

THE SETTLEMENT OF 26 JUNE A.D. 4 AND ITS AFTERMATH

I. INTRODUCTION

In a recently published article¹ I have suggested an amendment of the textual crux in Suetonius, *Tiberius* 21. 4 and an interpretation of the passage as providing direct evidence that the arrangement of the marriages of Germanicus and the younger Drusus was integral to Augustus' settlement of 26 June A.D. 4, even if (as seems on balance likely) they were not celebrated until early 5. This view differs from the more usual assumption that while the marriages took place in 5, the date of their arrangement was not particularly significant, or from the possibility implied by Levick² that Germanicus' marriage may have been arranged to placate the 'faction' (or what remained of it) of the elder Julia after the consolidation in 4 of the position of Livia's descendants. The more precise hypothesis that the marriages were intended as part of the settlement may help us to bring into sharper focus some of the political events of the next few years, and this article attempts to do so; in particular it looks at (a) the internal balance of the settlement; (b) the anomalous separate adoption of Agrippa Postumus; and (c) the decline and fall of Agrippa Postumus and the younger Julia. First, however, some further observations on the hypothesis in my earlier article.

(i) *Ovid's references to the Imperial house*

Ovid presents several³ verbal portraits of the Imperial family as it was in the years between 8 and 14, describing it in some detail. It has been suggested to me that the references in them to the wives of Germanicus and Drusus as integral members of the Imperial house are confirmatory evidence for the view that their marriages were part of the settlement. This is an attractive idea; but the relatively late date of all the passages tells against the references as evidence to date the arrangement of the marriages. There is nothing here to exclude the possibility of their having been arranged up to a year after the settlement; the suggestion that their arrangement was integral to it is, I think, not confirmed by Ovid's passages, although it is certainly not excluded, and the political veracity of the portraits is unquestionable in terms of their own date.

(ii) *The Arch of Pavia/Ticinum*

It has also been suggested that the record of the inscriptions⁴ on the lost Arch of Pavia or Ticinum (dating from 7/8) is supporting evidence for the importance of women in Augustus' settlement. Apart however from Livia herself, women are neither listed nor

¹ 'The correspondence of Augustus: some notes on Suetonius, *Tiberius* 21. 4–7', *CQ* n.s. 31 (1981), 155–161.

² B. Levick, *The Fall of Julia the Younger*, *Latomus* 35, 1976 ('Levick'), p. 313.

³ See in particular *Tristia* 2. 161–180; 4. 2. 1–12; *ex Ponto* 2. 2. 67–74; 2. 8 *passim* but especially 37–46.

⁴ *ILS* 107. The commemoration of the dead Gaius and Lucius is curious. Were they a last-minute replacement for Agrippa Postumus? It would be instructive to know when the Arch was commissioned. If in 6, Agrippa would probably have been available, but doubtless only one child of Germanicus, not two. Was the luckless Claudius included to balance the second great-grandchild of Augustus?

referred to, but two children of Germanicus appear, so including four generations of Augustus' (and Livia's) house in all. To this extent the point holds, and the Arch is perhaps better evidence than Ovid of the precise nature of the long-term intention in 4, partly because it is earlier in date, but also because it is effectively a State document declaring a formal purpose and suggesting strongly that in the settlement of 4 Augustus aimed to provide not only for the first and second generations of the succession, but also for the third. This idea finds an echo after the event in Tacitus' obituary of Livia, who 'sanguini Augusti per coniunctionem Agrippinae et Germanici adnexa communis pronepotes habuit'.⁵

II. THE INTERNAL BALANCE OF THE SETTLEMENT

(i) *Tiberius was not required to remarry*

During the exile of Tiberius in Rhodes Augustus divorced him from the elder Julia; he never remarried. It is worth noting that he was not required to remarry as part of the settlement of 4. Why not? His age (44 in June 4) was no bar; it had been no bar to M. Agrippa in marrying the elder Julia in 21 B.C. that he was then about 42. Part of the answer no doubt lay in the existence of his son Drusus, and of his nephew Germanicus whom he was now to adopt; they would make carefully interlocking marriages to take care of the succession. Another consideration for Augustus could have been a desire not to confuse the generations again – the advancement of Gaius and Lucius had already precipitated the breach with Tiberius⁶ and a further child born now to Tiberius would be a coeval and competitor for power with any children of Germanicus and Drusus. Any such consideration did not however prevent the equally anomalous simultaneous adoption of Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus. Perhaps a more likely point was that while any children of Germanicus or Drusus would perpetuate the lineage of Augustus, any possible marriage for Tiberius could not do this. For Tiberius the marriage with Julia had been disastrous and it is entirely credible that he should not want another; his bargaining position in 4 would have been strong enough for such a wish to carry weight if there had been any contrary proposal. Paradoxically, too, for an adopted son of the Princeps who was also his divorced son-in-law no other marriage could have avoided loss of 'dignitas'. This may well have been a point for Augustus as well as Tiberius.

(ii) *The balance between the descendants of Livia and Augustus*

There is no doubt that the settlement of 4 was a decisive moment in the fortunes of the Julio-Claudian house; the general shape which it assumed remained unimpaired in essentials until after the deaths of Germanicus in 19 and Drusus in 23, and subsequent events could not prevent the succession of a child of Germanicus and Agrippina as the Emperor Gaius and in due course of a grandchild as the Emperor Nero. The usual view is that the settlement represented the eclipse of the descendants of Augustus through Julia and M. Agrippa in favour of those of Livia. In material respects this was the case (because of the military and political dominance of Tiberius during the rest of Augustus' reign) but it was not a total eclipse if only because, after

⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 5. 1. 4.

⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 10. 1/2. There was however also the discord with Julia (*Tib.* 10. 1) and other more general motives are mentioned by Suetonius. Dio 55. 9. 7 gives the political explanation priority over the personal.

the fall of Agrippa Postumus and the younger Julia, Agrippina was still available to provide continuity for the other side. Nor did the changes all take place at once. The position in 8 was to look very different from that in 4.

The decisive shift in 4 towards Tiberius was determined largely by what Augustus found himself compelled to do by the deaths of first Lucius and then Gaius, and by the demands of the German war. A piece of information preserved by Suetonius says that Germanicus was seriously considered by Augustus as his successor before he required Tiberius to adopt him; doubtless the fact of the German war requiring immediate attention was decisive in favour of Tiberius' preferment. If Germanicus had been considered first by Augustus, that could go far to explain Tiberius' later suspicion and dislike of him, and the gibe against Agrippina's ambition reported by Suetonius.⁷

The settlement of 4 may be seen as the pivotal point in the events between 2 B.C. and A.D. 8, and as well as the surviving children of the elder Drusus (except the young and handicapped Claudius, whose 13th birthday fell on 1 August 4) and Tiberius' own son Drusus, it incorporated Agrippa Postumus and Agrippina, two of the three surviving children of M. Agrippa and Julia. We should not infer from this a grand design by Augustus and Livia to integrate by adoption or marriage all the principal members of the Imperial family in the settlement of 4, even if its effect was to achieve this to a marked degree. Such an aim had not been pursued previously and would have had no point at any time considered apart from any practical considerations which might have been seen as justifying it, or an approach to it. By contrast, the idea of a degree of linkage within the family was not new and was understandable given the political pressures which developed within it. Thus Tiberius had been made to marry Julia, and it is entirely possible that had Gaius Caesar lived and married Claudia Livilla, a balancing match between Germanicus and Agrippina would still have been arranged. Had this happened Tiberius and the younger Drusus would doubtless have continued in disgrace and obscurity respectively. The precise shape of the settlement in 4 turned however on the sudden indispensability of Tiberius and, in a secondary sense, on the movement of Germanicus towards greater future significance through his near-selection as Augustus' heir and his adoption by Tiberius.

Much political bargaining and infighting must have taken place between the news of Gaius Caesar's death on 21 February 4 (received in Pisa on 2 April – *ILS* 140 – but doubtless rather sooner at Rome) and the final settlement on 26 June. Inevitably these changes must have diminished the political importance of L. Aemilius Paullus (*cos.* A.D. 1), who had been married to the younger Julia, the remaining daughter of M. Agrippa and the elder Julia. The consequences of this blow to ambition were to become apparent in due course, but in the meantime the betrothal of Claudius to Julia's daughter Aemilia Lepida may have been designed now as a sign of continuing Imperial favour. If so, it failed, perhaps unsurprisingly given the general family view of Claudius revealed by Suetonius,⁸ who records the breaking off of the betrothal following 'the offence given by Aemilia's parents to Augustus'. Immediately, however, in 4, while the settlement was inescapably built around Tiberius and Germanicus, the position of Agrippa's children, though subordinate, was not on the face of it neglected. Nevertheless it was (with the exception of that of Agrippina, who was safely lodged – for the time being – within the household of Tiberius as well as Augustus) to deteriorate and collapse rapidly. Why?

⁷ For the compulsion on Augustus to act, cf. his ambiguous oath '*rei publicae causa adoptare se eum*' (Suet. *Tib.* 21. 3) and the opening words of his will (*Tib.* 23); see also Vell. Pat. 2. 104. 2. For Germanicus' position cf. Suet. *Cal.* 4. Tiberius' gibe: Suet. *Tib.* 53. 1.

⁸ Suet. *Div. Claud.* 2–4; 26. 1.

III. THE ANOMALOUS SEPARATE ADOPTION OF AGRIPPA POSTUMUS

When adopted by Augustus as part of the settlement of 4 the youngest son of M. Agrippa and Julia was still a boy of 15. The contrast with Tiberius, a senior and experienced commanding officer, was very great. Moreover, to strengthen the line of succession, Tiberius was required⁹ to adopt Germanicus before his own adoption by Augustus and both Drusus and Germanicus were further locked into the settlement by marriage. For Agrippa Postumus there was nothing – not even assumption of the ‘*toga virilis*’, which was already overdue¹⁰ and did not take place until the spring of 5, still less the designation of a consulship, admission to the Senate and salutation as *Princeps Iuventutis* as for Gaius and Lucius Caesar when they came of age in 5 and 2 B.C. respectively; in the absence of these special honours the occasion of his assuming the ‘*toga virilis*’ was not marked, as it had been for his elder brothers, by Augustus taking a consulship for the ceremony of ‘*deductio in forum*’.¹¹ Nor apparently was any marriage arranged for the boy (even though he was two years older than Claudius). We may well ask – as he did in due course – whether the honour of being taken into the *Princeps*’ family as a directly adopted son was not, in his case, empty.

We can assume that the defects of character which the historians say he subsequently developed were not apparent at this stage. His position was however so anomalous that we may ask why he was not also adopted by Tiberius, with Germanicus; such a course would have integrated him into the branch of Augustus’ house which was evidently destined to provide the succession, and would have made him a younger brother of Germanicus and a near twin of Drusus. The fact that it would have made him brother-in-law as well as brother of Agrippina would not have been an objection; Germanicus was put by his adoption into this dual relationship with Claudia Livilla, who married Drusus. Tiberius (and Livia) would not however have forgotten the humiliations received during the rise of Gaius and Lucius and could have objected that his humble paternal ancestry would pollute the Claudian house; but such considerations could be swallowed in the cause of avoiding a rival, and Dio refers¹² to Tiberius’ anxieties about a possible rival as a reason for his constant returns to Rome when on campaign in the next few years. On the other hand, Tiberius did not even want to adopt his nephew Germanicus and might well have preferred nothing at all to be done for Agrippa. At all events, it is difficult to see him endorsing the separate adoption, and we may conclude that the decision to undertake this must have been Augustus’ alone. It might have been a matter of family piety; Agrippa was after all of his blood. So however was Germanicus, who was in great favour with Augustus, so that explanation is unlikely to be the whole story, and we are driven back to see Agrippa’s adoption, not as a check on Tiberius (the disparity would be too great) but in some other light.

What consideration could be relevant, in addition to the blood tie? Augustus might have felt it politically risky to subordinate to Tiberius the last surviving male heir of M. Agrippa. Subsequent events were to show that the name of Agrippa was one to

⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 3. 5 and Suet. *Tib.* 15. 2.

¹⁰ Perhaps, as Levick suggests (p. 310/1) because of deadlock in 3 over the succession (if any) to L. Caesar following his death in 2. For its date, see Dio 55. 22. 4 (A.D. 5, after notice of partial eclipse of sun of 28 March 5 – Levick p. 326). Did it coincide with the marriages of Germanicus and Drusus?

¹¹ Suet. *Div. Aug.* 26. 2.

¹² Dio 55. 27. 5. Suet. *Tib.* 15. 2 is also of interest.

be conjured with, even if unsuccessfully, and Augustus must have known this. Moreover, and arising out of this idea, he might have seen Agrippa Postumus in some way as an insurance policy, should the main line of succession fail. Such failure might come about through early death, whether in war or from natural causes; but that would not, in the absence of more specifically political considerations, have justified a separate adoption. Another possible cause of failure could however be political unreliability on the part of the Claudians. The 'republican' tendencies of Tiberius' dead brother Drusus had been known and Tiberius himself, notwithstanding Suetonius' charge of betraying his brother, may well already have given signs of that 'republican' and aristocratic sense of the proper limits of his power which alarmed Sallustius Crispus, that high servant of the State ('particeps secretorum'), in the crisis following Agrippa Postumus' murder in 14. Even Germanicus, trusted though he had been by Augustus, was suspected by Tiberius and Livia in 14 (unjustly, says Tacitus) because of a popular, if paradoxical, belief at Rome that, like his father Drusus, 'if he gained power he would restore liberty'. This deplorable libertarian streak in the Claudian house¹³ may have been apparent to Augustus in 4 and have weighed with him in deciding to maintain Agrippa Postumus in an independent position, even while he decided to require Tiberius to take Germanicus into his household. The success of such a strategy would however depend upon the boy's developing an independent basis of power in due course. There is no sign, however, of this happening in the immediate arrangements in 4. It is possible to see the boy's failure to advance as Tiberius' price for acquiescing in the separate adoption; if so, this part of the strategy was effectively defeated from the outset.

The contrast between the treatment of Germanicus and Agrippa is interesting and illuminates the complexity of the political deal which evidently took place. Quite possibly Tiberius objected to them both as potential rivals and wanted neither to advance. Under pressure he was prepared to take Germanicus; perhaps Augustus made it clear that his advancement was not to be gainsaid and made Tiberius adopt him in order to contain the likely effects of rivalry. Agrippa was about three years younger and perhaps less well endowed by nature than Germanicus for future high command. Augustus however had reasons to adopt him independently of Tiberius, but while gaining this could not secure Tiberius' agreement to permit him any significant advancement.

Perhaps the mysterious plot of Cn. Cornelius Cinna recorded by Dio under 4,¹⁴ but leading to his consulship in 5, belongs here, also revealing a part of the arcane political contest preceding the settlement of 26 June, whose visible result required public explanation because of an unexpected change in the arrangements for the consular elections for 5, evidently yet to be held in the summer of 4. The story is curious and exceptionally unconvincing – a plot against the life of Augustus detected; clemency granted after debate with Livia and a two-hour interview in Augustus' study; and an immediate consulship (if Dio's timing is to be believed). It bears the mark of a public-relations account of a change of plan leading to the election of a consul for 5 acceptable to Tiberius, doubtless displacing another person, not recorded, previously destined for office but now disappointed.¹⁵ Better for Augustus to have detected a conspiracy and shown clemency than to admit a political defeat.

¹³ Drusus: Suet. *Tib.* 50. 1; Tiberius: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 6. 6; Germanicus: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 33. 2, 3.

¹⁴ Dio 55. 14; 55. 22. 1, 3. Cf. also Seneca *de clem.* 9. Cf. also Levick p. 320 on Augustus' review of the Senate in 4, treated by Dio 55. 13. 3 as a direct consequence of the settlement of 26 June.

¹⁵ Cf. R. Syme, *Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), p. 414. Could the displaced person have been Plautius Rufus? Dio 55. 27. 2 refers to Publius Rufus, but no P. Plautius Rufus is known to *PIR*. If however *PIR* III 360 rightly identifies him with C. Plautius Rufus of *CIL* ix 5834 and

The circumstances of Agrippa Postumus' separate adoption strongly suggest that the party which had gathered round the elder Julia in 2 B.C. had been so effectively broken then that, with Lucius and Gaius now dead, while much public support for Julia and her children subsisted and it was prudent for Augustus to maintain an independent position for Agrippa Postumus, there remained in 4 no political force sufficient to guarantee him any advancement. In the case of the consulship of 5, since we do not know who was displaced, or how he had been selected in the first place, we cannot infer for certain that the change was necessarily due to the disappearance of Lucius and Gaius and the rehabilitation of Tiberius, but the possibility is there. If the displaced candidate was Plautius Rufus, his name is linked by Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 19. 1 with Aemilius Paullus, which could furnish a connection. Regardless however of this very speculative point, the implied strength of the new dispositions perhaps provides a significant clue to the Government's survival of the crisis of 6 and the relative ease with which Agrippa Postumus and the younger Julia were removed from the scene.

IV. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF AGRIPPA POSTUMUS AND THE YOUNGER JULIA

The consequences for Agrippa Postumus of the balance of forces were serious, and not slow to appear. At some point in the year 5, according to Velleius,¹⁶ presumably after his assumption of the 'toga virilis' in the spring, he 'began to reveal his true nature, turning to destructive courses with an extraordinary debasement of character and intelligence': What does this mean? Tacitus describes him (in language scarcely easier to translate) as 'uncultivated, physically tough and aggressive, but stupid', adding however 'but he had been found guilty of no crime'; also as 'rough'. In his description of his murder he records that 'a determined centurion nevertheless had trouble in killing him, though he caught him off-guard and unarmed'. He adds that Augustus had 'undoubtedly complained much and bitterly about the young man's character, and had achieved his exile by formal resolution of the Senate'. In similar vein Suetonius refers to Agrippa's 'low and aggressive character' and to Augustus' description of him (together with the two Julias) as his 'three abscesses and cancers'. Dio's contribution to this character sketch is a reference to his 'servile disposition... and propensity to violent anger'.¹⁷

As usual in Roman contexts, the references to defects of character are to be read as having a substantial political component, signalling behaviour regarded by the 6384, he would have been of the right rank, having been praetor twice (6384). On this hypothesis, in order for the public explanation to be necessary, some form of 'destinatio' (? by Augustus) of the 'consules ordinarii' of 5 must already have taken place before 26 June but seems unlikely yet to have been confirmed by the consular comitia. (If it had, the substitution would have been much harder, if not impossible, and the displaced person less likely to have escaped record.) It may be argued (e.g. with A. H. M. Jones, 'The Elections under Augustus', in *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (Blackwell, 1960), pp. 29 ff.) that in Augustus' middle years, until the Lex Valeria Cornelia of A.D. 5, the government was able to exercise little influence on the consular elections and that such 'destinatio' would not therefore have been possible. But, to look no further, Augustus had been able to get himself elected consul in 5 and 2 B.C. for a particular purpose, and the consulship of L. Aemilius Paullus in A. D. 1 does not look like a result of the unassisted working of Republican electoral procedure. It is tempting to see the election of Cornelius Cinna as preliminary to the next year's electoral reform to which he was party.

¹⁶ Velleius 2. 112. This is dated to 7 by association in 2. 112 with the Battle of the Volcaean Marshes, which Dio 55. 32. 3/4 puts in 7 immediately after his notice of the fall of Agrippa. See Levick, pp. 328-9.

¹⁷ See Tac. *Ann.* 1. 3. 4; 1. 4. 3; 1. 6. 1, 3; Suet. *Div. Aug.* 65. 1, 4; Dio 55. 32. 1.

writer (or his source) as seditious or dangerous to the State. We may take it that the young man was tough, unpolished and perhaps not overbright (though evidently able to appreciate his unfavourable situation), but we should look not for a psychological but a political explanation for the deterioration in 5. By the spring of 5 it must have become apparent to him that advancement was not coming quickly; doubtless the minimal simplicity of his delayed coming-of-age ceremony made this clear, if it had not already become so from the dispositions of the year 4. If the marriages of Germanicus and Drusus are to be dated to the spring of 5 they will have reinforced the message; no doubt they were marked with a sufficiency of appropriate State ceremonial. It would not be surprising that Agrippa should react with ill temper born of frustrated ambition.

Nor as an adopted son of Augustus was he able to hold property in his own right. In this he was in the same position as Tiberius, but while Tiberius loyally accepted this limitation, which in his case offered a great contrast with his previous freedom as a 'pater familias', Agrippa seems to have chafed repeatedly. He may well have asked why, if he could not enjoy public and official distinction or make a prestigious marriage, he could not at least have the use of his natural father's wealth. According to Dio, when in the end he proved incorrigible and was banished, his property was confiscated to the 'aerarium militare' founded in 6 – a highly convenient windfall.¹⁸ Doubtless this aspect of his behaviour, contrasted with that of Tiberius, had been a particular irritant to Augustus; many hard words were evidently spoken and any reminders from the youth of Augustus' one-time dependence on the elder Agrippa's military and naval prowess would have given the greatest offence.

It is difficult however to credit that a family row about property could of itself have led to Agrippa's downfall. Dio 55. 32 seems to imply more but in obscure terms, saying that in 7 Augustus sent out Germanicus instead of Agrippa to the war 'because Agrippa was servile and spent most of his time fishing (so that he called himself Neptune) and had a violent temper; also he attacked Livia as a stepmother and repeatedly accused Augustus himself about his paternal inheritance'.

It is at least clear from this that but for Agrippa's behaviour he could have expected to be sent out in early 7 (at about age 18) with reinforcements for Tiberius. This suggests a command of some kind conferred in 6; it would have been consistent with Augustus' general policy towards the sons of senators for a suitable command to be offered to him as soon as he reached the minimum military age of 17.¹⁹ The precise nature of the command is not on record, and as Levick says²⁰ we cannot infer an early quaestorship from Dio's statement that Germanicus was sent out *καίτοι ταμείοντα*. But if it was not less than would be offered to the son of an ordinary senator, neither was it (apparently) more. Agrippa may well have regarded the appointment as a further affront, however honourable it might have been in ordinary circumstances for a senator's son.

Dio's reference to fishing by the self-styled Neptune prompted A. E. Pappano²¹ to suggest that Agrippa had naval ambitions in the light of his father's career. While Agrippa must have been acutely aware of his father's importance in the foundation of the New State and have contrasted his own lot with it unfavourably, it is unclear whether any ambitions he may have had to follow him as a naval commander (or

¹⁸ See Dio 55. 32 (A.D. 7). For Tiberius' legal position as Augustus' adopted son see Suet. *Tib.* 15. 2. For the 'aerarium militare' founded in 6, Dio 55. 25. 2.

¹⁹ For this policy 'militiam auspicantibus' see Suet. *Div. Aug.* 38. 2. For the lower age limit of 17 for military service, cf. A. Gellius, *NA* x, xxviii.

²⁰ pp. 317–8.

²¹ A. E. Pappano, *CP* 36 (1941), 30 ff.; see also Levick, pp. 332–3.

to attain any other position which he might regard as worthy of himself) ever led to specific actions on his part, as opposed doubtless to wild talk (see below). What is more significant about the reference in Dio is the causal relationship which he gives it to the decision to send out Germanicus instead of Agrippa with the troops for Tiberius. The implication seems clear that Agrippa, already disappointed, reacted badly to the offer of what he saw as a minor military post, behaving unworthily of a Roman gentleman ('δουλοπρεπής', according to Dio; Suetonius speaks of his 'ingenium sordidum ac ferox' as the reason for his 'abdicatio'), and sulking at some suitable coastal resort. Such an interpretation might give an extra dimension to the charge which Agrippa laid against Augustus about his 'paternal inheritance'. But although it is clear that from the year 5, and more particularly in the year 6, Agrippa was responding badly to his very real disappointments, the severity of the punishment of 'abdicatio' and exile seems to require further explanation of a political order. Dio's words in 55. 32 are again perhaps significant: 'καὶ οὐ γὰρ ἐσωφρονίζετο, ἀπεκηρύχθη' – 'and as he persistently refused to come to his senses he suffered "abdicatio"'. Implicit in the word 'ἐσωφρονίζετο' we may detect the Roman idea of political dissent (or worse) as 'furor'. What of the wider political situation at this time?

This had been deteriorating, with disaffection over pay (Dio 55. 23) in the army in 5, continuing into 6 (Dio 55. 26) despite improved payments to the troops which precipitated a financial crisis and the introduction of a 5% death duty. This measure was itself a cause of discontent at Rome (Dio 55. 27), but much worse followed rapidly. The sudden news of the revolt of Pannonia/Illyricum ('the most serious of all foreign wars since the Punic') produced panic at Rome which affected Augustus himself. Desperate measures followed – conscription, general recall of reservists, the arming of freed slaves by the wealthy classes. Augustus declared in the Senate that unless measures were taken, the enemy could come into sight of Rome within ten days. As if this were not enough, Pliny and Dio testify to plague and fire in Rome and famine there and throughout Italy, followed by revolutionary agitation and billposting in the city. At the end of his catalogue of disasters Pliny records that Augustus 'determined to commit suicide and nearly died as a result of four days starvation'.²²

These scattered fragments are enough to indicate a crisis of government of the first rank, with financial, military and political dimensions and accompanied by serious civil disorder. Direct evidence that Agrippa inserted himself into this disorder is lacking, although Levick²³ argues persuasively that he was involved. Suetonius notes that Augustus 'considered it enough to fine the plebeian Junius Novatus, though he had published an extremely hostile letter about him in the name of the young Agrippa'. No date is given, but the context strongly suggests that such clemency was shown where the person concerned was in no position to do harm, so that it may well date from after Agrippa's final banishment to Planasia. Taken together with the various references to Agrippa's disaffection and dangerous behaviour at this time, this notice may however be good indirect evidence of a connection of some kind between Agrippa and the disorders. Novatus' 'epistola' was no doubt similar to the material which had, according to Dio, been distributed by night at the height of the disorders, and the passage implies that whatever its date, the fortunes of Agrippa were of acute political interest when it was written.²⁴

Agrippa himself was treated with more severity: first his adoption was revoked and

²² Sources: Suet. *Tib.* 16. 1; Vell. Pat. 2. 110. 6; Pliny, *HN* 7. 149; Suet. *Div. Aug.* 25. 2.

²³ pp. 329–31.

²⁴ Sources: Suet. *Div. Aug.* 51. 1, 3; Dio 55. 27. 1 (A.D. 6).

he was banished to Surrentum; becoming thereafter 'no easier to handle but more crazed every day' he was transported to Planasia and kept under armed guard; a resolution of the Senate prescribed permanent confinement there. No doubt of the threat he was held to pose. The disorders apparently instigated by Publius Rufus, behind whom others were suspected of lurking (Dio), link naturally with the 'rerum novarum initia coniurationesque' attributed by Suetonius to Plautius Rufus and Lucius Paullus, Augustus' grandson-in-law through marriage to the younger Julia. The circumstantial evidence for suspecting that both Julia and Agrippa Postumus were involved is very strong, but it would be rash to infer that Agrippa – still only 17 – was a prime mover. He may well have been used by Paullus and Julia, taking advantage of his name and his accumulated resentments, the latest being the disappointment of the proffered military command.²⁵

Tacitus attributes Agrippa's punishment to Livia's hold over the mind of the ageing Augustus and says that Agrippa 'had not been found guilty of any crime'. This recalls Dio's notice that Agrippa charged Livia with being an 'iniusta noverca'. Given the prolonged absences of Tiberius on military service, the influence of Livia is credible, but taking the evidence of Tacitus and Suetonius together, it may be inferred that the fishing expeditions and talk of Neptune did not go so far as any action such as contact with the fleet at Misenum, which would have been treasonable. Given that the youth was still only 17 in 6, this too is credible.²⁶

To explain the severity of the punishment we must therefore look to more general political factors. The first punishment – 'abdicatio' and removal to Surrentum – was a curious mixture of extreme severity and surprising leniency. Loss of status as Augustus' adopted son was in political terms the effective end of all prospects (such as they might have been) of advancement. Exile in Surrentum was presumably comfortable, probably very comfortable, and as favourable a sentence of this kind as could have been imposed. Ovid in a few years would be prepared to settle for much less. In view of Agrippa's father's connection with Misenum it is tempting to speculate that he might have been confined to a (confiscated) paternal villa. Perhaps we may see here the hand of Livia, wishing to remove a real nuisance and focus for discontent who was also a source of anxiety to Tiberius, and the grandfather's wish to mitigate the personal consequences of the family disaster. It is difficult on the evidence to gauge how real was the threat posed by the young man; but in the overheated political atmosphere of 6 any visible association (in however passive a role) with potentially revolutionary activity was likely to be enough to give an excuse to move against him. If Augustus had suffered – even temporarily – a crippling loss of morale and was weakened physically by attempted suicide, so much the easier. Tacitus' picture of Livia as the moving spirit, now as in 14, assumes more substance.²⁷

In the event, the move to Surrentum proved either a mistake or at the least an inadequate step. Dio suggests that the second punishment came in 7. By this time some aspects of the crisis of 6 had been relieved; Tiberius was containing the Pannonians and the corn supply had been restored. Political measures were in order to improve the atmosphere at Rome; funeral games were celebrated for the elder Drusus by his sons (Germanicus and Claudius) and Tiberius dedicated a temple of Castor and Pollux

²⁵ Sources: Suet. *Div. Aug.* 65. 1, 4; Dio 55. 27. 2 (A.D. 6); Suet. *Div. Aug.* 19. 1.

²⁶ Sources: Tac. *Ann.* 1. 3. 4; Dio 55. 32.

²⁷ An alternative explanation for the suicide attempt is suggested by the curious parallel to Pliny's allegation in Suetonius' account (*Tib.* 10. 2) of the manoeuvres leading up to Tiberius' exile in 6 B.C., when Livia and Augustus both resisted his desire to go: 'quin et pertinacius retinentibus, cibo per quadriduum abstinuit'. He was then released. Did Augustus starve himself in the face of moves against Agrippa Postumus? If so, he lost where Tiberius had won.

in his own name and his brother's,²⁸ carefully emphasizing his position as an adopted son of the Princes by the name 'Claudianus', a form not found, for example, on the almost exactly contemporaneous Arch of Ticinum. Levick,²⁹ in dating these events to the spring of 7, remarks that they brought the popular hero Drusus (dead 15 years) to mind 'to win popular favour for his kinsmen'. A more specific interpretation might be that the previous year's agitation was revolutionary; hostility against the Government in which the Claudians were now dominant went with a genuine popular sentiment in favour of the children of M. Agrippa and the elder Julia, and it was appropriate to remind the Roman people of the anti-establishment aspect of the Claudians, the conveniently dead Drusus providing the focal point, and of the subordination of Tiberius to the arch-revolutionary Augustus.

Other dangers remained, of which the Government and its opponents will have been acutely aware. The Pannonians were far from defeated; indeed the critical Battle of the Volcaean Marshes was to come later in the year 7, regarded by both Velleius and Dio as effectively contemporaneous with the final banishment of Agrippa Postumus. To the opponents of Tiberius his military eclipse, however dangerous this might be for Rome, was by no means inconceivable or undesirable; hence perhaps Augustus' neurotic concern with Tiberius' slowness and the sending of Germanicus with extra levies. Continued agitation would therefore be seen as worthwhile; hence the political disorders – perhaps, as Levick suggests,³⁰ in favour of Agrippa Postumus – implicit in Dio's statement that Augustus had himself in 7 to appoint all the magistrates due for election in that year. Certainly continued political contacts between Surrentum and the City can be inferred from the decision to remove Agrippa ('nihil tractabiliorem, immo in dies amentio rem') to Planasia. Hence too, perhaps, a credible temptation for opponents to consider using the fleet at Misenum as a renewed threat to the corn supply of Rome and Italy and perhaps as a counterweight to the land forces of Tiberius; while no evidence exists of such a move, it would not be lost on Livia (or Augustus) that the name and discontents of Agrippa Postumus could suggest it to disaffected persons.

Such perils (real or foreseen) would compel action. Exile for Agrippa on Planasia under armed guard would follow naturally as the ultimate punishment available to Augustus, who 'was unwilling to kill any of his own family'.³¹ What of Paullus and Julia? The sources are defective, obscure and – in the case of the scholiast on Juvenal 6. 157 – not necessarily to be trusted. Some points can however be taken as established:³²

- (i) Agrippa's final fall came in 7;
 - (ii) Julia and Paullus were associated in disgrace;
 - (iii) Julia's exile came in 8;
 - (iv) Julia was condemned for adultery; and
 - (v) Her only reliably recorded adulterer (discounting the fantasy about incest with her brother) was D. Iunius Silanus, who was exiled informally.
- More uncertainly:

- (vi) Agrippa was linked with the agitation of 6 and 7 and therefore with Rufus, who

²⁸ Dio 55. 27. 3/4 (nominally under A.D. 6).

²⁹ pp. 330–1.

³⁰ p. 332; see Dio 55. 34. 2.

³¹ Tac. Ann. 1. 6. 3. But see Suet. *Div. Aug.* 65. 4.

³² Sources: (i) see note 16; (ii) Suet. *Div. Claud.* 26. 1; (iii), (iv) Tac. Ann. 4. 71. 6, 7; (v) Tac. Ann. 3. 24. 5. Incest: Schol. on Juv. 6. 157; (vi) Suet. *Div. Aug.* 19. 1; (vii) Schol. on Juv. 6. 157 (death); for exile, see R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 210–1.

is associated with Paullus by Suetonius in 'riot, revolution and conspiracy'; and (vii) Paullus' fall brought either death or exile.

The problem is that if Paullus were dead in 8 it is not obvious how Julia could then commit and be charged with adultery; if (as Syme's argument suggests) he was not and if Ovid's disgrace was associated with that of Julia, how could Ovid claim that he had taken part in no improper or illegal conduct? Further, if Paullus and Julia were linked in conspiracy and Paullus' fall was associated with that of Agrippa, how did Julia survive another year? Syme suggests that both fell in the autumn of 8, and cites Suetonius' reference to Claudius as 'admodum adulescens' as support for this since he was 17 on 1 August 8. 'Adulescens' is not however a synonym for 'young man of military age' but could be applied at the age of 14 or 15; further, the passage of Suetonius is expressed very much in general terms, and cannot bear the weight of being used to date the joint disgrace of Aemilia Lepida's parents.³³

A general argument that Paullus was removed from the scene before Julia may be derived from the charge of adultery against her. Since they were apparently political allies it would be mildly surprising – even against the social background of the 'lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis' – if Julia were simultaneously conducting a liaison with another politically significant man (D. Silanus) but much easier to understand if Paullus, having fallen in 7 (or even in late 6, if that is the date of Agrippa's banishment to Surrentum), were absent, so that she would need to seek another vehicle of political advancement. It is worth recalling that her mother's alleged multiple adulteries in 2 B.C. were conducted – if they were – in Tiberius' absence. It is also interesting that only the one name is conjoined with hers in a charge of adultery; if nothing else this suggests the weakness of her political support compared with that of her mother in 2 B.C. Seen against this background the charge of adultery suggests that it is quite likely (but not absolutely certain)³⁴ that Paullus was still alive but in exile. If we assume that Ovid's indiscretion was connected with Julia's fall in 8 and that what he did was 'not forbidden by law', we may perhaps with Levick infer his presence at a form of marriage believed by the participants to be valid, which was consummated and resulted in the birth of a child but was subsequently repudiated – with the child – by Augustus.³⁵ For

³³ References: R. Syme, op. cit. (note 32), p. 208; Suet. *Div. Claud.* 26. 1. For the meaning of 'adulescens' cf. (i) Varro ap. Censorinus c. 14. 2: 'primo gradu usque ad annum xv pueros dictos... secundo ad xxx annum ab adulescendo sic nominatos'; (ii) Isid. *Orig.* 11. 2. 4: 'tertia (aetas) adulescentia ad gignendum adulta quae porrigitur (ab anno quarto decimo) usque ad vigesimum octavum annum'. These references assume and are quoted in the context of various theories of the 'ages of man' but presumably reflect popular usage. Lower age for military service: note 19.

³⁴ Two texts give pause: (i) *Digest* 50. 16. 101 (Modestinus): 'inter "stuprum" et "adulterium" hoc interesse quidam putant, quod adulterium in nuptam, stuprum in viduam committitur. sed lex Julia de adulteriis hoc verbo indifferenter utitur'; *Digest* 48. 5 and 6. I give more detail. (ii) Tac. *Ann.* 3. 24. 2, 3 (on Silanus): '...impudicitiam filiae ac neptis quas urbe depulit adulterosque earum morte aut fuga punivit. nam culpam inter viros ac feminas vulgatam gravi nomine laesarum religionum ac violatae maiestatis appellando clementiam maiorum suasque ipse leges egrediebatur'. The last four words are taken by Furneaux ad loc. as referring to the excessive penalties imposed, but could also refer to an extension of scope. If so, does (i) reflect an extension of the law implied in (ii)?

³⁵ cf. Ovid *ex Ponto* 2. 9. 71: 'nec quicquam, quod lege veto, committere, feci'. Also *Tristia* 4. 1. 23–4; 4. 4. 43–4; 5. 8. 23; *ex Ponto* 1. 7. 40. See Levick, p. 336. Why would Ovid be invited? A plausible explanation could be that he came in a professional capacity, to perform an epithalamium, as he had for Paullus Fabius Maximus; cf. *ex Ponto* 1. 2. 131–2: 'ille ego, qui duxi vestros Hymenaeon ad ignes, et cecini fausto carmina digna toro'. Such a poem could be politically explosive; if this was his offence, the otherwise puzzling charge against the *Ars Amatoria* could be explained. Compare also (with Levick, p. 336) *Tristia* 2. 6. 27–8: 'nec breve

this to be credible Paullus would certainly have to be offstage and either divorced by Julia or dead – the former an unrecorded but entirely possible circumstance; it would then be necessary to assume that Augustus refused to acknowledge the divorce in order to create the basis for a charge of adultery. If Paullus were however dead, the texts at note 34 would imply that Augustus possessed in the Lex Julia – or created – a basis for a charge of adultery against his widowed granddaughter based presumably on the absence of his consent to what had been done.

Why then if Paullus and Julia were disgraced together and Paullus exiled (still more if he were put to death) in 7 did Julia survive to intrigue again in 8? To explain this, it is not necessary to follow the convoluted and dubious account of a double exile in the scholiast on Juvenal. We may, if we wish, cite Augustus' lack of bloodthirstiness towards his own family, but this did not prevent a ferocious punishment of Agrippa Postumus. Perhaps Paullus was seen as the prime mover; he may in fact have been so (cf. Suetonius' attribution of the conspiracy to Plautius Rufus and Paullus). Another consideration may have been the undoubted favour with the Roman populace enjoyed by the elder Julia and her children³⁶ and the need which there had been for a defensive political charade in early 7 in favour of the Claudians; Agrippa Postumus had to go since he was the focus of the threat in 7, but to expel the younger Julia would represent the complete extinction of M. Agrippa's house as a force independent of the Claudians (Agrippina would not count). Likewise we may see here a motive for the exile rather than death of Paullus, if that is what happened. The eclipse of M. Agrippa's line was to be avoided if at all possible, and political embarrassment to be minimized.

In the event it was not possible and the events of the year 8 brought further conspiracy, perhaps including the attempt to get the elder Julia and Agrippa Postumus back from exile and to the armies, and the form of marriage with Silanus.³⁷ Technically the marriage may well have been valid but Julia now had to go. Augustus, like Pompey 'suarum legum auctor idem ac subversor', had to resort to torture of slaves³⁸ and to a forced application of the 'lex de adulteriis' in order to get rid of her. Again, however, for those associated with her, a studied leniency veiling ruthless condemnation: D. Silanus 'exilium sibi demonstrari intellexit'; the equestrian Ovid was banished to the wilds of Tomis. When Silanus returned in 20 Tiberius 'was glad to see that he had returned from his long travels' – 'sibi tamen adversus eum integras parentis sui offensiones neque reditu Silani dissoluta quae Augustus voluisset. fuit posthac in urbe

nec tutum, quo sint mea, dicere, casu | lumina funesti conscia facta mali' with Suet. *Div. Aug.* 65. 4: 'ex nepte Iulia post damnationem editum infantem agnoscere alique vetuit'. Does 'fausto' (above) imply a contrast with an 'infaustus torus'?

³⁶ e.g. the popular demand for a consulship for Gaius in 6 B.C. (Dio 55. 9. 2), the pressure for the recall of the elder Julia in A.D. 3 (Dio 55. 13. 1), and the stir in favour of the pseudo-Agrippa reported in Tac. *Ann.* 2. 39–40.

³⁷ Levick, p. 336 draws attention to the reference to a marriage of Julia and a Silanus in 'Περὶ τοῦ Καίσαρτος γένους' (ed. Lampros, in 'Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων', 1 (1904), 149). The relevant passage reads: 'δύο θυγάτρες Ἰουλία Σιλανῶ (scripsit Lampros, Ἰλανῶ codd.) γαμηθεῖσα καὶ Ἀγριππῖνα ἡ μετὰ ταῦτα Γερμανικῇ τῷ Δρούσου'. Julia was Agrippina's elder sister and might therefore be properly named first, but the supposed marriage to Silanus is mentioned where, chronologically, a reference to Paullus would be expected. Doubt accrues from the fact that the MSS are corrupt at the critical point; the reading could well result from corruption of *ΙΟΥΛΙΑ(Α)ΙΜΙΛΙΩ*. Fortunately the argument does not turn on this text.

³⁸ Levick, p. 335 cites *Digest* 48. 18. 8, an edict of Augustus dated in the second half of A.D. 8, providing for 'servorum quaestiones' in the investigation of 'capitalia et atrociora maleficia'. With this cf. Ovid *Tristia* 4. 10. 99–102:

'causa meae cunctis nimium quoque nota ruinae
indicio non est testificanda meo.
quid referam comitumque nefas famulosque nocentes?
ipsa multa tuli non leviora fuga.'

neque honores adeptus est'. Ovid's entreaties fell on deaf ears at Rome and virtually ceased with the accession of Tiberius. Cui bono? No doubt that only with the events of 8 was the domination of Tiberius finally achieved, thereafter to be implacably maintained. Time indeed in 10, after the crisis of the 'clades Variana', for Tiberius to dedicate at Rome a temple of Concord, as a sure sign that effective or seriously threatening opposition was now extinct.³⁹

V. POSTSCRIPT

So, within the space of three years, we see the ruin of Augustus' intention of sustaining a position independent of the Claudians for the surviving son of M. Agrippa, who was also his only living grandson. I have suggested that plausible reasons for Augustus' policy towards Agrippa were (i) the fear of the consequences of eclipse by Tiberius of the last male descendant of M. Agrippa, and (ii) a wish to guard against the failure of his main strategy for the succession. Augustus must however have known from the outset in 4 that Agrippa's prospects were unlikely ever to be secure, particularly, if as I have suggested, Tiberius first moved against him in the bargaining leading to the settlement of 26 June 4. The Roman state's overwhelming need of Tiberius' military skill and experience effectively made it impossible for Agrippa Postumus' career to advance in a way which would have enabled him to become an independent political force. Frustration led him to indiscretion, and he became implicated – perhaps only passively at first – in the prolonged civil disorders at Rome in 6 and 7 which were nourished by military crisis, natural disasters and popular support for the elder Julia and her children, already present and brought to the surface by the difficulties facing the Claudian administration. Augustus, doubtless much against his personal inclination, was obliged by circumstances (and, we may be sure, the urging of Livia) to disown and banish him and, when the result of this proved to be yet more seditious activity, to imprison him under guard on a penal island. The disorders had also implicated – and perhaps in part been instigated by – Agrippa's sister Julia and her husband Paullus. Even after the fall of Agrippa and Paullus, Julia continued to intrigue for a political independence until she too was banished. The ruin was complete and irrevocable but had to be managed with great discretion since a violent popular reaction might otherwise occur and could be a real danger until the outcome of the Pannonian war was assured. No wonder the Varian disaster, supervening on the victory, was such a crushing blow to Augustus. No matter, however, since Tiberius was now in a position of unchallengeable authority. The surface of civil harmony was restored.

Can we infer from the course of events down to 8 what were the circumstances of the death of Agrippa in 14? Suetonius leaves it an open question whether Augustus left instructions for Agrippa's murder, or Livia ordered it with or without Tiberius' knowledge but in Augustus' name. Dio makes Tiberius send from Nola (where Augustus had died) to have Agrippa put to death, while denying that he had done so and permitting gossip to range over the possible explanations. Tacitus specifically attributes to Sallustius Crispus the dispatch ordering the murder. In Tacitus' view, while Tiberius attributed Agrippa's murder to Augustus, it would not have been in Augustus' character to do such a thing: 'propius vero Tiberium ac Liviam, illum metu, hanc novercalibus odiis, suspecti et invisi iuvenis caedem festinavisse'. He then adds,

³⁹ References: Tac. *Ann.* 3. 24. 5, 7; Dio 56. 25. 1 (A.D. 10); Suet. *Tib.* 20. 1. Ovid's repeated entreaties merely to be moved to a less harsh place of exile perhaps betray knowledge that his offence was unpardonable. Could he have expected recall when writing *Tristia* 2. 509–14 ('inspice ludorum sumptus, Auguste, tuorum... scaenica vidisti lentus adulteria')? Cf. the views of T. Wiedemann, 'The political background to *Tristia* 2', *CQ* n.s. 25 (1975), 264–71.

in terms similar to those of Suetonius, that when the officer who had killed Agrippa reported that he had carried out his orders, Tiberius said that he had given no such orders and the matter must be accounted for to the Senate. Then follows the account of Sallustius Crispus' approach to Livia, which is consistent with Livia having organized the murder in Tiberius' name in the interval before Augustus' death was announced, but without Tiberius' knowledge. The significance of these passages has been extensively argued; the course of events affecting Agrippa Postumus from 4 on suggested in this article can be adduced as supporting the probability of Tacitus' general account of events in 14 – i.e. Augustus was not a party to the murder, though the attribution of complicity to Tiberius (by Dio as well as Tacitus) is very questionable, not least in the light of Sallustius Crispus' reaction to Tiberius' proposal to take the matter to the Senate.⁴⁰

In support of the exculpation of Augustus we may perhaps look to Sallustius Crispus' reference to the importance of not revealing 'arcana domus, consilia amicorum, ministeria militum'. It is unlikely that, with Augustus dead, if the decision to order Agrippa's execution had been his, Livia and Sallustius would have hesitated to attribute responsibility to him. It was evidently their advice to Tiberius that he should do so, but 'consilia amicorum' looks elsewhere – perhaps to Livia and Sallustius themselves. *Annals* 1. 6. 2 was evidently the public result of the deliberations within the Imperial household reported in 1. 6. 6.

Doubt has been expressed (first by Tacitus himself)⁴¹ on the historical probability of the visit to Planasia by the aged Augustus, but the story is circumstantial and there is an independent piece of evidence that the death of Paullus Fabius Maximus required explanation. Nor would the voyage have been as long or as arduous as Augustus' land journey to Ariminum in 8. Though it is generally wise to be wary of crediting the Julio-Claudians with human feelings, it may in fact be the case that Augustus was fond of his grandson. If his purpose in making the visit was to see whether there was any prospect of rehabilitating him Augustus must have known it to be a forlorn hope, if not beforehand then as soon as he set eyes on the wild and unkempt young man whom he had been compelled to treat so much more harshly than he would have wished. Pliny speaks of his 'desiderium post relegationem' in words which are obscure but in their general purport support the account given in Tacitus. It is difficult to credit Levick's theory that Augustus left personal orders either with Sallustius Crispus or on the island of Planasia directing the murder of Agrippa. The tears of Augustus are sufficiently explained if we consider that he must have been certain that nothing could be done for Agrippa and of the fate in store for him following his own death. The whole history of his failed attempt to bring the young man forward would have made this clear to him; there was no need, even if he had had the wish, for him to do the work of Livia and Sallustius in defending respectively the position of Tiberius and the future peace of the Roman state.⁴²

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⁴⁰ References: Suet. *Tib.* 22; Dio 57. 3. 5, 6 (A.D. 14); Tac. *Ann.* 1. 5. 6, 1. 6 *passim*. Also discussion and refs. in R. Syme, op. cit. (note 32), pp. 149–51, and B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (Thames and Hudson, 1976), pp. 64–7.

⁴¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1. 5: 'quippe rumor incesserat... utcumque se ea res habuit'. See R. Syme, op. cit. (note 32), pp. 149 ff. But cf. Suet. *Div. Aug.* 82. 1 on Augustus' travelling habits, esp.: 'si quo pervenire mari posset, potius navigabat'. The voyage would have taken place in early summer (Augustus died on 19 August; Tac. *Ann.* 1. 5. 2 says it was 'paucos ante mensis'), and was not impossibly far. For Augustus' journey to Ariminum in 8, Dio 55. 34. 3.

⁴² References: Ovid, *ex Ponto* 4. 6. 9–14 (Fabius); Tac. *Ann.* 2. 39. 3 for the slave who, impersonating Agrippa after his death, thought it necessary to grow his hair and beard long; Pliny, *HN* 7. 150; B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, p. 65.