cf. EJ, p. 43.

92. Cf. EJ, p. 43 and SMALLWOOD, pp. 2-3 (consulships for 34, 43 and 47).

93. Suet. Vit., 2; cf. Tac. Ann., 11.1-3 (Messalina) and 12.4, 5-6, 42 (Agrippina).

94. Suet. Vit., 3; cf. SMALLWOOD, p.3.


100. Tac. Hist., 2.1; WELLESLEY, pp. 42-6.


102. Cf. PIR C.300 and the genealogical table in CHILVER, op. cit. in note 60, p.74.

103. Compare Tac. Hist., 1.15-16 (Galba's speech) and 2.76-7 (Mucianus' speech). Cf. CHILVER, op. cit. in note 60, pp. 75-9 and 234-7.

104. Cf. Tac. Hist., 1.21-6; Dio, 64.5.2-3; Suet. Galba, 17, Suet. Otho, 5 (Otho's conspiracy). For Galba's death see references in note 71 above.


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108. Tac. Hist., 3.68. K. Wellesley, Cornelius Tacitus, The Histories, Book III, (Sydney, 1972), p. 165 argues that Augustus' surrendering of the powers he had accrued to the Senate in 27 BC and Otho's suicide were abdications of sorts. Naturally, the voluntary and non-violent nature of Vitellius' attempt was what was new.

109. For the events on the Capitol see Tac. Hist., 3.70-4; Dio, 65.17.2-4; Suet. Vit., 15; and T.P. Wiseman, "Flavians on the Capitol", AJAH 3 (1978), 163-78.


111. Plut. Galba, 2, 8-9, 13-14. Cf. Tac. Hist., 5; Suet. Galba, 11; Dio, 64.2.3.

112. For the text see EJ, no. 364 (= McCrum & Woodhead, op. cit. in note 101, no. 1).

113. The Acta Fratrum Arvalium make it clear that Otho received imperium on 16 July but had to wait until the 26 February, before accepting the tribunician power, cf. McCrum & Woodhead, op. cit. in note 101, no. 2.35-9, 82.1
CONCLUSION

The nature of the Principate as an institution made it very difficult to transfer its prerogatives to another. Augustus, the first Emperor, had received his powers piecemeal, each one contributing to an overall position that was supposedly unique to himself. On his death the powers he had held should have reverted to the Senate, the body that had granted them in the first place, and could not, unless that body chose to do so, be conferred on someone else. Even then, no procedure for selecting a successor existed. The realities of Augustus' rise to power - victory in faction and civil war - made the free choice of a successor to Augustus by the Senate a virtual impossibility: such a man could be challenged by another who considered himself *capax imperii* and who had sufficient military support to press his claim. The result of this would have been a return to civil war, the very thing Augustus, in establishing the Principate, was attempting to prevent. Nor could Augustus simply declare someone his open successor. This would have been too obviously autocratic, would have alienated the upper classes and led, perhaps, to assassination and the termination of the Principate. Augustus never forgot the lesson of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar. Due to these restraints, no State procedure for succession was to be found in the laws. Under Augustus, choice of a successor became the Emperor's responsibility, investiture the Senate's. The military basis of the Principate meant that the army's approval of a successor was essential, although this did not become clear until the third generation after the first Emperor. The role of the troops in the succession was something only gradually revealed.
In the face of such a situation, two peaceful methods of succession were employed or attempted: natural dynasty and adoptive dynasty. The basic principle of succession would appear therefore to have been heredity, the dynastic principle being deeply rooted in the Roman mind. Because the Julio-Claudians were always succeeded by someone who was a relative, and despite their extensive use of adoption as a method of designation, they can be termed a natural dynasty. Every Emperor who had a natural son attempted to have him succeed to the imperial power: Tiberius did so for Drusus, Claudius for Britannicus. Later, Vitellius appears to have done so for Germanicus and Vespasian definitely did so (successfully) for Titus. The importance of the blood-inheritance principle should not therefore be played down or denied just because it was so rarely realised in our period; dynastic aspirations for one's sons were entirely natural to Roman aristocrats, Emperors included.

Within this general scheme, certain methods of designation came to be recognised and accepted. If an Emperor had no natural son who might succeed him, he could adopt one. This happened numerous times under the Julio-Claudians: Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Agrippa Postumus and Tiberius were adopted by Augustus; Germanicus by Tiberius; Tiberius Gemellus (briefly) by Gaius; Nero by Claudius, although the latter already had a natural son, Britannicus. Adoption by the Emperor was the clearest sign of intended successorship as it elevated the chosen relative to the position that would have been occupied by the Emperor's son, had such existed. Nero's adoption by Claudius was therefore a clear sign of preferment above the Emperor's natural son in that it inferred some incapacity to rule on Britannicus' part; otherwise why...
should Claudius adopt Nero at all? In fact, there might not have been any incapacity in Britannicus - Nero's adoption was undoubtedly the result of the machinations of Agrippina - but that is how people would have interpreted the move (cf Tac. Ann., 12.9.25). The importance placed by observers on adoption would indicate that heredity was indeed the basic principle of imperial succession. Allied to adoption and direct descent were the various indications of imperial favour that further marked out a man as an Emperor's successor. A cursus honorum of favours soon emerged, beginning with magisterial privileges and ending with a share in the Emperor's special powers, especially tribunicia potestas (cf. Tac. Ann., 3.56). In between came various honours and privileges: priesthoods, magistracies, provincial commands (particularly in Germany or the East) and honorific titles of which the most important was princeps iuventutis. Designated consulships and partnerships with the Emperor in that office were significant under Augustus and Tiberius but appear to have been less so in later reigns. In this way, by a combination of natural kinship, adoption and designation, the Julio-Claudians monopolised the imperial power for almost a century. Rightly could Tacitus, speaking through Galba, comment that "under Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius we [the Romans] were virtually the inheritance of a single family" (sub Tiberio et Gaio et Claudio unius familiae quasi hereditas fuimus - Tac. Hist., 1.16).

The second peaceful method, adoptive dynasty, can be distinguished from the first by a simple qualification: in the adoptive scheme, adopter and adopted have no natural kinship whatsoever. This was attempted only once in our period, when Galba adopted Piso on 10 January, 69. Galba's alarmingly unstable position at the time of the
adoption made it ultimately futile, but it can none the less be seen as clearly presaging the adoptive Antonine dynasty that successfully ruled the Empire for the greater part of the second century.

These two methods of succession were "legal" in the sense that they apparently adhered to the laws of Rome where the succession of son to father was the simplest to effect. Because of this they were generally acceptable to the aristocracy due to their discreet and superficially legal character. There was however a third method, violent and less acceptable, that came to be used: usurpation. The Principate had emerged from civil war and bloodshed, so the threat of usurpation was omni-present. An Emperor had to face the possibility that ambitious army commanders might get ideas above their station and attempt, as Augustus had, to gain control of the State by force of arms. Various steps were taken to minimize the chances of this happening, but at least two governors under the Julio-Claudians — Gaetulicus and Scribonianus — attempted, or were preparing to attempt, just that. In general, the troops were basically loyal to the Caesars, the guarantors of their continued employment and wages, but they could be lured away from this loyalty by promised benefits, money and laxity of discipline. There was another element: the Praetorians. Stationed in Rome, these troops enjoyed a considerably more luxurious lifestyle than their colleagues in the frontier provinces. Their presence at the heart of the Empire ensured a political importance for this force and its commander. At least two Prefects of the Guard — Sejanus and Nymphidius Sabinus — attempted to gain control of the Empire, while others — Macro, Burrus and Tigellinus — enjoyed considerable influence at court.
It was only in the third succession, that of Claudius from Gaius, that usurpation reared its head. The disloyalty on this occasion was limited only to the city of Rome and certain elements of the Guard, but the power of the sword in the imperial succession was clearly revealed: one Emperor lay dead because of it, another was installed by the threat of it. The provincial troops were evidently satisfied with the Praetorians' choice (Claudius was after all the brother of their beloved Germanicus), otherwise AD 41 could well have been the longus et unus annus. It was the collapse of the dynasty after Nero that brought the provincial armies decisively into play.

Nero had inherited a situation not faced by his predecessors. The survival of the dynasty for nearly a century had resulted in there being a large number of people related to it by blood or marriage who, because the central figures of the dynasty had been eliminated by previous Emperors as a means of securing their individual positions, could now entertain, or be suspected of entertaining, imperial ambitions. Nero's response to this was not imaginative: he killed them all. Unfortunately for Nero and the Julio-Claudian dynasty, these rivals were also the very people who could have provided the childless Emperor with a successor. Nero therefore exterminated all possible successors from within the dynasty ensuring that, on his death, the problem of the succession would have to be dealt with by others. These "others" turned out, not surprisingly, to be the army commanders. It could be argued, I believe correctly, that this had always been the case, that every Emperor's position depended on the army; so what was different about AD 69? The difference was that the Julio-Claudian
The result of this was a series of usurpations in AD 69 which saw four Emperors come to power, three of whom lost their lives violently. Claudius, Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian were all military usurpers who gained control of the State by defeating their rivals and opponents in battle or, in the case of Claudius and Otho, by gaining the support of the Guard.

These were the three methods of succession employed or attempted in the period 23 BC - AD 69. They were, in fact, the three that were to predominate throughout the existence of the Principate. The Flavians returned to a natural dynasty, albeit more literally natural than the Julio-Claudian form of it; Nerva's adoption of Trajan in 98 initiated the adoptive dynasty of the Antonines that operated for most of the second century; M. Aurelius' failed attempt to establish a natural dynasty through his son Commodus led to the civil wars of 192-3; the Severans, emerging victorious usurpers from the wars, were a
natural dynasty; and their collapse after Severus Alexander in 235 led to the half-century of anarchy and usurpation one modern scholar has dryly labelled "The Imperial Merry-Go-Round". Vitellius' abdication cannot be seen as an attempt to initiate a new method of succession as it was an expedient move dictated by the circumstances of the time.

The role of the Senate in all this remains to be mentioned. It held the power of investiture in that it alone could actually confer the imperium on an Emperor needed to rule. It may have also come to bestow the tribunicia potestas, although this may just as easily have come from the Comitia. In fact, the Senate and the People held little more power and influence in the imperial succession than that of ratification of a fait accompli. Whether a prospective Emperor stood before them as one indicated by a predecessor or one nominated by the soldiers in Rome or elsewhere made little difference: the senators had to vote him the imperial prerogatives anyway. Should they have refused to do so the consequences would have been catastrophic for them and led to their being overlooked or, perhaps, to civil war. Not once in the imperial period did the Senate refuse to invest a candidate who enjoyed military support with the imperial power, whether he be a Tiberius or an Otho. The powerless position of the Senate is amply illustrated by a pathetic incident reported in Tacitus' Histories. The Fathers had accompanied their Emperor, Otho, as far as Mutina in North Italy when the latter was preparing to face the Vitellian challenge in April, 69. News reached them there that Otho had been defeated and had committed suicide. The senators were naturally inclined to declare for the victorious Vitellius but were prevented from doing so by the intimidating presence in their midst of part of Otho's army who did not
believe the reports and were suspicious of the Senate. On the other hand, should they delay for long in declaring Vitellius Emperor, they risked incurring the wrath of the Vitellian faction who might see them as reluctant to accept their leader as Emperor. The senators' way out of this impasse was to flee and disperse until reconvened by Fabius Valens who guaranteed their safety (Tac. Hist., 2.52-4). This incident shows clearly just how helpless the Senate was in the face of the soldiers' demands, their problem not being whether or not Otho or Vitellius was fit to rule but how best to transfer their allegiance from one to the other without appearing disloyal to either party. Claudius' accession twenty-eight years before had revealed this fact for the first time but the Long Year highlighted it to the point of absurdity.

So it was that the question of the succession was never properly solved by the Julio-Claudians or their immediate successors. Dynasty based on heredity came to be accepted as the general mode of succession but no State formula for the choice of candidates was ever established. The omnipresent threat of military intervention provided an element of violence that emerged from time to time. The succession was thus a source of uncertainty, conspiracy and violence as various candidates and their supporters, even in peace, vied with one another to secure the imperial power. The collapse of the Julio-Claudian dynasty after Nero led to the chaotic civil wars of the Long Year which showed once and for all that, despite the constitutional niceties of the Augustan system, the Principate was after all a military autocracy whose ultimate source of power lay with the approval of the soldiers.
NOTES


2. For Nero's adoption and preferment above Britannicus, see above, pp. 142-4.

3. Gaius and Lucius Caesar were consules designati under Augustus but under later Emperors we hear of men who are not intended successors enjoying this position, such as C. Silius, Messalina's fatal lover (cf. Tac. Ann., 11.27. Cf. Tac. Ann., 13.28, 14.48, 15.49, Tac. Hist., 1.14 for others). Partnership with the Emperor appears to have been significant only under Tiberius who held the magistracy three times in his reign, on each occasion with the heir apparent (Germanicus in 18, Drusus in 21 and Sejanus in 31). Other Emperors' consular colleagues were not necessarily intended successors, cf. EJ, pp. 41-4; SMALLWOOD, pp. 1-8).


APPENDIX I

1

THE SOURCES

The sources for the Julio-Claudian succession are threefold: literary, epigraphic and numismatic. Due to the essentially political nature of the succession, the other traditional source for ancient history, archaeology, plays no role in the evidence beyond being the medium through which coins and inscriptions can come to light.

Firstly, the literary sources. There are three main authors whose works form the backbone of the history of the Julio-Claudian period: Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio. Cornelius Tacitus was a senator living in the late first, early second century AD. He was consul for the year 97 and was the son-in-law of the conqueror of North Britain, Julius Agricola. Beyond these facts we know little of his life. He wrote two major historical works which, between them, cover most of our period and survive extant. The Histories, written in the early second century, covers the Long Year up to and including Vespasian's accession but in its original form took the story up to the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96). The Annals, written shortly after the Histories, covered the Julio-Claudian Emperors from Tiberius to Nero. This work is more or less complete but there are lamentable lacunae that occur at crucial moments in the history of the dynasty. Tacitus' lesser works, written before either the Histories or the Annals, can also contain useful references. They are: the Agricola, a biography of the author's father-in-law; the Germania, an idealistic ethnography of the fierce German tribes; and the Dialogus de Oratoribus, a discussion about the decline of oratorical ability under the Principate. Although quite far
removed in time from the events he describes, Tacitus did have access to official documents, imperial memoirs and earlier historians whose works are lost to us. For Nero's later reign and the Long Year, the historian could have personally interviewed old men who remembered the times he describes.

Gifted with a high intelligence and a perceptive nature, Tacitus is generally respected today as a reliable source. Yet despite this, and his claim to recount the history of the Julio-Claudian Emperors "without anger and without partiality" (sine ira et studio), Tacitus is possessed of a certain bias. As a senator and a historian, Tacitus is wont to look back on the days of the Republic, when the class to which he belonged dominated politics, as something of a Golden Age. He resents the Principate which deprived the senators of their libertas, (their right to choose magistrates freely, form political alliances and determine policy) and replaced it with obsequium (obedience to the Emperor). Tacitus himself must have been an adept at obsequium as he survived the turbulent days of Domitian's rule to hold the consulship for 97. None the less, Tacitus' works are littered with references to the Senate's servility in the face of the Emperor's power. He does seem, however, to have acknowledged that a return to the Republican system of government would only lead to civil war and instability (Tac. Hist., 4.8). He therefore accepted the necessity of the Principate while deploring the adverse affect that institution had on the Senate's position and dignity.

Suetonius Tranquillus was a contemporary of Tacitus about whose life we know a little more. His family, who may have originated in Africa, enjoyed connections with the imperial house as early as Gaius'
reign, although the nature of those connections cannot be determined precisely. (cf. Suet. Calig., 19). Suetonius himself spent some time in Rome during Domitian’s reign and prospered under Trajan and Hadrian, holding the secretarial posts of a studiis, a bibliothecys and ab epistulis. He was an eques. He probably knew Tacitus — the two shared a friend in Pliny the Younger. Suetonius’ most famous work, and the one that comes down to us almost complete, is his Lives of the Twelve Caesars, covering Julius Caesar to Domitian. Each is a biography of the subject and was not intended to be a complete history of the ruler and his times, nor can it be read as such. It is a racy, amusing work but difficult to use as an historical source. Suetonius deals with the Caesars under rubrics (marriages, faults, appearance, good deeds, bad deeds etc.) which leads to a compartmentalisation of information. As he is not at pains to give precise contexts for his numerous anecdotes concerning each ruler, interpretation, even assignation at times, can be difficult. Despite this, Suetonius’ historical evidence should not be shunned or ignored; he can be useful in corroborating the assertions of other authors or when other accounts are entirely lacking, partially filling in the gaps.

Cassius Dio was a Bithynian Greek of senatorial rank who lived under the Severan dynasty of the late second, early third century AD. He was consul in 229 and held various governorships, including Africa, Dalmatia and Pannonia Superior. He wrote a vast History of Rome in eighty books, the task taking him thirty years to complete. Of this work much survives intact, more in the form of epitomes compiled by later Byzantine scholars such as Johannes Xiphilinus and Zonaras. For
our period, the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius and half of Claudius' survive more or less complete with some lacunae partially filled by epitome. The rest—the second half of Claudius' reign, the whole of Nero's and the events of the Long Year—exist only in epitome. As a historian Dio is useful but his distance in time from the events of the Julio-Claudian period make him prone to inaccuracies, particularly in matters constitutional. His main concern is with narrative and his analyses tend to be moralistic. Other authors whose works are useful in part are Seneca, Nero's tutor; Philo, an Alexandrian Jew who met Gaius; Pliny the Elder, an encyclopedist; Josephus, a Jewish historian of the Flavian era; and Plutarch, essayist and biographer of late first and early second century.

It is immediately noteworthy that all our sources derive from the governing classes of the ancient world—senators, equites and provincial magnates—thus giving us a rather blinkered view of events. In the case of the succession this is not a major problem. The people best in a position to describe the events surrounding the succession were the upper classes; choice, designation and investiture of a new Emperor were matters of high imperial politics, and senators the best qualified individuals to comment upon them. Each of our main literary sources had a different attitude to the succession that should be borne in mind when assessing their respective statements concerning it. Tacitus did not approve of the succession as it was, in strict senatorial terms, both illegal and unconstitutional for a magistrate to bequeath his office to another when he died, or to make arrangements therefore. The domestic sections of the *Annals* are chiefly concerned with the violence and intrigue generated by the succession question and
the reader is left with a bad impression of a dynasty afflicted with suspicion, conspiracy and murder as various parties vie with one another to secure the purple for their particular candidate. Suetonius, a civil servant who benefited directly from imperial favour, was well disposed towards the Principate but no definite political outlook on his part can be discerned. He seems to accept the Principate and the succession without any qualms.

Dio, living at a time when the Principate as an institution was unquestioned and Emperor had been succeeding Emperor for over two hundred years, takes the succession for granted and fails to emphasise its importance in first century politics.

Inscriptions and coins have little to offer the student of the succession by way of direct evidence. The covert nature of the imperial succession, the official reluctance to declare this man or that the next Emperor, means that coins in particular will not contain overt mention of an Emperor's successor. Yet, once we are alerted as to what to look for - the titles and powers that indicate imperial favour in the succession - coins and inscriptions can be useful. The cenotaph of C. Caesar from Pisa refers to him as princeps designatus, a title Augustus refrains from employing in his Res Gestae, thus implying that its use was not officially sanctioned. The Acta Fratrum Arvalium, inscriptions recording the sacrifices and dedications of that obscure college, can contain references to historical events such as the dies imperii, day of accession, of an Emperor or the discovery of a plot. The consular Fasti, lists of the annual consuls, can also be useful. We have seen cases of coin issues that hail certain princes as principes iuventutis, one of the chief
succession-related titles used by Emperors to indicate favourites (see above, pp. 12-13) They can further reflect particular historical situations, such as Agrippina’s brief period of dominatio and subsequent fall from grace in 52-5 (see above, pp. 145, 161). Two instructive series of coin issues come from the Long Year and its immediate aftermath. The unstable position of all four Emperors of that year is illustrated by the appeals to PAX, CONCORDIA and SECURITAS that adorn their coins. More tellingly, Vitellius’ coins implore the troops with phrases like FIDES EXERCITUUM or CONCORDIA PRAETORIANORUM. The early coins of Vespasian, as we have seen, proclaim his intention to have his sons succeed him (see above, pp.201). In short, coins and inscriptions, although not openly concerned with the succession, can provide evidence that is pertinent to it.
NOTES

1. For a general assessment of the historical value of each of the sources about to be discussed, see M.H. CRAWFORD, (ed.), Sources for Ancient History, (Cambridge, 1983).


5. The lacunae are between: An., 5.5-6 (AD 29-31 missing); 6.51-11.1 (AD 37-47); 16.35-end (AD 66-8). This results in the loss of Tacitus' accounts of the fall of Sejanus; the entire reign of Gaius and the accession of Claudius; and the fall of Nero.

6. For Tacitus' sources, see SYME, Tac., pp. 176-90 (Histories) and 688-710 (Annals).


12. For Dio's life, see MILLAR, op. cit. in note 1, pp. 5-27, 193-4.

13. Succession-related events in the Annals that leave a bad impression are: the death of Marcellus in 23 BC (1.3); the murder of Agrippa Postumus in AD 14 (1.6); the death of Germanicus and the trial of Piso in AD 19 (2.69-3.19); the conspiracy of Sejanus and its aftermath (4.1-6.19); the death of Messalina (11.26-37); the rise of Agrippina and Nero's preferment over Britannicus leading to the murder of Claudius (12, passim); Nero's murder of his rivals, including his mother (13-16, passim).


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15. Compare EJ, no. 69 (cenotaph) with RG, 14 (Augustus honouring his sons).


17. Cf. SUTHERLAND, RIC, pp. 216-77, passim, (Galba to Vitellius).
Quippe Augustus supremis sermonibus, cum tractaret quinam adspici principem locum suffecturi abnuerent, aut inpaes vellent, vel idem possent cuperentque, M' Lepidum dixerat capacem, sed aspernantem, Gallum Asinium avidum et minorem, L. Arruntium non indignum et, si casus daretur, ausurum. De prioribus consentur, pro Arruntio quidam Cn. Pisonem tradidere: omnesque praeter Lepidum variis mox criminibus struente Tiberio circumventi sunt.

"For Augustus, in his last conversations, when discussing possible holders of the principate - those who were competent and disinclined, who were inadequate and unwilling, 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."

(Loeb text and translation).

This is a curious passage. If it is historically accurate we must ask did Augustus seriously consider choosing a successor from among the capaces listed above? That would mean that the princeps was looking for a successor from outside his family. This is improbable. All of Augustus' actions in regard to the succession were dynastic and general considerations argued against his choosing an unrelated senator as a successor (see above, Chapter I). We cannot, therefore, think of this passage as indicating that Augustus seriously considered a non-dynastic form of succession.

The historicity of the passage has been challenged. Syme considers it a hasty insertion of Hadrianic date designed to highlight the killing of four consulars that marked that Emperor's accession to power. Dio and Suetonius do not mention the anecdote at all so Tacitus apparently picked up the story in some subsidiary source and
decided to use it to show that Augustus, like Hadrian, had been aware of the challenge to his position presented by eminent men. This theory has been roundly denied by Goodyear who sees the passage as historically reliable and set in the context of an admonishment issued to Tiberius by Augustus warning the future Emperor of some possible rivals. This is plausible in itself and is perhaps implied by Tacitus' phrase *omnesque praeter Lepidum variis mox criminibus struente Tiberio circumventi sunt*. However, were they? And if so, why praeter Lepidum?

The last question can be answered immediately: Lepidus was "disdainful" (*aspernans*) of imperial ambition and was not therefore a threat in the first place. Closer examination of the deaths of the other three will be necessary to answer the other question. Asinius Gallus, L. Arruntius and Cn. Piso all played major roles in the reign of Tiberius. Gallus and Arruntius are mentioned numerous times as taking part in senatorial debates. However, the deaths of the three do not appear to have been all encompassed *struente Tiberio*. The Emperor did not save Piso from prosecution for murdering Germanicus, but he certainly did not strive for his death. Piso had anyhow broken the law on several counts and finally committed suicide (see above, pp. 54-6). Arruntius committed suicide shortly before the death of Tiberius himself while awaiting trial on a charge which Tacitus admits was probably brought without the Emperor's knowledge (Tac. *Ann.*, 6.47-8). Indeed Arruntius was an enemy of Macro, this being the most likely reason for his death. Gallus is an exception. He died in 33 of starvation while awaiting trial on some unspecified charge (Tac. *Ann.*, 6.23). Tiberius' involvement is clear. It is noteworthy that
Agrippina, who also died in 33 of the same cause, had previously been accused - not formally charged - with "adultery" (political alliance?) with Gallus (Tac. Ann., 6.25). If Gallus had been attempting to unite with Agrippina, he can be seen as one involved in high dynastic politics and worthy of his epithet *avidus*.

Thus, except for Gallus, Tiberius does not appear to have orchestrated the deaths of the men he is accused of having killed by Tacitus. In the case of Gallus the Emperor may have had just cause to suspect a man whom he did not like anyway - Gallus had married Tiberius' beloved Vipsania - and who may have been trying to organise Agrippina's faction. All three deaths therefore do not seem to have been effected out of a concern for the succession, or because Tiberius took particular heed of the advice given to him by Augustus. Even Gallus died some nineteen years after the *supremi sermones* took place. This however does not mean that Augustus did not issue the warning recorded in Tac. Ann., 1.13 in good faith; that Tiberius was slow to act on it, or did not act at all, was his decision.
NOTES

1. Cf. SYME, Tac., pp. 380-4, 485-6, 694. For the obscure Hadrianic executions, see Dio, 69.2.5; SHA, Hadr., 7.1-2.


3. For Lepidus' career, see PIR A.363.

4. For the careers of Gallus and Arruntius, see PIR A.1229 and A.1130 respectively.
APPENDIX III

1

PRAETORIAN PREFECTS, 2 BC - AD 70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name 1</th>
<th>Name 2</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Ostorius Scapula</td>
<td>P. Salvius Aper</td>
<td>2 BC - ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerius Ligur (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>? - ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Seius Strabo</td>
<td>L. Aelius Sejanus</td>
<td>AD 14-16/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Aelius Sejanus</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 16/17-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Naevius Cordus Surturius Macro</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 31-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Arrecinus Clemens</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 37-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufrius Pollio</td>
<td>Catonius Justus</td>
<td>AD 41-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catonius Justus (?)</td>
<td>Rufius Pompilius (?)</td>
<td>AD 43-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufrius Crispinus</td>
<td>L. Lusius Geta</td>
<td>AD 47-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex. Afranius Burrus</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 51-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Faenius Rufus</td>
<td>C. Ofonius Tigellinus</td>
<td>AD 62-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Ofonius Tigellinus</td>
<td>C. Nymphidius Sabinus</td>
<td>AD 65-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius Laco</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plotius Firmus</td>
<td>Licinus Proculus</td>
<td>AD 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publius Sabinus</td>
<td>Julius Priscus</td>
<td>AD 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Alfenus Varus</td>
<td>Arrius Varus</td>
<td>AD 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Arrecinus Clemens</td>
<td></td>
<td>AD 69-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

1. This list is compiled from A. PASSERINI, Le Coorti Pretorie, (Rome, 1939), pp. 275-88.
These tables are designed to clarify, not confuse. They do not therefore show all of the imperial family's collaterals nor all the relationships involved. All of the central figures are shown, along with some of the most important peripheral characters. The tables are intended to correspond with the chapters, although there will be some overlaps.
TABLE I
AUGUSTUS

See Table II

M. Claudius Marcellus (42BC-23BC)

---

See Table II

Livia Julia (Livilla) = C. Caesar, cos. AD1
(19BC-AD31)

See Table II

M. Vispaurius, Julia... TIBERIUS Vispania
(63BC-AD14) (42BC-AD37)

See Table II

L. Caesar (17BC-AD2) = L. Aemilius Paullus
(15BC-AD19)

See Table II

Claudius (10BC-AD54)

Descent from M. Antonius, cos. 44BC
(See Table II)

C. Julius Caesar (Dictator)

Julia

Atid = C. Octavius

Scribonia = AUGUSTUS = Livia Drusilla = Ti. Claudius Nero
(63BC-AD14)

M. Vispaurius, Julia... TIBERIUS Vispania
(39BC-AD14) (42BC-AD37)

See Table II

Agrippa (63BC-12BC)

Agrippina = Germanicus
(14BC-AD33) (12BC-AD14)

See Table II

C. Caesar, cos. AD1
(20BC-AD4)

L. Caesar = L. Aemilius Paullus
(15BC-AD19)

See Table II

Agrippa = Germanicus
(14BC-AD33) (12BC-AD14)

See Table II

Livia Julia (Livilla) = C. Caesar, cos. AD1
(19BC-AD31)

=C. Caesar, cos. AD1
(20BC-AD4)

= Drusus (13BC-AD23)
(See Table II)
TABLE II

TIBERIUS AND CAIUS

See Table I

Octavia
= See Table I
= M. Antonius
  cos. 44 BC

AUGUSTUS = Livia Drusilla = Ti. Claudius Nero
  (63 BC-AD14)

Julia = TIBERIUS = Vipsania
  (39 BC-AD14) (42 BC-AD37)

Antonia
  (36 BC-AD37)
  = Drusus
  Claudius
  Nero, cos. 9 BC
  (38 BC-9 BC)

Germanicus, cos. 12, 18
  (15 BC-AD19)
  = Agrippina
  (14 BC-AD33)

Livia Julia (Livilla) CLAUDIUS
  (13 BC-AD31)
  = C. Caesar, cos. AD1
  (20 BC-AD4)
  = Drusus
  (13 BC-AD23)

Descent from M. Antonius, cos. 44 BC

Drusus Claudius Nero, cos. 9 BC.
  (38 BC-9 BC)

= Antonia

Julia Ti. Gemellus
  (?-AD43) (AD 19-37)

= Nero Caesar
  (AD6-31)

= C. Rubellius
  Blandus, cos. AD18

Rubellius Plautus
  (?-AD62)

Nero Caesar
  (AD6-31)
  = Julia
  (?-AD43)

= Agrippina
  (AD15-59)

Drusus Caesar
  (AD7-33)
  = Aemilia
  Lepida

GAIUS
  (AD12-41)

= M. Aemilius
  Lepidus

Drusilla Julia Livilla
  (AD17-38) (AD18-41)
  = M. Aemilius
  Lepidus

Nero Caesar
  (AD6-31)

= Agrippina
  (AD15-59)

= Cn. Domitius
  Ahenobarbus
  cos. AD32

= Cn. Domitius
  Ahenobarbus
  cos. 16 BC

= C. Rubellius
  Blandus, cos. AD18

= Agrippina
  (AD15-59)

= M. Aemilius
  Lepidus

= Cn. Domitius
  Ahenobarbus
  cos. AD32
**TABLE III**

**CLAUDIUS AND NERO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUGUSTUS</th>
<th>See Table II</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>C.Rubellius Blandus, <em>COS</em>. AD18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(See Table I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Rubellius Plautus (?-AD62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.Aemilius Paullus <em>COS</em>. AD1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| M.Aemilius | Aemilia= M.Junius Silanus |
| Lepidus= Lepida | Torquatus, *COS*. AD19 |
| Drusilla (AD17-38) | |

| M.Silanus, *COS*. AD46 | L.Silanus D.Silanus Sisters |
| (AD14-54) | Pret. 48 (?-64) |
| L.Silanus (?-65) | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See Tables I&amp;II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germanicus Livia Julia (See Tables I&amp;II) (Livilla) (See Tables I&amp;II)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAUDIUS = AGRIPPINA = Cn. Dominus Ahenobarbus <em>COS</em>. AD52</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aelia Paetina Valeria Messalina (c.AD24-48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAUDIUS (10BC-AD54) (AD15-59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannicus (AD91-55)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAUDIUS</th>
<th>L.Domitius Ahenobarbus (NERO) (AD37-68)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=Faustus Cornelius Sulla Felix, <em>COS</em>. AD52 (?-62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = adoption
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