

“How afraid I was that the kingdoms of Libya might have brought you harm”. Yes indeed; how nearly they did. It was because Aeneas *chose* to follow his divine duty and not to stay with Dido that the city of Rome was founded. I am not here discussing whether it was the right choice; I am insisting that it was a choice, an act of Aeneas’ free-will. Virgil did *not* believe that the existence of a divine purpose for the world denied to men their free-will, and in the *Aeneid* he explores the question of how that free-will can operate in collaboration with the divine purpose.

I have tried to show that what I find so fascinating, and lasting, in Virgil is his variety of poetic mood and style and his ability to juxtapose different aspects of human behaviour in such a way as to show sympathetic appreciation of widely contrasted attitudes to life: of pity and of toughness; of the individual’s desires and of society’s needs; of the relationship between free-will and devoted service to a cause, especially a divine cause. Different aspects of Virgil’s poetry have been appreciated at different times: his patriotism and his learning in Roman times; his pre-Christian values and allegories in the Middle Ages; his solemn ethics and his artistic correctness in the time of Dryden and Pope; his pathos in Victorian times. Our own generation has admired Virgil not for one or two of these qualities but for many of them taken together; and in an age which looks many ways at the same time we have found satisfaction and truth in Virgil’s many-sidedness.

‘Virgil, Tacitus, Tiberius and Germanicus’

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That there are problems of interpretation in Tacitus’ presentation of Tiberius and Germanicus is generally accepted among Tacitean critics. Most would agree, too, that some problems are a direct result of his complex method of writing literary history, a method whereby event and interpretation, fact and impression, content and style are so linked and interdependent that they cannot be separated without distortion of his text. Ignore *how* Tacitus makes a point, and you miss half of it. Hence the study of Tacitus’ language is particularly important and interesting. Associations of words, their colour, poetic overtones and literary echoes must be given due consideration if we are to understand his meaning, and assess accurately the validity of his historical interpretations.

Of the authors upon whom Tacitus draws for literary association, Virgil is perhaps the most significant. While I have no key to offer to the problems of Tiberius and Germanicus, the thread of Virgilian language which runs through Tacitus’ presentation of them is, I think, of some relevance.

The technique of literary reminiscence, which is not stylistic imitation only or mere verbal echoing, but rather the juxtaposition of passages so that they may interact with one another in the mind of the reader or listener, we associate more with poetry than

with prose. It is a technique which Virgil himself uses. One can think of numerous examples. In *Aeneid* Six, 77ff, the Sibyl of Cumae prophesies for Aeneas a re-enactment of the Trojan war in Italy and says *alius Latio iam partus Achilles,/natus et ipse dea*. But in *Aeneid* Eleven, 492ff, when Virgil depicts Turnus in a simile as a horse which has broken from his stable and now runs free, glorying in his strength, he echoes a Homeric simile used of Paris and Hector before they enter battle. (See *Il.* 6.506ff; 15.263ff, and also Ennius A.514ff.) Surely an association which bodes ill for the heroic Rutulian. In spite of his momentary sense of power, Turnus is no Achilles, and, like the Trojan heroes, he will ultimately be defeated. When Aeneas sees Hector in a dream, *Aen.* 2.270ff, and addresses him, *o lux Dardaniae*, v.281, he uses words similar to those of Cassandra in a tragedy of Ennius, *o lux Troiae, germane Hector*, Scen. 72-75V. Cassandra's words, appropriately enough, are part of a prophetic lament, additional details of which are included elsewhere in Aeneas' speech.¹ The juxtaposition of passages serves to heighten the pathos of Aeneas' dream by reinforcing its emotional effect. Aeneas speaks to Hector as a long-awaited saviour: *o lux Dardaniae, spes o fidissima Teucrum,/quae tantae tenuere morae? quibus Hector ab oris/exspectate venis?* But out of the dream world he knows that Hector is dead and that Cassandra has wept for him, her prophecy fulfilled.

Examples could be multiplied, but let those two suffice to indicate some of the functions which literary allusion can serve – comparison and contrast, reinforcement of emotional tone, indirect comment on the stature of characters depicted, dramatic foreshadowing, a means of establishing a context in which we may view the words and actions of individuals.

The list of passages which will be examined is selective rather than comprehensive but does not, I trust, distort the evidence. A brief comment should be made on the nature of the evidence, since the question of what is or is not Virgilian in Tacitus' works is a complex one. The examples used are of four types: words and phrases which are attested only in Virgil and Tacitus; Virgilian words and phrases which seem to be imitated independently by other writers as well as Tacitus; those for which verbal parallels in other writers are irrelevant to the question of a direct relationship between the epic poet and the historian; and, finally, words or phrases which may well have been derived directly from Virgil by Tacitus since they form part of a cluster of imitated language in their Virgilian context, or of imitative language in Tacitus' *Annals*.² We should keep in mind, too, that Virgil's *Aeneid* began its career as a school text soon after its publication, and that even if Tacitus' use of Virgilian language is difficult to parallel in prose, there are parallels in the poetry of the early Imperial period.³

A small group of imitative passages appears to have implications both for Tiberius and for Germanicus. The suggestion of tension in the relationship between the two figures begins in Tacitus' account of attempts by Augustus to guarantee a chain of possible successors, *Ann.* 1.3.5. In a sentence beginning *at hercule*, Tacitus describes the forced adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius with the words *adsciri per adoptionem a Tiberio iussit*. The verb *adscire* is unusual,⁴ marks an unusual action, and is not particularly happy in its literary associations. Latinus had used the same verb when he attempted to

persuade Turnus to give up his quarrel with Aeneas, *Aen.* 12.38-39, *si Turno extincto socios sum ascire paratus, / cur non incolumi potius certamina tollo?* Without pushing the relationship too far one could say that the word *ascire* has overtones of conflict and dynastic struggle from its Virgilian context, overtones which are far from irrelevant to its Tacitean context since Tacitus points out that Tiberius already has a son. The stage is set for factional strife between Julians and Claudians.

Three interrelated passages in *Annals* 2.5 make more explicit comment on the relation between Tiberius and Germanicus by means of Virgilian associations (2.5.1, *dolo simul et casibus obiectaret*, and *Aen.* 2.750-751, *caput obiectare periculis*; 2.5.2, *aversa patrum voluntas* and *Aen.* 12.646-647, *superis aversa voluntas*; and 2.5.2, *celerandae victoriae intentior* and *Aen.* 9.378, *celerare fugam*.) Sallust, Virgil, and Tacitus himself at *Hist.* 2.33 combine the verb *obiectare* with *periculis*. Although the general similarity between *Bellum Jugurthinum* 7.1 and the present passage might suggest that Sallust is Tacitus' source,⁵ there is, I think, more convincing evidence that his source is Virgil. It is clear from other contexts that Tacitus is very familiar with the second book of the *Aeneid* (see, e.g., his extensive use of *Aeneid* Two in his account of the sack of Cremona, *Hist.* 3) and it is also clear that he is familiar with the particular passage in question. Two other imitated phrases appear within five lines of *Aen.* 2.751: *lumina lustrō*, v.754, reappears in *Hist.* 2.70 and *silentia terrent*, v.755 at *Hist.* 3.84.

What then might be the function of the phrase and its possible associations? Briefly stated, Aeneas' courage and determination, shown in his resolve to face the dangers of returning to Troy in search of Creusa, are reflected upon Germanicus who thereby assumes some of the stature of his heroic ancestor. But there seems also to be an implied contrast between Germanicus and Aeneas as persons who face hazards, and Tiberius who causes others to face them, *dolo* being a significant addition for Tiberius' characterization. The two figures are contrasted more sharply with the phrase *aversa patrum voluntas*. This expression of Germanicus' thoughts about the attitude of his adoptive father recalls Turnus' ultimate recognition that the gods are hostile to his cause. Tiberius is associated with hostile divine power, power which in the *Aeneid* at least, is absolute (*patrum* and *superis* are parallel in function), while Germanicus through his equation with Turnus acquires the potential of a tragic hero, or heroic victim, depending upon one's interpretation of the *Aeneid*. The transitive use of *celerare* in the final phrase is simply a stylistic device with the virtue of conciseness and it contributes to the poetic colouring of its context. I have classed it as Virgilian rather than generally poetic because it appears in a cluster of imitated language in the Nisus and Euryalus episode in *Aeneid* Nine.

If one were to choose a theme which runs consistently through the *Annals*, it would be Tacitus' preoccupation with the nature of political power and the relationship between power and personality. The Virgilian phrases in *Annals* 2.5, as well as the passage in *Annals* 1.3, help to define the relative positions of Germanicus and Tiberius, and the nature of the power which they possess as individuals and political figures.

I shall now attempt to substantiate the interpretation of the passages which we have just examined by showing that Tacitus is to a high degree consistent in the Virgilian associations which he builds up around Germanicus and Tiberius.

Germanicus

Book Two of the *Annals* is in a real sense Germanicus' book. Virgilian language appears in the description of his campaigns in Germany, his travels in the East and in Egypt, in the account of his death and in the description of subsequent mourning for him.

Tacitus' description of the storm which scatters the fleet of Germanicus, *Annals* 2.23-24, could be called a literary variation on a Virgilian theme, containing as it does variants of phrases and details from the *Georgics*, the description of the storm in *Aeneid* One, the monologue of Juno which precedes it, Ilioneus' speech to Dido about it, and a phrase depicting the violence of nature from another context in the *Aeneid*.⁶

One of the most striking aspects of Tacitus' passage is its compression. The opening phrase is spacious in concept but taut, even strained, in syntax: *placidum aequor mille navium remis strepere aut velis impelli*, 2.23.2. Tacitus' concentration upon visual and auditory effects is itself a poetic technique. The building up of the storm is presented swiftly and concisely: *mox atro nubium globo effusa grando, simul variis undique procellis incerti fluctus prospectum adimere, regimen impedire*, 2.23.2. Instead of drawing upon Virgil's more lengthy description, *Aen.* 1.82-91, Tacitus takes a compact clause from a simile as his model. In 2.23.3, *disiecitque naves in aperta Oceani aut insulas saxis abruptis vel per occulta vada infestas*, details from three passages are combined and there is a change in emphasis. Virgil's description, *Aen.* 1.102ff, achieves its effects through the building up of details with verbal repetition and parallelism as important structural devices. In addition, the storm is described in character, so to speak. The first words spoken are those of Aeneas, vv94-101, and words and phrases, some with emotional overtones, maintain the impression that we are viewing the storm through his eyes (e.g., 1.111, *miserabile visu*, 113, *fidum Oronten*, 114, *ipsius ante oculos*, 120, *validam Ilionei navem...fortis Achatae*, 121, *grandaevus Aletes*). Tacitus, in contrast, presents a panoramic scene of devastation with a minimum of detail, with no verbal repetition, and from a more impersonal point of view. There is also a change in emphasis in 23.4. At *Aen.* 1.118-119, Virgil describes the wreck of Ilioneus' ship and the loss of Trojan treasure, *Troia gaza*, a phrase which underlines on an emotional level the extent of Aeneas' loss. The detail *equi iumenta sarcinae etiam arma praecipitantur* in Tacitus' account represents not simply loss, but a desperate attempt to avert disaster. The phrase *manantes per latera*, a condensed version of *Aen.* 1.122-123, along with a variation on a phrase from Ilioneus' speech, *superante salo*, 1.537, ends Tacitus' description of the storm itself.

Chapter 24 depicts the fate of the ships and the effect of the storm upon Germanicus. There are again interesting alterations in emphasis as a result of rearrangement of details. *Aeneas scopulum...conscendit*, *Aen.* 1.180, to scan the sea for traces of his companions, but when he sees the stags grazing, he turns to the immediate task of providing food for the survivors. Germanicus performs a similar action (2.24.2, *quem apud scopulos*) but in an agony of remorse because he feels personally responsible for the disaster. His followers can scarcely restrain him from seeking in the sea the death which Aeneas wishes he had found before the walls of Troy (*oppetere* with *mortem* understood, 2.24.2 and *Aen.* 1.96). Hence Germanicus' reaction becomes an emotional focal point, as

it were, for the account, rather than its general perspective as in the case of Aeneas.

Why does Tacitus choose to present the storm in such detail, and why his extensive use of Virgilian language? One reason may be stylistic, creative imitation of an acknowledged master, which reveals Tacitus' own individuality of approach: evocative, impressionistic writing, but rigorous selection and compression of detail rather than epic expansiveness. More importantly, the storm is depicted with Virgilian echoes because it is a misfortune which befell Germanicus and is thereby a means of characterizing him in terms of Aeneas. The aura of the heroic which he gains, even though the hero is at a low ebb of his fortunes, is part of Tacitus' interpretation of a historical figure who is the inheritor of the traditions of the Julian family. Whether Tacitus is *simply* presenting Germanicus as a heroic figure is a point to which we shall return.

Three passages from the account of Germanicus' travels (2.54.2, *relegit Asiam* and *Aen.* 3.690-691; 2.60.1, *diversum ad mare* and *Aen.* 11.261-263; and 2.61.1, *instar montium* and *Aen.* 2.15) need not detain us long since they are primarily stylistic imitations which add Virgilian colour to the narrative. What is most interesting about them is the nature of their contexts. Germanicus is beset by another storm on his way to Athens. While his ships are being refitted he pays a visit to Actium (*Ann.* 2.53.2) as Aeneas did (*Aen.* 3.278-288). He also visits Troy, "venerable...for the origins of Rome", 2.54.2, and consults an oracle of Apollo, which gives him what is reputed to be an ominous prophecy. The significance of Apollo during the wanderings of Aeneas needs no comment. Germanicus' visit to Egypt, *Ann.* 2.60ff, partakes of the fabulous and the romantic. The travels of Germanicus could be said to perform a similar function to Aeneas' wanderings, as far as Tacitus' purpose is concerned, in that they associate him with founding legends, mythology, ancient history, and deeds of military glory.⁷

In *Annals* 2.71-73, Tacitus gives his account of the death and funeral of Germanicus. At 2.71.3, Germanicus' parting words to his friends in which he gives them the charge of avenging his death (*vindicabitis vos, si me potius quam fortunam meam fovebatis*) contain the same contrast between the individual and his circumstances which appears in Aeneas' words to Ascanius before his final combat with Turnus (*Aen.* 12.435-436, *disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem/fortunam ex aliis.*)⁸ Germanicus' *fortunam meam* suggests the bright prospects and high hopes of the prince which have been frustrated. Possibly the words acquire both strength and irony from Aeneas' *fortunam ex aliis*, a phrase tinged with the bitterness of one who has been dogged by misfortune and suffering, his efforts at peaceful settlement in Italy frustrated at every turn.

When Tacitus describes the grief in the province at the death of Germanicus, he uses the phrase *ingenti luctu*, 2.72.2. Although its ascription to a particular context in Virgil is difficult since the combination appears more than once, on subjective grounds one context is particularly appropriate, if not right.⁹ Anchises describes as *ingentem luctum... tuorum*, *Aen.* 6.868, the death of Marcellus. Marcellus was a young man marked out for greatness as a national leader, the focus of national hopes (*Aen.* 6.875-877). He too was cut off by an untimely death before his promise had been fulfilled. It is difficult to believe that with his extensive knowledge of the *Aeneid*, Tacitus was unfamiliar with the

moving passage at the end of Book Six which Virgil is said to have recited with such effect (*Vita Donati* 100). The suggestion of a link with Marcellus gains support from the comments on the triumph of Germanicus, which express the *occulta formido* of the people: *haud prosperum in Druso patre eius favorem vulgi, avunculum eiusdem Marcellum flagrantibus plebis studiis intra iuventam ereptum, breves et infaustos populi Romani amores*, 2.41.3.

The suggestion of what might have been is clear at 2.73.2. Those attending Germanicus' funeral in Antioch compare him favourably with Alexander the Great and say that he was no less a military figure *etiam si...praepeditus sit percultas tot victoriis Germanias servitio premere*. The words *servitio premet* appear at *Aen.* 1.285 in Jupiter's prophecy to Venus of the subjugation of the East by the house of Assaracus in the person of Augustus Caesar. Not only does Germanicus have the reflected glory of the conquests of Caesar, but also he has literary reparation for the fact that his funeral was without the traditional ancestral effigies, *sine imaginibus et pompa*. Jupiter's speech is a splendid and solemn outline of the history of the Roman people as seen through the history of the *gens Iulia*.

Tiberius

What of Tiberius? There are no concentrations of Virgilian language as in the description of the storm, *Ann.* 2.23-24, but instead scattered passages from Book One to Book Six. Again, the passages to be examined are a selection rather than a complete list, but none of those which have been omitted, as far as I am aware, directly contradicts the pattern which will be suggested.

Pace F.R.D. Goodyear and in support of N.P. Miller (whose point I think he misunderstands)¹⁰ I would class *Ann.* 1.47.1, *Immotum...fixumque Tiberio fuit*, as a conscious and purposeful imitation of *Aen.* 4.15, Dido's statement of her resolve never to marry again: *si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet/ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali...* There are none of the tragic implications in Tacitus' passage of the vow so soon to be broken, but instead the ironic suggestion *varium et mutabile semper femina*. As deliberate policy Tiberius gives the appearance of being just on the point of leaving for the armies, even though he has no such intention. By using this Virgilian phrase to draw attention to apparent indecision, Tacitus belittles the logic of Tiberius' point that the power of an emperor to deal with an army mutiny, and his imperial dignity are secure so long as he remains a remote figure of authority. This interpretation of the intent of the phrase is supported by another Virgilian allusion in 6.32.1 as Tacitus comments on Tiberius' preference for diplomacy rather than armed conflict in international relations: *consiliis et astu res externas moliri, arma procul habere*. Virgil had used the combination *consilio et astu* of Ligus when he tried to escape from Camilla in battle by tricking her.¹¹ Not a complimentary interpretation of Tiberius' policy in the Eastern empire, but an interpretation it is.

The reason for Tacitus' strictures may perhaps be found in *Annals* 4.32, where he contrasts his subject-matter with that of Republican historians: *ingentia illi bella,*

*expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges....memorabant: nobis in arto et inglorius labor; immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res, et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat.*¹² Tiberius' policy of consolidation, like his refusal to engage in personal heroics during the army mutinies, is sane and statesmanlike. The historian would seem to be influenced in his judgment by his own half-sentimental leanings towards the imperialism of the Republic, and even, perhaps, towards the type of strong military leader who could quell a mutiny with the single word "*Quirites*". (Note Germanicus' comments to the mutinous soldiers, *Ann.* 1.42.3).

Also in *Annals* 1.47, however, is another Virgilian usage whose implication is perhaps more serious: *resistentisque Germanico aut Druso posse a se mitigari vel infringi*. At 1.47.2 appears the only example in the *Annals* of the verb *infringere* used of persons. It is at least interesting that it is Tiberius' self-stated power to break people which is expressed by a Virgilian word.¹³

Later in *Annals* One Tacitus imputes to Tiberius ultimate responsibility for the death of his former wife Julia, daughter of Augustus: *omnis spei egenam inopia ac tabe longa peremit*, 1.53.2. The similarity between *omnis spei egenam* and *omnium egenos*, *Aen.* 1.599, is stylistic, a verbal echo which may be unconscious, but the latter part of Tacitus' statement recalls the *lugentes campi* in the Underworld inhabited by the shades of those whom *durus amor crudeli tabe peredit*, *Aen.* 6.442. The moral of the story may be that love and politics don't mix, as Julia and Dido found out. Syntactically, however, Tiberius and *amor* are equated, and *amor* belies its name. It is a pitiless destroyer.

The trial of Libo Drusus on a charge of plotting treason, *Ann.* 2.27ff, has been examined in detail by B. Walker and others.¹⁴ In her view it is a major example of the divergence between fact and impression in Tacitus' works, and constitutes brilliant but slanted anti-Tiberian writing. Tacitus considers the case particularly significant *quia tum primum reperta sunt quae per tot annos rem publicam exedere*, 2.27.1. Tacitus' language echoes the comments of Venus on Juno's implacable hatred of the Trojans: *non media de gente Phrygum exedissee nefandis/urbem odiis satis est*, *Aen.* 5.785-786. A striking metaphor for a particularly vicious activity. Tacitus is referring here to the *delator* who pretends friendship with his intended victim in order to make him incriminate himself. At 2.29.2, Libo Drusus appeals to Tiberius, *manus ac supplices voces ad Tiberium tendens*. The language is very similar to that with which Virgil three times depicts the ritual gesture of prayer to the gods (*Aen.* 2.688; 3.176-177; 10.667). The phrase may, as B. Walker suggests (p.12) be an ironic reminiscence of the joyful thanks of Aeneas and Anchises, or it may with slightly different irony point a similarity to Turnus whose prayers were also in vain. In either case, Tiberius is assigned the role of a divinity. There can be little doubt about the power of informers, and also little doubt that the Emperor is the last court of appeal. Tacitus' echoes of Virgil are pointed comment, not simply rhetorical exaggeration.

Two other Virgilian phrases appear in the context of legal proceedings, particularly treason trials. There is a question in people's minds as to how far Tiberius might go in punishing Plancina for her alleged part in the death of Germanicus and the rebellious

actions of her husband Piso. Although the similarity between *Ann.* 3.15.1, *quantum Caesari in eam liceret*, and *Aen.* 6.502, *cui tantum de te licuit*, is largely syntactical, the context of Virgil's phrase deserves comment. In *Aeneid* Six, Aeneas is addressing the mutilated shade of Deiphobus, betrayed to Menelaus by Helen during the sack of Troy. It is perhaps not going too far to suggest that Tiberius, too, has the power to exact a terrible punishment, even though that power may not be exercised in this particular instance because of the intercession of Livia.

The trial of Votienus Montanus *does* lead Tiberius to exercise his power: *Caesar, obiectam sibi adversos reos inclementiam eo pervicacius amplexus*, 4.42.3. Votienus is convicted of treason *ob contumelias in Caesarem dictas*. Aquilia, convicted of adultery, receives the sentence of exile even though she was prosecuted under the Julian law which admitted of lesser penalties, and Apidius Merula, for refusing to swear obedience to the *acta* of the deified Augustus, loses his senatorial rank. The word *inclementia* appears only here in Tacitus' extant works. Virgil uses it in the *Georgics* of the absoluteness of death, *Geo.* 3.68, and, in *Aeneid* Two, Venus tells Aeneas that the real cause of the fall of Troy is not Paris and Helen but *divum inclementia divum*, v.602. It is to the latter passage that I suggest we should look for Tacitus' source. ¹⁵

R.G. Austin's comments on the Venus-Aeneas scene are brilliantly evocative.

The repetition of *divum* comes with a stabbing shock. There and then Venus rends apart the cloud that clogs Aeneas' mortal sight and shows him the great gods in action against Troy....It is a fantastic apocalypse, gods in devilry, gloating over their horrid work like demons in a medieval Doom....

And, later in his discussion

It is as if [Virgil] had suddenly, blindingly, seen that human *pietas* – the linch-pin of the whole structure of the *Aeneid* – has no protection against the arbitrary ruthlessness of the gods, no necessary recognition from them: there is no appeal against *divum inclementia*. ¹⁶

"Arbitrary ruthlessness" would, I suggest, be an accurate translation at *Ann.* 4.42.3.

The final four phrases to be considered have some characteristics in common in that they use military vocabulary or have some military associations. The prophecy of the astrologers that Tiberius would never return to Rome after his departure into Campania was misinterpreted to mean that he would soon die, not that he would go into voluntary retirement as he did at Capri, an indication *vera....quam obscuris tegerentur*, *Ann.* 4.58.3. Virgil had used similar words of the Sibyl of Cumae, *obscuris vera involvens*, *Aen.* 6.100. What the Sibyl had prophesied for Aeneas was *bella, horrida bella/et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine*, *Aen.* 6.86-87. What is concealed by "the nature of things", the movements of the planets, is that Tiberius will approach the city but not enter it, *saepe moenia urbis adsidens*, 4.58.3. The language is specifically military. Latinus had expressed his distress at calling a Council of the Latins in his beleaguered city *cum muros adsidet*

hostis, *Aen.* 11.304. Rome, then, is a city under siege. If one is to find significance in the fact that it is Aeneas in the latter passage who is described as *hostis*, it can only be, I think, the significance of contrast. Aeneas' ultimate mission in Italy was to be a civilizing force. The same could not be said of the latter years of the reign of Tiberius, whatever his intentions might have been.

The fall of Sejanus had disastrous consequences which Tacitus foreshadows by means of a Virgilian allusion at 4.74.5. For those who successfully courted Sejanus *infaustae amicitiae gravis exitus imminebat*. It was Turnus of whom Juno had said *nunc manet insontem gravis exitus*, *Aen.* 10.630. Turnus, certainly, is caught up in a power struggle between Juno and Jupiter, just as the senators who flock to Campania will be caught between Sejanus and Tiberius. But is Turnus really *insons*? Juno could hardly be described as an impartial witness for her favourite. Turnus seeks to shape the world in his own image and fails. The same comment could be made of those who seek to gain by flattering the Emperor's favourite. The final phrase to be considered, which appears at *Ann.* 6.39.2, is a highly rhetorical extension of the death of Mezentius to a scene of general carnage in Rome: [*Tiberius*] *quasi aspiciens undantem per domos sanguinem aut manus carnificum* (*Aen.* 10.908, *undantique animam diffundit in arma cruore*).

It would appear, then, that there are two distinct patterns of Virgilian associations: for Germanicus, it is the positive world of heroic values represented especially by Aeneas; for Tiberius, apart from references which, in effect, question his judgment, various images of destructive power, be it destructive emotion, human vengeance, divine power turned against man, or death-dealing war.

Tacitean bias is a hoary chestnut. While it would be rash to attempt to define the function of a historian, one *can* say that he is not simply a chronicler recording events, but rather a seeker after intelligible patterns, an interpreter of the past to the present. Let us not criticize a historian unjustifiably for performing his proper task, even though his way may not be our way. Virgilian language is one level of the historian's interpretation of his material.

There can be little doubt that there was a Germanicus "legend", for Tacitus himself provides us with the evidence for it. Germanicus' general popularity is mentioned in 1.7.6, the grounds for it in 1.33.2: *quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem. nam iuveni civile ingenium, mira comitas et diversa a Tiberii sermone vultu, adrogantibus et obscuris*. Other details fill in the picture: his *pietas*, 1.34.1 and 1.61.1; his martial spirit, *passim Annals* One and Two; the human touch of a good military leader, 1.71.3; his physical attractiveness, endurance, charm, and even temper, 2.13.1; his kindness and clemency, 2.55.3 and 2.72.2; his dignity and grandeur which inspired reverence, and his freedom from jealousy and pride, 2.72.2. The depth of affection for him in Rome is amply illustrated by Tacitus' moving description of the grief of the people at his death, 2.82. Of such stuff are folk-heroes made.

Yet Tacitus is not entirely uncritical nor is he lacking in perspective. For example, in 1.3.6 he comments on the German war which occupies so much of his first two books that it is a war undertaken *abolendae magis infamiae ob amissum cum Quintilio Varo exercitum quam cupidine proferendi imperii aut dignum ob praemium*. Germanicus' mock attempt at suicide as a means of quelling an army mutiny fails. Calusidius offers his own sword saying "Take this, it's sharper", 1.35.5. Germanicus is granted a triumph although the war is still in progress, 1.55.1, and his military tactics are not invariably successful: *et manibus aequis abscessum*, 1.63.2; *nox demum inclinantis iam legiones adversae pugnae exemit*, 1.64.3; *classis Amisiae relicta laevo amne, erratumque in eo, quod non subvexit: transposuit militem dextras in terras iturum*, 2.8.2. And, just before the setting up of the victory monument (2.22) there is the comment *equites ambigue certavere*, 2.21.2. Germanicus does recover two of the lost eagles of Varus, thereby saving Roman face (1.60.3 and 2.25.2) but Book Two ends thus with Tacitus' comments on the death of his chief opponent Arminius:

liberator haud dubie Germaniae et qui non primordia populi
Romani, sicut alii reges ducesque, sed florentissimum imperium
laccessierit, proeliis ambiguus, bello non victus. 2.88.2.

How can one reconcile such comments with the figure of popular imagination and Virgilian vocabulary which recalls a heroic world? I would suggest that they are complementary. The Virgilian language used of Germanicus serves a double function in that it suggests both potential and limitation, power and failure to realize it. It is the world of Aeneas, Turnus, and the great figures of the *gens Iulia* which is the appropriate context for Germanicus, since he possesses some of the qualities of that world, and it is against its standards that he is to be judged. To illustrate briefly, a particular and a general example. Aeneas wishes that he had died at Troy, an appropriately heroic end. Tacitus uses the same verb, *oppetere*, 2.24.2, but of what heroic action by Germanicus? Attempted suicide by drowning. Aeneas' journey to Italy is a time of testing and of learning, of trial and error, an exercise in the submission of an individual will to a larger purpose. In contrast, Germanicus enters a world of high romance on a scenic and historical tour, and, in Egypt, even wears Greek dress in imitation of Publius Scipio Africanus in Sicily (2.59.1)¹⁷ Meanwhile his dispositions in the east go to wrack and ruin. Tacitus' Virgilian language and Virgilian associations contain within them the basis of their own criticism.

In the case of Tiberius, I would suggest that Tacitus is not indulging a penchant for subtle abuse, but rather presenting an interpretation of the nature of the Principate which has some validity. Although Augustus had disguised it with considerable skill, the Principate was a form of absolutism, a benevolent despotism which might, in the hands of the wrong man, become simply despotic. It was during the principate of Tiberius, particularly in the consequences for the senatorial class of his revival of the law of treason, that the potential of the office first became clear.

I have suggested earlier that Virgil is perhaps the most significant of the authors whom Tacitus draws upon for literary associations. The *Aeneid* is an evocative summation of all previous Roman history, its achievements and the cost of those achievements. It also heralds a new beginning, the return of the Golden Age of Saturn to be ushered in by the rule of Augustus. What better touchstone for a literary historian who wishes to establish a perspective for his account of Augustus' Julio-Claudian successors? The strain of imperial optimism in Virgil's *Aeneid* is in some sense answered by the imperial pessimism of the *Annals*. The Golden Age never, in Tacitus' view, became a reality. The dynasty which lost its heroic potential with the death of Germanicus, which soon, in the person of Tiberius, turned its supreme power against Rome, ends with Nero and a return to civil war: *sunt lacrimae rerum*.

NOTES

1. Macrobius, *Sat.* 6.2.18 cites the passage as from Ennius' *Alexander*.

O lux Troiae, germane Hector
 Quid ita cum tuo lacerato corpore
 Miser es, aut qui te sic respectantibus
 Tractavere nobis?

Except for the phrase noted there are no verbal parallels, but rather a re-working of details. See, e.g., 2.270ff and 277ff.

2. Examples of the four types of passages used are as follows: i. *consiliis et astu*, 6.32.1 and *Aen.* 11.704, noted by Fletcher (*Annotations on Tacitus*); ii. *aversa patris voluntas*, 2.5.2 and *Aen.* 12.647, *superis aversa voluntas* (Fletcher, *A.T.*), for which see also Val. Fl. 6.463, *mens mihi non eadem Iovis atque aversa voluntas*; iii. *gravis exitus imminebat*, 4.74.5, which shares the political overtones of *Aen.* 10.630, *nunc manet insontem gravis exitus* (Furneaux), connotations not found in Cic. *Div.* 2.22, Ov. *Met.* 10.8 or Stat. *Th.* 2.17, passages noted by Koestermann; iv. *celerare* used transitively, 2.5.2 and *Aen.* 9.378, the Nisus and Euryalus episode which also appears to provide the models *tendere contra*, v.377 (*Ann.* 3.10.1), *abutum*, v.380 (*Ann.* 14.37.1) found only in these two passages, *de nomine*, v.387 (*Ann.* 1.15.2), *fraude loci*, v.397 (*Ann.* 12.33.1) and *properet mortem*, v.401 (*Ann.* 2.31.3). Clusterings of imitated language appear elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. See, for example, the discussion of the storm, *Ann.* 2.23-24.
3. Those who most frequently use Virgilian language are themselves epic poets like Valerius Flaccus, Silius Italicus, or Statius. In addition to the phrase *aversa voluntas*, noted above, see also, e.g., Sil. 2.596, *haud gravior duris divum inclementia rebus/Quam leti proferre moras*, which has a marked affinity with *Aen.* 2.602; Stat. *Th.* 5.234, 10.716, *undantem...cruorem* and *Aen.* 10.908; and Val. Fl. 5.534-535, *cuperem haud tali vos tempore tectis/advenisse meis, quo me gravis adsidet hostis*, which is strikingly similar to *Aen.* 11.303-304.

4. Three other examples appear in Tacitus' works at H.4.24; 4.80; and A.19.2. Statius possibly uses the verb twice, *Silv.*1.1.23 (v.1) and 2.2.136.
5. Tiberius and Micipsa are given similar motivation and Jugurtha and Germanicus similar positive qualities. Sallust's passage ends *statuit eum obiectare periculis et eo modo fortunam temptare*.
6. The relevant passages are as follows:

Tacitus	Virgil
2.23.2 placidum aequor mille navium remis strepere aut velis impelli	<i>Aen.</i> 8.96 placido aequore; <i>Geo.</i> 1.254, remis impellere marmor
2.23.2 atro nubium globo effusa grando	<i>Aen.</i> 10.803-4 velut effusa si quando grandine nimbi/praecipitant.
2.23.3 tumidis Germaniae terris	<i>Geo.</i> 2.324 vere tument terrae
2.23.3 disiecitque naves in aperta Oceani aut insulas saxi abruptis vel per occulta vada infestas	<i>Aen.</i> 1.43 disiecitque rates; 1.108-12, tris Notus abreptas in saxa latentia torquet; tris Eurys in brevia et syrtis urget; inliditque vadis; 1.536 in vada caeca tulit
2.23.4 equi iumenta sarcinae, etiam arma praecipitantur	<i>Aen.</i> 1.118-19 naves in gurgite vasto/ arma virum tabulaeque et Troia gaza per undas.
2.23.4 alvei manantes per latera et fluctu superurgente	<i>Aen.</i> 1.122-23 laxis laterum compagibus omnes/accipiunt imbrem rimisque fatiscunt; 1.537 superante salo
2.24.2 plures apud insulas longius sitas eiectae	<i>Aen.</i> 1.511-12 ater quos turbo penitusque alias avexerat oras.
2.24.2 quem apud scopulos	<i>Aen.</i> 1.180 Aeneas scopulum interea conscendit
2.24.2 oppeteret	<i>Aen.</i> 1.96 Troiae sub moenibus altis/ contigit oppetere
2.24.3 claudae naves raro remigio	<i>Aen.</i> 1.104 franguntur remi; 5.271 amissis remis

J. Soubiran in "Thèmes et rythmes d'Épopée dans les *Annales* de Tacite", *Pallas* 12 (1964), 55-79, discussed the storm and its literary background in considerable detail. In spite of the fact that it is a stock theme, and that Soubiran finds similarities between Tacitus' account and details from Pacuvius, Ovid, Seneca, and Lucan, as well as Albinovanus Pedo, who sailed with Germanicus, the sheer number of parallels listed above and the contexts from which they come indicate that Virgil is Tacitus' primary source.

7. For a discussion of Germanicus' travels see e.g. J.J. Savage, "Germanicus and Aeneas", *C.J.* 34 (1938-39), 237-238.
8. See J.J. Savage, "Germanicus and Aeneas Again", *C.J.* 38 (1942-43), 166.
9. Livy uses the same phrase three times, twice of the Romans' reactions to defeats by Hannibal, and once of the reaction of the people of Rhodes to the destruction of their fleet (25.22.1; 27.2.3; 37.12.7). Virgil also uses the phrase three times at *Aen.* 6.868, 11.62-63 and 11.231.
10. "When e.g. Tiberius' intention is described in *Ann.* i.47 as *immotum fixumque* and we recall that the other famous use of the phrase is to describe (*Aen.* iv.15) Dido's intention never to wed again, we cannot but wonder if Tiberius' purpose will prove to be as unstable as Dido's." N.P. Miller, P.V.S. 1961-1962, 32. To this F.R.D. Goodyear replies *ad loc.*: "But T. himself uses the phrase, not Tiberius: Vergil had put it in the mouth of Dido. Again, T. clearly suggests at the end of this ch. that Tiberius pursued his policy steadfastly, for all his dissembling. And we already know that there is no reason why he should change it, since the Pannonian mutiny is over and the German mutiny near its end." On these grounds he concludes that this is not an allusion calculated to recall the original context but simply a verbal echo:
11. *isque ubi se nullo iam cursu evadere pugnae/posse neque instantem reginam avertere cernit,/consilio versare dolos ingressus et astu/incipit. Aen.* 11.702ff.
12. It should be noted that even here Tacitus thinks, to some extent, in Virgilian language. Syme comments (339, n.2) "Observe also the historian's (ostensible) depreciation of his own theme – 'nobis in arto et inglorius labor'. What he wished to suggest, but could not claim, was 'in tenui labor: at tenuis non gloria' (*Georgics* IV.6)."
13. The verb *infringere* is used once of a person by Cicero, *Att.* 7.2.2, as Goodyear notes. Koestermann cites Liv. 2.59.4, *nihil infractus...animus* which is analogous rather than strictly parallel. It is used twice of persons in the *Aeneid*. At *Aen.* 5.784, where it is applied to Juno, it is followed, vv. 785-86, by *exedissee nefandis urbem odiis*, the model for *Ann.* 2.27.1 (a parallel noted by Koestermann). It appears again at *Aen.* 12.1 in the scene between Latinus and Turnus which provided Tacitus with *praestans animi*, 12.19 (*Ann.* 6.6.2), *tanto impensius*, 12.20 (*Ann.* 3.44.4) and *adscire*, 12.38 (*Ann.* 1.3.5)
14. B. Walker, *The Annals of Tacitus: A Study in the Writing of History* (Manchester, 1960), esp. 93ff. See also D.C.A. Shotton, "The trial of M. Scribonius Libo Drusus", *Historia* 21, no.1 (1972), 88-98.
15. That other writers found Virgil's passage striking is clear from their imitations of it. In addition to *Sil.* 2.596 see also *Stat. Th.* 1.650. This same scene of revelation provides Tacitus with a striking image of total destruction in his account of the