

CALIGULA

[1] Gaius Caesar's* father Germanicus, the son of Drusus and the younger Antonia, was adopted by his paternal uncle Tiberius.* He held the quaestorship five years in advance of the time laid down by law and went straight on to the consulship.* He had been sent out to take command of the army in Germany when news came of the death of Augustus. The legions most obstinately refused to acknowledge Tiberius as emperor and sought instead to offer supreme control of the empire to Germanicus. He, however—with greater loyalty or courage it is hard to say—held them back and not long afterwards defeated the enemy, securing a triumph. Made consul for the second time, he was sent away, before he could take office, to bring order to the East. After he had defeated the King of Armenia and made Cappadocia a province, he died at Antioch, in his thirty-fourth year, of a long-drawn-out illness—indeed there was some suspicion of poison. For dark patches appeared all over his body and he foamed at the mouth, and besides this, when he was cremated, his heart was found intact amongst his bones; it is thought that the heart, when infected with poison, cannot be destroyed by fire. [2] The plot to kill him, people thought, was initiated by Tiberius, through the agency and offices of Gnaeus Piso, who at that time was governor of Syria. He made no secret of the fact that he had to make an enemy either of the father or of the son, as if there were no other option, and even when Germanicus was ill, he set upon him, offering the most bitter insults in word and deed without the least restraint. For this reason, when he returned to Rome, he was almost torn to pieces by the people, while the senate condemned him to death.*

[3] That Germanicus had all the virtues of body and spirit to a degree achieved by no other man is generally agreed. His person was striking, his valour conspicuous, his talent for eloquence and learning, both Greek and Roman, was outstanding. He was noted for his kindness of disposition and was remarkably successful in his endeavours to secure people's goodwill and to merit their affection. One aspect of his appearance out of proportion with the rest was the thinness of his legs but even this he gradually managed to improve through assiduous riding after meals. He often struck down an

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enemy fighting at close quarters. He took on court cases even after he had celebrated his triumph. Among the many testimonies he left to his learning were comedies in Greek. He sought to act as an ordinary citizen both at home and abroad, entering free and allied cities without an escort of lictors. Wherever he came across the funeral monuments of famous men, he used to make offerings to their spirits. Intending to bring together in one grave the remains of those who had fallen years previously in the Varian disaster,* he himself began the task of gathering them, picking them up with his own hands. Towards his detractors, whoever they were and whatever their motives, he remained gentle and without malice, so that even when Piso was countermanning his orders and vexing his clients, he was reluctant to grow angry with him until he was convinced that he was the victim of poison and curses. Even then he only went so far as to renounce his friendship, in the manner of our ancestors, and to invoke revenge from his household should anything happen to him.

[4] Endowed with this rich crop of virtues, Germanicus was so esteemed and loved by his family that Augustus (to say nothing of the rest of his relatives), after debating long as to whether to designate him his successor, had him adopted by Tiberius. He was so much loved by the common people, as many writers report, that whenever he arrived anywhere or left anywhere vast crowds came to meet him or see him off, sometimes even endangering his life. Indeed, when he was returning from Germany after the suppression of the mutiny, all the praetorian cohorts came to meet him, although it had been announced that only two were to undertake this duty, while all the people, whatever their age, sex, or status, flooded out of Rome as far as the twentieth milestone.

[5] However, by far the most important and surest verdicts on him date from after his death.* On the day he died temples were attacked with stones, the altars of the gods were overturned, the household gods of some families were cast out into the street, and others exposed their wives' new babies. Indeed, they say that even the barbarians, some of whom were engaged in a civil war while others were at war with us, agreed to a truce, as if they themselves had suffered a common loss. They say, too, that some princes shaved off their beards and had their wives' hair cropped as a sign of the greatest grief, while even the king of kings* is said to have abstained from

hunting expeditions and from banqueting with his magnates, which among the Parthians is the sign of public mourning.

[6] Back in Rome, the citizens, shocked and grieving at news of his ill health, had been waiting for further information, when towards evening a report spread, its source unclear, to the effect that he was recovering. At once crowds flocked to the Capitol with torches and sacrificial victims. They almost tore off the temple doors such was their impatience at any delay to their offerings. Tiberius was roused from sleep by their voices as they rejoiced on all sides, chanting:

Rome is safe, our fatherland safe, for Germanicus is safe.

And when at last his death became known, no consolation, no orders could contain the public mourning, which lasted even through the feast days of the month of December.* The dreadfulness of later events increased the reputation of the dead man and regret for his loss. All believed and with good reason that only respect for Germanicus and fear of him had held in check the cruelty to which Tiberius soon gave rein.*

[7] Germanicus was married to Agrippina, daughter of Marcus Agrippa and Julia, and through her fathered nine children. Two of these were lost as infants, while a third died on the verge of boyhood, a child noted for his sweetness of disposition, whose portrait, showing him as Cupid, Livia dedicated in the temple of Capitoline Venus, while Augustus had another placed in his bedroom which he used to kiss every time he entered the room. The other children survived their father: three were girls, Agrippina, Drusilla, and Livilla, born within the space of three years, and there were the same number of boys, Nero, Drusus, and Gaius Caesar. Nero and Drusus were condemned as enemies of the state by the senate. Tiberius was their accuser.*

[8] Gaius Caesar was born the day before the Kalends of September, in the year when his father and Gaius Fonteus Capito were consuls.* Differing accounts make it impossible to be sure where he was born. Gnaeus Lentulus Gaetulicus* writes that he was born at Tibur, Pliny* that he was born in the region occupied by the Trevirii, in a place called Ambitarvius, where the rivers* meet. The latter adds in support of his version that altars are displayed there, with the inscription: 'For Agrippina's delivery'. Verses which were circulating soon after he became emperor suggest that he was conceived in the legions' winter quarters.

Born in a camp, brought up with his father's troops, Clearly he was destined to be our emperor.

I find, from official records, that he was born at Antium. Pliny refutes Gaetulicus, arguing that his falsehood was motivated by a desire to flatter the young and arrogant prince, adding to his glory by locating his birth in the town sacred to Hercules. He could with more confidence twist the story, for about a year before another of Germanicus' sons had indeed been born at Tibur, also bearing the name Gaius Caesar (his delightful character and early death were mentioned earlier*). Pliny's own argument is refuted by chronology. For those who record the doings of Augustus agree that when Germanicus, after the end of his consulship, was sent to Gaul, Gaius was already born. Nor do any of these altar inscriptions help Pliny's case, for Agrippina gave birth to two daughters while in that region and the term used for 'delivery', *puerperium*, is the same whether the child born is male or female, for in the old days girls were known as *puerae*, while boys might be known as *puelli*.* Besides this, a letter survives written by Augustus to his granddaughter Agrippina a few months before he died which mentions this Gaius in the following terms (for no other child called Gaius was living at that time):

I arranged yesterday with Talarus and Asilius that they shall escort the child Gaius, if the gods are willing, on the fifteenth day before the Kalends of June.* I am also sending with him a doctor, one of my slaves, whom I have told Germanicus to keep if he wishes. Farewell, my Agrippina, and take care that you reach your Germanicus safely.

In my opinion it is quite evident that Gaius could not have been born in a place to which he was first taken from Rome when he was two years old. These facts call into question the verses, which are in any case anonymous. We should believe the only possibility which remains (and which is supported by the authority of official documents), particularly when Gaius himself preferred Antium to all other resorts, loving it as people love the place where they were born. They even say that he was sick of Rome and sought to transfer to Antium the seat and capital of empire.*

[9] His nickname 'Caligula'* he took from a joke current in the camp, for he was carried around among the troops in the dress of an ordinary soldier. The love and favour he enjoyed among them, as a result of being brought up in their midst, is strikingly shown by the

fact that, when the soldiers were in uproar and on the point of frenzy after the death of Augustus, just the sight of him was undoubtedly enough to change their minds. For they only left off when it was reported that Caligula was to be removed because of the danger posed by the mutiny and transferred to the next town. Only then were they overcome with remorse and sought to stop and hold back the carriage, begging to be spared from the threatened shame.

[10] He also accompanied his father on the journey to Syria. On his return from there he lived first with his mother, then, when she was sent into exile, with his great-grandmother, Livia Augusta. When she died, despite his youth he delivered a eulogy for her on the rostra. Next he lived in the house of his grandmother, Antonia. Then, in his nineteenth year he was summoned by Tiberius to Capri, where on the very same day he took on the dress of a grown man and made a dedication of his first beard, though without any of the ceremony which had attended his brothers' coming of age. In this place he was beset by every kind of trap, as people sought to trick him or force him into making complaints, but he never gave them satisfaction. He behaved as though he had forgotten the fate of his family, as if nothing had happened to any of them, while the things he himself had suffered he passed over with a capacity for dissimulation which defied belief. So obsequious was he to his grandfather and the latter's courtiers that it has fairly been observed of him that there was never a better slave—nor a worse master.

[11] Yet even at that time he was not able to control his savage and reprehensible nature.* Indeed, he showed the keenest interest in witnessing the sufferings and torments of those condemned to be tortured, while at night he was in the habit of going out, disguised in a wig and long cloak,* to indulge in gluttony and adultery, and he sought out performances of dancing and singing with the greatest appetite. Tiberius suffered this behaviour lightly, hoping these activities might serve to calm his vicious character. That character was so perceptively assessed by the old man, shrewd as he was, that he used every so often to remark that Caligula alive would bring death for himself and all others, that he was rearing a viper for the Roman people—and a Phaethon* for the world.

[12] It was not long after this that Caligula took in marriage Junia Claudilla, daughter of that most noble man Marcus Silanus. At that time it was intended that he should become augur in place of his

brother Drusus but before he had taken on the office of augur he was promoted to the pontificate—supported by strong endorsements of his piety and distinction. And as the royal house was stripped bare of its other hopes and Sejanus was soon afterwards suspected of treachery and disposed of, he came gradually to hope that he himself might succeed.* To increase his chances, after Junia Claudilla had died in childbirth, he lured Ennia Naevia, wife of Macro, who at that time commanded the praetorian guard, to commit adultery, even promising her marriage if he managed to secure the empire—and he guaranteed this with an oath and a written bond. Having through her wormed his way into Macro's favour, he administered poison to Tiberius, as some believe, and, while he still breathed, ordered first that his ring be pulled off, then, since Tiberius seemed to be resisting, that a pillow be put over his mouth, and he himself with his own hands strangled him.* A freedman, who exclaimed at the dreadful-ness of the crime, was immediately sent to be crucified. This seems quite plausible, for some authors report that he himself confessed, if not to the deed itself of parricide, then certainly to planning it, for he often used to boast as a sign of his family loyalty that, in order to avenge the deaths of his mother and his brothers, he had entered the bedroom armed with a dagger while Tiberius slept, then, overcome with pity for the man, had thrown away the weapon and withdrawn. Nor had Tiberius, though aware of what had happened, dared to interrogate him or follow the matter up.

[13] Having thus secured the empire, he was the answer to the prayer of the Roman people, or should I say, all humankind—the ruler most highly favoured by the greater part of provincials and soldiers, many of whom had known him as a child, and by all the people of Rome who remembered his father Germanicus and pitied the sufferings of his family. Thus it was that, as he came from Misenum, though wearing mourning and accompanying the funeral train of Tiberius, among the altars, sacrificial victims, and blazing torches he encountered thronging crowds of people rejoicing greatly who greeted him with auspicious names: 'star', 'chick', 'child', and 'little chap'.

[14] When he entered the city, with the full consent of the senate—and of the crowd that was bursting into the senate chamber—he overrode the wishes of Tiberius, who had in his will named his other grandson, still a child, as co-heir.* And absolute

power over all matters was conceded to him with such public rejoicing that within the next three months, or even less, more than 160,000 victims are said to have been sacrificed. When, a few days later, he crossed over to the islands nearest to the Campanian coast, vows were made to secure his safe return lest the slightest occasion be omitted for displaying care and concern for his well-being. And indeed, when he was in ill health, everyone around the Palatine watched through the night, and there were even some who vowed to fight as gladiators to secure the sick man's recovery, while others posted public notices in which they promised their own lives.* Besides the great affection of the citizens he also enjoyed notable favour from foreigners. For Artabanus, king of the Parthians, who had always shown hatred and contempt for Tiberius, of his own accord sought the friendship of Caligula, attended a meeting with a consular legate, and crossed the Euphrates to offer his respects to the eagles and standards of Rome and to the portraits of the Caesars.

[15] Caligula himself sought to stimulate people's devotion by courting popularity in all sorts of ways. Having praised Tiberius with much weeping before the people and given him a splendid funeral, he at once hurried off to Pandateria and the Pontian islands to collect the ashes of his mother and brothers, his family feeling made all the more conspicuous by a terrible storm. Approaching with reverence, he himself placed the ashes in the urn. No less display attended the journey to Ostia—a standard flying on the stern of the ship—then on up the Tiber to Rome, where he had them carried on two biers into the Mausoleum of Augustus by the most eminent men in the equestrian order, at midday when crowds filled the streets. He also prescribed funeral offerings to be made for them every year on a day of public remembrance, and, more grandly still, circus games in honour of his mother and a carriage in which her image might be transported in the procession. But in memory of his father he gave the month of September the name 'Germanicus'.* After this, by senatorial decree he heaped upon his grandmother Antonia whatever honours had been bestowed on Livia Augusta. His paternal uncle, Claudius, who was at that time only a Roman knight, he made his colleague in the consulship. He adopted his stepbrother, Tiberius Gemellus, on the day he attained his toga of manhood, and gave him the title Prince of Youth.* As for his sisters, he ensured that the following words were added to all oaths: 'Nor shall I hold myself

nor my children dearer than I hold Gaius and his sisters,' while proposals of the consuls* were to include the words: 'That all may be well and fortunate with Gaius Caesar and his sisters.' As a further bid to secure popularity he freed those who had been condemned or exiled and declared an amnesty regarding any criminal accusations outstanding from the previous reign. So that no informer or witness would afterwards remain in fear, he ordered that the records relating to the cases against his mother and his brothers be carried to the Forum and burnt, having first called out loud upon the gods as witnesses that he had not read or touched any of them.* When someone offered him a document concerning his own security he refused to accept it, insisting that he had done nothing which would make anyone hate him, and he claimed he had no ears for informers.

[16] He banished from the city those monsters of lust, the 'tight-bums'*—only with great difficulty was he dissuaded from having them drowned. He made it legal to obtain, to possess, and to read the writings of Titus Labienus, Cremutius Cordus, and Cassius Severus, which had been banned by senatorial decree,* on the grounds that it was much in his interest that their contents be transmitted to future generations. He made available details of the imperial economy, which Augustus had been in the habit of publishing but which Tiberius had kept back. He allowed magistrates freedom in dispensing justice, without having to appeal to him. He inspected the Roman knights strictly and carefully but with moderation, making a public display of withdrawing the horse from those who were guilty of some evil or shame but in the case of those guilty only of a minor misdemeanour, merely omitting their names from the list as it was read out. To lighten the workload of jurors he added a fifth division to the existing four.* He attempted to restore the practice of elections, thereby giving the vote back to the people. Although Tiberius' will had been annulled, he straight away fulfilled its legacies faithfully and without argument, as well as those set out in the will of Julia Augusta,* which Tiberius had set aside. He relieved Italy of the one two-hundredth auction tax. He gave compensation to those who had suffered losses through fire. And in cases where he restored a ruler's authority, he also returned all the money which had in the mean time been collected as customs duty or revenue—Antiochus of Commagene received a hundred million sesterces which had been collected by the treasury. To make clear how he encouraged good

deeds, he gave eight hundred thousand sesterces to a freedwoman because she had kept silent about her patron's crime though suffering terrible tortures when under interrogation. In recognition of these actions, he was voted in addition to his other honours a golden shield which every year on the appointed day the colleges of priests would carry to the Capitol, accompanied by the senate and a chorus of boys and girls of noble birth who would sing an ode in praise of his virtues. It was also decreed that the *Parilia** should be transferred to the day on which he acceded to power, as it marked a new beginning for the city.

[17] He held the consulship four times, the first from the Kalends of July for two months, the second from the Kalends of January for thirty days, the third lasted until the Ides of January and the fourth until the seventh day before the Ides of the same month.* Of all these only the last two were held continuously. He embarked upon the third on his own at Lugdunum.* This was not, as some thought, because of pride or carelessness but because, since he was away, the news could not be conveyed to him that the other consul had died just before the Kalends. He twice gave to the people a gift of three hundred sesterces and twice also hosted a most plentiful banquet for the senatorial and equestrian orders, even including their wives and children. At the second feast he gave out formal attire to the men, and to the women and boys ribbons of red and purple. And, in order to increase public enjoyment in perpetuity, he added an extra day, which he termed 'Iuvenalis', to the Saturnalia.

[18] He gave several gladiatorial games, some held in the amphitheatre of Statius Taurus and some in the Saepta. Among the fighters he included bands of African and Campanian boxers, the very best of both regions. He did not always preside over the games himself but sometimes entrusted the task to magistrates or friends. He provided theatre shows all the time of many kinds and full of variety. Some of them were even staged by night and the whole city was lit up. He also threw gifts of various kinds and distributed a basket of savouries to each man. While people were eating he sent over his own portion to a Roman knight who was sitting across from him and consuming his meal with relish and delight, while to a senator, who behaved similarly, he sent a note announcing that he would make him a praetor out of the regular order. He also gave a great many circus shows which lasted from morning till night, the

interval consisting sometimes of the baiting of panthers, sometimes of military exercises from the Troy game.* In some special games, the arena was scattered with red and green and all the chariots were driven by men of the senatorial order. Some games he gave on the spur of the moment, when, as he was inspecting the Circus equipment from the Geloitian house some people in the nearby houses begged him for them.

[19] Besides this he also thought up a new and previously unheard-of variety of spectacle. For he made a bridge across the middle of the bay of Baiae to the promontory of Puteoli—a space of about three thousand six hundred paces*—by bringing together cargo ships from all around, anchoring them together in two lines and then heaping on top of them earth, to resemble the Appian Way. Across the bridge he travelled back and forth for two days in succession. On the first day his horse was decked out with trappings and he himself was distinguished by his oak wreath, his Spanish shield, his sword, and his golden cloak. On the second day he wore the dress of a charioteer and drove a chariot pulled by a pair of famous horses, carrying with him a boy called Dareus, one of the Parthian hostages, and escorted by the entire praetorian guard and a posse of friends travelling in war chariots. I know that many people believe Caligula thought up the idea of a bridge to outdo Xerxes, who excited much admiration when he threw a bridge over the rather more narrow Hellespont.* Others are of the opinion that he wanted the fame of his great achievement to inspire terror among the Germans and Britons whom at that time he planned to take on. But I remember my grandfather saying, when I was a boy, that the reason for the project had been given away by courtiers who reported that the astrologer Thrasyllus had reassured Tiberius, when he was anxious about who might succeed him and favoured his real grandson, that Gaius was no more likely to rule the empire than he was to ride with horses across the bay of Baiae.

[20] He also gave shows away from home: in Sicily he gave city games at Syracuse and in Gaul he gave mixed games at Lugdunum. Here he also held a competition for eloquence in Greek and Latin and they say that in this competition the losers were obliged to give prizes to the winners and to make speeches praising them, while those who found least favour were ordered to erase what they had written either with a sponge or with their tongues, unless they

preferred the option of being beaten with rods or being thrown into the nearest river.

[21] He completed some public works, such as the Temple of Augustus and Pompey's Theatre, left half-finished by Tiberius.* He began work on an aqueduct near Tibur and an amphitheatre next to the Saepia. Of these works his successor Claudius completed the former* and abandoned the latter. In Syracuse the city walls and the temples to the gods which had collapsed through old age were repaired. He had intended also to rebuild Polycretes' palace on Samos, to complete the temple to Apollo of Didyma at Miletus, to found a city on an Alpine ridge, and above all to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Greece*—he had already sent out a chief centurion to survey the project.

[22] The story so far has been of Caligula the emperor, the rest must be of Caligula the monster.

He took on many titles—the 'Pious', 'Son of the Camp', 'Father of the Forces', and 'Caesar Best and Greatest'.* On one occasion at dinner at his house, when he heard some kings who had come to Rome to pay him their respects arguing among themselves as to which of them came of the noblest line, he declaimed:

Let there be one Lord, one King!*

He came very close to assuming a diadem on the spot and turning what looked like a principate into the appearance of a monarchy. But when he was reminded that his own position had risen above that of princes or even of kings, he began from that time to lay claim to the majesty of a god. He gave orders that statues of gods noted for their religious and artistic importance, including the statue of Zeus from Olympia,* were to be brought from Greece in order that their heads might be removed and replaced with copies of his own. He extended a part of the palace right into the Forum, taking over the temple of Castor and Pollux as his own vestibule. Often he would stand between the divine brothers displaying himself for worship by those visiting the temple. Indeed, some hailed him as Jupiter Latiaris.* He also set up a temple to himself as god with priests and the most exotic sacrificial victims. In the temple there was a golden statue exactly resembling him which was dressed every day in clothes identical to those he himself was wearing. All the richest men used their influence or offered bribes to become priests of his cult. The sacri-

ficial victims included flamingos, peacocks, black grouse, different breeds of guinea-hens, and pheasants, which were offered up, a different kind each day. While by night he would repeatedly invite the full and shining moon to share his bed and his embraces, in the daytime he used to talk privately with Capitoline Jupiter, sometimes whispering to him, then offering his own ear in turn for a reply, at other times speaking quite loudly and even cursing. For his voice was heard threatening:

Raise me up or you I'll . . . *

Finally, however, he was won over by the god, he claimed, and persuaded to share his home. He had a bridge built right over the temple of the Deified Augustus, joining the Palatine to the Capitol. Soon, in order that he might be still closer, he had foundations laid for a new house in the Caprotine temple precinct.

[23] Because of Agrippa's humble origins, he did not like to be thought of or referred to as his grandson. He would become angry if anyone in a speech or poem included Agrippa among the family of the Caesars. Instead, he used to claim that his mother was born of an incestuous relationship between Augustus and his daughter Julia. Not content with this insult to Augustus, he forbade ritual celebrations commemorating his victories at Actium and off the coast of Sicily, on the grounds that they had been terrible and disastrous for the Roman people. He frequently called his great-grandmother Livia Augusta 'Ulysses dressed as a Roman matron'. He even had the gall to accuse her of low birth, asserting in a letter to the senate that her maternal grandfather was a town-councillor of Fundi, when it was clear from public monuments that Aufidius Lurco had held high office in Rome. When his grandmother, Antonia, came seeking a private audience, he would only see her in the presence of the prefect Macro. It was because of this kind of humiliation and annoyance that she died—though some are of the opinion that she had been given poison, too. He offered her no honours after her death and observed her burning funeral pyre from his dining-room. His brother Tiberius* he caught off guard, sending a military tribune on the spur of the moment to put him to death, while his father-in-law Silanus he compelled to commit suicide by slitting his throat with a razor. He alleged that Silanus, when he himself had put to sea under turbulent conditions, had stayed behind in the hope of gaining control of the

city if anything should happen to the emperor. As for Tiberius, he claimed that he smelt of an antidote of the kind people take when they are afraid of poison. Silianus indeed was prone to seasickness and wanted to avoid the discomfort of a voyage, while Tiberius had taken medicine to cure his persistent and increasingly severe cough. His uncle Claudius Caligula preserved as a butt for jokes.*

[24] He habitually indulged in incestuous relations with all his sisters and at a crowded banquet he would make them take turns in lying beneath him, while his wife lay above.* Of his sisters it was Drusilla whose virginity he is believed to have violated while still a boy. Indeed, it is believed that their grandmother Antonia, who was at that time responsible for their joint upbringing, once actually caught them in bed together. Not long afterwards, when Drusilla was married to the ex-consul Lucius Cassius Longinus, Caligula abducted her and openly treated her as if she were his lawful wife. When he was ill he made her heir both to his property and to the empire. When she died, he declared a period of mourning, during which it was a capital offence to laugh, wash, or dine with one's parents, spouse, or children. Unable to bear his grief, he fled from the city one night all of a sudden, sped through Campania and made for Syracuse. As soon as he arrived he set out again on his return journey, unshaven and with hair unkempt. From that time onwards he refused to take any oath, no matter how important the business, even before an assembly of the people or before the army, unless it was by the godhead of Drusilla. His feelings for his other sisters were not marked by the same passion or reverence but he often prostituted them to his catamites. Thus, during the trial of Aemilius Lepidus it was all the easier for him to condemn them as adulteresses involved in the plot against him. He publicized letters in the handwriting of all of them which he had obtained through deception and sexual intrigue, and even made an offering in the Temple of Mars the Avenger of three swords intended for his murder, along with an inscription.

[25] As regards marriage, it is difficult to decide whether he behaved worst in acquiring wives, in getting rid of them, or during his marriages. When Livia Orestilla was marrying Gaius Piso* and he himself was a guest at the wedding he gave orders that the bride be taken to his own residence. After a few days he divorced her, then, a couple of years later, had her relegated on the grounds that, in the

mean time, she had resumed relations with her previous husband. According to another story, Caligula, during the wedding banquet, had sent an order to Piso, who was reclining across from him, saying: 'Get your hands off my wife!' He had then left the party taking the bride with him and the next day issued an announcement that he had found himself a wife following the precedent set by Romulus and Augustus.* Happening to hear that Lollia Paulina's grandmother had been in her day a very beautiful woman, he had the granddaughter at once summoned back from the province where she was accompanying her husband, the ex-consul and army commander, Gaius Memmius. Having separated her from her husband he married her but soon afterwards set her aside—with the orders that she was never again to have sexual relations with anyone. As for Caesonia, though her looks were not striking and she was hardly in her first youth (she had already had three daughters by an earlier husband), she was a woman devoted to luxury and sexual excess and he loved her with all the more passion and constancy. Indeed, he would often show her off to the soldiers decked out with cloak, shield, and helmet and riding by his side, while to his friends he would even display her naked. He did not honour her with the title of wife until the day she gave birth, announcing simultaneously that he was her husband and the father of her baby girl. As for the child, whom he named Julia Drusilla, he carried her around to the temples of all the goddesses, placing her in the lap of the statue of Minerva, entrusting her with the care for the child's growth and education. Her temper seemed to him the surest indication that she was his own daughter, for even then she was so savage that she would try to hurt the little children who played with her by scratching at their eyes and faces.

[26] It would be trivial and superfluous to add to this the manner in which he treated his relatives and friends, Ptolemy, son of King Juba, his cousin (for Ptolemy was the grandson of Mark Antony through his daughter Selené)* and especially Macro and Ennia who had helped him to secure the empire. All these were rewarded for their kinship and for their loyal services with a bloody death. And he was no more respectful or merciful towards the senate. Some who had held the highest offices he allowed to run in their togas alongside his military chariot for several miles, and, when he was eating, to wait upon him, sometimes at the head of the dining-couch, sometimes at his feet, dressed in short linen tunics.* Some, when he had

secretly had them killed, he would repeatedly summon as if they were still living. Then a few days later he would announce falsely that they had taken their own lives. When the consuls forgot to make an edict concerning his birthday, he stripped them of their office so that for three days the state was without its supreme magistrates. A quaestor who was alleged to have been involved in a conspiracy he had flogged.* The clothes which had been stripped off him were placed under the soldiers' feet to give them a firmer grip as they beat him.

He treated the other orders with similar arrogance and cruelty. When he was disturbed in the middle of the night by people trying to secure the free seats in the Circus he had them all driven away with cudgels. In the confusion more than twenty Roman knights and the same number of ladies, along with a vast number of others, were trampled to death. At the theatrical shows, trying to stir up fights between the common people and the Roman knights, he distributed the free tickets early so that the places for the knights were taken by the commonest people. At a gladiatorial show, he had the awnings drawn back when the sun was at its fiercest and would allow no one to leave. He would have the usual equipment taken away and then set the most useless and ancient gladiators against many wild animals and have mock fights between respectable family men who were known to be of good reputation but conspicuous for some physical disability. And sometimes he would condemn the people to hunger by closing the granaries.

[27] Through these acts he made the clearest demonstration of his cruel character. When the cattle to feed the wild beasts he had provided for a show were rather expensive, he instead selected criminals for them to devour; he looked over the row of prisoners, without any regard for their individual records, and, from his position in the middle of the colonnade, announced that those 'between the bald-heads' were to be led away. The man who had promised he would fight as a gladiator if the emperor were restored to health, he obliged to fulfil his vow,* looking on as he struggled in combat and not letting him off till he had won his fight and pleaded repeatedly for delivery. Another, who had offered his own life in the same cause but had hesitated to fulfil his pledge, he handed over to his slaves who were to drive the man, wearing sacred wreaths, through the streets, demanding fulfilment, then finally hurl him from a rampart. Many

men of honourable rank he first had disfigured with the marks of branding irons and then condemned to the mines, to road-building, or to the beasts or else he would force them into cages on all fours like animals, or have them sawn in half.* Nor was this always for some serious offence but sometimes merely because they had not liked one of his shows or because they had never sworn by his Genius. He obliged parents to witness the execution of their own children and when one man excused himself on the grounds of ill health he had a litter sent to collect him. Another man he forced from the spectacle of torment direct to a banquet at which, all charm, he tried to make him laugh and joke. The manager of the games and beast fights he had beaten with chains for days on end, while he himself looked on, and only had him killed when the smell of the man's rotting brains made him ill. He had a composer of Atellan drama burnt to death in a fire in the middle of the arena because one of his lines of verse contained a doubtful joke.* When a Roman knight who had been thrown to the wild beasts shouted out that he was innocent, he had him taken out, then, his tongue cut out, thrown back into the arena.

[28] He once asked a man, back after a long period in exile, how he had spent his time there. The man answered, in an attempt to flatter: 'I kept praying to the gods that Tiberius would die, as indeed happened, and that you would come to power.' Thinking that those now in exile were similarly praying for his own death, he sent people around the islands to kill them all. When he had conceived a desire to have one of the senators torn apart, he arranged for some men to accuse him of being a public enemy as soon as he entered the senate, and to stab him with their writing implements before handing him over to the other senators to be torn to pieces. Nor was he satisfied until the man's body parts, limbs, and entrails were dragged through the streets and heaped up together in front of him.

[29] The most appalling deeds he made still worse by what he said. He used to say he loved to praise and admire no aspect of his own nature more than, to use his own words, his *adiutrepisia*, that is to say his shamelessness.* When his grandmother, Antonia, tried to give him some advice, he not only disobeyed her but said: 'Remember, I can do anything I please and to anybody.' When he was about to kill his brother,* whom he suspected of taking remedies through fear of being poisoned, he said: 'Do you think you can take a remedy

against Caesar?' When he exiled his sisters, he warned them that he possessed swords as well as islands. A man of praetorian rank, who had withdrawn to the resort of Anticyra on account of his ill health and had written frequently asking for an extension to his leave, he had killed, with the comment that bloodletting was the cure for one who had got no benefit from hellebore* in all this time. When he signed the list every tenth day of those from among the prisoners who were to be put to death, he used to say he was clearing his accounts. One time when a number of Greeks and Gauls had been condemned, he boasted that he had beaten Gallograecia.*

[30] When he had people put to death it was almost invariably by means of numerous minor wounds and always with the same familiar order: 'Strike him so he feels his death!' When a man had been executed in error, his name mistaken for that of the intended victim, Caligula commented that the dead man, too, had deserved the punishment.* He often declaimed that line from tragedy:

Let them hate, provided that they fear!*

He would frequently attack all the senators equally, as if they were all guilty of supporting Sejanus, and of denouncing his mother and brothers, bringing out the records, which he had pretended to have destroyed,* and defending Tiberius' cruelty as unavoidable when there were so many plausible accusers. He ceaselessly reviled the equestrian order as being in thrall to the stage or the arena.* Roused to anger by the crowd cheering on those who competed against his favourites, he shouted out: 'If only the Roman people had a single neck!' And when the crowd called for the brigand Tetrinius,* he termed them Tetriniuses, too. Once five net-fighters in tunics, fighting as a group, surrendered to the same number of *secutores* without putting up any resistance. When the order was given that they should be put to death, one of them picked up his trident and killed all the victors. This Caligula lamented in a proclamation as the cruellest slaughter, and denounced those who had felt able to witness the spectacle.

[31] He used to complain openly about the times he lived in as being unmarked by public disaster. Augustus' reign had the Varian tragedy,* that of Tiberius was memorable for the collapse of a theatre at Fidenae,* while his own, when nothing seemed to go wrong, was in

danger of being forgotten. And every now and again he would express his desire for a terrible military defeat, a famine, a plague, a great fire, or an earthquake.

[32] Even when he was relaxing and taken up with entertainment and feasting, his words and actions were marked by the same cruelty. Often, while he was having his lunch or enjoying himself, the most serious judicial investigations, in which torture was used, were conducted in his presence or else a soldier adept at decapitation would cut the heads of a number of prisoners. When his bridge at Puteoli (the design of which I recounted above*) was being dedicated, he invited a large number of people who were on the shore to come out to him, then at once had them all pushed into the sea. Some managed to get hold of the rudders but he had them pushed back into the sea with poles and oars. In Rome, at a public banquet, finding a slave had stripped off some silver from the couches, he at once handed him over to an executioner to have his hands cut off and hung in front of him around his neck, and he was led around among the banqueters, preceded by a placard indicating the nature of his offence. Once, when he and a *mumillo* from the gladiatorial school had been having a fight with wooden swords and the latter deliberately fell to the ground, he ran the man through with a real dagger and rushed about wearing a palm, as victors do. Another time, when a sacrificial victim was brought to the altar, he, dressed in the robes of a *popa*, raised his mallet high, then brought it down killing the *cultarius*.* At a rather elegant dinner he suddenly roared with laughter and when the consuls, who were lying nearby, politely asked him why he was laughing, replied: 'Why else than because just a nod on my part would be enough to have either of you slaughtered at once?'

[33] Among his other jokes, he once asked the actor Apelles, when he was next to a statue of Jupiter, which of them was the greater and when Apelles hesitated to answer, he had him fayed with scourges, praising the quality of his voice, as he cried out for mercy, as delightful even when groaning. Whenever he kissed the neck of a wife or a mistress, he would add: 'This lovely neck would be severed the minute I gave the order.' Indeed, from time to time he would exclaim that he might even have to use torture on his own Caesonia to find out from her why he loved her so very much.

[34] The envy and malice with which he regarded persons of almost every period were no less than his arrogance and cruelty.

Some statues of famous men which Augustus had moved from the Capitoline precinct to the Campus Martius because of lack of space, he had overturned and broken up in such a manner that it was impossible to reassemble them with all their inscriptions. And he issued orders banning the future erection of any statue or image to a living man unless authorized or initiated by himself. He even thought of banning the poetry of Homer, remarking that there was no reason he should not be allowed to do as Plato had done,* in banning the poet from his ideal city. Indeed he came close to removing the writings and portraits of Virgil and Livy* from all the libraries, complaining that one had no talent and very little learning, while the other's history was long-winded and sloppy. As regards lawyers, he acted as if he was going to abolish the profession, often threatening that he would make sure, by Hercules, that none of them could give an opinion that went against his own.

[35] From all the greatest nobles he confiscated their family insignia, taking the collar from Torquatus, the lock of hair from Cincinnatus, and from Gnaeus Pompey, the *cognomen* of his ancient line, 'The Great'. Ptolemy, whom I mentioned earlier,* he summoned from his kingdom and welcomed with honour, then executed, for no other reason than because, when he himself was giving some gladiatorial games, he noticed that as Ptolemy entered the splendour of his purple cloak attracted the attention of the crowd. Whenever he came across men with a good head of hair, he had the backs of their heads shaved to spoil their appearance.* There was a man called Aesius Proculus, son of a chief centurion, who was known as the Giant Lower because of his impressive size and appearance. This man was at once dragged from the audience and taken into the arena, where Caligula matched him first with a Thracian, next with a heavy-armed gladiator, then, when the man had twice beaten his opponents, he ordered that he be bound in chains without delay and led about the streets, dressed in rags, to be shown to the women, before being put to death. To sum up, there was no one, however humble his rank, however wretched his lot, whose advantages Caligula did not resent. Since the King of Nemi had held his priesthood for many years, he procured a stronger man to supplant him.* When, one day during the games, an *essedarius* called Porius, who had freed his slave after a victory, was warmly applauded, Caligula rushed from the games in such haste that he trod on the hem of his

toga and fell headlong down the steps in a state of fury shouting that the people who ruled the world gave more honour to a gladiator for the smallest act than to their deified emperors or to himself, their present one.

[36] He had regard neither for his own chastity nor for that of others. He is said to have had sexual relations with Marcus Lepidus, the actor Mnester, and a number of hostages—giving and receiving pleasure in turn. Valerius Catullus, a man of consular family, proclaimed publicly that he had buggered the emperor and was quite exhausted by his sexual demands. In addition to his incestuous relations with his sisters and his notorious affair with the prostitute Pyralis, there was hardly any woman of distinguished family he did not make advances to. Most of them he invited to dinner, along with their husbands, and as they passed by the foot of his couch, he would appraise them carefully—as if he were buying slaves, sometimes raising their faces with his hand, if they had cast their eyes modestly downwards. Then, as often as he felt like it, he would leave the dining-room, having called to him whichever woman he found most attractive. Not long afterwards he would return,* making no attempt to conceal the signs of his recent sexual activity, and would offer criticism or praise of his partner, listing in detail the good or bad features of her body and her sexual performance. To some women he himself sent a divorce notice, in the name of their absent husbands, and gave orders that these notices were to be entered in the public records.

[37] His ingenuity in extravagant expenditure outdid that of all other prodigals ever; he invented a new kind of bath and the most outlandish varieties of food and drink—he used to bathe in hot and cold perfumed oils and would drink the most precious pearls dissolved in vinegar* and offer his guests loaves of bread and savouries made out of gold. He used to remark that a man should either be frugal or be Caesar. Indeed for several days in a row he scattered among the people coins of larger denominations from the roof of the Basilica Julia. He had constructed some Liburnian galleys, their prows studded with jewels, their sails of many colours, whose ample interiors housed baths, porticoes, and dining-rooms as well as a large variety of vines and fruit-trees, so that lounging on these vessels he might travel by day along the shores of Campania entertained by choirs and orchestras. In the construction of his palaces and villas,

with no regard for expense, he desired nothing more ardently than to achieve whatever was impossible. Great structures were built up in hostile and deep waters, mountains of the hardest flint were tunnelled through, while plains were raised to the level of mountains and excavations levelled mountain peaks flat.* The speed with which these measures were effected was incredible, for delay was punished by death. Thus, to save recounting all his projects in detail, he spent vast sums, including the two thousand seven hundred million sesterces built up by Tiberius Caesar, in the space of less than one year.

[38] In need of money, his funds exhausted, he turned his mind to robbery by means of a variety of cunningly devised false accusations, auctions, and taxes. He claimed that Roman citizenship had been illegally acquired by persons whose ancestors had been granted it for themselves 'and their descendants', except in the case of sons, for the term used, *posterij* ['descendants'], should be understood as covering no one beyond that degree of relationship. When certificates of citizenship issued under the Deified Julius and the Deified Augustus were presented to him he dismissed them as old and out of date. He also accused people of having made false census returns, if they happened to have subsequently acquired any addition to their estates.* Any wills of chief centurions made since the beginning of the reign of Tiberius which failed to specify either Tiberius or himself as heirs he annulled on the grounds of ingratitude. And he declared null and void also the wills of others, if someone said they had intended to make Caesar their heir when they died. Having stirred up this fear, when he was then named as heir alongside relatives by men he did not know and alongside children by their parents, he would claim that men were making a fool of him when they carried on living after having named him heir and to many he sent poisoned sweets.* He himself presided at the trials of such cases, beforehand stipulating the sum he planned to raise during the sitting and only drew business to a close once that sum was raised. Unable to suffer the slightest delay, he once passed a single sentence on forty men who had been arraigned on different charges and boasted to Caesonia of how much he had achieved while she had been having her afternoon nap. Having arranged an auction, he put up and sold all that was left over from the games, himself soliciting bids and exaggerating them to such an extent that some people,

bankrupted by the huge sums they had been forced to pay for goods, opened their veins. In one notorious incident, when Aponius Saturninus had nodded off on one of the seats and Caligula urged the auctioneer not to overlook the man of praetorian rank who kept nodding his head, the bidding did not come to an end until the man had unknowingly acquired thirteen gladiators for nine million sesterces.

[39] And while he was in Gaul he sold for vast sums the jewellery, household goods, slaves, and even the freedmen,* belonging to his condemned sisters. Then, spurred on by the profits he was making, he gave orders that all the furniture of the old palace was to be brought from Rome. Hire vehicles and draught animals from the bakeries were requisitioned for their transport with the effect that there were bread shortages in Rome and many people who were involved in court cases lost them, because they were unable to get to court and thus failed the terms of their bail. In his attempts to offload this furniture he resorted to every kind of deception and flattery, sometimes complaining about the avarice of particular individuals who were not ashamed of being richer than himself, sometimes pretending to feel regret that the property of the imperial family was falling into the hands of ordinary people. When he discovered that a wealthy man of the provinces had paid two hundred thousand sesterces to his secretaries in order, through bribery, to secure an invitation to a dinner party, he was not in the least annoyed that the honour of dining in his company should be valued at such a high price. The next day when the man was attending his auction, he sent a messenger to hand over to him some insignificant object for the price of two hundred thousand sesterces and to tell him that he was to dine with Caesar by personal invitation.

[40] His new and unheard-of taxes were exacted first through the tax-collectors, then, because they were making so much money, through centurions and tribunes of the praetorian guard. There was no kind of object or person which was not subject to some kind of tax. A fixed tax was imposed on all ready-cooked food sold throughout the city. With regard to all lawsuits and court cases, wherever they took place, a levy of one-fortieth of the sum at issue was charged, and a punishment imposed if anyone was found compromising with their opponents or giving up their suit. Porters were taxed an eighth of their daily earnings. Those who profited from

prostitution were taxed whatever they charged for one act of intercourse. To the law's preamble was added the stipulation that anyone who had ever been a prostitute or a pimp was liable for this tax and that even their marriages were not exempt.

[41] When these laws had been announced but not issued in written form and many offences had been committed because of people's ignorance of the exact provisions, in response to popular protest the legislation was at last posted. However, the lettering was so small and the position so awkward that no one was able to read any of it. So as not to leave any method of plundering untried, Caligula set up a brothel on the Palatine, designating a number of rooms and having them furnished in a manner appropriate to the dignity of the location, and installed in them respectable married women and free-born boys. He then sent around the forums and basilicas heralds who invited young men and old to take their pleasure. Those who came were lent money on interest and officials were at hand who openly took down their names as contributors to Caesar's revenue. He was not ashamed to make money even from games of dice where he made a profit through lying and even perjury. And, one time, having given up his turn in the game to the man sitting next to him, he went out into the front hall of his house where, seeing two wealthy Roman knights ride by, he gave orders that they should be seized and their wealth confiscated without delay. He went back triumphantly boasting that he had never had a luckier play.

[42] When his daughter was born, however, he lamented his poverty still more, complaining that he now had to bear a father's burdens as well as those of an emperor, and received contributions to the girl's upbringing and dowry. He announced that he would be accepting New Year's presents at the start of the year and stood in the temple vestibule on New Year's Day in order to take the donations which a crowd of all sorts of people heaped upon him with overflowing hands and togas.* Finally, seized with a passion for handling money, he would often walk with bare feet on the huge heaps of gold pieces he had piled up in the most public places and sometimes he would even roll about in them with his whole body.

[43] He only once got involved in war or military affairs—and even then without having planned to do so. He was on a journey to Mevania to see the grove and river of Clitumnus* when he was advised that he ought to supplement the troop of Batavians who

accompanied him, and he was seized by the urge to undertake a German campaign. He allowed no delay but summoned legions and auxiliary forces from all over the place (the levy was everywhere enforced with great severity) and ordered supplies of all kinds, in quantities greater than ever before. Sometimes he embarked upon the journey and made for his destination with such haste and speed that the praetorian cohorts, against their usual custom, were obliged to load their standards onto pack animals and thus follow him. So lazy and luxurious was his style of travelling, at other times, that he was borne in a litter by eight bearers and the inhabitants of towns along the way were ordered to sweep the roads and sprinkle them with water in order to damp down the dust.

[44] On arriving at the camp, in order to make a show of his strictness and severity as a leader, he dismissed with dishonour the legates who had been too late in gathering together auxiliary troops from different regions. During his review of the troops, he demoted from their posts as chief centurion, on the grounds that they were old and infirm, quite a few men who were now of advanced years, some of them only a few days off retirement. Then, rebuking the rest for their greed, he cut the reward for completion of military service to six thousand sesterces.* All that he achieved was to accept the surrender of Adminius, son of the British king Cynobellinus, who, after he had been thrown out by his father, came as an exile with a tiny band of followers. Acting as though this signified the surrender of the entire island, Caligula sent a grandiose message to Rome, commanding the couriers to ride in their carriage right into the Forum* to the senate house and not to deliver it except to the consuls, in front of a crowded meeting of the senate in the temple of Mars the Avenger.*

[45] Later, not having anyone to fight with, he gave orders for some of his German bodyguards to be taken across the Rhine and hidden, then that after lunch news should be brought in a great commotion that the enemy had appeared. These orders fulfilled, he rushed out into the nearby woods, accompanied by his friends and some of the praetorian cavalry, where they cut down trees and decked them out like war trophies before returning by torchlight. Those who had not come with him he berated as cowards, while those who had accompanied him and participated he rewarded with crowns to mark this novel and unprecedented kind of victory. These,

decorated with images of the sun, moon, and stars, he termed 'the scout's crown'. Another time, some hostages were taken from an elementary school and sent secretly ahead. Then, suddenly abandoning a dinner party, he rushed after them with a body of cavalry as if they were escaped prisoners, seized them, and brought them back in chains. This charade, too, exemplified his extraordinary excesses. Having returned to the dinner, when messengers announced that the troops were drawn up, he urged that they should come and join the party just as they were, though they were dressed in their cuirasses. He also advised them, in Virgil's words, to 'endure and save themselves for better times'. * While all this was going on, he issued a ferocious edict cursing the senate and people in their absence, on the grounds that while Caesar was at war and exposed to such great dangers, they were enjoying regular parties, the circus, the theatre, and pleasant resorts.

[46] Finally, as if he was about to embark upon a war, he drew up his battle lines and set out his catapults and other artillery on the ocean shore. When no one had the least idea what he intended, he suddenly gave the order that they were to gather sea shells, filling their helmets and the folds of their tunics. These were what he termed spoils owed by the Ocean to the Capitol and Palatine. And, as a monument to his victory, he had a very high tower constructed, which would, like the Pharos,* send out beams of light to guide the course of ships by night. As if he had exceeded all previous models of generosity in announcing a donative for the troops of a hundred denarii per man, he told them, 'Depart in happiness, depart in wealth.'

[47] From this he turned to consideration of his triumph. Besides the captives and barbarian refugees, he selected all the tallest men of Gaul, men 'fit for a triumph' as he himself would say, as well as quite a few of the princes, who were to take part in the procession, and forced them not only to dye their hair red and grow it long, but also to learn some words of German and take on barbarian names. He even gave orders that the triremes, in which he had set forth on the Ocean, should be transported to Rome—though most of the journey was overland. He issued written instructions to the procurators to make preparations for a triumph, with the lowest possible outlay, but on a scale grander than ever before—for they had at their disposal the property of all.

[48] Before he left the province, he conceived the most appalling plan—to slaughter those legions which had tried to mutiny after the death of Augustus, on the grounds that they had trapped his father Germanicus, who was their leader, and himself, then a small child. * Only with great difficulty was he dissuaded from this reckless proposition and he could in no way be prevented from carrying through his wish to decimate them. * The legions were summoned, without their weapons, even their swords left behind, to attend an assembly where they were surrounded by armed cavalry. However, when he saw that quite a few of the legionaries, suspecting that something was going on, were slipping away to arm themselves in case violence broke out, he fled from the assembly and at once made for the city, where all his ferocity was displaced onto the senate whom he publicly threatened, in order to divert attention from rumours concerning the extent of his own shameful behaviour. He asserted among his other complaints, that he had been deprived of his merited triumph—though he himself, not long before, had given orders that no honours were to be offered him, on pain of death.

[49] Thus when on his journey home he was approached by legates representing that most distinguished order who begged him to hasten his return, he shouted at the top of his voice, 'I shall come, I shall come and this will be my companion', all the while banging the hilt of the sword he was wearing. He pronounced that he would return—but only to those who wanted him—the equestrian order and the people, for to the senate he would never more be either fellow citizen or prince. He even forbade any senators to come to meet him. Then, having either abandoned or postponed his triumph, he entered the city on his birthday with an ovation. Within four months he was dead, having dared to commit terrible crimes and planning worse ones. For he had proposed to move, first to Antium, later to Alexandria, * having first put to death all the best men of the senatorial and equestrian orders. There can be no doubt about this for amongst his secret papers were found two little books with different titles, one 'The Sword', the other 'The Dagger'. Both contained the names and details of those whom he intended to have killed. A chest full of different poisons was also found, which, when they were soon afterwards on Claudius' orders thrown into the sea, are said to have so polluted its waters that many fish died, their corpses washed up by the tide on neighbouring beaches.

[50] He was tall of stature, very pallid of complexion. His body was ill formed, his neck and legs very thin. His eyes and temples were sunken, while his brow was broad and intimidating. His hair was sparse, his crown being completely bald, while the rest of his body was hairy. Because of this he pronounced it a crime meriting death if, when he was passing, anyone should look down on him from above, or if, for whatever reason, the word 'goat' was mentioned. Though nature had made his face hideous and repulsive, he deliberately tried to make it more so by practising all kinds of terrifying and dreadful expressions in the mirror. His health, both of body and of mind, was unstable. When he was a boy he suffered from epilepsy. When he was a little older he was capable of some endurance but sometimes he would suddenly become weak and be unable to walk, stand, think straight, or hold himself up. He himself was aware of his state of mental health and sometimes thought of taking a rest cure to clear his brain. It is thought he was drugged by his wife Caesonia when she administered a love potion which had instead made him mad. He suffered terribly from insomnia for he could never sleep for more than three hours in a night and even this was not calm and peaceful but troubled by strange visions. One time, for instance, he thought he saw an image of the sea speaking with him. Thus, for most of the night, bored of lying awake in his bed, he would sometimes lounge on his couch and sometimes wander through long porticoes, calling out, every now and again, for daylight and longing for it to come.

[51] That such opposed vices, both the greatest arrogance and the greatest timidity, were to be found in the same person, I have no doubt in attributing to his mental infirmity. For this man, who had so little respect for the gods, would, at the slightest hint of thunder or lightning, close his eyes and cover his head, while a bigger storm would make him spring out of his bed and hide under it.* On a tour of Sicily, he greatly mocked the local wonders, then, one night, suddenly fled from Messana, terrified by the smoke and rumbling coming from the peak of Mount Etna. Despite the threats he would utter against barbarians, when he was travelling by chariot, on the farther side of the Rhine, with a tightly grouped body of men through a narrow passage and someone remarked what a panic there would be if the enemy made an appearance somewhere, he immediately mounted a horse and hurried back towards the bridges. And when he

found them crowded with serving men and baggage, he would not tolerate delay but had himself passed from hand to hand over people's heads. Soon afterwards, hearing of an uprising in Germany, he made plans to flee, making ready the fleet as his means of escape from the city. His only comfort was the thought that, even if the enemy took control of the Alps, as the Cimbri had done, or even the city of Rome, as the Senones* had once done, at least he would be left with the overseas provinces. It was this, I think, which later gave his assassins the idea of pretending to the rioting soldiers that he had taken his own life, terrified by the report of a military defeat.

[52] In his clothes, his footwear, and other aspects of his personal adornment his practice never conformed to the traditional manner of Roman citizens, sometimes departing from what was appropriate to his sex, sometimes even from what was right for a mortal. Often he would dress himself in a patterned cloak set with precious stones, a long-sleeved tunic, and bracelets, before making a formal appearance in public. Sometimes he dressed in silk or in women's clothes. For shoes he sometimes wore actor's slippers or platforms,* sometimes soldier's boots or feminine pumps. He was often to be seen with a gilded beard, holding a thunderbolt, a trident, or a *caduceum*—the emblems of the gods—and sometimes even in the regalia of the goddess Venus.* He frequently sported the robes of a triumphant general, even before he went on campaign, and sometimes the breastplate of Alexander the Great, which he had taken from his sarcophagus.*

[53] As regards the liberal arts, he had little time for learning but much for oratory, and was as fluent and quick as could be, especially if he was delivering an accusation against somebody. When he was angry, words and concepts came easily to him and his voice and enunciation were strong. Such was his enthusiasm that he could not keep still and even those standing far away could hear him. When he was about to make a speech, he would threaten that he was going to draw the sword forged by his late-night labours. He had so much contempt for more subtle and refined kinds of writing that he described Seneca—then very much in fashion—as the author of 'mere school essays' and 'sand without lime'.* He was also in the habit of writing responses to the successful pleas of orators and he would compose speeches for the prosecution and for the defence of high-status defendants on trial in the senate. Depending on how his own

compositions turned out, he made his judgements in condemnation or acquittal of each defendant, while the equestrian order, too, was summoned by edict to come and listen to him.

[54] When it came to other sorts of arts, he devoted himself with great enthusiasm to the widest variety. Taking on the roles of Thracian gladiator or charioteer, sometimes even those of singer or dancer, he would engage in battle with real weapons, and drove a chariot in circuses built in various locations. He was so transported by the pleasure of singing and dancing that he could not sit through public spectacles without singing along with the tragic actor as he delivered his lines, and openly imitating the actor's poses, as if praising or criticizing the performance. And indeed, the very reason for which he ordered an all-night festival on the day he died was so that the licence of the occasion might provide an auspicious opportunity for his stage debut.* Sometimes he even used to dance at night. Once, he summoned three men of consular rank to the Palatine at the second watch, then, when they arrived in great fear and dreading the worst, he made them sit on a platform. All at once, and with a great noise of flutes and castanets, he leapt out, dressed in a cloak and ankle-length tunic, and performed a dance, before going away again. However, despite being so multi-talented he never learned to swim.

[55] In relation to all those who were his favourites, his behaviour constituted madness. He used to kiss the pantomime actor Mnester even in the middle of the games. And if, when Mnester was performing, anyone made the slightest noise, he had him dragged from his seat and flogged him himself. When a Roman knight caused a disturbance, he sent a centurion to him with the message that he should go without delay to Ostia and thence travel on to King Ptolemy in Mauretania, carrying a message: 'Do nothing good or bad to the man I have sent you.' He put some Thracian gladiators in charge of his German bodyguards, while he reduced the armour of the *murmillo*s.* When a certain Columbus won a victory but was slightly wounded, he gave orders that the wound be rubbed with a kind of poison, which he thereafter termed Columbinum. This was certainly how he recorded it amongst his other poisons. He was so wildly keen on the Green Faction* in the circus, that he used often to take his dinner in the stable and stay overnight there. At one of his parties, he gave the driver Eurychus two million sesterces in going-

home presents. As for his horse Incitatus, to prevent whose disturbance he used to send his soldiers, the day before the circus games, to demand silence in the surrounding area, apart from the marble stable, the ebony manger, the purple blankets and the gem-studded collar, he also gave him a house and a household of slaves and furniture, so that guests he invited in his name might be entertained in a more refined manner. It is said, too, that he meant to make him consul.*

[56] While he was running riot and laying waste in this way, a number of people had the idea of making an attempt on his life. However, when one or two conspiracies had been detected and others were hesitating, having so far lacked a favourable opportunity, two men devised a plan and carried it through—not without the complicity of the most powerful freedmen and the praetorian prefects. For the latter had themselves been accused, though falsely, of conspiring in some plot and felt themselves suspected and hated by the emperor. He had aroused great hatred against them by once taking them aside and asserting, his sword drawn, that if they thought he merited death he would take his life himself, and from that time he was constantly making accusations about one to the other and setting them all against each other. When they had decided to make their attempt on him during the Palatine games, at midday, as he made for the exit, Cassius Chaerea, tribune of a praetorian cohort, requested the leading part. For, though he was an older man, the emperor used to taunt him by calling him soft and effeminate* in the most abusive manner, sometimes, when he asked for the watchword, giving him 'Priapus' or 'Venus', and sometimes, when, for some reason, he gave the emperor thanks, offering his hand to be kissed, then moving it in an obscene gesture.

[57] Many prodigies foretold his violent end. The statue of Jupiter at Olympia, which he had decided to have taken apart and brought to Rome, suddenly gave out a such a laugh that the scaffolding collapsed and the removal men ran away; and at once a man called Cassius approached claiming that he had been ordered in a dream to sacrifice a bull to Jupiter. The Capitol in Capua was struck by lightning on the Ides of March; and on the same day the same thing happened at Rome to the Palatine doorman's booth. There were some who speculated that the latter omen portended danger to the Palatine's master from his guards, while the former signified the

violent death of a distinguished man in repetition of that which had taken place years ago on the same day.* The astrologer Sulla, when Caligula made inquiries about his star signs, assured him that certain death was very close. The lots of Fortune at Antium warned him to beware Cassius. He thus gave orders that Cassius Longinus,* who was then proconsul of Asia, should be put to death, forgetting that Chaerea, too, was called Cassius. The day before he met his death, he dreamt that he was standing in the heavens next to Jupiter's throne and that Jupiter pushed him with the big toe of his right foot so that he fell headlong to earth. Some other events are also regarded as prodigies which took place a little earlier on the day itself. When he was making a sacrifice he was sprinkled with the blood of a flamingo. And Mnester the pantomime performed the same tragedy which the tragedian Neoptolemus had produced at the games during which King Philip of Macedon was killed; and in the farce 'Laureolus'—in which the lead actor in trying to run away falls and vomits blood—several of the understudies sought most keenly to show off their talents, so that the stage was overflowing with blood.* Besides this, preparations were being made for a night-time show in which Egyptians and Ethiopians acted stories from the Underworld.

[58] On the ninth day before the Kalends of February,* at around the seventh hour, having delayed getting up for lunch since his stomach was still disturbed by the previous day's overeating, he finally went out, in response to his friends' persuasion. Since there were young aristocrats from Asia, who had been summoned to perform on stage, getting themselves ready in the covered passage through which his route lay, he paused to look them over and give them encouragement. If the leader of the troop had not complained of a cold, he would have gone back and had the show put on at once. There are two versions of the rest of the story. Some say that while he was speaking to the boys Chaerea from behind gave his neck a deep cut with his sword, shouting 'Take this!';* then that the tribune Cornelius Sabinus, the other conspirator, ran his chest through from in front. Others report that Sabinus, having got some centurions who were in on the plot to get rid of the crowd, asked Caligula for the password following usual military practice and, when Caligula replied 'Jupiter',* Chaerea shouted out 'Let it be so!' As Caligula looked behind him, Chaerea split his jaw with a blow. As he lay with his limbs twisted up, repeatedly calling out that he was alive, others

finished him off with thirty wounds. All acted on the signal 'At it again!' Some even applied the sword to his private parts. As the commotion began, his bearers came running to his aid with their litter-poles and the German bodyguards not far behind. They slaughtered several of the conspirators, together with some senators who had not been involved.

[59] He lived twenty-nine years and ruled for three years, ten months and eight days. His corpse was secretly transported to the Larnian gardens* and, partially burnt on a makeshift pyre, was buried under turf in a shallow grave. Afterwards, his sisters, back from exile, exhumed it and had it cremated and entombed. It is generally known that prior to this, the caretakers of the gardens were disturbed by ghosts and in the house, too, where he had slept, no night passed without some alarming apparition, until the house itself burnt down in a fire. His wife Caesonia died with him, run through by a centurion's sword, as did his daughter, who was dashed against a wall.

[60] Anyone might gauge the state of those times from the following circumstances, too. For when news broke of his assassination no one would believe it at first, and people suspected that the story had been devised and spread by Caligula himself in order to discover by this means how people felt about him. Not even the conspirators wanted anyone to succeed to supreme power, while the senate so heartily agreed on re-establishing liberty that the consuls summoned the first meeting not in the Senate house, which was called 'Julian',* but on the Capitoline, while some, when expressing their opinions, even proposed to wipe out all memory of the Caesars and pull down their temples. It was however particularly observed and noted that all the Caesars with the forename Gaius died by the sword, starting with the one who was murdered in the time of Cinna.*

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SUETONIUS

Lives of the Caesars

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Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
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