



30th Latin Summer School

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Class 4 v

Tutor:

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The end of Suetonius' *Nero* (43-57)

Content advice: suicide, violence

Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars* is a series of twelve biographies (called *Lives*) of the first emperors of Rome, from Julius Caesar to Domitian. We are reading the end of *Nero*, the sixth *Life* in the series and one of the most famous. Nero is known as one of the classic 'bad' emperors, who lived riotously and cavalierly from the beginning to the end. Suetonius emphasises his cruelty, extravagance with money, and especially his love of being the centre of attention.

The last few sections of *Nero* are often called the most artistic section of Suetonius' *Lives* and in these sections it is true that Suetonius does do something unusual, for him: he shifts from his usual 'rubric' arrangement of giving information one topic at a time to this long sequence of narrative with several characters and people speaking to each other. The camera always remains on Nero himself, who has just been declared an enemy of the state after fourteen years as emperor (he succeeded as a teenager and dies, aged 30). When this passage opens, Suetonius has just told a sequence of appalling crimes Nero was supposed to have committed or planned to commit before the 'world finally cast him off' (section 40) and we start reading at 43, where Suetonius tells of the (faintly ridiculous) way Nero responded to the crisis of generals revolting against him (beginning with Vindex, in Gaul).

An important thing to remember is Nero's reputation (something Suetonius plays up) for being very keen on the theatre: he is always performing. This includes several statements Nero will make in Greek (the language of poetry and theatre). I have provided translations of the Greek quotations here. In his last moment and his last words this theatrical element of his character is brought out. Another thing to keep in mind is the Roman tradition of noble suicide, which Nero inverts in every way.

To prepare for this class, I would suggest reading the *Life of Nero* (in English or your usual language), taking note of the way the crimes build up in a crescendo towards section 40, where the narrative moves to Nero's downfall. Any translation will do, but I like Catharine Edwards, *Suetonius Lives of the Caesars* (2000) or Donna Hurley, *Suetonius the Caesars* (2011) which has good notes. As always, the Penguin edition (translated by Robert Graves, revised by J. B. Rives) is a good translation with a useful introduction. For commentary, the best is Keith Bradley, *Suetonius' Life of Nero* (1978) but like all others it is primarily a historical commentary. Part of this is supplied here.

If you wish, I would be happy to email you the relevant part of the translation by Hurley, and/or an interesting chapter by Cynthia Damon on the last section of *Nero* called 'Death by narrative in Suetonius' *Lives*' from 2018.

XLIII. Initio statim tumultus multa et inmania, verum non abhorrentia a natura sua creditur destinasse; successores percussoresque summittere exercitus et provincias regentibus, quasi conspiratis idemque et unum sentientibus; quidquid ubique exulum, quidquid in urbe hominum Gallicanorum esset contrucidare, illos ne desciscentibus adgregarentur, hos ut conscios popularium suorum atque fautores; Gallias exercitibus diripiendas permittere; senatum universum veneno per convivia necare; urbem incendere feris in populum immissis, quo difficilius defenderentur. Sed absterritus non tam paenitentia quam perficiendi desperatione credensque expeditionem necessariam, consules ante tempus privavit honore atque in utriusque locum solus iniit consulatum, quasi fatale esset non posse Gallias debellari nisi a consule. Ac susceptis fascibus cum post epulas triclinio digrederetur, innixus¹ umeris familiarium affirmavit, simul ac primum provinciam attigisset, inermem se in conspectum exercituum proditurum nec quicquam aliud quam fleturum, revocatisque ad paenitentiam defectoribus insequenti die laetum inter laetos cantaturum epinicia,² quae iam nunc sibi componi oporteret.

XLIV. In praeparanda expeditione primam curam habuit deligendi vehicula portandis scaenicis organis³ concubinasque, quas secum educeret, tondendi ad virilem modum et securibus peltisque Amazonicis instruendi. Mox tribus urbanas ad sacramentum⁴ citavit ac nullo idoneo respondente certum dominis servorum numerum indixit; nec nisi ex tota cuiusque familia probatissimos, ne dispensatoribus quidem aut amanuensibus exceptis,⁵ recepit. Partem etiam census omnes ordines conferre iussit et insuper inquilinos⁶ privatarum

¹ Leaning on (from nitor)

² Epinicia: songs of victory

³ scaenicis organis: theatrical instruments

⁴ Ad sacramentum: to sign up for the military

⁵ Dispensator: paymaster, amanuens: secretary

⁶ Lodgers (lit. foreigners)

aedium atque insularum pensionem annuam repraesentare fisco; exegitque, ingenti fastidio et acerbitate nummum asperum argentum pustulatum,⁷ aurum ad obrussam,⁸ ut plerique omnem collationem palam recusarent, consensu flagitantes a delatoribus⁹ potius revocanda praemia quaecumque cepissent.

XLV. Ex annonae quoque caritate lucranti¹⁰ adcrevit invidia; nam et forte accidit, ut in publica fame Alexandrina navis nuntiaretur pulverem luctatoribus aulicis¹¹ advexisse. Quare omnium in se odio incitato nihil contumeliarum defuit quin subiret. Statuae eius a vertice cirrus¹² appositus est cum inscriptione Graeca; nunc demum agona esse, et traderet tandem. Alterius collo ἄσκòς¹³ praeligatus simulque titulus: "Ego egi quod potui. Sed tu culleum¹⁴ meruisti." Ascriptum et columnis, etiam Gallos¹⁵ eum cantando excitasse. Iam noctibus iurga cum servis plerique simulantes crebro Vindicem¹⁶ posebant.

XLVI. Terrebat ad hoc portentis somniorum et auspicio et ominum, cum veteribus tum novis. Numquam antea somniare solitus occisa demum matre vidit per quietem navem sibi regenti extortum gubernaculum trahique se ab Octavia uxore in artissimas tenebras et modo pinnatarum formicarum¹⁷ multitudine oppleri, modo a simulacris gentium ad Pompei theatrum dedicatarum circumiri acerique progressu; asturconem,¹⁸ quo maxime laetabatur, posteriore corporis parte in simiae speciem transfiguratum ac tantum capite integro hinnitus

⁷ Pustulatum: very pure (with argentum)

⁸ ad obrussam: tested (i.e. of very good quality)

⁹ Delator: an informer (a common problem in this century- informers who would take part of the estate of anyone they doxxed in)

¹⁰ Lucror: profit, gain

¹¹ luctatoribus aulicis: wrestling matches in the palace

¹² Cirrus: a curl of hair

¹³ ἄσκòς: a sack

¹⁴ Culleus: a sack, spec. the sack in which a parricide is sewn up

¹⁵ A pun: the Galli are the people of Gaul (where the revolt began) but also galli are roosters. Canto can mean I crow or I sing.

¹⁶ Another pun: vindex means 'avenger' but was also the name of the one who was rising up against Nero.

¹⁷ pinnatarum formicarum: flying ants

¹⁸ An Asturian horse

edere canoros.¹⁹ De Mausoleo, sponte foribus patefactis, exaudita vox est nomine eum
cientis.²⁰ Kal. Ian. exornati Lares in ipso sacrificii apparatu conciderunt; auspicanti Sporus²¹
anulum muneri optulit, cuius gemmae scalptura erat Proserpinae raptus; votorum
nuncupatione,²² magna iam ordinum frequentia, vix repertae Capitolii claves. Cum ex
oratione eius, qua in Vindicem perorabat, recitaretur in senatu daturos poenas sceleratos ac
brevis dignum exitum facturos, conclamatum est ab universis : "Tu facies, Auguste."²³
Observatum etiam fuerat novissimam fabulam cantasse eum publice Oedipodem exulem
atque in hoc desisse²⁴ versu:

Θανεῖν μ' ἄνωγε σύγγαμος, μήτηρ, πατήρ.²⁵

XLVII. Nuntiata interim etiam ceterorum exercituum defectione litteras prandenti sibi
redditas concerpsit,²⁶ mensam subvertit, duos scyphos²⁷ gratissimi usus, quos Homericos a
caelatura carminum Homeri vocabat, solo inlisit²⁸ ac sumpto a Lucusta²⁹ veneno et in auream
pyxidem condito transiit in hortos Servilianos, ubi praemissis libertorum fidissimis Ostiam ad
classem praeparandam tribunos centurionesque praetorii de fugae societate temptavit. Sed
partim tergiversantibus, partim aperte detrectantibus, uno vero etiam proclamante: "Usque
adeone mori miserum est?" varie agitavit, Parthosne³⁰ an Galbam³¹ supplex peteret, an

¹⁹ hinnitus canoros: 'tuneful neighing'

²⁰ Cio: I summon

²¹ Sporus is one of Nero's lovers, whom Nero had had castrated (see section 28) and married, as if Sporus was a girl.

²² Nuncupatio: a solemn pronouncement

²³ The official title of Nero is Augustus.

²⁴ Desino: I finish

²⁵ Θανεῖν μ' ἄνωγε σύγγαμος, μήτηρ, πατήρ: Wife, mother, father, drive me to (my) death

²⁶ Concerpo: I tear up

²⁷ Scyphus: a large, two-handled drinking vessel

²⁸ Illido: I smash

²⁹ Lucusta (elsewhere called Locusta) is a woman who works for Nero, an expert poisoner.

³⁰ Parthians are a people who live in the east- they were supposedly quite pro-Nero (see final section of this reading)

³¹ Galba is the name of the man who will eventually succeed Nero.

atratus³² prodiret in publicum proque rostris quanta maxima posset miseratione veniam praeteritorum precaretur, ac ni flexisset animos, vel Aegypti praefecturam concedi sibi oraret. Inventus est postea in scrinio³³ eius hac de re sermo formatus; sed deterritum putant, ne prius quam in Forum perveniret discerperetur.³⁴ Sic cogitatione in posterum diem dilata ad mediam fere noctem excitatus, ut comperit stationem militum recessisse, prosiluit e lecto misitque circum amicos,³⁵ et quia nihil a quoquam renuntiabatur, ipse cum paucis hospitia singulorum adiit. Verum clausis omnium foribus, respondente nullo, in cubiculum rediit, unde iam et custodes diffugerant, direptis etiam stragulis,³⁶ amota et pyxide veneni; ac statim Spiculum murmillonem³⁷ vel quemlibet alium percussorem, cuius manu periret, requisivit et nemine reperto "Ergo ego" inquit "nec amicum habeo, nec inimicum?" procurritque, quasi praecipitaturus se in Tiberim.

XLVIII. Sed revocato rursus impetu aliquid secretioris latebrae ad colligendum animum desideravit, et offerente Phaonte liberto suburbanum suum inter Salariam et Nomentanam viam circa quartum miliarium, ut erat nudo pede atque tunicatus, paenulam³⁸ obsoleti coloris superinduit adapertoque capite et ante faciem optento sudario³⁹ equum inscendit, quattuor solis comitantibus, inter quos et Sporus erat.⁴⁰ Statimque tremore terrae et fulgure adverso pavefactus audiit e proximis castris clamorem militum et sibi adversa et Galbae prospera ominantium,⁴¹ etiam ex obviis viatoribus quendam dicentem: 'Hi Neronem persequuntur', alium sciscitantem:⁴² 'Ecquid in urbe novi de Nerone?' Equo autem ex odore abiecti in via

³² Atratus: wearing black

³³ Scrinium: writing desk

³⁴ Discerpo: I tear apart (see *concerpo*, above)

³⁵ 'he sent around *for* his friends'

³⁶ Stragulum: covering for bed, linens

³⁷ Spiculus, the gladiator

³⁸ Paenula: a cloak

³⁹ A handkerchief

⁴⁰ Remember Sporus?

⁴¹ et sibi adversa et Galbae prospera ominantium: prophesying bad things for him (Nero) and good for Galba

⁴² Sciscitor: I ask, enquire

cadaveris consternato detecta facie agnitus est⁴³ a quodam missicio⁴⁴ praetoriano et salutatus. Ut ad deverticulum ventum est, dimissis equis inter fruticeta ac vepres⁴⁵ per harundineti semitam⁴⁶ aegre nec nisi strata sub pedibus veste ad aversum villae parietem⁴⁷ evasit. Ibi hortante eodem Phaonte, ut interim in specum egestae harenae concederet, negavit se vivum sub terram iturum, ac parumper⁴⁸ commoratus, dum clandestinus ad villam introitus pararetur, aquam ex subiecta lacuna poturus manu hausit et 'Haec est' inquit, 'Neronis decocta.' Dein divolsa⁴⁹ sentibus paenula traiectos surculos⁵⁰ rasis, atque ita quadripes per angustias effossae cavernae receptus in proximam cellam decubuit super lectum modica culcita,⁵¹ vetere pallio strato, instructum; fameque et iterum siti interpellante panem quidem sordidum oblatum aspernatus est, aquae autem tepidae aliquantum bibit.

XLIX. Tunc uno quoque⁵² hinc inde instante ut quam primum se impendentibus contumeliis eriperet, scrobem⁵³ coram fieri imperavit dimensus ad corporis sui modulum, componique simul, si qua invenirentur, frusta⁵⁴ marmoris et aquam simul ac ligna conferri curando mox cadaveri, flens ad singula atque identidem dictitans: 'Qualis artifex pereo!'. Inter moras perlatos a cursore⁵⁵ Phaonti codicillos praeripuit legitque se hostem a senatu iudicatum et quaeri, ut puniatur more maiorum, interrogavitque, quale id genus esset poenae; et cum comperisset nudi hominis cervicem inseri furcae, corpus virgis ad necem caedi, conterritus duos pugiones, quos secum extulerat, arripuit temptataque utriusque acie rursus condidit,⁵⁶

⁴³ Agnosco: I recognise

⁴⁴ Missicio: a discharged soldier

⁴⁵ fruticeta ac vepres: thickets and thorn-bushes

⁴⁶ harundineti semitam: a path of reeds

⁴⁷ Paries: a building (at the back of the villa)

⁴⁸ Parumper: for a moment

⁴⁹ Divello: I tear apart

⁵⁰ sentes: thorns; surculus 'twig' is dimin. Of surus, 'sprout')

⁵¹ Culcita: cushion

⁵² Unus quisque: one and all

⁵³ Scrobis: a trench

⁵⁴ NB not frustra! Frustum, -i: a piece, a bit

⁵⁵ Cursor: messenger

⁵⁶ Condo: I put (them) away

causatus nondum adesse fatalem horam. Ac modo Sporum hortabatur, ut lamentari ac plangere inciperet, modo orabat, ut se aliquis ad mortem capessendam⁵⁷ exemplo iuaret; interdum segnitiam⁵⁸ suam his verbis increpabat: 'Vivo deformiter, turpiter pereo- οὐ πρέπει Νέρωνι, οὐ πρέπει - νήφειν δεῖ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις - ἄγε ἔγειρε σεαυτόν!'.⁵⁹ Iamque equites appropinquabant, quibus praeceptum erat, ut vivum eum adtraherent. Quod ut sensit, trepidanter effatus:⁶⁰ "Ἴππων μ' ὠκυπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὔατα βάλλει"⁶¹ ferrum iugulo adegit iuvante Eraphrodito a libellis.⁶² Semianimisque adhuc irrumpenti centurioni et paenula ad vulnus adposita in auxilium se venisse simulanti non aliud respondit quam 'Sero' et 'Haec est fides'. atque in ea voce defecit, extantibus rigentibusque oculis usque ad horrorem formidinemque visentium. Nihil prius aut magis a comitibus exegerat quam ne potestas cuiquam capitis sui fieret, sed ut quoquo modo totus cremaretur. Permisit hoc Icelus, Galbae libertus, non multo ante vinculis exolutus, in quae primo tumultu coniectus fuerat.

L. Funeratus est impensa⁶³ ducentorum milium, stragulis albis auro intextis, quibus usus Kal. Ian. fuerat. Reliquias Egloge et Alexandria nutrices cum Acte concubina gentili Domitiorum monumento condiderunt quod prospicitur e campo Martio impositum colli Hortulorum.⁶⁴ In eo monumento solium⁶⁵ porphyretici marmoris, superstante⁶⁶ Lunensi ara, circumsaeptum est lapide Thasio.

⁵⁷ Capesso I embrace (desiderative of capio)

⁵⁸ Segnities: cowardice

⁵⁹ οὐ πρέπει Νέρωνι, οὐ πρέπει - νήφειν δεῖ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις - ἄγε ἔγειρε σεαυτόν: 'it is not becoming for Nero, not becoming- one must be sober/vigilant in these times – come on, wake up!'

⁶⁰ Effor, I speak

⁶¹ "Ἴππων μ' ὠκυπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὔατα βάλλει: this is Homer, Iliad, 10.535: 'The sound of swift-footed horses strikes upon mine ears.' Nestor says it, as part of a speech at a time when action is required.

⁶² 'a libellus': (a job title) librarian

⁶³ 'he was buried at the cost of'

⁶⁴ The Pincian hill

⁶⁵ Solium, -i: a sarcophagus

⁶⁶ Possibly we should read superstante e Lunensi...

LI. Statura fuit prope iusta, corpore maculoso et fetido, subflavo capillo, vultu pulchro magis quam venusto, oculis caesis et hebetioribus,⁶⁷ cervice obesa, ventre proiecto, gracillimis cruribus,⁶⁸ valitudine prospera; nam qui luxuriae immoderatissimae esset, ter omnino per quattuordecim annos languit, atque ita ut neque vino neque consuetudine reliqua abstineret; circa cultum habitumque adeo pudendus, ut comam semper in gradus formatam⁶⁹ peregrinatione Achaica etiam pone⁷⁰ verticem summiserit ac plerumque synthesinam⁷¹ indutus ligato circum collum sudario in publicum sine cinctu et discalciatus.

LII. Liberalis disciplinas omnis fere puer attigit. Sed a philosophia eum mater⁷² avertit monens imperaturo contrariam esse; a cognitione veterum oratorum Seneca⁷³ praeceptor, quo diutius in admiratione sui detineret. Itaque ad poeticam pronus carmina libenter ac sine labore composuit nec, ut quidam putant, aliena pro suis edidit. Venere in manus meas pugillares⁷⁴ libellique cum quibusdam notissimis versibus ipsius chirographo scriptis, ut facile appareret non tralatos aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos;⁷⁵ ita multa et deleta et inducta et superscripta inerant. Habuit et pingendi fingendique non mediocre studium.

LIII. Maxime autem popularitate efferebatur, omnium aemulus,⁷⁶ qui quoquo modo animum vulgi moverent. Exiit opinio post scaenicas coronas proximo lustro descensurum eum ad Olympia inter athletas; nam et luctabatur assidue nec aliter⁷⁷ certamina gymnica tota Graecia

⁶⁷ Hebes: dull

⁶⁸ With skinny legs

⁶⁹ (his hair) done in rows (of curls?)

⁷⁰ Pone: behind

⁷¹ Synthesina: a loose robe

⁷² His mother was Agrippina the Younger

⁷³ Seneca the younger was Nero's teacher

⁷⁴ Pugillares: writing tablets

⁷⁵ Exaro: I write

⁷⁶ Aemulus: envious

⁷⁷ 'nec aliter' = always

spectaverat quam brabeutarum⁷⁸ more in stadio humi assidens ac, si qua paria⁷⁹ longius recessissent, in medium manibus suis protrahens. Destinaverat etiam, quia Apollinem cantu, Solem aurigando aequiperare existimaretur, imitari et Herculis facta; praeparatumque leonem aiunt, quem vel clava⁸⁰ vel brachiorum nexibus⁸¹ in amphitheatri harena spectante populo nudus elideret.

LIV. Sub exitu⁸² quidem vitae palam voverat, si sibi incolumis status permansisset, proditurum⁸³ se partae victoriae ludis etiam hydraulam et choraulam et utricularium⁸⁴ ac novissimo die histrionem saltaturumque Vergili Turnum. Et sunt qui tradant Paridem histrionem occisum ab eo quasi gravem adversarium.

LV. Erat illi aeternitatis perpetuaeque famae cupido, sed inconsulta. Ideoque multis rebus ac locis vetere appellatione detracta novam indixit ex suo nomine, mensem quoque Aprilem Neroneum appellavit; destinaverat et Romam Neropolim nuncupare.

LVI. Religionum usque quaque contemptor, praeter unius Deae Syriae, hanc mox ita sprexit,⁸⁵ ut urina contaminaret, alia superstitione captus in qua sola pertinacissime haesit, siquidem imagunculam puellarem, cum quasi remedium insidiarum a plebeio quodam et ignoto muneri accepisset, detecta confestim⁸⁶ coniuratione pro summo numine trinisque in

⁷⁸ Brabeuta: umpire

⁷⁹ Paria: pairs (of contestants)

⁸⁰ Clava: a club

⁸¹ Nexus, -us, a clasp (in wrestling) i.e. he is going to strangle it

⁸² Before the end of his life (i.e. just before)

⁸³ He would go on stage

⁸⁴ the words for the player of various instruments: the water organ, the flute, a kind of bagpipe

⁸⁵ Sperno: I spurn, I scorn

⁸⁶ Confestim: immediately

die sacrificiis colere perseveravit volebatque credi monitione eius futura praenosceret. Ante paucos quam periret menses attendit et extispicio⁸⁷ nec umquam litavit.⁸⁸

LVII. Obiit tricensimo et secundo aetatis anno, die quo quondam Octaviam⁸⁹ interemerat, tantumque gaudium publice praebuit, ut plebs pilleata⁹⁰ tota urbe discurreret. Et tamen non defuerunt qui per longum tempus vernis aestivisque floribus tumulum eius ornarent ac modo imagines praetextatas in rostris proferrent, modo edicta quasi viventis et brevi magno inimicorum malo reversuri. Quin etiam Vologaesius Parthorum rex missis ad senatum legatis de instauranda societate hoc etiam magno opere oravit, ut Neronis memoria coleretur.

Denique cum post viginti annos adulescente me exstitisset condicionis incertae qui se Neronem esse iactaret, tam favorabile nomen eius apud Parthos fuit, ut vehementer adiutus et vix redditus sit.

⁸⁷ Extispicium: inspection of sacrificial victims

⁸⁸ Lito, I obtain a favourable omen

⁸⁹ Octavia was Nero's wife, whom he murdered

⁹⁰ Pilleatus: wearing pileus, a 'liberty cap', worn by a slave on obtaining freedom

Chilver, *JRS* 47 (1957), 32 n.40, who, however, still prefers a latish date on the ground that Nero's death swiftly followed the battle. This is unnecessary, though, for Nero's final despair can be attributed to other factors; see below, 271. Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 86, also assumes late May-early June for the battle; but Mattingly, *art. cit.*, 33ff, emphasising that the German legions could be expected to have mobilised rapidly on the precedent of A.D. 21, is more compelling in favour of an early date (though he still oddly settles for late May). An interval has to be allowed Vindex for the organisation of his supporters, but this must have been under way since the initial stages of the revolt.

abundantissimam cenam

See above, 242.

43.1-2

The second main interruption of the narrative now occurs. The more extended design of s.43.2 most likely represents the resumption of the narrative, for fact and progression replace relatively insubstantial material. Chronological relationship between the two sections is thus doubtful.

43.1 *Initio statim tumultus multa et inmania, uerum non abhorrentia a natura sua creditur destinasse*

Literally interpreted this passage would mean that the alleged enormities took place on receipt of the news of the rebellion at the time of the Quinquaginta of 68 (above, 249f), or possibly even earlier when the first reports from the provincial governors began to arrive; *Plut. Galba* 4.2. But this is inconsistent with the recorded period of inactivity in s.40.4, which there is every reason to accept in essence (above, 251f). The point is not noticed by Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 89. *Inmania* and *natura sua* show the tentativeness of the statement. What follows is made up of calumnies directed against Nero either during or after the rebellion, but in either case not to be treated as serious historical evidence. The rumours represent what Nero was thought to be capable of doing, not what he actually did. The outrageousness of the proposals readily shows this.

For a summary of the Suetonian material, cf. Oros. 7.7.13, *cumque incredibilia perturbandae, immo subruendae reipublicae mala moliretur ...*

successores percussoresque summittere exercitus et provincias regentibus, quasi conspiratis idemque et unum sentientibus

Despite the letters of Vindex to provincial governors who later reportedly took part in the rebellion after initial reluctance (*Plut. Galba* 4.2), evidence of widescale hostility to Nero from the governors at the outset of the revolt is not strong.

Ti. Iulius Alexander, prefect of Egypt, may possibly have supported the insurrection. The edict issued by him on 6th July, 68 refers to Galba as *ἀποχρηστῶν*. Communications problems make it virtually impossible for Alexander to have been informed of Galba's imperial position unless before the death of Nero, which suggests negotiations well before that time perhaps guaranteeing Alexander continuation of his Egyptian command if the resources of Egypt were secured for Galba's cause; see G. Chalon, *L'Edit de Tibérius Iulius Alexander* (1964), 43ff; *PIR*² I 139. For his adherence to Corbulo, Syme, *Tacitus*, 790.

Although the behaviour of the legate of Upper Germany is notoriously difficult to evaluate, the modern consensus, that Verginius Rufus' attitude was indecisive and incipiently disloyal (Brunt, *art. cit.*, 538; Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 90) is preferable to theories of allegiance to Nero in the early stages of the revolt; cf. Kraay, *art. cit.*, 144f; Mattingly, *art. cit.*, 34, and especially Shotton, *art. cit.*, 370ff.

Fonteus Capito, the legate of Lower Germany, was put to death by Galba after Nero's death, ostensibly on the ground of seditious intentions: *Tac. Hist.* 1.7; *Suet. Galba* 11; *Plut. Galba* 15.2. This would seem to suggest support of Nero on Capito's part. Cf. Chilver, *art. cit.*, 32; *PIR*² F 467, 468; E. Ritterling, *Fasti des röm. Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat* (1932), 53f.

The governor of Britain from 63-69, M. Trebellius Maximus, was in no way connected with the rebellion. *PIR*¹ T 239; *RE* s.v. 'Trebellius' no. 13; A. R. Birley, *Epigraphische Studien* 4 (1967), 66.

Nothing of disaffection is heard from the Balkan governors. Pompeius Silvanus was in charge of Dalmatia; *PIR*¹ P 495; J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (1969), App. II, no. 12. But whether L. Tampius Flavianus had yet been appointed to Pannonia is unknown; cf. *Tac. Hist.* 2.86; *PIR*¹ T 5. He may have been appointed, however, by Galba; Syme, *Gnomon* 29 (1957), 520; cf. also W. Reideringer, *Die Statthalter des ungeteilten Pannonien und Oberpannonien* (1956), 43ff. Also uncertain is the date of the appointment to Raetia of Porcius Septimius; he is attested there in 69 only; *Tac. Hist.* 3.5; *RE* s.v. 'Porcius' no. 43.

C. Licinius Mucianus, the governor of Syria with four legions, has no association with the rebellion, and T. Flavius Vespasianus was fully occu-

pied with the rebellion in Judaea. There are no suspicions of disloyalty. *PIR*² L 216; *RE* s.v. 'Licinius' no. 116a; Tac. *Hist.* 1.10; Suet. *Vesp.* 4.5-6; Jos. *BJ* 4.497ff; *PIR*² F 398.

L. Clodius Macer, the legate of *legio III Augusta* in Africa, appears to have led an uprising independent of that of Galba, issuing coins, perhaps invading Sicily, and attempting to starve Rome. But the project was ineffectual. Macer commanded no support and was eventually put to death by Galba. Plut. *Galba* 6; Tac. *Hist.* 1.7; *PIR*² C 1170; cf. Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 92f. In any case, his legionary strength was small, one legion together with one additionally raised in Africa itself; Tac. *Hist.* 1.11; 2.97; *RIC*, 194. See further below, 266, and *AJP* 93 (1972), 451ff.

As a reaction against the Pisonian conspiracy and the dangers represented by the executions of the Scribonii and Domitius Corbulo (above, 221), Nero had filled military governorships with individuals less likely to prove insurrectionist; Chilver, *art. cit.*, 32. Mucianus, Verginius Rufus, Vespaasian and the Balkan leaders were men of lowly origins and unlikely imperial candidates. In the beginning, then, only Vindex, Galba, Otho, and perhaps Ti. Julius Alexander were openly pro-Galba, a force which could easily be matched in military terms by the British and Balkan forces if arrangements were made quickly. Syme, *AJP* 58 (1937), 7ff, has reviewed the forces immediately at Nero's disposal: *legio I Italica* may still have been in Italy in 68; XIV *Gemina* was probably in northern Italy; Tac. *Hist.* 2.27; vexillations from Illyricum had been sent for, Tac. *Hist.* 1.9, and in addition Nero had eight cohorts of Batavians. Given this situation and the lack of evidence to show a majority of governors in support of Galba, the present text appears wholly unreasonable as a serious defensive measure on Nero's part. It is attributed by Brunt, *art. cit.*, 541 n.3, to a response to previous reports of governors' disloyalty, but at the outset these can have been very few. The only record of an attempt on the life of a governor is that which concerns Galba himself (above, 255), and perhaps this provides the origin of the present passage. It may be a rhetorical exaggeration of the source drawn on at Suet. *Galba* 9.2 where the assassination attempt is recorded.

quasi

The alleged motivation provided by Suetonius will make sense only once Nero had heard of fullscale disaffection by provincial governors as it appears from Plut. *Galba* 4.2. Two possibilities exist. The allegation is either deliberately contrived by Suetonius, or a misplaced item which is really applicable in a context after Vesontio.

quidquid ubique exulum, quidquid in urbe hominum Gallicanorum esset con- trucidare

The following persons were exiled in 65 or 66 in the aftermath of the Pisonian conspiracy and may have still been alive in 68. No record of the place of exile or of return remains unless otherwise stated.

P. Gilius Gallus; exiled to Andros; returned under Galba; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.6; *Hist.* 1.90; Plut. *Otho* 1; *SIG*³ 811-2; *PIR*² G 184; above, 187. Novius Priscus, perhaps the consul of 78; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.6; *PIR*² A 147; *RE* s.v. 'Novius' no. 15. Annius Pollio; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.6; *PIR*² A 678. Verginius Rufus, exiled to Gyaros; he had probably returned to Rome by 69; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.9; Dio 62.27.4; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.16; *PIR*¹ M 548; *RE* s.v. 'Musonius' no. 1; cf. above, 116f. Cluvidienus Quietus, Bilitius Catulinus, Iulius Agrippa, Petronius Priscus, Iulius Altinus; all exiled to an Aegean island; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.10; *PIR*² C 1200; B 138; I 127; I 146; *PIR*¹ P 219; *RE* s.v. 'Priscus' no. 52. Caedicia, wife of Flavius Scaevinus; restoration is conjectured; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.11; *PIR*² C 116. Caesennius Maximus, exiled to Sicily and recalled by Vespasian; Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.11; Mart. 7.44; *PIR*² C 172. C. Cassius the jurist, exiled to Sardinia and recalled by Vespasian; Tac. *Ann.* 16.9.2; *Dig.* 1.2.2.51-52; *PIR*² C 501; above, 223f. P. Gallus, Tac. *Ann.* 16.12.1; *PIR*² G 66; Sillia, Tac. *Ann.* 16.20.1; *PIR*¹ S 516; *RE* s.v. 'Sillius' no. 29. C. Helvidius Priscus, withdrew to Apollonia and returned under Galba; Tac. *Ann.* 16.33.3; *Schol. Juu.* 5.36; Tac. *Hist.* 4.6; *PIR*² H 59; Q. Paconius Agrippinus, exiled perhaps to Rhodes, Tac. *Ann.* 16.33.3; *PIR*¹ P 16; *contra RE* s.v. 'Paconius' no. 5; he probably returned after Nero's death, *PIR*¹ l.c. L. Annaeus Cornutus, the philosopher; Dio 62.29; *PIR*² A 609; Cassius Asclepiodotus, restored under Galba; Tac. *Ann.* 16.33; Dio 62.26.2; *PIR*² C 486.

From this total certain persons may easily be discounted as being of no political importance during their exile. Thus Sillia, whose only crime, allegedly, was friendship with Petronius; Tac. *Ann.* 16.20.1. The group of five from Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.10 are otherwise unknown and can hardly have been of any significance or prominence. Of all it may be said that they were probably adherents to rather than leaders of the conspiracy, the implication being that they would be unlikely to foment further rebellion individually in isolation. Only C. Cassius and Helvidius Priscus seem capable of leadership but even in these cases, where the impression is obviously that of locations in exile away from military positions, it may be doubted that they were

capable of serious insurrection. The conclusion has to be, therefore, that this group of exiles did not constitute a great danger to the security of Nero.

Exiled in 61 after condemnation on a forgery charge were Valerius Fabianus, Vinius Rufinus, and Terentius Lentinus; Tac. *Ann.* 14.40.5. Nothing more is known of any of these men. They may, or may not, have still been in exile in 68, but the non-political nature of their offence makes it a remote possibility that they were involved in the designs of Vindex and Galba. Added to this category may be M. Tarquinius Priscus, exiled also in 61 for extortion, Tac. *Ann.* 15.46.1, of whom nothing is known after the date of exile. Likewise M. Antonius Primus, condemned under the *lex Cornelia*, Tac. *Ann.* 14.40, and restored under Galba, Dio 64.9.3; *PIR*² A 866. L. Vibius Secundus, convicted for extortion in 60, was probably still in exile, but it is difficult to see any personal connection with Nero; Tac. *Ann.* 14.28; cf. *Hist.* 2.10; *PIR*¹ V 398. Three persons exiled earlier in the reign were Livineius Regulus, P. Suillius Rufus, and the *accusator* Paetus; whether they were still in exile in 68 is unknown; Tac. *Ann.* 14.17; 13.42-43; 13.23. Possibly of greater danger was Fabricius Veiento, condemned in 62 to an unknown destination after conviction for libel and venality; Tac. *Ann.* 14.50.1-2. Return after Nero's death is likely; *PIR*² F 91. But there is no clear evidence of his implication in the conspiracy. Finally in exile in 68 was C. Caecina Tuscus, but his origins make him an unlikely serious political threat; above, 215f.

The overriding impression from this catalogue of exiles is that in absolute terms Nero had little to fear from these people, so that the notion of mass slaughter cannot be taken as a serious proposition. The present text in this regard is no more than specious. The same may be concluded for the threat to execute all Gallic elements in Rome if conjecture is based on the statistics of men from the Tres Galliae found in the senate and imperial service under Nero.

That *Gallicanorum* must refer to the Tres Galliae and not to Narbonensis is apparent from the succeeding *popularium suorum*. Only two candidates are offered by Syme, *Tacitus*, 799f, the orators M. Aper and Iulius Securus, but even these are uncertain; cf. S. J. de Laet, *De Samenstelling van den romeinischen Senaat* (1941), 280f; *PIR*² A 910; I 559. The same paucity of numbers is true for imperial procurators and military tribunes; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (1967), 52ff. Such a lack of careerists makes it extremely unlikely that there were Gauls in Rome in 68 sufficient to cause Nero alarm. The text, therefore, can in no way reflect any genuine deterrent action against the rebels taken or intended by Nero.

Gallias exercitibus diripiendas permittere

The German armies are probably meant; Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 89. Coercive action by the Rhine legions was certainly the most obvious way to mean the rebellion in normal circumstances; above, 250f. This rumour may mean that such a policy was at some stage considered by Nero, but then became distorted by hostile elements.

senatum uniuersum ueneno per conuiuia necare

Cf. Dio 63.27.2; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 63; Aur. Vict. *De Caes.* 5.14; above, 226. The simple unfeasibility of such a project deprives this item of any seriousness. Possibly the point of the rumour was to vilify Nero through allusion to the murders of Claudius and Britannicus and other poisonings.

urbem incendere feris in populum immissis, quo difficilium defenderentur

Cf. Dio 63.27.2; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 63; Aur. Vict. *De Caes.* 5.14; above, 164; 226ff. Plainly no more than a popular belief after the idea had taken hold that Nero was responsible for the outbreak of the great fire. Towand, *Latin Biography*, 91, connects it with the version of fire theories that Nero only "planned to set fire to the city" (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.38.1; above, 227). Although Suetonius' practice of adopting different versions of the same event in various sections of his work is indisputable, this particular case does not, however, stand up. The reference here has to be to 68 (as Townend acknowledges). There is no point to the remark otherwise. So it must be a rumour of a potential second fire, and not derived from an explanation of the first.

43.2 *consules ante tempus priuauit honore atque in utriusque locum solus inuit consulatum*

If the narrative source is resumed here this event must be subsequent to the receipt of the news in ss.42.1 and 42.2, for which dates in April are suggested. This is borne out by Plin. *Pan.* 57.2, *fuit etiam qui in principatus sui fine, consulatum quem dederat ipse, magna ex parte iam gestum extorqueret et raperet*. Normal tenure of the consulship would expire at the end of June, given the usual practice of six-month consulates under Nero; above, 98. But the present episode cannot be fixed more positively. The *ordinarii* of 68 were Ti. Catus Asconius Silius Italicus and P. Galerius Trachalus; Degrassi, *Fasti*, 18. But inscriptions record Trachalus' name with Nero's; *CIL* VI 9190; 8639 = X 6637. This does not altogether mean

that Suetonius is wrong in his statement of a sole consulship. The inscripational material is very fragmentary, and Trachalus' name may have been inserted to conform with the convention of two consular names simply because there had been only one.

cum post epulas triclinio digrederetur

See above, 242.

affirmauit, simul ac primum prouinciam attingisset, inermem se in conspectum exercituum proditurum nec quicquam aliud quam fleturum, reuocatisque ad paenitentiam defectoribus

Another anecdote intended to portray the absurdity of Nero's reaction to this crisis. The use of the plural forms *exercituum* and *defectoribus* may be rhetorical exaggerations, or else refer generically to the client forces of Vindex; Plut. *Galba* 4.3; Syme, *Tacitus*, 462. Yet the similar phrase in s.47.1, *ceterorum exercituum defectione*, almost certainly means Roman troops, so this may also be the meaning here. If so the plurals will include the troops led into Gaul by Verginius Rufus, originally for the siege of Vesontio; Dio 63.24.1; Plut. *Galba* 6.1. Troop movements from the Spanish provinces are unattested. If Vesontio had already been fought, and Nero still believed a personal visit to Gaul necessary and vital, and then resorted to extreme forms of recruitment policy (s.44.1), this must have been due to the need to confront Verginius and the rebellious troops under his command; Dio 63.23; Plut. *Galba* 6.2-3; above, 254ff. As an immediate and anticipatory move, it may have been now that Nero despatched Rubrius Gallus *xai* ἀλλοὺς τανάς to Gaul; Dio 63.27.1.

defectoribus

Cf. Goodyear *ad Tac. Ann.* 1.48.1.

44.1 *primam curam habuit deligendi uehicula portandis scaenicis organis*

See above, 243.

conclubinasque

Cf. above, 164.

mox tribus urbanas ad sacramentum citauit

It is not clear whether this was a political action or a recruitment measure. The oath may be the oath of loyalty to the *princeps* which was

renewed annually, except that here an irregular procedure would have to be understood, or else the oath of loyalty taken by recruits on enlistment. For the former see the edition of the *Res Gestae* by Brunt and Moore (1967), 67f, with especially *ILS* 8781; for the latter cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 10.18.2; 11.43.2; Liv. 22.38.3; *DS* s.vv. 'sacramentum', 'dilectus'.

nec nisi ex tota cuiusque familia probatissimos, ne dispensatoribus quidem aut amanuensibus exceptis, recepit

This text may reflect the attempts of Nero to raise the legion which subsequently became I *Adiutrix*. It was composed partly of seamen, *classarii*, who were freedmen; Suet. *Galba* 12.2; Plut. *Galba* 15.3-4. Its presence in Italy is attested at Tac. *Hist.* 1.6. The *amanuenses* and *dispensatores* were possibly intended for the minor legionary executive positions, *librarii*, *exactors* and so on; cf. H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (repr. 1971), 207, though all the indications are that the legion was to be made up of freedmen. Suetonius follows a tradition different from that of Tacitus, who records more regular troop disbursements: I *Italica*, raised for the projected Caspian expedition (above, 117f) is shown to be at Lugdunum in 69, probably having been diverted thence from northern Italy; *Hist.* 1.74.2; Brunt, *art. cit.*, 540. Also, legions were summoned from Illyricum and actually arrived in Italy along with other detachments intended for the East; *Hist.* 1.70; Brunt, *l.c.*; above, 260.

44.2 *partem etiam census omnes ordines conferre iussit*

Perhaps to pay for the new levies.

et insuper inquilinos priuatarum aedium atque insularum pensionem annuam repraesentare fisco

Inquilini were tenants of apartments, houses, or *insulae* under the terms of *locatio, conductio rei*; *DS* s.vv; W. W. Buckland, *A Textbook of Roman Law*³ (1966), 305. The distinction here implied between the two types of accommodation is analogous to that at ss.16.1, 38.2. This must mean that *priuatarum aedium* is synonymous with *domus*. While it was regular procedure to lease ground floor shops in *domus*, it was not common for *domus* themselves to be leased out. Occupation was usually maintained by the owner. But the possibility of such a transaction is confirmed at Suet. *Vitell.* 7.2, *ut domum in reliquam partem anni ablocaret*; cf. Meiggs, *Ostia*, 258; L. Homo, *La Rome impériale* (1951), 550f. This text may convey the legalistic terminology of an enactment, and the distinction in building types

may refer to different categories of income groups; cf. *omnes ordines* above; rich and poor alike were to contribute; above, 193.

fisco

That is, the financial organisation controlled *de facto* by the *princeps*. Distinction between 'public' and 'private' is irrelevant; cf. Jones, *JRS* 40 (1950), 25; Brunt, *JRS* 56 (1966), 75; *contra* Millar, *JRS* 53 (1963), 39; see also above, 192.

nummum asperum

See M. Crawford, *JRS* 60 (1970), 46, who suggests that a demand for "fresh coin" was unusual.

consensu flagitantes a delatoribus potius reuocanda praemia quaecumque cepissent

The revival of the *lex maiestatis* in 62 opened the way to a revival of accusations which proliferated after the Pisonian conspiracy; Tac. *Ann.* 14.48; above, 237f. The usual reward for a *delator* on the bringing of a successful prosecution was one quarter of the defendant's means; Koestermann *ad Tac. Ann.* 16.33. The evidence for rewards to Neronian informers, however, is meagre; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 16.33.4, *accusatoribus Epruo et Cossutiano quinquagties sesterium singulis, Ostorio duodecies ... tribuuntur*; Tac. *Hist.* 4.42, (Regulus) ... *septuagties sesterio saginatus*.

45.1 *ex annonae quoque caritate lucrantia[a] adcreuit inuidia; nam et forte accidit, ut in publica fame Alexandrina nauis nuntiaretur puluerem luctatoribus aulicis aduexisse*

A rise in the price of corn can have resulted only from a shortage, as the text demonstrates. But this can have nothing to do with events in Gaul and Spain. More plausible is the view that the famine was due to the activities of Clodius Macer in Africa; above, 260. It seems that his intention from the outset of his insurrection was to starve Rome into recognition of him; cf. Plut. *Galbā* 13.3, and for the full argument see *AJP* 93 (1972), 451ff.

lucrantia[a]

Lucrantia (sc. *Neroni*) must be the preferred reading.

45.2 *Quare omnium in se odio incitato nihil contumeliarum defuit quin subiret*

The statement is a climax to the persistently disparaging stories of ss.44.1-45.1. The generalisation is inflated, or at least of temporary significance only; contrast the references to Nero's popularity after his death; Tac. *Hist.* 1.4; 1.8; below, 293. In the *exempla* adduced in support Neronian outrages are the vehicle and objects of criticism: *cirrus*, philhellenism (cf. s.51); *culleum*, the matricide; *cantando*, aestheticism. Cf. Subrius Flavius' dictum at Tac. *Ann.* 15.67.3.

cum inscriptione Graeca: nunc demum agona esse, et traderet tandem

Townend, *Hermes* 88 (1960), 109, suggests that this item originated in a basic narrative source, which he identifies as the elder Pliny, arguing that this source eschewed the use of Greek and conveyed Greek material into Latin. Hence the reason for Suetonius' rendition in Latin of an *inscriptio Graeca*. For passages where Suetonius retains Greek, another source is posited, Cluvius Rufus. It was observed above, 247, that the quotation in s.40.2 appearing also in Dio most likely derived from the common source, which if correct should mean that the basic narrative source did in fact use Greek on occasion. However, it is equally likely that the present text does not derive from a common source since it does not appear in Dio, in contrast to the following *exemplum*. It might well be then an independently acquired piece of information gathered for corroborative purposes in an exemplary section. The reason for conversion into Latin may be no more than simple expediency. Like other instances of Latinised Greek, the text is given in indirect speech where Latin usage should be expected; cf. above, 126f.

alterius collo ascopa deligata simulque titulus

Cf. Dio 61.16.1, where the material is put in a more apposite context, the murder of Agrippina. The information has been displaced by Suetonius from a common source, for it has no direct relevance to the events of 68; cf. below, 268.

ascopa

This word is extremely rare, but is a reading preferable to *ascopera*. It may descend from *ἀσχορῖψα* but more probably *ἀσχορῦρῆνῃ*; Ernout, Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* (1932), s.v.; *TLL* s.v.; *contra*, A. A. Howard, *HSCP* 7 (1896), 208; W. Chawner, *CR* 9 (1895), 110.

ego quid potui? sed tu culleum meruisti

For attempts to remove the obscurity see Howard, *art. cit.*, suggesting *egi ego quod potui sed tu culleum meruisti*; Chawner, *art. cit.*, suggesting *ego quid? tu autem meruisti*.

Vindex

Inclusion at this juncture of Vindex' name does not affect the earlier proposition (above, 257) that Vesontio had already been fought and Vindex killed. The exemplary technique of the section deprives this item of any chronological significance. Cf. above, 267.

46.1 *Terrebatu ad hoc euidentibus portentis somniorum et auspiciorum et ominum*

Cf. *Iul.* 81.1, *euidentibus prodigiis*; *Aug.* 97.1, *euidentissimis ostentis*. The inclusion in catalogue form of prodigies and portents, signs of divine disfavour, is a conventional feature of Roman historical writing; cf. Syme, *Tacitus*, 522; P. G. Walsh, *Livy* (1961), 61ff. Perhaps for this reason it constitutes a frequent item in Suetonian biography; cf. *Iul.* 81.1-3; *Aug.* 97.1-2; *Tib.* 74 etc. Suetonius' reason for including omens and portents, however, may be different from and less elevated than those of the historians. For Livy is claimed a philosophical interpretation of *prodigia*; Walsh, *op. cit.*, 64; cf. W. Laistner, *The Greater Roman Historians* (1947), 69f; contra I. Kajanto, *God and Fate in Livy* (1957), 52. Tacitus could not allow himself to neglect the unnatural; Syme, *Tacitus*, 522, citing *Hist.* 2.50, *vulgatis traditisque demere fidem non ausim*. But for Suetonius there is no comparable *grauitas coepti operis*. By contrast, his purpose may well be *conquirere fabulosa et fictis oblectare legentium animos*; *Tac. l.c.*; cf. above, 246. The view that Suetonius has no high regard for the import of *prodigia* because he nowhere makes subjective comments on his lists of portents is a fallacy; F. B. Krauss, *An Interpretation of the Omens, Portents etc. in Livy, Tacitus, Suetonius* (Diss. 1931), 29. This misses one of the most obvious characteristics of Suetonius' work, the minimal number of personal intrusions by the author on almost any matter. For prodigies in general see R. Bloch, *Les Prodiges dans l'antiquité classique* (1963), 129ff.

cum ueteribus tum nouis

That is, the opening generalisation will be illustrated from a wide range of sources, not just related to the immediate stage of events in the narrative of the rebellion.

nauem

The ship of state; Krauss, *op. cit.*, 151. But allusion is also doubtless intended to the ship meant to kill Agrippina; s.34.2.

pinnatarum fornicarum multitudine oppleri

A sign of abandonment by popular elements; cf. *Tib.* 72.2; Krauss, *op. cit.*, 151.

a simulacris gentium ad Pompei theatrum dedicatarum circumiri arcerique progressu

Fourteen statues representing the peoples subdued by Pompey formed part of the decorations of the *theatrum Pompei*; *Plin. NH* 36.41; cf. above, 83. It is uncertain whether they stood within the theatre or the adjacent *porticus Pompei*; Platner, Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, s.v. But the indication is obviously one of provincial uprising; Krauss, *op. cit.*, 151.

asturconem

Krauss, *op. cit.*, 151, interprets this as another sign of popular hostility to Nero, but does not give reasons.

46.2 *Mausoleo*

For the Mausoleum Augusti see Platner, Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, s.v.; E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1962), s.v.; Blake, *Ancient Roman Construction in Italy* (1947), 171f.

exaudita uox est nomine eum cientis

Cf. *Vesp.* 23.4, *nam cum inter cetera prodigia Mausoleum derrepente patuisset*.

Kal. Ian.

Cf. below, 270. Perhaps an allusion to the sacrifices of the Arval college for which on 1st January see *AFA* for 57 and 58 (Smallwood, *Documents*, nos. 18; 20).

exornati Lares in ipso sacrificii apparatu considerunt

Evidence of the loss of divine approval of the reign; Krauss, *op. cit.*, 170 n.24. See below, 270, for the sacrifice. For the Lares in the Arval grove, Henzen, 145.

Sporus

See above, 161.

Proserpinae raptus

To signify the "suddenness and violence of (Nero's) death"; Krauss, *op. cit.*, 170 n.24.

votorum nuncupatione magna iam ordinum frequentia

The qualification of the second phrase makes it probable that this text refers to the vows taken annually on 3rd January for the well-being (*pro salute*) of the *princeps* by the senate and priestly colleges, rather than the vows of 1st January, taken by the senate alone in *acta principis*; cf. e.g., *AFA* for 59 and 60 (= Smallwood, *Documents*, nos. 21, 22); *Plut. Cic.* 2.1; *Dio* 59.24.6; Koestermann *ad Tac. Ann.* 16.22.1; Sherwin-White, *Pliny*, 611f; *Dig.* 50.16.233.1. This makes the selective nature of the *exempla* clear.

Capitolii

Cf. *AFA* II.c. *uictimis immolatis in Capitolio*.

46.3 *ex oratione eius, qua in Vindicem perorabat, recitaretur in senatu* Suetonius has stated earlier, s.41.2, that Nero failed to consult the senate and people on his arrival in Rome concerning the emergency situation, not without reproach. This text, however, seemingly derived from an alternative tradition, suggests that some concern to palliate senatorial feelings and to maintain allegiance had been felt by Nero, and that an attempt to do so had been made. The text may be connected with the remark at *Plut. Galba* 5.4, that at one stage the senate declared Galba a public enemy. This must have been at a period of indecision when the outcome of events was still in the balance and attention to Nero's directions still being maintained to a degree. Although the practice of using variant traditions on Suetonius' part leads to inconsistencies within the text, it does at least permit a reappraisal of the predominant tradition of Nero's irresponsibility in the final crisis.

obseruatum etiam fuerat

The tense may indicate a change in source material; Townend, *art. cit.*, 104; but see above, 247.

Oedipodem

See s.21.3.

θανέν μ' ἀνωγε σύγγραμος, μήτηρ, πατήρ

Cf. *Dio* 63.28.5 (with Nauck, *Adesp.* 8), where a variant but similar quotation appears in a later part of the narrative.

47.1-2

Suetonius here returns to the basic narrative interrupted at s.44.1, and describes the desperation of Nero's plans the day before his death, that is, 8th (or conceivably 10th) June; cf. s.47.3, *in posterum diem*; and see below, 292.

47.1 *Nuntiata interim etiam ceterorum exercituum defectione*

The armies already in a certain state of rebellion were those only of Galba and Macer, and, presumably, the remnants of Vindex' Gallic levies. The armies of the East and of Britain were commanded by loyalist, or at least neutral generals; above, 259f. This all-embracing text must then relate to the defection of the Balkan legions and of the troops newly raised by Nero; cf. *Tac. Hist.* 1.8; *Brunt, art. cit.*, 541; *contra*, Chilver, *art. cit.*, 32. Moreover, in view of the length of time required for news to travel from Alexandria to Rome it may have been only at this late juncture that Nero became aware of the wavering of Ti. Iulius Alexander (above, 259); which would then account for the hesitation in deciding whether to escape to Egypt; s.47.2. The attitude of the German legions is more difficult to decide. They were certainly reluctant to desert Nero, *Tac. Hist.* 1.8, but this does not mean that they were still loyal almost as late as 8th June, as apparently believed by Shotter, *art. cit.*, 373. With Vesontio in April and military movements after this, *Dio* 63.27.1 cannot be disregarded. Verginius Rufus did not join Galba until the senate had abandoned Nero, *Plut. Galba* 6.4; but with Vindex' army more or less eliminated after Vesontio, the troop movements within Italy are explicable only on the assumption that Nero was alarmed about Verginius. This text, then, should probably not be taken to incorporate the German armies; *contra*, Shotter, *art. cit.*, 373, following Hainsworth, *art. cit.*, 86.

litteras prandenti sibi redditas concepsit, mensam subuertit

Cf. *Plut. Galba* 5.3, where the same material appears but in the context of the original news of Galba's defection. See also above, 242.

duos scyphos gratissimi usus, quos Homeros a caelatura carminum Homeri uocabat, solo intulit

Cf. Plin. *NH* 37.29, *Nero amissarum rerum nuntio accepto duos calices* broken their allegiance to Nero. At a very late stage, according to Plut. *crystallinos in suprema ira fregit inlisos*. The similarity of subject matter *Galba* 2.1-2, the praetorians were bribed by Nymphidius Sabinus to here may offer a clue to the identity of Suetonius' main source in the enounce Nero and to acclaim Galba. This final military loss was fatal; cf. narrative section if it is conceded that a similar entry appeared in Pliny's *Brunt, art. cit.*, 542.

17.2 *uarie agitaui, Parthosne an Galbam supplex peteret*
The settlement with Parthia (above, 89) had established conditions which made retreat to the East a genuine possibility; cf. below, 294f. Sanford, *Roman Gold and Silver Plate* (1966), 136; 140; and plates 35B and 44B.
HSCP 48 (1937), 100f, and 99 for associations with oracular prophecies.

Lucusta

See above, 198f.

auream pyxidem

Cf. s.12.3, and see the illustrations in Strong, *op. cit.*, plates 32B and 54A.

hortos Seruilianos

The exact location of these gardens is unknown, though proximity to the *uia Ostiensis* is suggested from Nero's intention to escape to Ostia. This has led to the proposal that the gardens lay between the *uia Ostiensis* and the *uia Ardeatina*; P. Grimal, *Les Jardins romains?* (1969), 157; cf. Platner, Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, s.v.; *RE* s.v. The gardens may have been in the possession of Nero since the death in 59 of M. Servilius Nonianus; Tac. *Ann.* 15.55; Grimal, *op. cit.*, 157. They are known to have been the site of various works of art; Plin. *NH* 36.23; 25; 36. Cf. Dio 63.27.3 for a garden reference prior to Nero's flight.

praemissis libertorum fidissimis Ostiam ad classem praeparandam

Precise identification of these imperial freedmen is impossible but the most likely contender for the Ostian mission must be Helius, the all-powerful deputy of Nero during the latter's absence in Greece; above, 141f; Dio 63.12; 18.2. His loyalty is to be assumed from his later execution by Galba; Dio 64.3.4¹; Plut. *Galba* 17.2; *PIR*² H 69. Other freedmen put to death by Galba were Patrobius, Polyclitus, Petinus, Narcissus, and Pythagoras; Dio 64.3.4; Plut. *Galba* 17.2; cf. *PIR*¹ P 119; 430; 40; 826; N 19; any of these might have been included. Phaon, Epaphroditus, Neophytus, and Sporus, however, have to be excluded from consideration since they were Nero's companions in his flight to Phaon's villa; below, 276. It is unlikely that they were also despatched to Ostia.

tribunos centurionesque praetorii de fugae societate temptaui

Appeal to the lower ranking officers implies that the *praefecti* had already

uel Aegypti praefecturam concedi sibi

Cf. Dio 63.27.2; Plut. *Galba* 2.1. *Concedi* makes good sense if Nero now knew about the disloyalty of the prefect of Egypt; above, 259, although in any case the rule of Egypt would be a 'concession' from a new *princeps* who was in complete control.

inuentus est postea in scrinio eius hac de re sermo formatus

This text demands preparation of a voyage by Nero so that Egypt might have been his destination before the news of Ti. Iulius Alexander arrived; cf. above, 259. Note also Plin. *Epp.* 7.27.14.

17.3-49.4

These sections, which comprise the *exitus* of Nero proper, are generally recognised as the most successful piece of narrative composition in the whole of Suetonius' work. Compression, abundance of detail, vividness are its accepted qualities; cf. Townend, *Latin Biography*, 93ff. That Suetonius still adheres to a basic narrative source appears likely in spite of the added detail, for the epitome of Dio at this stage continues to have many parallels with Suetonius' text and is itself fuller and more graphic than the previous abbreviated excerpts. It may be that the common source itself was more comprehensive in its treatment, unless Suetonius and Dio have borrowed more heavily than usual. In any case, some especial catering for the interest of the reader is seemingly indicated; cf. Heinz, *Das Bild*, 61. Despite the literary success, however, the piece at the same time has details which contribute little or nothing to elucidating the last hours of Nero's life. It is impossible to comment on such items as s.47.3, *direptis etiam stragulis*, s.48.3, *inter fruticeta ac uepres*, s.48.2 *tremore terrae et fulgure aduerso*. These items have a telling effect in a novelistic sense, but this is all.

However, other details suggest an ultimate betrayal of Nero. Townend, *op. custodes* They may have been the *custodes Germanici*, known, for example, from *cit.*, 95, observes difficulties over the stealthy approach to the villa, the *Ann.* 1.24; Suet. *Calig.* 45.1; 55.2; 58.3, and from various mediocre quality of the food, the avoidance of the servants, the swift arrival Tac. *Ann.* 1.24; Suet. *Calig.* 45.1; 55.2; 58.3, and from various mediocre quality of the food, the avoidance of the servants, the swift arrival of the cavalry. "The whole course of events smells of treachery". If so, this Documents, no. 293; *Not. Scav.* (1950), 86ff; *RE* s.v. 'custos' (2). See above, 274.

pyxide ueneni

See above, 272.

47.3 *in posterum diem*
The day of death (cf. s.49.4), hence 9th, or possibly 11th, June; see below, 292. Events start the night of 8th/9th June, *ad mediam fere noctem*; cf. Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7, *desertus undique noctis medio egressus urbe*.

ut comperit stationem militum recessisse

This guard is distinct from the *custodes* below, apparently the imperial bodyguard, made up of praetorians on one hand, and sentries inside a building on the other. Cf. Dio 63.27.2b; Jos. *BJ* 4.493.

prosiluit e lecto

Cf. Dio 63.27.3, ἐν χίμαιραις δὲ τῶν ἐπύργων καθέδων, which would sensibly be identifiable with the Servilian gardens; above, 272. Late sources, however, report that Nero's escape was finally made from the Palatine; cf. Eutrop. 7.15.1, *e palatio fugit*; Hier. *Chron.* 2084r, *e palatio fugiens*, which there is no cause to doubt. At some stage, therefore, Nero withdrew to the palace, which might either be the Domus Aurea or the Domus Tiberiana, from the Servilian gardens, which, topographically, would concur with the decision not to make for Ostia but to proceed northeast to Phaon's villa, skirting the *castra praetoria* in the process; s.48.1.

misitque circum amicos

Not in Dio.

hospitia

Rolfe (Loeb edition II, 174) suggests that these were rooms in the palace in which the *amici* lodged. Town-dwellings might be more appropriate for those unconnected with the imperial household.

cubiculum

A residence of some kind may be inferred from Tac. *Ann.* 15.55.1, ... *Milichus in hortos Servilianos pergit; et cum foribus arcetur.*

Spiculum murmillonem
Ti. Claudius Spiculus is known from *CIL* X 6690 to have been a *decurio* in Nero's bodyguard; *RE* s.v. 'Claudius' no. 355; *PIR*¹ S 579. Galba permitted his death at the hands of the mob; Plut. *Galba* 8.5. For his riches see above, 166.

ergo ego, inquit, nec amicum habeo nec inimicum?

Cf. Dio 63.29.2; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 65. Dio places the dictum nearer the actual moment of death in his account. It is extended in Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7 with a second half parallel to the quotation in s.49.4. A "histrionic 'cri-du-cœur'"; Ogilvie *ad Liv.* 2.40.8.

48.1 *ad colligendum animum*

This point in the narrative seems to be where the change in strategy from the originally intended departure to Ostia is intimated.

Phaonte liberto

Little is known of the life of Phaon. *CIL* III 14112.2 refers to a *Phaon Aug(usti) (ibertus) a rat(ionibus)*, probably identical with this man, his period of office falling in the last years of the reign; P. R. C. Weaver, *CQ* 15 (1965), 149; cf. Schumann, 57. *CIL* X 444 (= *ILS* 3546) records a dedication by a L. Domitius Phaon of his estate to Silvanus and is of Domitianic date. Again the same person may be surmised, freedom having been conferred by Nero's aunt, Domitia Lepida, on the analogy of *AE* 1914, no. 219, where this is reasonably certain for another L. Domitius Phaon. *RE* s.v. 'Phaon' no. 2; *PIR*¹ P 248.

suburbanum suum inter Salarium et Nomentanam uiam circa quartum miliarium

For parallels of vocabulary, cf. Eutrop. 7.15.1; Oros. 7.7.13; Hier. Chron. 2084f. The Via Salaria led in a northeasterly direction from the city through the Portae Collina and Salaria. Hence, the Via Nomentana, of subsidiary importance, forked at the Porta Collina leading through the Porta Nomentana to Nomentum; Platner, Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, 565; 567. The route taken, therefore, was diametrically opposite to the Ostian route. Observe Chron. 354, *Nero occisus uia Patinaria*, which is unidentifiable.

ut erat nudo pede atque tunicatus, paenulam obsoleti coloris superinduit adopertoque capite et ante faciem optento sudario equum inscendit
Cf. Dio 63.27.3; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 64. Clothing details were perhaps a minor characteristic of the common source; cf. s.42.1, *ueste discissa*.

quattuor solis comitantibus, inter quos et Sporus erat

Cf. Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7, *sequentibus Phaone Epaphrodito Neophytoque et spadone Sporo*. Dio, 63.27.3, omits to mention Neophytus, who is unknown apart from the reference in the *Epit. de Caes.*, and speaks elsewhere, 63.28.3, only of three freedmen. Jos. *BJ* 4.493, however, confirms the number four. The presence of both Phaon and Epaphroditus could be inferred from subsequent stages of the text; ss.48.3; 49.3. Yet the specific mention of Sporus, awkwardly interposed, may be made for stylistic reasons since this figure provides a symbol of Nero's degeneracy; Townend, *op. cit.*, 110 n.31; see above, 161f. Observe Victor's improvement on Suetonius, 5.16, *desertus undique nisi ab spadone*.

48.2 *tremore terrae*

Cf. Dio 63.28.1, with subjective interpretation of the earthquake's significance; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 64.

e proximis castris clamorem militum et sibi aduersa et Galbae prospera ominantium

Doubtless the reference is to the praetorian camp; cf. above, 274. The noise may be the acclamation by the troops of Galba as *imperator*; Plut. *Galba* 7.2 has Icelus report that the soldiers hailed Galba after Nero's flight but before his death.

uiatoribus

Messengers attached to magisterial staffs; cf. Jones, *Studies*, 154ff; *OCD*² s.v.

detecta facie agnitus est a quodam missicio praetoriano et salutatus
Cf. Dio 63.28.1, reporting the incident as hearsay only; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 64.

48.3 *ut ad deuerticulum uentum est*
Cf. Dio 63.28.1; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 64.

inter fruticeta ac uepres
Cf. Dio 63.28.1; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 64.

eodem Phaonte
See above, 275.

speculum
Cf. Dio 63.28.5.

aquam
Cf. Dio 63.28.5. Dio adds the eating of bread, reserved until s.48.4 by Suetonius, probably conflating two separate incidents.

haec est, inquit, Neronis decocta
Cf. Dio 63.28.5; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 65; Plin. *NH* 31.40, *Neronis principis inuentum est decoquere aquam uitroque demissam in niues refrigerare; ita uoluptas frigoris contingit sine uititis niuis*; Mart. *Epig.* 14.117.

49.1 *qualis artifex pereo*
Cf. Dio 63.29.2; Heinz, *Das Bild*, 63. An aesthetic context for this dictum is to be preferred (cf. above, 247) against the interpretation of Nero as "the great showman"; Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (1971), 109; Tacitus, 41. *Artifex* will not bear such a meaning; *TLL* s.v., while Suetonius invariably uses the word in the sense of 'artist'; cf. *Iul.* 84.2; *Vesp.* 18; s.20.1; Momigliano, 741.

49.2 *legitque se hostem a senatu iudicatum*
Cf. Dio 63.27.2b; Joann. Antioch. fr. 91 M v.74-77; 92 M v.55-60; Eutrop. 7.15.1; Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7; Oros. 7.7.13, putting the declaration before the flight. The ban of outlawry meant that Nero could lawfully be executed by any citizen; cf., e.g., App. *BC* 1.60; 74; *DS* s.v. 'hostis'.

et cum comperisset nudi hominis ceruicem inseri furcae, corpus uirgis ad necem caedi

Cf. Joann. Antioch. *l.c.*; Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7; Eutrop. 7.15 embellishes, ... *ut nudus per publicum ductus furca capiti eius inserta uirgis usque ad mortem caederetur atque ita praecipitaretur a saxo*. This is an important text for the definition of punishment *more maiorum*, for which cf. Liv. *Per.* 55 and *Epit. de Caes.*, Eutrop. *l.c.* Flogging might precede punishment by the *furca*, hanging from the fork; Isid. *Orig.* 5.27.34.

fatalem horam

See above, 15; 46.

49.3 *Sporum*

See above, 276.

uino deformiter, turpiter — οὐ πρέπει Νέρωνι, οὐ πρέπει — νήφρον δέι ἐν τοῖς ποιοῦτοῖς — ἄγε ἔγειρε σεαυτὸν

Cf. Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7, *dedecorose uixi, turpius peream*. Townend, *Hermes* 88 (1960), 105, understands a source change for the Greek extract. The Latin piece may have been part of a lengthier quotation in the basic source; cf. above, 275.

itaque equites appropinquabant

Cf. Dio 63.29.2.

praecipitum erat

For the possible connotation of officiales see above, 252.

ferrum iugulo adegit

Cf. Dio 63.29.2; Aur. Vict. *De Caes.* 5.16; Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7; Oros. 7.7.13.

iuuante Epaphrodito a libellis

Cf. Dio 63.29.2; *contra*, Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.7, *et spadone Sporo ... adiuuante*. Epaphroditus is first heard of in connection with the discovery of Piso's conspiracy; Tac. *Ann.* 15.55. In 95 he was exiled by Domitian, Dio 67.14.4, and subsequently executed, *quod post destitutionem Nero in adispiscenda morte manu eius adiutus existimabatur*; Suet. *Domit.* 14.4. He may be identified with the recipient of certain of Josephus' works; *Ant.*

1.8.9; *Vita* 430; *Contra Ap.* 1.1; 2.1.296. He was the owner of certain gardens; Front. *Aq.* 68. *PIR*² E 69. He has been assumed also to be the (*Aug.* *l. Epaphrodit(o)*) of *ILS* 9505, rewarded with military honours for his part in the detection of the Pisonian conspiracy; L. A. Constans, *MEFR* 34 (1914), 383ff; Stein, *PIR* *l.c.*

49.4 *Icelus, Galbae libertus*

This is the earliest known reference to Icelus, so no definite reason for his incarceration remains. Obviously his influence and usefulness to Galba must have been considerable at the outset of the rebellion. He subsequently delivered to Galba the news of Nero's death and was well rewarded for his services by the new *princeps*; Suet. *Galba* 14.2; 22; Plut. *Galba* 7; Tac. *Hist.* 1.13. For his power add to the texts cited Plut. *Galba* 20; for his punishment after dispute with Galba, Tac. *Hist. l.c.*; 1.33; 1.46. *PIR*² I 16.

50. *Funeratus est impensa ducentorum militum*

Despite the *damnatio memoriae* which followed Nero's death the expense incurred in his burial recorded here might suggest a public funeral, for which see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (1971), 56ff and above, 67.

stragulis albis auro intextis, quibus usus Kal. Ian. fuerat

The date is possibly a reference to the taking of vows on 1st January. Distinct from the vows for the well-being of the *princeps* on 3rd January (above, 270) were the oaths to maintain the *acta* of the *princeps* and his predecessors, made by the senate and magistrates; Tac. *Ann.* 1.72.1; 13.11.1; 16.22; Dio 53.28.1; 58.17.2; see especially Sherwin-White, *Pliny*, 611f, for a discussion of first century practices. When the new magistrates entered office vows were additionally taken for the safety of the state, *pro incolumitate reipublicae*; cf. Koestermann *ad Ann.* 16.22.1. If such an inference is correct then it follows that the ceremonies were personally attended by Nero. The use of the pluperfect is likely to relate to one specific occasion rather than to an habitual practice, and within the context of ss.40-50 any other year than 68 would be incongruous. Thus, a terminus for Nero's arrival in Rome after the Hellenic tour is obtained; see *Latomus* 37 (1978). For the interest in clothing details cf. above, 276.

most part. Further, personal description appears in pre-Alexandrian literature⁽⁴¹⁾, even though it may have received more attention from the Alexandrians. The belief that a photographic description is consistent with Suetonius' avoidance of personal judgements on or psychological penetrations of his subjects⁽⁴²⁾ is similarly false. Statements such as those at *Calig.* 22 or s.19.1 imply value-judgements of some kind (above, 14ff). So too the relationship of ancestral characteristics to the traits of the biographical subjects. The verdict that "Suetonius aimed in his lives of the Caesars at portraying their characters rather than analysing their policy or at narrating events"⁽⁴³⁾ is nearer the mark, so that besides the inherent interest of the iconistic description for the reader there may also be truth in the idea that the physical portrayal is relevant to the portrayal of character through doctrines propounded by the physiognomists. There is evidence in the remains of the *περὶ βλασφημιῶν* that Suetonius had some acquaintance with physiognomy⁽⁴⁴⁾, while a general interest in the subject in Suetonius' day may be indicated by the composition of a physiognomical handbook by the sophist Polemo of Laodicea⁽⁴⁵⁾. An extreme view holds that the physical descriptions in Suetonius were indeed not only motivated by physiognomical interests but that they are thereby symptomatic of the scientific nature of Suetonian biography⁽⁴⁶⁾. The test in this case, however, must be to consider the possible significance of the description of Nero in terms of physiognomy and to see whether there is any correspondence with Neronian characteristics displayed elsewhere in the biography. It becomes apparent that some of the interpretations of Nero's physical attributes can be compared favourably with various other recounted actions and activities, but equally there is a lack of consistency in the interpretations — for example, a clash between 'sensitivity' and 'insensitivity' — which illustrates the danger of firmly subscribing to physiognomical analysis. On balance, it would appear that Suetonius was familiar with the physiognomical significances of the Neronian features mentioned in his text but that it is unlikely that this fact alone determined the nature of the description.

In addition to works cited in the footnotes on physiognomy see also E. C. Evans, *The Study of Physiognomy in the Second Century A.D.* in *TAPA*

(41) D. R. STUART, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (repr. 1967), 174ff.

(42) E.g. MISENER, *art. cit.*, 118.

(43) P. A. BRUNT, J. M. MOORE, edd., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (1967), 8.

(44) EVANS, *art. cit.*, 52ff.

(45) For M. Antonius Polemo see G. W. BOWERSOCK, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (1969), index s.v.

(46) J. COUSIN, *Suétone physiognomiste* in *REL* 31 (1953), 234ff.

72 (1941), 96ff; R. Megow, *Anike Physiognomielehre in Das Altertum* 9 (1963), 213ff.

51. *Statura fuit prope iusta*

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 813b: good physical proportions connote sensitivity and a capacity to realise ambitions; Plin. *NH* 30.16, *nihil membrīs defuit*. A headless statue from Tralles, measuring 1m. 97, including 13 cm. for the plinth, allows some estimate of Nero's size; see C. C. Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor* (1968), 389, and fig. 126; G. Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines, et byzantines II* (1914), 315f, no. 584.

corpore maculoso et fetido

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 810a: the panther, whose characteristics are thievery, pettiness, and deceit has mottled skin, τὸ χρῶμα ποικίλον. Iconography is of no use here, but a possible allusion to Nero's freckles has been detected at Plin. *NH* 30.16, where freckles are said to be a handicap to those practising *magicae artes*; A. Ernout, *ad loc.*, in the Budé edition (1947).

subflauo capillo

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 812a: the tawny-coloured hair of the lion is associated with bravery, though identification of *subflauus* with *πυρρός* may not be exact here; Polemo, *De Physiog. Lib.* 41, states that hair which is *fulvus* is a sign of culture and aestheticism, while the anonymous author of the *De Physiog. Lib.*, 14, equates *capilli sufflavi* with *boni mores*. Again iconography is of little aid here, though the genealogical colouring of the Ahenobarbi (s.2) might be recalled as a slight control.

uultu pulchro magis quam uenusto

Cf. Sen. *Apoc.* 4.1, *ille* (Nero) *mihī* (Phoebus) *similis uultu similisque decore*; *flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso / uultus*; ps.-Sen. *Oct.* 22; 109f; 457 etc., for *tumidos et truces ... uultus*. For portraits of Nero see R. West, *Römische Porträt-Plastik* (1933), plate LXII, nos. 271; 272; 273; H. P. L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture* (1947), 56ff.

oculis caesis et hebetioribus

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 807b; 808a: weak eyes are symptomatic of cowardice, and yet orderliness; Polemo *De Physiog. Lib.* 54: *oculi non*

nitidi are said to be a sign of timidity. Suetonius here may possibly have drawn on Pliny; cf. *NH* 11.144, *Neroni* < *caesii et* >, *nisi cum coniuere ad prope admota, hebetes*; Ernout *ad loc.* (Budé).

ceruice obesa

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 807b; 811a: a sign of strength, insensitivity, and temper; Polemo *De Physiog. Lib.* 23, *breuitas et crassities colli fortitudinem corporis sed timiditatem in animo significat*. The feature is readily visible from surviving portraits and from coin representations even from Nero's earliest years of adulthood; West, L'Orange, *ll.c.*; *BMC* I plates 38-48.

uentre proiecto

Cf. ps.-Arist. *Physiog.* 810b: a sign of strength; Polemo *De Physiog. Lib.* 14, of licence or else deceitfulness; compare the Tralles statue; above, 283.

gracillimis cruribus

Cf. Polemo *De Physiog. Lib.* 2; 54; Anon. *De Physiog. Lib.* 91: *angusta crura* are feminine and symptomatic of timidity. See Vermeule, *l.c.*

nam qui luxuriae immoderatissimae esset

See above, 165ff.

ter omnino per quattuordecim annos languit

An *anceps ualeudo* is noted at Tac. *Ann.* 14.22.6, in 60 after Nero had taken a swim in the Marcian aqueduct; Tacitus also refers to another probable illness sometime before 61 which must have been serious since Memmius Regulus appears to have been prepared for the succession; *Ann.* 14.47.1, with Furneaux *ad loc.*; Rogers, *TAPA* 86 (1955), 193ff. An entry in the *AEA* for 66 could refer to a third illness if Henzen's restoration is correct: *propter [... et ualel]uadinem [Caesaris Augusti uota nuncupauit in Clapitolio*; Henzen, lxxxiii. There is no need, however, to suspect the sincerity of these *uota*, as L. W. Daly, *TAPA* 81 (1950), 166.

ut comam semper in gradus formatam

This text is usually interpreted as a reference to the so-called 'crimped' hairstyle of Nero which appears on portraits from 64 on. Thus Suetonius' *semper* is a clear exaggeration. Two views are held to explain the af-

fectionation: firstly, that Nero's personal taste was influenced by a hairstyle worn by Alexander the Great and is thus a symptom of the mounting hellenistic influence on Nero's principate; L'Orange, *op. cit.*, 55ff; alternatively, that the style was that of an *auriga* and so scandalous to Roman upper class taste; Toynbee, *Num. Chron.*⁵ 7 (1947), 126ff. Given the similarity of styles between the Worcester head of Nero (L'Orange *op. cit.*, 57 fig. 32) and a contemporary bust of an *auriga* (Toynbee, *art. cit.*, 137 fig. 1 = West, *op. cit.*, plate 66 no. 289), together with the rise in Nero's interest in charioteering (for which see above, 137ff), the latter seems the more sensible interpretation. For further illustrations of the new style see West, *op. cit.*, plate 72 nos. 273; 275. Cf. also Sen. *Apoc.* 4.1, *et adfuso ceruix formosa capillo*.

peregrinatione Achaica etiam pone uerticem summiserit

This should not mean that the hair was grown into the nape of the neck since such a style is visible in Neronian portraiture from the earliest years; cf. Toynbee, *art. cit.*, 138; *BMC* I plate 38, nos. 1-4; 26; and West, *op. cit.*, 229, commenting on a head of 60, "Das Haar ist noch immer von auffallender Dichtigkeit und wächst tief in den Nacken hinab". Rather, in 66 there was a change in style — the adoption of shoulder length hair in the modern fashion. Again, L'Orange, *l.c.*, unconvincingly associates this with an Alexander style, but it seems certain that it was assumed especially for the Greek tour; cf. Dio 63.9.1, though Dio has nothing of the 'tiered' style. For the tour of Greece see above, 137ff.

52. *Liberatis disciplinas omnis fere puer attigit*

Little is known about the education of Nero. It is improbable that any type of formal instruction was given him in the household of Domitia because he was obviously too young; cf. above, 49f. The names of two freedmen *paedagogi* are known, Anicetus and Beryllus, respectively later prefect of the fleet at Misenum and *ab epistulis Graecis*; Tac. *Ann.* 14.3; Jos. *Ant.* 20.183; *PIR*² A 589; B 111; above, 212. These men probably taught Nero during the time from Agrippina's return from exile (above, 51) until the appointment of Seneca (above, 56). It is to be presumed that they were not simply chaperons of Nero but also the equivalent of the *primus magister* or *litterator* in the schools and gave Nero — along with his fellow pupils (cf. s.22.1) — the basic educational skills. From the present text it seems that during this period Nero also began study of the *artes liberales*, though *attigit* suggests only a superficial study. The term comprised literary,

rhetorical, mathematical, and musical studies, the traditional 'broad education'; cf. Cic. *De Orat.* 1.8-12; 187; 3.127; Tac. *Dial.* 30.4; Sen. *Epp. Moral.* 88; A. Gwynn, *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian* (1926), 84ff; J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Penguin ed. 1964), 119ff; H.-I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (1964 ed.), 358ff and 244f on *artes liberales* (= ἐργασίαι παιδείας).

sed a philosophia eum mater auerit

For similar suspicion of the teachings of philosophy and the dangers therein see Tac. *Agric.* 4.3, *se prima in iuuenta studium philosophiae acrius, ultra quam concessum Romano ac senatori, hausisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coersisset*; cf. Ogilvie, Richmond *ad loc.*; Tac. *Hist.* 4.5; Cic. *De Offic.* 2.1.2; Carcopino, *op. cit.*, 124f. There is evidence, however, that Nero did associate with philosophers, notably the Stoic Chaeremon from Egypt and the Peripatetic Alexander of Aegae; *Suda* I, 203, ed. Bernhardt. If Agrippina discouraged Nero from philosophical studies as Suetonius says, Chaeremon's attendance at the court could hardly have been due to her influence; *contra*, Morford, *Phoenix* 22 (1968), 58. Further, Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.3 strongly intimates the presence of other philosophers at Nero's court. Morford, *art. cit.*, 59, suspects, however, that they were not "permanent members". Cf. Furneaux *ad Tac. Ann. l.c.* Morford, *l.c.*, suggests that the *De Clementia* was a means of teaching Nero publicly what had been impossible privately and cites *De Clem.* 2.5.2-3 as a possible reply to the attitude of Agrippina evinced in this text.

a cognitione veterum oratorum Seneca praeceptor, quo diutius in admiratione sui detineret

Seneca's chief concern was the teaching of rhetoric; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.2. The text appears to classify him as an advocate of the so-called 'new style' of oratory under the Empire which rejected the traditions of the Ciceronian age in favour of the more vigorous and forceful style particularly associated with Cassius Severus. For the developments in rhetoric in the first century see in general M. E. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome* (1953), 100f; A. D. Leeman, *Oratorian Ratio* (1963) I 219ff; Sherwin-White, *Pliny*, 86ff; Carcopino, *op. cit.*, 126f; the comments of G. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (1972), 467f on this passage are of little value. For Seneca's opinion of the liberal arts and educational regimen see *Epp. Moral.* 88; 106.12; *De Ira* 2.21; cf. Morford, *art. cit.*, 60f. And for Quintilian's estimate of Seneca, 10.1.126-31.

itaque ad poeticam pronus

From boyhood, Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.7, but perhaps with more commitment from c.59, Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.1.

itaque

The connective is awkward. The text perhaps means that Nero turned to poetry because he was not permitted to study philosophy at a serious level; cf. similarly Morford, *art. cit.*, 59f. But it may have been Nero's own inclination which guided him. The subjects cannot have been mutually exclusive.

carmina libenter ac sine labore composuit

But contrast below, *ita multa et deleta ... inerant*.

nec, ut quidam putant, aliena pro suis edidit

Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.16.1-2, believed from a personal estimate of the quality of Nero's poetry that the verses were written collectively by a group of aspirant poets. Doubtless this is the opinion against which Suetonius here reacts, and Townend, *Latin Biography*, 89, suggests a dim recollection by Suetonius of the Tacitean passage. This, however, may not have been possible. Syme, *Tacitus*, 782, presents the belief that the third hexad of the *Annals* had not yet been made available when Suetonius wrote the *Nero*. In the final analysis the issue is insoluble. Nonetheless, *ut quidam putant* may not be here a rhetorical plural, as often, but a reflection of an opinion widely held from Nero's time on. Suetonius' inspection of the manuscripts of Nero appears to refute the former view. See also below.

uenerunt in manus meas pugillares libellique cum quibusdam notissimis uersibus ipsius chirographo scriptis, ut facile appareret non tralatos aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos; ita multa et deleta et inducta et superscripta inerant

Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.16.1-2, claimed to have been familiar with Nero's poems (*species ipsa carminum*) but unlike Suetonius, who doubtless took the opportunity of his tenure of one of the Palatine posts, perhaps the *studii*, did not see the manuscripts. If Suetonius' appraisal of these is valid, then his view has to prevail over that of Tacitus on the question of the authenticity of composition (above); cf. H. Bardon, *La Littérature latine inconnue* (1956), II, 124. It is thus difficult to see why Furneaux, *ad Tac. l.c.*, hesitated over the sound evidence of the manuscripts.

A catalogue of Nero's poetry, which included epic and dramas as well as occasional and scurrilous pieces, is provided by Bardon, *op. cit.*, 124; 132; 137ff; cf. *REL* 14 (1936), 337ff; and O. A. W. Dilke, *GR* 4 (1957), 93ff. Little of this work has survived; for the fragments see Morel, *Frag. Poet Lat.* Note that Suetonius has no opinion on the quality of Nero's poetry. Martial, however, 8.70.8, dissented from the verdict of Tacitus.

habuit et pingendi fingendique [maxime] non mediocre studium
Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.7; Dio Chrysos. *Orat.* 71.9.

53. *Maxime autem popularitate efferebatur, omnium aemulus, qui quoque modo animum uligi mouerent*

For a description of Nero's relations, generally favourable, with the *plebs*, with emphasis on the provision of food, *spectacula*, and urban stability, and the consequent alienation of upper class sentiment, see Z. Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (1969), 120ff.

exiit opinio

Ss.53-54 are extremely vague from the viewpoint of sources; note especially *existimaretur, aiunt, et sunt qui tradant*.

post scaenicos coronas

See above, 138.

nam et luctabatur assidue

Cf. Dio Chrysos. *Orat.* 71.9.

destinauerat etiam, quia Apollinem cantu, Solem aurigando aequiperare existimaretur, imitari et Herculis facta

Though generally unnoticed this text has some bearing on the question of Nero's religious position, particularly on the subject of oriental theocracy. It indicates beyond doubt the reasons for Nero's preoccupations with Apollo and with solar imagery, preoccupations which increased throughout the reign, namely his personal interest in music and charioteering (for which see above, 119ff). Nero's accession was heralded as the beginning of an age of gold, but the flatteries contained in such texts as Sen. *Apoc.* 4.1.13ff; Luc. 1.45ff; Calp. Sic. *Buc.* 4.87ff; 157ff can hardly have originated from Nero himself. Rather they mirror the attempts of the Senecan dispensation to identify with the administration of Augustus; Momigliano, 703f; cf.

above, 71. As the ancestral god of the Iulii, Apollo had been brought into special prominence by Augustus; Weinstock, *DJ*, 13ff; but as patron of the arts Apollo was also the deity with which a natural association might develop on the part of an aspirant musician, so that the established court propaganda of the early years was perfectly suitable for extension by Nero even after Seneca's disappearance from the political arena. Thus, the celebration of Nero as νέος Ἥλιος and νέος Ἀπόλλων (Smallwood, *Documents*, nos. 145; 146; — not new, cf. *SIG*³ 798 for Caligula), the golden day of Tiridates' reception (above, 91), the Domus Aurea and *colossus* (above, 169ff), should all be seen as promotions of Apolline imagery dependent upon music and the chariot; cf. also Tac. *Ann.* 14.14.2, *cantus Apollini sacros*. It was in the context of dramatic performances that the Augustiani greeted Nero as Apollo in 59; Dio 61.20.5; Apollo whom Nero sought after the Hellenic tour; above, 151; his voice which he regarded as god-like; above, 131; and the representation of Apollo Citharoedus which appeared on the coinage; above, 152. For statues cf. West, *op. cit.*, plate 65 no. 274. At the same time it is questionable to what extent Nero deliberately cultivated religious elevation of himself. Momigliano, 732, wrote that in the late years of Nero "the tendency to deification was becoming more openly expressed" and Cizek, *passim*, developing the position of L'Orange (see above, 175ff; 180), sees a constant progression towards theocratic despotism. Yet the recent admission has been made that a distinction must be preserved "between the divinity, and the association with the divine", E. J. Bickerman, 'Consecratio' in *Le Culte des souverains dans l'empire romain, Entreitens sur l'antiquité classique* 19 (1973), 7. The statues of Nero as Apollo must often have been spontaneously produced in provincial regions, not at the instigation of Nero, and even to offset those cases where the hand of Nero himself does appear, for instance in the coinage and the *colossus*, there remains the decisive fact that ultimate and formal deification at Rome was refused; Tac. *Ann.* 15.74. Association with the patron, but not absorption, was Nero's aim, as indeed Suetonius' terminology here suggests: *aequiperare* and *imitari* do not connote identification. And that idea, moreover, was hardly new. Representations of previous emperors in symbolically divine dress are not at all uncommon. It was the scale that was different here. Statements to the effect that Nero insisted on worship of himself as the sun-god (e.g., M. J. Vermaseren, *Mithras, The Secret God* [1963], 24) do not seem to be right. Confusion stems from the association of Sol with Mithras; cf. Nock, *JRS* 27 (1937), = *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (1972), 452ff. The two deities

are often equated or depicted together, but the absence of archaeological evidence before the second century means that any worship of Mithras at Rome beforehand must have been minimal. There is little literary evidence for Mithraism at Rome in the Julio-Claudian period, and the Neronian material itself suggested only partial, not total initiation; cf. above, 90. Furthermore, the worship of Sol has a purely Italian history; Weinstock, *DJ*, 382, and the association with chariotteering is indisputable; cf., e.g., *Tert. De Spect.* 8.1, *circus Soli principaliter consecratur*. But this has nothing to do with orientalism, and no more than a dilettantish interest in Mithraism, as with *magicae artes*, need be imagined for Nero; see above, 90. A belief that the interest in Mithras indeed developed from the Apollo-Sol nexus may be confirmed indirectly from the lack of evidence of interest in Egyptian cults; cf. M. Malaise, *Les Conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie* (1972), 404ff. No doubt solar symbolism and Nero's megalomania were interconnected, but to speak of such symbolism in theological or theocratic terms (as Beaujeu, *La Religion romaine à l'apogée de l'empire* [1955], 46ff) is to overstate the case.

For coins from Patrae with the legend 'Herculi Augusto' and representations of Nero as Hercules, see Sydenham, *The Coinage of Nero* (1920), 32. Nero was also greeted as Hercules on his return from Greece; Dio 63.20.5. L. Thompson. *CPh* 59 (1964), 147ff, argues for association between Nero and Hercules at Luc. 1.45ff.

54. *Paridem histriionem occisum ab eo quasi grauem aduersarium*

See above, 219.

55. *ideoque multis rebus ac locis uetere appellatione detracta nouam indixit ex suo nomine*

There are several examples of renaming procedures: Caesarea Philippi became Neronias; *Jos. Ant.* 20.211; Artaxata in Armenia Neronēia; Dio 63.7.2; an Egyptian month became 'Neroneios Sebastos'; K. Scott, *YCS* 2 (1931), 201ff; *RE* s.v. *Νερώμελος*, and a line of the Acraephia inscription indicates that the renaming of the Peloponnese was at least considered; Holleaux, *BCH* 12 (1888), 510. It is to be noted, however, that all of these examples come from the East and that they suggest spontaneous honours locally conferred on Nero, not that Nero promoted a line of renaming places after himself in any official manner; cf. Bickermann, *art. cit.*, 9. There is thus cause to doubt that Suetonius' statement *erat illi aeternitatis ... cupido* provided the reason for the name changes. Stress should in fact be placed

on *inconsulta*. In contrast, it is worth pointing out that the old royal capital of Pontus Polemoniacus was renamed Neocaesarea in 64; cf. above, 113f. Even so, the principle was not new: eastern cities had been renamed after emperors since Augustus; cf. Nock, *CAH* X, 487. And the essentially hellenistic practice of renaming months continues both before and after Nero; see below.

mensem quoque Aprilem Neroneum appellauit

In the spite of thanksgivings after the disclosure of the conspiracy of Piso a proposal was made that *mensisque Aprilis Neronis cognomentum acciperet*, April being the month of discovery; *Tac. Ann.* 15.74.1. The inference from *Tac. Ann.* 16.12 of K. Scott, *art. cit.*, 231, that Cornelius Orfitus sponsored the proposal, is guesswork. But the change does seem to have been adopted, at least temporarily; cf. *Tac. Ann.* 16.12.3. Note again, however, that in the Tacitean notice the proposal did not originate with Nero himself. The emphasis of Suetonius is misplaced. The practice of celebrating statesmen with honorific months was essentially a hellenistic procedure; Weinstock, *DJ*, 153ff; Scott, *art. cit.*, perhaps overestimating the attempt to divinise Nero (230). For Roman examples, *Suet. Aug.* 31.2; *Calig.* 15.2; *Domit.* 13.3.

dēstinauerat et Roman Neropolim nuncupare

The text may be a more specific version of the rumour current at the time of the great fire that Nero wished to found a new city named after himself; *Tac. Ann.* 15.40.3; cf. above, 230. Otherwise, in the light of the previous comments on s.55, the statement must be judged doubtful. A distinction has to be maintained between Rome and the East. Balland, *MEFR* 77 (1965), 366, emphasises comparison with the practice of city-founding by hellenistic kings.

56. *Religionum usque quaque contemptor*

Suetonius rarely indicates in such formal terms the attitude to *religiones* of a *princeps*, though note *Aug.* 90 and *Tib.* 69. No other explicit statement on Nero's religious outlook exists, though scholars have not been slow to associate Nero with various supernatural interests; cf. above, 175ff; 180; 288ff. The question might hinge on the distinction between *religio* and *superstitio*, for which *Cic. De Nat. Deor.* 1.42.117 is essential: *superstitio nem ... in qua inest timor inanis deorum ... religionem, quae deorum cultu pio continetur*. The text here could mean then that Nero had little interest in

the state religion; certainly, unlike Augustus or Claudius, he had no official religious policy; cf. Beaujeu, *op. cit.*, 54ff. This might then explain the renunciation of the Dea Syria (below), since through her association with the worship of Minerva she lost the attraction of other interests such as those of *magicae artes*; above, 90.

Deae Syriae

Nero's attention to the Dea Syria, which must have been shortlived, has been seen as the reason behind the building of a sanctuary to the goddess by her devotees on the Janiculum; Blake, *Roman Construction*, 62.

hanc mox ita spreuit ut urina contaminaret

Fickleness towards oriental cults is Nero's most characteristic attitude, not complete uninterest as suggested by R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Greco-Roman World* (1971), 224. Cf. Plin. *NH* 30.15-16; Cumont, *Riv. di Fil.* 11 (1933), 147.

57.1 *Obiit tricensimo et secundo aetatis anno*

The precise year of Nero's birth is difficult to ascertain though 37 is the accepted view here; see above, 45f. Consequently, death in 68 gives the thirty-first, not second year of Nero. Confusion results from calculating not by calendar year but from birthday to birthday. For the most recent discussion of the evidence see G. V. Summer, *Latomus* 26 (1967), 418, and see above, 48f.

die quo quondam Octavianum interemerat

The sources present conflicting accounts of the length of Nero's reign. A tabular summary appears below, although final and complete reconciliation is impossible. The usual view gives 9th June as the date of death, the conclusion of L. Holzappel, *Römische Kaiserdaten* in *Klio* 12 (1912), 483ff. Yet a recent view draws attention to astrological evidence which makes 11th June possible: the second century author Vettius Valens refers (5.11) to a horoscope in which Saturn's position in Virgo in 37 returns on 11th June, 68; B. W. Reece, *The Date of Nero's Death* in *AJP* 90 (1969), 72ff. For the death of Octavia see above, 211.

	Life	Reign
Dio 63.29.3	30 yrs. 9 mths.	13 yrs. 8 mths.
Zonar. 11.13.432.	30 yrs. 5 mths.	13 yrs. 8 mths. minus 2 days
1-6D	20 days	14 yrs. minus 2 mths.
Joan. Ant. fr. 92M	30 yrs.	13 yrs. 7 mths. 28 days
v. 70-74		13 yrs. and 8 days
Hier. <i>Chron.</i>		
ios. <i>BJ</i> 4.491		

tantumque gaudium publice praebuit

Rejoicings at Rome following Nero's final escape are noted at Dio 63.29.1; Zonar. 11.13.42 10-20D; Joann. Antioch. fr. 91 M vv. 74-77. Cf. also Tac. *Hist.* 1.4, *finis Neronis ut laetus primo gaudentium impetu fuerat* ... T. O. Mabbott, *CP* 36 (1941), 398f, suggested a suppression of Neronian coinage at Nicopolis in Epirus in the time of Epictetus. But this need have nothing to do with the *damnatio memoriae* and could have been due to local causes if indeed the suppression was genuine; cf. M. Crawford, *JRS* 60 (1970), 47. Galba, however, certainly seems to have made an attempt to suppress Neronian coinage in Spain; C. H. V. Sutherland, *Num. Chron.* 20 (1940), 265f.

plebs pilleata

Cf. Dio; Zonar. *ll. c.*

et tamen non desuerunt qui per longum tempus uernis aestiuisque floribus tumulum eius ornarent

Suetonius correctly implies what Tacitus makes explicit, that the reactions to Nero's death were mixed; see especially Tac. *Hist.* 1.4; cf. 16. The praetorians had not been anxious to abandon Nero; Tac. *Hist.* 1.5; Otho was conscious of Nero's popularity with the *plebs* and of the political value which association with Nero's name might bring; Tac. *Hist.* 1.78; cf. Plut. *Otho* 3; M. Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility* (Eng. trans. 1969), 144; while Vitellius later offered sacrifices in Nero's honour; Tac. *Hist.* 2.95.

tumulum

See above, 280.

ac modo imagines praetextatas in rostris profferrent

Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.78, *et fuere qui imagines Neronis proponerent*; Plut. *Otho* 3.1.

57.2 *Vologaesius Parthorum rex*

On Vologaesius, c.51/2-79/80, see N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia* (1937); K.-H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Rom und dem Partherreich* (1964).

missis ad senatum legatis de instauranda societate

The context implies that the Parthian delegation left for Rome as soon as the news of Nero's death had been received, that is in 68. That the settlement of 63, for which see Tac. *Ann.* 15.27-31, was in fact renewed is suggested from the reply of Vespasian, still in the East in the midsummer of 69, to another Parthian delegation which brought the offer of a cavalry squadron, *gratiae Vologaesio actae mandatumque ut legatos ad senatum mitteret et pacem esse sciret*; Tac. *Hist.* 4.51; cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 6.4; Ziegler, *op. cit.*, 78. Note also Anon. *Epit. de Caes.* 5.8, *hunc (Nero) Persae in tantum dilexerant, ut legatos mitterent orantes copiam construendi monumenti.*

post uiginti annos adulescente me

Thus about 88. The text is important since it introduces a personal recollection of Suetonius. For its bearing on Suetonius' biography see the references above, 20 n.39.

exitisset condicionis incertae qui se Neronem esse iactaret

There is strong evidence here for a pseudo-Nero about 88, but notices of other *falsi* at earlier dates exist. The evidence is not altogether clear and has led to some rather pointless debate over the correct number of pretenders, whether two or three. Tac. *Hist.* 2.8, *ceterorum casus conatusque in contextu operis dicemus* must mean any number of *falsi* before 96. Nero was after all still thought to be alive by some even under Trajan; Dio Chrysos. *Orat.* 21.9-10. Yet it is not the exact number of pretenders, but the possibility that Nero was alive after 68, and the potential unrest which that allowed for, that is important. The circumstances of the death can never have been clearly known except to a very small number of people, and those actually with Nero at the end were themselves quickly dead.

The first pretender appeared in 69, also *condicionis incertae*, a Bithynian slave or else an Italian freedman. He was joined by a number of deserters who hoped for better prospects, and occupied by force the island of Cythnos in the Cyclades. The danger of the movement, serious enough to cause distress in Asia and Greece, was eliminated through the actions of Calpurnius Asprenas, en route to assume the command of Galatia and Pamphylia

with a naval squadron. Tac. *Hist.* 2.8-9; cf. Dio 64.9.3; Zon. 11.15.45; 11-16D.

Under Titus a second pretender appeared, Terentius Maximus, an Asian, finally seeking refuge with Artabanus of Parthia. Dio 66.19.3b-3c; Joann. Antioch. fr. 104M.

The present text would thus indicate a third pretender about 88 in accordance with the implication of Tac. *Hist.* 2.8, and perhaps Tac. *Hist.* 1.2, *mota prope etiam Parthorum arma falsi Neronis ludibrio*, can be fitted in here as support. Some scholars, however, identify the Suetonian *falsus* with Terentius Maximus, and the parallel between s.57.2, *ut uehementer aditius et uix redditus sit*, and Dio 66.19.3c may indeed be observed as the Parthian connection. Yet F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (1964), 214ff, has pointed to the pattern of a "pseudoroyal progress" which surrounds sundry pretenders — including the false Nero — which may account for such similarities of detail. More positively, it seems implausible that Suetonius, writing from first-hand knowledge, would have made an error of some eight years. For discussion of the whole issue, see Millar, *op. cit.*, 214ff; Syme, *Tacitus*, 518; S. J. Bastomsky, *The Emperor Nero in Talmudic Legend in Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 59 (1969), 321ff; P. A. Gallivan, *The False Neros: a Reexamination in Historia* 22 (1973), 364ff; Ziegler, *op. cit.*, 81.