

THE TACITEAN GERMANICUS

Suggestions for a Re-Evaluation

Tacitus' treatment of Germanicus Caesar in the first two books of the *Annales* has often served as a measuring-stick of the historian's integrity and reliability. F. R. D. Goodyear, in the first volume of his *Annals* commentary, surveyed the approaches taken by scholars to that date. Some¹⁾ believed that Tacitus had idealized a Germanicus who was at best a mediocre character and at worst a complete failure. Some²⁾ saw in the *Annales* a more balanced treatment of a Germanicus whose successes and abilities had recently been underestimated by scholars seeking to compensate for Tacitus' hero-worship. Some³⁾ stressed the specific parallelisms constructed by Tacitus between the careers of Agricola and of Germanicus. Some⁴⁾ evenhandedly and evenhandedly examined Tacitus' Germanicus-portrait and judged it, too, a basically fair treatment of a young officer whose brief career was a mixture of successes and costly errors, all overshadowed by the incongruity of his own situation vis-à-vis his adoptive father. Goodyear does not mention a second, and perhaps even more intriguing, article by Borzsák⁵⁾, in which the author – noting similarities among Antonius, Germanicus, and Caligula in the “orientalisierenden Gestalten” exhibited by each – claims that it was the aim of Tacitus – ever a master of subtlety and complexity – “dem Tyrannen-*mon-*

1) B. Walker, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Manchester 1952, 118–120, 126–128; Ronald Syme, *Tacitus*, Oxford 1958, 418, 492; S. G. Daitz, *Tacitus' Technique of Character Portrayal*, *American Journal of Philology* 81 (1960), 34–35, 37.

2) See especially E. Koestermann, *Die Feldzüge des Germanicus 14–16 n. Ch.*, *Historia* 4 (1956), 429–479; the same author's *Die Mission des Germanicus im Orient*, *Historia* 7 (1957), 331–375.

3) D. Timpe, *Der Triumph des Germanicus*, Bonn 1968, 77; B. Walker, *The Annals*, 232–233.

4) I. Borzsák, *Das Germanicus-Bild des Tacitus*, *Latomus* 28 (1969), 588–600; D. C. A. Shotton, *Tacitus, Tiberius and Germanicus*, *Historia* 17 (1968), 194–214; D. O. Ross, *The Tacitean Germanicus*, *Yale Classical Studies* 23 (1973), 209–227.

5) *Zum Verständnis der Darstellungskunst des Tacitus. Die Veränderungen des Germanicus-Bildes*, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 18 (1970), 279–292.

strum Tiberius einen potenziellen Tyrannen gegenüberzustellen, der infolge seines Wesens, als *comis* und *affabilis*, nur noch gefährlicher gewesen wäre als der andere". Goodyear himself doubts that Tacitus ever intended to draw a particularly consistent portrait of Germanicus, and sees the variations in the report as a function of the highly rhetorical character of Tacitus' historiography. "He is a rhetorician rather than a psychologist, and one of his most dominant concerns is, whenever and however he can, to move and enthral his readers," now using Germanicus as a dramatic foil to Tiberius, now as "egregiously undignified and inept" at the climax of a mutiny⁶).

It may well be time to re-evaluate Tacitus' portrait of Germanicus Caesar as a strategist, a leader of men, and ultimately as a potential successor to Tiberius. In the present paper I draw attention to several of Tacitus' comments concerning the actions and character of Germanicus which seem germane to a definitive understanding of the young man's potential as presented by the historian. I shall attempt, as far as possible, to exclude from consideration the character of Tiberius, as a foil to whom Germanicus has so often been viewed.

The evidence is of various types: editorial comments by Tacitus, remarks by other characters or groups of characters which are congruent with Tacitus' own comments, and narrative descriptions of Germanicus' actions which reveal a nature for which the comments of Tacitus and others have prepared the reader. Some of the passages have previously been used by scholars who wished to evaluate Tacitus' view of Germanicus. Others have escaped notice in this regard. A study which takes into consideration all of these pieces of evidence – and which needs to be carried out in a comprehensive way – will more likely succeed in producing a true picture of Tacitus' complex reaction to the young Germanicus. The present paper sows the seeds of a more comprehensive re-evaluation.

Such a detailed re-evaluation of Germanicus' career from A.D. 14 until his death in A.D. 19 will demand another large work on a topic often analyzed by scholars. Suffice it to note at the beginning of the present paper that Tacitus was certainly not afraid to point out Germanicus' mistakes. We must, I think, discard at the outset the notion that he idealized the latter. At 2.8, in

6) The Annals of Tacitus, Vol. I (1.1–54), Cambridge 1972, 240 f.

fact, he even labels as an error an action on Germanicus' part which may be construed as the considered act of a farsighted general. Arrived at the Ems, Germanicus landed his troops on the left bank and consumed several days in bridge-building. Tacitus worries about the loss of time, and although plans for a retreat might have necessitated such a step and there is no indication that the delay proved significant, Tacitus calls it a mistake: *erratumque in eo quod non subrexit <aut> transposuit militem*.

Germanicus' career divides itself clearly into two segments⁷). The action which Tacitus labelled erroneous (2.8) occurs near the end of the German narrative. That section itself, of course, began with Germanicus' attempts at quelling the German mutiny – attempts whose less-praiseworthy aspects have often drawn critical note. His suicide threat (1.35), the kind of histrionic and rather absurdly sentimental gesture which one comes to expect of Germanicus, backfired in a humiliating and potentially dangerous manner. There followed the ruse of the forged letter, immediately transparent to its intended victims (1.36 f.). Another humiliation resulted.

When a riot of the soldiery had intervened, Germanicus' advisors began to express their reactions to his tactics: *satis superque missione et pecunia et mollibus consultis peccatum* (1.40). The approach which they proposed was clearly of the kind elected by Drusus vis-a-vis the Pannonian mutineeres: *vocatos Vibulenum et Percennium interfici iubet* [Drusus] (1.29). While Tacitus does not explicitly support their position the context of the surrounding narrative loudly does so⁸).

By yet another highly sentimental ploy – the dispatch of his wife and son to 'refuge' among the Treviri (1.41–43) – Germanicus so excited the remorse of his soldiers that his suggestion to them (1.44, *cetera ipsi exsequerentur*) resulted in a voice-vote trial of those considered most guilty among the rebels and a bloody frenzy of revenge. There was no question of Germanicus' wishes having been misunderstood. He himself never advanced that claim, and Tacitus reports clearly the general's reaction to the slaughter,

7) See the articles by E. Koestermann, cited above in note 2.

8) One faction of Drusus' general staff had advised that *fortioribus remediis agendum*, a clear parallel with the German staff's complaints about *mollia consulta*. Compare also Drusus' firm speech in 1.29 (*negat se terrore et minis vinci: flexos ad modestiam si videat, si supplices audiat, scripturum patri ut placatus legionum preces exciperet*) with the emotion-based presentation by Germanicus in 1.42–43.

and its motivations: *nec Caesar arcebat, quando nullo ipsius iussu penes eosdem saevitia facti et invidia erat* (1.44). Surely a general of more experience or determination or courage would have found a more acceptable manner of dealing with the rebels. Germanicus was content to allow – even encourage – his men to condemn and slaughter each other while he himself appeared to maintain a safe distance from the horror of the action and the responsibility for it.

Even to Germanicus the solution was clearly not a satisfactory one, and when the slaughter was ended he dispatched the veterans to Raetia on the pretence of provincial defence, but actually *ut avellerentur castris trucibus adhuc non minus asperitate remedii quam sceleris memoria* (1.44). The army under Germanicus' command had reached a point at which it could bear neither its own errors nor the only remedies suggested by its leader.

A brief sentence which immediately follows has never been utilized by scholars in evaluation of the Tacitean Germanicus. It may, nevertheless, shed some light on that question, while careful examination of the sentence in the context of Germanicus' character may solve some of the linguistic problems which the passage has always presented to commentators.

When the purge of the rebels had been completed and the veterans had departed the camp with its memories of mutiny and retribution, *centurionatum inde egit* (1.44). Tacitus concludes this section of the narrative with a description of the *centurionatus* and moves to discuss the problems of the fifth and twenty-first legions, quartered in winter camp at Vetera.

The problematic sentence is the one cited above, conspicuous for several reasons. The word *centurionatus* is not a common one. In this context, where it must mean 'an election or review of centurions', it is unique (cf. ThLL 3.845.36). Meaning 'rank of centurion', *centurionatus* occurs at Val. Max. 3.2.24 and CIL 10.3340⁹). Furneaux¹⁰) allowed that "it is perhaps possible, on the analogy of 'dilectum agere', to make the phrase [*centurionatum agere*] mean 'to hold an election of centurions'; but more probably the passage is corrupt"¹¹). Koestermann remarks that "auch die

9) It is also a possible reading at CIL 8.10718; cf. ThLL 3.845.29 ff.

10) The Annals of Tacitus, Oxford 1896, Vol. I, 240.

11) Orellius, C. Cornelii Taciti opera quae supersunt, London 1846, Vol. I, 40, defines *centurionatus* in 1.44 as "centurionum recensionem ac de eorum meritis et delictis cognitionem". He notes that, at Val. Max. 3.2.23 (*cum facta, tum etiam verba tua centurionatus honore donata sunt*), *centurionatus* "est idem atque cen-

Neuwahl der Centurionen verlief in gänzlich ungewohnten Bahnen und war nicht weniger anfechtbar¹²⁾. Goodyear¹³⁾ maintains that “if we retain the *paradosis*, we must assume either that Tacitus has harshly and unaccountably distorted Latin usage, or that *centurionatus* may in fact be a Latin term for *centurionum recensio*, unknown to us because the procedure happens not to be recorded elsewhere. The latter alternative may be preferred”.

The meaning called for by the term *centurionatus* in this context is certainly clear. It *must* mean ‘an election or review of centurions’. Further, a review of centurions – themselves apparently the source of many problems – is not surprising in this context. The surprising aspect is the manner in which the review was carried out. Such a review happens not to find parallel in the extant corpus of Latin literature, despite the numerous mutinies which pepper the narratives of Roman historians. There is no indication that Drusus, in suppressing the Pannonian mutiny whose causes matched those of the German uprising (1.31, *isdem ferme diebus isdem causis Germanicae legiones turbatae*), ever considered carrying out such a *centurionatus*.

In the very midst of the narrative of Germanicus’ responses to the mutinous legions, at a time when his tendency to avoid harsh and decisive action which might result in ill feelings against himself is repeatedly making itself apparent, stands the problematic sentence: *centurionatum inde egit*. Its brevity, in the context of long and complex sentences, marks it as noteworthy¹⁴⁾. So does the apparently unparalleled use of the word *centurionatus* in the sense which the context demands – ‘an election or review of centurions’. I maintain that Tacitus was quite aware of the harshness of the term in this sense and that he used it purposely in order to catch the reader’s attention, hold it, and direct it toward the aspect of Germanicus’ character which he stresses, explicitly and implicitly, throughout the course of the narrative. He hesitated to excite ill-will against himself and repeatedly allowed others to carry out in his stead actions which tended in that direction. Soldiers

turiatus, centurionis munus”. For the entire phrase he draws parallels with *censum, delectum agere*. His remarks indicate a certain dissatisfaction with the sentence, or with the use of *centurionatus* in the sense required.

12) *Annalen*, Heidelberg 1963, Vol. I, 175.

13) *Annals*, Vol. I, 300.

14) As parallels from the first two books of the *Annales* may be cited such significant sentences as *et erat, ut rettuli, clementior* (2.57) and *versae inde ad Tiberium preces* (1.11).

slaughtered soldiers in a frenzy of guilt, *nec Caesar arcebat*. Immediately thereafter took place the Germanican *centurionatus* – an action which by its nature and its apparent lack of precedent may well highlight a nature dangerously inclined to shirk responsibility in a time of crisis.

Germanicus' reaction to the scene of slaughter which awaited him subsequently upon his arrival at Vetera (1.49) only reinforces the notion of a young man who is either naively untutored concerning the behavior of soldiers under such dire conditions as those which prevailed, or cleverly ready to use his subordinates to deal with unpleasant situations in his stead. Having threatened harsh action if retribution was not exacted before his arrival at the camp, when faced with the resultant slaughter he could only lament *non medicinam illud plurimis cum lacrimis, sed cladem appellans* (1.49). The tears and the apparently helpless distress are congruent with the portrait of Germanicus which Tacitus has presented to this point.

Germanicus' mistakes only seem to have multiplied when he left the German legions and moved to the eastern provinces. His trip to Egypt could scarcely be defended on any grounds, since no senator was allowed to enter the province without the express permission of the Princeps. Once more Germanicus appears as a young man either strangely remote and ignorant of the political realities or cagey in his pretence of naiveté. Tacitus reports that the trip's true motivation was Germanicus' desire to see the antiquities (2.59, *Aegyptum proficiscitur cognoscendae antiquitatis*). While even such a justification would doubtless have been unsatisfactory to Tiberius, the Caesar alleged in excuse his interest in settling some affairs of the province (*sed cura provinciae praetendebatur*), and during his trip thoroughly frightened Tiberius by meddling with the Egyptian grain supplies (*levavitque apertis horreis pretia frugum*). Whatever may have been his other popular actions in the province (*multaque in vulgus grata usurpavit*) – endearing him no more to his adoptive father – Tiberius had to intervene later in the year when the grain supplies at Rome dropped to unacceptable levels (2.87). One wonders whether Germanicus' apparently generous and probably naive action in Egypt had soon produced unfortunate results in the Roman market¹⁵).

15) Surely Germanicus had little consideration for the effect on his men of the visit to the Teutoburger Wald. A desire seized him (1.61, *cupido Caesarem invadit*) and he led his soldiers to the dire scene. There was no question of re-

The Egyptian tour had other consequences which touched Germanicus himself almost immediately. Before the trip, the Caesar seemed to have settled in a rather satisfactory way the problems of the eastern provinces. According to Tacitus, however, problems with Piso were obvious even then, and neglect of his provincial duties at a time when Piso's enmity could be most effective was a mistake. Tacitus reports that as Germanicus travelled and Piso began his own campaign against him many of the young man's well-considered arrangements were rendered null and void (2.69, *cuncta quae apud legiones aut urbes iusserat abolita vel in contrarium versa cognoscit*).

Before the Egyptian tour the two men had clashed and parted in open anger (2.57, *discesserunt apertis odiis*). Later Piso criticized Germanicus for an 'un-Roman' love of luxury and the latter, though feeling the insult, held his peace (*quae Germanico quamquam acerba tolerabantur tamen*)¹⁶). At this juncture Tacitus tersely describes the very character of Germanicus which the narrative, through its many scenes, has revealed: *erat, ut rettuli, clementior*. Tacitus intrudes on the narrative with his own striking editorial comment and thereby draws special attention to this sentence, with its strange adjective. *ut rettuli* seems to refer most specifically to a recently-narrated instance of Germanicus' man-

capturing the eagles lost with Varus: only a sentimental desire, however praiseworthy, to pay last respects to the dead. Tacitus alleges two possible motivations for Tiberius' disapproval. Dio reports (56.31.3) that Tiberius, in his role as pontifex, was extremely circumspect in his dealings with funerary affairs, and if in this instance his concern was that Germanicus, as a member of the collegium of the Augustales (1.54), would profane himself, it may have been an overreaction based on his own eccentricity. After all, Germanicus did not touch the dead and therefore was not contaminated in any strict legal sense. The rites for the dead seem to have had no immediate ill effect on the soldiery, aside from the first shock of grief, however much such an effect may have worried the emperor. Their anger against the enemy was increased by the experience (1.62, *aucta in hostem ira maesti simul et infensi*). Nevertheless, Tiberius' concern (*exercitum...tardatum ad proelia et formidolosiores hostium credebat*) may have found its echo in the quick-panic of Caecina's men on the return march (1.65), or in Caecina's own nightmare concerning Varus. Be that as it may, Tacitus never hints that either of those two perfectly understandable concerns presented itself even fleetingly to Germanicus. *Cupido Caesarem invadit* and he reacted – from the most noble of motives, it may be, but naively and sentimentally. If he took thought for his own position or the impact of the dire sight on his men, Tacitus lets it pass unmentioned.

16) The events are here presented as Tacitus narrates them, according with the popular belief that Piso received an imperial mandate to harass Germanicus and was, indeed, directly or indirectly responsible for his death.

suetudo. At 2.55 Tacitus reported that Germanicus, although he might easily have eliminated his rival who was shipwrecked and in mortal danger, *tanta mansuetudine agebat ut ... miserit triremis quarum subsidio discrimini eximeretur*. Tacitus' comment in 2.57 assures the reader that Germanicus' very *nature* was of the type exemplified in the incident of the shipwreck: *erat ... clementior*.

The adjective *clemens* is not common in Tacitus' works. Gerber and Greef list only two uses¹⁷). In 1.58 it characterizes a response given by Germanicus to Segestes as the latter surrendered himself to Roman custody: *Caesar clementi responso liberis propinquisque eius incolunitatem, ipsi sedem vetere in provincia pollicetur*. The only other appearance is in the section now under consideration, 2.57. In both the referent is Germanicus Caesar. Tacitus is likely to be telling the reader something by such narrowly focussed word usage. In 2.57 he even steps into the picture to emphasize the point: *et erat, ut rettuli, clementior*¹⁸).

The significance of the comparative degree itself in 2.57 presents an intriguing question. Did Tacitus intend the reader to see Germanicus as 'rather mild'? Or was his comment a more critical one, labelling the young Caesar 'too mild'? The narrative of Germanicus' career seems well to congrue with the latter interpretation, but it need not be pressed. Many of Germanicus' problems, nevertheless, seem to have resulted from his excessive mildness, manifested in hesitation to take a strong and direct action which might provoke conflict. Examples of such conduct – or of conduct which might have as its aim the acquisition of a *reputation* for clemency – in connection with the German mutiny are rife: his attempts to quell the mutiny in Germany by threatening suicide (1.35) or by using his family to humiliate the soldiery (1.44), his attempt at settling the financial problems of the soldiers via a forged letter (1.36), his connivance when the legions of lower Germany carried out a voice-vote trial of the rebels among them and condemned the 'guilty' to death (1.44), his similar reaction to the scene of slaughter at Vetera (1.49). The reader is, in fact, completely prepared for the *content* of Tacitus' remark in 2.57, if not for its strikingly intrusive nature.

Twice Tacitus re-emphasizes Germanicus' reputation for gentleness at the very conclusion of his narrative concerning the Caesar. At the announcement of Germanicus' death, the province

17) See the Lexicon Taciteum, Leipzig 1877–1890, *clemens*.

18) See Gerber and Greef for uses of *clementer* and *clementia*.

as well as foreign nations and kings mourned him for his *comitas in socios, mansuetudo in hostis* (2.72). He indicates that the *populus Romanus* shared this view of Germanicus in its musings on the day of his funeral: he surpassed other men *clementia, temperantia, ceteris bonis artibus* (2.73)¹⁹).

In re-evaluation of the Tacitean Germanicus, it is necessary to consider carefully the passages treated in the present paper. Tacitus interspersed his narrative of Germanicus' campaign with his own comments, those of other characters, and descriptions of Germanicus' actions themselves, all of which suggest that Tacitus' conception of Germanicus was extremely complex. The young man was eager, ambitious, and often acted from the most praiseworthy of motives. His actions, nevertheless, as those of a possible successor to the Principate, create a more ominous impression. He often seems to act more on the basis of sentiment and quick emotion than of considered planning. Repeatedly he reacts to a situation in a manner which proves unsatisfactory and which might allow him to avoid conflict and responsibility for any consequent ill-will.

Perhaps Germanicus' much-touted reputation for *clementia* and *mansuetudo* had a basis in fact. In that case and on the best accounting, there are clues that his *clementia* and *mansuetudo* perhaps ran over into plain softness, and that his extreme naiveté made him, realistically, quite inappropriate as an aspirant to power in the changed world of the Principate²⁰). A less charitable accounting might see in his hesitance to excite personal ill-will a clever and perhaps somewhat diabolical inclination to use others as his tools while preserving his own image of innocence, *clementia, mansuetudo, and comitas*. On that reading Borzsák's "*potenzieller Tyrann*"²¹) will find support in the Tacitean narrative.

19) In the same psychological *obliqua*, the first point which *differentiated* Germanicus from Alexander the Great was his mildness toward his friends: *sed hunc mitem erga amicos*.

20) Although he does not discuss the *centurionatus*, Borzsák 1970, 287 well summarizes Tacitus' view of Germanicus' character and potential: „Aber er [Tacitus] mußte doch von Fall zu Fall zugeben, daß sein Idealtheld die ihm zuge dachte Aufgabe nicht erfüllen konnte. Er ließ sich durch die Ereignisse hinreißen, er konnte sich zum Handeln nicht entscheiden, die Initiative erwartete er von anderen, und die Verantwortung überließ er anderen. . . Indem der Historiker die rechnerische und selbstsüchtige Zusammenfügung der einzelnen Elemente der Germanicus-Legende entdeckt und auch durch seine Leser sehen läßt, zerstört er eigentlich einen schön erscheinenden, aber falschen und irreführenden Mythos.“

21) Zum Verständnis der Darstellungskunst, 288 (see note 5 above).

Missing from the present study is an evaluation of Germanicus' performance 'in the field' during his German campaigns of A. D. 14–16²²). Details of that performance would demand a lengthy treatment of military matters which goes beyond the scope of this paper. A careful reading of the pertinent chapters, however, produces a not unfavorable impression of the young man as a general. Augustus had, after all, entrusted him with a province which could always be troublesome²³), and a certain ability on his part which merited the trust of Augustus should be expected. His preparations seem to have been generally appropriate and well-considered²⁴). His clashes with the enemy appear, on a fair reading, to have been rather more successful than not²⁵). The losses

22) E. Koestermann (see note 2 above) has studied carefully his actions in that arena.

23) Suetonius (Aug. 23) maintains that the disaster of Varus troubled Augustus' mind ever after. Edward Luttwak deals with the strategic approach adopted by the Romans in Germany during the Julio-Claudian period (The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A. D. to the Third, Baltimore 1976, 7–50). See also R. Chevallier, *Rome et la Germanie au Ier siècle de notre ère: Problèmes de colonisation*, Latomus 20 (1961), 266–80. Collin Wells collects the archaeological evidence for Augustus' German policy in his useful and intriguing book, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence*, Oxford 1972.

24) 1.50, wise use of scouts and quick, effective action on the basis of their reports; 1.51, accurate prediction of the enemy's behavior and appropriate response (*quod gnarum duci, incessitque itineri et proelio*); 1.56, careful arrangements for the building and strengthening of roads and bridges to the rear of the Roman lines; 1.56, awareness of the weather conditions which might well meet him on his retreat and preparations for dealing with them; 1.63, appropriate advice to subordinate officer concerning the best way of negotiating the return march; 2.5, decision (supported with detailed rationale) to transport the troops into the German heartland via rivers rather than overland; 2.11, refusal to launch attack across river by his own troops before making sufficient preparations for them in case of retreat (*nisi pontibus praesidiisque impositis dare in discrimen legiones haud imperatorium ratus*); 2.12, careful and effective use of scouts and deserters; 2.20, prediction of the vengeful attack by the Germans following his establishment of a trophy (*nihil ex his Caesari incognitum: consilia locos, prompta occulta noverat astusque hostium in perniciem ipsis vertebat*).

25) Twice they fled before a true battle could be joined (1.56, 2.7). Caecina's troops, attacked in the swamps of the 'long bridges', fought through, and achieved a psychological victory, though not without suffering (1.68: *quamvis plus vulnerum, eadem ciborum egestas fatigaret, vim sanitatem copias, cuncta in victoria habere*). Twice (2.18, 2.22) Germanicus himself was able to set up trophies after victorious engagements. Of Idistaviso, Tacitus remarks that *magna ea victoria neque cruenta nobis fuit* (2.18). Once the care with which he was able to draw up his legions prevented a massacre of the Roman cavalry by Arminius' men (1.63,

suffered – some of them quite costly – can easily be explained without recourse to denigration of his abilities²⁶).

Indeed, Germanicus' most glaring error in connection with the German campaigns – and the one which has drawn much scholarly note – was in his too-favorable evaluation of the impact of his own campaigns and especially in his overly-optimistic prognosis for an early end to the German war. Tacitus reports that, at the end of Germanicus' final campaign the enemies were no longer willing to join battle with the Romans, and captives reported that their motive was fear. The quick recovery of the Romans from losses which had seemed devastating had apparently impressed the Germans greatly (2.25, *quippe invictos et nullis casibus superabiles Romanos praedicabant, qui perdita classe, amissis armis, post contrata equorum virorumque corporibus litora eadem virtute, pari ferocia et velut aucti numero irrupissent*). These remarks, whether based in fact or in a desire to flatter or mislead an enemy who had the speakers at his mercy, as well as his own experiences in Germany, encouraged Germanicus to believe that the Germans were on the point of surrender.

Expectations were high when the soldiery returned to winter quarters and victory during the following season seemed likely: *nec dubium habebatur labare hostes petendaeque pacis consilia sumere, et si proxima aestas adiceretur, posse bellum patrari* (2.26). This very enthusiasm on Germanicus' part, here attributed also to his troops, has led students of Germanicus' military exploits to decry his misevaluation of the situation. His evaluation of his own accomplishments and possibilities, however, seems completely consonant with the youth's character as it has been delineated in this paper. His military accomplishments were not contemptible, his care and foresight and planning generally praiseworthy. Again, however, as in his dealings with the mutineers, with Egyptian matters, and with Piso, his apparently naive enthusiasm was his worst enemy. Tiberius, sincerely or not²⁷), was willing to allow that the Roman losses in Germany had been the fault of weather conditions and were no fault of Germanicus (*quae venti et fluctus,*

trudebanturque in paludem gnaram vincentibus, iniquam nesciis, ni Caesar productas legiones instruxisset. inde hostibus terror, fiducia militi). That confrontation resulted in a draw.

26) 1.70, 2.23.

27) The Tacitean portrait of Tiberius, with all of its complexities, is not the topic of this paper.

nulla ducis culpa. . . damna intulissent). Even Tiberius, urging Germanicus' return, allowed that his campaigns had not been insignificant (*satis iam eventuum, satis casuum. prospera illi et magna proelia*). Nevertheless, Germanicus' continued request for a year in which to clean up the German problem seemed to the emperor naive at best, and might have smacked of intended uprising at the head of a victorious army loyal to its general. *Precante Germanico annum efficiendis coeptis*, Tiberius remained firm and the campaign was at an end.

Indications are that to assert Tacitus' idealization of Germanicus is to assume an untenable position. A detailed study of the Tacitean Germanicus may yet decide for the naive and innocent youth or for the clever and dangerous image-maker. Whatever the final judgement on Germanicus' character as portrayed by Tacitus, it seems imperative that in formulating the final judgment one give appropriate weight to the evidence here presented.

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WHEN DID GUARD DUTY END? THE REGULATION OF THE NIGHT WATCH IN ANCIENT ARMIES

Very little information has come down to us on how the duration of night watches was regulated in ancient armies. The earliest evidence is that of Aeneas Tacticus, writing probably soon after 357 B. C. His *Poliorcetica*, though probably more useful to the besieged general than the *Georgics* are to the farmer in the field, provide scant instructions on keeping the watch. A further account of night watches, in the Roman army in the late fourth century A. D., is provided by Vegetius¹). The difference in the

1) Vegetius, *Epitome Rei Militaris* (ed. C. Lang [Teubner], Leipzig 1885) 3, 8 (pp. 84-5). Cf. J. Clark and T. R. Phillips, *The Military Institutions of the Romans* (Harrisburg 1944, 1965), p. 84.