

## HOSTILITY AND GOODWILL IN SUETONIUS AND THE HISTORIA AUGUSTA\*

### INTRODUCTION

In beginning his narrative of Nero's last days, Suetonius in c. 41 records that Vindex issued frequent insulting edicts against Nero, reproached him for being a poor lyre-player and called him Ahenobarbus rather than Nero. Then to Rome came news of the revolt of Galba and the Spanish provinces. Nero composed verses that made fun of the leaders of the revolt (42.2) and supposedly planned to kill army commanders and provincial governors, murder exiles everywhere and all Gauls in Rome, and poison the senate *en masse* (43.1). Hostility against Nero grew because he was perceived to be exacerbating high grain prices. His statues were used to insult him, and derogatory graffiti were posted (45.2). An anti-Vindex speech of Nero's was delivered in the senate (46.3) and then came news of further revolts (47.1). An officer of the praetorian guard made an insulting response to Nero's attempt to persuade them to flee with him (47.2) and the senate sentenced him to be flogged to death (49.2). Insult, revolt, planned massacre, invective and capital condemnation, these are some of the many ways in which hostility appears in the pages of Suetonius.

In the Augustan History's life of Antoninus Pius we have Pius showing dutiful affection to all members of his family, and many relatives enriching him with legacies (1.9). He lent a helping hand to his frail father-in-law in the senate house (2.4), spared many of those who had been condemned by Hadrian and ensured that due honours were paid to him after his death, having prevented him from suicide (2.7). Pius used his fortune to assist many people (2.8) and always chose the most merciful course when dispensing justice (3.8). He gave a *congiarium* to the urban plebs (4.10) and returned all of the crown gold sent to him from Italy (4.10). But although the kindness and favour shown by Pius towards others and by others to Pius is a feature of the life, references to

\* Exculpatory thanks are due to Professor A.R. Birley for assistance with an earlier draft of this paper. I am particularly indebted to him for letting me have access to his article, *Marius Maximus the Consular Biographer*, due to appear in *ANWR* II 34.3.

hostility are present and unavoidable. The life refers twice to his predecessor condemning men to death (2.6, 6.3), Pius' wife Faustina reproving him for being insufficiently generous to his household and his reproof in turn for her not understanding that he had lost the means to freely disburse (4.8). The senate condemned the ex-consul Atilianus Titianus for conspiracy (7.3). The Alani raided Roman territory and Pius had to put down revolts by Moors, Britons, Jews and Dacians (5.4).

### *Hostility and goodwill*

Acts, words and thoughts of hostility and goodwill can take various forms, be manifested for various reasons, and lead to various consequences. The imperial biographies composed by Suetonius and the unknown late fourth-century author of the *Historia Augusta* (HA) can be classified as being about «good», «bad» or ambivalently presented emperors. Just what constitutes goodness and badness in their eyes has been extensively discussed<sup>1</sup>. By adopting broad definitions of hostility and goodwill, and listing and summarising instances emanating from an emperor, one can weave some threads into the tapestry of autocracy at Rome in the principate. Adding instances belonging to the period before they became emperor and those emanating from people other than emperors provides further threads. The lives feature a large cast of contemporaries and contain references to ancestors, both as agents and recipients of hostility or goodwill. The recorded instances of hostility and goodwill that stem from pre- and non-imperial figures adds to mate-

<sup>1</sup> E.g. by G. ALFÖLDY, *Römisches Staats- und Gesellschaftsdenken bei Sueton*, *AncSoc* 11/12 (1980/81), p. 349-385; ID., *Die römische Sozialordnung in der Historia Augusta*, in *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1975/1976*, Bonn 1978, p. 1-51; B. BALDWIN, *Suetonius*, Amsterdam 1983; K. BRADLEY, *Imperial Virtues in Suetonius*, *JIES* 4 (1976), p. 245-253; ID., *The Imperial Ideal in Suetonius' Caesars*, in *ANRW* II 33.5 (1986), p. 3701-3732; L. BRAUN, *Vitellius und Tiberius bei Tacitus und Sueton*, *WJA* 16 (1990), p. 205-219; T. CARNEY, *How Suetonius' Lives Reflect on Hadrian*, *PACA* 11 (1968), p. 7-24; J. COISSON, *Suetone physiognomoniste dans les Vies des XII Césars*, *REL* 31 (1953), p. 234-256; J. EKTOR, *L'impassabilité et l'objectivité de Suetone*, *LEC* 48 (1980), p. 317-326; J. GASCOU, *Suetone historien*, Rome 1984; G. LUCK, *Über Suetons 'Divus Titus'*, *RhM* 107 (1964), p. 63-75; M. MECKLER, *The Beginning of the Historia Augusta*, *Historia* 45 (1996), p. 364-375; T. REEKMANS, *Prosperity and Security in the Historia Augusta*, *AncSoc* 10 (1979), p. 239-270; K. ROSEN, *Soziale Fragen in der Historia Augusta*, *Index* 17 (1989), p. 263-274; R. SYME, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, Oxford 1968; ID., *Emperors and Biography*, Oxford 1971; ID., *Historia Augusta Papers*, Oxford 1983; H. SZELEST, *Virtus und Vitium in der Historia Augusta*, *Eos* 72 (1984), p. 362-373; A. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Suetonius*, London 1983.

rial that permits comparison of two key areas of human behaviour for example, and criticising and by the authors<sup>2</sup>, and by noting mended and berated, light can be authors and, less certainly, the. The social status of the most and hostility and goodwill reveals s and ambient worlds depicted by sively, their literary sources. Als provides, whether explicitly or t pose and effect of any particul how this information can be gr information could be a mark of j or of haste and carelessness in c not always have had such infor else may think it sufficient to reader to surmise its significar focus may simply be on other r simply be a collector of biograp said may be revealing. Thus, w given, it is almost always in res; not for what he or she is. The m people are rewarded or enriched injury.

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<sup>2</sup> Suetonius, it may be relevant to no anticipate the findings below, cf. A. RIC Yale 1983, p. 104 on the relationship b

<sup>3</sup> For example, in their introduction 1927, p. xiv. H. BUTLER and E. CARY Julius' motives but rather on certain o generosity and versatile genius.

<sup>4</sup> See R. SALLER, *Personal Patron* p. 207, on the importance of patron together.

he life refers twice to his predecessor (5.3). Pius' wife Faustina reproaches to his household and his anger that he had lost the means to defend the ex-consul Atilianus who had raided Roman territory and Pius punishes Jews and Dacians (5.4).

and goodwill can take various forms, and lead to various consequences imposed by Suetonius and the *Historia Augusta* (HA) can be read as ambivalently presented as good and badness in their eyes having broad definitions of hostility including instances emanating from an emperor into the tapestry of autocracy at Rome belonging to the period before Augustus originating from people other than emperors. Lives feature a large cast of characters including ancestors, both as agents and as recipients; recorded instances of hostility towards non-imperial figures adds to material

*Gesellschaftsdenken bei Sueton, AnSozialordnung in der Historia Augusta*, in *Antiquitas*, Bonn 1978, p. 1-51; B. BALDWIN, *Suetonius' Virtues in Suetonius*, *JIES* 4 (1976), p. 1-10; *Caesars*, in *ANRW* II 33.5 (1986), p. 1-10; G. LUCK, *Über Suetonius' Divus Titus*, *Antiquitas*, Bonn 1990, p. 1-10; *Reflection on Hadrian*, *PACA* 11 (1968), p. 7-10; *Les Vies des XII Césars*, *REL* 31 (1953), p. 317-318; *Le Fragen in der Historia Augusta, Index und the Historia Augusta*, Oxford 1968; *Historia Augusta Papers*, Oxford 1983; *Augusta*, *Eos* 72 (1984), p. 362-373; A.

that permits comparison of the perceptions of the two biographers in two key areas of human behaviour. The acts of praising and honouring, for example, and criticising and dishonouring are frequently mentioned by the authors<sup>2</sup>, and by noting for what emperors and others are commended and berated, light can be shed on the values and interests of the authors and, less certainly, the values of the writers' contemporaries. The social status of the most and least frequent senders and receivers of hostility and goodwill reveals something of the dynamics of the court and ambient worlds depicted by each author and, more remotely and elusively, their literary sources. Also of interest is how frequently an author provides, whether explicitly or through reasonable inference, cause, purpose and effect of any particular instance of hostility or goodwill; and how this information can be grouped. Frequent failure to provide such information could be a mark of poorly integrated or understood material, or of haste and carelessness in composition. The author, of course, may not always have had such information, or be unwilling to speculate, or else may think it sufficient to record an instance and leave it to the reader to surmise its significance and typicality. Or else the author's focus may simply be on other matters<sup>3</sup>, and he may be happy at times to simply be a collector of biographical facts. What is not or is infrequently said may be revealing. Thus, when a cause for an attack on a person is given, it is almost always in response to something the person has done, not for what he or she is. The motive is rarely to defend others and when people are rewarded or enriched it is rarely to compensate them for some injury.

An ancient biographer's evaluation of an emperor will depend largely on how an emperor treats his subjects and how subjects respond to his behaviour<sup>4</sup>. Acts of hostility and goodwill comprise a large portion of such conduct and statistics below shed some light on this issue. However, the primary purpose of this study is the shape and direction of hos-

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius, it may be relevant to note, wrote a treatise on terms of abuse in Greek. To anticipate the findings below, cf. A. RICHLIN, *Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*, Yale 1983, p. 104 on the relationship between invective and power.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in their introduction to the edition of Suetonius' *Divus Julius*, Oxford 1927, p. xiv, H. BUTLER and E. CARY note how little emphasis there is on, *inter alia*, Julius' motives but rather on certain of his qualities such as envy, audacity, affability, generosity and versatile genius.

<sup>4</sup> See R. SALLER, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*, Cambridge 1982, p. 207, on the importance of patronage in holding otherwise inequitable societies together.

tility and goodwill in the biographies and the authors' perception of these phenomena, not simply how well or badly an emperor scores in these areas.

Theories as to why people engage in hostile or kindly acts are many and various, and involve discussions of human behaviour too numerous and wide ranging to be summarised here. In seeking to deal with evidence of hostility we have used the definition of Saul: «the tendency of an organism to do something harmful to another organism»<sup>5</sup>, viewed as some kind of deprivation, whether it be of safety, life, health, property, movement, status, reputation, peace happiness. As a corollary, goodwill is that which enhances an organism in some way, physically or emotionally, and can range from trust and forgiveness to sympathy, aid, love and praise. Hostility is usually accompanied by feelings of anger, and can range in intensity from to a glare and a piece of gossip to bloody revenge. It can involve groups as well as individuals and includes, for example, cloaking personal sadism in the name of institutional imperatives or communal good. It can be a sign of weakness, fear and frustration, a means of affirming identity and of relieving boredom as others react, as much as strength and confidence.

#### *Hostility and goodwill in Suetonius and the HA*

The first eight lives of the HA have been used, from Hadrian to Caracalla, excluding the co-emperor Verus, the ill-fated successor Aelius Caesar and the unsuccessful claimants Avidius Cassius, Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. The total number of words in the eight

<sup>5</sup> L. SAUL, *The Psychodynamics of Hostility*, New York 1976, p. 6. Also useful have been A. PEPITONE, *Attraction and Hostility*, New York 1964; W. GAYLIN, *The Rage Within*, New York 1984; R. JOHNSON, *Aggression in Man and Animals*, Philadelphia 1972. J. OKEY, *Human Aggression: the Aetiology of Individual Differences*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 32 (1992), p. 51-64, reviews the theories. Saul distinguishes hostility from aggression, which he calls a behaviour that can be constructive. But because full and clear exposition of purpose and effect is so often lacking in Suetonius and the HA I have counted as hostility behaviour that could be construed as constructively aggressive, such as *Ant.* 4.8, the exchange between Pius and his wife over giving to the household. The official who enjoys the charisma of office, not of person, and who carries out violence with reference to formality and function, not for personal domination, can act with a terrifying impersonality. Adolf Eichmann is a well-known case. See R. COLLINS, *Three Faces of Cruelty: towards a Comparative Sociology of Violence*, *Theory and Society* 1 (1974), p. 415-440. R. COVER, *Violence and the Word*, *Yale Law Journal* 95 (1985), p. 1601-1629, discusses the problem of violence from the perspective of perpetrator, victim and judge.

biographies is 26,681. Suetonius words<sup>6</sup>.

The following categories have of hostility. Instances are confi dreams, allegations, threats and must be some destructive movem A and B cannot be clearly identi

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Caesar plans to make war on action against his tribunes (*Ju* make incursions into Moesia votaries of Bellona to cut off th

B. Deprive or abandon: rob, b reject, banish, fine, refuse he

Caligula removes their horses : scandalous acts (*Cal.* 16.1); ( Didius Julianus and become Umbria desert Didius for Sever

C. Generally cause fear, sufferin or below: torment, punish, ir

Tiberius subjects Agrippina the ment when they are in exile Aemilianus (*Sev.* 8.16); Carac him when he is ill (*Car.* 5.3).

<sup>6</sup> Manual counting of Suetonius' liv *Jul.* 9570; *Aug.* 13327; *Tib.* 8971; *Cal.* 1605; *Vit.* 2311; *Ves.* 3203; *Tit.* 1591; lives, supplied by I. MARRIOT, *The Aut. Studies*, *JRS* 69 (1969), p. 65-77, at 75 3449; *Pert.* 2576; *Did.* 1585; *Sev.* 4205

<sup>7</sup> Thus «some», «many», «a certair as *Jul.* 55.3., that Caesar had a bad reput insulting remark of the elder Curio that woman was counted. If an action has a counted as hostile even though it could justice. This may mean that some instan it is impossible to be sure of pure mo comment on the pain that is inflicted, su elty was fostered by Sejanus (*Tib.* 61.1 punishments (*Gal.* 9.1).

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biographies is 26,681. Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars* amount to 68,810 words<sup>6</sup>.

The following categories have been used to group material indicative of hostility. Instances are confined to human interaction but include dreams, allegations, threats and wishes that have hostile intent. There must be some destructive movement of energy between A and B, even if A and B cannot be clearly identified<sup>7</sup>.

A. Apply direct force: kill, injure, mutilate, harm, beat, destroy, attack with force, invade, seize, shove, hit, torture.

Caesar plans to make war on his senatorial opponents if they take action against his tribunes (*Jul.* 30.1); the Roxolani and Sarmatians make incursions into Moesia (*Had.* 6.6); Commodus orders the votaries of Bellona to cut off their arms (*Com.* 9.5).

B. Deprive or abandon: rob, betray, deceive, mutiny, rebel, divorce, reject, banish, fine, refuse help to.

Caligula removes their horses from those knights guilty of wicked or scandalous acts (*Cal.* 16.1); Claudius Pompeianus refuses to help Didius Julianus and become co-emperor (*Did.* 8.4); soldiers in Umbria desert Didius for Severus (*Did.* 8.5).

C. Generally cause fear, suffering or anguish in ways not covered above or below: torment, punish, intimidate.

Tiberius subjects Agrippina the Elder, Nero and Drusus to harsh treatment when they are in exile (*Tib.* 64); Severus refuses pardon for Aemilianus (*Sev.* 8.16); Caracalla is very cruel to those who nurse him when he is ill (*Car.* 5.3).

<sup>6</sup> Manual counting of Suetonius' lives yields the following word totals for each life: *Jul.* 9570; *Aug.* 13327; *Tib.* 8971; *Cal.* 7599; *Cla.* 6394; *Ner.* 7839; *Gal.* 2804; *Oth.* 1605; *Vit.* 2311; *Ves.* 3203; *Tit.* 1591; *Dom.* 3596. Computer counted totals for the HA lives, supplied by I. MARRIOT, *The Authorship of the Historia Augusta: Two Computer Studies*, *JRS* 69 (1969), p. 65-77, at 75, are: *Had.* 5106; *Ant.* 2233; *Marc.* 5476; *Com.* 3449; *Pert.* 2576; *Did.* 1585; *Sev.* 4205; *Car.* 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Thus «some», «many», «a certain» etc. can be counted. A general statement such as *Jul.* 55.3, that Caesar had a bad reputation for sexual immorality was not included. The insulting remark of the elder Curio that Caesar was every woman's man and every man's woman was counted. If an action has a negative or depriving effect upon someone, it is counted as hostile even though it could be an impersonal, objective and impartial act of justice. This may mean that some instances of hostility are included that should not be but it is impossible to be sure of pure motivation. Occasionally Suetonius has an explicit comment on the pain that is inflicted, such as his rejection of the view that Tiberius' cruelty was fostered by Sejanus (*Tib.* 61.1) and his view that Galba was too severe in his punishments (*Gal.* 9.1).

- D. Verbal assault: criticise, depreciate, threaten, blame, despise, express anger at, quarrel or argue with in unfriendly way, accuse, annoy, provoke.

Caesar prosecutes Dolabella for extortion (*Jul.* 4.1); Augustus calls Agrippa Postumus and the two Julias his three boils and ulcers (*Aug.* 65.4); a philosopher abuses Tiberius for favouring one side in a dispute (*Tib.* 11.3).

- E. Seek revenge; hate, or stir up hatred against; enjoy the sufferings of another.

Caligula encourages plebeians to take the seats of knights at the theatre (*Cal.* 26.4); Caligula forces fathers to attend their sons' executions (*Cal.* 27.4); many hate Otho bitterly (*Oth.* 12.2).

- F. Restrict: hinder, thwart, block, impede, imprison, bind, arrest.

Nero imprisons Galba's freedman Icelus (*Ner.* 49.4); Severus captures Albinus' generals (*Sev.* 10.8); Servianus prevents Hadrian from carrying news of Nerva's death to Trajan (*Had.* 2.6).

Regardless of possible ulterior motivation, overt expressions of goodwill are taken at face value, unless the author explicitly indicates insincerity or blatant self-interest<sup>8</sup>. To assume otherwise would be to descend into a morass of indecision. To be included an instance needs to be more than an acting in concert. As with hostility, there needs to be a transfer of energy from A to B. The act of goodwill must be aimed at a person or group, and not be some general act of philanthropy or good government, such as putting on games or passing a law. The following categories have been used to group material indicative of goodwill:

- A. Show or promise love, warmth, friendliness, kindness, concern (but not marry or betroth). More specifically and concretely, embrace, farewell, greet, pat, woo, kiss.

Nero holds Vitellius dear (*Vit.* 4); Otho writes consolatory letters to his sister and to Nero's widow (*Oth.* 10.2); Marcus' mother is concerned about him sleeping rough (*Mar.* 2.6).

<sup>8</sup> E.g. *Oth.* 2.2, Otho's pretended love for an old imperial freedwoman; *Dom.* 12.1, Domitian's treacherous affability. Similarly excluded is Caesar only helping candidates to be elected who would support him (*Jul.* 23.2) and Otho securing an acquittal in return for a large payment (*Oth.* 2.2).

- B. Show sympathy, compassion towards others. Miss or grieve for the loss of others.

In their grief at his loss, some deposit his statues on the rostra (*M.* 10.2); Geta's death towards a playmate for the beating and other men weep for Geta's death.

- C. Praise, appreciate, thank, congratulate.

Provincials in Germany and Britain (Tit. 4.1); senate bestows title of *patronus* (5.2); Commodus makes a former Iudaea

- D. Protect, heal, nurture, help, befriend, advise, show support for, congratulate.

Domitian distributes three *congiarii* (10.2); Titus always sends petitioners away with a reward; Hadrian rewards Hadrian with a diamond (12.5).

- E. Forgive, pardon, show mercy and leniency.

Domitian pardons quaestor's son (10.2); Nero forgives all the crimes of improprities (*Ner.* 29); Hadrian tried to kill him (*Had.* 12.5).

- F. Trust, show loyalty to.

Titus proves his loyalty to Vespasian in Marcus (*Mar.* 6.9); Marcus is reported as though greatly offended by them (10.2).

Analysis of the findings beginning with occurrences of hostility and goodwill instances is expressed as x times y.

	Sue
Hostility	15.9
Goodwill	8.7

<sup>9</sup> In counting an instance, a specific instance, regardless of how many agents or recipients, is counted once, regardless of how many agents or recipients are mentioned. However, if «many» or «all» are mentioned, the multiple agents or recipients, the instance is counted as many instances of hostility.

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B. Show sympathy, compassion for the misfortune and suffering of  
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In their grief at his loss, some decorate Nero's tomb with flowers and  
put his statues on the rostra (*Ner.* 57.1); Caracalla is sympathetic  
towards a playmate for the beating he received (*Car.* 1.6.); his mother  
and other men weep for Geta's death (*Car.* 3.3).

C. Praise, appreciate, thank, confer honours upon.

Provincials in Germany and Britain set up statues in honour of Titus  
(*Tit.* 4.1); senate bestows title of Augusta on the elder Faustina (*Ant.*  
5.2); Commodus makes a former lover of his mother consul (*Com.* 8.1).

D. Protect, heal, nurture, help, be generous towards, give constructive  
advice, show support for, confer benefit upon, do favour for.

Domitian distributes three *congiaria* at 300 sesterces per head (*Dom.* 4.5);  
Titus always sends petitioners away with some hope (*Tit.* 8.1); Trajan  
rewards Hadrian with a diamond he had received from Nerva (*Had.* 3.7).

E. Forgive, pardon, show mercy and leniency towards.

Domitian pardons quaestor's scribes for past offences (*Dom.* 9.3);  
Nero forgives all the crimes of those who confessed their sexual  
improprieties (*Ner.* 29); Hadrian deals leniently with a madman who  
tried to kill him (*Had.* 12.5).

F. Trust, show loyalty to.

Titus proves his loyalty to Vespasian (*Tit.* 5.3); Pius shows great trust  
in Marcus (*Mar.* 6.9); Marcus conceals and defends Verus' vices,  
though greatly offended by them (*Mar.* 15.3).

Analysis of the findings begins with an overall comparison of the  
occurrences of hostility and goodwill in each author. The frequency of  
instances is expressed as x times per thousand words<sup>9</sup>.

	Suetonius	HA
Hostility	15.9 (1095)	20.7 (550)
Goodwill	8.7 (596)	19.2 (510)

<sup>9</sup> In counting an instance, a specific act of hostility or goodwill was counted only  
once, regardless of how many agents or recipients were involved. To count an act ema-  
nating from or affecting each individual separately is to put one in the impossible position  
of trying to assess the number of instances that should be counted when «some»,  
«many» or «all» are mentioned. However, if there was more than one *status* involved in  
the multiple agents or recipients, the instance was multiplied accordingly. For example, if  
the emperor is reported as condemning senators and knights to death, this counts as two  
instances of hostility.





number of instances in each sam-  
 ility outnumber those of goodwill  
 significantly exceeds both Sueton-  
 1 Cochran on the amount of posi-  
 ryal of each of his imperial sub-  
 nd impressions and quantify the  
 The figures in the table immedi-  
 of instances of hostility and good-  
 e those studies because they con-  
 eror<sup>11</sup>. The bracketed figures are  
 of the total instances of hostility  
 bject of the life. For example,  
 130, or 62%, of the instances of  
 s, based on the not insubstantial  
 two areas of behaviour offer an  
 on the main subject) each life is<sup>12</sup>.

HA	
Hostility	Goodwill
16.6 (57)	25.3 (62)
7.6 (65)	34.5 (67)
8.9 (39)	26.8 (78)
44.6 (44)	7.0 (50)
14.4 (22)	18.6 (42)
27.1 (33)	10.7 (41)
26.4 (76)	12.1 (69)
25.6 (71)	7.5 (53)

s «Vies des Douze Césars» de Suétone,  
 'Conception of Imperial Character. Bio-

y evoked similar responses in others, then  
 ffer corroboration. But in the accounts of

tility and goodwill percentages together:  
 ula 130, Claudius 112, Nero 128, Galba  
 us 120, Domitian 161, Hadrian 119, Pius  
 didius 74, Severus 145, Caracalla 124. The  
 Severus, Tiberius, Pius and Caligula. The  
 y Didius and Otho. The remainder cluster

Of Suetonius' lives, the bleakest in terms of the relative frequency of reported hostile thoughts, words and deeds, is that of Domitian, followed by Tiberius and Vitellius. A life that contains a high proportion of civil or foreign warfare can inflate a hostility score, hence the score for Otho, a life which presents its main subject favourably overall; and Titus' score would be lower if fewer criticisms of plots against him were recorded. The positivity of the Otho life emerges in its goodwill score, the highest, exceeding even that of Titus. The negativity of the Domitian life is reinforced by it also achieving the lowest goodwill score, whereas Suetonius' very hostile portrayal of Vitellius<sup>13</sup> has not precluded a comparatively high number of instances of goodwill. However when favour is shown to undeserving people, as Vitellius tends to do, that is no commendation. In the HA, the very high Commodus hostility score reflects not only a vicious emperor but the senatorial decree passed against him on his death and recorded at great and repetitive length by the author (18.2-19.9). Apparently preserved by Marius Maximus<sup>14</sup>, it contains no fewer than 44 wishes for the defilement of the late emperor's corpse, degradation of his memory, and, punishment for informers. Without this extended quotation, Commodus hostility frequency would be in the low 30s, still the highest, and corresponding with his having the lowest goodwill score. Pius, and in particular Marcus, had wars to fight and rebellions to suppress, which accounts for some of their hostility score, and the author recounts some hostile gossip against the imperial family, but their low hostility scores, the lowest of the eight, correspond to their goodwill scores, the highest. The high hostility scores of Didius and Severus, both lives containing civil war narrative, and that of Caracalla, are reflected in their low goodwill scores (unlike Suetonius' Otho). The HA's hostility rankings tend to mirror the goodwill rankings more than do those of Suetonius. In a sense, they are more polarised.

#### THE PATTERNS OF HOSTILITY AND GOODWILL

One of the objects of this exercise is to determine the shape or pattern of hostility and goodwill that exists in each author, that is, what categories

<sup>13</sup> See E. CIZEK, *La mort de Vitellius dans les «Vies des Douze Césars» de Suétone*, *REA* 75 (1975), p. 125-130.

<sup>14</sup> Who liked to insert documents and could draw on the *acta senatus*.

occur most and least often, and whether this distribution differ between the authors. In the tables below, the figures in brackets give the breakdown between the emperor-sourced and other-sourced hostility. The figures to the right of the brackets indicate the proportion of the total formed by each category.

The pattern of hostility is the following:

	Suetonius			HA		
Hit, kill	A	440 (267+173)	40.2%	284 (154+130)	51.6%	
Deprive	B	173 (128+45)	15.8	81 (33+46)	14.7	
Torment	C	56 (43+13)	5.1	31 (26+5)	5.6	
Criticise	D	349 (146+203)	31.9	111 (46+65)	20.1	
Hate	E	43 (21+22)	3.9	32 (13+19)	5.8	
Impede	F	34 (19+15)	3.1	11 (5+6)	2.0	

In both authors, categories B, C, E and F form the smallest categories and partly for that reason the variation of their relative salience within each author, as distinct from their absolute frequency, is not great<sup>15</sup>. A good deal of robbing, abandoning, banishing, betraying (B) goes on. The HA physical violence (A) score is, proportionately, about 11% higher than Suetonius', and his verbal violence (D) about 11% lower. Suetonius' A and D scores in particular show that emperors can resort to physical violence more than others, whereas their subjects mainly<sup>16</sup> have to have recourse to criticising, gossip, lampoons, graffiti, abusing and accusing. Notable in both authors is the extent to which the subjects of the lives, rather than others, cause suffering, fear and anxiety in others (C), as when Tiberius offers Agrippina an apple which he knows she will suspect is poisoned (*Tib.* 53.1) or when Hadrian pries into the affairs of his friends (*Had.* 11.4).

For goodwill the pattern is as follows:

<sup>15</sup> The frequency of each category per thousand words works out as follows: Suetonius: A-6.4, B-2.5, C-0.8, D-5.1, E-0.6, F-0.5. HA: A-10.7, B-3.0, C-1.2, D-4.2, E-1.2, F-0.4.

<sup>16</sup> In some cases the other who expresses hostility in a life was an emperor who reigned before the subject of the life acceded, e.g. Caligula having Claudius thrown into the river in 39 (*Cl.* 9.1). And the main subject of a life can express hostility before becoming emperor, e.g. Tiberius prosecuting Fannius Caepio in 23 B.C. (*Tib.* 8). Because others are the targets of hostility from both emperors and others, overall they score higher as recipients than emperors do. Suetonius: 261 emperors, 834 others; HA: 158 emperors, 392 others.

#### Suetonius

Love	A	114 (81+33)	19.1
Pity	B	20 (5+15)	3.4
Praise	C	166 (68+98)	27.9
Help	D	242 (192+50)	40.3
Forgive	E	35 (31+4)	5.8
Trust	F	19 (12+7)	3.1

B, E and F form the smallest categories for greatly in their relative salience in both authors, categories C and D together but there is more emphasis on help and more on praising and honouring.

#### Analysis of subsamples: status of agents

Further analysis is based upon 18,787 words. HA 18,236), characterising «good» (Vespasian, Titus, M. Aurelius Severus) and ambivalently presenting these subsamples we will be analysing both as agents and recipients, a number of instances of hostility. The issue writers tended to define a hostile character itself, but by the character, not the agent.

Suetonius' subsample has 271 instances, 102 in Suetonius and 169 in HA. These emperors, which means that emperors spend the time in Suetonius and 54% of the time in HA. The status of agents cannot be determined in both authors, and comprising

<sup>17</sup> The frequency of each category per thousand words works out as follows: Suetonius: A-1.7, B-0.3, C-2.4, D-3.5, E-0.5, F-0.2. HA: A-1.7, B-0.3, C-2.4, D-3.5, E-0.5, F-0.2. Compared with Suetonius, Love (A) and Pity (B) are three times as often.

<sup>18</sup> For the entire sample, emperors are agents 54% in the HA.

<sup>19</sup> On the generally hostile attitude of emperors, see PAUW, *Impersonal Expressions and Unipersonal Biography*. *AClass* 23 (1977), 1-10.

er this distribution differ between figures in brackets give the break- and other-sourced hostility. The indicate the proportion of the total

ving:

HA	
284 (154+130)	51.6%
81 (33+46)	14.7
31 (26+5)	5.6
111 (46+65)	20.1
32 (13+19)	5.8
11 (5+6)	2.0

E and F form the smallest cate- variation of their relative salience their absolute frequency, is not doing, banishing, betraying (B) e (A) score is, proportionately, and his verbal violence (D) about es in particular show that emper- more than others, whereas their urse to criticising, gossip, lam- ng. Notable in both authors is ie lives, rather than others, cause rs (C), as when Tiberius offers she will suspect is poisoned (*Tib.* the affairs of his friends (*Had.*

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hostility in a life was an emperor who e.g. Caligula having Claudius thrown into ect of a life can express hostility before unius Caepio in 23 B.C. (*Tib.* 8). Because erors and others, overall they score higher emperors, 834 others: HA: 158 emperors,

	Suetonius		HA	
Love	A	114 (81+33) 19.1%	96 (69+27)	18.9%
Pity	B	20 (5+15) 3.4	8 (4+4)	1.6
Praise	C	166 (68+98) 27.9	190 (96+94)	37.3
Help	D	242 (192+50) 40.6	182 (135+47)	35.7
Forgive	E	35 (31+4) 5.9	27 (25+2)	5.3
Trust	F	19 (12+7) 3.2	7 (3+4)	1.4

B, E and F form the smallest categories in both authors and do not dif- fer greatly in their relative salience within the goodwill patterns. In both authors, categories C and D together comprise the bulk of the instances but there is more emphasis on helping and favouring (C) in Suetonius and more on praising and honouring (D) in the HA<sup>17</sup>.

*Analysis of subsamples: status of agents and recipients of hostility*

Further analysis is based upon similar sized subsamples (Suetonius 18,787 words, HA 18,236), chosen to comprise a similar blend of «good» (Vespasian, Titus, Marcus), «bad» (Caligula, Commodus, Severus) and ambivalently presented emperors (Claudius, Hadrian). In these subsamples we will be analysing the social status of the others, both as agents and recipients, and the causes, purposes and effects of instances of hostility. The issue of status is imporant because ancient writers tended to define a hostile act as cruel, not so much by the act itself, but by the the character, merit and status of those involved.

Suetonius' subsample has 271 instances of hostility, the HA 399. Of these, 102 in Suetonius and 184 in the HA are agents who are not emperors, which means that emperors are the source of hostility 62% of the time in Suetonius and 54% in the HA<sup>18</sup>. In some instances, social status of agents cannot be determined because the agent is designated as «men», «some», «many», «all», «a certain», «someone», 27 times in both authors, and comprising a category called indeterminates<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> The frequency of each category per thousand words works out as: Suetonius: A-1.7, B-0.3, C-2.4, D-3.5, E-0.5, F-0.3; HA: A-3.6, B-0.3, C-7.1, D-6.8, E-1.0, F-0.3. Compared with Suetonius, Love (A) and Help (B) occur twice as often in the HA, Praise (C) three times as often.

<sup>18</sup> For the entire sample, emperors are responsible for 57% of the instances in Suetonius, 54% in the HA.

<sup>19</sup> On the generally hostile attitude of unidentified commentators on emperors, see D. PAUW, *Impersonal Expressions and Unidentified Spokesmen in Greek and Roman Histo- riography and Biography*, *AClass* 23 (1980), p. 83-95, esp. 91-92.

Miscellaneous is a category that includes people designated by their occupation (wrestler, writer, philosopher) or by their behaviour (informers, criminal, petitioners, audiences, litigants): 5 in Suetonius, 6 in the HA. All remaining other agents can be allocated to one of the following statuses held by the person at the time of the instance: slave, ex-slave, imperial ex-slave, foreigner (client and independent, ruler and people), populace (*populus, plebs*), provincial, Italian, soldier or bodyguard, equestrian (includes women and minors of that *ordo*), senatorial (as with the equestrians, a corporate body the senate, or individuals of the *ordo* and their wives and children), members (by blood, marriage or adoption) of the imperial family (put into a separate category even though, like Germanicus or Aelius Caesar, they can also be senators) and, finally, other emperors, mentioned in the life but not its main subject. Those in the indeterminate and miscellaneous categories could be any of the statuses in this list. In Suetonius, unsurprisingly, the largest groups of other agents are imperial family members (14), other emperors (12), senatorials (12) and equestrians (10). No other status has more than 5. Lesser status within the hierarchy coincides with less reported hostile agency. In the HA, the distribution of other agents is quite different: 86 senatorials, 17 foreigners, 15 equestrians and no other status larger than 8. Taken together with the instances of the emperor as agent (Suetonius 169, HA 215), the emphasis on the upper echelons is predictable enough but in the HA there is proportionately less focus on the emperor and the imperial family. The prominence of senatorials in the HA is also reflected in their share of the other recipients total: 87 out of 302, where indeterminates (50) and foreigners (40) also figure prominently<sup>20</sup>. Except for other emperors only featuring 7 times, Suetonius' recipients of hostility tends to mirror their prominence as agents: 41 senatorials, 35 imperial family and 22 equestrians, but his biggest category is that of miscellaneous (52)<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Imperial family (22), miscellaneous (21), equestrians (21) and provincials (19) are also fairly common recipients in the HA. Emperors are recipients 97 times out of 399, in Suetonius 53 times out of 271. The prominence of senatorials as agents and recipients in the HA may reflect in a way that Suetonius does not their importance in legislative activity. On a few occasions where the status of a named person was not evident from the narrative, reference was made to the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*.

<sup>21</sup> As recipients, miscellaneous also contain a group of people who have been created and labelled by some judicial process or other treatment: victims, prisoners, condemned, exiles, suspects.

### *Causes, purposes and effects of hos*

Concerning the causes, purposes a statistic is how often none is expli inferred from the narrative alo sources). Circumstantial detail is the way of cause and purpose, 1 instances in the subsample, caus effects in 78%. Compare the HA instances, purposes 80% and effec given with no evident cause, pu secretly executing people and clā (*Cal.* 26.2). The frequent absence helps convey a sense of randomn as if they occur in a partial vac overwhelmingly presented as re done or failed to do, such as ( flogged for hesitating to say tha 33), or Severus putting senators Albinus (*Sev.* 9.8, 13.1-7)<sup>24</sup>. Ra

<sup>22</sup> The 104 instances when effects were arranged in a number of categories, such as was subsequently enhanced or deprived in of the recipient (e.g., *Com.* 10.5, a corpule modus cut open his stomach) that occurre reported effect is particularly intriguing in t action is a response to what others have de elicits strong feelings of anger and humili reports of retaliation? Part of the answer r retaliate.

<sup>23</sup> It may be significant that the «go instances of no evident purpose to cases of 45 out of 49 respectively, as if the good account for.

<sup>24</sup> A list of 41, which includes some bo Severus as a «bad» emperor). See F. JACQ *selon l'«Histoire Auguste»: liste de proscrij* (1992), p. 119-144; A.R. BIRLEY, *Further PASCHOUD* (eds.), *Historiae Augustae Colle* esp. 27-34. The main source for this life, M in the civil war, had reason to be anti-Sev interest in informers and imperial *amici*, t configuration of hostility and goodwill pr tonian rubrics.

cludes people designated by their (sopher) or by their behaviour (ences, litigants): 5 in Suetonius, nts can be allocated to one of the on at the time of the instance: reigner (client and independent, s, *plebs*), provincial, Italian, soldes women and minors of that ians, a corporate body the senate, vives and children), members (by imperial family (put into a sepa- anicus or Aelius Caesar, they can emperors, mentioned in the life indeterminate and miscellaneous s in this list. In Suetonius, unsur- agents are imperial family mem- torials (12) and equestrians (10). esser status within the hierarchy gency. In the HA, the distribution 36 senatorials, 17 foreigners, 15 r than 8. Taken together with the (Suetonius 169, HA 215), the redictable enough but in the HA on the emperor and the imperial als in the HA is also reflected in al: 87 out of 302, where indeter- ) figure prominently<sup>20</sup>. Except for s, Suetonius' recipients of hostile ce as agents: 41 senatorials, 35 but his biggest category is that of

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### *Causes, purposes and effects of hostility*

Concerning the causes, purposes and effects of hostility, an important statistic is how often none is explicitly given or cannot be reasonably inferred from the narrative alone (i.e. not supplied from other sources). Circumstantial detail is far more common in Suetonius in the way of cause and purpose, though not effects. In 32% of the instances in the subsample, cause is lacking, purpose in 38% and effects in 78%. Compare the HA: causes are lacking in 62% of the instances, purposes 80% and effects 74%<sup>22</sup>. Sometimes an instance is given with no evident cause, purpose *or* effect, such as Caligula secretly executing people and claiming they had committed suicide (*Cal.* 26.2). The frequent absence of circumstantial detail in the HA helps convey a sense of randomness and mystery about many events, as if they occur in a partial vacuum<sup>23</sup>. In both authors, causes are overwhelmingly presented as reactions to something someone has done or failed to do, such as Caligula having the actor Apelles flogged for hesitating to say that he was greater than Jupiter (*Cal.* 33), or Severus putting senators to death for supporting Niger and Albinus (*Sev.* 9.8, 13.1-7)<sup>24</sup>. Rare are attacks on people for some

<sup>22</sup> The 104 instances when effects were given in the HA and the 59 in Suetonius were arranged in a number of categories, such as whether the agent or recipient of the instance was subsequently enhanced or deprived in some way by the hostility. It was deprivation of the recipient (e.g., *Com.* 10.5, a corpulent person's intestines pouring out after Commodus cut open his stomach) that occurred most frequently in both authors. The lack of reported effect is particularly intriguing in the light of what causes show: so much hostile action is a response to what others have done. Since an act of hostility almost invariably elicits strong feelings of anger and humiliation on the part of the recipient, why so few reports of retaliation? Part of the answer may lie in the simple inability of recipients to retaliate.

<sup>23</sup> It may be significant that the «good» emperors Titus and Marcus have high instances of no evident purpose to cases of hostility in the biographies, 15 out of 21 and 45 out of 49 respectively, as if the goodness of their reigns makes hostility harder to account for.

<sup>24</sup> A list of 41, which includes some bogus names (but which add to the impression of Severus as a «bad» emperor). See F. JACQUES, *Les 'nobiles' exécutés par Septime Sévère selon l'«Histoire Auguste»: liste de proscription ou énumération fantaisiste?*, *Latomus* 51 (1992), p. 119-144; A.R. BIRLEY, *Further Notes on HA Severus*, in G. BONAMENTE - F. PASCHOUD (eds.), *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Genevense* (1991), Bari 1994, p. 19-42, esp. 27-34. The main source for this life, Marius Maximus, despite having served Severus in the civil war, had reason to be anti-Severus and to harp on his cruelty. His apparent interest in informers and imperial *amici*, typical of a senatorial writer, would shape the configuration of hostility and goodwill present in sampled lives, lives that use the Suetonian rubrics.

physical or character trait, such as Vespasian being naturally avaricious (*Ves.* 16.3, 19, 20) and Sabina's harsh temper (*Had.* 11.3)<sup>25</sup>. Outside the subsample there are cases such as Vitellius being taunted by the mob for bodily defects such as his large stomach and limp while being led captive through the streets of Rome (*Vit.* 17.2). In the HA rare, too, are causes that are spontaneous or proactive, stemming from a desire or trait of the agent, such as Severus' desire for glory leading to war with Parthia (*Sev.* 15.1), Commodus' cruelty (*Com.* 9.5) and imitation of Hercules (*Com.* 9.6), or the madness of the slave who tried to kill Hadrian (*Had.* 12.5). This type of cause, however, is much more common in Suetonius, 56 times in the subsample, the majority of these instances (39) being apparently caused by Caligula's cruelty, bloodthirstiness, sadism, brutality, need for money and insecurity<sup>26</sup>. Claudius too acts from cruelty and bloodthirstiness (*Cl.* 34-36), and the violent temper of Caligula's daughter leads her to attack her playmates (*Cal.* 25.4). What is absent are causes that we know from other sources can be influential, such as resentment at taxation causing rebellion and ethnic prejudice leading to communal violence<sup>27</sup>.

Below is a table that groups the different purposes or motives that can lie behind hostile behaviour, together with the distribution of instances in the two authors.

		Suetonius
A	Norm enforcement; action in the name of the law, common morality, group expectation	49
B	Revenge; defence of own reputation, honour; jealousy	23
C	Self-defence, removal of physical or psychological pressure, response to threat	26
D	Self-enhancement; predation; bullying sadism, greed, exploitation	62
E	Defence of others	4
F	Other motives	5
	Total	166
	Add instances where no purpose evident	10
	Overall totals	276

Cause and purpose can overlap impulses can be both cause and mostly, they are distinguishable. procurators, the cause of his action purpose was to enforce a norm gov (*Had.* 3.9). When a procurator had out an order from Hadrian, the alle escape, the purpose may have beer ously inferences about motive mus motive can be present in any act, c subjective. Nevertheless, however might venture that anti-social sel enforcement antitheses play a larg where self-concerned motives such larger proportions of the total.

When Claudius removed the m and yet insisted the erasure be s

<sup>25</sup> *Had.* 11.3. 6 examples in Suetonius (out of 183 recorded causes) and 9 in the HA (out of 152 recorded causes). Caesar's baldness is ridiculed, Tiberius' unattractively austere manner resented (*Jul.* 45.2, *Tib.* 21.2).

<sup>26</sup> E.g., *Cal.* 35-39. Cf. L. COCHRAN, *art. cit.* (n. 10), on Suetonius' concern with internal control and self-discipline, and the lack of it in bad emperors, and A. WALLACE-HADRILL, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 162, on Suetonius' demonstration of the terrifying consequences of power not being held in check by moral restraint. On causes and effects, J. GASCOU, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 425, has observed a frequent indifference by Suetonius to both, and commonly there is a disproportion between cause and effect, as in his account of Claudius' invasion of Britain.

<sup>27</sup> Further to this point, it is instructive to note the causes of enmity given by D. EPSTEIN, *Personal Enmity in Roman Politics, 218-43 B.C.*, London 1987, p. 34-63, for enmity in the late Republic: personal insults, misplaced wit, disagreements, infidelities (because of the insults they conveyed), being ignored or unrecognised, ferocious competition for limited fame and glory, and envy towards to comparatively (and sometimes excessively) successful few. The emperor was a natural target of envy, particularly amongst those who were slow to appreciate the principate's permanence and tendency to concentrate power and resources.

Vespasian being naturally avaricious and his harsh temper (*Had.* 11.3)<sup>25</sup>, as such as Vitellius being taunted as his large stomach and limp streets of Rome (*Vit.* 17.2). In the spontaneous or proactive, stemming such as Severus' desire for glory (5.1), Commodus' cruelty (*Com.* 9.6), or the madness of the slave). This type of cause, however, is 56 times in the subsample, the being apparently caused by sadism, brutality, need for money from cruelty and bloodthirstiness of Caligula's daughter leads her. What is absent are causes that are influential, such as resentment at prejudice leading to communal

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	Suetonius	HA
A	Norm enforcement; action in the name of the law, common morality, group expectation	49 (esp. Claudius) 13 (esp. Hadrian and Severus)
B	Revenge; defence of own reputation, honour; jealousy	23 (esp. Caligula) 27 (esp. Severus)
C	Self-defence, removal of physical or psychological pressure, response to threat	26 (esp. Caligula) 16 (esp. Commodus)
D	Self-enhancement; predation; bullying sadism, greed, exploitation	62 (esp. Caligula) 14
E	Defence of others	4 7
F	Other motives	5 1
	Total	169 78
	Add instances where no purpose evident	102 321
	Overall totals	271 399

Cause and purpose can overlap, as when a desire to gratify sadistic impulses can be both cause and purpose of hostile behaviour but, mostly, they are distinguishable. When Hadrian intervened against procurators, the cause of his action was the improper use of power, the purpose was to enforce a norm governing proper procuratorial behaviour (*Had.* 3.9). When a procurator had the exiled Crassus Frugi killed without an order from Hadrian, the alleged cause was Crassus' attempting to escape, the purpose may have been to benefit Hadrian (*Had.* 5.6). Obviously inferences about motive must be tentative and since more than one motive can be present in any act, conjecture as to which predominates is subjective. Nevertheless, however approximate the above figures, one might venture that anti-social self-enhancement and pro-social norm-enforcement antitheses play a larger role in Suetonius than in the HA, where self-concerned motives such as revenge and self-defence occupy larger proportions of the total.

When Claudius removed the mark of censure from a knight's name and yet insisted the erasure be seen, he was, albeit idiosyncratically,

enforcing a norm, maintaining at least a remnant of the social disapproval for the past of a man whose friends had now managed to influence the emperor (*Cla.* 16.1). A more straightforward example of norm-enforcement is when he dismissed from the list of jurors (i.e., men who would hear cases conducted in Latin) a Greek who knew no Latin (*Cla.* 16.2). When certain men abandoned weak and sick slaves on the island of Aesculapius in the Tiber, they were acting out of greedy self-interest and callous indifference to others (*Cla.* 25.2). In ordering that gladiators who fell accidentally should be slain, so that he could watch their faces as they died, Claudius seems to have been indulging a sadistic streak (*Cla.* 34.1). Unknown persons who arrested a man with a dagger near Claudius were acting to defend another (*Cla.* 36.1). When Claudius banished without a hearing an innocent clerk who had behaved intemperately towards Claudius before he became emperor, the apparent motive was revenge (*Cla.* 38.2). In one version of Claudius' death, Suetonius has Agrippina poisoning Claudius in order to remove a threat to her and Nero (*Cla.* 43-44.1). Scribonius' immediate purpose in revolting from Claudius was to remove him from power, but his ultimate purpose (to install himself or restore the Republic?) is unclear from Suetonius' narrative (*Cla.* 13.2, 35.2). Caligula ordered criminals to be fed to wild beasts gathered for the arena, since cattle were too expensive. The aim was to cut costs (*Cal.* 27.1).

#### *The perception of hostility*

Presenting motivation as we have done, while acknowledging possible multi-factorial motivation, treats the issue much as Suetonius and HA do, largely on the level of manifest, surface behaviour, and does not delve too deeply into the latent psychological mechanisms of paranoia, fear, shame, guilt, narcissism and envy, whether inherent in human nature or shaped by factors such as Roman childhood and adolescent experiences, competitiveness, drive for power, the presence of slavery, the violence of the educational system, the harshness of military discipline, the inevitable insecurities of autocracy, the ferocity of criminal punishment, the nature of public entertainment, the endemic ambiguities, frauds and hypocrisies of the principate and the relationship between ruler and subjects and between Romans and subjects, not to mention the peculiar formative childhood experiences of rulers such as Tiberius, Claudius and Nero which Suetonius describes. The Romans

regarded unmerited attacks on the poor and thought cruelty was less deliberate motives, rather than emotion whether criticism and abuse, for emotion formation (attempting to convert certain virtues and not certain vices in others). Focussing just on hostile principate, a world where people sometimes arbitrarily and illegally outburst, or in order to serve as adequate law-enforcement agencies staying within the law and with the weapon of the weak which could liberate emperors, where the price of political disgrace, humiliation and poverty for wise enjoy enviable material security demonstrations, foreign and civil insults, scorn, hatred, feuds, treacherous threats and fantasies by, for example of mass extermination. Even the kings on his deathbed (*Ant.* 12.8) a towards those guilty of serious crime a countervailing, softening picture however hypocritical, self-serving of goodwill may be at times, especially extreme antithesis, goodwill almost

<sup>28</sup> Three works that deal with some of these are: P. PLASS, *Wit and the Writing of History in the Romans*, Princeton 1993; and, despite the title, (n. 27). Although the arena had changed, the Romans, were slow to grasp this. There are many examples in *The Political Life of the Ancient World*, in *Crudelitas. The Politics of Cruelty in the Roman World*, ed. L. SAUL, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 187, lists five to be loved. 2. Extreme demands for preferred conscience. 4. Persistent and childish punishment during childhood. On the evidence sources in much of Nero's behaviour and behind some of Claudius' behaviour. Burned the bodies of Severus and Caracalla.

<sup>29</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* I 2 provides a succinct account of the years 69 to 96. But he is also cheered



at a remnant of the social disapp- friends had now managed to influ- straightforward example of norm- m the list of jurors (i.e., men who a Greek who knew no Latin (*Cl.* weak and sick slaves on the island e acting out of greedy self-interest z. 25.2). In ordering that gladiators so that he could watch their faces e been indulging a sadistic streak arrested a man with a dagger near er(*Cl.* 36.1). When Claudius ban- clerk who had behaved intemper- ame emperor, the apparent motive ion of Claudius' death, Suetonius order to remove a threat to her and ediate purpose in revolting from ower, but his ultimate purpose (to ?) is unclear from Suetonius' nar- lered criminals to be fed to wild ttle were too expensive. The aim

ne, while acknowledging possible issue much as Suetonius and HA surface behaviour, and does not ological mechanisms of paranoia, nvy, whether inherent in human Roman childhood and adolescent or power, the presence of slavery, n, the harshness of military disci- utocracy, the ferocity of criminal rtainment, the endemic ambigui- principate and the relationship een Romans and subjects, not ood experiences of rulers such as uetonius describes. The Romans

regarded unmerited attacks on the rich as worse than such attacks on the poor and thought cruelty was less serious if done from rational and deliberate motives, rather than emotion and caprice<sup>28</sup>. Nor does it go into whether criticism and abuse, for example, could be projection and reaction formation (attempting to convince oneself and others that one has certain virtues and not certain vices by praise and condemnation of them in others). Focussing just on hostility yields a bleak picture of the early principate, a world where people are killed, hurt or cruelly punished, sometimes arbitrarily and illegally, at a powerful man's whim or angry outburst, or in order to serve as a warning in a society that lacked adequate law-enforcement agencies and needed to terrorise people into staying within the law and within their station, where gossip was a weapon of the weak which could lacerate the reputations of even benign emperors, where the price of political failure was death, exile or, at best, disgrace, humiliation and poverty for some of the elite who might otherwise enjoy enviable material security. There emerges a world of riots, demonstrations, foreign and civil wars, plots and espionage, invective, insults, scorn, hatred, feuds, treachery, revenge, dismissal, and of apparent threats and fantasies by, for example, Caligula, Nero and Commodus of mass extermination. Even the mild Pius can express anger at certain kings on his deathbed (*Ant.* 12.8) and the clement Marcus could be harsh towards those guilty of serious crimes (*Mar.* 24.1)<sup>29</sup>. Fortunately there is a countervailing, softening picture of recurrent goodwill in both authors, however hypocritical, self-serving, dutiful, manipulative those signs of goodwill may be at times, especially in the HA, where, in a more extreme antithesis, goodwill almost balances a panorama of hostility

<sup>28</sup> Three works that deal with some of the undercurrents that could promote hostility are: P. PLASS, *Wit and the Writing of History*, Madison 1988; C. BARTON, *The Sorrows of the Romans*, Princeton 1993; and, despite its late Republican focus, D. EPSTEIN, *op. cit.* (n. 27). Although the arena had changed, some nobles, particularly under the Julio-Claudians, were slow to grasp this. There are some useful remarks in A. LINTOTT, *Cruelty in the Political Life of the Ancient World*, in T. VIJAMAA – A. TIMONEN – C. KRÖTZL (eds.), *Crudelitas. The Politics of Cruelty in the Ancient and Medieval World*, Turku 1992, p. 9–27. L. SAUL, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 187, lists five chief sources of hostility: 1. Insatiable needs to be loved. 2. Extreme demands for prestige, motivated by envy and rivalry. 3. Disordered conscience. 4. Persistent and childish dependence. 5. Revenge for misguided treatment during childhood. On the evidence of Suetonius alone, one can see the first three sources in much of Nero's behaviour and it would not be surprising if number 5 was behind some of Claudius' behaviour. Burning desire for revenge is evident in some of the deeds of Severus and Caracalla.

<sup>29</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.2 provides a succinct, contemporary and corroborative survey for the years 69 to 96. But he is also cheered by examples of courage and loyalty, 1.3.

even bleaker than that of Suetonius<sup>30</sup>. And some of the reported hostility may not always have been as bad as it appears. Emperors could jest and, while scarcely a mark of respect for the senate, Caligula's reported proposal to make his horse consul may have been only a joke (*Cal.* 55.3). It can suit Suetonius and other critics of an emperor to take more seriously than it deserves Caligula's spoken wish that the Roman people had only one neck<sup>31</sup>, and to embroider a deplorable episode from the repertoire of stock tyrant lore<sup>32</sup>. A certain amount of mockery has its pleasures for the agent, for third party observers, and even for recipients if egos were not too fragile<sup>33</sup>. However, it is the perceptions and portrayals of Suetonius and the HA that is the issue here, not the «reality», and not how much of their own hostility and hostile fantasies are poured into the writing. And not knowing how seriously to take an emperor at times was one of the disconcerting insecurities of life in the principate<sup>34</sup>.

*Analysis of subsample: status of agents and recipients of goodwill*

Turning to the instances of goodwill in the subsample, the emperor has, proportionately, a similar role to play as a source of goodwill in Suetonius, 61% of 189 instances (cf. hostility 62%), and larger one in the HA, 69% of 352 (cf. hostility 54%), with Hadrian and Marcus supplying the bulk of the 243 instances. In the HA, the figure that stands out in the distribution by status of other agents is 52 (out of 109) from other emperors, mostly explained by the subject of a life being honoured in some way by previous emperors. With senatorials supplying 26 and no other group more than 6, goodwill in the HA is very much something that comes from the highest strata. Suetonius, by contrast, has a more even

<sup>30</sup> For discussion of *meritum*, *beneficium*, *gratia* and *officium*, and the place of *utilitas* in *amicitia*, R. SALLER, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Cal.* 30.2. Cf. P. PLASS, *op. cit.* (n. 28), p. 67, 86.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Cal.* 37.4. Cf. A. RICHLIN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 91, on rhetorical, stereotyped tyrants and for the view that most anti-emperor stories belong to folklore rather than history.

<sup>33</sup> *Ves.* 12, 13, 20, 23.1, and provided the the *scurra* did not go too far. Cf. Dio LXV 11: whenever scurrilous graffiti were posted around the city against Vespasian, he would simply post an equally scurrilous reply. An external object on which to vent hostility can relieve intolerable internal pressures. Aggressive behaviour can shore up the self, and fend off feelings of vulnerability and intimations of mortality. Violence and cruelty are ways of distinguishing humans from subhumans, ingroups from outgroups.

<sup>34</sup> The above perception of hostility can be elaborated if we note for what the main subject as emperor was attacked or criticised when information is explicitly given. See appendix, below.

spread, so that while other emperors (73), unknown (11), the populace (also figure prominently. As recipients 26% of instances in Suetonius, 23% the more even spread of statuses: senatorials 50, miscellaneous 46 and other 4. In the way Hadrian was honoured by the emperor, Hadrian has the imperial family most prominently, miscellaneous 8, senatorials and imperial freedmen 8, reflecting the way in which they are appearing not at all in the HA. While other emperors figure prominently in Suetonius and the HA together 10 times, only once are they agents of hostility, equestrians and a large and diverse group of targets of hostility, they are less prominent in the HA it is senatorials, foreigners and miscellaneous who are the primary targets of hostility, whereas it is the imperial family and miscellaneous who are the primary recipients of hostility, whereas it is the imperial family and miscellaneous who are the primary recipients of hostility in the HA than in Suetonius<sup>35</sup>.

*Causes, purposes and effects of goodwill*

The figures for the absence of goodwill in the 352 instances of goodwill in the HA of purpose and 84% in the case of Suetonius are 70%, 36% and 67% respectively. The following table, supplying circumstantial detail in the HA slightly better with goodwill than in Suetonius, can be given either as benefit (HA 48 out of 128, Suetonius 51). Instances in the HA subsample are mainly from the Marcus life. N. Verus and Faustina (*Mar.* 20.2,

<sup>35</sup> See A. TIMONEN, *Prejudices against emperors* (1980), p. 183-197.

And some of the reported hostility appears. Emperors could jest and, in the senate, Caligula's reported provocation has been only a joke (*Cal.* 55.3). It is an emperor to take more seriously than that the Roman people had only a notable episode from the repertoire of mockery has its pleasures for the emperor for recipients if egos were not mentioned and portrayals of Suetonius the «reality», and not how much analysis is poured into the writing. An emperor at times was one of the principate<sup>34</sup>.

#### *Hostility and recipients of goodwill*

In the subsample, the emperor has, as a source of goodwill in Suetonius (62%), and larger one in the HA, Hadrian and Marcus supplying the same figure that stands out in the data (2 out of 109) from other emperors of a life being honoured in some instances supplying 26 and no other. The HA is very much something that is, by contrast, has a more even

#### *Hostility and officium, and the place of utilitas*

67, 86. (p. 91, on rhetorical, stereotyped tyrants as belong to folklore rather than history. The *scurra* did not go too far. Cf. Dio LXV and the city against Vespasian, he would find an object on which to vent hostility can be behaviour can shore up the self, and as of mortality. Violence and cruelty are not, ingroups from outgroups. elaborated if we note for what the main when information is explicitly given. See

spread, so that while other emperors also score most highly (15 out of 73), unknown (11), the populace (10), troops (10) and senatorials (10) also figure prominently. As recipients of goodwill, emperors account for 26% of instances in Suetonius, 23% in the HA, which in this case has the more even spread of statuses: the imperial family scores 64, senatorials 50, miscellaneous 46 and other emperors 35, reflecting for example the way Hadrian was honoured by Pius, and the populace 19. Suetonius has the imperial family most prominent (52) but other groups figure much less prominently, miscellaneous 29, senatorials 12, unknown 10, and imperial freedmen 8, reflecting the indulgence of Claudius and appearing not at all in the HA. Whether as agents or recipients, senatorials and other emperors figure prominently in the HA, and whereas in Suetonius and the HA together miscellaneous figure as recipients 75 times, only once are they an agent. Whereas in Suetonius, senatorials, equestrians and a large and diverse miscellaneous group are the major targets of hostility, they are less prominent as recipients as goodwill. In the HA it is senatorials, foreigners and unknowns who are the main targets of hostility, whereas it is the imperial family, senators, other emperors and miscellaneous who are the main recipients of goodwill. Provincials figure more often as recipients of both hostility and goodwill in the HA than in Suetonius<sup>35</sup>.

#### *Causes, purposes and effects of goodwill*

The figures for the absence of circumstantial detail in the HA are 64% of the 352 instances of goodwill in the case of causes, 51% in the case of purpose and 84% in the case of effects. The corresponding figures for Suetonius are 70%, 36% and 67%. Overall, Suetonius is better at supplying circumstantial detail in instances of hostility than of goodwill, the HA slightly better with goodwill. For both authors the chief causes of goodwill can be given either as signs of appreciation for a service or benefit (HA 48 out of 128, Suetonius 56 out of 132) or of genuine affection, generosity of spirit and a sense of fellow feeling (HA 57, Suetonius 51). Instances in the HA subsample of signs of appreciation come mainly from the Marcus life. Marcus thanked the senate for deifying Verus and Faustina (*Mar.* 20.2, 26.7), and honoured his teachers for

<sup>35</sup> See A. TIMONEN, *Prejudices against Provincials in the Historia Augusta*, *Arctos* 25 (1980), p. 183-197.

what they taught him (*Mar.* 3.5). On his death the senate and people hailed him as a kindly god for his benevolence as emperor, and decreed a temple and priests for him (*Mar.* 18.3, 8). The Hadrian life provides a number of instances too, such as Trajan rewarding Hadrian with a diamond for his distinguished service in the Dacian war (*Had.* 3.6) and with a consulship for maintaining discipline amongst the troops and curbing the procurators (*Had.* 3.9). The Parthians were well disposed towards Hadrian because he removed the king Trajan had imposed upon them upon them (*Had.* 21.10). The senate offered a triumph to Severus for his successes against the Parthians (*Sev.* 16.6). Instances of the second category, fellow feeling, solicitude and the desire to be helpful are naturally found in Suetonius' Titus: it was his firm practice never to let a petitioned go away without hope (*Tit.* 8.1); he promised a gladiatorial show simply because spectators wished it, never refused a request and even encouraged people to ask for what they wanted (*Tit.* 8.2). Vespasian provided a dowry and fine match for the daughter of his enemy Vitellius (*Ves.* 14). When Caligula fell ill early in his reign, large crowds gathered outside the palace and some vowed to fight as gladiators or offer their own lives if they recovered (*Cal.* 14.2). Vows were offered for his safe return when he journeyed to islands off Campania (*Cal.* 14.2). And Caligula could show generosity too. Like Titus he readily granted a request for games (*Cal.* 18.3). He loved his wife Caesonia ardently and constantly (*Cal.* 25.3) and kissed the pantomime actor Mnester even in the theatre (*Cal.* 55.1). His sisters exhumed his half-burnt corpse, cremated it properly and put the ashes in a tomb (*Cal.* 59). The next most common cause of a goodwill gesture was the need to win support and popularity or to plan for the future: Suetonius 19, HA 14. Claudius promised each praetorian guardsman 1500 sesterces, «the first Caesar to win the loyalty of the troops by pledging a reward» (*Cl.* 10.4; cf. *Had.* 5.6), and declared an amnesty for all that had been said and done during the two-day interregnum (*Cl.* 11.1). Hadrian gave a double *congiarium* to the people of Rome on his return in 118 in order to check rumours about himself (*Had.* 7.4). He adopted the future Antoninus Pius to ensure an orderly succession on his death (*Had.* 21.1; cf. *Mar.* 5.1), who in turn commended Marcus to his friends and prefects as death drew near (*Mar.* 7.3). Only rarely does a need to compensate for injury or loss occur, such as the senate voting to rebuild at public expense the house Claudius lost through fire (*Cl.* 6.2) and Claudius vowing to make things up to Britannicus for having impaired his chances of succession

(*Cl.* 43). Other causes include Severus and his wish to annoy the emperor (21.10, 17.11). While many instances of goodwill are more frequent than what someone has done, such as frequently than with hostility does go to the credit of an agent.

The majority (101) of the HA's instances of goodwill are intended to show honour or respect, such as honours for Trajan (*Had.* 6.1) and for Marcus and Commodus (*Com.* 2.4). Instances of goodwill towards Caesar upon Caracalla (*Sev.* 14.3) are a proportion of Suetonius' given put to the most important purpose. Examples include Asia erecting statues to Vespasian (*Ves.* 1.2), Vespasian honours for drinking from a silver cup that once belonged to the emperor the year (*Ves.* 2.1) and Claudius promoting a legionary commander in Britain to a consulship (*Ves.* 4.2). Also prominent instances), is the aim to help, appreciate or reward in a non-official way such as Otho burning the houses of his supporters (*Oth.* 10.2), Caligula seeking to add a fifth *decuria* (*Cal.* 16.2), Caligula being vigilant about Claudius' safety (*Cl.* 27.1) and the Parthian king offering to help Vespasian's cause against the Parthians include winning popularity (an obvious aim of the group including Claudius to demonstrate his notions of justice to those sent to kill Helvidius Priscus and Severus sending Caracalla a speech to conciliate his feuding sons (*Sev.* 14.3). The effects of instances of goodwill, where the recipient is the most common effect, are the most common effect of the third of the examples<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. n. 18 for the effects of hostility. . . (flattery can irritate if underdone or overdone, trying to bring his sons together, an effort to disadvantage the agent, recipient or third

n his death the senate and people  
nevolence as emperor, and decreed  
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d to compensate for injury or loss  
build at public expense the house  
) and Claudius vowing to make  
paired his chances of succession

(*Cla.* 43). Other causes include Severus' desire for harmony between his sons and his wish to annoy the senate by deifying Commodus (*Sev.* 21.10, 17.11). While many instances of goodwill can be a reaction to what someone has done, such as making a request, much more frequently than with hostility does goodwill stem from an innate desire or trait of an agent.

The majority (101) of the HA's 174 given purposes can be classified to show honour or respect, such as Hadrian asking the senate for divine honours for Trajan (*Had.* 6.1) and the senate decreeing a triumph for Marcus and Commodus (*Com.* 2.4-5) and Severus bestowing the title of Caesar upon Caracalla (*Sev.* 14.3). Such a motive occupies a smaller proportion of Suetonius' given purposes (50 out of 121) but it remains the most important purpose. Examples include grateful inhabitants of Asia erecting statues to Vespasian's father for being an honest tax-collector (*Ves.* 1.2), Vespasian honouring his grandmother's memory by drinking from a silver cup that once belonged to her on special days of the year (*Ves.* 2.1) and Claudius recognising Vespasian's exploits as a legionary commander in Britain with triumphal regalia, priesthoods and a consulship (*Ves.* 4.2). Also prominent, particularly in Suetonius (42 instances), is the aim to help, appreciate, support in a less formally honorific way such as Otho burning letters that might incriminate his supporters (*Oth.* 10.2), Caligula seeking to ease the burden on jurors by adding a fifth *decuria* (*Cal.* 16.2), Claudius thanking Narcissus for being vigilant about Claudius' safety even when he (Narcissus) was asleep (*Cla.* 27.1) and the Parthian king Vologaesus promising 40,000 archers to help Vespasian's cause against Vitellius (*Ves.* 6.4). Other motives include winning popularity (an overlap with causes here) and a miscellaneous group including Claudius showing leniency in many court cases to demonstrate his notions of justice (*Cla.* 14), Vespasian trying to recall those sent to kill Helvidius Priscus in order to save his life (*Ves.* 15) and Severus sending Caracalla a speech from Sallust that he hoped would conciliate his feuding sons (*Sev.* 21.10). Concerning the mentioned effects of instances of goodwill, in both authors enhancement of the recipient is the most common effect, in both cases comprising nearly one third of the examples<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. n. 18 for the effects of hostility. An act of goodwill can fail to enhance the agent (flattery can irritate if underdone or overdone) or fail to achieve its object (like Severus trying to bring his sons together, an effort neither of them may have appreciated), or can disadvantage the agent, recipient or third party. Enhance subject: Caligula honoured the

*The perception of goodwill*

Severus deifying Commodus as part of an anti-senatorial policy reminds us that, although it enhances the (memory of the) recipient and thus fits our working definition of goodwill, an act of goodwill may not please everybody, any more than acts of hostility necessarily displease or disadvantage everybody. Signs of goodwill to a bad emperor could be a sign of alienation from the self and identification with the aggressor, even, in some cases, a questionable loyalty to the perceived need for group cohesion and social order. An act of goodwill towards A may require an act of hostility towards B. An act of violence, like beating an errant child or dull pupil, might be thought to be an act of kindness, for the good of the recipient, even if in reality it perpetuates cycles of violence. Punishment of a crime might be considered to be for the benefit of the community. While there is a formal, ritualistic and often insincere element in much of the goodwill related by the authors, as in funeral eulogies, there is also much kindness, clemency, affection and loyalty, although in the frequent absence of circumstantial detail one has to take the instances at face value<sup>37</sup>. People offer support, grant tax relief, remit rent, grant posts and privileges, give gifts and rewards, food and money, banquets and entertainment, land and legacies, reinstate the deprived, prevent embarrassment for a host by using his rancid oil, mourn losses and bereavements, offer to serve without pay and rations, console and comfort, rescue from kidnappers, promote reconciliations, forgive opponents and reveal a plot, just to give some examples from the life of Caesar. In a society where the institution of patronage required an exchange of services, where, in a world where not everything can be bought with money, one sought to build up a degree of social security and political capital by the bestowal of benefits and putting others under an obligation, where generosity honoured the giver rather than the recipient, and

memory of his mother and brother Nero by sailing to recover their ashes from the islands where they died and bring them back to Rome. «and in a violent storm, so that his *pietas* might stand out more» (*Cal.* 15.1). Disadvantage subject: the help Ennia and Macro gave to Caligula to succeed Tiberius was rewarded by a bloody death (*Cal.* 26.1). Disadvantage object: Caligula's passionate love for Caesonia involved threats to torture her to find out why he loved her so (*Cal.* 33, perhaps the threat was not meant seriously). Disadvantage another: a consequence of Caligula's devotion to actor Mnester was a flogging for anyone who made the slightest noise while he was performing (*Cal.* 55.1).

<sup>37</sup> The very first instance supplied by Suetonius has Julius Caesar refusing to divorce Cornelia at the behest of the dictator Sulla (*Jul.* 1.2). But was this only devotion to Cornelia or a refusal to be dictated to?

where flattery was often prudent *pro* was no more than a necessary social of goodwill<sup>38</sup>. Yet the kindness *ante* Pius and Marcus was recognised *ante* goes beyond their bestowal of *mag* tuses, offices and honours to *prod* benefits. The affection of Tiberius and Hadrian for Antinous was *gent*

SUM

To sum up: in many respects, *Su* hostility and goodwill are similar. *T* categories Deprive (B), Torment (*T* range of social categories to which profile of certain low status groups *ators* as recipients, causes of *hosti* as reactions to the behaviour of *ot* are true of both authors. The differ *hosti* are nearly one third again in the HA (A), more Criticism in *often* gives the cause and purpose *o* vation, where given, is more about *ment* than revenge and self-defence *of* the agent figures much more *o* agents in the HA, other emperors *active* in Suetonius. The HA has *1* Suetonius on the imperial family.

Concerning their treatment of *being* more often the sources of *g*

<sup>38</sup> Cf. A. HANDS, *Charities and Social* «In the vast majority of texts and docum quite clear that the giver's action is self-r the recipient of his gift some sort of *return* more like an economic transaction than a point out that, far from this process *being* course and was vital for one's security a disinterested, non-reciprocal, minimal gi thirsty stranger or burying an unburied *co*

an anti-senatorial policy reminds (ry of the) recipient and thus fits act of goodwill may not please ally necessarily displease or dis- ill to a bad emperor could be a lentification with the aggressor, yalty to the perceived need for act of goodwill towards A may n act of violence, like beating an ight to be an act of kindness, for dity it perpetuates cycles of vio- considered to be for the benefit ial, ritualistic and often insincere ed by the authors, as in funeral clemency, affection and loyalty, umstantial detail one has to take er support, grant tax relief, remit ts and rewards, food and money, legacies, reinstate the deprived, sing his rancid oil, mourn losses out pay and rations, console and te reconciliations, forgive oppo- e examples from the life of Cae- 'patronage required an exchange t everything can be bought with e of social security and political putting others under an obliga- ver rather than the recipient, and

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where flattery was often prudent policy, much of the apparent goodwill was no more than a necessary social lubricant and/or hypocritical veneer of goodwill<sup>38</sup>. Yet the kindness and affability of men like Vespasian, Pius and Marcus was recognised and appreciated by contemporaries and goes beyond their bestowal of magistracies, immunities, privileges, statuses, offices and honours to produce a web of shared and reciprocal benefits. The affection of Tiberius for Vipsania, Caligula for Drusilla and Hadrian for Antinous was genuine enough.

#### SUMMARY

To sum up: in many respects, Suetonius' and the HA's treatments of hostility and goodwill are similar. The relative unimportance of hostility categories Deprive (B), Torment (C), Hate (E) and Impede (F), like the range of social categories to which agents and recipients belong, the low profile of certain low status groups as agents and the high profile of senators as recipients, causes of hostility being overwhelmingly presented as reactions to the behaviour of others, the low rate of given effects, all are true of both authors. The differences are that instances in the HA of hostility are nearly one third again as frequent. There is more Violence in the HA (A), more Criticism in Suetonius (D). Suetonius much more often gives the cause and purpose of hostility, and the nature of his motivation, where given, is more about self-enhancement and norm-enforcement than revenge and self-defence, and amongst causes, a desire or trait of the agent figures much more often. Senatorials dominate the list of agents in the HA, other emperors and the imperial family are the most active in Suetonius. The HA has more focus on non-Roman recipients, Suetonius on the imperial family.

Concerning their treatment of goodwill, similarities are emperors being more often the sources of goodwill than of hostility, about two-

<sup>38</sup> Cf. A. HANDS, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome*, London 1968, p. 26: «In the vast majority of texts and documents relating to gifts in the ancient world, it is quite clear that the giver's action is self-regarding, in the sense that he anticipates from the recipient of his gift some sort of return. To the modern mind such 'giving' may seem more like an economic transaction than altruistic gesture». However, Hands goes on to point out that, far from this process being amoral, it formed the basis of friendly intercourse and was vital for one's security and prestige. Moreover, there was a concept of disinterested, non-reciprocal, minimal gift and service giving, like giving water to a thirsty stranger or burying an unburied corpse.

thirds of the time, members of the imperial family being frequent recipients, a similar disposition of types of causes, an emphasis on honorific purposes, and similar sized categories of goodwill, except for Praise (C), considerably higher in the HA. Other differences include the prominence of emperors as recipients in the HA, senatorials more active as agents in the HA, a greater social spread of agents in Suetonius, and Suetonius more often giving the causes, purposes and effects of goodwill.

Overall, hostility occurs more frequently than goodwill (though not by much in the HA), and a similar range of social categories, whether of agents or recipients, occurs in both areas. The percentage of instances where effects are given is similar in hostility but higher in Suetonius' goodwill, more causes and purposes are given by Suetonius in hostility, and the HA has a greater overall frequency of hostility and goodwill. In both areas, the HA features senatorials as agents and gives more prominence to foreigners and provincials as recipients.

There is little in either author to contradict impressions provided by other literary sources on the nature of political and social life in the principate. Senators and emperors had to and did co-operate and gratify each other but some emperors conducted psychological warfare against the senate and any possible threats with displays of caprice, unpredictability, humiliation and force. Other tactics such as fostering disunity and suborning others to do their dirty work occurred too, but this is not something our categories are designed to catch. However, regardless of relations between the senate and a particular emperor, society as a whole cohered through myriad reciprocal benefits and bonds of genuine esteem and affection, and through displays of deference and loyalty that are only occasionally recorded by the sources.

#### CONCLUSION

In an autocracy, like in any society, certain conflicts and tensions, certain honorific gestures and expressions of favour, whether sincere or calculated, will manifest and be part of the social landscape. How any author reports these, both as regards their overall frequency and their disposition in particular categories, will be the combined result of the author's personality, preoccupations, ideology, perception of the present and available material. This study has sought to throw some light on

how Suetonius and the HA portray behaviour by a content analysis of presenting statistics, similarities, and differences. To focus only on what emperors did is to focus to the material but at the cost of seeing how they saw all men and women behaving, in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The historical period of their times of writing more than 25 years after the events he described, though Augustus, a distinguished senatorial writer, was an event in the lives. It could be that Suetonius' silence reflects the growth of political events in the fourth century, and his emphasis on panegyric in the dominate, but his sources may be more important.

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#### APPENDIX: WHAT EMPERORS DID

The following list is confined to the reigns, beginning with Augustus:

- Augustus: too stringent marriage law, the senate, his taste for deflowering
- Tiberius: his apparent hypocrisy about African envoys, indecent assault towards Mallonia, Germanicus' provocations of Nero and Drusus (24.2, 31.2, 44.2, 45, 52.3, 53.2, 54.2)
- Claudius: failure to prevent famine (47.2)
- Nero: his excessive wickedness, miswishes, suspected desire to loot Rome (45.1, 45.2, 47.2, 49.2)
- Galba: his stinginess, discharging (20.1).

<sup>39</sup> While recognising that an act of goodwill depends on who is affected and allowed.

<sup>40</sup> Such as «Neronizing» Commodus in *his Mother in the Historia Augusta, Hist*



perial family being frequent recipients of goodwill, except for Praise A. Other differences include the agents in the HA, senatorials more social spread of agents in Suetonius' the causes, purposes and effects

ently than goodwill (though not by type of social categories, whether of areas. The percentage of instances of hostility but higher in Suetonius' are given by Suetonius in hostility, frequency of hostility and goodwill. In cases as agents and gives more prominent recipients.

Contradict impressions provided by political and social life in the principate did co-operate and gratify each other in psychological warfare against the displays of caprice, unpredictability, such as fostering disunity and subversion occurred too, but this is not somewhat. However, regardless of relations of ruler and subject, society as a whole benefits and bonds of genuine esteem of deference and loyalty that are common.

#### CONCLUSION

Certain conflicts and tensions, certain areas of favour, whether sincere or calculated, shaped the social landscape. How any of these will be the combined result of the emperor's ideology, perception of the present and how it is sought to throw some light on

how Suetonius and the HA portray two distinct<sup>39</sup> and important areas of behaviour by a content analysis that seeks to delineate the pictures by presenting statistics, similarities, differences, examples and a summary. To focus only on what emperors did and said would have given more focus to the material but at the cost of a wider view of how the author saw all men and women behaving, snapshots from the early 2nd and late 4th centuries. The historical periods they cover are virtually contiguous, their times of writing more than 250 years apart. Suetonius lived through some of the events he described, the HA relied on heavily Marius Maximus, a distinguished senatorial who likewise lived through some of the events in the lives. It could be that the HA's emphasis on physical violence reflects the growth of political savagery and social strife in the late fourth century, and his emphasis on honours reflects the popularity of panegyric in the dominate, but his own tastes and prejudices and those of his sources may be more important factors<sup>40</sup>.

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#### APPENDIX: WHAT EMPERORS ARE CRITICISED AND PRAISED FOR

The following list is confined to criticisms of rulers after they began their reigns, beginning with Augustus:

Augustus: too stringent marriage laws, perceived restrictions on free speech in the senate, his taste for deflowering virgins (34.1, 54.1, 71.1).

Tiberius: his apparent hypocrisy about accepting power, wasting the time of African envoys, indecent assault on acolyte and flute-player, indecency towards Mallonia, Germanicus' death, treatment and exile of Agrippina, provocations of Nero and Drusus, his cruelty (twice), general unpopularity (24.2, 31.2, 44.2, 45, 52.3, 53.2, 54.2, 59, 66, 75.3).

Claudius: failure to prevent famine (18.2).

Nero: his excessive wickedness, misusing his talents, crimes and murderous wishes, suspected desire to loot Gaul, excesses and failures, bad lyre-playing, famine, unpopularity (three times) (36.2, 39.1, 39.3, 39.3, 40.4, 41.1, 41.1, 45.1, 45.2, 47.2, 49.2).

Galba: his stinginess, discharging some praetorians, unpopularity (13, 16.1, 20.1).

<sup>39</sup> While recognising that an act of goodwill can be an act of hostility and vice versa, depending on who is affected and allowing for mixed motives.

<sup>40</sup> Such as «Neronizing» Commodus and Caracalla. See R. PENELLA, *Caracalla and his Mother in the Historia Augusta*, *Historia* 29 (1980), p. 382-384.

- Vitellius: gluttony, burning temple of Jupiter (17, 17).  
 Vespasian: covetousness and shameless methods of money raising (five times) (16.1, 16.3, 19.2, 23.3).  
 Domitian: tyrannical behaviour (three times) (23.1).  
 Hadrian: death of four ex-consuls, destroying gains and buildings of Trajan, homosexuality, adultery, disloyalty to friends, excessive *civilitas*, natural cruelty, dishonest healings, excesses at end of reign (7.3, 9.2, 11.7, 20.1, 20.3, 25.4, 28.2).  
 Pius: insufficient generosity to household (4.6).  
 Marcus: reading at the games, for tolerating Faustina's adultery, insincerity, encouraging the arrogance of the court (15.1, 29.3, 29.7).  
 Commodus: inappropriate appointment to consulship, ridiculous pretensions, being a murderer, gladiator, foe to gods and senate, plundering temples, setting aside wills and robbing heirs, selling admission to the senate, encouraging spies, informers and slaves to inform (8.1, 8.9, 18-19).  
 Pertinax: covetousness, being too close to Commodus, criticising sloppy ways of soldiers, reimposing taxes Commodus had remitted, stinginess (3.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.7, 13.5).  
 Didius: death of Pertinax (4.2, 4.3, 4.7).  
 Caracalla: killing Geta (2.7).  
 Rulers are praised for the following:  
 Augustus: admirable conduct, returning from provinces, blessings of peace, a long and good reign (57.1, 57.2, 98.2, 100.2, 100.3).  
 Tiberius: success as general (21.5).  
 Caligula: being a new emperor after Tiberius, generous acts (13, 14.1, 16.4).  
 Nero: recital in theatre, crowning king of Armenia, desire to be acclaimed as a performer, performance in theatre, victories in competitions (10.2, 13.2, 21.3, 24.1, 25.2).  
 Galba: being kind to his bodyguard when they were sick (20.1).  
 Otho: buying loyalty of praetorians, being a new emperor, being a reminder of Nero (6.3, 7.1).  
 Vitellius: being popular, his arrival in Rome (8.2, 13.2).  
 Titus: manifesting the highest virtues, being lovable and popular (7.1, 11).  
 Hadrian: suppressing Moorish revolts (12.7).  
 Pius: his birthday, his many qualities (5.2, 13.3).  
 Marcus: successful Parthian war, consideration to senate, lovability (9.1, 9.2, 12.7, 18.3, 18.5, 18.8).  
 Commodus: being so anti-senatorial (16.11-12).  
 Pertinax: being so good a ruler (15.2, 15.4).  
 Severus: Parthian success (16.6).

## NOTES ON VERBAL HUMOUR

The main division in the field of verbal humour: «things designed to raise laughter» (Cicero, *Institutio oratoria* VI 3.25). The first is verbal humour, not with practical jokes, but with practical jokes. H.A. to Roman rulers and their subjects.

Within verbal humour (*in dicto*) there is a division between humour *in verbis* and humour *in rebus*. «the laughter of a witty saying is distinguished (quodam acumine) in word» (Cicero, *De oratore* II 244), «it is amusing whenever laughter is excited» (Cicero, *De oratore* II 248); «the excitement of laughter is distinguished as the other departments are distinguished with things and words (*positis*)» (Cicero, *De oratore* II 3.22)<sup>1</sup>.

Humour *in verbis* consists in punning, in the *ratio* and force of the word (*definita*), but most of it excites merriment (Cicero, *De oratore* II 288) and it loses its charm (*venustum*) (Cicero, *De oratore* II 258)<sup>2</sup>. As for humour *in rebus*, very meaning (*in ipsa sententia*) finds innumerable divisions and a few not disappointing expectations and ridiculing pointing out in an amusing way of things uglier, irony, incongruity (*supra et infra*) (Cicero, *De oratore* II 264) and to be more elegant (*et elegantiora*, Cicero, *De oratore* VI 3.57).

Biographers such as Plutarch considered the production of humour

<sup>1</sup> The translations used are those published by E. V. Rieu (CICERO, *De oratore*), J.C. Rolfe (SUETONIUS, *Vitae XII Caesarum*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also *D.O.* II 252: *quod quibusque in rebus: quod mutatis verbis salem amittit*,



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