

GAIUS SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS AS A HISTORIAN

by

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ABSTRACT

The introduction to this thesis consists of a biographical note. This is extremely essential to an understanding of Suetonius's attitude and preoccupations. Information about his life is scanty, but some definite conclusions can nevertheless be drawn about the main outlines of his life. He was a rather versatile and prolific writer. Unfortunately the De Vita Caesarum and fragments of the De Viris Illustribus among which is the De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus, are the only extant works.

In chapter I, an examination of the Sources which Suetonius used for his De Vita Caesarum is made, and it is found that Suetonius cites many sources in the De Vita Divi Iulii and the De Vita Divi Augusti, but gradually quotes more rarely in the lives that follow, until in the lives of the Flavians, he fails to name a single source. This practice of not continuing the use of any one source lends confirmation to his wide literary taste. His choice of sources is regarded critically, and his criticism of his source-material is observed. It is found that he has made an injudicious

selection of sources, which tends to give a warped impression of the majority of the emperors. Although his criticism of his sources is rare, yet it is handled well on those rare occasions. His use of gossip is examined, and bias is detected, for it is found that the gossip is for the most part malicious, and used mostly in the lives of those emperors of whom he disapproves.

Chapter II is devoted to an assessment of the accuracy of Suetonius's account of the De Vita Caesarum. Special attention is paid to the De Vita Divi Iulii, the De Vita Divi Augusti and the De Vita Divi Vespasiani. The conclusion is reached that although Suetonius's account differs slightly from that of Plutarch, Velleius Paterculus, Appian, Tacitus and Dio Cassius, Suetonius's main fault lies in the fact that he has omitted or treated too lightly important historical events. His disregard of a chronological sequence of events tends to make it difficult for anyone to appreciate cause and effect. There are certain internal inconsistencies. He is at times very accurate about the birthdates and the times of death of his emperors, but at other times, he is guilty of careless inaccuracies.

In Chapter III, it is shown that Suetonius, because of his superstitious nature, sees the divinities as guiding the destiny of man who is weak and feeble. Man is restricted

in his actions, and his ability to effect good or bad change is dependent on his impious or pious attitude to the gods, who show their approval or disapproval in the form of portents, prodigies, omens and dreams. When man does not hearken to the signs, he meets a horrible end. Throughout the chapter, it is shown that Suetonius sees divine intervention in every facet of the emperors' lives. This accounts for his failure to look for political, social or economic reasons for any of the difficulties that beset the empire.

Chapter IV deals with Suetonius's preoccupation with morality, or rather with immorality. Throughout the De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius examines the public and private lives of the emperors for virtues and vices. He seems as concerned with the moral question as Gaius Sallustius Crispus. The emperors are judged favourably or unfavourably in proportion to their virtues and vices. The chief vices are largitio, stuprum, avaritia and luxuria. The virtues are clementia, liberalitas, and moderatio. Any violation of moderatio, on which Suetonius places a great deal of emphasis, is greatly censured.

Suetonius's analysis of human behaviour is treated in Chapter V. It is found that Suetonius possesses little psychological subtlety, and makes futile efforts to account for changes in the behaviour of several emperors. He

believes in the inflexibility of human nature. Man is born either good or bad, and heredity has a great deal to do with this innate goodness or evil. There is also the suggestion that man's destiny is inescapable. Suetonius's inadequate analysis of human character and behaviour is due to his belief in the power and influence of the gods.

Chapter VI is an attempt to show that Suetonius, despite his lack of a deep political insight, yet is not disinterested in politics. He is interested in the attitude of the emperors to the Senate, their administrative ability, their treatment of the law courts, their relations with the public, their social reforms and their foreign policy. He glosses over the political struggle that occurred before Julius Caesar became dictator, the political significance of Augustus's actions and those of the ^{other} emperors. The complexities of the political life of the Empire have little fascination for him.

Chapter VII is an attempt to show that Suetonius is only familiar with Italy, and is vaguely aware of the other regions. This may be regarded as evidence that he has not travelled outside of Italy.

The conclusion, contained in Chapter VIII is an assessment of Suetonius as a historian. It is found that

Suetonius can be regarded as a historian, even if not a very good one. It must be borne in mind that he does not pretend to write history, but biography. A knowledge of the main historical facts is assumed. The De Vita Caesarum contains a remarkable amount of important data. He has omitted what we consider important details, but which he himself considered unimportant. Every historian lays particular stress on what he considers important, and Suetonius is no different. He makes a genuine attempt to record the facts impartially. He did a great deal of research, and cites many sources. At times he is critical of his sources. He is no mere chronicler, but in general a comparatively good historian. The impact of his work on literature is also briefly summarized.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	iii
List of Tables	iv
List of Maps	v
Introduction	1
CHAPTER	
I Sources	5
II Accuracy	34
III Causation in History	75
IV Attitude to Morality	96
V Analysis of Human Character and Behaviour	113
VI Attitude to Politics	133
VII The World of Suetonius	157
VIII Conclusion	165
Bibliography	173

PREFACE

In writing this thesis, I have relied on Macé's Essai sur Suétone for the details of Suetonius's life, works, and the impact of his works on subsequent Roman Literature. I have also been greatly assisted by the commentaries of A.W. Braithwaite to Vespasian, of H.E. Butler and M. Cary to Divus Iulius, and of E.S. Shuckburgh to Divus Augustus in writing Chapter II. All the quoted passages of the De Vita Caesarum are from the Loeb edition.

I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. B.L. Hijmans who suggested the topic for my thesis, Dr. T.F. Charney, my adviser, and Dr. K.A. Sandiford of the History Department who offered many helpful suggestions and valuable criticisms. Above all, I am indebted to my wife who has done a splendid typing job despite the difficulties involved.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Favourable and Unfavourable Comments Hidden in Unsubstantiated Sources	30
2.	Distribution of Sources in <u>De Vita Caesarum</u>	32
3.	Omens in Suetonius's <u>De Vita Caesarum</u>	91
4.	Omens in Dio Cassius's <u>Roman History</u>	92
5.	Omens in Tacitus's <u>Histories</u> , Plutarch's <u>Lives</u> and Appian's <u>Roman History</u> ,	93

LIST OF MAPS

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Map of the Ancient World showing towns, rivers cited by Suetonius ..	160
2.	Map of the Ancient World showing regions named by Suetonius	161
3.	Map of Italy showing places named by Suetonius	162

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, an attempt will be made to show that, contrary to the opinion of many critics, Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus is a historian. His biographical work, De Vita Caesarum will be examined, and an assessment made of his ability to write history on the basis of this work.

For an understanding of his motives in writing the De Vita Caesarum, a detailed knowledge of his life would have been helpful, but little is known about him. From the few details available, it is still possible to see the reasons for his preoccupation with the supernatural and morality, his interest in the administrative ability and the literary talents of the emperors, his insistence on justice, and his disinterestedness in military affairs and in the political intrigues of various factions.

Like most ancient writers, Suetonius rarely mentions facts about his life. Allusions to himself and to his family are to be found in the De Vita Caesarum and the De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus, his correspondence with Pliny, and Pliny's correspondence with the Emperor Hadrian. Spartian, John Lydus

and Fronto also provide some useful information.

As to details of his birth and other parts of his life, one has to resort to conjecture. It is generally believed that he was born at Rome ca. 69 A.D. Evidence for this is based on Suetonius's recollections of a false Nero. (Nero 57) His father was apparently of equestrian rank. Suetonius, in recounting the battle of Bedriacum, writes that his father, Suetonius Laetus, tribune of the XIII legion in Otho's army. (Otho 10)

Suetonius passed his childhood under Titus and Vespasian. He rarely speaks of his memories of growing up. In the Life of Lucan, he recalls that Lucan's writings formed the subject of lectures by grammarians. In the De Grammaticis (Ch. 4), he mentions that grammarians taught rhetoric, and he cites an example of a grammaticus, who, when he (Suetonius) was an adulescentulus, used to vary his teaching with demonstrations in rhetoric.

Me quidem adulescentulo repeto quendam principem nomine alternis diebus declamare alternis disputare nonnullis vero mane disserere, post meridiem remoto pulpito declamare solitum.

During his adulescentia, he collected oral testimonies. (Nero 29) He probably learnt the details which he reports on the proscriptions from the sons of the proscribed. (Nero 36)

It is only from 97 to 113 A.D., that definite information is obtained about Suetonius, mainly through Pliny's letters. Pliny gave Suetonius the title of contubernalis in this period. On Suetonius's request, Pliny wrote Baebius Hispanus about purchasing a small cheap villa for Suetonius. (Ep.1,24) Influenced, perhaps, by Pliny, Suetonius practised as a pleader in the forum. This information is derived from Pliny's letter I, 18, which is a reply to a request of Suetonius that Pliny should use his influence to have a case in which Suetonius was appearing postponed, because he was frightened by a dream. This letter explains the importance Suetonius attaches to dreams and omens in the De Vita Caesarum.

Suetonius is next heard of contemplating a military life. Pliny obtained a military tribunate for him, but Suetonius changed his mind and urged Pliny to have the commission transferred to a relative. Pliny agreed. (Ep.III 8) Suetonius, free to concentrate on studies from 101 to 113, published his first work ca. 111 - De Viris Illustribus. The death of Pliny in 113 puts an end to our knowledge of Suetonius until his appointment as secretary ab epistulis to Hadrian. This position he obtained through the influence of Pliny's friend, Septicius Clarus, who became prefect of the praetorian guard in 119 for three years. Suetonius benefited greatly from this office. On the expulsion of Clarus from his post, Suetonius, out of loyalty to him,

resigned. Apparently Clarus was the head of a faction at Court, which lost its influence to the party of the Empress Sabina.

Considering the number, variety and length of several of his works, one could assume that at least twenty-five years were spent in producing them. Since there is no evidence to support any date for his death, it would appear that he lived at least to 138. The date generally given is 141 A.D.

His writings are as follows:-

1. De Viris Illustribus. (About famous literary figures in Roman History).
2. De Vita Caesarum, published in eight books around 120 A.D.
3. De Regibus. (A catalogue of the Kings of Europe, Asia and Africa).
4. περὶ ἐπισημῶν πορνῶν. (About famous prostitutes).
5. περὶ τῆς κικέρωνος πολιτείας. In this work, sympathy is shown for Cicero.
6. De Institutione Officiorum. Interest is shown for ancient public offices.
7. περὶ τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσιν παιδιῶν. (About the games of the Greeks).
8. De Genere Vestium. (About clothing).
9. περὶ τῶν παρὰ Ῥωμαίους θεωριῶν καὶ ἀγῶνων. (Circus, games and scenes).
10. περὶ τοῦ κατὰ Ῥωμαίους ἐνιαυτοῦ. (On the Roman year).
11. περὶ Ῥώμης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ νομίμων καὶ ἡθῶν.
12. περὶ δυσφήμων λέξεων ἢ τοι βλασφημιῶν καὶ πόθεν ἔκαστη.
13. περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις σημείων. (On Signs in Books).
14. De Rebus Variis.
15. Pratum (Prata). This work includes De Naturis Rerum, De Animantium Naturis and De Vitiis Corporalibus.

CHAPTER I

SOURCES

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, in his De Vita Caesarum uses a variety of sources, the majority of which are concentrated in his De Vita Divi Julii and ^{De}Vita Divi Augusti. His citing of specific sources becomes rarer in the lives that follow, until in the lives of the three Flavians - Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, not a single source is mentioned. The De Vita Caesarum is divided into eight books. Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero occupy separate books, while Galba, Otho and Vitellius occupy the seventh and Vespasian, Titus and Domitian the eighth book. The first six Caesars will be treated separately, therefore, but Galba, Otho and Vitellius will be dealt with as one group and the Flavians ^{as}/another.

The sources available to Suetonius for writing the life of Julius Caesar were numerous. He had at his disposal the texts of the laws and the senatus consulta which were stored in the aerarium. There were similar materials in municipal archives still available in the time of Suetonius. Inscriptions were still abundant. Numerous coins struck by Caesar during the period 49 - 44 B.C. could be obtained, and

much official information on various topics could still be found in the files of the acta senatus and the acta populi which had been published by Caesar in 59 B.C., as Suetonius himself mentions in De Vita Divi Iulii 20.1. Information could also be gleaned from autobiographies of contemporaries with whom Julius Caesar was closely connected. Augustus, Cicero and Sulla, for example, had compiled autobiographies. Caesar's life had been described by Gaius Oppius and Cornelius Balbus, while Votacilius Pitholaus had written a life of Pompey.

General histories, too, were numerous. There were the annalistic works of Aelius Tubero and Velleius Paterculus, and the authoritative account of the Civil War from 60 B.C. to 42 B.C. by Asinius Pollio. Historical monographs on various topics were numerous. Caesar's Commentarii recognized even by his enemies as an outstanding work, treated the Gallic and Civil Wars, while Gaius Sallustius Crispus wrote the In Catilinam which describes an interesting period of Caesar's life. Also available in large quantities were political pamphlets, political speeches and publications of orators.

The most important source material would, perhaps, be the correspondence between Cicero and Caesar, and Cicero's letters in general. The reason for mentioning the sources

available is that it is quite possible that Suetonius could have used all of the sources, despite the fact that he only names some of them specifically. On various occasions he cites sources without giving any particular names. On a few occasions, he even cites names that are apparently used¹ only by him.

In the De Vita Iulii, Suetonius may have used the acta senatus for the detailed list of honours voted to Caesar during the period 46 - 44 B.C. (ch. 76), the acta populi for the similar list of festivities (ch. 39) and for the proceedings at the funeral of Caesar (ch. 84). There is no certainty that Suetonius used only the sources he named, for Appian, Dio Cassius and Plutarch have described these matters at great length. Of the biographical writers, Suetonius cites Cornelius Balbus (ch. 81), Marcus Brutus (ch. 49) and Gaius Oppius (chs. 53 & 72). Of the historians, he cites Ampius Balbus (ch. 77), Tanusius Geminus (ch. 9), Aulus Hirtius (ch. 56), Actorius Naso (chs. 9 & 52), Asinius Pollio (chs. 30 & 56) and Aelius Tubero in ch. 83. With the exception of Hirtius and Oppius, and probably Balbus, for he was at first an adherent of Pompey and later transferred his allegiance to Caesar, all of the others were opposed to Caesar.

¹Vide infra p.12.

Suetonius's account of the crossing of the Rubicon (chs. 31f) seems to have been derived from Asinius Pollio, for it agrees closely with that of Plutarch who evidently drew from Pollio. Pollio was one of Caesar's military confidants and accompanied him on most of his campaigns in the Civil War. Hence, there is the possibility that Suetonius obtained much of his information contained in chapters 57 to 70 from this source. The fact that Suetonius alludes directly to Pollio on three occasions seems to lend support to this argument. Caesar's Commentarii are discussed, and Suetonius cites sources to prove that Caesar was highly regarded as an eloquent man of letters. It is, therefore, very reasonable to assume that Suetonius did refer to this work.

Among the writers of pamphlets and lampoons, Suetonius quotes Aulus Caecina (ch. 75), Licinius Calvus (ch. 49), and he mentions Valerius Catullus (ch. 73), Gaius Memmius (chs. 49 & 73) and Volcacilius Pitholaus (ch. 75), all of whom were the principal sources for scandalous gossip. He also refers to the edicts of Bibulus (ch. 9), the speeches of Marcus Cato, a known enemy of Caesar (chs. 14, 30 & 53), Gnaeus Pompey (ch. 30), Caesar's chief adversary in the Civil War, and Lucius Sulla (ch. 1).

There are numerous references also to Caesar's

speeches and letters (chs. 22, 31, 34, 56, 66 and 74), and Cicero's correspondence from which Suetonius often cites. (chs. 9, 42, 47, 50, 55, 56) Suetonius mentions letters of Caesar less often than those of Augustus, but he seems to have also examined them in the archives. In Iulius 56, Suetonius writes: "Epistulae quoque eius ad Senatum extant quas primus videtur ad paginas et formam memorialis libelli convertisse, ..." This shows that he also examined authentic manuscripts. Helvius Cinna, a tribune of the plebs is mentioned in chapter 52. In addition to these specific sources, there are fifteen occasions on which he uses general terms hinting that he has made use of sources, although he conceals the names. A few examples of these are:- "Saepe ex eo auditum ferunt ..." (ch. 29), "... multi prodiderunt" (ch. 46), "...fuisse constans opinio est ..." (ch. 50).

In writing the De Vita Divi Augusti, Suetonius had at his disposal a considerable number of authorities, the majority of which have perished. He quotes from the emperor's own memoirs which extended to 24 B.C., of which he makes ample use, since they are cited in chapters 2, 7, 42, 62, 74, 85 and 86. Suetonius's post as secretary ab epistulis to Hadrian seems to have helped him considerably. The documents which he appears to have perused more carefully in the

archives are the writings of the emperors themselves, notably their letters, and especially those of Augustus. Suetonius not only quotes those that had been published - Tacitus, Quintilian and Aulus Gellius also quote extracts from letters of Augustus - but he is preoccupied with inserting into his works the unedited letters of Augustus. The fact that these letters were not published is confirmed by the very character of a number of the letters quoted by Suetonius.

The publication of some of the letters of Augustus would have been very embarrassing to the parties concerned. It is unlikely that Augustus or his successors allowed the publication of letters in which Augustus made fun of the oddities or criticized the failings of Tiberius or Claudius, or his daughter Agrippina, or Maecenas. Macé thinks that the information which Augustus writes to Livia, Claudius's grandmother, about Claudius could never have been published.

(Claudius 4) "Certes des détails si intimes et si tristes pour Auguste et pour sa famille jusqu' à Claude étaient encore, à la mort de ce dernier, ensevelis aux archives dans quelque 'scrinium' secret."²

The publication of some of these letters would have

²
A. Macé, Essai sur Suétone, p.119.

been annoying for Augustus himself. He would scarcely have published the letters which stated that dice games were played outside of the Saturnalia (ch. 71), or the letter in which he reprimanded Vinucius for calling on his daughter at Baiae (ch. 64). Suetonius discovered these letters in the archives and published the first part of the letters of Augustus relative to Vinucius, to the miseries of Claudius, and to Tiberius (Tib. 21). The fashion in which he presents several letters also indicates that they were not edited. The letters are often introduced by a verb in the first person: "... capita ex ipsius epistulis posui." (Claudius 3) "Ex quibus in exemplum pauca hinc inde subieci." (Tib.21) The length as well as the number of citations seem to indicate that Suetonius has examined these letters very thoroughly. His examples are varied and well chosen. "Notavi et in chirographo eius illa praecipue." (Aug.87) As if to prove the authenticity of his citation, he writes: "Verba ipsius ex epistulis sunt." (Aug.76) In Tiberius 22, Suetonius gives six instances to prove the truth about the adoption of Tiberius.

The letters are interspersed throughout the De Vita Caesarum. They are introduced in various ways:- ut ipse dicit, ut scribit, ita rescripsit, epistula ita scripta and ita questus. Sometimes the letter is put in indirect style. (Aug. 56, 64, 92) Letters that were published are also used, as

can be seen from the way in which he introduces the letter written by Augustus to his grand-daughter Agrippina (Caligula 8): "Exstat et Augusti epistula ...". Augustus's speeches are cited exactly in chapters 58 and 84. State papers are quoted in chapter 84; his laws in chapters 34 and 36; rationaria of the Empire drawn up periodically (ch.28); laudationes over members of his family. There is mention of other compositions on more general topics as listed in chapter 85. Suetonius also mentions three volumes left by Augustus containing directions for his funeral, a breviarum of the Empire and finally the index rerum gestarum (ch.101).

Among Suetonius's sources were numerous public documents: the acta diurna preserved from the time of Julius Caesar, the senatus consulta et acta quoted in chapters 5, 58, 65; the plebiscita which bestowed honours on Augustus in chapters 57 and 58, as well as local records at Velitrae (ch.1). There were also the writings of various friends and foes of Augustus. The speeches of Marcus Brutus, the letters of Sextus Pompey (ch.68); Marcus and Lucius Antonius in chapters 2, 4, 6, 63, 69, Cassius of Parma (ch.76), Junius Novatus (ch.51), Antistius Labeo (ch.54) are all cited. Popular epigrams are referred to in chapter 70, while Cicero is cited in chapters 3 and 94, and Drusus, of whom little is known, in chapter 94.

There were other histories giving a chronological account of the life and times of Augustus. Among them was Cremutius Cordus (ch.35) who wrote a history of Augustus in which he appeared to have taken a rather unfavourable view of the earlier part of Augustus's career. Proof of Cordus's unfavourable history is the fact that his books were among those burnt in the reign of Tiberius. Suetonius also alludes to Aquilius Niger (ch.11), who attacked Augustus and accused him of causing the death of Hirtius. Nothing is known about Niger, since he is only mentioned by Suetonius. Equally unknown is Junius Saturninus (ch.27) who assailed Augustus's conduct during the proscription.

Marcus Valerius Messala (64 B.C. - A.D.8) is cited on three occasions, twice in chapter 58 and in chapter 74. Valerius had formerly been a supporter of Brutus and Cassius, but joined Antony after the defeat of the Republican Party. He transferred his allegiance to Octavian (Augustus) because of Antony's conduct. He did Augustus great service, even proposing the title of Pater Patriae for him in 2 B.C. Messala gained great fame as an orator and historian, but he also dabbled in poetry and philosophy. He was one of a small group which upheld its principles even in the face of trouble. He refused a prefecture offered by Augustus (26 B.C.), because he objected to Augustus's conduct at the time. His history could, therefore, be depended upon to

give a fairly impartial view, since his object would neither be one of flattery nor enmity.

Reference is also made to Cornelius Nepos (99 - 24 B.C.), a historian and poet, in chapter 77. In his most comprehensive work De Viris Illustribus in which he paralleled the lives of Romans and foreigners alike, he must have alluded to Augustus frequently. Julius Marathus, Augustus's freedman and secretary, left an account of Augustus's personal appearance and the omens that accompanied his birth. Reference is made to him in chapters 79 and 94. In the matter of omens, Suetonius also cites Asclepiades of Egypt and Publius Nigidius Figulus (ch. 94).

Notwithstanding the mass of authorities for the period, Suetonius mentions sources without giving names, using vague phrases to cover both written and oral testimonies. Examples of these are:

Alii scribunt quidam ... (chs. 2 & 16)
 ... exstiterunt qui tradunt (ch. 15)
 Quidam ... exponunt (ch. 94)

The statements that are not attributed to specific people are for the most part favourable to Augustus. Some of them may have been malicious rumours circulated around the court, and Suetonius with his flair for gossip could not let slip the opportunity of including these rumours in the biography.

With regard to the De Vita Tiberii, Suetonius seems to rely on the words of the emperor himself. The use of specific sources is rare. With the exception of Augustus in 21.4, 21.5, 21.6, 21.7, and Lucius Annaeus Seneca in chapter 73, this biography is based mainly on the statements of Tiberius. His allusions are vague. Reference is made to the annals of a man of consular rank: "Annalibus suis vir consularis inseruit ..." (Tib. 61) Whether the paucity of dependable material is responsible for the lack of sources named, or Suetonius is less interested in the lives of the ten other emperors, it is clear that no attempt is made by Suetonius to substantiate many of the statements by citing specific sources. The belief is that the nearer he gets to his own period, the less he seems to regard the writings of others, and he prefers to use the words of the emperors themselves to praise or condemn them.

It seems that the documents in the archives regarding Tiberius did not prick Suetonius's curiosity, for reference is only made to his will. (Tib.76) The letter to the Senate (ch.67) could have been published in the acta where Tiberius allowed the insertion of documents which were not advantageous to him. In chapter 24, Suetonius cites the very words of Tiberius: "Ipsius verba sunt." Most of his material from sources is introduced vaguely thus:

... quidam ... existimaverunt ... (ch.5)
 Scio vulgo persuasum ... (21.2)

For the reigns of Caligula and Claudius, there were several historians at Suetonius's disposal. Two of the best known were Aufidius Bassus and Servilius Nonianus. Suetonius does not mention these. As in the biography of Tiberius, the sources named are few. In the De Vita C. Caligulae reference is made to Gaius Plinius Secundus in chapter 8, Julius Catullus, a young man of whom little is known, (Cal. 36), and Gnaeus Lentulus Gaeticulus. (Ch.8) Pliny is the one source used by Suetonius which is not contemporaneous with the life of the emperor he describes. Pliny (A.D.62 - 113) held public and municipal office under Domitian and finally the consulate under Trajan. He was Imperial Legate in Bithynia. Under Nerva, Pliny began to compose letters with a view to publication, and these letters dealt with a multiplicity of subjects. There was also a great deal of correspondence between Pliny and Suetonius, and in fact, it is mainly from Pliny that most of the information on Suetonius's life is known. Cornelius Lentulus Gaeticulus was an erotic poet. He was consul in A.D. 26 and Legate in Upper Germany. In A.D. 39, he led the conspiracy by which Gaius Caligula was to be murdered, and on the failure of the plot, he was executed.

To prove that Caligula had decided to kill the noblest members of the two orders, Suetonius refers to two notebooks in which Caligula had the names of those destined to die.

(Cal.49) Reference is made to Tiberius and the Gazette (ch.8.2), and a letter of Augustus written to Agrippina (ch.8.3) Suetonius refers to the public records in Caligula 23. Caligula himself is used as the main source. As in the other lives, numerous references are made to unnamed sources, introduced in the usual manner:- "... ut quidam opinantur ..." (ch.12), "Scio plerosque existimasse ..." (ch.19.3), etcetera.

The same plan holds true for the De Vita Divi Claudii. Here mention is made only of Augustus (Claudius 4), Tiberius and Caligula. There are various references to the statements of Claudius himself, while the rest of the account is taken care of by the usual vague introductions:- "fuisse autem traditur creditur ..." (ch.1.4), "... pari modo oppressum ferunt ..." (ch.37). There is also the personal testimony of Suetonius: "Illud quoque a maioribus natu audiebam, ..." (ch.15.3) Suetonius also quotes Claudius's history in chapter 21.

For the life of Nero, the best available sources were Cluvius Rufus, Fabius Rusticus and Pliny. How far Suetonius uses these is uncertain. References are made to Licinius Crassus (ch.22), Datus, an actor of Atellan farce (ch.39.3), Domitius, Nero's father (ch.6) and Isidorus (ch.39). The predictions of astrologers are given in

chapter 40, while some of the lampoons that were posted and circulated are quoted in chapter 39. He mentions trustworthy authorities in writing about the evil deeds of Nero, but there is no hint as to the authorities meant. He writes:

"Adduntur his atrociora nec in certis auctoribus ..."(Nero 34)

The trustworthiness of the authorities is doubted since the information given by these authorities is regarded as false by other authorities, as Tacitus writes in his Annales 14.9. Suetonius also mentions that he has obtained testimony from certain men. "Ex nonnullis comperi persuasissimum habuisse ..."(ch.39). In order to show the great respect paid to Nero after his death by the Parthians, Suetonius writes:

Denique cum post viginti annos adolescente me exstitisset
condicionis incertae qui se Neronem iactaret tam
favorabile nomen eius apud Parthos fuit ut vehementer
adiutus et vix redditus sit. (Nero 57)

There are the usual references to statements of Nero himself, and anonymous sources.

Since Galba, Otho, and Vitellius did not remain in power for very long, and since Suetonius's account of them is so short, their biographies can be dealt with briefly together. Suetonius must have had access to the Histories of Tacitus which was published around 106 - 108 A.D., but he never specifically refers to this work. This is in keeping with his habit of not citing any major work. Pliny the Elder was the principal authority for these biographies, since his continuation of the history of Aufidius Bassus

ended around 71 A.D. By a minute comparison of the accounts of Galba and Otho given by Tacitus in his Histories and by Plutarch and Suetonius in their biographies of these two emperors, and of the accounts given by Tacitus and Suetonius of Vitellius, Fabia comes to the conclusion that Tacitus, Suetonius and Plutarch used a common source - Pliny.³ In the De Vita Galbae, Suetonius cites Augustus (ch.4) and Tiberius (ch.4). He refers to a written order, (ch.5.2) verse bandied about the camp, (ch.5.2) actors of Atellan farce, (Ch.13) an Edict (ch.15) and the senatus consulta (ch.23). He seems to have consulted the domestic records of the Sulpician and Salvian families, for he writes in Galba 3: "Imagines et elogia universi generis exsequi longum est." In the De Vita Othonis, Suetonius refers to Claudius, (ch.1) Otho himself, and Suetonius Laetus, his (Suetonius's) father, (ch.10) while in the De Vita Vitelli, he mentions Quintus Elogius (ch.1) and Cassius Severus (Ch.2). Elogius was an Augustan writer of memoirs, and Suetonius cites him as a first hand authority on the Vitellian family. Severus seems to have been a brilliant but bitter orator, whose work was publicly burnt, while he himself was forced to go into exile.

The genealogy of Vespasian owes a great deal to Suetonius's personal research. "Ipse ne vestigium quidem de

³P. Fabia, Les sources de Tacite, (Paris: 1893)
chapter III

hoc quamvis satis curiose inquirerem inveni!(Vesp.1) The Histories of Tacitus, then the only complete historical work available is not mentioned by Suetonius, and the possibility of his having used it is remote, as Macé⁴ affirms. Braithwaite states that Suetonius's work on the Flavians was completed before he became secretary ab epistulis, since there is nothing in these three lives to show that he used the imperial archives in their preparation.⁵ In the life of Titus, he writes: "E pluribus comperi notis ..." (ch.3.2) A personal testimony is given of Domitian's cruelty by Suetonius, when in chapter 12, he states: "Interfuisse me adolescentulum memini, cum a procuratore frequentissimoque consilio inspiceretur nonagenarius senex an circumsectus esset." Many slanderous remarks are assigned to mysterious sources.

Suetonius seldom gives an opinion on his sources, but it is often possible to judge his opinion by his own subtle treatment of them. In the De Vita Divi Iulii, for example, when he mentions the Pisonian Conspiracy (9), although he does not say whether he believes Julius Caesar was implicated in the plot, yet the number of sources he uses to substantiate this point viz. that Caesar was involved, means that he himself believes it. In this instance he cites

⁴Macé, pp 369, 375.

⁵C. Suetoni, Vespasian, ed. A.W. Braithwaite (Oxford: 1927) p. xii.

Marcus Bibulus, Marcus Cicero, Gaius Scribonius Curio, the Elder, Tanusius Geminus, and Actorius Naso. The fact that all the sources named were hostile to Caesar shows that Suetonius does not try very hard to convey an impartial view of the situation. Throughout this life, Suetonius consistently denigrates Caesar, and it is obvious that his jaundiced view of this great man is mainly the result of his injudicious choice of sources.

In keeping with this imbalance in his treatment of Julius Caesar, Suetonius gives the impression that the excuse for the Civil War was a trivial one, and hence he writes: "causas autem alias fuisse opinatur." (Iul.30) Then he quotes Marcus Cato, Cicero, Gnaeus Pompeius, Asinius Pollio and a vague "alii". With the exception of Asinius Pollio, the sources named were hostile to Julius Caesar. On this occasion, after agreeing with Pollio's assertion, thinking it the more credible story, he cannot help but take a further gibe at Caesar, and so he writes: "Quidam putant captum imperii consuetudine pensitatisque suis et inimicorum viribus usum occasione rapiendae dominationis quam aetate prima concupisset". (Ibid.) The impression is created that Suetonius is prepared to deny the validity of the former view, which is certainly the more credible one, and agree with Cicero in the latter opinion.

Suetonius again quotes numerous sources to prove an accusation detrimental to Caesar's reputation. By using a rhetorical device, he cites Bibulus, Brutus, Licinius Calvus, Cicero, Curio the Elder, Dolabella and Gaius Memmius to prove that Caesar had illicit relations with King Nicomedes. As if to add further proof, he cites the bantering songs sung by Caesar's soldiers in the Gallic triumph. It is only fair to believe that Suetonius is convinced that Caesar was guilty, because Suetonius takes great pains to strengthen the evidence, even using sources inimical to Caesar. Greater evidence of Suetonius's opinion is furnished by his conclusion: "At ne cui dubium omnino sit et impudicitiae et adulteriorum flagrasse infamia Curio pater quadam eum oratione omnium mulierum virum et omnium virorum mulierem appellat" (Iul.52).

Even when Caesar has to be praised - even his bitter critics Cicero and Aulus Hirtius acclaimed him highly as a man of letters, and rated his memoirs an outstanding work - Suetonius cannot resist the temptation to belittle Caesar's literary talents. Thus he maliciously reports Asinius Pollio's view that Caesar's memoirs were put together "parum diligenter parumque integra veritate ..., cum Caesar pleraque et quae per alios erant gesta temere crediderit et quae per se, vel consulto vel etiam memoria lapsus perperam ediderit." (ch.56) If one were to examine this chapter alone,

one would be forced to think that Suetonius's attempt at impartiality has caused him to report all opinions, both favourable and unfavourable. However, an examination of this biography, and especially of Suetonius's account of the Gallic Wars, would readily reveal that Suetonius, even if he does not believe Pollio's statement in toto, thinks there was a great deal of truth in it. Suetonius uses most of his sources to make personal points rather than to support any historical theory. When he is extremely vague and resorts to hearsay, he generally cites information detrimental to the emperors. This is particularly true in the case of Julius Caesar.⁶

In the De Vita Divi Augusti, although Suetonius realizes that Antonius was trying to disparage the maternal ancestors of Augustus, yet he, with his flair for spiteful gossip, cites Antonius as a source (Aug.3). This could hardly be regarded as a good attempt at objective writing. Cassius of Parma, an enemy of Augustus, is also cited to substantiate Antonius's statement. Suetonius, however, shows definite bias in his treatment of Augustus. For, although he is quick to report spiteful gossip, nevertheless, in the case of Augustus, he tries to free him of any charge of mean ancestry, or any other charge that would be

⁶Vide chapters 33, 45, 47, 50, 51, 54 & 79 of the De Vita Divi Iulii,

detrimental to his reputation.

In chapter 88, Suetonius uses his personal observations in an attempt to free Augustus from a charge of cashiering a consular governor for bad spelling. He points out that Augustus did not comply with orthography, but he was always transposing and omitting syllables, and adds:

Nec ego id notare, nisi mihi mirum videretur tradidisse aliquos, legato eum consulari successorem dedisse ut rudi et indocto, cuius manu "ixi" pro "ipsi" scriptum animadvertit.

Suetonius is conveying the impression that Augustus was not likely to do such a deed, since he himself was guilty of the same practice.

In the De Vita Tiberii, Suetonius offers criticism of his sources with regard to the birth of Tiberius. For he writes: "Tiberium quidam Fundis natum existimaverunt secuti levem coniecturam, quod materna eius avia Fundana fuerit et quod mox simulacrum Felicitatis ex s.c. publicatum ibi sit." (Tib.5) Then as is the case with all genealogies, birthdates and birthplaces, he seems to have consulted numerous authorities, for he writes: "... ut plures certioresque tradunt...", Tiberius was born at Rome. He substantiates this with proof from the Calendar and the public Gazette. "sic enim in fastos actaque in publice relatum est". (Ibid.) Another of those rare occasions when Suetonius offers a criticism of his sources^{is} in chapter 21. Here he is trying to

disprove the common belief that Augustus was opposed to Tiberius, and was led by his wife's entreaties to adopt him.

Suetonius writes:

Adduci tamen nequeo quin existimem, circumspectissimum et prudentissimum principem in tanto praesertim negotio nihil temere fecisse; sed vitiis Tiberi virtutibusque perpensis potiores duxisse virtutes, praesertim cum et rei p. causa adoptare se eum pro contione iuraverit et epistulis aliquot ut peritissimum rei militaris utque unicum p. R. praesidium prosequatur.

Suetonius then strengthens his opinion by appending several extracts from the letters of Augustus. With respect to the belief of many that Tiberius would have executed his grandsons, Suetonius himself considers this "nec abhorret a vero; namque identidem felicem Priamum vocabat quod superstes omnium suorum exstitisset." (Tib.62) Suetonius also quotes many sources in relating the death of Tiberius, but he does not give his opinion. (ch.73)

In the De Vita C. Caligulae, Suetonius produces a rather lengthy criticism of the sources on the question of that emperor's birthplace. "Ubi natus sit incertum diversitas facit." (Cal.8) To settle the problem, Suetonius cites the writing of Gnaeus Lentulus Gaeticulus who stated that Caligula was born at Tibur, and that of Pliny who wrote that he was born in a village near Ambitravium among the Treveri. In the face of his conflicting evidence, Suetonius decides to investigate the matter himself, and discovers that Caligula was in fact born at Antium. "Ego in actis Anti editum

invenio." (Ibid.) He further adds that Pliny has erred in chronology. Then he gives proof of Pliny's error by referring to other historians of Augustus, and quotes moreover a letter written by Augustus to his grand-daughter, Agrippina, about Gaius Caligula. After this lengthy discussion, Suetonius writes:

Abunde parere arbitror non potuisse ibi nasci Gaium, quo prope bimulus demum perductus ab urbe sit. Versiculorum quoque fidem eadem haec elevant et eo facilius, quod ii sine auctore sunt. Sequenda est igitur, quae sola restat et publici instrumenti auctoritas, praesertim cum Gaius Antium omnibus semper locis atque secessibus praelatum non aliter quam natale solum dilexerit...(Ibid.)

Another instance of his giving an opinion on sources is in Caligula 12. Suetonius states that there were many who believed that Tiberius was poisoned by Gaius Caligula, and that this "nec abhorret a veritate, cum sint quidam auctores, ipsum postea etsi non de perfecto, at certe de cogitato quondam parricidio professum." Suetonius offers disbelief at the supposition of many for Caligula's reason for building a bridge between Baiae and Puteoli, when he writes:

Sed avum meum narrantem puer audiebam causam operis ab interioribus aulicis proditam quod Thrasyllus mathematicus anxio de successore Tiberio et in verum nepotem priori affirmasset non magis Gaius imperaturum quam per Baianum sinum equis discursurum. (Cal.19)

Suetonius, in the De Vita Divi Claudii, proffers an opinion on the general belief that Germanicus was eager for glory and intended to restore the old form of government whenever he had the chance. Suetonius thinks that it was because of this that some people have said that Germanicus was an

object of suspicion to Augustus, and was poisoned on his orders. (Cl.1.4) Suetonius says, however, "quod equidem magis ne praetermitterem rettuli, quam quia verum aut versimile putem." (Cl.1.6) He then shows, contrary to the belief of many, that Augustus loved Germanicus so much that he named him joint heir with his (Augustus's) sons, and even wrote a memoir of Germanicus's life.

In the De Vita Neronis, Suetonius disagrees with those who think that Nero published the works of others as his own, and gives as his reason for disagreement the following proof:

Venere in manus meas pugillares libellique cum quibusdam notissimis versibus ipsius chirographo scriptis ut facile appareret non tralatos aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos; ita multa deleta et inducta et superscripta inerant. (Nero 52).

Whereas Suetonius tries to free Augustus from being charged with low birth, he makes no attempt to support Vitellius. There were varying accounts given of the origin of the Vitelli, some saying that the family was ancient and noble, others that it was new and obscure, if not of mean extraction. Suetonius writes: "Quod ego per adultores obtrectatoresque imperatoris Vitelli evenisse opinarer, nisi aliquanto prius de familiae condicione variatum esset." (Vit.1) He then cites Quintus Elogius who gives the favourable view of the origin of the Vitelli, and Cassius Severus and others who give the unfavourable view. However, he decides not to give an opinion. "Sed quod discrepat, sit in medio". (Vit.2) Nevertheless, he then proceeds to name some of the ancestors of Vitellius, and to

show how notorious they were. These details per se make it clear what Suetonius's opinion is.

Suetonius makes the claim that he has made a careful investigation and has found no evidence that Petro's father came from the region beyond the Po, but that he settled in the town of Reate and then married. (Vespasian 1.4) This is just another instance of Suetonius's care in checking sources critically when genealogy is involved. He also shows in chapter 16 of the De Vita Divi Vespasiani his readiness to acquit or make excuses for those emperors whom he regards highly. Therefore, when Vespasian is accused of being naturally covetous by some, while others think that he was driven to raise money by spoliation and robbery, because of the desperate state of the treasury and privy purse, Suetonius gives preference to the latter view thus: "Quod et verisimilius videtur quando et male partis optime usus est". (Ibid.)

Above are shown the occasions on which Suetonius feels himself compelled to criticize his sources or to give an opinion directly or indirectly. When there are weightier points of historical interest to consider, Suetonius ignores these and spends a great deal of energy on digging up sources to substantiate slanderous attacks on the lives of the emperors. His choice of sources is understandable, since he is more likely

to obtain malicious information from obscure sources than from reputable ones. Not only in the De Vita Divi Iulii, does Suetonius, by his use of unfavourable sources, or by his reportage of gossip, not give a fair assessment of Julius Caesar, but also in the lives of the other emperors. An examination of the information which is assigned to vague and unnamed sources shows that Suetonius has used this information mainly to the detriment of the emperors whose behaviour he abhors.⁷ Seldom is the gossip good, when it is reported in the lives of the bad emperors. When he is describing the lives of the emperors he considers good, there are fewer examples of malicious rumours and even if these emperors are scandalously attacked, Suetonius attempts to defend them.

The conclusion must be reached that Suetonius does not make effective use of the sources available to him in writing the De Vita Caesarum. Only in the chapters dealing with genealogies, birthdates and birthplaces does he make any attempt to discover the reliability of his sources. The impression is also conveyed that Suetonius devotes so much time to an examination of the sources for the preparation of the biographies of Julius Caesar and Augustus, that his energy is all spent when he is writing the other lives. Hence the first two lives are well supported by documents, however ill

⁷See chart on page 30.

CHART SHOWS FAVOURABLE AND UNFAVOURABLE COMMENTS HIDDEN IN UNSUBSTANTIATED SOURCES

	EMPERORS OF WHOM SUCTONIUS HAS A FAVOURABLE OPINION		EMPERORS OF WHOM SUCTONIUS HAS AN UNFAVOURABLE OPINION			
	AUGUSTUS	VESPASIAN	JULIUS CAESAR	TIBERIUS	CALIGULA	NERO
+	2, 6, 15, 33 73, 94	4.5	45, 55, 75, 78		19	
-	15, 71, 80	4, 16.2, 16.3, 16.3. *	30, 30, 33, 34, 45, 45, 46, 47, 47, 50.1, 50.2, 51, 54, 76, 78, 79.	21.2, 21.2, 45, 49.1, 49.2, 51, 52, 54, 62.	12, 12.3, 19, 24, 25, 32, 36, 38, 50.	6, 23, 28.2, 28.2, 29, 29.3, 32, 34, 37.2, 37.3, 45, 53, 54.
?	13, 23, 35	24, 25.	1, 13, 29, 30, 34, 48, 86.1, 86.2.	67	59.2, 59.3	54
NUMBER OF CHAPTERS IN EACH LIFE	101	25	89	76	60	57
+ FAVOURABLE COMMENT - UNFAVOURABLE COMMENT ? NEUTRAL			NUMBERS REPRESENT CHAPTERS IN WHICH UNSUBSTANTIATED SOURCES ARE QUOTED * ALL COMMENTS CONCERN HIS LOVE OF MONEY			

chosen they may be, while the other lives are filled with gossip and unsubstantiated statements. His citing of specific sources becomes rarer and rarer until it disappears in the lives of the Flavians.⁸

It becomes apparent that Suetonius, in citing the sources, many of which were obscure, is trying to show how widely read he is. His resorting to generalizations, introduced by such words as traditur, ferunt and creditur, is an attempt to conceal the fact that the information was hearsay or to show that there were many authorities for the information, and he is familiar with them all. Since Suetonius, when he does cite specific sources, does not persist in the use of any of them, while he uses sources named only by him, it seems likely that he is well acquainted with the various authorities of the time. He makes a thorough perusal of Augustus's letters. This is evident from the fact that the letters are even cited in the De Vita Divi Claudii. Perhaps there may be some truth in the contention that Suetonius is mainly interested in the emperors, Julius Caesar and Augustus, and does a thorough research on the material available to him, while in the other lives, he is less interested, and does less research. When he is describing the lives of the emperors

⁸Vide chart on page 32.

nearer to his own time, there were people still living from whom he could gather information. Hence he depends to a greater degree on oral testimonies rather than on written ones. This information can be generally unreliable since eyewitnesses tend to give very different accounts of events with the process of time. He also relates his personal observations to support his statements, (Nero 57) and the stories told by his father (Otho 10), and his grandfather (Cal. 19). Suetonius's failing as a historian lies not in the fact that he has not perused the sources available to him, but in the fact that he has made an injudicious choice of sources. Hence, as in the De Vita Divi Iulii, where the unsavoury parts of Caesar's life are built up out of proportion to the good parts, Suetonius's account of several emperors is distorted.

CHAPTER II
ACCURACY IN REPORTAGE

Suetonius's account of the De Vita Caesarum seems to be fairly accurate. However, the facts have to be examined not only with regard to their accuracy, but with regard to the interpretation given them by Suetonius, the sources used and the influence exerted by these facts on the course of history. In view of the great difficulty involved in checking the accuracy of the lives of the twelve Caesars, a detailed examination will be attempted of the lives of Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Vespasian, while a cursory one will be made of the lives of the other emperors.

In the De Vita Divi Iulii, as was already shown in chapter I, Suetonius chooses sources that were not only unfavourable but hostile to Caesar. This action in itself casts serious doubts on the authoritativeness of the work. A very warped picture of Julius Caesar must be given if no attempt is made by Suetonius to choose sources that are as impartial as can be expected.

Unlike all the other lives, the De Vita Divi Iulii begins when Caesar was in the course of his sixteenth year. It is obvious that a part of this life is lost, since in all the other lives, there is generally information on the ancestry of the emperor, and the omens that accompanied his birth. As a result of the loss of a few chapters of this life, there is no mention of Caesar's birthdate, but this can be obtained from other evidence in the life. Suetonius places his death in 44 B.C., at which time he was in his fifty-sixth year. This means that Suetonius places his birth in 100 B.C. This date is confirmed by Plutarch, Appian (ii 149) and Velleius Paterculus. (ii 41) A different date is suggested by Tacitus (Dial. 34.8), who indicates 98 B.C.¹ or 97 B.C. Velleius Paterculus, (ii 43) however, states that Caesar was appointed Flamen Dialis by Marius and Cinna. If this is correct, it would mean that the date would be 86 B.C., when Marius and Cinna were on their joint consulship, during which time Marius died. Suetonius mentions that Caesar lost his father at the age of fifteen, and was appointed Flamen in the next year - his sixteenth birthday. This would mean that his birthdate would be 102 B.C. Badian² states that the birthdate of Caesar has not been satisfactorily determined,

¹See introduction to Divus Julius ed. H.E. Butler and M. Cary (Oxford: 1927) for examination of arguments about date.

²E. Badian, "Caesar's Cursus, and the Intervals between Offices". JRP XLIX (1959), p.81.

although the majority of scholars place it at 100 B.C.

The affair between Sulla and Caesar is not treated properly by Suetonius, and it is difficult for one who knows little about the period to understand the significance of Sulla's request and Caesar's refusal. It is therefore obvious that Suetonius assumes a knowledge of the facts. Plutarch's account differs from that of Suetonius with regard to Sulla's words concerning Caesar, and is more credible. Plutarch states that when it was urged by some that it was not in Sulla's interest to contrive the death of a boy, he told them that they knew little who did not see more than one Marius in that boy. (Caesar 1) Suetonius, on the other hand, writes that Sulla gave way to the most eminent and devoted men of his party who interceded for Caesar and cried: "Vincerent ac sibi haberent, dum modo scirent eum, quem incolumem tanto opere cuperent, quandoque optimatum partibus, quas secum simul defendissent, exitio futurum; nam Caesari multos Marios inesse." (Iul. 1).

Suetonius mentions that when Caesar was in Bithynia, he was suspected of improper relations with Nicomedes. Plutarch does not mention this scandal, nor do Paterculus and Appian. Dio Cassius mentions that the soldiers referred to Caesar's stay, when he was a lad at the court of Bithynia, and Caesar's attempt to clear himself on oath of the rumour of

improper relations. (Dio xliii 20) Suetonius not only mentions it, but tries to show that there was some foundation for this suspicion. Whereas Suetonius associates the adventure with the pirates with Caesar's visit to Rhodes in 76 B.C., where he went to study (Iul. 4), Plutarch places it earlier in connection with his visit to Bithynia ca. 80 B.C. (Caes. 4) Velleius Paterculus is vague and just mentions that it happened when Caesar was quite young. (Vel. Pat.ii 41)

In the matter of the prosecution of Dolabella, (Iul. 4) Suetonius makes it appear as though the charge was an unjust one, and that Caesar had to escape to Rhodes to avoid the ill-will that resulted for him after the acquittal of Dolabella. Plutarch says that Caesar accused Dolabella of maladministration, and many cities in Greece came to attest to it. So far from rushing to Rhodes to escape the resentment of the people, Caesar, in return for the support of the Greeks, assisted them in their prosecution of Publius Antonius for corrupt practices. (Plut. Caes. 4) This trial is not mentioned by Suetonius. He seems more concerned with the audacity of Caesar in bringing a charge against a governor who had been honoured with triumph, than with the attempt by Caesar to obtain better government for the provincials.

Suetonius, after following a strict chronological order, breaks it by mentioning the marriage of Caesar and Pompeia,

and the divorce which occurred because of the pollution of the Bona Dea by Publius Clodius in 62 B.C. (Iul. 6) Suetonius implies that this marriage took place before Caesar went to Spain, while Plutarch writes that Caesar married Pompeia after his return from Spain. (Plut. Caes. 5) Suetonius may have given this impression mainly because he does not adhere to a strict chronological account of events.

The dream, in which Caesar offered violence to his mother, is mentioned by Suetonius as occurring in 61-60 B.C., (Iul. 7) while Plutarch (Caes. 32) and Dio (xli 24) write that this occurred in 49 B.C. at Ravenna, just before Caesar crossed the Rubicon. Plutarch also relates the incident connected with the statue of Alexander differently from Suetonius. Suetonius writes that, when Caesar noticed a statue of Alexander the Great in the temple of Hercules, he heaved a sigh, as if out of patience with his own incapacity in having done nothing noteworthy, at a time when Alexander had already brought the world to his feet. Then he straightway asked for his discharge and went to Rome to grasp an opportunity for greater enterprises. (Iul. 7) Plutarch does not mention a statue, but he writes that during his Spanish tour of duty, Caesar, when he had read Alexander's history, burst into tears, and asked for reason, said: "Do you think that I have no cause to weep when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations and I have all this

time done nothing that is memorable?" (Plut.Caes. 11)

Suetonius makes the sight of Alexander's statue the reason for Caesar's departure from Spain before his term of office was over, and the reason for his going to the Latin colonies to spur them on to some rash action for his own benefit.

(Iul. 8) He also shows Caesar to be superstitious, when he says that Caesar was also encouraged by an interpretation of his dream. This incident is recorded by Plutarch (Caes. 11) and Dio Cassius (xxxvii 52) as happening in Caesar's praetorship, while Suetonius records it as occurring in his quaestorship. Although Suetonius's account is by no means a great variation, the effect of the dream on Caesar is startling, especially since Suetonius shows that he despised dreams, omens and portents.³

Suetonius then accuses Caesar of participating in a plot with Publius Sulla and Publius Autronius. Suetonius makes a mistake in giving the praenomen of Lucius to Autronius. To add some basis for his accusation, he names five authorities, Marcus Bibulus, Cicero, Gaius Curio, Tanusius Geminus and Actorius Naso, all of whom were notoriously partial. Suetonius himself shows that they were hostile to Caesar.⁴ This story is likely to give a mistaken impression of Caesar, who could

³See De Vita Divi Iulii chapters 59, 77 and 81 for instances of Caesar's disregard of omens and portents.

⁴Ibid. chapters 9, 20 and 49.

scarcely be so foolish as to be privy to such an outrageous plot. His aversion to killing his fellowmen, his support of clemency for Lucius Catiline and the other conspirators, even when they were adjudged guilty of conspiracy, would surely give the lie to those, who on Suetonius's evidence, think that Caesar was involved.

Suetonius is guilty of two chronological errors when he states that the Senate gave Ptolemy the title of 'ally and friend' in 65 B.C. (Iul.11) This did not occur until 59 B.C., while Ptolemy was deposed by the citizens of Alexandria around 58 B.C. or 57 B.C. Suetonius also records this incident as taking place in 65 B.C. This error in chronology may be due to his style of writing rather than to his ignorance of the correct dates. In mentioning the charge brought by Caesar against Gaius Rabirius, Suetonius does not give the real reason for the charge, or the results of the case. Caesar was hardly interested in Rabirius, who was at the time an old man. He was more interested in the decision of the court in a trial of that nature - whether a citizen could be put to death without appeal to the popular assembly. Saturninus, the victim in the case, had been killed thirty-seven years before. This was also an opportunity for Caesar to identify himself with the popular party as opposed to the senatorial party.

Suetonius mentions that Caesar resorted to excessive bribery in competing for the office of Pontifex Maximus. (Iul. 13) He does not state that Catulus, a competitor for the same office, also resorted to bribery in order to induce Caesar to withdraw. Gaius Sallustius Crispus records Caesar's competing for office as taking place before the Catilinarian Conspiracy, (Coni. Cat. 49) while Dio Cassius places it after the plot. (Dio xxxvii 37) Plutarch, too, places it after the plot, for he states that Piso and Catulus found fault with Cicero for letting Caesar escape when it was thought that he was involved in the Catilinarian Conspiracy. (Caes. 7) Suetonius's account here is ambiguous, for one is likely to think that the office of Pontifex Maximus would help him to pay off his debts. Actually this success of Caesar only brought him to the forefront, since he had defeated two men of great political experience and wide influence.

Suetonius seems to be guilty of an inaccuracy again, when he writes that a troop of Roman knights who were stationed about the Senate house, drew their swords and made passes at Caesar. As a result of this action, Caesar's friends who sat next to him forsook him, while a few tried their best to shield him in their embrace or with their robes. (Iul. 14) Plutarch (Caes. 8) writes that as Caesar was going out of the Senate, many of the young men, who at

that time acted as generals to Cicero, ran in with their naked swords to assault him. Curio threw his gown over him and conveyed him away, while Cicero gave a sign to his body-guard not to kill him. Sallustius Crispus also agrees with Plutarch that the incident occurred as Caesar was leaving. (Conf. Cat. 49) The account of Sallustius Crispus and Plutarch seems more plausible, for the body-guard would scarcely be stationed in the Senate house. Suetonius does not give the reason for the stationing of the body-guard.

As a result of this attack on Caesar's life, Suetonius writes: "Tunc plane deterritus non modo cessit, sed et in reliquum anni tempus curia abstinuit." (Iul. 14) Plutarch, however, says that Caesar defended himself at a later meeting of the Senate, and was protected by the people. (Caes. 8) Plutarch's account is more in keeping with the character of Caesar, whom one can scarcely visualize as being a timorous soul. Plutarch mentions that there was no disturbance during Caesar's praetorship except the misfortune which he suffered in his own domestic affairs. (Caes. 9) Suetonius, on the other hand, states that Caecilius Metellus and Caesar were suspended from the exercise of their public functions by a decree of the Senate, since the former brought forward bills of a highly seditious nature, and was aided by the latter who espoused his cause in a very stubborn manner. (Iul. 16) Suetonius is alone

among the authorities in writing that Caesar was suspended by a decree of the Senate. Dio says that the Senate passed the decretum ultimum, and as a result, Metellus took refuge with Pompey, while Caesar did not run the risk of proposing any further innovation, for fear that the Senate should pass the decree against him also. (xxxvii 44) Plutarch does not mention any penalty being imposed on Caesar, but says that the proposal to drive Metellus from office was stopped by the intervention of Cato. (Cato 28)

With regard to the 'turbulentissimas leges', Suetonius says nothing about the nature of them, nor is the confusion which resulted from the attempt to propose them explained in full. Suetonius states that the crowd flocked to Caesar and offered their aid in recovering his position, but he held them in check, and was publicly thanked and restored to office. (Iul. 16) However, Suetonius is the only source for the restoration as he is for Caesar's suspension. Plutarch mentions the populace's support of Caesar during the Catilinarian Conspiracy, when Caesar was quaestor. (Caes. 8) Suetonius places this incident in Caesar's praetorship.

The summary of the Catilinarian Conspiracy given by Suetonius tends to make it appear insignificant, and no attempt is made to analyse its impact on the political

situation at Rome. The reason for the suspicion that Caesar was involved in the plot is not given, nor does Suetonius show the effect of the plot on Caesar's future actions in the political arena. He does not mention the prominence attained by Cicero, the problem he caused Caesar, who in turn was obliged to seek help in silencing him. Caesar obtained support from Publius Clodius, the enemy of Cicero. Suetonius does not give the reasons for the enmity of Clodius for Cicero, and this would have made the account more intelligible.

Suetonius is not clear as to the reason for the Triumvirate, or when the actual alliance was formed. He writes that when the aristocracy had the provinces of the smallest importance assigned to Caesar, he was incensed by the slight, and formed an alliance with Pompey and Crassus. (Iul. 19) Plutarch, however, states that Caesar formed the Triumvirate with a view to becoming consul. (Caes. 14) Velleius Paterculus (ii 44) places the formation of the Triumvirate in 59 B.C. Appian agrees that its formation preceded the elections, but makes the initiative come from Pompey. (ii 8) From an examination of the career of Pompey, this seems rather unlikely. The only conclusion that can be reached is that Caesar was the master-mind behind the scheme, and was able to exploit the group to further his own interests.

Suetonius does not understand the political situation very well. He does not see the far-reaching effects of the Triumvirate on the Roman Republic. Hence he draws the wrong conclusions for Caesar's attack on Cicero, when he writes:

Cicerone in iudicio quodam deplorante temporum statum Publium Clodium inimicum eius, frustra iam pridem a patribus ad plebem transire nitentem, eodem die horaque nona transduxit. (Iul. 20)

These actions are related, but not in the way Suetonius makes the connection. The real reason for Caesar's behaviour was Cicero's refusal to join his group. In Caesar's absence from Rome, Cicero could prove a dangerous opponent, especially since he had some influence over Pompey whose allegiance to the Triumvirate was wavering. The failure to report the facts relating to the Clodius incident⁵ prevents the accurate reportage of events.

Suetonius, in his eagerness to implicate Caesar in another plot, does not cite any sources for his information. (Iul. 20) That there was a genuine plot, in which Cicero and Lucullus were involved, is asserted by Dio. (xxxviii 9) It is generally agreed that the plot was trumped up for political reasons, but there is no proof that Caesar was involved. Suetonius seems to believe that Caesar was privy

⁵Vide De Vita Divi Iulii, chs. 6 & 74.

to the plot when he writes: "... desperans tam praecipitis consilii eventum interceptisse veneno indicem creditur."

(Iul. 20) The informer is believed to have been killed by Caesar. This is a damaging remark for Suetonius to make without substantiation.

In chapter 22, Suetonius writes:

Et initio quidem Galliam Cisalpinam Illyrico adiecto lege Vatinia accepit; mox per senatum Comatam quoque, veritis patribus ne, si ipsi negassent, populus et hanc daret.

Although the other authorities are not explicit as to whether Illyricum was an addition, or at this time formed part of Cisalpine Gaul, they do not contradict Suetonius's statement. However, Suetonius's statement that Caesar, "quo gaudio elatus non temperavit, quin paucos post dies frequenti curia iactaret, invitis et gementibus adversariis adeptum se quae concupisset, proinde ex eo insultaturum omnium capitibus" seems very incredible, and quite out of keeping with Caesar's character. This occurrence is not mentioned by any other source, and Suetonius does not cite any sources to show that this is anything but hearsay. It is surprising, however, that Suetonius should make such a statement, unless there was some definite foundation for this assertion which was made 'frequenti curia' by Caesar.

Suetonius writes that at the close of Caesar's consulship, Lucius Domitius, who was praetor at the time,

summoned Julius Caesar to an investigation before the Senate, because it was thought that his administration had been in violation of the auspices and the laws. Afterwards in his own consulship, Domitius tried to deprive Caesar of the command of the armies in Gaul. (Nero 2) Of the same incident, Suetonius writes: "Functus consulatu Gaio Memmio Lucioque Domitio praetoribus de superioris anni actis referentibus cognitionem senatui detulit; nec illo suscipiente ... in provinciam abiit." (Iul. 23) Suetonius also states that, when Domitius, candidate for the consulship, openly threatened to effect as consul what he had been unable to do in his praetorship, and to take his armies from him, Caesar compelled Pompey and Crassus to come to a conference at Luca. (Iul. 24) These accounts are extremely confusing, while the statement which Suetonius makes in Nero 2 is incorrect. For, although Domitius actually became consul in 54 B.C., he was so cowed in spirit that he kept quiet. The threats mentioned in Iul. 24 were uttered in 56 B.C. There is also a difference in the statements contained in Iul. 23 and in Nero 2, for in the former, Suetonius writes that Domitius 'moved^{an}/inquiry', while in the latter he states that Domitius 'summoned Gaius Caesar to an investigation before the Senate'.

Mention is made of Caesar's quaestor being arraigned, but no information can be obtained about the identity of the person. Of Lucius Antistius nothing is known, nor^{of} the charge

which he was to have brought against Caesar. (Iul. 23) The conference at Luca is shown by Suetonius as an attempt to prevent the success of Domitius in his bid for the consulship, but in fact the situation was a very serious one. Cato, Cicero and Domitius were working against Caesar, and he had to ensure that the Triumvirate, which was likely to topple if his opponents used their influence on Pompey, would be invigorated. Suetonius does not mention the wives of Cato, Cicero and the other enemies of Caesar. Again one is likely to lose sight of the importance of the Conference of Luca, when the facts are not related. Suetonius is, therefore, guilty of the sin of omission.

A rather serious charge is levelled against Caesar by Suetonius with respect to the Gallic Wars:

Nec deinde ulla belli occasione, ne iniusti quidem ac periculosi abstinuit, tam foederatis quam infestis ac feris gentibus ultro lacessitis ... (Iul. 24)

A statement of this nature needs to be supported by the testimony of someone other than an enemy of Caesar. As to Suetonius's remark about the Senate's immediately decreeing a commission to enquire into the conditions of the Gallic provinces, Suetonius seems to be the only authority for such information. There is the possibility that Suetonius might have thought the commission of ten legates, which Caesar desired instead of the normal three for a consular command, was a board of enquiry. It is true that there were some who

wanted Caesar handed over to the enemy. According to Plutarch, Cato proposed that Caesar ought to be surrendered to the barbarians so that the guilt, which a breach of faith might otherwise bring upon the state, might be expiated by transferring the curse on Caesar. (Caes. 22) There is nevertheless some uncertainty as to the truth of this statement, since Tanusius Geminus is Plutarch's source for it, and his hostility to Caesar was evident. Plutarch shows that in the matter which called forth the anger of Cato, the Usipetes and the Tencteri were wholly at fault for breaking the truce first.

Suetonius's greatest sin of omission is Caesar's Gallic campaigns. Suetonius in his dislike for describing military manoeuvres and battles, fails to see the effects of Caesar's work in Gaul on the political state of affairs at home. It was Caesar's campaigns in Gaul that won for him the dictatorship at Rome. He built up for himself an invincible army, loyal to their leader who treated them liberally. He obtained sufficient money to pay his troops, and to give splendid shows for the people, and his treatment of the provincials was such that he, even during the Civil War, was faced with no revolts, despite the fact that his enemies had declared that he had behaved so outrageously towards the provinces.

There seems to be a slight inaccuracy in Suetonius's comparing Caesar with Milo. (Iul. 30) Suetonius gives the impression that Milo protected himself by bands of armed men, but Milo did not surround the court with armed men when he stood on trial. It was Pompey who did so to secure Milo's conviction.

Suetonius mentions an apparition which was responsible for Caesar's conviction that he should cross the Rubicon. (Iul. 32) Appian does not mention any apparition. (ii 25) Plutarch (Caes. 32) states that Caesar had a dream before crossing the river, but the dream was the one referred to in (Iul. 7). With regard to Caesar's retaining Salvito, a contemptible fellow of the Cornelian family in order to give the lie to those people, who thought that the prophecies declared that the stock of the Scipios was fated to be fortunate and invincible in that province, (Iul. 59) Plutarch has a different story. He writes that Caesar put this man at the head of his troops, as if he were a general, but it was hard to say whether Caesar did it to ridicule Scipio who commanded the enemy, or seriously to bring the omen to his side. (Caes. 52) Dio gives the man's name as Salatto. (xlii 58)

Suetonius writes: "In Gallia fana templaque deum donis referta expilavit, urbes diruit saepius ob praedam quam ob

delictum." (Iul. 54) There is no mention of this in Plutarch, Appian or Velleius Paterculus. It is wholly out of keeping with Caesar's character. Suetonius also claims that Caesar's invasion of Britain was motivated by his greed for pearls. (Iul. 47) This seems a rather ridiculous reason, and Suetonius records it without any substantiation. There seems to be some difference of opinion regarding what took place at Ilerda. Suetonius writes that when terms of surrender were being discussed, Afranius and Petreius suddenly changed their minds and put to death all of Caesar's soldiers whom they found in the camp. (Iul. 75) According to Appian, Petreius had never thought of surrender. Afranius wanted to abandon Spain to Caesar if he could obtain safe conduct for his soldiers. Petreius opposed this, and ran through his camp killing all of Caesar's soldiers whom he caught fraternizing with his men. (ii 42)

Suetonius mentions that Caesar in his first consulship stole three thousand pounds of gold from the Capitol, replacing it with the same weight of gilded bronze. There is no record of any such raid on the state treasure in 59 B.C. The treasure which was supposed to be that deposited by Camillus on the Capitol in 389 B.C. for safe keeping from Gallic invaders, was still housed there as late as 52 B.C. The scandal here recorded is scarcely credible, in view of the silence of all authorities. Appian, on the other hand,

when describing Caesar's raid on the aerarium Saturni in 49 B.C., says that he seized a treasure deposited at the time of the Gallic invasion. (ii 41) There is no record of the transference of the treasure from the Capitol to the aerarium Saturni. However, there is a slight possibility that after the disappearance of the gold of about two thousand pounds from the treasure house on the Capitoline hill in 52 B.C., it might have been moved to the aerarium Saturni.

There are numerous instances of minor differences in the accounts given by Suetonius, Velleius Paterculus, Dio Cassius and Plutarch. These differences are understandable, but Suetonius's chief fault lies in the fact that he gives the wrong interpretation to his facts, or omits many essential details which would give a better picture of events. He appears to have a penchant for unreliable sources, especially in the De Vita Divi Iulii. Caesar, therefore, suffers greatly at the hands of Suetonius, who in his attempt to be impartial, reports all the information he has found concerning Caesar, without making any serious attempt to discover whether the information was trustworthy. Gossip and scandal find their way into his account, and are left without substantiation or denial. On the whole, Suetonius gives an account not very dissimilar to that of the authorities of the time. However, he seems to have consulted the available

sources, and after making up his mind as to what kind of man he thought Caesar^{to}/be, he used the sources most essential to proving that he was that kind of man. There is definite bias in Suetonius's account of Caesar's life, and this charge is easily proved, when an examination is made of Suetonius's treatment of similar actions in the biographies of Julius Caesar and Augustus.

Not only in the De Vita Divi Iulii can slight differences in detail be seen, but also in the De Vita Divi Augusti. In this life, there seem to be fewer inaccuracies, or, more rightly, differences in account. Suetonius devoted much time to an examination of the available documents on Augustus's life, and the great effort made by him is apparent from the number of times Augustus is cited in the lives of Augustus himself, Tiberius, Caligula and even Claudius. The nature of some of the letters cited by him is so personal that it is obvious that Suetonius only had access to them because of his post as secretary ab epistulis to Hadrian. A very favourable account is given of Augustus, and the impression is conveyed that, if Suetonius were to choose an ideal Emperor, Augustus would be his choice.

Suetonius writes that Augustus, in order to show that he regretted his connection with the former party, imposed a heavy fine on the people of Nursia, and banished

them from their city, when they were unable to pay it. (Aug. 12) According to Suetonius, this event occurred in 43 B.C., but Dio writes that it took place in 41 B.C., during the war between Fulvia and Augustus. The people of Nursia had repulsed Octavian (Augustus) from their walls, but Salvidienus Rufus made a surprise attack on the city, and captured it. The inhabitants of Nursia came to terms without having suffered any ill-treatment. They were, however, punished by so enormous a fine that they abandoned their city and at the same time all their territory. (Dio xlviii 13)

Suetonius is usually vague about military matters. At times, he passes over them very quickly. This may account for his writing that Augustus captured Alexandria in a short time after the battle of Actium. (Aug. 17) The capture of Alexandria occurred in 30 B.C. Perhaps Suetonius thinks that a year can be termed brevi. He does not mention the negotiations opened by Antony and Cleopatra separately. According to Dio, (li 5) Antony, in the previous autumn, made a vain attempt to gain over the troops in Africa, and on his return to Alexandria, had opened negotiations with Augustus, offering to live as a private citizen in Egypt. Plutarch writes that Cornelius Gallus, in the spring of 30 B.C., as leader of the troops in Africa, advanced to Paraetorium, where he secured the remainder of Antony's

fleet. Meanwhile, Augustus with the connivance of Cleopatra, entered Pelusinum, and advanced towards Alexandria, where he defeated Antony. Hearing the false news that Cleopatra was dead, Antony stabbed himself, and died in the arms of the queen. (Antony 76f) When Suetonius writes that Augustus drove Antony to suicide, his statement is only indirectly correct. It was mainly the false news of the death of Cleopatra that caused Antony to decide on suicide. Suetonius writes that Augustus forced Antony to kill himself, and looked on him when he was dead. (Aug. 17) To look on a slain enemy's corpse was regarded as unnecessarily cruel. Plutarch, however, says that he actually wept at the death of his old colleague. (Ant. 78) Dio writes that he saw the corpse of Cleopatra. (li 14)

Suetonius seems to be inaccurate when he writes that Antony was declared a public enemy. (Aug. 17) Antony, according to Dio, was not declared an enemy, but only Cleopatra, in order to give greater justification to Augustus in declaring war on her, and greater condemnation to Antony for fighting on behalf of a hostis. (l 43) In writing that Augustus reduced Egypt to the form of a province, Suetonius does not give the correct status of Egypt. Egypt was not a province, since it was kept as the personal property of the emperor, because of its great importance in the supply of corn to Rome, its wealth in men and resources, and its

strategic position. Under the Empire, no senator nor "eques illustris" was allowed to set foot in Egypt, and the governor was a knight personally appointed by Augustus. This safeguard was adopted since a disloyal governor could pose serious problems for Augustus.

There seems to be some internal inconsistency in Suetonius's statements about the attitude of Augustus to military awards. He writes: "Nec parcior in bellica virtute honoranda, super triginta ducibus iustos triumphos et aliquanto pluribus triumphalia ornamenta decernenda curavit." (Aug. 38) Earlier in the biography, he writes that Augustus was somewhat more ready to give trappings or collars, than crowns for scaling ramparts or walls, "quae honore prae-cellerent ... has quam parcissime ... tribuit." (Aug. 25) In the De Vita Tiberii, Suetonius says that Tiberius was honoured with triumphalia ornamenta for his German victories, and these were "novo nec antea cuiquam tributo genere honoris." (Tib. 9) Dio seems to give the lie to Suetonius's statement about Augustus's liberality, for he writes that when the Senate voted Tiberius a triumph for his achievements in Germany, Augustus did not permit him to celebrate it, and gave him the triumphal honours instead. (liv 31)

Suetonius possibly does not report that Augustus refused Tiberius a triumph in order to avoid self-contradiction.

diction, and also to show Augustus in a better light. This is quite likely, since he gives the impression that Augustus achieved much more than he actually did with regard to the Parthians, and the Germans. Suetonius writes: "Coercuit et Dacorum incursiones tribus eorum ducibus cum magna copia caesis, Germanosque ultra Albim fluvium summovit"

(Aug. 21) However, territory between the Rhine and the Elbe was never securely held in Roman possession at all, and after the death of Varus in 9 A.D., Augustus and Tiberius abandoned any attempt to spread the empire beyond the Rhine.

Suetonius gives a fairly accurate account of the events he reports, but his failure to report other important events must be criticized. This lack of information can give a false picture of Augustus. No attempt is made to show the changes in Augustus's attitude to certain political institutions. Suetonius's partiality is obvious, for certain impious acts - the taking of Antony's will from the Vestal virgins and the reading of it, the dragging of the son of Antony and Fulvia from the image of the Deified Julius - are mentioned without criticism, while others are condoned. The calamity of Varus is merely mentioned, in spite of the fact that it was a most heartbreaking experience for Augustus, and accounted for his policy of curtailing his territorial ambitions.

In the De Vita Divi Vespasiani, it is clear that some portions are more historically correct than others. It seems that in the first part of this life, Suetonius generally follows historical works previously published, but for the second part, he collects his own material and coordinates it for himself. There is therefore a considerable difference in the treatment of the two parts. The first seven chapters relating to events in Vespasian's life, in chronological order, form a connected story. There are minor inaccuracies on points of details, or omissions and differences in the readings given by other authorities of this period. Nevertheless, a comparison of the accounts given by Tacitus, Dio and Suetonius shows Suetonius's to be not very dissimilar.

The municipium Reatinum, where Titus Flavius Petro was a burgher was a praefectura in 27 B.C. It did not become a municipium until imperial times, so that Suetonius's reference to it is anachronistic. (Vesp. 1) Suetonius writes in chapter 4 that the procurator of Judaea was killed, but according to Josephus, Florus, the procurator of Judaea at this time, was not killed but retired to Caesarea.⁶

⁶Vide C. Suetoni, Vespasian. Commentary by A.W. Braithwaite. (Oxford: 1927) p. 31.

Suetonius does not go into any details about the actual events by which Vespasian became Emperor. He writes that Vespasian was roused to it by the accidental support of men unknown to him and at a distance. (Vesp. 6) These men were of the army in Moesia who were sent to help Otho against Vitellius, but learning of Otho's defeat, and having indulged in every kind of pillage at Aquileia, they were afraid to go back since they thought they would be punished, and hence they decided to select an Emperor since they considered themselves as good as the other armies that had elected Emperors. The Spanish army had elected Galba, and the Praetorian Guard Otho, the German army Vitellius. Mucianus, however, boasted that he was mainly responsible for Vespasian's good-fortune, and so did the Alexandrians. (Dio lxxv 1 & 8) Tacitus (Hist. ii 81-82) writes that Vespasian was extremely fearful of making a bid for the imperial power, but was encouraged by Mucianus, and his purpose was confirmed by the omens. Vespasian was proclaimed in Egypt by Tiberius Alexander, while the army of Judaea later took the oath of allegiance to Vespasian. The soldiers in Moesia did not wait for Mucianus, but changed their minds. The part played by Vespasian in the battles that preceded his rise to power was very small, and for this reason may have been omitted by Suetonius.

Suetonius is more concerned with the omens that foretold Vespasian's rule. He writes that Vespasian began to cherish hope of imperial dignity after the death of Nero and Galba, because he had long since witnessed the following portents:- (i) an oak tree sacred to Mars put forth a branch for each of Vespasia's children; (ii) Gaius Caesar had ordered Vespasian to be covered with mud for neglecting his duties when he was aedile; (iii) a stray dog brought him a human hand; (iv) an ox burst into the dining room and bowed its neck at the feet of Vespasian; (v) a cypress tree fell without any force of a storm; (vi) Nero's tooth was extracted and brought to him to see in accordance with his dream; (vii) consultation of the oracle of Carmel in Judaea; (viii) Josephus predicted that Vespasian would free him when Emperor; (ix) Nero dreamt that he had to take the sacred chariot to Vespasian's house; (x) Caesar's statue behaved strangely; (xi) the incident of the three eagles at Bedriacum. (Vesp. 5) Below is a chart showing the omens used by Suetonius and other writers. Dio (lxvi 1) and Tacitus (Hist. ii 78) differ with regard to (5).

<u>Authors</u>	<u>Omens</u>										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Suetonius	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Plutarch										"	"
Dio		"	"	"	(")	"	"	"			
Tacitus					(")		"			"	

Suetonius's ignorance of the Bellum Judaicum seems clear from the four discrepancies in his short account of the war:- the fate of Florus, the capture of the eagle which is not mentioned by Josephus, the composition of Vespasian's forces, and the nature and cause of Vespasian's wounds. The fate of Florus was already mentioned. As to the composition of the troops, Florus was given three legions. It is uncertain what Suetonius means when he writes that two legions were added to the forces. (Vesp. 4) If it means they were added to the forces in Judaea, Suetonius is in error, for there was no legion there. With regard to Vespasian's wounds at the siege of Jotapata in 67 A.D., Josephus writes that Vespasian was wounded by an arrow in the flat of his foot.⁷ Suetonius says that in the storming of a fortress, Vespasian was wounded in the knee with a stone and received several arrows in his shield. (Vesp. 4) Josephus, although he writes that the legion was held to be dishonoured, did not mention the loss of an eagle, and Suetonius's story is, therefore, improbable. Josephus, as an eyewitness of the actual occurrences,^r can be trusted more than Suetonius, especially since Josephus, then an enemy, would hardly omit such a mark of disgrace. Suetonius does not give any account of Vespasian's activities between the siege of Jotapata and his salutation as Emperor. In the

⁷Vide C. Suetonii, Vespasian, p.31.

course of two operations in 67 and 68 A.D., Vespasian occupied and subdued the whole of Judaea except the city of Jerusalem. (Tac. Hist. v 10), while civil strife ensued between Otho and Vitellius for the right to succeed Galba.

Suetonius writes that Vespasian cured a man of the people who was blind, and another who was lame in accordance with a declaration of the gods that Vespasian would restore the eyes, if he would spit upon them, and give strength to the leg, if he would deign to touch it with his heel.

(Vesp. 7) This story is also told by Tacitus (Hist. iv 81) and by Dio (lxvi 8) with the difference that an infirmity of the hand is substituted for an infirmity of the leg.

"... acto de Iudaeis triumpho consulatus octo veteri addidit." (Vesp. 8) Vespasian was consul ordinarius in every year of his principate but two - he had already assumed the consulship for 70 A.D. at Alexandria, (Tac. Hist. iv 38), so that Suetonius's claim is not strictly correct.

Suetonius, in discussing the actions of Vespasian in regard to the army and the provinces, writes that the soldiers, some emboldened by their victory and some resenting their humiliating defeat, had abandoned themselves to every form of licence and recklessness; the provinces, too, and free cities as well as some of the

kingdoms, were in a state of internal dissension. Therefore Vespasian discharged many of the soldiers of Vitellius and punished many. (Vesp. 8) Suetonius gives the general reasons for the special attention to the two departments. The reasons in both cases were superficial. Vespasian's great military rearrangements were caused, not by the Civil War, but by the German rebellion, and the meeting of the Rhine army, which Suetonius does not even mention, and the changes in status of the client kingdoms and free cities of the East were largely due to the reorganization of the eastern frontier, and the need for increasing taxation in the Empire. Only as regards Achaia and possibly Lycia is there reason to suppose that internal dissensions were the cause of the change. As for his discharging the soldiers of Vitellius, the statement seems inaccurate. The four Vitellian legions which were present at the battle of Bedriacum, were not disbanded. Measures had been taken to reduce the number of the praetorian cohorts by Mucianus before the arrival of Vespasian. (Tac. H.ii. 93) The legions disbanded on the Rhine were disbanded not because they were Vitellians but because they were mutineers.

Suetonius writes that Vespasian is even believed to have had the habit of designedly advancing the most rapacious of his procurators to higher posts, that they might be richer when he later condemned them; in fact, it

was common talk that he used these men as sponges, because he, so to speak, soaked them when they were dry and squeezed them, when they were wet. (Vesp. 16) There is only one possible case of a prominent officer being accused of extortion - Julius Bassus, apparently as quaestor of Bithynia, and he was acquitted. (Pliny Ep. 4, 9) Dio mentions that Caenis was the evil influence on Vespasian and most of the money went to her, for she received vast sums from many sources, sometimes selling governorships, sometimes procuratorships, generalships and priesthoods, and in some cases even imperial decisions. (lxvi 14)

Suetonius writes that Vespasian never took pleasure in the death of anyone, but even wept and sighed over those who suffered merited punishment. (Vesp. 15) Dio (lxvi 16) writes that the wife of Sabinus, Peponila, threw her children at Vespasian's feet, and delivered a most pitiful plea on their behalf, but Vespasian showed them no mercy, despite the fact that he was moved to tears by the plea. These children certainly cannot be shown to have merited their punishment, for Sabinus was the malefactor.

Even after constant conspiracies were made against him, Vespasian had the assurance to say that either his sons would succeed him or that he would have no successor. (Vesp. 25) Dio writes that Vespasian, overcome with emotion when

the tribunes arrested Helvidius Priscus, the praetor, for reviling him, gave Priscus in charge of their assistants and went out of the Senate chamber, weeping and saying that his successor would be his son or no one at all. (lxv 12) This incident occurred in 70 A.D., while in Suetonius's account, it occurred in 79 A.D.

In the De Vita Divi Claudii, Suetonius writes that Claudius in seeking a legitimate triumph, "... unde adquireret Britanniam potissimum elegit, neque temptatam ulli post Divum Iulium et tunc tumultuantem ob non redditos transfugas." (Cl, 17) Suetonius's account is vague. Dio states that a certain Bericus, who had been expelled from the island during a revolution, persuaded Claudius to send troops there. (lx 19) Whereas Suetonius says that a joint petition was circulated in the name of the legions, praying that the emblems be given to the consular governors at the same time with their armies to prevent their seeking all sorts of pretexts for war, (Cl. 24) Tacitus in his Annales (ii 20) states that the petition was circulated by the legions in Germany. There is a slight inaccuracy or carelessness on Suetonius's part when he writes that Britannicus was born on the twenty-second day of Claudius's reign in his second consulship. (Cl. 27) Claudius's second consulship did not begin until 42 A.D., and he began to reign in 41 A.D.

In the De Vita Neronis, there are also minor discrepancies. Suetonius writes that Nero was in his eleventh year when he was adopted by Claudius. (Nero 7) Since Tacitus states that the adoption took place in 50 A.D., (Ann. xii 25) and Nero was born on December 15th, 37 A.D., (Nero 6) Nero could scarcely be in his eleventh year. This is another instance of careless chronology.

Suetonius writes that when the player Canus greatly pleased Galba, he presented Canus with five denarii which he took from his own purse with his own hand. (Galba 12) Plutarch gives the story quite a different aspect, saying that the gift was of gold pieces, and that Galba said it came from his pockets and not from the public funds. (Galba 16) There seems to be more point to Plutarch's version. Galba is showing that he can be also generous at times. He was known to be a rather stingy man. Suetonius states that Piso was named by Galba as heir in his will, (Galba 17) but Plutarch and Tacitus make no mention of this. Suetonius says that, when Galba learned that Otho had possession of the Praetorian camp, and was advised to go there as fast as possible, he decided to keep his present position, and strengthen it by assembling a guard of legionaries who were encamped in many different quarters of the city. (Galba 19) Tacitus, however, asserts that Galba decided to go out and face the mutinous soldiers,

and that Piso was sent in advance to the Praetorian Camp, since he was likely to gain the favour of the cohorts because of his great name and his hostility to Vinius whom the soldiers hated. (H.i 34) Plutarch agrees with the account of Tacitus. (Galba 26)

Suetonius is guilty on many occasions of chronological carelessness. According to Suetonius, Galba met his death in the seventy-third year of his age, and the seventh month of his reign. (Galba 23) Suetonius writes that Galba was born in 3 B.C., (Galba 4) and this would make him only 71 years when he died, since he died on January the eleventh, 69 A.D. Another example of chronological carelessness is seen in Suetonius's account of Otho's death. (Otho 11) He says that Otho died in his thirty-eighth year. Since Otho was born on April 28th, 32 A.D., and died on April 16th, 69 A.D., he lived for 37 years less twelve days, as Dio (lxiv 15) accurately states. Tacitus says that Otho died in his thirty-seventh year, (H.ii 49) while Plutarch vaguely states that he lived for thirty-seven years. (Otho 18)

According to Suetonius, Vitellius met his death in his fifty-seventh year, (Vit. 18) Tacitus is of the same opinion. (H. iii 86) This is irreconcilable with

the date of birth given by Suetonius as September 24th, 15 A.D. (Vit. 3) This would mean that Vitellius was only fifty-four years old. Titus was born in 39 A.D. and not in 41 A.D. as Suetonius himself admits, when he records Titus's death in 81 A.D., in his forty-second year. (Titus 11) Dio says that Titus was thirty-nine years old, five months and twenty five days old when he succeeded Vespasian on June 24th, 79 A.D. (lxvi 18)

Chronology for the most part, is treated too lightly by Suetonius. Although slight inaccuracies in dates are not very serious, the failure by Suetonius to concern himself with a chronological pattern of biography, leads him into the grave danger of misconstruing some historical events. Not only must the facts be reported correctly, but there must be some observance of chronology, especially when the facts can be best explained because of the time element. Suetonius does not adhere strictly to a chronological arrangement, except in the early years of the Emperors. By rejecting chronology, Suetonius makes it impossible to trace the connection of events, or the effects of circumstances in developing character. A number of detached facts are told of conduct and policy on the various departments of government or personal habits, and it is left to the reader to sort out the events and fit them in their proper place.

Suetonius does not pretend to be an historian, and does not see the need to write a connected story of the lives of the Emperors. He thinks that by examining various aspects of the Emperors' lives, he can draw a clear picture of the character of these men. Although by this method, a view of their policies can be gained, more still is lost by concealing all that helps to explain motivation, and justifies or condemns actions. As was stated formerly, Suetonius is not wholly disinterested in chronology. In fact, he gives, with a significant amount of accuracy, the birthdates and the times of death of the various Emperors. In the brief summaries he gives of the Lives of Julius Caesar and Augustus, he is chronologically correct. It can therefore be stated that Suetonius dispenses with chronology when he feels that it has no significance in his writings. He treats chronology as important in these two aspects of his Biographies - birth and death. He is also apt to pay more attention to chronology in those lives far removed from his own. e.g. Julius Caesar, Augustus and Tiberius. Perhaps the numerous sources he has at his disposal help him greatly to follow the events of these lives in a chronological order.

Suetonius is very aware of chronology, but he decides to write the De Vita Divi Augusti "neque per tempora sed per species". (Aug. 9) His good intentions are indeed

apparent, but he certainly does not make the account clearer, and in fact confuses it. The reader is left with the task of finding out the course of events which changed Augustus, the cruel member of the Triumvirate, who coerced the Senate with his army to gain the consulate, and aided in the proscription of many influential citizens, into the benevolent ruler, and truly the pater patriae. No attempt is made to show the events that changed the Republic into the Principate. There is also a marked split in the biographies of the majority of the emperors, but it is made more conspicuous by Suetonius's style of writing.

Suetonius explains how he is writing as he goes along, and for the most part, the pattern of one biography is the same for almost all of them. In the De Vita Divi Augusti, Suetonius writes:

Quoniam qualis in imperiis ac magistratibus regendaque per terrarum orbem pace belloque re p. fuerit, exposui, referam nunc interiorem ac familiarem eius vitam quibusque moribus atque fortuna domi et inter suos egerit a iuventa usque ad supremum vitae diem. (Aug. 61)

In so doing, Suetonius has tried to separate Augustus's political conduct and his conduct in private life, but these two phases of his life cannot be separated, since the actions in one determine the actions in the other. Suetonius has made a very arbitrary division of public and private life, for a ruler scarcely has time for a private life of his own. His life is always held so much before the public view.

The disadvantages of Suetonius's method are more striking in the chapters dealing with those constitutional changes by which the new aristocracy was gradually evolved. Dates must be observed and the order of events must be followed if an understanding is to be gained of the immense^{and}/far-reaching changes.

Suetonius generally follows the plan "neque per tempora sed per species", giving separate accounts of an emperor's ancestry, early life, political offices before his principate, wars, legislation, friendships, methods of government, honours enjoyed, his attitude to religion, to his soldiers, to the Senate, to the people in general, his interest in the arts, his vices, his virtues, his appearance, his habits and his death. From the birth of the man destined to be emperor until his being declared emperor, a fairly strict chronological pattern is kept. Thereafter, the plan stated above is clearly followed. When any deviation from the plan is to be made, Suetonius generally says so.

That Suetonius is aware of chronology is seen in this statement: "Plinium arguit ratio temporum", (Caligula 8). Suetonius adds that the historians of Augustus agree that Germanicus was not sent to Germany until the close of his consulship, when Gaius was already born. This is just one

of the instances which show the concern with which Suetonius treats the birth of the several emperors. In the reign of Caligula, he deliberately avoids the annalistic style of narrative, and he decides to lay aside the usual pattern he adopts for the other lives. He divides Caligula's reign into two main branches. "Hactenus quasi de principe, reliqua ut de monstro narranda sunt." (Cal. 22) When Suetonius describes Caligula's actions as an emperor, these are for the most part very commendable. He does not give an adequate explanation of the change in Caligula, and he does not show, because of his method of writing, at what stage in his reign he became a monster. It is extremely difficult to follow the course of events in this reign, for Suetonius has dispensed with chronology completely.

The same thing is true of the De Vita Neronis.

Suetonius feels compelled to give a broader division to the actions of Nero. He writes that he has brought together acts of his, some of which were beyond criticism, while others were even deserving of no slight praise, to separate them from his shameful and criminal deeds. (Nero 14)

Despite the fact that the first five years of Nero's rule proved to be a period of good government, while his later years were disastrous, to make such a division is to give a very inaccurate view of the history of the period. This division also makes it impossible to trace the change in

Nero. If a chronological pattern of events were attempted, Suetonius would have been able to see more clearly the deterioration of Nero's character, and the course of events that ushered in this change in character. It is because of Suetonius's eschewal of a chronological history, that Lepper⁸ has inaccurately stated that there was no mention of the praiseworthy 'quinquennium Neronis' in Suetonius.

It is not only the accurate reportage of events that makes an accurate history, but also a strict adherence to chronology in events reported so that the motives for certain actions can be adduced, the effects of the events on one another can be clearly examined, and a better study made of the person causing the events, or of the kind of person which the events caused him to become. A chronological pattern also shows whether the change in the person's character is gradual or otherwise. A good example of an erroneous impression caused by inaccurate or careless chronology is seen in Suetonius's reason for the Triumvirate in the De Vita Divi Iulii.⁹ The consequence of these errors in chronology is slight when compared with the greater error that results from a disregard of the sequence of events in order to categorize the events. Because of this

⁸F.A. Lepper, "Some Reflections on the 'Quinquennium Neronis'". JRP XLVII (1957), p.102.

⁹Vide p.44 supra.

endeavour of Suetonius, a disjointed and unconnected story is told, the true motives for actions misunderstood, and the far reaching effects of such actions are overlooked.

CHAPTER III

CAUSATION IN HISTORY

Suetonius does not assign natural causes to any incidents in human affairs. Political and economic crises occur because the leaders' behaviour is disliked by the gods. Suetonius believes that man is very restricted in his influence on events, since his actions are controlled by the divinities. If he be respectful of the gods, and adheres to all the religious rites, then good fortune attends him, and he is able to effect beneficial reforms. If he is contemptuous of the gods, and spurns their warnings, then he is very likely to behave wickedly, imperil his country, and meet a cruel death. For this reason, Suetonius is very superstitious, and attaches great importance to dreams, omens and portents. His superstitious nature is clearly seen from Pliny's reply to him: "Scribis te perterritum somnio vereri, ne quid adversi in actione patiaris, rogas, ut dilationem petam et pauculos dies, certe proximum, excusem." (I, 18)

This belief in the influence of the supernatural is mainly responsible for Suetonius's emphasis on religiones. He examines the attitude of the twelve Caesars to religiones,

and he shows how each of them is affected in proportion to his piety or impiety. Suetonius points out that all of the emperors who disregarded religious rites, and despised the gods, were the most immoral ones, and those who suffered an inglorious death. This great preoccupation with the supernatural is seen by the amount of research which Suetonius did on the various omens that occurred in all the lives. He even consulted obscure works like the Theologoumena of Asclepiades of Mendes, and those of Publius Nigidius Figulus. (Aug. 94)

In the De Vita Divi Iulii, Suetonius expresses uncertainty about the ability of human beings to make wise statements without inspiration from the gods, when he writes about Sulla's forecast. He wonders whether it was "divinitus sive aliqua coniectura ..." (Iul. 1) There is sounder proof of this attitude in chapter 7. Here, Suetonius writes that Julius Caesar, a man dismayed by dreams, was inspired with high hopes, because the soothsayers interpreted his dream as one which portended the rule of the world for him. Again, when Caesar was about to cross the Rubicon, Suetonius says that when Caesar stood in doubt, a sign was given to him, because of which he made up his mind, and said: "Eatur ... quo deorum ostenta et inimicorum iniquitas vocat." (Iul. 32)

Suetonius is at pains to describe the religious attitude of all the emperors, what omens signal their birth, their success and failure, and their final end. He shows that Caesar's contempt for religion was mainly responsible for his downfall. Caesar did not put off the expedition against Scipio and Juba although the victim escaped as he was sacrificing. "Ne religione ulla a quoquam incepto absterritus unquam vel retardatus est." (Iul. 59) He also kept with him in camp a contemptible fellow of the Cornelian family "ad eludendas autem vaticinationes, quibus felix et invictum in ea provincia fataliter Scipionem nomen ferebatur." (Ibid.) Suetonius thinks that it was not only Caesar's disrespect of the Senate that caused him to be hated, but that "eoque arrogantiae progressus est ut haruspice tristia et sine corde exta quondam nuntiante futura diceret laetiora, cum vellet; nec pro ostento ducendum, si pecudi cor defuisset." (Iul. 77) This contempt for the predictions of the soothsayers, and this disregard of the ministrations of the gods induced the gods to abandon him. Hence, when the priests consulted the Sybilline Books, they were led to make the decision that a king should be appointed to defeat the Parthians.

This decision to make Caesar king hurried on the conspirators, who disliked royalty, to carry out their

designs to murder him. Although Suetonius does not directly say that Caesar's contempt for the supernatural caused his murder, this is the impression he creates. He really believes that "there is a divinity that shapes our end", and, therefore, he takes great pains to enumerate the unmistakable signs that foretold Caesar's murder. (Iul. 81) In defiance of these portents Caesar entered the Senate House. "Dein pluribus hostiis caesis, cum litare posset, introiit curiam sprete religione Spurinnamque irridens et ut falsum arguens, quod sine ulla sua noxa Idus Martiae adessent." (Ibid.) Because of his contempt for religiones, Caesar was murdered.

In the description of the ancestry of Octavius, Suetonius remarks on an incident which seemed to augur well for the ancestors of the Octavian family. His interest in this incident seems to add confirmation to the belief that the supernatural does influence human actions. Octavian's zeal to sacrifice to the gods, despite an unexpected attack, was rewarded with victory, and a new method of sacrifice resulted. (Aug. 1) The birthplace of Augustus, too, was sanctified by the gods, and as Suetonius is at pains to point out, "huc introire nisi necessario et caste religio est." (Aug. 6) The truth of the matter is shown in the anecdote about the new owner who was found half-dead in his bedclothes before the door. (Ibid.)

Augustus's very name has religious connotations. Such a man was destined to be the darling of the gods. But even Augustus must be punished for impious actions. Hence his statement when his ships were lost in a storm, "etiam invito Neptuno victoriam se adepturum ..." (Aug. 16), and his removal of the statue of the gods from a sacred procession, called forth the anger of the gods. That Suetonius thinks so is apparent from his statement: "Nec temere plura ac maiora pericula ullo alio bello adiit." (Ibid.) For this impiety, Augustus suffered defeat at the hands of Demochares and Apollophanes, and barely escaped with one ship. He also narrowly escaped capture by Pompey's biremes which were coasting off the shore, when he mistook them for his own. During his escape, a slave of his companion Aemilius Paullus attempted to slay him for proscribing his master's father. All of these terrible events occurred because of Augustus's irreligious attitude.

Augustus quickly atoned for his behaviour. Generally speaking, Augustus was a very religious man, and these were only lapses on his part, for which he speedily did penance. To appease the gods he offended, after his victory at Actium, he adorned the site of the camp which he had occupied with naval trophies, and consecrated it to Neptune and Mars. The results of this action were favourable for Augustus. "Tumultus posthac et rerum novarum initia

coniurationesque complures, prius quam invalescerent indicio detectas, compressit alios alio tempore" (Aug. 19) Good fortune attended Augustus because of the honour he paid the immortal gods thereafter. Augustus was quite different from Julius Caesar in his attitude to religiones. "Auspicia et omina quaedam pro certissimis observabat." (Aug. 92) This is also true of Suetonius.

As if Suetonius sees some similarity between himself and Augustus in their attitude to dreams, he gives a rather detailed account of the effects of dreams on Augustus, who "somnia neque sua neque aliena de se neglegebat." (Aug. 91) Because of his awe for the supernatural, he saved his life at Philippi. Although he had made up his mind not to leave his tent because of illness, he did so after all when warned by a friend's dream. In this way, he escaped from the enemy who made an attack on his tent. How vastly different from Caesar, who, when he was told not to go to the Senate, still persisted in going and met his death! Not only was Augustus moved by dreams, but "... et ostentis praecipue movebatur." (Aug. 92)

Suetonius devotes much time to enumerating the various omens that influenced the life of Augustus. In fact, so strongly does he see omens influencing Augustus, he decides to recount the omens that occurred before his birth,

on the day of his birth, and those that portended future greatness and uninterrupted good fortune. In addition to these, he adds other signs and portents, even citing sources for confirmation. These signs filled Augustus with such faith in his destiny that he made his horoscope public and issued a silver coin stamped with the sign of the constellation of Capricorn under which he was born. (Aug. 94) As if to leave no doubt in the minds of the hesitant, Suetonius relates other incidents by which the fortunate Augustus was able to divine beforehand the outcome of all of his wars. (Aug. 96) As the climax to his demonstration of the influences of the supernatural on Augustus's actions, he relates the signs that portended the latter's death. There is no doubt that Suetonius is a firm believer in the power of the divinities. He devotes ten chapters to omens, signs and portents.

Tiberius was also given various signs of his acquiring imperial power, and he himself was convinced that the signs were true. (Tib. 14) His confidence in battle was restored whenever his lamp went out suddenly without human agency. (Tib. 19) This omen his ancestors had found trustworthy in all their campaigns. Yet, although he believed in portents, he adopted a very intolerant attitude to religiones. He abolished foreign cults, especially the Egyptian and the Jewish rites, compelling all those who

were addicted, to burn their religious vestments and all their paraphernalia. (Tib. 36) "Haruspices secreto ac sine testibus consuli vetuit. Vicina vero urbi oracula etiam disicere conatus est" (Tib. 63) Not a day passed without an execution, not even those that were sacred and holy. This disregard for religious observances spelled disaster for Tiberius. When he attempted to do away with the oracles near the city, he forbore through terror at the divine power of the Praenestine lots, which he had sealed up in a chest and brought to Rome, but could not find until the box was taken back to the temple. (Ibid.)

It is small wonder that Suetonius has such a poor opinion of Tiberius who had been so neglectful of religiones. Although Tiberius was addicted to astrology and firmly convinced that everything was in the hands of fate, he was nevertheless immoderately afraid of thunder, so much so that he wore a laurel wreath because that kind of leaf is not blasted by lightning. His manner of death and his later years of life seemed to have been determined by the fates, because of his neglect of religiones. Throughout his life, the signs and portents were unfavourable. A violent omen also portended his death. (Tib. 74) Tiberius, unlike Julius Caesar, was not contemptuous of religion or of divine ministrations. He neglected and disregarded the gods, and therefore received the due punishment. He had always been

afraid of omens, as Suetonius shows, when he gives Tiberius's reasons for not going to Rome during his retirement."... sed prospectis modo nec aditis urbis moenibus rediit, primo incertum qua de causa, postea ostento territus." (Tib. 72)
 This fear of omens did not lead him to honour the gods, and hence he was punished by them.

Gaius Caligula also met an unhappy end because of his irreverence. He utterly despised the gods, and hence his behaviour throughout his reign is understandable. He was an immoral fiend. His murder was foretold by many prodigies. The statue of Jupiter at Olympia which he ordered to be taken to pieces and moved to Rome, suddenly uttered such a peal of laughter that the scaffoldings collapsed and the workmen took to their heels. (Cal. 57)
 The capitol at Capua was struck with lightning on the Ides of March, and as he was sacrificing, he was sprinkled with the blood of a flamingo. There is no doubt that such forebodings would only result when a man had led a most despicable life. His greatest act of impiety was his attempt to make himself a god. "Templum etiam numini suo proprium et sacerdotes et excogitatissimas hostias instituit." Cal. 22)

Suetonius shows that the religious attitude of the emperors dictated their actions, and accounted for the nature

of their death. The man who stands in awe of the gods must derive divine benefits from them. His actions, and especially the important ones, are directed by the gods who give him advice in the form of portents, omens and signs. It is true that too much good fortune is wont to win the jealousy of the gods, and hence even the happy man who respects the gods, will at times find fortune fickle, as is seen in the case of Augustus. His daughter and granddaughter were guilty of every kind of vice, and he had to banish them; while his sons, Gaius and Lucius, were killed within the space of eighteen months.

Throughout the De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius devotes at least a chapter in every biography to omens and to the religious attitudes of the several Caesars. This emphasis alone on religiones makes it apparent that he is very superstitious. Macé also sees Suetonius as a superstitious man, for he writes:

Le bon grammaticus fut superstitieux autant qu'homme de son temps. Il attache aux présages une importance toute particulière. De même qu'il n'oublie jamais d'examiner le style et les 'studia' de ses Césars, il ne manque jamais non plus d'observer s'ils étaient superstitieux.¹

This preoccupation with the supernatural can be detected in

¹Macé, op. cit., p. 59.

the kind of sources Suetonius uses. Pliny the Elder, one of the chief sources for the later Caesars, was Suetonius's friend, and furnished him with much of his material. Pliny was superstitious and credulous, as Macé writes:

Une partie aussi peu méritoire de son travail personnel est celle qu'il a consacrée aux prodiges; il les prodigue avec une naïveté tout de même trop consciencieuse. Même quand pour le fond du récit sa source principale est le crédule et superstitieux Plin l'Ancien, Suetone éprouve le besoin de la compléter à ce point de vue.²

Suetonius does not show whether punishment is meted out by the gods for evil deeds which have no religious importance. If there was some punishment for atrocious deeds, Caligula and Nero would not have enjoyed such a long period of license. Claudius was particular in his observance of religious ceremonies.

Observabatque sedulo ut quotiens terra in urbe movisset, ferias advocata contione praetor indiceret utque dirae in Capitolio visa obsecratio haberetur. (Claudius 22)

Suetonius tries to explain the failure of the revolt of Scribonianus by assigning some supernatural force as the reason. Surely natural causes could account for the failure. Nevertheless he writes: "Postquam denuntiato ad novum imperatorem itinere casu quodam ac divinitus neque aquila ornari neque signa convelli moverique potuerunt." (Ch. 13) However, Suetonius expresses disbelief at an action of Claudius which was supposed to avert the portents from

²Ibid.

himself. (Cl. 29) Claudius's action in this case was scarcely incredible, since as Suetonius himself says, Claudius was particular in his observance of religious rites.

The birth of Nero was ushered in by direful predictions and a remark of his father Domitius who denied "quicumque ex se et Agrippina nisi detestabile et malo publico nasci potuisse." (Nero 6) Another manifest indication of Nero's future unhappiness occurred on the day of his purification. (Ibid.) With such portents at his birth, Nero was fated to be an incorrigible rogue, as he showed himself to be later. The cruelty of Nero's disposition was early revealed, thus proving the dream of Seneca - that he was teaching Gaius Caligula - prophetic. (Nero 7) Suetonius also mentions the predictions of the astrologers that Nero would one day be repudiated. Nero's hopes, however, were falsely built up by a promise of some astrologers that he would rule the East, while a few expressly named the sovereignty of Jerusalem and the restoration of all his former fortunes. After consulting the oracle at Delphi and being told that he must look out for the seventy-third year, he was confident that he would have unbroken and universal good fortune. So confident was he that, when he lost some articles of great value, he

did not hesitate to say that the fish would bring them back. (Nero 40) He never thought that Galba would be the threat.

Nero was frightened by various portents. As a result of a comet appearing on successive nights, he resolved on the death of all the eminent men of the state in order to avert the omens, as the astrologer Balbillus had stated. (Nero 36) "Terrebatur ad hoc evidentibus portentis somniorum et ominum, cum veteribus tum novis." (Nero 46) Suetonius shows that these dreams came after the death of Nero's mother, and all spelled ruin for him. The helm was wrenched from his hands while he was steering a ship in his dreams; he was dragged by his wife, Octavia, into the thickest darkness; he was covered by a swarm of winged ants. (Ibid.) These were just a few of the portents that foretold punishment for Nero's unnatural behaviour, and his impious acts in killing his mother, wife, and aunt.

The only religious act of Nero for which Suetonius has praise is his punishment of the Christians, whom Suetonius regards as a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition. (Nero 16) Like Tiberius, he showed fear for the portents, for he had given up one of the two foreign wars he had planned, since he was "turbatus religione simul ac periculo" (Nero 19) Despite this fear,

he did nothing to win the favour of the divinities. This inhuman emperor, described as "religionum usque quaque contemptor praeter unius Deae Syriae", even acquired such a contempt for her that he made water on her image, after becoming enamoured of another superstition. (Nero 56) It was only a few days before his death that he attended an inspection of the victims, but he could not obtain a favourable omen. (Ibid.) In this instance also, Suetonius shows that Nero's actions and his final end were influenced mainly by his disregard of divine will.

Galba's reign, too, was ushered in by signs and omens. While he was sacrificing in a public temple after his arrival in Spain, the hair of a young attendant who was carrying an incense-box suddenly turned white all over his head. This was interpreted as the succession of an old man to a young one. Lightning also struck a lake of Cantabria, and twelve axes were found there. (Gal. 8) This was an unmistakable token of supreme power.

... et confirmabatur cum secundissimis auspiciis et omnibus virginis honestae vaticinatione, tanto magis quod eadem illa carmina sacerdos Iovis Cluniae ex penetrali somnio monitus eruerat ante ducentos annos similiter a fatidica puella pronuntiata. Quorum carminum sententia erat oriturum quandoque ex Hispania principem dominumque rerum. (Gal. 9)

Suetonius points out that it was not only because Nero had ordered Galba's death, or because Vindex had appealed to him to liberate mankind that he undertook the task of ridding

the state of Nero. The auspices and omens, too, lent encouragement. However, his rule proved a very short one. There is no mention of impious acts committed by Galba that he should suffer so quickly at the hands of the divinities. Suetonius only writes: "Magna et assidua monstra iam inde a principio exitum ei, qualis evenit, portenderant." (Gal. 18) A detailed list of prodigies is then given.

Otho's hopes for imperial power increased when he heard the unfavourable predictions of the soothsayers to Galba. However, the hopes of Otho were dispelled when he was haunted by the murdered Galba, whose shades he vainly tried to appease by every kind of expiatory rite. (Otho 7) He then began his expedition against Vitellius too hastily, "nulla ne religionum quidem cura, sed et motis necdum conditis ancilibus, quod antiquitus infaustum habetur", (Otho 8) and set out for Rome, refusing to heed the unfavourable signs. "Nam et victima Diti patri caesa litavit cum tali sacrificio contraria exta potiora sint." (Ibid.) His rashness in ignoring the direful portents and in engaging in battle, ended in disaster for Otho.

Vitellius was destined to have a short rule, for "genituram eius predictam a mathematicis ita parentes exhorruerunt, ut pater magno opere super contenderit, ne qua

ei provincia vivo se committeretur" (Vitellius 3)
 The fears of his parents were well founded as events turned out. In leading his army against Otho, he had bad omens, and as Suetonius adds, "avibus ostentis par respondet exitus." (Vit. 9) Vitellius like all the others who disregarded the signs, came to a bad end. Suetonius writes: "Magis deinde ac magis omni divino humanoque iure neglecto Alliensis die pontificatum maximum cepit." (Vit. 11) This was most sacrilegious behaviour, but Vitellius went further than that, and set fire to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus when Flavius Sabinus and his men sought shelter there. (Vit. 15)

The influence of the supernatural on Vespasian's life is clearly shown by Suetonius. Vespasian began to cherish hope of imperial dignity because of certain portents. Vespasian had shown no ambition until he received divine encouragement. No life shows more clearly the emphasis which Suetonius puts on omens and portents. A comparison of the works of Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Tacitus and Suetonius reveals that, regarding the omens foretelling Vespasian's rule, Suetonius gives eleven, Plutarch one, Dio Cassius seven and Tacitus three. Not only in this life, but in all other lives, Suetonius relates more omens than any of the above mentioned writers.³ Vespasian's end was in keeping

³vide charts on pp 91 - 93.

OMENS IN GAIUS SUETONIUS'S DE VITA CAESARUM:

PERIOD OF LIFE	JULIUS	AUGUSTUS	TIBERIUS	GALBA	OTHO	VITELLIUS	VESPASIAN	DOMITIAN
PRE - NATAL		4	1				1	
BIRTH		3					1	
CHILDHOOD		4	1	1	1			
MANHOOD		3		1	1			
CIVIL CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM	2	2		6			11	
MILITARY CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM	1	5	5	1			1	
CIVIL CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM	1	4			3	3	2	
MILITARY CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM	2				4			
DEATH	10	3	3	9		1	3	10
OMENS PORTENDING IMPERIUM	1	16		9	2		14	
NUMBER OF OMENS	17	28	10	18	9	4	19	10

OMENS IN DIO CASSIUS'S ROMAN HISTORY

PERIOD OF LIFE	JULIUS	AUGUSTUS	TIBERIUS	GALBA	OTHO	VESPASIAN
PRE - NATAL						
BIRTH						
CHILDHOOD						
MANHOOD						6
CIVIL CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM				4		
MILITARY CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM						
CIVIL CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM		3	3	1	2	2
MILITARY CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM						1
DEATH	3	4	3		5	3
OMENS PORTENDING IMPERIUM				4		6
NUMBER OF OMENS	3	7	6	5	7	12

OMENS IN TACITUS'S
HISTORIES

OMENS IN PLUTARCH'S
LIVES

OMENS IN APPIAN'S
ROMAN HISTORY

PERIOD OF LIFE	GALBA	OTHO	VITELLIUS	VESPASIAN	JULIUS	GALBA	OTHO	JULIUS	AUGUSTUS
PRE-NATAL									
BIRTH									
CHILDHOOD									
MANHOOD									
CIVIL CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM		2	1	3			3		9
MILITARY CAREER BEFORE IMPERIUM			1		1			4	1
CIVIL CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM	1								
MILITARY CAREER AFTER IMPERIUM				2	1	1		2	
DEATH		7	3		9			4	
OMENS PORTENDING IMPERIUM		2		4					
NUMBER OF OMENS	1	9	5	5	11	1	3	10	10

with the life he led. Nowhere does Suetonius show him to be contemptuous of the gods or of divine portents. He died a natural death.

Titus was encouraged by a physiognomist to hope for imperial power. (Titus 2) His visit to the oracle of Paphian Venus strengthened the prediction of the physiognomist. (Tit. 5) His reign, although of short duration, did not end without signs and portents. Titus himself was somewhat cast down "quod sacrificanti hostia aufugerat quodque tempestate serena tonuerat." (Tit. 10) Domitian's violent end was heralded by dreams, the predictions of astrologers, portents and omens. All of Domitian's attempts to avert disaster ended in failure. (Dom. 15f) Suetonius ends his De Vita Caesarum with a dream of Domitian that the condition of the empire would be happier and more prosperous after his death. Suetonius's remarks on the dream are: "... sicut sane brevi evenit abstinentia et moderatione insequentium principum." (Dom. 23)

Suetonius does not let slip any opportunity of showing how the intervention of the gods helped or hindered the emperors. His superstitious nature finds the supernatural an easy explanation for events which could otherwise be explained rationally. Far too much time is devoted to omens and prodigies, and too little to the analysis of the

behaviour of the several emperors. Suetonius sees the supernatural influencing men only in so far as they commit pious or impious deeds. The punishment for impiety comes not directly from the supernatural beings, but from man, their agent. Although most writers of this period included in their work omens and portents, they did not emphasize the role of these omens as much as Suetonius. Although Suetonius limits the influence of the supernatural on man, yet he does not allow man the ability to effect any great change without divine help. This superstitious attitude prevents him from looking for social, economic and political reasons for problems and crises that beset the empire. After Sallust and Tacitus, Suetonius's reversion to omens and portents as causes for the actions and sufferings of man is a distinct retrogression in historiography.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDE TO MORALITY

"Suetonium Tranquillum probissimum, honestissimum, eruditissimum, et mores eius secutus ... in contubernium assumpsi ..." ¹ As evidenced in this letter of Pliny to Trajan, Suetonius seems to have been a very upright man. Hence it is not surprising that he shows himself to be very concerned about the moral behaviour of the twelve emperors. He examines both their lives in private and in public, and relates any breach of morality, or even the rumour of it. He seems to feel that even the rumour of immoral actions is damaging to the characters of those who guide the destiny of Rome. In this he shares the view of Julius Caesar, who in divorcing his wife, Octavia, gave as his reason: "Quoniam meos tam suspicione quam crimine iudico carere oportere." (Iul. 74)

The facts of Suetonius's life are essential in understanding his preoccupation with morality, and since little is known about him, it is very difficult to draw

¹ad Traianum 94.

definite conclusions from his De Vita Caesarum. He does, however, place a great deal of emphasis on certain immoralities - Avaritia, luxuria, largitio, adulteria, and stuprum. It is known that Suetonius was a man of simple tastes. In Pliny's letter 1, 24, Pliny asks his friend Baebius Hispanus to use his influence to secure cheaply a little country house for Suetonius. This would account for Suetonius's criticism of luxuria. In fact, he criticizes any violation of moderatio. Throughout the De Vita Caesarum, he harps on the same immoralities, although they are variously named. His opinion of the emperors vary according to the presence or absence of these immoralities.

Although Suetonius generally relates the vices and the virtues of the several emperors without stating directly that he abhors or praises their behaviour, yet in the biography of Nero and that of Gaius Caligula, he gives a direct opinion on their behaviour. Suetonius divides the De Vita Neronis broadly into two parts. In the first part are recounted the acts, some of which Suetonius thinks are beyond criticism, while the others are even deserving of no slight praise. The other part contains Nero's shameful and criminal deeds. (Nero 19) In the De Vita C. Caligulae, there is also a broad division, where Suetonius separates Caligula's career as an emperor from his career as a monster. (Cal. 22)

By an examination of these lives, a good assessment can be made of Suetonius's attitude to the other Caesars.

There is no life in which Suetonius shelves a report on morals. Even in writing about Vespasian and Augustus, for whom he has a very high regard, he still relates any immoral actions or the rumours of immoral actions. These emperors win his approval because their virtues outnumber their vices. Throughout the ^{De} Vita Caesarum, Suetonius seems justified according to his description of the emperors in conveying the impressions he does convey of the several emperors, except in the case of Julius Caesar. For from Suetonius's own account of the De Vita Divi Iulii, the balance should be heavily in favour of Caesar as a good statesman.

The greatest fault in Caesar seems to be ambitio. Suetonius's dislike of bribery is quite evident from the many times he mentions it, not only in the De Vita Divi Iulii, but also in the other lives. Caesar's attempt at popularity causes him to use bribery. "Pontificatum maximum petit non sine profusissima largitione." (Iul. 13) Suetonius fails to mention that bribery was widely practised, and that in the contention for office, Catulus, Caesar's rival, had offered Caesar a bribe to withdraw from the competition. Caesar should not have been judged too harshly,

for even Cato was guilty of bribery. "... ne Catone quidem abnuente eam largitionem e re publica fieri." (Iul. 19) Caesar's use of bribery to have a charge brought against Gaius Rabirius also seems to win the disapproval of Suetonius, although in this case it seems that Suetonius is more concerned at the fact that the case was brought against a man who had served the state well. Caesar's lavishing of gifts on Pompey's friends and on the majority of the Senate in order to have them obligated to him also seems to be regarded with disfavour.

Although Suetonius mentions no direct proof of Caesar's immoral relations with Nicomedes, yet he tries to show that there must be some truth in the rumour by citing various hostile sources. When he first mentions this rumour, he writes: "Desedit apud Nicomedem, non sine rumore prostratae regi pudicitiae." (Iul. 2) Later, the relationship is reported as if it were no longer a rumour, but a fact. "Pudicitiae eius famam nihil quidem praeter Nicomedis contubernium laesit, gravi tamen et perenni obprobrio et ad omnium convicia exposito ..." (Iul. 49) As if to give substance to the accusation of immorality, Suetonius writes: "Pronum et sumptuosum in libidines fuisse constans opinio est, plurimasque et illustres feminas corrupisse ..." (Iul. 50)

There is no doubt that Suetonius shares the opinion. He also adds more rumours to the ones related already to give a decidedly bad impression of Caesar. "Existimabatur enim Servilia etiam filiam suam Tertiam Caesari conciliare." (Ibid.) Suetonius also uses the triumphal chant of Caesar's to give foundation to the accusation of immorality against Caesar, misunderstanding the custom whereby evil statements are made about the triumphing general as a sign of good omen. Suetonius then concludes his evidence against Caesar with striking proof, as he thinks, of Caesar's evil reputation thus: "At ne cui dubium omnino sed et impudicitiae et adulteriorum flagrasse infamia, Curio pater quadam eum oratione omnium mulierum virum et omnium virorum mulierem appellat." (Iul. 52)

Caesar's actions in pillaging shrines and temples filled with offerings, and his sacking towns for the sake of plunder were certainly a breach of morality. It is true that Suetonius does not offer any proof of this, despite his statement: "... Evidentissimis rapinis ac sacrilegis et onera bellorum civilium et triumphorum ac munerum sustinuit impendia." (Iul. 54) Suetonius's attitude to religion is such that the mere rumour of this action damages Caesar's reputation.² Suetonius condemns Caesar for

²Vide chapter III supra.

receiving excessive honours, and this is understandable since he believes very much in moderatio. However, he is not at all consistent, for Augustus, who also took excessive honours, wins his approval. Judging Caesar from Suetonius's description of him, one would conclude that Caesar was an outstanding man, but Suetonius thinks otherwise.

Although Suetonius tries to defend Augustus on charges of immorality, he nevertheless makes it his duty to report every immoral act of which he was accused. The severity of Augustus in the proscriptions is explained as an attempt at impartiality. Augustus was not free from immorality, for Suetonius writes: "Prima iuventa variorum dedecorum infamiam subiit." (Aug. 63) He is also taunted by Mark Antony with having earned adoption by his uncle through unnatural relations. (Ibid.) Suetonius does not deny Augustus's acts, but he excuses them in this way: "Adulteria quidem exercuisse ne amici quidem negant, excusantes sane non libidine, sed ratione commissa quo facilius consilia adversariorum per cuiusque mulieres exquirerent." (Aug. 69) His adulterous acts are like those which rumour assigned to Julius Caesar. Yet no attempt has been made to excuse Caesar's acts.

Augustus was criticized as being overfond of costly furniture and given to gaming, "... pretiosae supellectilis Corinthiorumque praecupidus et aleae indulgens ..." (Aug.70)

It was even believed that he caused men to be proscribed because of their Corinthian ware. Suetonius tries to free Augustus from the charge of the more serious immoralities, when he writes: "Ex quibus sive criminibus sive maledictis infamian impudicitiae facillime refutavit et praesentis et posterae vitae castitate; item lautitarum invidiam ..."

(Aug. 71) The charge of extravagance is also refuted by Suetonius who states that when Augustus took Alexandria, he kept none of the furniture of the palace for himself.

-Augustus cannot be freed of the charge of adulteria or libido, for "circa libidines ... ad vitiandas virgines promptior, quae sibi undique etiam ab uxore conquirerentur."

(Ibid.) Although Suetonius does not approve of adulteria, he does not regard it as immoral as stuprum, since adulteria was widely practised at that time. Stuprum - unnatural relations - is more greatly frowned upon by Suetonius, and hence he tries to clear Augustus of this charge. Julius Caesar finds no such support from Suetonius, whose bias is quite obvious, if one were to compare his treatment of these two Caesars.

Suetonius passes over the immoral acts of Augustus very quickly. He refrains from attacking Augustus for his callous and inhuman attitude in causing Agrippa to divorce his wife and marry the notorious Julia. No condemnation is levelled against him for compelling Tiberius to divorce his

wife, Agrippina, whom he loved very much, in order to marry Julia. Augustus himself forced Nero to divorce his wife, whom he (Augustus) married, although she was pregnant. This behaviour in the case of Caesar wins the disapprobation of Suetonius, who either suppresses or chooses to ignore the facts in order to convey a favourable picture of Augustus. Suetonius calls him an emperor of the utmost prudence and foresight, (Tib. 21) and concludes his remarks on Augustus's morals thus: "In ceteris partibus vitae continentissimum constat ac sine suspicione ullius vitii." (Aug. 72)

Tiberius, according to Suetonius, is guilty of every kind of immorality. Suetonius, in the earlier chapters of the ^{De}Vita Tiberii, shows Tiberius to be an opponent of vice and immorality.

Feminae famosae ut evitandas legum poenas iure ac dignitate matronali exsolverentur, lenocinium profiteri coeperant, et ex iuventute utriusque ordinis profligatissimus quisque, quominus in opera scaenae harenaeque edenda senatus consulto teneretur, famosi iudicii notam sponte subibant; eos easque omnes, ... exsilio adfecit. (Tib. 35)

Tiberius had taken great pains to remedy many of the evils that plagued Rome. However, the good picture of Tiberius is soon spoiled by Suetonius. Tiberius who was self-contained and patient in the face of abuse and slander, and who showed "parem moderationem minoribus quoque et personis et rebus ...," (Tib. 22) now, ..."secreti licentiam nactus et quasi

civitatis remotis, cuncta simul vitia male diu dissimulata tandem profudit." (Tib. 42) He drinks and eats excessively. He associates with lustful and prodigal people. He even awards the quaestorship to an obscure person in preference to men of the noblest families because of his ability to drain an amphora of wine. "Novum denique officium instituit a voluptatibus, praeposito equite R.T. Caesonio Prisco." (Ibid.)

Suetonius gives a long list of Tiberius's vices which far excel his virtues. Chapters xliii - xlv describe in detail the immoralities of Tiberius. He established at Capreae his "sedem arcanarum libidinum". (Tib. 45) His cruelty to women of high birth who refused to submit to his amorous advances, is shown by his treatment of Mallonia. (Tib. 45) This cruelty extended later to his wife and to the children of Germanicus. It is clear from the long list of immoral acts that Suetonius judges Tiberius to be a wholly disreputable character. As if to make this more apparent, Suetonius writes that the news of Tiberius's death was received with joy. From Suetonius's description, Tiberius is an immoral fiend who seems to have lost sight of modesty, patience, justice and virtue, instead of which are found extravagance, immorality, injustice, suspicion and cruelty. How unlike the Tiberius about whom Suetonius writes:

Adduci tamen nequeo quin existimem, circumspectissimum et prudentissimum principem in tanto praesertim negotio nihil temere fecisse; sed vitiis Tiberi virtutibusque perpensis potiores duxisse virtutes ... (Tib. 21)

Augustus had placed high hopes for Rome's future prosperity in Tiberius, and Suetonius in the early part of the De Vita Tiberii, shows that this hope was not misplaced.

Suetonius's later portrayal is such an ugly one that it completely mars the over all picture. Velleius Paterculus gives a completely different assessment of Tiberius, and it is obvious that the truth must lie somewhere between these two extremes.

Although Suetonius for the most part tries to show his opinion of the emperors by the amount of emphasis he places on their moral and immoral acts, and seldom directly states his opinion, in the De Vita C. Caligulae, he states openly that Caligula was a monster. Even his good deeds are done mainly to win popularity and secure his position, but he is basically wicked. Suetonius writes: "Naturam tamen saevam atque probrosam ne tunc quidem inhibere poterat, quin et animadversionibus poenisque ad supplicium datorum cupidissime interesset et ganeas atque adulteria ... noctibus obiret ..." (Cal. 11) Suetonius sees Caligula as a base hypocrite who "incendebat et ipse studia hominum omni genere popularitatis." (Cal. 15) His eulogy of Tiberius, his kindness to his mother and brother were not regarded as

morally good since they were done merely to win him popularity. His recall of those condemned to banishment, his banishment of the spintriae from Rome, the supposed freedom of speech, the unrestricted jurisdiction allowed to magistrates - these were effected "pari popularitate". (Ibid.) Nevertheless, these acts occurred while Caligula could still be termed an emperor. His other acts, however, win the strongest disapproval, and come under the heading of "Caligula as a monster". It is unnecessary to enumerate the many immoral and inhuman acts of Caligula. "Pudicitiae neque suae neque alienae pepercit." (Cal. 36) "Nepotatus sumptibus omnium prodigorum ingenia superavit, ..." (Cal. 37)

Suetonius shows that Gaius Caligula was guilty of avaritia, luxuria, stuprum, adulteria, sacrilegium and many more immoralities. He lived in habitual incest with his sisters. (Cal. 24) Suetonius finds nothing good in Caligula, for although Suetonius concedes that he was eloquent and ready of speech, he nevertheless adds that Caligula put this eloquence to bad use. The greater part of the De Vita C. Caligulae is taken up with the vicious and immoral acts of Caligula, and no doubt is left in the mind of the reader about Suetonius's opinion of this emperor. Even Tiberius's evil actions are outnumbered by those of this emperor.

Suetonius looks with approval on the behaviour of

Claudius towards his dead relatives. Moreover, Claudius was modest and unassuming, refraining from taking excessive honours, and refusing the forename of Imperator. (Claudius 12) In political matters, he acted most conscientiously. He showed himself a humanitarian in abolishing the cruel and inhuman religion of the Druids among the Gauls. In short, his conduct was morally good. However, Suetonius dislikes the fact that it was dictated not so much by Claudius's judgement as by that of his wives and his freedmen. (Cl. 25) "His ... uxoribusque addictus, non principem sed ministrum egit, ... libidine honores exercitus impunitates supplicia largitus est, ..." (Cl. 28) Suetonius's main reproach for Claudius is his violation of moderatio. "Cibi vinique quocumque et tempore et loco appetentissimus ..." (Cl. 33) He hardly left the dining room until he was stuffed and soaked. Not only in the matter of food was he immoderate, but "libidinis in feminas profusissimae." (Ibid.) Claudius was very greatly devoted to gaming also, but Suetonius is quick to point out that he was "marum omnino experts". (Ibid.) Despite the fact that Suetonius writes that it was not until late that Claudius gave up having women and young girls and boys grossly mishandled, he does not seem to have too bad an opinion of him. His cruelties, which displease Suetonius, are done through fear and suspicion. On the whole a sympathetic picture is drawn of Claudius.

Suetonius again passes moral judgement on the actions of an emperor in the De Vita Neronis. It would have been extraordinary for Suetonius to write about such a fiend without giving some hint of his personal feelings. As was formerly stated,³ Suetonius divides this life into two parts, and he gives his reasons thus:

Haec partim nulla reprehensione, partim etiam non mediocri laude digna in unum contuli, ut secernerem a probris ac sceleribus eius, de quibus dehinc dicam. (Nero 19)

It would be tedious to enumerate the cruelties and immoralities of this demon. He outdid Caligula in criminal actions. Incest, murder, matricide, unnatural relations with men and women formed part of his normal behaviour. The evil deeds of the other emperors seem like childish pranks when compared with the heinous crimes of Nero. The fact that only in the De Vita C. Caligulae and in this life Suetonius gives his personal opinion of emperor's evil behaviour, shows that Suetonius is thoroughly disgusted with the immoralities of these two emperors.

Vitellius's besetting sins were luxury and cruelty.

He was also extremely gluttonous.

Ut autem homo non profundae modo sed intempestivae quoque ac sordidae gulae, ... temperavit, quin inter altaria ibidem statim viscus et farris frusta paene e

³Vide page 97 supra.

foco manderet circaque viarum popinas fumantia obsonia
vel pridiana atque semesa. (Vit. 13)

Such an action wins the rebuke of Suetonius, not only because of the greed involved, but because it was dishonourable to the gods. Vitellius was stained by every sort of baseness as he advanced in age. He inflicted torture and death on anyone for any purpose. Galba had the double reputation for cruelty and avarice. (Gal. 12) "Libidinis in mares pronior et eos non nisi praeduros exoletosque." (Gal. 22) Otho is accused of extravagance and rashness. Suetonius also mentions his seduction of Pop^aaea Sabina and his pretended marriage with her. (Otho 3)

Suetonius seems to approve of Vespasian's actions, for he writes: "Non temere quis punitus insons reperietur nisi eo et ignaro aut certe invito atque decepto." (Vesp. 15) No other emperor obtained such a great compliment. Where moral rectitude is concerned, by Suetonius's description, Vespasian was the nearest to the ideal leader. This emperor never took pleasure in the death of anyone, but even wept and sighed over those who suffered merited punishment. "Sola est, in qua merito culpetur, pecuniae cupiditas." (Vesp. 16) This greed is outweighed by his measures to rid the state of licentiousness and extravagance. Suetonius even tries to account for this greed in a manner favourable to Vespasian. He was not naturally covetous, but was driven

by necessity to raise money by spoliation, since the financial position of the state was precarious. Suetonius gives as his reason for believing that Vespasian was forced by necessity into robbery, "... quando et male partis usus est". (Ibid.)

Titus, despite the fact that his period of rule was so short, is still examined for vicious and immoral habits. As commander of the praetorian guard, he had behaved arrogantly and tyrannically. "Praeter saevitiam suspecta in eo luxuria, quod ad mediam noctem comissationes cum profusissimo quoque familiarum extenderet." (Titus 7) He was also suspected of greed. These suspicions are reported only to be refuted. "At illi ea fama pro bono cessit conversaque est in maximas laudes neque vitio nullo reperto et contra virtutibus summis." (Ibid.) Suetonius's preoccupation with morality is evident from the fact that in a reign of this short duration, and a biography of eleven chapters, he still harps on this theme. The high regard which Suetonius has for this emperor is seen in the statement that Titus was cut off by death, to the loss of mankind rather than to his own. (Titus 10)

Domitian as city praetor behaved quite lawlessly. The rumour also spread that he was debauched by Nerva. At first, in the administration of the government, he showed

an equal number of virtues and vices, "donec virtutes quoque in vitia deflexit, ... super ingenii naturam inopia rapax, metu saevus." (Dom. 3) Moderatio is abused by Domitian. "Erat autem non solum magnae, sed etiam callidae inopinatae saevitiae." (Dom. 11) "Confidens etiam et cum verbis tum rebus immodicus ..." (Dom. 12) He was excessively lustful, and his constant sexual relationships he called bed-wrestling, as if it were a kind of exercise. (Dom. 22) Suetonius, nevertheless, points out that Domitian was equally free from any suspicion of love of gain or of avarice both in private life, and for some time after he became emperor. This emperor's virtues were excelled by his vices.

From the many examples given, it can be clearly seen that Suetonius constantly mentions certain breaches of morality. Political immorality consists of bribery, disrespect for the Senate, and cruelty to the senators. Nero and Caligula are especially known for their cruel treatment of the Senate and senators. The social immoralities frequently mentioned are avarice, extravagance, incest, and homosexuality. One can see however, that Suetonius is concerned not only with the immoralities named above, but with any breach of moderation. Violations of religious customs, and contempt for the divinities are unfavourably regarded by Suetonius. This is quite understandable, since religiones are closely bound up with civil, military and

private affairs.⁴

Perhaps the argument may be advanced that Suetonius was influenced by his source material, or the genre of writing in that period. Yet, if the concession is made that he was influenced by his sources and the genre of writing, a study of Plutarch and Tacitus reveals that Suetonius goes much further than these historians in his emphasis on moral behaviour. He seems to be as concerned about immorality as Sallustius Crispus, who based the decline of Rome's greatness on the deterioration of morals. Although Tacitus reports on the immoral activities of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and the Flavians, he does not give as many details as does Suetonius. This is understandable since his work is historical more than biographical. Plutarch on the other hand has also composed biographies, and yet he does not emphasize the moral questions as much as Suetonius does. Quite often the immoralities reported tend to be mere gossip; yet Suetonius includes them in his work. Those emperors who are least guilty of immorality, and who practise moderatio are the ones who win Suetonius's favour.

⁴vide chapter III.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF HUMAN CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR

Suetonius's attempt at an analysis of human character and behaviour fails miserably, since he apparently believes in the inflexibility of human nature. At a loss to account for the wicked deeds of the majority of the emperors, who at one time or another benefited the state, and showed temperance, clemency, generosity and moderation, Suetonius merely states that these emperors were innately bad, but their wickedness lay concealed in the early years.¹ He fails to recognize that people are affected by adversity and prosperity alike, and changes in behaviour can be gradual or sudden, depending on the environment, and the strength or weakness of the people concerned. Caligula is a good example of one whom environment moulded, especially since he was feeble - minded.

Suetonius's treatment of Tiberius will be examined first, since Tiberius, an obvious psychological case, is so badly misrepresented. Suetonius does not offer a

¹Vide Tiberius 57 and Domitian 12.

satisfactory explanation for the worse acts of Tiberius, mainly because he begins on the premise, erroneous as it is, that that emperor was fundamentally a cruel man. Because of this premise, he is forced to view Tiberius's actions, both good and bad, with contempt. This also accounts for Suetonius's failure to explain the changes which took place in Tiberius's behaviour, for as far as Suetonius is concerned, there was no change. A man is born good or bad. Suetonius possibly thinks that whether a man was good or bad depended on the gods. This assumption is made since Suetonius dwells so much on the influence of the divinities.

Suetonius has made no attempt to show what far-reaching effects Tiberius's childhood had on his behaviour as an adult. He mentions that Tiberius passed his infancy and his youth amid hardships and tribulation, (Tib. 6) without realizing that this could influence his behaviour at a later period. Tiberius was forced to accompany his mother on her various flights to retain his life. Such an experience so early in his life was bound to have some effect on Tiberius later, especially if he were reminded of that experience because of some similar one. Tiberius later found himself compelled to put away his wife, Agrippina, and marry Julia, the vicious and immoral daughter of Augustus. He was neglected and disregarded by Augustus as a future heir, and only named heir on the death of Augustus's sons, Lucius

and Gaius. Because of this treatment, Tiberius decided to withdraw from public life after a very successful career. Suetonius, not properly understanding the situation, prefers to put it down to an attempt by Tiberius to keep up his prestige by absence, or even to add to it in case his country should ever need him. (Tib. 12)

The compulsory divorce of his wife, Agrippina in 11 B.C., and the death of his brother in 9 B.C., filled Tiberius with the greatest sorrow. Suetonius was simple enough to believe that Tiberius, who loved his wife dearly, could actually enjoy marriage at any time with a trollop. Although being partly right in believing that Tiberius's disgust at Julia's behaviour was responsible for his retirement, he fails to appreciate all of Tiberius's reasons for retiring from political life. There was undoubtedly some point to the belief that, since the children of Augustus were now of age, Tiberius voluntarily gave up the position and virtual assumption of the second rank which he had long held. (Tib. 10) Suetonius writes that this is the reason which Tiberius gave, and he takes it for granted without venturing to analyse the situation. Certainly Tiberius would give such an excuse to allay the suspicions of Augustus, but no one reason could be given for his decision to retire from a political office that seemed

hopeless and a private life that ^{was} doomed because of a compulsory divorce from a wife he loved.

Tiberius's request to return to Rome after a divorce had been obtained from Julia was refused. He was at the same time suspected by Augustus of aiming at a revolution. This adds strength to Tiberius's reason for leaving when he did. This attitude of Augustus was also enough to change a man who was so just, conscientious and kind, and shows that he had retired from public life with good reason. Even after his retirement, there was fear of danger to his life, and this more than anything else caused him to sue for a return which he was eventually allowed to make after eight years' absence. When he did return, he did so on the understanding that he would take no part nor active interest in public affairs. (Tib. 13)

It was only after the death of Augustus's sons, Gaius and Lucius, that Tiberius was adopted along with Marcus Agrippa, by Augustus, but the condition of adopting his nephew was imposed on him. This incident, too, would rankle in Tiberius's mind, because he could not ensure imperial power for his line. Suetonius fails to realize the effect this incident must have had on Tiberius.

Suetonius shows that Tiberius, after his adoption, was a very successful leader in foreign wars, and his conduct was very becoming. When Augustus died, and the young Marcus Agrippa had been disposed of, Tiberius at length found himself emperor, by the will of Augustus. This will was a clear indication that his being named emperor was a matter of necessity rather than of choice, for it read: "Quoniam atrox fortuna Gaium et Lucum filios mihi eripuit, Tiberius Caesar mihi ex parte dimidia et sextante heres esto." (Tib. 23) It could easily be seen that this was in part responsible for Tiberius's reluctance to accept imperial authority. Nevertheless his statement when he did accept, "dum veniam ad id tempus, quo vobis aequum videri dare vos aliquam senectuti meae requiem", (Tib. 26) is regarded as hypocrisy by Suetonius, who writes: "impudentissimo mimo nunc adhortantes amicos increpans." (Tib. 24) Suetonius misinterprets all Tiberius's acts of humility, and thinks that his behaviour was affected.

Tiberius's conduct had been excellent, his public life unstained, and admirable. However, after the death of his sons, Germanicus and Drusus, he decided to return to Capreae, and utterly neglected the conduct of state affairs. Suetonius does not try to account for his retirement. Instead, after giving a summary of the good reforms of Tiberius, and his splendid career as a ruler, he now gives a very poor

explanation for the change in the emperor thus: "Ceterum secreti licentiam nactus et quasi civitatis oculis remotis, cuncta simul vitia male diu dissimulata tandem profudit." (Tib. 42) In fact, Suetonius states that there was no change, for "saeva ac lenta natura ne in puero quidem latuit." (Tib. 57) Tiberius did many other cruel and savage deeds under the guise of strictness and improvement of public morals, but in reality to gratify his natural instincts. (Tib. 59) In naming the cruel acts of Tiberius, Suetonius fails to realize what impact the treachery of Sejanus had on his behaviour. Tiberius was changed into a cruel man because of the events which affected him from childhood onwards. Formerly, Tiberius had been merciful and forgiving,² but afterwards he realized that for all his good deeds, he earned nothing but treachery in return. The slight at the hands of Augustus, the forced divorce of his wife, Agrippina, the death of his son Drusus at the hands of his treacherous wife, and Sejanus, all tended to create a radical change in Tiberius's behaviour.

Savagery resulted. He suspected everybody, even his grandsons, Gaius and Tiberius, whom Suetonius says his intention to kill "nec abhorret a vero; namque identidem

²Vide Tiberius chapters 28 and 32 for his virtues.

felicem Priamum vocabat, quod superstes omnium suorum exstitisset." (Tib. 62) This is a ridiculous conclusion. Suetonius should have tried to analyse Tiberius's speech to the Senate:

Similem se semper sui futurum nec umquam mutaturum mores suos, quam diu sanae mentis fuisset; sed exempli causa cavendum esse, ne senatus in acta cuiusquam obligaret, quia aliquo casu mutari posset. (Tib. 67)

Tiberius's extreme wretchedness is explained in a letter to the Senate. "Quod scribam vobis, p.c., aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, dii me deaque peius perdant quam cotidie perire sentio, si scio." (Ibid.) This shows clearly that Tiberius was torn apart with doubts, suspicions and various trials of conscience. Suetonius believes that the fame of Germanicus and the regret for his loss were increased by the horror of the times which followed, "cunctis nec temere opinantibus reverentia eius ac metu repressam Tiberi saevitiam, quae mox eruperit." (Caligula 6)

As in the case of Tiberius, Suetonius finds that Gaius Caligula was a scoundrel from birth. Even in his youth, "naturam tamen saevam atque probrosam ne tunc quidem inhibere poterat, quin et animadversionibus poenisque ad supplicium datorum cupidissime interesset et ganeas atque adulteria ... noctibus obiret ..." (Cal. 11) He was also suspected of murdering Tiberius. Suetonius does not account adequately

for his cruel nature. He does not realize that Caligula's growing up in a soldiers' camp had any influence on him. Suetonius divides the life of Caligula into two parts: Caligula as an emperor, and as a monster. By so doing, Suetonius fails to examine the effect various incidents had on Caligula's life. He does not show the changes from childhood through manhood. His arbitrary division does not allow the development or the deterioration of character to be traced. To account for Caligula's incestuous and cruel nature, Suetonius writes: "Mentis valitudinem et ipse senserat ac subinde de secessu deque purgando cerebro cogitavit." (Cal. 50) It was thought that his wife, Caesonia, gave him a drug intended for a love potion, which had the effect of driving him mad. (Ibid.) On one of those rare occasions when Suetonius actually ventures an analysis, he writes: "Non inmerito mentis valitudini attribuerim diversissima in eodem vitia, summam confidentiam et contra nimium metum." (Cal. 51)

An examination of the De Vita Divi Iulii reveals Suetonius's method of handling his biographies. He places great emphasis on the personal and private life of the emperor. His political life is briefly summarized. Suetonius does not realize that it was mainly because of the political tensions of the times that Caesar behaved in

the manner he did. He makes no attempt to show why Caesar hesitated before crossing the Rubicon. He could not see the inner conflict that was going on in Caesar's mind before he took that very important step. It was scarcely the omens that caused him to proceed with the business in hand. He had convinced himself of the rectitude of his acts and the injustice done to his cause by the Senate and those who supported Pompey. The Senate had rejected his proposals for a compromise, and he had no other alternative but to get rid of the corrupt Senate. The crossing of the Rubicon was the last resort after the failure of negotiations with the Senate.

Caesar's sincerity in trying to reach some peaceful solution and avoid war, is seen in his handing over legions to Pompey at a time when he knew there was a possibility of war. His reluctance to kill his fellowmen is seen in his generous behaviour to all of his enemies, and in his orders to his soldiers to spare their fellowmen as much as possible. Caesar had witnessed civil war in his youth, and the thought of declaring war on his countrymen made him hesitate. A true analysis of his character can only come from an analysis of the motives for his actions. Why did Caesar allow the recall of Cicero? Why was he so merciful to the vanquished? These questions must be answered before the conclusion that Caesar was just another revolutionary is reached.

Suetonius gives an extremely brief account of the Gallic Wars. Caesar was an excellent strategist. Suetonius does Caesar an injustice by not showing his behaviour in actual battle, his treatment of his enemies, his reasons for undertaking the war and the importance of the results of the war. However, he makes some rather damaging remarks about Caesar without substantiating his statements. Surely this is a statement that needs confirmation: "Nec deinde ulla belli occasione, ne iniusti quidem ac periculosi abstinuit tam foederatis quam infestis ac feris gentibus ultro laccessitis." (Iul. 24) Instead, he cites numerous sources to prove that Caesar had illicit relations with Nicomedes. (Iul. 47)

His inability to understand the political turmoil in Rome at this time is mainly responsible for some very inaccurate conclusions drawn about Caesar. Suetonius's statement about Caesar's behaviour when he obtained additional Gallic provinces, is out of keeping with the Caesar whom he describes. It is difficult to imagine Caesar boasting, especially before the Senate. Yet Suetonius writes: "Quo gaudio elatus non temperavit quin paucos post dies frequenti curia iactaret, invitis et gementibus adversariis adepturum se quae concupisset, proinde ex eo insultaturum omnium capitibus." (Iul. 22) Suetonius is the only authority for this statement.

Julius Caesar's political life can scarcely be separated from his private life, nor can his actions during his campaigns in Gaul be separated from his actions during his dictatorship in Rome. They are all inter-related, and they explain and give a clearer and truer picture of him as a man. The political confusion in Rome influenced Caesar's actions in Gaul, and these in turn affected the political situation at Rome. It is therefore misleading to enumerate facts first and describe character afterwards. This would mean that character is unchangeable, as Suetonius seems to believe. He does not consider the influence of environment on human character.

Suetonius's great regard for Augustus leads him to make excuses for Augustus's severity during the proscriptions, and on several other occasions. He does not account for the terrible acts which followed the proscriptions and for which Augustus incurred general detestation. A lame excuse is given for Augustus's severity. Suetonius writes that Augustus's attempt at impartiality was responsible for his severity, for while Antony and Lepidus could be moved by personal influence and entreaties, Augustus was insistent that all those guilty should be punished. Suetonius does not realize that Augustus at this time was in financial straits, and the more people proscribed, the more money would fall to him. Augustus added a colleague of his father

to the proscription list, not to satisfy justice, but at the insistence of the other members of the Triumvirate who also had to see their friends proscribed. (Aug. 27)

Suetonius does not account for the change which came about in Augustus - a change which resulted because of the more settled conditions of the country, and the strength of his power. He records the evil acts and the good ones without trying to show how it was possible for the same man to behave in a different manner at different times. He gives no reasons for the change in the behaviour of Augustus, who in the beginning seized power tyrannically, and held office continually, but later actually allowed the Senate to share in the government. A chronological account of events would give a clearer picture of the change in the attitude of Augustus, and the events that caused it. Suetonius by dividing his life into various phases, and noting down the relevant facts, makes it difficult for anyone to follow the evolution of Augustus's character, the death of the Republic, and the birth of the Principate.

Suetonius's high regard for Augustus is clearly seen from his statement about Augustus's choice of a successor: "Adduci tamen nequeo quin existimem, circumspectissimum principem in tanto praesertim negotio nihil temere fecisse." (Tib. 21) This is one of the rare occasions on which

Suetonius gives a personal judgement of the emperors, and confirms that, in the treatment of Augustus, Suetonius is biased. It is also obvious why some of the gloomier deeds of Augustus are kept silent, and the good ones preponderate.

Suetonius makes no proper analysis of the behaviour of Claudius, who, like Tiberius, began his career as a sensible, honest and upright leader, and ended up as a suspicious and cruel man. Claudius had lost his father when he was still an infant, and throughout almost the whole course of his childhood and youth, he suffered so severely from various disorders that the vigour of both his mind and body was dulled. When he reached the proper age, he was not thought capable of any public or private business. Suetonius also recounts the bad treatment meted out to him by his mother, who often called him "portentum ... hominis ... nec absolutum a natura sed tantum incohatum", while anyone accused of dullness was called "stultiorem ... filio suo Claudio". (Claudius 3) His grandmother, too, treated him with the utmost contempt, very rarely speaking to him. Suetonius does not think this treatment important in influencing Claudius's future behaviour. Yet, seeming to imply that Claudius was cruel from birth, he writes: "Soror Livilla cum audi(v)isset quandoque imperaturum tam iniquam et tam indignam sortem p.R. palam et clare detestata est". (Ibid.)

Because of this general distrust of his ability to participate in affairs of state, Claudius formed an intimacy with the lowest men, and incurred the reproach of drunkenness and gambling, in addition to his former reputation for dullness. (Cl. 5) Suetonius sees his behaviour resulting from his not obtaining consular rank. However, it was not merely disappointment at not obtaining office, but also his being neglected and insulted by his compeers. This was a reaction to the treatment meted out to him. Even after he had obtained consular power, he was still the object of insults. His gaining imperial power was a matter of pure chance, and he was long in doubt as to what his future would be, for when he was held by the soldiers, he did not know whether he would be killed or proclaimed emperor.

The emperor, realizing the position in which he was on his accession, decided to win the approval of the people, and hence behaved in a very praiseworthy manner. However, while he was doing his best to rectify many of the evils that haunted Rome, treachery and conspiracy threatened him. These events served only to remind him of his youthful days, and brought forth the beast in him. Suetonius makes no attempt to account for the change in Claudius's behaviour, but he realizes that Claudius showed strange inconsistency of temper. The reason for his behaviour is given by Suetonius as the influence of freedmen and his wives.

"His ... uxoribusque addictus non principem, sed ministrum egit." (Cl. 29) Suetonius does not show why Claudius, who was so concerned with doing beneficial deeds for his kin, would be the same one to put to death Appius Silanus, his father-in-law, the two Julias, daughters of Drusus and Germanicus, on unsupported charges; the man who was so respectful of the Senate, inflicted the death penalty on thirty-five senators and more than three hundred Roman knights.

Having failed to account for the change in Claudius, Suetonius reverts to his old philosophy of life - a bad man must have evolved from a bad child. To convince himself that the theory is correct, Suetonius tries to show that Claudius was always cruel. "Saevum et sanguinarium natura fuisse magnis minimisque apparuit rebus." (Cl. 34) Suetonius realizes that suspicion and timidity made Claudius cruel, but he fails to realize that his early experience and the conspiracies which were formed against him were responsible for the suspicion and timidity. Hence he is forced to conclude that this cruel trait was Claudius's from his early years.

Suetonius seems to think that heredity helps to mould character, for he writes: "Pluris e familia cognosci referre arbitror, quo facilius appareat ita degenerasse a

suorum virtutibus Nero, ut tamen vitia cuiusque quasi tradita et ingenita rettulerit." (Nero I) Suetonius shows that Nero was doomed to be evil, since many direful predictions were made from his horoscope also. Hence not only heredity, but also time of birth seems to influence character and behaviour, as far as Suetonius is concerned. Although this is the only occasion on which Suetonius remarks about heredity influencing character, yet the mere fact that Suetonius gives the behaviour of most of the emperors' ancestors in detail, seems to suggest that he sees some connection between the behaviour of the emperors and that of their ancestors. Tiberius, whom Suetonius treats rather harshly, behaves in a manner worthy of his ancestors. What behaviour could be expected from one who had among his ancestors "... e duobus gentilibus praeditis eo alter latrocinii, caedis alter convictus est." (Tib. 1) "Multa multorum Claudiorum egregia merita, multa etiam sequius admissa in rem p. exstant." (Tib. 2) There were good ones like Appius Caecus, Claudius Caudex and Tiberius Nero, while on the other hand, there were bad ones like Claudius Regillanus, Claudius Russus and Claudius Pulcher. It is, therefore, not strange to find a Tiberius descending from this line. Even the female ancestors of Tiberius were extremists. "Exstant et feminarum exempla diversa aequae, siquidem gentis eiusdem utraque Claudia fuit ..." (Ibid.) Suetonius seems to see a connection when he writes: "Ex hac

stirpe Tiberius Caesar genus trahit, et quidem utrumque."

(Tib. 3)

Suetonius, although he does not say that heredity exerted any influence on Vitellius, as he says in the case of Nero, yet gives details about the Vitellian family, which seem to suggest the influence of heredity. He makes no attempt to defend the Vitellian family from any infamous associations as he did in the case of Augustus. He describes various members of the Vitellian family, and shows that they were rogues. It is as if Suetonius has used this setting to account for the vices of Vitellius. This connection between the ancestors of Vitellius and Vitellius^{himself} is assumed after a close examination of the lives of the other Caesars. Where a good emperor is described, his ancestors, for the most part, are favourably treated, and any malicious rumours about them are disproved. In the case of bad emperors, their ancestors are generally shown to have been guilty of various vices. Since Suetonius has shown that heredity exerted an influence on Nero, it is very likely that he sees this also in the other emperors.

Of Nero, Suetonius writes that although his acts during boyhood at first seemed to be the usual pranks associated with boys, he was an innately bad character, as could be seen from the cruel nature of his misdeeds.

"Petulantiam, libidinem, luxuriam, avaritiam, crudelitatem sensim quidem primo et occulte et velut iuvenili errore exercuit, sed ut tunc quoque eubium nemini foret naturae illa vitia, non aetatis esse." (Nero 26) Again this is the story of a person who was always bad, but has tried to conceal his evil nature at first.

Domitian was not unlike Tiberius, Claudius and Nero.

"Ceterum omnem vim dominationis tam licenter exercuit ut iam tum qualis futurus esset ostenderet." (Dom. 1) He was always trying to conceal his real nature, for he made a remarkable pretence of modesty. (Dom. 2) Suetonius seems to contradict himself, for he writes that Domitian was made rapacious through need and cruel through fear. (Dom. 3) This would mean that he sees human nature changing because of external influences. Suetonius gives a rather confusing picture of Domitian. In chapter 3, he writes that Domitian showed himself inconsistent in the administration of government, with about an equal number of virtues and vices, but finally he turned the virtues into vices. Later in chapter 8, he states that Domitian administered justice scrupulously and conscientiously. This seems strange after Suetonius mentions his inconsistency. Domitian often gave strong proofs not merely of integrity, but even of liberality. (Dom. 9) The confusion arises because Suetonius disregards a chronological sequence of events.

The change in Domitian's attitude does not seem to startle Suetonius, for he simply writes: "Sed neque in clementiae neque in abstinentiae tenore permansit et tamen aliquanto celerius ad saevitiam descivit quam ad cupiditatem." (Dom. 10) After his victory in the civil war, Domitian became even more cruel. "Erat autem non solum magnae, sed etiam callidae inopinataeque saevitiae." (Ibid.) Suetonius, in his effort to explain the radical transformation, reverts to his old philosophy of human behaviour. He writes: "Ab iuventa minime civilis animi, confidens etiam et cum verbis tum rebus immodicus." (Dom. 12) Domitian's fearful and suspicious nature resulted from the conditions of the times, and the bad experiences he had during his early years.

Suetonius's belief in the immutability of human character and behaviour prevents him from giving due praise to those emperors, who early in their reigns, did beneficial deeds, but later, because of bad experiences, behaved cruelly, and performed acts detrimental to the well being of the state. He fails to take into account the nature of the times, and the effect this must have had on the emperors. At this period in history, no one was above suspicion. Treachery was rife. Uneasy lay the head that wore the crown. Tiberius, Claudius and Domitian seemed to be generous, kind and good rulers in the beginning, but they changed because of various circumstances. There is no reason to

think that these emperors were bad from childhood. Suetonius, however, finds it an easy explanation for the changes that occurred in the behaviour of the majority of the emperors. This explanation causes him to judge some of the emperors too harshly.

CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDE TO POLITICS

Suetonius's examination of the emperors' attitude to the Senate gives some clue as to his political views and shows his patrician sympathies. Although he rarely mentions his own name and one can hardly find in his work anything resembling a profession of political ties, one can without forcing the sense, learn from certain expressions his interest in the Senatorial party, his praise for the old institutions, and his rebuke of those emperors who tried to be autocrats. His ideal form of government is the Republic. He feels therefore that the Senate must be revered, the populace must follow its lead, and power should not ordinarily be concentrated in the hands of any one man.

He shows himself to be a diehard conservative, a worshipper of precedent, and a firm believer in conventional behaviour. He is opposed to any change, especially when it involves the administration of traditional institutions. He is concerned with the attitude of the emperors to established customs, their attempts to effect beneficial reforms, to

correct defects in institutions that had deteriorated because of faulty administration, and their moral behaviour in public life.

Although Suetonius does not always comment on the political actions of the emperors, yet it is possible to understand his attitude not only by his frequent references to certain political deeds and political offices, but especially by comparing the public life of the other Caesars with that of Caligula and Nero. These two biographies form the basis for a sound judgement of Suetonius's attitude. One needs only to compare the actions regarded as good or bad by Suetonius in these two lives with the actions in the other lives. Although he cannot be given credit for any deep political insight, yet he is constantly aware of the superficial political problems. He can accept reforms which he thinks are beneficial to the people and he has strong censure for those emperors who interfere with the government for their own personal ends.

Throughout the De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius focusses attention on the relationship between emperor and Senate. Under 'Caligula as a monster' is recorded Caligula's dishonourable treatment of the Senate. Suetonius detests his disrespect of the highest orders in the state. For

those who held the highest offices had to run in their togas beside Caligula's chariot and wait on him at table. Others were secretly killed. The consuls were deposed, and the state was left for three days without its highest magistrates. (Cal. 26) "Saepe in cunctos pariter senatores ut Seiani clientes ut matris ac fratrum suorum delatores, invectus est, ... Equestrem ordinem ut scaenae harenaeque devotum assidue proscidit." (Cal. 30) In every department of state, Caligula acted without moderation, clemency and human feelings. All political institutions suffered a severe setback in his later rule.

Listed among the "probris ac sceleribus" of Nero is his decision to kill all the eminent men of the state. Suetonius with good reason could believe Nero's boast that he would not even spare those of the Senate who survived, but would one day blot out the whole order from the state, and hand over the rule of the provinces and the command of the armies to the Roman knights and to his freedmen. (Nero 37) Despite his plea for help from the Senate, Nero, falsely assured of good fortune, completely disregarded the Senate, when he returned from Naples. "Ac ne tunc quidem aut senatu aut populo coram appellato quosdam e primoribus viris domum evocavit ..." (Nero 41) This treatment of the Senate is regarded as outrageous and intolerable by Suetonius. Nero had erased all the good he had done.

Suetonius has so much reverence for the Senate that the mere suspicion of Caesar's involvement in a conspiracy to attack the Senate and put the Senators to the sword is regarded with disfavour. Suetonius censures Caesar's opposition to the majority of the Senate during the trial of the Catilinarian conspirators. (Iul. 14) For Caesar, by proposing a lighter punishment for the conspirators, was regarded as delaying the proceedings, and Suetonius speaks of his opposition as being "immoderatus". Caesar's attitude to the Senate is denigrated by Suetonius who calls it obstinate resistance. (Iul. 15) Caesar espoused the cause of Caecilius Metellus "pertinacissime", when he proposed "turbulentissimas leges". (Iul. 16) This behaviour seems obnoxious to Suetonius, especially since the proposals were vetoed by Caesar's colleagues. To make matters worse, "ac nihilo minus permanere in magistratu et ius dicere ausus". (Ibid.) The greatest insult to this "amplissimum ordinem"¹ was his giving the vacant post of consul for a few days to a man who asked for it. (Iul. 76) Caesar's behaviour seems scandalous to Suetonius, the diehard conservative, who is appalled at the fact that he received the Senate before the temple of Venus Genetrix without rising. (Iul. 78)

On the other hand, Suetonius is very much impressed

¹Vide Vespasianus 2.

by Augustus's semblance of respect for the Senate. Hence²
 he cites Augustus's speech to the Senate:

Ita mihi salvam ac sospitem rem p. sistere in sua sede
 liceat atque eius rei fructum percipere quam peto, ut
 optimi status auctor dicar et moriens ut feram mecum
 spem, mansura in vestigio suo fundamenta rei p. quae
 iecero. (Aug. 28)

He seems to derive the greatest satisfaction from the fact that "the low-born and the ill-assorted rabble", and those who were "wholly unworthy" were weeded out, and the Senate was restored to its former limits and distinction. (Aug. 35) Suetonius is also pleased with the attitude of Claudius, who recalled no one from exile except with the approval of the Senate. He obtained from them as a favour the ratification of the judicial acts of his agents in the provinces. He also asked for the permission of the consuls to hold fairs on his private estates. (Cl. 12) Judging by the comments of Suetonius on Caligula's behaviour, it is clear that he agrees with the policy of Claudius who shared his own high regard for the Senate.

Galba's decision to accept the salutation as emperor, and his assertion that he was only a governor representing the Senate and the people of Rome, were actions strong enough to earn him sympathetic treatment at the hands of Suetonius. (Gal. 10) Vitellius is condemned, however,

²Vide Augustus 58 also.

because he used Nero as his model. "Et ne cui dubium foret, quod exemplar regendae rei p. eligeret, medio Martio campo adhibita publicorum sacerdotum frequentia inferias Neroni dedit ..." (Vit. 11)

Not only is censure reserved for those who treated the Senatorial Order disrespectfully, but those also who humiliated members of the Equestrian Order. Suetonius seems to regard these two orders highly and he therefore judges the emperors largely on the basis of their attitude towards the knights and senators. Suetonius feels that the Equestrian Order, like the Senatorial Order, should be purged of its base elements, and hence he praises Caligula, who "equites R. severe curioseque nec sine moderatione recognovit ..." (Cal. 16) He is, however, very critical of Caligula's treatment of the Senate and the other ranks. "Simili superbia violentiaque ceteros tractavit ordines." (Cal. 26) Suetonius abhors Caligula's behaviour in throwing a Roman knight to wild beasts. When the knight protested, Caligula cut out his tongue and threw him back, (Cal. 27) Vespasian's reform of the Senate and Equestrian Orders is not denigrated, mainly because Vespasian enrolled the most honourable of the Italians and Provincials in them.

Amplissimos ordines et exhaustos caede varia et contaminatos veteri neglegentia purgavit supplevitque recenso senatu et equite, summotis indignissimis et honestissimo quoque Italicorum ac provincialum allecto. (Vesp.9)

When there were not enough candidates of Senatorial rank, Augustus made appointments from among the knights for the tribuneship. He also allowed those knights whose property was diminished during the Civil War, to view the games from the fourteen rows, as long as they or their parents had been knights formerly. (Aug. 40) But Augustus never allowed scandalous conduct, even among the knights, to go unpunished. He therefore made reviews of them frequently.

Suetonius not only criticizes those emperors who disrespected the highest orders in the state, but those who behaved unconventionally. Caesar is often attacked for his disregard of custom. "Eadem licentia spreto patrio more magistratus in pluris annos ordinavit ... quosdam e semi-barbaris Gallorum recepit in Curiam." (Iul. 76) His division of the Campanian territory without casting lots is censured by Suetonius, not only because the customary method of handling such distributions was violated, but because an unprecedented invasion of the Senate's rights to control this land had been made. Suetonius reproaches Caesar because he went to Spain too early: "... conditores interventu sponsorum removit ac neque neque iure, antequam provinciae ornarentur, profectus est." (Iul. 18) Caesar's attempt to control Egypt by a decree of the Plebs is criticized, since he had used the deposition of the Alexandrian king to obtain "extraordinarii imperii occasionem". (Iul. 11) He did not

try the usual channels-the Senate-to obtain the appointment, and when he failed to secure Egypt, "quoque sicariorum numero habuit, qui proscriptione ob relata civium Romanorum capita pecunias ex aerario acceperant, quamquam exceptos ^{legibus} Corneliis." (Ibid.) Suetonius thinks that Caesar's attempt to impair the prestige of the aristocratic party by the restoration of the trophies of Marius was bad enough, but his prosecution of people contrary to the law was far worse.

The impunity with which Caesar opposed his colleague, Bibulus, who announced adverse omens, is regretted by Suetonius, who makes little attempt to show that Caesar's actions were justifiable under the circumstances. Here Suetonius is more concerned with established custom. He shows his annoyance at Caesar's behaviour, when he states that no one in the Senate expressed an opinion about it, "qualia multa saepe in levioribus turbis decreta erant." (Iul. 20) Caesar, in deposing the tribunes, Marullus and Flavius, was contravening an ancient law, and even disregarding the religious sanctity of the tribunate. The suspicion that he desired royalty was the last straw, and so Suetonius agrees that Caesar's suspected violation of four hundred years of tradition was too great to escape punishment. Of his behaviour, Suetonius writes: "Adiecit ad tam insignem despecti senatus contumeliam multo arrogantius factum." (Iul. 79)

Although he is a stickler for law and precedent, Suetonius is willing to praise any deviation from customary behaviour, when he thinks it is in the interest of the public. Hence he seems to be in favour of the Senators being called upon to give their opinions on questions of special importance, although this was done not according to the order established by precedent. (Aug. 35) Suetonius feels that this breach of conventional behaviour was beneficial since all of the Senators had to be alert, rather than be mere followers of what other people had initiated. Suetonius is willing to concede that Augustus, in going against established custom, was benefiting the state. He does not realize that the Senators, whether they gave their opinions first or last, did not really share in the government, since the decisions had already been made, and Augustus was only giving them the impression that they were being consulted.

Augustus's innovations are recounted without rebuke, mainly because Suetonius believes that they were for the good of the state. (Aug. 36ff) However, whenever Augustus reverted to an old custom, Suetonius seems to note it with pleasure. "*Sed desideranti consuetudinem veterem concessit rursus ut sui cuiusque mensis acciperet. Comitiorum quosque pristinum ius reduxit ac multiplici poena coercito ambitu...*" (Aug. 40) Augustus even decided to revive the ancient fashion

of dress. Like him, Suetonius abhors any "prostitution of Roman citizenship", "magni praeterea existimans sincerum atque ab omni colluvione peregrini ac servillis sanguinis incorruptum servare populum." (Ibid.) Suetonius is quick to point out that Augustus adhered to customs and laws as much as he could. Hence, Augustus sometimes employed even Roman knights in scenic and gladiatorial performances, "verum priusquam senatus consulto interdiceretur." (Aug. 43)

Claudius's substitution for one of the consuls - a thing without precedent in the case of the Emperor - is not condemned, for Claudius "ius et consul et extra honorem laboriosissime dixit." (Cl. 14) Suetonius is also willing to absolve Claudius from censure when he did not always follow the letter of the law, but modified its severity or levity according to his own notions of equity and justice. (Ibid.) However, Suetonius shows that Claudius could hardly act in the interest of the state, because of the strange inconsistency of his temper. (Cl. 15) Although Suetonius favours Augustus, he nevertheless looks with disgust on his illegal acts. He is appalled at Augustus's usurpation of the consulship, and his "... admotis hostiliter ad urbem legionibus missisque qui sibi nomine exercitus deposcerent." (Aug. 26)

However, the mere thought of a restoration of the

Republic by Augustus in enough to warrant him kind consideration from Suetonius. He views sympathetically the excuse given by Augustus for not restoring the Republic. "Sed reputans et se privatum non sine periculo fore et illam plurimum arbitrio temere comitti in retinenda perseveravit." (Aug. 28) Suetonius assumes that Augustus was sincere in his intentions, since he went so far as to summon the magistrates and the Senate to his house, and submit to them an account of the general condition of the Empire. He shows his approval of Augustus's actions thus: "dubium eventu meliore an voluntate". (Aug. 28) Since Suetonius realizes that there was no hope for the Republican form of government, his attention is concentrated on the Princeps who is judged by the amount of liberty he afforded the old political institutions. Those who tried to restore peace to the state by stamping out riots and rebellions, by ending civil strife, by bringing about harmony between the Orders, are all favoured by Suetonius. Those who benefited the state are the ones who merit praise. Last but not least, those who, virtuous themselves, set an example for the people to follow and honoured the gods of Rome, are the statesmen whom Suetonius admires.

Augustus is, therefore, highly regarded by Suetonius, because "fecitque ipse compotem voti nisus omni modo, ne quem novi status paeniteret." (Ibid.) He is not criticized for accepting extraordinary powers, for he had refused to take

the dictatorship which was forced upon him by the people, and "domini appellationem ut maledictum et obprobrium semper exhorruit." (Aug. 53) Suetonius, like the majority of Romans, is completely bemused by Augustus's diplomacy. Augustus refused to accept the titles, because he realized that the Romans disliked the idea of having all honours concentrated in the hands of one man. Suetonius is very much opposed to any breach of moderation. Therefore, despite Caesar's beneficial reforms, Suetonius writes: "...sed ampliora etiam humano fastigio decerni sibi passus est ... ac nullos non honores ad libidinem cepit et dedit." (Iul. 76) Hence he seems to share the views that Caesar abused his power and was justly killed. (Ibid.)

Suetonius apparently thinks that every good statesman should have certain qualities - moderatio, clementia, and liberalitas. Suetonius's interest in these qualities is obvious from the numerous references to them throughout the De Vita Caesarum. Claudius was modest and unassuming, and refrained from accepting excessive honours. "... in semet augendo parcus atque civilis." (Cl. 12) Caligula, on the other hand, laid claim to divine majesty. (Cal. 22) Although Suetonius criticizes Caesar for a breach of moderation in accepting excessive honours, he is quick to point out that Caesar "moderationem vero clementiamque cum in administratione tam in victoria belli civilis admirabilem exhibuit."

(Iul. 75) Suetonius praises his merciful treatment of his soldiers and his enemies also. In the case of the former, Caesar "delicta neque observabat omnia neque pro modo exsequebatur", (Iul. 67) and in the latter's case, "et in ulciscendo natura lenissimus ..." (Iul. 74) Augustus is thus praised by Suetonius: "Clementiae civilitatisque eius multa et magna documenta sunt." (Aug. 51) His behaviour as a patron and a master is described as "non minus severus quam facilis et clemens." (Aug. 67) Suetonius commends his generosity. "Liberalitatem omnibus per occasiones frequenter exhibuit". (Aug.41)

Suetonius is favourably disposed towards Tiberius who behaved admirably in the earlier period of his reign. Tiberius declined the forename of Emperor, Pater Patriae, the civic crown and the title of 'Augustus'. "Ex plurimis maximisque honoribus praeter paucos et modicos non recepit." (Tib. 26) "Parem moderationem minoribus quoque et personis et rebus exhibuit." (Tib. 32) Vespasian's refusal of excessive honors also wins Suetonius's approval. In praise of his clementia Suetonius writes: "Ceteris in rebus statim ab initio principatus usque ad exitum civilis et clemens." (Vesp. 12) Vespasian's liberalitas, too, receives Suetonius's commendation. "In omne hominum genus liberalissimus ..." (Vesp. 17) Domitian's behaviour in his early years of rule is favourably treated, for he showed "magna saepe non

abstinentiae modo sed etiam liberalitatis experimenta".

(Dom. 9)

Suetonius is interested also in good government and he examines carefully the reforms of all the emperors. Caesar's salutary reforms are recounted in such a way as to convey the impression that they were commendable. The reform of the Calendar, the reduction of the number of those who received the corn dole, the efforts to keep up the population in the city, the encouragement given to agriculture, the measures to relieve debt, to alleviate crime, to administer justice, to stamp out extravagance, to beautify the city, and to extend the Empire are all recorded with satisfaction. (Iul. 42ff) A detailed list of Augustus's reforms to benefit the state is also given by Suetonius. Augustus's building programme, his measures for fire prevention and for eradicating those pernicious practices which militated against public security are all praiseworthy. His judicial and Senatorial reforms, too, were good.

Even Caligula had performed acts worthy of an emperor:- the unrestricted jurisdiction given to magistrates without appeal to himself, his revision of the lists of Roman knights, his attempt to restore the suffrage to the people by reviving the custom of elections and his tax remittance. Claudius showed concern for the welfare of the

city. "Urbis annonaeque curam sollicitissime semper egit."
 (Cl. 18) Suetonius shows his approval for Claudius's public works thus: "Opera magna potius et necessaria quam multa perfecit, sed vel praecipua." (Cl. 20) Suetonius approves of the early years of Nero's political life. Nero's reform of the Senate, his building programme, his efforts to correct many abuses of the city, his protective device against forgers, and the measures with regard to wills, (Nero 15ff) are recounted "nulla reprehensione", because they were "etiam non mediocri laude digna". (Nero 19) Even Nero's foreign policy is approved by Suetonius. For Nero's lack of ambition in not extending the Empire is thus excused:

Augendi propagandique imperii neque voluntate ulla spe motus unquam, etiam ex Britannia deducere exercitum cogitavit, nec nisi verecundia, ne obtrectare parentis gloriae videretur, destitit. (Nero 18)

Suetonius must have realized that the extension of the Empire without adequate government would be responsible for many of Rome's ills.

As Suetonius endorses acts which he thinks beneficial to the state, so he reprimands those emperors who behaved tyrannically, and acted in their own interest. Nero, for example, is detested by Suetonius because he wasted the public funds on personal pleasures. "Non in alia re tamen damnosior quam in aedificando ..." (Nero 31) The hope of a vast hidden treasure led him to mad extravagance, and the

disappointment of his hopes forced him to false accusations and robbery. (Ibid.) Nero's method of gaining money is regarded with disgust by Suetonius. No sympathy could be felt for a man, who instead of looking after the interests of the citizens, was more interested in personal gains. Nero even turned the high cost of grain to his profit. While the people were suffering from hunger, it was reported that a ship had arrived from Alexandria, bringing sand for the court wrestlers. (Nero 45) Nero fleeced the people left and right, and Suetonius shows that he degenerated from a good politician into a cruel, self-seeking, murderous tyrant. Suetonius criticizes the inconsistency of Claudius who, as censor, allowed corruption, adultery and other evils to escape punishment, while innocent people were sometimes penalised.)Cl. 16) Suetonius also ridicules Claudius's various proclamations and edicts: "Dicitur etiam meditatus edictum, quo veniam daret flatum crepitumque ventris in convivio emittendi, cum periclitatum quendam prae pudore ex continentia repperisset." (Cl. 32) Claudius was conscious of his own tendency to wrath and resentment, and excused both in an edict. (Cl. 32) Suspicion and timidity had taken the place of mercy and moderation.

While Suetonius is often able to appreciate the more superficial and obvious political difficulties, he never demonstrates any talent for a profound analysis of

the fundamental problems. Hence he writes that Caesar hurriedly returned to Rome when he learned of Sulla's death, hoping to profit by a counter-revolution. (Iul. 3) Suetonius obviously realizes that Caesar's political career could be enhanced by the death of Sulla, and he ventures reasons for Caesar's failure to make common cause with Lepidus. These reasons are quite plausible. (Ibid.) He does not, however, show the importance of the conference at Luca, nor does he explain the intrigues that went on between Pompey, Cicero, Caesar and Cato prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. He does not adequately assess the impact of the Gallic Wars on the political affairs at home, but he realizes that if Caesar had given up his command to sue for the consulship at Rome, he would have left himself open to the attacks of his enemies.

Suetonius mentions Augustus's adoption of privy councils, but he does not show the importance of these small bodies in the administration of government. He also fails to recognize the limitations imposed on these bodies in Augustus's time. He believes that the Senate still had the power to advise^{as}/formerly. In writing of foreign affairs, Suetonius states that it is his belief that Augustus visited all the provinces with the exception of Africa and Sardinia. (Aug. 48) He does not explain the political significance of these visits to the provinces. On the other hand, he seems

to understand the importance of Augustus's uniting the kings with whom he was in alliance by mutual ties. He acknowledges the benefits of intermarriage or friendships with provincials. Hence he praises Augustus who "nec aliter universo quam membra partisque imperii curae habuit." (Aug.48) Suetonius also recognizes the importance of Augustus's defence measures, both for the provinces and Rome itself. He sees the need for good communications, and observes that Augustus stationed men at short intervals along the military roads to enable the events in the provinces to be reported and known more speedily and promptly. (Aug. 49)

Suetonius is concerned about the attitude of the emperors to the people in general, and the measures taken for their benefits. Hence he is at pains to show how liberal the emperors were in the distribution of largess and corn to the populace. The staging of public shows was also a political measure, as Suetonius realizes, and hence the emperors had to be judged on their treatment of the populace in this respect. For the most part, he seems to think that people can be satisfied with "panem et circensem". Claudius's treatment of the populace was adequate, for he was not niggardly in his spendings on shows. "Congiaria populo saepius distribuit. Specula quoque compluria et magnifica edidit, non usitate modo ac solitis locis, sed et commenticia et ex antiquitate repetita ... (Cl. 21)

Apparently Suetonius has little regard for the populace and the low-born, and he talks about them with disdain. Ancestry means a great deal to him, and he tries hard to show that this emperor or that was sprung from noble ancestors. Augustus often gave largess to the people, but usually of different sums. In times of scarcity, too, he often distributed grain to each man at a very low figure, sometimes for nothing, and he doubled the money tickets. (Aug. 41) Tiberius, however, is criticized because he showed generosity to the public only in two instances, and yet he made very much of his liberality. (Tib. 48) Suetonius approves Augustus's treatment of the Plebs, since he showed himself a prince who was interested in their welfare rather than popularity. Hence when the people complained of the scarcity of wine, he sharply rebuked them. (Aug. 42) Nevertheless Augustus kept the people entertained with shows. "Spectaculorum et assiduitate et varietate et magnificentia omnes antecessit." (Aug. 43)

In writing about slaves and freedmen, Suetonius only examines the influence they exerted on the several emperors. He is not concerned about the change in the political importance of freedmen under the twelve Caesars, or the social problems which arose in the society which depended on slaves. One can detect that Suetonius heartily dislikes the influence exerted by the slaves and freedmen, and the position of trust

which they obtained. Claudius placed many freedmen in administrative roles, and Suetonius in reporting, could easily have been following his source-material. However, Suetonius's annoyance at their power is seen in the statement that Claudius even allowed them to be honoured by a decree of the Senate, not only with immense gifts, but even with the insignia of quaestors and praetors. As if to show that the freedmen had an evil influence on Claudius's government, Suetonius adds:

Tantum praeterea acquirere et rapere, ut querente eo quondam de fisci exiguitate non absurde dictum sit, abundaturum, si a duobus libertis in consortium raperetur. (Cl. 28)

Galba was wholly under the control of three men, among whom was his freedman, Icelus, "paulo ante anulis et Marciani cognomine ornatus ac iam summae equestris gradus candidatus". (Gal. 14) Suetonius criticizes Galba, while at the same time he rues the power given to freedmen thus:

At contra nihil non per comites atque libertos pretio adduci aut donari gratia passus est, vectigalia immunitates, poenas innocentium impunitates noxiorum. (Gal.15)

Vitellius is rebuked for his dependence on actors, charioteers and freedmen. "Talibus principiis magnam imperii partem non nisi consilio et arbitrio vilissimi cuiusque histrionum et aurigarum administravit et maxime Asiatici liberti." (Vit. 12)

For a long time, Nero would not admit sons of freed-

men to the Senate and he refused office to those who had been admitted by his predecessors. (Nero 14) Since this action comes under the deeds approved by Suetonius, it can be asserted that Suetonius dislikes the influence of freedmen on politics. His conservative outlook on life makes it difficult for him to regard kindly the enrolment of these low-born people in such an august body. Julius Caesar is attacked for violating law and precedent, when he assigned the charge of the mint and the public revenues to his own slaves, and the command of the legions to a favourite, Rufio, a son of a freedman. (Iul. 76) Such arrogance is deplored by Suetonius, who adds: "Nec minoris impotentiae voces propalam edebat". (Iul. 77)

Augustus, on the other hand, made it difficult for slaves to acquire freedom and to attain full rights, by scrutinizing those slaves that were to be manumitted, and preventing any slave who had been in chains or had undergone torture from becoming free. Suetonius is very likely to agree with this action, since he, like Augustus, wanted to keep the Roman stock pure. Despite this behaviour on Augustus's part, Suetonius praises him. "Patronus dominusque non minus severus quam facilis et clemens multos libertorum in honore et usu maximo usu habuit". (Aug. 67) Augustus merely put a slave who insulted him into chains. By recounting this action, Suetonius is showing the clementia of Augustus.

When Suetonius writes "idem Polum ex acceptissimis libertus mori coegit compertum adulterare matronas", (Ibid.) he is demonstrating that Augustus was so strict and severe in punishing adultery, that he would not even allow his favourite freedman to escape with impunity.

Without analysing the effect of slavery on the Roman society, Suetonius mentions the relationship between slaves, freedmen and emperors to show the generosity, the humanity or the cruelty of the several emperors. Hence while Caesar is criticized for giving them too much power, (Iul. 76) Claudius, on the other hand is praised for his humanity. When certain men were exposing their sick and worn out slaves on the Island of Aesculapius, because they did not want to treat them, Claudius decreed that all those slaves would be free if they recovered. Furthermore, "quod si quis necare quem mallet quam ^{ex}ponere caedis crimine teneri". (Cl. 25)

Suetonius displays a keen interest also in the emperors' attitude to the law courts. This possibly stems from the fact that he himself had been a pleader at the bar. Hence he examines their behaviour critically. Augustus is praised, since "ipse ius dixit assidue et in noctem nonnumquam ...dixit autem non diligentia modo summa sed et lenitate ..." (Aug. 33) Julius Caesar was very strict and

just. "Ius laboriosissime ac severissime dixit." (Iul. 43) Caesar even expelled those convicted of extortion from the Senatorial rank. A freedman of his was put to death for adultery with the wife of a Roman knight, although no complaint had been made. (Ibid.) Claudius "ius et consul et extra honorem laboriosissime dixit..." (Cl. 14) However he later became rather inconsistent and variable in his behaviour, and the guilty went unpunished, while the innocent were punished.

Domitian is praised for his attempt to preserve justice. "Ius diligenter et industrie dixit, plerumque et in Foro pro tribunali extra ordinem ambitiosas centumvirorum sententias rescidit ... nummarios iudices cum suo quemque consilio notavit." (Dom. 8) Domitian's later behaviour is censured thus by Suetonius: "Complures senatores in iis aliquot consulares, interemit ...quasi molitores rerum novarum ceteros levissima quemque de causa". (Dom. 10) The property of the living and the dead was seized everywhere on any charge brought by the accuser. This change in Domitian occurred when he found himself in dire financial need. Formerly he had checked false accusations designed for the profit of the privy purse and inflicted severe penalties on offenders. (Dom. 9)

It is hardly necessary to review all the political

activities of the several emperors to analyse Suetonius's attitude to politics. His strong patrician sentiments are obvious from his support of the Senatorial order, his ardent conservatism is seen in his reverence for custom and precedent, and his bitter objection to autocratic rule makes him an adherent of the old Republican forms. He therefore has no place in his government for plebs, freedmen or slaves. However, he feels that they should be well governed, and should share in the prosperity of the state. Despite his partiality for the Republic, he realizes that its day is passed and therefore he chooses to compromise for a benevolent despot. Augustus's statesmanship wins him over to the advantages that could accrue to Rome under a prudent, merciful generous and just ruler. He becomes reconciled to the Principate but the emperors that followed Augustus were not so paternalistic in outlook, and with the exception of Vespasian and possibly Titus, he finds that the emperors of Rome were immoral, unjust, selfish, tyrannical and unconcerned with the welfare of the Roman Empire. His lack of a deep political insight makes him incapable of understanding the far-reaching effects of certain political acts. Nevertheless, this political myopia does not prevent him from appreciating the benefits that result from good statesmanship, and the evils that beset a state plagued by bad government.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORLD OF SÜETONIUS

A look at the regions, rivers, towns and lakes mentioned by Suetonius in the De Vita Caesarum reveals that his attention is focussed on Italy (Gallia Cispadana, Gallia Transpadana, Venetia and Liguria included). Although the subject-matter dictates mention of almost all of these places, the recurrences of some of these names seem to suggest Suetonius's familiarity with them. Hence, if the towns, mountains, lakes and rivers of single mention be disregarded, then it is possible to see what regions Suetonius may have¹ known.

In Hispania, although six towns are mentioned, the single reference to each town clearly indicates that the subject-matter demanded it. In Gallia Lugdunensis, Lugdunum and Vienna are named; in Gallia Narbonensis Massilia; in Sicilia, Syracuse; in Africa, none; in Graecia (Macedonia included), Dyrrachium, Apollonia, Philippi, Actium, Olympia and Athenae; in Judaea, Hierosolyma; in Egypt, Alexandria; in Asia, Ilium, and in the Eastern Mediterranean the islands of Samos and Rhodes. The constant reference to towns in

¹Vide map on page 160.

Graecia suggests that Suetonius may have been more familiar with that region than the others named. Almost all the towns referred to are mentioned primarily in a military connection. There is no detailed description of any region, despite the fact that there are several references to the regions themselves, and to people occupying some of these regions.

Of the regions, here are the ones most often named arranged according to frequency of mention:- Galliae, Hispania,² Germaniae, Syria, Africa, Illyricum, Britannia and Aegyptus; while of the peoples named, the Parthi, Germani, Galli and Graeci are mentioned frequently. The Parthi occupy the chief position in order of mention, and this is understandable since the Romans suffered greatly at their hands, and they always feared these eastern warriors about whom they knew little.

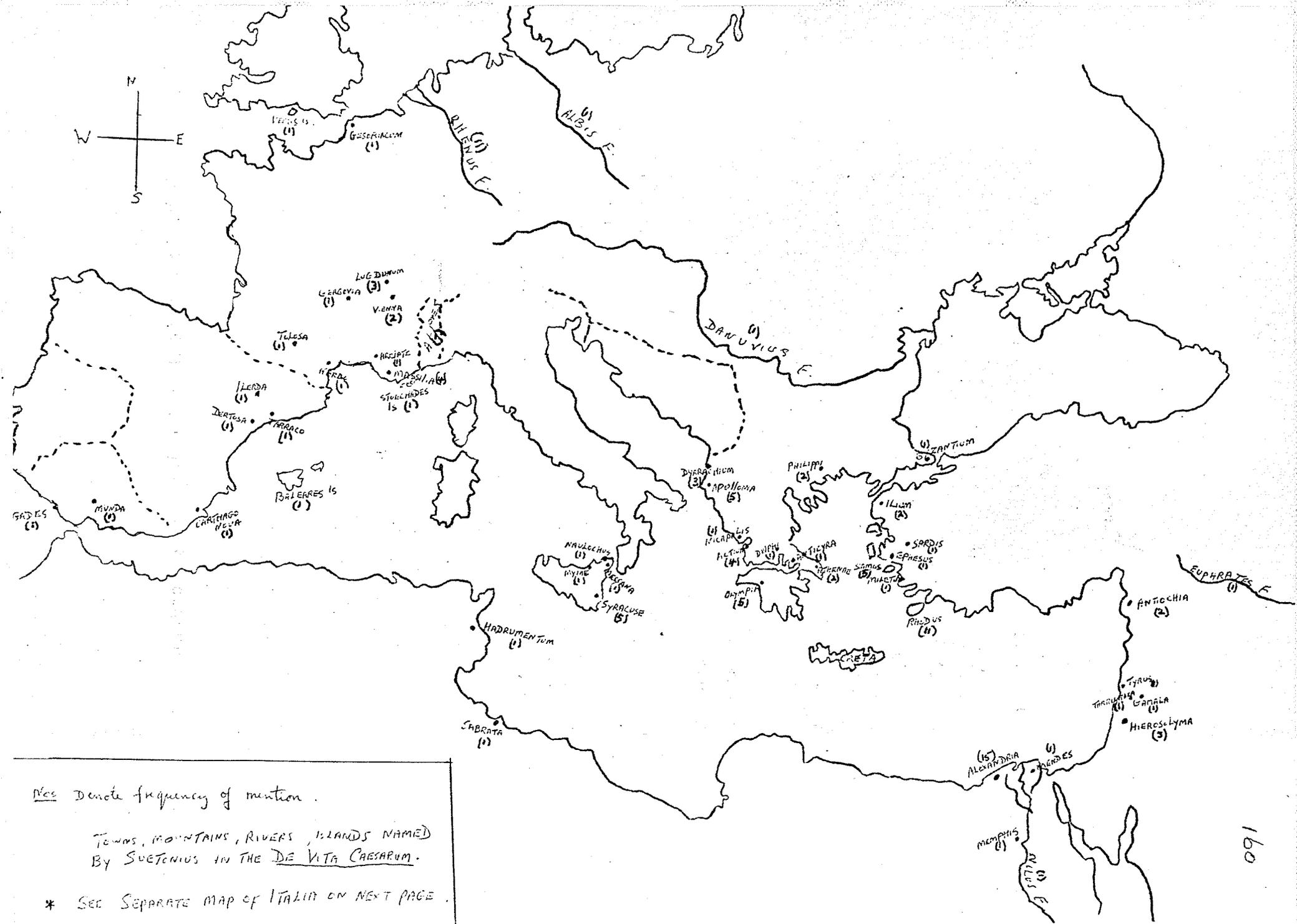
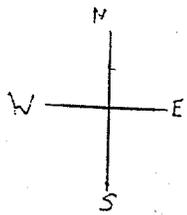
In Italia on the other hand, there are masses of names of towns, hills, lakes, roads, rivers and forests. The deepest concentration seems to be in Latium and Campania. There are frequent recurrences of the following names:- Aquileia (Venetia), Mantua and Placentia (Gallia Cispadana), Mutina and Ravenna (Gallia Transpadana), Perugia and Veii (Etruria), Corfinium, Nursia and Reate (Sabine territory),

²Vide map on page 161.

Antium, Aricia, Astura, Circeii, Ferentinum, Fidenae, Fundi, Ostia, Praeneste, Roma, Terracina, Tibur, Tusculum and Velitrae (Latium), Baiae, Capua, Misenum, Neapolis, Nola, Nuceria and Puteoli (Campania), Beneventum (Samnium), Rhegium and Thurii (Bruttii), Brundisium (Calabria), and the islands³ of Capreae, Pandateria and Pontia.

The assumption can therefore be made that Suetonius is not a widely travelled man, or possibly did not leave the Italian peninsula. Unlike the majority of Roman writers, Suetonius held no military position, (for he had declined the military tribuneship), nor is there any evidence that he was a publicanus. Hence he would have been travelling for study or pleasure. Since there are numerous references to Alexandria and Rhodes, if he did leave Italia, he might have gone there. Rhodes was both a resort area as well as a centre of learning, and Alexandria was a literary centre. Suetonius does mention the ports of call along the way from Italy to Rhodes and Alexandria, but only as places of military activity which are demanded by the subject-matter. References are made to Rhodes as a centre of learning and a resort, but Alexandria is mentioned in a military connection primarily. There are two references to it as a literary centre.

³Vide map on page 162.



Num Denote frequency of mention.

TEAMS, MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, ISLANDS NAMED
BY SUETONIUS IN THE DE VITA CAESARUM.

* SEE SEPARATE MAP OF ITALY ON NEXT PAGE.



KEY TO MAP

present the frequency with which Suetonius mentions these regions, towns and towns in

ITALIA

If he had visited either of the two centres, he might have indulged in some reminiscences on his visit, and he would have given some hint of his familiarity with them. The fact that he gives no details of these two places suggests that he did not visit either of them.

Suetonius's avoidance of military matters prevents a detailed description of many places which a work of this nature and length would have required. His unfamiliarity with the geography of the battle areas may have been responsible for this eschewal of military history. His failure to report adequately on military as well as provincial affairs is easily explained as the result of his remaining in Italy.

The provinces are mentioned only to show the greed, generosity, strictness, or laxity of the various emperors. Caesar is shown as a greedy and ambitious man who chose the Gallic provinces as the most likely to furnish him with suitable materials for a triumph. (Iul. 22) A very brief summary is given of Caesar's work in Gaul. (Iul. 25) Tiberius's greed is proved through his relationship with the provinces. (Tib. 49) Galba's reputation for cruelty and avarice is clearly demonstrated in his dealings with the Spanish and Gallic provinces. (Gal. 12) Suetonius also shows Augustus's generosity and consideration for other peoples by describing

his relationship with the provinces and the client kingdoms. (Aug. 46ff) Foreign affairs have no significance for Suetonius except in so far as they can demonstrate some quality of an emperor.

Suetonius is mainly concerned with affairs at Rome. His outlook is rather parochial. He views other peoples as foreigners. It is with reluctance that he praises Vespasian for his allowing the most distinguished Italians and Provincials to be enrolled in the Senate. (Vesp. 9) Julius Caesar's behaviour in admitting Gauls to the Senate was not only frowned upon by other Romans, but by Suetonius himself, who regards foreigners as barbarians. It is this narrow-mindedness that makes him spurn the intermingling of foreigners and Romans. He wants the Roman stock pure and unsullied. This is the attitude adopted by one who has not travelled widely, and who tends to regard his countrymen as superior to other peoples.

Suetonius's omission of details on provincial administration prevents a good assessment of the emperors' administrative ability. Provincial matters had a very great impact on affairs at home, for it was clearly demonstrated that not only at Rome could emperors be created but also in the provinces. The failure to report provincial matters adequately is therefore a defect in Suetonius's historiography.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

It is almost impossible to write a biography of a historical figure without giving some account of the times in which he lived, the manner in which he affected the course of events, and in turn was influenced by them. The De Vita Caesarum describes the lives of twelve rulers who held complete sway over their people, and actually played the dominant role in government. If a good account is given of the lives of the twelve Caesars, it must follow that the reader will derive a full knowledge and understanding of Rome's development, since the emperors made their presence felt in all spheres of Roman life.

It is generally agreed that the historian's aim is the discovery of truth, wherever truth is possible. It is also clear that no historian can record all events because of the multiplicity of actions of different degrees of importance. Hence the historian has to select what he considers important. These matters are judged important according to his idiosyncracies, and for the most part according to social interests and tradition. The duty

of the historian is also to state his findings accurately. If he can be assured that he has made a careful choice of the mass of sources available after examining them critically, he can then report his findings.

Suetonius's account of the lives of the Caesars must be historical. He tries his best to give a true account of his findings. It is only fair to expect that he should follow the old traditional customs, and be influenced by the prejudices of the society to which he belongs. Suetonius has certainly used all the sources available, but unfortunately he cites sources known to be inimical to some of the emperors. He thinks that by reporting all the information, whether rumour or fact, a good assessment of those about whom he is writing can be made. This indiscriminate use of material cannot really give an objective and impartial picture of the emperors. Suetonius errs in thinking that the reporting of all information makes for impartiality. It is obvious that he shows bias since he tries to defend those emperors whom he favours, while he makes little attempt to free the others from the rumours of an evil reputation. Sometimes, however, this bias results directly from his improper choice of sources.

It is generally agreed, however, that no historian

can be completely unbiassed. Suetonius in this respect is not unlike his contemporaries. Because of his choice of sources, his accuracy is not wholly irreproachable, but when a check is made, he is often correct. Although he is not very concerned with chronology, he can give a desirable chronological sequence when he feels it necessary. A comparison with Appian, Tacitus, Dio and Plutarch reveals that Suetonius has given a fairly accurate account of those events he describes. Appian is more concerned with military affairs, but he is inferior to Suetonius in administrative history; Dio surpasses Suetonius in chronological accuracy, while Plutarch, a biographer like Suetonius is inferior in accuracy and neglects administrative detail. Tacitus, unlike Suetonius, does not place the same emphasis on the supernatural and consequently, his analysis of human behaviour and of political events is much better.

Suetonius fulfils many of the duties of a historian. He has made an elaborate investigation of the documents; he is critical of the sources; and when he quotes information which is unsubstantiated, he tries to discover whether there are reasons for believing it. He thinks that in every rumour there is a great deal of truth, and that rumour is as damaging to a man's reputation as is statement of fact. Hence in reporting even rumours, he leaves it to the reader to make up his mind about the credibility of the information. If he

thinks that there is ground for trusting these reports, he says so. But since he is more interested in the emperors themselves than in the whole history of Rome, he tends to suppress many details which he cannot relate directly to the lives of the Caesars. In this regard, he is far less thorough than the majority of modern historians.

Suetonius, however, is no mere chronicler. He makes moral judgements on the actions of the emperors, and at times he is very critical of their policies. Although he does not give his personal opinions in every life, he has made his position quite clear in the biographies of Caligula and Nero. It is possible to discover Suetonius's opinion of all the Caesars by using these two lives as models.

Suetonius's belief in the supernatural dominates his history. Because of this preoccupation with the divinities, he regards the emperors merely as the instruments of the gods, and thus minimises the role of man in every sphere of human endeavour. This philosophy undermines his own ability to analyse the political, economic or social movements of which he is writing. It also leads him to regard human nature as inflexible. He concludes erroneously that a man is born either good or bad, and is incapable of influencing his destiny. Suetonius rarely deviates from these principles,

although on occasions his dependence on source-material creates the impression of inconsistency.

Suetonius's outlook on life is puritanical, and throughout the De Vita Caesarum he is occupied with morality and violations of it. At times everything else seems secondary to him. He tries to show that in the main good emperors are those least guilty of contravening moral laws. Religion played a dominant role in the lives of the Romans. A man's success or failure depended on his piety or impiety. Hence the successful emperor must also be pious, and piety prevents him from being immoral. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should find the majority of the Caesars immoral.

Suetonius's political sentiments are those of the Equestrian Order. He feels that the patriciate can contribute most to the welfare of the state. His ideal form of government is the Republic. However, he becomes reconciled to the Principate under Augustus because of Augustus's good qualities. No greater praise can be bestowed on an emperor by Suetonius than "proximum a dis immortalibus honorem memoriae ducum praestitit qui imperium p.R. ex minimo maximum reddidissent." (Aug. 31) He dislikes the participation of the plebs, freedmen or slaves in the administration of the government. His inadequate treatment of provincial affairs, and his

prejudice against foreigners, and even Italians, are due to a narrow-mindedness resulting from his failure to travel. He is more concerned with administrative detail than with an analysis of the motives and effects of political actions. This is due to his lack of a deep analytical mind. His strong conservatism, which underlies all of his history, is seen in his reverence for traditional customs.

Although Suetonius can hardly be termed a good historian by modern standards, since he has concentrated on only certain aspects of Roman life, and has included in his work many unsubstantiated stories, it must be remembered that the nature of his subject partly demands this treatment. He sets out to write biography, and hence he must not be judged too harshly for omitting important details. These did not seem important to him, and every historian stresses what he considers important to himself. Because of his superstitious nature, Suetonius sees the intervention of the supernatural in every sphere of human affairs. Other historians of this era recognize the influence of omens and portents on human actions, but still do not appear as superstitious as Suetonius. Hence, they can write superior history. Nevertheless, Suetonius's De Vita Caesarum is very informative not only about the twelve Caesars, but also about Roman society. As a historian, Suetonius certainly is not inferior to Appian, Velleius Paterculus or Plutarch. His impact on

historiography in the dark and middle ages was considerable. His works were even more popular than those of Sallust and Tacitus who are now considered his superior in the art of history-writing.

The De Vita Caesarum enjoyed a very great reputation. It was read, cited and plundered more often than the works of more talented writers. The influence of Suetonius on grammarians, ecclesiastical writers, historians, and especially biographers can easily be detected. Marius Maximus, impressed with Suetonius's biographies of the Caesars, used his method and plans by categories in producing a continuation of Suetonius's biographies of emperors from Nerva down to Elagabalus. The scriptores Historiae Augustae in the third and early part of the fourth century copied mainly from the works of Maximus, but their collection embraces the emperors from Hadrian to Numerianus. Aurelius Victor in his Caesars, and Eutropius in his Breviarium ab Urbe Condita followed Suetonius so faithfully that their accounts can serve to restore the text of Suetonius. In the fifth century Paulinus of Milan used Suetonius as a model. Einhard when writing his Vita Caroli Magni, imitated the De Vita Caesarum, and notably the De Vita Augusti so carefully that he produced not only the plan but for the most part entire phrases of his model. John of Salisbury and Vincent de Beauvais in the composition of his Speculum Historiale

depended mainly on the De Vita Caesarum.

C. Julius Romanus, Macrobius, Ausonius and Saint Jerome and Priscianus are a few of the grammarians who made use of Suetonius's works. Other writers also borrowed from Suetonius's works. Censorinus in his De Die Natali exploited the *περὶ τοῦ κατὰ Ῥωμαίους ἐν ἑαυτοῦ*. Isidore of Seville (570-636) apparently borrowed from Suetonius's works quite liberally, although he does not actually name Suetonius as a source. He cites the ninth book of the Prata twice in his De Natura Rerum where he uses Suetonius as a source and a model. In the twelfth century, William of Malmesbury cites a book of the Prata. These are only a few of the writers who were indebted to the works of Suetonius.

It can be clearly seen therefore that Suetonius influenced the writing of Roman history long after his death, and continued to be regarded as a model historian until the writers of more recent times with their scientific techniques of historiography demoted him to a learned antiquarian. They think that his De Vita Caesarum is neither history nor biography, but a good example of "muck-raking", which unfortunately caught the fancy of subsequent writers. However, Suetonius despite his failings, has written a fair history, even by modern standards.

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