

NERO'S RECALL OF SUETONIUS PAULLINUS*

A consensus of scholarly opinion, to borrow the inimitable words of the historian who most concerns us, 'laudari facilius quam evenire, vel, si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest.' It may therefore seem rash to devote time and thought to what emerges from the conjunction of two such fragile states of agreement. Yet the inferred facts, if they are facts, may contribute to our understanding of Nero's relations with his high command and of Tacitus' account of affairs in Britain.

Both these areas of consensus concern complex problems of Neronian chronology. First there is the question of the system by which the Emperor reckoned his terms of *tribunicia potestas*. Much of the evidence accords with the natural assumption that he numbered his terms continuously, either from his *dies imperii* on 13 October 54, when the *Fratres Arvales* sacrificed *ob imperium Neronis Claudii Caesaris Augusti Germanici*, or from the tribunician elections on 4 December 54, when the *Fratres Arvales* sacrificed *ob tribuniciam potestatem*.¹ But there are difficulties. The *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* give Nero's titles on the 1 January 60, and again on 3 January of that year, as Trib. Pot. VII, Imp. VII, Cos.IV, whereas continuous reckoning from October or December 54 would yield only Trib. Pot. VI. Furthermore, a military diploma with the same titles was for a long time dated by the consuls named on it to 2 July of the year 60.² On the other hand, coins showing Trib. Pot. VI with Cos. IV (held by Nero in 60) support the continuous dating.³

Mommsen proposed to reconcile the conflicting evidence by suggest-

* I am grateful to Sir Ronald Syme for reading and discussing this paper with me.

¹ AFA for A.D. 57 and 58: presumably the *comitia tribuniciae potestatis* (as in AFA for 26 February, 69) are meant.

² ILS 1987 (E. Mary Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge 1967), no. 296).

³ BMC, Imp. 1, p. 203, nos. 21,22.

ing that Nero decided, in the course of the year 60, to change his mode of reckoning in order to begin his tribunician year on the day on which the republican tribunes had begun their term. He now counted his first term as 15 October – 9 December 54, so that 10 December 54 became the start of Trib. Pot. II and all of the numbers were advanced by one over the continuous reckoning. 10 December 59 now became the first day of Trib. Pot. VII, instead of VI, so that the *AFA*, inscribed at the end of 60, showed the new numbering, while the coins, issued before the decision was taken, still showed the old.⁴ The numismatists held out from the first against Mommsen's view, at least as it applied to coins,⁵ but it is only since Hammond's thorough reexamination of the evidence in 1938⁶ that historians have generally come to admit, however reluctantly, that *AFA* must be in error. For Hammond showed that the diploma used by Mommsen to support the stonecutter could be dated to 61 instead of 60,⁷ and more inscriptions can be adduced whose evidence is not reconcilable with the inflated reckoning, if they give Nero's titles accurately.⁸ The general view among historians now seems to be that Nero numbered his terms of *tribunicia potestas* continuously, either from 13 October 54,⁹ or from 4 December 54.¹⁰

The other relevant point of agreement concerns the date of Boudicca's rebellion in Britain. The *auctoritas* of Sir Ronald Syme seems at last to have won substantial acceptance for the view of Asbach and Henderson that the rebellion broke out in the summer of 60, the

⁴ *Staatsrecht* 2³, 798, n. 1.

⁵ E.A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of Nero* (London 1920) 26-8; H. Mattingly, *JRS* 20 (1930) 79-80.

⁶ M. Hammond, *MAAR* 15 (1938) 26-32.

⁷ Hammond's arguments are accepted as probable by A. Degraasi, *FC* p. 17. Hammond also pointed out that *ILS* 8794 (Smallwood no. 64) recording Nero's liberation of Greece shows Trib. Pot. XIII for November of 67, which is only compatible with the continuous reckoning from 4 December. But the item comes from the speech of the provincial *flamen* and the puzzling ἀποδεδειγμένος that follows suggests some confusion in the mind of the speaker or the inscriber.

⁸ *ILS* 8902 showing Trib. Pot. IX after April-May 63 (adduced by Mitford, *ABSA* 42 (1947) 221, no. 90, and C. Gatti, *PP* 16 (1961) 427); *AE* 1904, no. 22), a Dalmatian inscription, also ascribing Trib. Pot. IX to Nero when Poppaea had the title Augusta, hence after January 63 (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.23,1; *AFA* for 63).

⁹ Stein in *PIR*² D 129.

¹⁰ Hammond, *MAAR* 15 (1938) 23ff.; A. Momigliano, *CAH* 10 (1934) 703; Mitford, *ABSA* 42 (1947) 219ff.; Gatti, *PP* 16 (1961) 426ff.; Smallwood, *Documents*, p. 1.

decisive battle in which the Britons were defeated occurred in the late autumn of 60, and the mopping up operations described by Tacitus in *Ann.* 14.38 took place in the winter of 60/1.¹¹

Those who, like myself, accept both of these current versions of Neronian chronology, must face the consequences in a third chronologically difficult area, that of Nero's imperial salutations. There has not been, to my knowledge, a detailed study of the dating of these salutations since the discussion by H. Stuart Jones in *Revue Archéologique*⁴ 3(1904), 263ff. and his defence of his views in that journal 7 (1906), 141-3. Nor has there been need for one, as new inscriptions have not altered the picture for the salutations before the year 60 (when Stuart Jones thought, following Mommsen, that there was a change in the numbering of the *tribunicia potestas*),¹² while later salutations are mostly unaffected by the difference between the inflated and the continuous reckoning.¹³ But there is one cardinal exception in

¹¹ J. Asbach, *Analecta historica et epigraphica Latina* 2 (Bonn 1878) 8ff.; B.W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero* (London 1903) 477-8; R. Syme, *Tacitus* 2, 765-6; C.M. Bulst, *Historia* 10 (1961) 496ff.; D.R. Dudley and G. Webster, *The Rebellion of Boudicca* (London 1962) 144-5; S. Frere, *Britannia* (London 1967) 87; R.M. Ogilvie - I. Richmond's edition of Tactus' *Agricola*, 194; protests have been heard from J. Overbeck, *AJP* 90 (1969) 129ff. and A.R. Burn, *Tacitus*, ed. Dorey (1969) 60, n. 6, answered by A.R. Birley, *Britannia* 4 (1973) 181, n. 16.

¹² References to Stuart Jones in succeeding notes are to his first article, *RA*⁴ 3 (1904) 263ff.

a) For the second salutation, Stuart Jones (p. 265) gave a date at the end of 55, following the earlier study of the salutations by E. Maynial, *RA*³ 39 (1901), 169-70 who connected it with Tacitus *Ann.* 13.9 where Tacitus notes that his narrative extends beyond 54, under which year the events are related. Stein's date of 56 (*PIR*² D 129) does not presumably indicate a different interpretation of the salutation.

b) Stuart Jones (p. 265) reported *Eph. Epig.* 3, p. 114 as reading Trib. Pot. IV, Imp. V: in fact, it reads Imp. IV (*Eph. Epig.* 9, p. 513), so that there is no basis for his view that news of the fifth salutation reached Britain before 13 October 58 (p. 269).

c) *IGR* 3, 985 (republished by Mitford, *ABSA* 42 (1947) 219) shows that Imp. VII, convincingly connected by Stuart Jones (pp. 266-9) with the fall of Artaxata, was not yet known in Cyprus when Trib. Pot. VI began (i.e. October or December 59).

¹³ Stuart Jones (pp. 269-71) was so convinced that Imp. IX, associated on *CIL* 2, 4888 with Trib. Pot. VIII, was to be connected with the monument set up on receipt of the exaggerated dispatches of Caesennius Paetus in autumn 62 (*Tac. Ann.* 15.18), that he took the Spanish inscription to be using the continuous reckoning, according to which Trib. Pot. VIII belongs to late 61-late 62. Gatti's view in *PP* 16 (1961) 429-30 that Imp. IX really belongs to 63, when it would fit Dio 62.23,4, and that the Spanish inscription is in error is unconvincing: coins showing that Nero first took the praenomen Imperator in 66 confirm

the second group, noted by Hammond himself: the dating of imperial salutation VIII.

The evidence for the date of the eighth salutation is as follows:

1) The *terminus post quem* is some point during Trib. Pot. VII, for Imp. VII is found combined with that title on three records:

a. *AFA* for January 60. But we have already noted that, according to the continuous reckoning, the Trib. Pot. number here is wrong. The usual explanation of the error is that the inscription, cut at the end of the year when Nero held these titles, erroneously ascribed them to him at the start of the year. In that case, the *terminus post quem* provided by the inscription would be October or December 60, when Trib. Pot. VII actually began. But the mistake in the Trib. Pot. number might have resulted from simple confusion with the imperial salutation number, in which case the *terminus post quem* is only January 60.¹⁴

b. An inscription from Cyprus, *IGR* 3.986, republished by Mitford in *ABSA* 42 (1947), 220. Nero's titles here combine Trib. Pot. VII and Imp. VII, yielding a *terminus post quem* for the eighth salutation of October or December 60, on the continuous reckoning.

c. Most important is the diploma already mentioned (p. 138) showing Trib. Pot. VII Imp. VII and dated to 2 July. If Hammond's suggestion that the year is 61 is accepted, then the eighth salutation belongs after 2 July 61.

2) The *terminus ante quem* is provided by an inscription from Thrace showing Imp. VIII with Trib. Pot. VIII.¹⁵ The ninth salutation is also found with Trib. Pot. VIII.¹⁶ On the continuous reckoning of the terms of his *tribunicia potestas*, Nero acquired two salutations between 2 July 61 (the date of the diploma) and October or December 62, when Trib. Pot. VIII came to an end.

Now Stuart Jones saw that one of these salutations must be connected

Suet. *Nero* 13, which has Nero first taking the salutation for Tiridates' submission when he came to Rome. That salutation will be XI, as Stuart Jones thought.

¹⁴ M.L. Constans, *CRAI* 1912, 385ff., in proposing a modified version of Mommsen's view that Nero altered the mode of reckoning his *tribunicia potestas* in 60, suggested that *AFA* customarily represented the Emperor's titles at their first mention each year as they were for most of that year, but his case rested on a misinterpretation of the sacrifice *ob comitia consularia* in *AFA* for March 59 (see Dessau, *ILS* 229; Mitford, *op. cit.*, 219 n. 74).

¹⁵ *ILS* 231 (Smallwood no. 351).

¹⁶ See n. 13.

with the victories of Suetonius Paullinus in Britain, as a lead *tessera* shows that Nero distributed a *congiarium* or donative in his name.¹⁷ He also saw that the monument set up *de Parthis* for the campaigns of Caesennius Paetus in Armenia in the autumn of 62 provided an occasion for the second salutation.¹⁸ The Armenian one, based on events occurring late in the year, had to be the second. He therefore concluded that the eighth salutation was connected with the British victories.¹⁹

For Stuart Jones, of course, Trib. Pot. VIII covered October 60 to October 61 and the diploma belonged to July of 60. He held that the limits for the eighth salutation were July 60 and October 61, while the rebellion led by Boudicca was properly dated by Tacitus to 61. It was therefore easy for him to explain the salutation and *congiarium* as related to Suetonius' victories before the *clades*, for Tacitus says that he had two successful years behind him and had just subjugated the Druid strong-hold of Anglesey when he heard of the revolt.²⁰ On the inflated Mommsenian reckoning of Nero's terms of *tribunicia potestas*, this interpretation of the eighth salutation will even withstand the redating of the *clades* to 60.²¹ For the salutation could have been voted after July 60 but before the news of the disasters at Londinium and Verulamium and of the decisive battle had reached Rome.

On the continuous reckoning of Nero's terms of *tribunicia potestas*, the Tacitean dating of the *clades* to 61 allows the same interpretation to be given.²² Hammond rightly pointed out, of course, that the re-dating of the diploma of 2 July to 61 would force us to place the eighth salutation after the revolt had broken out, for Tacitus clearly indicates that the

¹⁷ See below, p. 145.

¹⁸ For the chronology of the Armenian campaigns, see, most conveniently, H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*² (Oxford 1907), vol. 2, Introduction, pp. 111ff. Caesennius Paetus arrived from Rome in spring 62 (*pace* Groag in *PIR*² C 173 who thinks 'consularia insignia' in *Ann.* 15.7 shows that he arrived late in 61) and suffered his defeat towards the winter of 62/3. His dispatches are mentioned by Tacitus in *Ann.* 15.8,2; the monument in 15.18,1.

¹⁹ Stuart Jones (pp. 269-70), following the view of Maynial, *RA*³ 39 (1901) 173-4, but rejecting the connection with Paullinus' defeat of Boudicca.

²⁰ *Agr.* 14.3; *Ann.* 14.29-30.

²¹ Though Maynial *RA*³ 39 (1901) 173-4 (and again, in answer to Stuart Jones, in *RA*⁴ 4 (1904) 174-5), who accepted Asbach's date for the *clades*, linked the salutation to Paullinus' suppression of the revolt.

²² So Mitford, *op. cit.*, 221, but he did not know Hammond's article in *MAAR* 15 suggesting 61 as the date for the diploma, and so placed the eighth salutation 'in early 61'.

rebels had failed to plant crops because of their military pre-occupations.²³ That degree of planning in the spring must place the out-break before July. On the other hand, the outbreak of the revolt can hardly be placed before the summer, in order to allow for Suetonius' campaigns on Anglesey, which were virtually finished when news of the revolt reached him.²⁴ Therefore, if the *clades* belongs in 61, it would be possible for the Senate to have voted the eighth salutation to Nero for Suetonius' successes in Anglesey and the two preceding years, after 2 July 61 but just before news of the climax of the revolt reached Rome, and certainly before the final victory was known there.²⁵

Such a chronology, however, requires a rather loose interpretation of Tacitus' report in *Ann.* 14.39 that, some time after his defeat of Boudicca, Suetonius was ordered to hand over his army to Petronius Turpilianus 'qui iam consulatu abierat,' i.e. 'who had already laid down his consulship.'²⁶ For the diploma, if it is rightly dated to 61, shows that Petronius Turpilianus had already been replaced by a suffect consul before Nero received his eighth salutation. If Tacitus means, as he is often taken to mean,²⁷ that Petronius went straight from his consulship to Britain, the following events would certainly have been known at Rome by the time the diploma was issued: Suetonius' victory over Boudicca, his further operations with the help of reinforcements from Germany, the hostile report of the procurator Iulius Classicianus which resulted in the dispatch of the freedman Polyclitus, his more moderate report that led to a decision to retain Paullinus in command, some naval

²³ Hammond, *HSCP* 45 (1934) 97-8. The attempt of Burn (above, n. 11) to explain away *Ann.* 14.38,2 as a Tacitean confusion of sowing and harvesting is unconvincing.

²⁴ *Ann.* 14.30.3: 'praesidium posthac impositum victis...haec agenti Suetonio repentina defectio provinciae nuntiatur.' That military preparations impeded the sowing in the spring is compatible with the actual outbreak occurring in the summer.

²⁵ Hammond, *MAAR* 15 (1938) 32 seems to give up too easily, apparently because he found the amount of time between the taking of the salutation and the exploits it commemorated too great. On this problem of the interval, see below n. 32.

²⁶ For the meaning of 'iam' here as 'already,' or 'by now,' see Gerber-Greef, pp. 719-20. It clearly has this meaning in combination with 'abire' in *Hist.* 2.76,3: 'abiit iam et transvectum est tempus.'

²⁷ e.g. Hammond, *HSCP* 45 (1934) 96: 'He would hardly have written this had any long interval elapsed between the consulship and the appointment to the British command'; Syme, *Tacitus* 2, 765: 'fresh from his consulate.' In many translations, 'iam' is rendered 'just.'

losses that led to a reversal of that decision and the appointment of Petronius (*Ann.* 14.37-9). Therefore, we could only assume that the eighth salutation was voted for Suetonius' early successes alone, if Petronius was not sent to Britain for some months after he left office.

To see if Tacitus' remark is compatible with such a delay, we must consider what the author's point was in making it. If annual consulships were the rule in this period, 'qui iam consulatu abierat' might be an elegant temporal note indicating that Tacitus' narrative had, as so often, spilled over into the next year. Its function would then be similar to that of 'quos in alios consules egressa coniunxi' in *Ann.* 13.9. But Degrassi's list of unassigned consuls in these years (*FC* pp. 16-7) shows that suffectus must have been customary in these years, while the diploma, on the assumption that it is correctly dated to 61, shows that there certainly were suffect consuls in this year. We cannot assume that Tacitus was ignorant of these facts. He must therefore be explaining something about the timing of Petronius' appointment that was either unusual in itself and/or would puzzle his readers for some other reason. Now Petronius' colleague as *consul ordinarius*, L. Caesennius Paetus, does not seem to have arrived in Armenia before 62.²⁸ Could Tacitus' remark about Petronius have been intended simply to indicate that he, rather unusually and in contrast with his colleague, was sent out to a command in the same year as his consulship? Alternatively, or in addition, Tacitus could have been explaining to his readers that Petronius' dispatch to Britain during 61 was compatible with his earlier mention of him as *consul ordinarius* in that year (*Ann.* 14.29).

But we are on the slippery slope here, for Tacitus indicates that Suetonius' operations after his victory over Boudicca and before the dispatch of Petronius occurred during the winter (*Ann.* 14.38, 1-2). If Petronius was not sent out until early in 62, perhaps as much as a year after he had left office, according to the evidence of the diploma, there is then no point left in Tacitus' remark about his consulship.²⁹ We have

²⁸ See above, n. 18. The inscription *CIL* VI. 597 and Pompeian tablets *CIL* IV. 3340, cliv, clv that used to be cited as possible evidence that Petronius left office by 1 March and before Caesennius are now clearly dateable, through a plausible restoration of *IGR* 1.420 to 79 (*PIR*² C 174—Groag).

²⁹ Yet Overbeck, *AJP* 90 (1969) 144 accepts the 62 date.

now come up against the crucial argument for dating the *clades* to 60 rather than 61. There are too many events to fit into 61, especially as Tacitus indicates the passage of a summer and a winter in the course of the revolt and its suppression. Given what he says of Petronius, these seasons must be the summer of 60 and the winter of 60/1. On this chronology for the revolt in Britain, the eighth salutation cannot have been assumed for Suetonius Paullinus' earlier successes in ignorance of the climax of the revolt, or, indeed, of its virtual suppression. The salutation can only be interpreted as marking the victory over Boudicca, or for all of Suetonius' victories including that one. Even if proposed earlier, it must have been accepted after the hostile reports of Classicianus had been received, perhaps even after the appointment of Petronius Turpilianus, for the dating of the revolt to 60 leaves us free to take the natural interpretation of Tacitus' phrase about his consulship, as implying that Petronius proceeded from consulship to governorship without much delay.

At first glance, it might seem preferable to sacrifice one or the other item of consensus than to accept a conclusion so at variance with Tacitus' story of the recall of Suetonius under a cloud, charged with impeding pacification by the imperial procurator and with failure in the renewed conflict by the imperial freedman. Worse still for Tacitus, there is evidence that Suetonius Paullinus was honoured in a very special way by Nero, for, as we have mentioned, a lead *tessera* with 'NERO CAESAR' on the obverse carries the name 'PAULLINI' on the reverse along with traditional symbols of victory, Jupiter with a victory and an eagle.³⁰ Rostovtzeff, like earlier scholars, drew the reasonable inference that Nero gave a donative or *congiarium* in honour of Suetonius' victories in Britain. Though it is possible in theory to connect this honour with the general's earlier campaigns in the years 58-60, it seems

³⁰ M. Rostovtzeff, *Revue Numismatique*, ser. 4 no. 2 (1898) 77ff.; Syll. no. 23. The only other Paullinus who could be considered is Seneca's brother-in-law, Pompeius Paullinus, but he does not seem to have achieved any victories worthy of note in Lower Germany. Nero's third and fifth salutations are usually connected with the operations of his successor Duvidius Avitus (*Ann.* 13.54,56); see Stuart Jones, pp. 265-9.

more natural to associate it with the imperial salutation.³¹ The distribution probably occurred when Suetonius returned to Rome, just as Tiberius distributed a *congiarium* 'nomine Germanici' after Germanicus returned to Rome for his triumph.

This may explain why Nero waited for months after the victory over Boudicca to assume the eighth salutation: he wanted Suetonius to be present so that the tribute to the general would be more marked.³² There are other examples of *congiaria* given by the Julio-Claudian emperors in the name of prominent individuals, but all of those so honoured were members of the imperial house,³³ except for this one and another of 66 issued in the name of King Tiridates who had come to Rome to receive the Armenian crown from Nero's own hands. But this instance hardly detracts from the unusualness of Suetonius' honour, for special terms had been negotiated between Vologeses and Corbulo for Tiridates' reception, and Nero was determined to make the coronation an extravagant occasion.³⁴ Domitius Corbulo, the general responsible for his visit, was not apparently honoured in this way. Neither Suetonius nor Corbulo are known to have received *triumphalia ornamenta* from Nero: Corbulo had been decorated for his campaigns in Germany under Claudius,³⁵ and Suetonius might well have been for his successes in Mauretania under that same Emperor.³⁶ It is true that it was possible to receive these honours twice,³⁷ but their inflation and devaluation,

³¹ Just as the lead *tessera*, *Syll.* no. 22, with 'ARM(ENIAE) REG(IS)' on the reverse clearly marks the visit to Rome of Tiridates, on which occasion Nero took his eleventh salutation (above, n. 13).

³² Tacitus *Ann.* 2. 41-2. Hammond, *MAAR* 15 (1938) 32 n. 96, was prepared to accept that the eighth salutation was in honour of the definitive victory over Boudicca, but found the idea that it followed Petronius' appointment intolerable, apparently because the time interval was too long. This explanation then would meet his objection.

³³ *Syll.* 9 (Livia) - issued under Gaius; 10 (Antonia); 11 (Britannicus); 13 and 14 (Nero Caesar) - issued under Claudius; 34 (Claudia Antonia) - a Neronian one of 63.

³⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 15.31; Suet. *Nero* 13.1; 30.1.

³⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 11.20; Dio 60. 30,5. Claudius probably was saluted Imperator for the fifteenth time on that occasion.

³⁶ In 41-2. For the dating and purpose of these campaigns, see D. Fishwick, *Historia* 20 (1971) 473-7. Claudius' fourth salutation could be for the eventual annexation of Mauretania, which depended on the work of Suetonius Paullinus and his successor Cn. Hosidius Geta.

³⁷ At least from Claudius - Suet. *Claud.* 17.6.

particularly during and after Claudius' reign, might have resulted in their not being coveted by proud generals like Corbulo and Suetonius.³⁸ The latter's successor in Britain was to receive them in 65, not for the pacification of a province but for cooperation in betraying his peers,³⁹ and, in another case, solid military achievement under Nero had to wait to be rewarded in this way until the reign of Vespasian.⁴⁰ Therefore, whether or not Suetonius Paullinus was granted *triumphalia ornamenta* in 61, he had received a greater tribute. It is now not surprising to find his son serving as *consul ordinarius* five years later.⁴¹

'No honours awaited Suetonius in Rome.' The words are Bernard Henderson's,⁴² the evidence Tacitus' account in the *Annals*. But it is purely negative evidence, for Tacitus does not mention what, if any, gloss was put on Suetonius' recall for the public. He in no way suggests that the reports of Classicianus and Polyclitus were made public or that the pretext that Paullinus was unable to finish the war was offered to anyone but Paullinus and his staff in Britain, who were otherwise likely to blame the personal hostility of the imperial procurator. Moreover, in *Agricola* 16 Tacitus lends credit to this pretext to the extent of accepting that British belief in Suetonius' intransigence did prolong their resistance, and yet describes Suetonius' achievement as restoring to its former obedience a province that would otherwise have been lost. The government could similarly have maintained both views. The evidence of the salutation and the imperial distribution does not conflict with Tacitus' testimony in the *Annals*, only with the impression it creates.

For Nero to have honoured Suetonius at the same time as he both dismissed his general and abandoned the aggressive policy in Britain for which he had been chosen is, in itself, perfectly intelligible. It fits with

³⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 11.20; 13.5,3; Dio 60.23,2; 31.7; Suet. *Claud.* 24.

³⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 15.72 explicitly connects the award with the detection of the Pisonian conspiracy. The company in which Petronius received his honours make the scepticism of Ogilvie-Richmond, *Agricola*, p. 202 unjustified.

⁴⁰ *ILS* 986 (Smallwood no. 228).

⁴¹ *PIR* 694 (Dessau). Degrassi, *FC* p. 12 holds that the general himself held the consulship in 66, despite the lack of any indication of iteration in the sources. But iterated consulships seems to be a Claudian practice that Nero avoided: this would be the only known example.

⁴² *op. cit.*, 217; cf. P. Fabia, *Les sources de Tacite* (Paris 1898) 339: 'une demi-disgrâce.' But Bulst, *Historia* 10 (1961) 507 and Frere, *Britannia*, 92 express doubts.

Nero's early policy of tactful awareness of senatorial feelings, for appreciation of good generals was a senatorial criterion of a good emperor.⁴³ It fits also with Nero's attempts to conceal quarrelling in the high command and in the imperial house. In 55 C. Ummidius Quadratus, the elderly legate of Syria, was honoured jointly with Corbulo, Nero adding laurel to his *fasces* and taking his second imperial salutation.⁴⁴ He had quarrelled with Corbulo, and his post was being made available for an appointee of Agrippina with whom Nero had just been reconciled.⁴⁵ Tacitus aptly makes Nero in 62 refuse to allow Seneca to retire and surrender his wealth, because the Emperor would be criticized as greedy and ungrateful should his break with his old tutor become known.⁴⁶ Yet it can be argued that Nero was losing interest in tactful deference to senatorial sentiment just about this time: 61 is the first year for which the ordinary consulships were not reserved to *nobiles*, and the sending of Polyclitus to Britain was a blatant contravention of his accession promise 'discretam domum et rem publicam.'⁴⁷ But Nero had another aspect of his reputation to consider. Coming to the throne without military experience, he was eager to achieve military success. Whatever his momentary despair at the *clades*,⁴⁸ Nero would not have wanted Britain, whose conquest had been Claudius' most famous achievement, to be regarded as his theatre of defeat. In fact, it was the necessity for a halt in Britain that probably led him to initiate a new and rash policy in Armenia in hopes of achieving glory there: Petronius' fellow-consul Caesennius Paetus arrived there in 62, talking of annexation and direct rule.⁴⁹ The tribute to Suetonius Paullinus and the eighth salutation could be Nero's way of putting a brave face on the disaster in Britain.

The final problems concern Tacitus. One of his favorite themes is the contrast between imperial propaganda and reality. When it comes to

⁴³ Pliny, *Pan.* 44.6; 45.1; Tac. *Ann.* 4.6,2; cf. 1.80; 6.27; *Hist.* 2.65,2.

⁴⁴ See n. 12 above.

⁴⁵ As I have suggested in *JRS* 52 (1962) 104-5.

⁴⁶ *Ann.* 14.56,2.

⁴⁷ See M.T. Griffin, *Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford 1976) 105-9; 121-2; 233.

⁴⁸ The story in Suet. *Nero* 18 must belong just after the news of the revolt reached Rome, if it has any historical basis (for doubts, Syme, *Tacitus*, 490, n. 6).

⁴⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 15.6,4. The case for a psychological connection between policy in these two theatres is argued in *Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics*, 233-4.

Armenian affairs in the *Annals*, he is prepared to distort the facts in order to achieve just this contrast: memorials of victory voted on the strength of the boastful dispatches of Caesennius Paetus were set up even after news of his eventual crushing defeat had reached Rome.⁵⁰ Yet, in dealing with Paullinus, Tacitus seems to have deliberately missed the chance to point a similar contrast: an imperial salutation and victory distribution after heavy loss of citizen life and the abandonment of a policy of conquest. But there is no real cause for surprise, as Tacitus clearly has another effect in mind. Suetonius is an ambitious general, the rival, in popular imagination at least, of Corbulo. In the Claudian books (*Ann.* 11.20) Tacitus relates how Corbulo was prevented from winning real military glory and thereby provoked to the bitter comment: 'beatos quondam duces Romanos.' The theme is similar here: the ambitious general deprived of further victories through the influence of jealous men with the Emperor.⁵¹ There Corbulo's *triumphalia ornamenta* are mentioned but their value discounted; here Paullinus' more substantial honours are simply ignored.⁵²

Yet there remains the further problem of the discrepancy between Tacitus' two accounts. The usual explanation is to say that he used for the account in the *Annals* a source that he had not yet read when he wrote the *Agricola*, namely, the memoirs of Suetonius Paullinus himself. Some have supposed that Tacitus knew them directly; others that the material came to him through an earlier historian who had used them. The memoirs themselves are hypothetical, as there are no explicit references to them. Nonetheless, given that Suetonius wrote an account of his campaigns in Mauretania under Claudius,⁵³ it is possible that he narrated his exploits in Britain on which his military reputation was ultimately based.⁵⁴ Traces have been sought in the Elder Pliny⁵⁵ and in

⁵⁰ *Ann.* 15.18. As Furneaux points out *ad loc.*, 15.24 shows that the news of Paetus' defeat did not reach Rome until the spring of the following year.

⁵¹ With the remark about Classicianus in *Ann.* 14.38: 'Suetonio discors, bonum publicum privatis simulatibus impediēbat,' compare 11.19.3: 'apud quosdam sinistra fama.'

⁵² Cf. the scornful treatment of Agricola's decorations in *Agr.* 40. On the assumption made here that Tacitus would know of Suetonius' honours, see below, pp. 151–2.

⁵³ Pliny *NH* 5.14 and the index to Book 5.

⁵⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 2.37: 'militia clarus gloriam nomenque Britannicis expeditionibus meruisset.' Such a reputation supports the argument that Suetonius returned home from Britain in glory.

⁵⁵ The measure of distance in *NH* 2.187 — Mona to Camulodunum.

Tacitus' citation of casualty figures and his apologetic tendency.⁵⁶ Though many have believed, many have been sceptical.⁵⁷ Pliny, who used and mentioned the African memoirs, does not mention Suetonius as a source either in the index or the text of Book 4 of the *Natural Histories* where he deals with Britain. If Suetonius wrote an account of his exploits in Britain, it is odd that Pliny did not use it, or, if he did use it, that he did not record his debt. It is also strange that Tacitus, who mentions Corbulo as an author,⁵⁸ should not admit his use of Paullinus.

Comparison with Tacitus' use of Corbulo's memoirs suggests another difficulty: Tacitus was sceptical of Corbulo's criticisms of his rival commander and of his motives in choosing his strategy.⁵⁹ Why would he be so credulous of an account that, *ex hypothesi*, was blatantly tendentious? It is true that Tacitus admired Suetonius as a general,⁶⁰ but, in the *Histories* he was not wholly uncritical of his conduct as one of Otho's generals, and he despised the excuses Suetonius offered Vitellius in order to save his skin.⁶¹ Moreover, if Paullinus wrote up his British campaigns in the apologetic vein we find in the *Annals*, he must have done so after Nero's death: Corbulo could criticize the disgraced Caesennius Paetus under Nero,⁶² but such an account of the conduct of the Emperor's procurator and freedman, both of whom retained his confidence, is unthinkable. Suetonius' story of his recall then would belong to the 'narrow escape from the tyrant' type of literature, and Tacitus could hardly have failed to recognize it⁶³: it was a type of apology he deliberately eschewed on his own account.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ *Ann.* 14.33: 'ad septuaginta milia civium et sociorum...cecidissee constitit.' At 14.37 the comparison of enemy with Roman losses certainly sounds like the exaggerated claims of a victorious general, but does Tacitus' 'sunt qui tradant' indicate a different source for these figures from the one used at 14.33?

⁵⁷ Fabia, *op. cit.*, 337-9; H. Peter, *HRR* 2 (1906) cxxxviiiif; Syme, *Tacitus*, 765; C. Questa, *Studi sulle fonti degli Annales di Tacito* (Rome 1963) 222-4.

⁵⁸ *Ann.* 15.16.1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.16.1, cf. 15.10.4.

⁶⁰ *Agr.* 5: 'diligens ac moderatus dux'; *Hist.* 2.37 (cited in n. 54).

⁶¹ *Hist.* 2.25.2; 26.2; 44.1; 60.1.

⁶² Nero ridiculed him, according to Tac. *Ann.* 15.25.4.

⁶³ Compare the story of Vespasian's sleeping through Nero's performances: Suet. *Vesp.* 4.4; 14; Dio 66.11.2; *Ann.* 16.5 (where the occasion is different). Tacitus' 'ferebant' shows that he did not vouch for the story.

⁶⁴ With Pliny *Ep.* 3.11, cf. Tac. *Agr.* 45.2.

Little is solved by the suggestion that Tacitus actually derived his material from an intermediate source.⁶⁵ For one thing, it is hard to see why Corbulo's memoirs should be less likely to have reached Tacitus indirectly,⁶⁶ yet Tacitus was critical in his use of them. But even if we admit the possibility that Suetonius' work, and not Corbulo's, was only known to Tacitus indirectly, and not named by the transmitter, there is still the difficulty that the historian suggested for this role, Fabius Rusticus,⁶⁷ was himself used with the utmost caution by Tacitus.⁶⁸ Of Tacitus' other sources for the Neronian books, the Elder Pliny and Cluvius Rufus, only Pliny was certainly writing his history late enough to have used an account by Paullinus, but he also failed to inspire absolute confidence in Tacitus.⁶⁹ Thus the apologetic tone of the material makes Tacitus' acceptance of it difficult to explain, however it reached him. We must, in addition, bear in mind the fact that Tacitus probably omitted mention of the tribute to Suetonius and of Nero's salutation deliberately. For even if he did not learn of them from Agricola, who served under Suetonius in this campaign, he was consulting the *acta senatus* in the Neronian part of the *Annals*,⁷⁰ and the vote of the eighth salutation was presumably recorded there.⁷¹

Wherever he found the story,⁷² Tacitus must have decided to present the recall of Suetonius Paullinus as he did to serve the literary purpose suggested above. But if this is so, we do not need the hypothesis of a different source to explain the discrepancy between the *Annals* and the

⁶⁵ It is adduced as a solution by N. Reed, *Latomus* 33 (1974) 926ff.

⁶⁶ Traditional *Quellenforschung* assumed that they did reach Tacitus through an earlier historian (Fabia, *op. cit.*, 334-7); for Pliny, Momigliano, *RAL* 8 (1932) 334.

⁶⁷ By G. Walscr, *Rom, das Reich und die fremden Völker in der Geschichtsschreibung der frühen Kaiserzeit* (Baden-Baden 1951) 131-3; Reed (above, n. 65).

⁶⁸ *Agr.* 10.3; *Ann.* 13.20.

⁶⁹ *Ann.* 13.31.1; 15.53.3-4.

⁷⁰ They are explicitly mentioned in *Ann.* 15.74.3, but clearly only because the decree proposed ran counter to what some historians had said about its author (Syme, *Tacitus*, 407) and was never passed, so that it had to be certified. Note that the account of affairs in Britain is followed by an account of senatorial transactions in that year (14.40-6).

⁷¹ That the Senate regularly decreed salutations to the Emperor is clear from Dio 71.10; 68.23.2 (on which see M.I. Henderson, *JRS* 39(1949) 121-2); cf. 56.17.1-18.1.

⁷² Syme suggests (*Tacitus*, 765) that Tacitus knew a funeral oration in praise of the general. Certainly, under the Flavians, the difficulties of a Neronian general would be emphasized. But Tacitus' neglect of the work in the *Agricola* and his credulity in the *Annals* still crave explanation on this view.

Agricola. For, in the *Agricola*, there can be only one hero cheated of his due, one senatorial general insulted by being subjected to spying by an imperial freedman (39-40). *Agricola* had served as military tribune under Suetonius in Britain, who showed his confidence in the young man by admitting him to his Headquarters staff.⁷³ Tacitus no doubt received from his father-in-law the favourable picture of Suetonius found in the *Agricola*.⁷⁴ But he might also have been told the story we find in the *Annals* and omitted it in the earlier work. Or, if there was an account by Suetonius of his British campaigns, Tacitus could have been directed to it by *Agricola* and then have deliberately neglected the full *apologia* in his earlier work.⁷⁵

We cannot tell if Tacitus mentioned Suetonius Paullinus again in the lost portion of the *Annals*. If he did, he is unlikely to have been so uncritically favourable of him again. The final honours were due rather to Suetonius' rival Domitius Corbulo who had received more critical treatment earlier. Although Tiridates was said to have called Corbulo Nero's slave,⁷⁶ Corbulo's suicide redeemed his reputation. Suetonius Paullinus' outstanding virtue as a general was caution, which Tacitus thought was at times excessive.⁷⁷ He may well have observed that the same quality, or defect, helped Suetonius to survive the last years of Nero.

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⁷³ See Ogilvie-Richmond on *Agr.* 5.1.

⁷⁴ As suggested by E. Köstermann in his Commentary on Tacitus' *Annales*, vol. 4 (Heidelberg 1968) 85.

⁷⁵ Burn, *op. cit.*, 46 suggests that Tacitus owed the story in the *Annals* to *Agricola*, but makes no allusion to the discrepancy between that account and the one in *Agricola*.

⁷⁶ Dio 62.6.4.

⁷⁷ *Hist.* 2.25,2: 'cunctatio'; cf. 2.37: 'prudencia.'