

XIX.—Tacitus' Use of *Ferocia*

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In this paper we are concerned with Tacitus' use of the word *ferocia*. Primarily we are interested in its significance as applied to certain important political personages described in the historical works of Tacitus to signify their outspokenness and defiant behavior towards the emperor.

In narrating the apparent reluctance of Tiberius to assume the total responsibility of governing the Empire, Tacitus mentions the rather insulting remark of Asinius Gallus addressed to the emperor, his confused apology, and then makes the following comment (*Ann.* 1.12):

Nec ideo iram eius [the emperor's] lenivit, pridem invisus, tamquam ducta in matrimonium Vipsania M. Agrippae filia, quae quondam Tiberii uxor fuerat, plus quam civilia agitare Pollionisque Asinii patris ferociam retineret.

Dio Cassius describes the incident in the senate in the same way as it is described above by Tacitus, prefacing the insulting remark of Gallus with the following comment (*Hist.* 57.2.5): 'Ἀσίνιος δὲ δὴ Γάλλος παρρησία ἀεὶ ποτε πατρώα καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ συμφέρον αὐτῷ χρώμενος . . . It is apparent that the Tacitean *ferociam* is in agreement with the Greek *parrhêsia*, and that the two nouns are used to express the same idea. It is the purpose of this paper to discover any other instances of *ferocia* in Tacitus with the sense of *parrhêsia* and also to see whether Tacitus has used *ferocia* or its cognates *ferox*, *praeferox*, and *ferociter* in any other special or hitherto unnoticed sense.

Professor Furneaux in his notes¹ on the above quoted passage from Tacitus makes the following comment on the word *ferocia*:

ferocia, 'spirit': cp. 2.43,3 etc., and '*ferocissimi*' c.2,1. Dio (57.2,5) speaks of the *παρρησία* of Pollio. Velleius (2.86,4) gives his refusal to follow Caesar to Actium, 'discrimini vestro me subtraham, et ero praeda

¹ H. Furneaux's edition of the *Annals* (London 1896) Vol. 1.200. I am greatly indebted to Professor Walter Allen, Jr., who kindly brought the passage quoted from Dio Cass. to my attention,

victoris.' Other instances of his freedom of speech are given in Suet. *Aug.* 43.

Although Furneaux has seen the parallelism between the passages quoted from Tacitus and Dio Cassius, he does not draw any conclusions therein, but rather seeks to show examples of the outspokenness of Gallus' father Pollio.² His translation of *ferocia* is also somewhat misleading, and does not give the force of the Greek *parrhêsia*. Furneaux, moreover, has not noted all the other cases in the *Annals*, in which *ferocia* and its cognates have the idea of *parrhêsia*.

Among the Athenians *parrhêsia* was claimed as one of their special privileges.³ It was also thought of as the mark that distinguishes the free-born citizen from the slave.⁴ It was considered by the Athenians to be freedom of speech not only as evidenced in the utterance of unpopular sentiments, but also in speaking ill or insultingly of another.⁵ In the latter sense it was characteristic of Greek comedy, especially that of Aristophanes and some of his contemporaries. Among the Epicureans *parrhêsia* signified a paideutic method used between teacher and student and between fellow students. In this special sense it meant an outspoken admonition pleasantly and kindly delivered.⁶ The word always retained, however, the idea of speaking insultingly to anyone including the monarch.⁷ It is in this sense that Dio Cassius used *parrhêsia* in the passage quoted above, and this is the force of *ferocia* in the passage quoted from Tacitus.

One other passage from the *Histories* of Dio Cassius seems to show that *ferocia* (*ferox*) may be used in the sense of *parrhêsia*. In book twelve of the *Annals* Tacitus mentions the outspoken language of an eastern king Mithridates to the emperor Claudius: "ferocius quam pro fortuna disseruisse apud Caesarem" (*Ann.*

² In general the other commentators on the works of Tacitus have either not noticed this particular use of *ferocia*, or have translated it in much the same fashion as Furneaux.

³ Eur. *Hipp.* 422; *Ion* 672; Ar. *Thesm.* 541.

⁴ Eur. *Phoen.* 391.

⁵ Isoc. *Epist.* 4.4-7; see also: Max Radin, "Freedom of Speech in Ancient Athens," *AJP* 48 (1927) 216-17.

⁶ Norman De Witt, "Parresiasic Poems of Horace," *CP* 30 (1935) 312-19; A. K. Michels, "Παρρησία and the Satire of Horace," *CP* 39 (1944) 173-77.

⁷ De Witt (above, note 6) 312; A. Momigliano, in his review of Benjamin Farrington's *Science and Politics in the Ancient World*, *JRS* 31 (1941) 157.

12.21). The epitome of book sixty-one of Dio uses the word *parrhêsia* to introduce the insulting words of Mithridates attributed also to that king by Tacitus (61.32.4^a Petr. Patr. Exc. Vat. 41, p. 208 Mai = p. 191, 3–11 Dind.)

There is one other indication that *ferocia* may be used in the sense of *parrhêsia*. Tacitus very often uses the adjective *ferox* or the adverb *ferociter* in conjunction with words that signify speech or speaking. After it had been falsely reported that Otho had been killed, the most cowardly of the senators and knights complained to Galba that they had been cheated of a chance to avenge their emperor. Tacitus describes these men in the following fashion: "ignavissimus quisque et, ut res docuit, in periculo non ausurus, nimii verbis, linguae feroces" (*Hist.* 1.35).

The contrast between their cowardice and their boldy defiant speech is at once apparent. There are several other instances where *ferox* and *ferociter* used in conjunction with words of speaking must contain the idea of bold speech.⁸

The word *ferocia* occurs 13 times in the *Annals*, 10 times in the *Histories*, and 3 times in the minor works of Tacitus. The cognates of *ferocia* are also used freely by Tacitus. A careful examination of these usages will enable us to note the various senses of *ferocia* and to see the extent to which it is used with the sense of *parrhêsia*. At the same time we shall show that *ferocia* is also very often used by Tacitus to denote rebellious or defiant political behavior on the part of certain Romans towards the *princeps*.

Ferocia is very often applied to the "noble savage" who has not yet been enervated by Roman culture or refining influences. Tacitus seems clearly to admire their defiant and dauntless nature. In comparing the Britons with the Gauls Tacitus says (*Agr.* 11):

Plus tamen ferociae Britanniae praeferunt, ut quos nondum longa pax emollierit. Nam Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse accepimus; mox segnitia cum otio intravit, amissa virtute pariter ac libertate.

Other instances of this particular use of *ferocia* are listed in the footnote.⁹ Sometimes it refers to the excitable or undisciplined force of an enemy, and as such is sometimes contrasted with *virtus* or *pudor*.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.44, 15.5; *Hist.* 2.29, 4.57, 4.64, 4.71.

⁹ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.64, 3.47, 4.46, 4.47, 12.20, 12.33, 14.38; *Hist.* 1.59, 3.45, 5.18; *Agr.* 31.4.

¹⁰ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.17, 11.19, 15.27; *Hist.* 1.68, 1.79, 5.11, 5.15; *Agr.* 37.6.

In another sense *ferocia* sometimes means extreme daring or impetuosity.¹¹ In book two of the *Annals* Tacitus represents the Germans as admiring the valor of the Roman soldiers who though suffering many misfortunes fought "eadem virtute, pari ferocia et velut aucti numero" (*Ann.* 2.25). In another passage Tacitus speaks of the Roman soldier as *adversus pericula ferox* (*Hist.* 3.69).

Ferocia has also the idea of insolence or defiance, and is often applied to the recklessness of youth.¹² Tacitus describes the youthful Domitian with the expression *ferocia aetatis*¹³ (*Hist.* 4.68). In this same sense Tacitus also uses *ferocia* to describe the defiance, insolence or recklessness of an enemy or an individual.¹⁴ Vardanus, a victorious Parthian chief, "regreditur ingens gloria atque eo ferocior et subiectis intolerantior" (*Ann.* 11.10).

It is easy to see, therefore, how *ferocia* is also used by Tacitus in connection with rebellious groups or activities.¹⁵ In speaking of the outbreak of mutiny among the German legions Tacitus writes (*Ann.* 1.45): "Sic compositis praesentibus, haud minor moles supererat ob ferociam quintae et unetvicesimae legionum. . . . Nam primi seditionem coeptaverunt. . . ." In describing a rebellion of the Gauls Tacitus says (*Ann.* 3.40): "Ii secretis colloquiis, ferocissimo quoque adsumpto aut quibus ob egestatem ac metum ex flagitiis maxima peccandi necessitudo, componunt. . . ." In the initial chapters of the *Annals* Tacitus looking back upon Augustus' rise to power says (*Ann.* 1.2):

militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit, insurgere paulatim, munia senatus magistratuum legum in se trahere, nullo adversante, cum ferocissimi per acies aut proscriptione cecidissent, ceteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur. . . .

It is at once evident that by *ferocissimi* Tacitus means that class of *nobiles* who if they had survived the civil wars would have opposed Augustus in his rise to power in contrast to the other important men of the state who willingly subscribed to the new regime.

Although our author states that Augustus met with little or no opposition in his rise to power Tacitus is careful to point out and

¹¹ Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.24, 2.43, 2.76, 3.77; *Agr.* 27.1, 37.1; *Ger.* 32.4.

¹² Cf. Liv. 1.12; Sall. *Cat.* 38; Hor. *Carm.* 2.5.13; Quint. *Inst.* 2.2.3.

¹³ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.32.

¹⁴ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.14, 13.42, 14.34; *Hist.* 1.51, 1.68, 1.79, 2.45, 3.31, 3.77, 4.19, 4.23, 4.28.

¹⁵ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.27; *Agr.* 8.1.

describe insolent and rebellious acts against Tiberius, Claudius and Nero. Seneca had such recalcitrant personalities in mind when he gave the following excellent advice to those considering a political career under the Empire (*Tranq.* 6.3):

Quorundam parum idonea est verecundia rebus civilibus, quae firmam frontem desiderant; quorundam contumacia non facit ad aulam; quidam non habent iram in potestate et illos ad temeraria verba quaelibet indignatio effert; quidam urbanitatem nesciunt continere nec periculosus abstinent salibus. Omnibus his utilior negotio quies est; ferox inpatiens-que natura inritamenta nociturae libertatis evitet.

Although Seneca describes only those who are too free in their speech or of an unrestrained temper, he doubtless would also include those who are openly rebellious in their actions. To this group of political personages Seneca applies the adjective *ferox*. We wish now to consider how Tacitus applies the words *ferocia* and *ferox* to political personages described in his historical works.

We have already examined the use of *ferocia* in connection with Asinius Gallus. It is well, however, to note that in the same passage the words *plus quam civilia agitare* show that besides the idea of *parrhêsia*, *ferocia* may also have the idea of political opposition. Augustus had been of the opinion that Gallus was eager for the principate, but not capable of filling that office (*Ann.* 1.13). Tacitus himself is particularly careful to point out not only the extremely bold speech of Gallus on several occasions but also his political defiance.¹⁶ We also note that at a later date he was apparently tried for *perduellio*.¹⁷ Thus when Tacitus applies the word *ferocia* to Gallus he may have in mind not only his boldness of speech but also his general opposition to the emperor. In investigating the following usages of *ferocia* in connection with political personages we shall try to see whether merely one or both of these ideas are present.

Tacitus characterizes Cn. Calpurnius Piso¹⁸ in the following fashion (*Ann.* 2.43):

Cn. Pisonem, ingenio violentum et obsequii ignarum, insita ferocia a patre Pisone qui civili bello resurgentis in Africa partis acerrimo ministerio adversus Caesarem iuvit. . . . Sed praeter paternos spiritus uxoris

¹⁶ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.77, 2.35, 2.36, 4.71.

¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 6.23, 6.25. See also: R. S. Rogers, *Criminal Trials and Criminal Legislation under Tiberius*, "Philological Monographs" published by the American Philological Association, No. 6 (Middletown 1935) 104.

¹⁸ *PIR*² 2.287.

quoque Plancinae nobilitate et opibus accendebatur; vix Tiberio concedere, liberos eius ut multum infra despectare.

The career of Piso the elder was that of one of the *ferocissimi* described earlier. Tacitus seems anxious to show that the son carried on his own war of opposition under Tiberius just as Asinius Gallus followed in the tradition of his father. Tacitus seems also anxious to emphasize the *nobilitas* of Piso and his disdain of Tiberius and the imperial family. In another passage in which Tacitus describes Piso's preparation for *novae res* the historian comments: "Haud magna mole Piso, promptus ferocibus . . ." (*Ann.* 2.78). Augustus remarked that Cn. Piso desired the principate, and would dare to take it if a chance were given (*Ann.* 1.13). Clearly in the two passages mentioned *ferocia* and *ferox* refer to political rebelliousness and opposition, but Tacitus also gives several examples of Piso's *parrhêsia* as a part of his opposition to Tiberius.¹⁹

In book four of the *Annals* Tacitus narrates the judicial proceedings against Lucius Calpurnius Piso,²⁰ the brother of Cn. Piso, for treasonable activity (*Ann.* 4.21):

Actum dehinc de Calpurnio Pisone, nobili ac feroci viro. Is namque, ut rettuli, cessurum se urbe ob factiones accusatorum in senatu clamitaverat et spreta potentia Augustae trahere in ius Urgulaniam domoque principis excire ausus erat.

As if to explain his use of *ferox* Tacitus reviews the acts of Piso previously related (*Ann.* 2.34). In the year A.D. 16 Piso had voiced his intention in the senate in the presence of Tiberius of leaving Rome for some secluded retreat far away from the evils of the capitol. Professor Allen has pointed out that this remark was in the tradition of an earlier Piso, and was a veiled comparison between Tiberius and the triumvir Antony.²¹ As such it was a gross insult to the emperor. Later Piso gave equal proof of his outspokenness and bold behavior when he spurned the protests of Livia, and to the embarrassment of Tiberius took Livia's close friend Urgulania to court. Thus the use of *ferox* once more seems to refer to both bold speech and defiant behavior with regard to the emperor. It is also interesting to see that once more Tacitus chooses to mention the *nobilitas* of Piso, closely coupling it with *ferocia*.

¹⁹ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.74, 2.35, 2.55, 2.57, 2.69.

²⁰ *PIR*² 2.290.

²¹ Walter Allen, Jr., "A Minor Type of Opposition to Tiberius," *CJ* 44 (1948-49) 204.

The character of the elder Agrippina exemplifies well the political connotations of the word *ferocia* as used by Tacitus. Although Tacitus tries to interpret her actions as those of a matron devoted to country and husband, he nevertheless does present us with quite a formidable list of her actions.²² Germanicus is said by Tacitus on his death bed to have begged his wife Agrippina "exueret ferociam, saevienti fortunae summitteret animum, neu regressa in urbem aemulatione potentiae validiores inritaret" (*Ann.* 2.72). Well might Germanicus warn his wife if we believe Tacitus who states that Tiberius already suspected her of tampering with the loyalty of the soldiers of the German legions and entertaining more than matronly ambitions (*Ann.* 1.69). Agrippina, however, did not follow the advice of her husband upon her return to Rome²³ where she appeared *violenta luctu, nescia tolerandi*. In the following days she seems to have organized a definite opposition to Tiberius.²⁴ Tacitus also records her tirade before the emperor Tiberius while the latter was making sacrifice to the shades of Augustus. The impassive answer of Tiberius is extremely appropriate: "Graeco versu admonuit non ideo laedi quia non regnaret" (*Ann.* 4.52). It is also well to note that in the reported tirade of Agrippina before Tiberius Tacitus has emphasized her claim to *nobilitas*. Tacitus' summation of Agrippina's character fits very well with our interpretation of the word *ferocia* (*Ann.* 6.25): "aequi impatiens, dominandi avida, virilibus curis feminarum vitia exuerat." Well might Tiberius boast of his clemency in not having executed her for treason (*Ann.* 6.25).

In describing Sejanus' attempt to suborn Drusus Caesar, the son of Germanicus and Agrippina, against his elder brother Nero Caesar by assuring him succession to the principate *in lieu* of his brother, Tacitus comments (*Ann.* 4.60):

Atrox Drusi ingenium super cupidinem potentiae et solita fratribus odia accendebatur invidia quod mater Agrippina promptior Neroni erat. Neque tamen Seianus ita Drusum fovebat ut non in eum quoque semina futuri exitii meditaretur, gnarus praeferocem et insidiis magis opportunum.

Tacitus states that Drusus' temperament was such that he could be drawn into a scheme to remove his elder brother, and thus make way for his own succession to the principate. The phrase *cupidinem*

²² Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.33, 2.72, 3.1, 4.12, 4.17, 4.52, 4.53, 4.54, 4.70.

²³ Suet. *Tib.* 53.1; Tac. *Ann.* 3.1.

²⁴ R. S. Rogers, "The Conspiracy of Agrippina," *TAPA* 62 (1931) 141-68.

*potentiae*²⁵ is also indicative of Drusus' ambitious and disloyal nature. Sejanus, however, also planned the destruction of Drusus since he knew that just as the young man was of a politically rebellious or disloyal nature (*praeferocem*) so also he was the more liable to personal treachery (*insidiis magis opportunum*).

Tacitus also relates that Tiberius charged his grand-nephew with being "exitabilem in suos, infensum rei publicae"²⁶ (*Ann.* 6.24). He also reports the violent speech directed against Tiberius by Drusus as the latter lay dying (*Ann.* 6.24). This speech was a studied curse, and alluded to all the members of the imperial family "murdered" by Tiberius. As reported by Tacitus it is quite similar to the insulting speech of Agrippina mentioned above.

After mentioning the exile of Agrippa Postumus²⁷ Tacitus says he was: "rudem sane bonarum artium, et robore corporis stolide ferocem, nullius tamen flagitii conpertum" (*Ann.* 1.3). Tacitus strongly denies any open crime on Agrippa's part, and thus *ferox* is obliged to refer to temperament rather than overt action. Augustus, however, certainly did not exile him without reason. The words *robore corporis stolide ferocem* seem to be an imitation on Tacitus' part of a phrase in Livy: *stolide ferocem viribus suis*.²⁸ Livy describes how a tribune of the Roman people once accused the dictator Titus Manilius among other things of maltreating his own son *nullius probri conpertum*, the boy's only fault being his *tarditas ingenii* (Liv. 7.4). Aroused, however, by this accusation against his father the young man, *rudis quidem atque agrestis animi*, took the tribune by surprise and threatened to kill him unless the accusations against his father should be dismissed. It is to describe this rebellious act of the young man that Livy used the expression *stolide ferocem viribus suis* — foolishly insolent by reason of his strength.

Tacitus has obviously imitated several phrases quoted above from Livy, and has applied them as suitable to describe the character of Agrippa. Suetonius and Dio Cassius show us why such a de-

²⁵ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.2.

²⁶ Drusus was probably involved in a conspiracy. See Rogers (above, note 17) 106-7.

²⁷ See also: Walter Allen, Jr., "The Death of Agrippa Postumus," *TAPA* 78 (1947) 131-39.

²⁸ Liv. 7.5. H. Furneaux (above, note 1) 183, makes the following comment: "The words *robore . . . ferocem* are a close reminiscence of Liv. 7.5.6, where, as here, *ferox* means 'confident.'"

scription is suitable. Dio tells us that Agrippa was of an illiberal nature and spent most of his time fishing, whence he used to call himself Neptune. He was also of a violent temper and often spoke ill of both Livia and Augustus (*Hist.* 55.32.1). Suetonius states that under Agrippa's name a most scathing letter concerning Augustus had been circulated, and that Agrippa himself at a large dinner party had proclaimed that "neque votum sibi neque animum deesse confodiendi eum [Augustus]" (Suet. *Aug.* 51.1). When Augustus found Agrippa to be "nihilo tractabiliorem, immo in dies ameniorem" (Suet. *Aug.* 65.4), he disowned and banished him "ob ingenium sordidum ac ferox"²⁹ (Suet. *Aug.* 65.1). The passages from Livy, Suetonius, and Dio seem to explain Tacitus' very brief description of Agrippa's character and also his use of *ferox*. The word in Tacitus conveys the idea of Agrippa's insolence both with regard to his speech and to his attitude towards Augustus.

After narrating the murder of Drusus, son of Tiberius, Tacitus says that Sejanus (*Ann.* 4.12): "ferox scelorum et, quia prima provenerant, volutare secum quonam modo Germanici liberos perverteret, quorum non dubia successio." The phrase *ferox scelorum* quoted above has been understood in the sense of "emboldened by."³⁰ Such an interpretation does not seem grammatically sound,³¹ and would make the following clause repetitious in thought. Since Tacitus constantly emphasizes the treasonable designs of Sejanus,³² it seems more natural to interpret *ferox* in that sense: "traitorous in his crimes, and because the first crime (the death of Drusus) had succeeded, he considered etc." In the part of the sentence that follows the phrase *ferox scelorum* Tacitus has artfully suggested to

²⁹ Suetonius' description of Agrippa is quite similar to Livy's description of Titus Manilius both with regard to mentality, temperament, and propensity towards threats. Manilius' defiance and rebelliousness before a tribune of the Roman people is exactly parallel to Agrippa's threatening attitude towards the emperor Augustus. It is also significant that in the extant works of Suetonius we do not find the words *ferocia* and *ferociter*. *Ferox* is used but twice, once in describing Agrippa, and once in describing the younger Agrippina, see below, 259-60.

³⁰ H. Furneaux (above, note 1) Vol. 1.505.

³¹ R. Kuhner, *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache* (Hannover 1878) 2.320.

³² Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.29, 4.1, 4.7, 4.8, 4.41, 4.59, 5.8, 6.8, 6.14, 6.30, 6.47. It seems best to consider that Sejanus was conspiring directly against Tiberius. Cf. Rogers (above, note 17) 110-16. Dio Cass. 57.22.2 states that Sejanus had planned the assassination of Tiberius at the time of his son's murder.

the reader the treason of Sejanus³³ — his murder of Drusus and his similar ambition for the children of Germanicus. In this use of *ferox* no idea of outspokenness seems to be present.

In the reign of Nero the most important personage described by Tacitus to whom the word *ferocia* is twice applied is the younger Agrippina, the mother of Nero. In relating the animosity of Agrippina towards Seneca and Burrus, Tacitus remarks (*Ann.* 13.2): "Certamen utrique [Seneca and Burrus] unum erat contra ferociam Agrippinae, quae cunctis malae dominationis cupidinibus flagrans" The rest of the sentence following the use of *ferocia* explains its meaning, and in several other passages Tacitus refers to Agrippina's rebellious attitude and unwillingness to submit to the authority of the principate.³⁴ Suetonius characterizes Agrippina in the same fashion (*Suet. Nero* 28.2): "Nam matris concubitus appetisse et ab obtrectatoribus eius, ne ferox atque impotens mulier et hoc genere gratiae praevaleret, deterritum nemo dubitavit. . . ." In both Tacitus and Suetonius the words *ferocia* and *ferox* are used to describe the same characteristic — a rebellious and defiant nature aspiring to be more than a citizen.

Ferocia is applied to Agrippina in another passage by Tacitus. When Agrippina was accused of conspiracy by Burrus at the instigation of Nero Tacitus introduces the outspoken reply of Agrippina with the words: "Et Agrippina ferociae memor . . ." (*Ann.* 13.21). In the speech that follows we find an extreme example of *parrhêsia*, and this must be the force of *ferocia* in this passage. Tacitus alludes to and describes the outspokenness of Agrippina again and again.³⁵ She is often spoken of as *minax*, and once publicly declared that her son was merely dividing with her what he had received entirely from herself (*Ann.* 13.13). Under Claudius she boasted that she was herself a partner in the Empire which her ancestors had won, and at another time she threatened Claudius against inflicting capital punishment upon one of her intimates who had been accused of treason.³⁶ As in the cases of others already mentioned Tacitus seems to be here also describing the outspoken-

³³ Compare the similar method used by Tacitus in *Ann.* 2.43, 2.72, 4.21, 12.21, 13.2, 13.21, 15.68; *Hist.* 4.32.

³⁴ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.7, 12.8, 12.42, 12.57, 12.59, 12.64, 13.19.

³⁵ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.37, 12.42, 12.64, 13.5, 13.13, 13.14, 13.15.

³⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 12.42.

ness and defiant nature of a personage as if it followed in the tradition of an earlier relative, in this case the elder Agrippina.³⁷

Tacitus briefly narrates the causes for the downfall of M. Vestinus Atticus, consul in A.D. 65 (*Ann.* 15.68): "ille [Nero] ferociam amici [Vestinus] metuit, saepe asperis facetiis inlusus, quae ubi multum ex vero traxere, acrem sui memoriam relinquunt." Little explanation is necessary to show that in this passage *ferocia*, as explained in the following phrase by Tacitus, has the meaning of *parrhêsia*.³⁸ In such a passage as this one, however, it is difficult to separate the two forces of *ferocia* — boldness of speech and open rebelliousness. The boldness and insolence of Vestinus' speech was the form that his political rebelliousness took.

A similar situation is true for a passage in the *Histories*. Tacitus makes the following comment on the soldiers of the fourteenth legion who while fighting on the side of Otho had been defeated by the forces of Vitellius (*Hist.* 2.66): ". . . [defeated legions] hostilia loquebantur, praecipua quartadecimanorum ferocia, qui se victos abnuebant." These same soldiers later did cause considerable trouble, and the adjective *seditionosissimus* is applied to them.

Triaria, the wife of Lucius Vitellius, who had actively aided her husband in the revolution of his brother,³⁹ the emperor Vitellius, is styled as *ultra feminam ferox* (*Hist.* 2.63) by Tacitus upon relating how she had terrified Flavius Sabinus into causing the death of a senator. Tacitus in speaking later of the same incident mentions her *licentia* (*Hist.* 2.64). The word *licentia* seems to describe the same quality in Triaria as the expression *ultra feminam ferox*. Gerber and Greef rightly note this fact, and equate *licentia* with *ferocia* in this particular passage.⁴⁰ In the *Dialogue* (40.5) *licentia* is described as the habit of outspoken speech, and as the *comes seditionum, sine obsequio, contumax, temeraria*.

We are also told what *licentia* amounts to in the case of such a woman as Triaria in the reported speech of Severus Caecina before the senate (*Ann.* 3.33):

³⁷ Cf. the speech of the elder Agrippina to Tiberius, *Ann.* 4.52, where she recalls the greatness of her ancestors, and accuses Tiberius of trying to destroy her by destroying her friends.

³⁸ H. Furneaux (above, note 1) Vol. 2.406. Furneaux simply notes that *ferocia* is in this passage like *parrhêsia*, and refers to his note quoted at the beginning of this paper.

³⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 3.77.

⁴⁰ A. Gerber and A. Greef, *Lexicon Taciteum* (Leipzig 1903) 773.

Non imbecillum tantum et imparem laboribus sexum sed, si licentia adsit, saevum, ambitiosum, potestatis avidum; incedere inter milites, habere ad manum centuriones. . . .

Such a description fits exactly in the cases of the elder Agrippina and Triaria, both of whom are styled as *feroces*.

After the defeat of the forces of Vitellius at the battle of Cremona, a certain Alpinus Montanus, who had fought with Vitellius, was sent into Germany to report the victory of Vespasian's forces (*Hist.* 3.35, 4.31). As part of his duty he carried a message to the rebellious Civilis to the effect that Civilis was to lay down his arms. Tacitus continues (*Hist.* 4.32): "post ubi videt [Civilis] Montanum praeferocem ingenio paratumque in res novas. . . ." Tacitus tells us that Civilis succeeded in firing Montanus' ambitions. When he is next mentioned by Tacitus we find that he has deserted the Roman cause, and is fighting under Civilis (*Hist.* 5.19). The use of *praeferox* in the above quoted passage clearly refers to Montanus' rebellious and disloyal nature, but apparently not to any outspokenness.

We have seen that the word *ferocia* or one of its cognates with the bad force of the Greek *parrhêsia* is often used by Tacitus in his historical works to describe the outspoken conduct of certain political personages towards the emperor. *Ferocia* also very often denotes political rebelliousness or active opposition to the *princeps*. Sometimes both these ideas are present in Tacitus' use of the word. *Ferocia*, however, generally refers to rebellious actions, and thus in a derived sense to insolence of speech, since such insolence of expression is clearly a form of political rebelliousness. Seneca, in fact, states that abusive speech usually disturbs a king more than injuries (*Sen. Clem.* 1.10.3). It is also interesting to note that in the case of certain recalcitrant personages Tacitus seems to indicate that they acted in the tradition of an earlier member of their family. In other cases Tacitus emphasizes their *nobilitas*.

The word chosen by Tacitus to express political defiance would tend to show the author's disapproval of such conduct. *Ferocia* is otherwise used by Tacitus to describe the savage tribe, the defiant youth, the reckless bravery of the soldier, or the insolence of a public enemy.