

ABDUCTA NERONI UXOR: THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION ON THE MARRIAGE OF OCTAVIAN AND LIVIA

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In the *Annales*, Tacitus presents a version of the marriage of Octavian and Livia that conflicts with virtually all other sources. In two very brief references (1.10.5; 12.6.2), Tacitus stresses only one fact: the forcible removal of Livia from her first husband. In a longer account in the obituary of Livia (5.1.2), Tacitus includes more details, but he also reinforces the same point—Octavian stole Livia from her husband. Velleius Paterculus, Cassius Dio, Pliny the Elder, and one report in Suetonius, however, state that Tiberius Nero, Livia's first husband, willingly divorced his wife to give her in marriage to Octavian. Suetonius, in a second account, writes that Octavian stole Tiberius Nero's wife and thus contradicts himself. Yet Suetonius' contradictory statements also suggest the existence of two versions, the more widespread and accepted one, which scholars today generally believe, and an opposite version found only in Tacitus and one passage of Suetonius.¹

It is the purpose of this paper to propose a source for this hostile version. I hope to show its origins in propaganda of Antony, which itself drew on the historiographical tradition of the tyrant as a type. While scholars reject this hostile version as fiction, it could, even though false, have its roots in a

¹ The sources on the relationship between Tiberius Nero and Octavian are: Tac. *Ann.* 1.10.5: "abducta Neroni uxor"; 5.1.2: "exim Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito"; 12.6.2: "audivisse a parentibus, vidisse ipsos abripi coniuges ad libita Caesarum"; Vell. Pat. 2.79.2: "Caesar, cum prius despondente ei Nerone (cui ante nupta fuerat) Liviam auspicatis rei publicae ominibus duxisset eam uxorem"; 2.94.1: "Liviam, Drusi Claudiani filia, despondente Ti. Nerone (cui ante nupta fuerat) Caesari nupsit"; Cass. Dio 48.44.3: ἐξέδωκε δὲ αὐτὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὥσπερ τις πατήρ; Suet., *Aug.* 62.2: "ac statim Liviam Drusillam matrimonio Tiberi Neronis et quidem praegnantem abduxit"; Suet., *Tib.* 4.3: "uxoremque Liviam Drusillam et tunc gravidam et ante iam apud se filium enixam petenti Augusto concessit." One-sided and unreliable is Pliny *NH* 7.150 (illustrating Augustus' bad fortune): "in summa deus ille (i.e., Augustus) caelumque nescio adeptus magis an meritis herede hostis sui filio excessit." It is possible to interpret *hostis*, as does R. Schilling, *Histoire naturelle* 7 (Paris 1977) 214, as a reference to the public opposition of Tiberius Nero and Octavian during Perusia and its aftermath. See there too Schilling's analysis of Pliny's bias. Equally rhetorical is Aur. Vict., *Epit. de Caes.* 1.23: "abiecta quoque uxore Scribonia amore alienae coniugis possessus Liviam, quasi marito concedente sibi coniunxit."

contemporary hostile interpretation. Many years ago Charlesworth argued that propaganda of Antony during the triumviral period was the general source for *Annales* 1.10, in which the first reference to the marriage occurs.² While accusations of “wife-snatching” were common charges levelled against the tyrannical leader in the historiographical tradition, Antony could have maliciously twisted a real event—the marriage banquet of Octavian and Livia—to represent Octavian as stealing Tiberius Nero’s wife. Accusations of sexual misconduct were a prominent feature of the propaganda war between Antony and Octavian. A tongue-in-cheek *imitatio* of this banquet by Caligula, which Suetonius reports without recognizing the emperor’s parody (*Cal.* 25.1), supports my interpretation of the banquet. We need first to turn to the historical background to the marriage of Livia and Octavian and then to an analysis of the positive tradition and the hostile version.

Livia was married to Tiberius Claudius Nero, by whom she was pregnant with her second child, Drusus, when she met Octavian in Rome. Tiberius Nero, who had proposed rewards for Caesar’s assassins, had seen his name go up on the proscription lists, had fought along with Lucius Antonius at Perusia, and shortly after its fall attempted to mobilize an army of slaves in Campania. At Octavian’s approach, however, he fled to Sicily where Sextus Pompey, now having drawn closer to Octavian through Octavian’s marriage to Scribonia, the sister of his father-in-law, Lucius Scribonius Libo, did not offer Tiberius Nero the respect he expected. Insulted by Pompey’s slowness in receiving him and subsequent refusal to allow him to display the *fascēs*, Tiberius Nero sailed on to Greece and sought the protection of Mark Antony. One result of the pact at Misenum in 39 B.C. was amnesty for and the return home of exiles like Tiberius Nero. In the late summer or early fall of that year he came back to Rome with Livia and his young son Tiberius, both of whom had shared his temporary exile.³ Cassius Dio (48.34.3) writes that Octavian fell in love with Livia around the time of his “*depositio barbae*,” which he celebrated with lavish private and public festivities, perhaps at the time of his birthday in September.⁴

² M. P. Charlesworth, “Some Fragments of the Propaganda of Mark Antony,” *CQ* 27 (1933) 177.

³ Suet. *Tib.* 4; Vell. Pat. 2.75, 2.77; Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.1, 6.51.1; Cass. Dio 48.15.3, 54.7.2. Other sources on Tiberius Claudius Nero in *RE* 3 (1899) 2777–78, s.v. “Claudius” 254 (Münzer). On the date of the treaty of Misenum in the early summer of 39, E. Gabba, ed., *Appian: Bellorum Civilium Liber V* (Florence 1970) 118–19.

⁴ Octavian had allowed his beard to grow as a sign of mourning for his father. Cassius Dio says that Octavian continued clean-shaven, but coins as late as 36 B.C. show a bearded Octavian. On this see M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge 1974) 866, s.v. “Octavian,” and nos. 534.3 (38 B.C.), 538.1 (37 B.C.), 540.1 (36 B.C.). The coins, of course, may not reflect reality just as much as Cassius Dio may be in error. J. Carcopino, *Passion et Politique chez les Césars* (Paris 1958) 71, plausibly suggests that Octavian’s birthday on September 23 may have been connected with Octavian’s evidently long postponed “*depositio barbae*” (a term used for convenience in handbooks but not found in ancient literature). Evidence on this custom as a sign of the passage to manhood

Octavian's political marriage to Scribonia dissolved in the fall of 39, not only because of his ardor for Livia but because of fresh irritations between him and Sextus Pompey.⁵ The divorce, on the day Scribonia gave birth to their daughter Julia (Cass. Dio 48.34.3), signaled the end of what Tarn aptly labelled a "hollow pact" between Octavian and Pompey.⁶

There is no reason to doubt that Octavian had fallen in love, a fact Cassius Dio (48.34.3) gives as the reason for the divorce from Scribonia: ἡδὴ γὰρ καὶ τῆς Λιουίας ἐρᾶν ἤρχετο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν Σκριβωνίαν τεκοῦσαν οἱ θυγάτριον ἀπεπέμψατο αὐθημερόν, but considerable political advantage also came to Octavian through the marriage, for Livia's lineage was, as Tacitus summarized in her obituary, illustrious (*Ann.* 5.1: "nobilitatis...clarissimae"; cf. Vell. Pat. 2.75.3). Her father had been born into the Claudii Pulchri and adopted by the Livii Drusi. In the period following the pact of Misenum and as a result of the amnesty, Octavian had an opportunity to gain new allies among the ancient nobility and municipal aristocracy. His marriage to Livia shows he was beginning, as Carter has written, "to attract to his side some of the Republican nobility."⁷ Both Antony (Suet. *Aug.* 69.1) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 5.1.2) attack the haste of his marriage, which Tacitus malignly interprets as proof of uncontrollable passion: "exim Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito, incertum an invitam, adeo properus ut ne spatio quidem ad enitendum dato penatibus suis gravidam induxerit." Antony clearly used the charge not only to suggest an already established and adulterous relationship but to cast a shadow over the paternity of Drusus. Suetonius quotes the following as an example of *adulteria*: "M. Antonius super festinatas Liviae nuptias obiecit" (*Aug.* 69.1). Velleius Paterculus (2.79.2) describes the marriage as taking place on the eve of the war with Pompey. In other words, Octavian was already making plans for the war when he momentarily interrupted them to marry. Neither love nor sexual passion, however, adequately explains the speed of Octavian's marriage to a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy with whom, if we believe some of our sources (e.g., Cass. Dio 48.34.3; cf. 54.16.6), he was already carrying on an affair. His desire to celebrate the marriage before the birth of Livia's son suggests he stood to gain practical advantages from it on the eve of an

in private and especially the Imperial household in J. Marquardt and A. Mau, *Das Privatleben der Römer* (2nd ed., Leipzig 1886) 599–600; H. Blümner, *Die römischen Privataltertümer* (3rd. ed., Munich 1911) 269–70.

⁵ On the political nature of Octavian's marriage with Scribonia, App. *BCiv.* 5.53; Cass. Dio 48.16.3. Sources on Scribonia in *RE* N.R. 2 (1921) 891–92 s.v. "Scribonius" 32. See too E. F. Leon, "Scribonia and Her Daughters," *TAPA* 82 (1951) 168–75; B. Levick, "Julians and Claudians," *G&R* 22 (1975) 29–38.

⁶ *CAH*, 10. 56. See J. M. Carter, *Suetonius: Divus Augustus* (Bristol 1982) 182–83 for discussion.

⁷ On the political advantages to Octavian from the marriage, R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 229; B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (London 1976) 15; and esp. the astute summary by Carter (above, note 6) 182–83. On Livia's family background, *RE* 13 (1926) 881–84, s.v. "Livius" 19 (Münzer); J. Linderski, "The Mother of Livia Augusta and the Aufidii Lurcones of the Republic," *Historia* 23 (1974) 463–80.

unpopular war. Only this can explain the haste which he knew would inevitably lead to scandal about the unborn child and his prior relationship with Livia.

Not surprisingly, Tiberius Nero's role in the marriage occupies an important place in the historiographical tradition, for his behavior as well as that of Octavian generated gossip. Suetonius and Pliny the Elder allude to the willingness of Tiberius Nero, while Cassius Dio and Velleius Paterculus emphasize and even focus on the active and eager role of Tiberius Nero in the marriage. In his biography of Tiberius Suetonius writes: "uxorem...petenti Augusto concessit" (4.3). This account honors the memory of Tiberius' father by stressing the civilized nature of the arrangement, as Augustus petitioned Livia's husband and won a gracious concession. Velleius Paterculus also emphasizes the ex-husband's obliging role when he writes that Tiberius Nero betrothed Livia to Octavian: "Caesar, cum prius despondente ei Nerone (cui ante nupta fuerat) Liviam auspicatis rei publicae omnibus duxisset eam uxorem" (2.79.2). This statement, in the narrative about the triumviral period, is repeated almost word for word at the beginning of the section on the life and career of the emperor Tiberius: "Livia, Drusi Claudiani filia, despondente Ti. Nerone (cui ante nupta fuerat), Caesari nupserat" (2.94.1).⁸ Cassius Dio, finally, writes that Tiberius Nero gave his wife away in marriage and thus played the role of her now deceased father: ἐξέδωκε δὲ αὐτὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὥσπερ τις πατήρ (48.44.3). Cassius Dio's account is the longest, and he exploits these events for their humor by repeating an anecdote about a slave boy's confusion over which man was Livia's husband. These accounts, none of which is contemporary with the marriage, present a favorable picture of cordial relations between new husband and old. This favorable picture may be intended to counteract the persistent idea, reflected in the passages in Tacitus and Suetonius to which we will shortly turn, that Octavian compelled Tiberius Nero to give up his wife. The repetition in Velleius Paterculus, clearly an "official" version, perhaps even dependent on Augustus' own memoirs, shows the emperor Tiberius' interest in clarifying events surrounding the marriage of his mother and stepfather and in honoring the memory of his father.

It is interesting to note in these sources the quasi-technical language of betrothal and marriage, which represents the remarriage of a divorced woman in terms more appropriate for the wedding of a *filia familias*. *Despondere*, for example, is the regular term used of the betrothal of a daughter by her father. Pliny, in an anecdote about Livia at the time of her marriage (*NH*. 15.136), dates a famous omen to the period when she had been "pledged" ("cum illa pacta esset") by her first husband to Octavian. In his account of the marriage Cassius Dio (48.44.3) uses the verb ἐκδίδωμι, regularly used of the consent of the father to the marriage of the daughter, and comments that Tiberius Nero was indeed playing the part usually taken by the father. The language seems carefully chosen to stress the legal role of Tiberius Nero in the marriage.

⁸ See A. J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative* (2.94–131) (Cambridge 1977) 97, for the appropriateness of the repetition at the beginning of a sketch of Tiberius' life

Classical Roman law defined the legal position of the wife *in manu* by the formula "loco filiae mariti est." While free marriages had become the rule by the middle of the Republican period, *manus* marriages, as the *laudatio Turiae* shows, were still not wholly exceptional. An old-fashioned and older aristocrat like Tiberius Nero might well have preferred the more conservative form of marriage. It is the tentative conclusion of legal scholars that at this period a wife *in manu* could not initiate a divorce.⁹ If so, then Octavian had to have Tiberius Nero's agreement to a divorce because Livia could not begin such proceedings herself. The sentence in Suetonius—"uxorem...petenti Augusto concessit" (*Tib* 4.3), whatever favorable impression it wants to give of either Augustus or Tiberius Nero—could support the idea that Tiberius Nero's permission was legally necessary. Tiberius Nero's legal pledge of Livia (*Vell. Pat.* 2.79.2, 2.94.1; *Plin. NH* 15.136) may have been the necessary public demonstration of the dissolution of the first husband's *manus*.

Not surprisingly the jurists do not treat the unusual marital situation here. In classical Roman law a woman *in manu*, as jurists have reconstructed the situation, was manumitted by *remancipatio* to her earlier *pater familias* or a *tutor*. Now *sui iuris*, she would need only her *tutor's* passive acquiescence to a new marriage.¹⁰ Without any necessity for the active participation of a *tutor*, the marriage could have swiftly followed. Tiberius Nero's presence at the marriage banquet would then have been a sentimental gesture (unless the betrothal and marriage were, as could happen, all but simultaneous). Tiberius Nero would have been making this gesture not merely toward Octavian but to Livia, who we know had lost her father and presumably had no other available male relative to represent her at her wedding. Her ex-husband was of her family circle and so took the father's part. The emphasis in these sources on the ex-husband's active role also, of course, suggests the efforts of new husband and old to make clear to the Roman public their friendly relationship.¹¹

Tiberius Nero's complaisance in relinquishing his wife "would be incredible," writes B. Levick, "if it had not had a political motive."¹² Levick argues that he was an adherent of Antony, who saw a political advantage to himself in the divorce of Octavian and Scribonia and the consequent weakening of the alliance between Octavian and Sextus Pompey, to whom Octavian had moved closer in 40 B.C. by marrying Scribonia. Tiberius Nero's ill-will toward

⁹ P. E. Corbett, *The Roman Law of Marriage* (Oxford 1930) 108–12; A. Watson, *The Law of Persons in the Later Roman Republic* (Oxford 1967) 48–54; F. Schultz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford 1951) 117, 135; F. De Zulueta, *The Institutes of Gaius* (Oxford 1967–69) 2.38. See too M. McDonnell, "Divorce Initiated by Women," *AJAH* 8 (1983) 54–80.

¹⁰ R. M. Ogilvie, "The Maid of Ardea," *Latomus* 21 (1962) 477–83; Corbett (above, note 9) 218–28.

¹¹ Cassius Dio (48.44.5) records that Octavian sent Drusus to live with his father. While this action established the child's paternity by giving him to the man in whose *patria potestas* he was, it also speaks to friendly ties. Tiberius Nero in turn named Octavian the *tutor* to his two sons in his will. On these gestures, F. Blumenthal, "Die Autobiographie des Augustus," *WS* (1913) 285.

¹² *Tiberius the Politician* (London 1976) 15.

Pompey was plain. Yet Tiberius Nero, like other proscribed men who had returned to Rome, owed a debt of gratitude to Octavian as well as to Antony, and Octavian was present in Rome. Indeed, Tiberius Nero was in a position to satisfy the desires of both men, for the divorce suited Antony's political purposes and Octavian's personal wishes. Thanks to a calendar discovered at Verulae in 1922, we now know that Octavian and Livia celebrated their marriage on January 17 in 38 B.C.¹³

Tacitus' comments on the marriage focus on the use of force. In all three he mentions Augustus' coercion of Tiberius Nero. The first of these references occurs in chapter 10 of Book 1 where Tacitus summarizes gossip about Augustus' life: "nec domesticis abstinebatur." This pithy sentence serves as the topic sentence for a list of criticisms which begins "abducta Neroni uxor." The verb *abducere*, found only here in the *Annales*, is also the verb in Suetonius' quotation of a charge made by Antony against Octavian: "obiecit... feminam consularum...in cubiculum abductam" (*Aug.* 69.1) and in Suetonius' narrative of Augustus' marriages: "ac statim Liviam Drusillam matrimonio Tiberi Neronis et quidem praegnantem abduxit" (62.2). The verb occurs in others of Suetonius' *Lives* to indicate an Imperial tendency to wife-stealing.¹⁴ In a second reference at 5.1 Tacitus writes: "exim Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito." He uses the verb *aufferre* once again in 15.59.5 of another notable example of wife-stealing. In the third passage (12.6.2), a double reference to Caligula and Augustus, the verb is *abripere*, used only twice more in the *Annales*, of acts of brutality and violence.¹⁵

The origin of the phrase "abducta Neroni uxor" in *Ann.* 1.10.5 is the gossip of the populace, which associates Augustus with the tradition of the tyrant who steals other men's wives. While this might be an expected negative criticism of the marriage of an emperor, if we look at the rest of the sentence, we can see that all the other charges also fit the portrait of a tyrant: "et consulti

¹³ On the discovery, C. S. Scaratoni, *NSc* (1923) 194–201; G. Radke, *RE* N.R. 8A2 (1958) 1688, s.v. "Verulae." The chronology of the marriage has been the subject of considerable controversy. A passage in Suetonius (*Claud.* 11.3, cf. Cass. Dio 60.5.1) shows that the birthday of Claudius' father Drusus was the same as that of his maternal grandfather Marc Antony, marked in the calendar as January 14, i.e., three days before the marriage of Livia and Octavian. Our literary sources (e.g., Suet. *Aug.* 62.2; *Tib.* 4.3; *Claud.* 1.1; Vell. Pat. 2.95.1; Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.2) state that Octavian married Livia when she was pregnant. Two scholars have argued for a betrothal followed by a marriage after the birth. See J. Carcopino, "Le mariage d'Octave et de Livie et la naissance de Drusus," *RHist* 161 (1929) 225–36; W. Suerbaum, "Merkwürdige Geburtstage. Der nichtexistierende Geburtstag des M. Antonius, der doppelte Geburtstag des Augustus, der neue Geburtstag der Livia und der vorzeitige Geburtstag des älteren Drusus," *Chiron* 10 (1980) 348–49. In my opinion Radke has solved this problem by arguing for a different date for Drusus' birth in the Julian calendar. See G. Radke, "Der Geburtstag des älteren Drusus," *WürrJhb* 4 (1978) 211–13.

¹⁴ *Cal.* 24.1; *Oth.* 3.1; *Domit.* 10.2. On its regular use to mean the rape of women, *TLL* 61, 5–15. In the *Hist.*, *abducere* (5 instances) is used only as a military term.

¹⁵ See 14.8.2 and 15.45.2.

per ludibrium pontifices an concepto necdum edito partu rite nuberet; †que tedii et† Vedii Pollionis luxus; postremo Livia gravis in rem publicam mater, gravis domui Caesarum noverca.” This sentence with its apparently insoluble crux has always caused puzzlement for its choice of illustrative examples of the rubric *domestica*. How, for example, does Vedius Pollio fit into the family circle where *domestica* clearly puts him? Why does Tacitus choose to focus on Octavian’s marriage to Livia as an example of sexual misconduct when more volatile ammunition lay to hand? Goodyear comments: “It is rather odd that the misconduct of Vedius Pollio should be included amongst the *domestica* of Augustus, but such is one apparent implication of this curiously constructed sentence. It is also a little surprising that the misconduct of the two Julias, which does belong properly amongst *domestica*, is not here mentioned directly.”¹⁶ But these problems dissolve once we see that the sentence illustrates how Augustus’ behavior was tyrannical.

The tyrant was notorious for his scorn of the gods and religious proprieties, just as Augustus’ consultation with the *pontifices* is a *ludibrium*. Vedius Pollio, whose house on the Esquiline Augustus inherited but tore down to disassociate his name from that of an infamous profligate, illustrates the idea of *luxus*, which, the equivalent of τρυφή, is, according to Aristotle (*Pol.* 1311a 11), a characteristic feature of the tyrant’s life and court.¹⁷ Since Augustus made parsimony and frugality bywords of his personal life, and Suetonius completely exonerates him from any interest in luxurious living (*Aug.* 71.1: “facillime refutavit...lautitiarum invidiam”), Tacitus must condemn him for this moral lapse through his friendship with Vedius, misrepresented as more intimate than

¹⁶ F. D. R. Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus*, I (Cambridge 1972) 163. For a summary of the possible solutions to the identity of the person whose name should be connected with Vedius Pollio’s, see Goodyear 163–65. Tacitus shows keen interest elsewhere in the *Ann.* in the Julias: 1.53.1–3; 3.24.2. Augustus’ own life was not free from accusations of adultery. See Cass. Dio 54.16.3; 58.2.5; and on a supposed affair with Maecenas’ wife, Suet. *Aug.* 69.2; Cass. Dio 54.19.3, 54.19.6, 55.7.5; *Eleg. in Maec.* 2.7–8. Suet. (*Aug.* 71.1) exonerates him of charges (68) of homosexuality but states in references to charges of adultery made in chapter 69: “circa libidines haesit.”

¹⁷ Athenaeus devotes a whole book (12) to the subject of “those who were notorious because of their over-indulgence” (περὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τρυφῇ διαβοήτων γενομένων, 510b), many of them tyrants or tyrannical people. The size of his collection of examples, heavily drawn from Hellenistic historiography, shows how stock a theme τρυφή had become in any discussion of tyrants. Many examples show a characteristic sequence of behavior associated with Greek epic and drama: τρυφή leads to ὕβρις which leads to ἄτη. Discussion in A. Passerini, “La τρυφή nella storiografia ellenistica,” *SIFC* 11 (1934) 35–56; C. Venturini, “Luxus’ et ‘Avaritia’ nell’ Opera di Sallustio,” *Athenaeum* 57 (1979) 277–92. Most of the 37 examples in the *Ann.* refer to the emperors, members of the court, and Oriental kings. Tacitus’ interest in it arises in part from its contrast with *modestia*, a key theme. On this, U. Zucarelli, *Psicologica e Semantica de Tacito* (2nd ed., Brescia 1975) 101–65.

it was.¹⁸ The statement about Livia's character again recalls Aristotle, who states that "because of the arrogance of women tyrannies have often fallen from power" (*Pol.* 1314b 23). Aristotle's remarks suggest the power of women in a tyrant's household, their rivalry and its effect on a political regime. Livia's hostility to the *domus Caesarum* reflects these ideas.¹⁹ Finally, the chapter concludes with Augustus' desire for divine honors in his own lifetime and his jealousy of Tiberius as a rival, both themes connected with the stereotypic tyrant.²⁰

On two other occasions when Tacitus refers to the marriage of Livia and Octavian, the context once again associates the marriage with tyrannical *vis*, and the gossip reported at 1.10 has become accepted historical fact. In his obituary on Livia (5.1.2) Tacitus writes: "exim Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito, incertum an invitam, adeo properus ut ne spatio quidem ad enitendum dato penetibus suis gravidam induxerit." Not only does Tacitus repeat the idea of the forcible removal of wife from husband, but he also includes details which, although perfectly true, are nonetheless closely associated with the behavior of tyrants.

The beauty of the girl who kindles the tyrant's lust is, naturally, a characteristic feature of accounts about tyrants. In Livy's story about Lucretia (1.57.10), for example, her beauty as well as her chastity excite Tarquinius ("cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat"), and Verginia attracts the decemvir's notice because she is "forma excellentem" (3.44.4). The same stock motive

¹⁸ Suetonius gives many examples of Augustus' modest tastes and simple life (*Aug.* 72–73). On the notorious Vedius Pollio, whose name became a byword for extravagance, *Sen. Clem.* 1.18.1–2; *De Ira* 3.40.1–4; *Pliny NH* 9.77; *Ovid Fasti.* 6.639–48. *Cass. Dio* (54.23.1–6) denies Vedius any political significance and suggests that the friendship between Vedius and Augustus cooled. On Dio's account, see B. Manuwald, "Cassius Dio und des 'Totengericht' über Augustus bei Tacitus," *Hermes* 101 (1973) 364–65, note 30. H. Tränkle ["Augustus bei Tacitus, Cassius Dio und dem älteren Plinius," *WS* 3 (1969) 127–29] thinks Dio omitted Vedius' full history to cast Augustus in a more favorable light while Manuwald thinks Dio knew nothing of his political significance. On his political career, *Tac. Ann.* 12.60.4 and R. Syme, "Who was Vedius Pollio?" *JRS* 51 (1961) 23–30. On Augustus' deliberate destruction of his house to make a statement against Vedius' style of life, M. B. Flory, "'sic Exempla Parantur': Livia's Shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae," *Historia* 33 (1984) 309–30.

¹⁹ On the portrait of women in the *Annales*, see, e.g., E. Paratore, "La figura di Agrippina minore in Tacito," *Maia* 5 (1952) 32–81; B. Baldwin, "Women in Tacitus," *Prudentia* 4 (1972) 83–101. On "aemulatio feminarum" (*Ann.* 4.40.3) see, e.g., 2.43.4, 12.2.2, 12.64.3, 12.69.3, 13.13.1, 13.19.4. Livia was more than just an *exemplum* for Agrippina. The analogous case of their sons as heirs to the throne of their stepfathers caused Agrippina to emphasize Livia to an extraordinary degree in her own dynastic propaganda. See *Cass. Dio* 61.33.12.

²⁰ See *Arist. Oec.* 2.1353 b; *Diod.* 8.30.1. Evidence collected by L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown, 1931) 270–283. Also, by the same author, "The Worship of Augustus in Italy during his Lifetime," *TAPA* 51 (1920) 116–33. On the tyrant's jealousy of rivals, B. Walker, *The Annals of Tacitus* (Manchester 1952) 207–8.

appears in Cicero's portrayal of Verres but with a rhetorical twist, for Verres, merely hearing that the daughter of Philodamus was "particularly beautiful" (2.1.25.64) instantly wants to have sexual intercourse with her. But in Suetonius' portrait of Caligula the motif reaches its most absurd extreme, for hearing that the grandmother of Lollia Paulina was a beautiful woman, Caligula instantly summons the granddaughter (*Calig.* 25.2).

It is also symbolic of the libido and loss of self-control of tyrants that they demand instant gratification for their lust. Cicero emphasizes the immediacy ("statim") of Verres' desire, and this trait fits the capricious Caligula, who suddenly ("subito") demands the return of another man's wife to Rome so that he can marry her (*Calig.* 25.2). In Tacitus' account Octavian, fired by his passion for Livia's beauty ("cupidine formae"), acts with indecent haste ("adeo properus ut..."). Livia's beauty is verifiable from her portrait statues,²¹ and the hastiness of the marriage is fact too, but Tacitus has brilliantly focused on details which fit so familiar a character of Roman rhetoric and historiography that they unerringly guide the reader to compare Augustus with a tyrant.

On the final occasion when Tacitus refers to the marriage of Livia and Octavian, the model of the tyrant is obvious, and Augustus has become an *exemplum* of uncontrolled lust. In book 12 Vitellius makes a speech before the Senate to encourage support for the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina, uncle and niece. Vitellius contrasts Claudius' *modestia*, a word used here with great irony by Tacitus, with the behavior of two of his predecessors. Vitellius says that the senators had heard from their parents or had been eyewitnesses themselves to the rape of other mens' wives by their rulers: "audivisse a parentibus, vidisse ipsos abripi coniuges ad libita Caesarum" (12.6.2). The first part of the sentence refers to Augustus, the second to Caligula. *Libita* and *abriperere* recall the stereotypical tyrannical characteristics of lust and *vis*.²²

Although the portions of the *Annales* dealing with Caligula are lost, several references in the surviving books show that Tacitus probably represented Caligula as a man of abnormal and excessive sexual appetites, whose tyrannical nature led to violence even against married women (6.9.2; 15.72.2; 12.22.2; cf. 6.5.1). The reference to Caligula in Vitellius' speech must in fact reflect

²¹ See, for example, H. W. Gross, *Iulia Augusta* (Göttingen 1962) pl. 15. Cf. Vell. Pat. 2.75.3; Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.117-18.

²² *Libita* suggests the more usual word *libido*. On this term, J. R. Dunkle, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus," *CW* 65 (1971-72) 12-20 and also his article "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the late Republic," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 151-71. *Libita* is used only two other times in the *Ann.*, once of the slaves who procure boys for Tiberius and sexually abuse them (6.1.2) and of Agrippina's surrender, for reasons of ambition, to Pallas' lust (14.2.2). *Abripio* is found just two other times in the *Ann.*: at 14.8.2 to describe the violence of Anicetus as he drags away the slaves who guard Agrippina and at 15.45.2 to describe the pillaging of sacred statues from temples. The charge of sexual aggression or rape against women or boys was, of course, one of the most characteristic accusations against the tyrant, beginning with Herodotus' famous statement at 3.80. Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1314 b 231ff.

Tacitus' presentation of Caligula in the prior books of the *Annales*. This portrait of Caligula can be corroborated from Suetonius (*Calig.* 24; 25.1–2) and Cassius Dio (59.3.3; 59.8.7; 59.12.1). The connection between Augustus and Caligula is damning to Augustus, whose behavior can now be seen as a characteristic pattern comparable to the notorious sexual incontinence of his great-grandson. Tacitus encourages the idea of the 'bad seed,' for he constantly reminds his readers of the family relationships that tied one generation of Julio-Claudians to another.

Tacitus' portrait of Octavian's marriage was built on a rhetorical and historiographical tradition of the tyrant as a type, but Tacitus could also have been influenced toward this view by surviving propaganda of Antony. Tacitus mentions letters of Antony (4.34.5), which we know survived because Suetonius quotes directly from them. The hostile view of Octavian's marriage may well have had an actual as well as rhetorical source. Tacitus' adaptation of the facts of Octavian's marriage to the model of the tyrant is forced enough to suggest that it requires more explanation than Tacitus' hostility. The presence of two contradictory versions in Suetonius (*Aug.* 62.2; *Tib.* 4.3) argues for the existence of a hostile tradition. Suetonius presents the facts far more briefly than Tacitus but also emphasizes the haste of the marriage ("statim") and uses a verb ("abducere") also used by Tacitus. We know that Antony attacked Octavian's marriage to Livia in letters written before Actium, and Suetonius used these letters in his life of Augustus. What follows is a hypothesis of a source in Antony's propaganda based on important but underutilized sources in Suetonius.

In his life of Augustus Suetonius (*Aug.* 69.1) reports a charge made by Antony that Octavian had raped another man's wife at a dinner party: "Liviae nuptias obiecit et feminam consularem e triclinio viri coram in cubiculum abductam, rursus in convivium rubentibus auriculis incomptiore capillo reductam." Carcopino, whose hypothesis was accepted by Scott, suggested that the unidentified woman was Livia and the *convivium* was a celebratory party connected with the marriage.²³ Both Scott and Carcopino call it, in fact, a 'betrothal' party. Suerbaum, however, has raised objections to Carcopino and Scott. He argues that the "et" seems to connect two separate incidents and therefore two separate women and that neither Livia's husband nor father reached consular rank.²⁴ Neither objection seems conclusive. The "et" could as easily separate a general reference to the marriage from a specific charge. Suetonius may be summarizing several propaganda attacks made by Antony over a period of time. Since Antony wanted to malign Octavian, it also suited his purposes to create two separate incidents out of a single event. And if, as I will argue, the banquet was the innocuous if bawdy marriage celebration of Livia and Octavian, Antony had reason to refer to the event in vague terms, since Octavian was not acting illegally. In the case of the second objection Suetonius could well be making the same type of careless assumption he does about Scribonia, whom

²³ Carcopino (above, note 4) 74; K. Scott, "The Political Propaganda of 44–30 B.C.," *MAAR* 11 (1933) 39–40.

²⁴ See above note 13, 339 note 30.

he describes as married to two men of consular rank before her marriage to Octavian: "nuptam ante duobus consularibus" (*Aug.* 62.2). In fact one of Scribonia's husbands, Cornelius Scipio, did not reach consular rank until some years after the divorce. Antony himself might have used "feminam consularem" as rhetorical heightening. Antony too may well have distorted the woman's identity to conceal, for purposes of propaganda, that the occasion was Livia's marriage banquet.

I believe that Carcopino and Scott had an important insight into how Antony used the marriage banquet to create propaganda. I also believe that Antony deliberately suppressed Livia's identity in order to suggest that Octavian had on whim stolen another man's wife at a dinner party and dragged her off into a nearby bedroom to have sexual intercourse with her. The wording of Antony's attack calls to mind a tyrant, the stock character of rhetoric and historiography, whose lust drives him to exercise his *vis* against married women or freeborn virgins. But neither Carcopino nor Scott has tried to explain what is happening here. If the woman is Livia, then the apparent and grotesque conclusion is that Octavian rushed into the bedroom with Livia during a celebration connected with his marriage, while her ex-husband and guests continued to dine. The verb *abductam* does not make sense in that context. But I think we can plausibly explain this *convivium* by connecting it with a notorious *cena* δωδεκάθεος described by Suetonius. While Scott suggests both the *convivium* and the *cena* refer to the marriage of Livia and Octavian, he has not attempted to interpret the events described in Antony's propaganda attack in terms of the *cena*. The "abduction" of Livia from her husband is intelligible only in the context of a comic burlesque performed during the *cena*.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 70.1), who provides our only evidence about the *cena*, uses as his sources public gossip, letters written by Antony, and an anonymous six-line lampoon, which he quotes and which probably originated among Antony's partisans. While we cannot pinpoint the specific date of the *cena*, Suetonius does tell us that it occurred while there were problems with the corn supply in Rome: "summa tunc in civitate penuria ac fames" (70.2). According to Appian (5.67–68) there was a serious famine in Rome in 40 B.C., and a second and similar famine shortly after the treaty of Misenum in 39 B.C., which had promised an alleviation to scarcity. On both occasions the Romans took to the streets in protest. We do not have any conclusive evidence to determine in which year the *cena* took place, although recently Carter has argued for a date in late 39 or early 38—just the time when the marriage between Octavian and Livia took place. The evidence only allows us to suggest that the date of the second famine would suit the date of the *cena* as a marriage celebration.

Suetonius tells us that the twelve guests who attended the feast dressed as gods and goddesses and that Octavian appeared as Apollo. According to Suetonius, Antony knew and reported the names of all the other guests, but, unfortunately, this guest list does not survive. The lampoon reads:

Cum primum istorum conduxit mensa choragum,
sexque deos vidit Mallia sexque deas;
impia dum Phoebi Caesar mendacia ludit,

dum nova divorum cenat adulteria:
omnia se a terris tunc numina declinarunt,
fugit et auratos Iuppiter ipse thronos.

The lampoon poses problems of interpretation not only because of some unusual and difficult Latin, but especially because it is propaganda intended to exploit, not reveal the truth.²⁵ The first two lines suggest that Octavian served as the producer of a mime and assigned parts and costumes during a dinner party. Here Octavian himself impersonated actions or behavior that the lampoonist calls *mendacia*, lies or defamation against the character of Apollo, and which, moreover, revealed *impietas*. This entertainment took place as the guests were at dinner (*cena*) and its subject was the *adulteria* of the gods. I would hypothesize that in a comic burlesque Apollo-Octavian represented some disrespectful acts carried out against another god, probably his own father, and thus *impia*. The subject of the plot of the burlesque was, I believe, an adultery which Apollo committed with Jupiter's wife. This gives a precise meaning to *adulteria nova*, "unheard of," although the adjective clearly is meant to suggest the perversity of the performance in general. If we accept the marriage as the occasion of the banquet, then both Tiberius Nero and Livia would have been present taking the roles of Jupiter and Juno. Scott argued that Octavian would not have allowed Jupiter to appear on this occasion since he himself appeared as Apollo, but the objection falls if we interpret the occasion as a comic revel.²⁶ The lampoon expressly refers to Jupiter in the last line and to actions which can be interpreted

²⁵ Problems with the lampoon are well-summarized by Carter (above, note 6) 91–92. Particular difficulties arise from the meaning of the phrase "adulteria cenat" in line 4 and a parallel construction—"mendacia ludit"—in line 3. L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (above, note 20) 119 takes line 4 to mean that the guests indulged in "very unseemly gossip about the affairs of the other gods" while Scott (above, note 23) 31 thought that the *adulteria* referred to Livia and Octavian:

In spite of these legal separations and even if there had been no actual adultery as was suspected, there was ground for scandal in these divorces and in the fact that her former husband betrothed Livia, who was pregnant by him, to Octavian. Such conduct might easily lead to a charge of *adulterium*, and this is, I believe, what is meant by the line of the anonymous verse.

J. B. Pike, "Cenat Adulteria in Suetonius," *CJ* 15 (1919) 372–73, thinks the phrase means "gives a dinner representing the debaucheries of the gods." For *cenare* meaning "to enact while dining," *OLD*, s.v. "ceno," 2b.

²⁶ "Octavian and Antony's *De Sua Ebrietate*," *CP* 24 (1929) 140 note 2: "In our δωδεκάθεος it is not likely that Jupiter was represented since Octavian appeared as Apollo." A.D. Nock, *CAH* 10, 474 rejects the whole *cena* as invention on the basis of Jupiter's presence:

Antony retaliated with the allegation that Octavian had dined with eleven others, taking himself the part of Apollo and leaving to the rest the characters of the other gods, a parody of a *lectisternium*. That this is invented is clear. Octavian would hardly have suffered another to play Juppiter to his Apollo.

symbolically—Jupiter flees his throne in horror—or as a stage direction. Apollo, to suggest a plausible final scene to the mime, steals Juno from her husband and ascends to his vacated throne.

If we turn back to the events at the *convivium* described by Suetonius (*Aug.* 69.1), then this case of wife-stealing suits the subject of the mime. Octavian, playing a part in the burlesque, took Livia, also as a character in the mime, away from her husband and into a nearby bedroom from which she, still acting a role, returned blushing and with her hair in disarray. Her visible pregnancy could only have added to the farcical nature of the occasion. Antony suppressed Livia's name for obvious reasons, but it is not hard to see how her name and Tiberius Nero's could have come to be associated with this event in answer to the question of whose wife had been stolen.

Cassius Dio also describes certain comic events at a *ἑστιάσις* connected with the marriage of Livia and Octavian, and presumably the *cena* and this celebratory party are identical.²⁷ Also present at the party were *delicia*, cute, precocious slave boys, often carefully schooled in witty and risqué remarks, who were a regular feature of smart establishments during the early Imperial period.²⁸ According to Dio, women favored them and they were "usually naked." Their role as Cupids is obvious. Not only were they the appropriate servants to have at a banquet of the gods, but their presence suggests a comic, not serious occasion. A famous portrait of the wedding of Alexander and Roxane described by Lucian (*Herod.* 5) showed amoretti as servants playfully involved in the celebration.²⁹ One of the *delicia* makes a comic remark which confirms that the occasion was a marriage and not a betrothal celebration. The slave boy, seeing Livia now reclining at Octavian's side, points back to Livia's ex-husband and tells her that her husband is across the room:

παιδίον τι τῶν ψιθύρων, οἷα αἱ γυναῖκες γυμνὰ ὡς πλήθει
ἀθύρουσαι τρέφουσιν, ἰδὼν χωρὶς μὲν τὴν Λιουίαν μετὰ τοῦ
Καίσαρος χωρὶς δὲ τὸν Νέρωνα μεθ' ἑτέρου τινὸς κατα-
κείμενον, προσῆλθέ τε αὐτῇ καὶ ἔφη· "τί ποιεῖς ἐνταῦθα,
κυρία; ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ σοῦ," δείξας αὐτόν, "ἐκεῖ κατάκειται"
(48.44.3).

²⁷ Carcopino insisted that the occasion described by Cassius Dio was the betrothal party (not the marriage) because that suited his interpretation of a betrothal followed by the birth of Drusus and finally the formal celebration of the marriage. But Cassius Dio begins his whole account with a statement that he is describing the marriage: ἐξέδωκε δὲ αὐτὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὥσπερ τις πατήρ. καὶ τι καὶ τοιοῦτον ἐν τῇ ἑστιάσει σφῶν συνηνέχθη (48.44.3).

²⁸ The evidence is summarized by W. J. Slater, "Pueri, Turba Minuta," *BICS* 21 (1974) 133–40.

²⁹ See P. H. von Blanckenhagen and B. Green, "The Aldobrandini Wedding Reconsidered," *MDAI(R)* 82 (1975) 83–98. For artistic representations of Cupids as servants to deities, see, e.g., C. Ricci, "Marmi Ravennati Erratici," *Ausonia* 4 (1909) 247–58; R. Stuveras, *Le Putto dans l'art Romain*, Coll. Lat. 99 (1969) 140; G. E. Rizzo, *La Pittura ellenistico-romana* (Milan 1929) tav. 139.

Livia, as was the custom for the bride, had now taken her new place by her husband's side.³⁰

Merriment and even parody were not out of place at a wedding celebration. Even the most solemn Roman wedding ended with bawdy jokes and songs, the *Fescennina iocatio* that accompanied the bride and groom on their way to their new home.³¹ But the particular inspiration may well have been the divine aspirations of Antony in the East. In 41 B.C. in Ephesus Antony accepted comparison with Dionysus, and he summoned Cleopatra to Tarsus where she arrived arrayed as Aphrodite and attended by naked slave boys playing the part of Erotes. In Athens, during the winter of 39/38, Antony and Octavia were publicly identified with Dionysus and Athena, and an inscription records a "divine marriage." There are a few other suggestive facts: the group of ἀμνητοβίων (Plut. *Ant.* 28.2) formed by Antony and Cleopatra may have been twelve in number, and we know of a notorious banquet at which Antony was present when Munatius Plancus, naked, painted blue, and wearing a crown of reeds, mimed the role of the sea-god Glaucus (Vell. Pat. 2.83.2). The presence of the Cupids at the wedding of Octavian and Livia recalls the Erotes who attended Cleopatra on her barge trip along the Cydnus.³² The *cena* comically alluded to Antony's divine marriages and Olympian pretensions. We should not discount good-natured self-parody as an element of the party, for the play also shows Octavian, Livia, and Tiberius laughing at themselves. This revelry might have amused Antony himself, for he was a famous jokester who laughed at his own follies as much as others'.³³

Eitrem was surely right to point out that the Hellenistic East and not a Roman *lectisternium* was the model for Octavian's party.³⁴ Efforts to establish

³⁰ Juv. 2.119–120: "signatae tabulae, dictum 'feliciter,' ingens/ cena sedet, gremio iacuit nova nupta mariti"; cf. Apul. *Met.* 6. 24. The story of the joke told by the slave boy could, of course, be apocryphal, part of the gossip of the times. If true, however, it shows an underlying appreciation by the participants of the funnier side of their marital (re)arrangements. The slave boys had considerable leeway but surely took their cues from their owners.

³¹ See, e.g., Festus p. 85M (Lindsay), "fescennini"; Serv. *Aen.* 7.695; Pliny *NH* 15.86; Cat. 61.127; Sen. *Med.* 113–14.

³² On these events see Cass. Dio 48.39.2; Sen. *Suas.* 1.6; Vell. Pat. 2.82.4; Plut. *Ant.* 24.3–4, 26–28.3, 60.2–3; Athen. 4.147f–148c. These and other sources discussed by E. Huzar, *Mark Antony: A Biography* (Minneapolis 1978) 148–56. See too A. E. Raubitschek, "Octavia's Deification at Athens," *TAPA* 77 (1946) 146–50. An inscription from Alexandria that dubs Antony as "an inimitable lover" puns on and so confirms the existence of the "inimitable lovers"; see P. M. Fraser, "Mark Antony in Alexandria—A Note," *JRS* 47 (1957) 71–73. Octavian recognized the need to discredit Antony's divinity in Egypt; see H. J. Rose, "The Departure of Dionysos," *AAAL* 11 (1924) 25–30.

³³ Plutarch gives a number of examples in his life of Antony, e.g., 4.1–2, 24.7, 29.2–4, 32.4.

³⁴ "Zur Apotheose," *Symb.Oslo.* 10 (1932) 42. See too comments by O. Weinrich in Roscher, s.v. "Zwölfgötter," 6. 804–5. Identification with gods, emphasized sometimes by distinctive dress, is attested in this period. An

some underlying serious attempt by Octavian to identify himself with Apollo are misguided, for the *cena* was comic and, moreover, a private party ("cena quoque eius secretior," Suet. *Aug.* 70.1), whose events were, to borrow a modern term, leaked to the public by Octavian's enemies. The event hardly qualifies as a public identification of Octavian with Apollo. Although some scholars insist that the party would have been "exceptionally shocking to conservative Romans," the Roman populace (or Octavian's enemies) turn it into the opportunity for a joke by calling Octavian Apollo Tortor. The anger of the plebs is at Octavian's responsibility for their privations.³⁵ At a later moment Augustus himself clearly distinguished between what was suitable behavior in real life and acceptable in fun when he, the sponsor of stern moral legislation on adultery, imperturbably watched mimes of adultery on the public stage (Ovid, *Tr.* 2.509–14).

There may have been a later parody of these events during the rule of Caligula. The young emperor was invited to the wedding banquet of his friend Calpurnius Piso and Livia Orestilla (Suet. *Calig.* 25.1; Cass. Dio 59.8.7). Suetonius gives two versions of what happened at the celebration. In the first Caligula simply ordered the woman to be taken away to his house, in the second, the emperor, as he was reclining at the table, turned to Piso and said—"Don't fondle my wife"—and then immediately got up and took the woman away with him. Her residence in his house was a sign of their marriage, and in fact the next day Caligula announced by proclamation that he had taken a wife "exemplo Romuli et Augusti." Thus he sardonically pointed out that the first and second founders of the Roman state were wife-stealers and that he was imitating the *mores* of his ancestors. Such an act suited his irreverent sense of humor (*inverecundia*: Suet. *Calig.* 29.1) The satiric jibe at Augustus gained further piquancy in Caligula's reference to a model (*exemplum*), for Augustus

excellent summary in J. L. Tondriau, "Romains de la République assimilés à des Divinités," *Symb.Oslo* 27 (1949) 128–40.

³⁵ The quotation is from Scott, "Octavian" (above, note 26) 140. For examples of a long tradition of interpretations of the *cena* as essentially serious in its comparison of Octavian with Apollo: H. Heinen, "Zur Begründung des römischen Kaiserkultes," *Klio* 11 (1911) 140 note 3; E. Bickermann, "Die römische Kaiserapotheose," *ArchRW* 27 (1929) 24–25; F. Altheim, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* 3 (Berlin 1933) 65; P. Lambrechts, "La politique 'apollinienne' d'Auguste et le culte impérial," *NouvClio* 5 (1953) 66. I. Becher, "Octavians Kampf gegen Antonius und seine Stellung zu den ägyptischen Göttern," *Das Altertum* 11 (1965) 41. Those who accept the *cena* as funny in intent and a case of youthful high spirits are, for example, R. Holland, "Beiträge zum Verständnis der Maecenaselegien," *WS* 45 (1926/27) 83; O. Immisch, "Zum antiken Herrscherkult," in *Aus Roms Zeitwende* (Leipzig 1931) 29: "Jugendtorheit." Humorous references to the gods were part of the contemporary scene. See, for example, K. Scott, "Humor at the Expense of the Ruler Cult," *CP* 27 (1932) 317–28. On a probably parodic account of the myth of the Bona Dea, T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester 1974) 130–38; on a *petulans pictura* by Ctesilochus of Jupiter giving birth to Dionysus, groaning with labor pains, dressed in feminine gear, and attended by midwives, Pliny *NH* 35.140.

liked to find salubrious models in the past (Suet. *Aug.* 89.2) and stated with pride in the *Res Gestae* (8.5) that he had left *exempla* worthy of imitation by posterity. Caligula on two other occasions deliberately acted in ways which recalled the marriage of Octavian and Livia. Suetonius reports that he compelled Memmius Regulus to bring his wife Lolliia Paulina to Rome and then forced him to divorce her (*Calig.* 25). Cassius Dio (59.12.1) adds that Caligula ordered the ex-husband to betroth her and give her away in marriage. Cassius Dio (59.23.7) also tells the story of how Caligula waited until his mistress Caesonia Milonia was eight months pregnant and then married her so that he could have a "one-month-child." The story of Drusus, the "three-month-child," immediately comes to mind. The witty Greek verse that "the lucky even have children in three months" (Cass. Dio 48.44.5; Suet. *Claud.* 1.1), which probably originated in Antony's circle, had become a well-known proverb.³⁶

Caligula, like the other Julio-Claudian emperors, rested his right to rule on his relationship with Augustus, which he piously advertised, but he admired his great-grandfather Antony (Suet. *Calig.* 23.1).³⁷ While he was too shrewd to discredit Augustus by any public act to his own detriment, he found amusement in recalling embarrassing details of his deified great-grandfather's life. Caligula's behavior at the wedding dinner of Calpurnius Piso suggests that the infamous *convivium* of Suetonius 69.1 concerned Livia and Tiberius Nero; otherwise, the joke would lack point. Perhaps the similarity of the name of Calpurnius' bride was the impromptu inspiration for Caligula's behavior. The impression left by Caligula's actions is, of course, that Augustus stole Tiberius Nero's wife.

The existence of this hostile tradition has had its influence on modern historians of Augustus' life. Augustus knew the impact of Antony's propaganda, for he tried to substitute his own version of events in his autobiography.³⁸ But his efforts to impose stringent standards of morality on his contemporaries could only have kept the propaganda and gossip alive to furnish ammunition for his enemies. Suetonius can find little to criticize in the older Augustus' moral

³⁶ For a discussion of this imitation, M. B. Flory, "Caligula's *Inverecundia*: A Note on Cassius Dio 59.12.1," *Hermes* 114 (1986) 365–71.

³⁷ See too Cass. Dio 59.20.1–2. For Antony's influence on Caligula's rule, J. Colin, "Les consuls du César-pharaon Caligula et l'héritage de Germanicus," *Latomus* 13 (1954) 394–416; J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius* (Oxford 1934) 207–8.

³⁸ Augustus tried to answer charges of youthful adultery in his autobiography by blaming the divorce from Scribonia on her waspish temper: "cum hac (i.e., Scribonia) quoque divortium fecit, pertaesus, ut scribit, morum perversitatem eius" (Suet. *Aug.* 62.2). His discussion of the divorce answers charges made by Antony that he divorced Scribonia because she *liberius doluisset nimiam potentiam paelicis* (Suet. *Aug.* 69.1). Augustus had a reputation for mildness but on the subject of his family he could show his temper. He ejected Timagenes, a Greek historian writing a history of his life, from his house because of remarks Timagenes made about him, Livia, and his family. See Sen. *De Ira* 3.23.4. Seneca tells us the remarks were "witty but indiscreet." It is tempting to connect this sensitivity with events concerning his marriage to Livia as has J. P. V. D. Balsdon in *Romans and Aliens* (London 1979) 183.

character, but his opponents could look to his youth. While Augustus was acting the role of censor, a young man (νεανίσκος) was brought before him who had married a woman with whom he had previously committed adultery (Cass. Dio 54.16.6). Augustus' poise failed him, and he could not think of how to react. He clearly remembered, as had some opponent of him or his moral legislation, his own youthful indiscretions. After a long delay Augustus replied that the Romans should forget the past and look to the future. The *princeps* wanted to blot out past incidents that did not suit the picture of himself he wished posterity to inherit. In that hope he revealed his naïveté.³⁹

³⁹ I read a first version of this paper in 1986 as a "shop talk" at the American Academy in Rome during my year there as a Mellon Fellow. I am grateful to the Mellon Foundation for its support of my fellowship at the Academy. I had the opportunity to present the paper at the American Philological Association in 1986 at a panel sponsored by the American Academy. I am especially grateful to the moderators of that panel, Russell T. Scott and Miranda Marvin, for help and encouragement. I owe special thanks to Michael Simpson, who carefully critiqued this paper. The anonymous referees of this journal and its editor helped me to improve it.