

ANTONIUS SATURNINUS

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I

Milestones, they are more numerous than needed. They may tell very little, often merely certifying stages and intervals on roads already known, traced and trodden: or, less instructive, the names and titles of an emperor.

There are happy exceptions. From time to time the *miliaria*, by registering an imperial legate, contribute usefully to the study of the governing class. A new discovery can offer a sudden and welcome illumination. For example, the milestone set up on a strategic road in Palestine in the second half of the year 69: the road from Caesarea by Caparcotna to Scythopolis. At the head stands the name of the pretender, styled 'Imp. Caesar Vespasianus Augustus', and this stone was erected by M. Ulpius Traianus, the legate commanding the legion X Fretensis.¹

The document is variously instructive, not least for the career of that legate.² In the narrative of Josephus, Traianus was last heard of in the early summer of 68 when, after the subjugation of Peraea, he brought his army corps to join Vespasian at Jericho. The next fact is his consulate in 70, revealed by a small fragment of the *Fasti Ostienses*³. He followed as *suffectus* the great Licinius Mucianus (the second consulship of that person). The honour was deserved. Like another legionary legate, Aurelius Fulvus, who commanded III Gallica in Moesia, Ulpius Traianus (the inference is easy and painless) had a hand in the intrigue that led to the proclamation of Vespasian. Both were legates of some seniority. Fulvus is attested in 64, under Domitius Corbulo in Armenia (*ILS* 232).

II

Another stone may also disclose something of value for imperial history. It was found in the heart of Jerusalem, a little to the west of the Temple. As published, it stands as follows:—

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. IMP CAESAR | 5. L |
| 2. VESPASIAN[VS] | 6. AVG PR PR |
| 3. AVG IMP T [CAE] | 7. LEG X FR |
| 4. SAR VESP AVG | |

The object is a rounded pillar, with the shape and size of a *miliarium*.⁴ The editors decline to specify it as such. For adequate reasons. It was either an honorific inscription, they conclude, or the dedication of a building within or adjacent to the camp of the legion now installed in garrison at Jerusalem.

The second is the better explanation. A pair of Neronian constructions can be pertinently adduced. First, in Armenia. The Emperor's name stands at the head, next (in the ablative case) Cn. Domitius Corbulo, *leg. Aug. pro pr.*, and T. Aurelius Fulvus, *leg. Aug.*, with, at the end, *leg. III Gal.*⁵ Next, at Colonia Claudia: an imperial building, first the ruler's name and titulature, then 'P. Sulpicio Scribonio Rufo, *leg. Aug. pro pr.*', followed by 'leg. XV Primigeni'.⁶ As in the other inscription, the name of the legion stands in a separate line at the bottom.

¹ B. H. Isaac and I. Roll, *JRS* LXVI (1976), 15.

² The present paper, designed for brevity and economy, omits the evidence for a number of facts and dates that are not in dispute. Recourse may be had to the excellent repertorium of W. Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (1970), henceforth cited without the title.

³ Generally assigned to 70. For 72, however, see now the arguments of L. Vidman, *Listy fil.* 98 (1975), 66 f.

⁴ M. Gichon and B. H. Isaac, *Israel Exploration Journal* xxiv (1974), 117. The editors duly supplement 'Aug. [f.]' in line 4. I had the good fortune to inspect the stone in February of 1971.

⁵ *ILS* 232.

⁶ *AE* 1969/70, 443, cf. W. Eck, *Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* XIII (1972/1973), 89 f.

To proceed. First of all, the date. The entitlement of Titus Caesar may offer a clue. At the siege of Jerusalem in 70 Titus possessed proconsular *imperium*. That is clear: he took an imperial salutation. Further, he awarded military decorations.⁷ After the triumph celebrated in the summer of the next year, the Caesar was raised to full partnership in the power. Coins and inscriptions exhibit variations in his style and nomenclature. They are irrelevant in this place, except for the 'praenomen imperatoris' which emerges after a time: 'imp. Titus Caesar' occurs on several inscriptions set up between 76 and 79.⁸ The new document may be assigned without discomfort to the late years of Vespasian.

Next, the erased name in the fifth line. The editors propose 'L. [Flavio Silva leg.]'. That is, L. Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus, who as legate of Judaea reduced the fortress of Masada and was later *consul ordinarius* (in 81). How then explain the erasure? That local malcontents, angered by the name of the victor, should venture to deface a monument under the eyes of a Roman governor and a Roman garrison is not easy to credit. The editors therefore assume that the consul of 81 must subsequently have incurred a 'damnatio memoriae' (a convenient term, though perhaps not attested in any classical author). In fact, they present that name at the end, on their reconstruction of the document.⁹

The assumption was highly vulnerable. Suetonius, by a welcome change from his normal procedure, happens to furnish a catalogue: no fewer than ten men of consular rank, who were put to death by Domitian on a variety of pretexts, most of them trivial.¹⁰ Flavius Silva is not on the list. To put his name in the erasure entails a double postulate of silence in the record: an omission by the biographer and a transgression that earned punishment for high treason. Another name is demanded, and it is not far to seek.

III

On the first day of January 89, L. Antonius Saturninus, legate of Germania Superior, raised rebellion at Moguntiacum, with the threat and prospect of a great civil war. It was averted by the prompt intervention of Lappius Maximus, the commander of the other army on the Rhine.¹¹

The consular year of Antonius Saturninus was divined by Borghesi long ago. The bronze plate from Falerio carrying a notable decision of Domitian is dated by the Emperor's titulature to 82, with the *suffecti* in office on 19 July.¹² One is P. Valerius Patruinus, the name of the colleague was obliterated. Not all scholars in the recent time have been ready to follow Borghesi; and through inadvertence the doubt has extended to impugn the consular year of Valerius Patruinus.¹³ The doubt should be reversed, and the question asked: who other than the rebel deserved to have his name erased? ¹⁴ Let his consulate therefore stand as '82'. Though the caution may seem excessive, it will not deceive.

The consular legates in this period have generally acceded to the *fasces* after one of the eight praetorian provinces in the portion of Caesar—and some very promptly, if they had been legates in the two most important, viz. Numidia and Judaea, where the post is combined with the command of a legion.¹⁵ Nothing discountenances L. Antonius Saturninus as governor of Judaea c. 78–81.

One thing might arouse disquiet. Can the name fit into line five of the Jerusalem inscription, given the length of the other lines?

A topic of some interest therefore comes in, the abbreviation of personal names. There are extreme cases. In the year 161 the town council of Sarmizegethusa, advertising its farewell to a beneficent governor of Dacia, and under no compulsion of brevity, chose to

⁷ Titus also had a *praefectus praetorio*. That is, Ti. Julius Alexander (*P. Hibeh* 215).

⁸ viz. *ILS* 8904; 253 f.; *AE* 1974, 653. An earlier and sporadic instance in 72/3 is the dedication made by the town council of Sestinum in Umbria: 'imp. T. Caes. Aug. f. Vespasian.' (260).

⁹ *IEJ* xxiv (1974), 123.

¹⁰ Suetonius, *Dom.* 10. 2 f. Add 11. 1 (M. Arrecinus Clemens); 15. 1 (T. Flavius Sabinus).

¹¹ On the reconstruction of E. Ritterling, adopted in *CAH* xi (1936), 172 f.

¹² *CIL* ix. 5420.

¹³ Thus W. Eck, *op. cit.*, 60 (a strong doubt).

¹⁴ The *Fasti Ostienses* show no erasure of T. Flavius Sabinus (*cos.* 82) or of T. Flavius Clemens (95). And the name of M. Arrecinus Clemens stands entire on the record of his second consulship (in 85) with L. Baebius Honoratus for colleague (*CIL* xii. 3637: Nemausus).

¹⁵ The few exceptions are registered by W. Eck, *ANRW* 11.1 (1974), 216 (three between 78 and 127).

inscribe his name as 'P.F.S.'¹⁶ The rubric might be expanded, not without instruction and perplexities. Let it suffice to adduce two specimens from consular lists. The *Fasti* of the *Arvales* present the consul of A.D. 4 as 'C. Sentius Sat.'; and on the *Ostienses* an eminent suffect of 85 stands as 'L. Vale[r]. Mess. II.'

What goes at Rome or Ostia needed not be denied to a lapicide at Jerusalem—who in any case was compelled to abridge the nomenclature of Titus Caesar. An ordinary type of *nomen* is in question. No discomfort should ensue if it be curtailed to 'L. Ant. Saturnin.', which is no longer than 'L. Flavio Silva', or even to 'L. Ant. Sat.' But 'L. Antonio' or 'L. Ant.' may be found preferable (with 'leg.' following).

IV

If the identity is conceded, sundry consequences follow. In the first place, the governors of Judaea.¹⁷ When he departed, Titus Caesar left in charge of the army Sex. Vettulenus Cerialis, previously legate of V Macedonica (since 67, at least). An acephalous inscription at Carthage reveals a man whom Titus, 'triumphaturus [de Iudaeis]', honoured with military decorations, double in fact of what might normally accrue to an imperial legate of consular rank.¹⁸ Valid surmise enlists Vettulenus, and a proconsulate of Africa c. 85.

Vettulenus had a brief tenure. The consulship beckoned. Brief also the next governor of Judaea, the promoted equestrian Sex. Lucilius Bassus, who died. Flavius Silva follows. He captured Masada in 73—or perhaps in 74.¹⁹ The date is irrelevant to present purposes.

The latest survey of provincial governors prolongs Flavius Silva until the year 79.²⁰ There is no evidence. One motive may be inferred: to bring the tenure close to the predictable consulate, which came in 81.

Acceleration or delay is detected in a number of senatorial careers, with a variety of reasons to explain and justify.²¹ Flavius Silva, enjoying the rare distinction of the eponymous consulate, is not likely to have been held back unduly by Vespasian or by Titus. Other factors will be invoked.

The legionary legates on attestation in 69 are a diverse collection. Some senior, like Ulpius Traianus and Vettulenus Cerialis in Judaea, others as much as eight years younger, such as the commander of the third legion in that army, namely Titus, who was quaestorian in rank.

Similarly the men promoted by Vespasian on two occasions: after his proclamation and four years later during his censorship. The company repays inspection, not least through divergences.²² Two specimens of a rapid initial advancement in status may be singled out.

First Plotius Grypus, given senatorial rank in 69, appointed to the charge of a legion, and, almost at once, praetor for the year 70.²³ He does not reach his consulship until 88, but it is honorific, replacing the Emperor. Second, L. Antistius Rusticus.²⁴ He was *tribunus laticlavus* of the legion II Augusta. The next thing is 'adlectus inter praetorios' by the imperial censors in 73, with the military decorations appropriate to a legate of praetorian rank. The reason for the honour is no mystery. Of the legions of Britain in 69, II Augusta was strong for the Flavian cause.²⁵ Antistius Rusticus had to wait until 90 for his consulship.

Retardations ensued. Not merely from deficient merit or loss of influence with Caesar and the friends of Caesar. Sheer blockages in access to the praetorian provinces will be allowed for, given the large number of adlections. Hence some tenures shorter than might

¹⁶ *ILS* 7155 (P. Furius Saturninus).

¹⁷ For recent catalogues, H. G. Pflaum, *IEJ* xix (1969), 230 f.; W. Eck, op. cit. (n. 2), 243; G. Vermes and F. Millar in the revised edition of E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People* I (1973), 515.

¹⁸ *ILS* 988.

¹⁹ Arguments for 74 are adduced by W. Eck, op. cit., 101. See, however, C. P. Jones, *AJP* xciv (1974), 89 f., with appeal to the evidence of Josephus, *Bj* vii.

219; also G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* lxxv (1975), 183 f.

²⁰ W. Eck, op. cit., 102.

²¹ For retardations suffered by some of Pliny's friends see *Historia* ix (1960), 362 f. = *Roman Papers* (1978), 477 f.

²² For the list, W. Eck, op. cit., 103 f.

²³ Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 52. 3; iv. 39. 1 f.; 40, 2.

²⁴ *AE* 1925, 126 (Pisidian Antioch).

²⁵ *Hist.* iii. 44.

be expected.²⁶ Furthermore, a man's age. Though birth or signal favour can bring an early consulship, the forty-third year was considered suitable for senators not of consular family.²⁷

A pair of inscriptions recently discovered at Urbs Salvia in Picenum reveals the career of Flavius Silva from the minor magistracy to the consulship.²⁸ After being tribune of the plebs and legate of XXI Rapax, he was advanced 'inter praetorios' in the censorship of Vespasian and Titus.

The legionary command entails (or excuses) brief comment in passing. The *Historiae* at some point or other mention all the legates in the Rhine armies—except the commander of XXI Rapax. Which is peculiar. That legion, by its 'avaritia et festinatio', provoked hostilities with the Helvetii early in 69. Concentrating on the legion and on Caecina Alienus, the Vitellian general, the historian Tacitus omitted the legate whose identity and comportment should have been of some relevance.²⁹ The person, it might be conjectured, was reserved for unfriendly notice in the sequel. Not, perhaps, Flavius Silva. It will be preferable to assign his command of XXI Rapax to the following years.

This curt excursus may assert some general utility; and it will be found helpful for assessing the career of Antonius Saturninus. Nothing impedes his governorship of Judaea from 78 to 81. He may, or may not, have been preceded by an *Ignotus*. That was certainly the sequel, for the next known legate is Cn. Pompeius Longinus, attested in 86, consul suffect in 90.

v

A proper curiosity will not neglect the antecedents of Antonius Saturninus. A stray notice in a Greek writer discloses a modest fact that brings no surprise: he owed senatorial status to Vespasian.³⁰ Whether in 69 or in 73, that might be a question. Further, urban magnate, officer with the armies, or procurator?

The *nomen* 'Antonius' suggests provinces rather than Italy; and, for a consul at the beginning of Domitian's reign, the western lands rather than the eastern. The earliest of those newcomers to the *Fasti* are A. Antonius Rufus (*suff.* 44) and Q. Fabius Barbarus Antonius Macer (*suff. c.* 64). They offer no clear guidance. After Saturninus the next is L. Antonius Albus (*suff.* 102), for whom an eastern origin is not at once excluded.³¹

First thoughts go to Spain or Narbonensis. Attention was drawn to L. Antonius L.f. Gal. Saturninus, high priest of the provincial cult at Tarraco. That is, the parent, not the new senator.³² The priesthood, it appears, is the honorific end to a municipal or an equestrian career. It does not offer, in fact it precludes, admission to the rank of Roman senator. A single exception exists, in a disturbed season: young Raecius Gallus, a partisan active for Sulpicius Galba, the legate of Tarraconensis.³³

The nomenclature lacks distinction, in either sense of the term. Hence homonyms. As a mere *curiosum*, Africa can show among local magnates an Arrius Antoninus (*suff.?* 169) whose grandson married Antonia L.f. Saturnina.³⁴

As concerns Tarraco, caution is prescribed. So far as ascertained, the series of high priests (a large number) falls in the period 70–180.³⁵ No evidence or technique admits a close date for L. Antonius Saturninus.

²⁶ See Eck's lists for certain provinces, such as Numidia and Lycia-Pamphylia. A biennial tenure of Lusitania emerges clearly for C. Arruntius Catellius Celer (*suff.* 79).

²⁷ Observe, for example, L. Tettius Julianus (*suff.* 83), praetor in 70, or M. Tittius Frugi (*suff.* 80), who replaced Titus in the command of XV Apollinaris in 70.

²⁸ *AE* 1969/70, 183. See the full discussion in W. Eck, *op. cit.*, 93 f.

²⁹ For the problem, *Mus. Helv.* xxxiv (1977), 129 f.

³⁰ Aelian, fr. 112 (Hercher).

³¹ Yet perhaps Narbonensian. The *cognomen* might

reflect one of the common Celtic names in 'vind', meaning 'white'. Not, indeed, that 'Albus' is frequent: six in *CIL* XII, cf. eight in XIII.

³² *CIL* II. 4194, adduced in *Tacitus* (1958), 596. The man is to be presumed a citizen of Tarraco.

³³ *AE* 1965, 236 (Tarraco): the text of J. Deininger taking in improvements on *AE* 1932, 84. The item is relevant to Pliny's attempt (abortive) to get senatorial rank for his friend Voconius Romanus. He had been a high priest (*Epp.* II. 13. 4). See *Harvard Studies* LXXIII (1968), 231 = *RP* (1978), 769.

³⁴ *PIR*², A 1088; 898.

³⁵ G. Alföldy, *Flamines Provinciae Hispaniae Citerioris* (1973), 14 f.

More important than a city or a region of the Roman world is the earlier career of the consular whom Domitian put in charge of Germania Superior, with an army of four legions and numerous *auxilia*. Shortly before his praetorian province, the command of a legion will be postulated and Antonius Saturninus may have held a consular province before acceding to Germania Superior.

There is something else. It emerges from the letter of (L.) Venuleius Pataecius, Vespasian's procurator of Thrace, concerning disputes between Thasos and the Roman colony of Philippi.³⁶ In one matter, although amicably disposed towards the Thasians, he professes inability to modify a decision made by Lucius Antonius.

The editors chose to equate this man with L. Antonius Naso, whose career is known down to his procuratorship in Bithynia-Pontus, attested for either 77 or 78.³⁷ For that aberration, a sagacious critic administered a gentle rebuke and made a positive suggestion: L. Antonius Saturninus as proconsul of Macedonia 'vers 74'.³⁸

The proposal lapsed or was lost sight of in the sequel. At least that name is absent from lists of proconsuls drawn up by careful scholars.³⁹ It would be useful either to disallow or to confirm.

The document presents Λούκιος Ἀντώνιος ἀνὴρ ἐπισημότατος. The distinctive epithet employed by the procurator evoked neither joy nor alarm in editor or critic. It is patently the equivalent of 'vir clarissimus', although not elsewhere found on inscriptions or papyri.⁴⁰ Sporadic or early instances of honorific titles deserve attention.⁴¹

The style of nomenclature assigned to the proconsul likewise failed to excite curiosity: the *cognomen* omitted. Under the first dynasty a few families occur lacking *cognomina*, the conspicuous specimen being the Vitellii. The latest example in a consul would be worth establishing. Probably P. Marius, the *ordinarius* of 62, who, so it now appears, was wrongly equipped with 'Celsus'.⁴² Nothing can be confirmed from a later consular date like 'L. Arrtio T. Flavio Basso'.⁴³

In some instances exigencies of space suppressed the last portion of a consul's name. Thus the *suffecti* of A.D. 3 appear on the *Fasti Arvalium* as 'P. Silius P.f.' and 'L. Volusius'. However, on the *Fasti Capitolini*, where there is plenty of room, the former, the oldest son of P. Silius Nerva, stands without *cognomen*, but the latter has 'Saturninus'.

A different factor therefore comes into play, deliberate abstention from the *cognomen*, attested for both Silius and Volusius, in literary references as well as on official documents. For present purposes, the Volusii may take pride of place, an old family that had not got beyond the praetorship under the Republic. When naming three of their consuls, the historian Tacitus uniformly eschews the 'Saturninus'. He has 'Volusius' once, the style with *praenomen* and *nomen* five times.⁴⁴ Similarly Columella, in his reference to L. Volusius (*suff.* 3), the *praefectus urbi* whom he had met.⁴⁵ Tacitus, there is no need to insist, shows a marked interest in this family of great opulence and long duration.⁴⁶

³⁶ Chr. Dunant and J. Pouilloux, *Etudes Thasiennes* v (1958), no. 186, cf. J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ép.* 1959, no. 333. The career of the procurator was known (*AE* 1936, 1: Ilium).

³⁷ *ILS* 9199 (Heliopolis), cf. *PIR*², A 854.

³⁸ H. G. Pflaum, *Journal des Savants*, 1959, 81.

³⁹ H. G. Pflaum, *Rev. ét. lat.* XLIII (1965), 139; *IEJ* XIX (1969), 227; W. Eck, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 244. Eck later registered the proconsulate as 'sehr problematisch' (*Zephyrus* XXIII/IV (1972/3), 241).

⁴⁰ Only a glossary (*CGL* III. 32, 52) was cited by D. Magie, *De Romanis iuris publici sacrique vocabulis sollemnibus in Graecum sermonem conversis* (1905), 51—and no specimen anywhere in H. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions* (1974).

⁴¹ Thus ἀνὴρ ἐπισημότατος for an Augustan proconsul of Asia (*SIG*³ 785); 'vir ornatissimus' for the procurator of Sardinia who had been replaced as governor by a proconsul, a 'vir clarissimus' (*ILS* 5947, of the year 68).

⁴² cf. W. Eck, *RE Supp.* XIV, 276; *Historia* XXIV (1975), 334. On the other hand, Marius Celsus (*suff.* 69), governor of Syria in 73 (*ILS* 8903), still lacks a praenomen.

⁴³ *CIL* x. 6785: the date at the end of the funeral inscription of a freedman who was in charge of the island Pandateria. The item 'Arrtio' is assumed a mistake for 'Arruntio'. Neither he nor his colleague can be identified.

⁴⁴ viz., the *suffecti* of 12 B.C. and A.D. 3 (the *praefectus urbi* of long duration), and the consul of 56: *Ann.* III. 30. 1; XII. 22. 2; XIII. 30. 2; XIII. 25. 1; XIV. 46. 2; 56. 1. Note also the 'L. Volusius', consul and augur, named on his wife's gravestone (*ILS* 924): date and identity not certain.

⁴⁵ Columella I. 7. 3: 'sed et ipse nostra memoria veterem consularem, virumque opulentissimum, L. Volusium asseverantem audivi'.

⁴⁶ Praetor in 88, he had known the consuls of 87 and 92.

It was the habit of the nobility to drop the *nomen*, the *cognomen* being more distinctive. The *novus homo* was happy to conform. Thus M. Vipsanius Agrippa, to the point of suppressing his unlovely *gentilicium*. The Volusii, however, put emphasis on their family name. The style 'L. Volusius' is archaic, hence respectable.

The usurper Antonius Saturninus finds mention in a variety of sources down to the *Historia Augusta*, generally as 'Antonius'.⁴⁷ Suetonius introduces him, in two separate items, as 'L. Antonius'.⁴⁸ That is worth noting. By contrast, the *cognomen* is absent from Latin prose authors. Only in Martial and in a fragment of Aelian.⁴⁹

The poet's objurgation is worth quoting,

Dum nimium vano tumefactus nomine gaudes
et Saturninum te, miser, esse pudet.

He proceeds to deride the usurper's emulation of the Triumvir. Now the Antonii had never owned to a *cognomen*. The contemporary fellow may in fact have had a preference for the style 'L. Antonius'. By paradox, social pretension usually takes the contrary method. People with indistinctive *gentilicia* annex the historic *cognomen* of some aristocratic house now extinct. Instances are frequent enough. Thus local magistrates on coins of Carthago Nova, Q. Papirius Carbo and M. Postumius Albinus.⁵⁰

The procurator of Thrace referred to the proconsul as 'Lucius Antonius'. The chance subsists that, when setting up a dedication at Jerusalem, the governor exploited the constraint of short lines to have himself inscribed 'L. Antonio'. The spacing might entail 'L. Ant.'

VII

To resume—and to revert to facts. The title and the legal decision recorded on the Thasian inscription declare a proconsul of Macedonia. For identity, no call to conjure up the unattested parent of L. Antonius Albus (*suff.* 102). Saturninus is welcome, and he can be put *c.* 76. Brief comment can go to three other proconsuls of the decade 75–85.⁵¹

(1) P. Tullius Varro: revealed by the stone set up in memory by his son (*suff.* 127).⁵² More remarkable through his descendants than in himself, Varro can none the less serve some modest uses. After being *quaestor urbanus* he proceeded as *quaestor* to Crete and Cyrene. The anomaly is explained by transactions in Palestine. In 70 the legate commanding X Fretensis is no longer M. Ulpius Traianus. It is A. Larcus Lepidus, transferred from the *quaestorship* of Crete and Cyrene.⁵³

Quaestor therefore in 69, Varro became praetor *c.* 74. Then, after the command of the legion XIII Gemina, proconsul of Macedonia, at which point his career terminates. Varro dies in the province, or soon after, it has been supposed.⁵⁴ Not so soon, however. And he cannot be added to the roll of surmised deaths in the great pestilence of the year 80.⁵⁵ P. Tullius Varro was alive and active in the middle eighties of the century, given the presumed age of his two sons: P. Dasumius Rusticus (*cos.* 119), who had been adopted by the consular L. Dasumius, and P. Tullius Varro (*suff.* 127).

Perhaps still alive in 89 or 90. Martial salutes a friend called Varro and commends his poetry.⁵⁶ The *cognomen* 'Varro' is not in fact common: of senators in this period, only the mysterious Cingonius Varro, the consul-designate whom Galba put to death. Identity of senator and poet is not precluded, and it becomes helpful if an explanation were sought for the truncated career: that is, a taste for cultivated leisure rather than some political mis-

⁴⁷ For the testimonia, *PIR*², A 874. In Plutarch he is only Ἀντώνιος (*Aem. Paull.* 25).

⁴⁸ Suetonius, *Dom.* 6. 2; 73. Whence, one presumes, the 'L. Antonius' in one of the three instances in the *HA* (*Alex.* 1. 7).

⁴⁹ Martial iv. 11. 2; Aelian, fr. 112 (Herscher).

⁵⁰ M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas* (1946), 216.

⁵¹ Divergence will emerge from sundry dates proposed by H. G. Pflaum, *IEJ* xix (1969), 227 and W. Eck, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 244.

⁵² *ILS* 1002 (Viterbo). Tarquinii is the *patria*.

⁵³ *ILS* 987 (Antium).

⁵⁴ E. Groag, *RE* vii A, 1326.

⁵⁵ It was, as Suetonius reports, 'pestilentia quanta non temere alias' (*Divus Titus* 8. 3). For surmised deaths see *Some Arval Brethren*, Ch. vii (forthcoming).

⁵⁶ Martial v. 30.

demeanour.⁵⁷ Epicurean habits concern one at least of the strange vicissitudes in the life of Pliny's friend Bruttius Praesens.⁵⁸

(2) L. Baebius Honoratus. Nothing is known, apart from proconsulate and consulate. He shared the *fasces* with M. Arrecinus Clemens (*suffectus* for the second time).⁵⁹ That pair, it is now recognized, is the third pair of the year 85.⁶⁰

(3) C. Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus. The inscription, probably from a funerary monument, registers his complete career, and the *Acta* of the *Arvales* furnish some useful dates.⁶¹ The present remarks will be confined to the three posts he held during the seven years after he joined the Arval Brethren on 1 March 78 (Vespasian and Titus had admitted him to the Senate, first 'inter tribunicios', then 'inter praetorios').

Salvius Liberalis was legate of V Macedonia, *iuridicus* in Britain (specified as *legatus Augustorum*), proconsul of Macedonia. At first sight the legionary command goes easily in 78–81, delimited by his presence with the *Arvales* on 29 May 78 and 30 September 81.⁶² However, a recent study inserts the British post also into that triennium.⁶³ Which some may find an undue compression, despite the evidence for some curtailed tenures in this period.

The crux is the item *legatus Augustorum*. Can the term embrace Domitian as well as Titus? Now Salvius Liberalis was still at Rome on 30 September 81, seventeen days after the death of Titus.⁶⁴ An explanation has been produced: Salvius in fact owed the appointment to the deceased ruler. It appealed to Dessau and to Groag.⁶⁵ On that showing, the tenure of Salvius ran from the autumn of 81—or (it is not inconceivable) from the spring of 82. Or again, *legatus Augustorum* might be a euphemism for a condemned ruler.⁶⁶ . . .

However that may be, there is a lower limit, defined by the successor in Britain, viz. L. Javolenus Priscus, consul *suffectus* with A. Lappius Maximus at the end of 86. Javolenus had previously been legate of Numidia and *iuridicus* in Britain.⁶⁷ He was still in Numidia in 83, where he followed L. Tettius Julianus (*suff.* 83).⁶⁸

That problem has a direct bearing on the proconsulate of Macedonia. Salvius Liberalis was with the Brethren in January 86, so the tenure 85/6 is ruled out. His consular year now comes in. In 86 there is a vacancy for only one *suffectus* (in the March–April *nundinum*). However, revision of the *Fasti Ostienses* of 85 imports several improvements. Among them the recognition that 'Orestes' at the end of the year is not a local magistrate but a consul *suffectus*.⁶⁹ The place of his colleague is therefore available for Salvius Liberalis, with Macedonia preceding in 84/5.⁷⁰

Much more might be said about this man, a vigorous orator—who succumbed to a prosecution. As Borghesi saw, that is indicated by a passage in Pliny.⁷¹ He returned from exile after the fall of the dynasty and acquired the province Asia by the sortition, but declined it. Flavius Silva (his cousin, as the item 'Nonius Bassus' suggests) is not heard of subsequent to his consulship: *consul ordinarius, pontifex*, also adlected among the patricians. Salvius Liberalis was only an *arvalis*, a fraternity now in low estimation.⁷²

VIII

Of the four proconsuls of Macedonia, three reached the *fasces*; and Tullius Varro was in good posture, having commanded a legion. The proconsulates do not normally convey

⁵⁷ One of the Vestal Virgins called Varronilla got into trouble in the early years of Domitian (Suetonius, *Dom.* 8. 4).

⁵⁸ Observe the language employed by Pliny when inciting his friend to come back to the life of the capital c. 107 (*Epp.* vii. 3).

⁵⁹ For the proconsulate, *AE* 1930, 130 = *SEG* xvi. 291 (Beroea). For the consulate, *CIL* xii. 3637 (Nemausus), with 'Iatus' on the *Fasti Ostienses*.

⁶⁰ *JRS* XLIII (1953), 155. For the complete list of 85 see now F. Zevi, *Rivista storica dell'Antichità* III (1973), 106.

⁶¹ *ILS* 1011 (Urbs Salvia). Further, *PIR*¹, S 105 and the exemplary article of Groag, *RE* IA, 2026 f.

⁶² *CIL* vi. 3236 f.

⁶³ H. Petersen, *CP* LVII (1962), 32: accepted, so it appears, by W. Eck, *op. cit.*, 133.

⁶⁴ *CIL* vi. 32362.

⁶⁵ *PIR*¹, S 105; *RE* IA, 2027.

⁶⁶ Like the 'priors principes' who awarded one set of decorations to a centurion (*CIL* xi. 5992).

⁶⁷ *ILS* 1015.

⁶⁸ *CIL* viii. 23165. Tettius Julianus is attested for 81/2 (*AE* 1954, 137).

⁶⁹ F. Zevi, *Rivista storica dell'Antichità* III (1973), 107. Accepted by W. Eck in *RE* Supp. xv (forthcoming).

⁷⁰ W. Eck pronounced firmly for 83/4, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 133.

⁷¹ Pliny, *Epp.* III. 9. 33.

⁷² See further *Some Arval Brethren*, ch. xi (forthcoming).

promise of such advancement. However, rules must be deprecated, distinctions can be drawn, and the play of chance or favour will be respected.⁷³

Few proconsuls go on later to the consular commands. That is clear.⁷⁴ Several of the examples may be regarded as exceptional. Thus the resplendent fortune of M. Ulpius Traianus, who happens to have been proconsul of Baetica.⁷⁵ None the less one observes, in the precise and present context, A. Lappius Maximus, consul suffect with L. Javolenus Priscus at the end of 86. He had been proconsul of Bithynia-Pontus.⁷⁶

Routine develops, and patterns take shape. So far as known, most of the consular legates in this period had previously been legates governing a praetorian province. Antonius Saturninus in Judaea is a suitable confirmation.

Being political appointments in the first instance, the consular commands do not always entail much experience with the armies.⁷⁷ Sudden promotions can be detected. For example, the *ordinarii* of the year 78, L. Ceionius Commodus and D. Novius Priscus. They proceed almost at once, the one to Syria, the other to Germania Inferior. Likewise Lappius Maximus to Germania Inferior, one assumes, given his consulship at the end of 86.

As concerns Antonius Saturninus (*suff.* ?82), there is no way of telling whether or no he held another consular command before Germania Superior. Or, for that matter, whether the winter of 88/9 marks the first winter of his tenure or its previsible termination: there is a gap in the record after Q. Corellius Rufus (*suff.* 78), attested in 82. The one or the other might carry equal hazards for the comportsment and the prospects of a legate: a new and hesitant arrival, or a known commander, either odious as a disciplinarian, or over-indulgent through concessions to officers and troops.

IX

An attempt has been made to fill out the rubric of L. Antonius Saturninus with governorships in Macedonia (*c.* 76) and in Judaea (?78–81). One result is to show how sparse and equivocal is the written record. Cardinal questions about his rebellion wait upon an answer. In brief statement as follows:—

(1) The act of usurpation. That this Antonius proclaimed himself emperor is the common presumption.⁷⁸ Such may be implied in Martial's invective, but it is not stated in the sober testimony of Suetonius, who was about eighteen at the time. The charge becomes explicit in a later source, the *Epitome* of Pseudo-Victor: 'imperium corripuit.'⁷⁹ Whatever may be the designs of a rebel, the initial act and profession is not always to announce his own candidature.

Julius Vindex, insurgent in Gaul in the spring of 68, had to appeal to the legate of Tarraconensis, whom rank and prestige announced 'capax imperii'; and Verginius Rufus, who held Germania Superior, the son of a Roman knight, had reason to hesitate, disappointing his troops. The ensuing wars and proclamations changed the situation, and might seem to offer prospects for a pretender no better by birth than Vespasian. But it was not clear that the commanders of the nearest armies would acquiesce. As it happened, Lappius Maximus moved quickly against Antonius. The attitude of the legate of Britain, like his identity, remains obscure.

(2) Preparations. There is no sign. On the day of the battle a host of Germans appeared on the other bank of the Rhine, but the melting ice prevented them from crossing. They came at the call of Saturninus, so it was asserted.⁸⁰ Even if in extremity the rebel sought to

⁷³ Macedonia in this period stood highest, cf. H. G. Pflaum, *Bonner Jahrbücher* CLXIII (1963), 226. Observe further, under Trajan, the *Ignotus* disclosed by an inscription at Side: on which, L. Robert, *Rev. phil.* LXXXIV (1958), 33. He proceeded from Macedonia to Judaea; that article mentions the avowedly hazardous conjecture that the person might be '[C. Avi]d[ius] C[ei]oni[us] [Comm]odu[s]'. Hence *AE* 1969/70, 606.

⁷⁴ W. Eck, *ANRW* II. 1 (1974), 202 f.

⁷⁵ *ILS* 8970.

⁷⁶ Pliny, *Epp.* x. 58. 6.

⁷⁷ For an analysis of the consular legates from 70 to 235, see B. Campbell, *JRS* LXV (1975), 11 ff. That study properly deprecates notions of specialization. At the same time, a distinction can be drawn between Flavio-Trajanic practices and a certain pattern that can be detected under Hadrian and Pius.

⁷⁸ S. Gsell, *Essai sur le règne de l'Empereur Domitien* (1894), 252; R. Syme in *CAH* XI (1936), 172.

⁷⁹ *Epit.* 11. 9. Similarly Antonius is a 'tyrannus' in the three notices in the *HA* (*Pesc.* 9. 3; *Alex.* 1. 7; *Quadr. tyr.* 1. 1).

⁸⁰ Suetonius, *Dom.* 6. 2.

enlist barbarian help, no plan is proved. The Chatti in fact broke through the *Limes* and caused some damage.⁸¹

(3) The occasion. The season might appear propitious, the government being embarrassed on two fronts. A false Nero arose in the eastern lands, with strong support from the Parthians, and Roman armies were engaged in Dacia. On the other side, the Parthian monarch is seldom a genuine belligerent; and Domitian's general had won a great victory at Tapae in late summer or autumn of 88.⁸²

(4) Allies. Two consulars have been invoked.⁸³ First, a proconsul of Asia was suppressed about this time, namely C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis.⁸⁴ No connection has to be surmised. Cerialis might have come to grief through the false Nero—from failure to take action against the impostor. Second, a governor of Britain, Sallustius Lucullus, put to death on a trivial charge.⁸⁵ The person remains enigmatic, his fate may fall several years later.⁸⁶

(5) Political affiliations. No link is apparent with any group of malcontents at Rome, no person of rank incriminated. Savage punishments were meted out: at Moguntiacum, but not at the capital.⁸⁷ Further, legionary legates are lost to record. That is unfortunate. The transactions of January 69 show them as potent forces for action in each of the Rhine armies.

(6) Motives and morals. The *Epitome* comes in again—'his eius saevitiis ac maxime iniuria verborum, qua scortum vocari dolebat, accensus Antonius'.⁸⁸ The notice is not without interest. Domitian, so it happens, was rigorous in enforcing the old *Lex Scantinia*.⁸⁹

Adversion on the sexual habits of Antonius Saturninus goes back to earlier sources. According to Suetonius, a military tribune and a centurion secured pardon. They confessed to being merely 'impudici', hence submissive to their superior, not active in a treasonable enterprise; and Cassius Dio furnishes the name of the tribune, specified as a *laticlavus*.⁹⁰ On this theme it will be suitable to terminate with the peculiar item from Aelian. Reporting Vespasian's admission of Antonius Saturninus to the Senate, he describes him as a disgusting and scandalous fellow who was never entrusted with the charge of governmental funds.⁹¹

Whatever credence be accorded to confessions or allegations to the detriment of the consular legate, they fail to explain what occurred at Moguntiacum on 1 January of the year 89.

X

Epilogue. The large and general question therefore ends 'en queue de poisson'. No plot emerges, no premeditation.

One turns to the narrations of a historian who had a keen eye for the behaviour of soldiers as well as generals. The mutinies in September of 14 and the proclamations of 69 offer guidance. Cornelius Tacitus understood the nature of military turbulence: pride, rancour and anger, and the incendiary value of rumour. And, not less, accident or intrigue in elevating a pretender to the power.

Revolutions do not always arise from poverty, or rioting from genuine grounds of discontent. The two legions brigaded together at Moguntiacum had no known grievances (the pay had been increased), no recent successes in the field to inflate their conceit. But the soldiers may have found an excuse for license in celebrations of the Danubian victory or

⁸¹ *CAH* xi, 174 f.

⁸² Dio LXVII. 10. 2. Domitian was 'imp. xvii' by November of 88 (*CIL* xvi. 35).

⁸³ *CAH* xi, 174 (adducing Sallustius Lucullus).

⁸⁴ Tacitus, *Agr.* 42, 1, cf. *ILS* 1374 (the procurator).

⁸⁵ Suetonius, *Dom.* 10. 3.

⁸⁶ Thus A. R. Birley, *Epigraphische Studien* iv (1967), 68. For his identity, perhaps a *polyonymus*, see Tacitus (1958), 648—and, to no firm conclusion, *Some Arval Brethren*, ch. xi (forthcoming).

⁸⁷ Dio LXVII. 11. 2 f.

⁸⁸ *Epit.* 11. 9. Aurelius Victor and Eutropius do not mention the usurper. Which touches an intricate question, namely different sources evident in the *Epitome*. On Nerva it is profuse, probably deriving from Marius Maximus.

⁸⁹ Suetonius, *Dom.* 8. 3.

⁹⁰ Suetonius, *Dom.* 10. 5; Dio LXVII. 11. 4.

⁹¹ Aelian, fr. 112 (Hercher). The insurgent in fact seized the savings chest of the troops (*Dom.* 7. 3).

a prolongation of the December spirit of the *Saturnalia*, conceded by a benevolent commander.

When the troops broke into mutiny on the first day of January 69, the legate was Hordeonius Flaccus, debilitated by age, by gout, by timid inertia.⁹² Nor was Vitellius, the other commander, incited by energy or active ambition. Like that pair, Antonius Saturninus, though a younger man, perhaps owed commendation to a lack of dangerous talents. Vespasian's first promotions had been a mixed lot.⁹³

The calculations of a ruler in the choice of agents are baffled all too often; and a modest or mediocre *novus homo* may produce a surprise in more ways than one. Of Antonius Saturninus it cannot be ascertained whether he was eager to seize the power, impelled by officers on his staff—or the victim of events. Confronting the troops, Hordeonius Flaccus was in disarray—'segnis, pavidus et socordia innocens.' Without being quite so abject, Saturninus may represent the 'reluctant usurper', a figure on frequent show in the history of the later Empire, and in its historical fiction.⁹⁴

Let the emphasis repose on ignorance—and accident is safer to invoke than design. Ingenious or obtuse enquirers have discovered plots and planning behind the rebellion of Julius Vindex and the proclamation of old Gordianus, a hundred and seventy years later. Conspirators were inept if they selected either a Gallic province or proconsular Africa for launching their movement. The presiding power is Fortuna, 'quoius lubido gentibus moderatur'.

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⁹² *Hist.* i. 9. 1, cf. 52. 1.

⁹³ *Hist.* ii. 82. 2: 'plerosque senatorii ordinis honore percoluit, egregios viros et mox summa adeptos: quibusdam fortuna pro virtutibus fuit.'

⁹⁴ It is a theme of predilection in the *Historia Augusta*, which ends by bringing out comedy as well as folly in the act of usurpation. In the three brief

references to Antonius he is coupled with Vindex: in one of them, 'Lucium Vindicem et L. Antonium' (*Alex.* i. 7), Vindex is accorded the same *praenomen*. Had the author been aware of the *cognomen* he might have put it to good employ in the lavish inventions about the usurper Saturninus in *Quadrigae tyrannorum*.