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## Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' Annales

### A Contextual Analysis

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2018

*Document Version:*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Damtoft Poulsen, A. (2018). *Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' Annales: A Contextual Analysis*. [Doctoral Thesis (monograph), Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology]. MediaTryck Lund.

*Total number of authors:*

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Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' *Annales*



# Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' *Annales*

A contextual analysis

Aske Damtoft Poulsen



**LUND**  
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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Humanities and Theology,  
Lund University, Sweden,  
to be defended at the Centre of Languages and Literature (Hörsalen),  
18 May 2018, at 14.15.

*Faculty opponent*  
Prof. Elizabeth E. Keitel

Organization LUND UNIVERSITY Centre for Languages and Literature  Author Aske Damtoft Poulsen	Document name Doctoral dissertation	
	Date of issue 18 May 2018	
	Sponsoring organization	
Title and subtitle Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' <i>Annales</i> : a contextual analysis		
Abstract <p>This doctoral dissertation offers a contextual analysis of accounts of northern barbarians in Tacitus' <i>Annales</i>. It aims to demonstrate the functions of these accounts, that is, how they are connected to the structure of the books in which they appear as well as of the <i>Annales</i> as a whole. It is argued throughout that accounts of northern barbarians form a key part of Tacitus' narrative of the Julio-Claudian dynasty (AD 14-68). They allow Tacitus to explore, reflect on, and play with key moments of the Roman past within a fertile interpretive framework.</p> <p>The study comprises 5 chapters; In chapter 1, aim, material, background, methodological framework, and previous scholarship are discussed. Chapters 2-4 consist of analyses of individual accounts of northern barbarians within the books in which they appear.</p> <p>Chapter 2 is entitled "Arminius and his Adversaries: the Germanic civil wars of books 1-2". This chapter focuses on the narrative of Arminius' resistance against Rome in books 1-2 (1.55-70, 2.5-26, 2.44-46, 2.88). The recurrent motifs of speeches delivered by northern barbarians are introduced and the variety in their usage demonstrated, the account of Arminius and his adversaries is explored for how it evokes the theme of civil war, and parallels between events in Germania and the (unrealised) civil conflict between Tiberius and Germanicus in Rome are discussed.</p> <p>Chapter 3 is entitled "Thracians (and Romans) under Siege: resistance, suicide, and surrender in book 4". This chapter treats the account of the Thracian revolt at 4.46-51. The analysis revolves around the debate among the besieged Thracians: potential models for the debate are discussed and its relationship with the main themes of book 4 is investigated, that is, the growing power of Sejanus, the increase of suicides among Roman nobles, and the imperial siege and sack of Rome.</p> <p>Chapter 4 is entitled "Boudicca and her Predecessoresses: a British 'Lucretia-story' in book 14". This chapter deals with the British revolt led by Boudicca at 14.29-39. My analysis includes a comparison with the accounts of the revolt in the <i>Agricola</i> and Dio, a discussion of the theme of female power in book 14, and a reading of the account as a 'Lucretia-story': Boudicca's evocation of Roman heroes and heroines of old and its interpretive consequences for the understanding of book 14 are discussed.</p> <p>Chapter 5 (an epilogue) restates the conclusions of the analyses, reflects on the possibility of summarising the functions of accounts of northern barbarians, relates my findings to the <i>Annales</i> as a whole, and suggests possible perspectives for future research.</p>		
Key words Tacitus, <i>Annales</i> , Roman literature, historiography, intertextuality, intratextuality		
Classification system and/or index terms (if any)		
Supplementary bibliographical information		Language English
ISSN and key title 1100-7931 Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 24		ISBN 978-91-7753-669-7
Recipient's notes	Number of pages 249	Price
	Security classification	

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# Accounts of Northern Barbarians in Tacitus' *Annales*

A contextual analysis

Aske Damtoft Poulsen



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Faculty of Humanities and Theology, Centre for Languages and Literature,  
Lund University

Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 24

ISBN 978-91-7753-669-7

ISSN 1100-7931

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University  
Lund 2018

Published with support from  
Faculty of Humanities and Theology at Lund University  
Hjalmar Gullbergs och Greta Thotts stipendiefond



MADE IN SWEDEN 

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*To Claudia*





# Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	xiii
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aim of the study .....	1
1.2 Material: accounts of northern barbarians .....	1
1.3 Background: Tacitus and the Principate .....	4
1.4 Methodological framework .....	8
1.4.1 A narrative.....	9
1.4.2 An overview .....	11
1.4.2.1 Premise: historiography and <i>inuentio</i> .....	13
1.4.2.2 Aim: reading (contextually) for structure.....	14
1.4.2.3 Reading practice: intratextuality and intertextuality .....	18
1.5 Previous research.....	24
1.5.1 Previous research on Tacitus.....	24
1.5.2 Previous research on Tacitus' (accounts of) northern barbarians .....	25
1.6 The chapters of the book .....	29
<b>2. Arminius and his Adversaries: the Germanic Civil Wars in Books 1-2</b> .....	<b>31</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	31
2.1.1 Arminius in other ancient authors .....	33
2.1.2 Previous research on Arminius.....	36
2.2 Paraphrase of the account of Arminius.....	40
2.2.1 Arminius and Segestes (1.58-59) .....	42
2.2.1.1 The speech of Segestes.....	43
2.2.1.2 The first speech of Arminius .....	46
2.2.2 Arminius and his brother Flavus (2.9-10) .....	50
2.2.3 Germanicus and Arminius (2.14-15).....	53
2.2.4 Arminius and Maroboduus (2.44-46).....	57

2.2.5 The death and obituary of Arminius (2.88) .....	63
2.3 Analysis .....	67
2.3.1 Variety and rhetorical aims in the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries .....	68
2.3.1.1 The contrast between freedom and slavery .....	70
2.3.1.2 Traitors of the (Germanic) fatherland .....	73
2.3.1.3 The Varian disaster.....	74
2.3.2 Arminius and the Germanic civil war in books 1-2 .....	77
2.3.2.1 Civil wars in Rome.....	78
2.3.2.2 Civil war in Germania .....	81
2.3.2.3 Arminius, Germanicus, and the consequences of (not) waging civil war .....	90
2.4 Conclusions .....	95
<b>3. Thracians (and Romans) under Siege: Resistance, Suicide, and Surrender in Book 4 .....</b>	<b>97</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	97
3.1.1 Pre-Tacitean treatments of the Thracians .....	99
3.1.2 Previous scholarship on Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt.....	100
3.2 Paraphrase of the account of the Thracian revolt .....	103
3.2.1 The Thracian revolt within the context of the fourth book.....	103
3.2.2 Some introductory remarks on the Thracian revolt .....	105
3.2.3 The causes of the revolt.....	106
3.2.4 The first encounters .....	108
3.2.5 The debate and the battle.....	108
3.2.6 The rest of the book.....	110
3.3 Analysis .....	111
3.3.1 Models for the Thracian 'debate under siege' .....	111
3.3.1.1 Caesar's speech of Critognatus .....	112
3.3.1.2 Livy's account of the Roman defeat at the Caudine Forks.....	114
3.3.1.3 Lucan's account of Vulteius and his Caesarians .....	116
3.3.1.4 Josephus' account of the siege of Masada.....	119
3.3.1.5 Comparative remarks on pre-Tacitean 'debates under siege' .....	120

3.3.2 Confronted by a satiety of similar material: the Thracian revolt within book 4 .....	121
3.3.2.1 Resistance, suicide, and collaboration/surrender among the Romans.....	121
3.3.2.2 The digression at 4.32-33: different different but same? .....	126
3.3.2.3 Recurrent imagery I: (exemplary) remedies for oppression .....	135
3.3.2.4 Recurrent imagery II: siege and sack .....	140
3.4 Conclusions .....	145
<b>4. Boudicca and her Predecessoresses: a British ‘Lucretia-story’ in Book 14 .....</b>	<b>149</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	149
4.1.1 Boudicca, the Iceni, and their revolt: the historical evidence.....	150
4.1.2 Boudicca and the Britons before the <i>Annales</i> .....	151
4.1.3 Previous research on Tacitus’ account of Boudicca in the <i>Annales</i> .....	152
4.2 Paraphrase of the account of Boudicca’s revolt .....	156
4.2.1 Book 14 before Boudicca’s revolt (14.1-28).....	157
4.2.2 Boudicca’s revolt (14.29-39).....	158
4.2.2.1 Suetonius Paulinus’ expedition to Mona.....	158
4.2.2.2 Causes and outbreak.....	159
4.2.2.3 Roman defeats and Suetonius’ return.....	161
4.2.2.4 Preparation for battle: the speeches of Boudicca and Suetonius Paulinus .....	163
4.2.2.5 The battle and its aftermath.....	167
4.2.3 Book 14 after Boudicca’s revolt (14.40-65).....	169
4.3 Analysis .....	170
4.3.1 Boudicca, Boudicca, and Βουδουῖκα: a comparison with the accounts in the <i>Agricola</i> and in Dio .....	170
4.3.1.1 The account of Boudicca’s revolt in the <i>Agricola</i> .....	171
4.3.1.2 Cassius Dio’s account of Boudicca’s revolt.....	172
4.3.2 Femininity and female power in book 14.....	176
4.3.2.1 Femininity and female power in the <i>Annales</i> .....	176
4.3.2.2 Femininity and female power in the account of Boudicca’s revolt.....	179
4.3.2.3 Cartimandua, Epicharis, and Octavia .....	182

4.3.3 Chastity, freedom, and exemplarity: the account of Boudicca as a ‘Lucretia-story’ .....	185
4.3.3.1 Livy’s accounts of Lucretia (1.57-60) and Verginia (3.43-48).....	191
4.3.3.2 A Tacitean ‘Lucretia-story’ .....	195
4.3.3.3 Damsel in distress.....	197
4.3.3.4 Virtuous avenger of violated chastity.....	199
4.3.3.5 Tribune of the plebs?.....	202
4.4 Conclusions .....	208
<b>5. Epilogue .....</b>	<b>212</b>
5.1 Parts and wholes, particulars and universals .....	212
5.2 The northern barbarians and the Principate.....	214
5.3 Further research.....	217
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Index nominum et verborum.....</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia .....</b>	<b>248</b>

## Acknowledgements

While I do not know how it came about that I have written a book on northern barbarians in the *Annales*, I do know that it could not have happened were it not for certain people. I would like to express here my warmest gratitude to them all. All errors are my own.

Firstly, to my supervisors Arne Jönsson and Christina S. Kraus. You have both, in your different ways, been indispensable to me. I cannot imagine that a doctoral student has ever been guided so closely, so expertly, so tenaciously, and so wittily. Secondly, to my former supervisor Monika Asztalos for being my most careful reader, bluntest critic, and inspiring mentor. Your contribution has been invaluable. Thirdly, to the opponent at my mock viva, Rhiannon Ash for your generosity and kindness as well as your helpful corrections and stimulating suggestions. I can only apologise for my inability to do justice to your excellent feedback.

To my parents, Mona and Kurt, and my big brother Malthe and his family, Rita, Mikkel, and Peder, I would like to express my deepest affection. I owe to you not only my interest in history, but also the creative possibilities given by a happy childhood. You have always supported me in my choices and I am immensely grateful for your unwavering support for a project which must at times have seemed like a strange use of my time.

Heartfelt thanks go also to my colleagues at the department, especially Cajsa Sjöberg, Astrid Nilsson, Johanna Svensson, Aron Sjöblad, Martina Björk, Elisabeth Göransson, and Arsenij Vetushko-Kalevich. Your encouragement, suggestions, and aid in proof-reading have improved the book considerably. Again, all errors remain my own. An extra bow goes to Arsenij for your on-the-spot assistance in translating German, frighteningly good command of Latin, not to mention dry sense of humour: you have been an impeccable office-mate.

Special thanks go to my high school Latin teachers Kristin Heffermehl and Hilde Sejersted: your dedication, enthusiasm, and lists of ablatives led from *uobis gratias ago nisi me docuissetis, hic liber non scriptus esset*.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Bjørg Tosterud for teaching me how to enjoy the *misera laetitia* of reading Tacitus, Tor Ivar Østmoe for opening my mind to alternative approaches to the classics, Ingela Nilsson for guiding me to (and from, I suppose) narratology, Mathilde Skoie for helpful feedback at the final stages of the project, the entire department of classics (with families) at Yale University for your generous hospitality during my

two stays with you, and many, many more. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

To my friends in Lund, Malmö, Oslo, Yale, and across Europe, I would like to convey my most sincere feelings of appreciation. All work and no play would have made me a dull boy.

Finally, to Claudia: from the beginning we have been partners in toil and joy, frustration and inspiration, allusions and intertexts, early mornings and (too) late nights, days of sun and days of invisible drops of rain, quests for knowledge from Pisa to Oslo and from Würzburg to Yale, and endless(ly stimulating) discussions over breakfast. This book could never have been the same without the excitement of love. It is dedicated to you.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Aim of the study

This study comprises analyses of accounts of northern barbarians in Tacitus' *Annales*. The main aim is to analyse and explore the functions of these accounts, that is, how they are connected to the structure of the books in which they appear as well as of the *Annales* as a whole.

Although my main material consists of accounts of northern barbarians, I do not aim to extract information from these accounts about those barbarians as they existed outside the text of the *Annales*; the aim is not to uncover any “historical reality” beyond that of the text itself, nor to determine the historical trustworthiness of Tacitus as a source for the events described in these accounts. I am interested in the northern barbarians solely as literary characters, more precisely in how the accounts in which they appear fit into the *Annales*: which themes they bring up, how they interact with other parts of the text and with other texts, and what their non-Roman setting allows in terms of adopting different perspectives on recurrent themes. I will not use Tacitus' accounts of northern barbarians as a source on northern barbarians, but as an entry point to investigate the structure and discuss some key themes of the *Annales*.<sup>1</sup>

In this introductory chapter, I will discuss my material (section 1.2), the background to the study (section 1.3), the methodological framework (section 1.4), and previous research (section 1.4), as well as give a short summary of the succeeding chapters (section 1.5).

## 1.2 Material: accounts of northern barbarians

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<sup>1</sup> For a similar approach to Tacitus' account of the trial of Cremutius Cordus, see Moles 1998, 135: “We are interpreting text, not reconstructing history.” For an historical overview of the period, see Bowman, Champlin, and Lintott 1996.



I enter the *Annales* through a selection of its accounts of northern barbarians.<sup>2</sup> The *Annales* is my designated whole of which these accounts are my designated parts.<sup>3</sup> By ‘accounts of northern barbarians’ I intend extended textual passages which include one or more northern barbarians among the major characters. By ‘northern barbarians’ I intend peoples who live to the north of or in the northern part of the Roman Empire and who are termed *barbari* in the *Annales*. They can be either independent, semi-independent, or annexed into a province of the Roman Empire, as long as Tacitus describes them as capable of claiming a common, non-Roman identity. In the *Annales* we typically find them engaged in war against Rome, either to defend or to reclaim their freedom. The most important northern barbarians of the *Annales* are the Germani<sup>4</sup>, the Thracians, the Britons, and the Gauls.<sup>5</sup> These peoples form a unity not only through their shared geographical location north of the Mediterranean, but also through some shared characteristics, e.g. a strong warrior ethos, intransigent fierceness (*ferocia*), unstable political systems, comparatively egalitarian social structures, and a powerful dedication to freedom (*libertas*); when members of these peoples deliver speeches, the theme of freedom and slavery is almost always present. This is in contrast to the eastern barbarians (Parthians, Armenians), among whom monarchy is the default political system and whose orators rarely touch on the theme of freedom.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All references, unless otherwise indicated, are to the *Annales* and are cited from Heubner 1994; note that I have consistently replaced ‘v’ with ‘u’ in all Latin citations.

<sup>3</sup> On the designation of parts and wholes as an act of reading, see section 1.4.2.3.

<sup>4</sup> I use the words ‘Germania’, ‘Germani’, and ‘Germanic’ rather than ‘Germany’, ‘Germans’, and ‘German’ to denote the area and people written about by Tacitus; cf. Rives (2012, 45) and Pagán (2017, 78).

<sup>5</sup> For the Germani as *barbari*, see 1.57.1, 1.61.3, 1.64.1, 1.65.1, 1.68.1, 2.14.2, 2.16.2, 2.21.1, 2.63.6, 2.88.3, 11.16.2, 11.17.3, 11.19.1, 11.20.1, 12.29.2, 13.54.2. For the Thracians, see 4.47.1, 4.49.1, 4.49.3, 4.51.1. For the Britons, see 12.35.2, 14.32.2, 14.33.2, 14.36.1, 14.39.1). The Gauls, whose revolt at 3.40-47 I will touch on briefly, are not termed *barbari* in the extant *Annales*. The absence of the term is hardly surprising, since Gaul had been part of the Roman Empire for more than fifty years at the time of the revolt (21 AD). However, the Gauls still merit inclusion among the northern barbarians due to Tacitus’ stress on their chequered history with Rome, their hybrid Gallo-Roman identity, and the similarity of their motives for revolt with other northern barbarian rebels. Other peoples termed *barbari* in the *Annales* include Numidians (3.21.4, 4.25.2), as well as various easterners, primarily Armenians and Parthians (2.2.1, 2.56.2, 6.31.2, 6.32.1, 12.11.2, 12.12.2, 12.14.1, 12.45.3, 12.47.3, 12.48.2, 12.49.1, 13.36.2, 13.38.2, 14.23.2, 14.24.3, 15.9.1, 15.11.1, 15.25.2, 15.28.1, 15.28.2).

<sup>6</sup> That they rarely speak about freedom does not entail that Tacitus does not use them to illustrate the decline of freedom in Rome; cf. Gilmartin 1973 on the account of Corbulo’s

The major accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* are the Germanic wars of Arminius (1.55-2.88: *passim*), the Gallic revolt of Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir (3.40-47), the revolt and siege of the Thracians (4.46-51), the British resistance of Caratacus (12.31-40), and the British revolt of Boudicca (14.29-39). Smaller accounts include an internal Thracian conflict (2.64-67), another Thracian revolt (3.38.3-39), a Frisian revolt (4.72-73), the dispatch of Italicus (11.16-17), Corbulo's Germanic campaign (11.18-20), various Germanic affairs (12.27-30), and more Germanic affairs (13.53-57). My decision to focus only on northern barbarians (thus excluding Parthians, Armenians, Iberians, and Numidians) is determined by limitations of time and space. Even with this more narrow focus, however, I have been unable to undertake a complete analysis of all accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales*. The most notable absences are the Gallic revolt and Caratacus' resistance (cf. section 5.3).

As a consequence of my focus on how the accounts of northern barbarians function within the main narrative of the *Annales*, my discussions tend to revolve around the key themes of and questions suggested by the text as a whole, namely those connected with the evolution of the Principate: how it was established, what its consequences are for Rome and her citizens, how its existence is perpetuated and justified, and how it can be resisted. Somewhat paradoxically, then, although the northern barbarians make up its primary material, the study is thematically focused on Roman matters. Why, then, one might ask, am I looking at the accounts of northern barbarians, and not at those passages in which Tacitus writes more specifically and in his own voice about the Principate? The answer to this is that scholars have spent the last 100 years poring over the passages in Tacitus' texts where he offers (a semblance of) his own opinions without arriving at any consensus, except perhaps that the hunt for Tacitean opinions is an arduous, if not impossible task (cf. sections 1.3 and 1.4.2.2).

Moreover, given the sensitive political subjects treated in the *Annales* and the at times brutal repression of dissenting voices by the imperial regime, the best way to explore Tacitus' treatment of key themes and questions might not be to investigate the statements that he has put into his own mouth. Although one could, as noted by Curiatius Maternus (*Dial.* 11) and experienced by Cremutius Cordus (4.34-35), both wield and be accused of wielding political power through literary characters, the lands of the North might have provided Tacitus not only with a safer, but also more fertile framework for the

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eastern campaigns in books 13-15, and Keitel 1978 on the role of Parthia and Armenia in books 11-12.

treatment of sensitive subjects. This is not to say that I consider the northern barbarians as mouthpieces of Tacitus, but that their position as imperial outsiders whose criticism of the Empire belonged to the historiographical tradition enabled Tacitus to discuss more liberally themes that lay at the heart of the Principate. On the frontiers and outside the borders of the Empire, points could be made indirectly, parallels drawn allusively, and the ideology of the Principate tested tentatively. The northern barbarians, in short, could be Tacitus' way in.<sup>7</sup>

A change of perspective might therefore be salutary. Thus, while the study deals with a frequently contemplated theme, it does so from a perspective which is seldom considered and has never been thoroughly adopted.

### 1.3 Background: Tacitus and the Principate

“The large and primary matter that detained and engaged the sceptical attention of Cornelius Tacitus was the Principate itself.” (Syme 1958, 408)

“Liberty was the central concern of the historian Tacitus, from his earliest published work to the final extant chapters of the ‘Annales’.” (Morford 1991, 3420)

Conclusions about the main theme of the Tacitean corpus are strikingly similar. Whether one follows Syme (the Principate) or Morford (freedom<sup>8</sup>) seems largely inconsequential: in the Tacitean corpus, the decline of freedom is inseparable from the consolidation of the Principate. Unsurprisingly, then, the Principate and its consequences for the political freedom of the Roman citizens, especially senators, have long held a central place in Tacitean scholarship.<sup>9</sup> A recurrent aim of this scholarship has been to recover Tacitus' opinions about the Principate as a system of government.<sup>10</sup> Several scholars

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<sup>7</sup> On the interplay between inclusion and exclusion as an interpretive paradigm for the exploration of the Tacitean corpus, see Haynes 2014; cf. O'Gorman 2014. On Tacitus' need to consider not only the imperial reaction, but also his own standing among his senatorial peers, see Sailor 2008; on the dangers inherent in literary production, cf. section 3.3.2.2.

<sup>8</sup> I use 'freedom' rather than 'liberty', since freedom is derived from 'free' in the same way that *libertas* is derived from *liber*. For studies on the meaning of *libertas*, see Wirszubski 1950, Liebeschuetz 1966/2012, Roller 2001, Arena 2012, and Lavan 2011 and 2013.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to the studies mentioned above, see Vielberg 1987 (151-168), Williams 1989, Sage 1991, Sailor 2008 (esp. 119-121), Giua 2014, and Strunk 2017.

<sup>10</sup> For some passages which demonstrate how the Principate, through its internal logic, leads to specific phenomena and determines how events unfold, and thus confirm Tacitus' interest in

argue that Tacitus, in spite of the harsh and systemic criticisms contained within his works, was a reluctant supporter of the Principate in the sense that he considered it the best – perhaps even only – possible system of government for Rome.<sup>11</sup> This conclusion rests mainly on the belief that he accepted the Principate’s main claim to legitimacy, namely that it was necessary for the maintenance of peace in the Empire.<sup>12</sup> However, while there are indeed many passages in the Tacitean corpus in which Tacitus or his characters make a connection between peace and the Principate, we should be

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the Principate as a system of government, see Mucianus’ exhortation to Vespasian (*Hist.* 2.76-77), which amounts to a structural analysis of the causes of civil war within the Principate, the murder of Agrippa Postumus (1.6.1: *primum facinus noui principatus*), for which the Principate itself is held responsible (note the possessive genitive; cf. Goodyear 1972, *ad loc.*), Sallustius Crispus’ succeeding sententia about the need for secrecy when ruling as a monarch (1.6.3: *eam condicionem esse imperandi, ut non aliter ratio constet quam si uni reddatur*), Tacitus’ emphasis on the need to examine the underlying causes of things (*Hist.* 1.4.1: *non modo casus euentusque rerum, qui plerumque fortuiti sunt, sed ratio etiam causaeque noscantur*), and Petillius Cerialis’ speech to the Gauls (*Hist.* 4.73-74), in which he encourages the Gauls to remain loyal to Rome in face of the Batavian revolt by arguing that, just as bad weather cannot be avoided within the laws of nature, so bad emperors cannot be avoided within the laws of the Principate. See also Pelling’s (1999, 344-345) observation that the inner logic of the Principate creates specific roles, that is, imposes similar practices on characters who occupy the same position within the imperial system (e.g. emperor, imperial widow and mother, enemy of the emperor), and Shotter’s (1991, 3308-3312) inadvertent demonstration of how the Principate does not need a tyrant to become tyrannical. The view that Tacitus criticises only individual emperors and not the Principate as a system (Percival 1980, Morford 1991, Shotter 1991) seems to have been largely, and rightly, abandoned; yet see Whitmarsh (2009, 83) and Giua (2014, 53).

<sup>11</sup> Jens 1956; Syme 1958; Benario 1964 and 1991; Christ 1978; Percival 1980; Shotter 1991; Morford 1991. The view is challenged most forcefully by Moles 1998 and Strunk 2017; cf. Low 2013a, 32. For more guarded discussions of Tacitus’ judgement of the Principate, see Rutledge 1998, Oakley 2009a, and Sailor 2012.

<sup>12</sup> The language in which scholars express Tacitus’ acceptance of the Principate is highly revelatory of their own belief in its necessity: Jens 1956, 352: “Tacitus’ Tragik liegt in seinem Wissen um die Unmöglichkeit, die *libertas* im politischen Raum zu verwirklichen, ohne damit zugleich den Keim für Bürgerkrieg, Unruhe und Streit zwischen den Menschen zu legen.” Syme 1958, 408: “That the supreme authority in the Commonwealth had to be concentrated in the hands of one man was inevitable, if Rome was to regain peace and stability.” Benario 1964, 99: “Tacitus recognized that there had been no other alternative for Augustus: the republic with a guiding *princeps* offered the only escape from chaos.” Christ 1978, 483: “Schon in den *Historiae* (I, 16) wie im dialogus (40, 4) hat Tacitus aber auch die Notwendigkeit des Principats bedingt anerkannt, die Cerialis-Rede (hist. IV, 74) mit ihren desillusionierten und teilweise auch resignierten Feststellungen dürfte Wertungen enthalten, die Tacitus’ eigener Sicht sehr nahe kommen.” Morford 1991, 3442: “Tacitus continued to recognise the necessity of the principate, however much he regretted the loss of liberty.” See also Momigliano 1990, 118-119. On the maintenance of peace as a cornerstone of imperial propaganda, see Cornwell 2017 and Bhatt 2017.

wary when we interpret Tacitus' words (as well as those of his characters) regarding a claim which was so obviously advantageous for the ruling regime. Indeed, a closer look at these passages reveals them as poor sources of evidence that Tacitus believed that the Principate was necessary for the maintenance of peace. We start with the passages which Tacitus has put into his own mouth.

In his appraisal of earlier Roman historiography in the prologue of the *Historiae*, Tacitus writes that (*Hist.* 1.1.1) *postquam bellatum apud Actium atque omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere*. While the statement *omnem potentiam ad unum conferri pacis interfuit* does indeed make a connection between peace and one-man rule, it does so within a very specific historical context. Tacitus relates how the concentration of power in the hands of Augustus after the battle of Actium was justified. The statement cannot represent Tacitus' unshakable verdict on the successfulness of the Principate in maintaining peace, since only a few lines later we find the apparently conflicting statement that his work is rich in disasters, terrible in battles, torn by dissensions, and savage through peace itself (*Hist.* 1.2.1): *opus aggredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum*.<sup>13</sup> The peace of the Principate is described as savage, and one might wonder for what kind of peace the

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<sup>13</sup> As was kindly pointed out to me by prof. Monika Asztalos, *pace* in Tacitus is never purely temporal when standing on its own, but has always an instrumental meaning: Maroboduus is bound by peace (2.26.3: *Maroboduum pace obstrictum*), Tacfarinas is not to be bought off with peace (2.73.2: *nedum ... Tacfarinas pace et concessione agrorum redimeretur*), L. Piso was inattentive because of peace (4.45.1: *L. Pisonem, pace incuriosum*), Nero hopes that the rebellious minds of the Britons can be settled through peace (14.39.1: *rebelles barbarorum animos pace componi*), a legion is sent to Spain to cool down through peace and quiet (2.67.2: *prima classicorum legio in Hispaniam missa ut pace et otio mitesceret*), and Hordeonius Flaccus' ancestors were famous because of their exploits in peace and war (4.55.1: *pace belloque clara origo*). I have found only one exception (*Hist.* 2.86.2): [Antonius Primus] *pace pessimus, bello non spernendus*; and even here one senses a certain instrumental meaning, in the sense that Primus is "not to be despised for what he could accomplish through a time of peace". To describe a time-period, he uses *in pace* (1.19.3, 1.48.2, 6.36.2, 11.10.1, 14.61.2, *Agr.* 13.2, 32.1, *Germ.* 13.3, 18.3, 31.3, *Hist.* 1.5.1, 1.18.3, 1.51.2, 1.54.3, 1.75.1, 1.77.1, 1.88.3, 1.86.1, 2.4.4, 2.77.3, 2.82.2, 2.84.2, 3.71.3, 4.26.2, 4.49.1, 5.12.2), *longa pace* (13.35.1, *Agr.* 29.2, *Germ.* 14.2, *Hist.* 1.67.2, 1.88.2), *media pace* (14.33.2) *multa pace* (*Hist.* 4.35.2), or *ex longa pace* (*Hist.* 5.16.3); note that the expressions *longa pace* and *media pace* may also carry instrumental meanings. Cf. Blackman and Betts 1986. Thus, *ipsa etiam pace saeuum* cannot mean "even in peace sinister" (Wellesley 1964), but must imply that the work and the period it treats (Damon 2003, *ad loc.*) are "savage through peace itself".

concentration of power in the hands of one man was advantageous.<sup>14</sup> Tacitus makes a connection between peace and the Principate also in his summary of Roman history in book 3 of the *Annales* (3.28.2): *Caesar Augustus, potentiae securus, quae triumviratu iusserat aboleuit deditque iura, quis pace et principe uteremur*. However, this refers to the intentions of a character within the text (here Augustus), and cannot be taken as Tacitus' own opinion. In sum, the passages in which Tacitus' authorial voice speaks about the Principate are too few and too dependent on their respective contexts<sup>15</sup> to serve as a basis for a reconstruction of his attitude to the system.<sup>16</sup>

Tacitus also puts the idea that the Principate was necessary for the maintenance of peace into the mouths of some of his characters: we find it in the speeches of Curiatus Maternus (*Dial.* 40-41), Galba to Piso (*Hist.* 1.15-16), Vitellius to his soldiers (*Hist.* 1.56.3), Eprius Marcellus to his fellow senators (*Hist.* 4.8), the Remi to their fellow Gauls (*Hist.* 4.67), Cerialis to the rebellious Gauls (*Hist.* 4.73-74), and Asinius Gallus in the senate (1.12.3), as well as in the thoughts of those who fear or wish for war after the death of Augustus (1.4.2) and in the words of Augustus' supporters at his funeral (1.9.3-5).<sup>17</sup> Galba and Cerialis are the characters most often taken as spokespersons of Tacitus.<sup>18</sup> A contextual reading of their speeches, however, reveals the hazardousness of extracting authorial opinions from them: Cerialis needs to persuade the Gauls not to rebel, and Galba is an emperor. Note also that the claim of Augustus' supporters that Augustus secured peace in the Empire is attacked immediately afterwards by Augustus' critics, who designate the Augustan peace as bloody (1.10.4: *pacem sine dubio post haec, uerum cruentam*). As will become apparent in the course of this study, I do

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<sup>14</sup> See also *Hist.* 1.50.2, where the peace of the recent past, presumably the reigns of Nero and Galba, is explicitly designated as *saeva*. The etymological connection between *pax* and *pacare*, and its implications of a subject who pacifies and an object who is pacified, is very much at the fore in Tacitus' writings, e.g. in the speech of Calgacus (*Agr.* 30-32).

<sup>15</sup> I use the term 'context' in a purely intratextual sense, that is, to denote the textual surroundings which provide interpretability to a given word, phrase, passage, or account: the immediately preceding and succeeding chapters, an entire book, or a work as a whole. Should I wish to refer to an extra-textual context, I will qualify it with an appropriate adjective, e.g. 'historical' context.

<sup>16</sup> Christ 1978, 451.

<sup>17</sup> See esp. Galba's words to Otho at *Hist.* 1.16.1: *si immensum imperii corpus stare ac librari sine rectore posset, dignus eram a qua res publica inciperet: nunc eo necessitatis iam pridem uentum est ut nec mea senectus conferre plus populo Romano possit quam bonum successorem, nec tua plus iuuenta quam bonum principem*.

<sup>18</sup> For Galba, see Jens (1956, 341) and Shotter (1991, 3285). For Cerialis, see Christ (1978, 483), Dauge (1981, 259), and Shotter (1991, 3326). For Eprius Marcellus, see Mellor 1993, 99.

believe that one can make assumptions about how a speech functions within a text, that is, how it promotes a specific way of reading the text. However, I do not believe that any character can be identified as a spokesperson for Tacitus and that the contents of his or her speech can be translated directly into Tacitean opinions. The individual voices of the text are an integral part of its structure (they are its flesh and bones, so to speak), but if we wish to use them to reach a level of meaning beyond that of their respective speakers, we must contextualise them and explore their functions within the text as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

While I do not intend to enter the debate about Tacitus' opinions, at least not directly, I will offer a reading of the *Annales* in which there is very little left of the celebrated connection between *pax* and *principatus*. Already in 1978 it was noted by Christ and in 1984 demonstrated by Keitel that Tacitus portrays the Principate as an extension of, rather than an end to, the civil wars.<sup>20</sup> While he does not explicitly and in his own voice deny the claim that the Principate was necessary for peace, the claim is undermined by the narratives of the *Historiae* and *Annales* themselves. Tacitus, in short, keeps letting his characters claim that the Principate is necessary for peace, and then demonstrates, through the narrative, that the peace offered by the Principate is always fragile, frequently servile, and at times also bloody – that it is, in reality, the opposite of peace. While the opinions uttered by characters in the text are just that, the opinions of specific characters in specific situations, the framework within which these opinions are uttered is all Tacitus. In short, we should focus our attention on the structure of the text rather than on the individual voices within it; we must explore how the different parts of the text fit together and create meaning contextually.

## 1.4 Methodological framework

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<sup>19</sup> On the importance of analysing literary characters contextually, that is, examining their functions within the text in which they appear, see Pelling 1990, esp. 216. For contextual readings of Cerialis' speech, see Bastomsky 1988, Keitel (1993, 51-57), Haynes (2003, 168-171), Rutherford (2010, 323-326), and Master (2016, 51-58). For criticism of those who take Galba's words as "nothing less than the historian's own confession of a political creed", see Syme 1970, 133. On how the significance of a speech delivered by a northern barbarian character may transcend its local context, see O'Gorman 2014 on Calgacus and Caratacus.

<sup>20</sup> Christ 1978, 482; Keitel 1984; see also Woodman 1992/1998a (184-185), Ash 1999 and 2009, and Strunk 2017, 62-67, 118-119.

### 1.4.1 A narrative

Several theories have, in turn, made their mark on my project, and each has formed it with its particular methodological framework (with its particular set of premises, terminology, research questions, and approaches), which has then been torn down and supplanted by another. While older methodological frameworks have been continually replaced (discarded, forgotten, or nuanced), they have not been completely effaced. Each successive framework has left traces in the finished text, traces which might now, at the end, be as difficult to detect as they have been indispensable for the development of the project. It thus seems only right to afford some space to these theories, if only so that the reader might more easily ascertain the pillars and pedestals on which the project was first raised, by which it was later buttressed, and how they were finally hidden from view.

When I started my project some four years ago, I intended to investigate the development of the term *libertas* from the Late Republic to the Principate by looking at speeches put into the mouths of barbarians: Caesar's Critognatus and Sallust's Jugurtha from the Late Republic, Livy's Gauls from the Augustan Age, and Tacitus' Calgacus, Arminius, Boudicca, etc. from the Principate. I intended to use Koselleck's and/or Skinner's theories of conceptual change as a methodological framework.<sup>21</sup> As the immense scope of the project gradually dawned on me, I scaled it down, and, in the process of this downscaling, the idea of investigating conceptual change disappeared. I first went from "conceptual change of the word *libertas* between Republic and Principate as seen in speeches put into the mouths of barbarians" to "the use of the word *libertas* by Tacitus' barbarians", and then to "the use of the word *libertas* by Tacitus' northern barbarians in the *Annales*".

As the quantity of material gradually shrank, the possibility of reading it more closely grew. I realised that, contrary to what the commentaries kept telling me, there were significant differences between the individual speeches of Tacitus' northern barbarians: although the speeches do include many of the same recurrent motifs, they are employed differently. In order to investigate why, I turned to the immediate contexts of the speeches, namely the accounts in which they appear: with this expanse in material, my analyses came to be focused not only on the speeches themselves, but also on these surrounding accounts. It occurred to me that a speech in an historical work must make

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<sup>21</sup> The literature on conceptual history is vast; see esp. Koselleck 1972/2011 and Skinner 1969, 1999, and 2002; cf. Richter 1995 and Müller 2014.



sense on two different levels: (1) within its immediate context, and (2) within the context of the text as a whole. In other words, a northern barbarian character has certain intentions when he speaks in a certain way (e.g. to rally his fellow tribesmen to fight the Romans), but Tacitus also has his own intentions in letting a barbarian speak in a certain way. This move towards Tacitean intentions was made under the aegis of Woodman's insistence on the rhetorical nature of ancient historiography, especially the role of rhetorical *inuentio* in selecting and organising material for an historiographical work.<sup>22</sup> Visualising the accounts of northern barbarians as vast and malleable blank spaces lying at the mercy of Tacitus' critical mind, I started exploring (1) the connections between the speeches and the accounts in which they appear, and (2) the connections between these accounts and their contexts, that is, the theme of the books in which they appear.

The increased frequency with which I used the word 'intention' was troubling, however, and, as I was not particularly eager to get bogged down in philosophical debates, I decided to phrase my research questions in a less author-centred way (a relic of my Skinnerian approach).<sup>23</sup> Instead of talking about Tacitus' intentions ("why did Tacitus write so and so?"), I chose 'function' as my methodological keyword. This escape from authorial intention to textual structure led me into the domain of narratology. Narratology gave the project its final form, not by forcing me to rewrite my analyses with its terminology, but by moulding my research questions into shape: what are the functions of the accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales*, that is, how are they connected with the overall structure of the books in which they appear and of the *Annales* as a whole?

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<sup>22</sup> Woodman 1988.

<sup>23</sup> I was not significantly reassured by reading Anscombe's seminal 1957 work on intention. She notes that what we would like to know is not just an author's intention *of* writing a text (proven by the existence of the text), but his intention *in* writing, his motives. Anscombe notes drily that (19) "as for the importance of considering the motives of an action, as opposed to considering the intention, I am very glad not to be writing ethics or literary criticism, to which this question belongs." There is no lack of suggestions for how to overcome the problem of intention, most of which deal with some form of 'postulated intentions', e.g. Eco 1990, Levinson 1992, and Herman 2013. While I am sympathetic to their arguments, the wish to distance my approach from that of the scholarship which uncritically mined Tacitus' works for his opinions has led me to adopt a more text-centred terminology. I acknowledge that the change of terms does not remove all problems of subjectivity, but I do believe that it has helped me to avoid the most obvious pitfalls of claiming to know the intentions of other people.

## 1.4.2 An overview

While my foray into narratology did not lead me to adopt an explicitly narratological framework, it did lead me back to some of the Tacitean scholars whose approaches to the texts, in terms of premises, aims, and reading practices, were centred on their structures. Narratology, in the sense “structural analysis of texts”, existed in classical philology long before its modern version was invented by Todorov and Genette. In fact, structural analysis, what Keitel defines as “the means by which the historian arranges his material to best express his point of view”, has been central for Tacitean studies for more than 150 years.<sup>24</sup> The current theoretical foundations for such an approach was laid with the ‘rhetorical turn’ in the study of Roman historiography, led by T. P. Wiseman and A. J. Woodman.<sup>25</sup> Wiseman 1979, exploring how the fragmentarily preserved Roman historians of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC developed the annalistic format of their predecessors, claimed that lists of events were turned into fully fledged narratives through rhetorical embellishment.<sup>26</sup> Woodman 1988, arguing for the importance of rhetorical *inuentio* in ancient historiography, promoted an unprecedentedly literary approach to the study of ancient historical texts. Although the study treats several classical historiographers, Woodman has had a particularly strong impact on Tacitean studies, not least through the 1989 commentary on book 4 of the *Annales* (published jointly with R. H. Martin), in which the possibilities offered by his approach were demonstrated. He has also published extensively on Tacitus and the rhetorical nature of his texts, always with an eye for intertexts, imagery, and recurrent motifs.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See the overview of scholarship offered in Keitel 1977, 1-16.

<sup>25</sup> On the ‘rhetorical turn’ in the study of Roman historiography (also known as the ‘Wiseman-Woodman revolution’), see Feldherr (2009b, 6-8) and Ash (2012b, 10-11). For an all-out assault on Wiseman, Woodman, and their successors, see Lendon 2009. As my own acceptance of their framework implies, I find Lendon’s criticisms to be off-target: he seems to either simplify or (consciously or unconsciously) misinterpret the premises of the scholarship inspired by Wiseman and Woodman. His derogatory comments on literary studies are uncalled for. For more nuanced discussions of the debate between ‘traditionalists’ and ‘rhetorical historians’, see Laird 2009 and Marincola 2009, 15.

<sup>26</sup> See also Wiseman 1998 on the influence of drama on early Roman historiography.

<sup>27</sup> Commentaries include 1989 on *Annales* 4 (with Martin), 1996 on *Annales* 3 (with Martin), 2014 on the *Agricola* (with Kraus), and 2017 on *Annales* 5-6. His numerous articles include 1972/1998 on the presentation of Tiberius’ withdrawal to Capri, 1993/1998 on the narrative of the Pisonian conspiracy, 2006a on the imagery of madness in the presentation of the mutinies in *Annales* 1, 2006b on the recurrent imagery of food in the Tiberian *Annales*, 2009b on intertextuality, and 2010 on the use of medical imagery to describe the political

Besides Woodman, some of the most impressive examples of a similar approach within Tacitean studies are the works of Keitel and Ginsburg. Keitel stresses the importance of identifying patterns and connections in the Tacitean corpus: every text, every book, and every episode is both a unit of its own and a piece in a larger puzzle. No piece is detachable from its context, and contextual analysis of parts is therefore essential for a nuanced understanding of the whole.<sup>28</sup> Keitel's 1977 dissertation analyses the structures of *Annales* 11-12, Keitel 1978 deals specifically with the function of Parthia and Armenia in the same books, and Keitel 1993 explores how Tacitus uses the speeches of Cerialis and Epirus Marcellus to frame *Historiae* 4, connects it with the preceding books, and sheds light on its principal theme, the contrast between freedom and slavery. Ginsburg 1981, focused on *Annales* 6, is a demonstration of Tacitus' adaption of the annalistic framework. Both Keitel and Ginsburg stress the importance of contextual analysis: no part can be removed from its place in the overall structure.<sup>29</sup> So, while thematically my study goes back to Sir Ronald Syme and beyond (the rise of the Principate and the decline of political freedom), its methodological roots are set in the 'rhetorical turn' in ancient historiography pioneered by Wiseman and Woodman.

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community in Roman historiography. Woodman 1998a is a 'best of', including 12 articles. For a summary of Woodman's approach, see Kraus, Marincola, and Pelling 2010, 2-4.

<sup>28</sup> Keitel 1977, 7. Cf. Rutherford 2010.

<sup>29</sup> The approach of Keitel and Ginsburg is criticised by Malloch (2013, 116-119) for tending to prioritise the internal, Roman narrative (*res internae*), and hence regard external narratives (*res externae*) as digressive. Malloch argues that a division into a 'primary' Roman and 'secondary' external narratives distorts the basic structure of annalistic historiography, where internal and external events were of equal importance. While one can only agree with Malloch that *res externae* have intrinsic value for what they relate about Rome's foreign relations, the sheer weight of the Roman narrative in the *Annales* does entail that anything that goes on outside the imperial palace and the senate house takes on a certain digressive character. Tacitus' lament about the repetitiveness of his material at 4.33.3 explicitly associates accounts of external affairs with aspects characteristic of digressions: *ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt. nam situs gentium, uarietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeua iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obuia rerum similitudine et sattetate*. Thus, although accounts of northern barbarians are technically *res externae*, they may fruitfully be viewed as akin to digressions. As we shall see, the accounts treated in this study do seem to have been designed to highlight specific aspects of the Roman narrative (cf. section 5.2). On Tacitus' use of digressions, see Syme (1958, 309-310), Sage (1991, 3407-3408), Mellor (1993, 116-117), and Woodman and Kraus (2014, 125-127). On the annalistic historiography of Tacitus and its two overlapping structural patterns (annual units divided into smaller portions of internal and external affairs), see Martin and Woodman 1989, 15-19.

My methodological framework may be divided into three aspects: premise, aim, and reading practice. The main **premise** of the study is based on Woodman's insistence on the role of rhetorical *inuentio* as a governing principle in the writing of classical historiographical works. As noted by Woodman, "the Romans required the hard core of history to be true and its elaboration to be plausible."<sup>30</sup> Classical historians therefore had major license to elaborate, even invent, when faced with a material consisting mostly of dates and brief notices of events.<sup>31</sup> The main **aim** of the study is to examine the structure of the *Annales*, the relationship between parts (accounts of northern barbarians) and whole (the books in which they occur as well as the *Annales* in its entirety). My **reading practice** is consequently contextual, since only a contextual reading can uncover patterns and connections and thus come to grips with the structure of the text: reading contextually entails reading intratextually (looking for connections within the text) and intertextually (looking for connections with other texts).

#### 1.4.2.1 *Premise: historiography and inuentio*

The theoretical roots of the 'rhetorical turn' in scholarship on Roman historiography were formed in the wake of Hayden White's work on the rhetorical elements of historiography. As noted by White, the transformation of past events into narrative entails the construction of a plot by the historian. This construction of plot is the most obvious act of fictionalisation carried out by the historian, since she decides what the events mean: to the events she adds the story.<sup>32</sup> Thus, an investigation focused on the text itself (on its possible meanings) rather than on the events narrated in the text, must focus on its form, its structure. How an utterance is presented is as important as what is said.

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<sup>30</sup> Woodman 1988, 91. On the fragile distinction between 'hard core' historical facts and rhetorical embellishment, see esp. 83-94. The fate of Boudicca is a case in point: if we only had Tacitus' account of her death, we might have considered her suicide a hard core fact (14.37.3). However, since we have also Dio Cassius' account, in which Boudicca succumbs to a disease (Dio. 62.12.6), it would seem that the only hard core fact about Boudicca's death was that she died.

<sup>31</sup> The Latin *inuentio* (and the Greek *heuresis*) can mean both 'discovery' and 'invention': the distinction between discovering and inventing facts, then, was not as clear for the ancients as for modern, Rankean-schooled historians.

<sup>32</sup> White 1973, esp. 1-42; cf. Feldherr 2009b, 6-8. As noted by Ash (2012b, 8-11), the explicitly Tacitean roots of the 'rhetorical turn' can be traced back to Syme's 1958 integrated (historical, philological, and literary) reading of Tacitus, which bridged the gap between Tacitus as historian and literary artist.

The premise that Tacitus had sufficient freedom to construct his own plot from the events of the Julio-Claudian dynasty (through selection, adaptation, and structuring of events) is crucial to this study, since the aim is to investigate the functions of parts of this construction. Tacitus' freedom to select, adapt, and structure events into a plot was substantial even when treating matters in Rome (for which an abundant historical record existed, e.g. previous historical works, eyewitnesses, orally conveyed stories, possibly the 'acta senatus').<sup>33</sup> As noted already by Syme, "of Tacitus' bold independence in the selection of material and the construction of a narrative, the proof is overpowering."<sup>34</sup> However, it seems reasonable to assume that the scope for *inuentio* grew when treating matters in the provinces, on the borders, and in foreign lands.<sup>35</sup> Given that all accounts of northern barbarians investigated in this study (1) took place far from Rome, many (2) included no (obvious) Roman witness, and some (3) were narrated in detail by no other ancient historian (e.g. Arminius' conflicts with his fellow Germani in books 1-2 and the Thracian revolt in book 4), Tacitus seems to have exercised significant freedom not only in the selection of material but also in the construction of plot.

#### 1.4.2.2 Aim: reading (contextually) for structure

As demonstrated in section 1.3 on Tacitus and the Principate, the Tacitean corpus includes wildly divergent, often explicitly contradictory, statements on key themes, and defies attempts to impose on it a consistent set of authorial opinions: not only is there a plethora of conflicting voices within the corpus, even the authorial voice expresses conflicting views. To solve these apparent inconsistencies, some scholars have proposed the so-called 'Verdüsternghypothese', that is, that Tacitus became gradually more disillusioned with the Principate. They argue that one can track this growing sense of disillusionment from the *Agricola* to the *Annales*.<sup>36</sup> I am sympathetic

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<sup>33</sup> On Tacitus' sources, see Potter 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Syme 1958, 190.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Syme 1958, 317: "Exhortation in the field or argument in secret conclave, Tacitus was free to invent."

<sup>36</sup> Paratore 1951, Klingner 1953-1954, Jens 1956, and Benario 1964; see also Römer 2008, 273. The 'Verdüsternghypothese' is well summarised by Jens 1956, 352: "Im *Agricola* ist Tacitus optimistisch, gibt der Haltung des Pliniuskreises Ausdruck und glaubt an die Vereinigung von *principatus* und *libertas* unter Nerva und Trajan. Im *Dialogus* erkennt er Auswirkungen und Folgen der *libertas*, vertritt in den *Historien* ein *loco libertatis* als letzten Ausweg, um in den *Annales* auch diese Möglichkeit zu verwerfen." The works of Jens and Benario especially are impressive in scope and rich in good observations. However, their

to the suggestion that Tacitus probably changed his opinions about a great many things during his lifetime, but I disagree with the claim that we can reconstruct these opinions and their development: firstly, the assumption that we can identify something as a ‘Tacitean opinion’ is problematic, and, secondly, conflicting statements may result not from changing authorial opinions but rather from differences in genre, voice, perspective, or other contextual factors. While the ‘Verdüsterungshypothese’ accepts the presence of inconsistencies within the Tacitean corpus, it rejects the possibility that these might form part of and have functions in the texts.

Rather than argue away the inconsistencies, Luce 1986/2012 argues convincingly that inconsistency in thought and reasoning is a key trait of Tacitus’ style: the texture of the Tacitean corpus is so intricate that distinctions cannot easily be drawn between the voice of the narrator and those of his characters, much less between authorial and embedded focalisation.<sup>37</sup> His comparatively heavy use of indirect speech, which allows him to simultaneously present and comment on the thoughts and deliberations of his characters, and his predilection for quoting rumours, which allows him to present opinions for which he needs take no authorial responsibility, mean that speech and narrative blend together, boundaries between voices become blurred, and changes of perspective are inconspicuous.<sup>38</sup> In short, the recovery of Tacitean opinions is an interpretive extreme sport. Tacitus simply does not provide clear answers to the questions suggested by his text, and attempts to find consistent and non-contextual Tacitean opinions are therefore methodologically flawed.<sup>39</sup>

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attempts to reconstruct the development of Tacitus’ opinions are lacking in nuance, as they tend to disregard questions of genre, speaker, perspective, and context: both Jens (1956, 332-333) and Benario (1964, 99) take Tacitus’ praise of Nerva and Trajan at *Agr.* 3.1 at face value. For critical views of the ‘Verdüsterungshypothese’, see Syme (1970, 135-137) and Morford (1991, 3422).

<sup>37</sup> On focalisation, see de Jong 2014, 47-69.

<sup>38</sup> On speeches in Tacitus, see Miller 1964, Adams 1973b, Keitel 1991, Levene 1999 and 2009a, Mayer 2010, and van den Berg 2012; cf. Ash 2018, 23. On speeches in ancient historiography, see Miller 1975 and Marincola 2007. On the characteristics and consequences of direct vs. indirect speech, see Laird 1999, 94-101, 116-152. The only *oratio recta* speeches of northern barbarians in the *Annales* are those of Segestes to Germanicus (1.58; cf. footnote 127) and Caratacus to Claudius (12.37). Arminius’ four speeches are reported in *oratio obliqua* (1.59, 2.9.2-10., 2.15-16.1, 2.45.3-4), and so are those of Maroboduus (2.46.1-2), Sacrovir (3.45.2), Italicus’ enemies (11.16.2-3), Italicus himself (11.17.1-2), Caratacus to his men (12.34), Boiocalus (13.55.2-3), and Boudicca (14.35).

<sup>39</sup> Luce 1986/2012; on Tacitus’ inconsistency, see also Goodyear 1976 and Römer 2008. For some of the most explicit attempts to identify Tacitean opinions, see Jens 1956, Benario 1964 and 1991, Häußler 1965, Lucas 1974, Percival 1980, and Vielberg 1987.

We cannot divorce words and actions from their original contexts in an attempt to recover Tacitus' definitions of crucial terms, opinions about particular themes, or answers to pressing questions. Questions are of degrees, not absolutes, and slight changes in circumstances might affect the decisions taken by his characters. Luce phrases it succinctly: "this is one reason why Tacitus' brand of history is so well suited to an annalistic format: each item needs to be taken up *seriatim* and dwelt upon separately."<sup>40</sup> Luce, then, does not unequivocally reject reading for authorial opinion (indeed, the latter part of his 1986/2012 article is an attempt to resolve the tensions between Tacitus' various and apparently conflicting statements about the development of Tiberius' character), but insists on the importance of contextual analysis of individual events and a willingness to accept a certain incoherence as a result of Tacitus' adoption of different perspectives.

Pelling 2009, inspired by Luce's words of caution, explores how Tacitean opinions – or "Tacitus' personal voice" – might be uncovered. Pointing out that there are other ways than a first person singular verb for an author to express a personal voice, Pelling argues that the retrieval of Tacitus' personal voice is possible, but demands close reading and rigorous contextualisation of passages, consideration of the political and social context of literary production, and a certain amount of interpretive imagination.<sup>41</sup> Rutherford 2010 is similarly sceptical of the possibility of reconstructing Tacitean opinions. In a comparison between the speeches of Calgacus and Agricola with those of Civilis and Cerialis, Rutherford remarks that "interpreting Tacitus must be a matter of relating different passages to one another; but the different passages, not least the speeches, are situated in a particular context and the arguments arise from that context and are designed to respond to those circumstances; where speeches are concerned, characterization and historical evaluation must also play a part. The text remains polyphonic, not

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<sup>40</sup> Luce 1986/2012, 349.

<sup>41</sup> Pelling 2009, esp. 167: "Our purpose has rather been to see how the way in which 'the author underneath' sometimes pushes to the surface can affect the way the text works. The voice – or rather the voices, for they do not always say the same thing – is added to the voices we find of others in the text, all contributing to a polyphony that is part of the texture of the Principate, where imperial conduct was always something to talk about, where there were different explanations to weigh and to toy with, where later events could clarify earlier or could simply thicken the cloud of bemusement; and where talking about the most sensitive topics, if one were sensible, rarely meant talking straight." On the inherent semantic instability of Tacitus' texts, see also Henderson (1989/1998, 260-261) and Master 2012, 87: "Clarity is not the goal because certainty and confidence are not easily attained." On the importance of considering political and social context, see esp. Sailor 2008, 6-50.

easily malleable into summary and generalization.”<sup>42</sup> Rutherford’s crucial final remark recognises that the inherent polysemy of Tacitus’ texts is a result of his style.<sup>43</sup>

These observations on the need for contextualisation fit well with Langlands’ concept of ‘situation ethics’. Langlands points out that *exempla* in Roman historiography functioned within a system which allowed for situational variability, that is, with considerations of context (agent, time, etc.). In this way, rather than being static and prescriptive, *exempla* retained “their open-ended flexibility and enduring moral relevance.”<sup>44</sup> Since what was right for one might be wrong for another, the ability to situate oneself within the moral system was a crucial social skill. We find an explicit acknowledgement of situation ethics in Tacitus when the old L. Arruntius, finding himself accused, replies to those who encourage him to prolong his life (6.48.1): *Arruntius, cunctationem et moras suadentibus amicis, non eadem omnibus decora respondit*. The right choice is not the same for everyone. Just as ‘situation ethics’ allows for open-ended and flexible exemplary actions, it also encourages an open-ended and flexible reading practice. Reader reception of exemplary discourse, then, was not about identifying one-to-one correspondences and rigidly adopting the courses of action of an inflexible model, but about an heuristic process which took

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<sup>42</sup> Rutherford 2010, 328.

<sup>43</sup> On Tacitus’ ambiguous style and its interpretive consequences, see Bartsch (1994, 63-97) on ‘doublespeak’ and Haynes (2004, 37-39) on ‘emptyspeak’. Cf. Ash 2002a, Oakley 2009b, and Haynes 2010. On the possibilities of critique during the Principate, see Rudich 2006 and Whitmarsh 2009, 83-85. See also Rutledge 1998 on Roman ‘parallel-mania’; cf. Griffin (1985, 191-197) and Ash (1998, 38-39). As noted by Ahl 1984, Greek and Roman writers were schooled in the knowledge that blunt criticism was both more dangerous and less effective than figured speech; cf. Arist *Rhet.* 1382b, Plut. *Mor.* 66e-74e, Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.64-71.

<sup>44</sup> Langlands 2011, 102-103. Langlands (103-105) exemplifies her claim with reference to Valerius Maximus’ (6.2.5) discussion of Cato the Younger’s defiance of Pompey: while Cato’s opposition to Pompey was an example of courageous confidence (*fiducia*), for another person to have opposed Pompey in a similar way would have been an example of recklessness (*audacia*); cf. Kraus 2005, 187 (inspired by Chaplin 2000, 198-202): “the exemplary figure is at once an individual and a type; as history concentrates its (and our) gaze on a series of exemplary figures, we are encouraged to see them both as unique, historically determined individuals and as imitable, repeatable, paradigms.” On exemplarity in Roman historiography, see Miles 1995, Chaplin 2000, and Roller 2004 and 2009; cf. Sal. *Cat.* 51.25-36 (Caesar’s speech) and Liv. *Praef.* 10. Kraus 2005 discusses the crisis of exemplary discourse occasioned by the emperor’s monopolisation of power; cf. my discussion of the role of historiography in maintaining a shared standard of honour among the Roman nobles in section 3.3.2.3. For examples of Tacitean use of *exempla*, see Ash (2009, 93-95), Malloch (2009, 124-126), and Keitel (2009, 142).



situational variability into account. In other words, women, slaves, and barbarians were not excluded from exemplary discourse in spite of their otherness: their actions could be exemplary not only for other barbarians, but also for Romans. This flexibility within exemplary discourse will be crucial for my analyses in sections 3.3.2.3 and 4.3.3.<sup>45</sup>

A new approach to the old questions about Tacitus and the Principate might be salutary. That Tacitus' texts are characterised by a plethora of contradictory views and opinions does not mean that they do not have a coherent narrative structure. Rather than zoom in on specific passages which allegedly reveal Tacitus' personal opinion, I will explore the narrative structure, that is, the relationship between parts (accounts of northern barbarians) and whole (individual books as well as the *Annales* in its entirety). By looking for meaning in the narrative structure rather than in individual voices within it, I will attempt to let the narrative speak for itself.<sup>46</sup>

#### 1.4.2.3 Reading practice: intratextuality and intertextuality

The practice of reading for structure is best understood through Sharrock's concept of 'intratextuality': "how parts relate to parts, wholes, and holes."<sup>47</sup> As noted by Sharrock, meaning is generated by the imposition of a structure, and structure is not an inherent feature of a text but a construction made by the reader at the point of reception.<sup>48</sup> In other words, the meaning we ascribe

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<sup>45</sup> On the differences between Livian and Tacitean *exempla*, see Luce 1991 and Feldherr 1998, 218-225; cf. Gillespie 2015, 408: "Tacitus' models cannot be condensed to simple lessons or stereotypes of good and bad behaviour for readers to imitate or avoid." On exemplary actions carried out by unlikely characters (*argumentum ex minori*), see Quint. *Inst.* 5.11.9-10, Lausberg (1960, 231, §420 1b, β), Roller (2004, 6), and Turpin (2008, 367); cf. Sen. *Ben.* 3.23.2-4, *Ep.* 70.19-23.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Williams (1989, 156-161) on how the narrative of the Tiberian hexad questions the straightforward character sketches of Tiberius at the beginning and end of his reign, and Sage (1991, 3396-3397) on how Maternus' (*Dial.* 40-41) praise of the Principate might be read as irony, since it is negated by Tacitus' descriptions of the Principate in his historical works. For the idea that a narrative can speak by itself, see Demetrius' words on δεινότης (*On style* 288): when Plato wanted to blame Aristippus and Cleombrotus for not having visited Socrates in prison, he does so not through direct accusation but by first naming those who did visit him and then establishing that Aristippus and Cleombrotus were in Aegina at the time, that is, close to Athens. The reader must draw the final conclusion. Cf. Lausberg 1960, 523-524, §1079, 3f β.

<sup>47</sup> Sharrock 2000, 5. Sharrock acknowledges that this is perhaps "what careful readers do anyway", but she wants to raise "explicit awareness of the process of dividing and rejoining in the act of reading."

<sup>48</sup> While there are discernible structural markers in a text, e.g. rhetorical devices (anaphora, chiasmus), digressive formulae (*ad inceptum redeo*), scene shifting expressions (*at Romae*,

to a text resides in our interpretation of the relationships between its parts (designated as ‘parts’ by us), and between these parts and the whole. Readers who try to make sense of a text are therefore caught between the necessity of dividing it into interpretable parts and the drive to identify the meaning of its whole.<sup>49</sup> Sharrock’s emphasis on the interplay between part and whole is reminiscent of hermeneutics: “The links one find are dependent on, as well as part of, one’s readings of parts, as well as one’s reading of the whole.”<sup>50</sup> Sharrock offers a thought-provoking attack on scholarly obsession with ‘unity’ and exposes the dangers of slicing up texts in our quest for it.<sup>51</sup> Her claims, however, seem primarily designed to urge caution and encourage a self-inquisitive and open-minded approach to analysis of textual structures. Some parts of a text, she points out, might be designed to *not* interact, but this too, of course, is a sort of connection. In short, she asks if fragmentation can be a principle of organisation and if it is then still fragmentation, or a part of the (authorial) design and a producer of coherence and unity.<sup>52</sup>

Laird’s definition of intratextuality, which embraces the core of Sharrock’s reflections, illustrates lucidly how textual connections within a text are discerned: he writes that intratextuality designates “the *realm of possibility* [Laird’s italics] for whatever apparently ‘internal’ principles of organization, structure, or division in a text are there to be constituted by its readers.”<sup>53</sup> An

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*interim*), and temporal markers (*X et Y consulibus, sub idem tempus, eodem anno*), the evaluation of their respective significances and the relationship between them remains an interpretive act.

<sup>49</sup> Sharrock 2000, 2: “We need to compartmentalize, to take our texts in bite-sized chunks, in order to read at all, but in doing so we also tend (and ought) to resist the compartmentalization: ‘tend to’, because we all read for unity, in that we look for ways of putting things together; ‘ought to’, because the rigidity of unified reading (which tends also to be univocal) desensitizes us to the richness of texts. Reading inevitably involves some kind of movement or drive towards some sort of unity, because that is how we make sense of things ... and also some kind of chopping up of the text in order to use it, because otherwise we cannot see the trees for the wood.”

<sup>50</sup> Sharrock 2000, 37; on hermeneutics, see Spitzer (1948, 25-28) and Said (2004, 67).

<sup>51</sup> Sharrock 2000, 13-16. On ancient views on variation, coherence, and textual unity, see Heath 1989 and Fowler 1991. Both Heath and Fowler urge self-consciousness about the stress on closure and integration in classical scholarship. On the importance of variety in historiographical works, see also Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.4-6. For an example of how a digression can digress from and simultaneously contribute to the main theme, see Sharrock (2000, 23-24) on Ov. *Ars.* 3.133-168. The principal work on unity and coherence in Greek literature is Aristotle’s *Poetics*, in Roman literature is Horace’s *Ars Poetica*.

<sup>52</sup> Sharrock 2000, 7, 21; see also Heath 1989, 23-27.

<sup>53</sup> Laird 2000, 145: “Intratextuality involves the principles on which any individual text might be organized, and thus recognized: structure, segmentation, and the relations between parts and the whole. As with intertextuality, it takes a reader to discern it.”

‘intratext’, then, is an internal textual connection whose existence is made possible by the text but whose emergence depends on a reader’s recognition of that possibility. Different readers may identify different intratexts, but they can still be discussed and judged based on their explanatory powers. This is not to say that there cannot be several structures at play in a text at the same time: the *Aeneid*, for instance, may be divided simultaneously into two halves of six books (the *Odyssey/Iliad* division) and three parts consisting of four books each (the Dido/Rome/Turnus division).<sup>54</sup>

When ‘intratextuality’ entered classical scholarship in the 1990s,<sup>55</sup> ‘intertextuality’ was already a well-established term, especially among scholars of classical poetry: noteworthy contributions include Conte 1986, Fowler 1997/2000, and Hinds 1998. The notion of intertextuality has not only been broadened through the inclusion of unintended textual echoes and inevitable traces of earlier discourse as well as monuments and actual historical events, but also nuanced through attempts to create (and demonstrations of the difficulties in maintaining) a precise terminology of textual relations. The difficulties and dangers of a strict categorisation of intertextual relationships are convincingly demonstrated by Hinds: not only is the seemingly tidy distinction between intentional and unintentional intertexts (‘allusion’ and ‘parallel’) impossible to uphold in practice, it also tends either to prioritise allusions and disregard the interpretability of parallels, or to reject any notion of authorial control and embrace intertextualist fundamentalism.<sup>56</sup>

The scholar of intertextuality seems to be trapped between the opposing and seemingly irreconcilable demands of terminological clarity and interpretive flexibility. However, in order to impose some order on the intertextual relationships under consideration and because failure to constantly uphold a categorisation does not mean that it has no practical value, I offer the following definitions and distinctions: By ‘intertextuality’ I intend textual relations between texts. Consequently, by ‘intertext’ I intend any textual relation between one text and another: the relation may be one of verbal similarity as well as similarities in theme, character traits, situations, and plot structures. I use the term ‘allusion’ for intertexts that I consider

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<sup>54</sup> Williams 1973, xx.

<sup>55</sup> See Sharrock 2000, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Hinds 1998, 17-51. My discussion of intertextuality is indebted also to Genette 1982/1997, Thomas 1999, and Barchiesi 2001 (a collection of articles published 1986-1997).

author-intended.<sup>57</sup> For intertexts about which I make no claim of authorial intention I use ‘parallel’ (or ‘reminiscence’): not all intertexts need to be conclusively categorised for the distinction to have interpretive value. Allusions are one kind of intertext, then, but not all intertexts are allusions. Like intratexts, intertexts are created in the course of reading, since different readers at different times in their lives tend to see different intertexts. However, although intertexts are created in the process of reading, they are, I dare say obviously, not entirely external to the text itself. In the same manner as intratexts, the reader uncovers intertexts whose possibilities of excavation depend on the text under consideration.<sup>58</sup> While I concede that my own academic training (both historically and literarily centred on the time of the Late Republic and the rise of Augustus) has predisposed me to make sense of the *Annales* through the uncovering of intertexts with Sallust, Vergil, and Livy, I also believe that the result of the study demonstrate Tacitus’ creative adaptation of themes and motifs from these writers.<sup>59</sup>

As noted by Hinds, the identification of allusions from the web of intertexts is a hazardous exercise.<sup>60</sup> While the establishment of a parallel depends solely on markedness (verbal and/or thematic similarity) and sense (creation of meaning),<sup>61</sup> the establishment of an allusion demands also a suggestion of function: in addition to identifying verbal and/or thematic similarity and pointing out how it creates meaning, one must also explain why the writer might want to refer the reader back to another text, that is, one needs to give a plausible account of how the writer intended the allusion to function within her own text. While even clearly unintended intertexts may offer possibilities of interpretation,<sup>62</sup> the designation of an intertext as an

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<sup>57</sup> My distinction between ‘intertext’ and ‘allusion’ is inspired by Fowler 1997/2000, 117-119; see also Genette’s (1982/1997, 2) definition of allusion (transl. by Newman and Doubinsky): “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible.” The ancients might not have had a specific word for ‘allusion’, but they certainly knew what it was; cf. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.224-225: *cum lamentamur non apparere labores / nostros et tenui deducta poemata filo.*

<sup>58</sup> On the reconstruction of intertexts in the meeting between text and reader, see esp. Fowler 1997/2000, 127: “Intertextuality, like all aspects of literary reception, is ultimately located in reading practice, not in textual system: meaning is realised at the point of reception, and what counts as an intertext and what one does with it depends on the reader.”

<sup>59</sup> On the memory of the Republic during the Principate, see Gowing 2005 and Gallia 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Hinds 1998, 17-34; see also Woodman (2009b, 5-7) and Levene (2010, 83-84).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Fowler 1997/2000, 122-127.

<sup>62</sup> Hinds 1998, 34.

allusion radically affects its interpretability.<sup>63</sup> The function of an allusion can be external to the meaning of the text (e.g. to demonstrate the author's knowledge of his predecessors),<sup>64</sup> but it can also provide meaning to the text itself: a reader's belief that an intertext is intentional may alter her understanding of the text.

The identification and interpretation of allusions is crucial in my analyses, since allusions can help explain function. If we can establish that Tacitus is alluding to a specific passage, event, or context, we may start exploring what function the allusion has. The discernment of recurrent intertexts with the same text provides an especially fruitful platform for interpretation. Not only does such a persistent intertextual relationship between two texts suggest the existence of a one-to-one allusive relationship, it also widens the possibility for interpretation considerably. For example, if we find a single expression in Tacitus' portrayal of Boudicca which (verbally and/or thematically) reminds us of an expression in Livy's portrayal of Lucretia, we are unlikely to afford great interpretive potential to it: we might consider such an intertext either as incidental or, possibly, as an instance of Tacitus picking up an expression which happened to catch his eye. However, if we find several intertexts with Livy's Lucretia in Tacitus' portrayal of Boudicca, our possibility of interpretation grows: we might reason that Tacitus drew especially on Livy's Lucretia in his portrayal of Boudicca, and wonder why he chose Lucretia as a model and how he intended his audience to react to such a comparison. Finally, if we find intertexts not only with Livy's Lucretia but also with Livy's Brutus, the possibilities of interpretation are further expanded: we might argue that Tacitus wanted his audience to see the entire situation in Britain in light of the expulsion of the Roman kings. Such a persistent intertextual relationship may be discerned not only with a specific text, but also with a specific historical character or event (as portrayed in different texts).

The study of intertextuality is by now well-established also among scholars of historiography.<sup>65</sup> The centrality of intertextuality in current Tacitean

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<sup>63</sup> On intertextuality as an aid in the search for intention, see Thomas 1999, 117, 127-132.

Thomas has established a typology of references and has identified 'correction' as one of these (127): "The poet provides unmistakable indications of his source, then proceeds to offer detail that contradicts or alters that source." A reference of this kind thus implies an intention, since 'to correct' is an intentional act.

<sup>64</sup> Fowler 1997/2000, 121.

<sup>65</sup> My discussion of intertextuality in historiography is primarily inspired by Ash 1998, O'Gorman 2009, Levene 2010 (82-163), Marincola 2010, Damon 2010b, and Pelling 2013; cf. Low 2013a, 39-40. For further inspiration, see the list in Levene 2010, 82.

scholarship may be illustrated by Woodman's introductory chapter to the 2009 *Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*: the chapter revolves almost exclusively around questions of intertextuality and its possibilities in reconstructing if not *the* meaning of a text, then at least *a* meaning in a text. As noted by Woodman, "Tacitus' historical narratives can be as intertextually dense as the verses of many a Latin poet and, no matter what side we take in the debate over his deployment of Virgilian language [whether allusions to Vergil have more than a purely aesthetic function], the very existence of that debate indicates that 'literariness' is fundamental to the nature of his narrative."<sup>66</sup> Woodman's example of how Tacitus alludes to Velleius for aesthetic effect and to Vergil for factual detail illustrates that the historiographer, although he reconstructs a narrative from extratextual events, does not necessarily differ markedly from the poets in his use of allusion.<sup>67</sup> Unsurprisingly perhaps, given the notorious difficulty of delineating the boundaries between historiography and poetry, there seems to be no qualitative difference between intertextuality in the two kinds of literature.

However, some distinctions might be in order. In spite of its rhetorical nature, historiography, unlike poetry, aims at some form of truthful reconstruction of extratextual events. So, although intertextuality in historiography is fairly similar to that of poetry, we might deal with our inferences in different ways. Firstly, the historiographer's spur to reconstruct a plausible narrative means that intertextuality inevitably assumes an additional function in this genre. Conformity with an already accepted causal explanation increases the plausibility of the narrative. As noted by Pelling, "what is absolutely and in principle singular is absolutely and in principle unintelligible."<sup>68</sup> Since intertexts demonstrate the non-singularity of an event, they increase the plausibility of the narrative. Secondly, intertextuality

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<sup>66</sup> Woodman 2009b, 7. Cf. Baxter 1972, Bews 1972-1973, Putnam 1989, Ash 2002b, and Joseph 2010 on intertexts with Vergil, Woodman 1979/1998 on Tacitean self-imitation, Woodman 1992/1998b, Ginsburg 1993, and Krebs 2012 on intertexts with Sallust, Keitel 1992 and Ginsburg 1993 on intertexts with Livy, Morgan 1994 and Fear 2008 on intertexts with Caesar, Santoro L'Hoir 2006 and Taylor 2010 on tragic intertexts, Ash 2010 on intertexts with Vergil and Livy, Hardie 2010 and Joseph 2012a and 2012b on epic intertexts, Nappa 2010 and Williams 2010 on intertexts with Juvenal, Manolaraki and Augoustakis 2012 on intertexts with Silius Italicus, Whitton 2012 on intertexts with Pliny the Younger, Buckley 2018 on intertexts with Valerius Flaccus, Rimell 2018 on intertexts with Martial, and Whitton 2018 on intertexts with Quintilian and Pliny the Younger. On the allusiveness of Tacitus' writings, see also Ash 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Woodman 2009b, 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Pelling 1999, 346; cf. O'Gorman (2009, 240), Levene (2010, 84-86), Marincola (2010, 263-265), and Pelling (2013, 2-6).

facilitates interpretation, since intertexts with previous texts prompt reflection on historical continuities and changes: it invites the reader to try and make sense of the text.<sup>69</sup> In hermeneutic terms, it provides parts that allow the reader to enter into dialogue with the whole. While this characteristic of intertextuality is pertinent also to poetic texts, especially those which deal with a mythological, and therefore quasi-historical, subject matter, it assumes an extra importance in the genre which deals specifically with interpretations and explanations of the past.<sup>70</sup>

Arguments based on intertextual and intratextual relations play a key role in all three main chapters of this study. In the account of Arminius there are intratextual and intertextual connections with accounts of the Roman civil wars of the Late Republic and the ever-threatening civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus: the Principate, it seems, is as susceptible to civil war as the Late Republic. The account of the Thracian revolt includes a siege which is markedly different from sieges in earlier historical works, but which is intratextually connected to the narrative in Rome: the choice between surrender, suicide, and resistance is central both among besieged Thracians and oppressed Romans. In the account of Boudicca's revolt against Roman occupation there is a persistent intertextual relationship with Livy's account of L. Junius Brutus' revolt against Tarquinius Superbus: Rome has turned from propagation of freedom to suppression of freedom.

## 1.5 Previous research

### 1.5.1 Previous research on Tacitus

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<sup>69</sup> Pelling 2013, 18-19. On how Xenophon's and Sallust's use of *exempla* emphasise the differences between past and present, see Marincola 2010, 278-279, 286-287. On how the intertexts between Livy's account of the surrender at the Caudine Forks (9.5-6) and succeeding speech of Sp. Postumius (9.8.2-10) and Tacitus' portrayals of the surrender at Novaesium (*Hist.* 4.62), including the preceding speech of Dillius Vocula (*Hist.* 4.58), and Cremona (*Hist.* 3.31) encourage the reader to consider the differences (esp. the decline in Roman morality) between soldiers and leaders in each narrative, see Keitel 1992 and Ash 1998. Cf. Ginsburg 1993 on Livian and Sallustian intertexts in the senatorial debates at 3.33-34 and 14.42-45, and Morgan 1994 on the Caesarian reminiscences in Tacitus' portrayal of the marches of Caecina and Valens in the *Historiae*.

<sup>70</sup> On the questions of real-life imitation (how people of the past consciously modelled their behaviour on others) and how it might affect intertextuality in historiography, see Damon 2010b, Marincola (2010, 265-266), and Levene (2010, 85); cf. Ginsburg 1993, 92.

Students and scholars of Tacitus have never been better served: the last 10 years have seen the publication of two companions to Tacitus (Woodman 2009a, Pagán 2012), a collection of previously published articles (Ash 2012a), a companion to the Roman historians (Feldherr 2009a), four monographs on Tacitus (Sailor 2008, Mellor 2011, Pagán 2017, Strunk 2017), an edited volume on literary interactions under Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian (König and Whitton 2018), and commentaries on the *Agricola* (Woodman and Kraus 2014), *Annales* 4 (Formicola 2013), *Annales* 5-6 (Woodman 2017), *Annales* 11 (De Vivo 2011, Malloch 2013), *Annales* 15 (Ash 2018), and *Annales* 16 (Fratantuono 2018).

Scholarly interest in Tacitus' opinions and intentions is not extinct,<sup>71</sup> although its habitat has shrunk with the emergence of studies inspired by more overtly theoretical perspectives, e.g. Sinclair 1995, O'Gorman 2000, and Haynes 2003. Noteworthy studies on the structure of Tacitus' works include Keitel 1977 and 1978, Ginsburg 1981, Wille 1983, and Williams 1989.<sup>72</sup>

### **1.5.2 Previous research on Tacitus' (accounts of) northern barbarians**

The northern barbarians of the *Annales* have not yet received their own monograph. More general studies on Roman views on northern barbarians include Sherwin-White 1967, Balsdon 1979, Dauge 1981, Woolf 2011a, Gruen 2011, and Chauvot 2016. They give excellent overviews, but their broad scopes and schematic approaches leave little room for nuanced, contextual analyses of the function of individual accounts. Walser 1951 and Edelmaier 1964 deal specifically with Tacitus' presentation of northern barbarians. While they include some good observations, they are also rather dated. Some monographs focus on a specific people or area: Timpe 1970 and Trzaska-Richter 1991 on the Germani, Braund 1996 on Britain, and Woolf

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<sup>71</sup> See e.g. Raaflaub 2008 and Römer 2008.

<sup>72</sup> Williams (1989, 149) notes that "freedom-fighting Germans or Britons" is one of the repeated structures of the *Annales*. For structural analyses of Tacitus' works; see also Wölfflin 1886, Moore 1923, Graf 1931, and Morris 1969, esp. 267: "what emerges over many pages of text is a pervasive tension between the autonomy of a particular section in its immediate context and the place of that section in the over-all cohesion of the annalistic scheme." Explicitly narratological studies on Tacitus are few and far between: I have found only Waddell 2003, an intriguing application of narratology and film theory on Tacitus' *Annales* and Trajan's Column.



1998 and Williams 2001 on Gaul.<sup>73</sup> These studies include valuable discussions of the portrayal of their respective northern barbarians. Most monographs on Tacitus deal rather shortly with his accounts of northern barbarians.<sup>74</sup>

There are two main explanatory models for the functions of account of northern barbarians in the *Annales*: ‘northern barbarians as contrast’ and ‘northern barbarians as entertainment’. In the former, Tacitus uses northern barbarians in various ways to comment on and make a contrast with the main narrative centred on Rome. This interpretation is not wrong. However, it tends to be stated as a general observation rather than demonstrated through analysis of an individual account. Distinctions between individual northern barbarians are seldom made and the resulting conclusions are, unsurprisingly, often rather crude. The model may be exemplified by Walker 1952, who designates Tacitus’ northern barbarians as ‘noble savages’, and argues that he contrasts their defiance in the face of Roman expansion with the servility of the Romans in the face of the emperor.<sup>75</sup> She does not discuss the barbarians individually. While many northern barbarians do indeed serve as comment on and contrasts to events in Rome, scholars seldom discuss how and why this is achieved in each individual account.<sup>76</sup> While we may learn something about

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<sup>73</sup> See also Günnewig 1998 on ancient views on Germani and Britons. For a historical perspective on native revolts against Rome, see Dyson 1971 and 1975: cf. Woolf 2011b.

<sup>74</sup> Some monographs include chapters on Tacitus’ treatment of barbarians: Dudley (1968, 200-233) makes useful observations on the Germani (esp. Arminius and Segestes), Mellor (2011, 47-54) provides a (rather schematic) overview of Tacitus’ verdict on Germani, Gauls, Britons, and Thracians, and Pagán (2017, 77-101) situates the *Germania* within the Tacitean corpus. Others include analyses of individual northern barbarians: Sinclair (1995, 17-29) and Haynes (2003, 13-18) on Arminius, and Santoro L’Hoir (2006, esp. 113-118, 139-142) on Boudicca. I will discuss these when I deal with their respective barbarians. Paratore 1951, Syme 1958, Martin 1981, and Mellor 1993 have only scattered references to northern barbarians. The commentaries are valuable for the identification of intertexts and recurrent motifs in the accounts of northern barbarians. Some also offer useful thoughts on the structure of their respective books: Goodyear 1981 on the narrative of Arminius in books 1-2, Woodman and Martin 1996 on the Gallic revolt of Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir in book 3, Martin and Woodman 1989 on the Thracian and Frisian revolts in book 4, and Malloch 2013 on the dispatch of Italicus in book 11. Furneaux 1986-1907 and Koestermann 1963-1968 embrace the whole work. On the lack of interest in and scholarship on how the foreign sections of the *Annales* relate to the internal affairs of the books in which they occur, see Low 2013a, 7-8.

<sup>75</sup> Walker 1952, 225-229. The other type-characters identified by Walker are the Tyrant (204-214), the Opportunist (214-216), the Victim (218-220), the Collaborator (220-225), and the Intransigent (229-232).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Walser (1951, 71-82), Dauge (1981, 263-265), and Mellor (1993, 26).

Roman conceptualisations of their northern neighbours, we are no wiser about the structure or meaning of the *Annales*.

The other common way to treat (or rather disregard) the accounts of northern barbarians is to categorise them as digressions – in the modern colloquial English sense of the term where ‘to digress’ implies that one turns away from the main theme – from rather than an integral part of the main narrative centred on Rome (and therefore in no need of further explanation). In this way they are assigned a purely aesthetic function, that is, as pure entertainment or as distraction from the monotonous and depressive events taking place in Rome.<sup>77</sup> In the scholarly literature, then, discussions of the functions of accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* tend to be reduced to generalised remarks which disregard the peculiarities and subtleties of each individual account.

Other noteworthy treatments of functions of Tacitus’ northern barbarians in general include Gowing 1990 and Strunk 2017. Gowing argues that accounts of barbarians in the *Annales* are primarily designed to demonstrate the failure of Julio-Claudian foreign policy, Strunk that they are used to highlight problems in Roman expansion in the Principate: that there is no military glory to be won, since success on the battlefield will make the emperor jealous.<sup>78</sup> Worthy of mention are also Adler 2011 and Shumate 2012. Adler treats a range of speeches delivered by enemies of Rome in historiographical works, including the speech of Tacitus’ Boudicca (cf. section 4.1.3). Adler reads the texts closely, but I find his attempts to determine the efficacy of the speeches and the strength of their arguments misguided.<sup>79</sup> Shumate, applying an explicitly postcolonial approach, makes valuable observations on the colonial aspects (othering, hybridity, rationalisations of empire, inconsistencies in colonial discourse, the function of the noble savage, etc.) of Tacitus’ portrayal of northern barbarians, but her focus on a more official level of discourse, which presses Tacitus into the

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<sup>77</sup> See e.g. Goodyear (1981, 348), Ginsburg (1981, 85), and Martin and Woodman (1989, 206-207); see also Woodman 1979/1998, 84-85 (with references to Cic. *de Orat.* 2.59, *ad Fam.* 5.12.4, Vitruvius 5. *praef.* 1, and Pliny *Ep.* 5.8.4); cf. Ash’s (2002a, 274-275) critical remarks on Brunt’s (1980/1993, 187) and Paul’s (1984, 72-74) dismissal of Sallust’s digression at *Jug.* 17-19 as light entertainment.

<sup>78</sup> Strunk 2017, 39-77; cf. O’Gorman 2014, 177.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Lavan 2011, 303: “to read it [the British narrative of the *Agricola*] for insights into Roman imperialism is, in many ways, to miss the point.” See also Sherwin-White (1967, 44) and Lavan (2013, 154-155).

role of an apologist for empire, makes her interpretations somewhat less useful for contextual analysis of Tacitus' texts.<sup>80</sup>

This is not to say that there are no contextual analyses of accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales*. Keddie 1975 argues that the account of Italicus looks forward to and offers reflections on the account of the admission of the *primores Galliae* into the senate. As noted by Keddie, "one of the noteworthy aspects of Tacitean narrative is its striving for internal artistic unity. The use of words and phrases, and even of whole episodes in their essentials, repetitiously and in key places, is an integral part of the technique."<sup>81</sup> Laruccia 1980 demonstrates how Roman and barbarian accounts are connected through the word *solitudo*. Roberts 1988 and Gillespie 2015 offer perspicuous observations on the account of Boudicca's revolt: Roberts demonstrates in detail the verbal and thematic parallels with the narrative centred on Rome, and Gillespie investigates the role of exemplarity vis-à-vis Dio's account (cf. section 4.1.3). Devillers 1991 explores how the narrative of Tacfarinas' insurrection illustrates the gradual deterioration of Tiberius' reign (cf. section 4.3.2.2). Pagán 2000 discusses four "voices of freedom" in the *Annales* (Arminius, Epicharis, Cremutius Cordus, and Caratacus), arguing that Tacitus' treatment of these resistance fighters demonstrates his belief in the futility of opposition to the imperial regime. Tylawsky 2002 discusses the riverbank meeting between Arminius and his brother Flavus within the context of book 2 (cf. section 2.2.2). Lavan 2013 explores how the theme of slavery connects the Roman and foreign narratives in the *Agricola* and in the accounts of the Batavian and Boudicca's revolt (cf. section 4.1.3).<sup>82</sup> However, the typically narrow focus of these

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<sup>80</sup> Other postcolonial approaches to Tacitus include O'Gorman 1993/2012 on the *Germania*, and Rutledge 2000 and Clarke 2001/2012 on the *Agricola*; cf. Krebs 2010 on Roman discourses on the North ('borealism'). Themes of identity and hybridity are treated in Ash 1999, 2009, and 2014; cf. Haynes (2003, 148-177) and Shumate (2012, 491-494). On the symmetrical relationship between senatorial and barbarian experiences of imperial oppression in the Tacitean corpus, see O'Gorman 2014. As noted by O'Gorman, the symmetry is intersected by two additional ideological dimensions: (1) the senatorial victim of imperial oppression is also the imperial oppressor of the barbarian victim, and (2) colonial assimilation introduces the defeated barbarian into the Roman hierarchy below and ultimately beside the Roman senator; cf. the Britons following in the footsteps of the Gauls at *Agr.* 21.2. Senators and barbarians are thus both current enemies and future partners and fellow victims; cf. Sailor 2012 and Lavan 2013.

<sup>81</sup> Keddie 1975, 54.

<sup>82</sup> Lavan 2013, 127-155. For similar studies on eastern barbarians in the *Annales*, see Gilmartin 1973, Keitel 1978, Clark 2011, and Feldherr 2009c. For contextual analyses of the speeches of Calgacus and Agricola in the *Agricola* and of Civilis and Cerialis in the *Historiae*, see Rutherford 2010. The current study is inspired also by three studies on Greek portrayals of

studies complicates attempts to generalise: Roberts, for example, claims that Tacitus portrays resistance to Rome as ‘feminine’, but does not refer to any other account of resistance to Rome.<sup>83</sup>

The only full-length study which offers a contextual reading of Tacitus’ accounts of barbarians is Low’s 2013a dissertation. Low examines connections between accounts of barbarians and the main narrative focused on Rome in books 1-6: through investigation of intratexts and intertexts, she looks specifically at the themes of civil war and republican-imperial continuity. As the reader will see, I am in agreement with Low on many points of interpretation (cf. sections 2.1.2 and 2.3.2). I would like to add that we have reached most of these independently of each other.

In sum, Tacitus’ northern barbarians tend to be approached either as one uniform group of foreigners (with similarities highlighted and differences unappreciated), or via local studies of individual accounts, speeches, or characters. This study aims to explore functions of accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* from a perspective both broad enough to encompass several accounts and thorough enough to consider intratextual and intertextual relations. The various functions of Tacitus’ literary forays into the uncivilised North and the ways that they are connected to his main narrative of events in Rome can be appreciated only through contextual analyses of several accounts.

## 1.6 The chapters of the book

The present study comprises 5 chapters: In chapter 1 (the introduction, which you are currently reading), I present the aim, material, background, methodological framework, and subsequent chapters of the study, as well as an overview of previous scholarship. In chapters 2-4, I offer analyses of the functions of individual accounts of northern barbarians within the books in which they appear. Finally, in chapter 5 (an epilogue), I restate the conclusions of the analyses, reflect on the possibility of summarising the functions of accounts of northern barbarians, relate my findings to the *Annales* as a whole, and suggest some possible perspectives for future

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barbarians: Hartog 1980/1988 on Herodotus’ portrayal of the Scythians, Hall 1989 on the portrayal of Persians in Greek tragedy, and Munson 2001 on Herodotus’ portrayal of foreigners.

<sup>83</sup> Roberts 1988, 132.

research. While chapters 2-4 may fruitfully be read independently of one another, as case studies of individual accounts of northern barbarians, the aim of the epilogue is to demonstrate the interpretive possibilities offered by a more holistic reading.

The three main chapters are structured similarly: (1) introduction, (2) paraphrase, (3) analysis, and (4) conclusions. In the introduction, I look (briefly) at the historical evidence for the events treated in the account under consideration (including other ancient sources that deal with the account) and investigate how the account has been treated in modern scholarship. In the paraphrase, I contextualise and paraphrase the account. In the analysis, I discuss connections between the account and other texts (intertextuality) as well as other parts of the *Annales* (intratextuality). In the conclusion, I restate the main points of the analysis and offer some final remarks.

Chapter 2 is entitled “Arminius and his Adversaries: the Germanic civil wars of books 1-2”. This chapter focuses on the narrative of Arminius’ resistance against Rome in books 1-2 (1.55-70, 2.5-26, 2.44-46, 2.88). I introduce the recurrent motifs of speeches delivered by northern barbarians and demonstrate the variety in their usage, explore how the account of Arminius and his adversaries evokes the theme of civil war, and discuss the parallels between events in Germania and the (unrealised) civil conflict between Tiberius and Germanicus in Rome.

Chapter 3 is entitled “Thracians (and Romans) under Siege: resistance, suicide, and surrender in book 4”. This chapter treats the account of the Thracian revolt at 4.46-51. My analysis revolves around the debate among the besieged Thracians: I discuss potential models for the debate and its relationship with the main themes of book 4, that is, the growing power of Sejanus, the increase of suicides among Roman nobles, and the imperial siege and sack of Rome.

Chapter 4 is entitled “Boudicca and her Predecessoresses: a British ‘Lucretia-story’ in book 14”. This chapter deals with the British revolt led by Boudicca at 14.29-39. My analysis includes a comparison with the accounts of the revolt in the *Agricola* and Dio, a discussion of the theme of female power in book 14, and a reading of the account as a ‘Lucretia-story’: I discuss how Boudicca’s evocation of Roman heroes and heroines of old provides an interpretive framework within which the particulars of the Roman narrative may be appreciated.

## 2. Arminius and his Adversaries: the Germanic Civil Wars in Books 1-2

*omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset.* (Tac. *Hist.* 1.49.4)

“God pity them both! and pity us all,  
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall  
For of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these: ‘It might have been!’”  
(J. G. Whittier, *Maud Muller*, vv. 103-106)

“But then, I suppose, when with the benefit of hindsight one begins to search one’s past for such ‘turning points’, one is apt to start seeing them everywhere.” (K. Ishiguro, *Remains of the Day*)

### 2.1 Introduction

The Cheruscan chieftain Arminius is famous today mainly for his betrayal of and victory over the three legions led by Publius Quinctilius Varus in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD. Before this Arminius had been a trusted ally of Rome. He was a highly Romanised native who had been given Roman citizenship some time in the Principate of Augustus and later achieved equestrian status. He had also served for many years in the Roman army under Tiberius, where he had achieved the rank of tribune.<sup>84</sup> Arminius continued his resistance against Roman expansion until he was killed by

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<sup>84</sup> For a detailed biography of Arminius, see Timpe 1970; cf. Winkler 2016, 1-2. Arminius’ career mirrors that of the Aeduan Convictolanis (Caes. *Gal.* 7.37), who legitimised his decision to join the pan-Gallic revolt against Roman occupation by arguing that the common freedom was more important than any kindness received from Caesar. Cf. Pub. *Sent.* B5: *beneficium accipere libertatem est uendere.*

enemies within his own tribe in 21 AD. This latter period of Arminius' career, a period which falls under the Principate of Tiberius, is treated in *Annales* 1-2.

The account of Arminius can be divided into four main episodes: Germanicus' second Germanic campaign (1.55-70), Germanicus' third Germanic campaign (2.5-26), the struggle between Arminius and Maroboduus (2.44-46), and the book-end obituary of Arminius (2.88). Arminius' name appears 22 times in the first book and 15 times in the second, more than any other enemy of Rome. He is the northern barbarian leader of the *Annales* whose resistance against Roman expansion is most successful, his obituary is placed in a conspicuous position at the very end of the second book, and he is the third most loquacious character of the two first books, superseded only by Tiberius and Germanicus.<sup>85</sup> Arminius delivers four major speeches (more than any other barbarian in the *Annales*), and each speech is paired with the speech of an adversary: at 1.58-59 the exhortation of Arminius' father-in-law Segestes, in which he urges Germanicus to accept his surrender, is followed by Arminius' exhortation urging his fellow Germani to take up arms against the Romans; at 2.9-10 Arminius and his brother Flavus, who is fighting for the Romans, address each other from the opposite banks of the river Visurgis (Weser); at 2.14-15 Germanicus and Arminius (with other Germanic leaders) deliver pre-battle speeches; and at 2.45-46 Arminius faces off against the rival Germanic king Maroboduus in another pair of pre-battle speeches. These speeches are particularly interesting in light of Maternus' claim in the *Dialogus* that oratory thrives best in societies characterised by unrest and license (*Dial.* 36.2: *perturbatione ac licentia*), and Tacitus' emphasis of the importance of oratory for those who would seek a position of leadership among the Germani<sup>86</sup> in the *Germania*; the power of Germanic leaders, he notes, lies in their authority to advise rather than in their power to command (*Germ.* 11: *auctoritate suadendi magis quam iubendi potestate*).

In this chapter, I explore the account of Arminius in *Annales* 1-2. In the first part, I discuss the treatment of Arminius in other ancient sources and provide a summary of previous scholarship on his role in the *Annales* (sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). In part two, I paraphrase the account of Arminius

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<sup>85</sup> As noted by Pigoń (2008, 287), each narrative year in *Annales* 1-2 (except AD 16 at 2.1.1) begins with a reference to Germanicus. The emperor's son Drusus speaks only twice, both times to the mutinous soldiers of the Pannonian legions: at 1.25 he reads them a letter from Tiberius, and at 1.29 he addresses them with a short speech of his own.

<sup>86</sup> For a history of the Germani in Greco-Roman literature, see Rives 1999, 21-27, 35-41; cf. Krebs 2010.

in the *Annales* (section 2.2). In part three, I analyse some recurrent motifs in the four pairs of speeches delivered by Arminius and his adversaries (section 2.3.1), and I explore the connections between the account of Arminius and the main narrative focused on Rome (section 2.3.2): I identify intertextual and intratextual connections with accounts of Roman civil wars (most notably the civil war of the Late Republic and the always threatening but never realised civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus), and argue that Arminius' struggle with his (mostly Germanic) adversaries is portrayed as a civil war. In short, I demonstrate how the account of Arminius is connected with one of the main themes of the *Annales* in general and books 1-2 in particular: the emergence (or not) of political autocracy from civil strife.

### 2.1.1 Arminius in other ancient authors

The unique position of Arminius in the first two books of the *Annales* is well illustrated by a comparison with his treatment in other authors. The most extensive portrait of Arminius prior to Tacitus is that of Velleius Paterculus (2.118.2-3):

tum iuuenis genere nobilis, manu fortis, sensu celer, ultra barbarum promptus ingenio, nomine Arminius, Sigimeri principis gentis eius filius, ardorem animi uultu oculis praeferens, adsiduus militiae nostrae prioris comes, iure etiam ciuitatis Roma<na>e ius equestris consecutus gradis, segnitia ducis in occasionem sceleris usus est, haud imprudenter speculatus \*\*\* neminem celerius opprimi quam qui nihil timeret, et frequentissimum initium esse calamitatis securitatem. primo igitur paucos, mox pluris in societatem consilii recepit; opprimi posse Romanos et dicit et persuadet, decretis facta iungit, tempus insidiarum constituit.

Velleius' description of Arminius might appear rather short when compared to the extensive treatment of him in the *Annales*. However, considering the condensed and economical nature of Velleius' work (few characters receive any description at all), the space allotted to Arminius is substantial. Velleius' Arminius seems to be inspired by several established villains, most notably Sallust's Catiline, Caesar's Vercingetorix, and Livy's Hannibal.<sup>87</sup> However,

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<sup>87</sup> Winkler 2016, 27. On the possibility that Velleius encountered Arminius while they both served in the Roman army in Germania, see Dyson 1971, 254-255. For possible inspiration for Velleius' portrait, see Ovid's description of an imaginary Germanic triumph celebrated by Tiberius, in which appear several unnamed prisoners of war (*Tr.* 4.2.31-36): *ille ferox et adhuc oculis hostilibus ardens / hortator pugnae consiliumque fuit. / perfidus hic nostros*



despite the space accorded to Arminius, his portrayal is not very nuanced: he is a capable and perfidious barbarian, nothing more. That is all he needs to be in order to perform his function in the text, namely to provide Tiberius with a threat against which he can demonstrate his military mettle and achieve legitimacy for his rule.<sup>88</sup> The description of Arminius follows shortly after that of Varus, and comprises many of the same elements, creating an implicit comparison between the two men: Arminius' vigour is contrasted with Varus' lethargy.<sup>89</sup> This, in turn, corroborates the positive picture of Tiberius, who, in contrast to Varus, matches Arminius in vigour and strength. Velleius' lack of interest in the character of Arminius for its own sake is indicated by his disappearance from the text after the Varian disaster. Tacitus, on the other hand, not only follows Arminius all the way to his death, but also describes his interactions with other Germanic leaders. Note also that in Velleius' account Arminius' short exhortation to rebel against Rome is focused solely on practicalities: it includes neither moral arguments nor references to freedom and slavery. In short, Velleius is not interested in developing the character of Arminius beyond obvious stereotypes.<sup>90</sup>

No other preserved ancient author offers more than a brief mention of Arminius. He is first mentioned by name by his contemporary Strabo (7.1.4), who notes that Arminius commanded the army which defeated Varus and that he was still carrying on the war against Rome at the time of writing. Strabo passes quickly over Varus' defeat and focuses instead on Germanicus'

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*inclusit fraude locorum, / squalida promissis qui tegit ora comis. / illo, qui sequitur, dicunt mactata ministro / saepe recusanti corpora capta deo.* Although Arminius is not mentioned by name, it seems reasonable to assume that he served as a model for Ovid's portrait: while ferocity (*ferox*), furtiveness and planning (*hortator pugnae consiliumque*), and treachery (*perfidus*) are common in descriptions of enemies of Rome, the specific references to ambushing Roman soldiers in a deceitful place (*fraude locorum*) and sacrificing captives to the gods (*mactata ... corpora capta deo*) point more directly to Arminius and the defeat of Varus; note that both Ovid (*oculis ... ardens*) and Velleius (*ardorem animi uultu oculis praeferens*) focus on the fiery eyes of the enemy leader. On Ovid's imaginary triumph as a response to Varus' defeat and the contemporary campaigns of Tiberius and Germanicus, see Luck (1977, 238-243), Ash (2006, 119), Winkler (2016, 30), and Östenberg (2018, 256-257).

<sup>88</sup> Perhaps it took some time before the Romans were ready to allow for a more nuanced portrait of Arminius.

<sup>89</sup> Vel. 2.117.2: *Varus Quintilius, inlustri magis quam nobili ortus familia, uir ingenio mitis, moribus quietus, ut corpore et animo immobilior, otio magis castrorum quam bellicae adsuetus militiae, pecuniae uero quam non contemptor Syria (cui praefuerat) declarauit, quam pauper diuitem ingressus diues pauperem reliquit*; on Velleius' paired portraits of Varus and Arminius, see Woodman (1977, 188-196) and Dzuiba (2008, 324).

<sup>90</sup> I concur with Goodyear (1981, 193) that although Velleius' portrait is indeed graphic (Woodman 1977, *ad loc.* 2.118.2), it is also superficial. Cf. Trzaska-Richter 1991, 168-169.

triumph. He notes (as Tacitus does not; cf. 2.41.2-3) that Arminius' wife and son were among the many high-ranking Germanic captives paraded in the triumph. Arminius is mentioned by name also by Frontinus when he notes his tactic of scaring his enemies by parading the heads of their fallen comrades in front of their camp (*Str.* 2.9.4): *Arminius, dux Germanorum, capita eorum, quos occiderat, similiter praefixa ad uallum hostium admoueri iussit*. Florus also mentions him by name (2.30.32): *at illi [Germani], qui iam pridem robigine obsitos enses inertesque maererent equos, ut primum togas et saeuiora armis iura uiderunt, duce Armenio arma corripuiunt*. Although the Varian disaster reoccurs frequently in other authors, Arminius remains unmentioned.<sup>91</sup>

Why, then, did Tacitus give Arminius such a major role in the *Annales* 1-2, and what is that role? Tacitus' interest in Arminius can be explained partly by his interest in the Germani in general, on whom he had already written an ethnographic work.<sup>92</sup> In the *Germania*, the Germani are portrayed as the major rival of the Roman Empire, surpassing even the Parthians in the danger they pose to Rome (*Germ.* 37): *quippe regno Arsacis acrior est Germanorum libertas*. Thus, it could be argued that Tacitus' interest in Arminius was a natural consequence of his interest in the Germani, an interest based on his judgement of the Germani as the most dangerous enemy of Rome.

However, Arminius was not the only character whom Tacitus could have made into the main Germanic protagonist of the *Annales*. Velleius, although he mentions Arminius in relation to the Varian disaster, focuses his attention

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<sup>91</sup> In Manilius' description of the Varian disaster a personified *fera Germania* snatches Varus away and stains the fields with the blood of three legions (Man. 1.896-903): *quin et bella canunt ignes subitoseque tumultus / et clandestinis surgentia fraudibus arma, / externas modo per gentes, -- ut foedere rupto / cum fera ductorem rapuit Germania Varum / infecitque trium legionum sanguine campos, / arserunt toto passim minitancia mundo / lumina, et ipsa tulit bellum natura per ignes / opposuitque suas uires finemque minata est*. The battle is treated without mention of Arminius also by the Greek poet Crinagoras (*AP* 7.741, 9.291), Suetonius (*Aug.* 23, *Cal.* 31), and Orosius (*Hist. adv. pag.* 6.21.26). Dio (56.18-22) mentions Arminius, but gives no portrait of him, in his account of the battle. Arminius might have been treated more extensively in Pliny the Elder's work on the Germanic wars and in Statius' poem about Domitian's Germanic campaign. On non-Tacitean ancient treatments of Arminius, see Timpe (1970, 126-130) and Ash (2006, 117-123).

<sup>92</sup> On the *Germania*, see O'Gorman 1993/2012, Rives 1999 and 2012, and Thomas 2009. On the relation between Tacitus' interest in the Germani and the campaigns carried out by Domitian and Trajan in Germania, see Rives (1999, 30-31, 281-282) and Birley (2000, 239-240): Tacitus' dismissal of Domitian's campaigns (37.5: *proximis temporibus triumphati magis quam uicti sunt*) would have set the stage for Trajan to achieve a great victory. On the possibility that Tacitus served as governor of Germania Inferior or Superior some time between AD 101 and 104, see Syme (1958, 71-72) and Birley (2000, 235, 240-241, 247).

on Maroboduus (Vel. 2.108-109, 129): a defeated barbarian king asking Tiberius for mercy suited his encomiastic history better than a successful resistance fighter who defied both Rome and Tiberius until his death.<sup>93</sup> It could also be argued that the importance of Arminius belonged more naturally to the reign of Augustus. His victory over Varus, after all, occurred during Augustus' reign. As noted by Pigoń, Germanicus' campaigns against Arminius were hardly as significant and consequential as to merit the generous treatment that they are afforded in the *Annales*.<sup>94</sup> In short, it was not obvious that Arminius should play an important role in a work of Roman history dealing with Tiberius' Principate. Unlike other ancient writers, Tacitus presents Arminius as an adversary whose main historical significance was not his perfidious victory over Varus, but his continued, successful resistance against Rome *after* his victory over Varus.<sup>95</sup>

## 2.1.2 Previous research on Arminius

In spite of his dominating role in the first two books, Arminius has received surprisingly little attention in modern scholarship on the *Annales*. The commentaries of Koestermann (1963) and Goodyear (1981) provide useful intertexts (esp. for the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries), but offer little in terms of contextual analysis of the account. In monographs and articles on *Annales* 1-2, Arminius is rarely given more than a few brief mentions. This practice of 'forgetting' Arminius goes back at least to Syme: his monumental 1958 *Tacitus* offers only a few scattered remarks on the Germanic leader.<sup>96</sup>

The main monographs on Arminius are Timpe 1970 and Winkler 2016. Timpe's study focuses primarily on social and political history. It does

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<sup>93</sup> As observed by Dzuiba (2008, 321), Velleius explicitly renounces his customary brevity (*festinatio*) in order to give a fuller portrait of Maroboduus: not only is he portrayed as the most capable, dangerous, and ambitious of the Germanic leaders (2.108), he is also the one to whom the head of Varus is sent (2.119.5). For Velleius, Arminius was a rebel, Maroboduus a rival to Rome. As noted by Sage (1991, 3410-3411) and Goodyear (1981, 397-398), this seems to square well with Tiberius' view of matters, at least if we accept as trustworthy the speech given to him by Tacitus at 2.63.3, where Tiberius claims that Maroboduus was a more dangerous foe than Philip for the Athenians, and Pyrrhus and Antiochus for the Romans of old.

<sup>94</sup> Pigoń 2008, 288.

<sup>95</sup> Timpe 1970, 129; Sinclair 1995, 17; Ash 2006, 122-125; Winkler 2016, 33.

<sup>96</sup> Syme 1958, 266, 393, 496, 513, 531; Syme's 1958/1970 article on obituaries in the *Annales* does not discuss the obituary of Arminius.

contain a chapter on the treatment of Arminius in the ancient sources, but some of Timpe's observations on his treatment in the *Annales* are based on a rather shallow reading of the text, e.g. his claim that the speeches of Arminius' Germanic adversaries are to a large extent interchangeable.<sup>97</sup> As we shall see, each speech is in fact tightly bound to its respective context. Winkler's study deals almost exclusively with the reception of Arminius. His one chapter on characterisations of Arminius in antiquity is much indebted to, as well as less nuanced than, the study of Timpe. Thus, neither Timpe nor Winkler really deals with Arminius as a literary character in the *Annales*.<sup>98</sup>

Baxter 1972 identifies and discusses Vergilian correspondences in *Annales* 1-2. He demonstrates that they tend to appear in clusters and especially in passages that deal with Germanicus.<sup>99</sup> Baxter claims that Germanicus is modelled on Aeneas and draws attention to shared character traits (*uirtus, moderatio, iustitia, pietas, fides*), similarities in life stories (Julian family, Mediterranean travels with stop-overs at Actium and an Apollonian oracle, storms at sea, dream visions of a fallen friend) and verbal parallels, e.g. *dominus* and *patria* in Arminius' speech (1.59.6), the description of Latinus' palace (*Aen.* 7.182), and Camers' speech (*Aen.* 12.236-237).<sup>100</sup> Baxter's claim encourages him to find parallels also between Arminius and Turnus, but the shared character traits of *uiolentia, perfidia*, and *audacia* are common for enemies of Rome and hardly amount to a "close resemblance".<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Timpe 1970, 133; similarly, while Timpe is right to point out that Tacitus thrice contrasts Arminius with Germanic adversaries, he fails to mention that he is also confronted by the Roman Germanicus.

<sup>98</sup> Even some of those who have acknowledged Arminius' importance in *Annales* 1-2 are curiously silent on what this function might be; see e.g. Ando's (1997, 289) comment that book 2 ends with "the death of Arminius, with all that he represented." Nowhere, however, does Ando suggest what exactly Arminius 'represented'.

<sup>99</sup> Baxter 1972. Although his claim that most correspondences appear in passages dealing with Germanicus is sound, a closer look at the occurrences shows that it is not so much Germanicus in general who is the subject of these correspondences, but rather Germanicus in Germania. Thus, in the first book, 20 out of the 25 Vergilian correspondences relating to Germanicus occur when Germanicus is in Germania, and the mutiny narrative has only 4 of these, the war with Arminius 16. In the second book, the numbers are 16 out of 22 in his Germanic campaign, with another 3 each for his eastern travels and his death scene. Pagán (1999, 306-307) sees the Vergilian correspondences as a reminder of the cost of empire, a key theme in Vergil's *Aeneid*.

<sup>100</sup> Baxter 1972, 248-269.

<sup>101</sup> Baxter 1972, 268. I am similarly unconvinced by Baxter's claim that the triad of Arminius, his wife, and Segestes corresponds to Turnus, Lavinia, and Latinus. On the parallels between Germanicus and Aeneas, see also Bews 1972-1973; on the parallels between Arminius and Turnus, see also Edelmaier 1964, 134-139.

Moreover, the obituary of Arminius includes intertexts with Cicero and Livy, but not with Vergil. In his final verdict, Tacitus does not see Arminius as an outdated, epic character of the distant past, but as a political leader at home in, and relevant for understanding, the present. Baxter's approach has been convincingly challenged by Goodyear and Tarrant, who argue that he is too eager to equate characters with each other.<sup>102</sup> While I concur with Baxter that Tacitus has added an epic colouring to the Germanic campaigns of Germanicus, I disagree with his claim that Germanicus and Arminius correspond to Aeneas and Turnus.

Pelling 1993 makes some lucid observations on the similarities between Germanicus and Arminius: family relations, popular support, association with *libertas*, death by deceit, audacity, and a certain aura of an older world. However, Pelling's treatment of Arminius remains somewhat crude since it is entirely tied up with his treatment of Germanicus.<sup>103</sup> While I concur with Pelling that the parallel with Germanicus is crucial for an understanding of Arminius' role in *Annales* 1-2, I believe that a more nuanced appreciation of the parallel depends on a contextual analysis of the account of Arminius' resistance against Rome.

Sinclair 1995 offers an interpretation of Arminius' role in *Annales* 1-2 from the perspective of Tacitus' use of *sententiae* in descriptions of outsiders. According to Sinclair, Tacitus "tunes his presentation [of Arminius] to meet the interests of a readership who he assumes is, like himself, engaged above all with the question of what *libertas* ("political independence, freedom") means for a member of the political elite living under the exigencies of the principate."<sup>104</sup> In Sinclair's reading, the main function of Arminius is to be the quintessential 'other', against whom Tacitus' Roman readers can define themselves and thus better understand their own world. I embrace Sinclair's idea of interpreting Tacitus' account of Arminius in terms of what function it plays within the text. However, although Sinclair makes some interesting observations on how Tacitus communicates with his readers through a sententious rhetoric, his one-dimensional portrayal of Arminius as an unsophisticated and irrational barbarian who utterly rejects rhetoric does not do justice to the multifarious nature of Tacitus' account.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Goodyear 1981, 200; Tarrant 1997, 69.

<sup>103</sup> Pelling 1993, 79-81. On Tacitus' portrayal of Germanicus, see also Pigoń 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Sinclair 1995, 18.

<sup>105</sup> Sinclair 1995, 26-27; cf. Trzaska-Richter 1991, 169-171. 225. While Arminius might appear less sophisticated and more impulsive than Segestes in their paired speeches, to claim that Arminius is therefore less rhetorically sophisticated than his adversaries is to disregard the context of the speeches: while Segestes needs to adapt his speech to his Roman audience,

Haynes 2003 provides a literary analysis of Arminius' and Segestes' speeches and the obituary of Arminius.<sup>106</sup> Haynes' approach, like that of Sinclair, is distinguished by her ambition to go beyond the surface of the text and explore the function of characters and speeches. Her main thesis is that Tacitus' historiography is dominated by a tension between  *fingere*  and  *credere* , between "making things up and believing them."<sup>107</sup> Dealing more specifically with the Germani, she notes that they offer particularly rich interpretive possibilities for exploration of this tension due to their role as outsiders and their long and successful resistance against Rome.<sup>108</sup> Haynes claims that Tacitus' portrayal of Arminius' resistance against Rome, which has clear parallels to key moments of liberation in the Roman past, assimilates the imperial present to the regal past, and that his complaint about the lack of interest in Arminius among Roman writers (cf. 2.88.3) highlights Roman unwillingness to acknowledge the reality of autocracy in Rome. Haynes' observations are both nuanced and stimulating, but the possible conclusions to be drawn from her analysis are limited by its narrow focus on Arminius' and Segestes' speeches and the obituary of Arminius to the exclusion of their contexts.

Ash 2006 discusses the treatment of Arminius in other ancient authors (117-123), paraphrases and comments on Tacitus account (123-132), and presents some highlights from Arminius' post-classical reception (132-147). While directed to a wide readership and fairly unambitious in terms of novel interpretations, Ash's study succinctly brings out prominent particulars of Tacitus' account, most notably his unprecedentedly positive, yet still ambiguous, portrayal of Arminius: "For a figure who generates such universal loathing and fear in the collective Roman consciousness, Tacitus' Arminius is cast in a surprisingly positive light. His depiction is not completely devoid of darker tones, but the subtle and complex

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Arminius is, in his reply, (unsurprisingly) agitated by the newly received information about the capture of his wife and unborn child. In his speech against Maroboduus, Arminius is both perfectly capable of and willing to demonstrate his mastery of rhetoric, e.g. through allusions to Roman poetry (cf. footnote 164). Thus, I disagree with Sinclair's (23) claim about "Arminius' conspicuous simplicity" and his (27) characterisation of Arminius' speeches as "exclusively vehement polemic and military harangues." In fact, Tacitus has given Arminius the chance to express himself in four different situations against four different adversaries.

<sup>106</sup> Haynes 2003, 15-19.

<sup>107</sup> Haynes 2003, 3.

<sup>108</sup> Haynes 2003, 13.

characterization makes him three-dimensional and real in a way that contrasts sharply with the lifeless caricatures provided by our other sources.”<sup>109</sup>

Low’s 2013 dissertation offers a detailed analysis of Tacitus’ account of Arminius, placing it within the framework of *Annales* 1-2. She notes that events in Germania, through intertextual and intratextual connections with Roman civil wars of the past (the Late Republic), present (Germanicus and Tiberius), and future (AD 68/69) are portrayed as a civil war. In Low’s interpretation, the account of Arminius mirrors that of Germanicus and illustrates an alternative historical path.<sup>110</sup> While I am in agreement with and – through analysis of the portrayal of Arminius, the invention of a Germanic fatherland, and the theme of intrafamilial strife – will corroborate Low’s claim on the nature of the intratextual relationship between the account of Arminius and the Roman narrative of books 1-2, I find her dismissal of Germanicus’ potential as a republican liberator too decisive.

Following in the footsteps of Baxter and Pelling, I will expand the analysis of the parallel between Germanicus and Arminius, and following in the footsteps of Sinclair, Haynes, and Low, I will offer a contextual analysis of the account of Arminius, that is, I will explore the thematic links between the Roman and Germanic narratives of *Annales* 1-2. Unlike Baxter and Pelling my investigation of Arminius’ role will start from the character of Arminius himself (rather than from Germanicus), unlike Haynes it will incorporate the entire account of Arminius, unlike Sinclair it will focus less on how Arminius allows Tacitus to explore what it means to be a Roman of the Principate and more on how Tacitus uses Arminius to construct a world in which events from the recent Roman past can be interpreted in a fresh light, and unlike Low it will offer a more open-ended interpretation of the implications of the parallel between Arminius and Germanicus. I will argue that Tacitus has constructed his account of Arminius as a reversal of events in Rome during the civil wars of the Late Republic and the (always threatening) civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus. The account of Arminius is an integral part of the structure of *Annales* 1-2.

## 2.2 Paraphrase of the account of Arminius

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<sup>109</sup> Ash 2006, 131.

<sup>110</sup> Low 2013a.

The narrative of *Annales* 1-2 revolves around the disappearance of the last traces of freedom in Rome.<sup>111</sup> This is the context in which the account of the successful freedom-fighter Arminius must be read. As pointed out by Pelling, the account of Arminius is closely intertwined with that of Germanicus, whose wars on the edges of the empire are, in turn, intertwined with events in Rome, where Tiberius and the increasingly subservient senate are the main protagonists.<sup>112</sup> Some of the similarities between Arminius and Germanicus have been investigated by Pelling: both have a pregnant wife (Agrippina and Thusnelda), both are opposed by their uncle (Tiberius and Inguimerus), both die through treachery, and both are symbols of freedom. In addition to the specific parallels between these two characters, the account of Arminius explores similar themes to the narrative played out in Rome and in which Germanicus is a main character, namely the struggle between freedom and slavery, the nature and consequences of civil war, and the problem of succession.<sup>113</sup> These three themes are obviously intertwined, since the struggle between freedom and slavery is both at the heart of and a consequence of the Roman civil war, a civil war which is constantly threatening to break out anew due to the complicated nature of succession.

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<sup>111</sup> See e.g. 1.3.7: *quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam uidisset* (memory of the Republic is fading); 1.74.5: *uestigia morientis libertatis* (Cn. Piso notes the incontestable power of the *princeps* in senatorial discussions and voting); 1.75.1: *dum ueritati consulitur, libertas corrumpebatur* (Tiberius' participation in the law courts promotes integrity but damages freedom); 1.77.3: *ea simulacra libertatis* (an empty show of freedom in the senate); and 1.81.2: *speciosa uerbis, re inania aut subdola, quantoque maiore libertatis imagine tegebantur, tanto eruptura ad infensius seruitium* (Tiberius' practice of declaring that people whom he did not himself propose might still come forward as candidates is designated as disingenuous and conducive to the spread of servitude); cf. Goodyear (1981, 164), "freedom, real or pretended, is very much in T.'s mind in the closing chapters of book 1."

<sup>112</sup> Pelling 1993, 78. Germanicus, like several other Roman commanders in Tacitus' works, is fighting on two fronts: on the border he is in charge of a war against a barbarian enemy (Arminius) while in Rome he has to deal with a jealous and distrustful emperor (Tiberius). For other examples, see Agricola, whose triad is completed by Calgacus and Domitian, and Corbulo, who faces Tiridates and Nero. All three commanders, it should be noted, triumph against their barbarian enemy only to be – in some way or another – vanquished by their own emperor. On Agricola and Germanicus, see Cogitore 2014. On the good aristocrat at the fringe of the empire as a colonial staple, see Shumate 2012, 497-499.

<sup>113</sup> On the importance of the succession theme in *Annales* 1-2, see Ginsburg 1981 and Kraus 2009; Baxter (1972, 246-247, 261) notes the recurrence of the succession theme in book 2: the expulsion of Vonones (2.1-4), the murder of Agrippa Postumus' impostor, (2.39-40), the murder of Achelaus (2.42), the conflict between Maroboduus and Catualda (2.62-63), the conflict between Rhescuporis and Cotys (2.64-67), the death of Germanicus (2.69-73), and the murder of Arminius (2.88); cf. also the conflict between Arminius and Maroboduus (2.44-46).



A main cause of the conflict in Rome is the rivalry between the established leader, the old, apprehensive, and disliked Tiberius, and his adopted son, the young, bold, and popular Germanicus. A similar conflict is played out in Germania between Segestes (the established leader) and Arminius (his son-in-law). I will demonstrate that Tacitus portrays both of these conflicts as civil wars: the reader is invited to see events in Germania as a parallel and a contrast to the Roman civil wars of the late republic and to the ever-threatening civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus. While the civil wars of the Late Roman Republic led to the rule of Augustus and the Principate of Tiberius (whose susceptibility to renewed civil conflict is constantly stressed), the civil war between Arminius and his adversaries in Germania leads to a very different outcome.

The following paraphrase will give the outline of the account of Arminius and offer some preliminary observations. More detailed analysis will follow in sections 2.3.1 (on recurrent motifs in the speeches) and 2.3.2 (on the theme of civil war in *Annales* 1-2).

### 2.2.1 Arminius and Segestes (1.58-59)

As noted by Baxter, the first book of the *Annales* is structured around the juxtaposition of events in Rome and Germania, and may be divided into five episodes: chapters 1-15 include the famously stubby prologue, the death of Augustus, and the accession of Tiberius, 16-45 narrate the mutinies in Pannonia and Germania, 46-54 alternate between Germanicus' first Germanic campaign and Tiberius' reactions in Rome, 55-71 narrate Germanicus' second Germanic campaign, and 72-81 treat a variety of events in Rome.<sup>114</sup> Arminius makes his entry into the *Annales* in the middle of the book, at the start of Germanicus' second Germanic campaign.

Germanicus, aiming to exploit internecine strife among the Germani, launches an attack against the Chatti. The Germani are divided between Arminius and Segestes, who are introduced as a pair (1.55.1-2): *Arminium ac Segestem, insignem utrumque perfidia in nos aut fide. Arminius turbator Germaniae, Segestes parari rebellionem saepe alias et supremo conuiuio, post quod in arma itum, aperuit suasitque Varo ut se et Arminium et ceteros procures uinciret.* The familiar motif of Arminius' perfidy is introduced at the very start, and contrasted with Segestes' loyalty. While Segestes'

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<sup>114</sup> Baxter 1972, 246; the first four episodes revolve around a contrast between two characters: (1) Augustus and Tiberius, (2) Germanicus and Drusus, (3) Germanicus and Tiberius, and (4) Germanicus and Arminius.

background is given a somewhat more detailed description, presumably since he was less known among Tacitus' audience, Arminius is described with only two words: *turbator Germaniae*. While I will discuss the connotations and implications of this expression in section 2.3.2.2, it is worth noting already here that it is semantically ambiguous: it raises the question whether Arminius is a disruptor from Germania (genitive of origin) or a disruptor of Germania (objective genitive).

Tacitus goes on to describe Segestes' role in the Varian disaster: after an unsuccessful attempt to warn Varus and his army, he was forced to aid his fellow Germani in their attack on the Romans. However, a difference in policy towards Rome is not the only obstacle between Arminius and Segestes. There is also another, more personal, reason for their animosity: Arminius had carried off Segestes' daughter even though Segestes had promised her to someone else.<sup>115</sup> This problematic family connection gives the struggle between them an extra poignancy. They are explicitly denoted as *gener* and *socer* (1.55.3), a phrase whose civil war connotations I will discuss in section 2.3.2.2.

### 2.2.1.1 *The speech of Segestes*

Arminius, since his advocacy of war made him more influential with his compatriots, has gotten the upper hand in the intra-familial struggle with Segestes, who finds himself besieged. He sends a delegation to Germanicus to ask for assistance, whereupon Germanicus promptly breaks the siege, rescues Segestes and his men, and captures a number of Germanic nobles, including Arminius' pregnant wife, Segestes' daughter. Segestes himself is described as a towering figure, fearless in the recollection of his faithful alliance with Rome (1.57.5): *simul Segestes ipse, ingens uisu et memoria bonae societatis inpauidus*. Segestes' position is not, however, as comfortable as it might at first seem. He has been saved from the enemies within his own tribe, but he is now facing the Romans, and his involvement in the defeat of Varus has put his loyalty towards Rome into question. Although Tacitus' readers have been told from the start that Segestes was distinguished by this loyalty towards Rome, he himself is apparently sufficiently concerned so as to address Germanicus with a highly rhetorical

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<sup>115</sup> The woman, whom Tacitus never mentions by her name Thusnelda (Strabo 7.1.4: *Θουσνέλδα*), has more in common with her husband than her father (1.57.4): *uxor Arminii eademque filia Segestis, mariti magis quam parentis animi, neque uicta in lacrimas neque uoce supplex, compressis intra sinum manibus grauidum uterum intuens*.

speech.<sup>116</sup> Segestes needs to persuade Germanicus that (1) he and his children are worthy of mercy even though they had fought against Varus, (2) that he will be loyal to Rome also in the future, and (3) that he can be a useful asset for Rome if kept alive, and in a distinguished position (1.58.1-4):

non hic mihi primus erga populum Romanum fidei et constantiae dies. ex quo a diuo Augusto ciuitate donatus sum, amicos inimicosque ex uestris utilitatibus delegi, neque odio patriae (quippe proditores etiam iis quos anteponunt inuisi sunt), uerum quia Romanis Germanisque idem conducere et pacem quam bellum probabam. ergo raptorem filiae meae, uiolatorem foederis uestri Arminium apud Varum, qui tum exercitui praesidebat, reum feci. dilatus segnitia ducis, quia parum praesidii in legibus erat, ut me et Arminium et conscios uinciret flagitauit: testis illa nox, mihi utinam potius nouissima! quae secuta sunt, defleri magis quam defendi possunt; ceterum et iniecti catenas Arminio et a factione eius iniectas perpessus sum. atque ubi primum tui copia, uetera nouis et quieta turbidis antehabeo, neque ob praemium, sed ut me perfidia exsoluam, simul genti Germanorum idoneus conciliator, si paenitentiam quam perniciem maluerit. pro iuuenta et errore filii ueniam precor; filiam necessitate huc adductam fateor. tuum erit consultare utrum praeualeat, quod ex Arminio concepit an quod ex me genita est.

Segestes starts by pointing out that his loyalty (*fidei et constantiae*) to Rome stretches back to the time when he was made a Roman citizen by Augustus. He claims that he has always chosen his friends and enemies in consideration of Roman interests, not because of hatred towards his own country, but because he considered that Roman and Germanic interests were the same and that peace was preferable to war. Thus, he tries to portray himself as a faithful ally of Rome *and* a Germanic patriot. His devotion to precedent casts him as a parallel to Tiberius, whose commitment to the policies of Augustus remained a key feature of government.<sup>117</sup> He then throws some insults against Arminius, before he moves on to recount his role in the Varian disaster: he recalls his brave, but ultimately futile, attempts to warn Varus, dodges the details about the destruction of Varus' legions and his own role in it (*quae secuta sunt*), and admits that his role in the disaster cannot be defended while simultaneously highlighting his opposition to Arminius.<sup>118</sup> Moving on to

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<sup>116</sup> Sinclair 1995, 28.

<sup>117</sup> Sinclair 1995, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Segestes' version fits quite well with the one given by the authorial voice at 1.55.2-3: *Segestes parari rebellionem saepe alias et supremo conuiuio, post quod in arma itum, aperuit suasitque Varo ut se et Arminium et ceteros proceres uinciret: nihil ausuram plebem principibus amotis, atque ipsi tempus fore, quo crimina et innoxios discerneret. sed Varus*

present circumstances he stresses again his devotion of precedent, as he claims that he prefers the old and calm (Germania and Rome at peace) rather than the new and turbulent (Germania and Rome at war) order of things.<sup>119</sup> He also claims that he can be a qualified mediator between Romans and Germani. He finishes the speech with an explicit prayer of mercy (*ueniam precor*) for his son<sup>120</sup>, and a more implicit prayer of mercy for his daughter.

As noted by Goodyear, Segestes' speech is strikingly Roman.<sup>121</sup> His arguments are designed to make a Roman, not a Germanic listener approve of his past conduct and consider him a trustworthy and useful ally in the future. This makes perfect sense of course, since he is speaking to a Roman general. As we shall see in section 2.2.4, the Germanic king Maroboduus speaks very differently when addressing his own kinsmen. A significant part of Segestes' speech consists of explanation and defence of his earlier conduct: he first explains and defends his commitment to the Roman cause from a yet unstated charge of treachery (Arminius will soon supply it) and then explains and defends his role in the Varian disaster. Goodyear summarises the speech as "largely an *apologia pro vita sua*."<sup>122</sup> This designation, although it captures the content of the speech, is somewhat misleading, since it misses Segestes' rhetorical aim: to persuade Germanicus that he can be a trustworthy and valuable asset for Rome, and that he (and his children) should therefore be pardoned and protected. Segestes' excuses for his past conduct and justifications for his commitment to the Roman cause, although necessary to reassure Germanicus, are merely the base from which he can launch his petition for pardon and protection. His need to pre-empt allegations of treachery against his fatherland is not caused by a fear that his kinsmen will brand him a traitor, but by a fear that Germanicus will not trust a man who has repeatedly switched sides. As evinced by his introductory *sententia* about treachery, traitors are hated even by those they help.<sup>123</sup> Thus, even his claim

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*fato et ui Arminio cecidit; Segestes, quamquam consensus gentis in bellum tractus, discors manebat.*

<sup>119</sup> In the words of Haynes (2003, 16), Segestes "emphasizes conciliation between the nations, but he does so as if hostilities had not come first ... He erases the arrival of Roman *imperium* on German land."

<sup>120</sup> Segimundus, who had fought for Arminius against Varus (1.57.2).

<sup>121</sup> Goodyear 1981, 81; cf. Sinclair 1995, 27-28. Pagán (2000, 359-361) notes that Segestes' words mirror the considerations of a Roman senator dealing with the emperor: choice of friends, common interests, self-deprecation, and flattery. Haynes (2003, 16-17) points out that Segestes uses a string of Roman legal terms.

<sup>122</sup> Goodyear 1981, 81.

<sup>123</sup> One wonders if Segestes' acquisition of Roman culture might have extended to a reading Livy's account of Tarpeia, the girl who was killed by the Sabines after she had treacherously

that he is not a traitor of Germania is presented in Roman wrapping. In short, the speech is not ‘an *apologia*’, but a petition which includes elements of *apologia*: Segestes’ aim is not to defend his life-choice – as if he had any need to excuse his Roman sympathies to Germanicus – but to secure pardon and protection from Germanicus.

The speech is successful and Caesar (1.58.5), here presumably Germanicus, shows mercy to Segestes and his children, and promises them a place to live in the province. The episode ends with Tacitus promising (1.58.6) to tell about the fate of Arminius’ wife and son at the appropriate time, but this seems to have happened in one of the lost parts of the work.

### 2.2.1.2 *The first speech of Arminius*

As noted by Sinclair, although Segestes’ speech is directed to Germanicus, its real response comes from Arminius.<sup>124</sup> Arminius’ speech is presented as a reaction to Segestes’ surrender and pardon. Arminius is driven to frenzy by the news that his wife and unborn child have been captured (1.59.1): *Arminium super insitam uiolentiam rapta uxor, subiectus seruitio uxoris uterus uaecordem agebant, uolitabatque per Cheruscos, arma in Segestem, arma in Caesarem poscens.*<sup>125</sup> However, although Arminius’ speech follows directly upon that of Segestes, the two speeches are not formally paired.<sup>126</sup> The aim and audience of the two speeches are noticeably different: while Segestes asks a Roman general for pardon and protection, Arminius flies through the Cherusci and demands that they take up arms against Segestes and Rome. Moreover, while Segestes speaks in *oratio recta*, Arminius’ speech is reported in *oratio obliqua*. Tacitus seems to deliberately eschew the

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guided them to the top of the Capitol (Liv. 1.11.7): *seu ut ui capta potius arx uideretur seu prodendi exempli causa ne quid usquam fidum proditori esset*; cf. the speech of the Mytileneans at Thuc. 3.9.1 (Goodyear 1981, 82; Sinclair 1995, 28).

<sup>124</sup> Sinclair 1995, 28.

<sup>125</sup> One might detect some irony in the fact that the daughter-snatcher Arminius (1.58.2: *raptorem filiae meae*) is enraged because his wife has been snatched away. On the role of pregnant women, esp. Agrippina the Elder, in the *Annales*, see O’Gorman (2000, 73-74) and Kraus (2009, 113-114).

<sup>126</sup> Goodyear 1981, 81. The technique of putting non-paired speeches in counterpoint is used also by Livy, who frames his fifth book with the thematically connected speeches of Appius Claudius (5.3-6) and Camillus (5.51-54) and in Sallust’s *Iugurtha*, where Memmius’ (31) and Marius’ (85) speeches against the power and arrogance of the nobility serve as the two high points (Comber and Balmaceda 2009, 209-210).

balance between the two speeches.<sup>127</sup> The speech is introduced only by the remark that Arminius did not refrain from insults (1.59.2-6):

neque probris temperabat: egregium patrem, magnum imperatorem, fortem exercitum, quorum tot manus unam mulierculam auexerint. sibi tres legiones, totidem legatos procubuisse; non enim se proditione neque aduersus feminas grauidas, sed palam aduersus armatos bellum tractare: cerni adhuc Germanorum in lucis signa Romana quae dis patriis suspenderit. coleret Segestes uictam ripam, redderet filio sacerdotium hominum<sup>128</sup>: Germanos numquam satis excusaturos, quod inter Albim et Rhenum uirgas et securis et togam uiderint. aliis gentibus ignorantia imper<i> Romani inexperta esse supplicia, nescia tributa: quae quoniam exuerint inritusque discesserit ille inter numina dicatus Augustus, ille delectus Tiberius, ne imperitum adulescentulum, ne seditiosum exercitum pauescerent. si patriam parentes antiqua mallent quam dominos et colonias nouas, Arminium potius gloriae ac libertatis quam Segestem flagitiosae seruitutis ducem sequerentur.

In contrast to Segestes, Arminius' speech seems to be impulsive rather than premeditated. He jumps straight to the insults, against Segestes and Germanicus as well as against the Roman army. He then recounts his previous victory over the Romans, but does not mention Varus' legions, presumably because their explicit mention would have undermined part of his succeeding claim that this victory was brought about neither through treachery (*proditione*) nor against pregnant women (*aduersus feminas grauidas*), but in the open (*palam*) and against armed men (*aduersus armatos*). He encourages his audience by pointing out that the Roman standards that he dedicated to their native gods can still be seen in the sacred groves of the Germani. Keeping with this religious imagery he proceeds by (sarcastically) urging Segestes to 'cultivate' (*coleret*, a verb whose possible objects include both 'land', 'farm', and 'god') the conquered bank, and to send his son back to a priesthood devoted to the worship of (mere) men

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<sup>127</sup> Sinclair's (1995, 22-23) claim that Arminius (all of whose speeches, except the short battle exhortation at 1.65.4, are reported in indirect speech) is "bound to remain more one-dimensional than a figure who is directly quoted" (cf. Pagán 2000, 360-361), is contentious at best; as noted by Laird (1999, 94-101), use of indirect speech allows a writer not only to convey the words spoken, but also to interpret them and to portray the emotions of the speaker. On the distinctions between direct and indirect speech in historiography, see Laird 1999, 116-152; on speeches in Tacitus, see footnote 38.

<sup>128</sup> I follow the manuscript reading *hominum* (supported by Miller 1962) instead of Seyffert's conjecture *omissum* (printed in Heubner 1994); cf. the discussion in Goodyear 1981, *ad loc.*

(*sacerdotium hominum*).<sup>129</sup> He then moves on to the main theme of his speech, namely the suppression inherent in Roman rule. He claims that the Germani will never accept to see symbols of Roman power and culture (*uirgae et securae et togam*) on the eastern side of the Rhine,<sup>130</sup> points out that the Germani know only too well what Roman occupation entails (*supplicia ... tributa*), and, after some jibes at Augustus' divine status, Tiberius' wish to be seen as elected, the unnamed Germanicus' youth, and the recent mutiny in the Roman army, he urges his listeners to prefer fatherland, ancestors, and the old state of affairs (*patriam, parentes, antiqua*) rather than masters and new colonies (*dominos et colonias nouas*), and to follow Arminius in the fight for glory and freedom (*gloriae ac libertatis*) rather than Segestes for shameful slavery (*flagitiosae seruitutis*).<sup>131</sup> By offering a version of Germanic history far different from that of Segestes, Arminius can claim that he is the one who stands for the old and hallowed, Segestes for the new and uncertain.

According to Sinclair, the primary purpose of the paired speeches of Arminius and Segestes is “to differentiate the views of a German ‘collaborator’ from those of ‘Germany’s emancipator’.”<sup>132</sup> While I concur that the speeches illustrate the differences between such views, they are also embedded in a specific context. Arminius will face other adversaries (Flavus and Maroboduus) who similarly can be said to represent the views of a Germanic collaborator. Thus, one should look for features which distinguish this pair of speeches from the other pairs in which Arminius faces off against an adversary. While we encounter many of the motifs commonly found in speeches of northern barbarians in this first speech of Arminius (a contrast between freedom and slavery, condemnation of treachery, a focus on

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<sup>129</sup> As noted by Tacitus at *Germ.* 8, the Germani regarded the deification of humans with scepticism.

<sup>130</sup> As pointed out by Haynes (2003, 17-18), Arminius “strives like the Briton in *Agricola* [Calgacus] to demonstrate to his people the outline of the Roman fiction ... He deconstructs the *fascies* into *uirgae* (rods) and *securae* (axes), emphasizing the corporal punishment that forms one element of the Roman *imperium* and that wears the *pax* Segestes clings to as an outer dress – the *toga*. Germans, he says, will never put up with the false marriage of these two within their borders.” One could also interpret *uirgae* and *securae* as symbols of Roman conquest and *toga* as a symbol of Roman peace (cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.77): Roman peace, after all, could be both bloody (1.10.4), harmful to good morals (*Agr.* 21.2), and an object of fear (12.33).

<sup>131</sup> Sarcasm seems to be one of Arminius' favourite rhetorical devices: he employs it not only to ridicule his adversaries, but also to highlight his understanding of Roman matters; cf. the debate with his brother at 2.9-10.

<sup>132</sup> Sinclair 1995, 28; cf. Williams 1989, 142.

fatherland and family, religious language, moral argumentation, a list of undesirable consequences of Roman occupation), these motifs, as I will demonstrate in section 2.3.1, are not fixed and ready-made entities which are mechanically attached to one another, but rather constitute a pool of material from which Tacitus picks and adapts according to the circumstances of each speaker and his situation: the abundance of religious language in Arminius' first speech (*lucis, dis patriis, coleret, sacerdotium hominum, inter numina dicatus*) might perhaps be ascribed to the fact that Segestes' son held a Roman priesthood.

Haynes' interpretation of the speeches suffers from a similar lack of contextual consideration. She analyses the speeches through her interpretive paradigm of 'make/believe', and argues that while Segestes accepts and believes in (*credere*) the ideology of Empire made/created (*ingere*) by the Romans, Arminius encourages his listeners to reject the fiction of *pax* promoted by Rome.<sup>133</sup> Haynes fruitfully highlights the ideological battle between Segestes (trying to persuade Germanicus that he believes in the Roman ideology of empire) and Arminius (trying to persuade his countrymen that the Roman construction of reality is false), but in her focus on rhetoric seems to miss the (contextual) reality. Segestes' eloquent articulation of Roman ideology needs not be ascribed to an actual belief in the benefits of empire (and thus his subjection to a Roman world view), but may just as well (and I believe better) be ascribed to the rhetorical demands of his current situation. To insist on the contextual embeddedness of his speech is not to say that Segestes' words do not illustrate the political views of a collaborator. Tacitus has constructed a rhetorical situation which gives him the possibility to explore the reasoning and argumentation of one who chooses collaboration with, rather than resistance to, Roman subjugation. One should, however, beware of pulling the speeches out of their contexts and using them to produce generalisations about the personalities of the speakers.<sup>134</sup> The alleged Romanness of Segestes is better understood as a rhetorical strategy on his part than as an actual element in his personality. Similarly, the impulsiveness and aggressiveness of Arminius is better understood as a consequence of the newly arrived news of the capture of his wife and unborn son than as innate character traits. The contextual particulars are seamlessly combined with an interest in a more general theme.

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<sup>133</sup> Haynes 2003, 15-19.

<sup>134</sup> As does Sinclair (1995, 27), who in my opinion is too eager to see a contrast between the "romanophile" Segestes and the "irrational barbarian" Arminius.



The paired speeches of Arminius and Segestes exemplify how speeches in the *Annales* are actively integrated in and carry the narrative forward.<sup>135</sup> The reader is not only told about Arminius' and Segestes' motives for revolt vis-à-vis surrender and provided with background information about their personal enmity, but also brought from preliminary Roman penetration into Germania to a fully-fledged Germanic mobilisation. Arminius' speech seems to have great effect on his fellow Germani: not only the Cherusci, but also many neighbouring tribes join the revolt. To counter this threat, Germanicus decides to divide his forces, a tactic which almost ends in disaster when the legate Caecina and his forty cohorts are cut off and have to fight their way back through marshy landscape. After a series of battles in which Caecina and his men are uncomfortably close to re-enacting the disaster of Varus, they finally manage to rout the Germani and reach the safety of the Roman province. However, their successful withdrawal is achieved less through their own bravery and skill than through the temerity of the Germani, who, with victory within their grasp, decide to follow the advice of Inguiomerus and attack the Roman camp, instead of sticking with the successful strategy of Arminius and ambush the Romans in the forest (1.68).

## 2.2.2 Arminius and his brother Flavus (2.9-10)

The second book of the *Annales* starts with an account on events in the East, where there is trouble with the Parthian and Armenian successions (2.1-4). The scene then shifts to the relationship between Tiberius and Germanicus, as Tiberius plans to use the eastern problem as an excuse to withdraw Germanicus from his loyal legions in Germania and send him to the East (2.5.1). Germanicus still has time, however, to undertake one last expedition. Having collected a huge fleet and shipped his army into Germania, he reaches the river Visurgis, on whose opposite bank Arminius' army is positioned.

Arminius asks and receives from Germanicus permission to speak with his brother Flavus, who, we learn now, is fighting in the Roman army, and the two brothers address each other from opposite sides of the river. The geographical barrier serves as a symbolic reminder of their different life-choices.<sup>136</sup> Flavus is introduced as a man noted for his loyalty (2.9.1: *insignis fide*; cf. Segestes at 1.55.1: *fide*) towards Rome. The fraternal encounter is not separated into two distinct speeches: their words are blended together in

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<sup>135</sup> Mayer 2010; cf. Miller 1964.

<sup>136</sup> Tylawsky 2002, 255.

an extended section of indirect speech whose frequent change of speaker and superficial mention of the themes discussed mirror their mutual unwillingness to acknowledge each other's premises and engage in sincere discussion of their disagreements. The meeting starts with Arminius asking Flavius, whose military service under Tiberius had left him an eye short, about his facial disfigurement, but the brothers soon lapse into quarreling (2.9.3-10):

unde ea deformitas oris interrogat fratrem. illo locum et proelium referente, quodnam praemium recepisset exquirat. Flavius aucta stipendia, torquem et coronam aliaque militaria dona memorat, inridente Arminio uilia seruitii pretia. exim diuersi ordiantur, hic magnitudinem Romanam, opes Caesaris et uictis grauis poenas, in deditionem uenienti paratam clementiam; neque coniugem et filium eius hostiliter haberi: ille fas patriae, libertatem auitam, penetralis Germaniae deos, matrem precum sociam; ne propinquorum et adfinium, denique gentis suae desertor et proditor quam imperator esse mallet. paulatim inde ad iurgia prolapsi quo minus pugnam consererent ne flumine quidem interiecto cohibebantur, ni Stertinius adcurrens plenum irae armaque et equum poscentem Flavius attinisset. cernebatur contra minitabundus Arminius proeliumque denuntians; nam pleraque Latino sermone interiaciebat, ut qui Romanis in castris ductor popularium meruisset.

Arminius is unimpressed by Flavius' enumeration of his increased pay and his military decorations, and mocks them as cheap rewards for slavery (*uilia seruitii pretia*).<sup>137</sup> From here the discussion turns increasingly sour. The points addressed by the two speakers are not elaborated upon: Flavius speaks of the greatness of Rome, the power of Caesar, the heavy punishments inflicted on the vanquished, and the mercy bestowed upon those who surrender; in order to illustrate his last point, he claims that Arminius' family is not being treated badly. Arminius' reply treats the (divinely ordained) obligations towards the fatherland (*fas patriae*), ancestral freedom, the local gods of Germania, and their mother's prayers; Flavius, he argues, ought not to prefer to be a deserter and betrayer rather than a general of his neighbours, relations, and tribe.<sup>138</sup> From this point we are not told what was said, only

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<sup>137</sup> One wonders what kind of rewards Arminius would not have mocked. His opening question inevitably sets the world views of the two brothers on collision course. Arminius seems to be looking for an argument, but Flavius takes his brother's questions at face value. Only when Arminius explicitly mocks the rewards does Flavius realise that his brother is provoking him. The scene is almost comical.

<sup>138</sup> Arminius' words are later echoed by the enemies of Italicus, Flavius' son, as they use his father's life-choice against him (11.16.3): *exploratoris Flauii progenies ... si paterna Italico mens esset, non alium infensius arma contra patriam ac deos parentis quam parentem eius*

that the discussion turned steadily more vituperative. A fight in the middle of the river is prevented only when Flavius, who is already calling for his weapons and horse, is restrained by the Roman officer Stertinius. Arminius throws in some Latin phrases at the end, revealing that the interchange must have taken place in a Germanic language. This appended information both highlights their Roman connections and reveals their inherent foreignness.

Flavius, or 'Blondie', does not appear in any other ancient source, and both he and his name might well be Tacitean inventions.<sup>139</sup> The name sounds suspiciously like the name of a blatantly stereotypical northern barbarian, and might well have been intended to be perceived as such. His facial disfigurement, which he shares with patriotic Roman heroes of old, underlines the paradox that this loyal servant of Rome is actually a foreigner.<sup>140</sup> I am not convinced by Sinclair's claim that Flavius is "allowed to express direct, personal emotions", while Arminius "merely blusters, upbraids others, or gives up civilized discussion altogether and resorts to physical violence."<sup>141</sup> Both brothers throw insults, Flavius is the one who must be restrained to avoid a physical confrontation, and Arminius gets both the first and the last word of the discussion. In fact, the discussion reveals not only the ideological differences between the two brothers, but also their shared familial traits: apart from the syntactic blending of their words, their past (presumably joint) service in the Roman army, and Arminius' explicit mention of their mother, their family relation is further underlined by their

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*exercuisse*. The content of Flavius' insults against Arminius is not specified. Based on Flavius' earlier remarks about the wife and unborn child of Arminius, and on the fact that Arminius brought their mother into the discussion, it seems reasonable to assume that they dealt with Arminius' failure to protect his family.

<sup>139</sup> On 'speaking names', see Booth and Maltby 2006. On the (lack of) historical value of Tacitus' account of Germanicus' campaigns, see Walser 1951, 59-65. According to Ash (2006, 130-131), Flavius is what Arminius could have become had he remained loyal to Rome.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Tylawsky 2002, 257-258. Romans of old with facial disfigurements include unimpeachable heroes such as Horatius Cocles (Dion. Hal. *AR*. 5.23) and L. Caecilius Metellus (Plin. *Nat*. 7.141), as well as more questionable characters such as the rogue Sertorius (Sal. *Hist*. 1.88M). The 'one-eyed' soldier was apparently enough of a stock character for Plautus to use it for comic effect in his *Curculio*, where the antagonist (392f) puts on an eye-patch in order to look like a war-hero (Marshall 2006, 60). Hannibal was also famously facially disfigured (Liv. 22.2.11). Tacitus' Batavian rebel Civilis, similarly disfigured, is explicitly compared to Sertorius and Hannibal (*Hist*. 4.13.2): *Sertorium se aut Annibalem ferens simili oris dehonestamento*.

<sup>141</sup> Sinclair 1995, 23; cf. Shumate 2012, 493. Arminius is designated as winner of the discussion by Pelling (1993, 81) and Walker (1952, 227: "Arminius routs his brother completely").

shared promptness to anger, Arminius' ability to provoke his brother, their knowledge of both Germanic and Latin languages, and the use of the Vergilian expression *arma poscens* to describe their actions (Flavus at 2.10.2; Arminius at 1.59.1).

### 2.2.3 Germanicus and Arminius (2.14-15)

The following day Germanicus sends some Batavian auxiliaries to secure a foothold on the other side of the river. Learning that Arminius has already chosen a site for the battle, he decides to test his men's morale by mingling with them in disguise. Glad to see that they are both affectionate towards him, loyal to Rome, and eager to fight, he is then further encouraged by a propitious dream, and summons his men in order to deliver a speech (2.14-15.1):

auctus omine, addicentibus auspiciis uocat contionem et quae sapientia prouisa aptaque imminenti pugnae disserit. non campos modo militi Romano ad proelium bonos, sed si ratio adsit, siluas et saltus; nec enim immensa barbarorum scuta, enormes hastas inter truncos arborum et enata humo uirgulta perinde haberi quam pila et gladios et haerentia corpori tegmina. denserent ictus, ora mucronibus quaererent: non lorica Germano, non galeam, ne scuta quidem ferro neruoue firmata, sed uiminum textus uel tenues et fucatas colore tabulas; primam utcumque aciem hastatam, ceteris praeusta aut breuia tela. iam corpus ut uisu toruum et ad breuem impetum ualidum, sic nulla uulnerum patientia: sine pudore flagitii, sine cura ducum abire fugere, pauidos aduersis, inter secunda non diuini, non humani iuris memores. si taedio uiarum ac maris finem cupiant, hac acie parari: propiorem iam Albim quam Rhenum neque bellum ultra, modo se patris patrique uestigia prementem isdem in terris uictorem sisterent. orationem ducis secutus militum ardor, signumque pugnae datum.

The first part of Germanicus' speech is recorded only in summary form: he speaks about the precautions taken through his own good judgement and other things appropriate for the coming battle. The continuation of the speech is given in standard indirect speech.<sup>142</sup> Practical matters predominate: Germanicus, aware of his soldiers' fear of the thick forests (presumably caused by the role they played in the Varian disaster<sup>143</sup>), tries to convince

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<sup>142</sup> On the distinction between 'recorded speech' and standard 'indirect speech', see Laird 1999, 99-100.

<sup>143</sup> For Roman fear of fighting in uneven terrain, see also 1.65.4: Arminius waits until the Romans get bogged down in the marshes before he orders the attack, calling out to his men

them that forested and hilly country is just as favourable as open ground if only they use their wits; the small Roman weapons, he argues, are much better suited to fighting in constricted conditions than the huge weapons of the Germani. He then gives some practical advice as to where they should aim their strikes, pointing out the poor equipment, especially the lack of armour, of the Germani. He acknowledges the impressive physique of their enemies, but immediately dismisses it by drawing on the *topos* that barbarians, in spite of their size and the strength of their first charge, cannot endure wounds and are quick to flee.<sup>144</sup> He adds that in adversity they are cowardly and quick to run away, since they have no qualms about committing shameful acts and no devotion to their leaders (in implicit contrast to his own men, whose loyalty to himself he had learned about during his incognito mingling the day before). He then moves into the moral sphere as he points out that in success the Germani are negligent of human and divine law; this seems to be a reference to the behaviour of the Germani after the defeat of Varus, when Roman soldiers were tortured in gibbets, Roman officers sacrificed on altars, and Arminius himself arrogantly mocked the Roman standards (1.61.3-4).<sup>145</sup> At the end of the speech Germanicus returns to the battle at hand, claims that a victory will spell an end to the war, and urges his men to give it one last go. He finishes the speech with yet another reassurance that he knows what he is doing, by pointing out that he is following in the footsteps of his father and uncle (Drusus and Tiberius). In sum, Germanicus boosts his men's morale by turning their presumed disadvantages and accompanying fears into advantages, and by portraying the Germani as vicious and impious. The speech is received enthusiastically (*ardor militum*), and the signal for battle is given.

A change of perspective transfers the reader to the other side of the battlefield, where Arminius and the other Germanic leaders are delivering a speech to their men (2.15-16.1):

nec Arminius aut ceteri Germanorum proceres omittebant suos quisque testari,  
hos esse Romanos Varianni exercitus fugacissimos, qui, ne bellum tolerarent,

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that the Romans are trapped in the same fate once more: '*en Varus [et] eodemque iterum fato uinctae legiones!*' At 1.68.3, the Roman soldiers exult in the fact that they are fighting on level ground: *exim clamore et impetu tergis Germanorum circumfunduntur, exprobrantes non hic siluas nec paludes, sed aequis locis aequos deos.*

<sup>144</sup> On the lack of staying power among northern barbarians, see Liv. 5.44.4, 10.28.3-4, 38.17.7, Flor. 1.38.5, Tac. *Ger.* 4, and Dio 38.49.5. As noted by Trzaska-Richter (1991, 166-167), the Germani turn out to be more enduring than Germanicus claims.

<sup>145</sup> Shumate 2012, 491.

seditionem induerint; quorum pars onusta uulneribus terga, pars fluctibus et procellis fractos artus infensis rursus hostibus, aduersis dis obiciant, nulla boni spe. classem quippe et avia Oceani quaesita, ne quis uenientibus occurreret, ne pulsos premeret; sed ubi miscuerint manus, inane uictis uentorum remorumue subsidium. meminissent modo auaritiae crudelitatis superbiae: aliud sibi reliquum quam tenere libertatem aut mori ante seruitium? sic accensos et proelium poscentes in campum, cui Idistawiso nomen, deducunt.

The speech is reported in *oratio obliqua* and introduced by the religiously connoted verb *testari*.<sup>146</sup> Arminius and the other Germanic leaders swear to their men that the Romans facing them now are those who escaped from the Varian disaster, and therefore the most cowardly ones.<sup>147</sup> They also inform their men about the recent mutiny in the Roman army, claiming that it was caused by fear of going to war.<sup>148</sup> In addition, not only are the Romans cowards with wounds on their backs who took a roundabout way into Germania in order to avoid a fight, they are also bruised and battered after the difficult journey. Even the gods are against them, and their naval equipment will do them no good in the coming battle. The speech ends with an injunction to remember the greed, cruelty, and arrogance of the Romans, followed by a rhetorical question: what else can the Germani do but hold on to their freedom or die before they become slaves. The Germanic soldiers are fired up by the speech and are led to the battlefield demanding to fight (*accensos et proelium poscentes*).

The speeches are followed by a battle which ends in a great victory for Germanicus with little loss of life on the Roman side.<sup>149</sup> Arminius fights

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<sup>146</sup> *Testari* carries religious connotations from Plautus onwards (Pl. *Rud.* 1338, Cic. *Clu.* 194, Sal. *Jug.* 70.5, Verg. *Aen.* 4.492, Liv. 3.72.1), and especially so in the works of Tacitus: cf. 1.40.3 (*diuo Augusto*), 3.2.2 (*uictimas atque aras dis Manibus*), 3.16.3 (*deos immortales*), 4.38.1 (*mortalem*), 14.10.2 (*templa ... uictimis*), and *Hist.* 2.33.1 (*fortunam et deos et numen*). Among northern barbarians it is used also by Maroboduus (2.46.1) and Boudicca (14.35.1). On the religious connotations of *testari*, see Hickson 1993, 123-124.

<sup>147</sup> For the hortatory *topos* that the current enemies are the most cowardly because they are survivors of previous battles, see Agricola at *Agr.* 34.1: *hi ceterorum Britannorum fugacissimi ideoque tam diu superstites*; cf. the speeches of the Gallic rebel Sacrovir (3.45.2) and the Roman generals Camillus (Liv. 6.7.6) and Scipio (Liv. 21.40.5).

<sup>148</sup> The mutiny is mentioned also in the speech against Segestes (1.59.6), but without explicit mention of cowardice: when rallying the Germani to war, he needed to portray the Romans as divided and therefore easier to overcome in a protracted war, but now he needs to portray them as cowardly and therefore easier to defeat in battle.

<sup>149</sup> As noted by Ash (2007, 440), the battle is one of only four detailed set-piece battles in the *Annales*. The others occur at 6.34-35 (Pharasmenes vs. Orodes), 12.32-35 (Caratacus vs. Ostorius Scapula), and 14.34-37 (Suetonius Paulinus vs. Boudicca).

bravely and keeps the battle going for some time through his personal involvement (2.17.4: *insignis Arminius manu uoce uulnere sustentabat pugnam*), but finally breaks out and flees, either through the strength of his body and the impetus of his horse or because of treachery on the part of some Chaucian auxiliaries in the Roman army. Another Germanic leader, Inguiomerus, escapes through similar bravery, or similar treachery (2.17.5 *uirtus seu fraus eadem*). I find unconvincing Shumate's characterisation of Arminius' actions as a "shameful flight from battle."<sup>150</sup> Although Arminius escapes and many of his soldiers are killed, terms such as shame and abandonment are not invoked. Tacitus questions neither Arminius' actions nor his morals, and in fact presents as trustworthy the possibility that he escaped through his own strength (2.17.5: *nisu ... corporis*).

The defeat does nothing to discourage the Germani, who instead redouble their war efforts. However, another battle ends in another Roman victory, and Arminius is by now slowed down either because of the constant dangers or due to a newly acquired wound (2.21.1: *imprompto iam <Arminio> ob continua pericula, siue illum recens acceptum uulnus tardauerat*). The Roman victories on the battlefield are somewhat diminished by a disaster at sea, as many of the ships sent back to winter quarters are caught in a storm and sink. Nonetheless, Germanicus pushes on and is close to forcing the enemy to sue for peace when he is called back to Rome by the jealous Tiberius,<sup>151</sup> and the war is left unfinished.

With the introduction of Tiberius, the narrative switches back to the senate in Rome. The first treason trial of Libo Drusus (2.27-32) is followed by shorter debates on luxuriousness, corruption, the possibility of conducting business in the senate without the presence of the emperor, whether magistracies should be decided for five year periods, and the fate of the great orator Hortensius' poor great-grandsons (2.33-38). These debates are followed by an account of a slave of Agrippa Postumus, whose attempt to pass himself off as his dead master is met with some initial success before he

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<sup>150</sup> Shumate (2012, 490) claims that although barbarians are sometimes described neutrally, "when the imperative of imperial self-justification supersedes other concerns in framing a scene, it is the unregenerate, debased other who takes center stage as surely as he does in Churchill and Kipling." Barbarians, of course, are frequently portrayed as wild and cruel, but this is not one of those moments. I believe she misses the point when she assigns to Tacitus an imperative to justify Roman imperialism. Why, and for which audience, would it be necessary for him to do so? Surely he must have had other things to accomplish? A similar tendency to look for 'positive' and 'negative' verdicts on Roman imperialism can be found in Adler 2011.

<sup>151</sup> This, at least, is how Germanicus interprets (2.26.5: *intellegeret*) Tiberius' decision.

is captured and executed (2.39-40). Then follow descriptions of some construction projects, Germanicus' Germanic triumph, the fate of the Cappadocian king Archelaus, and some disturbances in the East, the latter bringing Germanicus back into the narrative (2.41-43). However, Germanicus' finale is deferred for a while longer (creating an uncomfortable tension, since the reader, of course, knows very well what will happen to him in Syria<sup>152</sup>), as the narrative focuses instead on Drusus' dispatch to and events in Germania.

## 2.2.4 Arminius and Maroboduus (2.44-46)

The return to Germania is introduced by Tiberius' dispatch of his son Drusus to Illyricum (2.44.1): *Drusus in Illyricum missus est*. The immediate reason for Drusus' mission is an appeal for help from the Suebi and their king Maroboduus against the rising power of Arminius' Cherusci (2.44.2): *Suebi praetendebantur auxilium aduersus Cheruscos orantes*.<sup>153</sup> Drusus, however, is oddly absent from the subsequent narrative until the reader is reminded at the very end of the section that he was dispatched to secure the peace for Rome (2.46.5: *paci firmator*).<sup>154</sup> Instead, the reader is provided with a more detailed background of the situation in Germania upon his arrival.

As noted by Ginsburg, Drusus, the expected main protagonist, serves only to frame the struggle between the two Germanic chieftains. While Arminius' interactions with Segestes and Flavus are clearly connected to the Roman narrative (the speech against Segestes is also a call for arms against Rome and the discussion with Flavus a discussion with a soldier in the Roman army), there is no such obvious link in the case of Maroboduus. Ginsburg argues that the section is thematically connected with the narrative in Rome,

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<sup>152</sup> On Tacitus' predilection for dividing a narrative into several parts to increase tension, see esp. his introduction of new pretenders to the purple before the current ones have finished their struggle in the *Historiae*: there is always a new threat lurking in the shadows, and one reads about the current war constantly reminded that a new one is just waiting to begin; cf. his avoidance of book-end closure: Galba and Otho are killed midway through books 1 and 2 respectively, meaning that the books finish after new struggles have already broken out, but are still undecided.

<sup>153</sup> Maroboduus (2.26.3), Vannius (2.63.6), and Vibilius (12.29.1) are the only Germanic chieftains explicitly designated as *rex* in the *Annales*.

<sup>154</sup> As noted by Nipperdey (cf. Furneaux 1986, *ad loc.* and Goodyear 1981, 330), Drusus does not come to secure the peace between the Germanic tribes, but to secure the peace for Rome. This was accomplished by sowing discord among the Germanic tribes, as seen in the assessment of the mission's success at 2.62.1: *haud leue decus Drusus quaesiuit illicius Germanos ad discordias, utque fracto iam Maroboduus usque in exitium insisteretur*.



since it functions as an ironic comment on the preceding account of Germanicus' Germanic triumph and on the public consequences (future troubles in the North) of Tiberius' hostility towards Germanicus.<sup>155</sup> Ginsburg's interpretation restores some balance to the narrative by explaining how the section fits into a broader context, but she deals only with its frame, not with its actual content.<sup>156</sup> A more nuanced understanding of the section demands a closer look at the particulars of the struggle between Arminius and Maroboduus.

It turns out that Tiberius was right in his prognostication that the Germani would descend to internal squabbles with the departure of Germanicus (2.26.3).<sup>157</sup> They start fighting among themselves as soon as the Romans are gone and they have no common enemy (2.44.2): *nam discessu Romanorum ac uacui externo metu gentis adsuetudine et tum aemulatione gloriae arma in se uerterant*. The idea that concord at home is more easily preserved when there is fear of a foreign enemy (*metus hostilis*) has a long tradition in Greco-Roman literature. As noted by scholars, Tacitus' explanation of the outbreak of internal discord among the Germani is strikingly similar to Sallust's explanation of the outbreak of internal discord in Rome at the end of the Third Punic War (*Hist.* 1.12): *postquam remoto metu Punico simultates exercere uacuum fuit plurimae turbae, seditiones et ad postremum bella ciuilia orta sunt*.<sup>158</sup> The similarities are obvious: *remoto metu* has become *externo metu*, *uacuum* has become *uacui*, and *bella ciuilia orta sunt* has become *arma in se uerterant*. I will discuss the significance of the use of the *metus hostilis* motif to explain the outbreak of internal discord among the Germani in more detail in section 2.3.2.2.

Maroboduus and Arminius are well matched in terms of the strength of their tribes and their personal bravery (2.44.2: *uis nationum, uirtus ducum in aequo*). However, Arminius' constant talk about freedom seems to have had an effect on the Germani: Maroboduus is hated because of his royal name,

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<sup>155</sup> Ginsburg 1981, 65-66.

<sup>156</sup> I find unconvincing Gowing's (1990, 322-326) claim that the account of Maroboduus serves to contrast Tiberius' treatment of client kings with that of Germanicus. Gowing notes that the final mention of Maroboduus at 2.62-63 is framed by two examples of Germanicus' treatment of client kings: at 2.58 he removes Vonones from Syria in order to strengthen the peace with the Parthian king Artabanus, and at 2.64.1 the news of his successful installation of Zeno/Artaxias III on the Armenian throne (cf. 2.56.3) is celebrated with the announcement of an ovation for Germanicus and Drusus. Gowing, then, like Ginsburg, makes some lucid observations on the structure of the book, but does not address what actually happens in Germania.

<sup>157</sup> Koestermann 1963, 297, 336; Goodyear 1981, 258; Low 2013a, 66.

<sup>158</sup> Koestermann 1963, 336; Goodyear 1981, 330; Low 2013a, 65-70.

while Arminius gains support because he fights for freedom (2.44.2: *sed Maroboduum regis nomen inuisum apud populares, Arminium pro libertate bellantem fauor habebat*).<sup>159</sup> Arminius is bolstered by the defection of two sub-tribes of the Suebi, and parity is restored only when Inguiomerus, Arminius' uncle, defects to Maroboduus. His defection means that Arminius is pitted against a family member in this struggle as well. The effect of Romanisation is seen clearly on both sides as they arrange their armies in fixed companies with standards, keep some soldiers in reserve, and follow the commands of their leaders, a consequence, writes Tacitus (2.45.2), of their many battles against Rome.<sup>160</sup> Arminius gives a pre-battle speech mounted on his horse (2.45.3-4):

ac tunc Arminius equo conlustrans cuncta, ut quosque aductus erat, reciperatam libertatem, trucidatas legiones, spolia adhuc et tela Romanis derepta in manibus multorum ostentabat; contra fugacem Maroboduum appellans, proeliorum expertem, Hercyniae latebris defensum, ac mox per dona et legationes petiuisse foedus, proditorem patriae, satellitem Caesaris, haud minus infensis animis exturbandum, quam Varum Quintilium interfecerint. meminissent modo tot proeliorum, quorum euentu et ad postremum eiectis Romanis satis probatum, penes utros summa belli fuerit.

This well-structured speech, introduced by the Tacitean hapax legomenon *conlustrans*,<sup>161</sup> may be divided into three parts: (1) Arminius praises his own leadership credentials, (2) dismisses those of Maroboduus, and (3) encourages his men to take confidence from the remembrance of previous victories. The first part consists of a *tricolon* of objects (*libertatem, legiones, spolia ... et tela*), each modified by a perfect participle (*reciperatam, trucidatas, derepta*), with the last element stressed by having two objects, by a chiasmic word order (the perfect participle no longer comes first), and by the addition of an adverbial phrase (*in manibus multorum*), followed by the finite verb (*ostentabat*). Arminius points out to his men the freedom they have regained (with the victory over Varus), the legions which they have massacred, and the standards and weapons which they have taken from the

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<sup>159</sup> Arminius too loses popular support when he aims for kingship at the end (Koestermann 1963, 336).

<sup>160</sup> Cf. the Chatti at *Ger.* 30: *Chatti ... multum, ut inter Germanos, rationis ac sollertiae: praeponere electos, audire praepositos.*

<sup>161</sup> *Conlustrare* seems to have moved from prose (Cic. *N.D.* 2.92, *Div.* 1.17) to epic: Verg. *Aen.* 3.651: *omnia conlustrans*; Stat. *Theb.* 2.510, 4.738 (ed. by Hall 2007). For *lustrare/lustrari*, see 13.24.2, 15.26.3, *Hist.* 1.87.1, 2.70.1, 4.3.3, 4.53.2. For the noun *lustrum*, see 11.25.5, 12.4.3, 16.2.2.

Romans and which many of them are holding in their hands. The objects are mentioned in an increasing order of concreteness and visibility: first the abstract and invisible ‘regained freedom’, then the more concrete ‘slaughtered legions’ (which, although not visible at the present moment, the soldiers have previously seen, and which presumably looked pretty much like the legions they are facing now), and finally the very concrete ‘Roman standards and weapons’ (to see which they need only look at their own hands).<sup>162</sup> Arminius brings his soldiers’ thoughts down to the matter at hand by pointing out to them the weapons they are holding in their hands. In this way, the speech moves from abstract to concrete, from invisible to visible, and from past to present in the very first line.

The second and longest part of the speech is divided into two sections by an accusative with infinitive phrase lacking a finite verb (*ac mox per dona et legationes petiuisse foedus*),<sup>163</sup> each with a similar tripartite structure: the first section consists of a present participle (*appellans*) governing an object (*Maroboduum*) thrice modified, first by two adjectives (*fugacem, expertem*) and then by a perfect participle (*defensum*); in the second section the noun is again thrice modified, first by two nouns (*proditorem, satellitem*) and then by a longer gerundive phrase (*exturbandum*). Arminius describes Maroboduus as quick to flee from and inexperienced in battle: he claims that he had been protected by the hiding places of the Hercynian forests, that he had made peace through messengers and gifts, and that he is a betrayer of his fatherland and a henchman of Caesar.<sup>164</sup> The accusations of treachery, cowardice, and inexperience combine to portray Maroboduus as singularly unsuited to lead the Germani.

The third, final, and shortest part of the speech also has a tripartite structure: an hortative subjunctive (*meminissent*) leads to a relative clause whose verb (*probatum*) governs an indirect question (*penes utros ... fuerit*). Arminius exhorts his men to expel Maroboduus with the same hatred as when

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<sup>162</sup> On *ostentabat* taken by zeugma (in the sense ‘*memorabat*’) with *libertatem* and *legiones*, see Furneaux 1886 and Koestermann 1963, *ad loc.*

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Koestermann 1963, *ad loc.*

<sup>164</sup> As noted by Woodman (2009b, 1-2), there is a double reference in the phrase *Hercyniae latebris defensum*: firstly, to the description of a snake at Verg. *Geo.* 3.544-5: *interit et curuis frustra defensa latebris / uipera*; and, secondly, to Velleius’ description of Maroboduus as a snake at 129.3: *Maroboduum inhaerentem occupati regni finibus, pace maiestatis eius dixerim, uelut serpentem abstrusam terrae salubribus medicamentis [Tiberius] coegit egredi!* Tacitus, then, has not portrayed Arminius as unsophisticated or unrhetoical, and perhaps the discussion of whether Arminius is capable of rhetorical sophistication might now be put to bed.

they killed Varus, and to remember (not, as in the speech against Germanicus, Roman cruelty and greed, but) their own previous victories. Arminius' main rhetorical aim seems to be to undermine the leadership credentials of Maroboduus.

Maroboduus' pre-battle speech follows directly upon that of Arminius (2.46.1-2):

neque Maroboduus iactantia sui aut probris in hostem abstinebat, sed Inguiomerum tenens illo in corpore decus omne Cheruscorum, illius consilii gesta quae prospere ceciderint testabatur. uaecordem Arminium et rerum nescium alienam gloriam in se trahere, quoniam tres uagas legiones et ducem fraudis ignarum perfidia deceperit, magna cum clade Germaniae et ignominia sua, cum coniunx, cum filius eius seruitium adhuc tolerent. at se duodecim legionibus petiture duce Tiberio inlibatam Germanorum gloriam seruuaisse, mox condicionibus aequis discessum; neque paenitere quod ipsorum in manu sit, integrum aduersum Romanos bellum an pacem incruentam malint.

The structure of Maroboduus' speech is broadly similar to that of Arminius, though without the moral exhortation at the end: he starts by boasting about his own achievements and insulting Arminius. His main aim, like that of Arminius, seems to be to present himself as a more capable and trustworthy leader of the Germani. Maroboduus holds on to Inguiomerus and swears solemnly (*testabatur*<sup>165</sup>) that he was the real hero of the Cheruscan victories. Arminius, on the other hand, is a deranged madman (*uaecordem*<sup>166</sup>) without knowledge of affairs who is trying to take for himself another man's glory. Maroboduus then plays down the magnitude of the victory against Varus by claiming that the Roman force was relatively small, wandering aimlessly around without proper leadership, and that the victory was achieved through treachery. Furthermore, this so-called victory, continues Maroboduus, has brought nothing but disaster for Germania and dishonour for Arminius, since his wife and child are still held in servitude. By claiming that it is the course proposed by Arminius that leads to slavery, Maroboduus turns his rhetoric about freedom and slavery on its head. He then contrasts Arminius' failures with his own successes: although attacked by twelve legions led by Tiberius himself, he preserved the glory of the Germani undiminished (*inlibatam*<sup>167</sup>)

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<sup>165</sup> On the religious connotations of *testari*, see footnote 146.

<sup>166</sup> Maroboduus seems to have picked up Tacitus' use of *uaecordia* to describe Arminius' reaction to the capture of his wife at 1.59.1. Cf. the 'frenzied' eloquence of the Gallic rebel Julius Valentinus at *Hist.* 4.68.5: *uaecordi facundia*.

<sup>167</sup> *Inlibatus* has connotations of health and purity (*TLL*): it can modify both *uirginitas* (Sen. *Contr.* 1.2.12) and *libertas* (Liv. 38.32.8); cf. *integrum ... bellum* below, a 'fresh war'. On

and parted on equal terms with his enemy. Maroboduus finishes by claiming that he has made sure that they can now choose between a fresh war (*integrum ... bellum*) and a bloodless peace (*pacem incruentam*) with the Romans.<sup>168</sup> In sum, Arminius is a perfidious madman, and a fair peace with Rome is possible.<sup>169</sup> Both Arminius and Maroboduus, then, try to boost the morale of their men by presenting themselves as better qualified than the other to lead the Germani.

The soldiers' reactions to the speeches of their respective leaders are described together (2.46.3): *his uocibus instinctos exercitus propriae quoque causae stimulabant, cum a Cheruscis Langobardisque pro antiquo decore aut recenti libertate et contra augendae dominationi certaretur*. The Cherusci and Langobardi fight for their ancient honour and recent freedom, while the Suebi fight to extend their dominion. The battle ends in a draw, but Maroboduus, in compliance with the description of him given by Arminius, concedes defeat, flees to the Marcomanni, and sends legates to Tiberius to ask for help. Tiberius declines, but sends Drusus to establish a peace advantageous for Rome, and we are back to where Drusus entered the story. However, the narrative then shifts, via an account on the earthquakes in Asia (2.47), back to Tiberius in Rome. Arminius is not mentioned again until the very end of the book. After some senatorial matters (2.48-51), a short description of Furius Camillus' victory over Tacfarinas (2.52), and an account of Germanicus' travels in the East (2.53-61), Maroboduus reappears at 2.62. He is expelled from the lands of the Marcomanni by a young nobleman of the Gotones and, deserted by everyone, crosses into the province of Noricum and writes a letter to Tiberius to ask for mercy. Tiberius grants his request and Maroboduus lives out the remaining eighteen years of his life in Ravenna, though with much diminished fame because of his too great desire to live (2.63.4): *multum imminuta claritate ob nimiam uiuendi cupidinem*.<sup>170</sup>

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the connection between freedom and chastity, see my discussion of Boudicca in section 4.3.3.

<sup>168</sup> Tacitus plays with possible uses of the adjective (*in*)*cruentus* in the Tiberian books. It seems that only northern barbarians apply it to appropriate nouns: while Maroboduus speaks of a bloodless peace (*pacem incruentam*) and the Thracians speaks of a bloody war (4.46.3: *bellumque impeditum arduum cruentum*), Augustus is said to have established a bloody peace (1.10.4: *pacem cruentam*), and Tiberius is accused of writing bloody letters (3.44.3: *cruentas epistulas*); yet cf. Germanicus' bloodless victory at 2.18.1: *magna ea uictoria neque cruenta*. For the darker side of Roman peace, see 1.10.4, 12.33, and *Agr.* 21.2.

<sup>169</sup> Koestermann 1963, 338.

<sup>170</sup> The phrase *ob nimiam uiuendi cupidinem* seems to be an allusion to Cicero's verdict on those who did not oppose Mark Antony's attack on freedom in Rome (*Phil.* 3.29): *multa,*

The mention of Maroboduus' ignominious exile is followed by a summary of matters in Thrace (2.64-67), a short account of the death of the exiled Parthian king Vonones (2.68), a much longer account of Germanicus' death and funeral (2.69-84), and some senatorial matters (2.85-87), before the book ends with the death and obituary of Arminius.

### 2.2.5 The death and obituary of Arminius (2.88)

The story of Arminius is brought to its conclusion at the very end of book 2. A letter arrives in the senate from a leader of the Chatti, who promises to kill Arminius if he is sent some poison. Tiberius declines the offer, replying that the Roman people take vengeance on their enemies not through treachery and secrecy, but in open battle (2.88.1): *non fraude neque occultis, sed palam et armatum populum Romanum hostes suos ulcisci*.<sup>171</sup> Tacitus writes that Tiberius tried to equal himself with the Roman generals of old who had refused (and made known that they had refused) a similar offer to poison king Pyrrhus of Epirus.<sup>172</sup> Then follow a short account of Arminius' death and his obituary (2.88.2-3):

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*quae in libera ciuitate ferenda non essent, tulimus et perpessi sumus, alii spe forsitan reciperandae libertatis, alii uiuendi nimia cupiditate.* The only difference between the expressions is that Tacitus has inserted his own favourite form of the noun (*cupido*) in place of the form favoured by Cicero (*cupiditas*); cf. Oldfather, Canter, and Abott (1938, 182) and Abott, Oldfather, and Canter (1964, 338) on Cicero, Gerber and Greef (1903, 251-252) and Blackman and Betts (1986, 378-379) on Tacitus. The allusion portrays Maroboduus as another one of those who preferred safety to freedom. Hill (2004, 202, 206) argues that Maroboduus, divested of his social role, would have been expected to commit suicide rather than accept the disgrace of living at the mercy of the Romans. However, Tacitus may have interpreted Maroboduus decision with somewhat Romano-centric eyes: the idea that one should commit suicide rather than accept pardon seems more appropriate for Roman nobles of the Principate than for a Germanic chieftain bested in an internal war: kings and other political leaders of antiquity commonly went into exile in the lands of the enemies of their enemies and asked for their help to return: Hippias and Themistocles went over to the Persians, Tarquinius Superbus called upon the Etruscans, Hannibal took refuge with the Seleucid king Antiochus III, and Pompey the Great tried his luck with the Egyptians. On suicide as a potential reaction to subjugation, see section 3.3.2.1.

<sup>171</sup> As noted by Walker (1952, 124), Tiberius might have wished to disprove Arminius' claim that he, unlike his Roman enemies, waged war in the open and against armed enemies rather than with treachery and against pregnant women (1.59.3): *non enim se proditione neque aduersus feminas grauidas, sed palam aduersus armatos bellum tractare*. For Roman scepticism to the use of deception in war, see also the objections raised by the elder senators to Marcus Philippus' trickery at Liv. 42.47.5.

<sup>172</sup> Rutledge (1998, 149-150) interprets *aequabat* as 'equalled' rather than 'tried to equal' (conative imperfect), and sees a contrast between Tiberius' refusal to poison Arminius and

ceterum Arminius, abscedentibus Romanis et pulso Maroboduo regnum adfectans, libertatem popularium aduersam habuit, petitusque armis cum uaria fortuna certaret, dolo propinquorum cecidit: liberator hau<d> dubie Germaniae et qui non primordia populi Romani, sicut alii reges ducesque, sed florentissimum imperium lacessierit, proeliis ambiguus, bello non uictus. septem et triginta annos uitae, duodecim potentiae expleuit, caniturque adhuc barbaras apud gentis, Graecorum annalibus ignotus, qui sua tantum mirantur, Romanis haud perinde celebris, dum uetera extollimus recentium incuriosi.

The remarkableness of this book-ending can hardly be stressed enough. Instead of giving the place of honour at the end of the book to the Roman hero Germanicus (who dies at 2.72), Tacitus closes the second book with the death and obituary of his northern barbarian enemy Arminius.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, Arminius did not in fact die until two years later, so Tacitus has deliberately eschewed chronology by using him to provide closure for the first two books. In the words of Ginsburg, “the notice serves to bring together the deaths of the two great adversaries and to provide a striking conclusion to Book II.”<sup>174</sup> No other barbarian receives an obituary in the extant part of the Tacitean corpus. Indeed, most of Tacitus’ obituaries are restricted to Roman senators and members of the imperial family.<sup>175</sup>

With the Romans withdrawing and Maroboduus expelled, Arminius aims for kingship (*regnum*). This turns him into an enemy of *libertas* and he eventually falls to the treachery of his relatives (*dolo propinquorum*). Yet again Arminius has trouble with his family, and this time they finally manage to get him.<sup>176</sup> The obituary of Arminius follows immediately upon notice of his death, and with the most crucial words: *liberator haud dubie Germaniae*.

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Trajan’s treacherous killing of Parthamasiris, a pretender to the Armenian throne. Although there might well be an implicit criticism of Trajan here, I am not convinced by Rutledge’s interpretation of *aequabat*. On the Roman refusal to poison Pyrrhus, see Plut. *Pyrrh.* 21 and Liv. *Per.* 13; see also Liv. 1.53.4: *minime arte Romana, fraude et dolo*.

<sup>173</sup> As noted by Paratore (1951, 443), the obituary presents the death of Arminius as the end of a cycle: the broad perspective of books 1-2 (Germanicus and his large-scale foreign wars) will now give way to a more narrow focus on internal affairs in books 3-4.

<sup>174</sup> Ginsburg 1981, 45. Cf. Walker (1952, 124), Syme (1958, 266-267), Koestermann (1963, 415), and Goodyear (1981, 446). For another example of Tacitus’ adjustment of chronology, see Löfstedt (1956, 139) on his account of the death of Agrippa Postumus at 1.6.

<sup>175</sup> Syme (1958/1970, 79) lists 12 obituaries, embracing 20 men, in the *Annales*, but he seems to have missed the obituary of Arminius, as well as those of Livia (5.1) and Agrippina the Elder (6.25).

<sup>176</sup> Cf. the fate of Celtillus, Vercingetorix’ father (Caes. *Gal.* 7.4.1): *principatum Galliae totius obtinuerat et ob eam causam, quod regnum appetebat, ab ciuitate erat interfectus*. Vercingetorix also has to defend himself from accusations from his fellow Gauls (Torignian 1998, 57-58), e.g. at 7.20.1.

The phrase recalls the expression with which Arminius was introduced into the text (1.55.2): *turbator Germaniae*.<sup>177</sup> I will discuss these terms in more detail in section 2.3.2.2.

Arminius is compared favourably with other enemies of Rome (e.g. Pyrrhus), since he challenged the Roman people at the height of their power. However, Arminius also resurrects famous Romans of old through the expression *proeliis ambiguus, bello non uictus*. The reader was invited to interpret Tiberius' refusal to poison Arminius as an emulation of previous Romans generals, but now Arminius too is presented as a reviver of ancient practices. However, in contrast to Tiberius, whose claim that Romans do not take vengeance on their enemies with treachery and secrecy is significantly undercut by his alleged involvement in the recent murder of Germanicus,<sup>178</sup> Arminius successfully lives up to the standards of the past. He is explicitly linked with, and supersedes, Roman enemies of the past, when he is described with the evocative phrase *proeliis ambiguus, bello non uictus* (2.88.2). The idea that someone has been defeated in battles yet is undefeated in war is ferociously Roman. Indeed, endurance and stubbornness are among the values (according to the Romans) that set the Romans apart from other peoples and guarantee their eventual victory. The Roman ability to endure defeats and emerge victorious is summed up neatly by Livy in his digression on Alexander the Great (Liv. 9.18.9): *populus Romanus, etsi nullo bello, multi tamen proeliis uictus sit*.<sup>179</sup> One of the most famous examples was precisely the struggle with Pyrrhus, who delivers this verdict on the Romans (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 21): καὶ ταῖς ἡτταῖς οὐκ ἀποβάλλοντας τὸ θαρρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥώμην καὶ φιλονεικίαν ὑπ' ὀργῆς ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον προσλαμβάνοντας.<sup>180</sup> In

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<sup>177</sup> Sinclair 1995, 23; Pelling 1993, 81.

<sup>178</sup> Walker 1952, 124; Dudley 1968, 228; Baxter 1972, 269; Ginsburg 1981, 45. *Fraus* is mentioned explicitly by Germanicus when he addresses his friends from his deathbed (2.71.2: *muliebri fraude*); *occultus* is used to describe Tiberius' and Livia's hatred of Germanicus (1.33.1: *occultis in se patrum auiaequae odiis*) and the orders Cn. Piso allegedly received from Tiberius (2.43.4: *occulta mandata*: cf. Domitius Celer's claim that Piso has the secret complicity of Livia and goodwill of Tiberius at 2.77.3: *est tibi Augustae conscientia, est Caesaris fauor, sed in occulto*). Tiberius is not explicitly lying, however, since he talks only of the *populus Romanus* and does not mention himself: he phrases himself in a sufficiently vague and obscure way to avoid a straightforward lie. On the theme of false friendship and internal treachery in the second book, see Williams 1989, 147, 151.

<sup>179</sup> Syme (1958, 521) notes an intertext also with Lucilius (683-4): *ut Romanus populus uictus ui et superatus proeliis / saepe est multis, bello uero numquam, in quo sunt omnia*.

<sup>180</sup> "And they did not lose courage in defeat, nay, their wrath gave them all the more vigour and determination for the war" (transl. by Perrin 1920). This character trait is later taken up by the British chieftain Caratacus (12.33): *quem multa ambigua, multa prospera extulerant ut ceteros Britannorum imperatores praemineret*. Caratacus also has in common with



his final analysis of Arminius, then, Tacitus claims that the main historical significance of Arminius did not lie in his defeat of Varus, but in his continued struggle for Germanic independence against Roman expansion in the years following his great victory, a struggle which included some significant defeats on the battlefield.<sup>181</sup>

The book ends with the mention that Arminius is still celebrated in songs among the Germani, followed by criticism of Greek and Roman historians for neglecting him. Tacitus is critical of earlier historians also elsewhere, but only here does he claim that a character worthy of universal remembrance has been neglected. The Greeks are said to be obsessed with their own past, of which we have seen an example in the second book, when the Athenians welcome Germanicus with praise of themselves through allusions to their past (2.53.3): *excepere Graeci quaesitissimis honoribus, uetera suorum facta dictaque praeferentes*. The Romans, for their part, are criticised for disregarding recent history in favour of extolling events from the distant past.<sup>182</sup> As noted by Sinclair, the passage both begins and ends with a reference to historians: the historians who passed on Tiberius' boast (*scriptores senatoresque eorundem temporum*) are presumably also those who have neglected Arminius (*annalibus ... Romanis*).<sup>183</sup> By chastising both Greek and Roman historians, Tacitus implies that the lessons to be learned from the story of Arminius are general in the widest sense, that they belong to all.<sup>184</sup>

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Arminius the loss of his wife and child to the Romans (12.35.3): *captaque uxor et filia Carataci fratresque in deditionem accepti*.

<sup>181</sup> Sinclair 1995, 18. On Tacitus' verdict on Arminius and his legacy, see also Straub 1980.

<sup>182</sup> Tacitus does not seem to consider Velleius' portrait of Arminius (Woodman 1977, 193). As noted by Low (2013a, 74), Tiberius' imitation of Roman heroes of the distant past is undermined by Tacitus' subsequent criticism of the lack of interest in more recent history: "To look back in this way and to imagine that the past can simply be reanimated in the present is futile, as Tacitus' sharp criticism of the Roman habit of doing so suggests." On the limitations of past (esp. Republican) models of behaviour in the imperial present, see my discussion of Boudicca's imitation of Lucretia, Brutus, and Verginia in section 4.3.3. On Romans neglecting their past, see also *Agr. 1.1: clarorum uirorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus quamquam incuriosa suorum aetas omisit*.

<sup>183</sup> Sinclair 1995, 21.

<sup>184</sup> For a similar point, see Sinclair 1995, 22: "The 'we' with which he appeals to his reader in the final *sententia* encourages him to think outside the parameters of the Principate. Instead, Tacitus subsumes Arminius within a Greco-Roman perspective, and urges his readers to recognize in 'the agitator' of Germany 'the champion of Germany's independence'. He thus uses the story of a foreigner to chasten his fellow citizens and to remind them of the centrality of bold individual courage in their own political culture." I do not believe that

Although Tacitus has not yet reached the point where he felt the need to excuse the repetitive and depressing content of his narrative (4.32-33), it seems pertinent for his later comment that he already here brings out the contrast between old and new, republican and imperial. By showing that the themes of the Republican past, foremost the struggle between freedom and slavery (Romans vs. their kings) are also the themes of the imperial present (northern barbarians vs. imperial Rome), Tacitus collapses the barrier between past and present. The reader is brought to acknowledge that the past is right here, in the present, played out again, at a different place, with different names for the main antagonists, and sometimes also with different outcomes, but still with the same internal logic: discord is never far from the family, civil war may lead to autocracy, those who fight for freedom may later aim for kingship, those who die young and fighting are remembered with praise, and those who cling to life are recalled, if at all, with scorn.<sup>185</sup> In implicit contrast to Maroboduus' much diminished reputation, Arminius' fame, like the fame of the famous Roman of old, ought to be – and will be, thanks to Tacitus – of lasting duration.

## 2.3 Analysis

The analysis is divided into two parts: In the first, I analyse the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries within their immediate contexts, by focusing on the aims and rhetorical strategies of the speakers. In the second, I investigate how the account of Arminius as a whole (the speeches and their immediate contexts) functions within the structure of *Annales* 1-2. I argue that the armed struggles in Germania are described as a Germanic civil war.

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Tacitus' audience would have seen (nor that Tacitus would have wanted them to see) Arminius as a model to be followed rigidly, but rather as a character whose life was worthy of examination, interrogation, and imitation within the framework of 'situation ethics', on which, see Langlands 2011 and section 1.4.2.2. On the limitations imposed on Arminius' exemplary value by his foreignness, see also Pagán 2000, 363-364.

<sup>185</sup> On Roman parallel-mania and the tendency of Tacitus' works to collapse the boundaries between past and present, see Rutledge 1998, esp. 144: "a Roman audience suffered from what one might term 'parallel-mania' – an almost ineluctable inclination to draw parallels between the past and the present in order to impart meaning to their own times or to a given event." See also Henderson 1989/1998, 257-298; cf. section 3.3.2.2 on the digression at 4.32-33. On past, present, and parallelism in the obituary of Arminius, see also Haynes 2003, 18-19.

### 2.3.1 Variety and rhetorical aims in the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries

Ancient authors, especially through the rhetorical exercise of *prosopopoeia*, were trained to adapt their characters' speeches according to their personality and rhetorical situation.<sup>186</sup> In this section I will demonstrate how the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries are adapted to their immediate contexts, that is, how they differ in their treatment of some recurrent motifs.<sup>187</sup> I will focus on the immediate rhetorical aims of Tacitus' characters rather than on how the account of Arminius functions contextually within books 1-2.

The speeches of Arminius and his adversaries illustrate how Tacitus plays with the rhetorical situation of 'the barbarian speech'. Although the speeches include many of the same motifs (and might at first sight seem almost interchangeable<sup>188</sup>), a closer examination reveals that these motifs are adapted to the specific context of each speech. The speeches vary in both form and context: regarding types of speeches, we have one exhortation to rebel, one quarrel, and two pre-battle speeches;<sup>189</sup> regarding speakers, we have the Germanic chieftain Arminius pitted against his father-in-law who has surrendered to and decided to collaborate with the Romans (Segestes), his Romanised brother fighting in the Roman army (Flavus), a Roman commander (Germanicus), and a rival Germanic king (Maroboduus). Thus, the material presents a variety easily overlooked when the speeches are all categorised as 'barbarian leader speaking about freedom and slavery'. This variety gives Tacitus a chance to explore key concepts such as freedom and slavery from different perspectives: how could a barbarian chieftain persuade his people to take up arms against Rome, how against another Germanic tribe? How could a Germanic collaborator defend his decision to stand with

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<sup>186</sup> On *prosopopoeia/ethopoeia*, see Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.49-54; cf. Clark (1957, 199-201, 218-223), Bonner (1977, 253, 267-285), and Björk 2016. On the conventional practice of letting enemies of Rome deliver speeches (Caesar's Critognatus at *Gal.* 7.77, Sallust's Mithridates at *Hist.* 4.69, Livy's Hannibal at 30.33.8-11, and Tacitus' Calgacus at *Agr.* 30-32), see Woodman 2014, 236-237.

<sup>187</sup> One could perhaps use the rhetorical term *topos* (*locus*) for these motifs; see Quint. *Inst.* 5.10; cf. the entry on 'topos' in the 2012 *OCD*. I follow Kraus, Marincola, and Pelling (2010, 4) in using 'topos' and 'recurrent motif' as virtual synonyms; so do most commentators on the *Annales*, e.g. Woodman and Martin 1996, Malloch 2013, and Woodman 2017.

<sup>188</sup> As implied by Timpe 1970, 133. On recurrent motifs in speeches of northern barbarians, see also Walser 1951, 158-159: (1) freedom vs. slavery, (2) family, (3) honour and loss thereof, and (4) Roman *avaritia*, conscription, taxes, decadence and immorality.

<sup>189</sup> On pre-battle speeches, their practicalities, and their representation in historiography, see Hansen 1993, Anson 2010, and Woodman 2014, 236-238.

the Romans? How are speeches of Germanic leaders distinguished from those of Roman commanders?

Arminius' four speeches are delivered in four different situations and against four different adversaries, and every speech has a specific rhetorical aim calling for a specific rhetorical strategy. In the speech against Segestes, his unwilling father-in-law and rival leader, Arminius has just learned about the capture of his wife and unborn child. He delivers an impulsive call to arms, of which the aim is to encourage the neighbouring Germanic tribes to rebel. The speech against Germanicus is a more typical pre-battle speech: Arminius and his fellow Germanic leaders need to persuade their men that the Romans must and can be defeated, and therefore focus primarily on the cruelty, aggression, and perceived weaknesses of the Romans. The speech against Maroboduus is also a pre-battle speech, but differs markedly from that against Germanicus since the adversary here is not a Roman, but a rival Germanic leader: thus, Arminius' rhetorical strategy here is to portray himself as a more qualified leader of the Germani than Maroboduus. The discussion with Flavus, his brother and an auxiliary soldier in the Roman army, takes place across a river, while Germani and Romans are encamped on opposite sides: unlike the other speeches, the discussion between Arminius and Flavus lacks an obvious persuasive aim. Neither speaker seems to have any intention of persuading the other to change sides. Arminius takes the initiative to talk, but his overture seems to be caused by curiosity about the fate of his brother or a desire to taunt him, rather than by military strategy.<sup>190</sup>

The speeches of Arminius' adversaries are no less bound to their contexts. While it comes as no surprise that Germanicus' speech diverges from the three speeches delivered by barbarians, it is noteworthy that even among the latter there are major differences. Again, this stems from the fact that they are delivered by different people in different positions: Segestes has to defend and justify his previous conduct to a Roman general from whom he hopes to receive pardon and protection. Flavus has to defend his life-choice against his brother's accusations. Maroboduus has to convince his soldiers that he, not Arminius, is the leader best suited to lead the Germani, and that they should

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<sup>190</sup> The verbal battle between Arminius and Flavus is somewhat similar to the epic device of 'flyting', common between Homeric heroes: the two warriors approach and address each other, exchange insults and intimidations, boast of their own prowess, and invoke and manipulate memory (Hesk 2006; cf. Parks 1990). As noted in my discussion of Baxter 1972 in section 2.1.2, Germania is an epic place in the *Annales*. However, an actual duel in the epic mould is prevented by Stertinius' intervention: this is, after all, historiography.

therefore have faith in him and fight bravely against Arminius. This has obvious repercussions for the themes addressed, and for their handling.

The differences between the aims of Arminius' adversaries are well illustrated by the different ways they speak about the fate of his wife and child. Flavus, whose defence of his own life-choice hinges on a benevolent portrayal of the Romans, claims that they are being treated well (2.10.1: *neque coniugem et filium eius hostiliter haberi*). Maroboduus, who wants to portray Arminius as unable to protect Germania against Rome, claims that they are held as slaves (2.46.1: *cum coniunx, cum filius eius seruitium adhuc tolerant*). For Segestes, who wishes to ingratiate himself with Germanicus, his daughter's (happy) marriage with Arminius presents an embarrassing problem, which he has to address (1.58.4). Arminius mentions his wife only in the speech against Segestes, where he uses her fate both to discredit Segestes (a poor father and a poor patriot) and to make the point that he, in contrast to Segestes and the Romans, would never fight against pregnant women.

I will illustrate the differences between the speeches through a closer analysis of how the individual speakers address some of the frequently recurring motifs: (1) the contrast between freedom and slavery, (2) the description of Germania as a common fatherland (with shared gods, ancestors, and family), and (3) the exhortation to remember (or forget) past victories (or defeats), especially the Varian disaster.

### 2.3.1.1 *The contrast between freedom and slavery*

The contrast between freedom (*libertas*) and slavery (*seruitus*) is the most frequently recurring motif in the speeches of Arminius and his Germanic adversaries, indeed in all speeches of northern barbarians. It appears in all of Arminius' speeches, no matter the adversary, no matter the listener, and no matter the purpose of the speech: to defend freedom and avoid slavery is the main reason to resist Roman expansion. Still, although the theme is remarkably constant, it is also flexible. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is left untouched by Germanicus, indeed by most Roman commanders. In fact, Roman commanders seldom feel any need to justify Roman aggression to their soldiers, focusing instead on glory, plunder, and desire to end the war. In contrast to a Germanic chieftain, a Roman commander can expect unquestioning obedience from his soldiers, and therefore has less need to offer moral justification. Northern barbarians fighting for Rome, on the other hand, might feel the need to justify themselves and defend their actions

against accusations of treachery, that is, of bringing slavery to their own people.

Segestes, Arminius' first adversary, does not have this problem, since he is speaking to a Roman commander. Segestes takes a wholly Roman perspective and even reminds Germanicus that he demanded to be put in chains together with Arminius and his accomplices (1.58.2: *ut me et Arminium et conscios uinciret flagitauit*; cf. 1.55.2: *suasitque Varo ut se et Arminium et ceteros proceres uinciret*). Segestes would presumably have chosen other words if addressing his own men, but they do the trick when petitioning a Roman for pardon and protection. In Arminius' subsequent exhortation of the Germani to rebel against Rome, however, the contrast between freedom and slavery serves as the climax at the end of the speech. Moral evaluation frequently accompanies mention of freedom and slavery, and here the moral terms are emphasised by the imbalance between glory and freedom on the one hand (1.59.6: *gloriae ac libertatis*; two nouns forming a hendiadys) and shameful slavery on the other (*flagitiosae seruitutis*; noun and adjective). Thus, the contrast is expressed as a choice between glorious freedom and shameful slavery.

Arminius brings up the contrast between freedom and slavery also in the fraternal river-bank discussion, as he mocks Flavius' military rewards as cheap rewards for slavery (2.9.3: *uilia seruitii pretia*). The word *uilia* has clear moral connotations, but Flavius' reply is wholly focused on practicalities: he speaks only of the hopelessness of resistance and the possibility for mercy. The closest he comes to a moral argument is his claim that Arminius' family is not treated as enemies, i.e. have not been enslaved. Arminius retorts by speaking of ancestral – another morally loaded word – freedom, and puts it into a context of proper religious observance and family obligations (2.10.1: *fas patriae, libertatem auitam, penetrales Germaniae deos, matrem precum sociam*).

In the pre-battle speech of Arminius and his fellow Germanic leaders before the battle against Germanicus, the contrast appears again in the prominent position at the very end of the speech. The moral dimension, however, is here less pronounced, possibly because the enemy is a Roman commander rather than a barbarian collaborator: with no barbarian collaborators present, there is no need to discredit collaboration. Thus, the exhortation to resist is not based on the argument that collaboration is shameful, but on the argument the Romans are greedy, cruel, and arrogant: this indeed is the claim that precedes the climactic rhetorical question about freedom and slavery, when Arminius asks what other alternatives they have

but to hold on to freedom or die before they become slaves (2.15.3: *meminissent modo auaritiaie crudelitatis superbiae: aliud sibi reliquum quam tenere libertatem aut mori ante seruitium?*).

Germanicus' speech, like most pre-battle speeches of Roman commanders fighting against northern barbarians, avoids references to freedom or slavery. Germanicus bolsters the morale of his soldiers primarily through practical advice, extolment of their courage, and denigration of the enemy: the only moral justification is the mention of the Germani's barbaric treatment of the survivors of the Varian disaster. The lack of moral justification seems to be partly due to the fact that most speeches of Roman commanders are pre-battle speeches: moral justification for expansion would presumably be of little interest for Roman soldiers on the field of battle.<sup>191</sup> Moral arguments belong more naturally to exhortations to rebel or, in the cases of Avitus (13.56) and Cerialis (*Hist.* 4.73-74), exhortations not to rebel. The pre-battle speech of Arminius and his fellow Germanic leaders against Germanicus, although it does include some moral arguments (reasons for why they should fight rather than reasons for why they will win) at the end (Roman greed, cruelty and arrogance), also contains more encouragement than justification.

In Arminius' speech against Maroboduus, freedom is listed as one of the topics on which he spoke, but no explicit contrast with slavery is made. In contrast to Arminius' other speeches, it does not appear at the very end of the speech, but at the very beginning, as Arminius starts by pointing out to his men the freedom that they have regained (2.45.3: *reciperatam libertatem*). Still, although Arminius does not claim explicitly that Maroboduus brings, or will bring, slavery to Germania, the implications are certainly there: at the same time as he claims that freedom has already been regained, he presents the struggle with Maroboduus as a continuation of the war of liberation from Rome. He urges his men to remember their previous victories against Rome and to expel Maroboduus in the same way that they drove out Varus. Maroboduus, although he does not attempt to portray himself as a paragon of freedom, is the only barbarian adversary who directly confronts Arminius' rhetoric about freedom and slavery, presumably because he is the only Germanic adversary who speaks to a Germanic audience. In keeping with his primary rhetorical aim of presenting himself as better suited than Arminius to lead the Germani, he points out that Arminius has been unable to save his own family from slavery (2.46.1: *cum coniunx, cum filius eius seruitium adhuc tolerant*), the implication being that he is even less able to save

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<sup>191</sup> For lack of moral justification for imperial expansion in pre-battle speeches, see also Suetonius Paulinus (14.36.1-2) and Agricola (*Agr.* 33-34).

everyone else. Thus, Maroboduus replies to Arminius' talk about freedom with the claim that his leadership only leads to slavery. In sum, Tacitus adapts the motif of freedom versus slavery to the context of each speech and the aims of each speaker.

### 2.3.1.2 *Traitors of the (Germanic) fatherland*

The motif of treachery against the fatherland (*patria*) occurs in all pairs of speeches in which Arminius is pitted against a compatriot.<sup>192</sup> It is often connected with the contrast between freedom and slavery, since bringing slavery to Germania is portrayed by Arminius as the ultimate betrayal of the fatherland. According to Arminius, all of his Germanic adversaries are traitors to Germania, the fatherland of all Germani: in his speech against Segestes, he speaks of the gods of the fatherland (1.59.3: *dis patriis*) and urges the Germani to follow him and choose fatherland, ancestors, and the old ways rather than to follow Segestes and choose masters and new colonies (1.59.6: *patriam parentes antiqua mallent quam dominos et colonias novas*). Arminius plays the traitor card also against his brother Flavus, who is accused of breaking not only his obligations to his Germanic fatherland and its ancestral ideals but also to the gods of Germania and his own tribe and family (2.10.1: *fas patriae, libertatem auitam, penetralis Germaniae deos, matrem precum sociam; ne propinquorum et adfinium, denique gentis suae desertor et proditor quam imperator esse mallet*). Maroboduus too, although he has not given himself up to the Romans in the same way as the collaborator Segestes or the turncoat Flavus, is nonetheless accused of being a traitor to his fatherland and a henchman of Caesar (2.45.3: *proditorem patriae, satellitem Caesaris*). Arminius presents Maroboduus as someone who has let himself be subjugated by the Romans and by Caesar, and who will therefore be unable to prevent, and perhaps even eager to promote, Roman enslavement of Germania. The accusation of treachery does not involve references to familial or religious obligations, presumably because Maroboduus, in contrast to Flavus and Segestes, is not related to Arminius.

Segestes pre-empts the accusation of treachery. He has not yet been accused of anything when he starts speaking, but still feels the need to point out that he does not turn to the Romans because of hatred of his fatherland

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<sup>192</sup> The pre-battle speech of Germanicus is devoid of references to treachery. Arminius and his fellow Germanic leaders mention the Germanic as opposed to the Roman gods, but say nothing about fatherland, ancestors, or family. Germanicus relinquishes the opportunity to call Arminius a traitor for his role in the Varian disaster, and Arminius can obviously not bring any charges of treachery against Germanicus.



(1.58.1: *odio patriae*). This fatherland is then identified as Germania, first through a juxtaposition of Romans and Germani (1.58.1: *Romanis Germanisque*), and then through a reference to the Germanic people (1.58.3: *genti Germanorum*). Instead, Segestes claims that his loyalty to Rome stems from a conviction that peace and cooperation between Rome and Germania is beneficial for both sides. Since such a conviction is unlikely to change, he thus presents himself not only as trustworthy, but also as properly Romanised. As noted in section 2.2.1, he desperately needs to persuade Germanicus that he can be trusted in spite of his desertion. The only mention of religious matters in Segestes' speech is a reference to the divine Augustus, a further illustration of his use of Roman discourse.

Flavus is the only Germanic speaker who says nothing about the Germani or his fatherland; nor does he mention ancestors or gods, and his only reference to family is to Arminius' captive wife, his own sister-in-law. His focus is instead on the greatness of Rome, the fact that resistance is futile and that mercy is close at hand. In contrast to Segestes, who states explicitly that he does not expect any rewards for his support of the Roman-imposed peace, Flavus is happy to enumerate his rewards. Were the stream of rewards to dry out, resistance would presumably become a viable option.

Maroboduus, like Segestes, accepts the conception of Germania as a common fatherland for the Germani. Indeed, the idea of a Germanic fatherland is equally important for him as for Arminius, as he too wants to present himself as the man most suited to lead this fatherland. He claims to have preserved the glory of the Germani (2.46.2: *Germanorum gloriam*) and accuses Arminius, identified as a Cheruscan (2.46.1: *Cheruscorum*), of having caused great calamity to Germania (2.46.1: *magna cum clade Germaniae*). Unlike Segestes, Maroboduus speaks to his fellow Germani, and he does not (yet) need Roman aid. He therefore presents himself as completely committed to the Germanic cause. His opposition to Arminius is not presented as a support for or belief in the peace imposed by Rome.

### 2.3.1.3 *The Varian disaster*

The Varian disaster plays a major part in the narrative of events in Germania: Germanicus is instilled by a desire to pay his last respects to Varus' unburied soldiers and he and his army visit the battlefield (1.61-62); Caecina sees Varus in a dream (1.65.2); Arminius suggests that the Romans should be allowed to exit their camp so that they can be surrounded *again* (1.68.1: *rursum*); and the Romans are hesitant to show mercy to Segimerus' son

because he was rumoured to have mocked Varus' corpse (1.71.1).<sup>193</sup> Unsurprisingly then, the Varian disaster plays an important part in Arminius' speeches against Segestes, Germanicus, and Maroboduus: all begin with a reference to his great victory. Its use both in pre-battle speeches and in the exhortation to rebel indicates that it can have a persuasive as well as an inspirational function. The motif cunningly ties proof of military success to Arminius' leadership, as it demonstrates that resistance to Rome is not futile, if led by Arminius: it can therefore be used both to persuade people to rebel and to raise the spirits of those already on the battlefield.

In his speech against Segestes, Arminius brings up the victory over Varus as a contrast to the recent Roman capture of his wife. Unlike the father (Segestes), the Roman commander (Germanicus), and the Roman army, who by betrayal managed to capture only one poor pregnant woman, Arminius has defeated a grand army in a fair fight. He also reminds his soldiers that the Roman battle standards can still be seen in the groves of Germania. The Varian disaster is used as evidence for the possibility of victory, without which the fellow Germani would be unlikely to risk rebellion. Note also that Arminius' one-line battle cry during the battle against Caecina is a reference to his victory over Varus (1.65.4): *clamitans 'en Varus eodemque iterum fato uinctae legiones!*" In the altercation between Arminius and Flavus, however, there is no mention of Varus' defeat, presumably because its inspirational and persuasive powers would be wasted on a staunch adversary.<sup>194</sup>

In their pre-battle speech before engaging Germanicus' army, Arminius and his fellow Germanic leaders claim that the opposing Roman soldiers are the very ones who fled from Varus' army, and therefore cowards (2.15.1: *hos esse Romanos Varianni exercitus fugacissimos*). By reminding their men of their victory over Varus, they simultaneously recall a glorious moment and assert the possibility for victory against Germanicus. In addition, it is implied that the current battle will be easier, since they are opposed by the least courageous part of the enemy army.

In his speech against Maroboduus, Arminius starts by reminding his men of the slaughtered legions and directing their gaze to the spoils taken from

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<sup>193</sup> On the significance of the Varian disaster in *Annales* 1-2 (esp. its transgressive and transformative potential), see Pagán 1999. As noted by Pagán (305, 314), Germanicus' burial of the Roman soldiers transforms – albeit temporarily – defeat into victory.

<sup>194</sup> It could perhaps have become relevant if they had discussed more deeply Flavus' suggestion that Rome and Caesar are too powerful to be resisted (2.10.1: *magnitudinem Romanam, opes Caesaris*). Arminius, however, bypasses the opportunity to bring up practical arguments regarding the feasibility of resistance against Rome, and instead uses moral arguments, such as obligations to freedom, fatherland, and family.

Varus' army (2.45.3: *trucidatas legiones, spolia adhuc et tela Romanis derepta*), evidence of their former victory and proof that another victory is possible. He then contrasts the victory over Varus in a battle fought under his own leadership with Maroboduus' flight, inexperience, and treachery. At the end of the speech, he urges his men to expel Maroboduus with no less anger than when they killed Varus (2.45.3: *Maroboduum ... haud minus infensis animis exturbandum quam Varum Quintilium interfecerint*), implying that Maroboduus is equivalent to a Roman invader, and exhorts them to remember their past victories over the Romans (scil. the victory over Varus). In this way, he uses the victory over Varus to draw a contrast between his own and Maroboduus' leadership credentials. The implication is that with Arminius as a leader they will triumph over the Romans again, but with Maroboduus (either because of his uselessness or through his treachery) they will become subjected to Rome.

Among Arminius' adversaries, only Segestes and Maroboduus explicitly mention the Varian disaster. Segestes is in a tricky position: he is susceptible to accusations of treachery from both the Romans (for having participated in the plot against Varus) and the Germani (for petitioning the Romans for help against Arminius). He needs to make Arminius the traitor of Rome and simultaneously avoid becoming a traitor of his own people: his claim that Arminius was the real instigator of the plot against Varus and that he himself tried to warn the Roman general is therefore accompanied by the claim that his commitment to Rome is born from consideration of what is best for Germania. Furthermore, Segestes' designation of Arminius as a violator of the treaty with the Romans is preceded by a designation of him as an abductor of Segestes' daughter (1.58.2: *raptorem filiae meae, uiolatorem foederis uestri*). Not only does this personal affront justify his stance against Arminius, the parallelism establishes a link between Segestes and the Romans as fellow victims of Arminius' treachery. Also, as the question of treachery is moved from the political to the familial domain, the waters of moral evaluation are muddied: who, after all, can judge the hatred of a man whose daughter has been abducted? In short, by portraying Arminius as a traitor both to Rome and to family values, Segestes deflects attention from his own, obvious betrayal of his fatherland.

Maroboduus also claims that Arminius defeated Varus through treachery (2.46.1: *perfidia deceperit*), but, as he is talking to his fellow Germani and not to a Roman commander, his reasons are clearly different. Maroboduus does not accuse Arminius of a lack of loyalty towards Rome, but fits his clandestine tactics into a portrayal of the battle as an easy victory – the

Roman army is reduced to three confused legions and a leader unaware of treachery (2.46.1: *tres uagas legiones et duces fraudis ignarum*) – and therefore not evidential of any real leadership qualities on Arminius' part. This fits into his larger rhetorical aim of portraying himself as better suited than Arminius to lead the Germani. Thus, while Segestes' words (accusations) against Arminius are designed to endear Segestes himself to the Romans, Maroboduus' words (insults) are designed to shatter Arminius' glorification of his victory.

Although Germanicus does not mention the defeat of Varus explicitly, his speech is strongly influenced by it. As noted in section 2.2.3, the speech can be summarised as an attempt to turn his men's presumed disadvantages and accompanying fears into advantages and reasons to take heart. The first presumed disadvantage that he addresses is the rough and wooded terrain, one of the main causes of the Varian disaster. Thus, without reminding his men too explicitly about the disaster, he assuages their fears of being about to repeat it. Furthermore, the assertion that the Germani have no respect for human or divine law is a reference to their brutal treatment of the Roman survivors in the aftermath of the Varian disaster, of which he and his soldiers had recently been reminded by their visit to the battlefield. In this way, the Varian disaster is used as an argument for the righteousness of their fight, since it is fought against wicked men.

### 2.3.2 Arminius and the Germanic civil war in books 1-2

Although the verisimilitude demanded by *prosopopoeia* was undoubtedly a factor in the composition of the speeches and Tacitus' knowledge of the events in Germania provided him with some guidelines in putting together his plot, rhetorical *inuentio* still provided Tacitus with immense freedom to introduce and describe characters, construct situations, draw parallels within his own and to earlier texts, and structure events and form them into a narrative.<sup>195</sup> In this second part of the analysis, I investigate how Tacitus has shaped the account of Arminius within the structure of *Annales* 1-2. These books are dominated by two Roman civil wars: the civil war that brought an end to the republic, and the unrealised yet always threatening civil war between the Tiberius and Germanicus. Through analysis of intratextual and intertextual connections between the account of Arminius and these Roman

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<sup>195</sup> On the role of *inuentio* in ancient historiography, see my discussion of Wiseman, Woodman, and the 'rhetorical turn' in section 1.4.2.

civil wars, I demonstrate that there is also a third civil war taking place in the first two books, a Germanic civil war.

### 2.3.2.1 Civil wars in Rome

The Roman civil war of the Late Republic is summarily narrated a staggering four times in the first ten chapters of the first book, twice by Tacitus' authorial persona (1.1.1: *Pompei Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere, qui cuncta discordiis ciuilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit*; 1.2.1: *postquam Bruto et Cassio caesis nulla iam publica arma, Pompeius apud Siciliam oppressus exutoque Lepido interfecto Antonio ne Iulianis quidem partibus nisi Caesar dux reliquus*), one by Augustus' advocates (1.9.3-5: *hi pietate erga parentem et necessitudine rei publicae, in qua nullus tunc legibus locus, ad arma ciuilia actum... non regno tamen neque dictatura, sed principis nomine constitutam rem publicam*), and one by Augustus' critics (1.10.1-4: *pietatem erga parentem et tempora rei publicae obtentui sumpta ... armaque quae in Antonium acceperit contra rem publicam uersa ... post Antonium, Tarentino Brundisinoque foedere et nuptiis sororis inlectum, subdolae adfinitatis poenas morte exsoluisse*). The struggle between freedom and slavery is the main theme of these accounts.<sup>196</sup> Yet another account of the civil war of the Late Republic is given in the excursus on the origins of law in book 3, and here too, through the imagery of tightening chains, the end result is understood as a form of slavery (3.28.2-3): *sexto demum consulatu Caesar*

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<sup>196</sup> At 1.1.1, there is a transition from *reges* to *libertas*, via a variety of de facto autocracies (*dictatura, decemuiralis potestas, consulare ius, dominatio, potentia, arma*), until Augustus closes the circle by taking everything under his power (*sub imperium accepit*). At 1.2.1, Augustus gradually takes over the powers of the senate, the magistracies, and the laws (*munia senatus magistratuum legum in se trahere*), the principal defenders of the freedom of the state and its citizens. His takeover means that the people most ready for slavery (*seruitio promptior*) are rewarded. At 1.9.4, Augustus' supporters claim that there was no other remedy for the fatherland than the rule of one person: *non aliud discordantis patriae remedium fuisse quam ut ab uno regetur*. At 1.10, Augustus' subverts senatorial power through lust of mastery and threats of violence (*cupidine dominandi ... extortum inuito senatu consulatum*). At the succession of Tiberius at 1.7.1, consuls, senators, and knights are said to rush into slavery (*ruere in seruitium*). Note also that Tacitus uses the same word (*dominatio*) to describe the rule of Augustus (1.3.1) and the rule of Sulla (1.1.1), the latter of which is presented as an example of a suspension of the free state instituted by Brutus. On Tiberius' Principate as civil war, see also the verses quoted by Suetonius at *Tib.* 59.2.

*Augustus, potentiae securus, quae triumviratu iusserat aboleuit deditque iura quis pace et principe uteremur; acriora ex eo uincla.*<sup>197</sup>

The civil war of the Late Republic is not the only Roman civil war whose presence is felt in books 1-2. The Tiberian Principate looks increasingly like an institutionalised form of civil conflict.<sup>198</sup> Firstly, the civil war of the Late Republic does not end completely with Augustus' acquisition of power, as noted by those who designate the Augustan peace as bloody (1.10.4): *pacem sine dubio post haec, uerum cruentam.*<sup>199</sup> Secondly, there is a constant threat of the outbreak of a new civil war during the Tiberian Principate. In the words of Kraus, "whether based in fact or in paranoia (not always his own), Tiberius is constantly throughout the hexad in counterpoint with men who may – or could – or might – replace him."<sup>200</sup> His main rival in *Annales* 1-2 is Germanicus:<sup>201</sup> while Germanicus is in fact conspicuously loyal to Tiberius

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Segestes' suggestion to Varus that he should put all the Germanic leaders, including himself, in chains (1.55.2, 1.58.2). On imagery of chains and binding in the *Annales*, see Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 47-56.

<sup>198</sup> Sailor 2008, 190; cf. Christ (1978, 482), Woodman (1988, 186-90, and 1992/1998a), Martin and Woodman (1989, 226-227), Sage (1991, 3397-3398), Ash (1999, 2009, and 2018, 10-11, 27), O'Gorman (2000, 20-45), Damon 2010a, Low (2013a, 28-31, 55, 233-275) and Strunk (2017, 62-67). The repetitiveness of civil conflict during Tiberius' Principate is underlined not least by the 'double' murder of Agrippa Postumus, Tiberius' step-son and potential heir to the throne: the real Agrippa Postumus at 1.6 and an impostor at 2.39-40.

<sup>199</sup> On how Tacitus implies that the civil war of the Late Republic continues seamlessly into the Principate of Augustus, see Keitel 1984, 312-317, 325: "Through cross-reference of theme and diction, the historian shows in *Annals* 1.1-10 a continuity between Octavian's violence and deception in civil war and his behavior as princeps ... hence, internal conflict is still bubbling, and the historian, by all these means, points to the essential instability of such a regime which is constantly in danger of perishing by the same violent means through which it rose to power." Cf. Low 2013a, 92-93.

<sup>200</sup> Kraus 2009, 105; cf. Low 2013a, 11-12, 132-133.

<sup>201</sup> 1.3.5: Augustus orders Tiberius to adopt Germanicus; 1.7.7: Tiberius is apprehensive about Germanicus' popularity and control of the legions in Germania; 1.31.1: the mutinous legions in Germania hope that Germanicus will lead them and aim for the purple; 1.33.1: Germanicus is hated by his uncle Tiberius and grandmother Livia; 1.35.3: the legions in Germania again show their willingness to follow Germanicus in a bid for the throne; 1.52.1: Tiberius' joy at the news that the mutinies have been quelled is mixed with concern about Germanicus' rising popularity among the soldiery; 1.62.2: Tiberius disapproves of Germanicus' decision to visit the battlefield of the Varian disaster; 1.69.1-2: Tiberius disapproves of the active participation in military affairs of Agrippina, Germanicus' wife; 2.5.1: Tiberius uses the disturbances in the East as a pretext to remove Germanicus from his legions in Germania; 2.26.2-5: Tiberius finally manages to get Germanicus away from Germania; 2.42.4-5: Cn. Piso is rumoured to have been sent to Syria by Tiberius in order to oppose Germanicus; 2.53.2: Germanicus visits his grandfather Mark Antony's old campsite at Actium; cf. Low 2013a, 43-45. Note also the fear of a conflict between Germanicus and Drusus, Tiberius' son (1.4.5): *duobusque insuper adulescentibus qui rem publicam interim premant, quandoque*

(cf. 1.34.1), others project revolutionary ideas on him (cf. 1.33.2). Moreover, he is both an incarnation of civil strife through his double ancestry from Augustus and Mark Antony and seemingly blissfully unaware of the fear and distrust with which he is regarded by Tiberius and the havoc he creates, e.g. through his symbolic visit to Actium and his potentially revolutionary trip to Egypt.<sup>202</sup> The civil war of the Tiberian Principate remains largely unfulfilled until the end of book 2, when Cn. Piso attempts unsuccessfully to take control of Syria (2.77-81).<sup>203</sup> However, its presence is felt already from the beginning of book 1, most conspicuously in the accounts of the mutinies among the legions stationed in Pannonia and Germania: civil war terminology (*ciuili bello* at 1.16.1, *ciuilium ... bellorum* at 1.19.3, *ciuilium armorum* at 1.49.1) is complemented with civil war imagery (*furor*<sup>204</sup> at 1.18.1, 1.49.3, *furens* at 1.35.5, 1.40.2, 1.42.1, *uaecors/uaecordia*<sup>205</sup> at 1.32.1, 1.39.2, *rabies* at 1.31.3, 1.39.6).<sup>206</sup>

As in the accounts of the civil war of the Late Republic, the struggle between freedom and slavery stands at the centre also of this civil war. For Germanicus is, through the memory of his father Drusus, explicitly linked with *libertas* in one of the passages where the rivalry between him and Tiberius is mentioned (1.33.1-2):

ipse [Germanicus] Druso fratre Tiberii genitus, Augustae nepos, sed anxius occultis in se patrum auiaeque odiis, quorum causae aciores quia iniquae. quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potestus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum fauor et spes eadem. nam iuueni ciuile ingenium, mira comitas et diuersa ab Tiberii sermone uultu, adrogantibus et obscuris.

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*distrabant*. Germanicus and Drusus remain on affectionate terms in spite of the family conflicts surrounding them (2.42.6). However, the theme of fraternal discord in the imperial family reappears with fatal consequences with Nero and Drusus (sons of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder) at 4.60.3, and Nero and Britannicus (adopted and biological sons respectively of the emperor Claudius) at 13.16. Cf. Bannon (1997, 149-158) and Fantham (2010, 214-217).

<sup>202</sup> Kraus 2009, 111-112.

<sup>203</sup> Low 2013a, 114-121.

<sup>204</sup> *Furor* was “un véritable synonyme de *bellum ciuile*” (Jal 1963, 422).

<sup>205</sup> *Vaecors/uaecordia* appears also in Sallust’s portrait of Catiline (*Cat.* 15.5).

<sup>206</sup> Woodman 2006a; Ash 2009, 90. Low (2013a, 36-75) uncovers intertexts with the civil wars of both the Late Republic and AD 68/69.

While Tiberius comes to represent the subjugation of the state, to the fate of Germanicus is tied a hope of a return to the Republic.<sup>207</sup> The death of Germanicus thus comes to represent the definite death of republicanism as an alternative system of government in Rome. The connotations of civil war are further strengthened by the mention of family connections: Tiberius and Livia are designated as Germanicus' *patruus* and *auia*. Family conflict was a common metaphor for civil war in Roman literature. As we shall see in the next section, Arminius' struggle against his Germanic adversaries is also portrayed as an intrafamilial conflict on whose outcome the freedom of the state depends.

### 2.3.2.2 *Civil war in Germania*

As we have seen, Arminius the orator is paired with one Roman and three Germanic adversaries. While the range of different speakers can be partly explained by Tacitus' desire for variation, it is noteworthy that three of them are Germani. Drusus, for instance, remains a peripheral figure when he enters the story in the build-up to the struggle between Arminius and Maroboduus. While the two Germanic leaders are given lengthy speeches, Drusus is tacit: his arrival in Germania serves only to frame the internal struggle among the Germani.<sup>208</sup> In short, the majority of Germanic adversaries and stress on intra-Germanic conflict set the stage for a portrayal of Arminius' resistance against Roman expansion as a Germanic civil war.<sup>209</sup>

The prerequisite for any civil war is that there exists a notion of a shared fatherland among the warring parties. As we have seen in the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries, such a fatherland does indeed exist among the Germani: Arminius, Segestes, and Maroboduus all speak about a Germanic *patria* to which all Germani owe allegiance.<sup>210</sup> Although Segestes and

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. the popular reaction at Germanicus' funeral at 3.4.1: *miles cum armis, sine insignibus magistratus, populus per tribus concidisse rem publicam, nihil spei reliquum clamitabant*.

<sup>208</sup> Note also that in the only speech delivered against a Roman commander (Germanicus), Arminius is not the only Germanic leader who speaks (2.15.1: *nec Arminius aut ceteri Germanorum proceres omittebant*). Thus, when Germanicus enters the picture, the contrast is not so much between Arminius and Germanicus as between a Roman commander and a collection of Germanic leaders.

<sup>209</sup> Note also the presence of Germanic auxiliaries in Germanicus' army (1.56.1, 1.60.2, 2.8.3, 2.16.3, 2.17.5).

<sup>210</sup> The idea of a Germanic *patria* reappears in the account of Italicus, the son of Arminius' brother Flavius. Italicus' enemies identify him as an enemy of the fatherland (11.16.3): *si paterna Italico mens esset, non alium infensius arma contra patriam ac deos penatis quam parentem eius exercuisse*. The struggle between Italicus and his adversaries is, in some sense, a continuation of the civil wars of Arminius and his adversaries (Malloch 2013, 251). The



Maroboduus respond to Arminius' accusation of treachery in different ways, they both accept the existence of and negotiate their own relationship with the Germanic fatherland: the idea of a Germanic fatherland does not belong only in the rhetoric of Arminius. Moreover, Arminius' introduction as a *turbator Germaniae* at 1.55.2 immediately invokes Germania as a whole: his own tribe, the Cherusci, is not mentioned until 1.56.5. This is in striking contrast to other northern barbarians of the *Annales*: Maroboduus is introduced as king of the Suebi (2.26.3: *Suebos regemque Maroboduum*), Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir are associated with the Treveri and Aedui respectively (3.40.1: *Treuiros Iulius Florus, apud Aeduos Iulius Sacrovir*), Arminius' nephew Italicus belongs to the *Cheruscorum gens* (11.16.1), Gannascus is a leader of the *Chauci* (11.18.1), Cartimandua is introduced as *reginae Brigantum* (12.36.1), Caratacus is associated with the Silures (13.33.1: *Siluras*), and Prasutagus is *rex Icenorum* (14.31.1). Finally, while there is perhaps nothing inherently spectacular about associating Arminius with Germania from the outset, it is worth noting that Velleius introduces him as a Cheruscan (Vel. 105.1): *intrata protinus Germania, subacti Canninefates, Attuarii, Bructeri, recepti Cherusci (gentis eius Arminius mox nostra clade nobilis)*. In short, Arminius is poignantly and perhaps innovatively designated as a Germanic leader, and both he and his adversaries acknowledge the existence of a shared Germanic fatherland to which all Germani owe allegiance.

Tacitus' portrayal of the Germani as patriots seems to run counter to previous treatments of the political landscape of Germania, e.g. in Caesar's *de Bello Gallico*. Caesar's Germani, although they recognise themselves as a separate people from the Gauls, do not share any special bonds: they do not speak of a common fatherland (*patria*) and express no reluctance in fighting one another. Their leader Ariovistus, while as loquacious as Arminius, shares neither his patriotism nor his dedication to freedom. Although designated *rex Germanorum* (Caes. *Gal.* 1.31.10), he never speaks of a Germanic fatherland. And, rather than a liberator, he is an invader: his demand to have 'free' possession over Gaul (*Gal.* 1.44.13: *liberam possessionem*) is met by Caesar's claim that Gaul should be free (1.45.3: *liberam debere esse Galliam*). In fact, not even Caesar's Gauls, in spite of their commitment to a common cause, speak of a common fatherland.<sup>211</sup> The scarcity of sources on

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Britons of the *Annales*, in contrast to the Germani, never speak of a common fatherland. On the lack of unification among the Britons in classical sources, see Günnewig 1998, 279-280.

<sup>211</sup> Although the Gauls do not speak about a common fatherland (*patria*) – the Belgae come closest (Caes. *Gal.* 2.15): *esse homines ferus magnaue uirtutis; increpitare atque incusare*

the political structure of Germania between Caesar and Tacitus means that we cannot know if the notion of a Germanic fatherland is a Tacitean invention.<sup>212</sup> Regardless of this, the Germania of the *Annales* is portrayed as a fatherland, and the internal struggles among the Germani are therefore a civil war.<sup>213</sup>

The ‘civil’ nature of the conflict among the Germani is stressed both through a consistent portrayal of the conflict as a family struggle and through intertextual and intratextual connections with Roman civil wars. First, however, I will look at the connotations of *turbator* and *liberator*, the two agent nouns which frame the account of Arminius.<sup>214</sup> Arminius is introduced into the text as *turbator Germaniae* (1.55.2) and exits as *liberator haud dubie Germaniae* (2.88.2). Both *liberator* and *turbator* have connotations of civil strife. *Turbator*, derived from the verb *turbare* (‘agitate’, ‘disturb’, ‘bring into confusion’, ‘upset’, ‘confuse’, ‘rouse to revolt’) designates a person who is inherently characterised by, professionally proficient in, or regularly carries out the above activities. The term is not very common, and always pejorative: it enters extant Latin literature at Liv. 2.16.4 (*turbatoribus belli*), where it is used to describe the Sabine war party. It occurs twice in book 4 in the

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*reliquos Belgas, qui se populo Romano dedidissent patriamque uirtutem proiecissent* – they do speak about a lot of things things which they consider common (*communis*) for all Gauls: *libertas* (7.4.4, 37.4, 71.3, 89.2), *fortuna* (7.1.5), *salus* (7.2.1, 21.3, 29.7), *concilium* (7.15.3). They can also express reluctance when it comes to fighting one another (7.37). On Caesar’s differentiation between the bounded (and therefore grabbable) Gaul and the shapeless and infinite Germania, see Riggsby (2006, 59-72) and Krebs 2006. On Caesar’s ‘invention’ of the Germani, see also Lund (1998, 36-57), Rives (1999, 21-27), and Krebs (2010, 203-207).

<sup>212</sup> For Velleius, the only *patria* is Rome. Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 4.99-100) seems more interested in identifying the individual tribes of Germania than in presenting them as a unified nation. Tacitus speaks of a Germanic fatherland also in the *Germania* (2.1): *quis porro, praeter periculum horridi et ignoti maris, Asia aut Africa aut Italia relictæ Germaniam peteret, informem terris, asperam caelo, tristem cultu adspectuque, nisi si patria sit.*

<sup>213</sup> It should be noted that Tacitus never designates the Germani as *ciues* or their internal war as *bellum ciuile*.

<sup>214</sup> Many of the keywords in the account of Arminius’ are agent nouns ending in *-tor/-sor*: Segestes calls Arminius a *raptor* and a *uiolator*, presents himself as a possible *conciliator*, and does not want to be confused with a *proditor* (1.58.1-4). Arminius exhorts Flavius to follow his own example and be an *imperator* rather than a *desertor* and a *proditor*, and the reader is told that Arminius had been a *ductor* in the Roman army (2.10.1-3). Germanicus’ soldiers describe Arminius and his men as *ruptores pacis* (2.13.1), Arminius calls Maroboduus a *proditor* (2.45.3), and Drusus is sent to Germania as a *paci firmator* (2.46.5). As noted by Sinclair (1995, 23-24), agent nouns were particularly popular among early imperial writers. While I am sceptical of Sinclair’s claim that Tacitus uses them as tools of dominance (since they are used frequently also by Arminius), I concur with his claim that he uses them to make sense of the behaviour of foreigners. For a broader discussion of agent nouns, see Adams 1973a; cf. Menge 1900, 121-122, §166.

expression *turbatores uolgi*, both times to describe tribunes advocating reform.<sup>215</sup> We find a single occurrence also in Romanus Hispo's treatment of how one could justify Mark Antony's killing of Cicero (Sen. *Con.* 7.2.13): *pro Antonio dicturum: occidi Ciceronem oportuit; et dixit locum, aliter non potuisse pacari rem publicam, quam si ille turbator oti e re publica sublatus esset.*

*Turbator* appears thrice in the *Annales*, always with connotations of civil strife: in addition to the passage under consideration, it is used to describe the leaders of the Pannonian mutiny (1.30.1: *tum ut quisque praecipuus turbator conquisiti*), and the Gracchan brothers and Lucius Appuleius Saturninus (3.27.2: *Gracchi et Saturnini turbatores plebis*).<sup>216</sup> The connotations of civil strife are strengthened by Segestes' designation of Arminius' supporters as *plebs* (1.55.2), the intertext with Thucydides' description of the reversal of morality during times of civil war (1.57.1: *nam barbaris, quanto quis audacia promptus, tanto magis fidus rebusque motis potior habetur*; cf. Thuc. 3.82.4-5),<sup>217</sup> and the similarities between Arminius' rhetoric and that of tribunes in Livy: Arminius' accusations of treachery against Flavus and Maroboduus (2.10.1: *gentis suae desertor et proditor*; 2.45.3: *proditorem patriae, satellitem Caesaris*) are mirrored by that of the tribunes Spurius Marcellus and Marcus Metilius against tribunes who support the senate (e.g. at Liv. 4.48.16: *proditores plebis commodorum ac seruos consularium*), and the symbols of Roman oppression identified by Arminius in his speech against Segestes (1.59.4: *Germanos numquam satis excusaturos quod inter Albim et Rhenum uirgas et securis et togam uiderint*) are mirrored in the tribune Icilius' words to the tyrannical decemvir Appius Claudius (Liv. 3.45.7: *expediri uirgas et secures iube*). Arminius, then, is introduced with a

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<sup>215</sup> At Liv. 4.2.7, Canuleius and his fellow tribunes are described as *uolgi turbatores* by the consuls. Note that Livy describes Canuleius as a positive character, in contrast to the arrogant consuls. He delivers a long speech promoting the right of intermarriage between patricians and plebeians and plebeian eligibility to the consulate (Liv. 4.3-5). Both laws are passed when the plebeians refuse the levy. At Liv. 4.48.1, Livy himself describes the tribunes Spurius Maecilius and Marcus Metilius as *turbatores uolgi*. When their attempt to enforce a radical agrarian reform is thwarted by opposition from some of their fellow tribunes, they accuse their colleagues of treachery towards the interests of the commoners and of being slaves to the consulars (4.48.16): *latores rogationis contione aduocata proditores plebis commodorum ac seruos consularium appellantes aliaque truci oratione in collegas inuecti, actionem deposuere.*

<sup>216</sup> Cf. the beginning of book 4, in which the civil war motif really starts picking up steam (4.1.1): *cum repente turbare fortuna coepit*. See also Sal. *Hist.* 1.12M, where *plurimae turbae* are the first step towards *bella ciuilia* in Rome after the destruction of Carthage.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Sinclair 1995, 22.

term which casts him in the role of a tribunician rabble-rouser, a veritable ‘tribunus Germaniae’ threatening civil disturbance.<sup>218</sup> Note also that he is twice described as *uaecors* (1.59.1, 2.46.1), another term with connotations of civil strife (cf. 1.32.1 and 1.39.2 on the mutinies).

*Liberator*, although considerably more popular than *turbator*, still has, in the words of Goodyear, “a certain solemnity.”<sup>219</sup> *Liberator* has a wider semantic range than *turbator*: in addition to enemies of the upper-class, it can also designate enemies, both past and present, of monarchy. The word appears first in Plautus,<sup>220</sup> but then disappears from extant literature until re-introduced by Cicero in the *Philippics* to refer to Brutus, Cassius, and/or the other assassins.<sup>221</sup> In Livy, *liberator* has a wider range of usage, but refers predominantly to characters of early Roman history who were victorious in struggles against king Tarquinius Superbus or against the decemvirs. Among the former belong L. Junius Brutus and Valerius Publicola, and among the latter Horatius Barbatus and Valerius Potitus.<sup>222</sup> Most occurrences in Livy and Cicero, then, are in contexts of civil strife, either between monarchs and republicans or between patricians and plebeians. The closest verbal similarity

<sup>218</sup> On rabble-rousers in Roman politics, see Hellegouarc’h 1963, 526-534.

<sup>219</sup> Goodyear 1981, 448. The only other character designated as *liberator* in the works of Tacitus is Jupiter, for whom the word is used twice in the *Annales*: both are scenes of forced suicide, where the person involved (Seneca at 15.64.4; Thrax at 16.35.1) makes a libation to *Iuppiter Liberator*. In the words of Pagán (2000, 363), “no Roman, no senator, no matter how passionate in his endeavors for freedom, is called *liberator haud dubie*.”

<sup>220</sup> Pl. *Per.* 417-421: *uir summe populi, stabulum seruitricium, / scortorum liberator, suduculum flagri, / compedium tritor, pristinorum ciuitas, / perenniserue, lucro edax, furax, fugax, / cedo sis mihi argentum, da mihi argentum inprudens*.

<sup>221</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 1.6: *patriae liberatores*; 1.36: *liberatoris sui*; twice at 2.31: *liberatores populi Romani conseruatoresque rei publicae ... liberatores*; 2.89: *liberatoribus nostris*; 2.114: *nostris liberatores*; 10.8: *liberatoris*; 14.12: *huius urbis liberatores*; cf. Cic. *Brut.* 1.16, *Att.* 14.12.

<sup>222</sup> For Brutus, see 1.56.8 (*liberator ille populi Romani animus*), 1.60.2 (*liberatorem urbis*), 2.5.7 (*liberatorem*), and 4.15.3 (*liberatoris patriae*); for Publicola, see 2.7.8 (*liberatore patriae*), 3.61.2 (*liberatoribus populi Romani*), and 7.32.13 (*liberatoribus patriae*); for Barbatus and Potitus, see 3.53.2 (*liberatores haud dubie*); for Potitus, see 3.61.2 (*liberatore*). Other Roman liberatores in Livy include Manlius Capitolinus (6.14.5: *liberatore suo, parenti plebis Romanae*), the victorious duellist Horatius (1.26.11: *liberatoris urbis huius*), and T. Quinctius and his legions in Greece (34.50.3: *liberatores*; 34.50.9: *seruatorem liberatoremque*). Non-Roman liberatores include the killers of the Syracusan tyrant Hieronymus (24.25.5: *liberatores patriae*) and the first Greeks to (potentially) rebel from Rome (35.17.8: *liberatorem populum*). *Liberator* also appears once in the praefatio of Columella’s *Res Rustica*, describing the Roman hero Quinctius Cincinnatus (*obsessi consulis et exercitus liberator*), and once in Curtius Rufus’ history of Alexander the Great, when Alexander addresses his soldiers (3.10.4: *terrarum orbis liberatores*). On liberators, see also Hellegouarc’h (1963, 550-556).

is with Horatius Barbatus and Valerius Potitus (Liv. 3.53.2): *liberatores haud dubie, et motus initio et exitu rei*.<sup>223</sup> The expression *haud dubie* is not, after all, very common in Tacitus.<sup>224</sup> Thus, of all the *liberatores* in the Roman past, in his final verdict on Arminius, Tacitus alludes to those who fought successfully for the rights of the plebeians against the decemvirs.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, *liberator* is often paired with and implies the existence of a *patria*, and thus further strengthens the idea of Germania as a fatherland. The account, then, is framed by two designations of Arminius with connotations of civil strife. These connotations are strengthened by a focus on family conflict and intertexts with Sallust and Livy.

Although Arminius fights more battles against Roman invaders than against fellow Germani, he is opposed not only by a Germanic compatriot but also by a family member in all of his fights: during Germanicus' second invasion he incites the Germani to take up arms upon receiving the news that his father-in-law (Segestes) has surrendered to the Romans, during Germanicus' third invasion he engages in a verbal battle with his brother (Flavus) across a river, in the conflict with the rival Germanic king Maroboduus he is opposed also by his own uncle (Inguiomerus), and in his final bid for kingship he is killed by his relatives. The array of family members opposed to Arminius is mirrored in the speeches, in which accusations of treachery are recurrently paired with references to family (mothers, children, wives, ancestors).

Segestes is the first of Arminius' three troublesome relatives. Arminius is designated a hated son-in-law of a hostile father-in-law (1.55.3): *auctis priuatim odiis, quod Arminius filiam eius alii pactam rapuerat, gener inuisus inimici soceri, quaeque apud concordēs uincula caritatis, incitamenta irarum apud infensos erant*. The *sententia* about bonds emphasises both the familial relation and the perversity of intrafamilial struggle. The most famous pair of *socer* and *gener* in Roman literature is undoubtedly Julius Caesar and

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<sup>223</sup> Timpe 1970, 131; Koestermann 1963, 415; Syme 1958, 733; Goodyear (1981, 448) notes also the intertexts with Cic. *Phil.* 1.6 and Liv. 1.26.11.

<sup>224</sup> It has a total of nine occurrences in the Tacitean corpus (Blackman and Betts 1986, 737): *Ger.* 28.5, *Hist.* 1.7.1, 46.4, 72.2, 3.86.2, 4.27.3, 80.2, *Ann.* 2.43.4, 2.88.2.

<sup>225</sup> The designation of Valerius and Horatius as *liberatores haud dubie* seems to be focalised through the plebeians. It could be argued that their understanding of the causes and course of the revolt which brought an end to the power of Appius Claudius and the other decemvirs might have been somewhat shallow, and that their concomitant acclamation of Valerius and Horatius as liberators of the fatherland was misplaced. While Valerius and Horatius are certainly on the side of the plebeians, the instigators of the revolt are Verginius and Icilius. However, there does not seem to be any sign of irony in Tacitus' designation of Arminius as *liberator haud dubie*.

Pompey the Great. Their family connection is often mentioned in treatments of the civil war between them.<sup>226</sup> The *gener-socer* pair is used also in accounts of other Roman civil wars, e.g. between the Romans and the Sabines and between Aeneas's Trojans and Latinus' Latins.<sup>227</sup> Among the other authors who mention Segestes, only Strabo (7.1.4) notes the family connection with Arminius.<sup>228</sup>

Flavus, twice explicitly designated as *frater* (2.9.1), is the second family member who opposes Arminius. War between brothers is one of the most frequently recurring civil war motifs in Roman literature, appearing in Vergil, Horace, Propertius, Livy, Lucan, and Tacitus.<sup>229</sup> Unlike Segestes and Maroboduus, who might merit an inclusion in the account of Arminius as historically important and in literature acknowledged Germanic leaders, Flavus is neither vital to the plot nor mentioned in any text before Tacitus. Moreover, he disappears from the *Annales* immediately after the confrontation with his brother.<sup>230</sup> Thus, Flavus' appearance on the bank of the

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<sup>226</sup> The intertext is noted by Dudley 1968, 228. Cf. Cat. 29.23-24: *eone nomine, urbis o potissimi / socer generque, perdidistis omnia*; Verg. *Aen.* 6.826-832: *illae autem paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis, / concordēs animae nunc et dum nocte prementur, / heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina uitae / attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt, / aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci / descendens, gener aduersis instructus Eois*; Luc. 4.799-802: *quid nunc rostra tibi prosunt turbata forumque / unde tribunicia plebeius signifer arce / arma dabas populis? quid prodita iura senatus / et gener atque socer bello concurrere iussi?* See also Luc. 7.721-723, 8.553-556, and Flor. *Epit.* 2.141: *Crassi morte apud Parthos et morte Iuliae Caesaris filiae, quae nupta Pompeio generi socerisque concordiam matrimonii foedere tenebat, statim aemulatio erupit.*

<sup>227</sup> For the Sabines, see e.g. the words of Livy's Sabine women (1.13.2): *ne sanguine se nefando soceri generique respergerent*. As noted by Phillips (1979, 89), in Livy's account of the Sabine women patriotic and family ties complement and reinforce each other. Lucan (1.114-118) draws a connection between the Sabine women and Julia, daughter of Caesar and wife of Pompey: *quod si tibi fata dedissent / maiores in luce moras, tu sola furem / inde uirum poteras atque hinc retinere parentem / armatasque manus excusso iungere ferro, / ut generos soceris mediae iunxere Sabinae*. Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.225-226, 6.93-95. For Aeneas and Latinus, see Verg. *Aen.* 7.317: *gener atque socer*. Livy (1.49.1) and Ovid (*Fast.* 6.600) also use the word-pair in their descriptions of the murder of Servius Tullius by his son-in-law Tarquinius Superbus.

<sup>228</sup> Neither Velleius (2.118.4) nor Florus (2.30.33) mention the family connection with Arminius (Trzaska-Richter 1991, 148).

<sup>229</sup> See e.g. Verg. *Geo.* 2.495-510, *Aen.* 2.291-295, Prop. 1.7.1-2, Hor. *Ep.* 7, Liv. 1.7, Luc. 1.95, Tac. *Hist.* 3.51; cf. Wiseman 1995, 143-144. On Roman views on fraternity, see Bannon 1997.

<sup>230</sup> Flavus' name makes another two appearances at 11.16, where his Rome-grown son Italicus returns to Germania and attempts to install himself as king of the Cherusci.

Visurgis might well have been a Tacitean invention.<sup>231</sup> His main purpose in the text, it seems, is to be Arminius' fraternal enemy.

Arminius' struggle with Maroboduus is the most obviously 'civil', since it is fought solely against fellow Germani rather than against Roman invaders supported by individual Germani. However, the connotations of civil war are further strengthened by the introduction of a third family feud. Just before the battle, Arminius' uncle Inguiomerus (cf. 1.60.1: *Inguiomerus Arminii patruus*) deserts his nephew and joins Maroboduus (2.45.1). Inguiomerus, like Flavus, does not appear in any other sources and disappears from the text as soon as the battle is over. It would seem that Tacitus yet again has exploited the possibilities of rhetorical *inuentio* and introduced a family conflict into the struggle. Furthermore, the account of the war is preceded by the explanation that the Germani started to fight among themselves as soon as the Romans (under Germanicus) had withdrawn (2.44.2): *nam discessu Romanorum ac uacui externo metu gentis adsuetudine et tum aemulatione gloriae arma in se uerterant*. As noted in section 2.2.4, there is here an allusion to Sal. *Hist.* 1.12M:<sup>232</sup> *postquam remoto metu Punico simultates exercere uacuum fuit, plurimae turbae, seditiones et ad postremum bella ciuilia orta sunt*. What for Sallust was an explanation of the outbreak of civil wars in Rome after the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC has for Tacitus become an explanation of the outbreak of civil war in Germania after the withdrawal of Rome.<sup>233</sup> In short, rather than a war between independent Germanic tribes, the allusion to Sallust turns the war between the Suebi and the Cherusci into a Germanic civil war. In the struggle between Arminius and Segestes we see the opposite phenomenon. Germanicus' invasion is prompted by the hope that the Germani are divided between their leaders (1.55.1): *nam spes incesserat dissidere hostem in Arminium ac Segestem*. However, any internal divisions seem to evaporate with the arrival of the

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<sup>231</sup> Cf. Furneaux 1896, 300; Goodyear 1981, 214.

<sup>232</sup> Koestermann 1963, 336; Goodyear 1981, 330.

<sup>233</sup> According to Syme (1958, 496), Tacitus indicates that when the Germani (and the Parthians, in Syme's extrapolation) are left alone, they quickly revert to their own quarrels and cease to be a problem for Rome. Thus, Syme argues that Tacitus is here giving "his contribution to the great contemporary debate on Roman foreign policy." Pelling (1993, 76) argues similarly that Tacitus wanted to show that Tiberius was right in his estimate that the Germani would start fighting among themselves as soon as the Romans withdrew. On Romans enjoying the 'spectacle' of Germanic civil war and vice versa, see O'Gorman 1993/2012, 115.

Roman army, for Segestes disappears from the narrative after his speech, and the Germani rally behind Arminius.<sup>234</sup>

The account of the struggle between Arminius and Maroboduus includes also an intertext with Livy's account of internal dissensions in Rome after the expulsion of the last king and the establishment of the Republic. Tacitus writes that Maroboduus lost popular support because the name of king was hated by the commoners (2.44.2): *Maroboduum regis nomen inuisum apud populares*. The phrase recalls Livy's description of public sentiment in Rome after the first consular elections, when the newly elected consul L. Tarquinius Collatinus was forced into exile because of his name (Liv. 2.2.2-3): *nomen inuisum ciuitati fuit*. Unlike Maroboduus, however, Collatinus is neither a king nor does he have kingly ambitions. He is merely related to the deposed king and therefore (apparently groundlessly) suspected of aiming at kingship. As mentioned by Livy, the Romans might have gone a bit too far in their devotion to freedom when they demanded that Collatinus go into exile merely because of his name (Liv. 2.2.2: *ac nescio an nimium undique eam minimisque rebus muniendo modum excesserint*). The Germani are perhaps slightly naïve when they choose sides on the basis of names, but they are still significantly more reasonable than the Romans. While the Romans exile Collatinus because of his family name, the Germani desert Maroboduus because he consciously assumes the role of king: his *inuisum nomen* is not an unchosen family name, but the name of the position he occupies. The end result, however, is the same, as they are both exiled because of the people's hatred of kings. Through invocation of this particular episode in the establishment of the Roman Republic, the struggle between Arminius and Maroboduus is endowed with significance. Germanic society is equated with a society where *libertas* is emerging as the major civic concern and where perceived threats to its fragile beginnings are ferociously (and perhaps somewhat excessively) resisted. The equation between ancient Rome and contemporary Germania creates a tension in the text, since the Germani take on the role of the heroic Romans of bygone ages: they hold both the virtues and the corresponding vices of the ancient Romans.<sup>235</sup> The Livian intertext thus portrays the awakening of a political mentality among the Germani whose dedication to freedom is comparable to that which propelled Rome to

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<sup>234</sup> On *metus hostilis*, see Kapust (2008, 361-367; 2011, 38-43) and Low (2013, 65-70). Cf. Xen. Cyr. 3.1.26, Plato, *Laws* 698bff, Arist. *Pol.* 1334a-b, Polyb. 6.18, 6.57.5, Sal. *Cat.* 10, Liv. 1.19.4, 2.39.7, 39.6.7.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Rives (1999, 61-64) and O'Gorman 1993/2012 on the *Germania*.



global hegemony. It is a promising start for any nation that aims to be a paragon of freedom.

In sum, the conflicts between Arminius and his adversaries are portrayed as a Germanic civil war.<sup>236</sup> Firstly, Germania is portrayed as a fatherland (*patria*). Secondly, the designations of Arminius as *turbator* and *liberator* invoke both ancient and more recent episodes of Roman civil strife. Thirdly, we find the conventional civil war motif of family conflict, as Arminius fights against a father-in-law (*socer*), a brother (*frater*), and an uncle (*patruus*). Fourthly, the war with Maroboduus is intertextually linked both to Sallust's account of the Roman civil dissensions which began after the fall of Carthage and to Livy's account of the establishment of the Republic. In addition, Arminius' wars and speeches revolve around freedom and slavery, the key terms in all Roman civil wars from the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus to the convulsions of the Late Republic and the rivalry between Tiberius and Germanicus. Not since Cicero's *Philippics* had Roman literature witnessed an orator so obsessed with freedom, fatherland, and family.<sup>237</sup>

### 2.3.2.3 Arminius, Germanicus, and the consequences of (not) waging civil war

There are many similarities between the Germanic civil war and the Roman civil wars treated in *Annales* 1-2. Most notably they all revolve around a struggle between freedom and slavery: Arminius defended Germanic freedom against Roman aggression, Augustus' rise to power is described as an enslavement of the state, and Germanicus was by many considered the last hope of Roman freedom against imperial subjugation.<sup>238</sup> The theme of family dissension is present both in the Germanic civil war and in the struggle between Tiberius and Germanicus: while Arminius fights a father-in-law, a brother, and an uncle, Germanicus is pitted against his uncle (who is also his adoptive father), but conspicuously avoids fighting his cousin Drusus, Tiberius' son.<sup>239</sup> The outbreak of civil war is connected to the theme of *metus*

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<sup>236</sup> Cf. Trzaska-Richter (1991, 169) and Low (2013a, 36-75).

<sup>237</sup> See e.g. Cic. *Phil* 8.8: *nos leges, iudicia, libertatem, coniuges, liberos, patriam defendimus*. Arminius' phrase *reciperatam libertatem* (2.45.3) is reminiscent of *Phil*. 13.15: *incensi omnes rapimur ad libertatem recipendam*.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Williams 1989, 143: "The decision which confronts the German in the face of Roman invasion and the decision which confronts the Roman in the face of the principate are the same essentially; freedom-glory / slavery-disgrace." Cf. Sailor 2012, Lavan 2013, and O'Gorman 2014.

<sup>239</sup> For *frater* in the sense paternal cousin, see Cic. *Fin*. 5.1, *Att*. 12.7.1, Suet. *Cal*. 15.2, *Ov. Ep.* 8.28; or Germanicus and Drusus are designated as *fratres* because Germanicus was

*hostilis*: the Romans of the Republic turn against one another after the fall of Carthage, Tiberius has no foreign rival but repeatedly attacks his fellow Romans, and Germanic concord seems to correlate with Roman aggression.

The basic parallelism between the Roman and Germanic civil wars accentuates the key differences. Most notably, unlike the Roman civil war of the late Republic and the unrealised civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus, the Germanic civil war does not end in slavery, but in freedom: “Internal strife amongst the Germans does not escalate, and their would-be monarchs fail; this contrasts with Tacitus’ vision of the Principate as an oppressive regime that risks imploding in destructive civil war.”<sup>240</sup> While the victory of Augustus leads to the establishment of the autocratic Principate and its bloody peace, and the death of the imagined republican Germanicus ensures the continuation of slavery and peace for the Romans, the death of the *liberator* Arminius leads, paradoxically, to freedom for the Germani.<sup>241</sup> The parallels between the Germanic and the Roman civil wars highlight this crucial difference in outcome.

However, the intertexts with Roman history might leave the reader in doubt whether the Germani have really embarked on a different path, or if they are merely some hundred years behind Rome in the historical process. Even if the reader chooses to believe that the Germani are travelling on the same path as the Romans, it is still unclear where exactly on this path they find themselves.<sup>242</sup> This is well illustrated by the double allusion to Sallust and Livy in the account of Maroboduus: are the Germani (with Livy) at the beginning of a glorious entrance on the historical stage, or are they (with Sallust) about to be plunged into a hundred years of internal strife? In Livy’s narrative of the Roman regal era, kingship has a constructive function as a creator of social cohesion: “the history of the monarchy lies in Livy’s view not only in the succession of individual kings, some better and some worse, but also in the emergence of a *res publica*, a common enterprise, among the citizen subjects of those kings.”<sup>243</sup> While it remains unclear at this point

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Tiberius’ adopted son. The theme of treacherous uncles vs. idealistic nephews (Arminius vs. Inguiomerus, Tiberius vs. Germanicus) recur in the account of civil dissensions in Thrace (2.64-67): at the death of king Rhoemetaces, his brother Rhescuporis betrays and kills Cotys, the king’s son and his own nephew; cf. Low 2013a, 202-204.

<sup>240</sup> Low 2013a, 27.

<sup>241</sup> On Low’s (2013a, 69) suggestion that freedom and imperialism are demonstrated to be mutually exclusive, see footnote 582.

<sup>242</sup> On northern barbarians occupying a prior historical time to the Romans, see also section 4.3.3.

<sup>243</sup> Phillips 1979, 91.

whether the Germani have been too quick to dismiss monarchy, the reappearance of civil strife among the Cherusci (starring Flavius' son Italicus) at 11.16-17 might suggest so.<sup>244</sup>

The parallels between Rome and Germania are reflected most clearly through the characters of Germanicus and Arminius: they both play the role of liberators yet are potential monarchs, are engaged in intrafamilial conflict, die young and through deceit, and are contrasted not only with each other but also with several other characters. As noted by Williams, while characters involved in contraposed pairs and used to highlight key contrasts (freedom vs. slavery, virtue vs. vice, past vs. present) might at first appear stereotyped and one-dimensional, the range of different characters with whom Arminius is contrasted (Segestes, Flavius, Germanicus, Inguiomerus, Maroboduus, his relatives) ensures that he cannot be easily pinned down.<sup>245</sup> Even within each pair, clear verdicts are hard to come by: vis-à-vis Segestes and Flavius he is both/either a *turbator* and/or a *liberator*, vis-à-vis Germanicus he is both/either a traitor and/or a patriot, vis-à-vis Maroboduus he is both/either a Cheruscan chieftain and/or a pan-Germanic leader, and vis-à-vis his relatives he is both/either a unifying king and/or a would-be autocrat. Germanicus' character is constructed in the same way: to Tiberius he is a potential rival, to Cn. Piso a potential autocrat, to the Roman people a potential liberator, to his soldiers a potential emperor, to the Greeks a potential monarch, and to Arminius a potential subjugator of Germanic freedom.<sup>246</sup>

The parallels between Germanicus and Arminius detected by Pelling, then, go well beyond personal characterisation. Arminius' sole function in the text is not to throw the character of Germanicus into relief. Rather, he represents and enables the perception of a historical development different from the one that occurred in Rome. Through the account of Arminius, Tacitus presents an alternative historical development and explodes the myth that one-man rule is the only possible outcome of civil war.<sup>247</sup> The criticism of Roman historians' lack of interest in recent history at the end of Arminius' obituary thus takes

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<sup>244</sup> While the Cheruscan petition that Rome send them a king (11.16.1: *Cheruscorum gens regem Roma petiuit*) seems to imply that the Cherusci now consider one-man rule necessary for peace and order, their subsequent attempt to expel him demonstrates their continued resistance to (and equation of) Roman interference and autocratic government. The Cherusci appear to have been overtaken in importance by the Chatti some time after the death of Arminius and were largely inconsequential in Tacitus' own time (cf. *Ger.* 36).

<sup>245</sup> Williams 1989, 144.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Martin and Woodman (1989, 27-31) on Tacitus' multifaceted portrayal of Tiberius; see also Luce 1986/2012, 350-356.

<sup>247</sup> Cf. Low 2013a, 13, 24-28, 65-75.

on an added significance (2.87.3). Rather than, or at least in addition to, being an historiographical motif, it encourages the reader to reconsider Arminius' importance through the lens of books 1-2. Only by appreciating the (in Tacitus' account clear) similarities between recent Roman and Germanic history can the myth of the Principate as a necessary continuation of the Republic be deflated. As noted by Haynes, the forgetting of Arminius enables the misrecognition of the regal past and entails the misunderstanding of the roots of the imperial present.<sup>248</sup> It is as if Tacitus wills his historiographical colleagues, through perception of the alternative historical path taken in Germania, to acknowledge the open-endedness of history and the potential for a qualitatively different future.

Tacitus, however, does not provide clear answers for the reader who ponders why the history of Germania took a different turn from that of Rome. It is not clear why Germanic freedom triumphs through the efforts of Arminius, while Germanicus fails to expel Tiberius and reinstate the Republic in Rome: the Romans, perhaps, had lost the will to freedom after the civil wars as they now plunged gratefully into slavery (cf. 1.7.1: *at Romae ruere in seruitium consules patres eques*). Or maybe Tiberius and Livia were simply too clever? Perhaps Germanicus would have succeeded if he had actually dared to take up the mantle of a liberator and lead the legions of Germania against Tiberius? And who knows if Germanicus, like Arminius, would have aimed for sole power in the end.<sup>249</sup> Regardless of exactly which questions a reader might ask, Germanicus' passivity increases the pathos of the narrative, as the sense of uncertainty remains: the reader is left to contemplate what might have been and to rue the unrealised opportunity for freedom.

Germanicus' counterfactual resistance against Tiberius may fruitfully be compared with what O'Gorman has termed Tacitus' virtual history of the Pisonian dynasty.<sup>250</sup> Like the potential dynasty of the Pisones (but in contrast

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<sup>248</sup> Haynes 2003, 18-19.

<sup>249</sup> Both are opposed by Republicans at the end: Arminius is betrayed by his own relatives when aiming for kingship and Germanicus is engaged in a conflict with Cn. Piso when he succumbs to an illness, or a poison. Dedication to Republican values was deeply ingrained in the Pisonian family (Pelling 1993, 83-84; Low 2013, 97), esp. through the trait of *ferocia* (2.43.2); cf. Traub 1953, 254-255. As noted by Williams (1989, 146), Piso is an ambiguous character, both a champion of freedom (1.74, 2.35) and a wild enemy of Germanicus (2.43, 2.55, 2.75, 2.78).

<sup>250</sup> O'Gorman 2006. On virtual history in the *Annales*, see also Ash (2018, 21-22) on the Pisonian conspiracy. For a sceptical verdict on Tacitus' ability to imagine an alternative to the Principate, see Giua 2014, 53.

to the most famous example of virtual history in Roman historiography, Livy's Alexander digression at 9.17-19), Germanicus' unrealised resistance against Tiberius is not separated from the main narrative and placed in a digression: the account of Germanicus is embedded in and runs parallel with the narrative of the Julio-Claudians. However, unlike the Pisones, who seem to demonstrate that the main component of Rome's future, i.e. monarchy, was predetermined (that only the name of the ruling dynasty was susceptible to change), the virtual history of Germanicus' bid for power is more ambiguous. It is unclear whether Germanicus is an alternative *princeps* or a potential restorer of the Republic. Would his citizen-like disposition and remarkable affability (1.33.2: *ciuile ingenium, mira comitas*; cf. 1.71.3, 2.13.1, 2.72.2, 2.82.2) have facilitated a restoration of the Republic, or would his impetuosity (cf. his handling of the mutiny among the legions in Germania at 1.31-51), disregard for proper boundaries (cf. his spontaneous arrival in Alexandria at 2.59), love of the East (cf. his grand tour at 2.53-2.61, including the donning of Greek attire at 2.59.1), and flair for the theatrical (cf. his attempted suicides at 1.35.4 and 2.24.2) have turned him into an emperor in the mould of his grandson Nero?<sup>251</sup>

Williams and Low are sceptical of Germanicus' supposed republicanism: Williams claims that although Tiberius and Germanicus are presented as political and moral opposites, there are no clear signs that Germanicus as emperor would have attempted a restoration of the Republic, and Low argues that Tacitus suggests that he would have become an emperor like any other.<sup>252</sup> Counterfactuals are by nature knotty: how, for example, could Germanicus have given clear signs that he would have attempted a restoration of the Republic, or something similar? It is also pertinent to bear in mind both that the Principate would not have appeared as inevitable during Tiberius' reign as it does for us today (Tiberius' had been the first imperial succession), and that Germanicus on his deathbed appears to acknowledge the hopes (of liberation) that people had in him (2.71.2): *si quos spes meae, si quos propinquus sanguis, etiam quos inuidia erga uiuentem movebat, inlacrimabunt quondam florentem et tot bellorum superstitem muliebri fraude cecidisse*. Only blinded by hindsight can we dismiss the possibility that history might have taken another turn. Given that Germanicus never

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<sup>251</sup> Compare also Germanicus' youth (1.33.2: *iuueni*) with Augustus (1.10.1 *adulescente priuato*; cf. Aug. *RG* 1.1) and Nero (13.4.1: *neque iuuentam armis ciuilibus aut domesticis discordiis inbutam*, cf. 13.2.1, 13.11.1 13.13.1).

<sup>252</sup> Williams 1989, 141-144; Low 2013a, 25-26, 54, 71-72, 92-127. On the complexity and contradictions inherent in Tacitus' portrayal of Germanicus, see Williams 2009b. Cf. Pelling 1993 and O'Gorman 2000, 46-69.

attained the Principate and that the Principate changed (or uncovered hidden traits of) those who held supreme power (Tiberius at 6.51.3, Nero at 14.52.1, Galba at *Hist.* 1.49.4, Vespasian at *Hist.*1.50.4), it would appear that a final verdict on Germanicus must remain elusive.<sup>253</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have offered a reading of *Annales* 1-2 from the perspective of the account of the wars between Arminius and his adversaries. In the first part of the analysis, I have identified recurrent motifs in the speeches of Arminius and his adversaries, especially the contrast between freedom and slavery, accusations of treachery, and the Varian disaster. I have also demonstrated that these motifs are treated with great variation depending on the immediate context of each speech and the rhetorical needs of the speaker. This variety in speakers and rhetorical situations enables Tacitus to examine questions of resistance and opposition from a variety of perspectives.

In the second part of the analysis, I have observed that the notion of a Germanic fatherland is a conspicuous and perhaps innovative element of Tacitus' account of events in Germania. Moreover, I have argued that the wars in Germania are portrayed as a Germanic civil war and thus thematically connected with the Roman narrative, which also revolves around the theme of civil war: the analysis has focused on the words *turbator* and *liberator*, the presence of family conflict, intertexts with Sallustian and Livian accounts of civil war, and intratexts within *Annales* 1-2. The main intratexts with the account of Arminius' civil wars are the Roman civil war of the Late Republic and the ever-threatening civil war between Tiberius and Germanicus. The contrasting fates of Arminius and Germanicus mirror the contrasting fates of Germania and Rome: while the death of Germanicus strengthens Tiberius' subjection of Rome, the death of Arminius entails freedom for Germania. While Germanicus goes from perceived liberator to a cause of internal unrest, Arminius is transformed from *turbator Germaniae* to *liberator haud dubie Germaniae*.<sup>254</sup> He starts out as a rabble rouser, and had he been decisively defeated by Germanicus he would have remained so. It is

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<sup>253</sup> As was kindly suggested to me by Prof. Arne Jönsson, upper-class Romans would have been particularly susceptible to think in terms of counterfactual history due to their rhetoricised education, esp. their training in composing *suasoriae*, *controuersiae*, and *ethopoeia*; cf. Clark 1957, Kennedy 1972, and Bonner 1977.

<sup>254</sup> Pelling 1993, 78; Sinclair 1995, 23.

his lengthy and successful resistance against Rome which turns him into a liberator. This final verdict on Arminius in the *Annales* fits well with Tacitus' statement at *Germ.* 37.2: *ex quo si ad alterum imperatoris Traiani consulatum computemus, ducenti ferme et decem anni colliguntur: tam diu Germania uincitur.* The adverbial addition *haud dubie* seems to underline that the freedom of Germania has been secured once and for all. While he might be a *turbator* from a narrowly Roman perspective in AD 15, he is a *liberator* from the panoramic perspective of Tacitus' own time.<sup>255</sup>

Arminius' eventual bid for kingship and consequent death do not entail his failure as a liberator. In fact, it was exactly the manner of his end which turned him into a *liberator haud dubie*. Had he (or someone else) been successful in a bid for monarchy and lived to rule as king, Arminius' legacy would have been something altogether different. While there is a certain poetic justice in the fact that Arminius is brought down by the forces that he himself has unleashed, the Germani's refusal to accept Arminius as king is in fact the definitive demonstration of his success as a liberator.<sup>256</sup> One might also, of course, salvage Arminius' designation as liberator by differentiating between freedom from Rome and freedom from monarchy: while his fight against Rome made him a liberator of Germania, his fight for monarchy got him killed.

Given that Tacitus' audience was presumably familiar with the events narrated in *Annales* 1-2, the employment of counterfactual history gave him the possibility to create another type of suspense, namely that of 'what if?'. In sum, the account of Arminius mirrors the Roman civil wars, demonstrates the open-endedness of history, and raises questions about causes of historical change and the direction of history.

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<sup>255</sup> Timpe 1970, 132-135; Straub 1980, 228-231. However, as noted by Low (2013a, 69), the Germani do not appear again as a unified group in the extant *Annales*: while individual tribes appear and at times successfully resist Roman expansion (the Frisians at 4.72-73 and 13.54, the Cherusci at 11.16-17, the Chauci at 11.18.1, the Chatti at 12.27.2-28, the Suebi and Hermunduri at 12.29-30, the Ampsivarii at 13.55-56, the Chatti and Hermunduri at 13.57.1-2, and the Ubii at 13.57.3), they pose no real threat to Rome.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. the fates of famous liberators in Livy: Horatius the duelist kills his sister and only avoids execution through his father's intercession (1.26), Brutus executes his sons for conspiring with the exiled king (2.5.5-8), and Manlius Capitolinus, whose career follows a similar trajectory to that of Arminius, is killed by his fellow patricians after he embarks on a path of popular rabble-rousing and (allegedly) aims for royal power (5.47, 6.14-20). On Manlius Capitolinus, see Jaeger 2009, 57-93.

# 3. Thracians (and Romans) under Siege: Resistance, Suicide, and Surrender in Book 4

“The *Annales* convey the traveller through a bleak land without light or hope.”  
(Syme 1958, 545)

“Entering Tacitus’ world is not straightforwardly pleasurable, but it does have a certain compulsion and fascination to it, as the audience becomes steeped in the guilty pleasures of watching a disaster narrative unfold.” (Ash 2006, 89)

## 3.1 Introduction

If the endeavour of the philologist is to explain why she feels the way she does about a text, then this chapter is an attempt to explain the sense of darkness and hopelessness experienced by Syme, as well as the compulsion and fascination highlighted by Ash. I will do this through a reading of Tacitus’ account of the Thracian revolt in the fourth book of the *Annales* (4.46-51). As in the previous chapter on Arminius, I investigate how an account of northern barbarians is connected to the broader themes of the narrative centred on Rome. I demonstrate how the account of the Thracian revolt functions within the structure of book 4 as well as the *Annales* as a whole. I argue that there are clear similarities between the choice faced by the Thracians besieged by the Roman army and that faced by the Roman people oppressed by the emperor and his subordinates.

At the centre of my analysis stands the debate of the besieged Thracians at 4.50, since this is where the connections with the Roman narrative become most apparent. While the choice among (futile, yet glorious) resistance against, (useless, yet honourable) suicide from, and (servile, yet practical) collaboration with the emperor is omnipresent in the Tacitean corpus, it



receives its most extensive treatment in the fourth book of the *Annales*. The book is populated not only by Romans who face the choice of what to do when oppressed by the emperor (e.g. M. Lepidus and Cremutius Cordus), but also by northern barbarians who face the choice of what to do when oppressed by Rome (the Thracians and the Frisians). As we shall see, the possibilities discussed by the Thracians correspond closely to those envisaged by Romans facing the might of the emperor. Thracians and Romans identify the same three possible courses of action for the man literally or metaphorically ‘under siege’: resistance, suicide, and surrender/collaboration.<sup>257</sup>

Sieges played a dominant part of warfare in antiquity and accounts of sieges appear frequently in both Greek and Roman historical works.<sup>258</sup> These accounts tend to include some recurrent motifs, e.g. lack of food and water, an attempted break-out, and the fate of non-combatants. Many include a debate, or a series of speeches, where the besieged discuss and weigh their options. I have termed this type of debate the ‘debate under siege’. Since the specifics of each such debate depend on its context, that is, on how the author has constructed the surrounding scene, the ‘debate under siege’ is a rhetorical situation which allows for variation (*uariatio*) and calls for rhetorical invention (*inuentio*). There are few preserved examples of extensive accounts of sieges carried out by Roman forces against northern barbarians, and the number of preserved ‘debates under siege’ attributed to northern barbarians is correspondingly small. Except for the speech of Caesar’s Critognatus at Alesia (*Gal.* 7.77-78), the only northern barbarian ‘debate under siege’ of any length in Roman historiography is the one attributed by Tacitus to the Thracians in book 4 of the *Annales* (4.50).

In the first part of the chapter, I consider pre-Tacitean treatments of the Thracians and discuss previous scholarship on the Thracian revolt (sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). In the second, I place the Thracian revolt within the context of book 4 and offer a paraphrase of the revolt (section 3.2). In part three, I compare earlier examples of the ‘debate under siege’ in Latin literature with

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<sup>257</sup> Hill (2004, 5-6), arguing that ‘suicide’ carries anachronistic connotations of depression and loneliness, uses the term ‘self-killing’. I have chosen to stick with ‘suicide’ and encourage my readers to let go of their modern sensibilities.

<sup>258</sup> For an omnibus treatment of the tactics and narratives of Roman siege warfare, see Levithan 2013. As noted by Levithan (1-2, 47-79), ‘the siege’ is best approached as ‘an event category’, that is, as a distinct mode of warfare which tended to follow a regular, predictable pattern and which was waged within a different moral environment from a set-piece battle. Curiously, Levithan’s chapter on “The Siege Progression” (47-79) does not include a discussion of the ‘debate under siege’.

the debate of the Thracians (section 3.3.1), and explore the connections between the account of the Thracian revolt, the main narrative focused on accusation, trials, and deaths in Rome, other accounts of external wars in the book, and Tacitus' words on the depressive and repetitive material of his *Annales* (section 3.3.2).

### 3.1.1 Pre-Tacitean treatments of the Thracians

The Thracians enter extant Greco-Roman historiography in Herodotus, who discusses them rather extensively in the fifth book of his *Histories* (5.3-10). Herodotus singles out the Thracians primarily for the powerfulness of their warriors and the strangeness of their customs. He also claims that they would have been the strongest of all peoples if they had been united under one leader.<sup>259</sup> He does not make any moral judgements about their character. Thucydides too is reluctant to pass judgements on the (rather numerous) Thracians who populate his pages, although he does present his readers with one glaring example of Thracian bloodthirstiness: when the Thracian forces commanded by the Athenian general Diitrephes captured the city of Mycalessus, carnage followed (7.29.4).<sup>260</sup> According to Kallet, Thucydides uses the stereotype of the Thracians as savage barbarians as a way of criticising Diitrephes for a failure to keep them under control. In other Greek works, the Thracians are frequently stereotyped as avaricious, mendacious, and bloodthirsty.<sup>261</sup> The Thracian king Polymestor is a prime example: in Euripides' *Hecuba*, Polymestor was a friend of Priam who had received

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<sup>259</sup> Her. 5.3: Θρηίκων δὲ ἔθνος μέγιστον ἐστὶ μετὰ γε Ἰνδοῦς πάντων ἀνθρώπων: εἰ δὲ ὑπ' ἑνὸς ἄρχοιτο ἢ φρονέοι κατὰ τὸντό, ἄμαχόν τ' ἂν εἶη καὶ πολλῶ κρᾶτιστον πάντων ἐθνέων κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἐμήν ("The Thracians are the biggest nation in the world, next to the Indians. If they were under one ruler, or united, they would, in my judgment, be invincible and the strongest nation on earth. Since, however, there is no way or means to bring this about, they are weak." Transl. Godley 1922). For the ethnographical topos that barbarians are disunited and that their disunity enables Roman conquest, see also Tac. *Agr.* 12.2 (*ita singuli pugnant, uniuersi uincuntur*) and *Germ.* 33.2 (*maneat, quaeso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui, quando urgentibus imperii fatis nihil iam praestare fortuna maius potest quam hostium discordiam*); individual tribes could be exceptions, e.g. the Chatti (*Germ.* 30.2: *praepone electos, audire praepositos*). Keeping the Gauls divided is a constant task of Caesar in *de Bello Gallico*, e.g. at 3.12. For more examples, see Woodman 2014, 150.

<sup>260</sup> Kallet 2002, 245.

<sup>261</sup> Hall 1989, 108-110. Hall (125-137) also refers to passages where Thracians are derided as drunkards (Plat. *Leg.* 1.637e), polygamous (Eur. *Andr.* 215-217), and rapists (Soph. *Tereus*), and points out that Thrace was often portrayed as the home of Ares (*Il.* 13.301; *Od.* 8.361; Soph. *Ant.* 970). On Thracian mendacity, see Bayliss 2014, 259-262.

Polydorus, Priams' youngest son, to be raised in Thrace. When the Trojan War broke out, Polymestor not only refused to aid the Trojans, but also he killed Polydorus and took the money that Priam had sent with him for his sustenance.<sup>262</sup> Thracian mendacity was an especially long-lived stereotype, found also in Zenobius' second-century AD collection of proverbs, where it is attributed to Menander Rhetor (4.32): Θράκες ὄρκια οὐκ ἐπίστανται: τάυτης μέμνηται Μένανδρος ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ.<sup>263</sup>

The Greek stereotype of the Thracians lived on in Roman texts. Vergil, Ovid, Horace, Florus, and Velleius all mention Thracians, and the characteristics of belligerence, mendaciousness, avarice, and bloodthirstiness all make their appearance: the story of Polydorus' murder was accepted virtually unchanged by Vergil, whose Aeneas meets the ghost of Polydorus when he stops in Thrace on his way towards Italy, as well as by Ovid. Both writers focus on Thracian avarice and mendacity.<sup>264</sup> In Horace's writings, Thracians are usually either bacchantic revellers (*Od.* 2.7.26-27: *non ego sanius / bacchabor Edonis*; 3.25.10-11) or savage and bloodthirsty warriors (*Hor. Od.* 1.27.1-3: *natis in usum laetitiae scyphis / pugnare Thracum est; tollite barbarum / morem*; 2.16.5: *bello furiosa Thrace*; *Epod.* 5.13-14).<sup>265</sup> Florus focuses on the inherent savagery and cruelty of the Thracians (1.39): *nihil interim per id omne tempus residuum crudelitatis fuit in captiuos saeuientibus: itaque dis sanguine humano, bibere in ossibus capitum, huiuscemodi ludibriis foedare mortem tam igne quam fumo, partus quoque grauidarum mulierum extorquere tormentis*. In short, the Roman stereotype of Thracians included violence, bloodthirstiness, mendacity, and lack of self-control.

### 3.1.2 Previous scholarship on Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt

<sup>262</sup> Eur. *Hec.* esp. 1-34 and 1208-1229.

<sup>263</sup> "Thracians do not understand oaths: Menander mentions this [proverb] in the first book" (my translation).

<sup>264</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 3.13-57; Ov. *Met.* 13.429-575; see also Prop. 3.13.55-56: *te scelus accepto Thracis Polymestoris auro / nutrit in hospitio non, Polydore, pio*. Ovid's version of the rape of Philomela also follows its Greek precursors in its focus on Tereus' Thracian ethnicity (*Met.* 6.435, 661, 882) and his innate libidinousness (*Met.* 6.458: *innata libido*; 6.562: *sua ... libidine*).

<sup>265</sup> Velleius, true to his brevity, describes the Thracians revolting in 13 BC simply as (2.98.2) *gentes ferocissimas*. Pliny the Elder's account of Thrace (*Nat. Hist.* 4.18) focuses almost exclusively on geography, and contains no information about Thracian character traits.

Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt has not received much attention in modern scholarship. This lack of interest can perhaps be explained by the lack of interest in the revolt also in antiquity. Tacitus is the only preserved ancient writer who reports it.<sup>266</sup> When Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt does find its way into modern scholarship, it is usually passed over with a general remark about barbarians or dismissed as a diversion from the main narrative, and few attempts have been made to demonstrate its connection with the structure of book 4.

Walker 1952 includes the Thracians among her type-character 'the noble savage', those who, "faced with the same situation which confronts the Roman senator, respond with defiance." She does not, however, discuss the Thracians independently, much less offer a detailed analysis of the Thracian revolt in book 4.<sup>267</sup> However, although Walker's general categorisation is rather shallow (as if all of Tacitus' barbarians play the role of noble savages and nothing else), regarding the Thracians, she is in fact spot on. For, as we shall see, it is in the account of the Thracian revolt that the connection noted by Walker between the situation faced by northern barbarians and the Roman senators becomes most explicit.

Martin and Woodman, although they frequently (and brilliantly) demonstrate how different parts of the book relate to each other, treat the account of the Thracian revolt in a curiously insular manner. Indeed, they seem to assume that its primary function was to entertain the reader.<sup>268</sup> The intratexts between the Thracian and Roman narratives within book 4 are left mostly uncommented. For comparative material, they refer instead to passages about barbarians in other texts, claiming that the words and themes used in the description of and debate among the Thracians are conventional for barbarians.<sup>269</sup> While they are obviously not wrong in noting the intertexts between Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt and accounts of barbarian

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<sup>266</sup> Syme 1958, 280. The revolt is not mentioned by Velleius, Suetonius, or Dio Cassius. It is unmentioned also in the article on Thrace in the 2012  *OCD*  as well as in the 2015  *Companion to Ancient Thrace* , ed. by Valeva, Nankov, and Graninger.

<sup>267</sup> Walker 1952, 228.

<sup>268</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 206-207; see 15-17 for their overview of the structure of book 4.

<sup>269</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 212-213; esp. illustrative is their comment at 4.50.3, where they claim that "the general picture" – presumably the description of besieged barbarians discussing what to do – is conventional, and then give only a single reference (to the Gauls at  *Caes. Gal. 7.77.2* ). Although I agree that the speech of Critognatus is a relevant intertext for the Tacitean passage and that it is important to note the similarities between the accounts of Tacitus and Caesar, I believe that the differences between the accounts are far more significant.

revolts in other texts, Martin and Woodman have (1) left uncommented the significant differences between Tacitus' account and these accounts, (2) left unmentioned the intertexts with accounts of non-barbarian people under siege, and (3) missed significant (and significantly closer) intratexts within the *Annales* themselves. They discuss the choice between surrender, resistance, and suicide (raised by the Thracian account) only within a barbarian context, and thereby overlook its contextual function within the *Annales*.

Martin and Woodman treat the account of the Thracian revolt more like a 'digression' – in the modern, colloquial English sense of the term where 'to digress' implies that one turns away from the main theme of the argument – than an integral part of the narrative. In its technical, rhetorical sense of the term, however, 'digression' is perhaps appropriate: as noted already by Syme, digressions were useful structuring devices for writers of annalistic history, since they could be used to bridge and forge links between events and years narrated. Digressions could be used to place an event within a specific category, provide contextual information, make parallels, and draw comparisons with the past or with foreign lands, as well as to provide guiding principles for the interpretation of surrounding events or of an entire book or work. Syme classifies the account of the Thracian revolt as a 'concealed digression', that is, an episode which has digressive characteristics and serves similar functions.<sup>270</sup> Syme does not, however, discuss the account in detail.

One of the few attempts to make sense of Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt is Levene 2009b. Levene notes that Tacitus has dedicated a lot of space to a war which in itself was relatively insignificant, and argues that the real significance of the account lies in its illustration of how the empire, after Germanicus' successful taming of the northern wilderness in Germania, could now effectively be defended even by a nonentity such as Poppaeus Sabinus: "the quintessential Tiberian commander, a mediocrity who owed his extended period of command to his friendship with the emperor."<sup>271</sup> For Levene, then, the focus is squarely on the Romans, and the Thracians remain passive and reactive characters whose deeds and words are inconsequential.

Although I find these treatments of the account of the Thracian revolt unsatisfactory, my analysis in this chapter is indebted to all three of them. While I find Walker's concept of 'the noble savage' simplistic when used as a catch-all category for northern barbarians en masse, I concur with her

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<sup>270</sup> Syme 1958, 309-310; on the constraints of the annalistic format, see also Syme 1958/1970, 79. On accounts of northern barbarians as digressions, see footnote 29.

<sup>271</sup> Levene 2009b, 234f.

observation that there is a clear connection between the choices faced by Thracians and Romans. While I disagree with Martin and Woodman's claim that the primary function of the account is to entertain, I have adopted the method of investigation promoted in their commentary: I explore the functions of and connections between passages inside (intratexts) and outside (intertexts) book 4. While I do not believe that the main function of the account is to illustrate the consequences of Germanicus' Germanic conquests, I concur with Levene's assertion that the significance of the Thracian revolt must lie outside the consequences of the revolt itself.

## 3.2 Paraphrase of the account of the Thracian revolt

Thracian affairs have been mentioned twice earlier in the *Annales*: at 2.64-67 Tacitus narrates the AD 19 war between Rhescuporis and Cotys, brother and son respectively of the deceased king Rhoemetalces; at 3.38.3-39 he narrates the disorganized and quickly suppressed Thracian revolt against Roman power in AD 21. In the struggle between Rhescuporis and Cotys Thracian mendacity plays a key role, as Rhescuporis again and again uses trickery in his attempt to take control of the kingdom.<sup>272</sup> The Thracians of the revolt in *Annales* 4, however, have undergone quite a transformation from the avaricious, libidinous, mendacious, and bloodthirsty warriors of the pre-Tacitean literary tradition.<sup>273</sup>

### 3.2.1 The Thracian revolt within the context of the fourth book

The fourth book of the *Annales* covers the years 23-28 AD. It initiates the latter (and significantly worse) part of Tiberius' Principate. In the very first passage of the book Tacitus – with tempestuous imagery (*turbare, saeuire*) and an allusion to Sallust's *Catilina* (10.1: *saeuire fortuna ac miscere omnia*

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<sup>272</sup> On the Thracian revolt at 3.38-39, see Low 2013a, 204-206. Low (182) notes that we do not know if and how Tacitus treated Thrace's annexation as a province in AD 46.

<sup>273</sup> Mellor (2011, 53-54) seems to confuse stereotypes of the Thracians with Tacitus' portrayal of them when he claims that Tacitus admires the Thracians' resistance but "is less sympathetic to their wild singing and dancing, drunken orgies, greedy pursuit of plunder, and dereliction of duty when sated with food and drink." The only Thracians to be described thus in the fourth book are those fighting as auxiliaries in the Roman army (4.48).

*coepit*)<sup>274</sup> – writes that the year 23 AD marked a turning point (4.1.1): *C. Asin<i>o C. Antistio consulibus nonus Tiberio annus erat compositae rei publicae, florentis domus (nam Germanici mortem inter prospera ducebat), cum repente turbare fortuna coepit, saeuire ipse aut saeuientibus uiris praebere.*<sup>275</sup> Sejanus, the praetorian prefect, is identified as the beginning and cause of the change (4.1.1): *initium et causa penes Aelium Seianum*. Sejanus' rise to power and its consequences are among the central themes of the book.<sup>276</sup>

Sejanus' victims start heaping up already the following year (24 AD): Tiberius' son Drusus is poisoned (4.8), the consular Gaius Silius is falsely accused of treason and commits suicide (4.19), and L. Calpurnius Piso avoids prosecution only through his timely death (4.21).<sup>277</sup> Then follows an account of the successful termination of the war against Tacfarinas, which ends with Tiberius denying, out of deference to Sejanus, triumphal insignia to the victorious general (4.23-26),<sup>278</sup> and an account of a slave war which was quelled at its inception (4.27), before the trials start again: the end result of Vibius Serenus' false (and unsuccessful) accusation of treason against his exiled father is that Tiberius strengthens the position of accusers and informers (4.28-30), Gaius Cominius is pardoned by Tiberius for having written an abusive poem against him (4.31.1),<sup>279</sup> Publius Suillius is convicted for bribery and banished to an island by Tiberius (4.31.3), and Catus Firmius is expelled from the senate for having brought a false accusation of treason against his sister (4.31.4). In these trials Sejanus plays no active part: they serve less to denigrate Sejanus and more to describe the new, corrupt state of affairs in Rome initiated by his rise to power.

This list of trials precedes Tacitus' famous digression about the usefulness of his *Annales* (4.32-33), which ends the year AD 24. Yet another trial initiates the year AD 25, namely that of the historian Cremutius Cordus

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<sup>274</sup> On the tempestuous vocabulary, see Williams 1989, 152; on the allusion to Sallust, see Martin and Woodman 1989, *ad loc.*

<sup>275</sup> When Tacitus summarises Tiberius' life at the end of the Tiberian hexad (6.51.3), five phases are mentioned, with 23 AD marking the transition between the second and third.

<sup>276</sup> Williams 1989, 148. Sejanus' fall, for Rome as destructive as his rise (4.1.2: *cuius pari exitio uiguit ceciditque*), was narrated in the lost part of book 5.

<sup>277</sup> Van Hooff (1990, 204) includes the death of L. Calpurnius Piso in his list of possible suicides.

<sup>278</sup> The war against Tacfarinas occupies the centre of the first part of the book, just as the Thracian revolt occupies the centre of the second part; one wonders if there might be some sort of north/south balance in play.

<sup>279</sup> On Tacitus' treatment of imperial poets and their poetry, see Ash 2016.

(4.34-35). Then follows Tiberius' refusal to let Further Spain build temples in his and Livia's honour (4.37-38) and an exchange of letters between Tiberius and Sejanus which spawns Sejanus' plan to remove Tiberius from Rome (4.39-41), before the year ends with three convictions (Votienus Montanus, Aquilia, Apidius Merula), three foreign embassies (the Lacedaimonians and Messenians, the Segestans, and the Massilians), and three obituaries (Gnaeus Lentulus, Lucius Domitius, and Lucius Antonius) (4.42-44).<sup>280</sup>

The account of the Thracian revolt is directly preceded by the murder of Lucius Piso, praetor of Nearer Spain, by an unnamed Spaniard. Tacitus writes that Piso was considered to have been killed because his attempt to embezzle money from the public treasury was more than the natives could endure (4.45.3): *sed Piso Terrestinorum dolo caesus habetur; qui <ppe> pecunias e publico interceptas acrius quam ut tolerarent barbari cogebat.*<sup>281</sup> The story, although not explicitly marked as a digression, serves as a transitional account: it continues the obituary theme of the preceding chapter and simultaneously, with the question of what barbarians are willing and unwilling to tolerate, anticipates the succeeding account of the Thracian revolt.<sup>282</sup>

### 3.2.2 Some introductory remarks on the Thracian revolt

Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt in AD 26 is the longest continuous narrative section of the fourth book (4.46-51). A grand war, one might think, and one to attract many writers. However, Tacitus' account is the only preserved account of the revolt. Loss in transmission might be to blame, of course, but it is noteworthy that neither Velleius nor Suetonius mentions it.<sup>283</sup> Syme was puzzled by Tacitus' extensive treatment of the revolt: "The next year [26 AD] opens with an insurrection of the Thracians which is reported in a dramatic narration of unusual (and perhaps inordinate) length."<sup>284</sup> Woodman notes that "the sheer extent of Tacitus' imitation suggests that the

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<sup>280</sup> The structure is noted by Martin and Woodman 1989, 200.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. Livy's account of the murder of Hasdrubal, brother-in-law of Hannibal: the perpetrator of this murder was also a solitary Spaniard on whom torture did not seem to have any effect (Liv. 21.2.6). See also Sal. *Cat.* 19.3-5, where a group of Spanish horsemen kill the quaestor Cn. Piso (possibly) because they cannot endure (*pati*) his cruel commands. On the virtual history of the 'Pisonian dynasty' in the Tacitean corpus, see O'Gorman 2006.

<sup>282</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 204. Cf. Syme 1958, 309-310.

<sup>283</sup> In contrast, the fate of Rhescuporis, another Thracian mentioned by Tacitus (2.64-67), is noted both by Velleius (2.129.1) and Suetonius (*Tib.* 37.4).

<sup>284</sup> Syme 1958, 310.



whole military campaign, rather than simply incidental details, may be a literary construct.”<sup>285</sup> Even without questioning the existence of the war, one might still wonder if Tacitus has magnified a rather insignificant revolt. Certainly, Tacitus cannot have been under any obligation to include an account of the revolt, and he was free to make of it more or less what he wanted. The account is therefore a promising place to explore Tacitean *inuentio*, for the ‘inordinate length’ of Tacitus’ treatment of the revolt betrays his desire to make something out of it.

The Thracian revolt is the first military campaign narrated by Tacitus after his claim that his *Annales* do not contain accounts of war and battle (cf. 4.32.1: *ingentia ... bella*; 4.33.3: *uarietates proeliorum*).<sup>286</sup> At first sight, then, one might wonder if the account is merely a result of Tacitus grasping at the smallest excuse to provide his readers with a proper military account, and that he consequently blows it out of proportion. I will argue, however, that there is more at stake than aesthetic pleasure.

### 3.2.3 The causes of the revolt

The Thracian revolt initiates the textual year AD 26. The account is introduced with the notice that it led to a decree of triumphal ornaments to the commanding general, Poppaeus Sabinus.<sup>287</sup> Tacitus then goes on to describe the causes of the revolt (4.46.1-2):

Lentulo Gaetulico C. Calvisio consulibus decreta triumphi insignia Poppaeo Sabino contusis Thraecum gentibus, qui montium editis inculti atque eo ferocius agitabant. causa motus, super hominum ingenium, quod pati dilectus et ualidissimum quemque militiae nostrae dare aspernabantur, ne regibus quidem parere nisi ex libidine soliti, aut, si mitterent auxilia, suos duces praeficere nec nisi aduersum accolas belligerare. ac tum rumor incesserat fore ut disiecti aliisque nationibus permixti diuersas in terras traherentur.

Several causes are mustered to explain the breakout of the revolt, and it boils down to what the Thracians can and cannot endure: in addition to their natural disposition towards war (a consequence of their simple living conditions) and their general unwillingness to obey orders, they were especially unwilling to endure troop conscription, demanding to be led by

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<sup>285</sup> Syme 1958, 729; Woodman 1998b, 236.

<sup>286</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 207; Levene 2009b, 234.

<sup>287</sup> Sabinus enters the *Annales* at 1.80.1, as an example of Tiberius’ policy of choosing mediocrities for provincial commands and of extending their periods of command.

their own officers and to fight only against their own neighbours while serving for Rome.<sup>288</sup> A rumour that they will be dragged far away and mixed with other tribes triggers the Thracians into action.<sup>289</sup>

The Thracians do not, however, initiate hostilities immediately, but instead send envoys to the Romans (4.46.2-3):

sed antequam arma inciperent, misere legatos amicitiam obsequiumque memoraturos, et mansura haec, si nullo nouo onere temptarentur; sin ut uictis seruitium indiceretur, esse sibi ferrum et iuuentutem et promptum libertati aut ad mortem animum. simul castella rupibus indita conlatosque illuc parentes et coniuges ostentabant bellumque impeditum arduum cruentum minitabantur.

The envoys remind the Romans of their friendship and obedience, promising that they will remain loyal if they are not afflicted with any new burden. They understand and accept that Rome expects a certain amount of submission from her client kingdoms. The question, as mentioned earlier, is where to draw the line: the Thracians refuse to be sent far away, mixed with other tribes, and fight under Roman officers.<sup>290</sup> The contrast between freedom and slavery makes its (almost obligatory) appearance in the form of a conditional phrase (*sin ut uictis seruitium indiceretur*) followed by a tricolon (*esse sibi ferrum et iuuentutem et promptum libertati aut ad mortem animum*): if slavery is imposed upon them as if on a vanquished people, they have the weapons, the young men, and the willingness to defend their freedom even until death. At the end of the speech, pointing to their mountain strongholds, their parents, and their wives, they threaten the Romans with a difficult and bloody war. Their explicit display of their homes (*ostentabant*) would seem to imply that the negotiations took place nearby, possibly in the Roman camp.

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<sup>288</sup> On the connection between simplicity of life and bravery in war, see Caes. *Gal.* 1.1.3: *horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae, propterea quod a cultu atque humanitate prouinciae longissime absunt, minimeque ad eos mercatores saepe commeant atque ea quae ad effeminandos animos pertinent important.* On the poetic language of the account of the Thracian revolt (e.g. *ductor, persultare, imbellis*), see Formicola 2013, 187-197.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. *Hist.* 2.80.3, where Mucianus kindles the indignation of Vespasian's soldiers against Vitellius by spreading a rumour that Vitellius has decided to switch the German and Syrian legions with each other; cf. also Suet. *Ves.* 6.4, where only the transfer of the German legions is mentioned.

<sup>290</sup> *Obsequium* appears at some crucial places in the Tacitean corpus, and is a heavily discussed word in scholarship; see e.g. Martin and Woodman (1989, 151) on 4.20.3, and Woodman (2014, 23, 119-120, 242, 302-303) on *Agr.* 8.3, 30.3, and 42.4.

### 3.2.4 The first encounters

Poppaeus Sabinus, playing the same game that Caesar had played with the Helvetii in his first campaign in Gaul (*Gal.* 1.7), gives mild replies to the Thracian envoys until he can unite his forces. He is joined by the Thracian king Rhoemetalces, whose men's loyalty to Rome is stressed (4.47.1): *rex Rhoemetalces cum auxiliis popularium, qui fidem non mutauerant.*<sup>291</sup> After having gathered a sufficiently strong force, Sabinus advances against the Thracians and drives them back to their mountain strongholds. He sets up his camp close to the enemy, but leaves his Thracian auxiliaries behind and gives them permission to burn and plunder the countryside (4.48.1): *iisque permissum uastare urere, trahere praedas.*

When the Thracian auxiliaries neglect proper military discipline, a coordinated attack by the Thracians wreaks great havoc among them (4.48.3): *Thraecum auxilia repentino incursu territa, cum pars munitionibus adiacerent, plures extra palarentur, tanto infensius caesi quanto perfugae et proditores ferre arma ad suum patriaeque seruitium incusabantur.* The auxiliaries are slaughtered all the more fiercely because their countrymen consider them deserters and traitors who bear weapons for the enslavement of themselves and their fatherland. As with the Germani (cf. section 2.3.2.2), Tacitus seems to be the first Roman writer to speak of a Thracian *patria*, to which all Thracians owe allegiance and which they must protect from the slavery imposed by Rome.

### 3.2.5 The debate and the battle

When on the following day the Thracians do not exit their stronghold to offer battle, Sabinus decides to initiate a siege (4.49.1: *obsidium coepit*). The Thracian host, which includes both soldiers and civilians, is soon struggling with thirst and disease (4.49.3):

sed nihil aequae quam sitis fatigabat, cum ingens multitudo bellatorum, imbellium uno reliquo fonte uterentur; simul equi armenta, ut mos barbaris,

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<sup>291</sup> Rhoemetalces is presumably one of those kings employed by Rome as instruments of slavery (*Agr.* 14.1): *ueterae ac iam pridem receptae populi Romani consuetudine, ut haberet instrumenta seruitutis et reges.* Cf. Ptolemy of Mauretania at 4.24.3 and my discussions of Arminius' adversaries Segestes (1.57-58) and Flavus (2.9-10) in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, and the British queen Cartimandua (12.36-40) in section 4.3.2.3. See also Liv. 2.10, where Horatius defends the bridge across the Tiber from the Etruscans, taunting them as *seruitia regum superborum* and *suae libertatis immemores alienam oppugnatum uenire.*

iuxta clausa, egestate pabuli exanimari; adiacere corpora hominum, quos uulnera, quos sitis peremerat; pollui cuncta sanie odore contactu.

The precariousness of their situation leads to discord among the besieged Thracians.<sup>292</sup> They form into three groups, each of which advocates a specific course of action: surrender, suicide, and breakout (4.50.1): *rebusque turbatis malum extremum discordia accessit, his deditionem, aliis mortem et mutuos inter se ictus parantibus; et erant qui non inultum exitium, sed eruptionem suaderent*. The debate is presented in indirect speech (4.50.2):

neque ignobiles tantum his diuersi sententiis, uerum e ducibus Dinis, proeuctus senecta et longo usu uim atque clementiam Romanam edoctus, ponenda arma, unum adflictis id remedium disserebat, primusque se cum coniuge et liberis uictoris permisit. secuti aetate aut sexu imbecilli et quibus maior uitae quam gloriae cupido.

The old Dinis, who is acquainted with the power and clemency of Rome, argues for surrender. Employing a medical imagery suitable for their current calamities of thirst and disease, he claims that putting down the weapons is the only remedy (*remedium*) for the afflicted (*adflictis*).<sup>293</sup> Dinis surrenders himself and his family to the Romans, and is followed by the old, the women, and those whose desire for life was greater than their desire for glory.<sup>294</sup>

The young Thracian warriors, on the other hand, agree to die with freedom intact. However, they disagree on how: Tarsa calls for death by their own hands and immediately provides an example by plunging a sword into his chest, inspiring many to do the same. Tacitus explicitly denotes the action taken by Tarsa as an *exemplum*, the significance of which I will discuss in more detail in section 3.3.2.3. Turesis, whose exact words in favour of a breakout are not given (but whose proposed course of action is clear from

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<sup>292</sup> Note how the disunity of the Thracians is threefold: some Thracians fight with the Romans, no Thracians come to the aid of those besieged, and even the besieged are unable to agree on a common course of action. For the topos of Thracian disunity, see Her. 5.3.

<sup>293</sup> *Remedium* reappears another two times at crucial moments at the end of the fourth book: at 4.72.3 (about the Frisian revolt) and at 4.74.1 (about matters in Rome). I will discuss these parallels in more detail in section 3.3.2.3.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Dinis and his followers are reminiscent of Sallust's Cilicians at *Hist.* 2.74D (Loeb edition): *at illi quibus aetas imbellior et uetustate uis Romanorum multum cognita erat, cupere pacem*. One is reminded also of Maroboduus, the enemy of Arminius who, in contrast to the great posthumous fame of his adversary, ended his life with much diminished fame because of his too great desire to live (2.63.4); cf. my discussion of Maroboduus in section 2.2.4.

4.50.1: *non inultum exitium, sed eruptionem suaderent*), gathers his supporters for a night attack on the Roman siege lines (4.50.3-4):

at iuuentus Tarsam inter et Turesim distrahebatur. utrique destinatum cum libertate occidere, sed Tarsa properum finem, abrumpendas pariter spes ac metus clamitans dedit exemplum demisso in pectus ferro; nec defuere qui eodem modo oppeterent. Turesis sua cum manu noctem opperitur, haud nescio duce nostro.

Informed about the enemy plan, the Romans strengthen their defences. A rainstorm turns the battle into a messy and confused affair. The description of the battle seems to draw inspiration mainly from Caesar's account of the siege of Alesia and Sallust's account of the battle with the Isaurians.<sup>295</sup> In spite of making a spirited attack, only a few Thracians manage to break out. The rest are pushed back into the stronghold where they are finally forced to surrender (4.51.3): *ceteros, deiecto promptissimo quoque aut saucio, adpetente iam luce trusere in summa castelli, ubi tandem coacta deditio*. Neighbouring areas are received in submission, and the arrival of winter on Mount Haemus puts an end to the fighting.

### 3.2.6 The rest of the book

The account of the Thracian revolt ends with a scene-shifting *at Romae* (4.52.1), which signals the return to matters in Rome:<sup>296</sup> first the deteriorating relationship between Tiberius and Agrippina and Sejanus' role in it (4.52-54), then Tiberius' decision to grant Smyrna the honour of constructing a temple in his name (4.55-56), followed by Tiberius' withdrawal from Rome and Sejanus' exploitation of it (4.57-60), before the year ends with the obituaries of Asinius Agrippa and Q. Haterius (4.61). The year AD 27 begins with the collapse of the amphitheatre in Fidenae and a fire in Rome (4.62-65), continues with the accusation of Quintilius Varus (4.66), and ends with Tiberius' withdrawal to Capri (4.67).<sup>297</sup> The year AD 28 begins with the murder of Titius Sabinus (4.68-70) and the death of Augustus' granddaughter Julia (4.71), continues with the revolt of the Frisians (4.72-73), climaxes with a description of the fearful atmosphere in Rome with Sejanus as lord of all

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<sup>295</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 7.69-90; Sal. *Hist.* 2.87M; on the intertexts, see Syme (1958, 354, 729), Martin and Woodman (1989, 206), and Woodman (1998b, 235-236).

<sup>296</sup> Formicola 2013, *ad loc.*

<sup>297</sup> On Tiberius' withdrawal to and life on Capri, see Houston 1985.

(4.74), and ends with a notice about the marriage of Agrippina (Germanicus' daughter) and Cn. Domitius, future parents of the emperor Nero.

### 3.3 Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Models for the Thracian 'debate under siege'

The significant particulars of Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt, and hence the key to its interpretation, can be identified and analysed only through conscientious comparison with passages inside and outside book 4. In this part of the analysis, I discuss potential models for the Thracian 'debate under siege': the speech of Critognatus in Caesar's *de Bello Gallico* (7.77-78), the debate of the Roman army trapped at the Caudine Forks in Livy's *ab Vrbe Condita* (9.1-7), the debate among the Caesarians 'besieged' at sea in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* (4.448-581), and the speech of Eleazar to the Jews besieged in the hilltop fortress of Masada in Josephus' *Jewish War* (7.320-388).<sup>298</sup> The aim is not to prove or disprove direct intertextual influences from these previous literary accounts, but to give some examples of 'debates under siege' against which the particulars of Tacitus' Thracian debate may be interpreted. I focus specifically on the alternatives considered by the besieged and investigate whether they correspond to those considered by the Thracians: suicide, resistance, and surrender.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> For some accounts of sieges which do not include a proper debate among the besieged, see the Gallic siege of the Roman capitol (Liv. 5.39-49: the military tribunes are empowered by the senate to make peace with the Gauls, but no details are given about the senatorial discussion), the Carthaginian siege of Saguntum (Liv. 21.7-15: some inhabitants commit suicide, others offer scattered, futile resistance when the envoy Alorcus urges them to accept Hannibal's harsh peace terms), and the Roman sieges of Astapa (Liv. 28.22-23: the inhabitants burn their possessions, their families, and themselves when they lose the battle outside the city), Thala (Sal. *Jug.* 75-76), and Numantia (App. *Hisp.* 15.90-98: the inhabitants resort to cannibalism to prolong the siege, but are at last driven to surrender, whereupon some commit suicide; see also Liv. *Per.* 59.1, Flor. *Epit.* 1.34). Tacitus' account of the conquest of Jerusalem in the missing books of the *Historiae* might have included a 'debate under siege'.

<sup>299</sup> Visual representations of northern barbarians fighting against, surrendering to, and committing suicide when faced with enslavement by the Roman army were probably a fairly common sight in Rome. For some examples from Trajan's column in Rome, see esp. scenes 75 (Decebalus surrendering at the end of the first Dacian campaign), 140 (Dacians committing suicide), 141 (Dacians surrendering to Trajan), and 145 (Decebalus committing suicide at the end of the second Dacian campaign).

### 3.3.1.1 Caesar's speech of Critognatus

The most famous example of a northern barbarian 'debate under siege' in Roman literature is probably Caesar's account of the debate among the Gauls besieged in Alesia. This is the most obvious intertext to Tacitus' Thracian debate.<sup>300</sup> Caesar is the only source mentioned by name in Tacitus' *Germania* (28.1: *summus auctorum diuus Iulius*)<sup>301</sup> and Tacitus alludes to Caesar's *de Bello Gallico* both in the *Agricola* and in the *Historiae*.<sup>302</sup>

The siege of Alesia is the climax of book 7 of the *de Bello Gallico* (indeed of the entire Caesarian work). Almost all of Gaul has risen in revolt, and the armies have intersected at the hilltop town of Alesia: Vercingetorix with his men are besieged in the city, Caesar's army is encamped outside, and a Gallic relief army is hastening to the rescue of their compatriots. A lack of provisions drives the besieged to call an assembly in order to discuss their situation (*Gal.* 7.77.1-2): *consumpto omni frumento, inscii quid in Aeduis gereretur, concilio coacto de exitu suarum fortunarum consultabant*. Three possible courses of action are discussed, of which the first two are dealt with quickly: Caesar writes that the assembly was divided between those who argued for surrender and those who argued for a breakout (*Gal.* 7.77.2): *pars deditonem, pars, dum uires suppeterent, eruptionem censebat*.

With the discussion seemingly evenly poised between these two alternatives, Critognatus, a character not previously mentioned and who will disappear from the text as soon as his speech is finished, interposes to deliver a long speech in *oratio recta*.<sup>303</sup> Critognatus quickly dismisses the view of those who argue for surrender, branding their so-called surrender a shameful slavery (*Gal.* 7.77.3): *qui turpissimam seruitutem deditonis nomine appellant*. In the main part of the speech, Critognatus deals with the view of those who argued for an attempted breakout. While he acknowledges that they seem to hold the most valorous position, he claims that real valour is not to sacrifice oneself in a futile breakout, but rather to endure pain by staying put and awaiting reinforcements (*Gal.* 7.77.4-5):

cum his mihi res sit, qui eruptionem probant; quorum in consilio omnium uestrum consensu pristinae residere uirtutis memoria uidetur. animi est ista

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<sup>300</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 212; Formicola 2013, 193.

<sup>301</sup> Rives 1999, 230; Krebs 2010, 203; cf. Plut. *Caes.* 22.2, Suet. *Iul.* 56.1-4, and App. *Celt.* 18.

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Woodman (2014, esp. 29) on Caesarian influences in the *Agricola* and Morgan 1994 on the marches of Caecina and Valens in the *Historiae*.

<sup>303</sup> Caesar uses *oratio recta* sparingly in his commentaries. Critognatus is the only character in the *de Bello Gallico* who is given a lengthy speech in *oratio recta* (Rasmussen 1963, 47-54; Sherwin-White 1967, 65-66); see also Rutherford 2010, 313.

mollitia, non uirtus, paulisper inopiam ferre non posse. qui se ultro morti offerant facilius reperiuntur quam qui dolorem patienter ferant.

Further, he urges his listeners to take a broader perspective and consider not only themselves, but all of Gaul. He claims that an attempted breakout, which he takes to mean ‘death by fighting’, will be disastrous for all of Gaul (*Gal. 7.77.7*): *sed in consilio capiendo omnem Galliam respiciamus, quam ad nostrum auxilium concitauimus*. He urges his listeners not to deprive of their aid those who – although dangerous to themselves – are coming to their assistance and, through stupidity, rashness, and cowardice, condemn Gaul to perpetual slavery (*Gal. 7.77.9*): *nolite hos uestro auxilio exspoliare, qui uestrae salutis causa suum periculum neglexerunt, nec stultitia ac temeritate uestra aut animi imbecillitate omnem Galliam prosternere et perpetuae seruituti subicere*.

Instead, he argues, they must wait and endure until reinforcements arrive, even if that means resorting to cannibalism in order to survive.<sup>304</sup> He corroborates his claim by drawing on an *exemplum* from the past, claiming that the same thing was done by their ancestors in the war against the Cimbrians and Teutons (*Gal. 7.77.12-13*):

facere, quod nostri maiores nequaquam pari bello Cimbrorum Teutonumque fecerunt; qui in oppida compulsi ac simili inopia subacti eorum corporibus qui aetate ad bellum inutiles uidebantur uitam tolerauerunt neque se hostibus tradiderunt. cuius rei si exemplum non haberemus, tamen libertatis causa institui et posteris prodi pulcherrimum iudicarem.

He finishes the speech with a comparison between the current threat posed by the Romans and the past threat posed by the Cimbrians and Teutons, and argues that in this war the very freedom of Gaul is at stake. The Gauls, not overly happy about Critognatus’ advice, take measures to make the provisions last as long as possible, but nevertheless decide to follow his advice if it should become necessary (*Gal. 7.78.1-3*).

There are some clear similarities between the situation of Tacitus’ Thracians and that of Caesar’s Gauls: both Gauls and Thracians occupy a stronghold on a hill (4.46.3: *castella rupibus indita*; 4.51.1: *castello aut coniunctis tumulis non degrediebantur*; *Gal. 7.69.1: ipsum erat oppidum*

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<sup>304</sup> Caesar appropriately described the speech with the noun *crudelitas*, which is – and was also by the Romans (Maltby 1991, 162-163) considered to be – related to the adjective *crudus*, ‘raw’. On cannibalism during siege, see also Josephus’ (*BJ* 6.199-219) account of the mother who eats her own child during the siege of Jerusalem; on which, see Chapman 2007.



*Alesia in colle summo admodum edito loco*), both include civilians as well as soldiers (4.49.3: *ingens multitudo bellatorum imbellium*; *Gal.* 7.78.3: *Mandubii, qui eos oppido receperant, cum liberis atque uxoribus exire coguntur*), both are affected by a lack of provisions (4.49.3: *nihil aequae quam sitis fatigabat*; *Gal.* 7.77.1: *consumpto omni frumento*), and both gather to discuss what to do. It follows quite naturally, therefore, that there are similarities between the two debates: in both debates there are three possible courses of action, in both the concept of freedom plays a major part, and in both there is a mention of an *exemplum*. In the end, both Gauls and (a group of) Thracians attempt (unsuccessfully) to break out.

However, behind these similarities are concealed some significant differences. Most obviously, although both Gauls and Thracians find themselves besieged by a Roman army, only the Gauls – courtesy of the relief army threatening to envelop the Romans – still have any belief in victory. There are therefore some major differences between the debates: Critognatus' speech contributes to a debate about how the Gauls can win, while the Thracians simply discuss the best way to lose. Not even Turesis seems to envisage a successful breakout. This has obvious repercussions for the possible courses of action discussed. While both Gauls and Thracians are divided into three groups, only two of these groups overlap. For the Gauls the alternatives are surrender, breakout, and to stay put, await reinforcements and, if necessary, resort to cannibalism. For the Thracians, however, for whom there is no hope of a relieving army coming to the rescue, the alternatives of surrender and breakout are not contrasted with the alternative to await reinforcements, but instead with the alternative to commit suicide. Note also that Critognatus' words are given in direct speech and at length, those of the Thracians in indirect speech and rather curtly: while the three alternatives of Tacitus' besieged Thracians are evenly poised, Caesar offers a rhetorical tour de force of the most extreme alternative. Critognatus in fact refuses even to speak with those who advocate surrender and claims that they ought not to be regarded as citizens. Tacitus, on the other hand, accepts that those who surrender do so for different motives, although some reasons are perhaps more justifiable than others. While it is unsurprising that Tacitus as narrator presents a more balanced view than a barbarian character with clear rhetorical aims in the text, it is still noteworthy that the alternative of surrender is given to a respectable character in his text.

### 3.3.1.2 Livy's account of the Roman defeat at the Caudine Forks

We find a second intertext to the Thracian debate in Livy's account of the Roman military disaster at the Caudine Forks. The Roman army, marching to the aid of the allied town of Luceria, walks into a trap laid by the Samnites. Surrounded in a narrow defile whose only two exits are blocked by the Samnite army, the Romans find themselves in a situation similar to that of a siege.<sup>305</sup> They immediately realise the hopelessness of their situation and a night of futile discussion brings them no closer to finding a solution (Liv. 9.3.3): *armati inermes, fortes ignavi, pariter omnes capti atque uicti sumus; ne ferrum quidem ad bene moriendum oblaturus est hostis; sedens bellum conficiet*. The Samnites, dismissing the suggestions of the wise Herennius Pontius that the Romans be either freed unconditionally or slain to the last man, demand that the Romans be driven under the yoke and accept the terms dictated to them.

With their attempts to break out having failed, their provisions dwindling, and the consuls unable to reply to the demands, Lucius Lentulus, the most eminent of the Roman envoys, addresses the consuls. Drawing on the Gallic siege of Rome as a comparison he explicitly presents their situation as one of a force under siege. He claims that if there were any hope that a breakout might succeed, he would not hesitate to attack. He argues, however, that their situation is tactically hopeless; that there can be no hope of a successful breakout (Liv. 9.4.9): *quod si, ut illis decurrere ex Capitolio armatis in hostem licuit, quo saepe modo obsessi in obsidentes eruperunt, ita nobis aequo aut iniquo loco dimicandi tantummodo cum hoste copia esset, non mihi paterni animi indoles in consilio dando deesset*. With this established, he then goes on to his main point, namely that the terms dictated by the Samnites must be accepted. His line of reasoning is that, while it is indeed glorious to die for one's fatherland (Liv. 9.4.10: *equidem mortem pro patria praeclaram esse fateor et me uel deuouere pro populo Romano legionibusque vel in medios me immittere hostes paratus sum*), it would be calamitous for the fatherland if the entire Roman army were to perish. Indeed, he claims that the army is the fatherland (Liv. 9.4.11: *hic patriam uideo, hic quidquid Romanarum legionum est*).<sup>306</sup> Thus, they should accept the terms, however shameful, and, by saving the army, save Rome (Liv. 9.4.14): *hic omnes spes*

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<sup>305</sup> On the vocabulary of (pastoral) enclosure employed in the passage, see Morello 2003, 293-294. As noted by Horsfall 1982, the narrow defile in which the Romans are trapped (and hence also the siege) is invented by Livy: the actual landscape at the Caudine Forks consists of a broad valley.

<sup>306</sup> On the idea that the state army embodies the state, see Hornblower (2010) on Xenophon's portrayal of the ten thousand. Cf. Otho's claim at *Hist.* 1.84.3-4 that Rome consists not of its buildings but of its senators.

*opesque sunt, quas seruando patriam seruamus.* The possible courses of action envisaged by Lentulus are (death by) resistance and surrender. Since his primary concern is to save the Roman army, he does not address the possibility of suicide: death is simply not a viable alternative.<sup>307</sup> The alternatives envisaged by Lentulus, then, are quite dissimilar from those envisaged by Tacitus' Thracians.

### 3.3.1.3 Lucan's account of *Vulteius* and his *Caesarians*

We find a third intertext to the debate of Tacitus' Thracians in the middle of the fourth book of Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* (Luc. 4.448-581). Here Lucan tells the story of the heroic Caesarian officer *Vulteius* and his cohort from *Opitergium*:<sup>308</sup> while they are trying to cross the strait between the island of *Curicta* (Krk) and the Dalmatian mainland, their raft is caught by an underwater cable laid out by the Pompeians.

Although *Vulteius* and his men are hopelessly outnumbered, they put up a brave resistance until the coming of night ends the Pompeian onslaught. *Vulteius* then addresses his soldiers, dazed and terrified at what awaits them the coming day, with a courageous speech (4.475: *magnanima ... uoce*). *Vulteius*' main claim is that suicide is the ultimate act of freedom.<sup>309</sup> After asking his men to spend the night considering how to face the end, he praises the act of suicide (4.478-80):

uita breuis nulli superest qui tempus in illa  
quaerendae sibi mortis habet, nec gloria leti  
inferior, iuuenes, admoto occurrere fato.

He points out that there is no hope of escape and urges his men to choose death, claiming that with that decision taken their fear will disappear (4.485-487):

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<sup>307</sup> The eventual Roman departure from the valley is in fact cast as a form of *katabasis* (Morello 2003, 294-295): the Roman soldiers, like men pulled out from the Underworld, return to and gaze on the light, yet find it gloomier than any death (Liv. 9.6.3): *ita traducti sub iugum et quod paene grauius erat per hostium oculos, cum e saltu euasissent, etsi uelut ab inferis extracti tum primum lucem aspiceret uisi sunt, tamen ipsa lux ita deforme intuentibus agmen omni morte tristior fuit*. On Livy's account of the battle at the Caudine Forks, see Ash (1998, 28-31) and Oakley (2005a, 48-114).

<sup>308</sup> *Opitergium* was situated close to *Aquileia* in *Gallia Transpadana*. Neither the city nor its inhabitants are mentioned anywhere else in extant Roman literature, so we can only speculate if there were anything particularly 'Gallic' or 'barbarian' about them. The most extensive treatments of the passage are provided by Hill (2004, 218-221), D'Alessandro Behr (2007, 36-45), and Asso (2010, 189-212).

<sup>309</sup> Asso 2010, 199.

fuga nulla patet, stant undique nostris  
intenti ciues iugulis: decernite letum,  
et metus omnis abest. cupias quodcumque necesse est.

He then contrasts with their own position the deaths of those who fall, unbeknownst to all, in the confusion of a massed battle, pointing out that they can be seen by friends and foes alike, and that they therefore have the opportunity to make a conspicuous and memorable end for themselves (4.496-497): *nescio quod nostris magnum et memorabile fatis / exemplum, Fortuna, paras*. The word *exemplum* is crucial, since it presents their act as something worthy of remembrance and imitation.<sup>310</sup> Further, Vulteius compares their situation specifically to that of a siege, twice characterising his men as besieged (4.502: *obsessis*; 4.504: *capti*).<sup>311</sup> Vulteius even deplors the fact that they do not have fathers and sons with them to protect, as besieged men often have. Then, like Tarsa, he presents the act of suicide as a way of preventing enslavement, urging his men to let the enemy know that they are indomitable (4.505): *indomitos sciat esse uiros*. Suicide, according to Vulteius, prevents subjugation and hence entails freedom.<sup>312</sup> Vulteius also mentions, and rejects, two alternatives to suicide, namely surrender (4.507-508: *temptare parabunt / foederibus turpique uolent corrumpere uita*) and escape (4.514-515: *dent fata recessum / emittantque licet, uitare instantia nolim*). The speech finishes with a reiteration of the glory inherent in suicide (4.516-520):

proieci uitam, comites, totusque futurae  
mortis agor stimulis: furor est. agnoscere solis  
permissum, quos iam tangit uicinia fati,  
uicturosque dei celant, ut uiuere durent,  
felix esse mori.

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<sup>310</sup> As noted by Levithan (2013, 8-9, 17), siege warfare was “an exceptionally visible affair”, fought under the eyes of your loved ones and in order to defend them from enslavement, rape, and murder, and therefore well suited for the production of *exempla*; cf. the teichoscopy at *Il.* 3.121-244. As noted by Edwards (2007, 43), “Vulteius thinks of death as a performance. Spectators are thus essential if the performance is to have meaning.” Vulteius’ exemplarity is mentioned also by Florus (2.13.33); cf. Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.30.

<sup>311</sup> D’Alessandro Behr 2007, 37.

<sup>312</sup> On suicide as an escape from slavery to freedom, see esp. Sen. *Ep.* 77.14-15; cf. Seneca’s (15.64.4) and Thræsea Paetus’ (16.35.1) libations to Jupiter Liberator in their suicide scenes. Vulteius’ speech appears in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* (3.8.23) alongside the debate of the besieged Saguntines (cf. Liv. 21.14) as proof that the necessary (*necessarium*) has no role in a deliberative speech: there is always the possibility of dying.

Thus, the three courses of action for the besieged envisaged by Vulteius are surrender, death by resistance, and death by suicide.<sup>313</sup>

The success of the speech is demonstrated the next day when Vulteius' men refuse to surrender, put up a strong resistance, and, when the battle is lost, turn their weapons upon one another (4.531-573).<sup>314</sup> Lucan ends the account by again drawing attention to its function as an *exemplum*, deploring the fact that many people do not understand that the sword – here a metonym for suicide – holds the key to freedom for all (4.573-581):

... nullam maiore locuta est  
ore ratem totum discurrens Fama per orbem.  
non tamen ignauae post haec exempla uirorum  
percipient gentes quam sit non ardua uirtus  
seruitium fugisse manu, sed regna timentur  
ob ferrum et saeuis libertas uritur armis,  
ignorantque datos, ne quisquam seruiat, enses.  
mors, utinam pauidos uitae subducere nolles,  
sed uirtus te sola daret.

There are some clear parallels between Tacitus' siege of the Thracians and Lucan's account of the Opitergian cohort: both Thracians and Opitergians find themselves besieged (though in somewhat different ways) with no chance of help; both envisage death by resistance, death by suicide, and surrender as the possible courses of action; both consider death by suicide a way to prevent enslavement; both commit suicide with swords; in both cases the leader who argued for suicide is also the first to fall, providing an *exemplum* for his men; and in both cases the validity of the example extends

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<sup>313</sup> D'Alessandro Behr (2007, 38-39) argues that Vulteius presents himself as a stoic teacher when he urges his men to make a virtue out of necessity and to accept hardships that cannot be avoided, but that in reality he distorts the moral teachings of the stoics: he and his men do not die to preserve their freedom, but to please Caesar and win glory.

<sup>314</sup> As pointed out by Hill (2004, 213-217), suicide is a recurrent image of civil war in the *Bellum Ciuile*. Another outrageous example is provided by the Caesarian officer Cassius Scaeva, who encourages his men to attack the Pompeian swords with their very bodies (Luc. 6.160-161); see also Luc. 3.619-620, 4.561-562, 5.326-327. While the connection between suicide and civil war is inspired by earlier writers (Verg. *Aen.* 6.833, Man. 4.43-44, Calp. Sic. 1.46-50), the extent to which Lucan develops the implications of the image and the way in which it serves to define the moral structure of the text are unprecedented, e.g. in the way that he uses suicide to conceptualise the essence of civil war (Luc. 1.1-3): *bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos / iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem / in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra*. On the connection between suicide and civil war in Lucan, see also Martindale (1993, 48), Gorman (2001, 281-282), and Edwards (2007, 33-45). On suicide and civil war in the Flavian epics, see McGuire 1997.

also to a broader audience: in Lucan's account of the Opitergians this is done explicitly when Vulteius ends his speech by holding out the mass suicide of his men as an example for other soldiers in the future, while in Tacitus' account of the Thracians it is done implicitly when the actions of the Thracians are intratextually connected with the narrative centred on Rome (cf. section 3.3.2). However, while the exemplary value of the mass suicide committed by Lucan's Vulteius and his Caesarians is severely compromised by their participation in civil war, possession by *furor* and *amor mortis*, and blind allegiance to Julius Caesar,<sup>315</sup> the potential exemplarity of the actions committed by Tacitus' Thracians is more ambiguous.

#### 3.3.1.4 Josephus' account of the siege of Masada

We find a 'debate under siege' also at the end of Josephus' *Jewish War*, in the form of two speeches delivered by the rebel leader Eleazar during the siege of the hill-top fortress of Masada.<sup>316</sup> The rebels, with their women and children, have barricaded themselves in the fortress under the leadership of Eleazar, but their position becomes untenable when the Romans manage to set fire to a part of the wall (*BJ* 7.252-319). The night before the expected Roman assault, Eleazar calls his men together and argues that they must kill their families and commit suicide. He considers escape impossible and continued resistance futile, and argues that the only way to avoid slavery and preserve their freedom is through mass suicide (*BJ* 7.320-336).

However, since this first speech is only partially successful and there are still many who are reluctant about his suggestion, he gives a second, longer, speech. This time he starts out more philosophically, arguing that death is a relief from the miseries of life and the only way for the soul to achieve real freedom. He then returns to more pressing matters, pointing out that they really do not have much of a choice, since the Romans are likely to mistreat, enslave, and kill any survivors of the siege. At the end of the speech, he returns once more to the argument that suicide is the only way for his men to preserve freedom, both their own and that of their families, and he urges them to leave the Romans with nothing but consternation at their death and

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<sup>315</sup> Vulteius' speech is not directly challenged by Lucan, but there seems to be unanimous agreement among scholars that Lucan intended Vulteius as a negative, or at least highly problematic, *exemplum*: Ahl 1976, 120; Martindale 1984, 69; Johnson 1987, 57; Leigh 1997, 182-183, 218-219; Saylor 1990; Hill 2004, 220; D'Alessandro Behr 2007, 33-75; Edwards 2007, 40-45; Asso 2010, 210.

<sup>316</sup> Dudley (1968, 187) singles out the sieges of Masada and Numantia as possible points of reference for a Roman reader of Tacitus' account of the Thracian revolt.

admiration of their bravery (*BJ* 7.337-388). The alternatives to mass suicide are not specifically addressed in Eleazar's two speeches, but seem to include surrender, escape, and continued (although futile) resistance. This time Eleazar is more successful, and he has not even finished speaking before his listeners rush off to kill their families and themselves. Only two women and five children, who hide in the cisterns, survive. Nothing is said of their fates, but the Romans, as had been divined by Eleazar, respond with admiration of their resolve and their contempt for death (*BJ* 7.389-406).<sup>317</sup> In the speeches of Eleazar, in contrast to Tacitus' Thracian debate, the focus is not so much on the possible alternatives for the besieged as on the philosophical arguments in favour of suicide.

### 3.3.1.5 Comparative remarks on pre-Tacitean 'debates under siege'

The accounts collected above, although not necessarily all read by Tacitus, illustrate in what particulars his Thracian 'debate under siege' distinguishes itself from other 'debates under siege'. Two important distinctions emerge: firstly, in all of the pre-Tacitean debates the author eschews the balance of the debate by focusing on one speaker and letting him argue (at length) for his suggested course of action. Tacitus' (comparably short) Thracian 'debate under siege', on the other hand, divides neatly into three: the alternative courses of action are presented equally, that is, in a balanced and straightforward manner: each proposed course of action – also that of surrender – is presented by its own spokesperson, none of whom are denigrated by the authorial voice. In short, the focus falls squarely on the alternative courses of action, not on the rhetorical flair with which they are presented.

Secondly, the triad of death by resistance, death by suicide, and surrender used by Tacitus in the Thracian debate was not a conventional formula. If we assume that similar circumstances call for similar speeches, it is thought-provoking that the three alternatives envisioned by the Thracians do not correspond to those of their fellow northern barbarians in the shape of Caesar's Gauls. Instead, the only character who makes the same threefold division is Lucan's Vulteius. Lucan was an imperial author whose life under

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<sup>317</sup> The mass suicide, as well as many other particulars of the account, seems to have been invented by Josephus (Cohen 1982). According to Mader (2000, 25, 97), Eleazar serves as a representative for Josephus' ideological adversaries. For more examples of collective suicides among non-Romans, see Liv. 34.17.6, *Per.* 57.7, Diod. 19.76.5, 34/35.4.1, Jos. *BJ* 3.331, Plut. *Mor.* 770d, Dio. 55.6.3, 65.6.3; cf. van Hooff 1990, 6-8. For some examples of collective cremation, see *B. Afr.* 91.1-3, Diod. 16.45.4, 18.22.4-7, 25.17, Curt. 9.4.6, Plut. *Brut.* 31.1-5. Cf. Cohen 1982, 386-392.

Nero would have familiarised him with the possible courses of action of a man oppressed by the emperor. As we shall see in the next section, the three alternatives of suicide, resistance, and surrender/collaboration correspond to those of Romans in the *Annales* who are faced with the might of the emperor.

### **3.3.2 Confronted by a satiety of similar material: the Thracian revolt within book 4**

In the first part of the analysis, I discussed potential models for Tacitus' Thracian 'debate under siege' in earlier literature. In this part, I discuss intratexts between the account of the revolt in its entirety and the main narrative of book 4 in light of the digression on the usefulness of the *Annales* at 4.32-33. In section 3.3.2.1, I look at the similarities between the courses of action envisioned by the Thracians attacked by Rome and Romans attacked by the emperor and his henchmen. In section 3.3.2.2, I contextualise and discuss the implications of Tacitus' claim in the digression that he is confronted by a satiety of similar material (4.33.3: *obuia rerum similitudine et satietate*). In section 3.3.2.3, I identify and analyse the recurrent medical imagery of the book in light of Tacitus' words on exemplarity in the digression (4.33.2: *plures aliorum euentis docentur*). In section 3.3.2.4, I identify and analyse the recurrent imagery of siege and sack, which demonstrates the similarity of the Thracian experience of Roman aggression and the Roman experience of imperial aggression, and thus sustains Tacitus' claim about the repetitiveness of his material. Throughout the analysis, I argue that the narrative coherence of the book revolves around Tacitus' (implicitly alleged) overcoming of the (explicitly alleged) problem of the repetitive and depressive nature of his material.

#### *3.3.2.1 Resistance, suicide, and collaboration/surrender among the Romans*

Northern barbarians of the *Annales* who take up arms against Rome tend to do so explicitly in the name of freedom.<sup>318</sup> While the opposition between freedom and slavery is the theme around which the narrative centred on Rome revolves, Romans who are singled out for destruction by the emperor seldom give speeches about freedom. The most obvious reason seems to be

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<sup>318</sup> See e.g. Arminius at 1.59.6, 2.10.1, 2.15.3, Sacrovir at 3.45.2, the Thracians at 4.46.3, 4.50.3, Caratacus at 12.34, unnamed Britons at 14.31.2, and Boudicca at 14.35; cf. Calgacus at *Agr.* 30-32.



that most of them (unlike northern barbarians) choose not to resist: since they do not need to persuade anyone to revolt, but rather to make sure that the emperor will not punish their families, freedom is irrelevant. However, those Romans who challenge (or are encouraged to challenge) the power of the emperor do so in the name of freedom. Cremutius Cordus is fixed upon leaving life when he directly challenges an emperor in the senate with talk of freedom (the only Roman in the *Annales* to do so, 4.34-35). C. Calpurnius Piso is encouraged to take up the mantle of freedom when the conspiracy against Nero is uncovered, but decides instead to withdraw to his house and quietly await death (15.59).<sup>319</sup>

If we instead compare the rhetoric of their respective adversaries, that is, Roman commanders in the field and henchmen of Roman emperors accusing their fellow countrymen of treason, we encounter a similar problem. While some accusers (try to) justify their accusations, Roman commanders seldom feel the need to do so:<sup>320</sup> they are, after all, delivering pre-battle speeches to audiences singularly indifferent to justifications of empire, i.e. soldiers. Cerialis' speech at *Hist.* 4.73-74 is the only Tacitean example of a Roman speech which engages at length in imperial justification, presumably because the audience consists of Gallic nobles who need to be persuaded to stay loyal to Rome, rather than Roman soldiers who need to be encouraged before a battle. The similarity between Cerialis' rhetoric and that of the accusers in Rome is striking: firstly, they claim that the Principate/Empire is inevitable (Eprius Marcellus at 4.8.2, Cerialis at *Hist.* 4.74.2) and necessary for the maintenance of peace (Eprius Marcellus at 16.28.3, Cerialis at *Hist.* 4.74.1), and, secondly, they portray their enemies as obstinate and irrational (Eprius Marcellus at 16.28.1, Cerialis at 4.74.4) and their dedication to freedom as false (Capito Cossutianus at 16.22.4, Cerialis at *Hist.* 4.73.3; cf. Italicus at 11.17.2). Although the speeches are difficult to compare (considering their varying audiences and contexts of delivery), they do point to some shared characteristics between the situations of northern barbarians vis-à-vis Rome and Romans vis-à-vis their emperor.

However, in order to appreciate fully the similarity of their situations, we will turn our attention instead to their possible courses of action in face of oppression. While few Romans of the *Annales* challenge the emperor

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<sup>319</sup> Cf. also the hope that Germanicus would reinstitute freedom in Rome (1.33.1-2), discussed in section 2.3.2.3.

<sup>320</sup> Cf. the almost complete absence of justification for imperial expansion in speeches of Roman commanders, e.g. Agricola (*Agr.* 33-34), Germanicus (2.15), C. Silius (3.46), Avitus (13.56), and Suetonius Paulinus (14.36).

directly, many of those who have attracted his or his henchmen's hostility deliberate (whether alone or with friends and family) over possible courses of action. The Romans are as divided in their reactions to imperial oppression as the Thracians are to Roman expansion. They fall into three main categories: collaborators, resistance fighters, and suicides.<sup>321</sup> The collaborators can be further sub-divided into two groups: the good collaborators and the bad collaborators. M. Lepidus is the archetype of the good collaborator: he manages to stay alive, remain influential, and steer clear of shameful adulation. When C. Silius commits suicide in lieu of an impending condemnation for treachery and his wife Sosia is forced into exile, Lepidus makes sure that most of their property remains with their children and is not given to their accusers (4.20.2-3):

hunc ego Lepidum temporibus illis grauem et sapientem uirum fuisse comperior: nam pleraque ab saeuis adulationibus aliorum in melius flexit. neque tamen temperamenti egebat, cum aequabili auctoritate et gratia apud Tiberium uiguerit. unde dubitare cogor, fato et sorte nascendi, ut cetera, ita principum inclinatio in hos, offensio in illos, an sit aliquid in nostris consiliis liceatque inter abruptam contumaciam et deforme obsequium pergere iter ambitione ac periculis uacuum.

Lepidus is praised for moderation and wisdom in his obituary at 6.27.4: *obit eodem anno et M. Lepidus, de cuius moderatione atque sapientia in prioribus libris satis conlocauit*.<sup>322</sup> Lepidus, then, is a Roman equivalent of the Thracian chieftain Dinis: a man who knows and accepts that resistance is futile, and instead tries to work within the system, however imperfect it might be.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Cf. Walker 1952, 214-234.

<sup>322</sup> See also Lepidus' (futile) attempt to make Tiberius adopt a policy of moderation and forgiveness against Clutorius Priscus at 3.50. The doctrine of collaboration is embraced also by L. Piso (6.10.3), Cornelius Scipio (11.4.3), and Agricola (*Agr. passim*, esp. 42.4); on the *Agricola* (and the courses of action portrayed in it) as a microcosm of the Tacitean corpus, see Sailor 2012, 41. On the devaluation of *libertas* as a moral trait and concomitant promotion of *obsequium*, *moderatio*, and *utilitas* under the Principate, see Bhatt 2017, 88-91. On the importance of *moderatio* in the ideology of the Tiberian Principate, see Cowan 2009. Cowan (480) notes that "it was through *moderatio* that Tiberius' Principate accommodated and explained succession, continuity and even change."

<sup>323</sup> The question posed at 4.20.3 – whether it is by chance or because of policy that some maintain good relations with the emperor and others do not – is not provided with a clear answer: Sejanus' victims at 4.18-19, C. Silius and Titius Sabinus (whose death is described at 4.68-70), are singled out for destruction solely because of their previous friendship with Germanicus. Silius, one could argue, had boasted too much about his soldiers remaining loyal to Tiberius during the mutinies among the legions in Pannonia and Germania (4.18.2-3), and his wife had remained on (too) friendly terms with Germanicus' widow Agrippina

While the good collaborator is quite a rarity in the *Annales*, the bad collaborators are omnipresent. Their most common sub-types are the informer/accuser (*delator*) and the flatterer (*adulator*).<sup>324</sup> Some examples from book 4 will suffice: the pontiffs and priests offer vows for the preservation of Tiberius and of the sons of Germanicus (4.17.1: *non tam caritate iuuenum quam adulatione*), the consul Visellius Varro disgraces himself by supporting Sejanus in the accusation of C. Silius (4.19.1: *Varro consul, qui paternas inimicitias obtendens odiis Seiani per dedecus suum gratificabatur*), Vibius Serenus accuses his own father for treason (4.28), and the Romans en masse, at the very end of the book, find a remedy for their fear of Sejanus in adulation (4.74.1: *pauor internus occupauerat animos, cui remedium adulatione quaerebatur*).

The fourth book also includes a major example of a Roman resistance fighter and eventual suicide: Cremutius Cordus (4.34-35) refuses to acquiesce and commits suicide when under accusation of having published a work of history in which he praised Brutus and Cassius. Also in the fourth book we find the senator L. Calpurnius Piso, whose outspoken criticism of the emperor puts him in danger and who escapes prosecution and punishment only because of his timely death (4.21.2: *ob mortem opportunam*).<sup>325</sup> While

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(4.19.1). Titius Sabinus, Tacitus writes later (4.68.1), had kept up his friendship with Agrippina after everyone else had deserted her. These trials demonstrate if not the impossibility of guarding oneself against the vagaries of fortune, then at least how careful one had to be when weighing the demands of career and collaboration against those of life and honour. For the possibilities of avoiding danger by living a quiet life, see also Memmius Regulus (14.47), whose *quies* was no obstacle for attaining *claritudo*, Cornelius Sulla, whose seemingly quiet life gave his accuser the possibility of accusing him of being a (14.57.3) *simulatore[m] segnitiae, dum temeritati locum reperiret*, and Rubellius Plautus, who lived an active life, and was therefore accused of (14.57.3) *ne fingere quidem cupidinem otii sed ueterum Romanorum imitamenta praeferre, adsumpta etiam stoicorum adrogantia*. In short, how you lived your life did not matter much if the accusers were after you. On the failure of moderation to provide safety against the arbitrary power of the emperor, see Strunk 2017, 13-22.

<sup>324</sup> On *delatores* and *adulatores*, see Strunk 2017, 79-121 and 133-146.

<sup>325</sup> L. Cornelius Piso is described as *nobili ac feroci uiro* (4.21.1), and thus shares with the Thracians the trait of *ferocia* (4.46.1). As noted by Traub (1953), *ferocia* and its cognates are used by Tacitus to describe both enemies of Rome (intransigent barbarians) and enemies of the emperor (intransigent senators). Martin and Woodman (1989, 208) mention only the first category, and thereby overlook the connection between Piso and the Thracians. As noted by Cowan (2009, 483), Tiberius' promotion of *moderatio* as an imperial virtue "suggested that extremes of conduct would not be tolerated. Individuals displaying *ferocia* ... placed themselves in direct opposition to the *princeps* and could be eliminated." For the connection between *ferocia*, *libertas*, *uirius*, see also Agr. 11.4 and 31.3. On the connection between *libertas* and *ferocia*, see also Vielberg 1987, 159-163.

neither Cordus nor Piso explicitly discuss their possible courses of action, we find several instances in other books of the *Annales* where opponents of the emperor discuss the merits of suicide vis-à-vis resistance. The choice is illustrated most poignantly in the account of L. Arruntius' death (6.48). Arruntius, together with Gnaeus Domitius and Vibius Marsus, is accused of being a lover of the noblewoman Albucilla. While Domitius decides to prepare a defence and Marsus to slowly starve himself, Arruntius opts for immediate suicide. When his friends beg him to do as the others and bide his time, Arruntius replies that the same choices are not honourable for everyone (6.48.1): *non eadem omnibus decora*. His main reasons for suicide are his old age and his belief that Gaius Caesar (i.e. Caligula) will become an even worse *princeps* than Tiberius. Other characters in the *Annales* who deliberate on possible courses of action when faced by impending destruction include Rubellius Plautus (14.58-59), C. Calpurnius Piso (15.59), Silanus Torquatus (16.9), and Thræsea Paetus (16.25-26, 34-35).<sup>326</sup>

A comparison with the speeches and deliberations of northern barbarians demonstrates that similar motifs and questions dominate: matters of freedom and slavery occur in the deliberations of Cremutius Cordus at 4.35.1, Arruntius at 6.48.1-3, and C. Calpurnius Piso's accomplices at 15.59.3 (cf. footnote 326, the Frisians at 4.72, and Italicus' adversaries at 11.16.3), the glory of suicide and resistance versus the shame of surrender and slavery occurs in the deliberations of Cocceius Nerva at 6.26.2, Arruntius at 6.48.1-3, Rubellius Plautus' father-in-law at 14.58.4, C. Calpurnius Piso's accomplices at 14.59.3, Silanus Torquatus at 16.9.2, and Thræsea Paetus' friends at 16.25 (cf. Arminius at 1.59.6, 2.9.3, the Thracians at 4.50.1-3, Boudicca at 14.35.2), the oppressors' arbitrary and cruel use of power occurs in the deliberations of L. Calpurnius Piso at 4.21.1, Cocceius Nerva at 6.26.2 and Arruntius at 6.48.1-3 (cf. Arminius and other Germanic leaders at 2.15.3, Florus and Sacrovir at 3.40.3, the Frisians at 4.72, unnamed Britons at 14.31.2-4, Boudicca at 14.35.1), the role of age plays a part in Arruntius' deliberation at 6.48.1-2 (cf. Dinis and his followers at 4.50.2), and considerations of family and friends influence the deliberations of Rubellius Plautus at 14.59.1, C.

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<sup>326</sup> Rubellius Plautus is first encouraged by his father-in-law to resist and afterwards to await (stoically) the soldiers sent to kill him. Either because he has no hope of success or in order to protect his family, he decides to wait and is consequently butchered when the soldiers arrive (14.58-59); cf. my discussion of Octavia in section 4.4. Silanus Torquatus accepts the indignity of exile, but refuses the order to commit suicide and dies fighting (with his bare hands) the soldiers sent to kill him (16.9). Thræsea Paetus discusses at length with his friends whether or not he should meet the accusations in the senate, but at the end he decides to commit suicide (16.25-26, 34-35). On C. Calpurnius Piso, see above.

Calpurnius Piso at 15.59.5 and Thræsea Paetus at 16.26.4-5 (cf. 16.34.2, Segestes at 1.58.4, Dinis at 4.50.2, the Frisians at 4.72.3, Caratacus at 12.34, Boudicca at 14.35.1).

The Roman nobles of the *Annales*, then, envision the same three courses of action as the besieged Thracians. According to rhetorical theory a speaker must adapt his speech to his situation and to his audience. An author of another person's speech, e.g. an historian, must adapt the speech both to the character for whom he is writing it and to the situation in which this character finds himself.<sup>327</sup> One would therefore expect to find few similarities between a debate among barbarian rebels besieged on a hilltop and deliberations of Roman nobles accused of treachery.<sup>328</sup> However, both in the descriptions presented by the authorial voice and in the descriptions offered by the characters themselves, Roman nobles and Thracian rebels conceptualise their respective situations in strikingly similar terms. Roman nobles, especially in the latter part of Tiberius' reign (books 4-6), continuously find themselves in situations which resemble that of the besieged Thracians of book 4.

### 3.3.2.2 *The digression at 4.32-33: different different but same?*

4.32-33 are among the most heavily quoted and extensively discussed chapters of the *Annales*.<sup>329</sup> While the passage is formally a digression, it has been denoted a 'second preface' for its paradigmatic nature. As noted by Sailor, the relevance of what Tacitus says here goes beyond the fourth book, even beyond the *Annales*.<sup>330</sup> It is not within the scope of this study to provide a full overview of previous research or a complete re-interpretation of the

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<sup>327</sup> On *prosopopoeia/ethopoeia*, see Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.49-54; cf. Clark (1957, 199-201, 218-223) and Bonner (1977, 253, 267-285); see also Björk 2016.

<sup>328</sup> Cf. Woodman's comment in his commentary on the *Agricola* (2014, 23): "that Calgacus' views on *obsequium ac modestia* differ from those of A. and his biographer is a difference one might expect between Roman ex-consuls and a Highland chief."

<sup>329</sup> Some important contributions include Woodman (1988, 180-186), Martin and Woodman (1989, 169-176), Luce (1991, 2914-2916), Sinclair (1995, 60-63), Moles 1998, Rutledge 1998, O'Gorman (2000, 99-103), Sailor (2008, 259-275), and Low (2013a, 185-200).

<sup>330</sup> Sailor 2008, 259-275; in the words of Moles (1998, 102), the passage is "Tacitus' single most significant prefatory statement in the *Annals*." Moles finds it striking that the passage, which is clearly relevant for the entire latter half of Tiberius' reign (with its shift from Germanicus' foreign wars to treason trials in Rome), does not occur at the beginning of but instead takes the form of a digression midway through the book. Perhaps Tacitus wanted to suggest in a less conspicuous position how he expected his readers to interpret the narrative. On "proems in the middle", see Conte 1992. The 'real' preface of the *Annales* (1.1), also in contrast to that of the *Historiae* (1.1-3), is remarkably short. The three introductory chapters at the beginning of book 4 also have a certain prefatory tincture.

digression, but rather to show its connection to and relevance for the account of the Thracian revolt in the same book. Some trespassing, however, cannot be avoided, since our interpretation of the digression has major consequences for how we read the *Annales*. After a short paraphrase of the digression, I will discuss intratextual connections with the subsequent account of the trial of Cremutius Cordus and the account of the Thracian revolt.

The digression starts with a reversal of the historiographical topos of claiming importance for one's own work: his *Annales*, writes Tacitus, might seem insignificant, trivial, and tedious compared to the works written about Roman history of old (4.32.1): *pleraque eorum quae rettuli quaeque referam parua forsitan et leuia memoratu uideri non nescius sum: set nemo annales nostros cum scriptura eorum contenderit, qui ueteres populi Romani res composuere*.<sup>331</sup> Previous authors wrote about both external (great wars, storming of cities, flight and capture of kings) and internal (discord between consuls and tribunes, agrarian and grain laws, struggles between the orders) affairs with free elaboration (4.32.1): *ingentia illi bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges aut, si quando ad interna praeuerterent, discordias consulum aduersum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatium certamina libero egressu memorabant*. Tacitus' labour, however, is restrictive and inglorious: peace was undisturbed or only modestly challenged, matters in the city sorrowful, and the princeps uninterested in expanding the Empire (4.32.2): *nobis in arto et inglorius labor; immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res, et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat*.

However, Tacitus argues, it will still be useful to examine these seemingly insignificant things from which the movements of great events often spring (4.32.2): *non tamen sine usu fuerit introspicere illa primo aspectu leuia, ex quibus magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur*. Just as when the people was strong or the senators exerted power, it was necessary to understand the nature of the people and the senators, now, when the state has been overturned, it will be expedient to assemble and transmit these things (the things contained in the *Annales*), since most people learn what is good and bad through what happens to others (4.33.2): *sic conuerso statu neque alia re Romana quam si unus imperitet, haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia*

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<sup>331</sup> As noted by Low (2013a, 187-188), the (discerning) reader will feel compelled to compare the *Annales* with republican style historiography both because Tacitus writes that one should not and because Tacitus himself immediately disobeys his own injunction. Cf. Tacitus' claim at the beginning of his *Historiae* (1.2.1): *opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum*.

*pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum euentis docentur.*<sup>332</sup> However, although helpful, the narrative offers little enjoyment, since it lacks the kind of content which keeps the attention and reinvigorates the minds of readers. Instead of ethnographies, battles, and famous deaths, Tacitus is faced with a material both repetitive and inducing of satiety: savage orders, incessant accusations, false friendships, the ruin of innocents, and always the same causes of destruction (4.33.3): *ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt. nam situs gentium, uarietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeua iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obuia rerum similitudine et satietate.* His undertaking is also likely to attract disparagers, since it deals with recent history and since people have a tendency to find criticism of themselves both in the commemoration of virtue and the chastisement of vice in others (4.33.4). The passage ends with the ‘signing-off’ formula *sed ad inceptum redeo* (4.33.4), which marks the passage formally as a digression.<sup>333</sup> The digression is followed by the account of the trial and suicide of Cremutius Cordus (4.34-35).

While there is disagreement over the exact implications of Tacitus’ remarks about authorial control at the end of the digression, scholars agree that writers did deliberately introduce subtexts into and invited their readers to engage actively with their texts:<sup>334</sup> see e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.65: *iam enim ad id genus quod et frequentissimum est et expectari maxime credo ueniendum est, in quo per quamdam suspicionem quod non dicimus accipi uolumus, non utique contrarium, ut in εἰρωνείᾳ, sed aliud latens et auditori quasi inueniendum.* In the subsequent analysis, I will identify one such subtext

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<sup>332</sup> There is a textual problem at 4.33.2. The MSS reading is *neque alia rerum quam si unus imperitet*. I have given the text printed by Furneaux 1886 and Koestermann 1965, and defended by Moles 1998, 115-118: *neque alia re Romana quam si unus imperitet*. The alternative reading (*neque alia rerum salute quam si unus imperitet*) is promoted by Martin and Woodman (1989, 173-174) and printed by Heubner 1994.

<sup>333</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 176; for examples of ‘signing-off’ formulas, see Sal. *Jug.* 4.9, 42.5 and Vel. 2.68.5.

<sup>334</sup> For author-centred interpretations of 4.32-33, see Moles 1998 and Sailor 2008, 259-275; for reader-centred interpretations, see Rutledge (1998, 141-145, 152-153) and O’Gorman (2000, 101-102). Cf. Bartsch (1994, esp. 63-71) on ‘doublespeak’. On the lack of organised censorship and its consequences in a literary culture which privileged readerly response, see Rudich 2006, 24: “the conjunction of a repressive regime with the omnipotence of the reader, in the absence of an institutionalized censorship, obliged the literati to exist perpetually in a state of anxiety.”

within the account of the Thracian revolt, that is, demonstrate that there are thematic and verbal parallels between events in Rome and in Thrace.

Tacitus, then, complains that his material is depressive (4.33.3: *minimum oblectationis*) and repetitive, that is, that he is confronted by a satiety of similar material (4.33.3: *obuia rerum similitudine et satietate*). The complaint seems to refer specifically to the increasing number of accusations and trials of treason in the latter half of Tiberius' reign (4.33.3: *saeua iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas*). The emperor's fear and paranoia, abetted by the ambitions of Sejanus, fuel the rise of the *delatores* ('informants', 'accusers', 'snitches') and the consequent increase in accusations, trials, and deaths. The fourth book includes several trials which lead to the destruction, either through execution or suicide, of the accused:<sup>335</sup> the dominance of destruction can be illustrated by the word *exitium* ('destruction', 'extermination'), whose 11 appearances in a single book is a personal record for Tacitus. *Exitium* makes its first, ominous appearance already in the first chapter, when Tacitus writes that Sejanus' rise and fall alike were causes of destruction for the Roman state (4.1.2: *cuius [Seiani] pari exitio uiguit ceciditque*). Most occurrences of *exitium* are found in accounts of the treason trials and consequent executions and forced suicides caused by Sejanus' rise to power, e.g. when Caecilius Cornutus considered accusation equivalent to destruction and therefore committed suicide (4.28.2: *periculum pro exitio habebatur*) and when Tacitus designates the informers a breed of men invented for destroying the people (4.30.3: *genus hominum publico exitio repertum*).<sup>336</sup> However, *exitium* also

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<sup>335</sup> On the historical background to the increase in suicides during the Early Empire, see Hill (2004, 183-200) and D'Alessandro Behr (2007, 40). Although not promoted by pre-imperial stoics, suicide became popular among members of the so-called stoic opposition as a way to preserve one's freedom; see e.g. Sen. *de Ira* 3.15.3-4, and *Ep.* 70 and 77; on the stoic opposition, see MacMullen (1966, 46-94) and Sailor (2008, esp. 11-20). As noted by Hill (2004, 185-186), the 'philosophical suicide' had apparently become sufficiently standardised by the time of Petronius for the *arbiter elegantiae* at Nero's court to exploit it in order to make some fun at the end (16.18-19); for some examples of the popularity of the question of suicide in declamatory literature of the early Empire, see Sen. *Suas.* 6, 7, *Ep.* 24.6, and Per. 3.44-47. Sailor (2008, 12) notes how the glory of having been killed or forced to commit suicide by the Domitianic regime shines through in Pliny's (*Ep.* 3.11.3) and Tacitus' (*Agr.* 3.2) writings; cf. Whitton 2012, esp. 353-355. On 'Roman suicide', see Gris  1982, van Hooff 1990, and Plass 1995.

<sup>336</sup> See also 4.11.1 (the rumour that Tiberius should have 'offered destruction' to his son Drusus without questioning him), 4.52.1, 4.52.2 and 4.54.2 (the trial leading to the destruction of Agrippina's friend Claudia Pulchra and the future destruction of Agrippina herself is set in motion), 4.58.2 (the destruction of those who inferred wrongly and claimed publicly that Tiberius would die soon after retiring to Capri), and 4.60.3 (Sejanus



appears in Tacitus' words about the depressive and repetitive nature of his material, in which the causes of destruction are always the same (4.33.3: *easdem exitii causas*), and in the motivations of Turesis and his Thracians, those who argue for an attempted breakout rather than surrender or unavenged destruction (4.50.1: *non inultum exitium*), that is, suicide.

As we saw above, not all of the Thracians are convinced by Turesis' call for an attempted breakout. Tarsa plunges a sword into his own chest and thus provides an *exemplum* which his followers imitate. This is one of the 75 (successful) suicides in the *Annales* as a whole.<sup>337</sup> Most of these occur in the latter half of Tiberius' reign (books 4-6) and in the reign of Nero (books 14-16). While the 23 suicides of the sixth book means that it reigns supreme in number of suicides among the Tiberian books (indeed among all Tacitean books), the eight suicides of the fourth book mark a sudden increase compared to the five of the first three books taken together. Five of these are committed by Romans: C. Silius (4.19.4), Plautius Silvanus (4.22.3), Caecilius Cornutus (2.28.2), and Cremutius Cordus (4.35.4) commit suicide in lieu of conviction, while 400 Roman soldiers (4.73.4) commit suicide during the war with the Frisians when they are separated from the main force, take refuge in a villa, and fear betrayal. However, there are also three barbarian suicides: Tacfarinas throws himself against Roman weapons when he realises the hopelessness of his situation (4.25.3), the unnamed Spanish assassin of the praetor L. Piso dashes his head against a rock (4.45.2), and Tarsa and his Thracians commit suicide by turning their weapons against themselves (4.50.3). This quantitative and geographical expansion in suicides not only discloses the similarity between barbarian experiences of Roman domination and Roman experiences of imperial suppression, but also highlights the new state of affairs in Rome, where the choice between suicide, resistance, and collaboration is becoming increasingly more relevant. In short, the repetitive and depressive themes of destruction (*exitium*) and

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contemplates the future destruction of Drusus, Nero's younger brother); note also that the adjective *exitiosus* is used to designate Sejanus' advice at 4.59.2: *exitiosa suaderet*.

<sup>337</sup> The number of suicides per book increases gradually in the first hexad: the first two books have only 1 suicide each, the third has 3 (2 by individuals, 1 by a group), the fourth 8 (5 by individuals, 2 by groups), the fragmentarily preserved fifth has 2, and the sixth has a record 23 suicides. The last hexad demonstrates a similar division: the eleventh book has 4 suicides, the twelfth 2, the thirteenth 4, the fourteenth 3, the fifteenth 11 (10 by individuals, 1 by a group) and the sixteenth 13. In the *Historiae*, enemies of the reigning emperor tend to rebel rather than commit suicide, and the number of suicides is correspondingly lower: the first two books have 2 each, the third has only 1, and the fourth has 3. My numbers are based on the list made by van Hooff (1990, 198-232), but includes some that he seems to have missed, e.g. Sacrovir and his men (3.46.4), Tacfarinas (4.25.3), and Tarsa and his Thracians (4.50.3).

suicide are not reserved solely for the narrative centred on Rome and the senate.

At first sight, the account of a foreign war – even a siege! – in Thrace seems to contradict Tacitus’ claim that his material does not include great wars or sieges (4.33.3). In fact, the fourth book includes many of those things the absence of which Tacitus bemoans, e.g. wars in Africa, Thrace, and Germania (4.23-25, 4.49-51, 4.72-73; cf. *uarietates proeliorum* at 4.33.3), a siege of a Thracian hilltop village (4.49-51; cf. *expugnationes urbium* at 4.32.1), an ethnographical description of Capri (4.67; cf. *situs gentium* at 4.33.3), and the famous death of Cremutius Cordus (4.34-35; cf. *clari ducum exitus* at 4.33.3).<sup>338</sup> As noted by Martin and Woodman, Tacitus also provides a metaphorical war in the latter part of the book, in the form of Tiberius’ siege and sack of Rome (to be discussed in section 3.3.2.4).<sup>339</sup> Thus, Tacitus seems to be in line with Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ (*Pomp.* 3.11-12) suggestion that if a material induces satiety (τῷ κόρω) through a lengthy narrative, the writer should include pauses (ἀναπαύσεις) where the reader can be offered some variety (ποικίλην). Under closer scrutiny, however, Tacitus’ (implicitly) alleged overcoming of the problem of the (explicitly) alleged similarity of depressing material turns out to be deceptive. In short, Tacitus announces his familiarity with the historiographical guidelines for the use of digressive material, and then surprises his audience by disregarding them.<sup>340</sup> Firstly, the death of Cordus cannot be equivalent to the deaths of famous Romans of old who fought against foreign enemies. Secondly, Capri is not home to a foreign people whose conquest *by* Rome is about to be narrated, but the hideaway of a Roman emperor whose siege and sack *of* Rome is about to be described. Thirdly, the external wars do not digress from the main themes of the narrative centred on internal affairs, but rather serve to illustrate, mirror, or make a contrast with the invariably mournful events in Rome. This last point calls for some elaboration.

A comparative analysis of the account of the Thracian revolt, the digression on the usefulness (and the depressive and repetitive nature of the material) of the *Annales*, and the account of Cordus’ trial reveals clear verbal and thematic connections. The most striking is their shared focus on the

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<sup>338</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 207, 226-227; Moles 1998, 102-103; Levene 2009b, 234; Low 2013a, 189. As noted by Keitel (2010, 332-333), Tacitus’ list of themes absent from his *Annales* is similar to Cicero’s (*Fam.* 5.12.4-5) list of themes present in a potential history of his own consulship.

<sup>339</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 226-227, 232-235.

<sup>340</sup> On Tacitus’ practice of calling attention to rhetorical conventions even as he plays with and adapts them, see Keitel 2014, 59-60.

question of how to respond to tyranny: the Thracians are divided among surrender, suicide, and resistance, Cordus commits suicide, and Tacitus claims that his *Annales* are useful for those who live under one-man rule. In addition, many of the themes designated by Tacitus as repetitive at 4.33.3 (and mentioned by Cordus at 4.34-35) appear in the account of the Thracian revolt. The outbreak of the revolt is caused by several harsh demands upon the Thracians, and a rumour of even worse things to come (4.46.1-2; cf. 4.33.3: *saeua iussa*<sup>341</sup>). Before the outbreak of the revolt, the Thracian envoys remind the Romans of their previous friendship (4.46.2: *amicitiam obsequiumque memoraturos*; cf. 4.33.3: *fallaces amicitias*).<sup>342</sup> Tacitus emphasises the civilian casualties of the war (4.49.3: *ingens multitudo bellatorum imbellium*; cf. 4.33.3: *perniciem innocentium*).<sup>343</sup> The Thracians who argue for a breakout wish to avoid an unavenged destruction, that is, suicide (4.50.1: *et erant qui non inultum exitium, sed eruptionem suaderent*; cf. 4.33.3: *easdem exitii causas*). Furthermore, not only the reasons (refusal to endure subjugation) for but also the ways of leaving this world (suicide and resistance) correspond to the world of the treason trials in Rome, and in both places we find also those who choose collaboration with the subjugating power.

The account of the Thracian revolt, then, while at first sight a welcome diversion from the repetitive and depressive events in Rome, turns out to be not so much a digression from, but rather a new example of, Tacitus' usual material.<sup>344</sup> Here at last, one may think, has Tacitus found a foreign war with which he can reinvigorate the minds of his readers, who are indeed presented with some descriptions typical of a refreshing narrative (e.g. a siege, a debate, and a night battle), but the same basic question still dominates: how does one respond to tyranny? Even the once 'exhilarating' and 'refreshing' stuff of Rome's foreign wars has become yet another depressing story of freedom

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<sup>341</sup> *Saeua iussa* appear also in the account of the Frisian revolt: when Roman tribute demands suddenly increase dramatically, the Frisians revolt (4.72.1); cf. also the description of Tiberius at 4.1.1: *cum repente turbare fortuna coepit, saeuire ipse aut saeuientibus uiris praebere*.

<sup>342</sup> Cordus mentions that Livy's praise of Pompey the Great had been no obstacle for his friendship with Augustus (4.34.3): *neque id amicitiae eorum offecit*.

<sup>343</sup> Cordus claims that he is *factorum innocens* (4.34.2), but the fact that his accusers are Sejanus' clients proves *perniciabile* (4.34.2) for him.

<sup>344</sup> Cf. Tacitus' claim at 6.38.1 that he has linked together events occurring over two years in Parthia in order to provide relief from events in Rome. As noted by Low (2013, 256), the claim is disingenuous: "the situation in Parthia is distinctly reminiscent of what is happening at the centre of the empire, as the prevalence of civil war and tyrannical government in Rome are replicated amongst the Parthians."

quashed by tyranny. It seems that the account of the Thracian revolt does not, after all, distract the reader from the main narrative.

In addition to the Thracian revolt, the fourth book includes accounts of external wars against Tacfarinas' Numidians in Africa and the Frisians in Germania. Tacitus' narrative of Tacfarinas has four parts, divided among four years and three books.<sup>345</sup> Tacfarinas appeared for the first time at 2.52, then at 3.20-21, and again at 3.73-74. During none of these earlier appearances, however, was he allowed to speak. The last, and longest, passage devoted to Tacfarinas is at 4.23-26. In these chapters the Numidian narrative is brought both to its peak, with the speech of Tacfarinas, and to its end, with his defeat and death. Tacfarinas exhorts his men by employing the contrast between freedom and slavery (4.24.1): *igitur Tacfarinas disperso rumore rem Romanam aliis quoque ab nationibus lacerari eoque paulatim Africa decedere, ac posse reliquos circumueniri, si cuncti, quibus libertas seruitio potior, incubuissent, auget uiris positisque castris Thubu<r>s<i>cum oppidum circumsidet.*<sup>346</sup> Tacfarinas' words are not challenged by the Romans, whose general Dolabella responds instead by enlisting the help of king Ptolemy of Mauretania before leading a sudden four-pronged attack into the heart of Numidian territory. The Numidians are caught unawares and slaughtered like cattle (4.25.2): *pecorum modo trahi occidi capi.*<sup>347</sup> Tacfarinas, surrounded and watching his son's capture, realises that all is lost, rushes against the Roman weapons, and escapes captivity through death (4.25.3): *at ille deiectis circum stipatoribus uinctoque iam filio et effusis undique Romanis ruendo in tela captiuitatem haud inulta morte effugit.* Measured against the Thracians, Tacfarinas comes out somewhere between Turesis and Tarsa: his decision to seek revenge through resistance is recalled by Turesis and his followers, those who (4.50.1) *non inultum exitium, sed eruptionem suaderent* (cf. *haud inulta morte*). However, unlike Tacfarinas, the remainder of Turesis' men opt for surrender after their failed breakout attempt (4.51.3). Thus, the suicidal manner of Tacfarinas' resistance is recalled by Tarsa and his followers, although their suicides were more overtly

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<sup>345</sup> Tacfarinas' (textual) survival depends almost entirely on Tacitus: the 4<sup>th</sup> century epitomator Aurelius Victor is the only other author who mentions him, and he affords him just a single sentence (*De Caesaribus* 2.3): *Gaetulorum latrocinia quae Tacfarinate duce passim proruperant.*

<sup>346</sup> Tacfarinas' speech shares important points with those of Florus and Sacrovir (3.40.3) as well as with Sallust's Catiline (*Cat.* 20, 58); see also the speech of Sallust's Roman rebel Aemilius Lepidus (*Hist.* 1.55.26): *potiorque uisa est periculosa libertas quieto seruitio.*

<sup>347</sup> Cf. *Sal. Jug.* 101, *Cat.* 58.21; see also the suicides of Florus (3.42.3) and Sacrovir (3.46.4).

self-inflicted than that of Tacfarinas (4.50.3: *demisso in pectus ferro; cf. ruendo in tela*).<sup>348</sup>

Devillers 1991 argues convincingly that Tacitus has divided his narrative of Tacfarinas into four parts in order to illustrate the gradual deterioration of Tiberius' character and relationship with the senate.<sup>349</sup> Another reason why Tacitus decided to stick with the annalistic framework in his treatment of the Numidian resistance against Rome could be his desire to save Tacfarinas' suicide for the book in which suicide was to be a recurring motif.<sup>350</sup> The connection with the Roman narrative is further strengthened by the fact that Tacfarinas is supported by the Mauri, who do not wish to obey the servile commands of their youthful king's freedmen (4.23.1): *Maurorum auxiliis, qui, Ptolemaeo Iubae filio inuenta incurioso, libertos regios et servilia imperia bello mutauerant*. The feelings of the Mauri would have been shared by the Roman nobility, who found it disgraceful to obey the freedmen of the emperors.<sup>351</sup> In short, the division between internal and external affairs in the fourth book turns out to be illusory also in the narrative of the war against Tacfarinas, and there is little distraction to be enjoyed by the increasingly satiated reader.

While Tacitus and his readers are satiated by (accounts of) accusations, trials, and suicides already at 4.33.3 and Cremutius Cordus too seems to have had enough when he commits suicide through abstinence from food at 4.35.4 (*uitam abstinentia finiuit*), Tiberius is insatiable: although the emperor might at times feel momentarily satiated, he needs only to strike down his old, bloated partners in crime and replace them with new, fresh ones in order to regain his appetite (4.71.1): *scelerum ministros ut peruerti ab aliis nolebat, ita plerumque satiatus et oblati in eandem operam recentibus ueteres et praegraues adflixit*. Indeed, his hunger for slaughter is mitigated neither by

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<sup>348</sup> The defeat and death of Tacfarinas is followed by a brief account of a short-lived slave revolt in Italy: T. Curtisius, a former praetorian, attempts to raise the agricultural slaves in revolt with a call for freedom (4.27.1: *ad libertatem uocabat agrestia per longinquos saltus et ferocia seruitia*); the revolt is quickly quelled and Curtisius and his closest allies are dragged to Rome, but the themes of freedom and ferocity are soon resumed in the account of the Thracian revolt.

<sup>349</sup> Devillers 1991; cf. Low (2013a, 129-180) and Strunk (2017, 47-49). For the opposing view, that the narrative of Tacfarinas was meant to serve as a recurrent distraction from the monotony of Tiberius' reign, see Syme (1951, 120: "relief and variety") and Goodyear (1981, 348). On revolts in North Africa, including that of Tacfarinas, see Dyson 1975, 162-167.

<sup>350</sup> For some examples of Tacitus' abandonment of the annalistic framework for the sake of thematic coherence, see footnote 395.

<sup>351</sup> See Roller (2001, 264-272) on 'social inversion' and 'status dissonance'.

time, nor pleas, nor satiety (6.38.1): *non enim Tiberium, quamquam triennio post caedem Seiani, quae ceteros mollire solent, tempus preces satias mitigabant.*<sup>352</sup> There is mercy neither for Tiberius' victims nor for Tacitus' readers.<sup>353</sup>

### 3.3.2.3 Recurrent imagery I: (exemplary) remedies for oppression

The third major account of an external war against barbarian freedom fighters occur at the end of the book, this time starring the Frisians, a Germanic tribe living on the northern side of the Rhine, as the main protagonists.<sup>354</sup> The exemplary value of the actions of the besieged Thracians here comes into play.<sup>355</sup> While the presence of exemplary discourse is felt in the entire Tacitean corpus, indeed in all Roman historiography, it is of particular importance in book 4 of the *Annales*. The book includes not only Tacitus' own paradigmatic words on the didactic value of his work (4.32.2: *non ... sine usu*; 4.33.2: *plures aliorum euentis docentur*), but also a range of exemplary characters: M. Lepidus the quintessential 'good collaborator', Cremutius Cordus the stubborn resistance fighter and eventual suicide, and a multitude of bad collaborators share the book with the only northern barbarian character of the *Annales* whose behaviour is explicitly denoted an *exemplum* by the authorial voice (4.50.3):<sup>356</sup> *Tarsa properum finem, abrumpendas pariter spes ac metus clamitans dedit exemplum demisso in pectus ferro; nec defuere qui eodem modo oppeterent*. As noted in section 1.4.2.2, Roman exemplary discourse functions within a context of situation ethics: since both agent and audience recognise the flexibility of the moral system, actions carried out by non-Romans retain the potential for exemplary value.<sup>357</sup> The designation of Tarsa's act as exemplary urges the reader to

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<sup>352</sup> On Tacitus' use of the metaphor of food (and his skill in structuring his narrative through the use of recurrent imagery), see Woodman 2006b. The idea of satiety caused by a similarity of material reappears when Tacitus discusses his material at 16.16.1: *etiam si bella externa et obitas pro re publica mortes tanta casuum similitudine memorarem, meque ipsum satias cepisset aliorumque taedium exspectarem, quamuis honestos ciuium exitus, tristes tamen et continuos aspernantium: at nunc patientia seruilis tantumque sanguinis domi perditum fatigant animum et maestitia restringunt*.

<sup>353</sup> As noted by Ash (2006, 88-90), Tacitus' negative words about his own material at 4.32-33 strikes a somewhat ironic note, since they come so far into the work: it would appear that both writer and audience must have found some sort of melancholic delight (cf. *Hist.* 2.45.3: *miseria laetitia*) in the contemplation of civil war.

<sup>354</sup> The Frisian revolt, like the Thracian, is unattested in other sources (Low 2013a, 182).

<sup>355</sup> On exemplarity in Roman historiography, see footnote 395.

<sup>356</sup> Caratacus argues that he will be an *exemplum* of Claudius' mercy if pardoned (12.37.3).

<sup>357</sup> Cf. Langlands 2011.

consider also the courses of action promoted and followed by Turesis and Dinis in the light of exemplary discourse. Indeed, all three Thracians are imitated by characters who appear later in book 4. The Thracians, it would seem, are included among the (deliberately vague) *aliorum* at 4.33.2: *pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum euentis docentur*.

The Frisians do not revolt because they cannot endure obedience, but because of Roman avarice (4.72.1): *eodem anno Frisii, transrhenanus populus, pacem exuere, nostra magis auaritia quam obsequii impatientes*. A sudden and dramatic increase in tribute demands forces the Frisians to sell their wives and children into slavery (4.72.2): *primo boues ipsos, mox agros, postremo corpora coniugum aut liberorum seruitio tradebant*.<sup>358</sup> When their complaints are not heard (cf. the complaints of the Thracians at 4.46.2-3), the Frisians take matters into their own hands and find a remedy in war (4.72.3): *hinc ira et questus, et postquam non subueniebat<ur>, remedium ex bello*. The phrase *remedium ex bello* seems to be modelled on the advice given by Dinis, the Thracian chief who argues for surrender, when he claims that the only remedy (*remedium*) for the afflicted (*adflictis*) is to lay down their weapons (4.50.2): *ponenda arma, unum adflictis id remedium disserebat*. The Frisians, however, find a remedy for Roman oppression not in surrender, but in war. They do not follow the course of action proposed by the man whose words are alluded to (Dinis), but of his rhetorical adversary, the man who argues for resistance (Turesis). The third Thracian leader (Tarsa) is alluded to at the end of the account, when 400 Roman soldiers commit suicide by killing each other when trapped in a villa and fearing betrayal (4.73.4): *aliam quadringentorum manum occupata Cruptorigis quondam stipendiari<i> uilla, postquam proditio metuebatur, mutuis ictibus procubuisse*.<sup>359</sup> The intratext with the *exemplum* set by Tarsa is clear (4.50.1): *his deditionem*,

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<sup>358</sup> The question of endurance (*patientia*), that is, of how much one is willing and capable of enduring, is central to book 4. The revolts of the Thracians and the resistance of the Spaniards are also explained with a reference to what the barbarians can or cannot endure: the Spaniards cannot endure the praetor L. Piso's overzealous theft of money from the public treasury (4.45.3: *pecunias e publico interceptas acrius quam ut tolerarent barbari cogebat*), and the Thracians cannot endure levies (4.46.1: *patri dilectus et ualidissimum quemque militiae nostrae dare aspernabantur*). The book has (for the *Annales*) an unprecedented 15 occurrences of *patri*, *tolerare*, and their cognates; cf. 4.1.3, 4.3.2, 4.6.4, 4.8.3, 4.17.2, 4.40.2, 4.44.1, 4.52.4, 4.59.3, 4.71.4, 4.24.2, 4.34.5.

<sup>359</sup> Martin and Woodman (1989, 258) and Low (2013a, 226) note the parallel with the Thracians at 4.50.3 and Julius Sacrovir and his followers at 3.46.4: *illic sua manu, reliqui mutuis ictibus occidere*; cf. the Britons after Mons Graupius (Agr. 38.1): *satisque constabat saeuisse quosdam in coniugas ac liberos, tamquam misererentur*.

*aliis mortem et mutuos inter se ictus parantibus*. The Frisians, then, initiate rather than endure a siege, and thus force 400 Roman soldiers to choose between the alternatives of surrender, resistance, and suicide.<sup>360</sup> The revolt leads to major losses among both Romans and Frisians, yet ends without a definite victory for either side.<sup>361</sup>

The medical imagery – again through the word *remedium* – reappears at the very end of the book. At 4.74.1, the Roman senators seek a remedy for their fear (of Tiberius and Sejanus) in adulation (of Sejanus): *pauor internus occupauerat animos, cui remedium adulatione quaerebatur*. The senators, faced with the growing arrogance of Sejanus, follow neither the example given by Tarsa and followed by the 400 Roman soldiers (suicide), nor that given by Turesis and followed by the Frisians (resistance), but instead that given by Dinis and followed by the weak, the old, and those valuing life over glory (surrender and collaboration). The Frisians cannot endure the avarice of their Roman overlords, revolt in order to save their families from slavery (4.72.2: *seruitio*), inflict major losses on the Romans, and, although defeated once in battle, remain unsubjected and achieve fame among their fellow Germani (4.74.1: *clarum inde inter Germanos Frisium nomen*). The Roman senators, on the other side, patiently endure the haughtiness of Sejanus' doorkeepers (4.74.4: *fastus ianitorum perpetiebantur*), and the arrogance of Sejanus is only increased by their disgraceful acceptance of slavery (4.74.4: *satis constabat auctam ei adrogantiam foedum illud in propatulo seruitium spectanti*).<sup>362</sup> The recurrent use of medical imagery highlights the different reactions of Thracians, Frisians, and Roman senators when under oppression. The reader is invited to compare and judge how the Frisians and the Roman senators respectively respond to the questions raised and the choices made during the siege of the Thracians. Further intratexts are provided by Tacfarinas' not unavenged death (4.25.3: *haud inulta morte*), the suicide of the Spanish assassin committed in order to protect his accomplices (4.45.2), and the 400 isolated Roman soldiers who take their own lives in fear of betrayal (4.73.4).

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<sup>360</sup> Cf. Low 2013a, 224.

<sup>361</sup> Low (2013a, 182-231) argues that the Thracians at 4.46-51 and the Frisians at 4.72-73 are more successful than the Gauls at 3.40-46 because they are more distant from Rome and therefore less affected by Roman influences. Cf. Caesar on the Belgae (*Gal.* 1.1.3) and Lavan (2013, 133-139) on the debilitating effects of slavery.

<sup>362</sup> The idea that voluntary submission only leads to harsher treatment appears also in the words of the rebellious Britons at *Agr.* 15.1: *nihil profici patientia nisi ut grauiora tamquam ex facili tolerantibus imperentur*.



Indeed, we find in the account of the Thracian revolt and these subsequent reactions to the questions raised in it all four elements of exemplary discourse as defined by Roller: (1) a spectacular action which embodies a specific virtue, (2) a primary audience who witnesses and evaluates the action, (3) a secondary audience who remembers the action and makes its own evaluation, and (4) an imitator who strives to replicate, or avoid replicating, the action.<sup>363</sup> Tarsa, Turesis, and Dinis are the first performers of exemplary actions which embody specific virtues/vices, their respective followers are primary audiences who witness and imitate these actions, Tacitus is a secondary audience who commits them to parchment, and the Frisians, the 400 Roman soldiers, and the Roman senators are imitators of these same actions (of which Tacitus again becomes a secondary audience); the contemporary Roman readers of the *Annales* also constitute a secondary audience, whose decisions of which actions to imitate are still in the future.<sup>364</sup>

The book includes a fourth occurrence of *remedium* when Sejanus claims that the only remedy for the threatening civil war with Agrippina's faction is to undermine/destroy (*subuerterentur*: Sejanus is as vague as his master) one or two of her most eager supporters (4.17.3): *instabat quippe Seianus incusabatque diductam ciuitatem ut ciuili bello: esse qui se partium Agrippinae uocent, ac ni resistatur, fore plures; neque aliud gliscentis discordiae remedium, quam si unus alterue maxime prompti subuerterentur*. Sejanus' words echo those of Augustus' supporters at 1.9.4 (*non aliud discordantis patriae remedium fuisse quam <ut> ab uno regeretur*) as well as Tacitus' own at 4.33.2 (*sic conuerso statu neque alia re Romana quam si unus imperitet*). The similarity between Dinis' words and these claims about the unfeasibility of a return to a republican constitution and the necessity of the Principate for the maintenance of peace is remarkable.<sup>365</sup> Thus, the speech of the northern barbarian who advocates surrender of freedom and collaboration with the Roman oppressors is phrased in the same terms as the

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<sup>363</sup> Roller 2004, 3-6; Roller 2009, 216-217. On the possibility of disagreement among different audiences in the evaluation of specific actions and hence in the construction of exemplary discourse, see Roller 2004, 7, 27.

<sup>364</sup> It is noteworthy that Tacitus' Thracians, unlike Caesar's Gauls (*Gal.* 7.77.12-13) and Appian's Numantines (*Hisp.* 15.96), do not consider cannibalism. Such a suggestion would perhaps have made them too obviously non-Roman for the reader to consider the exemplary value of their actions.

<sup>365</sup> Woodman (1988, 132-134) suggests that 1.9.4 might be inspired by Liv. *Praef.* 9: *donec haec tempora quibus nec uitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus peruentum est*. In this view, Tacitus interprets Livy's use of *remedium* as a reference to the Principate (rather than to Augustus' moral legislation).

arguments of those who claim that one-man rule was the only solution to the political disturbances of the Late Republic.

Tacitus is very fond of medical imagery and *remedium* appears a correspondingly large number of times in his works, 47 in total.<sup>366</sup> There is thus nothing inherently spectacular about finding four occurrences in one book. However, in no other book is the word *remedium* connected so explicitly to the question of how to react to oppression.<sup>367</sup> In other words, this is the book in which Tacitus most consistently applies one of his favourite source domains (medicine) to one of his favourite target domains ('the man oppressed by tyranny').<sup>368</sup> While the intratext between the Frisians (4.72.3) and the Romans (4.74.1) has been noted,<sup>369</sup> the appearance of the same imagery in the speech of Dinis seems to have been overlooked. Thus, the connections between the debate among the besieged Thracians and the broader narrative themes of the book and the overarching dominance of the question of what to do when besieged/oppressed have not been properly appreciated.

The exemplary value of Tarsa's suicide is of particular importance in light of Hill's observation that it was crucial for the Roman nobility of the Principate to maintain a shared standard of honour: indeed, the nobility could be described as "a collectivity of *arbitri honorum* united by a consensus regarding the nature of the honourable and the just."<sup>370</sup> In short, if the knowledge of how to be a Roman noble was lost, so was the (traditional) Roman nobility. The reaction to the rise of Sejanus in Rome indicates that the Roman nobles have lost touch with their exemplary models. The Romans urgently need to refresh their memories of the past and engage actively with questions of exemplarity: Tacitus' historiographical project seems to have arrived just in time. However, the new (imperial) state of affairs demands a

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<sup>366</sup> On medical imagery in Tacitus, see Woodman and Martin 1996, *passim*, but esp. 17-18. On the use of medical imagery to describe the state (including metaphors of disease to describe structural crisis within the state) in Roman historiography, see Woodman 2010. On Tacitus' use of the imagery of *remedia* to portray the Flavian restoration of Rome after the civil wars, see Edwards 2012, 253-257.

<sup>367</sup> The closest parallel occurs in book 1, when Percennius, the instigator of the revolt among the Pannonian legions, asks the soldiers why they obey the officers and when they will dare to demand remedies for their harsh treatment (1.17.1): *interrogabat, cur paucis centurionibus, paucioribus tribunis in modum seruorum oboedirent. quando ausuros exoscere remedia, nisi nouum et nutantem adhuc principem precibus vel armis adirent?*

<sup>368</sup> For the terms 'source domain' and 'target domain', see Lakoff and Turner 1989, 59-63; for an application of Lakoff's metaphor theory on the *Agricola*, see Damtoft Poulsen 2017.

<sup>369</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 260; Strunk 2017, 66.

<sup>370</sup> Hill 2004, 207.

new type of exemplary historiography. When the emperor is tyrannical and it is dangerous to praise exemplary Romans of the past who opposed tyranny (cf. the trial against Cremutius Cordus at 4.34-35), writers must look elsewhere for *exempla*. As noted by Langlands, the Roman exemplary discourse was sufficiently flexible to accommodate also non-Romans within a tradition of situation ethics.<sup>371</sup> In this way, the Frisians' brave reaction to Roman suppression not only highlights the disintegration of Roman morality (by portraying non-Romans as superior to Romans as students of exemplary history),<sup>372</sup> but also illustrates concretely how exemplary behaviour may still be commemorated.

### 3.3.2.4 Recurrent imagery II: siege and sack

The account of the Thracian revolt is centred on the siege and its concomitant 'debate under siege'. We find another two actual sieges in the fourth book, both of which are narrated rather cursorily: Tacfarinas' siege of Thubursicum (4.24.1: *Thubursicum oppidum circumsidet*) is quickly lifted by the arrival of a Roman army and the inhabitants never have to consider their options, and the 400 Roman soldiers who, separated from the main force during the Frisian revolt, take refuge in a villa and commit suicide by killing one another are not explicitly described as besieged (4.73.4): *aliam quadringentorum manum occupata Cruptorigis quondam stipendiari uilla, postquam proditio metuebatur, mutuis ictibus procubuisse*. However, in addition to these actual sieges, there is also a metaphorically besieged city in book 4, Rome herself. After his departure from Rome (4.57.1), Tiberius stays in the countryside and, although he never enters the city, he frequently 'encamps' near its walls (4.58.3): *saepe moenia urbis adsidens extremam senectam compleuerit*. As has been noted, *adsidere* is commonly used to designate the action of an army 'encamping' near the walls of a city to be besieged.<sup>373</sup>

The portrayal of Tiberian Rome as a city under siege is expanded at the beginning of the following textual year, when Rome is afflicted by a range of disasters which commonly afflict besieged and sacked cities: first, there is an

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<sup>371</sup> Langlands 2011. On exemplary discourse put under pressure by the dominating presence of the emperor, see Kraus 2005; cf. 3.55.4 (Tiberius), Sen. *Clem.* 1.6 (Nero), and Plin. *Pan.* 13.4-5 (Trajan).

<sup>372</sup> In Livy, Romans tend to be superior to non-Romans in learning from the past; cf. Chaplin 2000, 48 (the Caudine Forks), 70-71 (Hannibal), 78-82 (the Carthaginians, the Capuans, and the Macedonians).

<sup>373</sup> Koestermann 1965 and Martin and Woodman 1989, *ad loc.*

earthquake in Fidenae (4.62-63), a disaster which is explicitly equated with *ingentium bellorum cladem*, and described in metaphorical terms as the fall of a city. The phrase *ululatus et gemitu coniuges aut liberos noscebant* is especially reminiscent of the *urbs capta* topos.<sup>374</sup> The earthquake is followed by a fire in Rome (4.64), before a flurry of accusations are metaphorically described as a breakout of disease (4.66.1).<sup>375</sup> In sum, we have the collapse of buildings, a fire in the city, and a breakout of disease, all of which are stock elements of the *urbs capta* topos.<sup>376</sup>

The climax of the description of Rome as a besieged/sacked city occurs at 4.68-70, with the accusation and murder of Sejanus' enemy Titius Sabinus (not to be confused with Poppaeus Sabinus, the general who suppressed the Thracian revolt). Sabinus, accused and immediately dragged away, looks around for help and cries out, but wherever he turns his eyes and wherever his words fall, there is only flight, desolation and deserted streets and squares (4.70.1-2):

et trahebatur damnatus, quantum obducta ueste et adstrictis faucibus niti poterat, clamitans sic inchoari annum, has Seiano uictimias cadere. quo intendisset oculos, quo uerba acciderent, fuga uastitas, deseri itinera, fora.

*Vastare* ('to lay waste') and its cognates (*uastitas*, *uastus*) are common in Tacitus' accounts of the establishment and maintenance of Roman

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<sup>374</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 232-235; see also Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.68 and Plin. *Ep.* 6.20.14. The topos is also used to describe the atmosphere in Rome after the death of Vitellius (*Hist.* 4.1): *ubique lamenta conclamationes et fortuna captae urbis*; cf. also the burning of the Capitol at *Hist.* 3.83. On the *urbs capta* motif, see Paul 1982; cf. Rossi (2004, 17-49) on its use in *Aeneid* 2. The stock elements of the topos are the killing of men, the destruction of the city by fire, the rape, wailing, and enslavement of women, the plunder of temples, and the murder or violent abduction of children. The topos was employed in several genres and some writers exploited the audience's familiarity with the topos by applying it to qualitatively different situations, e.g. for humorous (the description of the raging Fulvia at Prop. 4.8.55-56) or pathetic (the appeal of Verginia at Liv. 3.47.2) effect. The *urbs capta* motif, then, was sufficiently well known for writers to play around with it and still expect their readers to see the connection with the besieged and destroyed city. On sacks in siege narratives, see Levithan 2013, 205-227.

<sup>375</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, *ad loc.*

<sup>376</sup> The recurrent imagery of siege and sack seems to be in line with Quintilian's statement that historians avoid the boredom of narrative through the use of more recondite words and freer use of figures of speech (*Inst.* 10.1.31): *et uerbis remotioribus et liberioribus figuris narrandi taedium euitat*. An historian's variety, claims Quintilian, consists in arrangement and portrayal rather than selection of facts.

domination in foreign lands.<sup>377</sup> In book 4, the verb appears when Sabinus allows his Thracian auxiliaries to plunder and burn the countryside (4.48.1: *iisque permissum uastare urere, trahere praedas*), and the noun occurs in the accusation and murder of Sabinus.<sup>378</sup> In short, *uastare* and its cognates are used to describe the consequences for both Thracians resisting Roman expansion and Romans resisting the emperor and his henchmen.<sup>379</sup> As noted by Keitel, “Rome resembles the aftermath of a battle or a captive city complete with flight from and desolation of the city center.”<sup>380</sup>

However, 4.70.1-2 is noteworthy also for the presence of an allusion to Vergil’s description of the rape of Cassandra during the sack of Troy (*Aen.* 2.403-406):

ecce trahebatur passis Priameia uirgo  
 crinibus a templo Cassandra adytisque Minervae  
 ad caelum tendens ardentia lumina frustra,  
 lumina, nam teneras arcebant uncula palmas.

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<sup>377</sup> For other barbarians of the *Annales* who are subjected to or speak about Roman *uastitas*, see 1.51.1, 1.60.3, 3.45.1, 12.32.1, 13.55.2, 14.23.3, 14.31.1, 14.38.2, and 15.8.1; barbarians do the waste-laying only twice, at 11.18.1 and 15.12.2. *Vastare* and its cognates are also used thrice in the *Agricola*: Agricola lays waste (*uastatis*) to the British countryside (22.1), the British chieftain Calgacus speaks of the Romans as *uastantibus* (30.4), and the Roman victory at Mons Graupius is followed by a *uastum ubique silentium* (38.2).

<sup>378</sup> See also Tacitus’ description of the day on which Germanicus, another enemy of the emperor, was buried (3.4.1): *dies quo reliquiae tumulo Augusti inferebantur modo per silentium uastus, modo ploratibus inquires*. For Titus Sabinus and Germanicus as well as for the barbarians, resistance ends in *uastitas*; cf. O’Gorman 2014, 177. On the imperial civil war as a state of ‘sovereign exception’ wherein individuals are reduced to ‘bare life’ (*nuda uita*), see Bhatt 2017, 84-88. In light of Tacitus’ use of metaphors of civil war to describe the ‘experience’ of the Principate, note also the parallel between a state of exception and legalised civil war (Agamben 2005, 2).

<sup>379</sup> The adjective is also used to describe the atmosphere during the attempted Thracian outbreak, when the Romans become uncertain because of the alteration between their enemies’ turbulent shouting and desolate silence (4.50.4): *et ingruerat nox nimbo atrox, hostisque clamore turbido, modo per uastum silentium, incertos obsessores effecerat*. The combination of *uastus* and *silentium* appears also in the *Historiae* when the soldiers of the legions in Germania greet the overthrow of the statues of Vitellius with a *uastum primo silentium* (*Hist.* 3.13.2). As noted by Martin and Woodman (1989, 213), the phrase is Livian in origin (10.34.6): the first Roman soldiers who enter the city of Milonia during the Third Samnite War are met by a *uastum silentium*. The Livian passage includes also two appearances of another of Tacitus’ favourite words when describing the consequences of resistance against Rome and the emperor: *silentium ac solitudinem* (10.34.10) and *solitudinem* (10.34.13). On the significances of silence in the Tacitean corpus, see Strocchio 1992.

<sup>380</sup> Keitel 2014, 65; cf. *Hist.* 1.82.2, Liv. 5.41.5-6.

The most obvious similarity between the two passages is the word *trahebatur*, which reoccurs in Tacitus' text not only in the same form as in Vergil but also introduced by a similarly short word on 'e' (*et ~ ecce*). A closer comparison between the structure of the two passages reveals more similarities: firstly, the disarrayed appearances of both Sabinus and Cassandra are described through an ablative construction (*obducta ueste et adstrictis faucibus*; cf. *passis ... crinibus*); secondly, to both Sabinus and Cassandra is joined a present participle expressing an attempt to attract attention (*clamitans*: cf. *tendens*); thirdly, both of these attempts are frustrated: Sabinus' cries seem to be muffled by the clothes drawn over his head, and Cassandra' tender hands are bound (*quantum obducta ueste et adstrictis faucibus niti poterat clamitans*; cf. *teneras arcebant uincula palmas*); fourthly, both Sabinus and Cassandra are therefore reduced to stretching out their eyes (*intendisset oculos*; cf. *tendens ardentia lumina*); and fifthly, both passages are infused with a religious vocabulary, as Sabinus speaks of himself as an inaugural victim, and Cassandra, dragged from the temple of Minerva, stretches her eyes towards heaven in an attempt to ask for divine help (*sic inchoari annum, has Seiano uictimas cadere*; cf. *a templo Cassandra adytisque Minervae / ad caelum*).<sup>381</sup> Vergil's description of the rape of Cassandra and Tacitus' description of the death of Sabinus are excellent examples of Quintilian's observation (*Inst.* 8.3.67-70) that a writer who wishes to achieve emotional effect should not only narrate the bare bones of a sack, but also unpack its horrifying details.<sup>382</sup>

Sabinus, then, seems to be moulded in the image of Vergil's Cassandra. The allusion, however, not only lends some epic grandeur to Tacitus' description of Sabinus' death, but also coats the description of the Sejanus-

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<sup>381</sup> The Vergilian lines on the rape of Cassandra were reworked also by Silius Italicus in his description of the capture of the Carthaginian general Hanno (*Sil.* 16.72-74): *per medios Hannon palmas post terga reuinctus / ecce trahebatur lucemque (heu dulcia caeli / lumina!) captiuus lucem inter uincla petebat*. Silius Italicus' version is closer than Tacitus' to that of Vergil: *trahebatur* is preceded by *ecce*, and there are specific mentions of bound hands (*palmas ... reuinctus*; cf. *teneras arcebant uincula palmas*) light (*lucem ... lumina ... lucem*; cf. *lumina ... lumina*), sky (*caeli*; cf. *caelum*), and a struggle to free oneself from chains (*inter uincla petebat*; cf. *tendens ... frustra*). There are no obvious traces of Silius Italicus in Tacitus' version. On Tacitus' use of Vergil, see Baxter 1972, Bews 1972-1973, Putnam 1989, Ash 2002b and 2010, Woodman 2009b, Hardie 2010, Joseph 2010, 2012a, and 2012b.

<sup>382</sup> As noted by Keitel (2014, 64-65), the murder of Sabinus is made vivid even though it epitomises all the allegedly depressing themes listed by Tacitus at 4.33.3: *saeua iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas* (cf. *speciem artae amicitiae* at 4.68.4). On Tacitus' account of the murder of Sabinus, see also Heinz 1975, 58-62. On discussions of descriptions of sacks and their aftermaths in ancient rhetorical handbooks, see Webb 2009, 148-149, 152-153.

dominated Rome in imagery connotative of a sacked city.<sup>383</sup> In this way, by turning Rome into a besieged and sacked city, Tacitus draws attention to the similarity between the situation faced by barbarians revolting against the power of Rome and that faced by Romans resisting the power of the emperor and his henchmen. However, the specific allusion to the sack of Troy should not be dismissed. Troy, after all, is not only the archetype of the besieged and sacked city, but also the mother city of Rome, and has a consequently strong emotive force in Roman literature.<sup>384</sup> It is thus hardly incidental that not only Tiberius, but also Augustus and Nero are portrayed as enemies of Troy: the designation of Augustus as a *machinator doli* at 1.10.2 casts him in the role of a Greek schemer (Sinon or Odysseus or both),<sup>385</sup> and Nero sings about the destruction of Troy during the fire in Rome at 15.39.3.

Through the use of imagery of siege and sack, Tacitus might seem to have found another way to overcome the problem of his repetitive and depressive material, since it allows him to narrate internal calamities as if they were external wars. At first sight such a claim seems to be supported by the gesture, carried by the statement that his is a restrictive and inglorious labour (4.32.2: *nobis in arto et inglorius labor*), to Vergil's *recusatio* at the beginning of *Georgics* 4 (4.3-7):

admiranda tibi leuium spectacula rerum  
 magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis  
 mores et studia et populos et proelia dicam.  
 in tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria, si quem  
 numina laeua sinunt auditque uocatus Apollo.

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<sup>383</sup> On Tacitean emperors waging war against Rome, see esp. Keitel 1984 and 2010, Woodman (1988, 186-190; 1992/1998a), and Ash (2018, 10-11, 26-27). The imagery of siege and sack is developed further in the sixth book: 6.1.2 (*uelut in captos*), 6.19.2 (*iacuit immensa strages, omnis sexus, omnis aetas, inlustres ignobiles, dispersi aut aggerati*), and 6.39.2 (*Tiberius ... urbem iuxta ... quasi aspiciens undantem per domos sanguinem aut manus carnificum*); see also Cornelius Dolabella's proposal that Tiberius, after the suppression of the Gallic rebellion of Florus and Sacrovir, should enter Rome *ouans e Campania* (3.47.4). Tacitus might have been inspired by Seneca's portrayal of the emperor Claudius as a conqueror of Rome at *Apoc.* 6: *itaque quod Gallum facere oportebat, Romam cepit*. Given the absence of major foreign wars and consequent *metus hostilis* during the Tiberian Principate, the appearance of civil war in Rome is perhaps unsurprising; cf. section 2.3.2.3. On book 6 as the climax of the Tiberian civil war, see Low 2013a, 233-275.

<sup>384</sup> On Troy as a repeatable paradigm, see Kraus 1994 on Livy, and Keitel 2010 on Tacitus.

<sup>385</sup> Putnam 1989 notes the similarity with Sinon at Verg. *Aen.* 2.264-267, but misses Odysseus at Sen. *Tro.* 750-3.

Vergil claims that he will overcome the humble nature of his subject by portraying it with imagery worthy of epic: greathearted leaders, customs and efforts or peoples, and battles.<sup>386</sup> Tacitus, as we have seen, does something similar: he allegedly overcomes the repetitive and depressive nature of his material by describing the internal struggles of Rome with imagery more appropriate for the portrayal of external wars (siege and sack). However, while Vergil's *recusatio* does the job, in the sense that it allows Vergil to incorporate epic elements in his didactic poem and releases him from the obligation to write an extended epic poem, Tacitus' alleged overcoming is deceptive. While his use of imagery of siege and sack in the portrayal of the calamities affecting Rome (like his journeys to Numidia, Thrace, and Germania) certainly invigorates his narrative, it also, literally, destroys Rome: it accentuates rather than diminishes the sense of repetitiveness and incessant destruction.

In sum, the imagery of siege and sack in the portrayal of Tiberian Rome in the fourth book not only connects the Roman narrative organically with the account of the Thracian revolt, it also powerfully evokes the loss of freedom in Rome. Sack, after all, almost inevitably entails enslavement.<sup>387</sup> When Rome was under siege by the Gauls, for example, her very freedom was at stake: a sack would have led to the capture and (literal) enslavement of her citizens.<sup>388</sup> The portrayal of Tiberius' deteriorating reign with imagery of siege and sack therefore implies that the freedom of Rome is under constant attack. Moreover, in contrast to Camillus' refoundation of Rome after the Gallic Sack and Augustus' restoration of the Republic after the civil wars of the Late Republic, in Tiberian (indeed Julio-Claudian) Rome there is never any respite: sack follows upon sack in a never-ending nightmare.<sup>389</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusions

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<sup>386</sup> On the Vergilian passage, see Thomas 1988, *ad loc.*

<sup>387</sup> Levithan 2013, 205-227.

<sup>388</sup> Dahlheim 1965, 7-14, 53-64. On Camillus' role as refounder in Livy, see Miles 1995, 88-98, 119-134.

<sup>389</sup> Cf. Nero's perverse wish to refound Rome in his own name after the great fire in AD 64 (15.40.2): *uidebaturque Nero condendae urbis nouae et cognomento suo appellandae gloriam quaerere*; as noted by Ash (2006, 94), the fire "cannot stop the rot, as Nero takes advantage of the new space created in Rome to build his Golden House, promptly re-imposing his corrupting influence on the city."



The besieged Thracians are not alone among Tacitus' northern barbarians in being faced with a choice among surrender, suicide, and resistance. In fact, nearly all accounts of wars between Rome and northern barbarians in the *Annales* (as well as in the Tacitean corpus in its entirety) are played out around the same three choices: the Gallic leaders Florus and Sacrovir commit suicide (3.42.3; 3.46.4), the British leader Caratacus accepts defeat (12.33-34), Boiocalus of the Ampsivarii makes a futile attempt to resist (13.55-56), and the British leader Boudicca commits suicide (14.35-36). The fates of the three Germani of the previous chapter are also illustrative: while the collaborators (Maroboduus and Segestes) survive to an inglorious old age, the resistance fighter (Arminius) gains glory, remembrance, and death.<sup>390</sup> The situation in which the besieged Thracians find themselves, then, is a microcosm of the situation in which all northern barbarians who face the power of Rome find themselves, and – as emphasised by the intratexts in book 4 – the situation in which the Romans oppressed by the emperor and his henchmen find themselves. The account of the war against and siege of the Thracians is both verbally and thematically uncomfortably close to the Roman narrative of accusations, trials, and deaths.

The three possible courses of action envisioned by Tacitus for the Romans oppressed by the emperor correspond directly to those envisioned by the Thracians in their 'debate under siege': surrender, suicide, or resistance. Indeed, the Thracians of book 4 are exceptional among besieged characters in Roman literature in that they divide neatly and seemingly evenly into these three categories. Considering the similarity with which he describes their situations, it would seem that Tacitus' northern barbarians besieged by Rome and Romans oppressed by the emperor conceptualise their situations similarly. Not only do barbarians and Romans describe their situations in the same way, they also reason and respond in the same way. It is a significant paradox of Tacitean *prosopopoeia* that "what would a Thracian say when besieged by the Roman army?" and "what would a Roman say when faced with the wrath of the emperor?" turns out to be *almost the same*.

Since the fourth book deals with Sejanus' rise to power and the impact of his domination, that is, the accusations, trials, and deaths (whether executions or suicides) which he leaves in his wake, it is fitting that the question of how to respond to tyranny is explored also on and beyond the borders of the Empire: Tacfarinas, the Spanish assassin, the Thracians, and the Frisians. The

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<sup>390</sup> See also the Britons of the *Agricola*: some fight for the Romans (*Agr.* 32.1), some die in battle (*Agr.* 37.5), and some commit suicide (*Agr.* 38.1). On Caratacus' speech in Rome as a mirror of the (im)possible senatorial reactions to the emperor, see O'Gorman 2014, 181-184

connection between these external wars and the internal narrative centred on Rome is further corroborated by the recurrent use of medical and siege imagery. While the Thracian revolt culminates in a siege and is described correspondingly, the description of events in Rome in terms of siege (and sack) is more unexpected, and thus draws attention to the similarities between the choices faced by the (literally) besieged Thracians and the (metaphorically) besieged Romans. In short, the northern barbarian experience of Roman oppression and the Roman experience of imperial oppression are demonstrated to be strikingly similar.

Although the choice faced by the Thracians in book 4 is essentially no different from that of all northern barbarians opposed to the might of Rome, its emphasised position within an actual siege (with its more tangible and immediate consequences) not only exposes more dramatically the human consequences of the choice, but also, through the increased emphasis created by this exposure, highlights the similarity between Thracian and Roman experiences of oppression, and thus heightens the exemplary value of the debate.<sup>391</sup> In other words, the narrative scene of the siege provides a rhetorical situation ('the debate under siege') which facilitates – through the shared alternatives of suicide, resistance, and surrender/collaboration – the creation of an organic connection with the Roman narrative of imperial oppression, encourages the clear and explicit presentation of these alternatives (with which comes also an accentuation of the similarity between internal and external affairs), and furnishes a scene on which the choice faced by the Romans oppressed by the emperor can be dramatised in the most spectacular manner.

It is with these recurrent alternatives (suicide, resistance or surrender/collaboration) and images (siege and sack) in mind, I believe, that we must read Tacitus' complaint at 4.33.3 that he is confronted by a satiety of similar material. At first sight, the complaint seems to refer specifically (and solely) to the many treason trials in Rome.<sup>392</sup> However, under closer scrutiny it turns out that it encompasses also those parts of the book which were supposed to counteract and offer diversion from this satiety: while internal affairs are portrayed with the imagery of external wars, the external wars of the book (Numidians, Thracians, Frisians) revolve around the same themes as the internal narrative, namely the struggle for freedom against slavery and the

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<sup>391</sup> Cf. section 3.3.2.1 on the similarities between Cerialis' speech in support of Roman imperialism (*Hist.* 4.73-74) and the accusations delivered by *delatores* against alleged enemies of the emperor.

<sup>392</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989, 206-207; Moles 1998, 167.

choice between resistance, suicide, and surrender/collaboration. The reader of the fourth book is, truly, confronted by a *rerum similitudine et satietate*. Tacitus explicitly invokes the idea that a repetitive narrative induces satiety, implicitly overcomes the problem by introducing new material (e.g. through rhetorical elaboration of the otherwise non-event of the Thracian revolt) and by describing the repetitive themes of his material with a ‘refreshing’ imagery (siege and sack), and then quashes his reader’s expectations of actual variety by breaking down the boundaries between internal and external affairs, and thus exposes the grim reality of thematic similarity. The reader who discerns Tacitus’ implicit overcoming of the problem of similarity-induced satiety and expects the external narratives to provide variety and momentary relief from the horrors in Rome is left stupefied when it turns out that he will only be offered more and more and more of the same. Travelling through the *Annales* is indeed a grim experience, but it does have a certain fascination to it.

# 4. Boudicca and her Predecessoresses: a British ‘Lucretia-story’ in Book 14

## 4.1 Introduction

“Women have their uses for historians.” (Syme 1986, 168)

Thus wrote the venerable Sir Ronald Syme in his book on the Augustan aristocracy in 1986. While Syme was referring to how modern historians could write social history by studying portrayals of women in ancient texts, his statement is equally (although differently) valid for ancient historiographers. For them too women had their uses, and Tacitus is no exception: the mistreatment of a noble widow can be used to highlight the savagery of an emperor (Agrippina the Elder and Tiberius), the transgressions of an imperial consort to highlight the weakness of an emperor (Messalina and Claudius), and the bravery of a freedwoman to highlight the cowardice of male aristocrats (Epicharis and the Pisonian conspirators). As we have seen in the chapters on Arminius and on the Thracians, northern barbarians fulfil similar functions in the *Annales*: they are used to mirror, comment on, and provide contrast to matters in Rome. Boudicca, who is both a northern barbarian and a woman, promises to be an especially versatile analytic tool in the hands of Tacitus.

In this chapter, I offer an analysis of Tacitus’ account of Boudicca’s revolt against Rome in AD 61 in the fourteenth book of the *Annales* (14.29-39). As in previous chapters, my analysis focuses on the function of the account, that is, what role it plays within book 14 in particular and in the *Annales* as a whole. As noted in chapter 3 on the Thracian revolt, Tacitus’ northern barbarians share many characteristics with adversaries (and victims) of the emperors. In this chapter, I demonstrate how Boudicca’s resistance against Roman oppression mirrors the resistance of the early Romans against their

kings as well as of the plebeians against the patricians and decemvirs. I have taken as a starting point for my discussion what I consider the three main identifying traits of Boudicca in the *Annales*: she is a woman, she is a northern barbarian, and she is a freedom fighter. Boudicca's complexity cannot be grasped without proper consideration of the similarities and differences between her and other members of these three categories. To properly appreciate Boudicca's function in the *Annales*, we first need to investigate how Tacitus sets her apart from other women, northern barbarians, and freedom fighters.

In the first part of the chapter, I offer an overview of the historical evidence on Boudicca's revolt, consider Britain's place in the Roman literary imagination prior to Tacitus, and discuss previous research on the account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales* (sections 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3). In the second part, I give a paraphrase of the account (section 4.2). The third part comprises the analysis proper, divided into three: firstly, I look at similarities and differences among Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales*, his earlier account in the *Agricola* (14.3-16.3), and the (epitomised) account of Cassius Dio (62.1-12) (section 4.3.1); secondly, I relate Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales* to the theme of femininity and female power in book 14 (section 4.3.2); and thirdly, I look at parallels between Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales* and Livy's accounts of Lucretia (Liv. 1.57-60) and Verginia (Liv. 3.43-48) (section 4.3.3). I demonstrate that Tacitus' account revolves around the same themes and plot points as the traditional 'Lucretia-story': physical violence against women leads to a revolt in the name of freedom. I argue that consideration of the intertexts with these two Livian predecessors is crucial to grasp the structure of the account and explore its function within the Neronian books.

#### **4.1.1 Boudicca, the Iceni, and their revolt: the historical evidence**

Caesar was the first Roman general to make landfall on the British Isles in 55 BC. He returned the year after, but was forced to abandon his conquests due to revolt in Gaul. The annexation of Britain, starting AD 43, was undertaken in the reign of Claudius. The only extant extended accounts of the invasion are those of Suetonius (*Cl.* 17) and Cassius Dio (60.21-22).<sup>393</sup> At the time of Boudicca's revolt, most of south-eastern England and the Welsh border seem to have been under Roman control. The main tribes involved in the revolt

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<sup>393</sup> See also Sen. *Apoc.* 12.

were the Iceni and the Trinovantes. The Iceni lived in present day Norfolk in south-east England, the Trinovantes on their southern border, in present day Essex and Suffolk.<sup>394</sup>

Tacitus includes the revolt in his treatment of AD 61, but it may have started the year before.<sup>395</sup> Modern scholars, relying heavily on the accounts of Tacitus and Dio, ascribe the revolt to a mixture of long-standing grievances (excessive taxation, provincial mismanagement, social unrest), sudden recalls of private and public loans, and possibly unauthorised abuses committed by Roman officials after the death of King Prasutagus and with the governor Suetonius Paulinus absent on campaign.<sup>396</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Boudicca and the Britons before the *Annales*

The Britons, as a faraway island people, occupied a special place in the Roman imagination already at the time of Lucretius, who identified Britain as one of the four corners of the world (6.1106).<sup>397</sup> Caesar's expeditions, narrated in books 4-5 of *de Bello Gallico*, brought Britain into closer contact with the Roman world: Catullus refers twice to the most distant (*ultimi*) Britons (11.11-12, 29.4). Although neither Augustus nor his immediate successors (Tiberius and Caligula) ventured across the channel, Britain and its inhabitants were frequently invoked in Augustan poetry (often together with names of other distant places such as Scythia, Persia, and Africa) as a

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<sup>394</sup> Cf. *Agr.* 13.3. For the archaeological evidence, see Webster (1978, 46-48) and Aldhouse-Green (2006, 22-28). For a (perhaps slightly too) colourful and romantic account of the revolt, see Webster 1978, 86-103.

<sup>395</sup> Those who prefer AD 60 include Syme (1958, 765-766), Ogilvie and Richmond (1967, 192), Martin (1981, 173), and Woodman (2014, 173). Tacitus' dating is defended by Braund (1996, 133). For an extended bibliography, see Adler 2011, n. 1, p. 235. It should be noted that Tacitus often disregards chronology for the sake of thematic coherence, e.g. when he places Arminius' death in AD 19 rather than AD 21 (cf. my discussion of 2.88 in section 2.2.5), when he treats two years of eastern affairs at 6.31-38.1 (cf. 6.38.1: *quae duabus aestatibus gesta coniunxi*), and when he includes the governorships of both P. Ostorius and A. Didius in his account of British affairs at 12.31-40 (cf. 12.40.5: *haec, quamquam a duobus [Ostorio Didioque] pro praetoribus plures per annos gesta, coniunxi*); on Tacitus' distortion of chronology for thematic reasons, see Malloch 2009, 122.

<sup>396</sup> On the causes of the revolt, see Bulst 1961 and Dyson 1971, 258-260; cf. Walser's (1951, 128-136, 160) critical evaluation of the sources and (lack of) trustworthiness of Dio's and Tacitus' accounts.

<sup>397</sup> On the mystical qualities attached to islands in antiquity, see Gabba 1981, 55-60; on the mystical qualities and attraction of Britain in particular, see Braund 1996, 41-54; on the construction and function of Britain's remoteness in the *Agricola*, see Clarke 2001/2012.

metonym for the (exoticism at the) end of the world.<sup>398</sup> The campaigns undertaken under Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Domitian made sure that Britain remained popular among Neronian and Flavian poets.<sup>399</sup> Britons also show up in the poems of Tacitus' contemporaries Juvenal and Martial.<sup>400</sup> Boudicca makes her first appearance in Roman literature in Tacitus' account of her revolt in the *Agricola* (15-16), to be discussed in section 4.3.1.1.

### 4.1.3 Previous research on Tacitus' account of Boudicca in the *Annales*

Most of the attention bestowed upon Boudicca in modern scholarship deals with her reception or with British history.<sup>401</sup> However, there are also some significant literary analyses of Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales*. Roberts 1988 offers a nuanced contextual analysis: he notes that the dominating themes and contrasts of the account (freedom vs. slavery, active vs. passive, male vs. female, rationality vs. emotionality, discipline vs. disorder) recur in the main narrative of book 14. He argues that the similarities between Roman oppression of the Britons and the emperor's oppression of the Romans mean that the account could not have served as mental refreshment from the disasters unfolding in Neronian Rome.<sup>402</sup> While I concur with this claim, the limited scope of Roberts' study precludes proper investigation of the particulars of the account (there is no consideration of other female characters in book 14, a book which revolves around the actions of strong-willed women), and slants his attempts to generalise from the

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<sup>398</sup> For references to the 'far-away' status of Britain in Augustan poetry, see Verg. *Ecl.* 1.64-66, Hor. *Od.* 1.21.13-15, 1.35.29-30, 3.4.32-36, 3.5.1-4, 4.14.41-52, Tib. 3.7.147-150, Prop. 2.27.5, 4.3.7-10, Ov. *Met.* 15.752-755. On the British tradition of painting their bodies, see Ov. *Am.* 2.16.39, Prop. 2.18c. On Britain in Augustan poetry, see Braund 1996, 77-79; on Strabo's discussion of British geography (4.5.1-3), see Braund 1996, 80-89.

<sup>399</sup> For references to Britain by Neronian and Flavian poets, see Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.149, *Sil. Ita. Pun.* 3.597-598, Val. Flacc. *Arg.* 1.7-9, Mart. 10.44, 11.53, 14.99, *Spec.* 7. On the treatment of Britain by the Neronian and Flavian poets, see Braund 1996, 147-151.

<sup>400</sup> Juv. 2.161, 4.124-127, 15.111, 124, Mart. 11.3.5, 21.9, 53.1, 12.8.9, 14.99.

<sup>401</sup> On Boudicca in British history, see Bulst 1961, Webster 1978, and Gillespie 2018. On the reception of Boudicca, see Williams 2009a.

<sup>402</sup> Roberts 1988, 122-130; note also his observation that the British perspective on the temple of Claudius (14.31.4: *arx aeternae dominationis*) anticipates the Roman perspective on Nero's 'Domus Aurea' (15.43.1: *ceterum urbis quae domui supererant*). On the connection between Roman oppression of the Britons and the emperor's oppression of Romans, see also Lavan (2013, 124-155) and Adler (2011, 138-139). For scepticism about whether Tacitus intended his readers to see such a connection, see Woodman 2014, 15-25.

results. For example, Roberts' claim that rebels (whether Britons against Rome or Romans against the emperor) are portrayed as femininely irrational and collaborators as servile is made without consideration of other northern barbarian revolts in the *Annales*.<sup>403</sup> Moreover, Roberts does not investigate potential literary models for Boudicca outside the *Annales*.

Braund 1996 is useful on all aspects of Roman Britain from Caesar's invasions to Agricola's governorship, combining broad historical strokes with nuanced textual analysis. Especially relevant for us are his overview of Roman views on queens and queenship, his discussions of the historical context of Boudicca's revolt (and of the texts wherein it is treated), and his comparisons between Boudicca and Cartimandua (a British queen who collaborates with the Romans) and between the Boudicca of the *Annales* and Dio's Boudicca. According to Braund, Tacitus portrays Boudicca as a mostly positive character in the *Annales*: although undisciplined, audacious, and ultimately a cause of death and destruction for her people, she is not presented as an extravagant foreign queen goading a barbarian horde into an irrational revolt, but rather as a decorous and Romanised woman, wife, and mother leading her people in a righteous struggle for freedom.<sup>404</sup> I concur with Braund's claims, but will take the analysis further by considering the intertexts between Boudicca and Livy's Lucretia, Brutus, and Verginia, as well as by contextualising the account of her revolt within the *Annales* in general and book 14 in particular.

Santoro L'Hoir 2006 investigates the influence of the transgressive women of tragedy on the female characters of the *Annales*. Her main focus lies on imperial power players such as Livia and the two Agrippinae. She discusses Boudicca as a barbarian example of the transgressive woman and her revolt

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<sup>403</sup> Roberts 1988, 127-132. The 'feminine revolt' seems to be a special scenario rather than a general pattern: the revolts of Arminius (1.55-70, 2.5-26, 44-46, 88; cf. chapter 2), Tacfarinas (2.52, 3.20-21, 73-74, 4.23-26), Florus and Sacrovir (3.40-47), the Thracians (4.46-51; cf. chapter 3), the Frisians (4.72-73), and Caratacus (12.31-40) are not portrayed as feminine.

<sup>404</sup> Braund 1996, 118-146. Braund, like Roberts 1988, sees a similarity between Boudicca and Roman resistance fighters, esp. Thrasea Paetus. However, although Tacitus at times questions the usefulness of and motives behind Paetus' actions (14.12.1, 14.49.3), it is a misguided reading which finds authorial criticism of Boudicca in the fact that (1996, 138-139) "elsewhere Tacitus tends to suggest that the choice [between freedom/death and slavery/life] need not be so stark, that at least for a member of the Roman elite a life of dignity can be lived even under a tyrannical regime." Members of the Roman elite could, and often did, fall victim to the machinations of the emperor or his minions in spite of their efforts to lay low. The disregard of Prasutagus' will and fate of his family and people show that collaboration did not secure protection; cf. my discussion of the murders of C. Silius (4.18-19) and Titius Sabinus (4.68-70) in footnote 323. On Boudicca's lack of discipline and rationality, see also Crawford 2002, 27.



as a Tacitean example of the disastrous results when power is in the hands of a woman.<sup>405</sup> Although she makes perceptive observations on word choice and intertexts with Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia, I find her conclusions somewhat strained by her overall aim to demonstrate Tacitus' hatred for all things female and to fit Boudicca into the category of the evil, masculinised, insidious, uncontrollable, and power hungry female usurper.<sup>406</sup> She argues that the intertexts with Lucretia demonstrate Boudicca's failure to live up to the virtues of the ideal Roman matron, and that the intertexts with Verginia brand her rhetoric as tribuniciantly rabble-rousing. While I concur with Santoro L'Hoir that Tacitus was preoccupied with the character of the transgressive woman, I disagree with her claim that "the queen's [Boudicca's] portrayal in the *Annales* serves Tacitus' thematic purposes, in that she is presented as merely one of a procession of female *duces* whose usurpation of male power imposes slavery on family as well as nation."<sup>407</sup> In fact, the negatively connoted words frequently used by Tacitus in descriptions of Roman women with power (*deuincire/uincire*, *pellicere*, *blandimentum/blanditia*, *dolus*) are conspicuously absent from his description of Boudicca. Against Santoro L'Hoir, then, I argue that Tacitus has not replicated Poppaea, painted her blue, and set her loose on the shores of Britannia: the Boudicca of the *Annales* is not portrayed as a queen fighting for *dominatio*, but as a woman fighting for *libertas*.

Adler 2011, in stark contrast to Santoro L'Hoir (yet without entering into a debate), considers the Boudicca of the *Annales* a very positive character. Adler tries to come to grips with the ability of ancient historians to engage in 'self-criticism', that is, criticism of Roman imperialism. Consequently, he attempts to ascertain Tacitus' evaluation of individual speeches and his level of sympathy with their speakers. Adler investigates the connections between Boudicca's speech and other anti-Roman speeches in the Tacitean corpus (those of Civilis and Calgacus) and compares Tacitus' and Dio's accounts of

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<sup>405</sup> Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 111-157, esp. 113-118, 139-142.

<sup>406</sup> Santoro L'Hoir, 2006, 113: "Tacitus' disapproval of women who lead is discernible through the persona of Boudicca in *Agricola*, in which the diction utilized in her characterisation prefigures that of the *Annales*. In both works, Tacitus portrays the queen of the Iceni as ruthless." While Boudicca's revolt certainly is portrayed as ruthless, it does not stand out in comparison with other barbarian revolts (cf. the Germanic rituals in the Teutoburg Forest at 1.61) or indeed with Roman invasions (cf. the slaughter of women and baggage animals in the aftermath of Boudicca's defeat at 14.37.1-2).

<sup>407</sup> Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 116. In Santoro L'Hoir's reading, even the queen's rhetorical skills and mastery of the language of power can be used against her, since these are the same weapons (141) "that the Julio-Claudian emperors wield to impose slavery on their subjects."

the revolt. He notes that Boudicca has characteristics not only of a wronged Roman matron, but also of a barbarian war-leader, and identifies her as a hybrid: “part maltreated Roman matron, part determined Celtic leader.”<sup>408</sup> While he makes some insightful observations, noting also the intertexts with Lucretia (which he considers too vague to be of any real significance), I find that Adler’s approach asks the wrong questions. As pointed out by Lavan 2013, the embeddedness of the account in its narrative context complicates attempts to mine it for information about Roman imperialist ideology and uncover Tacitean self-criticism.<sup>409</sup> Instead, Lavan reads the account with an eye for metaphors of enslavement, with a focus on narrative structure, and with the accounts of Calgacus and Civilis as a backdrop. He accepts Roberts’ claim about the parallels between Boudicca’s revolt and senatorial resistance in Rome, arguing that the intertexts with Livy’s accounts of Lucretia and Verginia illustrate the deterioration of Roman political culture: “[the focus is] on the fragility of the boundaries between slaves and free in a world corrupted by power.”<sup>410</sup> I concur with Lavan’s conclusions, but will undertake a more thorough contextual analysis and develop further the implications of the Livian intertexts.

Gillespie 2015 offers a comparative analysis of the accounts of Boudicca in Tacitus’ *Annales* and in Dio from the perspective of exemplarity. Gillespie finds that, although both accounts offer valorisation of and sympathy with Boudicca, the role of exemplarity differs: while Tacitus’ Boudicca is implicitly modelled *on* exemplary characters from the Roman past (Lucretia, Brutus, Verginia, Icilius, and Cloelia), Dio’s Boudicca explicitly models herself *against* barbarian queens (Nitocris and Semiramis) and Roman empresses (Messalina, Agrippina the Younger, and Nero [*sic*]). Furthermore, Gillespie claims that Tacitus and Dio use Boudicca not only to comment on the conditions of *libertas* and the possibilities of demonstrating *uirtus* during the Principate in general and the reign of Nero in particular, but also to question the flexibility and utility of past models of behaviour in an imperial context.<sup>411</sup> While I concur with Gillespie’s claims, I believe that the Livian intertexts may be corroborated with additional evidence and that a more contextual reading of the account will increase our appreciation of their

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<sup>408</sup> Adler 2011, 127. On hybridity in Tacitus, see footnote 80.

<sup>409</sup> Lavan 2013, 154-155.

<sup>410</sup> Lavan 2013, 154.

<sup>411</sup> Gillespie 2015, 427-429; cf. Gillespie 2018, which unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to consult.

significance within book 14 as well as for the *Annales* as a whole (cf. section 4.3.3).

Other scholars who have dealt with Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales* include Miller 1969, who provides an observant paraphrase, Martin 1981, who praises its stylistic characteristics, and Shumate 2012, who sees it as an example of the debasement of the colonial subject through femininisation.<sup>412</sup> Shumate argues that the presence of Boudicca strengthens the feminine associations (disorder, irrationality, lack of self-control) commonly attributed to barbarians. However, she also notes how Boudicca is made to play two contrasting roles in the account, both as a transgressive, masculine woman, and as a positive contrast to feminised Roman men, especially Nero.

## 4.2 Paraphrase of the account of Boudicca's revolt

Britain plays no part in the first six books of the *Annales* (except as the unchosen destination of some of Germanicus' shipwrecked soldiers at 2.24.3-4). Since books 7-10 and the beginning of 11 are lost, we do not know if the island was mentioned in the narrative of Caligula's Principate (7-9), nor how Claudius' invasion in AD 43 was treated (10-11).<sup>413</sup> The gap in the narrative means that we are in insecure waters when Britain (re)appears as a scene of events in the remaining books. We do not know who Claudius' main adversaries were, how they were described, if Boudicca and/or her husband Prasutagus were mentioned, etc. The only treatment of affairs in Britain between the lost books and Boudicca's revolt is the account of the campaign against, capture of, and triumph over the British chieftain Caratacus, which includes his defiant speech in front of Claudius and Agrippina the Younger in Rome and ends with expansion in Britain coming to a standstill (12.31-40).<sup>414</sup>

Boudicca, the only female barbarian leader of the *Annales* who challenges the might of Rome, is also the last northern barbarian to appear in the (extant)

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<sup>412</sup> Miller 1969, 107-112; Martin 1981, 173-175, 215-216, 219; Shumate 2012, 491, 497.

<sup>413</sup> Dudley 1968, 41; Braund 1996, 113.

<sup>414</sup> On the role of Caratacus in the *Annales*, see Braund (1996, 112-117) and Malloch (2009, 120-123). Caratacus provided Tacitus with an opportunity to develop some of his favourite themes, e.g. nobility in face of adversity, female power in Rome, the contrast between barbarian morality and Roman degeneracy. Caratacus appears also in Dio (60.33.3c).

work.<sup>415</sup> The account of her revolt – or, more precisely, the revolt of the Icenii, Trinovantes and other British tribes – stretches over eleven chapters, making it the longest section of foreign narrative in book 14. The account, embellished with a poetic vocabulary and thematically connected with the main narrative centred on Rome, is placed almost squarely in the middle of the book, and includes both a detailed set piece battle (one of four in the *Annales*<sup>416</sup>) and two (for the *Annales* quite long) speeches reported in *oratio obliqua*. In short, it demands significant attention.

#### 4.2.1 Book 14 before Boudicca's revolt (14.1-28)

Book 14 begins in AD 59, the sixth year of Nero's reign, with the murder of Agrippina the Younger, Nero's mother (14.1-13). Poppaea, Nero's lover, is the real instigator of the plot. She taunts the young emperor and claims that as long as he is supervised by his mother and married to Octavia (Claudius' daughter) he lacks not only power but also freedom (14.1.1): *non modo imperii sed libertatis etiam indigeret*. When the first attempt to kill Agrippina fails and she takes refuge in her villa, Nero, panicstricken, dispatches a group of soldiers who stab her to death. Then follow Nero's grand debuts as charioteer, lyre player, and poet (14.14-16). The rest of the year consists of minor events: a riot in the amphitheater in Pompeii (14.17), two accusations of provincial maladministration in Cyrene (14.18), and the obituaries of Domitius Afer and M. Servilius (14.19).

The year AD 60 begins with the institution of the quinquennial games in Rome, accompanied by a brief history of the development of games in the city (14.20-21). Rubellius Plautus is then forced into exile because the populace believes that portents have singled him out as Nero's successor (14.22). Corbulo undertakes a successful campaign in the East, and Tigranes is installed by Nero as king of the Armenians (14.23-26). The year ends with short notices on Laodicea's recovery after an earthquake, the failure of colonies in Italy, Nero's interference in the election of praetors, and the condemnation (for extortion) and exile of Vibius Secundus (14.27-28). The mood of the book is well-described by O'Gorman: "History, at this stage in the principate, provides so many precedents of tyranny and oppression that the very process of narrating seems to make the possibilities for the

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<sup>415</sup> Cf. the role of the Germanic priestess Veleda in the Batavian revolt (*Hist.* 4.61-65, 5.22-24): Veleda never appears on a battlefield nor takes charge of a war.

<sup>416</sup> Ash 2007, 440; the other three are Germanicus vs. Arminius (2.14-22), Pharasmenes vs. Orodes (6.34-35), and Caratacus vs. Ostorius Scapula (12.32-35).

redemption of liberty in the future ever more unimaginable.”<sup>417</sup> Only in Britain, it seems, is there any attempt to fight back against oppression.

## 4.2.2 Boudicca’s revolt (14.29-39)

### 4.2.2.1 Suetonius Paulinus’ expedition to Mona

The account of Boudicca’s revolt initiates the year AD 61. The names of the consuls are followed immediately by the mention of a grave disaster suffered in Britain (14.29.1): *Caesennio Paeto et Petronio Turpiliano consulibus grauis clades in Britannia accepta*. First, the reader is reminded of the lacklustre performances of the previous legates A. Didius and Q. Veranius (cf. 12.40.4): the former had contented himself with holding on to earlier gains, the latter had dishonoured himself by flattering Nero in his will (14.29.1: *adulatione*). These two serve as foils for the new legate, Suetonius Paulinus. Suetonius is introduced as an equal and rival of Corbulo (14.29.2): *scientia militiae et rumore populi, qui neminem sine aemulo sinit, Corbulonis concertator, receptaeque Armeniae decus aequare domitis perduellibus cupiens*. The motivation behind Suetonius’ attack on the island of Mona (Anglesey) is his desire (14.29.2: *cupiens*) to match the prestige of Corbulo’s recovery of Armenia (cf. 14.23-26).

The expedition to Mona is described in vivid, poetic imagery. As noted by Roberts, the Britons’ alien appearance is mirrored in Tacitus’ poetic prose.<sup>418</sup> At first the Roman soldiers are stunned by the strange appearance of the British force facing them on the beach (14.30.1):

stabat pro litore diuersa acies, densa armis uirisque, intercurstantibus feminis, <quae> in modum furiarum ueste ferali, crinibus disiectis faces praeferebant; druidaeque circum, preces diras sublatis ad caelum manibus fundentes, nouitate adspectus perculere militem, ut quasi haerentibus membris immobile corpus uulneribus praeberent.

The chaotic, confused, and confusing appearance of the British force is stressed in a number of ways. Firstly, the syntax of the passage is convoluted:

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<sup>417</sup> O’Gorman 2000, 143.

<sup>418</sup> Roberts 1988, 121. Roberts notes the heavy alliteration of ‘f’ in *feminis <quae> in modum furiarum ueste ferali, crinibus disiectis faces praeferebant*, expertly conveyed in Woodman’s 2004 translation: “they were flourishing firebrands after the manner of Furies.” On the poetic, esp. Vergilian, language of the passage, see also Furneaux (1907, *ad loc.*) and Koestermann (1967, *ad loc.*).

the two main clauses (*stabat ... acies* and *druidaeque ... perculere*) are interspersed with a range of ablative phrases. Secondly, the number and variety of verbs contribute to the confusion: violent movements (*intercurantibus, praeferebant, sublatis, fundentes, perculere, praeberent*) are interrupted by moments of sudden standstill (*stabat, haerentibus*). Thirdly, there is a veritable assault upon the senses, causing sensorial overload both for the Roman soldiers and the reader: one can see the swift movements of the fury-like women, hear the dreadful prayers of the druids, smell (I presume) the smoke from the torches,<sup>419</sup> and the result is that the bodies of the Romans soldiers are left stunned and immobile (*haerentibus membris immobile corpus*). Fourthly, the passage is dominated by contrasts: armed men are contrasted with disorganised women (*armis uirisque, intercurantibus feminis*), motion with immobility (*intercurantibus ... immobile*), and abstract with concrete (*nouitate adspectus perculere*). Fifthly, the prefixes of the passage point, literally, in all directions: *INTERcurantibus feminis, crinibus DISiectis, faces PRAEferant, druidaeque CIRCVM, SVBlatis ... manibus, AD caelum, PERculere militem*.

Suetonius, however, proves his mettle in this baptism of fire and reactivates his stunned men (14.30.2): *dein cohortationibus ducis et se ipsi stimulant, ne muliebri et fanaticum agmen pauescerent, inferunt signa sternuntque obuios et igni suo inuolunt*. In the end it is an easy victory for the Romans.<sup>420</sup> The British force on Mona (portrayed as female and fanatic by the Roman general) is ultimately no match for Roman discipline. News of the outbreak of a revolt (*defectio*) on the mainland reaches Suetonius while he is consolidating his victory (14.31.3): *haec agenti Suetonio repentina defectio prouinciae nuntiatur*.

#### 4.2.2.2 Causes and outbreak

The background to and causes of the revolt are narrated from the British perspective. The Icenian king Prasutagus, in an attempt to save his kingdom and believing that submissiveness would prevent injuries, had named the Roman emperor as heir along with his two daughters (14.31.1):<sup>421</sup> *rex*

<sup>419</sup> As noted by Morgan (1992, 27-29), smell is seldom mentioned explicitly in ancient historiographical texts.

<sup>420</sup> Caesar faced, and solved, a similar situation during his first invasion of Britain: his men were frightened (*perterriti*) and hesitant (*cunctantibus*) to disembark in unknown waters (*ignotis locis*) and in the face of a British army confidently (*audacter*) defending the beach (*Gal.* 4.24-25).

<sup>421</sup> As noted by Braund (1996, 133-134) and Aldhouse-Green (2006, 73-75), client kings commonly included the Roman emperor in their wills.

*Icenorum Prasutagus, longa opulentia clarus, Caesarem heredem duasque filias scripserat, tali obsequio ratus regnumque et domum suam procul iniuria fore.* However, as experienced by so many Romans singled out for destruction by the emperor, submissiveness proved to be of little avail against greed and lust.<sup>422</sup> Prasutagus' will is disregarded and the Romans brutally move into his kingdom (14.31.1):

quod contra uertit, adeo ut regnum per centuriones, domus per seruos uelut capta uastarentur. iam primum uxor eius Boudicca uerberibus adfecta et filiae stupro uiolatae sunt; praecipui quique Icenorum, quasi cunctam regionem muneri accepissent, auitis bonis exuuntur, et propinqui regis inter mancipia habebantur.

Prasutagus' kingdom is plundered by centurions and his palace by slaves, as if captured in war: his widow Boudicca is flogged, their daughters raped, the Icenian nobles are stripped of their ancestral goods, and the members of the royal family treated as slaves. This is the first mention of Boudicca in the extant part of the *Annales*. She is designated as the king's wife (*uxor eius*) and, implicitly, as mother (*filiae*), not as queen. The language of slavery pervades the passage (*seruos ... capta ... uerberibus ... mancipia*), and the slavery imposed by Rome is explicitly connected with sexual aggression against women (*filiae stupro uiolatae sunt*).<sup>423</sup>

The Icenii rush to arms and stir up neighbouring tribes (14.31.2-4):

qua contumelia et metu grauiorum, quando in formam prouinciae cesserant, rapiunt arma, commotis ad rebellionem Trinouantibus et qui alii nondum seruitio fracti resumere libertatem occultis coniurationibus pepigerant, acerrimo in ueteranos odio. quippe in coloniam Camulodunum recens deducti pellebant domibus, exturbabant agris, captiuos, seruos appellando, fouentibus impotentiam ueteranorum militibus similitudine uitae et spe eiusdem licentiae. ad hoc templum diuo Claudio constitutum quasi arx aeternae dominationis adspiciebatur, delectique sacerdotes specie religionis omnes fortunas effundebant. nec arduum uidebatur excindere coloniam nullis munimentis saeptam; quod ducibus nostris parum prouisum erat, dum amoenitati prius quam usui consulitur.

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<sup>422</sup> On the question if submissiveness and compliance can protect against a tyrant, see footnote 323 on Tacitus' comments at 4.20.2-3 and the examples of Gaius Silius and Titus Sabinus at 4.68-70.

<sup>423</sup> For examples of sexual aggression as a cause of revolt among northern barbarians in the Tacitean corpus, see the Britons at *Agr.* 15.3 and the Batavians at *Hist.* 4.14.1; cf. the speeches of Caratacus at 12.34 and Calgacus at *Agr.* 31.1.

The Britons' reasoning is given a British focalisation, underlined both through the passive verbs (*adspiciebatur, uidebatur*) and through an equation of Roman imperialism with slavery. The Iceni rush to arms (*rapiunt arma*<sup>424</sup>) because of outrage over their mistreatment and because they fear that they will be treated even worse now that they have succumbed to the status of a province (*formam prouinciae*). They rouse the tribes not yet broken by slavery (*nondum seruitio fracti*), and the revolt takes on the characteristics of a war of independence (*resumere libertatem*). Their hatred for the Roman veterans in Camulodunum (Colchester) is especially fierce, because the veterans are driving them from their homes and lands and designating them as captives and slaves (*captiuos, seruos appellando*). Their fear of more severe mistreatment (*metu grauiorum*) seems to stem from the behaviour of the Roman soldiers who, hoping to enjoy the same license (*licentiae*), are kindling the veterans' lack of self-restraint (*impotentiam*). Furthermore, the temple dedicated to the deified Claudius appears (*adspiciebatur*) to the Britons a citadel of eternal slavery (*quasi arx aeternae dominationis*), where whole fortunes are squandered in a show of religion (*specie religionis*). Finally, it does not seem (*uidebatur*) difficult for the Britons to destroy the unfortified colony. At this point, with the indicative (*consulitur*) of the *quod* clause, the perspective returns to the author, as he points out that the province was woefully unprepared since the Roman leaders had thought more about amenity than utility. The revolt, then, is caused by a mixture of long-standing British grievances (the hypocrisy of the priests in charge of the temple, the greed of the procurator Decianus Catus; cf. 14.32.3: *auaritia*), recent deterioration in Romano-British relations (the licentious behaviour of the Roman veterans; cf. 14.31.3: *recens deducti*), sudden, seemingly unauthorised abuses committed by Roman provincial officials (the mistreatment of Prasutagus' family and people), and the opportunities offered by the governor's absence and the general vulnerability of the province.

#### 4.2.2.3 Roman defeats and Suetonius' return

Another change of perspective brings the reader inside Camulodunum, where a series of sinister prodigies causes fear among the Roman veterans and hope

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<sup>424</sup> The expression *arma rapere*, which has epic roots (Verg. *Aen.* 8.219, 10.462, Luc. 6.268, Sil. 3.523, 6.207, Stat. *Theb.* 10.194) is a Tacitean favourite for describing the actions of barbarians: cf. 1.49.1, 2.19.1 (Germani) and *Hist.* 4.21.2 (Batavians). The combination of *frangere* and *seruitium* appears also at *Hist.* 2.17.1 (describing Italians surrendering to Vitellius): *longa pax ad omne seruitium fregerat faciles occupantibus et melioribus incuriosos*. For the expression *resumere libertatem*, see also the debate among the rebellious Gauls at 3.40.3; cf. Pliny's praise of Trajan at *Pan.* 66.2.



among the Britons: the statue of Victory falls over as if succumbing to enemies, frenzied women are prophesying that destruction is at hand, that foreign growls have been heard in the curia, that the theatre has resounded with howling, and that an image of the overturned colony has been seen in the Thames, the ocean has a gory appearance, and likenesses of human bodies have been left on the shore by the ebbing tide. Since Suetonius is still on Mona, the veterans seek help from the procurator Catus Decianus, but he sends only a small and poorly equipped force. Moreover, they neither send away the non-combatants nor construct defences. The Britons surround and, with the help of some accomplices on the inside, capture the colony (14.32.1-2). The relief army commanded by Petilius Cerialis is routed by the victorious Britons, whereupon the procurator Catus Decianus flees to Gaul (14.32.3): *qua clade et odiis prouinciae, quam auaritia e<ius> in bellum egerat, trepidus procurator Catus in Galliam transiit*. Catus Decianus, previously unmentioned, is portrayed not only as a coward, but also as the man whose greed (*auaritia*) was responsible for the outbreak of the revolt. His inglorious flight makes space for the decisive battle to be fought between two noble adversaries: Boudicca and Suetonius.

While Catus Decianus is setting sail for the safety of Gaul, Suetonius returns to his overrun province and with remarkable steadfastness makes his way to Londinium (14.33.1): *at Suetonius mira constantia medios inter hostes Londinium perrexit*. He keeps his eyes on the bigger picture and, not wanting to fall victim to the same rashness (*temeritas*) that had led Cerialis to defeat, decides to sacrifice the city.<sup>425</sup> While the defenders of Camulodunum had failed to send away the non-combatants, Suetonius coldly abandons both Londinium and its inhabitants to the Britons. When the Britons finally arrive, there are only women and old men left in the city.<sup>426</sup> A general massacre of Romans in the province follows, in which some 70,000 are savagely murdered (14.33.2): *neque enim capere aut uenundare aliudue quod belli commercium, sed caedes patibula, ignes cruces, tamquam reddituri supplicium, at praerepta interim ultione, festinabant*.<sup>427</sup> The Britons, as if

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<sup>425</sup> On Suetonius' restoration of military discipline, see Roberts 1988, 125. *Temeritas* is a key concept in Caesar's *de Bello Gallico* (1.31.13, 5.52.6, 6.7.4, 7.42.1, 7.52.1) and *de Bello Ciuili* (1.45.2, 1.55.2); on loss of discipline as an explanation for military defeat, see Rosenstein 1990, 101-102. Cf. Agricola's *constantia* at *Agr.* 18.4.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. the Romans' reasoning before the entrance of the Gallic army into the city at *Liv.* 5.39.9-41.3.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. the massacre of Romans at the beginning of The First Mithridatic War (*Val. Max.* 9.2.3, *App. Mith.* 22-23).

already aware that they will be punished for what they have started, inflict a pre-emptive revenge upon the Romans.

#### 4.2.2.4 Preparation for battle: the speeches of Boudicca and Suetonius Paulinus

After having regrouped, Suetonius prepares for battle. To protect his numerically inferior force from encirclement and ambush, he chooses as battleground a narrow plain protected in its rear by a forest. While Suetonius arranges his army into tight ranks with the skill of a seasoned Roman general, disorder reigns among the Britons: they muster haphazardly and with no apparent battle plan.<sup>428</sup> Never before has there been such a multitude of British warriors assembled, and the mood is one of ferocious defiance: (14.34.2): *at Britannorum copiae passim per cateruas et turmas exultabant, quanta non alias multitudo, et animo adeo fero<ci>, ut coniuges quoque testes uictoriae secum traherent plaustrisque imponerent, quae super extremum ambitum campi posuerant.* So strong is the spirit of defiance (*animo adeo feroci*) that they have brought with them their wives as witnesses of the impending victory. Boudicca mounts her chariot to address the British army (14.35):

Boudicca curru filias prae se uehens, ut quamque nationem accesserat, solitum quidem Britannis feminarum ductu bellare testabatur, sed tunc non ut tantis maioribus ortam regnum et opes, uerum ut unam e uulgo libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci. eo prouectas Romanorum cupidines, ut non corpora, ne senectam quidem aut uirginitatem impollutam relinquunt. adesse tamen deos iustae uindictae; cecidisse legionem, quae proelium ausa sit; ceteros castris occultari aut fugam circumspicere. ne strepitum quidem et clamorem tot milium, nedum impetus et manus perlaturus. si copias armatorum, si causas belli secum expenderent, uincendum illa acie uel cadendum esse. id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent.

With her daughters on display in the chariot, Boudicca testifies that it is common for Britons to wage war under the leadership of women. She says, however, that she is not, as one born of noble ancestors, avenging the loss of her kingdom and wealth, but, as though she were a commoner, the loss of

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<sup>428</sup> In the words of Miller (1969, 110), the disposition of the Roman forces is “neatly articulated in a literary variation which avoids monotony, and at the same time marks the distinction between Roman order and British chaos.” Cf. Shumate 2012, 491.

freedom, her body flogged, and the ravished chastity of her daughters.<sup>429</sup> So far have the lusts of the Romans proceeded, she continues, that they leave unpolluted neither old nor young. She claims that the gods are present to assist their justified vengeance, pointing out that one legion daring battle has already fallen and that the remaining Romans are hiding in their camps or looking to flee. Not even the clamor of so many soldiers would they be able to resist, much less their charge and strength. If the Britons consider the forces arrayed on each side and the reasons for war, they will understand that they must either conquer or fall. At the end of the speech, she returns to the theme of freedom and slavery and tells her soldiers that this, at least, is the decision of a woman; men might live and be slaves. While this finale might seem rather inauspicious, since it focuses on the possibility of defeat and consequent choice between death and slavery, Boudicca's gendered rhetoric does appeal to a desperate kind of valour: the men are reminded that only through victory can they avoid the choice, and will thus presumably fight all the more fiercely.<sup>430</sup>

Boudicca's speech includes both similarities with and differences from other speeches of northern barbarian enemies of Rome. The contrast between freedom and slavery (*libertatem amissam ... seruirent*), the religious language (*testabatur ... adesse tamen deos ... impollutam*), the denigration of Roman maladministration (*uerberibus ... cupidines*), and the contrast between Roman weakness and barbarian strength (*cecidisse legionem ... ceteros castris occultari aut fugam circumspicere* vs. *clamorem tot milium ...*

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<sup>429</sup> Roberts 1988, 126. One could also interpret *testabatur* in the sense "demonstrate by one's action" (*OLD* 4). In that case, the first part of the passage (including *ulcisci*) is not spoken by Boudicca, but visualised and made vivid by Tacitus: "Boudicca demonstrated, by carrying her daughters before her in a chariot as she approached each tribe, that it was common for Britons to wage war under the leadership of women. However, at that moment (*sed tunc*) she (demonstrated through her actions that she) was not avenging, as one would expect from one born from noble ancestors, the loss of her kingdom and wealth, but, as though she were a commoner, lost freedom, her flogged body, and the ravished chastity of her daughters. She said that ..." For *testari* in the sense "demonstrate by one's action", see also 3.2.2. For *testari* as introducing an indirect speech, see 2.15.1 and 2.46.1. On the interpretive consequences of Tacitus' predilection for indirect speech, see section 1.4.2.2 and footnotes 38 and 127.

<sup>430</sup> Cf. Gillespie 2015, 417. According to Adler (2011, 137), Boudicca and her soldiers are ennobled by the pessimism of her speech, since they willingly choose death over slavery. On the alternatives 'living in slavery' and 'dying for freedom', see also my discussion of the Thracian revolt (4.46-51) in section 3.3.2.1. For other evaluations of the speech, see Dudley (1968, 42: "a moving recital of British wrongs") and Adler (2011, 127: "a complex and compact excoriation of Roman imperialism"). On Santoro L'Hoir's (2006, 140) excessive criticism, see section 4.1.3.

*impetus et manus*) are commonplaces.<sup>431</sup> Some crucial aspects of the speech, however, stand out. Firstly, and most obviously, a focus on gender pervades the speech from start (*feminarum ductu*) to finish (*mulieri ... uiri*). Secondly, although the theme of Roman sexual aggression appears also in other speeches of northern barbarians, it is especially prominent in Boudicca's speech, unsurprisingly perhaps, since she is both a victim of physical abuse and a mother of victims of sexual abuse. The juxtaposition of abstract (*libertas ... pudicitiam*) and concrete (*corpus*) objects implies that Boudicca connects loss of freedom with arbitrary, physical – in particular sexual – abuse. The mention of the Romans' lusts (*Romanorum cupidines*) is reminiscent of Suetonius' motivation for attacking Mona, the event which sparked the revolt, namely his desire (14.29.2: *cupiens*) to match the prestige of Corbulo's recovery of Armenia.<sup>432</sup> Thirdly, Boudicca presents herself as an avenger (*ulcisci*) of freedom and chastity. The triad of freedom, chastity, and revenge is an integral part of the account (cf. section 4.3.3). Fourthly, Boudicca is the northern barbarian whose rhetoric is most clearly influenced by that of plebeian tribunes (*non ut tantis maioribus ortam regnum et opes, uerum ut unam e uulgo*; cf. section 4.3.3.5).

The speech of Suetonius follows directly upon that of Boudicca. In spite of his confidence in the courage of his men, the Roman general was not silent at such a decisive moment. His speech is described as a mix of exhortations and prayers (14.36.1-2):

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<sup>431</sup> For freedom and slavery, see Arminius and other Germanic leaders at 2.15.3, the Thracians at 4.46.2, and Caratacus at 12.34. For religious language, see Arminius at 1.59, Boicalus at 13.55, and Calgacus at *Agr.* 30.2-3. For denigration of Roman maladministration, see Florus and Sacrovir at 3.40.3, the Thracians at 4.46.2-3, Civilis at *Hist.* 4.14.2-3, and Calgacus at *Agr.* 31.1. For contrasts between Roman weakness and barbarian strength, see Arminius at 2.15.1, Civilis at *Hist.* 4.14.4, and Calgacus at *Agr.* 31.4-32.3. For a comparison with Civilis' speeches (*Hist.* 4.14.2-4 and 17.2-5) and Arminius' speech against Segestes (1.59.2-6), see Adler 2011, 130-136.

<sup>432</sup> While *cupere* at 14.29.2 does not have any obvious connotations of lust and gratification of bodily desire at first sight, its recurrence (as noun) in a context of sexual abuse in Boudicca's speech creates an insidious link. Tacitus could, after all, have chosen another construction (or a more neutral verb such as *uelle*) to describe Suetonius' motivations. For some examples where *cupere* carries connotations of lust and gratification of bodily desire, see 3.26.1-2 (*uetustissimi mortalium, nulla adhuc mala libidine ... ubi nihil contra morem cuperent ... at postquam exui aequalitas et pro modestia ac pudore ambitio et uis incedebat ...*), 14.14.2 (*ut est uulgus cupiens uoluptatum*), and 15.72.2 (*C. Caesar, scortorum quoque cupiens*). Tacitus often uses *cupere* with powerful objects such as *bellum* (1.4.2, 1.59.1, *Hist.* 2.7.2), *imperium* (2.42.5, *Hist.* 2.74.2), and *nouae res* (15.46.1, 16.22.4).

ne Suetonius quidem in tanto discrimine silebat. quam<quam> confideret uirtuti, tamen exhortationes et preces miscebat, ut spernerent sonores barbarorum et inanes minas: plus illic feminarum quam iuuentutis adspici. imbelles inermes cessuros statim, ubi ferrum uirtutemque uincunt totiens fusi agnouissent. etiam in multis legionibus paucos, qui proelia profligarent; gloriaeque eorum accessurum, quod modica manus uniuersi exercitus famam adipiscerentur. conferti tantum et pilis emissis post umbonibus et gladiis stragem caedemque continuarent, praedae immemores: parta uictoria cuncta ipsis cessura.

Compared to Boudicca, Suetonius offers more practical advice and fewer fireworks. His speech is, in Dudley's words, "short and professional".<sup>433</sup> He starts by exhorting his men to disregard the noises and empty threats of the barbarians. Then, by exploiting the 'punnability' of the Latin word for courage (and in reply to Boudicca's juxtaposition of *uir* and *seruire*), he draws a contrast between feminine British shouting (*sonores ... feminarum*) and masculine Roman courage (*VIRtutem*):<sup>434</sup> he claims that there are more women than men in the enemy ranks, and that, unwarlike and unarmed, they will buckle as soon as they have recognised the steel and courage of those by whom they have so often been defeated. He then points out, presumably in reply to his soldiers' unvoiced fear that they will be overwhelmed by the numerically superior Britons, that even large battles are decided by a small number of men, and that it would add to their glory to acquire as a small troupe the fame of an entire army. At the end of the speech, Suetonius turns to practical matters: he reminds his men to throw the javelins first and continue the killing with their swords afterwards, and urges them to postpone the plundering until the battle is won.<sup>435</sup> In sum, Suetonius exhorts his men by denigrating their enemies (*feminarum*), praising their courage (*uirtutem*), appealing to their desire for glory and fame (*gloriae ... famam*), reminding them of how battles are won, and holding out a promise for booty (*praedae*). He does not reply to Boudicca's accusations of injustice, that is, he does not dwell on the moral justifications for imperialism.

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<sup>433</sup> Dudley 1968, 42; cf. Miller 1969, 111.

<sup>434</sup> Cf. Roberts 1988, 123.

<sup>435</sup> Suetonius' warning to his men might perhaps be read as an implicit acceptance of the accusation voiced by the Britons at 14.31.3 (that the Roman veterans and soldiers are greedy, unruly, and licentious), although we find similar common-sense reminders in the pre-battle speeches of Germanicus (1.14.2-3) and Poppaeus Sabinus (4.50.4).

Adler is not impressed by Suetonius' speech, since "it fails to answer any of Boudica's charges pertaining to Roman misrule."<sup>436</sup> Adler's criticism, however, does not take into account the different audiences of the two speeches: while it makes perfect sense for Boudicca to inflame her fellow Britons by focusing on Roman brutality, Suetonius is speaking to Roman soldiers for whom questions about the legitimacy of Roman rule were irrelevant. The enthusiasm with which the Roman soldiers greet the speech seems to confirm its efficacy, and Suetonius, certain of victory, gives the signal for battle (14.36.3): *is ardor uerba ducis sequebatur, ita se ad intorquenda pila expedierat uetus miles et multa proeliorum experientia, ut certus euentu<s> Suetonius daret pugnae signum.*<sup>437</sup>

#### 4.2.2.5 The battle and its aftermath

The battle turns out to be a short and brutal affair, an easy victory for the Romans. Everything proceeds, as noted by Levene, "exactly as Suetonius had predicted in his speech."<sup>438</sup> The legionaries keep their discipline, launch their javelins, and break through the British lines: as noted by Roberts, the Romans are the subjects of all the verbs, and thus the active part throughout the battle.<sup>439</sup> A great slaughter of men, women, and pack animals follows, since the British flight is hampered by the wagons lining the battlefield. Just as the Britons on Mona had been consumed by their own fire, so do the Britons here fall victim to their own devices, with some 80,000 British casualties, compared to only 400 Roman. Tacitus writes that praise was acquired on that day equal to that of victories of old (14.37.2): *clara et antiquis uictoriis par ea die laus parta.*<sup>440</sup>

The battle ends with two, very different, suicides. First, in a short but memorable phrase, Boudicca poisons herself (14.37.3): *Boudicca uitam ueneno finiuit.* As pointed out by Koestermann, Boudicca's decision to take

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<sup>436</sup> Adler 2011, 129. Adler notes that Cerialis (*Hist.* 4.73-74), in contrast to Suetonius, does offer justifications for Roman imperialism. However, Cerialis' audience consists of Gallic nobles wondering if they should join the Batavian revolt, that is, men in dire need of being persuaded of the benevolence of Roman rule.

<sup>437</sup> The reader is not told anything about the reception of Boudicca's speech (Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 140).

<sup>438</sup> Levene 2009b, 230. As pointed out by Levene (229-231), all the battles during Boudicca's revolt (and indeed most battles in the Tacitean corpus) are narrated rather curtly and decided straightforwardly; there is seldom any change of fortune during the battles (cf. 4.33.3: *uarietates proeliorum*) nor any doubt regarding their outcomes.

<sup>439</sup> Roberts 1988, 124.

<sup>440</sup> Roberts (1988, 125) notes the "republican ring" of the phrase.

her own life follows naturally upon her claim in the speech that death is preferable to slavery.<sup>441</sup> Thereafter, Poenius Postumus, prefect of the camp of the second legion and mentioned here for the first time, conscious of having cheated his legion of glory and disobeyed the orders of his commander, pierces himself with a sword (14.37.3): *et Poenius Postumus, praefectus castrorum secundae legionis, cognitis quartadecimanorum uicesimanorumque prosperis rebus, quia pari gloria legionem suam fraudauerat abnueratque contra ritum militiae iussa ducis, se ipse gladio transegit*. The two suicides are contrasted in description (short vs. long), as well as in motivation (loss of freedom vs. loss of honour). After the battle, reinforcements are sent from Germania and mopping-up operations begin. Tribes which had been hostile or whose loyalty had been dubious are ravaged with fire and sword (14.38.2): *quodque nationum ambiguum aut aduersum fuerat, igni atque ferro uastatum*. Since the Britons, in the expectation of Roman plunder, had not sowed new crops, many are afflicted by hunger. The province returns only slowly to peace and quiet, both because of the natural defiance of the British tribes (14.38.3: *gentes praeferoce*) and because of the disagreements between Suetonius and the new, and very troublesome, procurator, Julius Classicianus.

The account, which began with a contrast between the Roman legates' slavishness towards the emperor (14.29.1: *adulatione*) and their desire to subject the Britons (14.29.1: *subiectorum*; 14.29.2: *domitis*), ends on a similar note. Nero sends his freedman Polyclitus to Britain in order to reconcile Suetonius and Classicianus and to assuage the rebellious temperament of the wild Britons. While Polyclitus' great column (14.39.2: *ingenti agmine*) strikes terror into the Roman soldiers, he is a laughing-stock to the Britons, among whom freedom still blazes and the power of freedmen is still unknown (14.39.2): *sed hostibus inrisui fuit, apud quos flagrante etiam tum libertate nondum cognita libertinorum potentia erat; mirabanturque, quod dux et exercitus tanti belli confector seruitiis oboedirent*. The Britons marvel at the obedience shown by Suetonius and his army towards what they see as a mere slave. As noted by Roberts, the treatment of Suetonius by the procurator Polyclitus, an ex-slave, recalls that of the Britons by the slaves of the procurator Catus Decianus at the start of

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<sup>441</sup> Koestermann 1968, *ad loc.*; cf. Martin (1981, 219), Williams (2009a, 33), and Gillespie (2015, 418).

the revolt: “there is a difference in degree between what the Iceni and Suetonius experience, but not a difference in kind.”<sup>442</sup>

However, while the Britons respond with revolt, Suetonius quietly acquiesces.<sup>443</sup> The contrast is underlined as the Britons themselves are made to remark upon it. The account of Boudicca’s revolt ends with Suetonius being relieved of command and forced to hand over his army to the new legate Petronius Turpilianus.<sup>444</sup> Turpilianus does not take any further military action, and covers up his laziness with the honorable name of ‘peace’ (14.39.3): *is non irritato hoste neque lacessitus honestum pacis nomen segni otio imposuit.*<sup>445</sup>

### 4.2.3 Book 14 after Boudicca’s revolt (14.40-65)

The rest of AD 61 unfolds in Rome: the conviction of Valerius Fabianus and some other senators and equestrians for forgery of a will (14.40-41; a parallel to the dismissal of Prasutagus’ will?) is followed by the murder of the city prefect Pedanius Secundus by one of his own slaves, a murder which leads to the execution of his 400 slaves (14.42-45), before the year ends with the condemnation for extortion of Tarquinius Priscus, censuses in Gaul, and the obituary of Memmius Regulus. The final year treated in the fourteenth book is AD 62. At this point, Rome, whose Emperor Nero is increasingly under the spell of Tigellinus and Poppaea, is heading for disaster: the year includes the

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<sup>442</sup> Roberts 1988, 128; cf. Braund (1996, 124-135) and Lavan (2013, 151-152). As pointed out by Roller (2001, 264-272), ‘social inversion’, that is, that nobles were treated as slaves by their social inferiors, was a preoccupation of the Roman imperial upper class. It is indeed somewhat of a leitmotif in Tacitus’ narrative of the Neronian Principate, as nobles are routinely ‘asked’ to perform in the theaters (cf. 14.14.3).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. the *moderatio*, *obsequium*, and *modestia* of Agricola (*Agr.* 8.1, 42.3-4). For Tacitus’ use of freedmen to shed light on the lack of freedom in Rome, see 11.35.1 and 12.1-2. For Tacitus’ use of morally innocent barbarians to illustrate deplorable social conditions in Rome (e.g. the power of women, freedmen, and slaves), see Caratacus’ speech to Claudius and Agrippina the Younger (12.37). Cf. Tacitus’ descriptions of the role of women and marriage (*Germ.* 18-19) and freedmen and slaves (*Germ.* 25) in Germanic society. For another culture clash caused by the arrival of northern barbarians in Rome, see the Frisian ambassadors at 13.54. Strunk (2017, 41-42) argues that the arrival of Polyclitus illustrates the decline of military *libertas* in Rome.

<sup>444</sup> Other Roman generals prevented from finishing a war through the intervention of an emperor include Germanicus (2.26) and Corbulo (11.20).

<sup>445</sup> A Roman general was, after all, supposed to *imponere pacem, leges* and *mores* (Verg. *Aen.* 6.851-853; Tac. *Agr.* 20-21); cf. Tacitus’ refusal to describe the ‘peace’ imposed on Rome by Augustus as an unqualified *pax*: *dulcedine otii* at 1.2.2, *quies* at 1.9.5 *quies*, and *pacem ... cruentam* at 1.10.4.



accusation and, thanks to the courage and outspokenness of Thrasea Paetus, acquittal of Antistius, who had written slanderous poetry against Nero (14.48-49),<sup>446</sup> the accusation, condemnation, and exile of Fabricius Veiento, another writer (14.50), the death of Burrus and subsequent collapse of the power of Seneca (14.51-56), the murders of Cornelius Sulla (14.57), Rubellius Plautus (14.58-59), and Octavia (14.60-64),<sup>447</sup> whose heads are brought to Rome. The book (but not the year, which continues in book 15) ends with the rumour that Nero had poisoned the freedmen Doryphorus and Pallas, and with a glimpse forward to the Pisonian conspiracy, which will take centre place in the following book (14.65).

## 4.3 Analysis

### 4.3.1 Boudicca, Boudicca, and Βουδούικα: a comparison with the accounts in the *Agricola* and in Dio

Tacitus is the only ancient historian whose extant work deals with Boudicca's revolt at any length.<sup>448</sup> For comparative material we must therefore turn to his own prior account in the *Agricola* and the epitomised version of Cassius Dio's account. While there are some clear similarities between these accounts (most notably the contrast between freedom and slavery), there are also some notable differences which will help us identify the particulars of Tacitus'

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<sup>446</sup> It is a fine moment for Paetus, who not only breaks the slavery of the others (14.49.1: *libertas Thraseae seruitium aliorum rupit*), but also prevents Nero from claiming the mantle of clemency by sparing a man condemned to death. Paetus' successful show of defiance here may be compared to his less successful show of defiance earlier in the book, when his exit from the senate house in the middle of the meeting in which supplications in celebration of the death (murder) of Agrippina the Younger were discussed had brought danger on himself without presenting the other senators with an entrance to freedom (14.12.1): *exiit tum senatu, ac sibi causam periculi fecit, ceteris libertatis initium non praeibuit*.

<sup>447</sup> The fate of Octavia draws a complaint from Tacitus about the repetitive nature of his material not dissimilar from the one he gave at 4.33.3. He mentions that temples were decorated to celebrate the murder of Octavia, and then asks rhetorically (14.64.3) *que<m> ad finem memorabimus? quicumque casus temporum illorum nobis uel aliis auctoribus noscent, praesumptum habeant, quotiens fugas et caedes iussit princeps, totiens grates deis actas, quaeque rerum secundarum olim, tum publicae cladis insignia fuisse. neque tamen silebimus, si quod senatus consultum adulatione nouum aut patientia postremum fuit*.

<sup>448</sup> Suetonius offers only a brief remark (*Nero*. 39), with no mention of Boudicca's name.

account in the *Annales*. As noted by Braund, “Dio’s account has the virtue of demonstrating how differently Tacitus might have depicted Boudica.”<sup>449</sup>

#### 4.3.1.1 *The account of Boudicca’s revolt in the Agricola*

The account of Boudicca’s revolt in the *Agricola* (14.3-16.3) takes up almost half the section devoted to the history of Romano-British relations prior to Agricola’s appointment as governor (13-17).<sup>450</sup> However, it is significantly shorter than the account in the *Annales* (2 vs. 11 chapters). The plot is fairly similar (Suetonius’ absence on Mona, British deliberations, outbreak of the revolt, sack of two Roman cities, Suetonius’ return, Roman victory, replacement of Suetonius), but the emphasis is markedly different. While much space is given to the British complaints (15.1-5),<sup>451</sup> no mention is made of the actual mistreatment, and the progression of the revolt is narrated briefly (16.1-3). Boudicca is little more than a name (16.1): *his atque talibus inuicem instincti, Boudicca generis regii femina duce (neque enim sexum in imperiis discernunt) sumpsere uniuersi bellum*. There are no daughters, no speeches, and no mention of her fate.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Braund 1996, 144.

<sup>450</sup> For the *Agricola* I have used the text printed in Woodman 2014.

<sup>451</sup> The British deliberation is divided in three parts. They (1) discuss the evils of slavery, (2) compare their injustices, and (3) rouse one another by putting favourable interpretations on things (15.1): *Britanni agitare inter se mala seruitutis, conferre iniurias et interpretando accendere*. On verbal parallels between the two accounts, see Woodman 2014, *ad loc.*: *alterius manus centuriones, alterius seruos* at Agr. 15.2 corresponds to *ut regnum per centuriones, domus per seruos* at 14.31.1; *eripi domos* at Agr. 15.3 corresponds to *pellebant domibus* at 14.31.3; *sedem seruitutis* at Agr. 16.1 corresponds to *arx aeternae dominationis* at 14.31.4; *femina duce (neque enim sexum in imperiis discernunt)* at Agr. 16.1 is picked up by Boudicca herself and turned into *solitum quidem Britannis feminarum ductu bellare* at 14.35.1; cf. Calgacus on Boudicca (Agr. 31.4: *femina duce*), Vergil on Dido (*Aen.* 1.364: *dux femina facti*), and Hippolytus on Phaedra (*Sen. Phaed.* 559: *dux malorum femina*).

<sup>452</sup> Cf. Williams (2009a, 30), Adler (2011, 119-120), and Potter (2012, 135). Boudicca reappears in the speech of Calgacus at Agr. 31.4: *Brigantes femina duce exurere coloniam, expugnare castra ac, nisi felicitas in socordiam uertisset, exuere iugum potuere; nos integri et indomiti et in libertatem non in paenitentiam <arma in>laturi primo statim congressu ostendamus quos sibi Caledonia uiros seposuerit*. There is some confusion about which revolt Calgacus has in mind, since Boudicca was queen of the Iceni (not the Brigantes). However, since no other source mentions a revolt of the Brigantes (and their queen Cartimandua), and since the acts of the revolt are clearly those of Boudicca and her Iceni, it seems reasonable to assume that Tacitus simply got the name wrong (Woodman 2014, *ad loc.*). Braund (1996, 125-126), noting that Pausanias (8.43.4) made the same ‘mistake’, suggests that *Brigantes* (like *Britanni*) might have been a broader term encompassing several tribes. In Santoro L’Hoir’s (2006, 115) interpretation, Calgacus claims that the former rebels were tainted by slavery because they were led by a woman. I agree that Calgacus makes a

The differences between Tacitus' two accounts can be explained by their different functions within their respective texts.<sup>453</sup> In the *Agricola*, Boudicca's revolt is merely part of the historical background: Tacitus has little reason to dwell on the personality of Boudicca or evoke pathos for her and her people by offering authorial confirmation of the mistreatment suffered by the Britons prior to her revolt. Observations on the Britons as such, however, on their commitment to freedom, their reasons to revolt, and the danger they posed for the Roman province, are relevant as background for Agricola's governorship: the British reasons to revolt, for example, are addressed by Agricola when appointed governor (*Agr.* 19-21). Similarly, the stress on British patriotism in the *Agricola* (the word *patria*, absent from the account in the *Annales*, appears twice at *Agr.* 15.1-5) creates a united nation ready for conquest by the work's eponymous hero.<sup>454</sup>

#### 4.3.1.2 Cassius Dio's account of Boudicca's revolt

Dio's account of Boudicca's revolt survives only in Joannes Xiphilinus' epitomised version.<sup>455</sup> So, what we have called, and (for simplicity) will continue to call, Cassius Dio's account of Boudicca's revolt, is in fact Xiphilinus' epitome of Cassius Dio's account of Boudicca's revolt. Xiphilinus' practice in epitomising Dio seems to have been based on selection rather than condensation. The account of Boudicca's revolt stretches over twelve chapters (62.1-12), and appears to have been left almost untouched by Xiphilinus. While I presume that Xiphilinus has preserved the sinews and bones of Dio's narrative (events, names, chronology), I will not use his text as comparandum for syntax or vocabulary, since these are more likely to have undergone change.<sup>456</sup>

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contrast between (negative) female and (positive) male leadership for his own rhetorical purposes, but I do not believe that he considers his men *integri et indomiti* because they are not led by a woman: while a hoard of conjectures has been proposed to emend *Agr.* 31.4, most scholars agree that Calgacus is making the point that, while the earlier rebels had first accepted Roman rule and only later regretted it and rebelled, the Britons gathered to fight now have always lived in freedom and are thus more courageous (Ogilvie and Richmond 1967 and Woodman 2014, *ad loc.*).

<sup>453</sup> Braund 1996, 144-145; Adler 2011, 119. There is no reason to resort to biographical explanations based on the changing political outlook of Tacitus to account for the differences (as does Paratore 1951/2012, 181-184).

<sup>454</sup> Dio's Britons are also patriotic (62.4.3).

<sup>455</sup> On Xiphilinus, the 11<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine epitomator of books 36-80 of Dio's *Roman History*, see Millar (1964, 2-3), Brunt (1980, 488-494), and Berbessou-Brostet 2016.

<sup>456</sup> On the possibilities of using Xiphilinus' epitome for an analysis of Dio's original, see Gowing (1997, 2561-2563) and Williams (2009a, 36). For a case study of Xiphilinus'

The plot of Dio's account is fairly similar to that of the *Annales*. Dio's first words, like those of Tacitus (14.29.1: *clades*), are of disaster (Dio 62.1.1): ἐν ᾧ δὲ ταῦτα ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπαίζετο, πάθος ἐν τῇ Βρεττανία δεινὸν συνηνέχθη ("While this sort of child's play was going on at Rome, a terrible disaster occurred in Britain")<sup>457</sup>. He notes the ominous prodigies in Camulodunum (62.1.2), highlights British atrocities (62.7), provides speeches revolving around many of the same themes (Boudicca at 62.3-6: provincial maladministration, Roman cowardice and British valour, death as preferable to slavery, female power; Suetonius at 62.9-11: previous victories, numerical inferiority, plunder and glory),<sup>458</sup> and mentions Boudicca's death (62.12.6).<sup>459</sup>

However, Dio's account gives a far less sympathetic picture of Boudicca and her revolt. The outbreak is ascribed to purely economic causes: we hear of the reclaiming of loans by the procurator Decianus Catus and by Seneca, the leadership of Boudicca, and the absence of Suetonius Paulinus (62.2), but nothing about Roman mistreatment of the Britons.<sup>460</sup> Boudicca's accusations of Roman maladministration (62.3) and passing reference to sexual abuse in her speech (cf. 62.3.3: τῶν σωμάτων αὐτῶν δασμὸν ἐτήσιον φέρομεν, "do we not pay a yearly tribute for our very bodies?") thus remain a rhetorical construct. The supposed reality to which she refers is nowhere to be seen. Boudicca herself is portrayed as a wild, warmongering queen (62.2-4):

ἡ δὲ μάλιστα αὐτοὺς ἐρεθίσασα καὶ ἐναντία Ῥωμαίων πολεμεῖν ἀναπέισασα, τῆς τε προστατείας αὐτῶν ἀξιοθεῖσα καὶ τοῦ πολέμου παντὸς στρατηγήσασα, γυνὴ Βρεττανίς γένους τοῦ βασιλείου, μεῖζον ἢ κατὰ γυναικα φρόνημα ἔχουσα. αὕτη γὰρ συνήγαγέ τε τὸ στράτευμα ἀμφὶ δώδεκα μυριάδας ὄν, καὶ ἀνέβη ἐπὶ βῆμα ἐξ ἐδάφους ἐς τὸν Ῥωμαϊκὸν τρόπον πεποιημένον. ἦν δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα μεγίστη καὶ τὸ εἶδος βλοσυρωτάτη τό τε βλέμμα δριμυτάτη, καὶ τὸ φθέγμα τραχὺ εἶχε, τὴν τε κόμην πλείστην τε καὶ ξανθοτάτην οὖσαν μέχρι τῶν γλουτῶν καθεῖτο, καὶ στρεπτὸν μέγαν χρυσοῦν ἐφόρει, χιτῶνά τε παμποίκιλον ἐνεκεκόλπωτο, καὶ γλαμῦδα ἐπ' αὐτῷ παχεῖαν ἐνεπεπόρητο. οὕτω μὲν αἰεὶ ἐνεσκευάζετο: τότε δὲ καὶ λόγχην λαβοῦσα, ὥστε καὶ ἐκ τούτου πάντας ἐκπλήττειν, ἔλεξεν ᾧδε.

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practice, see Millar 1964, 195-203. The interpretive problems are noted by Adler 2011, 141-142.

<sup>457</sup> All translations of Cassius Dio are from Cary and Foster 1925.

<sup>458</sup> In Dio the speeches take up almost two thirds of the account, against one seventh in the *Annales*.

<sup>459</sup> For comparisons of Tacitus' and Dio's accounts, see Walser (1951, 128-136), Braund (1996, 141-146), Crawford (2002, 26-28), Williams (2009a, 36-38), Adler (2011, 158-161), Potter (2012, 134-135), and Gillespie 2015.

<sup>460</sup> Walser 1951, 131-132; cf. Potter 2012, 134-135.

“But the person who was chiefly instrumental in rousing the natives and persuading them to fight the Romans, the person who was thought worthy to be their leader and who directed the conduct of the entire war, was Buduica, a Briton woman of the royal family and possessed of greater spirit<sup>461</sup> than often belongs to women. This woman assembled her army, to the number of some 120,000, and then ascended a tribunal which had been constructed of earth in the Roman fashion. In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce, and her voice was harsh; a great mass of the tawniest hair fell to her hips; around her neck was a large golden necklace; and she wore a tunic of diverse colours over which a thick mantle was fastened with a brooch. This was her invariable attire. She now grasped a spear to aid her in terrifying all beholders and spoke as follows.”

With no mention of public or personal injustices committed by the Romans and backed up by Dio’s portrayal of her as a wild warrior queen whose credentials to rule are royal ancestry and extraordinary spirit, she is at the head of the British army (cf. 62.2.2: τοῦ πολέμου παντὸς στρατηγήσασα, “who directed the conduct of the entire war”) as it pillages, plunders, and tortures its way through the Roman province.<sup>462</sup> Her speech does little to ameliorate her in the eyes of the Greco-Roman reader: while the jibes at Nero might receive a sympathetic hearing (62.6.3-5),<sup>463</sup> her unsupported accusations of Roman maladministration (62.3), her recurring (at times extreme) stress on British primitivism (isolation at 62.4.2, lack of armour and walls at 62.5.2-4, bodily strength at 62.5.5-6, animal imagery at 62.5.6), her use of a hare in divination (62.6.1), her invocation of the mysterious goddess Andraste (cf. Dio 62.6.2: προσεπικαλοῦμαι σε γυνή γυναικά, “call upon thee as woman speaking to woman”),<sup>464</sup> and her embrace (with some qualifications; cf. 62.6.2-4)<sup>465</sup> of the role of queen (62.6.4: βασιλεύουσα)<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Cary and Foster 1925 translate φρόνημα with ‘intelligence’, but ‘spirit’ (with its connotations of ‘bravery’) seems more appropriate.

<sup>462</sup> Adler (2011, 149-151, 159) notes that Boudicca herself repeatedly stresses British primitivism and roughness (in contrast to Roman civilisation and softness) in her speech (62.4.2, 62.5.5-6, 62.6.1-2, 62.6.3-5).

<sup>463</sup> As noted by Gowing (1997, 2572-2573, 2580-2581), Boudicca’s insults against Nero (that he is a theatrical exhibitionist and that he is effeminate) are *leitmotifs* in Dio’s narrative of the Neronian Principate; cf. Adler (2011, 151-152) and Gillespie (2015, 418-427).

<sup>464</sup> On Andraste, see Kightly 1982, 39-40.

<sup>465</sup> Gillespie 2015, 421-425.

<sup>466</sup> After Boudicca’s death, the Britons mourn her deeply, afford her a costly funeral, and scatter to their homes (62.12.6: ἀποθανούσης δὲ ἐν τούτῳ τῆς Βουδουίκης νόσφ ἐκέειν μὲν δεινῶς ἐπένησαν καὶ πολυτελῶς ἔθαψαν, αὐτοὶ δ’ ὡς καὶ τότε ὄντως ἡττηθέντες διεσκεδάσθησαν); they are leaderless, it appears, without their queen.

combine to portray her as an ‘other’, and thus estrange her from the Greco-Roman reader.

In the *Annales*, on the other hand, Boudicca is portrayed as a wronged Romanised matron turned avenger: she is introduced as wife and mother (14.31.1: *uxor eius ... filiae*), the rationale of her late husband’s will is thoroughly Roman (to save family, wealth, and kingdom from a bad emperor),<sup>467</sup> her resistance against Roman imperialism is clearly reminiscent of senatorial resistance against the emperors,<sup>468</sup> and the account of her revolt is modelled on accounts of revolts carried out by exemplary Romans of the past.<sup>469</sup> Her role in the revolt is also pointedly different: she starts out as a passive victim of physical mistreatment and then fades from view until she mounts the chariot with her ravaged daughters to deliver her pre-battle speech, and is therefore not incriminated by the atrocities committed by the British army (14.33.2).<sup>470</sup> Unlike in Dio, her death does not end the British war effort (14.38). Although her gendered rhetoric is subversive (especially the pun on *uirtus*, *uir*, and *seruire*),<sup>471</sup> her presentation of herself as an avenger of core Roman values (freedom, chastity, social order)<sup>472</sup> finds support in the surrounding narrative: there is significant overlap among Boudicca’s accusations (14.35), the deliberations of the Britons as a collective (14.31.2-4), and the authorial description of Roman mistreatment of the Britons (14.31.1; cf. 14.32.3 on the procurator Catus Decianus’ *auaritia* as a cause of the revolt).<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Cf. the similarly deferent will of the Roman governor Veranius at the beginning of Tacitus’ account (14.29.1). On Tacitus’ claim that good parents enter only bad emperors as heirs in their wills, see *Agr.* 43.4: *a bono patre non scribi heredem nisi malum principem*. For more Romans engaged with wills in book 14, see the forgery case at 14.40-41; cf. Champlin 1991, 86.

<sup>468</sup> Roberts 1988; cf. Adler (2011, 124-127, 136-139) and Lavan (2013, 147-155). On the Romanness of the Boudicca of the *Annales*, see Braund (1996, 133-135) and Crawford (2002, 26-27).

<sup>469</sup> Gillespie 2015; cf. Santoro L’Hoir (2006, 140-141), Williams (2009a, 77), Adler (2011, 125-126), and Lavan (2013, 150).

<sup>470</sup> Braund 1996, 137, 145. Note also that the description of British atrocities is significantly more graphic in Dio (62.7) than in the *Annales* (Williams 2009a, 37).

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Roberts 1988, 126-127: “it associates *libertas* with the female, and *seruitium* with the male, suggesting through paronomasia an etymological connection of the word *uir* with the verb *seruire*, rather than with *uirtus*.” For the etymological connection between *uir* and *uirtus*, see Cic. *Tusc.* 2.43: *appellata est enim ex uiro uirtus*.

<sup>472</sup> On the specifically Roman connotations of *stuprum* and *puicitia*, see Lavan 2013, 149-150.

<sup>473</sup> Braund 1996, 138.

Moreover, her status as queen is less pronounced. While the substitution of her highborn status for a low-class appearance (*non ut tantis maioribus ortam ... uerum unam e uulgo*) is designed to provoke outrage among the Britons for the ignominious treatment of their queen,<sup>474</sup> it also couches her resistance against Roman oppression in terms reminiscent of plebeian resistance against patrician oppression (cf. section 4.3.3.5). In sum, while Dio's Boudicca is portrayed as a wild barbarian queen, Tacitus has created a pointedly double-sided character in the *Annales*: both a wronged Romanised matron and an avenger of freedom and chastity.<sup>475</sup> The Boudicca of the *Annales*, I will argue in section 4.3.3, is not only a hybrid of Rome and Britain, but also of some key personalities of early Roman history: Lucretia, Verginia, Brutus, and Icilius.

### 4.3.2 Femininity and female power in book 14

In this section, I investigate the themes of femininity and female power in the account of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales*. Firstly, I discuss conceptions of femininity and examples of female power in the *Annales*; secondly, I investigate how femininity and female power shape the account of Boudicca's revolt; and, thirdly, I consider how Boudicca measures up against other female characters in the *Annales*, most notably the British queen Cartimandua, the brave freedwoman Epicharis, and the silent victim Octavia.

#### 4.3.2.1 Femininity and female power in the *Annales*

The pages of the *Annales* are frequented by a large array of imperial women, whose influence and power increase steadily throughout the work: Livia (wife of Augustus, mother of Tiberius) and Agrippina the Elder (wife of Germanicus) are important characters of the Tiberian hexad.<sup>476</sup> The Claudian books are dominated by Messalina and Agrippina the Younger (wives of Claudius), the latter of whom (as the mother of Nero) continues her dominance in the Neronian books until she is murdered at the start of book 14. Poppaea Sabina (lover and wife of Nero) is the last female power player

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<sup>474</sup> Williams 1989, 76.

<sup>475</sup> Adler 2011, 160; see also Braund's (1996, 141) conclusion: "Dio invites none of the sympathy that Tacitus evokes for Boudica. Rather, Dio's Boudica is a monstrous figure."

<sup>476</sup> Milnor (2012, 459-460, 467) notes the significance of Tacitus starting the *Annales* with Livia as the key power player in the transition of power from her husband Augustus to her son Tiberius. On the role of women in public life as a theme in book 3, see Woodman and Martin (1996, 11-17) and Milnor (2012, 469).

of the remaining books. Octavia (daughter of Claudius, wife and victim of Nero) is a tragic counterpart to these active and ambitious women: in spite, or rather because, of her female virtues of passivity and modesty, she becomes a helpless victim in the power struggles taking place around her.

As noted by Milnor, the dominance of female Roman power players in the *Annales* is an acknowledgement of the fact that the fate of the state had become intertwined with the fate of the ruling house.<sup>477</sup> With the advent of the first imperial dynasty, women had entered the Roman political scene: the exaltation of individual houses to supreme power ensured that the power exercised by women in the domestic (female) sphere found its way also into the public (male) sphere. The emergence of powerful women in Rome increased the interest in powerful women outside Rome:<sup>478</sup> Semiramis, Dido, and Cleopatra are the archetypal queens of early imperial literature whose ideological baggage made up the framework within which female leaders were constructed.<sup>479</sup>

However, due to their supposed inability for (rational) self-control, propensity towards luxury and extravagance, sexual insatiability, and constant competitiveness, women were considered innately incapable of ruling. Women who acquired positions of power were often viewed with the

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<sup>477</sup> Milnor 2012, 467-473; cf. Braund (1996, 119) and Milnor (2009, 285-287); on the foundations of Livia's power, see Brännstedt 2016. Tacitus' other works include conspicuously few women: there are no women in the *Dialogus*, the only woman of importance in the *Agricola* is Agricola's mother, the *Germania*, although it includes comparisons between the role of women in Rome and Germania, does not mention individual women, and the extant part of the *Historiae*, which deals almost exclusively with civil war, is highly male-dominated.

<sup>478</sup> Aldhouse-Green 2006, 112.

<sup>479</sup> On Semiramis, see Prop. 3.11.21-26 and Ov. *Am.* 1.5.11; on Dido, see Verg. *Aen.* 1, 4; on Cleopatra, see Hor. *Od.* 1.37, Verg. *Aen.* 8.685-688, and Luc. 10.53-193. Juvenal (2.108-109) underlines the effeminacy of the emperor Otho by portaying him as even more feminine than Cleopatra and Semiramis. Other gender transgressive female characters in Roman literature include epic and tragic personages such as Camilla (Verg. *Aen.* 7 and 11), Phaedra (Sen. *Phae.*), and Medea (Sen. *Med.*, Val. Fl. *Arg.* 7, 8). On the gender-disruptive potential of amazons, see Hardwick 1990 and Blok 1995, 155-185. For a tour-de-force through the enslaving powers of women, see Prop. 3.11. For powerful women in Livy, see Tanaquil (1.41; on the parallels between Livy's Tanaquil and Tacitus' Livia, see Charlesworth 1927) and Tullia (1.46-48); in Lucan, see Marcia (2.326-391) and Cornelia (5.722-815); in Suetonius, see Livia (*Tib.* 22, 50-51) and Agrippina the Younger (*Claud.* 26, 44); cf. Vergil's Amata (*Aen.* 8, 11-12, esp. 11.222-224). Powerful women had attracted interest also among republican authors: Ennius wrote a tragedy about Medea and Dido appeared in Naevius' *Bellum Punicum* (Horsfall 1973, 8-12).



same distrust, fear, and hatred as powerful freedmen and slaves.<sup>480</sup> As pointed out by Braund, queens represented not only an autocratic form of government, but also an inversion of proper gender roles.<sup>481</sup> Thus, although the strict division between public and private affairs became impossible to uphold, emperors were still judged on how well they managed to separate them: failure to keep order within the imperial family could be used as a metaphor for failure to keep order within the Empire.<sup>482</sup>

Tacitus seems to have shared with his contemporaries a generally negative view on female capability to rule. As noted by Späth, women in the *Annales* are often denoted collectively with the noun *sexus* modified by a pejorative adjective, e.g. *imbecillus*, *inualidus*, or *imbellis*.<sup>483</sup> Moreover, although his Agrippina the Younger and Poppaea Sabina are not queens in the proper sense of the term, they certainly demonstrate such queenly traits as lust, greed, and hunger for power. His portrayal of the imperial female power players and the dangers they posed to the public welfare can be illustrated by his use of the expression *muliebris impotentia*, which describes both Livia (1.4.5) and Agrippina the Younger (12.57.2).<sup>484</sup> The expression is somewhat self-contradictory, implying both helplessness (through lack of self-control) and violence (through lack of self-restraint). Tacitus was not, however, beyond praising individual political acts carried out by women, e.g. Agrippina the Elder's intervention to save the bridge over the Rhine; he

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<sup>480</sup> Späth 2012, 440-442; cf. Ginsburg 1993, 95. For attacks on Roman women who entered the political stage during the Republic, see Cicero on Clodia Metelli (*Cael. passim*) and Fulvia (*Phil. 2. passim*).

<sup>481</sup> Braund 1996, 118.

<sup>482</sup> Ginsburg 2006, 8, 112; cf. Braund 1996, 124.

<sup>483</sup> Späth 2012, 441. On Tacitus' portrayal of women, see also Christ (1978, 470-482), Santoro L'Hoir (1992, 120-143), Vidén (1993, 13-65), Mellor (2011, 115-144), and Milnor 2012; on Agrippina the Elder, see Kaplan 1979, Kraus (2009, 107-114), and Späth (2012, 447-448); on Messalina, see Keitel 1977 and Malloch (2013, 66, 197-206); on Agrippina the Younger, see Kaplan 1979, Ginsburg (2006, esp. 106-132) and Gillespie 2014; on Epicharis, see Walker (1952, 134-135) and Ash (2012c, 449-451). On women in Roman historiography, see Milnor 2009. On women in Roman literature, see Vidén 1993 and Ash 2012c.

<sup>484</sup> Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 111-112; Milnor 2012, 470; on Livia, see also *matris impotentia* at 4.57.3 and *mater impotens* at 5.1.4; cf. Severus Caecina's speech against allowing governors to be accompanied by their wives into their provinces (3.33.4): *duorum egressus coli, duo esse praetoria, peruicacibus magis et impotentibus mulierum iussis, quae Oppiis quondam aliisque legibus constrictae, nunc uinclis exolutis domos fora, iam et exercitus regerent*. On representations of Agrippina the Younger (vicious stepmother, female leader, sexual transgressor), see Ginsburg 2006, esp. 106-132.

leaves it for Tiberius and Sejanus to ascribe devious and dynastic motives to her act (1.69).<sup>485</sup>

As noted by Milnor, “by the time Tacitus’ narrative reaches Nero, the boundary between the domestic affairs of the Julio-Claudian house and those of the imperial state has almost completely broken down.”<sup>486</sup> Nero, in spite of his claims to the contrary (13.4.2), does not (manage to) keep public and private affairs separate; nor does he (manage to) keep the women of the imperial palace under control. The climax of the female influence is reached in book 14, in which four women appear on the political stage: Agrippina the Younger, Poppaea Sabina, Octavia, and Boudicca. Indeed the book is structured around these women: the murder of Agrippina (the old tyrant) instigated by Poppaea (the new tyrant) at the start of the book, the revolt and suicide of Boudicca (the victim turned resistance fighter) in the middle, and the murder of Octavia (the silent victim) instigated by Poppaea at the end. Moreover, not only living women populate the pages of the book, but also memories of dead women: Octavia evokes memories of Agrippina the Elder and Julia Livilla (14.63.2), Agrippina the Younger and Poppaea recall Livia and Messalina, and Boudicca brings to life Lucretia and Verginia, heroines of the republican past (cf. section 4.3.3.3).

#### 4.3.2.2 *Femininity and female power in the account of Boudicca’s revolt*

Femininity and female power play a major part in the account of Boudicca’s revolt in the *Annales*. Words denoting someone as female or describing someone or something as feminine occur sixteen times. The British defenders on Mona include women who behave as furies (14.30.2: *intercursantibus feminis, <quae> in modum furiarum ueste ferali, crinibus disiectis faces praeferebant*). Suetonius describes the defenders as a womanly and fanatic flock (14.30.2: *muliebre et fanaticum agmen*). Boudicca is introduced as the wife of the late king Prasutagus (14.31.1: *uxor eius Boudicca*). Their daughters are mentioned thrice (14.31.1: *filiae*; 14.35.1: *filiis ... filiarum*). The Roman women inside Camulodunum are in a frenzy, prophesising doom (14.32.1: *feminae in furore <m> turbatae adesse exitium canebant*), and these women have not been removed before the Britons arrive at the gates (14.32.2:

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<sup>485</sup> On Agrippina the Elder’s mixture of female virtues (1.33: fecundity, chastity, and conjugal love; cf. 4.12.2), female vices (6.25.2: ambition, impatience, and eagerness for power; cf. 2.72.2, 4.52.2), and male virtues (1.69.1-2: bravery), see Vidén (1993, 42-43) and Späth (2012, 447-448).

<sup>486</sup> Milnor 2012, 471-472.

*neque motis ... feminis*). Suetonius leaves behind those of the weak sex when abandoning Londinium (14.33.1: *imbellis sexus*). The Britons drag their wives with them to witness their victory (14.34.2: *coniuges quoque testes uictoriae secum traherent*). Boudicca swears in her speech that it is common for Britons to wage war with women as leaders (14.35.1: *feminarum ductu*). She also mentions the Roman outrages committed against old women and young girls (14.35.2: *senectam ... uirginitatem*),<sup>487</sup> and she ends the speech by making a contrast between herself as a mere woman and the men around her (14.35.2: *id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent*). Suetonius claims in his speech that there are more women than soldiers on the British side (14.36.1: *plus illic feminarum quam iuuentutis*). And the Romans cut down the British women during the retreat (14.37.1: *miles ne mulierum quidem neci temperabat*).

The sheer quantity of words used to designate women in the account (*femina, mulier, uxor, coniuges, filia, uirginitas, senecta, imbellis sexus, muliebre*), as well as the variety in their usage – they are applied to both Romans and Britons – imply that there is something more at stake than a distinction between masculine Romans and feminine Britons. Firstly, the feminisation of the Britons is not as clear as it might first appear: although the British force on Mona includes women, it is described as feminine and fanatic only by Suetonius. Similarly, Boudicca's Britons drag their wives with them to watch the battle, but not to fight, contrary to what Suetonius Paulinus seems to imply in his speech. That northern barbarians bring their women with them to battle is not unusual, and does not need to imply that gender roles are being subverted: in the *Germania*, Tacitus writes that the Germani, whose gender roles he praises (*Germ.* 18-19), bring their women to battle in order to provide moral support for their husbands and fathers (*Ger.* 7.2-8.1).<sup>488</sup>

Secondly, the Romans are not spared feminine connotations: the veterans in Camulodunum are frightened by omens and fail to calm down the frenzied women, the leaders have been more eager to decorate than to defend the

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<sup>487</sup> I follow Braund's (1996, 134) suggestion that Boudicca refers to herself with *senectam* and to her daughters with *uirginitatem*.

<sup>488</sup> Cf. *Hist.* 4.18.2, where the Batavian rebel Julius Civilis similarly stations his soldiers' women and children behind the ranks as *hortamenta uictoriae uel pulsus pudorem*. Braund (1996, 138) finds an intratext in the senatorial discussion at 3.33, where Severus Caecina claims that allowing the wives of Roman magistrates to accompany their husbands into the provinces would turn the Roman army into a barbarian procession (3.33.2: *Romanum agmen ad similitudinem barbari incessus conuertant*). Santoro L'Hoir (2006, 116) argues that the Britons are thoroughly emasculated.

province (14.31.4), the administration is characterised by avarice (14.32.3: *avaritia*) and lust (14.35.1: *cupidines*), and the behaviour of the veterans by license and lack of self-restraint (14.31.3: *impotentiam ... licentiae*). The expected distinction between barbarian femininity and Roman masculinity is not established until Suetonius returns from Mona and, with his *mira constantia* (14.33.1), takes control of the Roman war effort. This distinction, however, is then left in the balance by the arrival of the freedman Polyclitus, whom even the victorious Suetonius and his army passively obey (14.39.2: *oboedirent*).<sup>489</sup> Overall, the Britons, in spite of being led by a woman, are portrayed as manlier than the Roman men, if not those in Suetonius' army, then certainly those responsible for the outbreak of the revolt, not to mention those back in Rome.

Thirdly, the feminisation of Boudicca does not equate her with the female power players in Rome. The word *impotentia* is not attributed to Boudicca, but to her enemies, the Roman veterans (14.31.3: *impotentiam ueteranorum*).<sup>490</sup> Unlike Dio's Boudicca she does not seem to be involved in the atrocities committed by the Britons and, while the gendered rhetoric of her speech certainly is bold, it does not demonstrate any lack of self-control. Her forceful contrast between women who fight and die for freedom and men who obey and live in slavery puts her into the category of Tacitean women who demonstrate courage when men do not.<sup>491</sup> A closer comparison with the empresses in Rome (and with archetypal eastern queens such as Cleopatra and Semiramis) reveals instead the differences between them: Boudicca is not an adulterer, does not fight with stealth and poison, does not demand servile obedience, and does not aim for dominance.<sup>492</sup> In short, Tacitus plays

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<sup>489</sup> On the feminisation of the Romans, see also Adler 2011, 136-137 (in explicit disagreement with Shumate 2006, 103-104). On how the moral high-ground switches with the return of Suetonius Paulinus, see Braund 1996, 136. The contrast between emasculated Romans who obey a feminine man and manly Britons who obey a masculine woman is presented more explicitly (in the loud and clear voice of Boudicca herself) in Dio's account. However, the theme of femininity is largely confined to her speech, esp. the invocation of Andraste and the jibes at Nero: the Romans in Britain do not demonstrate feminine traits. On feminisation and eroticisation as rhetorical strategies of colonialism, see Spurr 1993, 170-183.

<sup>490</sup> Another common trait among the female power players in Rome is *atrocitia* (wildness): Agrippina the Elder is *semper atrox* (4.52.2), Agrippina the Younger is *atrox odii* (12.22.1), and Poppaea is *semper odio, tum et metu atrox* (15.61.1) and *atrocior saeuitia* (15.64.2). The term is not applied to Boudicca. I am not convinced by Santoro L'Hoir (2006, 139) that Boudicca demonstrates all the characteristics of *muliebris impotentia*.

<sup>491</sup> Cf. Agrippina the Elder (1.69) and Epicharis (15.51, 57).

<sup>492</sup> Nero, not Boudicca, is the imitator of Cleopatra; cf. the intertext between 15.37.4 (*ex illo contaminatorum grege*) and Hor *Od.* 1.37.6-10 (*contaminato cum grege turpium*); see also his transformation of Rome into Alexandria (Woodman 1992/1998a, 180-185; cf. Ash 2018,

on the femininity of Boudicca, but he has not turned her into a copy of his imperial female power players.

#### 4.3.2.3 *Cartimandua, Epicharis, and Octavia*

Cartimandua, Epicharis, and Octavia all share some traits with Boudicca, and therefore offer fruitful parallels: Cartimandua is a British queen, Epicharis a freedom fighter (of sorts), and Octavia an abandoned victim of the Roman order. Cartimandua is illustrative of what else Tacitus could do with a female British leader. She enters the extant *Annales* in the twelfth book as a key character in the account of Romano-British relations during the years AD 47-57 (12.31-40). When Caratacus, the leader of the British war-effort, is defeated in battle by the Roman legate Ostorius Scapula, he seeks sanctuary with Cartimandua in the hope of continuing the war from her kingdom. Cartimandua, however, hands him over to the Romans in chains (12.36.1): *ipse, ut ferme intuta sunt aduersa, cum fidem Cartimandus reginae Brigantum petiuisset, uinctus ac uictoribus traditus est.*<sup>493</sup> The loss of Caratacus does not curb the enthusiasm of the British tribes, however, who continue the fight under the leadership of Venutius, Cartimandua's ex-husband. At first the struggle is contained among the Brigantes, with Cartimandua and Venutius vying for power, but when the queen finds herself in a tight spot, the new Roman legate, A. Didius intervenes to rescue her and her throne (12.40.2-3).

Boudicca and Cartimandua share gender (woman) and role (leader), but not much else.<sup>494</sup> Firstly, while Boudicca enters the text as a wife and mother, Cartimandua is explicitly denoted a queen at her first mention (14.36.1:

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11, 175, 199). One might argue that Boudicca is portrayed differently than the female power players in Rome because she has different cards on her hand: she has an army to lead, not a husband to deceive. I am not convinced: firstly, Boudicca has different cards on her hand because Tacitus has given her different cards; as noted by Aldhouse-Green (2006, 87-88), Boudicca's absence from Prasutagus' will would have made it easy for Tacitus to imply some sort of factionalism within the Icenian royal house, lovers included (cf. Cartimandua, Venutius, and his squire at *Hist.* 3.45). Secondly, Boudicca does not take part in the British war effort until the very end: Tacitus has pointedly not created a wild warrior queen in the mould of Dio's Boudicca. In the words of Braund (1996, 145), "she is not an uncontrolled adulteress like Cartimandua or Messalina, or a man-eater like Dio's Boudica."

<sup>493</sup> Heubner 1994 spells her name *Cartimandus*, but she is generally known as Cartimandua.

<sup>494</sup> On similarities and differences between Boudicca and Cartimandua, see Braund (1996, 124-146) and Crawford (2002, 21-28).

*reginae*).<sup>495</sup> Her character is thus coloured by the negative connotations of queenship from the beginning. Secondly, Cartimandua was a staunch supporter of Rome during her entire reign. Her greatest service to Rome was her betrayal of Caratacus, the champion of British freedom (12.34: *libertas*).<sup>496</sup> She thus fits in rather well among the monarchs who were employed by Rome as instruments of slavery (*Agr.* 14.1: *instrumenta seruitutis*), and is uncomfortably similar to the bad collaborators in Rome.<sup>497</sup>

Thirdly, Boudicca and Cartimandua differ significantly in their marital status. Cartimandua is a divorced woman locked in a bitter fight against her anti-Roman ex-husband, a fight she fights with cunning tricks (12.40.3: *callidis artibus*).<sup>498</sup> Boudicca, on the other hand, is a widow exacting vengeance against the Romans who scorned the will of her late pro-Roman husband. Fourthly, Boudicca and Cartimandua come to different ends. While the fate of Prasutagus' will shows that no amount of obedience is a safe barrier against the lusts and desires of the Romans, the ultimate failure of Boudicca's revolt demonstrates that active resistance can also backfire horribly. Cartimandua, on the other hand, manages to cling to her throne, with some help from her Roman friends. Her eventual expulsion by Venutius in AD 69 falls outside the time period of the *Annales*, but is narrated in the *Historiae* (3.45). In sum, Tacitus portrays Boudicca as a far more positive, yet also more tragic, character than Cartimandua in the *Annales*.<sup>499</sup> Boudicca is a virtuous wife and mother, a victim of Roman oppression, a champion of British freedom, and a character who is given time and space to express

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<sup>495</sup> Braund 1996, 124-126. Berenice (*Hist.* 2.2, 2.81), daughter of Agrippa I of Judaea, is the only other person explicitly designated as queen (*regina*) in the Tacitean *corpus*; on Berenice, see Macurdy 1935.

<sup>496</sup> Braund 1996, 127-128; Crawford 2002, 21. Caratacus' nobility is demonstrated by his subsequent behaviour as a captive in Rome (12.36.2-37). It should be remembered, however, that the Britons of the *Annales* are not patriots (in the sense that they recognise a common British fatherland), so Cartimandua is perhaps not a traitor of her fatherland.

<sup>497</sup> On monarchs as instruments of slavery, see my discussion of Arminius' adversaries Segestes (1.57-58) and Flavus (2.9-19) in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2; cf. Italicus at 11.16-17. On the choice between collaboration, resistance, and suicide, see chapter 3 on the Thracian revolt, esp. section 3.3.2.1.

<sup>498</sup> Braund (1996, 135) notes the contrast between Cartimandua's struggle with Venutius and the marital harmony of Rhadamistus and Zenobia later in the same book (12.51).

<sup>499</sup> Schürenberg 1975, 79; Braund 1996, 131-132; Aldhouse-Green 2006, 121; Gillespie 2015, 405-406. Tacitus' portrayal of Cartimandua in the *Annales* is still significantly less scathing than in the *Historiae* (3.45). What is simply termed 'divorce' (12.40.2: *discidio*) in the *Annales*, is a fully-fledged adulterous affair with her husband's squire in the *Historiae* (Aldhouse-Green 2006, 128-129); also, the capture of Caratacus is explicitly denoted as treacherous, Cartimandua herself is described as ruthless, and her people rally against her.

herself. Cartimandua is an adulterous queen, a tool of Roman oppression, and an enemy of British freedom who is never allowed to defend her actions with words.

Boudicca has more in common with the freedwoman Epicharis, a key player in the Pisonan conspiracy against Nero in book 15. In spite of her disreputable past (15.51.1: *neque illi ante ulla rerum honestarum cura fuerat*), she conducts herself well under distressing circumstances. Like Boudicca, she belongs among the Tacitean women who act and show courage when men are passive and faint-hearted.<sup>500</sup> When her male co-conspirators are hesitating and postponing the deed (15.51.1: *cunctantibus prolatantibusque*), Epicharis attempts to advance the plot by persuading a naval officer in Misenum to join the conspiracy. When this fails and the officer accuses her in front of Nero, she stands her ground and gives nothing away (15.51). Later, when her male co-conspirators crumble under the slightest of interrogation and betray family member and friends in order to save themselves, she endures gruesome tortures without speaking, and eventually commits suicide to protect her allies (15.57).<sup>501</sup> The courage of this freedwoman is singled out in explicit contrast to the cowardice of the Roman noblemen around her (15.57.2): *clariore exemplo libertina mulier in tanta necessitate alienos ac prope ignotos protegendo, cum ingenui et uiri et equites Romani senatoresque intacti tormentis carissima suorum quisque pignorum proderent*. The only other place in the extant *Annales* where *uir* and *mulier* are contrasted is at the end of Boudicca's speech (14.35.2: *id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent*). In Epicharis case, the pleonasms *libertina mulier* and *ingenui et uiri et equites Romani senatoresque* add emphasis to the gender distinction.<sup>502</sup>

Like Epicharis, Boudicca reacts when there is no man present to avenge the injustices that she, her family, and her people have suffered. In her speech, she explicitly challenges the British men to match her own courage. Her commitment to freedom, dignity, and chastity is also pointedly

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<sup>500</sup> Braund 1996, 132; Crawford 2002, 26; Aldhouse-Green 2006, 123. On Epicharis, see Pagán (2004, 80-82) and Ash (2012c, 449-451 and 2018, *ad loc.* 15.51.1, 15.56.4). As noted by Milnor (2009, 280), stories of women are included "primarily as a means of framing the history of Roman men."

<sup>501</sup> Nero was thus mistaken in his belief that Epicharis' female body would be unequal to pain (15.57.1: *muliebre corpus impar dolori*); cf. Valerius Maximus' (6.1.1) remark that Lucretia, in spite of her *muliebre corpus*, had a *uirilis animus*; see also the outstanding example (*praeclaro exemplo*) of the unnamed woman who resists torture at *Hist.* 2.13.2 (Pagán 2004, 82; Ash 2018, *ad loc.*).

<sup>502</sup> Pagán 2004, 82; see also *muliebre corpus*, *illam*, and *femina* at 15.57.1 (Ash 2018, *ad loc.*).

contrasted to the absence of these values among the Romans, who submit meekly not only to Nero, but also to his freedman Polyclitus. In the words of Shumate, “the manly resolve of the British Queen Boudicca (*Ann.* 14.2) only serves to reinforce the idea of the utter absence of this quality in those whose proper province it ought to be: elite Roman males.”<sup>503</sup> Boudicca and Epicharis, then, are both unlikely heroes (a barbarian woman and a freedwoman with a disreputable past), both take an active part in a revolt against an oppressor, both are mistreated, both demonstrate courage when men do not, and both commit suicide when their cause is lost. They are forced out of their female spheres by the failure of men to act: Boudicca has no male relatives who are willing or capable to stand up to the Romans and demand revenge, and Epicharis is driven to action by the hesitancy of her cowardly male co-conspirators.

One woman of book 14 also deserves mention, namely Octavia, daughter of Claudius and wife and ex-wife of Nero: she too is mistreated by Roman males. However, while Boudicca takes on an active (male) role and revolts, Octavia remains (femininely, helplessly) passive. She has learned to conceal her emotions (13.16.4), is merely the pawn in the plans of others (Messalina at 11.32.2, 34.3; Agrippina at 13.18.2, 19.3), and does not speak until her death scene (14.64). She silently accepts her fate, and her murder does not lead to revolt: no avenger steps forth to lead a revolt in the name of freedom.<sup>504</sup>

### 4.3.3 Chastity, freedom, and exemplarity: the account of Boudicca as a ‘Lucretia-story’

The account of Boudicca’s revolt revolves around the connection between chastity (*pudicitia*) and freedom (*libertas*). The revolt erupts when the Romans treat the late king Prasutagus’ family and people as slaves (14.31.1, quoted in full in section 4.2.2.2): his widow Boudicca is whipped (*uerberibus adfecta*), their daughters are violated (*filiae stupro uiolatae*), the nobles are stripped of their ancestral properties (*auitis bonis exuuntur*), and the members of the royal family are held as menials (*inter mancipia habebantur*). The rebels persuade tribes not yet broken by slavery to join the fight to reclaim

<sup>503</sup> Shumate 2006, 92; cf. Roberts 1988, 126-127.

<sup>504</sup> One might compare Tacitus’ mute Octavia with the Octavia of the tragedy that bears her name: the Octavia of the *Octavia* is far more loquacious, although she speaks only with her nurse and the chorus, and thus remains an isolated figure. For an introduction to the structure and themes of the *Octavia*, see Boyle 2008, lviii-lxxv.



freedom (14.31.2: *nondum seruitio fracti resumere libertatem*). The hatred of the Britons is directed primarily against the Roman veterans, since they treat the Britons as slaves and captives and whose lack of self-restraint is abetted by the Roman soldiers who hope to exercise the same license (14.31.3: *captiuos, seruos, appellando, fouentibus impotentiam ueteranorum militibus similitudine uitae et spe eiusdem licentiae*). The connection between loss of freedom and corporal and sexual abuse is revisited in Boudicca's speech, where she presents herself as the avenger of lost freedom, her own whipped body, and the abused chastity of her daughters (14.35.1: *libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci. eo prouectas Romanorum cupidines, ut non corpora, ne senectam quidem aut uirginitatem impollutam relinquunt*). In short, the treatment to which the Britons are subjected is that of slaves by their masters: arbitrary corporal and sexual abuse.<sup>505</sup>

The traits used to characterise the Romans in the account are frequently assigned to tyrants: *licentia*, *impotentia*, *auaritia*, and *libido/cupido*. Like the power of a master over his slaves, the power of a tyrant over his people is arbitrary, and frequently entails corporal and sexual abuse. In other words, wherever arbitrary power is wielded, the people live as slaves and are subject to sexual abuse: just as freedom and chastity belong together, so do slavery (loss of freedom) and sexual abuse (loss of chastity).<sup>506</sup> The excessive desire of tyrants for forbidden women was an especially popular motif in Greco-Roman literature:<sup>507</sup> stories of ravaged chastity belong in tyrannies, since in tyrannies women are not protected against the lustful whims of the powerful. The connection between freedom and chastity means that rape is inextricably intertwined with revolution, since free citizen men are obliged to vindicate attacks on the chastity of their women.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> On slavery and sexual abuse, see Bradley 1987, 113-137. On the link between imperialist conquest and sexual abuse, see Aldhouse-Green (2006, 44-48) on the freeze in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor showing a divine Claudius violating a personified Britannia.

<sup>506</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence that Valerius Maximus' examples of *pudicitia* (6.1) are followed by those of *libertas* (6.2). On the link between sexual misbehaviour and political shortcomings in Roman literature, see Edwards 1993, esp. 24-28. As noted by Roller (2001, 245-246), what made the rule of the Roman emperors most obviously authoritarian was the arbitrariness with which their power was exercised; cf. Arena 2012, 29-30, 45-47. On sexual abuse of slaves, see Bradley 1987, 116-118.

<sup>507</sup> Hartog 1980/1988, 325-331; cf. Her. 3.31, 3.80-82, 6.62; on the character of the tyrant, see also Plat. *Rep.* 571a-576c.

<sup>508</sup> Henry and James 2012, 89-90; cf. Phillips 1979, 89-90. On the link between female chastity and male honour, see also Joshel 1992/2002, 174-175.

All extant emperors in the *Annales* (except Claudius, whose narrative is only partly preserved) commit sexual abuse: Augustus abducts Livia (1.10.5, 5.1.2), Tiberius defiles freeborn youngsters in royal fashion (6.1.1: *more regio*), and Nero's lusts and the lusts that are cultivated in Rome during his reign (*cupido, libido*) are a *leitmotif* of the Neronian books.<sup>509</sup> Unlike Augustus and Tiberius, who limit and/or conceal their debaucheries, Nero and his officials do not even hide their blatant transgressions of sexual decorum. The spread of sexual licentiousness is stopped neither in Rome (where Nero and the women and freedmen of his house wreaked havoc) nor, as we have seen, in the provinces.<sup>510</sup> However, only in Britain, under the leadership of Boudicca, is there any attempt to stop the debaucheries of the Neronian regime.

In the following analysis, I argue that Tacitus has constructed his account of Boudicca's revolt as a 'Lucretia-story', that is, as a story wherein the rape of a woman is the catalyst for revolt and political change.<sup>511</sup> I focus specifically on parallels with two Livian accounts of rape, revolution, and recovery of freedom: the rape of Lucretia leading to the revolt of L. Junius Brutus and the fall of the Roman monarchy (Liv. 1.57-60), and the attempted rape of Verginia leading to the second secession of the plebeians and the fall of the decemvirate (Liv. 3.43-48). The paradigmatic plot of the 'Lucretia-story' can be construed from these two Livian accounts: rape (or attempted rape), death of the victim, display of her body, speech of the avenger, anger of the people, revolt in the name of freedom, exile and death of the oppressor, and establishment of a new and more just political system. In the words of Joshel, "Livy's narrative of Rome's political transformation revolves around chaste, innocent women raped and killed for the sake of preserving the virtue of the body female and the body politic; Roman men stirred to action by men

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<sup>509</sup> For the lusts of Nero, see 13.12.2, 13.13.1, 13.17.2, 14.9.1, 14.13.2, 14.14.1, 14.22.4, 14.51.2, 15.33.1; for those of Agrippina the Younger, see 14.2.2; for Poppaea Sabina, see 13.45; for Rome in general, see 14.15, 15.37.2. On *libido* as a royal trait, see 6.42.2: *regiae libidini*. The connection between tyranny and sexual abuse is present also in Suetonius, most of whose Caesars are judged by their measure of self-restraint in the domain of passion and lust: *Caes.* 50-52, *Aug.* 69-71, *Tib.* 43-45, *Cla.* 33.2, *Ner.* 26-29, *Gal.* 22, *Tit.* 7.1, *Dom.* 22.

<sup>510</sup> Gowing (1990, 327) claims that Tacitus blames the outbreak of the revolt on Nero's deceitful dealings with Prasutagus. However, although Tacitus does not state so clearly, it appears (given that the mistreatment of the Britons occurs during Suetonius' brief absence) that the decision to disregard Prasutagus' will is made by the Roman provincial officials rather than by Nero (cf. the *avaritia* of the procurator Decianus Catus at 14.32.3). Thus, while the emperor is not guilty of deceit, he is certainly guilty of a lack of control over his Empire and its administration; cf. Classen 1988, 108.

<sup>511</sup> Kraus 1991; cf. Strunk 2014.

who take control; and lustful villains whose desires result in their own destruction.”<sup>512</sup> As noted by Kraus, the ‘Lucretia-story’ is used as a building block by Livy in his work.<sup>513</sup>

Versions and/or traces of the ‘Lucretia-story’ appear also in Tacitus. The account of Augustus’ abduction of Livia (5.1.2) is a reversed ‘Lucretia-story’: Livia’s relatives do not avenge the abduction, Augustus becomes emperor, and Livia – far from committing suicide – adroitly takes advantage of her new position of power.<sup>514</sup> Also in the account of Octavius Sagitta’s adulterous affair with Pontia are the key elements of the plot (playfully) reversed (13.44): Pontia, easily persuaded to disregard her chastity, is killed by Sagitta in a lover’s quarrel, and the exemplary act of the story is carried out by Sagitta’s freedman, who demonstrates his loyalty towards his patron by falsely (and unsuccessfully) claiming responsibility for the murder.<sup>515</sup> As

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<sup>512</sup> Joshel 1992/2002, 169. On Livy’s accounts of Lucretia and Verginia as examples of “Rome’s repetitive rape-revolution formula”, see Henry and James 2012, 89-92; cf. Williams (2009a, 77), Chaplin (2010, 60), Keith (2012, 395-396), Strunk (2014, 144-145), and Gillespie (2015, 408). For a broader treatment of Livy’s accounts of Lucretia and Verginia, see Geldner 1977: she discusses the similarities between their stories (13-24, 186-188), identifies their Greek models (25-34), and compares them with alternative versions in other authors (Lucretia: 35-70, 85-184. Verginia: 189-229).

<sup>513</sup> Kraus 1991 discusses the account of the Fabia sisters (Liv. 6.34.5-35-1); cf. the account of the violation and revenge of the Galatian Orgiatio’s wife (Liv. 38.24). For an example of Livy playing around with the ‘Lucretia-story’ and its expected plot structure, see Chaplin 2010 on the anti ‘Lucretia-story’ of Scipio and Allucius’ fiancé: Scipio pointedly does *not* violate the woman who has fallen into his power, and his abstinence secures for Rome a loyal ally.

<sup>514</sup> Strunk 2014; cf. Kraus 2009, 114.

<sup>515</sup> Sagitta falls madly in love (*amore uacors*; cf. Liv. 1.58.2: *amore ardens*) with a married woman (*mulieris nuptae*; cf. Liv. 1.58.6: *uxoris*), he tries to seduce her into adultery (*adulterium*; cf. Liv. 1.58.7: *adultero*), first with gifts (*ingentibus donis*) and later with pleas and threats (*modo conquiri, modo minitari*; cf. Liv. 1.58.3: *orare, miscere precibus minas*), he arrives with a single freedman (*uno cum liberto*; cf. Liv. 1.58.1: *cum comite uno*), he enters her bedroom with a sword (*ferrum*; cf. Liv. 1.82.2: *stricto gladio*), and the affair ends in death (*manifesta caedes*; cf. Liv. 1.59.8: *miserabili caede*). However, the story is obviously an anti ‘Lucretia-story’, Pontia an anti Lucretia character: Sagitta has little difficulty in persuading her to divorce her husband (*ut omitteret maritum, emercatur*; vs. Liv. 1.58.5: *obstinatam pudicitiam*), she hopes for an even richer suitor (*spe ditioris coniugis*), she accepts Sagitta’s request for a single night (*statuitur nox*), she entrusts custody over her bedroom to a slave girl (*Pontia consciae ancillae custodiam cubiculi mandat*; vs. Liv. 1.57.9: *[Lucretiam] deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas*), she seems to be as lustful as Sagitta (*libidini*), she is unafraid (*nihil metuentem*; vs. Liv. 1.58.5: *quo terrore*), the sword is hidden in Sagitta’s clothes (*ferrum ueste occultum*; vs. Liv. 1.58.11: *sub ueste [Lucretiae] abdutum*), she is killed by Sagitta (*ferro transuerberat*; vs. Liv. 1.58.11: *[Lucretia] eum [cultrum] in corde defigit*), and the exemplary character (*magnitudine exempli*; cf. 1.58.10: *Lucretiae exemplo*) of the story turns out to be neither the (adulterous and greedy) woman nor her (non-

we shall see, the account of Boudicca's revolt also turns out to be something of a reversed 'Lucretia-story': the similarities in theme and plot structure accentuate the difference in outcome. The parallels between Tacitus' account of Boudicca and the Livian accounts of Lucretia and Verginia have been discussed most extensively by Gillespie, who finds links not only to the two female heroines, but also to their respective male avengers, Brutus and Icilius, as well as to the courageous maiden Cloelia (Liv. 2.13.6-11). However, in contrast to Dio's Boudicca, who explicitly refers to (and rejects) specific female models, Tacitus' Boudicca does not mention any models by name.<sup>516</sup>

The multitude of past literary characters involved in the construction of Tacitus' Boudicca creates a complex, but fertile interpretive framework. As noted in my discussion of intertextuality in section 1.4.2.3, Roman writers, their characters, and their audiences were tuned to see intertextual connections as indicators of historical continuity and/or change. Events were seen in light of other events and literary characters were evaluated through the jungle of their potential models.<sup>517</sup> The Boudicca of the *Annales* evokes different models at different times and in different situations, and therefore defies unilateral judgement. Her potential for exemplarity is further complicated by her identity as a female barbarian leader: she is separated from Lucretia and Verginia by her ethnicity and position, and from Brutus and Icilius, as well as the male Roman reader, by her ethnicity and gender. Her actions need to be considered within a flexible ethical system which

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existing) avenger, but instead the adulterer's freedman. He demonstrates his loyalty towards his patron by trying to take the blame for the murder, claiming that he murdered Pontia in order to avenge the wrongs committed against his patron (*se patroni iniurias ultum esse*; cf. Liv. 2.7.4: *ultor uiolatae pudicitiae*), but his testimony is overturned by that of the slave girl, and Sagitta is condemned. On Pontia's adultery with Sagitta as a precursor to Poppaea's adultery with Nero (whose beginnings are narrated in the following chapter), see Santoro L'Hoir 1992, 139.

<sup>516</sup> Gillespie 2015 focuses specifically on the role of exemplarity in the accounts of Boudicca's revolt in the *Annales* and in Dio: while the Boudicca of the *Annales* implicitly emulates old Roman examples of chastity and courage, Dio's Boudicca explicitly models herself against eastern and Roman queens of the past and present and strives to become a new type of model altogether. On the parallels between Tacitus' Boudicca and Livy's Lucretia and Verginia, see also Santoro L'Hoir (2006, 140-141), Williams (2009a, 77), Adler (2011, 125-126), and Lavan (2013, 150).

<sup>517</sup> Cf. Keitel 1992, Ash 1998, Rutledge 1998, Marincola (2010, 278-279, 286-287), and Pelling (2013, 18-19). On the creation of literary characters from multiple sources, and the interpretative potential of such an amalgamation of personalities, see esp. Griffin's (1985, 191-197) discussion of character creation in the *Aeneid*.

takes her ‘otherness’ into consideration.<sup>518</sup> As noted by Gillespie, she belongs among those Tacitean characters whose exemplary value is tied to their position outside the Roman civic order.<sup>519</sup>

Before we look at specific parallels with the two Livian accounts from early Roman history, we should note that Tacitus has situated Boudicca’s revolt not only geographically but also temporally far away from Neronian Rome. This temporal separation from Rome is created primarily through two occurrences of *nondum* (‘not yet’), a useful word for giving a direction to history and noting how far someone has advanced on the scale from primitivism (and freedom) to civilisation (and slavery):<sup>520</sup> at the outbreak of the revolt it occurs in a description of the tribes not yet been broken into slavery (14.31.2: *nondum seruitio fracti*), and, at the arrival of Nero’s freedman Polyclitus, it occurs in a description of the Britons for whom freedom was still burning and the power of freedmen was not yet known (14.39.2): *sed hostibus inrisui fuit, apud quos flagrante etiam tum libertate nondum cognita libertinorum potentia erat; mirabanturque, quod dux et exercitus tanti belli confector seruitiis oboedirent*. The laughter of the Britons betrays their innocent ignorance about modern times.<sup>521</sup>

The Britons (in the latter example) are further antiquated through the verb *mirabantur*, which also has connotations of the mythical Golden Age.<sup>522</sup> The idea that there is a correlation between primitivism and distance from Rome,

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<sup>518</sup> On the situational variability inherent in the Roman ethical system, see Langlands 2011; on Boudicca as an example of situational variability in exemplary discourse, see Gillespie 2015, 409. On the importance of an intersectional perspective (considering social and legal status, age, and race in addition to gender) when interpreting the actions of female characters, see Späth 2012, 444.

<sup>519</sup> Gillespie 2015, 408-409; cf. Feldherr 1998, 218-225. On the differences between Livian and Tacitean *exempla*, see Luce 1991 on Livian ‘moral uplift’ vs. Tacitean ‘commemoration’; on exemplary actions carried out by unlikely characters (*argumentum ex minori*), see Quint. *Inst.* 5.11.9-10, Lausberg (1960, 231, §420 1b, β), Roller (2004, 6), and Turpin (2008, 367); cf. Sen. *Ben.* 3.23.2-4, *Ep.* 70.19-23.

<sup>520</sup> Cf. Catullus’ use of *nondum* in his description of the Golden Age at 64.386-387: *sese mortali ostendere coetu / caelicolae nondum sprete pietate solebant*. The expression *iam ... nondum*, although quite common in Latin literature, is a particular favourite of Tacitus: see esp. *Agr.* 13.1 (*iam domiti ut pareant, nondum ut seruiant*) and *Germ.* 44.1 (*trans Lugios Gotones regnantur, paulo iam adductius quam ceterae Germanorum gentes, nondum tamen supra libertatem*).

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Braund 1996, 140-141.

<sup>522</sup> On the motifs and images commonly associated with the the Golden Age, see Gale (1994, 161) and Campbell (2006, 4, 40-47). Note also the *mira constantia* (14.33.1) of Suetonius Paulinus and the *mira comitas* of Germanicus (1.33.2): in both cases an adjective with connotations of the Golden Age is paired with a virtue with connotations of the Roman Republic.

that is, that travelling away from Rome somehow equals travelling back in time, is not limited to Tacitus.<sup>523</sup> However, the temporal markers placing Boudicca's revolt in the past are more explicit than usual. In other words, not only do the Britons stand up for old-fashioned republican Roman values such as freedom and chastity, they also seem to inhabit an island of the past. This combination of the past and virtue is hardly surprising: as pointed out by Milnor, "the story of Roman virtue generally, and specifically domestic virtue, was for many authors a historical one, involving a contrast between an imagined honourable past and a vice-ridden present."<sup>524</sup> Boudicca not only emulates the two most famous female symbols of freedom in the republican past, she is also herself placed in a metaphorical past.<sup>525</sup>

#### 4.3.3.1 Livy's accounts of Lucretia (1.57-60) and Verginia (3.43-48)

Livy's account of the rape of Lucretia and the revolt to overthrow the kings can be divided into four acts.<sup>526</sup> In act one (*libido et uiolatio*), Sextus Tarquinius, son of king Tarquinius Superbus, is overcome by a wicked desire to debauch Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, aroused by her beauty and observed chastity (Liv. 1.57.10): *ibi Sex. Tarquinius mala libido Lucretiae per uim stuprandae capit; cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*. Sextus enters the house uninvited when Collatinus is away, and when persuasion fails, threatens to kill Lucretia and a slave and dishonour her by putting them in the same bed. In this way he overcomes her resolute chastity, has his way with her, and departs (Liv. 1.58.5): *quo terrore cum uicisset obstinatam pudicitiam uelut ui uictrix libido, profectusque inde Tarquinius ferox expugnato decore muliebri esset*. In act two (*mors mulieris infelicis*), Lucretia sends for her father and husband, urging each of them to bring a trusted friend. Collatinus brings L. Junius Brutus and her father brings Publius Valerius. When questioned about her well-being, Lucretia asks how she can be well when her chastity has been lost (Liv. 1.58.7): *quid enim salui est mulieri amissa pudicitia?* She tells them what has happened and demands that they pledge to avenge her (Liv. 1.58.7): *sed date dexteras fidemque haud impune adultero fore*. The men give their pledges and try to comfort her, saying that she bears

<sup>523</sup> On the metaphorical past wherein so-called noble savages tend to live, see O'Gorman (1993/2012, 112), Campbell (2006, 61-111), and Shumate (2006, 86-87).

<sup>524</sup> Milnor 2012, 459.

<sup>525</sup> Nero, on the other hand, is more concerned with emulating royal charioteers of the past (14.14.1): *concertare equis regium et antiquis ducibus factitatum memorabat*.

<sup>526</sup> For other versions of the story, see Ov. *Fast.* 2.685-856, Val. Max. 6.1.1 and D.H. 4.64-85. Ogilvie (1965, 219) notes that the rape of Lucretia is inspired by Greek stories of the overthrow of tyrannies, e.g. the Peisistratids; see also Xenocrite at Plut. *De Mul. Virt.* 26.

no guilt. She, however, replies that no unchaste woman shall henceforth live with her as an example (Liv. 1.58.10: *nec ulla deinde impudica Lucretiae exemplo uiuet*), and plunges a dagger into her heart.

In act three (*oratio et monstratio*), Brutus pulls out the knife, swears to avenge Lucretia's most chaste blood, and takes the gods as witnesses that he will expel the king and his family, and not allow anyone to rule as king in Rome ever again (1.59.1): "*per hunc,*" inquit [Brutus], "*castissimum ante regiam iniuriam sanguinem iuro, uosque, di, testes facio me L. Tarquinius Superbum cum scelerata coniuge et omni liberorum stirpe ferro, igni, quacumque denique ui possim, exsecuturum nec illos nec alium quemquam regnare Romae passurum.*" The others swear to follow Brutus' lead and their grief is turned into anger (Liv. 1.59.2): *totique ab luctu uersi in iram*. They bring Lucretia's body to the forum (Liv. 1.59.3-4): *elatum domo Lucretiae corpus in forum deferunt*. The people gather around, moved by the father's sadness as well as by Brutus' castigations of their tears and exhortations to take up weapons like real men and real Romans (Liv. 1.59.4): *quod uiros, quod Romanos deceret*. Brutus travels to Rome and gives a speech in the forum. He starts with Sextus' lust and the rape and death of Lucretia (Liv. 1.59.8: *de ui ac libidine Sex. Tarquini, de stupro infando Lucretiae et miserabili caede*), moves on to more general accusations against the Tarquins, and finishes by urging them to expel the king and his family. In act four (*rebellio ad libertatem*), Tarquinius Superbus finds the gates of Rome closed against him, while Brutus is received in the camp as a liberator of the city (Liv. 1.60.2): *liberatorem urbis laeta castra accepere*.<sup>527</sup> The Tarquins are exiled, Sextus ends up being murdered by other enemies, and consuls are elected in Rome. The emergence of republican freedom, then, is intimately connected to a story of avenged chastity.<sup>528</sup>

As Lucretia plays a major part in the overthrow of the autocratic monarchy of the Tarquins, so Verginia is a key character in the overthrow of the autocratic decemvirs and their leader Appius Claudius. In the words of Feldherr, "the political enslavement of the entire state to the *regnum* of Appius again reveals itself in an attack on the freeborn status of one

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<sup>527</sup> For Brutus as a liberator, see also Liv. 1.56.8: *liberator ille populi Romani animus*.

<sup>528</sup> In the words of Milnor (2009, 282), Lucretia "is directly responsible for perhaps the most significant political change in early Roman history." Cf. Strunk 2014, 145: "So out of the suffering of Lucretia rises the Republic, wherein power is shared and tyrannical vices are subdued through the virtue of *libertas*."

individual woman.”<sup>529</sup> The account is introduced as the second of two grim acts (the first being the murder of Lucius Siccius, a soldier advocating the election of tribunes and secession) carried out by the decemvirs in 449 BC (Liv. 3.44.1): *sequitur aliud in urbe nefas ab libidine ortum, haud minus foedo euentu quam quod per stuprum caedemque Lucretiae urbe regnoque Tarquinius expulerat, ut non finis solum idem decemuiris qui regibus sed causa etiam eadem imperii amittendi esset. Ap. Claudium uirginis plebeiae stuprandae libido cepit*. Livy connects his account of Verginia explicitly with that of Lucretia: he notes that both ended tragically (in the death of the respective women) and that not only did the decemvirs meet the same end as the kings (expulsion), the cause of their end was also the same (lust).<sup>530</sup>

When Appius Claudius fails to overcome Verginia’s chastity through presents and promises, he orders one of his clients to exploit the absence of her father (on military service) to claim her as his slave (Liv. 3.44.4-5):

hanc uirginem adultam forma excellentem Appius amore amens pretio ac spe perlicere adortus, postquam omnia pudore saepta animaduuerat, ad crudelem superbamque uim animum conuertit. M. Claudio clienti negotium dedit ut uirginem in seruitutem adsereret neque cederet secundum libertatem postulantibus uindicias, quod pater puellae abesset locum iniuriae esse ratus.

This first attempt to seize Verginia is thwarted by the intervention of Publius Numitorius (her grandfather) and Lucius Icilius (her betrothed). Icilius delivers a speech in defence of plebeian freedom, arguing that chastity must be safeguarded (Liv. 3.45.8-9): *non, si tribunicium auxilium et prouocationem plebi Romanae, duas arces libertatis tuendae, ademistis, ideo in liberos quoque nostros coniugesque regnum uestrae libidini datum est*.

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<sup>529</sup> Feldherr 1998, 204; cf. Ogilvie 1965, *ad loc.* As noted by Haberman (1980, 8), the story of Verginia (whose name makes the issue of chastity perfectly clear) was probably invented to explain the fall of the decemvirs.

<sup>530</sup> As noted by Feldherr (1998, 204), Sextus Tarquinius and Appius Claudius are both taken captive by lust (Liv. 1.57.10: *ibi Sex. Tarquinius mala libido Lucretiae per uim stuprandae capit*; Liv. 3.44.1: *Ap. Claudium uirginis plebeiae stuprandae libido cepit*). Lucretia and Verginia are mentioned together also by Cicero (*Fin.* 2.66, 5.64), Valerius Maximus (6.1.1-2: the two first examples of *pudicitia*), Silius Italicus (13.821-827), and in the *Octavia* (294-299a), where the chorus brings up the stories of Verginia (296: *uirgo dextra caesa parentis*) and Lucretia (302: *nata Lucreti*) as models for revolts undertaken to avenge (295: *ulti*) sexual abuse of women. The chorus, like Livy, notes that the stories of Lucretia and Verginia are similar both in cause, that is, lust (298-299: *uictrix / dira libido*; 303: *stuprum saeui ... tyranni*), and consequence, that is, the expulsion of tyrants (294-294a: *illi reges hac expulerant / urbe superbos*; 297: *ne seruitium paterere graue*). On the roles of Lucretia and Verginia in the *Octavia*, see Boyle 2008, 158-159.



*saeuite in tergum et in ceruices nostras: pudicitia saltem in tuto sit.* Icilius ends his speech with a promise to die fighting rather than betray his betrothed (Liv. 3.45.11): *me uindicantem sponsam in libertatem uita citius deseret quam fides.*

The following morning Verginius, Verginia's father, enters the forum with his daughter and procures support from the people. He reminds them of his military services and asks for what purpose the city is kept safe from foreign enemies, if one's children have to suffer the outrages which befall those of a captured city. Appius Claudius, unmoved, assigns Verginia to slavery and calls in a force of soldiers. Verginius, realising that he cannot protect his daughter, pulls Verginia aside, grabs a knife, and plunges it into her breast, claiming that this is the only way that he can guarantee her freedom. Then, turning to Appius Claudius, he curses him with the blood of his daughter (Liv. 3.48.5): *"hoc te uno quo possum" ait "modo, filia, in libertatem vindico." pectus deinde puellae transfigit respectansque ad tribunal "te" inquit, "Appi, tuumque caput sanguine hoc consecro.*" While Verginius flees the scene, Icilius and Numitorius exhibit Verginia's body to the people, reproach Appius, lament the girl's death, and defend her father's action (Liv. 3.48.7): *Icilius Numitoriusque exsangue corpus sublatum ostentant populo; scelus Appi, puellae infelicem formam, necessitatem patris deplorant.*

The people see the occasion as a possibility to reclaim their freedom (Liv. 3.49.1): *concitatur multitudo partim atrocitate sceleris, partim spe per occasionem repetendae libertatis.* When the public heroes L. Valerius and M. Horatius arrive, Appius Claudius takes refuge in a nearby house. Verginius makes his way to the army and, in an emotional speech to the soldiers, narrates his story, defends his actions, calls for vengeance, and urges them to defend their families from the lusts of Appius Claudius (Liv. 3.50.5-9). The soldiers respond by shouting that they will neglect neither his pain nor their own freedom (Liv. 3.50.10): *haec Verginio uociferanti succlamabat multitudo nec illius dolori nec suae libertati se defuturos.* After the army has marched to Rome and occupied the Sacred Mount, Valerius and Horatius persuade the decemvirs to step down and are received in the camp as the undoubted champions of freedom (Liv. 3.53.2: *liberatores haud dubie*). The tribunican power and the right to appeal are restored, the decemvirs are offered an amnesty and promptly resign, the plebeians return peacefully to the city where they elect tribunes, and Valerius and Horatius are elected consuls and immediately bring legislation in favour of the plebeians (Liv. 3.53-55). Verginius brings an accusation against Appius Claudius, who subsequently commits suicide (Liv. 3.58.6: *Appius mortem sibi consciuit*).

Spurius Oppius, another decemvir, also commits suicide in the face of an impending trial, and the remainder flee into exile (Liv. 3.58.7-10).<sup>531</sup>

#### 4.3.3.2 A Tacitean 'Lucretia-story'

There is a clear thematic connection among Tacitus' account of the rape of Boudicca's daughters and revolt of Boudicca in the *Annales*, Livy's account of the rape of Lucretia and revolt of Brutus, and Livy's account of the attempted rape of Verginia and revolt of the plebeians: they are all stories about violated chastity leading to armed revolt in the name of freedom.<sup>532</sup>

Moreover, the four-act plotline of the Livian accounts, with some change in sequence, is strikingly similar to that of the account of Boudicca's revolt. The lust of an oppressor leads to the violation of a noblewoman (*libido et uiolatio*): Suetonius Paulinus invades Mona desiring to match the prestige of Corbulo (14.29.2: *Corbulonis concertator, receptaeque Armeniae decus aequare domitis perduellibus cupiens*; cf. Sextus' *mala libido* at Liv. 1.57.10 and Appius Claudius' *libido* at Liv. 3.44.1), and in his absence the slaves of the Roman governor physically abuse Boudicca and rape her daughters (14.31.1: *Boudicca uerberibus adfecta et filiae stupro uiolatae sunt*; cf. Sextus' rape of Lucretia at Liv. 1.58.5).<sup>533</sup>

The abused bodies are shown to the public and used to inflame their passions (*oratio et monstratio*): Boudicca exhibits not only herself, but also her raped daughters, to the British army (14.35.1: *Boudicca curru filias prae se uehens*; cf. Brutus' exhibition of Lucretia's body at Liv. 1.59.3 and Icilius and Numitorius' exhibition of Verginia's body at Liv. 3.48.7). The rape and exhibition of Boudicca's daughters are especially revealing: they do not

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<sup>531</sup> The story of Verginia seems to have been narrated in some detail also by Cicero, but his account in *de Republica* is only fragmentarily preserved (Cic. *Rep.* 2.63.2): *nota scilicet illa res et celebrata monumentis plurimis litterarum, cum Decimus quidam Verginius uirginem filiam propter unius ex illis decemuiris intemperiem in foro sua manu interemisset, ac maerens ad exercitum qui tum erat in Algido confugisset, milites bellum illud, quod erat in manibus, reliquisse, et primum montem sacrum, sicut erat in simili causa antea factum, deinde Auentinum ar\** (Text from Zetzel 1995). Dionysius of Halicarnassus' (*Ant. Rom.* 11.28-44) account breaks off with the army encamped on the Aventine and the decemvirs weighing their options.

<sup>532</sup> Adler 2011, 124-125; Gillespie 2015, 413-418.

<sup>533</sup> Cf. the speeches of Brutus (Liv. 1.59.8: *ibi oratio habita ... de ui ac libidine Sex. Tarquini, de stupro infando Lucretiae et miserabili caede*) and Boudicca (14.35.1: *eo prouectas Romanorum cupidines, ut non corpora, ne senectam quidem aut uirginitatem impollutam relinquunt*).

appear in Dio and their (living) bodies play the same role as the (dead) bodies of Lucretia and Verginia in Livy's accounts.<sup>534</sup>

A revolt is sparked in the name of freedom (*rebellio ad libertatem*): the Britons revolt against the slavery imposed by Rome (14.31.1: *propinqui regis inter mancipia habebantur*, 14.31.2: *seruitio*, 14.35.2: *seruient*; cf. the slavery imposed by the tyrannical king at Liv. 1.59.9 and Liv. 1.57.2, and the slavery imposed by the decemvirs at Liv. 3.56.4: *seruitutem* and Liv. 3.44.5: *seruitutem*) in order to avenge violated chastity (14.35.1: *contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ... ulcisci*; cf. Brutus' oath to avenge Lucretia at Liv. 1.59.1, his designation as *ultor uiolatae pudicitiae* at Liv. 2.7.4, and Verginius' wish to avenge his daughter at Liv. 3.50.7 and 3.51.4) and reclaim their lost freedom (14.31.1: *resumere libertatem*, 14.35.1: *libertatem amissam*;<sup>535</sup> cf. the designation of Brutus as *liberatorem urbis* at Liv. 1.60.2, the designation of Rome as free at 1.60.3 and 2.1.1-2, and the desire of the Romans to reclaim their freedom at Liv. 3.49.1).<sup>536</sup>

There are two major differences between the plots. Firstly, Boudicca's death (*mors mulieris infelicis*) occurs at the end rather than at the beginning. Secondly, her revolt fails: her own revolt is defeated and her eventual suicide, although it does not spell the end of the revolt (as in Dio), fails to inspire the Britons to substantially renew their war-effort.<sup>537</sup> While both Sextus Tarquinius and Appius Claudius die, in Britain dies only the anonymous and unfortunate Roman prefect Poenius Postumus: the avaricious procurator Catus Decianus simply flees to Gaul.

The similarities between the causes of revolt and the rhetoric of the rebel leaders are especially conspicuous. As noted by Feldherr, Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia are structured around the issue of illegitimate use of

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<sup>534</sup> Cf. Gillespie 2015, 414-416. Boudicca's exhibition of her daughters is reminiscent of the arrival of Agrippina the Elder (she too recently widowed and hoping for revenge; cf. 2.75.1: *ultionem ... ultionis*) in Italy with her children Gaius (Caligula) and Julia Livilla at 3.1.4: *postquam duobus cum liberis, feralem urnam tenens, egressa nauis defixit oculos*.

<sup>535</sup> The expression *libertatem amissam* (14.35.1) seems to be an allusion to Lucretia's *amissa pudicitia* (Liv. 1.58.7); while somewhat tenuous on its own, the link is corroborated by the occurrence of the phrase *amissa uirtute pariter ac libertate* in the *Agricola* (11.4), shortly after Livy is mentioned by name (10.3).

<sup>536</sup> Note also the rebels' shared characteristic of *ferocia/ferocitas*, Boudicca's Britons at 14.34.2 (*fero<ci>*) and 14.38.3 (*praeferoces*), and Brutus' Romans at 1.59.5 (*ferocissimus quisque iuuenum*); cf. the opponents of Augustus at 1.2.2: *ferocissimi*. On the ambiguous semantic field of *ferocia/ferocitas* (from 'boldness' and 'spiritedness' to 'savagery' and 'arrogance'), see Traub 1953 and Penella 1990, 211-212.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Gillespie 2015, 418.

public authority for private gratification.<sup>538</sup> Similarly, Boudicca's revolt is caused by the illegitimate (the Romans disregard the king's will) mistreatment of the Britons and the Roman veterans' license and lack of self-restraint (14.31.3: *impotentiam ... licentia*). In the key speeches of the accounts, the choice is between death and freedom: Boudicca declares herself ready to die for freedom (14.35.2), Brutus swears that he will not allow anyone to rule in Rome as king again (Liv. 1.59.1), and Verginius kills his daughter to save her from slavery and rape (Liv. 3.48.5; cf. 3.50.6: *sibi uitam filiae sua cariorem fuisse, si liberae ac pudicae uiuere licitum fuisset: cum uelut seruam ad stuprum rapi uideret, morte amitti melius ratum quam contumelia liberos*). There are also parallels in the use of gendered rhetoric: Boudicca's quip at 14.35.2 (*id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent*) is reminiscent of Brutus' exhortation to revolt (Liv. 1.59.4: *quod uiros, quod Romanos deceret*) and the reply of the rebellious soldiers to the decemvirs (Liv. 3.50.13: *et uiros et armatos se esse respondentur*).

The intertexts with the Livian accounts of Lucretia and Verginia assume an added significance since Livy employs a 'dramatic' (in the sense 'inspired by the style, structure, and language of dramatic performance') vocabulary, and in this way makes a connection between autocracy and the excesses of dramatic performances.<sup>539</sup> Nero, after all, was the dramatic emperor par excellence. It is quite fitting, then, that the account of Boudicca's revolt should allude to these two Livian accounts of revolt against autocrats with a flair for the dramatic. The events in Britain illustrate a potential consequence of such an excessive, unconstrained, and arbitrary way of 'performing' government: revolt.

#### 4.3.3.3 Damsel in distress

The parallels in theme and plot between the accounts are strengthened by the parallels between the female protagonists. Boudicca not only starts out as a passive victim of abuse, she is also surrounded by an aura of Romanness (the will of her late husband, her dedication to Roman values).<sup>540</sup> When it comes

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<sup>538</sup> Feldherr 1998, 204.

<sup>539</sup> On Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia as 'dramatic', see Feldherr 1998, 194-212; on Livy's work as a whole as 'dramatic', see Feldherr 1998, 7-12, 165-217; cf. esp. Tullia driving a chariot over her father's corpse at Liv. 1.48.7. On the origins of the Roman historical tradition in drama, see Wiseman 1998. On how tyrannical rule is based on show because there can be no true dialogue between tyrant and subject, see Haynes 2014, 44; cf. Ash (2018, 8-9) on how Nero is portrayed as a "reactive vessel or conduit, empty of substance, but constantly filling with emotions triggered by his immediate experiences."

<sup>540</sup> Braund 1996, 134-138, 141-144; Crawford 2002, 25-27; Adler 2011, 125-127, 138, 143.

to character traits, however, only Lucretia resembles her.<sup>541</sup> Both are married noblewomen. Both are described with the terms *mulier* (14.35.2; cf. Liv. 1.58.2, 1.58.7) and *uxor* (14.31.1; cf. Liv. 1.57.5, 58.6), rather than *femina* and *coniunx*.<sup>542</sup> Both put great value on chastity: Lucretia commits suicide to avoid becoming an example for unchaste women (Liv. 1.58.10), and Boudicca leads a revolt to avenge the lost chastity of her daughters (14.35.1). Both react bravely to their mistreatment: Lucretia demands that her family and friends avenge her (Liv. 1.58.7), and Boudicca takes up the mantle of vengeance herself (14.35).<sup>543</sup> Both commit suicide: Lucretia does so after having ensured that the men will avenge her (Liv. 1.58.10), while Boudicca, deprived of male avengers, commits suicide after her defeat in battle (14.37.3). The suicide parallel is especially noteworthy, since Tacitus seems to have invented Boudicca's suicide specifically for his account in the *Annales*: Dio's Boudicca succumbs to a disease and Tacitus does not specify how Boudicca dies in the *Agricola*.<sup>544</sup> While the use of poison perhaps evokes Cleopatra (Hor. *Ep.* 1.37),<sup>545</sup> the circumstances that lead to her suicide are clearly reminiscent of Lucretia.

Tacitus' Boudicca, however, is not a copy of Lucretia either. First and foremost, she is a far more active character.<sup>546</sup> While both start out as fairly

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<sup>541</sup> Verginia is a markedly different character. She is younger, unmarried, and of lower class: a plebeian *puella/uirgo* attacked in the forum rather than a patrician *femina/uxor* in her bedroom; her low rank means that she is in danger of actual, literal enslavement.

Furthermore, she is an even more passive character than Lucretia: she does not speak, and she is killed by her father rather than by herself; cf. Haberman 1980, 9: "Verginia in reality is nothing more than a pawn, a token, over which three important men fight."

<sup>542</sup> British wives are usually *coniuges*: 12.34, 12.36.3, 12.37.4, 14.34.2, *Agr.* 15.4, 27.2, 31.1, 38.1; the only other British *uxor* is Caratacus' wife at 12.35.3. Roman wives are always *uxores* in the *Agricola* (6.1, 43.4, 44.4, 45.5, 46.3), unless spoken about by Britons (32.2); as noted by Adams (1972, 254), *coniunx* appears only in books 12-14 of the *Annales* (12.51.1, 12.51.2, 12.64.2, 12.65.1, 13.32.2, 14.34.2, 14.59.3, 14.60.5), where it is used side by side with *uxor* for Roman as well as non-Roman wives. Tullia, the wicked consort of Tarquinius Superbus, is referred to both as *coniunx* (Liv. 1.59.1, 11) and *uxor* (Liv. 1.46.2), both *femina* (Liv. 1.46.7) and *mulier* (Liv. 1.47.1). On the distinction between *uxor* and *coniunx*, see Axelson (1945, 57-58) and Adams (1972, 252-253): *coniunx* appears more often in poetry, in certain formulae, and on epitaphs.

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Dido's call for an avenger at Verg. *Aen.* 4.625-629.

<sup>544</sup> Walser 1951, 130; Braund 1996, 139; Williams 2009a, 37-38; Adler 2011, 145; Gillespie 2015, 418.

<sup>545</sup> Braund 1996, 143. On Cleopatra and her suicide by poison, see Verg. *Aen.* 8.696-697, 707-713, and Hor. *Od.* 1.37.25-32; cf. Sophoniba's suicide by poison at Liv. 30.15. Dido commits suicide by sword and fire (Verg. *Aen.* 4.642-705), Amata hangs herself (Verg. *Aen.* 12.593-613). On the tragic connotations of female suicide, see Loraux 1985/1987.

<sup>546</sup> On the passivity of Lucretia and Verginia, see Joshel 1992/2002, 180-184.

apolitical characters – Boudicca is not mentioned in her husband’s will, Lucretia is safely stacked away at home working on her loom – their abuse makes them pregnant with political potential. Lucretia, however, in spite of her bravery, remains constrained by the limitations imposed upon her female body. The only way that she can make a difference is by committing suicide, by negating her own existence. Indeed, in order to give moral legitimacy to the subsequent revolt and to provide the men with a symbol to rally around (as well as to make sure that her example cannot be used to defend unchaste behaviour by future Roman wives), she needs to kill herself.<sup>547</sup> So, although she is crucial for the emergence of freedom in Rome, she is so primarily as a passive victim of oppression and a pleader for vengeance. The actual business of revolt she leaves to the men.<sup>548</sup> Boudicca also starts out as a passive, abused character. However, as she is pointedly devoid of male relatives, she takes on the role of avenger herself. The distinction between the passive Lucretia and the active Boudicca is well illustrated by the control they exercise over their own and others’ bodies. Lucretia’s importance (like that of Verginia) revolves around what others do to her body: her beauty and observed chastity cause Sextus to desire her (1.57.10: *cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*), the violation of her body (1.58.7: *corpus ... uiolatum*) provokes the oath to expel the kings, and the combination of Brutus’ speech and the sight of her violated body, carried into the forum (1.59.3: *Lucretiae corpus in forum deferunt*), spurs the Romans to rebel. Boudicca, on the other hand, although at first reduced to a body by the Romans (14.35.1: *confectum uerberibus corpus*), then exhibits her own body and the bodies of her daughters (14.35.1: *curru filias prae se uehens*) while delivering her pre-battle speech.

#### 4.3.3.4 *Virtuous avenger of violated chastity*

However, that Boudicca parts company also with Lucretia does not mean that the parallel with the Livian accounts is an interpretative dead-end.<sup>549</sup> The

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<sup>547</sup> On the necessity for Lucretia and Verginia to die, see Joshel 1992/2002, 178-180.

<sup>548</sup> Joshel 1992/2002, 176: “Male heroes, not raped women, carry forward the main trajectory of Livy’s work – the history of the Roman state.” Cf. Haberman 1980, 9: “their [Lucretia’s and Verginia’s] existence is due to the need for martyrs to the idea of freedom.”

<sup>549</sup> Adler claims that (2011, 125), “Boudicca is not personally the victim of sexual violence, and she certainly does not respond in the same fashion as that attributed to Lucretia.” The objections are tenuous: although the nature of the mistreatment that she suffers is not specified, Boudicca is indeed physically abused by her oppressors (14.31.1, 14.35.1), and although she does not commit suicide immediately, she does in fact do so at the end (14.37.3).

point of imitation, after all, is not repetition, but variation: in the words of Pelling, “intertextuality is often most interesting when it underlines differences as much as similarities, or differences within similarities.”<sup>550</sup> The points where Boudicca parts company with the two women are also the points where she resembles their avengers, Brutus, Icilius, and Verginius.<sup>551</sup> In fact, Boudicca seems to have as much in common with the male avenger as with the woman avenged. I will focus first on the parallels with Brutus, and then on those with Icilius and Verginius.

Both Boudicca and Brutus are leaders (*duces*) of an army: Brutus is explicitly designated as *dux* (Liv. 1.59.5: *duce Bruto*), and Boudicca refers to her own leadership within the context of other female leaders (14.35.1: *feminarum ductu*). Although they are both members of the upper-class – Brutus as son of the king’s sister (Liv. 1.56.7), Boudicca as wife of the late king (14.31.1) – they are also unlikely leaders: Brutus feigned stupidity to stay alive under the kings (Liv. 1.56.8: *ergo ex industria factus ad imitationem stultitiae*). Boudicca was a woman. Both are freedom fighters and avengers of violated chastity: Brutus is specifically designated as such by Livy (Liv. 2.1.8: *uindex libertatis*; 2.7.4: *ultor uiolatae pudicitiae*), and Boudicca claims in her speech that she is avenging not only the lost freedom of her people and her own mistreatment, but also the violated chastity of her daughters (14.35.1: *libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci*). Both deliver speeches denouncing tyranny: Brutus speaks twice, first in the forum in Collatia (Liv. 1.59.4-5) and then in the forum in Rome (Liv. 1.59.7-11). Boudicca speaks on the battlefield (14.35). Both bring in the gods as avengers (14.35.2: *deos iustae uindictae*; Liv. 1.59.10: *ultores parentum di*).<sup>552</sup>

At one point, all three (Boudicca, Lucretia, and Brutus) come together. They all play on gender roles when exhorting their followers: Lucretia urges her family and friends to act as men (Liv. 1.58.7: *si uos uiri estis, pestiferum hinc abstulit gaudium*). Brutus calls upon his men to take up arms as men and Romans (Liv. 1.59.4: *quod uiros, quod Romanos deceret, arma capiendi aduersus hostilia ausos*), and notes the disgrace that Roman men are forced to carry out servile work (Liv. 1.59.9: *Romanos homines, uictores omnium*

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<sup>550</sup> Pelling 2013, 7; on imitation and variation, see Nilsson 2010, esp. 198.

<sup>551</sup> Cf. Gillespie 2015, 414-417.

<sup>552</sup> According to Ogilvie (1965, 219), Livy’s Brutus would have reminded his audience of Brutus the tyrannicide. Tacitus’ account, then, alludes to an account which alludes to the Roman civil wars of the Late Republic: a line is drawn from Lucius Junius Brutus via Marcus Junius Brutus to Boudicca.

*circa populorum, opifices ac lapicidas pro bellatoribus factos*).<sup>553</sup> Boudicca finishes her speech by lashing out at those men who might prefer to live in slavery rather than die for freedom (14.35.2: *uiuere uiri et seruirent*). The possibility for Boudicca to imitate both Lucretia and Brutus is alleviated by the verbal parallel between the two Romans in Livy (1.56.12: [Brutus] *prolapsus cecidisset*; cf. 1.58.11: [Lucretia] *prolapsaque in uolnus moribunda cecidit*). Boudicca, at different times and in different situations, embraces the roles of Lucretia and Brutus.<sup>554</sup>

The connection between Boudicca and Brutus is strengthened by the appearance of another (failed) imitator of Brutus in book 14, namely Rubellius Plautus (14.22.1-3): Plautus, like Brutus, is a man of noble family (*nobilitas*), respectful towards his ancestors (*placita maiorum colebat*), serious (*habitu seuro*), and lord of a chaste and private house (*casta et secreta domo*), who tries to conceal himself from the emperor (*quantoque metu occultior, tanto plus famae adeptus*). However, when a comet is interpreted as portending the end of Nero's rule and the people point to Plautus as the natural successor (cf. the portent predicting the power of Brutus at Liv. 1.56.4-13), Nero forces him into exile. It is unclear whether his failure to challenge Nero is caused by the greediness and ambition of those who promoted him prematurely, or his own cowardice.<sup>555</sup> The murder of Plautus at 14.59.2 is followed immediately by the beginning of the end for Octavia, devoid of male assistance. The Neronian *Annales* have aptly been termed "*Hamlet without the Prince*",<sup>556</sup> book 14 of the *Annales* could just as aptly be termed "The origins of Rome without Brutus, except in Britain where Boudicca combines the roles of Lucretia and Brutus but is ultimately defeated and tyranny remains." Indeed, the book is an orgy of unpunished sexual debauchery (14.1-2: Nero's adultery with Poppaea, incest between Nero and Agrippina the Younger, Agrippina the Younger's adultery with Lepidus and Pallas, Nero's affair with Acte, incest between Claudius and Agrippina the Younger; 14.9.1 Nero's praise of his dead mother's body; 14.60.1: the marriage of Nero and Poppaea) and mistreatment of women (14.8: murder of Agrippina the Younger; 14.31.1: abuse of Boudicca and her

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<sup>553</sup> Haberman 1980, 10.

<sup>554</sup> Cf. Späth 2012, 448-450 (on Epicharis): "gender stereotypes can apparently be set without any difficulty alongside characters refuting the prevailing stereotypes."

<sup>555</sup> Rubellius Plautus joins company with Germanicus (cf. section 2.3.2.3) and C. Calpurnius Piso (cf. section 3.3.2.1) among those whose decision not to challenge the emperor prompts questions of virtual history; on Agricola as man who died without testing the limits, see Haynes 2010, 41.

<sup>556</sup> Malloch 2009, 1.



daughters; 14.33: slaughter of Roman women in Britain; 14.37.1: slaughter of British women; 14.60-64: exile and murder of Octavia). The parallels between Boudicca, Brutus, Rubellius Plautus, and Octavia, then, highlight the lack of positive Roman role models. Only in Britain is there any attempt on the part of the oppressed to exact vengeance (*ultio*) and achieve freedom (*libertas*).

#### 4.3.3.5 Tribune of the plebs?

At first sight it might seem as if the vocabulary and themes of Boudicca's speech are shared by all freedom fighters, whether slaves fighting against their masters, barbarians against Romans, plebeians and tribunes against patricians and consuls, or senators against the emperor. All freedom fighters, after all, fight against servile treatment. Vocabulary and imagery are drawn from the condition and experiences of slaves in order to describe the condition and experiences of plebeians, barbarians, and senators who are treated badly: see, for example, the verbal parallel between 14.31.3 (*captiuos seruos appellando*) and Liv. 3.44.6 (*seruam appellans*).<sup>557</sup> However, although there are similarities between the speeches of all freedom fighters, one can still isolate words, themes, or arguments which are typical for a specific sub-category of freedom fighters.

Santoro L'Hoir claims that Boudicca's rhetoric is explicitly tribunician. She finds parallels with speeches of plebeian tribunes in Livy's *ab Vrbe Condita* in general, and of Verginia's betrothed Icilius in particular. I concur with Santoro L'Hoir's observations, but I am unconvinced by her claim that the tribunician characteristics of Boudicca's rhetoric brand her as deceitful, ruthless, and demagogically domineering.<sup>558</sup> Icilius, as we have seen, is not a

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<sup>557</sup> Note also Paul's (1982, 152) observation that we find elements of the *urbs capta* topos in Verginius' rhetorical question at 3.47.2 (*quid prodesse si, incolumi urbe, quae capta ultima timeantur liberis suis sint patienda?*). On the use of the *urbs capta* topos to describe imperial oppression of Roman citizens in the *Annales*, see section 3.3.2.4.

<sup>558</sup> Santoro L'Hoir 2006, 114, 140-141. Santoro L'Hoir translates *accesserat* as 'bully' and *testabatur* as 'claim unjustly' (14.35.1): however, *accedere* is normally used in a neutral sense, e.g. in Suetonius' speech (14.36.2); cf. the examples collected in Gerber and Greef 1903. *Testari* means 'to swear/testify solemnly' or 'to demonstrate by one's action', and does not carry any negative connotations; cf. 14.10.2, 14.64.1. Santoro L'Hoir also finds fault with Boudicca for her decision to take the quest for vengeance into her own (female) hands, rather than letting her male family members and friends step up for her. However, no such men are available for Boudicca. Her interpretation of Boudicca's famous final phrase (*id mulieri destinatum; uiuerent uiri et seruirent*) is similarly jaundiced (141): "The reversal of images, in which a woman leads and warriors follow, further reveals Boudicca's promises as empty rhetoric: her tribesmen's true servitude, according to Tacitus' thematically charged portrayal,

negative character. Moreover, given that Boudicca's version of events fits in well with the narrative offered by Tacitus,<sup>559</sup> her speech cannot be discarded as empty rhetoric. However, while there are indeed northern barbarians in the *Annales* with plebeian characteristics, I will argue that those of Boudicca are in fact less pronounced than what they appear at first sight.<sup>560</sup> By drawing attention to Boudicca's appropriation of tribunician motifs (as seen in the speeches of Icilius and Verginius as well as in speeches of other tribunes in Livy and Sallust), I will point out how Boudicca distinguishes herself from these predecessors: she uses tribunician rhetoric as a foil rather than as a blueprint. While the contrast between freedom and slavery is a recurrent motif of tribunician speeches, it is obviously too common to alone give

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derives from their toleration of a female usurper of male power." Boudicca, however, is not portrayed as a usurper, although there might have existed rumours on which such a claim could have been based (Aldhouse-Green 2006, 87-88). In fact, Tacitus effectively discards the possibility of domestic strife in the royal house when he describes, in the same sentence, Prasutagus' will, Boudicca, and their daughters as victims of Roman aggression; cf. section 4.2.2.2.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. Roberts 1988, 126.

<sup>560</sup> Northern barbarians of the *Annales* with plebeian characteristics include Arminius, Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir, and the *primores Galliae*. Arminius, as seen in section 2.3.2.2, is denoted both *turbator* (1.55.1) and *liberator* (2.88.2), words frequently used to denote plebeian tribunes and other enemies of the patricians: like plebeian tribunes, Arminius is engaged in a fight in which he can be seen both as a rabble rouser and as a defender of the people's freedom. Moreover, the same objects are identified by Arminius as symbols of imperialist Roman aggression (1.59.4: *uirgas et securis et togam*) and by Verginius as symbols of decemviral oppression (Liv. 3.57.2: *uirgas securesque*); cf. the speeches of Caratacus (12.34: *securibus*) and Civilis (*Hist.* 4.32.2: *uirgas, securis*). Tacitus' account of the Gallic revolt of Florus and Sacrovir is reminiscent of Sallust's account of Catiline's conspiracy, e.g. in causes (debt at 3.40.1; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 20.13), plot structure (failed attempt to bribe Gallic cavalry at 3.42.1; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 40-41 – suicide of the rebel leaders at 3.42.3 and 3.46.4; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 60.7), characterisation of the rebels (morally degenerate and financially desperate at 3.40.2 and 3.42.2; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 14.1-3, 16.3, 17.2, 20.8, 20.15, 21.4, 23.1, 24.3, 28.4, 33.3-5, 37.5, 58.11, 58.19 – ferocious at 3.40.2; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 61.4), and rhetoric of the rebel leaders (freedom and slavery at 3.45.2; cf. *Sal. Cat.* 58.8-11). On the Gallic revolt, see Low 2013, 207-220. Tacitus' version of Claudius' speech in favour of admitting Gallic nobles (*primores Galliae*) into the senate (11.24) is modelled on the speech of the plebeian tribune Canuleius in favour of allowing plebeians to stand for the consulate and to intermarry with patricians (Liv. 4.3-5). Claudius draws a direct line between plebeians and Gauls (11.24.7): *plebei magistratus post patricios, Latini post plebeios, ceterarum Italiae gentium post Latinos. inueterascet hoc quoque [ius Gallorum adipiscendorum in urbe honorum], et quod hodie exemplis tuemur, inter exempla erit*. Malloch (2013, 341-342) notes that Canuleius' presence is even more marked in Tacitus' version of the speech than in Claudius' original; cf. Griffin 1982 and Kraus and Woodman 1997.

Boudicca's speech a specifically tribunician flavour.<sup>561</sup> However, two characteristics of Boudicca's speech stand out as more explicitly tribunician: (1) she assumes, albeit to provoke outrage among the Britons, the role of a commoner, and (2) she connects the British loss of freedom with corporal punishment and sexual abuse.

Firstly, Boudicca describes her desire for vengeance not as that of a woman sprung from great ancestors but as a woman of the people (14.35.1): *non ut tantis maioribus ortam regnum et opes, uerum ut unam e uulgo libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci*. The contrast between *unam e uulgo* and *tantis maioribus ortam* is striking, and further underlined by the nouns associated with these potential personages (*regnum* and *opes* vs. *libertas*, *corpus*, and *pudicitia*). She claims that she is not avenging her wealth (*opes*) and royal power (*regnum*), both of which have patrician (as well as royal) connotations.<sup>562</sup> Her alleged adoption of the rhetorical persona of a commoner (*unam e uulgo*) highlights the shameful exigency that has forced her to assume an inferior social role: *uulgus* is often used interchangeably with (or pejoratively for) *plebs* and carries connotations of Roman party politics; examples abound in Livy and Sallust.<sup>563</sup>

While the struggles between plebeians and patricians fall outside the scope of the *Annales*, *uulgus* does appear alongside (and apparently synonymous

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<sup>561</sup> For the contrast between freedom and slavery in tribunician speeches, see Macer (Sal. *Hist.* 3.48M), Canuleius (Liv. 4.5.1), some unnamed debtors (Liv. 2.23), and some unnamed tribunes (Liv. 5.2); for the motif of preferring death to slavery, see Catiline's speech at Sal. *Cat.* 20.9: *nonne emori per uirtutem praestat quam uitam miseram atque inhonestam, ubi alienae superbiae ludibrio fueris, per dedecus amittere?* Cf. C. Manlius' letter at Sal. *Cat.* 33.4: *libertatem quam nemo bonus nisi cum anima amittit*.

<sup>562</sup> Cf. the words of Macer (Sal. *Hist.* 3.48.3M), Memmius (Sal. *Jug.* 31.1), and some despairing tribunes (Liv. 7.18.9). On the connection between *opes* and patricians and *pauci potentes*, see also Liv. 5.10.11, 6.35.4, 10.9.4, and Cic. *Rep.* 1.51. Tribunes and other enemies of the patricians could be accused of aiming for kingship (*regnum*), most notably Gaius Gracchus (Sal. *Cat.* 31.7) and Spurius Maelius (Liv. 4.13.4).

<sup>563</sup> Hellegouarc'h 1963, 514. For *uulgus* used to describe plebeians and their tribunes, see Liv. 4.2.7 (where the consuls speak of Canuleius and the other plebeian tribunes as *uolgi turbatores*), and Liv. 4.48.1 (where Livy himself describes the plebeian tribunes as *turbatores uolgi*). For the interchangeability of *plebs* and *uulgus*, see Liv. 6.34.5-6: *M. Fabi Ambusti, potentis uiri cum inter sui corporis homines tum etiam ad plebem, quod haudquaquam inter id genus contemptor eius habebatur, filiae duae nuptae, Ser. Sulpicio maior, minor C. Licinio Stoloni erat, illustri quidem uiro tamen plebeio; eaque ipsa adfinitas haud sprete gratiam Fabio ad uolgum quaesierat*; cf. Sal. *Jug.* 73.3-5, 84.3. For the opposition between plebeians (*uulgus*) and patricians (*optimates*), see Liv. 9.33.5: *actionem ... non popularem magis quam iustam nec in uolgus quam optimo cuique gratiorem*. For the connection between *uulgus* and *libertas*, see Liv. 45.18.6 and Nep. *Pel.* 3.3.

with) *plebs* in the flashback to republican times at 4.33.2: *igitur ut olim, plebe ualida uel cum patres pollerent, noscenda uulgi natura et quibus modis temperanter haberetur, senatusque et optimatum ingenia qui maxime perdidicerant, callidi temporum et sapientes credebantur*.<sup>564</sup> The presence of *uulgi* in a speech by a barbarian must have struck the reader as confusingly inappropriate.<sup>565</sup> Because of its pejorative connotations, it is seldom used to describe oneself: Catiline seems to use it self-deprecatingly and in order to rouse his (mostly upper-class) fellow conspirators through shame (Sal. *Cat.* 20.7: *uulgi fuimus*).<sup>566</sup>

While one could argue that Boudicca is in earnest, that she uses the term with pride and as a way of rousing her soldiers (most of whom must have belonged to the lower class) by embracing their identity, it seems more reasonable to see her appropriation of tribunician rhetoric as a way of emphasising the ignominy of her mistreatment. Tacitean Britons do not, after all, seem to have had any previous experience of republicanism (neither in the past nor during Nero's reign) which might have familiarised them with the language of class struggle: the *libertas* of which they speak connotes 'independence', not 'republic'. Thus, rather than excusing her noble ancestry, the highborn Boudicca is claiming that it would have been sufficiently disgraceful for her to avenge loss of lands and riches; that she is forced to avenge loss of freedom and physical abuse is outrageous.<sup>567</sup> However,

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<sup>564</sup> In the Tacitean corpus *uulgi* appears 44 times in the sense 'people', 'public', 'masses':

1.47.3, 1.54.2, 1.77.1, 2.41.3, 2.59.1, 2.77.3, 2.82.3, 3.6.1, 3.9.2, 3.12.4, 3.42.2, 3.61.1, 3.76.1, 4.14.3, 4.29.2, 4.33.2, 4.41.1, 4.64.1, 5.3.1, 6.22.2, 6.44.1, 6.45.1, 6.46.1, 12.3.2, 12.21, 12.41.2, 12.43.1, 12.47.4, 12.69.3, 13.1.1, 13.17.1, 13.39.4, 14.14.2, 14.22.1, 14.51.2, 14.60.5, 14.61.2, 15.33.3, 15.44.2, 15.48.2, 15.63.3, 15.64.2, 15.73.1, 16.4.3; it appears 8 times to describe a Roman army (usually when in sedition): 1.18.1, 1.28.3, 1.29.3, 1.39.3, 1.41.2, 1.49.2, 3.13.2, 15.53.3; and 3 times to describe a barbarian army (4 with the *uulgi obaeratorum aut clientium* who takes up arms in support of the Gallic revolt at 3.42.2): Germani at 1.68.5 and 11.17.3, Britons at 12.34. On the connection between *uulgi* and barbarism, see Dauge 1981, 626-630.

<sup>565</sup> Only Romanised barbarians use *plebs* in the *Annales*: Segestes uses it to explain internal Germanic power struggles to the Romans (1.55.2), and Florus and Sacrovir use it to denigrate the Roman army when exhorting the tribes of Gaul to revolt (3.40.3).

<sup>566</sup> Cf. the letter of C. Manlius to Marcius Rex, in which Manlius implicitly equates the cause of the conspirators with that of the plebeians (Sal. *Cat.* 33.2-3). Sallust states explicitly that the plebeians in Rome supported the conspiracy (Sal. *Cat.* 37.4).

<sup>567</sup> Most scholars seem to accept Boudicca's dismissal of her highborn status as earnest (Schürenberg 1975, 77; Crawford 2002, 26-27; Adler 2011, 124; cf. the translations of Woodman 2004 and Yardley 2008), but see Williams 2009a, 76. Italicus and Caratacus also use their highborn status: Italicus, replying to his adversaries' claim that an heir to the throne nobler than the son of the scout Flavius could be found in Germania (11.16.3), uses his royal ancestry (11.16.1: *stirpis regiae*) to rally support among the Cherusci (11.17.1: *quando*

although Boudicca does not invoke tribunician rhetoric in order to embrace it, her mention of *uulgus* is remarkable: she is the only Tacitean northern barbarian who explicitly employs the (tribunician) language of class struggle.<sup>568</sup>

Boudicca seems to assume a low-class identity again at the end of the speech, when she makes a contrast between men and women (14.35.2): *id mulieri destinatum: uiuerent uiri et seruirent*. As noted by Adams, the difference between *mulier* and *femina* is often one of social position.<sup>569</sup> The significance of *mulier* is increased by its position as a contrast to *uir*, since *femina* is the term commonly used when ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are contrasted in imperial literature.<sup>570</sup> Moreover, Boudicca is twice denoted *femina* in the *Agricola* (16.1, 31.4). Thus, the use of *mulier* in the *Annales* betrays a conscious change of emphasis.<sup>571</sup>

Secondly, the mistreatment of which Boudicca speaks, although normally reserved for slaves, was in the darker moments of the Roman Republic also experienced by plebeians.<sup>572</sup> Boudicca’s explicit connection between loss of freedom, corporal mistreatment, and violated chastity (14.35.1: *libertatem*

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*nobilitate ceteros anteiret*); Caratacus boasts of his highborn status (12.37.1: *claris maioribus ortum*) and his former wealth (12.37.2: *habui equos uiros, arma opes*) when asking Claudius for mercy in Rome. To demand allegiance through high birth and glorious ancestry was, at least according to their enemies, a rhetorical move often employed by patricians and *pauci potentes*: cf. the speeches of Gaius Marius (Sal. *Jug.* 85.4, 10, 21, 37) and Lepidus (Sal. *Hist.* 1.55.2M).

<sup>568</sup> Arminius (1.68.5), Italicus (11.17.3), and Caratacus (12.34) are all supported by, but none of them speaks about, the *uulgus*.

<sup>569</sup> Adams 1972, 234-235; cf. Santoro L’Hoir 1992 (1-5, 120-121) and 2006 (113, 295-296 n. 10). For examples, see the words used to designate Epicharis (*mulier* at 15.51.2, 15.57.2; *femina* at 15.57.1), Claudius’ potential wives (12.1.1: *feminae*), Queen Cartimandua (12.40.3: *femina*), the poisoneress Locusta (12.66.2: *mulier*), and Agrippina the Younger (*mulier* at 13.13.3, 14.3.2, 14.11.2; *femina* at 12.2.3, 12.6.1, 12.7.3, 12.37.4, 12.42.2, 13.6.2, 14.4.1, 14.11.1). Cf. *TLL* on *mulier* and *femina*.

<sup>570</sup> Adams 1972, 242-244. Tacitus has *uir/femina* often, but *uir/mulier* only thrice: the Britons lament their losses (*Agr.* 38.1), Boudicca refers to herself (14.35.2), and Tacitus refers to Epicharis (15.57.2).

<sup>571</sup> Tacitus’ nuanced use of gender-related words is indicated in his account of the battle: the British women are *coniuges* when they come to the battle, but *mulieres* when cut down; to the Roman soldiers, after all, their marital status is both irrelevant and unknown. Also, they might no longer be wives, since many British men died in the battle.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. Roller 2001, 229; as noted by Roller (130), the metaphorical use of the master-slave relationship to describe patrician mistreatment of plebeians is literalised in Livy’s account of Verginia. Cf. Sal. *Hist.* 3.48M, Cic. *Leg.* 3.9, 15-25, Liv. 2.23.2, 28.7, 33.1, 3.9.2-4, 10.13-14. On the master slave relationship as a metaphor for political slavery in republican Rome, see Roller (2001, 214-220) and Arena (2012, 45-51).

*amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci. eo prouectas Romanorum cupidines, ut non corpora, ne senectam quidem aut uirginitatem impollutam relinquunt*) is particularly indicative. The motif of corporal mistreatment appears also in Verginius' speech to the soldiers (Liv. 3.50.9: *ab alia uiolentia eius eodem se animo suum corpus uindicaturum quo uindicauerit filiae*), and in his speech at Appius Claudius' trial (Liv. 3.57.2: *tergo ... uirgas securesque*).<sup>573</sup> Boudicca's mention of body (*corpus*) and flogging (*uerberibus*) recalls the Porcian Law, which prohibited the flogging of Roman citizens and is explicitly connected to the plebeian struggle for freedom (Liv. 10.9.3-4): *eodem anno M. Valerius consul de prouocatione legem tulit diligentius sanctam ... causam renouandae saepius haud aliam fuisse reor quam quod plus paucorum opes quam libertas plebis poterat. Porcia tamen lex sola pro tergo ciuium lata uidetur*.<sup>574</sup> Debt-slaves, a group of people which frequently needed tribunician assistance, were particularly susceptible to flogging (Liv. 2.23, 8.28).<sup>575</sup>

The connection between loss of freedom and loss of chastity appears also in the speeches of Icilius (Liv. 3.45.8-9: *non, si tribunicium auxilium et prouocationem plebi Romanae, duas arces libertatis tuendae, ademistis, ideo in liberos quoque nostros coniugesque regnum uestrae libidini datum est. saeuite in tergum et in ceruices nostras: pudicitia saltem in tuto sit*) and Verginius (Liv. 3.50.6: *sibi uitam filiae sua cariorem fuisse, si liberae ac pudicae uiuere licitum fuisset*), and in the words of the wives and children of the soldiers who are departing from Rome to the Sacred Mount (Liv. 3.52.4: *prosequuntur coniuges liberique, cuinam se relinquerent in ea urbe in qua nec pudicitia nec libertas sancta esset miserabiliter rogantes*). We also find it in the plebeian tribune Canuleius' speech in favour of patrician and plebeian intermarriage. Canuleius reassures the patricians that no plebeian will carry away their daughters by force; such unbridled lust, he adds

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<sup>573</sup> See also the claim of Catiline's co-conspirator C. Manlius that he and his men have taken up arms *uti corpora nostra ab iniuria tuta forent* (Sal. Cat. 33.1).

<sup>574</sup> Cf. Cic. Ver. 5.163: *o nomen dulce libertatis! o ius eximium nostrae ciuitatis! o lex Porcia legesque Semproniae! o grauius desiderata et aliquando reddita plebi Romanae tribunicia potestas! Hucine tandem haec omnia reciderunt, ut ciuis Romanus in prouincia populi Romani, in oppido foederatorum, ab eo qui beneficio populi Romani fasces et secures haberet deligatus in foro uirgis caederetur?*

<sup>575</sup> The only other speech of a Tacitean northern barbarian that includes both bodies and flogging is the significantly longer speech of Calgacus (Agr. 31.1): *corpora ipsa ac manus siluis ac paludibus emuniendis inter uerbera et contumelias conteruntur*. Bodies of wives and children are mentioned by Caratacus (12.34: *coniugum et liberorum corpora*); the Frisians revolt when forced to surrender (the bodies of) their wives and children into slavery (4.72.2): *corpora coniugum aut liberorum seruitio tradebant*.

mockingly, is patrician behaviour (Liv. 4.4.8): *nemo plebeius patriciae uirgini uim adferret; patriciorum ista libido est*.<sup>576</sup> The plebeian connotations of *pudicitia* are also illustrated by Livy's account of the establishment of an altar to *Pudicitia Plebeia* (Liv. 10.23.4-10).<sup>577</sup> Although several northern barbarians speak about the need to protect women and children from the lust of the Romans (e.g. Caratacus at 12.34, Calgacus at *Agr.* 31.1, unnamed Britons at *Agr.* 15.2), only Boudicca speaks specifically about chastity (*pudicitia*). Not even Arminius, despite the capture of his wife, seems to worry about matters of chastity.

In short, although Boudicca's speech shares many motifs with other speeches of northern barbarians, indeed of all freedom fighters, it is exceptional in its consistent employment of tribunician motifs. Boudicca equates the current British fight against Roman imperialism with the (past) struggle of the plebeians against the patricians and *pauci potentes*. However, while Britons and plebeians both suffer the indignities of corporal mistreatment and sexual abuse, such treatment is all the more outrageous when committed against Boudicca, a royal consort.

## 4.4 Conclusions

As seen in chapter 3 on the Thracian revolt, there are similarities in world view between northern barbarians oppressed by Rome and Roman nobles oppressed by the emperor. Both conceptualise their oppression as a form of slavery. This is apparent also in the account of Boudicca's revolt in book 14: when the Britons are made to remark on Suetonius' obedience to a Polyclitus,

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<sup>576</sup> Canuleius' speech was well-known in antiquity (Ogilvie 1965, 533); cf. the reminiscences in Tacitus' version of Claudius' speech in favour of admitting Gauls into the senate (11.24).

<sup>577</sup> The protagonist of the account is a patrician matron (fittingly) named Verginia. When her marriage to a plebeian excludes her from participation in the rites in honour of *Pudicitia Patricia*, she sets up an altar in her own house. She summons the plebeian matrons to the dedication ceremony and delivers a short speech (Liv. 10.23.7-8): "*hanc ego aram*" inquit "*Pudicitiae Plebeiae dedico; uosque hortor ut, quod certamen uirtutis uiros in hac ciuitate tenet, hoc pudicitiae inter matronas sit detisque operam ut haec ara quam illa, si quid potest, sanctius et a castioribus coli dicatur.*" The chastity of the matrons taking part in the rituals in honour of *Pudicitia Plebeia* had to be clearly established (10.23.9: *spectatae pudicitiae*; cf. Lucretia at 1.57.10: *spectata castitas*). As noted by Levene (1993, 232-235), Livy connects his account of the establishment of the cult to *Pudicitia Plebeia* with the struggle of the orders: plebeian demands of access to the major priesthoods are narrated earlier in the book (Liv. 10.6-9); cf. Oakley 2005b, 250. On *pudicitia* as a divine quality, see Clark 2007, 39-46.

the link between Roman oppression of Britain and the emperor's oppression of Rome is poignantly exposed, and in the paired speeches of Boudicca and Suetonius, it is the female barbarian, rather than the male Roman general, who takes a stand for the Roman values of freedom and chastity. Furthermore, the portrayal of Boudicca as, at various times, a mistreated Romanised matron and a determined avenger of violated chastity inevitably clothes her enemies, the Romans, in the garments of licentious kings and lustful decemvirs. Perhaps it is not such an unreasonable suggestion, then, that Tacitus' Roman readers would have felt not only sympathy for, but also empathy with Boudicca.<sup>578</sup>

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the Boudicca of the *Annales* shares characteristics not only with fellow northern barbarians and Roman nobles oppressed by the emperor, but also (and specifically) with Roman heroes of old fighting against monarchical and decemviral oppression. I have argued that the account of Boudicca distinguishes itself from other accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* through its conformity with the 'Lucretia-story'. A comparison between Tacitus' account of Boudicca's revolt and Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia exposes similarities not only in theme (most notably the link between freedom, chastity, and vengeance), but also in plot (lust, rape, suicide, speech, revolt, freedom). In all three stories there is a crucial link between loss of freedom, arbitrary corporal mistreatment, and sexual abuse. The possibility that Tacitus intended his readers to see his account of Boudicca's revolt as an imitation of and variation on these Livian accounts is corroborated by their explicit exemplarity: Livy's Lucretia specifically denotes herself an *exemplum*, the account of Verginia is explicitly introduced as a parallel to that of Lucretia, and the weight of Brutus's exemplarity had led his descendant to align himself with his ancestor as a liberator of the Republic.<sup>579</sup>

The significance of Tacitus' choice to model the British revolt of AD 60/61 on these two momentous events in Roman history should not be underestimated. In a sense, the British present corresponds to the republican past: the Britons are placed in a metaphorical past and made to reenact (with a different outcome) dramas from Roman history. The presence of Lucretia, Brutus, Sextus Tarquinius, Tarquinius Superbus, Verginia, Verginius, Icilius, and Appius Claudius – if only as ghosts and shadows – provides the account

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<sup>578</sup> Cf. the predilection among many modern scholars for the speech of Calgacus rather than that of Agricola, e.g. Rutherford (2010, 315-316) and Adler (2011, 129); to Agricola's defence springs Woodman 2014, 256-257.

<sup>579</sup> Cf. the EID MAR coins struck by Brutus (picture in Tempest 2017).



of Boudicca with a highly loaded, indeed explosive, analytical framework. If Boudicca's revolt is somehow comparable to the revolts which ended the tyrannies of king Tarquinius Superbus and the decemvirs – the two most important political changes in early Roman history – then Boudicca is not simply a barbarian 'digression'. Indeed, Tacitus accomplishes through his Boudicca what Cremutius Cordus had to pay for with his life in order to achieve (4.34-35): to put Brutus on the page.<sup>580</sup> As in the account of Arminius' civil wars (cf. section 2.3.2), the coexistence and inseparability of past and present create an open-ended interpretive framework.

The main difference between Tacitus' account of Boudicca and Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia is the ending: the violation of Boudicca's daughters triggers revolt, but does not end in a successful change of political system. The similarity in plot structure highlights the failure and heightens the pathos, since it predisposes the reader to expect a successful outcome. The parallels between Boudicca and Roman heroes and heroines of the past mean that the Roman reader is bound to sympathise, at least in part, with the British rebels, as he ponders the missed possibilities of their revolt: the British are prevented from setting in motion a train of events which, as the accounts from the Roman past demonstrate, might have led to the creation of a free, fair, and formidable political system. For Livy, the characters of Lucretia and Verginia are forward-looking, that is, they keep the plot moving forwards: the stories in which they participate are stories of change, of successful solutions to political problems. For Tacitus, the character of Boudicca looks backwards: her resistance, founded on emulation of heroic characters of the Roman past, fails to become the cathartic solution to the problem of the tyrannical present. What was an exemplary story of when and how to break free from political oppression has become yet another example of the futility of the choices faced by those living under the autocracy of the emperors: endure and suffer servile mistreatment, or revolt and suffer annihilation. As noted by Gillespie, Boudicca becomes an opportunity to reflect upon the adaptability and efficacy of republican models within an imperial context.<sup>581</sup>

While Boudicca fails to reclaim freedom, the Romans do not even try: the parallels between the energetic Boudicca, the passive Rubellius Plautus, and

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<sup>580</sup> On Tacitus' awareness of the dangers caused by similarity (and dissimilarity) between literary characters and real life personages, see Kraus 2014, 219-221; cf. section 3.3.2.2.

<sup>581</sup> Gillespie 2015, 409-410, 427-428; cf. Williams 2009a, 77. See also Ash (2018, 22) on the exemplary value of the account of the Pisonian conspiracy: "T., by narrating this flawed plot, illustrates how *not* to assassinate an emperor." On Tacitus' use of non-Romans to explain and explore Roman history, see Low 2013a, 6, 24-28, 65-75.

the abandoned Octavia not only highlight the utter lack of courage among the Romans, but also leaves it open whether a revolt against Nero could have succeeded. In this way, the revolt of a northern barbarian widow is used to demonstrate how far Rome has come from the glorious days of the republican past. Furthermore, the Roman reader is presented with this failed re-enactment of a promising foundation story within the context of the repressive and depressive reign of Nero. Rome, it seems, has reached a point where its citizens not only do not possess freedom, they are actively engaged in preventing its conception among their neighbours.<sup>582</sup> There is a frightening resemblance between the Roman Empire and the autocracies (ancient Roman as well as contemporary near eastern) against which the Romans preferred to draw contrasts rather than see similarities with themselves: the Romans, in short, are turning into their own worst nightmares.<sup>583</sup> While the Neronian Principate is disintegrating from the inside through Nero's debaucheries and cruelties, it is – paradoxically – still sufficiently strong on the borders to reproduce itself through the suppression of emerging freedom movements. Here lies perhaps an additional source of pathos, since the tyrannies of the Tarquins and the decemvirs were, at least, unable to resist the power of the freedom movements that opposed them. Tacitus, then, has created a story whose roots are firmly set in the Roman past, but whose branches stretch well into the Roman present and future.

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<sup>582</sup> Cf. Lavan 2013, 150: "it is not a case of a few individuals being corrupted by their personal power, but of Romans in general being corrupted by their power as an imperial people." Low (2013a, 69) argues that a pattern emerges which suggests that societies engaged in imperialist endeavours are likely to lose their internal freedom. Although perhaps somewhat too schematic (as acknowledged by Low), Tacitus does frequently stress the importance of 'seeing' freedom, e.g. when Agricola claims that conquering Ireland would be useful for the occupation of Britain since freedom would be removed from sight (*Agr.* 24.3): *idque etiam aduersus Britanniam profuturum si Romana ubique arma, et uelut e conspectu libertas tolleretur*; cf. *Agr.* 30.2, where Calgacus claims that his soldiers have never seen the shores of slavery and that their eyes are therefore unpolluted by contact with domination, and 1.3.7: *quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam uidisset?* The defeat of Boudicca's revolt thus equals the removal of freedom from sight, in Britain as well as from Gaul and the rest of the Roman Empire: in this sense, through commemoration of the revolt in Britain, Tacitus lets his audience visualise and thus keeps alive the memory of freedom also in Rome. Cf. the complaint about the lack of memory of exemplary deeds voiced by the chorus of Romans prior to the introduction of Lucretia and Verginia in the *Octavia* (288-293): *nos quoque nostri sumus immemores / post fata ducis, cuius stirpem / prodimus aeuo suadente metum. / uerum priorum uirtus quondam / Romana fuit, uerumque genus / Martis in illis sanguisque uiris*. On the importance of historiography for the maintenance of a shared standard of honour among the Roman nobility, see section 3.3.2.3.

<sup>583</sup> Cf. Adler 2011, 136-137, 173.

# 5. Epilogue

## 5.1 Parts and wholes, particulars and universals

As was noted by Luce, the scholar who searches for consistency in the opinions expressed by Tacitus and his alleged mouthpieces sets himself a daunting, perhaps impossible, and certainly misguided task.<sup>584</sup> Luce's observation is pertinent also to the results of the present study. The final chapter of this book, then, does not aim to give a definite answer to the question posed at its beginning, namely what the functions of accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* are. This calls for some explanation.

It is, of course, possible to offer some general observations and broad conclusions. One can point out that the accounts investigated in this study are used by Tacitus to explore themes that interested him: Arminius invokes the civil wars of the Late Republic, the Thracians embody the choice of those oppressed by tyranny, and Boudicca discloses the consequences of arbitrary and autocratic rule. However, since our aim has been to understand the function(s) of specific accounts of northern barbarians within their respective books (instead of, for example, to offer a catch-all category for or identify the colonial traits of Tacitus' discourse about northern barbarians),<sup>585</sup> the key characteristics of the accounts have not been those that connect them with, but those that distinguish them from one another. A list of functions, even though it could be produced (e.g. to parallel, mirror, comment on, illustrate an aspect of, or make a contrast with the narrative centred on Rome), would be so crudely simplified, distasteful to the very essence of Tacitus' writings, that it would do little to increase our understanding of the particulars of each individual account – and that, I believe, must always be our aim. Any attempt to arrive at the universal must be based on rigorous contextualisation of the particular.

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<sup>584</sup> Luce 1986/2012; on the recovery of Tacitean opinions, see also Pelling 2009; cf. sections 1.3 and 1.4.2.2.

<sup>585</sup> Walker 1952, 225-229; Shumate 2012.

As noted by Sharrock, a literary text might be understood as a whole, but it can be read only in parts.<sup>586</sup> In the heuristic process of reading and re-reading parts and wholes, a nuanced understanding of the whole depends on constant contextualisation of the parts. In previous chapters, I took the accounts of northern barbarians as parts and the book(s) in which they appeared as the wholes to which I aimed to connect them: through investigation of the particulars of each account, I identified the connections with and demonstrated how they functioned within their surrounding narratives. Of special utility in the identification of such particulars were the establishment and interpretation of intratexts and intertexts. The understanding of a literary text depends on an understanding of prior literary texts: meaning is created in the interaction between texts. The *Annales* makes sense only through the literary tradition to which it belongs.<sup>587</sup> In this epilogue, the books become the parts, as I now take the *Annales* in its entirety as the whole to which I aim to connect the books: just as an account is understood through identification and interpretation of the links between its parts/particulars and a book is understood through identification and interpretation of the links between its parts/accounts, a work as a whole is understood through identification and interpretation of the links between its parts/books.

I hope that this study has demonstrated that northern barbarians may fruitfully be approached as a category, but that Tacitus' accounts of them should be analysed individually; only in this way can we appreciate the variety within the category, identify the particulars of each account, and thus increase our understanding of the text. Walker was not wrong when she structured her five pages of discussion of Tacitus' barbarians around the type-character of the 'noble savage' and pointed out that barbarians are used to comment on the lack of freedom in Rome. However, by doing so, she also missed the essential, that is, the particular point of every account in which barbarians play an important part, and thus demonstrated that broad categorisation will bring the interpreter only so far. In short, I have attempted to show that the functions of accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* cannot be summarised in a list: every barbarian needs his or her own explanation.

In the following, I will offer some observations and reflections on the structure of the *Annales* (section 5.2), which I hope might serve as an encouragement for further research (section 5.3).

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<sup>586</sup> Sharrock 2000; cf. my discussion in section 1.4.2.3.

<sup>587</sup> On Tacitean intertextuality, see esp. footnote 66.

## 5.2 The northern barbarians and the Principate

The accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* form part of Tacitus' treatment of the decline of political freedom during the Principate, and must be interpreted within this context.<sup>588</sup> Most immediately notable is that the contrast between freedom and slavery is not only temporal (from flashbacks of the Republic to the tyranny of Nero), but also spatial: there is a contrast not only between past freedom and present slavery, but also between freedom abroad and slavery at home. This structural component forms a crucial part of the *Annales*. Given that past, republican models of behaviour seem to be increasingly unfit for – not to mention dangerous to invoke in – the imperial present, the possibility of commemorating examples of resistance from beyond the borders of the Empire is invaluable for maintaining a shared standard of honour among the Roman nobility (cf. my discussion in section 3.3.2.3).

However, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, the accounts of northern barbarians are also thematically connected with the main narratives of the individual books, triads, and hexads in which they appear. This is not to say that Tacitus has no interest in provincial matters for their own sake, but that he is eager to bring together his narratives into a coherent whole. The adaptation of each account to the narrative context of its respective book becomes especially apparent when one takes a bird's eye view of the work. Each account reflects events in Rome, and thus illustrates aspects of the Principate as it evolves from suppression of its civil war origins under Tiberius to fully fledged self-destruction under Nero. In books 1-2, the memory of the civil war of the Late Republic is still fresh and the rivalry between Tiberius and Germanicus threatens to unleash internal conflict: the account of Arminius and the Germanic civil war not only exposes the Principate's origins in civil war and the possibility that it might perish in a similar way, but also heightens the pathos of Germanicus' unrealised resistance against Tiberius.<sup>589</sup> Book 4 revolves around the dramatic increase in treason trials in Rome due to Sejanus' rise to power and the concomitant accentuation of the choice between resistance, suicide, and collaboration among Roman senators: in the same book, the Thracians find themselves besieged and are made to voice precisely these alternative courses of action.

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<sup>588</sup> On the decline of political freedom and emergence of the Principate as the key theme(s) of the *Annales*, see section 1.3.

<sup>589</sup> Cf. Keitel 1984 and Low 2013a, 36-75. On the (fragile) relationship between peace and the Principate, see also Christ 1978, Woodman 2006a, and Ash 1999 and 2009.

In book 14, Nero's debaucheries and their consequences are starting to become apparent, but there is (still) no reaction in Rome: not only do the causes of Boudicca's revolt (the violation of her daughters and the servile treatment of her people) stress the arbitrary power of the Principate and the immoral purposes for which it is put to use, but the framing of the revolt as a 'Lucretia-story', with the Britons filling the roles of Lucretia and Brutus, illustrates the completion of Rome's transformation from a free state to an autocracy, from liberating to enslaving power.<sup>590</sup>

Additional analyses of accounts of northern barbarians in other extant books of the *Annales* would undoubtedly complement the patchy narrative outlined above (cf. section 5.3 on further research). Finally, while one can only wonder which and how northern barbarians appeared in Caligula's Principate, the results of this study suggests that we can be fairly certain that they illustrated the particulars of Caligula's reign: brave Germani might have been contrasted with a timid emperor (Suet. *Cal.* 51), obsequious Gauls enslaved through oratorical competitions paralleled with Romans enslaved through gladiatorial games (Suet. *Cal.* 18, 20; cf. *Agr.* 21.2), Thracian bodyguards illustrated the hybridisation of Roman society (Suet. *Cal.* 54), and Caligula's subjection of *Gallograecia* mirrored his subjection of Rome (Suet. *Cal.* 29).

Some tentative universals might perhaps be drawn from these particulars. It has been a key premise of this study that Tacitus exercised significant freedom both in selection and arrangement of material (*inuentio*): while the voices within are by necessity multifarious in their aims and opinions, the narrative structure is all Tacitus. Thus, although I consider misguided the practice of reconstructing Tacitus' opinions about the Principate from his and his characters' statements about it, I do consider it fruitful to offer an interpretive reconstruction of the impression made on the reader by the narrative. Since such an impression depends less on the words spoken and more on the context of their delivery (think of Shakespeare's Mark Antony and his "... Brutus is an honourable man!"), it can be reconstructed only through an analysis of the narrative structure, that is, of the connections between parts of the text. The reader's exposure to these connections (perceived or unperceived) produces a certain impression and leaves a certain

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<sup>590</sup> While other accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* might of course be more detached from their surrounding contexts, the results of this study certainly suggests that entertainment and diversion from events in Rome were not the main functions of these accounts. On accounts of northern barbarians as digressions, see footnote 29 and section 3.1.2.

sensation. In this way, the inconsistencies within our amalgamation of Tacitean opinions may be disregarded and the author's narrative may be heard over the din of the narrator's voice.<sup>591</sup>

The reader can easily (and the Roman reader would easily) disregard the explicit criticism of Roman imperialism offered by the northern barbarians in their speeches, indeed especially because it is expected, explicit and made by non-Romans. However, the reader is not only exposed to explicit criticism of the Roman Empire (understood as "a relationship between Romans and non-Romans"), but also to implicit connections between the Roman Principate (understood as "a relationship between Romans and other Romans") and civil war, the Principate and siege and sack of Rome, and the Principate and the tyrannies of Tarquinius Superbus and Appius Claudius. Exactly because these connections are not articulated explicitly by a character but carried implicitly by the narrative itself, they are more likely to be unconditionally, yet perhaps also unconsciously, accepted by the reader.<sup>592</sup> The reader, I believe, is unlikely to escape unaffected from exposure to these connections, in which the Principate is continuously exposed as its alleged opposite, as the contrast against which it defined itself and claimed legitimacy. Indeed, since examples demonstrate the truth of claims, the accumulation of examples from all over the known world serves to add authority to Tacitus' interpretation and condemnation of the Principate as a system of government: the accounts of northern barbarians help him disprove the claim that one-man rule is an inevitable result of civil war (cf. section 2.4), suggest a link between autocracy and epidemics of suicide (cf. section 3.4), and prove the susceptibility to revolt of a regime based on arbitrary expressions of power (cf. section 4.4). This does not mean that Tacitus was a die-hard Republican or that he believed in the possibility and advocated the return of a republican government, but it does mean that the *Annales* – as a whole – undermines the legitimacy of the Principate and portrays it as a frightful, suppressive, and inherently brutal system of government.

A bird's eye view of the work also exposes its significant holes. The *Annales* is a fragmented text, and reflections on its overall structure are by nature fragile and subjective. Due to vagaries of textual transmission, the violent downfalls of Caligula and Nero (in contrast to the more 'peaceful' deaths of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius) are not preserved. The extant

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<sup>591</sup> On Tacitean inconsistencies and the hazards of hunting for Tacitean opinions, see Luce 1986/2012. On letting the narrative speak for itself, see Williams (1989, 156-161) and Sage (1991, 3396-3397); cf. section 1.4 on the methodological framework of the study.

<sup>592</sup> On the distinction between the 'Principate' and the 'Empire', see Sailor 2012, 29.

text is therefore unnaturally devoid of examples of successful resistance against the emperor: in its original state, the *Annales* would not only have included accounts of unrealised and failed regime change. While Low's suggestion that Tacitus might have used his account of the assassination of Caligula to demonstrate the folly of those who believed in a possible restoration of the Republic is certainly worthy of consideration, we cannot dismiss the possibility that accidents of textual transmission have contributed greatly to our understanding of Tacitus as a pessimist who could see no alternative to the Principate.<sup>593</sup>

### 5.3 Further research

Tentative, but unfortunately unfinished analyses of other accounts of northern barbarians in the *Annales* suggest similar connections between internal and external affairs. The account of the Gallic uprising led by Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir (3.40-47), especially the lack of fear with which it is greeted in Rome, seems to be modelled on Catiline's conspiracy and thus to illustrate the similarity between Tiberius' reign and the Late Republic, the period from whose instability the Principate drew its primary legitimacy. Claudius' dispatch of Italicus and the latter's attempt to establish himself as king among the Cherusci (11.16-17) illustrate (through reminiscences of Augustus' rise to power) the strains put on the political vocabulary during times of internal conflict: the heated debate between Italicus and his adversaries seems to highlight the Romans' inability to distinguish between freedom and slavery during Claudius' reign.

However, the most notable absence in this study is perhaps the British chieftain Caratacus: an analysis of the account of his resistance against and speech in Rome (12.31-40) would provide a fruitful entrance to an interpretation of the Claudian books, most notably through the contrast between the female-dominated Claudius and the manly Caratacus, both of whom are betrayed by unfaithful women. Boiocalus, the chieftain of the Ampsivarii, is another northern barbarian character who finds himself unreasonably and undeservedly neglected. His unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Romans that they should prefer to have friendly peoples rather than wastelands and solitudes on their borders (13.55.2: *modo ne uastitatem et solitudinem mallent quam amicos populos*) picks up some of the recurring

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<sup>593</sup> Low 2013a, 281; on counterfactual history, see also O'Gorman 2006 and Low 2013b.



words and themes of the relationship between Rome and her northern barbarians in the *Annales*: the *solitudo* invoked by Boiocalus is coloured by its presence in the speech of Calgacus (*Agr.* 30.5: *aufferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*), and both of these passages must be kept in mind when Thræsea Paetus is accused of disliking the imperial peace (16.28.3: *pacem displicere*) and regarding forums, theatres, and temples as a solitude (16.28.3: *fora theatra templa pro solitudine haberet*).<sup>594</sup> One might consider also the summary of Agricola's civilising project in Britain (*Agr.* 21.2: *templa, fora, domos ... idque apud imperitos humanitas uocabatur, cum pars seruitutis esset*). These intratexts put the distinction between Principate and Empire under pressure.

In contrast to these neglected northern barbarians, the Numidian Tacfarinas, in spite of his non-northern ethnicity, has sneaked into my analysis (cf. section 3.3.2.2): the similarity of his rhetoric and way of death with northern barbarians is notable. More could have been said about this Numidian Catiline who seems to demonstrate that the distinction between Rome's barbarians is one of west-east rather than north-south (cf. section 1.2 on my selection of material); and apropos eastern barbarians, contextual investigations of accounts of Parthian and Armenian affairs in book 13-15 (the campaigns of Corbulo) can offer fruitful starting points for structural analyses of these books.<sup>595</sup> In the war between the Parthians and the Iberians at 6.31-37, the speeches delivered by the rival generals (6.34.3) recall those of Rome and her northern barbarians: the Iberians, in short, seem to be Parthia's northern barbarians.

However, it is not only those barbarians who have been neglected in this study who call out for further research. The concentration of Vergilian intertexts in the account of the Germanic civil wars in books 1-2 have been noted only cursorily (cf. footnote 99), the metaphor of satiety has been investigated almost exclusively within book 4 (cf. section 3.3.2), and the possible prophetic function of the account of Boudicca's revolt for the rest of Nero's reign has been discussed only in passing (cf. section 4.4). While the decision to focus exclusively on the *Annales* is, I believe, justified in light of the work's numerous accounts of northern barbarians and the necessity of careful contextualisation of each account, it has also decreased the

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<sup>594</sup> Fratantuono 2018, *ad loc.*

<sup>595</sup> For books 11-12, see Keitel 1978. The recently published edition of book 15 (ed. by Ash) and the currently in-press edition of book 14 (ed. by Lavan and Whitton) will fill major gaps in the Tacitean commentary corpus and be of invaluable assistance in future research on the Neronian books.

possibilities of making intratextual connections within the Tacitean corpus: more could be made of the relationship between the barbarians of the *Annales* and those of the *Germania*, *Agricola*, and *Historiae*. Such a broader approach would also make it possible to follow key Tacitean terms and themes throughout the corpus: as mentioned above, there is a red thread of *solitudo* from beginning to (accidental) end of the Tacitean corpus.<sup>596</sup> Similarly, many of the themes addressed in the study are open to investigation from different perspectives and/or in other texts: the relationship between Principate and civil war, the effects of prolonged autocracy on the moral behaviour of the Roman senators, the efficacy of Republican models of behaviour in the Principate, the nature of female power, and the choice between resistance, suicide, and surrender/collaboration might be explored in other imperial texts, e.g. Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*, Suetonius' imperial biographies, and the works of Pliny the Younger and the two Senecas.

Furthermore, other historiographical works might be approached with a similar methodological framework and analysed through its accounts of barbarians, e.g. Sallust's *Iugurtha*, Livy's *ab Vrbe Condita*, and Velleius Paterculus' *Historiae*. And, finally, different methodological approaches would provide complimentary readings. While my study revolves around narratological issues (the structure of the text, the intertwined voices of Tacitus' narrator and characters), its use of methodological terminology and methodology is eclectic and can only indicate the possibilities of a fully-fledged narratological approach. The inherent ambiguity of Tacitus' Latin and the several levels on which his narrative takes place would make his texts highly suitable for an analysis of voice and/or focalisation: for whom, for example, does Boudicca excuse her royal ancestry (14.35.1: *non ut tantis maioribus ortam regnum et opes, uerum ut unam e uulgo libertatem amissam, confectum uerberibus corpus, contrectatam filiarum pudicitiam ulcisci*), her own British audience or Tacitus' Roman reader? In sum, I hope that the study has shown the immense potential for further study within the research paradigm outlined by Wiseman and Woodman as well as possible ways forward, not only through application of narratological methods, but also by exploring intersections with counterfactual history, experiences of imperial rule, limitations of past models of behaviour in a new world governed by new rules and truths, and possibilities of regime critique under autocratic rule.

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<sup>596</sup> Cf. Laruccia 1980 on *solitudo*, Strocchio 1992 on *silentium*, and Haynes 2004 on *uocabulum*; see also Theodorakopoulos 1997 on Vergil's use of *umbra*.

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# Index nominum et verborum

- Actium, 6, 37, 79-80  
*adulatio*, 123-124, 137, 158, 168, 170  
Aedui, 82  
Aeneas, 37, 87, 100  
Africa, 83, 131, 133-134, 151, 224  
Agrippina the Elder, 41, 46, 64, 80,  
110, 138, 149, 176, 178-179, 181,  
196  
Agrippina the Younger, 155-157,  
169-170, 176-179, 181, 185, 187,  
201, 206  
Alesia, 98, 110, 112, 114  
allusion, 20-23, 62, 88, 91, 103-104,  
142-143, 196  
Ampsivarii, 96, 146, 217  
Appius Claudius, 46, 84, 86, 192-196,  
207, 209, 216  
Ariovistus, 82  
Armenians and Armenia, 2-3, 12, 50,  
58, 64, 157-158, 165, 218, 228  
Arminius, 3, 9, 14-15, 24, 26, 28, 30-  
97, 108-109, 121, 125, 146, 149,  
151, 153, 157, 165, 183, 203, 206,  
208, 210, 212, 214  
as *turbator Germaniae*, 42-43, 65,  
82-83, 95  
as *liberator haud dubie*  
*Germaniae*, 64, 83, 95  
Arruntius, L. 17, 125  
*avaritia*, 68, 136, 161-162, 175, 181,  
186-187  
*audacia*, 17, 37, 84  
Augustus, 5-7, 21, 31, 36, 42, 44, 47-  
48, 62, 74, 78-79, 90-91, 94, 110,  
132, 138, 144-145, 151, 169, 176,  
187-188, 196, 216-217  
auxiliaries, 53, 56, 69, 81, 103, 108,  
142  
Boioicalus, 15, 146, 165, 217  
Boudicca, 3, 9, 13, 15, 22, 24, 26-28,  
30, 55, 62, 66, 121, 125, 146, 149,  
150-176, 179-185, 187, 189-191,  
195-212, 215, 218-219  
Britons and Britain, 2, 6, 22, 25-26,  
28, 82, 121, 125, 136-137, 146,  
150-153, 156-169, 172-176, 179-  
183, 186-187, 190, 196-198, 201-  
211, 215, 218  
Brutus, L. Junius, 22, 24, 66, 78, 85,  
96, 153, 176, 187, 189, 191-192,  
195-197, 199-202, 209, 215  
Brutus, M. Junius, 85, 124, 155, 200,  
209-210, 215  
Caecilius Cornutus, 129-130  
Caesar, Julius, 9, 23-24, 31, 33, 68,  
78, 82-83, 86-87, 98-99, 101, 107,  
111-114, 118-120, 137-138, 150-  
151, 153, 159, 162  
*de Bello Gallico*, 31, 64, 68, 82,  
98, 99, 101, 107-108, 110-114,  
137-138, 151, 159, 162, 187  
Calgacus, 7- 9, 16, 28, 41, 48, 68,  
121, 126, 142, 154, 160, 165, 171,  
207-209, 211, 218  
Caligula, 125, 151, 156, 196, 215-216  
Camulodunum, 160-162, 173, 179-  
180  
cannibalism, 111, 113-114, 138  
Canuleius (tribune), 84, 203-204, 207,  
208  
Capri, 11, 110, 129, 131, 228



Caratacus, 3, 8, 15, 28, 55, 65, 82,  
 121, 126, 135, 146, 153, 156-157,  
 160, 165, 169, 182-183, 198, 203,  
 205-208, 217  
 Cartimandua, 82, 108, 153, 171, 176,  
 182-183, 206, 224  
 Cassandra, 142-143  
 Catiline, 33, 80, 133, 203-205, 207,  
 217-218  
 Catus Decianus, 162, 168, 175, 196  
 Caudine Forks, 24, 111, 114-116, 140  
 Cerialis, 5, 7-8, 12, 16, 28, 72, 122,  
 147, 162, 167  
 chastity, 62, 164-165, 175-176, 179,  
 184-200, 206-209  
     *cf. pudicitia*  
 Chatti, 42, 59, 63, 92, 96, 99  
 Chauci, 82, 96  
 Cherusci, 31, 46, 50, 57, 61-62, 74,  
 82, 87-88, 92, 96, 205, 217  
 Cicero, 38, 62, 84-86, 90, 131, 178,  
 193, 195  
     *Philippics*, 62, 85-86, 90, 178  
 civil war, 5, 24, 29-30, 33, 40-43, 67,  
 77-92, 95, 118-119, 132, 135, 138,  
 142, 144, 177, 214, 216, 219  
 Civilis, 16, 28, 52, 154, 165, 180, 203  
 Classicianus, Julius, 168  
 Claudius (emperor), 15, 80, 135, 144,  
 149-150, 152, 156-157, 161, 169,  
 176-177, 185-187, 201, 203, 206,  
 208, 216-217  
 Cleopatra, 177, 181, 198  
 collaborators, 48-49, 68, 71, 73, 123,  
 124, 135, 146, 153, 183  
 Collatinus, L. Tarquinius, 89, 191  
 Corbulo, 2-3, 41, 157-158, 165, 169,  
 195, 218  
 counterfactual history, 93-96, 217,  
 219  
 Cremutius Cordus, 1, 3, 28, 98, 104,  
 122, 124-135, 140, 210  
 Critognatus, 9, 68, 98, 101, 111-114  
 Curiatius Maternus, 3, 7, 18, 32  
 debates under siege, 98, 111-121,  
 140, 147  
 decemvirs, 85-86, 150, 192-197, 209-  
 211, *see* Appius Claudius  
 Dido, 20, 171, 177, 198, 227  
 digressions, 12, 19, 27, 65, 67, 94,  
 102, 104-105, 121, 126-128, 131-  
 132, 210, 215  
 Dinis, 109, 123, 125, 136-139  
 Dio Cassius, 13, 28, 30, 35, 54, 101,  
 120, 150-151, 153-156, 170, 172-  
 176, 181-182, 189, 196, 198  
 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 131, 195  
 Domitian, 35, 41, 152  
 Drusus (son of Tiberius), 32, 42, 54,  
 56-58, 62, 79, 81, 83, 90, 104, 129  
 Drusus (father of Germanicus), 80  
 Egypt, 80  
 Eleazar, 111, 119-120  
 Epicharis, 28, 149, 176, 178, 181-  
 182, 184, 201, 206  
 Eprius Marcellus, 7, 12, 122  
 Euripides, 99  
 exemplarity and exemplary discourse,  
 17, 28, 67, 117, 119, 121, 135,  
 138-140, 147, 155, 185, 189-190,  
 209-210,  
     *see also* situation ethics  
     *cf. exemplum*, 17-18, 24, 109-110,  
     113-114, 117-119, 130, 135-  
     136, 140, 190, 203, 209, 229,  
     238

*exitium*, 12, 57, 104, 109-110, 128-130, 132-133, 143, 179  
 facial disfigurement, 51-52  
 female power, 30, 150, 156, 173, 176-182, 219  
*ferocia*, 2, 93, 124, 134, 196, 238  
 Flavius (brother of Arminius), 28, 32, 48, 50-52, 57, 68-88, 92, 108, 183, 205  
 Florus, Julius, 3, 26, 82, 125, 133, 144, 146, 153, 165, 203, 205, 217  
 freedmen, 134, 168-170, 178, 181, 185, 187-190  
 Frisians, 3, 96, 98, 109-110, 125, 130, 132-140, 146-147, 153, 207  
 Frontinus, 35  
 Galba (emperor), 7-8, 57, 95  
 Gannascus, 82  
 Gauls and Gaul, 2-3, 5, 7, 9, 26, 28, 64, 82-83, 99, 101, 108, 111-114, 120, 137-138, 145, 150, 161-162, 169, 196, 203, 205, 208, 211, 215,  
*gener - socer*, 43, 86-87, 90  
 Germani and Germania, 2, 14, 25-26, 30-96, 102, 108, 112-123, 131, 133, 137, 142, 145-146, 161, 168, 177, 180, 205, 214-215,  
 Germanicus, 15, 24, 30, 32-34, 36-38, 40-58, 61-95, 102-103, 111-122, 123-124, 126, 142, 156-157, 166, 169, 176, 190, 201, 214,  
 Gotones, 62, 190  
 Herodotus, 29, 99, 186  
 hindsight, 31, 94  
 Horace, 19, 21, 87, 100, 152, 177, 198  
 Horatius Barbatus, 85  
 hybridity, 2, 27-28, 155, 176, 215  
 Iberians, 3, 218  
 Icenii, 82, 150-151, 154, 157, 160-161, 169, 171  
 Icilius, 84, 86, 155, 176, 189, 193-195, 200, 202-203, 207, 209  
 imagery  
     disease and medicine, 11, 78, 109, 121, 124, 136-139  
     sack, 121, 131, 140-148, 216  
     satiety, 12, 121, 128-129, 131, 134-135, 148, 218  
     siege, 98, 140-147  
     storm, 103  
*impotentia*, 160-161, 178, 181, 186, 197  
 Inguiomerus, 41, 50, 56, 59, 61, 86, 88, 91  
 insults, 44, 47, 52, 69, 71, 77, 174  
 intertextuality, 11, 18-24, 30, 189, 200, 213  
     intertextuality in historiography, 22-24  
 intratextuality, 18-20, 30, 218  
*inuentio*, 10-14, 77, 88, 98, 106, 215  
 Italicus, 3, 15, 23, 26, 28, 51, 81-82, 87, 92, 122, 125, 143, 183, 193, 205-206, 217  
 jealousy, 27, 41, 56  
 Josephus, 111, 113, 119-120  
 Juvenal, 23, 152, 177, 233, 239  
 Lepidus, M., 98, 123, 135  
*libertas*, 2, 4, 5, 9, 14, 31, 35, 38, 41, 47-48, 51, 55, 59-61-64, 70-73, 78, 80, 83, 89-90, 107-108, 113, 118, 123-124, 133-134, 154-155, 157, 160-161, 163-165, 169-171, 175, 183, 185-186, 190, 192-194, 196, 200, 202, 204-207, 211, 219  
*libido/cupido*, 63, 100, 109, 186, 187, 191, 193, 195, 208

- licentia*, 160-161, 181, 186
- Livia, wife of Augustus, 64-65, 79, 81, 93, 105, 153, 176-179, 187-188
- Livy, 9, 17, 21-24, 33, 38, 45-46, 52, 54-55, 61, 63-65, 68, 83-84, 85-87, 89-91, 94, 96, 105, 108, 111, 114-117, 120, 132, 138, 140-142, 144, 145, 150, 153-155, 162, 177, 187-189, 191-204, 206-210, 219
- Londinium, 162, 180
- Lucan, 87, 111, 116, 118-120, 161, 177, 219
- Lucretia, 22, 30, 66, 149-150, 153-155, 176, 179, 184-201, 208-211, 215
- Lucretia-story, 30, 149-150, 185-189, 195-209, 215
- Marcomanni, 62
- Mark Antony, 62, 79, 80, 84, 215
- Maroboduus, 6, 15, 32, 36, 39, 41, 45, 48, 55, 57-64, 67-70, 72-76, 81, 83-84, 86-92, 109, 146
- Martial, 23, 152, 235
- Messalina, 149, 155, 176, 178-179, 182, 185
- metus hostilis*, 58, 88-89, 91, 144
- Mona, 158-159, 162, 165, 167, 171, 179-181, 195
- mutinies, 11, 37, 42, 48, 55, 79-80, 84, 94, 123
- Narratology, 10-11, 25, 219, 228
- Nero (emperor), 6-7, 41, 80, 94-95, 111, 121-122, 129-130, 140, 144-145, 152, 155-158, 168-170, 174, 176, 179, 181, 184-185, 187, 189-191, 197, 201, 205, 211, 214, 216, 218
- noble savages, 26-27, 101-102, 191, 213
- nondum*, 160-161, 168, 186, 190
- Numidians, 2-3, 133, 147  
see Tacfarinas
- obituaries, 32, 36, 38-39, 63-64, 67, 92, 105, 110, 123, 157, 169
- Octavia, 125, 157, 170, 176-177, 179, 182, 185, 193, 201, 211, 222, 237
- Octavius Sagitta and Pontia, love affair, 188
- oratio obliqua*, 15, 46-47, 51, 53, 55, 109, 114, 157, 164
- oratio recta*, 15, 46, 112, 114
- Ovid, 19, 33, 87, 90, 100, 152, 177, 191, 221-222, 251
- Parthians and Parthia, 2-3, 35, 50, 58, 63, 88, 132, 218
- parts and wholes, 2, 18-19, 213
- patria*, 37, 44, 47-49, 51, 59, 71, 73-74, 78, 81-86, 90, 108, 115-116, 138, 172
- patruus*, 81, 88, 90
- pax*, 6-8, 44, 48-49, 60-62, 79, 109, 127, 136, 161, 169, 218
- perfidia*, 37, 42, 44, 61, 76
- Piso, C. Calpurnius, 122, 125-126, 201
- Piso, Cn, 41, 65, 79-80, 92-93
- Piso, L. Calpurnius, 104, 124-125
- Plutarch, 17, 64-65, 112, 120, 191
- Poenius Postumus, 168, 196
- Polyclitus, 168-169, 181, 185, 190, 208
- Poppaea Sabina, 154, 157, 169, 176, 178-179, 181, 187, 189, 201
- Poppaeus Sabinus, 102, 106, 108, 166
- postcolonial approaches to Tacitus, 27

- Prasutagus, 82, 151, 153, 156, 159,  
160, 161, 169, 179, 182, 183, 185,  
187, 203
- pre-battle speeches, 32, 59, 61, 68-69,  
71-73, 75, 122, 166, 175, 199
- primores Galliae*, 28, 203
- Propertius, 87, 100, 141, 152, 177
- prosopopoeia*, 68, 77, 126, 146
- pudicitia*, 163, 165, 175, 186, 188,  
191, 193-194, 196, 200, 204, 207-  
208, 219
- Pudicitia Plebeia*, 208  
see also chastity
- Pyrrhus of Epirus, 63, 65
- Quintilian, 23, 117, 141, 143, 238
- Remi, 7
- rhetorical turn, 11-13, 77
- Rubellius Plautus, 124-125, 157, 170,  
201-202, 219
- Sacrovir, Julius, 3, 15, 26, 55, 82,  
121, 125, 130, 133, 136, 144, 146,  
153, 165, 203, 205, 217
- saeuitia*, 35, 100, 103-104, 118, 123,  
132, 136, 181, 193-194, 207
- Sallust, 9, 17, 21, 23-24, 27, 33, 46,  
52, 55, 58, 68, 80, 84, 86-91, 103-  
105, 109-111, 128, 133, 203-207,  
219, 223, 230, 234, 239
- Segestes, 15, 26, 32, 37-39, 42-50,  
55, 57, 68-71, 73-77, 79, 81, 83-  
84, 86-88, 92, 108, 126, 146, 165,  
183, 205
- Sejanus, 30, 104-105, 110, 123-124,  
129, 132, 137-139, 141, 143, 146,  
179, 214
- Seneca the Elder, 84, 129
- Seneca the Younger, 18, 61, 84-85,  
117, 129, 140, 144, 150, 170-171,  
173, 177, 190, 219
- seruitus/seruitium*, 41, 46, 47, 48, 55,  
61, 70-72, 78, 93, 107-108, 113,  
118, 133, 136, 137, 160-161, 170-  
171, 175, 183, 186, 190, 193, 196,  
207, 218
- Sextus Tarquinius, 191, 193, 196,  
199, 209
- siege, 3, 24, 30, 43, 98, 102, 108,  
110-113, 115, 117-121, 131-132,  
137, 140-147, 216  
see also imagery, siege
- Silanus Torquatus, 125
- Silius, C, 122-124, 130, 153
- Silures, 82
- situation ethics, 17, 67, 135, 140  
see also exemplarity and  
exemplary discourse
- solitudo*, 28, 142, 217-219
- Spaniards and Spain, 6, 105, 130,  
137, 146
- Strabo, 34, 43, 87, 152
- Suebi, 57, 59, 62, 82, 88, 96
- Suetonius (biographer), 35, 78, 90,  
105, 107, 112, 150, 215, 219
- Suetonius Paulinus, 55, 72, 122, 151,  
158-159, 162-169, 171, 173, 180-  
181, 190, 195
- suicide, 13, 24, 30, 63, 85, 97-98,  
102, 104, 109, 111, 114, 116-125,  
128-130, 132, 134-140, 146-147,  
179, 183-185, 188, 194, 196, 198-  
199, 203, 209, 214, 216, 219  
mass suicide, 119-120
- Syme, 4-5, 8, 12-15, 26, 35-36, 64-  
65, 86, 88, 97, 101-102, 105-106,  
110, 134, 149, 151
- Tacfarinas, 6, 28, 62, 104, 130, 133-  
134, 137, 140, 146, 153, 218

- Tarquinius Superbus, 24, 63, 85, 87, 90, 191-192, 198, 209, 216
- Tarsa, 109-110, 117, 130, 133, 135-139
- the *Agricola*, 6-7, 11, 14-15, 25, 27-28, 30, 48, 55, 62, 66, 68, 72, 99, 107-108, 112, 121-124, 126, 129, 136-137, 139, 142, 146, 150-152, 160, 162, 165, 169-172, 175, 177, 183, 190, 196, 198, 206-208, 211, 215, 218
- the *Germania*, 6, 26, 28, 32, 35, 48, 83, 89, 96, 99, 169, 177, 180, 190, 219
- the *Historiae*, 5-8, 24, 28, 52, 57, 61, 68, 72, 100, 111-112, 122, 126, 130, 141-142, 147, 157, 160-161, 165, 167, 177, 180, 183, 203
- Thracians and Thrace, 2-3, 14, 24, 26, 30, 62-63, 91, 97-99, 100-149, 153, 164-165, 183, 208, 212, 214
- Thrasea Paetus, 85, 117, 125, 153, 170, 218
- Thucydides, 84, 99
- Thusnelda (wife of Arminius), 41, 43, 45, 49, 61, 70, 72, 74-75
- Tiberius, 11, 16, 18, 24, 28, 30-34, 36, 40-42, 44, 47-48, 50-51, 54, 56-58, 60-63, 65-66, 77-81, 88, 90-95, 103-106, 110, 123-126, 129-132, 134, 137, 140, 144-145, 149, 151, 176, 179, 187, 214, 216-217
- Tigellinus, 169
- Titius Sabinus, 110, 123, 141-143, 153
- Treveri, 82
- Trinovantes, 151, 157
- triumphs, 33-35, 41, 57-58, 104, 106, 156
- Troy and Trojans, 87, 100, 142, 144
- Turesis, 109-110, 114, 130, 133, 136-138
- Turnus, 20, 37
- uastitas*, 108, 141-142, 168, 217
- urbs capta*, 141, 202
- see also imagery, siege and sack
- uulgus*, 163, 165, 176, 204-206, 219
- Valerius Potitus, 85
- Valerius Publicola, 85
- Varus and the Varian disaster, 31, 34-36, 43-45, 47, 50, 53-55, 59, 61, 66, 70, 72-77, 79, 95
- Velleius Paterculus, 23, 33-36, 60, 66, 82-83, 87, 100-101, 105, 219
- Vercingetorix, 33, 64, 112
- Verdüsterungshypothese, 14-15
- Vergil, 21, 23, 37-38, 53, 55, 59-60, 87, 100, 118, 142-145, 152, 161, 169, 171, 177, 198, 218, 219
- the *Aeneid*, 20, 37, 55, 59, 87, 100, 118, 142, 144, 161, 169, 171, 177, 189, 198
- the *Georgics*, 144
- Verginia, 66, 141, 150, 153-155, 176, 179, 187-189, 191-199, 202, 206, 208-211
- Verginius, 86, 194-197, 200, 202-203, 207, 209
- Vespasian (emperor), 5, 95, 107, 152
- Vitellius (emperor), 7, 107, 141-142, 161, 233
- Vulteius, 116-120
- Xiphilinus, Joannes, 172



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