Suetonius and His Own Day

Over the course of the last century since the publication of Alcide Macé's epoch making work on Suetonius, there have been many attempts to discover Suetonius the man and scholar (1). As part of the endeavour many modern scholars view his most important extant work, the *Caesares*, as a vehicle of allusive polemic against the emperor Hadrian, or, more gently, of critical advice — criticism of a reigning emperor was dangerous, so Suetonius had to proceed by allusion, that is by the deliberate insertion of covert, yet discernable, references to the present. Here I attempt to consider the plausibility of these views and to show how Suetonius treats his own time. For the sake of definition this will be taken as the reigns of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian, years which the *Caesares* do not cover and which are precisely the period taken up by Suetonius' scholarly and secretarial careers. I shall argue that the apparent purpose and character of the *Caesares* are actual.

Firstly, it is necessary to consider where Suetonius does clearly refer to the present and to see how he relates the past to it. His general eschewing of the historic present tense and predominant use of the perfect and imperfect tenses facilitates the investigation (2). The few examples of historic presents admit of no certain explanation (3) :

(1) A. Macé, *Essai sur Suétone*, Paris, 1900. Much of the subsequent discussion is handled skillfully by R. C. Lounsbury, *The Arts of Suetonius : an Introduction*, New York, 1987. I thank Mrs M. T. Griffin and Prof. J.E. Atkinson for their comments on this article at various stages ; they should not be taken as sharing my views.

(2) P. Sage, *Quelques aspects de l'expression narrative dans les Douze Césars de Suétone* in *RBPh 57*, 1979, p. 24, stresses this peculiarity, contrasting Nepos' biographies, and rightly excludes such forms as *redit, adit, perit, petit* from the investigation.

(3) *Vulnerat* (*D.I.* 82,1) might be ascribed to a desire to give a vivid description of the assassination of Caesar, but then why is it the only present in a string of indisputable perfects ? *Aperitur* and *recitatur* (*D.I.* 83,1) in connection with Caesar's will and *adoptatur* (*Tib.* 15,2) offer a potentially more interesting explanation, as Hadrian's difficult accession might be thought to make a reference to wills and adoption controversial (see below). The reader would need to make a conscious contrast between the legitimacy of Octavian's inheritance and the supposedly dubious claims of Hadrian. For a general Suetonian interest in wills, see B. Mouchova, *Adoption und Testament*

Suetonius may have been inadvertent or have followed his sources too closely ; the predominance of passives may be significant, although no simple substitution of the perfect participle is possible in all cases.

We can exclude many other present tenses from consideration as dependent on *dum* clauses and the like (4), or as in the introductory phrases to his sections (rubrics) (5), or as in explanatory phrases such as *id est* (6). There remain, however, nearly fifty references in the *Caesares*, marked by the present tense and either some temporal expression such as *nunc* or *adhuc* or by clear attachment to the post-Domitianic period, which have to be considered (7). On analysis these references show a range of Suetonian interests wholly devoid of controversial and didactic content, yet with demonstrable links to his other works (8). Roman topography, with exact geographical descriptions,

in Suetons Kaiserbiographien in *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Philosophica et Historica* 5, 1966, p. 55-62. *Additur* (*D.I.* 88), *nascitur* (*N.* 4) and *cognoscit* (*G.* 19,1) lack any particular importance. Perhaps rightly SAGE excludes *creatur* (*D.I.* 19,2), preferring the reading *creatus*. *Assolet* (*N.* 34,5), if the text is correct, also appears to be a historic present. No allusive reference to Hadrian has yet been surmised, although he reintroduced the wearing of beards.

(4) E.g. *Tib.* 51,2 ; 57,2 ; *Ve.* 24 ; *Dom.* 17,2.

(5) E.g. *D.I.* 34,1 ; 76,1 ; *D.A.* 57,1 ; *Tib.* 61,2 ; 63,1 ; *Cal.* 22,1, 25,1.

(6) E.g. *D.I.* 19,2 ; 56,6 ; *D.A.* 26,2 ; *Tib.* 57,1 ; *instar est* : *Cal.* 5 ; *hoc est* : *Ve.* 11.

(7) I list them all here for convenience, and discuss in the text those examples which are particularly interesting. *D.I.* 25,1 : *continetur patetque*, 49,4 : *canunt* ; *D.A.* 5 : *nunc ...habet*, 6 : *nunc ...est*, 7,1 : *colitur*, 43,1 : *est*, 47 : *est*, 49,3 : *perferunt*, 72,3 : *sunt*, 97,1 : *mos est*, 100,2 : *est* ; *Tib.* 6,3 : *durant ostendunturque*, 14,3 : *hodieque... uisuntur*, 16,2 : *ostenditur*, 62,2 : *ostenditur*, 65,2 : *uocatur* ; *Cal.* 1,2 : *existimatur* ; *Cl.* 1,2 : *adhuc... uocantur*, 10,1 : *est*, 19 : *hodieque seruantur*, 20,1 : *est*, 21,3 : *agunt, insiliuntque... detrahunt*, 24,2 : *aut, uti nunc*, 25,1 : *uocatur*, 46 : *uocant* ; *N.* 7,2 : *ut assolet*, 22,2 : *solent*, 36,1 : *putatur*, 50 : *prospicitur* ; *G.* 1 : *hodieque...* 4 : *sinistrorsus Fundos petentibus* ; *O.* 8,3 : *habetur... incipiunt*, 9,2 : *est* ; *Vi.* 17,1 : *fit... solent*, 18 : *ualet* ; *Ve.* 1,4 : *solent*, 2,1 : *est*, 7,1 : *assolet*, 8,3 : *commeant... cursitant*, 12 : *extat*, 19,2 : *est* ; *Tit.* 1 : *manet adhuc et ostenditur*, 2 : *hodieque praefertur*, 4,1 : *apparet* ; *Dom.* 4,4 : *nunc est*, 5 : *nunc... uocatur*, 8,2 : *post illum reos omnium criminum uidimus*, 23,2 : *beatiorem post se laetioremque portendi rei publicae statum, sicut sane breui euenit abstinentia et moderatione insequentium principum.* — Comparable material exists in *De Viris Illustribus* and shows the continuity of interest in Suetonius' works : *De Gramm.* 4,8 : *quae omitti iam uideo*, 9,6 : *ostenditur*, 17,4 : *habet* ; *De Rhet.* 25,8 : *uocant* ; *Vita Horati* (ROTH. p. 298) : *ostenditur* ; *Vita Accii* (ROTH, p. 295) : *dicitur* ; *Vita Virgilii* (ROTH, p. 296) : *dicitur... sepeliuntur.* — Also *D.A.* 50 : *perseuerarunt* and 94,7 : *coaxare* may be true perfects, but they do not fit the criteria here. Textual variants provide *uomit* at *Cal.* 57,4, but the correct reading is *uomuit*.

(8) For a discussion of the evidence for these other scholarly works, see P. L. SCHMIDT, *Suetons Pratum seit Wessner* in *ANRW* II 33.5, Berlin, 1991, p. 3794-3825, and D. WARDLE, *Suetonius and Greek* in *AClass* 36, 1993, p. 91-104.

is prominent (9) : the shrine at the "Ox-heads" in the Palatine quarter (*D.A.* 5), the bronze statuette (of Hadrian ?) (10) placed among the imperial *Lares* (*D.A.* 7,1), the grove of the Caesars on the Tiber's right bank (*D.A.* 43,1) (11), the statue of Victory in the Senate house (*D.A.* 100,2) (12), the Hermaeum, an appartment in the Palace (*Cl.* 10,1), the Aqua Claudia (*Cl.* 20,1) (13), the tomb of the Domitii on the Pincian (*N.* 50), Titus' birthplace near the Septizonium (*Tit.* 1), the ebony statue of Britannicus used in the procession at games in Rome (*Tit.* 2) and the forum named after Nerva (*Dom.* 5).

A second prominent feature is an appetite for "imperial curiosities" in which the *Caesares* resemble a tourist guidebook, revealing an inquisitive love of the peculiar (14). Imperial birthplaces attract the biographer's attention : Augustus' birthplace as a site of worship (*D.A.* 5) (15) and the superstition attached to his early home (*D.A.* 6) ; we also have directions, as from a tourist guidebook, to Galba's birthplace near Tarracina (*G.* 4) and to Vespasian's ancestral home (*Ve.* 1.3). He preserves the insignificant name of the hamlet where Vespasian was born (*Ve.* 2,1) and the location of Titus' humble arrival (*Tit.* 1).

(9) Cf. F. Della Corte, *Suetonio Eques Romanus*², Florence, 1967, p. 146 ; E. Tambroni in *ACSR* 1, 1931, p. 388-393. Places outside Rome can illustrate the extent of Suetonius' travels : Capri (*D.A.* 72,3 ; *Tib.* 62,2 ; 65,2) ; Baiae (*Tib.* 6,3) ; N. Italy (*Tib.* 14,3, *O.* 9,2, *Vita Virgilii*) ; Pisaurum (*Vita Accii*) ; Umbria (*Ve.* 1,3) ; and Samnium (*Ve.* 2,1 ; *De Gramm.* 5,6). T. F. Carney, *How Suetonius' Lives reflect on Hadrian* in *PACA* 11, 1968, p. 13-14, doubts wider travel, but a consistency of usage should reveal journeys to Germany (*Cl.* 1,2) and Britain (*Tit.* 4,1). Any such travel was most likely undertaken while Suetonius was *ab epistulis* with Hadrian in 121-2 (*pace* B. Baldwin, *Suetonius*, Amsterdam, 1983, p. 14-15). From the language of *Tib.* 16,2 one might link the Bithynian venture with Pliny which is usually created by the emendation of *hunc* to *nunc* at *Ep.* 10,94 (E.g. R. Syme, *Tacitus*, Oxford, 1958, p. 780 ; A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, Oxford, 1965, p. 690).

(10) See J. M. Carter, *Suetonius : Divus Augustus*, Bristol, 1982, ad loc.

(11) S. B. Platner/T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford, 1929, p. 357-8 (cf. Carter, p. 158), for Suetonius quoting from *Res Gestae*. However, Suetonius' frequent use of explicative clauses may suggest that the resemblance is coincidental. Neither Macé (p. 154) nor J. Gascou, *Suétone historien*, Paris, 1984, p. 530-532, cite this passage for Suetonius' use of *Res Gestae*.

(12) See H.A. Pohlsander in *Historia* 18, 1969, p. 588-597.

(13) Suetonius' use of the exact forms *Caeruleus* and *Albudignus* may come from an investigation of the inscription *CIL*, VI, 1256 (Gascou, p. 522) ; by contrast Frontinus, *De Aq.* 1, 14 has *Caerulus* and *Albudinus*.

(14) See W. Allen in *CB* 35, 1958, p. 1-4.

(15) Cf. H. Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti : eine Studie zu den Tempeln des ersten Kaisers*, Rome, 1985, p. 114, 119f.

This subject seems to be of particular interest, as Suetonius unusually parades his knowledge, which he has ostensibly acquired by independent research, and engages frequently in scholarly polemic ([16]). Other "tourist" features connected with the emperors appear : on Capri was Augustus' remarkable collection of huge bones (*D.A.* 72,3), a Tiberian place of execution (*Tib.* 62,2) and villa (*Tib.* 65,2) ; in Rome, the museum collection of Augustus' domestic furniture (*D.A.* 73) ; at Baiae, Pompeia's gifts to Tiberius (*Tib.* 6,3) ; and near Patavium, the golden dice in the fountain of Aponus at Geryon's oracle (*Tib.* 14,3).

Clear links may be drawn between many of these items and Suetonius' other scholarly, antiquarian works, although the existence of these works in fragmentary form makes the following attributions conjectural. Moreover which way the relationship with the *Caesares* worked is obscure, since the relative chronology of all the works is a matter of speculation. Perhaps because they are the major extant work, the *Caesares* are usually viewed as the summit of Suetonius' achievement, in which he drew on all his other works, but we cannot be certain ([17]). With *De Institutione Officiorum* ([18]) we might link how the *Aerarium Saturni* was governed (*Cl.* 24,2), Claudius' institution of the honorary form of Equestrian service, tenable in absence and entitled 'supernumerary' (*Cl.* 25,1), known only from Suetonius ([19]), and the explanation for the couriers from Ostia and Puteoli running barefoot (*Ve.* 8,3) ([20]). We can link with the *Ludicra Historia* ([21]) Claudius' introduction of Thessalian horsemen to the games (*Cl.* 21,3), the detail on the spot in the Circus Maximus from which the starting signal was given (*N.* 22,2), the iselastic custom of entering cities through

(16) Above all see *Cal.* 8 and the discussion by D. WARDLE, *Suetonius' Life of Caligula : a Commentary*, Brussels, 1994, ad loc.

(17) Cf. MACÉ, p. 300-301, 307-310, 331-335 ; A. F. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Suetonius : the Scholar and his Caesars*, London, 1983, p. 46-47. On the uncertainty of dates, e.g. G. B. TOWNEND, in *Roman Biography*, London, 1967, p. 80.

(18) For the extant fragments see ROTH, 302-303 (On REIFFERSCHEID's alternative collection see WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 41-42). For the scholarly nature of the work see MACÉ, p. 298-300 and WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 74-78. For DELLA CORTE, p. 18, it may have been a preparatory study towards Hadrian's reform of the imperial civil service.

(19) It has been suggested that Suetonius' concern to record this innovation may be connected with his enjoyment of the rank, if he accepted a post after he refused service in Britain (GASCOU, p. 573 n. 430).

(20) Cf. WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 130.

(21) For fragments, see ROTH, p. 278-280.

a breached wall (*N.* 25,1), mimes' wearing of the dead man's mask at his funeral (*Ve.* 19,2), the parading of Britannicus' statue in the *pompa circensis* (*Tit.* 2) and the excessive number of crowns given in Domitian's quinquennial games contrasted with later moderation (*Dom.* 4.4). In *Περὶ Ῥώμης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ νομίμων καὶ ἠθῶν* Suetonius discussed the Roman triumph (22), so his description of the regular singing of scurrilous ditties at triumphs (*D.I.* 49,4) might derive thence. In particular the reader might be reminded of Trajan's great triumphs over the Dacians and of the posthumous triumph for his victories over the Parthians (23). From the same work may derive the superstition that witchcraft and poison could render the human heart incorruptible to fire (*Cal.* 1,2), the dispensations granted to merchants who commissioned ships for the corn trade (*Cl.* 19) (24) and the posture forced upon criminals at their execution (*Vi.* 17,1). We may link with *Περὶ τοῦ κατὰ Ῥωμαίους ἐνιαυτοῦ* (25) the custom of 15th March, when the priests of Cybele began to wail (*O.* 8,3). *Pratum* or *Prata*, the most obscure of Suetonius' works (26), may have been the home of those miscellaneous references which have no obvious place elsewhere : the naming of *stellae crinitae* as *cometes* (*Cl.* 46, *N.* 36,1), the boundaries of Gaul (*D.I.* 25,1) and customs of Alexandrian religion (*Ve.* 7,1).

Everything so far has accorded well with the the human interests of Suetonius' works, defined by Wallace-Hadrill as 'life and manners' (27). These references to Suetonius' time appear to lack particular relevance or to be making detectably hostile allusions to Hadrian — indeed they are ignored by the scholars who detect such material elsewhere. Even the two references to political matters after Domitian do not disturb this picture : there is eloquent praise of the more fortunate state of affairs and of imperial moderation and restraint (*Dom.* 23,2) ; only the rapacity of many provincial governors mars the utopia (*Dom.* 8,2) (28).

(22) For fragments, see ROTH, p. 282-283.

(23) On this see W. DEN BOER, *Trajan's Deification and Hadrian's Succession* in *Ancient Society* 6, 1975, p. 203-212.

(24) Alternatively this may derive from *De Institutione Officiorum*. Suetonius' basic source may well have been Roman law, as the concessions survived to be incorporated in the Theodosian and Justinianic codes.

(25) For fragments, see ROTH, p. 281.

(26) For a discussion of the scholarship on the nature and existence of *Pratum*, see P. L. SCHMIDT in *ANRW* II 33.5 (1991), p. 3794-3825.

(27) P. 46.

(28) More obliquely, Nerva appears as the debaucher of Domitian (*Dom.* 1,1) and

The remaining instances of the present tense in the *Lives*, however, include many that are employed polemically. Excluding those in the first person, they concern primarily the citation of sources and report of traditions with such words as *credere, extare, ferre, opinari, putare, scribere* and *tradere* (29). We shall, however, concentrate on those instances of the first person where Suetonius intervenes in polemic against other scholars. Two particular uses are important (30) : where Suetonius stresses his own role as researcher and where he examines the value of a tradition or source. Necessarily both usages involve the refutation of other opinions, as in the discussion of Caligula's birthplace, on which the Elder Pliny and Gaetulicus are rejected in favour of the *acta diurna*, which Suetonius has consulted, or in the explanation for the bridge of boats at Baiae, on which he prefers his grandfather's version to two others (31). Where Suetonius is most closely involved personally is in scholarly 'oneupmanship' on matters which have no obvious or clearly demonstrable connection with the present (32).

It is often suggested that Tacitus' works have inspired some of Suetonius' polemic, or else that he attacks Plutarch, his only known rival as biographer of the emperors. Neither is mentioned by name. Plutarch's sequence of imperial *Lives, Augustus* to *Vitellius*, certainly

has a forum named after him (*Dom.* 5) (cf. BALDWIN, p. 50-51). For the frequent *repetundae* cases of Trajan's reign, see P. A. BRUNT in *Historia* 10, 1961, p. 217. — In both aspects that we have considered Suetonius' practice is closely paralleled in the Historia Augusta. That series of biographies or emperors and pretenders has over one hundred and seventy references to the present using similar formulae to those in Suetonius, e.g. *hodieque*.., and on generally similar subject matter. The following is only a brief selection of references in Historia Augusta to illustrate the basic categories employed. [1] Roman topography : *Hadr.* 19,12, *Pesc. Nig.* 6,8 ; *Geta* 7,2 ; *M.B.* 16,1 ; *Trig.* 25,4 ; *Tac.* 8,1 ; [2] social and religious customs : *Hadr.* 3,5 ; *Car.* 9,8 ; *Hel.* 22,2 ; *Trig.* 14,4 ; *Aur.* 35,2 ; [3] imperial birthplaces and sites of "pilgrimage": *Pert.* 2,3 ; *Max. Duo* 28,8 ; *Trig.* 31,1 ; [4] geographical information : *Sev.* 16,1 ; *Gord.* 16,2 ; *Trig.* 35,5. A notable difference, however, is that the supposed emperor of the day is sometimes addressed directly, e.g. *Ael.* 19,12 ; *Cl. Al.* 4,2 ; *Sev. Al.* 57.

(29) See A. A. HOWARD/C. N. JACKSON, *Index verborum C. Suetonii Tranquilli*, Cambridge, Mass, 1922.

(30) GASCOU ([n. 11], p. 242-249) has four further uses of the first person : [1] to recall a previous passage dealing with the same subject ; [2] to underline or excuse an expression ; [3] to reveal editorial choice in the material selected ; and [4] to explain the plan he follows or excuse the inclusion of apparent trivia.

(31) Examples from *Cal.* 8 and 19,3.

(32) It is conceivable that *Tib.* 21, on Tiberius' adoption by Augustus, may have an allusive role (see note 4 for its "pro-Hadrianic message"), but many others have none, e.g. *D.A.* 3, 57 ; *Cal.* 51,1.

preceded Suetonius' and could have been used (33). Tacitus' *Histories* also were available. The dates of the *Annals'* and *Caesares'* appearance are uncertain (34). Whether Suetonius could have, or did, use the *Annals* involves uncertainty on every point (35). Moreover the loss of all the common sources utilised by Suetonius and Tacitus obscures how much of the biographer's polemic is against them rather than against Tacitus (36) ; and it remains the case that any criticism concerns their methods and conclusions only.

We have seen that Suetonius' overt references to the present seem uncontroversial and that his personal interventions in the *Caesares* reveal the scholar at work. If there is criticism of Hadrian it is well hidden and no part of the ostensible purpose of the *Caesares*. Before examining various forms the theory of allusions has taken, its general plausibility should be considered. Firstly who was intended to perceive the allusions ? For, unless Suetonius intended to indulge his own feelings by a purely personal revenge upon Hadrian, the allusions, by definition, were to be perceived. If the general audience was to spot them, the emperor too would not have remained ignorant, especially if, like Hadrian, he was highly literate and sensitive ; and the whole procedure would seem dangerous. Secondly, the converse, that we have

(33) Publication under Domitian or Nerva (C. P. JONES, *Plutarch and Rome*, Oxford, 1971, p. 72).

(34) For the debate on the *Annals*, see F. R. D. GOODYEAR, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Vol. II, Cambridge, 1981, p. 387-393. Cf. G. W. BOWERSOCK, *The Greek Nabataean Bilingual Inscription at Ruw-wufa Saudi Arabia*, in *Le monde grec : hommages à C. Préaux*, Brussels, 1975, p. 518-522. For the *Caesares* the only external evidence is John LYDUS' statement (*De Mag.* 2,6 ; MACÉ, p. 204-205) that Septicius Clarus was the dedicatee during his praetorian prefecture, i.e. A.D. 119-122, but the dedication is lost with the beginning of *Diuus Iulius* ; that there was such a dedication does not attach it to all the *Caesares* : for example, TOWNEND (*CQ* 9, 1959, p. 285) links it to the first two only (cf. R. SYME, *MH* 37, 1980, p. 112-113, BALDWIN, p. 40). If so, the remaining lives could have followed after a long gap (E.g. SYME , p. 501, p. 778 : *Galba-Domitian* some years after the Julio-Claudian lives ; but retracted in *MH* 37, 1980, p. 118 [cf. GASCOU, p. 519 n. 250]).

(35) Despite this many have tackled the question. DELLA CORTE, p. 111f) has much of the 19th century *Quellenforschung* (cf. C. QUESTA, *Studie sulle fonti degli Annales di Tacito*^{2}, Rome, 1963, p. 95-103 ; F. R. D. GOODYEAR, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1972, 135-136, p. 167-168, 286 n. 3. G. B. TOWNEND in *Ancient Writers : Greece and Rome*, Vol. II, (New York, 1982, p. 1054) adds *Cl.* 1,4 as criticism of *Ann.* 2,82,2 ; WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 10 n. 15, p. 112 n. 15) accepts Suetonius as a critic.

(36) Cf. BALDWIN, p. 191-193, for the impossibility of any answer. The question receives artificial importance because only Tacitus of the relevant historians is extant.

private advice for the emperor alone to perceive, seems implausible : the wider audience, unless it was less perceptive than some modern scholars, would have noticed. If Suetonius had wanted to offer direct advice on kingship in a literary form to Hadrian, he had the precedents of Seneca's *De Clementia*, Dio of Prusa's many *Orationes* and of Pliny's *Panegyricus*. One can argue that to proceed by allusion gave the author a possible defence if the criticism was detected and found offensive — that the criticism existed only in the detector's mind. Thirdly why did no ancient scholar notice Suetonius' allusions and present him as other than a literary and scholarly individual (37) ? However, not withstanding these objections many scholars insist that allusions exist to be spotted.

The first hint of the practice appears in a footnote of B. W. Henderson in 1923 (38), but he never worked out the idea and it remained unconsidered until Syme revived it in a footnote of his *Tacitus* (39). Within a year Townend (40) produced the first detailed exposition of a theory of allusions, modelled on Syme's Hadrianic thesis (41). For Townend, Suetonius wished to discredit Hadrian because the emperor had dismissed him from his post of *ab epistulis* in the imperial service in AD 122 (42). He holds that Suetonius' disgruntlement and criticism can be traced in passages which exhibit a decline in tact on three matters which must have been delicate in the first years of Hadrian's reign. Firstly Trajan's death far from Rome and the unheralded adoption of Hadrian aroused suspicions of foul play (43). So the report of any transmission of imperial power might reflect current events : before his dismissal, Suetonius when writing of A.D. 14 presents only the version in which the dying Augustus confirms Tiberius as his successor in his presence. The alternative version, in which Augustus dies without seeing Tiberius and Livia makes secret arrangements, is strongly rejected (44). After his dismissal, however, when writing of Claudius'

(37) Cf. J. A. Crook on Syme's Hadrianic thesis in *Phoenix* 13, 1959, p. 40.
(38) B. W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Hadrian*, London, 1923, p. 23 n. 5.
(39) P. 490 n. 6.
(40) *CQ* 9, 1959, p. 285-293.
(41) P. 481-491. The thesis was ably criticised by Crook and by Goodyear, p. 125-128, 181-184.
(42) H.A., *Hadr.* 11,3.
(43) H.A., *Hadr.* 3,11f ; Dio LXIX, 1,1-2.
(44) *D.A.* 98,5 ; *Tib.* 21 ; *contra* Tacitus, *Ann.* I, 5.

death, no such tact is exhibited : 'he virtually invites comparison between the concealment of that emperor's death and Trajan' (45). But we must not, Townend suggests, construe this as an attack on Hadrian! If, though, there is an allusion, it must be hostile, since it implies that Hadrian's succession needed to be fixed, that Trajan's will was not lost accidentally, that the deathbed adoption was a fiction and that Plotina lied. How long was the period of tact thought necessary by Suetonius ? *Claudius* may have followed *Tiberius* after a short gap.

Secondly, Townend uses the report of Nero's reluctance to increase the empire and refusal from shame to surrender what his adoptive father had conquered (46). Thus Suetonius criticises Hadrian's rejection of Trajan's expansionism and preference for internal consolidation of the empire, as seen in the surrender of the Mesopotamian conquests and the limitation of the British frontier. For Townend, this passage stands out for its unique presentation in Suetonius of imperial expansionism as an obligation and for its inappropriateness to Nero, who elsewhere displays no concern for Claudius' *gloria*. The Suetonian information has even been deemed fable (47). The context, among those actions *partim nulla reprehensione, partim etiam non mediocri laude digna*, however, suggests no Suetonian indisputable admiration for unlimited expansionism, let alone a proclamation of it as an imperial duty. A direct parallel is his praise of Augustus' policy, so we might as easily believe that Suetonius approves the cautious, diplomatic approach (48).

Thirdly Townend adduces from *Titus* the suppression of all potential rivals, notably the consular Aulus Caecina, and Titus' subsequent unpopularity (49). This he considers gratuitous and a deliberate allusion to the assassination of the four consulars in A.D. 118. About this there was contemporary disquiet, in so much as Hadrian had to defend his

(45) *Cl.* 45. Quotation of TOWNEND's words in *Emperors and Biography*, London, 1967, p. 90 ; cf. *CQ* 9, 1959, p. 291.

(46) *N.* 18 : *augendi propagandique imperii neque uoluntate ulla neque spe motus umquam.*

(47) R. SYME, *MH* 37, 1980, p. 119 (cf. *Hermes* 109, 1981, p. 113) ; M. T. GRIFFIN, *Seneca : a Philosopher in Politics*, Oxford, 1976, p. 230-231, places the incident in 61 ; K. R. BRADLEY, *Suetonius' Life of Nero : an Historical Commentary*, Brussels, 1978, p. 110-113, in 54.

(48) *D.A.* 21,2. Cf. GASCOU, p. 755-758.

(49) *Tit.* 6,1-2.

action in his autobiography (50), but the parallel with events of A.D. 79 is not close : Caecina's murder occurred before Titus' accession, the assassination of the four consulars a year after Hadrian's ; Titus was in Rome, Hadrian in the East. Moreover, Suetonius may suggest that Caecina's murder was justified by the evidence Titus had obtained. Alternatively, although the murder was an example of *inciuilitas* and *uiolentia*, all the forebodings of an incipient tyranny were contoverted by the ensuing reality of an ideal reign (51). So, if any allusion is intended, it might as easily be apologetic as polemic.

Townend's modest beginning was soon eclipsed by Carney, who posits a mutual antipathy between Suetonius and Hadrian which contributed to the biographer's dismissal and which was then advertised in *Tiberius* to *Domitian*, the six volumes of *Caesares* published after A.D. 122 (52). One is to gather evidence of Hadrian's opinions from Historia Augusta and Dio and of Suetonius' opinions from what he praises or criticises in the *Caesares*. Both the basis and the detail of Carney's argument can be attacked.

His selection of examples from the *Caesares* is vitiated by imprecision : he includes many references not applicable to the imperial reigns and fails to distinguish between significant and neutral occurrences of terms (53). For example, Suetonius impugns all his bad emperors with homosexuality, and excuses or acquits the good (54). The vice is prominent in the Historia Augusta, notably of Hadrian's relations with

(50) H.A., *Hadr.* 7,2.

(51) *Tit.* 7,1.

(52) T. F. CARNEY, *NAJN* 6, 1967, p. 291-303 ; and most accessibly in *PACA* 12, 1968, p. 7-24 (henceforth referred to without date).

(53) K. R. BRADLEY (*JIES* 4, 1976, p. 245-253) refutes the idea that Suetonius maliciously ignores the virtues stressed by Hadrian on his early coinage or imputes them to bad emperors. 18 of CARNEY's 48 references disappear on the first criterion, 12 on the second. What remains is not significant, e.g. most uses of *pietas* concern the beginning of reigns, as other authors also show ; allusion to Hadrian is improbable. R.A. BAUMAN (*ZRG* 99, 1982, p. 126), on the notion that Suetonius' treatment of Caesar's intended codification of Roman law (*D.I.* 44,2) shows his opposition to Hadrian's codification rightly comments : 'one can hardly imagine a more devious way of making a point.'

(54) P. 12. *D.I.* 2 ; 22,2 ; 49,1-4 ; 52,3 ; *Tib.* 44,1-2 ; *Cal.* 36 ; *N.* 28,1f ; 35,4 ; *G.* 22 ; *O.* 2,2 ; *Vi.* 3,2 ; 12 ; *Dom.* 1,1 ; refuted for good emperors : *D.A.* 68 ; Claudius was apathetic *Cl.* 33,2. CARNEY (p. 12, n. 24) wrongly suggests that Suetonius implies a false imputation of the vice to Titus. It was a fact, but never recurred after his accession (*Tit.* 7,1f).

Trajan and Antinous ([55]). Probably Hadrian met Antinous first in A.D. 123 on his peregrination through Bithynia (less likely is A.D. 129), which wholly excludes Carney's notion that prominence was given to Caesar's relationship with Nicomedes of Bithynia (not explicitly credited by Suetonius) to criticise Hadrian's attachment, as long as he believes *Diuus Iulius* emerged before A.D. 122. Such chronological impossibilities beset the allusion-hunter : Aurelius Victor's *rumores mali* ([56]) of Hadrian's homosexual practices in his Tiburtine retirement are an obvious parallel to Tiberius' debauches on Capri, but Hadrian withdrew to Tibur only after A.D. 136, by which time Suetonius may have been dead ([57]). Undoubtedly the *Caesares* present homosexuality as a vice, but how can we be certain that this is more than an expression of conventional Roman morality ?

Carney selects other points of antipathy between the emperor and biographer : [1] excessive love of horses. Caligula was devoted to Incitatus, Nero to chariot-racing and Hadrian to Borysthenes, for whom he raised a tomb and penned an epitaph ([58]). Buried at Narbo, the horse probably died in A.D. 122, after Hadrian's return from Britain, when *Caligula* was yet to be published. However, the manifestation of Hadrian's devotion differs in nature and magnitude from Caligula's — how obvious would an allusion have been ? [2] Philhellenism : Hadrian was a devotee of Greek dress, poetry, singing painting and sculpture, whereas Suetonius' admiration of things Greek extended only to literature and authors, so long as they were kept in their place.([59]) Again, how certain is it that Suetonius specifically criticises Hadrian rather than expresses a traditional Roman sentiment ? [3] Literary taste : Hadrian preferred the archaic and obscure, whereas

(55) H.A., *Hadr.* 2,7 ; 4,5 ; 11,7 ; 14,5-6, 9.

(56) *Caes.* 14,5 (cf. SUETONIUS, *Tib.* 42,1f).

(57) Suetonius now need not have been dead by A.D. 128 (F. ZEVI, *MÉFRA* 82, 1970, p. 301f). Debate centres on *Tit.* 10,2 : SYME contends that the tone and imperfect tenses, *iurabat* and *erat*, suppose that Domitian's widow was already dead, but BALDWIN, p. 46) rightly denies this. The language and tone are irrelevant, for would a Suetonius who dared to criticise the reigning emperor, wait till a powerless dowager was dead before impugning her morality ? She was dead by A.D. 140 (*CIL*, XIV, 2795) but certainly alive in A.D. 126 (*CIL*, XV, 554) ; perhaps she survived to A.D. 129/30 (index to *CIL*, XV, p. 87).

(58) *Cal.* 55,3, *N.* 22,1 ; *D.I.* 61 (Caesar's wonder-horse) a non-evaluative rubric. Borysthenes : DIO LXIX, 10,2, H.A., *Hadr.* 20,11, *CIL*, XII, 1122. Cf. Augustus : PLINY, *N.H.* 8, 155.

(59) CARNEY, p. 13 ; H.A., *Hadr.* 1,5 : *Graeculus* ; cf. 14,8-9, 19,12-3, 25,9f.

Suetonius' style suggests he preferred the opposite (60). Hadrian's tastes seem suspiciously close to Caligula's, which Suetonius includes among his vices (61). However, it is not clear what Suetonius objects to in *Caligula*, and his own works exhibit a Caligulan rejection of Virgilian *cacozelia* and Livian verbosity. If the objection is simply to the presumption of Caligula's action, then allusion to Hadrian is the less obvious. Probably Suetonius' criticisms of archaism antedate Hadrian's reign, which again weakens a case for specific polemic (62). Caligula's criticism of Seneca's style is also supposedly an allusion, but the reader lacks real guidance as to Suetonius' opinion (63). Indeed Suetonius' style may well reflect more the requirements of the genre he has adopted, and give no indication of his preferences in poetry or prose.

Suetonius' polemic in the approaches considered so far may be classed as personal, the disgruntlement of a discarded academic against his ex-employer, but for Cizek the *Caesares* are a political manifesto to be adopted by Hadrian (64) : Septicius Clarus and Suetonius rejected the Greco-Oriental despotism of Hadrian, preferring the traditional *concordia ordinum* of the Roman model ; although the basic research for the *Caesares* had been completed under Trajan as a scholarly project, the new reign suggested a political purpose, so rapid re-editing and publication between A.D. 119 and 122 ensued ; the manifesto was rejected, but did not lead to Suetonius' immediate dismissal ; only an attempt to secure Sabina's support achieved that (65). The function of allusion in this scheme is unsatisfactory : supposedly Suetonius contemplates Hadrian's private life, for instance, but does not criticise ; rather 'il voulait lui déconseiller les outrances, le prévenir de ne pas s'engager trop sur la voie de prouesses hétéro- et homosexuelles' (66). The distinction is over-subtle, for how is such advice not criticism ?

(60) H.A., *Hadr.* 16,5f ; Dio LXIX, 4,6 ; Fronto 2, 138 (Haines) ; *D.A.* 86 supposedly presents Suetonius' views.

(61) Carney, p. 13 ; cf. Baldwin, p. 366. H.A., *Hadr.* 16,5f v *Cal.* 34,2.

(62) *De Gramm.* 10,2. If *De Viris Illustribus* is Trajanic, as is most probable.

(63) *Cal.* 53,2 ; cf. Baldwin, p. 365-367.

(64) E. Cizek, *Structures et idéologies dans les Vies des Douze Césars de Suétone*, Bucarest, 1977, p. 181f.

(65) The construction is rightly criticised (e.g. R. Syme, *Hermes* 109, 1981, p. 113 ; Gascou, p. 773) Several aspects are dubious, e.g. whether Suetonius was in Rome to play the role Cizek allots him. Moreover Hadrian did not espouse a despotic principate.

(66) P. 185.

Specific *Caesares*, Cizek holds, point to specific errors to be avoided by Hadrian : *Diuus Iulius* warns against the perils of monarchical ambition and the loss of popularity from excessive peregrination ; *Caligula* and *Nero* warn against destruction of the traditional social order ; and *Claudius* against excessive freedom given to freedmen ; even Augustus' promoting of the great literary talents of his age is to advise Hadrian not to associate with mere peddlars of epigrams (67). The extremity and implausibility of such a view, which does no justice to the individual *Caesares* is evident.

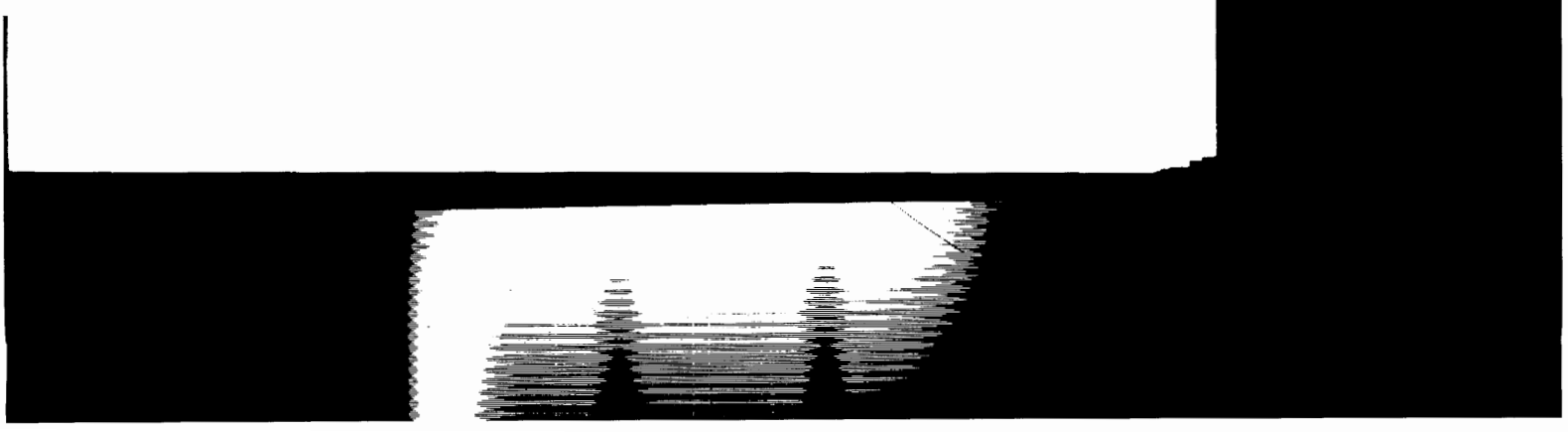
A milder variation of the theme is given incidentally by Reekmans (68) : 'les mesures économiques et autres furent rapportées tantôt *docendi* tantôt *probandi causa*. L'argumentation aussi bien que l'information pouvaient se doubler d'allusions à l'actualité, qui était celle des premières années du règne d'Hadrien.' Although not a manifesto, the *Lives* offer explicit exhortations to Hadrian to maintain the good practices of his predecessors and to reject the bad. Of the events or practices supposedly alluded to only four predate A.D. 122, when Reekmans dates the Lives' publication, and all four are critical of Hadrian (69). Of eight other allusions which Reekmans detects six are heeded by Hadrian (70), whence one might conclude that the *Caesares* were a successful didactic exercise. However, this approach needs constantly to distinguish between what is contemporary and significant and what is not : the variety of passages selected by its proponents suggests that much lies in the eye of the beholder. Indeed, if a didactic, political or critical purpose is paramount in the writing of the *Caesares*, every line, at least in the evaluative rubrics, should be significant.

(67) P. 186-187.

(68) T. Reekmans, *La politique économique et financière des autorités dans les Douze Césars de Suétone*, in *Historiographia Antiqua : commentationes Lovanienses in honorem W. Peremans septuagenarii editae*, Louvain, 1977, p. 269, 314.

(69) Moral and financial corruption of the imperial entourage H.A., *Hadr.* 4,5 v *Cl.* 28, *G.* 14,2 ; murder of the four consulars, H.A., *Hadr.* 7,2 v *Tit.* 6,2 ; largesse to troops on accession, H.A., *Hadr.* 5,7 v *Cl.* 10,4 ; withdrawal from Trajan's conquests, H.A., *Hadr.* 5,3 v *N.* 18. Other possible correlations : excessive indulgence in wine, H.A., *Hadr.* 3,3 v *Tib.* 42 ; malignity and jealousy Dio LXIX, 3,3 ; 4,6 v *Cal.* 34,1-35,3 ; excessive appetite, Dio LXIX, 7,3 v *Cl.* 33,1.

(70) No financial rapacity, H.A., *Hadr.* 7,6 ; 18,5 v *Dom.* 9,1f ; no monopolising of *bona damnatorum*, H.A., *Hadr.* 7,7 v *Cal.* 39,1 ; the removal of *ergastula*, H.A., *Hadr.* 18,10 v *Tib.* 8 ; importance of building projects and *spectacula*, H.A., *Hadr.* 19,2 v e.g. *Cal.* 21 ; necessary restraint on imperial freedmen, H.A., *Hadr.* 21,2 v *Cl.* 28 ; *G.* 14,2.



A facet of Baldwin's work reveals a further uncertainty inherent in the search for allusions : if some or all of the *Lives* were published before A.D. 117, Trajan might be the target of any allusions, e.g. he shared Tiberius' excessive fondness for drink ([71]), or rejected the *ciuilitas* of Augustus and Tiberius in being addressed as *Dominus* ([72]) ; and even *De Viris Illustribus* may criticise education in the Trajanic empire ([73]). Baldwin's conclusion that no example of alleged allusion is indisputable is sound, but he nowhere questions whether such allusions are likely *per se* ([74]).

It may be more promising to search for the influence of the present on Suetonius' work in more general things. The spirit of the age was a concern for 'systematisation and order' ([75]), to be seen in three areas : the tidiness of the scholar's mind, the penetration of Hellenistic culture into Roman society and the triumph of γραμματική. All of these affect Suetonius and explain much about his methods of work and his range of interests ([76]). In fact the closeness of Suetonius to the academic community of his day may in fact strengthen the belief that he makes no allusions to the present, as none of his contemporaries or fellow-scholars is reasonably suspected of the practice ([77]).

Most recently Gascou has treated the question at length with much sound analysis.([78]) He proceeds from the sound element of Carney's

(71) 51 ; H.A., *Hadr.* 3,3 v *Tib.* 42, used by REEKMANS as a Hadrianic allusion.

(72) 243 ; *D.A.* 53,1 ; *Tib.* 27 v PLINY, *Ep.* X *passim.* Would Trajan have enjoyed the detail that the legions remained loyal to Domitian after his assassination (*Dom.* 23,1 ; cf. BALDWIN, p. 351) ?

(73) BALDWIN, p. 20, on *De Gramm.* 24 ; however, *De Gramm.* 22 may be an Hadrianic allusion (cf. H.A., *Hadr.* 15,13).

(74) P. 386, cf. 51, 282, 365-368. Hadrian believed Vespasian was poisoned (DIO LXVI, 17,1), but Suetonius suppresses this version entirely. Had he wished to criticise Hadrian, he could have engaged in legitimate scholarly polemic.

(75) WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 201. He begins with equivocation (p. 198) whether specific allusions are present, but lists several parallels before concluding *non liquet.*

(76) He works like a Hellenistic scholar (cf. WALLACE-HADRILL, p. 43-45). CARNEY (p. 12) collects the references to Greeks and concludes that none is presented positively, but WALLACE-HADRILL shows that this is no accurate guide to the value Suetonius places on things Greek. A distinction between Greeks and Greek culture ? Certainly the *Caesares* exhibit a command of Greek.

(77) In WALLACE-HADRILL it is not a feature of the period's scholarly writings (cf. M. SCHANZ/C. HOSIUS/G. KRUGER, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, III, Munich, 1922, for an overview of the period's literary endeavours). E. COURTNEY (*A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, London, 1980), however, on JUVENAL 16,15, implausibly suspects criticism of Hadrian's rescript (*Dig.* 22,5,3,6) on the availability of soldiers to appear in civilian courts.

(78) P. 711-773.

procedure, that Suetonius' attitudes to key areas of imperial administration can be ascertained by studying the ideal *princeps* presupposed in the *Caesares*. He compares Hadrian with this abstract ideal and concludes that in most respects he is its fulfilment ([79]). Thus the grounds of mutual antipathy supposed by Carney should disappear. However, Gascou's Hadrian is as partial a creation as Carney's, for Gascou ignores the negative traditions, e.g. of cruelty, bad relations with the Senate and excessive philhellenism. For example, by comparison in the *Caesares* Suetonius should have criticised Hadrian's passion for the gods of Alexandria ([80]). However the picture may be refined in details, Gascou holds that the biographer must have had Hadrian in mind and been tempted to create a comparison of him with the *principes* of the past, but that the *Caesares* are not propaganda or adulation ([81]). The objections we have raised before are relevant : how do we know when Hadrian is in view and when not, how could overwhelming approbation of Hadrian's policies, if the allusions were perceived, not appear adulatory, or disagreement over minor failings not be criticism ? If Suetonius' overall view of Hadrian is favourable, why did praise have to be allusive ? For this question, though, the loss of the *Caesares*' preface, which may have contained the necessary information, is serious.

None of the approaches mentioned has considered satisfactorily whether the fundamental idea of allusions in imperial biography is plausible. On general grounds, of course, one would expect to find contemporary references in an "historical" work as *prolepsis*, explanation by use of the present as a form of reference. Many of the overt references examined earlier fall into that category. Also it is difficult to believe that anyone, including a pure antiquarian, could write an historical work without some perception of the "relevance" of his text, which he would seek to make known. For Suetonius and other writers under the empire, where whatever the protestations of the more liberal emperors freedom of speech was restricted, there was an intellectual challenge to express unpopular ideas. In such a situation, if there is

(79) P. 749, p. 767. But Hadrian secured no *consensus* (Dio LXIX, 23,2), and his literary taste is questionable.

(80) Cf. *D.A.* 93, *Tib.* 36 (*Ve.* 8,1 ?).

(81) P. 759, p. 773. His belief that Suetonius was *apologiste indirect* for Hadrian's foreign policy (p. 758) is probably inconsistent with his denial of a propagandistic function of the *Lives* (p. 773).

a concealed level of meaning, it is least likely to be found where the author refers overtly to his own day or uses the first person. So it should not be surprising that nothing contentious emerges from the references we have considered. However, it would seem crucial that the concealed level of meaning should be detectable, unless the author is his own audience. Given that the author would desire his deeper meaning to be perceived, some code would required. One typical device to employ would be irony, and there are means of detecting its existence in a literary text ([82]). However, Suetonius is not an obviously ironical writer, apart from some lines of bathos ([83]). In furthering the investigation in connection with Suetonius several strands at least must be unravelled : firstly was the ancient audience of a literary work alive to spotting connections with their own day ? Did the authors concerned intend such links ? Do the literary theorists of antiquity recognise the practice alleged against Suetonius ? And how crucial is the question of genre? Carney asserts that the ancient audience expected and perceived allusions to the present. The instances he cites do indicate perception ([84]), but his argument requires substantial refinement when those passages he adduces from Suetonius are examined ([85]).

In connection with the funeral of Julius Caesar which was held five days after his assassination Suetonius writes *inter ludos cantata sunt quaedam ad miserationem et inuidiam caedis eius accomodata, ex Pacuui Armorum Iudicio : "Men seruasse, ut essent qui me perderent ?" et ex Electra Acili ad similem sententiam* ([86]). From the parallel account of Appian it seems that the audience needed no perception to spot this "allusion": they themselves sang praises to Caesar and recalled his kindness to his murderers, whereupon someone cried out the line of Pacuvius ([87]). So this is not an example of an allusion perceived in the midst of a work's presentation, but an appropriate selection from a pre-existing work in a situation where minds were concentrated

(82) See J. E. Atkinson, *Seneca's Consolatio ad Polybium* in *ANRW* II, 33,5 (1985), p. 872-876.

(83) E.g. *Cal.* 54,2 : *atque hic tam docilis ad cetera natare nesciit.*

(84) P. 9 ; Syme, p. 477-478 : 'he wrote for a subtle and malicious audience.' ; cf. Atkinson, p. 879 : 'the Roman audience was hypersensitive to innuendo and irony in drama and history'.

(85) Suetonius supplies the majority (collected by Carney, p. 9). A better treatment is given by R. W. Reynolds (CQ 37, 1943, p. 37-45).

(86) *D.I.* 84,2.

(87) *B.C.* 2,146.

on the one subject. To be rejected for similar reasons from Carney's list of allusions is the people's recognition *post euentum* of how appropriate Nero's final words on stage proved to be (88).

In *Pro Sestio* Cicero describes at length the popular reaction against Clodius when news reached the theatre, during the *Ludi Apollinares*, that the Senate had just recalled the exiled Cicero. Even the actors joined in the invective (89) : *nam cum ageretur togata "Simulans" ut opinor, caterua tota clarissima concentatione in ore impuri hominis imminens contionata est : "Huic, Tite, tua post principia atque exitus uitiosae uitae"'* Cicero comments crucially : *in magna uarietate sententiarum numquam illum fuisse locum, in quo aliquid a poeta dictum cadere in tempus nostrum uideretur, quod aut populum uniuersum fugeret aut non exprimeret ipse actor.* Later Claudius Aesopus, while performing Accius' *Eurysaces*, added lines of his own creation (90), transferred lines from other plays as he thought appropriate (91) and added to the effect by powerful gestures (92). On the same day a *fabula praetexta* by Accius yielded another allusion : *nominatim sum appellatus in Bruto : "Tullius qui libertatem ciuibus stabilauerat". Miliens reuocatum est* (93). None of these contemporary references was intended by their authors, but for their creation required unsubtle manipulation by the performer. Essential to the success of the endeavour was the immediate, contemporary relevance of Cicero's recall.

Comparable to these examples is the performance by Diphilus of the lines from an unknown tragedy in 59 B.C., which the audience took to be criticism of Pompey (94). Superficially Carney's notion seems to be supported, as no specific action or event facilitated the allusion, but the adverb *petulanter* may suggest that the lines were unduly emphasised in some way (95), and, as Cicero makes clear earlier to Atticus, the activities of the First Triumvirate dominated the situation in 59 B.C. and at the time of the *ludi* singularly unpopular ; moreover Pompey's *cognomen* Magnus was uniquely distinctive.

(88) *N.* 46,3.
(89) 118.
(90) 121.
(91) 121, a line from ENNIUS' *Andromache* (cf. *Tusc. Disp.* 3,19)
(92) 122.
(93) 123.
(94) *Ad Att.* 2,19,3.
(95) Pompey was absent despite VALERIUS MAXIMUS 6,2,9.

Suetonius himself provides the most striking instance of a contemporary reference being spotted, but lack of essential detail prevents adequate assessment : *sed et populus quondam uniuersus ludorum die et accepit in contumeliam eius et adsensu maximo comprobauit uersum in scaena pronuntiatum de gallo Matris deum tympanizante : "uidesne, ut cinaedus orbem digito temperat ?"* (96). Suetonius produces this in his discussion of the allegations of homosexuality made against Octavian prominently in the propaganda of the Triumviral period. These we know had penetrated all levels of Roman society (97). The kind of play, whether it was of a genre where contemporary allusion was expected, and the immediate situation are wholly obscure (98). If it belonged to the period of the Perusine war when such allegations were at their hottest, no particular degree of perception would have been required of the audience.

From these examples for the creation of an allusion one factor is crucial : a specific situation or event has to be at the forefront of the audience's mind. We know too little of the preoccupations of Hadrian's Rome to say what issues were of burning topicality whenever it was that the *Caesares* emerged. Moreover all Carney's examples concern drama or public gatherings and thus provide a poor parallel to Suetonius' biographies, which were probably read to select audiences. Again, the highlighting of the allusions by actors suggests that the audience's perceptiveness needed help.

For deliberate allusions the question of genre is relevant, since an audience might reasonably expect contemporary allusions in certain kinds of work. It is no surprise that the Atellan farce and mimes provide most of our examples. In the earlier Republic attacks on individuals were direct (99), and even Laberius' attacks on Julius Caesar were neither covert nor allusive (100). Political comment was expected and brought no retribution. Later, however, the reverence due publicly to the emperor meant that criticism, although still tolerated within the institution of the farce, became allusive. Suetonius' examples suggest this, e.g. the line that circulated after Tiberius' sexual harrassment of

(96) *D.A.* 68,1.
(97) See the evidence of the Perusine *glandes*, discussed by J. P. Hallett in *AJAH* 2, 1977, p. 151-171.
(98) Date 41-39 B.C. : Carter, p. 190 ; deliberate insult : Reynolds, p. 40.
(99) *Auctor ad Herennium* 1,24 ; 2,13.
(100) Decimus Laberius 38f, 63f, 88, 98f (Ribbeck).

a Roman matron had caused her suicide : *hircum uetulum Capreis naturam ligurire* ([101]). The joke's subject matter and the pun on Capri illuminates the lewdness possible. Rumours of Tiberius' depravities in his retirement were rife and such an imperial retreat was a novelty. Together they perhaps explain the alacrity with which the joke was taken up. Caligula had no taste for ambiguous jokes and punished at least one author ([102]). *Nero* provides a good example of such a joke about the unnatural deaths of Claudius and Agrippina ([103]). The pointedness of the latter allusion is matched by a surprisingly lenient response on which Suetonius comments. Rumours of Galba's rapacity preceded him to Rome and were exploited in the farce ([104]). From mime Suetonius provides one example of an allusion which it is impossible to classify as intentional or not : *cum spectante eo [Augusto] ludos pronuntiatum esset in mimo : "o dominum aequum et bonum" et uniuersi quasi de ipso dictum exultantis comprobasset* ([105]).

An incident from Domitian's reign is central to the question : *occidit et Heluidium filium quasi scaenico exodio sub persona Paridis et Oenones diuortium suum cum uxore taxasset* ([106]). Helvidius perished towards the end of A.D. 93 with other members of the so-called "philosophical opposition" to Domitian. Despite the pleas of Tacitus and Pliny, there may well have been activities to justify *a maiestas* trial for Helvidius and his subsequent execution ([107]). The infatuation of Domitia for the actor Paris was over by A.D. 83, when the latter was executed ; Domitian's divorce from Domitia appears to have ended by A.D. 84 ([108]). As the intention of an *exodium* was to sweep away sad emotions evoked by the tragedy ([109]), comic contemporary allusions

(101) *Tib.* 45.

(102) *Cal.* 27,4. In A.D. 23 Tiberius banished actors from Rome and the Senate suppressed the Oscan (Atellan) farce (TACITUS, *Ann.* IV, 14,3).

(103) 39,3.

(104) *G.* 13 : the song of town-slaves dreading their master's return from the country.

(105) *D.A.* 53. Oddly omitted from CARNEY's list. Perhaps datable between A.D. 2 and 4 (DIO LV, 12,2). The other appearances of *mimi* in the *Lives* (*Tib.* 57,2 ; *Ve.* 19,1) are irrelevant here. *Scurrae mimarii* are a plague in H.A. : *M. Ant.* 8,1 ; 29 ; *Comm.* 3,4 ; *Max. Duo* 9,3f ; *Gall. Duo* 9,6.

(106) *Dom.* 10,4.

(107) See R. S. ROGERS in *CP* 55, 1960, p. 19-23 ; B. W. JONES, *Domitian and the Senatorial Order*, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 41-45.

(108) See J. JANSSEN, *C. Suetonii Tranquilli vita Domitiani*, Groningen, 1919, p. 17. Cf. P. E. ARIAS, *Domiziano*, Catania, 1945, p. 60-61.

(109) See SCHOLIAST *ad* IVV. 3,175.

would not seem out of place : the title of *Paris* involved a singularly unfortunate evocation of Domitia's paramour and Paris' actions in the myth closely paralleled Domitian's (110). When Helvidius' *exodium* was staged and how fresh in the popular mind Domitian's actions were is unclear. It is not improbable that the allegation was raked up during Helvidius' *maiestas* trial some years after the *exodium*'s performance.

Even taking into account this last example it seems that instances of deliberate allusion are limited to genres involving slapstick, comic situations and extemporised wit, performed before a theatre audience. For any close parallel with Suetonius' *Caesares* we must consider other genres to see if contemporary allusions were expected or perceived there (111). Suetonius himself provides two relevant passages. Firstly from *Tiberius* concerning a *maiestas* trial of A.D. 34 *omne crimen pro capitali receptum etiam paucorum simplicium uerborum. obiectum est poetae, quod in tragoedia Agamemnonem probris lacessisset*, to which Tacitus and Dio add needed detail (112) : Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus wrote in his tragedy *Atreus* a line in which a subject of that tyrant was advised to endure his folly ; it played no part in the charges brought against Scaurus. In Tacitus, Macro denounces the poet, but the language, obscures whether the historian believes there was a deliberate allusion : the ablative absolute *additis uersibus qui in Tiberium flecterentur* might be interpreted to mean that Scaurus added extra lines to his tragedy which were allusive, but its position outside the two genitives, *tragoediae.. scriptae* suggests rather that Macro drew attention to particular lines capable of hostile interpretation. Probably, then, Macro played on Tiberius' great sensitivity to criticism and Scaurus was innocent. Alternatively, it is possible that the tragedian denounced tyranny or the institution of the principate, as others did later, e.g. Curiatius Maternus whom Tacitus notes was censured for his *Cato* but declared his *Thyestes* would be more outspoken (113). His criticism, however, would not seem to have contained allusion to an individual, as is posited for the *Caesares*, but to be motivated

(110) Reynolds, p. 42 ; Janssen, p. 54 : *satis erat congruentiae ut omnium suspiciones mouerentur.*

(111) *Tib.* 56, in Carney's list is irrelevant : Tiberius' perception and punishment of an insult concerns a conversation, not a written work.

(112) 61,3 ; Dio LVIII, 24,3-5 ; *Ann.* VI, 29,3.

(113) *Dialogus* 2,1ff ; also Seneca and Pomponius Secundus ?

by an ideological rejection of the principate which Suetonius does not share ([114]). Moreover there is no indication that the verse was generally perceived as anti-Tiberian, rather that after an attempted prosecution in A.D. 32 had failed Macro sought for any grounds, however tenuous, for convicting Scaurus.

The second Suetonian passage has the only example of an historian punished for allusive criticism of an individual emperor : *[Domitianus occidit] Hermogenem Tarsensem propter quasdam in historia figuras, librariis etiam, qui eam descripserant, cruci fixis* ([115]). The nature and content of Hermogenes' work are unknown, but Suetonius' use of *figurae* suggests that he believes that Domitian's suspicion was justified, for similar allusions were made by orators against Vespasian ([116]). Rhetoricians use *figurae* for the device whereby words do not carry their ostensible meaning, but one which the hearer must perceive, a device used when open speech was unsafe or unseemly ([117]). The Greek equivalent is the *λόγος ἐσχηματισμένος* ([118]). Its use outside oratory is not discussed, although this silence may not be significant, as the only extant discussions concern oratorical theory and style. Demetrius writes of the very practice supposed by Carney of Suetonius, praise or criticism of one man by praising or criticising others in the past who acted similarly ([119]). Although Hermogenes' work probably did allude to

(114) Cf. GASCOU, p. 718-722. The only example of an allusion spotted by an audience in Greek tragedy is now dismissed as mythical by G. O. HUTCHINSON, *Aeschylus : Septem contra Thebas*, Oxford, 1985, 137-138. At Rome Cremutius Cordus perished for his praise of Brutus and Cassius (*Tib.* 61,3 ; *Ann.* IV, 34-36), but not for allusions against Tiberius.

(115) *Dom.* 10,1 ; Hermogenes (*PIR*^{2} H 147, cf. 146) should not be identified with the friend of Seneca and addressee of Balbillus' astrological works, because of the long period between the 60s and Domitian's reign. G. W. MOONEY (*Suetonius : Lives of Galba to Domitian*, Dublin, 1930, p. 554) cautiously identifies with the writer of a mythological history of Phrygia, but JACOBY dates him to the Hellenistic period (*FGrH* IIIc, no. 795).

(116) *ve.* 13.

(117) QUINTILIAN, *Inst.* 9,2,65f.

(118) DONYSIUS HALICARNASSUS 2,295f (USENER/RADEMACHER) ; DEMETRIUS, *Περὶ ὕψους* 289f. See W. STROH, *Taxis und Taktik : Ciceros Gerichtsreden*, Stuttgart, 1975, p. 74 n. 74.

(119) 292. SERVIUS (*Praef In Aen : intentio Virgilii haec est : Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus*) believes that this was Virgil's intention in the *Aeneid*, and modern scholars have unearthed several contemporary reflections in the epic world of Aeneas. E.g. W. A. CAMPS, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1969, p. 95-104, *App.* 5.

Domitian, no other specific examples of allusive historians, where the allusiveness was recognised, exist. Tacitus' testimony ([120]) : *utque familiae ipsae iam extinctae sint, reperies qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari putent. etiam gloria ac uirtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquo diuersa arguens* should enforce our belief in the danger of writing allusively, as he stresses the reverse of the situation, that many believed they were the target of allusions when they were not ([121]). While this may suggest that the audience was alert for innuendo, it also shows that they were wholly undiscriminating. Tacitus' words come from the subtle and complex excursus on historiography in which he is at pains to stress the difficulty of his task ([122]). Of this the final aspect he highlights is the misguided readiness of the audience to interpret references to members of their own families as criticism of themselves. Tacitus chooses to stress this aspect for its obvious connection with the trial of Cremutius Cordus with which it is juxtaposed. Although this trial is very important for showing the restraint on free speech which could be applied under the principate, Cremutius' crime of praising Brutus and Cassius and thereby detracting from the *maiestas* of the late Augustus was very different from the practice imputed to Suetonius. Cremutius offers nothing on the presence of deliberate allusion in Roman historiography.

It has been suggested that the *Historiae* of Curtius Rufus, if they were written during the reign of Claudius, contain extensive allusions to events under Caligula ([123]). Even the most extreme presentation of this view, however, falls short of what Carney envisages for Suetonius.

The search for a hidden purpose to the *Caesares* is delusive : they make perfect sense as the work of scholarship they profess to be, a novel presentation of the first twelve emperors. Suetonius' creation of the genre of Roman imperial biography springs, most obviously, from

(120) *Ann.* IV, 33,4.

(121) The notion that Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities XIX* was written to warn Domitian of the fate that awaited him if he persecuted the Jews (E. M. SMALLWOOD in *CP* 51, 1956, p. 11) should be passed over (cf. L. H. FELDMAN, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, Berlin, 1984, p. 377).

(122) See R. H. MARTIN/A. J. WOODMAN, *Tacitus : Annals Book IV*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 169-176.

(123) The most convenient statement of this is in J. E. ATKINSON, *A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus' Historiae Alexandri Magni Books III and IV*, Amsterdam, 1980, p. 30f, p. 72-3.

the combination of the prominent aspects of his life, his long experience of the emperor at work, which also taught him what was expected of the sovereign by his subjects, and his scholarship, which provided the method of enquiry. No work on the Roman emperors could ever be value-free, so the sense exists in which the *Caesares* cannot fail to have embodied implicit recommendations as to conduct, but that is hardly worth saying. Moreover Suetonius and his contemporaries had a shared set of values by which the emperor was judged. Suetonius' and his society's ideal *princeps* may not have been too far from fulfilled in Hadrian, in so far as the meagre evidence permits us to to conclude. The reader of the *Caesares* read them against the background of a conventional belief of what an emperor should be ; his eyes were on the past, to see how far each emperor fulfilled these expectations, and the present only really intruded when some particular antiquarian or scholarly interest of Suetonius was aroused.

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