



SUETONIUS

the Biographer

STUDIES IN ROMAN LIVES

edited by TRISTAN POWER & ROY K. GIBSON

OXFORD

SUETONIUS THE BIOGRAPHER

Suetonius the Biographer

Studies in Roman Lives

Edited by

TRISTAN POWER AND ROY K. GIBSON

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Oxford University Press 2014

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First Edition published in 2014

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013957442

ISBN 978-0-19-969710-6

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Preface

So often our only source for intimate details about the lives of the Roman emperors and their families, Suetonius features prominently in popular accounts of the Roman world. He lurks, too, in the popular imagination as the main source for the immensely successful ‘Claudius’ novels by Robert Graves—*I, Claudius* (1934) and *Claudius the God* (1934)—later filmed in a notorious production for BBC TV in 1976. (Graves himself would go on to offer a version of Suetonius in his Penguin Classics translation of 1957.) But, like his near-contemporary, the Elder Pliny, Suetonius’ presence in modern scholarship is largely confined to footnotes. Critics value the data provided, rarely paying undivided attention to the text which offers the otherwise welcome information. For, despite a sudden flurry of attention in the 1980s, there has been little sustained work of any length specifically on Suetonius in recent decades. The present volume is the first book-length work on the author, in English, in almost thirty years. Its aim—to breathe new life into Suetonian scholarship and refocus attention on his skill as a biographer—is set out in the Introduction.

The volume has its origins in a conference held at the University of Manchester in 2008. The initial omens for a conference on Suetonius in the north of England were not propitious—at least, if one credits the insights of Sir Ronald Syme. The story of Suetonius’ fall from imperial favour, found in the ancient *Life of Hadrian*, appears to take place during Hadrian’s tour of Britain in AD 122. Syme, for his part, was sure that the reason for this personal catastrophe had little to do with Suetonius’ alleged over-familiarity with the empress Sabina. Rather, from Syme’s perspective, it was the rain: ‘If a prosaic imagination be conceded some license, a modest explanation offers. . . . Travel generates friction and annoyances, not least among devotees of arts and letters—and add to that a summer in northern England’ (Syme 1981: 114 = *RP* III.1345–6). This was not the first time that northern England had been unlucky for Suetonius. As we know from Pliny’s *Letters* (3.8), he was offered a tribunate in Britain under Neratius Marcellus, which he later declined. A letter from Vindolanda—no. 196, found in the Period III *praetorium*—contains a clothing list evidently meant for the eyes of the garrison commander, Flavius Cerialis. This list includes

some clothing items ‘from Tranquillus’. Tony Birley, in *Garrison Life at Vindolanda: A Band of Brothers*, wonders: ‘Is it possible that Suetonius had had a box of his gear, including blankets, dining outfits and vests sent ahead to Britain, sold or made available to Cerialis when its owner backed out of his commission?’ (Birley 2002: 139).

Whether Suetonius’ errant undergarments rested on their long journey north to Vindolanda in Roman Manchester (Mamucium)—recently founded, as Tacitus somehow neglects to tell us, by Agricola—is unclear. But, despite these omens, the lively Manchester conference of 2008 generated few, if any, personal annoyances or instances of loss of goods (although it did rain), and it produced the initial versions of the majority of the chapters presented in this volume. To these we have added a few others, specially commissioned for the occasion.

Along the way, we have accumulated a number of debts. Sincere thanks are owed to Ruth Morello (who helped to organize the 2008 conference), Hilary O’Shea and her team at OUP, especially Juliet Gardner, and the anonymous readers for the Press. Above all, Roy Gibson would like to thank Tristan Power, who has been the leading editor and driving force behind the book since its inception.

T. P.

R. K. G.

New York
Manchester
August 2013

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Editions and Abbreviations</i>	<i>xi</i>

Introduction: The Originality of Suetonius <i>Tristan Power</i>	1
--	---

PART I: FORMAL FEATURES

1. Suetonius' Rubric Sandwich <i>Donna W. Hurley</i>	21
2. Suetonius the Ventriloquist <i>Cynthia Damon</i>	38
3. The Endings of Suetonius' <i>Caesars</i> <i>Tristan Power</i>	58

PART II: READING THE *LIVES*

4. Was Suetonius' <i>Julius</i> a Caesar? <i>John Henderson</i>	81
5. Exemplary Influences and Augustus' Pernicious Moral Legacy <i>Rebecca Langlands</i>	111
6. E.g. Augustus: <i>exemplum</i> in the <i>Augustus</i> and <i>Tiberius</i> <i>Erik Gunderson</i>	130
7. Rhetorics of Assassination: Ironic Reversal and the Emperor Gaius <i>Donna W. Hurley</i>	146
8. Another Look at Suetonius' <i>Titus</i> <i>W. Jeffrey Tatum</i>	159
9. The Mirror in the Text: Privacy, Performance, and the Power of Suetonius' <i>Domitian</i> <i>Jean-Michel Hulls</i>	178

PART III: BIOGRAPHICAL THRESHOLDS

10. Suetonius and the <i>uiri illustres</i> of Pliny the Younger <i>Roy K. Gibson</i>	199
11. Suetonius' <i>Famous Courtesans</i> <i>Tristan Power</i>	231
12. Suetonius and the Origin of Pantomime <i>T. P. Wiseman</i>	256
13. Suetonius and the <i>De uita Caesarum</i> in the Carolingian Empire <i>Jamie Wood</i>	273
<i>Bibliography</i>	293
<i>Index Locorum</i>	325
<i>General Index</i>	334

List of Contributors

Cynthia Damon is Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her publications include *Tacitus: Histories Book I* (Cambridge, 2003) and (with W. W. Batstone) *Caesar's Civil War* (Oxford, 2006). She has also translated Tacitus' *Annals* for the Penguin Classics series (London, 2013).

Roy K. Gibson is Professor of Latin at the University of Manchester. His publications include *Ovid: Ars Amatoria Book 3* (Cambridge, 2003) and (with R. Morello) *Reading the Letters of Pliny the Younger: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2012). He is currently working on a commentary on Pliny, *Letters* Book 6.

Erik Gunderson is Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Toronto. His publications include *Declamation, Paternity, and Roman Identity: Authority and the Rhetorical Self* (Cambridge, 2003) and *Nox philologiae: The Fantasy of the Roman Library* (Madison, WI, 2009). He is currently working on a book on Seneca.

John Henderson is Emeritus Professor of Classics and a Fellow of King's College at the University of Cambridge. His publications include *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998) and *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge, 2007).

Jean-Michel Hulls is Head of Classics at Dulwich College. His publications include several articles on Latin literature, and he is also one of the contributors to J. F. Miller and A. J. Woodman (eds), *Latin Historiography and Poetry in the Early Empire: Generic Interactions* (Leiden, 2010).

Donna W. Hurley has taught Classics at Princeton University. Her publications include *Suetonius: Diuus Claudius* (Cambridge, 2001) and *Suetonius: The Caesars* (Indianapolis, IN, 2011). She is also one of the contributors to E. Buckley and M. Dinter (eds), *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (Malden, MA, 2013).

Rebecca Langlands is Senior Lecturer at the University of Exeter. Her publications include *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 2006), and she is also (with K. Fisher) one of the contributors to

S. Hales and J. Paul (eds), *Pompeii in the Public Imagination: From its Rediscovery to Today* (Oxford, 2011).

Tristan Power has taught Classics at the University of Reading. His publications include a number of articles on Suetonius, and he is also one of the contributors to K. De Temmerman and K. Demoen (eds), *Telling Ancient Lives: Narrative Technique and Fictionalization in Greek and Latin Biography* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

W. Jeffrey Tatum is Professor of Classics at the Victoria University of Wellington. His publications include *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999), *Always Am I Caesar* (Oxford, 2008), and *A Caesar Reader: Selections from Bellum Gallicum and Bellum Civile* (Mundelein, IL, 2012).

T. P. Wiseman is Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter. His publications include *Clio's Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicester, 1979), *Catullus and His World: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1985), and *Remembering the Roman People: Essays on Late-Republican Politics and Literature* (Oxford, 2009).

Jamie Wood is Lecturer in History at the University of Lincoln. His publications include *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2012), and he is also one of the contributors to R. S. Bagnall *et al.* (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 13 vols (Malden, MA, 2013).

Editions and Abbreviations

Quotations of Suetonius' works are taken from the edition of M. Ihm for the *Lives of the Caesars* (Leipzig, 1908), that of A. Rostagni for the *Vita Terenti* (Turin, 1944), that of G. Brugnoli for the *Vita Horati* (Rome, 1968), that of G. Luck for the *Vita Tibulli* (Stuttgart, 1988), that of R. Badali for the *Vita Lucani* (Rome, 1991), and that of R. A. Kaster for the *Grammarians and Rhetoricians* (Oxford, 1995). For Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, the edition of C. Lindskog and K. Ziegler (eds), *Plutarchus: Vitae parallelae*², 4 vols (Leipzig, 1957–80) is followed; for Nepos, that of P. K. Marshall (ed.), *Cornelius Nepos: Vitae cum fragmentis* (Leipzig, 1977); for Tacitus, that of H. Heubner (ed.), *P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1978–83); and for Dio, that of U. P. Boissevain (ed.), *Cassii Dionis Coceiani Historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt*, 5 vols (Berlin, 1895–1931).

Ancient and medieval authors as well as modern works are abbreviated according to *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*⁴, edited by S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow (Oxford, 2012), or otherwise standard practice. References to periodicals follow *L'année philologique*, with conventional modifications in English. For frequently cited modern works, note especially the following abbreviations:

Adler	A. Adler (ed.), <i>Suidae Lexicon</i> , 5 vols (Leipzig, 1928–38).
Astbury	R. Astbury (ed.), <i>M. Terentius Varro: Saturarum Menippearum fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, 1985).
Cardauns	B. Cardauns (ed.), <i>M. Terentius Varro: Antiquitates rerum divinarum</i> , 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1976).
CS	A. Momigliano, <i>Contributo alla storia degli studi classici</i> , 10 vols (Rome, 1955–2012).
Dindorf	L. Dindorf (ed.), <i>Ioannis Malalae Chronographia</i> (Bonn, 1831).
Helm	R. Helm (ed.), <i>Eusebius Werke</i> , vol. 7: <i>Die Chronik des Hieronymus</i> (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderte 47: Berlin, 1956).

- Jocelyn H. D. Jocelyn (ed.), *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge, 1967).
- Lloyd-Jones H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.), *Sophocles*, vol. 3: *Fragments* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).
- Oakley, *Comm.* S. P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy Books VI–X*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1997–2005).
- OLD P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (London, 1982).
- PCG R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds), *Poetae comici Graeci*, 8 vols (Berlin, 1983–2001).
- Pf. R. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Callimachus*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1949–53).
- PH C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London, 2002).
- RE A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll (eds), *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 86 vols (Stuttgart, 1893–2000).
- Reiff. A. Reifferscheid (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli praeter Caesarum libros reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1860).
- Rose V. Rose (ed.), *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*³ (Leipzig, 1886).
- Roth C. L. Roth (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli quae supersunt omnia* (Leipzig, 1858).
- RP R. Syme, *Roman Papers*, 7 vols, ed. E. Badian and A. R. Birley (Oxford, 1979–91).
- Taillardat J. Taillardat (ed.), *Suétone: Περὶ βλασφημιῶν, Περὶ παιδιῶν (extraits byzantins)* (Paris, 1967).
- TLL *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1900–).
- Vallarsi D. Vallarsi (ed.), *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis presbyteri opera*², 11 vols (Venice, 1766–72).
- Wehrli F. Wehrli (ed.), *Die Schule des Aristoteles: Texte und Kommentar*², vol. 7: *Herakleidos Pontikos* (Basel, 1969).
- Wuensch R. Wuensch (ed.), *Ioannis Lydi De magistratibus populi Romani libri tres* (Leipzig, 1903).

Introduction: The Originality of Suetonius

Tristan Power

Scholars sometimes quibble over the word ‘historian’ when it is applied to Suetonius Tranquillus.¹ Nor is the word ‘biographer’ entirely satisfactory, since it implies that readers had stable expectations for the genre of biography in Suetonius’ day, which they did not.² Either term should be acceptable, since even his early readers referred to him by both. For example, Jerome calls him a ‘historian’: *de Tranquillo et ceteris illustribus historicis curiosissime excerptissimus* (‘I have

I wish to thank Timothy Duff, Roy Gibson, and Christopher Pelling for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this Introduction. All translations are my own.

¹ See e.g. Wallace-Hadrill (1986) 245; Ash (2004) 448; Charles (2008); *contra*, Bradley (1978) 16. Scholarship on historiography often excludes Suetonius where he would have profited from study: e.g. Kraus and Woodman (1997); Marincola (1997); Laird (1999); Davies (2004); Pigoñ (2008); Feldherr (2009); Kraus *et al.* (2010); Miller and Woodman (2010); Grethlein and Krebs (2012); as does one volume on biography: McGing and Mossman (2006). Suetonius is likewise absent from volumes on the Latin language that treat historians: e.g. von Albrecht (1989); Reinhardt *et al.* (2005); Clackson (2011). On the other hand, the word ‘historiographical’ is used by Hurley (1993) in the title of her commentary on the *Caligula*, and other books on ancient historians freely include Suetonian biography as a topic: e.g. Duff (2003); Marincola (2007); den Hengst (2009); Feldherr and Hardy (2011); Mehl (2011). Scholars continue to refer to Suetonius as ‘the historian’ (e.g. Guittard 2009: 185; Poulle 2009: 121) or include him among ‘historiographers’ (e.g. Rohmann 2013: 126). For Suetonius as a historian by modern standards, see Gascou (1984) 457–74, (2001). On Suetonius’ relationship to the historian Tacitus in particular, see Power (2014f).

² See e.g. Duff (1999) 17; Pelling (2009c) 41, (2011b) 13. On biography’s earliest development, Leo (1901) and Momigliano (1993) are fundamental; see also Bollansée *et al.* (1998) xiv–xviii; Bollansée (1999a) ix–x; Pelling (2009a), (forthcoming). On the origin of the word ‘biography’, see Bowersock (2000) 258–9; Pausch (2011) 147–8 n. 31.

excerpted most carefully from Tranquillus and other illustrious *historians*, *Chron. praef.* p. 6 Helm = p. 288 Roth).³ So too does John Malalas: ὁ σοφώτατος Τράνγκυλλος, Ῥωμαίων ἱστορικός ('the most learned Tranquillus, *historian* of the Romans', *Chron.* p. 34 Dindorf = p. 266 Reiff.). Servius, however, calls Suetonius' *Divine Julius* 'the *Life* of Caesar' (uita *Caesaris*, ad *Aen.* 6.799), just as John Lydus writes '*Lives* of the Caesars' (τοὺς τῶν Καισάρων βίους, *Mag.* 2.6). The word 'biography' is, as Pelling puts it, simply 'useful shorthand' for one of the several ways of writing about the past that were available to authors of Suetonius' time.⁴ However, even biographical approaches varied, and the line between biography and its neighbouring genres was often blurred.⁵

The only important question that must be asked when the word 'historian' is attached to Suetonius is whether unsuitable criteria are being used to assess his *Lives*; otherwise, the term is being used more arbitrarily, and should not be taken to carry any real significance. By the same token, scholars can occasionally use the term 'biography' with little regard for its distinction. For example, some scholars have compared Suetonius' biographies to Tacitus and found them wanting by the rather different standards of historiography, an approach which implicitly equates the criteria of assessment for the two endeavours.⁶ Our labels for Suetonius are unimportant, so long as we understand the nature of his task—that is, if we understand why 'biography' remains such a useful description for Suetonius' work; then we may call him what we like. To do this, we must value his self-described *Vitae* (*Aug.* 9.1) instead on their own terms, by discovering the qualities

³ Conversely, Jerome refers to Tacitus' work as biography: *uitas Caesarum* ('*Lives* of the Caesars', *Comm. Zach.* 3.14). Plutarch describes his own *Lives* as 'history' (ἱστορία): *Nic.* 1.5, *Cim.* 2.5, *Fab.* 1.1, *Per.–Fab.* 1.1, *Aem.* 1.1, *Aem.–Tim.* 1.1, *Gracchi* 1.1; see Duff (1999) 17–20.

⁴ Pelling (1999) 329 n. 14. On the importance of some overall distinction, see Burrige (2004) 265–9; cf. Marincola (1997) 218, (1999) 282.

⁵ Geiger (1985) 11–25; Horsfall (1989) 10–11; Lewis (1991) 3672–4; Momigliano (1993) 88; Radicke (1999) x–xi; Burrige (2004) 65–9; Kraus (2005b), (2010b); McGing and Mossman (2006) ix–xiii; Czachesz (2007) 5–7; Tröster (2008) 15; Valcárcel Martínez (2009a); Hägg (2012) 67–8; Stem (2012) 39, 107. Biography is oddly omitted by Kraus (2013: 424–5) from genres tangential to historiography. The two endeavours were often defined in contrast to each other; cf. below, n. 40. On biographical features in historiography, see e.g. Gowing (1997) 2564–5; Pelling (1997a), (2006a) 257–62; Engels (2005) 138; Oakley, *Comm.* III.179; Hurley (2013) 32–3, 42; Mallan (2013).

⁶ See e.g. Mackail (1895) 229–31; Martin (1981) 37–8; *contra*, Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 25; Stem (2012) 39–40 n. 115; Hurley (2013) 32–3, 42.

that define Suetonius' particular kind of biography.⁷ The present volume will offer its own search for Suetonius the biographer, examining various aspects of his *Lives* that make them unique, including their tendencies of style and content, organizational method, allusive techniques, and literary reputation.⁸

While this book does not aim for systematic coverage of Suetonius' oeuvre (the studies of individual *Lives* in Part II address only five of the eight books of the *Caesars*; aside from the three brief emperors of AD 69, significant omissions are the middle biographies of Claudius, Nero, and Vespasian), it does aim for representative coverage of aspects of both his major (*Julius* to *Caligula*) and minor (*Titus*, *Domitian*, *Illustrious Men*) *Lives*, as well as his lesser-known works on insults, courtesans, and games (Introduction, chs. 11–12). The volume also deals with general aspects of Suetonius' writing ('Part I: Formal Features'), beginning with the present discussion. In this Introduction, I shall provide the background for our challenge of approaching Suetonius as a biographer by looking at some of the influences that appear to have shaped how he wrote *Lives*. This section lays the groundwork for a new baker's dozen of complementary studies that look at the many biographical facets of Suetonius. Discussion of the other individual chapters will follow in the second part of the Introduction in light of this context, and some remarks will be made about the volume's overall contribution to Suetonian studies.

⁷ We might compare the emphases of Woodman (1988: x) and Davies (2004: 14) on viewing historians according to their own individual traits; cf. Oakley (2009) 209 n. 39: 'a genre lives only by being flexible and capable of adaptation'. On Suetonius' word *uita* as signalling his biographical genre, cf. Lewis (1991) 3672, although I am not convinced by his view that it here means only 'career'. For exceptions to any straightforward conception of ancient biography, see e.g. the *Βίος Καίσαρος* by Nicolaus of Damascus—written on only part of Augustus' life, or Varro's *De gente populi Romani* and *De uita populi Romani*, the second of which he modelled on Dicaearchus' *Βίος Ἑλλάδος*. On the former author, see e.g. Pausch (2011); on the latter works, Wiseman (2009) 128. We might also point to Satyrus' *Βίος Εὐριπίδου* and Roman *exitus* literature; for both, see below. Tacitus' *Agricola* does not easily conform to general notions of biography: e.g. Whitmarsh (2006). One wonders, too, how Arrian wrote his lost biography of Tilliborus the infamous thief (Lucian, *Alex.* 2); cf. Baldwin (1973b) 78–9. See further Duff (1996) 266.

⁸ For more on Suetonius' reputation, in addition to the chapters in Part III of this volume, see e.g. Macé (1900) 401–22; Townend (1967) 96–108; Lounsbury (1987) 27–61; Poignault (2009) 147–336.

1. WHAT IS A SUETONIAN *LIFE*?

The question of what ancient biography is *not* has received ample space;⁹ less attention has been paid to the features that define it.¹⁰ What is it that makes Suetonius' *Caesars* so clearly a work of biography, or, to put it in Momigliano's terms, how was it that Suetonius 'saved imperial biography from confusion with imperial history'?¹¹ Although any such discussion must be accompanied by the concession that much of ancient historical and biographical literature is lost, and that our emphases on what was conventional may at times be misguided, enough representative examples survive—and out of those, enough precedents are lacking—to indicate the strong probability that Suetonius was innovative.¹² There are also plausible avenues of influence in Suetonius' various scholarly pursuits, which may have contributed to the end result of the *Caesars*, whether they were published before or after that work.

Clearly the biographer crystallized something unique for later writers to continue or to use as a model, and did so through an admixture of literary forms. But where did those forms come from? Here we shall look briefly at two formal features of Suetonius' style that distinguish it from that of any other known biographer in antiquity before him: his consistent use of the third-person verb, and his habitual use of *diuisio* to organize his information into 'rubrics' or category headings. In Suetonius, practically all the action and discussion of a *Life* is controlled by the biography's subject: it is he alone who is the focus of almost every detail and category, and who almost always commands the verb of the sentence, with contextual events and other persons or details relegated to direct objects, participles, and other clauses.¹³ Facts are

⁹ McGing and Mossman (2006).

¹⁰ But see e.g. Marincola (1999) 318–20 on the *Agricola*; Burrige (2004); Pelling (2011b) 13–25 on Plutarch; Hägg (2012) *passim*; Stem (2012) 39–40, 100–13; the Introduction of Duff (forthcoming); De Temmerman (forthcoming). Cf. also references above, n. 2.

¹¹ Momigliano (1984) 1147 = CS VIII.394. Suetonius was called the 'father of modern biography' by Grant (1954: 120). However, Plutarch also remained influential in the genre's modern development; see Bowersock (1980) = (2009) 52–65.

¹² See Lewis (1991) 3670. Against the unfounded view that Suetonius may have been inspired by Plutarch, see Power (2014f).

¹³ On Suetonius' consistent use of a verb in the third person, with participles and subordinate clauses doing much of the other work, see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 19, 122–3; Hurley (2001) 19–20. For his uses of the first person in the *Caesars*, see the chapters by Damon and Henderson in this volume with bibliography; and in the *Illustrious Men*, e.g. *Vita Ter.* 1–28, *Vita Luc.* 32–4, *Gramm.* 2.1, 7.1, 10.6, 25.2, with Kaster (1995) 45–6, 58, 118, 148; Power (forthcoming a). On Suetonius' verbs generally, see Pike (1903) xv–xvii; Mooney (1930) 623–6.

also compartmentalized into individual categories that support the overall picture; this is done through *diuisio*, a rhetorical device of signalling one's structure, to which we shall return.

First, let us look at main verbs. Suetonius maintains focus on the action of his subject so consistently through the third person that he does not even need to repeat the subject's name; only in the *Divine Julius*, which by necessity contains several other characters, does Suetonius frequently call him 'Caesar'.¹⁴ The biographer often does not refer to his subject by name for long stretches,¹⁵ and usually not unless it is necessary to differentiate him from others mentioned by name in the same sentence, which regularly happens in the *Caesars*, or unless his name is relevant for some other point of clarity, such as the naming of a monument. In the *Horace* as we have it, Suetonius himself does not even repeat the poet's name once after its placement at the beginning of the *Life* (quotations, of course, do not count). Thus when Suetonius in his biographies introduces a new topic such as 'food' (*cibi*), it is already clear to the reader whose eating habits will be described—the subject's (e.g. *Vita Verg.* 9, *Aug.* 76.1, *Claud.* 33.1). This rubric technique is apparent both in the *Illustrious Men* and the *Lives of the Caesars*, but it only works because of the dependability of Suetonius' focus.

Even those sentences in the *Caesars* that do not have Suetonius' emperors as the grammatical subjects maintain the emperors' centrality in the discussion. For example, in describing the military achievements of Caesar, it is the troops who are the main subjects (*Iul.* 68); and Nero does not command the verbs when Suetonius describes the accidental disasters that occurred in his reign (*Ner.* 39). However, Suetonius' focus on each emperor's character can still be seen, since the former passage only illustrates Caesar's virtues, while the latter demonstrates Nero's loss of popularity, which is underscored through this change of subject.¹⁶ Such exceptions only prove the rule, revealing the large degree to which Suetonius' focus is ensured by the theme of each section, and mostly supported by the consistency of his main verbs. In the *Caesars*, this stylistic tendency becomes an apt metaphor

¹⁴ Townend (1982a) xii.

¹⁵ See e.g. *Vita Verg.* 8–28, 30–42, *Aug.* 60–93, *Calig.* 20–37, *Claud.* 4–28, 30–6, *Ner.* 8–38, 42–56, *Galb.* 6–19, *Otho* 3–9, *Vit.* 8–13, *Vesp.* 8–14, *Tit.* 3–11, *Dom.* 2–12, 18–22.

¹⁶ We might also compare the arresting change of subject at *Ner.* 40.1. Cf. the use of the derogative passive by Suetonius at 29 (*conficeretur*), which comes just before Nero is made a bride (see Power 2014e); also 16.2–17, on which see Croisille (1969–70) 82; Bradley (1978) 102; Townend (1982b) 1058; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 122–3; and *Galb.* 14.2, with Power (2012–13) 39–40.

for the consolidation of power under the principate, especially at a time when biography is becoming the most suitable form for history-writing under the rule of a single leader.¹⁷ In Suetonius' *Caesars*, emperors dominate both the discussion and the action.

The main verbs of Suetonius' sentences are more consistently placed in the third person to signify the subject of the *Life* than those of any other ancient biographer. Take, for example, Suetonius' *Vitellius*. Out of the 131 main verbs in the *Life*, 90 of them belong to the emperor (69%). This majority is not confined to negative biographies, as the *Divine Titus* yields similar results: Titus is the subject of sixty-one out of the total seventy-nine main verbs (77%). In fact, if we take into account the fact that more than half of the verbs in the *Vitellius* that are not governed by the emperor occur in the section on ancestry alone, before Vitellius is even mentioned (*Vit.* 1–3.1), the results may be even more similar. The *Titus* does not contain an account of ancestry, since it has already been told (*Vesp.* 1), and ancestry obviously entails discussion of figures other than the subject of the *Life*. If we use as our total only the 109 main verbs of Vitellius' biography proper, the ninety verbs of which the emperor is the subject form a more comparable percentage (83%). Between these two *Lives*, then, Suetonius uses an average of 80% of his main verbs to describe the action of the *princeps*.

The significance of these figures can be judged against the relatively rare tendency of other ancient biographers to reserve their main verbs for the subject of the *Life*, whom they more often describe in a variety of grammatical forms, with less strictly consistent syntax. BurrIDGE finds that Tacitus, for example, in his *Agricola*, makes the Roman general his subject in only 18% of the verbs, albeit this number reflects a broader register for Tacitus' focus on the subject, since it does not encapsulate main verbs alone, but other verbs too.¹⁸ In Plutarch's *Cato the Younger*, the subject similarly governs the action no more than 15% of the time, and with even less occurrence (about a tenth of the

¹⁷ On the self-evident appropriateness of biography for the empire, see e.g. Syme (1968b) 94–108; Woodman (1977) 45; Momigliano (1993) 99; Swain (1997) 2, 23–4, 31; Clarke (2002) 86–7; Duff (2003) 104; Kraus (2005a) 183–4; Pelling (2006a) 258; Hurley (2013) 41–2.

¹⁸ BurrIDGE (2004) 158. Broader still is the assessment of Tacitus' focus by Späth (2011: 136), who notes that *Agricola* is either the subject or object of the verb more than two-thirds of the time.

sentences) in Plutarch's *Caesar* (11%), *Pompey* (12%), *Sulla* (9%), and *Marius* (11%), according to BurrIDGE's survey of nominatives.¹⁹ BurrIDGE's statistics for Plutarch do not represent a count of verbs, but rather appearances of the subject's name in the nominative relative to the other nominatives in the biography—a method which, although obviously ill-suited to Suetonius, sufficiently represents the more varied focus of Plutarchan prose. BurrIDGE's analysis of fragments of dialogue from Satyrus' Βίος Εὐριπίδου returns a higher number (26%) for Euripides himself in the nominative (about a fourth of the sentences),²⁰ but nowhere as high as our own numbers above for the subject in Suetonius (four-fifths of the sentences). We may reasonably conclude from these few statistics alone that, however we gauge it, there is clearly a greater focus on the subject in Suetonius than in other ancient biographers, not only thematically, but also in the construction of each sentence.

Suetonius' consistent use of the same tense of verb under thematic categories suggests a parallel in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, which Suetonius clearly knew (*Aug.* 101.4), even if their common themes derive more generally from earlier biography and oratory, and if some echoes of the *Res Gestae* in Suetonius are clearer than others.²¹ However, arguments for the stylistic influence of the *Res Gestae* on Suetonius have their limitations: Suetonius' scholarly style was at any rate already close to that of inscriptions due to its brevity,²² and the *Res Gestae* itself is similar to other edicts reported in the *Divine Augustus* (e.g. 28.1–2), which may equally have influenced Suetonius.²³ Moreover, Augustus uses the first person, not the third. But the fact that his main verbs are so consistently placed in this tense, and describe the deeds of

¹⁹ See BurrIDGE (2004) 158–9.

²⁰ BurrIDGE (2004) 130. On Satyrus' dialogue form of biography, see e.g. Lefkowitz (2012) 99–101; Geiger (1985) 40–4; Schorn (2004) 31–6.

²¹ On the stylistic similarity of the *RG* to Suetonius and his use of it, see Macé (1900) 154; Gagé (1977) 39–40; Carter (1982) 157–8; Baldwin (1983) 133–4, 237–40; de Coninck (1983) 45–57; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 167; Gascou (1984) 530–2; Ramage (1987) 117, 147; Lewis (1991) 3633; Scheid (2007) lxiii–lxiv; Pelling (2009c) 41; Cooley (2009) 50, 120, 204, 223, 240–1, 250–1; Prokoph (2010) 283–9; and Gunderson, ch. 6 in this volume. For Suetonius and oratory, see below, n. 28.

²² Duff (1914) 166; McDermott (1971a) 93; Seager (2005) 238: 'Biography as written by Suetonius is only a glorified epitaph.' On Suetonius' brevity, see Pike (1903) xii, xvii; Mooney (1930) 634–6; Lounsbury (1987) 115–16; Power (2012c), (2014c).

²³ Cf. Baldwin (1983) 134. On the 'programmatic edict' at *Aug.* 28.1–2, see Wardle (2005).

an emperor, does offer a compelling point of comparison, since both authors maintain a uniform perspective on the action, in which the emperor remains central.²⁴

The second way in which Suetonius controls perspective is through *diuisio*, another aspect of biographical writing that is taken to new extremes in the *Illustrious Men* and *Caesars*. Headings (*species*), highlighted by their position, announce each new category to which the biographer turns. Suetonius creates a sort of index out of his prose, with key words clearly visible at the start of his paragraphs. The chapters are then often subdivided by further headings, when the information available to Suetonius illustrates more than one point, or is more plentiful than a single anecdote or piece of evidence.²⁵ Although *diuisio* is common in ancient authors of biography and nearby genres,²⁶ none use it nearly as often or elaborately as Suetonius; and while categorical arrangement was certainly a feature of ancient biography before Suetonius, and certain topics were standard in such works,²⁷ it remains true that no earlier biographer approaches his level of systematic consistency throughout the whole *Life*.²⁸ In this regard, influence

²⁴ On Augustus' first-person verbs, see Ramage (1987) 21–8. Augustus' main verbs are shown by Kraus (2005a) to respond to the style of Caesar, to whom he alludes at *RG* 1.1 ~ *BCiv.* 1.22.5, and possibly also in his autobiography (Lewis 1993: 884). For Caesar and the *RG* more generally, see Levick (2009) 212–13. Suetonius' style has been likened directly to Caesar by McDermott (1971b: 214) and Murison (1992: viii), but Caesar does not use rubrics; cf. Warmington (1999) x. He does, however, use *diuisio*: Kraus (2010a). For Caesar's Xenophonic style, see also Cic. *Brut.* 262 = *Iul.* 56.2, with Lewis (1993) 667; Marincola (1997) 197–8, 205; Oakley, *Comm.* I.139; Pelling (2006b) 16–17, (2013); Riggsby (2006) 148–9; Grillo (2012) 5, 154.

²⁵ On *diuisio* in Suetonius generally, see e.g. Townend (1967) 85–7; Lewis (1991) 3663–4; Kaster (1992) 95–8; Osgood (2011b) 47–8; Hurley, ch. 1 in this volume. Cf. also below, n. 32.

²⁶ See e.g. Isoc. *Evag.* 22; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.6; Nep. *Epam.* 1.4; also Vell. Pat. 2.129.1, with Woodman (1977) 264; Plut. *Alc.* 16.1, with Duff (1999) 187; cf. 269–70 on Plutarch's *synkriseis*; and id. (2008) 196 on *Alc.* 1.

²⁷ Leo (1901) 180–2.

²⁸ See Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 152; Averintsev (2002) 21. There is no strong evidence that in this regard Suetonius was anticipated by Oppius, as suggested by Townend (1987) and accepted by Osgood (2010) 324; *contra*, see Pelling (2011b) 50, 206 n. 5; and Lewis (1991) 3652, arguing that Suetonius' source for the pre-consular career of Caesar, whether Oppius or not, ultimately goes back to a Ciceronian model; cf. 3643–9, 3672 on the pre-imperial categories of Suetonius' *Lives*. For his categories of virtue and vice as influenced by Roman oratory, esp. panegyric, see e.g. Steidle (1951) 108–25; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 145–9; Lounsbury (1987) 67–9, 91–116, (1991) 3761–77; Duff (1999) 313; Gibson (2012) 74–6, also suggesting a parallel with the arrangement of Cicero's letters.

on Suetonius must derive from ancient scholarly works, since it is a commentary-like style.²⁹

Evidence for Suetonius' scholarly output is plentiful, despite the relatively few whole parts that have come down to us intact. For example, Suetonius' *Abusive Words, or Insults and their Derivation* (Περὶ δυσφημῶν λέξεων ἥτοι βλασφημιῶν καὶ πόθεν ἐκάστη), a title known to us from the *Suda* (τ 895), survives only in a Greek epitome, but the author's usual style is still clearly visible.³⁰ Take its beginning, where Suetonius announces his methodology through a subtle *diuisio*; he will proceed by categories of writers, beginning with Homer and other poets of that age, before proceeding to comic playwrights, orators, and historians:

Τὸν τῶν ΒΛΑΣΦΗΜΙΩΝ τρόπον κατέδειξε μὲν ἀρχήθεν Ὅμηρος καὶ οἱ συνεγγὺς τῷ χρόνῳ **ποιηταί**, ἐπηύξησαν δὲ ὕστερον **κωμικοί** τε καὶ **ῥήτορες**. ἔστι δ' ὅπη καὶ τῶν **συγγραφέων** τινὲς καὶ ἄλλας λέξεις ὁποίως ἐκαινοτόμησαν, ὡς ἐξῆς που φανεῖται.

ὁ τοίνυν **Ποιητής** ἃ μὲν ἀπλῶς, ἃ δὲ συνθέτως, ἃ δὲ ἰδιοτρόπως προήνεγκεν. ἀπλῶς μὲν ὡς ἄλιον, τὸν μάταιον, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλὸς ἐν οὐδενὶ λόγῳ κειμένης πρὸ τῆς τῶν νῶν εὐρέσεως· καὶ μεθήμονα, τὸν ἕκαστα τῶν ἔργων μετιέντα·

συνθέτως δὲ ἀεσίφρονα ὃν ἂν τις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀήσεως ἐξηνεμωμένον εἶποι τὰς φρένας· καὶ κυνάμιαν ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων ζώων τὴν τολμηράν· καὶ ἀπτοεπὴ καὶ ἐπεσβόλον τὸν τοῖς ἐπεσι καθαπτόμενον καὶ βάλλοντα· συνθέτως δὲ ἐν ταύτῳ καὶ διαλελυμένως τὸ οἰνοβαρές, κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων·

ἰδιοτρόπως δέ, ὡς τὸν μολοβρὸν καὶ τὸν τρώκτην καὶ τὸν ἀλλοπρόσαλλον καὶ τὸν κέρα ἀγλαόν· καὶ τὸν μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ μολίσκειν βοράν, τὸν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ τρώγειν, τοῦ κερδαίνειν, ὥσπερ εἰ λίχνον, τὸν δὲ κέρα ἀγλαὸν ἀπὸ τίνος ἐμπλοκῆς καλλωπισμοῦ τριχῶν ἅς κέρατα ἐκάλουν· ἀλλοπρόσαλλον δὲ τὸν ἄλλοτε ἄλλω προστιθέμενον καὶ μὴ βέβαιον.

τὰ μὲν οὖν παρ' Ὁμήρῳ τοιαῦτα· ἰτέον δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις εἰρημένα.

INSULTS as a custom were invented in the beginning by **Homer** and the fellow **poets** of his age, and were later augmented by **writers of comedy**

²⁹ Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 43–4, 90–1; cf. Dihle (1994) 346; Kaster (1995) xxxiv–xxxv on the 'basically lexicographical' method of the *Grammarians and Rhetoricians*; and Devillers (2003) 222. Although it is not cogent to assume that Suetonius' own scholarly works necessarily predate the *Illustrious Men* or *Caesars* (Power 2010: 141), they nonetheless demonstrate Suetonius' interests and style; cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 49. Rawson (1978 = 1991: 324–51) shows that Latin prose, particularly technical writing such as that of Varro, became heavily influenced by Greek philosophy in the second century BC, incorporating *diuisio* in its arrangements.

³⁰ On this work, see Taillardat; Pfeiffer (1968) 201; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 44–5; Carbone (1993); Dickey (2007) 103; Kapparis (2011) 224–5, 232–51.

and **orators**; and in a way, some of the **historians** too equally contributed other new phrases, as I shall describe in order.

Homer first introduced insults for *simple-minded*, *crude*, and *odd* as follows.

Simple-minded: *halios* ('useless'): idle; from the *halos* ('sea') that lay to no purpose before the invention of ships; and *methêmona* ('scatter-brain'): neglecting every task.

Crude: *aësiphrôn* ('windbag'): what one might call 'full of wind', from the *aësis* ('air') in the *phrên* ('chest'); *kunamuia* ('dog-fly'): the stubbornness of both animals; *aptoepēs* ('blabbermouth') and *epesbolos* ('bigmouth'): attacking with words and throwing words. For 'crude', add to these the colloquial *oinobarês* ('wine-sack'): having eyes like a dog.

Odd: *molobros* ('glutton'), *trôktês* ('knave'), *allopriosallos* ('two-face'), and *kera aglaon* ('beautiful horns'): from *moliskô* ('go') plus *bora* ('food'); from *trôgô* ('gnaw'), eager to traffic goods, so to speak; *kera aglaon* from a certain adornment of braided hair that they call 'horns'; *allopriosallos*: changing allegiance by turns and inconsistent.

Such are the insults from Homer; let us now look at those recorded by others.

(Taillardat p. 48)

Not only is Suetonius' style of *diuisio* evident in this passage through his compartmentalizing of the three kinds of insults within the first rubric, but even his diction. We might usefully compare his introduction to the *Grammarians*, where he writes about the profession's development by using the word *auxerunt* (*Gramm.* 3.1), which is comparable to ἐπηύξησαν ('augmented') above; if the Greek epitome of Suetonius' *Insults*, as we have it, represents merely a Byzantine translation of a Latin work (aside from the terms themselves and the illustrative quotations), then it may well have been *auxerunt* that Suetonius wrote to describe the contribution of proponents who came after the Archaic Greek poets.³¹

Let us very briefly compare an example of *diuisio* from Suetonius' biographical writing. Take the following passage from the *Divine Augustus*, which has been more widely read than Suetonius' *Insults*:

patronus dominusque non minus [A] **seuerus** quam [B] **facilis et clemens** [B] multos libertorum in honore et usu maximo habuit, ut Licinum

³¹ Cf. also e.g. *auxit* (*Iul.* 2, 42.3), and Howard and Jackson (1922) s.v. *augeo* for further references. It is not certain whether Suetonius' *Insults* was originally written in Greek; see Wardle (1993) 97–9.

et Celadum aliosque. Cosmum seruum grauissime de se opinantem non ultra quam compedibus coercuit. Diomedem dispensatorem, a quo simul ambulante incurrenti repente fero apro per metum obiectus est, maluit timiditatis arguere quam noxae remque non minimi periculi, quia tamen fraus aberat, in iocum uertit. [A] idem Polum ex acceptissimis libertis mori coegit compertum adulterare matronas; Thallo a manu, quod pro epistula prodita denarios quingentos accepisset, crura ei fregit; paedagogum ministrosque C. fili, per occasionem ualitudinis mortisque eius superbe auareque in prouincia grassatos, oneratos graui pondere ceruicibus praecipitauit in flumen.

As patron and master he was no less [A] **harsh** than [B] **lenient** and **merciful**; [B] many of his freedmen were treated by him with respect and on the most familiar terms, such as Licinus and Celadus, among others. Cosmus, a slave who was openly critical of him, was disciplined merely with imprisonment. Diomedes, an attendant who was walking by his side and, when a wild boar suddenly charged, fearfully pushed him in front of it, he preferred to declare frightened rather than harmful, and so this event of considerable danger, since no harm was done, was turned into a joke. [A] But by the same token, Polus, one of his closest freedmen, he condemned to die for being caught committing adultery with matrons; when his scribe Thallus took five hundred coins to reveal a letter, he broke his legs; and when the tutor and servants of his son Gaius took the opportunity of his illness and death to act arrogantly and avariciously in his province, he placed heavy weights on their necks and threw them into the river.

(Aug. 67.1–2)

In this example, we see how the two moral themes of *seueritas* and *clementia* are exemplified in the sections that follow, where the arrangement is chiasmic. The subtlety of the design leaves the worst impression last, with Suetonius going from virtue to vice. But in fact, with this rubric, he makes a transition to a less than favourable part of the *Life* on sexual activities and gambling (Aug. 68–71), only before resuming his overall laudatory portrait (72–101). He therefore actually achieves the reverse ‘chiaroscuro’ effect in the biography as a whole, emphasizing good deeds in light of bad ones.³² It is easy to see

³² For other subtleties of implication from Suetonius’ categorizations by rubric, see e.g. *Iul.* 42.2, with Duff (1914) 167; *Iul.* 44, with Townend (1982a) xii; *Aug.* 26–7 and 35.3, with Carter (1982) 8; *Claud.* 38.3–43, with Power (2011) 731; *Tit.* 7.1–3, with Wardle (2001) 65. On the ‘chiaroscuro’ technique in Suetonius, see e.g. Waters (1964) 51 n. 5; B. W. Jones (1996) xv, 33–4, 80; cf. Jones and Milns (2002) 143.

how Suetonius' familiar practice of neat compartmentalization can be likened to the style of his scholarly writings,³³ a style which he manipulates for rather different, moralistic ends in his *Lives*. Nonetheless, this uniformity of style still serves to blur the line between Suetonius the scholar and Suetonius the biographer.

Another contributing factor to the fluidity between Suetonius' two endeavours is his use of sources, which reveals some continuity in the methods of gathering information for both his scholarly and biographical projects. In his *Grammarians and Rhetoricians*, for example, Suetonius drew mainly on scholarly works, rather than earlier biographies, which had not yet been written for these literary figures.³⁴ Where Suetonius had no recourse to predecessors, he had to rely on scholarship to originate his biographies. By the same token, Suetonius himself is later mined for details no less by scholiasts on poetry, or scholars such as Gellius, than by subsequent biographies of the Caesars, such as the *Historia Augusta*, a fact that indicates the prominently antiquarian details embedded in his *Lives*. Wiseman's chapter in this volume addresses an excellent example quoted by the fourth-century grammarian Diomedes (Suet. fr. 3 Reiff.) that has been controversially located in Suetonius' *Poets*, even though it may possibly derive instead from his scholarship. The biographical writing of Suetonius shared some of the same source material as his more technical works, and indeed displays many of the same interrelated themes that appear to have constituted his diverse and wide-ranging interests, such as his emperors' literary endeavours.³⁵ The erudition of Suetonius' scholarship is constantly displayed in the *Caesars*, just as his political expertise can be gleaned from passages of the *Illustrious Men*. For this reason, it can sometimes be uncertain where a Suetonian fragment should lie.

We have looked closely at only two aspects of Suetonius' style and one possible model for his *Vitae* (Augustus' *Res Gestae*), but the literary influences on Suetonius were many.³⁶ For example, Roman

³³ Cf. Townend (1967) 85, comparing the style of *diuisio* in the *Caesars* to a fragment from Suetonius' *De genere uestium* (Serv. ad *Aen.* 7.683 = fr. 168 Reiff.); also references above, n. 29.

³⁴ Viljamaa (1991) 3829–31.

³⁵ See Dihle (1994) 260–1 on Suetonius' transcendence of 'a merely biographical interest' in the *Caesars*, despite his strictly narrow focus on the emperor. For *studia* in Suetonius generally, see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 83–6; Kaster (2010) 495, 497–500; Power (2011) 731, (2014f).

³⁶ Lewis (1991). As Lewis shows, public oratory and *commentarii*, to name only two, are other possible models; on the former, see above, n. 28; for the latter, esp. Pelling (2009c).

death narratives of famous men probably influenced the care with which Suetonius, and his sources, recounted the final moments of his emperors, just as it may have influenced some of the death scenes in Pliny's *Letters* and Tacitus.³⁷ The success with which Suetonius can fashion his raw material in order to put his own unique stamp on it can be measured through his comparison with the parallel accounts of Plutarch, Tacitus, and Dio.³⁸ Even when he handles the sources of historiography, turning to more centrally political subject matter, Suetonius strays further from that genre's pattern than both Plutarch in his Greek collections of *Lives* and Tacitus in the *Agricola*,³⁹ imposing a template that was considerably influenced by his scholarly works on poetry and culture—especially the private, everyday life of Romans.

Furthermore, Suetonius' political *Lives* are neither apologetic nor pretentious: not only are the biographies of Plutarch and Tacitus closer to historiography than his, but Suetonius paid little mind to the criticisms of *Lives* found in that genre, which usually treated overtly biographical material with disdain, striving to avoid the semblance of biography by eschewing trivial subject areas.⁴⁰ Suetonius utilized his style of *diuisio*

³⁷ On Suetonius and *exitus* literature, see Lounsbury (1987) 63–7; Lewis (1991) 3657–61; Brenk (1992) 4375; Sansone (1993) 189; Wardle (2007) 444–5, 449; Brandão (2009) 25, 48; Power (2014c); on its popularity at Rome, e.g. Plin. *Ep.* 3.5.3, 5.5.2, 8.12.5, 17.19.5; Tac. *Agr.* 2.1; with Syme (1958) 297–8; Geiger (1979) 61–2; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 11; Morford (1990) 1589–94; Sage (1990) 1016–17; Hunink (1992) 390–5; Burridge (2004) 73–4; Edwards (2007) 131–6, 248–50; Harker (2008) 143–6. See also Plin. *Ep.* 2.1, 7.24, with Trapp (2006) 339; Gibson, ch. 10 in this volume. On accounts of death in early Hellenistic biography, see Currie (1989); Woodman (1993) 117–18 = (1998) 205–6; Bollansée (1999a) 467–8 (on F 64), 513 (on F 72), 530–2 (on F 76); (1999b) 141–53.

³⁸ See e.g. Malloch (2004) 207–8; Pausch (2004) 305–9, 316; Holzberg (2006) 49–51; Power (2007), (2012b), (2014b), (2014f); Oakley (2009) 206–11; Hurley (2013).

³⁹ Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 14–15; Swain (1997) 24; Duff (1999) 20–1, 98 n. 106; Damon (2003) 28–9; Pelling (2011b) 16.

⁴⁰ On the grandeur of historiography, see e.g. Townend (1967) 93; Bradley (1978) 153–4; Baldwin (1983) 506–7; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 25; Oakley, *Comm.* II.136–9, III.176, 179, IV.551. For other ancient biographers as generally more defensive than Suetonius, see e.g. Nep. *Praef.* 1–3, *Att.* 13.6, *Epam.* 1.1–3; Plut. *Alex.* 1.2–3, *Cat. Min.* 24.1, 37.10; Tac. *Agr.* 1–2; SHA, *Opil.* 1.4–5, *Heliogab.* 18.3, *Gord.* 21.3, *Quad. Tyr.* 6.2–4, 12.6; with Baldwin (1979a) 101–3 = (1983) 67–9 = (1989b) 12–14. Suetonius does not feel the need to justify including trivial details (Horsfall 1997: 25) or excluding matters of historiography (Hurley 2013: 38). On Suetonius' greater interest in sexual material than Plutarch and Nepos, see respectively Duff (1999) 94–7 and Stem (2012) 157 n. 52. He also freely wrote on courtesans (Lydus, *Mag.* 3.64 = fr. 202 Reiff.); see Baldwin (1979a) 103 = (1983) 69 = (1989b) 14. The defensiveness of Jerome's preface (*De vir.* II.821 Vallarsi = Suet. fr. 1 Reiff.) probably misrepresents Suetonius; see Power (2014d) 402–3, (forthcoming b), and ch. 11 in this volume, pp. 239–40.

for the facets of emperors' characters in a larger structure than that of his literary *Lives*, which, through its ordering of rubrics, implied both subtle and overall moralistic points about each subject's ability to rule. When the biographer finally decided to turn his craft from poets to the more ambitious subject of imperial history, taking up annalistic sources too, the project became a hit. The 'tell-all' book, which began with Suetonius' *Lives* of the twelve Caesars, would endure down to our own day. Part of its success is no doubt owed to its doing away with rhetorical niceties and getting immediately to the engrossing details.

2. SUETONIUS REVIEWED

Thirty years ago, Suetonius experienced a revival with the unprecedented appearance of several monographs on the author within the space of two years, including the first full-length books in English by Baldwin and Wallace-Hadrill.⁴¹ Since then, a substantial group of nine papers written in various languages appeared in a 1991 volume of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*,⁴² and a collection of twenty more papers was published in 2009, almost exclusively in French, with a predominant focus on the author's reception.⁴³ The present volume is the first book of essays on Suetonius in English, and it aims to address the central question of his task as a biographer. In a review of his 1983 monograph, one scholar concluded that 'Wallace-Hadrill has rescued Suetonius' scholarship' but given short shrift to questions of style and genre, some of which were the most interesting about the biographer, while another reviewer felt that Baldwin's book of the same year gave too much attention to 'traditional problems of Suetonian scholarship', such as the historical facts about his life and which sources he used.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Baldwin (1983); de Coninck (1983); Wallace-Hadrill (1983); Gascou (1984); Lambrecht (1984). These were shortly followed by the last book in English on Suetonius: Lounsbury (1987). To this coinciding, we might compare the less cited appearance of four contemporary commentaries on Suetonius' *Caligula*: Guastella (1992); Hurley (1993); Lindsay (1993); Wardle (1994); and two on the *Nero* in as many years: Warmington (1999 [1977]); Bradley (1978); likewise on Suetonius' Book 7: Murison (1992); Shotter (1993).

⁴² Galand-Hallyn (1991); Lewis (1991); de Coninck (1991); Bradley (1991); Giua (1991); Lounsbury (1991); Murphy (1991); Schmidt (1991); Viljamaa (1991).

⁴³ Poignault (2009).

⁴⁴ See Paterson (1984) 219 and Bradley (1985b) 255 respectively.

The chapters that follow here attempt to complete some of the missing picture, synthesizing previous scholarship and revealing new directions of enquiry. A brief word about our title is warranted, before examining the different chapters included. The books on Suetonius mentioned above treat him from a variety of perspectives, approaching him alternately as an archivist, a scholar, a historian, or an artist, as their titles suggest. The chapters contained herein rather bring the focus squarely back to Suetonius as a biographer, seeking answers to questions about his biographical form, his different biographical themes across his *Lives* and other works, and the limitations to interpreting his work as biography. In this way, as we suggested at the beginning of this Introduction, we can better meet Suetonius on his own terms, and read his biographies with insight and understanding, rather than applying criteria that do not belong and judging him as a failed example of a very different norm. Suetonius, as we have shown, was an innovative writer, and we must bear his work's distinction in mind for our discussions to be fruitful.

Let us now turn to the individual chapters themselves. The ongoing debate over the biographer's form and its merits will continue in our first chapter. Hurley examines what she sees as a conflict between Suetonius' thematic and chronological arrangements, a topic with which she has previously dealt only briefly.⁴⁵ Whereas Hurley finds some of Suetonius' arrangements awkward, such as his section on Caesar's horse (*Iul.* 61),⁴⁶ Damon in the ensuing chapter finds Suetonius capable of much artistry by looking at his prose style, particularly his inclusion of verbatim quotations. Damon sees a Suetonius who is able to pull the strings behind his depictions, often letting the emperors speak for themselves and manipulating his presentation of facts through irony.⁴⁷ Power then argues for a sense of closure in the arrangement of the *Caesars* as a whole, showing how Suetonius' final rubrics in each biography allude to the beginnings and endings of earlier *Lives*.

⁴⁵ Hurley (2001) 17–20, (2011) xx–xxiv, (2013) 38–40. For a discussion of Suetonius' style in English, one had formerly to turn to Townend (1967).

⁴⁶ On this detail as 'a flagrant touch of the Alexander touch', see Baldwin (1983) 230. The allusion is also noted by Brandão (2009) 212 and Henderson, ch. 4 in this volume, p. 103, n. 44.

⁴⁷ Damon's chapter was anticipated by Reekmans (1992: 205–6) and may be likened to the study of verbatim quotations of women in Roman elegy by James (2010), who argues for 'ventriloquism' in their portrayal by poets (316 n. 7), borrowing the term from Harvey (1989); cf. also Drinkwater (2013). Against the complete artificiality of beloveds in Latin love poetry, see Power, ch. 11 in this volume.

Henderson begins the second part of this book, 'Reading the *Lives*', with a much-needed study on the question of why Suetonius included the non-imperial *Divine Julius* in his collection, which has mostly been viewed historically in light of Trajan's revival of Caesar during Suetonius' own day.⁴⁸ This extensive chapter surveys Caesar instead as a literary theme through the rest of the *Lives*, and is therefore a valuable resource for its gathering of disparate yet relevant passages. Although Hurley thinks that the *Julius* is a less polished biography, perhaps written after the *Divine Augustus* (p. 26), Henderson finds it more programmatic to the collection. In fact, in my view it might be preferable to see the *Julius*–*Augustus* pairing as revealing a combined model on which the later biographies draw, with the dialogue between them providing an ideal of different conduct to follow, both exemplary and cautionary.⁴⁹

From the largely deterrent *Julius*, the next two chapters by Langlands and Gunderson turn to the *Augustus*, which is usually thought to be more positive. However, Langlands charts the theme of moral behaviour in the emperor's personal life,⁵⁰ comparing different parts of the biography and arguing for a subtle negative commentary between the lines. On the other hand, Gunderson takes on the idea of Augustus' exemplarity itself, which is shown to be used by Suetonius to reveal a sharp contrast with the failure of his successor, Tiberius. Hurley's second chapter on Caligula's death is another topic, like Henderson's, that cries out for fresh treatment despite a number of already existing discussions. She likewise brings a distinctive approach to bear, assessing the significance of ironic religious undertones and parallels with Suetonius' other death scenes. Tatum and Hulls follow up this chapter with studies of the *Titus* and *Domitian* respectively, another pair of *Lives* that is especially meaningful when read together.⁵¹ Tatum looks at the structure and encomiastic bias of Suetonius' *Titus*,

⁴⁸ See Syme (1980) 111 = *RP* III.1258; Baldwin (1983) 50, 234–5; Bowersock (1998) 197, 205; Pelling (2002) 213–14 = *PH* 253–4; (2009b) 253–4. On the need for such a reassessment, cf. Braund (2009) 36–7 n. 119. For the perception that the *Julius* is to some extent anomalous, see e.g. Warmington (1999) vii.

⁴⁹ On the increased awareness of the programmatic function of this pair of *Lives*, see e.g. Bradley (1985b) 264; Mossman (2006) 282; Pelling (2009b) 260–4; Power (2010) 161; and O'Gorman (2011) 293 n. 12, wrongly attributing to Wallace-Hadrill (1983: 61–2) a view of Syme's (see Power 2010: 160 n. 86). For a comparative analysis of the two *Lives*, see Picón García (2009).

⁵⁰ On the moral theme of marriage in Suetonius, see also Bradley (1985a).

⁵¹ See Galtier (2009) 86–9.

while Hulls investigates how the use of mirrors suggests the theme of tyrannical solitude in the last *Life*. Both scholars read their respective biographies in the context of Suetonius' full oeuvre, identifying larger themes across it through their individual studies.

The last part of the book, 'Biographical Thresholds', addresses where Suetonius' focus and interests as a writer cross the boundaries of genre and time, venturing away from the political biography for which he is primarily known today and into the realms of literary biography and ancient scholarship, as well as influencing late antique and medieval works. These chapters all look at how Suetonius' use (and at times sole transmission) by other writers can often reveal the many tangents between his *Lives* and other kinds of writing, including his relationship to later biography. Gibson begins with a comparison of Suetonius' *Illustrious Men* with Pliny the Younger's *Letters*, demonstrating important differences in the two authors' social outlooks and criteria for selecting biographical subjects.⁵² The possibility that Pliny had read Suetonius' material before it was published informs Gibson's reading of the *Letters* as a critique and pre-empting of the *Illustrious Men*, which was a work of great interest to Pliny, especially because it would glorify his uncle, Pliny the Elder. Much of Pliny's material on Roman writers is shown to vie with the terrain of literary biography etched out by Suetonius, who is less interested in late Julio-Claudian writers. Pliny, in a way, also expands the *Illustrious Men* to include his own literary circle, which was beyond the temporal endpoint of Suetonius' work.

From Suetonius' literary *Lives*, we move to his scholarly publications and fate as a writer in subsequent periods. Another chapter by Power takes as its subject the Suetonian composition attested as *Famous Courtesans*. This oft-mentioned but seldom seriously considered work may not have been a collection of biographies at all, but rather, as Power argues, a work closer to an ancient commentary on women in Latin verse—a companion to the companions of Roman poetry. The known and suspected fragments from the work are reconsidered (preserved by sources such as Apuleius, John Lydus in the sixth century, and the tenth-century Bern scholia), as well as others in Suetonius' near-contemporary Gellius and the Virgilian commentator Servius, which are newly proposed. This theme of Suetonius' legacy

⁵² See also Syme (1958) 87–9 and Leach (2012) 87–8 for observations on the social class of Pliny's addressees.

is continued by Wiseman, who investigates the nature and scope of a Suetonian fragment on Roman drama as transmitted by the fourth-century grammarian Diomedes, which we have already discussed, and also illuminates its context through comparison with the third-century Christian writer Tertullian.⁵³ Finally, Wood explores how Suetonius' work on the emperors was read by Einhard, influencing the continued development of political biography as a genre during the Carolingian Empire.⁵⁴

In representing a re-evaluation of Suetonius as a biographer, the chapters in this book, for the most part, make a break with past scholarship that sought to define him primarily in terms of his social class or antiquarian interests.⁵⁵ Since earlier literary appreciations of Suetonius have failed to convince,⁵⁶ new avenues are needed to redirect emphasis from the biographer's era, career, and earlier sources in seeking the reasons for his creative choices. By reading Suetonius' *Caesars* and his other works in the context of their respective genres, the present book eschews these scholarly preoccupations, better explaining the techniques by which he shaped his material as serving sophisticated compositional aims. Suetonius is thus unearthed as a richer and more complex source for the Roman Empire, and an author whose literary talent is only now receiving the attention it deserves.

⁵³ For Diomedes' use of Suetonius, see also Moore (2012) 11, 60–1; for Tertullian's, Waszink (1948) 225–33.

⁵⁴ Einhard and Suetonius are also discussed by Bowersock (1998) 209; Averintsev (2002) 34; Fischer and Markoff (2006); Simons (2011); Hägg (2012) 231–2. For Einhard and biography, see Becht-Jördens (2008). On the manuscript tradition of Suetonius' *Caesars*, see Kaster (2014).

⁵⁵ On Suetonius as a product of the equestrian order, see e.g. Della Corte (1958); Piccirilli (1998). On Suetonius the antiquarian, see e.g. Leo (1901) 1–16, 268–314; Momigliano (1993) 19–20, 86–8, 112–15.

⁵⁶ For criticism of previous literary studies, see Bradley (1978) 15–16; Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 21–2, 175, (1986) 326.

Part I

Formal Features

Suetonius' Rubric Sandwich

Donna W. Hurley

Richard Lounsbury opened the preface of his 1987 *The Arts of Suetonius* by justifying the plural in the title. 'It implies,' he wrote, 'that C. Suetonius Tranquillus wrote by choice and by will, having conceived a project and worked out the best methods of accomplishing it; and that the accomplished and various artifact is worthy in itself of our pleasure and our taste.'¹ Lounsbury's second 'art', the production of a 'worthy artifact', opens the possibility of literary assessment of the *Caesars*. His first 'art' refers more particularly to the biographer himself and is tangential to a long-held assumption that Suetonius was little more than a sorter of facts.² And it raises the question of intention. This examination and comparison of the structure of the individual *Lives*, with attention to the author's manipulation of rubric segments, reveals him trying to respond to the imperative that he obviously felt to organize the information that he had at hand and to shape it effectively. It could sometimes be difficult for him to line his emperors up against one another in a way useful for comparison, but the *Lives* show him working hard at it and writing 'by choice and by will'.

Suetonius' biographies of the Caesars are acknowledged to follow a pattern in which rubrics, facts ordered by topic, are sandwiched into the chronologically obvious boundaries of an emperor's birth and death.³ Furthermore, the pattern reaches back to ancestry and moves forward from birth with a description of his pre-imperial life. Accession prefaces events of his reign arranged by rubric. Chronology

¹ Lounsbury (1987) ix.

² Macé (1900); Leo (1901); Funaioli (1927) = (1947) 147–79.

³ Lewis (1991) 3641.

returns at the end with the narration of his death and burial followed by a closing thought or coda of some sort. It is the central section, the exposition of the emperor's reign by topic without temporal reference, that constitutes the alleged filling of the sandwich.

Suetonius' rubrics frequently begin with obvious introductory summations, the red-letter sentences that give their name to his method. Vespasian 'patiently endured the candour of his friends, the innuendos of lawyers, and the defiance of philosophers' (*amicorum libertatem, causidicorum figuras ac philosophorum contumaciam lenissime tulit*). Illustrations follow in order. Three kinds of challenge come from three categories of persons; a representative of each is named and his irritating behaviour described (*Vesp.* 13). Claudius 'was set upon by individuals and by a faction and finally in civil war' (*et a singulis et per factionem et denique ciuili bello*, *Claud.* 13.1), a sentence carefully constructed with polysyndeton and *uariatio*. An example of each threat follows in the same order (*Claud.* 13.1–2). This is writing with attention to detail.

Some rubrics are concrete and relate to the emperor's broad range of involvement in affairs of state (the dispensation of justice, the sponsorship of games, consulships) or to his private life (marriages, literary accomplishment, eating habits). Others are rubrics of character or quality, positive or negative, often gathered into abstract nouns—the *ciuitas* (citizen-like behaviour) of Augustus (*Aug.* 50), the *petulantia* (insolence) of Nero (*Ner.* 26.1), the *seueritas* (harshness) of Galba (*Galb.* 6.3, 7.1)—and are the 'imperial virtues' (or vices) recognized as paradigmatic of Suetonian biography.⁴

Rubrics often follow one another in a logical stream. Generosity (*liberalitas*) has subsets in the providing of entertainment, gifts to the populace, and public works. A description of the emperor's physical appearance may be followed by his health and personal habits, his eating, drinking, and sleeping. Attention (or the lack of it) to the standard educational curriculum (*studia liberalia*) introduces oratorical and literary accomplishment. Gaius' *saeuitia* (cruelty, *Calig.* 27.1) is modified over several pages as verbal cruelty (*atrocitas uerborum*, *Calig.* 29.1) and cruelty while at leisure (*Calig.* 32.1). A general heading such as the 'administration of the state' (*ad ordinandum rei publicae*, *Iul.* 40.1)

⁴ Qualities correspond in large part to the plenitude of abstract nouns in Pliny's *Panegyric* to Trajan (3.4): Mouchová (1968); Wallace-Hadrill (1981a), (1983) 174; Bradley (1991); Lewis (1991) 3627–8.

was more challenging; Suetonius might organize by geography, from Rome to Italy and then outward to provinces and distant territories (*Aug.* 29–48). Chronology retained within rubrics assists organization: Augustus' betrothal and marriages are listed in order (*Aug.* 62); omens portending Gaius' murder draw ever closer to the moment of assassination (*Calig.* 57). This kind of sorting usually goes well, although some choices can be awkward or unexpected.

But these too (perhaps even more revealingly) show Suetonius making decisions and purposefully arranging his material. When Caesar, with the outcome of battle in doubt, sends away the horses (including his own), in order to discourage retreat, Suetonius seizes the opportunity to describe the emperor's special horse with human-like feet (*Iul.* 61). This nugget intrudes oddly into pages devoted to military leadership, but he could evidently find no better spot for it, although he clearly thought he must include it. Nero's cruelty expands logically from family to friends and beyond (*Ner.* 33–7) until it becomes 'cruelty' to the city walls, a contrived thought, but a way to fit responsibility for the great fire of AD 64 into a scheme (*Ner.* 38.1). Every page of the *Caesars* reveals Suetonius making studied decisions like these about the dispersal of his information and achieving what are usually (if not always) satisfying and effective connections. This is, without doubt, composition 'by choice and by will', observable in sentences and paragraphs and beyond. But decisions on a larger scale, the organization of a biography as a whole, and the positioning of rubric segments within it—the making of the sandwich—appear to have given him greater trouble.

Suetonius' sandwich with a rubric filling, his use of rubrics to describe the emperor's reign within a chronological enclosure, fits the *Life of the Divine Augustus* most closely. This is the only one of the *Lives* in which he makes specific reference to rubrics. After the obligatory description of ancestry, in this case with intimations of divinity, Augustus is introduced in Chapter 5 (*natus est*, 'he was born,' *Aug.* 5). A quick survey of his youth ends with the briefest of summaries of his rule, a single sentence: 'He raised armies and then ruled the state, first with Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus, then with Antony alone for almost twelve years, and finally for forty-four by himself' (*Aug.* 8.3). Then an organizational marker, the much quoted *diuisio*: 'Having set forth this summation, as it were, of his life, I shall go through the individual items not according to chronology [*per tempora*] but by topics [*per species*], so that they can be more clearly revealed and understood'