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The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus

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The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus

For my parents.

Vita of Joshua Sayer Smith
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ABSTRACT

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Attempts to understand Tacitus' treatment of Roman soldiers have tended to focus on his aristocratic bias towards the lower-class citizen soldiers. These studies used evidence from throughout Tacitus' corpus which show the historian describing the unruly, ruthless, and often violent actions of soldiers. As an aristocrat, Tacitus was describing the actions of a group of people whom he apparently despised. These studies on Tacitus' treatment of soldiers, therefore, neglected the potential for discussing the military values of common soldiers. The assumption that Tacitus was a biased aristocrat who looked down on the figure of the soldier fails to consider the scenes throughout the historian's corpus that speak toward the military values of soldiers. Military values can tell us a great deal about the soldiers who embody them. They also, as is the case with Tacitus, inform us about the relationship between soldiers, their values, and the military commanders who lead them.

Military values of common soldiers were part of a larger system of military, and therefore political, infrastructure that had lasting impacts on Roman life under the Principate,

and this dissertation attempts to provide a nuanced understanding of how Tacitus wrote about those military values and why it was important for him to do so. This dissertation also approaches the issue from the material evidence left behind during the Principate. The funerary epitaphs and imperial monuments from the 1st-2nd centuries AD provide an alternative perspective on the importance of the military values of common soldiers both for the soldiers themselves and the aristocracy who lead them.

The Tacitean evidence combined with the material evidence considered in this dissertation point readers of Tacitus in a different direction than the predominant trend in scholarship on Tacitus' treatment of common soldiers. Tacitus crafted his narratives about common soldiers to include their military values, because he recognized the importance of understanding these military values for whoever was leading the soldiers. Under the Principate, this was ultimately the *princeps* himself, but included the aristocratic generals serving the *princeps* in the provinces. The military values of legionary soldiers, then, play a role in how Tacitus writes the history of military leadership, both its successes and its failures.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus: Endurance, Courage, Rewards

Joshua Smith

Introduction

Whether conquering Britain alongside Agricola, causing chaos during the civil wars of AD 69, or destabilizing the military hierarchy through mutinies, legionary soldiers and their relationship with military leaders feature prominently throughout Tacitus' corpus. The relationship between soldiers and their leaders depended on certain military values and systems: endurance, courage, and rewards. For Roman generals to lead appropriately, they needed to understand and work within these values and systems. This dissertation explores these military values and systems and seeks to explain the importance of military generals appropriately engaging them under the complicated political and social environment of the Principate.

This interpretation of soldiers in Tacitus offers a different perspective on their role within Tacitus' corpus. Some past work, including that of Kajanto, Coulston, and Speidel, has focused on Tacitus' representation of soldiers as an unruly and barbaric mob, revealing the author's aristocratic bias.[1] It is not that pointing out Tacitus' characterization of soldiers as dangerous, unstable, and unruly is incorrect. At times, Tacitus does represent them in such a way. However, only seeing the soldier through this hostile characterization runs the risk of

[1] Kajanto (1970), Coulston (2013); Speidel (2012) says, "Throughout the *Histories* and *Annals*, Tacitus describes the soldiers of the Roman army as a sorry species, with no regard for men of honour and age."

over-simplifying the role of the soldiers and their values on the ways in which Tacitus discusses military leadership more broadly under the Principate. For example, we rarely see the *princeps* on the frontier of the empire, nor do we see him in the provinces helping maintain Roman control. The *princeps*, therefore, relied on military commanders to maintain Roman control in the provinces, where a commander's understanding and relationship with the soldiers was paramount to Roman success. Exploring this relationship through important military values and systems such as endurance, courage, and rewards, we can see that an overly simplified view of soldiers as a mere unruly mob may not fully grasp the importance of a military commander's need to understand, manage, and maintain an effective relationship with the legions.

My work on soldiers also differs slightly from the work of Ash, who explores Tacitus' characterization of the army and its leaders during the civil wars of AD 69.[2] The *Histories* provides Ash with a useful case study to explore the dynamic between soldiers and leaders precisely because it offers us four iterations through Otho, Galba, Vitellius, and Vespasian. Ultimately, Ash's goals are set on Tacitus' mode of characterization during civil war, the ethical and moral connection between soldiers and their leaders, as well as reframing Tacitus' civil war narrative in terms of the twisting and turning portrayal of the soldiers. This last point alone deserves more attention. Ash suggests that the portrayal and characterization of soldiers in other authors of civil war narrative (specifically Appian and Dio) was somewhat monolithic. Caesar, Ash concedes, does not present the army in as unified a way as Appian and Dio. However, she suggests that the civil wars of AD 69 were a different kind of problem for an

[2] Ash (1999).

historian, namely that Tacitus was dealing with four armies instead of two. Ultimately, Ash suggests that while authors such as Caesar, Appian, and Dio elide the differences between armies in civil war, Tacitus did not. Ash, therefore, traces the changes and shifts in Tacitus' representation of the armies and the ways in which their leaders change or influence the soldiers.

Ash, for example, emphasizes the moral and ethical degeneration of Vitellius' soldiers as they leave the corrupting influence of Rome (*Histories* 2.62.8): *degenerabat a labore ac virtute miles adsuetudine voluptatum et contemptu ducis* ("The soldiers lowered themselves from hard work and valor after becoming accustomed to Vitellius' luxury and learned to despise their leader").[3] In chapter 1, when I explore this passage in more detail, my reading focuses on the role of the military values of *labor* and *virtus*. In particular, Vitellius' negative (or as Ash might say, morally corrupting) influence affects the very military values which an effective leader should be cultivating. For values such as endurance of *labor* and *virtus* are central to a soldier's success, and therefore central to the success of the general and, extrapolated further, the success of the Empire at large. Ash's work has, in one sense, created a new line of inquiry into Tacitus' depiction of the army, one based not necessarily on his accurate portrayal of military history proper, but his representation of military figures, including both soldiers and *principes*.[4]

[3] See Ash (1999) on the moral degeneration and also Ash (2007: 248) on the eastern association of Vitellius' declining troops.

[4] Worth noting here is the unpublished dissertation of Perkins (1984) who read soldiers collectively, as an individual character, throughout the *Histories*. Perkins reads the soldiery as an individual in and of itself, expressing actions, thoughts, and feelings. Her soldier(y) as a character is just as important as Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian, due in large part to their historical importance in AD 69. She argues that Tacitus' depiction of the soldiers as an individual reflects their historical importance.

Ash and Perkins both pointed out the ways in which Tacitus characterizes and represents soldiers. Perkins looked only at the soldiers as a unified figure in and of themselves, whereas Ash attempts to clarify Tacitus' overall characterization of soldiers and leaders in AD 69. This project seeks to expand on this work by looking more specifically at how Tacitus represents and portrays the relationship between soldiers and leaders insofar as they depended on certain military values, which were integral to the maintenance of the Imperial Roman army, and therefore to the overall health of the Roman state.

Syme first cautioned readers of Tacitus against the historian's military narratives. Syme suggested we read Tacitus not for military history proper – numbers, movements, battles, purposes. Instead, Syme encouraged us to think of Tacitus as a historian more concerned with what he called the substance of history, not the material.[5] There are compelling reasons, however, to read Tacitus for the material of history, since his work stands as some of the best literary evidence we have of the early Roman Empire. For that reason, we might parse Tacitus' narrative for any remnants of this sort of material. It might be equally important to read Tacitus for any substance of military history, as Syme would say, even if Tacitus himself was not writing military history. That is to say, Tacitus was not a military historian and so we should use caution when he discusses military matters. However, Syme's suggestion was a fruitful one: Tacitus was not a military historian proper, but that does not mean his literary representation

[5] Syme (1958: 157), responding to Mommsen's claim that Tacitus was the most unmilitary of historians said, "The charge is powerful, and perhaps misdirected. Accurate intelligence about numbers and regiments, the detail of operations both principal and subsidiary, the times and stages of a march, such were the facts to be registered in the reports of generals or the *commentarii* of military emperors. In short, the materials of history rather than its substance."

of military affairs do not provide us with valuable information. Not to read Tacitus as potentially writing about the substance of military affairs would be doing a disservice to the purpose of the historian's text, leaving us, his current audience, unable to render fully the meaning of his prose and how it may have affected his contemporary audience.

There has been a trend in scholarship on the Roman imperial army to focus on the decentralization of Roman military power, focusing on the importance of provincial manpower.[6] This work has solidified our understanding of Imperial Rome's increasing reliance on the provinces for military concerns. In particular, the field has produced several insightful monographs on the *auxilia* and their role as non-citizen soldiers within the Roman army. Most notably, Jonathan Master has taken this question and addressed it through reading Tacitus' *Histories* as a didactic text intended to instruct Tacitus' Trajanic audience on the importance of realizing how influential the provinces were for the sustenance of the state.[7] The impulse to look to the periphery of the empire to understand its center stands at the heart of this trend in research and so far it has greatly expanded our knowledge of the empire.

The starting point for the present study differs in that it does not look to the *auxilia*, non-citizen soldiers of Rome, but to the citizen *milites* of the legions and their relationship with the aristocratic generals who lead them. In keeping with the framework of approaching Tacitus from the perspective of historiography, the goal of examining Tacitus' representation of military values is to see precisely what lies at the heart of the relationship between soldiers and

[6] Master (2016); see also Haynes (2016).
[7] Ibid.

military leaders. To gain insight into this, I incorporate, where possible, material evidence which provides a different perspective on the military values Tacitus represents. Funerary epitaphs of soldiers provide a semblance of agency in their own self-representation after death, or how commemorators sought to represent their fellow soldiers. Likewise, monuments in Rome and on the periphery of the empire allow us to contextualize Tacitus' representation of military values from a state-sponsored perspective. In studying relevant monuments, we will see some contemporary material evidence with which we can make connections to Tacitus' literary representations. While these connections are not the main focus of this project, they do provide interesting and relevant contextualization for our effort to better understand the military values of legionary soldiers and their relationship with military leaders of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

This project joins the conversation that classicists have been having since the work of T.P. Wiseman and AJ Woodman created a shift in the way that Roman historiography contributed to Roman literary culture.[8] Wiseman suggested that ancient Roman historians used rhetorical techniques similar to orators.[9] Use of rhetorical techniques (*colores*) made historical narratives more engaging and instructive for their intended audience. Woodman argued, a few years after Wiseman, that Tacitus himself was using the same material on more than one occasion in his writing. In other words, Tacitus could not pass up the opportunity to

[8] Woodman, in particular, has been one of the most influential voices on Tacitus over the last 40 years. His list of contributions to the field is extensive and will be cited throughout. Worth noting here in the introduction are his contributions to the study of Tacitus more broadly as a rhetorical and literary agent, for which see (1979, 1988, and 1998).
[9] Wiseman (1979).

use an emotionally effective scene so long as he felt it might entertain the audience. Woodman called this "substantive self-imitation" and this was founded on the principle that ancient historians were tasked with entertaining their readers.[10] Around a decade later Woodman continued to explore the literary purposes of ancient historians by way of close reading Cicero's *De Oratore* 2.62 in which Woodman argues that avoiding the appearance of bias was the primary concern of ancient historians, rather than a verifiable account of what actually happened.[11] Luke Pitcher reasonably contextualizes Woodman's important interpretation of Cicero's remarks by pointing out that rejecting bias is a means by which the author attempts to temper any distortions of truth.[12]

Since the work of Woodman, other scholars such as Ash, O'Gorman, Haynes, and Sailor have all contributed to the study of Tacitean historiography.[13] All scholars mentioned above differ in their methodologies and the extent to which they are willing to separate Tacitus' literary production from history.[14] The separation of literary or rhetorical production

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[10] See Woodman (1979: 154) where he states, "I think the reasons for Tacitus' 'substantive self-imitation' in *Annals* 1.61-2 and 64-5 lie… in entertainment. However foreign it may be to us today, historians in the ancient world were expected to provide their readers with entertainment, *delectatio lectoris*, a responsibility of which Tacitus expresses himself only too well (cf. *Annals* 4.32.1, 33.2-3)." See also Martin (1955) who suggested that even if we can trace source material for events, the picture created by internal allusions has a real impact on the way we understand Tacitus and his style.

[11] Woodman (1988).

[12] Pitcher (2009); For ancient historiography's truth claims see Luce (1989) and Marincola (1997).

[13] Sailor (2008); see also O'Sullivan (2010) who says, about these Tacitean scholars, "By remaining attentive to issues of voice, allusion, and narrative presentation, these scholars have shown how Tacitus is worthy of the kinds of intense readings we might perform on any ancient author writing in poetry or prose; in many ways they do for Tacitus what Miles, Jaeger, and Feldherr did for Livy in the 1990s."

[14] Ash has focused, to an extent, on the characterization of individuals (or groups) in Tacitus; see (1999) for leaders and soldiers, (2006) for Corbulo, and (2010) for Vocula. O'Gorman's has been influential in understanding new ways of seeing the political world of Rome through Tacitus; see (2020) for her most recent work exploring politically effective speeches in Tacitus, (2007) for intertextuality in Tacitus, and (2000) for her work on "reading" as a concept more broadly in Tacitus, for which her comments on understanding characters in Tacitus' prose as readers are particularly useful. Haynes (2003) perhaps takes Tacitus' literary creation too far in

from history plays an important role in any research on Tacitus, for his purpose and product – historical writings – were, in a sense, literary and rhetorical creations, as these scholars have shown. Therefore, I am indebted to those authors who have and continue to explore, ask, and answer questions about Tacitus' writing.

The Roman Army

Legionary soldiers were the backbone of the Roman army. Their importance became more profound as Rome transitioned from Republic to Empire and the *princeps* relied on their support for continued control over the state.[15] Augustus was first to routinize certain processes of the army, some of which began earlier in the Republic, while others were newly created by Augustus himself.[16] Legions of approximately 5000 soldiers were officially supplemented by the *auxilia*, which were first formalized under Julius Caesar. Augustus also significantly changed the economics of the military by his institution of the *aerarium militare*, which was a treasury established by money garnered through taxation. This treasury was used to pay soldiers their *praemia* upon retirement.[17] This also meant that length of service had to be determined and

her attempts to understand what is true and what is purely fictional through the literary theory of critics such as Freud, Lacan, Marx, and Althusser. Other scholars are surely worth mentioning in the world of Tacitean scholarship, particularly for their contributions to the historiography of Tacitus. Damon casts a wider net over the entirety of Latin historiography, but her work on the *Histories* (2003, 2006) in particular has been influential on the field; Ginsburg (2005); Joseph (2012); Kraus (2010, 2014).

[15] Campbell (1984) explores the relationship between the *princeps* and the soldiers during the Principate, with particular attention paid to the ways in which the *princeps* navigated their rule in conjunction with the needs of the army.

[16] Phang (2008), Gilliver (2007), Raaflaub (1980).

[17] On the institution of the *aerarium militare* and the importance of the *praemia* as a regularized pension over the ad hoc responses to military retirement in the Republic see Phang (2008: 163) who says, "It [the *aerarium militare*] was funded by new taxes, a sales tax and the *vicesima hereditatium* or five percent tax on inheritances. This taxation

that ultimately meant that life in the military had officially changed, even if soldiers had been serving extended periods of time under military leaders of the late Republic.[18] Augustus' changes to the military have been summarized usefully by Keppie:

> The army of the Roman Empire differed from that of the Republic in many ways. The individual legions (and auxiliary regiments) remained permanently in commission with the same names, numerals and titles, and were renewed by constant supplementation. The soldier served for an extended period, and looked on the army as a lifetime's occupation and career. A proper financial structure ensured the payment of wages. At the end of service there was a fixed reward, on the implementation of which the soldier could rely. It is to Augustus that the credit belongs for effecting these changes.

These more structural changes created a different kind of military service for soldiers of the Imperial army compared to the service of soldiers before Augustus.[19] Another element of Augustus' reign introduced an added layer of complexity to military service under the Empire, namely that Augustus, as *princeps*, was the ideological sole leader not just of the entire Empire, but of the military as well. The *princeps*, of course, relied on the *legati Augusti* to manage and handle the provinces. The relationship between these more immediate generals and the legionary soldiers is the focus of this dissertation. The new military system added complexity to this immediate relationship between general and soldier, because the *princeps* was now ideologically or physically influencing the behavior of generals towards soldiers; generals now had to worry about the consequences of the *princeps*' envy and fear. However, at times Tacitus

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imposed formal rationality on the provisions of *praemia*, ending the irregular confiscations and veteran settlements that had so alienated the aristocracy." See also Suetonius *Aug.* 49.2; Dio 54.25.6.

[18] See Phang (2008) in particular for the transition of service from Republic to Empire.

[19] Keppie (1984: 146); For the Augustan legion and the changes he made to the military system see Parker (1928: 72-92) and Le Bohec (1994: 181-206). For the Roman Imperial army more generally see Webster (1969), Le Bohec (1994), and Goldsworthy (1996).

provides us examples of *principes* interacting with the soldiers directly (more frequently in the *Histories*). One of Augustus' innovations was to keep the soldiers loyal to him and only him through the direct payment of *stipendia* from *princeps* to *miles*.[20] This close connection was not only nurtured by imperial coinage, but also by the *phalerae* that soldiers would win as rewards in battle. The *phalerae* were small metal disks worn on the breastplate, or sometimes hung from standards of legions. These *phalerae* frequently contained images of the current *princeps* or symbols and images easily identifiable with him.[21] Augustus' work to maintain a strong bond between soldier and emperor would undergo strain after his death, as we can see in some of the passages already considered – the Pannonian and German revolts were partly in response to the death of Augustus and first imperial succession.

The infrastructure of the army changed after Augustus opened up opportunities of service to Roman provincials. The standing legionary forces which Augustus maintained typically returned to their place of origin after being moved around *ad hoc* for specific engagements. While I do not intend to cover the topic of legionary recruitment in any significant detail, there is undoubtedly a broad shift in legionary recruitment through the first century AD: more non-Italian citizens are serving than Italians by the time of Claudius and Nero.[22] Provincials sought the professionalized Roman army as a means for social ascensions

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[20] Keppie (1984: 149), "Throughout his reign Augustus was concerned to maintain a bond between the soldiers and himself: he was their patron, they his clients. Their loyalty, and the closeness of the bond, were continually emphasized, especially on the coinage, which the soldiers received from Augustus as their pay."

[21] For *phalerae* see Chilver (1979: 118), Stäcker (2003: 160-166), and Maxfield (1981: 213-217). A particularly interesting *phalera* survives from the 1st century AD. It contains the image of Tiberius flanked by Germanicus and Drusus on either side; Richter (1920: 164).

[22] For the influx of non-Italian soldiers in the Roman army see Keppie (1997: 89), "In the century and a quarter between Caesar's campaigns in Gaul (58-50 BC) and the civil war which brought the Julio-Claudian period to a

and improvement for their life.[23] The hierarchy of the army allowed non-equestrian Roman citizens the chance to serve in hopes that they would acquire some wealth and perhaps eventually entrance into the equestrian class. Promotion through the ranks was possible, albeit slow.

Material Evidence

In this dissertation I use material evidence to contextualize my readings of Tacitus. While my research questions focus on Tacitus and not on the material evidence itself, the material evidence of the 1st and 2nd centuries offers interesting points of comparison against the work of Tacitus. My use of material evidence is relatively limited throughout. However, I take care in each chapter to explore the military value in question in at least some form of material evidence. I intend to provide the viewpoint offered from material evidence only as a point of contextualization with Tacitus' historiographical representation of the military values that may be displayed on the tombstones of soldiers or the imperial monuments of the state. In chapter 1, I use the funerary inscriptions of soldiers from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD to contextualize Tacitus' representation of military labor. In Chapters 2 and 3, I use imperial monuments of the state including Trajan's column and the *Tropaeum Traiani* in order to see the ways in which

close (AD 68-9), the Roman army, under the strain of defending and policing a very substantial geographical area … changed from being 'Roman' in the sense that the bulk of its manpower was drawn from Rome, or indeed Italy, to an army defending Roman territory and a city which few would ever have the opportunity of visiting during the course of their military service," as well as Keppie (1984: 180-186), where he notes that by the time of Trajan only 21% of legionary recruits are coming from Italy/Rome. On the larger trends of legionary recruitment under empire, see Forni (1953), Brunt (1974), Mann (1983).

[23] Speidel (2012) discusses the conditions of the army being a marked improvement for certain Roman provincials.

Tacitus' depiction of courage and rewards may align or diverge from the message being issued from the *princeps* himself.

Chapter Summaries

In the following chapters, I present detailed analysis of Tacitus' representation of three important military values and incentive systems for common soldiers: endurance, courage, and rewards and remuneration. These values and systems are explored through their dependence on those military generals leading the soldiers, whether that be the local *legati* or the *princeps* himself. The relationship between soldiers and leaders has always been seen as important for Roman success. Yet, studies on Tacitus have not yet shown in a sufficiently thorough and consistent way how that success relies on the effective relationship between leader and soldier.

Chapter 1 explores the value of endurance, or *patientia*, which traditionally referred to the Roman soldier's ability to tolerate natural conditions such as heat, cold, and rain. While even Tacitus uses the natural world to showcase soldiers' endurance, he more frequently and programmatically showcases soldiers' endurance of what I call the "social world." The endurance of the social world is a framework derived from Robert Kaster with whom much of chapter 1 engages on the topic of endurance as a military value. Contrary to Kaster, I argue that Tacitus depicts soldiers more frequently enduring the social world as seen through the harsh realities of the *labor* that was expected of soldiers serving in the army. I use Tacitus' concentration on soldiers' endurance of *labor* and the social world to show that this value speaks more broadly to the important relationship between the soldier and their commanding

officers, who themselves were acting as proxies for the *princeps*; endurance of the social world was beneficial both to the soldiers and the state. I use images from Trajan's column to make the additional claim that soldiers' endurance of the social world was an important topic for Tacitus and his contemporaries who were still largely responsible for commanding the legions in the provinces.

In Chapter 2, I argue two major points. First, that Tacitus represents soldierly courage as a symbiotic relationship between general and soldier, a relationship which could deteriorate under a bad *princeps* or an amoral general. On the other hand, under an effective military leader this relationship could produce Roman success through the cultivation of courage. This symbiotic relationship could be beneficial to the soldiers. Courageous action on the battlefield could lead not only to prolonged life, but the possibility of rewards and social distinction. However, the relationship was also beneficial for the generals, whose own *virtus* relied on the success of the military. The second major point of this chapter explores this idea more closely, namely that understanding how to lead soldiers to courageous action without garnering the jealous gaze of the *princeps* was an important issue for aristocratic military leaders under the Principate. In this sense, chapter 2 suggests that Tacitus' representation of the courage of common soldiers had historical importance to those members of his own aristocratic *milieu*. In contextualizing this last historical claim, I use images from Trajan's Column and the *Tropaeum Traiani* to show a connection between the state-sponsored representation of courage and leadership and Tacitus' literary representation of the same.

Chapter 3 explores the system of military rewards. I examine two main categories of rewards: the *dona militaria*, won by soldiers for brave deeds on the battlefield, and the *donativa* given by a *princeps* to his soldiers. In this chapter, I am concerned with elucidating Tacitus' representation of these reward systems and exploring the ways in which that representation may speak to Tacitus' efforts as a historian of the Empire. Tacitus was interested in exploring the importance of the military reward system not just from the perspective of elite military commanders winning their own rewards, but their ability to reward common soldiers appropriately. For if a military general cannot participate in this system effectively, he runs the risk of losing the soldiers, as being appropriately rewarded for service was important for soldiers. How a military commander navigates the relationship between himself, military rewards, and soldiers, shows itself to be one aspect of Tacitus' characterization of military leadership under the Principate.

Throughout, I hope to show that by reading Tacitus through the lens of military values, particularly those related to the common soldier and their relationship with military leadership, we will see that soldiers have a more important role in Tacitus than past interpretations have allowed. In particular, viewing soldiers only through the lens of aristocratic bias against the masses, or as the product of their leader's personal characteristics, oversimplifies their role. It does not allow for us to see Tacitus' representation of soldiers and their values as part of a relationship with military leadership, one which was crucial for Roman success. I suggest that examining these values, systems and relationships, shows us that Tacitus was concerned with the dynamics of military leadership during a time period in which the

centralization of power made those values, systems, and relationships fraught with complications.

The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus: Endurance

In 83 AD Gnaeus Julius Agricola addressed his troops before the battle of Mons Graupius. The battle would be the culmination of Agricola's invasion of Caledonia and his *exhortatio* would be forever immortalized by his son-in-law, Tacitus. The speech has been noted for its adherence to historiographical conventions and its perceived inferiority to the speech of the Caledonian chieftain, Calgacus, that preceded it.[24] Nevertheless, the speech holds an important place within the narrative and Tacitus uses the speech to highlight some of Agricola's qualities as a military general. Agricola, likewise, uses the opportunity to praise certain qualities in his soldiers.[25] Agricola specifically highlights his soldiers' endurance (*Agricola* 33): *tot expeditionibus, tot proeliis, seu fortitudine adversus hostes seu patientia ac labore paene adversus ipsam rerum naturam opus fuit, neque me militum neque vos ducis paenituit* ("In all these campaigns and in so many battles, whether strength against the enemy, or endurance and hard work were required against nature itself, I have had nothing to regret in my soldiers, or you in your general"). Agricola praises his soldiers for their endurance (*patientia*) and hard work (*labor*) against nature itself. This praise for endurance and hard work comes at a defining moment in the *Agricola*. The battle of Mons Graupius was won by the Romans and was a major steppingstone toward the end of Rome's tenuous struggle to conquer Britain. The placement

[24] Rutherford (2010: 315-16) discusses the "disappointments" in the speech. Woodman (2014: 256) suggests that Agricola's speech is not inferior, but different, citing Tacitus' pre-emption of Calgacus' arguments, and that responding to Calgacus' claims would not make sense for Agricola's narrative audience of soldiers.
[25] On the *Agricola* as a text about virtues and how Tacitus treats the roles of praise and blame see Sailor (2008: 51-118).

of Agricola's praise within the overall structure of the *Agricola* and within the speech itself (the first lines) suggest that soldiers' endurance was necessary for a Roman victory and for Tacitus' characterization of Agricola as a military general.

What exactly was endurance and hard work to the legionary soldiers of the Empire and to what extent was the endurance of labor affected by military commanders? Agricola praises the soldiers' endurance and hard work; he says he has nothing to regret in them. Agricola also points out that the soldiers have had nothing to regret in him. Agricola's successes as a military general are many, but in his exhortation before Mons Graupius one point that Tacitus makes clear is that the role of endurance and hard work was not only necessary for Roman victory but required willing soldiers and effective leaders who understood how to get the best of their soldiers. In the following chapter, I explore Tacitus' representation of military endurance and the ways in which this military virtue casts light upon effective military generalship through the historian's corpus. Likewise, I also explore two alternative perspectives on the theme: funerary epitaphs of legionary soldiers and Trajan's column. I make the argument that endurance, or *patientia*, was an integral value for Roman soldiers of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. In particular, soldierly *patientia* was not just the endurance of the natural world, argued by scholars, emphasized by Tacitus, and suggested by Agricola himself: *patientia ac labore paene adversus ipsam rerum naturam*. Soldierly *patientia* was also, and perhaps predominantly, endurance of the social world. This was forced on soldiers through the infrastructure of the military, primarily by means of military *labor*. Second, I argue that this "social-endurance" has a

significant role in the connection between the *princeps* and the legions, a fundamental relationship for the establishment and maintenance of the Principate.

The military system of Rome functioned on differentials of power and established a clear hierarchy of personnel through an infrastructure based on rank, citizenship, and social standing.[26] This is a social system, not a natural one. Endurance of this social system was equally important for legionary soldiers, if not more so, than endurance of the natural world. One of the ways in which this social system affected soldiers was through the constant enforcement of military work. Military *labor* was part of the way the Principate controlled the behavior of soldiers. This theme was present in Latin literature well before Tacitus.[27] It was also the means by which the military maintained strong, competent, and able-bodied troops. On the other hand, it seems to be the case that soldiers took pride in their military service.[28] Enduring the constant work necessary for life in the military provided soldiers consistent pay, community, and it may have even been an improvement on their previous life as a civilian (or non-citizen).[29] Legionary soldiers endured the social world of the military for a better life; Rome used military *labor* to continue its imperialism.

Recognizing the link between soldierly endurance and the social world bears significance in several ways. Primarily, it forces us to reexamine and challenge the standard narrative that soldiers' endurance was predominantly of the natural world. Endurance of the

[26] Campbell (2002: 22-46); see Speidel (2012: 176-8) in particular for epigraphic based argument on citizenship and social requirements for service in the Imperial army.
[27] See Phang (2008: 201-47) for extended discussion of *labor* in Republican and Imperial literature.
[28] Speidel (2012).
[29] Speidel (2012).

social world was influential on the lives of soldiers and their relationship with the military infrastructure more broadly; it was an expected, normative behavior that was integral to the lives of soldiers. It was a military value that benefitted them just as much as Rome. In this way, recognizing the connection between this value and the social world of the military shows the extent to which the values of the legions played a role in the maintenance of the Principate. The *princeps* was the most important figure in the social and political world, and he was also the sole general of the military. He relied on the soldiers to endure the harsh system of the military if he wanted to use military force for legitimation or expansion; soldiers, in turn, used the social system of the military for their own advantage. The relationship between the *princeps* and the legions was thus a symbiotic one.[30] Acknowledging soldiers' endurance of the military as endurance of a social system makes that symbiotic relationship clearer, because unlike enduring the natural world, enduring the social world involves differentials of power, social *iniuria* at the hands of others, and real political consequences.

I structure this chapter around two main points. First, I explore Tacitus' treatment of soldierly endurance with a focus on the significance of the value on Tacitus' representation of legionary soldiers throughout his corpus. I argue that Tacitus' representation has a significant focus on soldiers' endurance of the social world, not the natural world. I do this by expanding on a variety of examples in which soldiers endure military *labor*, as well as anything considered to be of the natural world. I then look more closely at two case studies on the theme. I look at

[30] Lendon (1997: 237) on the important connection between the soldier and empire, "But the army's fundamental role in empire is perfectly clear: the Roman empire depended, in the last resort, upon violent force, and so, in the last resort, it depended upon the discipline and loyalty of the soldiers who exerted that force."

two military revolts in 14 AD, described by Tacitus in the *Annales*. Then, I look at a specific time period during 69 AD in Tacitus' *Histories* which focuses in particular on the second battle of Bedriacum, a battle that heavily influenced Vespasian's victory in 69 AD. These case studies make clear Tacitus' focus on soldiers' endurance of military *labor* and some of the ways in which that value works in connection with the military leadership.

Second, I look at Trajan's Column and funerary epitaphs of soldiers from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD with which I contextualize Tacitus' representation of soldierly endurance. I argue that the epitaphs of soldiers show us a distinct focus on the importance of enduring the social world of the military primarily by looking at the predominance and meaning of the formulaic inclusion of "years served" on military tombstone. Likewise, Trajan's Column provides useful insight into how the Principate chose to represent military experience with a clear focus on the endurance of campaigning and *labor,* not the natural world. The column also speaks to the second main point in this chapter, namely that the relationship between soldiers, their values, and the *princeps* was integral for soldiers to survive the harsh realities of military life and for the Principate to maintain itself not just through the senatorial generals who led the legions in the provinces but also through the state sponsored images and ideals put forward to the public by means of imperial monuments like Trajan's column.

The argument I put forward in this chapter heavily engages with and uses the work of Kaster, whose article on *patientia* serves as the touchstone for any scholarly discussion of the virtue.[31] Kaster suggests three basic propositions for *patientia* as a virtue. The first is endurance

[31] Kaster (2002).

of the natural world. This is a form of endurance to external nature and the conditions it imposes on the individual. Kaster cites *patientia frigoris*, *patientia solis*, *patientia doloris*, and *patientia laboris* as examples of such endurance. Kaster suggests that *patientia laboris* hearkens back to the yeomen citizen-soldiers of early Rome; this *patientia* was the endurance of the *maiores*, suffering what was necessary.[32] The second proposition: *patientia* and its relationship to *fortitudo*. That is to say, *patientia* at its most basic meaning is the process of being acted upon, but continuing to act in the face of this, a kind of "aggressive passivity," was central to Roman identity.[33] However, this was highly dependent on the social status of the individual; the process of being acted upon can have a range of meaning from sexual submission to political resistance. Somewhere in the middle, Kaster argues, is where this virtue of *patientia* becomes harder to define. Those individuals who are neither at the top nor the bottom of the social hierarchy do not possess the power and forbearance of someone like the *princeps*, nor can they exhibit extreme passivity like a slave. This is Kaster's third proposition regarding *patientia*: surviving the physical world is free from a certain kind of tension, because the natural world is assumed to be more powerful than any individual. Enduring the natural world is therefore honorable and failing to endure it is not necessarily disgraceful. The social world, however, involves other peoples' wills and what is at stake is social capital.[34]

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[32] Kaster (2002: 136), "*patientia laboris* – the ability to tolerate the pain that inevitably results from living in the physical world, or the ability to tolerate the toil that the physical world imposes because the Golden Age is a myth and human beings must scratch a living from the earth in the sweat of their brow."

[33] Kaster (2002: 136), "Being on the receiving end of experience here goes beyond self-protection and shades over into resistance, and the sense that just by virtue of withstanding you are actually moving forward toward some goal."

[34] Kaster (2002: 138), "But that kind of *iniuria*, in which social pain is involved, is precisely what makes *patientia* a source of tension in the area of social relations. Here other people's wills are in play as well as one's own; and

My argument does not diverge from the propositions put forward by Kaster, it only renegotiates how the legionary soldier's *patientia* operates within them. Kaster only speaks about soldiers in proposition one, in which he suggests that *patientia* has a connection to Roman identity with an emphasis on the toil and work that early Roman mythical figures had to endure (e.g. Cincinnatus). Soldiers never appear in Kaster's third proposition, the one centered on the tensions of the social world. [35] Enduring the physical world was certainly something that soldiers did, and Kaster has rightly connected this to a deep-rooted sense of Roman identity. Endurance, as a value, was a complex one, as Kaster has pointed out. Kaster has chosen to emphasize the ways in which *patientia* speak to aristocratic notions of the value of endurance, particularly endurance of the new social order of the Principate. Legionary soldiers, I argue, put up their own struggle against the social world through their endurance of military *labor* thereby placing themselves in all three of Kaster's categories, but primarily in category three. That is to say, Tacitean *patientia* or endurance is not only that of an elite subservient to the *princeps*. Endurance of the social world by soldiers was a type of virtuous *patientia* which Kaster seems to overlook.

Since Kaster's article, more work has been done on *patientia*, but not in the corpus of Tacitus. Dionigi, for example, argues that the word has less importance in the Roman world – in an author like Seneca – than in the Christian world.[36] Dionigi is not alone, for much of the

differentials of power, rather than being assumed from the start, are often what is the aim of any given transaction to clarify (or obfuscate)."

[35] Kaster's article is not primarily about soldiers and does not focus on them in any significant way other than to suggest a link between Roman identification with their past, hard-working, citizen-farming ancestors and soldiers, forming a link between citizen and soldier that was part of the Roman self-conception.

[36] Dionigi (2002: 413-429).

scholarship produced on *patientia* comes from scholars of Tertullian and later Christian authors.[37] Likewise, Lawrence's article "Putting Tortue (and Valerius Maximus) to the Test" covers the noun in Valerius Maximus. Lawrence argues that Scaevola and Pomeius' *patientia* to burn off their own limbs results in their inability to be tortured, which in itself is a kind of power.[38] Valerius Maximus features prominently in another recent article by Wildberger, "Mucius Scaevola and the Essence of Manly Patientia," in which Wildberger compares Augustine's version of the Scaevola story with Livy and Valerius Maximus' versions. Wildberger argues that the comparative readings demonstrate how social intricacies shape not only the rhetorical and literary expression in accounts of virtuous behavior but shape the actual conceptualization of those virtues.[39]

Earlier work on *patientia* was equally as focused on its Christian context.[40] However, Vielberg's *Pflichten, Werte, Ideale. Eine Untersuchung zu den Wertvorstellungen des Tacitus* was, before Kaster, the work most cited regarding *patientia* as a virtue. Vielberg lists *patientia* on the spectrum of individual virtues under the principate, including *adulation*, *obsequium*, *moderatio*, *libertas*, *ferocia*, and *contumacia*.[41] Vielberg pointed out the servile nature of *patientia*, which other scholars like Kaster and Woodman picked up.[42] Others after Vielberg continued to contribute to the scholarship on virtues, but *patientia* itself was less emphasized, as opposed to

[37] See Soenksen (2010), Ayedze (2000), Heim (1996), Micaelli (1989) for most recent work on *patientia* in the Christian context.
[38] Lawrence (2016: 245-260).
[39] Wildberger (2015: 27-39).
[40] See Spicq (1930) and Kunick (1955) for examples of early scholarship on *patientia* focused on its role in Christianity.
[41] Vielberg (1987: 77-177).
[42] Vielberg (1987: 124); Woodman (2009: 187) referencing Vielberg.

virtues like *libertas* and *virtus*.[43] It should also be made clear here that I am not only looking at instances of the word *patientia*, but the concept which *patientia* represents more broadly. Therefore, throughout the chapter I use *patientia* to represent the value of endurance even when the word *patientia* may not be present in Tacitus. However, I have explored all iterations of *patientia* in Tacitus as they relate to common soldiers. Any and all useful passages are cited throughout.

I use the definition of military *labor* established by Phang in her study on the military discipline of the late Republic and early Empire. For Phang, military *labor* consisted of marching, training for combat, working on large building projects (bridges, roads, and especially aqueducts), general camp duties and work, as well as other responsibilities more closely aligned to the civic sphere including policing, administration, and taxation.[44] Phang uses this definition of military *labor* to suggest that the work done by soldiers in the army was part of a larger infrastructure of *disciplina*. Phang's overall argument about *disciplina* fails to account for how soldiers might deal with the sort of military *labor* that she suggests was part of *disciplina* as a system. The concept of *disciplina*, at least in the Principate, serves to legitimate the military system and the *princeps* as its sole general. My argument attempts to view the forced military *labor* as part of a military value system. Soldiers endured forced military *labor* as part of the job, one which could provide considerable benefits. In contrast, Phang's argument about

[43] For other studies focusing on virtues in Tacitus like *libertas* and *virtus* see Klingner (1932: 151-169), Morford (1991: 3420-3450), and more recently Strunk (2017) and Balmaceda (2017).
[44] Phang (2008: 247); For soldiers as builders and their role in the construction of aqueducts in particular see Février (1979), Hodge (1991), and Sonnabend (1999: 568-73).

disciplina revolves around its usage as a tool of imperial control over the soldiers and does not seek to view the issue from a non-elite perspective.[45]

Endurance of the Social World

The Latin noun *patientia* featured prominently in ancient Roman discussions of virtues, those qualities that Roman aristocrats considered to be morally good, a benefit to society, and inherently linked to what it meant to be a Roman.[46] Cicero was one of the first to theorize the virtue, including it among the esteemed company of concepts such as *magnitudo animi* and *gravitas* – essential qualities for the Roman *vir*.[47] Continuing this tradition, Livy incorporated the virtue of *patientia* into the exigence of his work: constructing a monument from which Romans could learn how to behave appropriately. The classic *exempla* of Livy including Horatius Cocles, Cloelia, and Mucius Scaevola all embody *patientia*.[48] Valerius Maximus, writing during the reign of Tiberius, wrote his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* in which he suggests that *patientia* is one of the primary military virtues, including Scaevola as his ancestral *exempla*. There was a long a robust tradition of viewing *patientia* as a virtue and one specifically linked with military service.

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[45] Phang (2008) leaves *patientia* largely untouched, only mentioning it twice, in passing.
[46] Cicero *Tusculunae Disputationes*, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, Seneca *De Providentia*, Valerius Maximus *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*.
[47] Cicero *Tusculunae Disputationes* 2.14: *quid? fortitudini comitibusque eius, magnitudini animi, gravitati, patientiae, rerum humanarum despicientiae quo modo respondebis?* ("How will you respond to fortitude and its companions, magnanimity, severity, endurance, and contempt for human affairs?").
[48] For the robust topic of *exempla* in Livy and Roman culture: Feldherr (1998), Chaplin (2000), Roller (2004), and Langlands (2018).

The connection between *patientia* and a sense of Roman identity permeates these texts through the recollection of mythic Roman heroes and their reliance on *patientia* to serve, defend, and maintain the *res publica*.[49] There was a deep connection between Rome's rise in its earliest history to militarization, further emphasizing the role of *patientia* to the military world and to Roman identity. *Patientia* also played a role in the formulation of *virtus*, one of Rome's most important virtues. Somewhere in the literary tradition *patientia* and its connection to endurance of the natural world became a common way of expressing the virtue, as Kaster has argued.[50] This may be in part, as Kaster notes, precisely because of the deep ancestral connection between the idealized citizen-farmer, working their land, while also serving as a soldier when the *res publica* needed able bodied men.[51]

For aristocrats, enduring the asymmetrical power structure of the Principate required *patientia*. This is what Kaster labels endurance of the "social world." The social world differed from the natural world in that individuals suffered social *iniuria* at the hands of other individuals; this created power differentials. Deferring to the power of nature was not seen as problematic and was sometimes viewed as honorable.[52] Deferring to the power of another individual resulted in social *iniuria*. This was particularly true for aristocrats who lived through

[49] It has also been suggested that dying for the *res publica* was considerably more relevant to Imperial soldiers than some commentators have suggested. See Hope (2018) and Speidel (2010).
[50] Kaster (2002).
[51] The role of this "ancestral Roman" as outlined by Kaster has a specific focus on *labor* – working the fields as a farmer.
[52] Kaster (2002).

the reigns of tyrannical emperors. Endurance of the social world in this way seemed, according to Kaster, at odds with aristocratic conceptions of what it meant to be Roman.[53]

Soldiers, on the other hand, are a group of people for whom deferring to the power of another individual was intimately tied to their experience. The Roman military relied on differentials of power to function. Ranks, chain of command, and discipline all produced what Kaster might call social *iniuria*. Yet, it is not surprising at all to think of the military in this way. Social *iniuria* was a fundamental aspect of how the Roman military operated.

The Roman military used a system of *labor* to control, train, and discipline legionary soldiers. Generals, centurions, or any individual of higher rank could command a legionary soldier to construct, dig, or work on the most menial of tasks. This system of military *labor* forced social *iniuria* on soldiers. The entire military system was dependent on soldiers' ability to endure the military *labor* imposed on them and the social *iniuria* that may have resulted from it. The soldiers, however, also benefited from enlistment in the military. Enduring the military *labor* and the entire military social system could result in prestige, renown, and good pay, all things that soldiers sought when enlisting; the system was mutually beneficial.

An analysis of Tacitus' corpus for examples of soldiers enduring the natural world or the social world of the military suggests that soldiers more frequently endured the social world. I primarily focused my analysis on times in which Tacitus used the noun *patientia*, or adjectival and verbal forms of the concept. However, I also included scenes in which the action of

[53] Kaster (2002).

endurance takes place, but the noun, adjective, or verb used by Tacitus was not related etymologically to *patientia*.

Although the majority of the scenes include endurance of the social world, Tacitus does depict soldiers enduring the natural world. Agricola, for example, praises his troops for enduring Nature itself (*Agricola* 33). The Pannonian legions, after a revolt in 14 AD, suffer a rain and windstorm that almost rips away their standards (*Annales* 1.30.7). Likewise, Germanicus' soldiers in Germany get caught in a winter storm that forces them to eat dead horses (*Annales 2.23-24*). Like Germanicus, the famous general Corbulo suffers with his soldiers in the dry heat and deserts of Syria (*Annales* 14.24). Tacitus comments again on the role of weather in Syria and Germany when discussing legionary movements in 69 AD (*Histories* 2.80.19). These all indicate that part of endurance for a legionary soldier was enduring the natural world.

Tacitus more frequently refers to soldiers' endurance of the social world of the military. Sometimes these references are from the perspective of the operating general, as when Caecina realizes how much more work the soldiers will have to endure after the Germans have flooded the plain in which they had built their camp (*Annales* 1.64.13) – a double reference to military *labor*. Likewise, Corbulo requires fresh troops in Syria, primarily because these fresh troops will have endured frequent work, which hardened them to the requisite level (*Annales* 15.26.5). There are other generals and leaders that seem to understand the importance of soldiers' endurance of military *labor*: Otho listens to complaining soldiers when attempting to switch their allegiance from Galba – endurance of Galba's strict *labor* was their primary complaint

(*Histories* 1.23.8); Paulinus fears the endurance required for a march from Bedriacum to Cremona (*Histories* 2.26.13); Antonius Primus understood the same level of endurance required for the trip (*Histories* 3.26); Alfenus Varus knew the role of the military social system on soldiers, namely that the soldiers themselves needed it, for without it, they had no idea what to do (*Histories* 2.29).

Mutinies provide another perspective on how Tacitus represents soldiers' endurance of military *labor*. For example, Valens' soldiers attack him with stones, driving him from the camp, on the grounds that he had held too many of the spoils of war from the soldiers. Tacitus frames this as the soldiers complaining over the rewards of their labor: *pretia laborum suorum* (*Histories* 2.29.4).[54] This particular mutiny was only held in check by the action of the camp prefect, Alfenus Varus, mentioned briefly above, who withheld camp duties in order to incite fear into the soldiers. The soldiers are stunned and afraid when Varus forbade centurions from making rounds and omitted the sound of the trumpet to call soldiers to their normal duties. Tacitus describes the soldiers as dazed (*attoniti*) and afraid (*paventes*). These are the same soldiers that drove Valens out of the camp by stoning him. Why does the removal of regular camp work cause the soldiers to seize up in fear? It is not so much that they lack self-reflection, as it may seem on first reading – for they had driven off their general, what did they expect? – but that they merely wanted a different leader. They wanted a leader who would share the spoils of war with them, someone who would reward them properly for enduring all the

[54] Civilis would use his own endurance of *labor* in the Roman military – he spent over 25 years in the camp – in his effort to persuade soldiers to turn against Rome. His argument was that 25 years enduring the military system got him nothing. He says that the rewards of his effort (*pretia laborum*) were not worth the effort.

hardships of military life.[55] Tacitus represents the soldiers here as expecting that they be rewarded for their endurance of hardships. This representation of expectation puts the onus on the general, who in this instance does not understand what it takes to get the best out of his soldiers. Tacitus was highlighting that what is at stake here is not whether the soldiers themselves deserved to share in the rewards of their labor (Valens did not think they should), but that Valens as a general either did not understand the soldiers' endurance of hardships or wanted his generalship to be founded on a harshness that did not align with the soldiers' perception of appropriate leadership. In either case, it was Valens' failure as a leader that pushed the soldiers to revolt.

Varus' plan is thus a clever one: throw the soldiers out of the normal hierarchical power structure and watch them crumble.[56] Without someone telling them what to do, they have no purpose. Tacitus is specific about this being their primary fear, namely that nobody was in control: *quod nemo regeret*. It should not surprise us that the antidote to this was *patientia*, particularly in such a clearly marked subversion of the military system (i.e. a situation where power differentials of a social system are in play). The soldiers use *patientia* almost as a tool to force themselves back into the military system, into the good graces of their general.[57]

Tacitus, again, uses the endurance of military *labor* as part of his representation of soldiers in mutiny against the Flavian general Aponius Saturninus, who was setup as a supporter of Vitellius. These soldiers, like the ones in Valens' camp, did not attempt to subvert

[55] See Ash (1999: 36-55) for the plunder-hungry characterization of Vitellius' troops.
[56] A common tactic for other generals through Tacitus' works: *Histories* 1.82.1, 2.44.2, *Annales* 1.66.2.
[57] Tacitus *Histories* 2.29.4: *silentio, patientia, postremo precibus ac lacrimis veniam quaerebant* ("… in silence, submission, and finally prayers and tears, the soldiers begged for forgiveness").

and remove the military system as a whole. They only wanted a leader they believed in and trusted. If Saturninus was really a supporter of Vitellius, the Flavian troops would have rightly rebelled against him. Tacitus says that after the soldiers found some letters, apparently written by Saturninus to Vitellius, they attacked him with greater ferocity (*atrocius*) because it was the middle of the day and they were not yet tired from the labor and work of digging.[58] That is to say, if these letters had been found later in the day, the soldiers would have attacked Saturninus less fiercely, or perhaps not at all. Military *labor* was a way of keeping soldiers from rebellious behavior, perhaps because it simply made them too tired to care. The discovery of the letters midday and the soldiers' subsequent reaction shows us that Tacitus' representation makes the soldiers' endurance of military *labor* seem integral to their daily experience. Enduring the social system of the military was a massive part of what it meant to be a soldier. Sometimes the lack of not having endured, as is the case with Saturninus, results in mutiny.

There are many other references to military *labor* and the endurance of military *labor* as part of what it meant to be a soldier. Vitellius' campaign against Otho, for example, exhibits the importance of soldierly endurance of the social world particularly inside the city of Rome. Vitellius' troops deteriorate during their time in Rome, but their deterioration began far before they entered the city. After Vitellius' victory at Bedriacum, his avarice and luxury take over. Even before he gets to Rome, he is taking advantage of his new political power. This luxury spread to the soldiers and the soldiers degenerated from hard work and valor as they

[58] Tacitus *Histories* 3.11.1: *eo atrocius adgrediuntur, quod non, ut prius, labore et opere fessae, sed medio diei exarserant, vulgatis epistulis* ("They attacked him with the greater violence, for they were not as before tired by severe labor, but their anger blazed up suddenly in the middle of the day on the publication of some letters").

conformed to Vitellius' new way of life; this caused the soldiers to resent Vitellius.[59] If this was not enough to strain his relationship with the soldiers, just a few days later Vitellius decides to split his legions; he sends the Batavian cohort home; the Gallic auxiliaries were also dismissed; lastly, he orders a reduction in legionary forces, forbade further recruiting, and offered free discharge (*Histories* 2.69.13). Tacitus says that this action was destructive to the state and unpopular with the soldiers, chiefly because this meant that the same work (*munia*) that was once being done by many, was now being done by few, increasing the danger and hard work (*labor*) required by the soldiers. Tacitus ends the section with a typical Tacitean *sententia* decrying the corrupting influence of luxury on Vitellius' soldiers in contrast to ancient discipline and customs – more a critical assessment of Vitellius as a general than a comment on legionary soldiers. Tacitus' critical representation of Vitellius shows the importance of enduring military *labor* for soldiers as a community as well as the role of this value in creating an influential relationship between the *princeps* and his soldiers.

Tacitus says that Vitellius' entrance into Rome was marked by his soldiers' inability to cope with the city (*Histories* 2.93). Vitellius' luxury, nonchalance, and the city itself made the soldiers soft: *neque labore firmari*.[60] Vitellius allows so much license to his soldiers that the rank structure of the military broke down completely: *sibi quisque militam sumpsere*. Tacitus, however,

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[59] Tacitus *Histories* 2.62.8: *degenerabat a labore ac virtute miles adsuetudine voluptatum et contemptu ducis* ("The soldiers degenerated from hard work and valor after becoming accustomed to Vitellius' luxury learned to despise their leader"). Ash (2007: 248), "Such enervation of collective military strength is more often associated with Asia and the east, but Vitellius' soldiers are moving eastwards, at least relative to their own permanent camps in Germany. *Labor* could potentially benefit an army."

[60] City soldiers are often considered undisciplined in soft as a topos in Tacitus (*Histories* 1.23.2, 1.51.2, 2.16.13, 2.19.1-2; *Annales* 13.35.1). The city itself has been seen by a place of cultural crisis and one that engenders subversion of Roman culture: Ash (1999), Sailor (2008).

mentions some "good" soldiers who willingly choose not to jump rank and continue to serve in the legions. Later, when Vitellius' soldiers leave Rome, they are the antithesis of Roman soldiers.[61] Their time in the city made them *impatiens*. Tacitus specifically juxtaposes the *impatiens* of the soldier and the expectation that they be able to endure heat, dust, storm and have the heart to endure the hardships of military life: *quantumque hebes ad sustinendum laborem miles*.

Tacitus' point here is not necessarily to highlight the military virtues of legionary soldiers. He is primarily concerned with painting Rome as a place of corruption and cultural crisis during civil war; the characterization of Vitellius being a secondary goal. However, in order for Tacitus to depict the corrupting nature of Rome, he needs to show how far the soldiers have fallen from where they should be. Tacitus focuses on the antithesis of soldierly endurance to show how corrupted they were after spending time in the city. In pointing out the antithesis of soldierly endurance, Tacitus has indicated the normative perception of soldiers from his point of view. Endurance, of the natural world, but primarily the social world through *labor*, was the supposed normative behavior for soldiers. We know that this was the supposed normative behavior for Vitellius' soldiers precisely because Tacitus is attempting to make clear the corrupting influence of Rome. The city has corrupted the soldiers to the extent that they lose sense of their values.

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[61] Tacitus *Histories* 2.93: *non vigor corporibus, non ardor animis; lentum et rarum agmen, fluxa arma, segnes equi; impatiens solvis pulveris tempestatum, quantumque hebes ad sustinendum laborem miles, tanto ad discordias promptior* ("There was no strength in their bodies, no enthusiasm; the line was slow and in disarray, not properly holding their weapons, the horses were sluggish; the soldiers not able to endure heat, dust, or storm, who had no heart to face toil, were all the more ready to fight each other").

These examples all point toward something we might expect: endurance was important for legionary soldiers. However, these examples also make clear the important difference between endurance of the natural world and endurance of the social world. Enduring the natural world was, in a sense, a losing battle. Enduring the natural world and coming out on top was considered honorable.[62] On the one hand, the military system as a social construct was harsh, but it was expected that soldiers would endure it. Putting up with the requisite military *labor* year in and year out was what the professionalized army of the Empire was hired to do. It was their job. On the other hand, the social deference required for this job, at times, boiled over into revolt. Without a high level of endurance for this social system, soldiers would have been less successful at their jobs, which in turn results in a less powerful and less influential Rome. More specifically under the Principate, it would have resulted in a less powerful and influential *princeps*. The value of social-endurance for legionary soldiers and its connection to the *princeps* are explored more in depth in the following case studies.

The Mutinies of 14 AD: A Case Study in Soldierly *Patientia*

Augustus' death in 14 AD sparked unrest on the northern frontier of the empire. Soldiers in Germany and along the Danube, primarily in Pannonia, viewed Augustus' death as a moment to renegotiate their legitimacy and rights as soldiers of the Roman army. The soldiers were, if we can trust Tacitus, beyond exhaustion and at their wits end. Leading up to the mutinies in 14 AD, Rome had experienced years of troublesome military failures. The last

[62] Kaster (2002: 135-6).

few years of Augustus' reign saw revolts along the Danube and in the Balkan region that stretched the imperial legions thin.[63] Augustus was forced to conscript soldiers to recoup the losses. Velleius Paterculus tells us that veterans were recalled, and even freedmen were forced into the legions.[64] The issue of manpower and morale was further decimated by the slaughter of Varus and his three legions in the Teutoburg forest in 9 AD. This massive loss of soldiers forced Augustus to conscript soldiers, again, and forced undue pressures on the soldiers who were still serving.

The mutinies in 14 AD are both directly related to Augustus and to the military personnel crisis he experienced in his later years as *princeps*. The military organization of the Principate was such that soldiers had a deep connection to Augustus, the sole general of the Roman army. Aspects of the traditional Roman military structure were no longer as efficient as they used to be; the transition to a professionalized standing army under Augustus was direct evidence of the large-scale changes happening in the early years of the Empire. Conscription, for example, could drag a man halfway across Europe to be in service for twenty or more years, never seeing his family or home again. Length of service, as it turns out, was one of the main complaints of the ringleader Percennius who began the Pannonian revolt. The mutinies as a whole, however, might be seen as the result of a larger trend in the mistreatment and undue expectations of a legionary force that had been fighting for too long, many of whom were

[63] Dio 55.29-34, 56.11-17; Velleius Paterculus 2.110-116.
[64] Velleius Paterculus 2.111.

conscripted and forced to remain in the legions long after their 16 year service agreement was complete.[65]

Augustus' death was a moment for these soldiers to force Roman leadership to reexamine the soldiers' role; it was an opportunity to try and legitimate themselves, socially and politically. Augustus was, after all, the first emperor, the symbol of the state, and the leader of the legions. The majority of these soldiers in Pannonia would have served under Tiberius, but would have been recruited, paid, and influenced by Augustus – the man they swore to serve via the *sacramentum militare*. These soldiers served Augustus, not the Roman state, and their relationship with the *princeps* was therefore intensely political. The mutinies themselves, then, are both political statements and attempts to renegotiate their place within the social fabric of the military. Within this renegotiation, we see that *patientia*, primarily social endurance, but also natural endurance, serves a critical role in how Tacitus represents the soldiers as social and political actors.

Tacitus' depiction of these mutinies stands out among his many historical elaborations. Syme noted the abundance and vividness of the depictions, which he suggests is fitting for an author like Tacitus, who was clearly preoccupied with the behavior of soldiers (as he was in the *Histories* before he wrote the *Annales*) but that Tacitus was not always concerned with the turbulence and drama of the legions; Syme observed some of the valuable depictions of soldiers within these mutinies, such as the legitimate grievances of the soldiers related by

[65] Length of service for legionaries was fixed at 16 years under Augustus but changed to 20 under Tiberius. Ultimately, legionaries were generally expected to serve around 25 years. See Wesch-Klein (2007), Campbell (2002: 25-32), and Scheidel (1996).

Percennius.[66] Goodyear, in his commentary on *Annales* 1, wrote: "The most notable example of vast elaboration in Tacitus is provided by his account of the mutinies of A.D. 14."[67] Likewise, Mellor regards the depiction of the mutinies as one of Tacitus' most striking accounts: "The most extraordinary of the Tacitean tableaux is his account of the mutinies in Book 1 of the *Annals*."[68] More recently, Woodman has weighed in on the mutinies, suggesting that the parallelism between the two is more distinct and full of purpose than even Goodyear recognized, citing the importance of the legions to imperial security.[69] Tacitus himself recognized the importance of the legions, through his uniquely crafted depiction of these mutinies in *Annales* 1.16-49, but also through more direct suggestion in *Annales* 4.5.1, where he indicates that Rome's strength lie with the eight legions on the Rhine: *sed praecipuum robur Rhenum iuxta, commune in Germanos Gallosque subsidium, octo legiones errant*. The mutinies of 14 AD are specifically marked by Tacitus as a moment of importance: the connection between the legions and the *princeps* would forever play a role in politics at Rome. Within this important moment in Tacitus' narrative of imperial history we see the legionary soldier saying that the *labor* of the military, or their social endurance, was one of the main causes and grievances of the mutinies. Endurance of the social world was used in the soldiers' attetmpted negotiations

[66] Syme (1958: 375).
[67] Goodyear (1972: 30) continues: "No sufficient explanation of this scale of treatment can be based on the assumption that Tacitus considered the mutinies of special historical importance, since he is so careful to disentangle them from political events at Rome and deliberately to set aside their possible relevance to Tiberius' hesitations over the succession. Tacitus makes so much of the mutinies mainly because they afford him an unrivalled opportunity to deploy all his resources of style in a type of narrative very congenial to him. Here, on a fuller scale than elsewhere, he can combine pictorial and dramatic treatment, presenting a series of vivid and exciting scenes, varied in character and tempo, but held together by recurrent imagery and skillful planning of the stories as a whole."
[68] Mellor (1993: 124).
[69] Woodman (2006).

with the state. This, I argue, indicates that *patientia* was a value of legionary soldiers and that this *patientia* was significantly more concerned with the endurance of the social world imposed upon these soldiers by Augustus.

Tacitus' treatment of the Pannonian revolt in *Annales* 1.16-31 begins with his recognition that the grievances of the legions were not new (*nullis novis causis*), but that only the new *princeps* had changed things.[70] Three legions in Pannonia where stationed together, under the command of Junius Blaesus, the *VIII Augusta*, *XV Apollinaris*, and *IX Hispania*.[71] Augustus' death and the accession of Tiberius forced Junius Blaesus to allow for the proper mourning of Augustus by suspending normal camp duties (*Annales* 1.16): *praesidente Iunio Blaeso, qui, fine Augusti et initiis Tiberii auditis, ob iustitium aut Gaudium intermiserat solita munia*. Suspension of duties for Roman soldiers almost never led to productivity. The trope of *otium* affecting the troops negatively was a long standing one before Tacitus.[72] The suspension of the *solita munia*, in this instance, leads to the soldiers rejecting discipline and hard work: *disciplinam et laborem aspernari*. Tacitus has already set the mutiny in terms of military structure, hierarchy, and *labor* – all elements of what I consider the social world of the military.

The stage was set for a ringleader to inflame the troops. Percennius, in fact a former stage performer, was the one to take up the cause. Percennius is described by Tacitus as a *gregarius miles*, a true legionary of questionable background, who, as a former actor, was

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[70] Tacitus *Annales* 1.16.1.
[71] It was still common at this time for more than one legion to be encamped together. The practice was changed by Domitian (Suetonius *Domitian* 7).
[72] Sallust expounds on the role of *otium* in Rome's downfall (particularly *Cat.* 10-11); for some implications of *otium* also see Woodman (1966: 225-6).

proficient in the art of inflaming an audience.[73] Percennius, step by step and in the cover of night, played on the minds of the soldiers, who began to question how the death of Augustus would affect their conditions of service (*Annales* 1.16): *is imperitos animos et quaenam post Augustum militia condicio ambigentis inpellere*. The conditions of their service were, it seems, directly tied to Augustus himself. The death of the *princeps* that recruited and paid them meant a renegotiation of their status was necessary, particularly for the reasons that Percennius outlines in his speech.

Percennius' speech in *Annales* 1.17 is a list of social endurances. Among Percennius' grievances were the soldiers' slave-like obedience to centurions, years of inaction, and men who served for 30 to 40 years, suffering extreme wounds in battle (and possibly through *disciplina*). One of the most charged accusations was that discharged veterans were being called back after their service was legally over and were forced to do the same jobs they had done as a regular *miles*, but under a different name. Even if, Percennius said, someone managed to endure all these catastrophes, what he earned in due reward was not commensurate with the job. Tacitus clearly embellishes some of the claims.[74] The years of service cited by Percennius, for example, are not taken to be actual numbers but a rhetorical embellishment to underscore the problem of long periods of service – far beyond the years required for discharge – which are attested by Pannonian soldiers in inscriptions.[75] The historical reality of Percennius' list of grievances is

[73] Tacitus *Annales* 1.16.
[74] Goodyear (1972: 201) notes the embellishment of years served, as does Scheidel (1996). Goodyear (1972: 194-97) also discusses Tacitus need to embellish, to some extent, the story of the mutinies even if he had a good source, which Goodyear is not convinced he had anyway.
[75] *CIL* 3.2014, 2710, 2818.

difficult to parse, for Tacitus is an impartial reporter and it is clear he embellishes parts of the speech for rhetorical purposes, as the hyperbolic claim of 30-40 years served suggests.[76] However, these rhetorical embellishments also have kernels of truth. The inscriptions of the Pannonian soldiers suggesting extended service periods attests to this point.

The speech highlights many aspects of the soldier's life, but none more prominent than their endurance of the military *labor* that comes with service in the Roman military. Percennius must be speaking about the endurance of a soldier when he references things like white haired men serving 30 or 40 years and suffering extreme bodily damage (*quod tricena aut quadragenta stipendia sense et plerique trunacto ex vulneribus corpore tolerent*). The verb *tolerent* in this sentence is as clear an indication of endurance as you find in Tacitus. The embellishment of the number of years served, as noted above, must be recognized, but at the core of Tacitus' sentiment is the idea that soldiers endure (*tolerare*) years of service (*stipendia*) as well as the bodily harm that comes from prolonged service (*truncato ex vulneribus corpore*). Percennius referring to the years served (*stipendia*) here is a direct reference to the expectation of the military that soldiers endure whatever the military requires of them, even if it means a white-haired man continuing to endure *stipendia* beyond his contractual obligation. The role of *stipendia* and years served will be taken up again later in the chapter, when we consider the ways in which thinking about the "years served" on military epitaph indicates a broader military experience, including endurance of the social grievances put forward by Percennius.

[76] Goodyear (1972: 194-5), "The very generous scale and treatment which Tacitus accord to the mutinies in Pannonia and Germany cannot adequately be explained by supposing that he regarded them as exceptionally important historically. A more likely explanation is that the mutinies provided Tacitus with ideal material for development in a graphic and dramatic manner."

Percennius also mentions among his grievances that veterans who were called back after fulfilling their service requirement were supposed to be free from the regular work duties of the legionary soldier. A reprieve from military *labor* was part of what made becoming a veteran so rewarding. Percennius says, however, that even after their honorable discharge veterans were brought back under a different name but had to endure the same military *labor* (*Annales* 1.17): *ne dimissis quidem finem esse militae, sed apud vexillum tendentes alio vocabulo eosdem labores perferre*. Tacitus uses the verb *perfero* here to indicate endurance, and with it almost a sense of suffering, or at the very least indicating the drawn-out quality of what Percennius is trying to suggest, namely that these soldiers are continuing to serve in a role they should not.[77] The *vexillum*, as Goodyear notes, was the standard of a detachment, cavalry, or veterans, contra the *aquilae* and *signa* of the legions.[78] This should have marked these veterans as individuals who need not perform the normal duties of the legionary. Yet, here they are stretching out (*tendentes*) their implied tents (*tentoria*) under their standard.[79] Percennius is suggesting these veterans are still involved in making their camp, perhaps the most menial of military *labor*. Furthermore, Percennius says that they endured the same exact work (*eosdem labores*) only under a different name (*alio vocabulo*).

[77] *OLD perferre* 7-8.
[78] Goodyear (1972: 202).
[79] The manuscript tradition M has *retentos*, but Goodyear (1972: 202) accepts *tendentes* and suggests *retentos* has not been widely accepted since the 18th century. I follow Goodyear as well as Heubner (1994). Although Goodyear cites *Annales* 1.36.3 (*exauctorari … ac retineri sub vexillo*) and 13.35.3 (*retentusque omnis ercitus sub pellibus*) I believe Percennius' insistence on the *eosdem labores* forced on the veterans makes *tendentes* make more sense contextually. Likewise, as Goodyear points out, Palaeography favors *tendentes*.

Percennius does not only speak to soldiers' endurance of the social world, but it does dominate the narrative. Shortly before he ends his speech, he references the whips (*verbera*), wounds (*vulnera*), rough winters (*duram hiemem*), and the harsh summers (*exercitas aestates*), two things we might consider to be the social world (*verbera*, *vulnera*) and two things from the natural world (*hiems*, *aestas*). The importance of both social and natural endurance are combined here. Also noteworthy is the physical *iniuria* from the whips and wounds. Whereas the *iniuria* of the aristocrat was primarily political, enduring social *iniuria* in the Roman military meant physical punishment and pain in addition to suffering through terrible weather.

Percennius finishes his inflaming speech to the legions in Pannonia with a fiery list of just how much soldiers had to endure by serving in the Roman military. He cites the useless farmland given as reward for service, which is little better than swamp.[80] The entire military system, according to Percennius, was profitless (*infructuosam*) and hard (*gravem*). Endurance of the social world continues to pepper his speech: low pay, needing to buy their own weapons and cloths, and the almost necessary need to buy off centurions to get a respite from work.[81] He ends by suggesting that no alleviation was possible within this system until certain standards were specified: service limits and proper pay. Tacitus represents this problem in terms of soldiers enduring (*tolerare*, *perfero*) military life.

[80] Goodyear (1972: 203) suggests the complaint about the useless land might not be purely rhetorical, citing Miller (1959: 139), who says that "There was not enough money to pay the promised 12,000 sesterces on discharge, and some of it may well have been paid in land: also, colonies of veterans (e.g. Colchester, Cologne) were still being established in the time of Claudius.

[81] Soldiers paid off centurions to allocate regular camp duties to other soldiers (*vocationes*).

Percennius appeals to the common value of endurance, and it works. The soldiers recognize through Percennius' examples of mistreatment that they can only endure so much. After Percennius finishes his speech, the soldiers show their embodied social *patientia* by displaying the marks of the lash, their gray hair, and the threadbare clothing they wore.[82] Percennius had successfully enflamed the soldiers by appealing to their common value of endurance, with a particular focus on their endurance of the hardships forced on them by the military system.

The soldiers' endurance of military *labor* was emphasized in another critical moment of the Pannonian revolt. At *Annales* 1.20, we hear of a few companies of soldiers that had been dispatched to Nauportus to repair the roads and bridges – an explicit reference to military *labor* – but once news of the mutiny reached these soldiers, social upheaval followed. The soldiers revolted against one individual in particular: Aufidienus Rufus. He was a man, according to Tacitus, who was a long-time common soldier, reached the rank of centurion, and then camp-marshal. He was seeking to reintroduce the iron discipline of the past, habituated as he was to work and toil, and all the rougher because he had endured it. The soldiers, maddened by the onslaught of the mutiny, made endurance their number one grievance, as Percennius did back in camp (*Annales* 1.20):

> *praecipua in Aufidienum Rufum praefectum castrorum ira, quem dereptum vehiculo sarcinis gravant aguntque primo in agmine, per ludibrium rogitantes an tam immensa onera, tam longa itinera libenter ferret. quippe Rufus diu manipularis, dein centurio, mox castris praefectus, antiquam duramque militiam revocabat, vetus operis ac laboris, et eo immitior quia toleraverat.*

[82] Tacitus *Annales* 1.18.

> The chief object of anger being the camp-marshal, Aufidienus Rufus; who, dragged from his car, loaded with baggage, and driven at the head of the column, was plied with sarcastic inquiries whether he found it pleasant to support these huge burdens, these weary marches. For Rufus, long a private, then a centurion, and latterly a camp-marshal, was seeking to reintroduce the iron discipline of the past, habituated as he was to work and toil, and all the more cruel because he had endured.

All the usual elements of military *labor* are here: carrying baggage, marching in the column (on foot), and specific mention of just how immense these burdens and marches were (*tam immense onera, tam longa itinera*). Tacitus uses *tolerare* again as his preferred verb for indicating soldiers' endurance of the social world. Here, however, it is used from the perspective of Rufus, who was experienced in the very work and labor he was attempting to inflict upon his troops (*vetus operis ac laboris*). I believe this consistent reference to military *labor* throughout the Pannonian revolt, while couched in a very dramatized treatment of the mutiny, nevertheless speaks to the importance of enduring the social world of the military for legionary soldiers. With the soldiers at Nauportus it has clearly boiled over into insubordination and madness, but just as with Percennius' rhetorically hyperbolized speech, underneath the elaboration, Tacitus represents these soldiers as feeling like their endurance of the social world had been pushed too far.

Ultimately, the end of the mutiny is influenced in part by the arrival of Drusus, but also in part by the centurions that wander about the camp, convincing the soldiers that they actually need the imperial family. The original relationship between the legions and Augustus was a strong one, and Augustus' death proved an opportune moment for the soldiers to try and renegotiate their political relevance – quickly squashed by Drusus' complete rejection of their demands on the grounds that the senate must vote on them. In the early months of

Tiberius' accession, it was not entirely clear what the relationship would be between the new *princeps* and the legions. The centurions who wandered around the camp and convinced the soldiers that they needed Tiberius were working to ease the tension of this the transition from Augustus to Tiberius. After all, even if the soldiers were not being paid their owed salary, Percennius was not going to pay them, but Tiberius probably would. It was the leadership of the centurions that proved most useful. They understood the soldiers' complaints and replied to it in a way that made sense to them. In other words, their leadership put an end to the mutiny because they understood the values of the soldiers and offered a legitimate response to their complaint.

Drusus executed Percennius and Vibulenus (another one of the ring leaders) putting a rather emphatic mark on the end of a civil disturbance. At the center of the mutiny were complaints about endurance of the military system beyond what was expected of them. It is not that the soldiers have an issue with the broader military system; there is no issue with hierarchy, power, and forced *labor* in and of themselves. The problem is the military and its generals not keeping up their end of the bargain. They are taking advantage of the soldiers: late payments, or none at all, veterans forced to do menial *labor*, extended periods of service with no reward. These complaints point to the differentials of power inherent in the structure of the military. The brutal executions of Percennius and Vibulenus puts the hierarchical power structure of the military into full view; perhaps the soldiers had a point about enduring the social system of the military. The bodies of Percennius and Vibulenus were either buried inside the general's tent or, according to some others, thrown outside the lines of the camp and left

open to viewing. This classic Tacitean alternative addresses, rather directly, the brutality of the military system as a social construct and how there was a real need for soldiers to be capable of enduring that world.[83]

After Drusus executed Percennius and Vibulenus, a massive rain and wind storm hit the camp; it was so bad that it threatened to steal away the standards (*Annales* 1.30): *auxerat militum curas praematura hiems imbribus continuis adeoque saevis, ut non egredi tentoria, congregari inter se, vix tutari signa possent, quae turbine atque unda raptabantur* ("An early winter increased the troubles of the soldiers with continual and harsh rains such that the soldiers could not leave their tents or meet amongst themselves; they were scarcely able to save the standards, which were dragged off by wind and water").[84] The soldiers stand to lose a great deal. Loss of the legionary standards was one of the worst omens the Roman army could suffer.[85] The most noteworthy example of this happened just five years earlier during the massive Roman defeat in the Teutoburg forest.[86] However, the soldiers in Pannonia show their grit, endure the storms, and hang on to the standards, albeit scarcely. An example of soldiers' endurance of the natural world closes out the Pannonian mutiny, as Tacitus quickly shifts gears and heads to the mutiny in Germany.

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[83] Tacitus treatment of the Pannonian mutiny actually extends for one more section in which a massive rain and windstorm threatens to take the standards away from the legions encamped on the Rhine.
[84] See Goodyear (1972: 236) for discussion on the phrase *congregari inter se*, which is the transmitted text, but which Goodyear rejects in favor of *non gregari*, primarily on the grounds that we cannot expect Tacitus to have excluded *non*, which produces a halting and unnatural phraseology. I keep the text of Heubner (1994).
[85] Goodyear (1972: 237): "To allow this to happen to the standards would clearly be to invite disastrously bad fortune." Miller (1959: 152): "It would be a bad omen if they [the standards] fell."
[86] Rome had to transition a large portion of its legionary force east of the Rhine to Pannonia to quell the revolt happening there. This significantly reduced the military presence in Germany, giving Arminius the perfect time to strike and to take the standards of the Roman legions.

The Pannonian mutiny narrative began with the cessation of customary camp duties (*solita munia*), a clear marker of what I call the social world (using Kaster's framework). The soldiers' endurance of this social world was being stretched thin by conscriptions, increased time served, loss of men, and the imperial transition happening back in Rome. Tacitus makes it clear that endurance of this social world was a value, an expected behavior and cultural norm, that was being threatened by the imperial transition and recent heavy losses of infantry. The soldiers' endurance of the natural world played a role as well, as *Annales* 1.30 attests. What is clear from Tacitus' representation of the Pannonian revolt is that soldiers had to endure the social world of the military in addition to their endurance of the natural world. Additionally, for soldiers of the early Principate, enduring the social world of the military was a particularly turbulent affair. Soldiers who were loyal to Augustus were immediately put in a position of shifting their allegiance to Tiberius. The Pannonian revolt captures the social, and natural, endurance of Roman soldiers at time when enduring the social system of the military was, perhaps, unclear to those who were in it. For after the transition from Augustus to Tiberius, the blueprint was set for imperial successions. However, Tacitus continues his explication of the anxiety experienced by soldiers during this time period. The soldiers' anxiety about the imperial transition and their role within it is the central theme of Tacitus' treatment of the mutiny in Germany, happening almost simultaneously as the mutiny in Pannonia.

The similarities between the mutiny in Pannonia and the mutiny in Germany have been outlined in detail by Woodman.[87] Some of the general similarities are related to their

[87] Woodman (2006: 304-7).

proximity in time. For example, the soldiers are held in their summer camps because of the death of Augustus, pushed to their limits due to recent strains on manpower, and showcase their general anxiety about the transition of power from Augustus to Tiberius. There are, however, some striking similarities between the mutinies related to the soldiers' endurance of military *labor*. For example, the soldiers in Germany were also put on light duty in their camp.[88] They also complained of extended periods of service, the cost of *vocationes*, and about the physical manifestations of their *patientia*.[89] They even tear off their clothes to expose their scars just like the soldiers in Pannonia.[90]

There are some major differences between the mutinies as well. For example, the mutiny in Germany has no ringleader proper; Tacitus says it was a mutiny of many tongues and many voices.[91] There is no direct speech like the one we get from Percennius. Additionally, Germanicus concedes some of the demands made by the soldiers, unlike Drusus, who put the burden of concession on the senate. Some of the concessions made by Germanicus included discharging troops who had served their time, paying bonuses that were owed, and providing cessation of work duty for certain soldiers. All the concessions made for the soldiers of the mutiny in Germany were related to military *labor*. Germanicus recognized the importance of soldiers' ability to endure military *labor*. If soldiers were pushed too far on this point, Germanicus knew where it would lead. Tacitus represents Germanicus as a general who

[88] Tacitus *Annales* 1.31.3: *levia munia*.
[89] Tacitus *Annales* 1.35.2: *tricena aut supra stipendia*, 1.35.1: *pretia vocationum*, 1.35.1: *ex vulneribus, verberum*.
[90] Tacitus *Annales* 1.35.1: *nudant... corpora... verberum notas exprobrant*.
[91] Tacitus *Annales* 1.31.

understood the soldiers' values and needs, unlike a figure like Valens, whose failure to understand his soldiers' values resulted in his embarrassment and failure.

The mutiny in Germany ended in a similar fashion to the one in Pannonia. Germanicus makes a similar case to the one made by the centurions who made rounds in the camp in Pannonia: if the soldiers wanted to continue to get paid, they needed the imperial family. The soldiers did not have much of a choice. The renegotiated position of the soldiers in relation to Germanicus resulted in a return to the delicate balance between general and soldier. The successful end to the mutiny in Germany relied on Germanicus' successful managing of his soldiers' value. This particular mutiny was fostered on the unfair treatment and continued exploitation of the soldiers' endurance. Germanicus did his best to address the soldiers' concerns in relation to their endurance, as did the centurions in Pannonia, and by means of his appropriate negotiation with the soldiers' values (here focused on *patientia*) he was able to end the mutiny.

A further point should be made here about Germanicus in particular, who seems to understand how to navigate the soldiers' feelings of distrust and anger as it related to enduring social injury and military *labor*. The results of Tacitus' representation are that we view Germanicus as a leader who understands the role of the military, *labor*, and the soldiers' own experience with both. We can view Tacitus' representation of soldierly endurance as being indicative of two things: (1) enduring the social world was an important element of what it meant to be a soldier in Tacitus' representation, and (2) for aristocratic generals, like Germanicus, understanding just how important *patientia* was for the soldiers was itself part of

what it meant to be an effective and competent general. In the case of Germanicus, his competence and successes with the soldiers may have played a role in how Tacitus' represented his death.

The mutinies in 14 AD speak to the importance of soldierly endurance as a value. If their endurance was pushed too far, the soldiers snapped. Yet, they also relied on their endurance to continue serving in the military, as the aftermaths of both mutinies show us – neither mutiny removes military *labor* nor even seeks to remove it. The soldiers merely want what is owed to them; they want the military to stop taking advantage of them. Understanding this balance – how far to push the soldiers' endurance – was within the domain of the generals leading the troops, and therefore also speaks to the relationship between generals and soldiers. The historical circumstances of 14 AD provided soldiers on the Danube and the Rhine an opportunity to renegotiate the imbalanced and unfair treatment they had recently been receiving vis-à-vis the *princeps*.[92] This mistreatment might be seen as an example of what Kaster called social *iniuria*. The offense, insult, even injury these soldiers suffered were clearly the result of the military system taking advantage of the lowest ranking soldiers. To be clear, endurance of military *labor* and the military system more broadly was part of life as a soldier, but there were supposed to be standards upheld by those in charge. Tacitus represents the transgression of those standards as social *iniuria* to the soldiers. This contributes significantly to why they revolt. The two mutinies in 14 AD show us that endurance of the social world –

[92] The *princeps* was the one who granted honorable discharge to soldiers who had served the required 16 (or 20 year), but he usually entrusted this to governors. Nevertheless, achieving veteran status was considered an honor bestowed by the *princeps*. See Wesch-Klein (2007: 440).

primarily the harsh military *labor*, but also other unfair conditions of service – was a significant driving force in Tacitus' representation of the mutiny. It was an equally significant force in his representation of legionary soldiers more broadly. The next case study will continue to parse this representation of legionary social-endurance. The civil wars of 69 AD, like the mutinies in 14 AD, will show us that soldiers' endurance of the social world of the military, primarily military *labor*, played a crucial role in Tacitus' representation of soldiers and his depiction of an integral moment in Roman history.

The Battles of Bedriacum and the Endurance of Civil War

The transition from Augustus to Tiberius was the first time the Roman legions had to shift their allegiance from one *princeps* to another. By the time of Nero's death, the process had taken place a number of times. Yet, the situation in 69 AD after Nero's suicide was considerably more chaotic and violent than the one in 14 AD after Augustus' death. In 69 AD the legions' shifting allegiance brought about the first civil war in Rome for almost a hundred years. These shifting allegiances between Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian speak to the tricky situation of imperial accession and how the relationship of the soldiers and the *princeps* factored into it. The complications of this relationship and the failure of Nero to secure an heir resulted in Roman soldiers being forced to kill other Roman soldiers. To what extent was soldiers' endurance of military *labor* and the social infrastructure of the military affected because of the historical context? The *Histories* explicates the importance of social *patientia* for soldiers in a way that the *Annales* cannot. Civil war was, after all, a significantly different kind

of military operation. Yet, based on the following case study, soldiers still relied on *patientia* in a way that is reminiscent of the mutinous soldiers in 14 AD. There is a consistent representation of social endurance for soldiers, one that focuses on its necessity for both the soldiers and the military, even in civil war.

There were two major battles at Bedriacum, near the town of Cremona, where it could be argued that the fate of imperial succession was decided in 69 AD. Otho was defeated there by Vitellius' troops, and Vitellius' troops were then defeated by Vespasian's. This second battle of Bedriacum serves as a useful case study in soldierly *patientia* for a few reasons. First, the Flavian general in charge of the campaign considers pushing the boundaries of military *labor* and forcing his soldiers to endure more than they might have anticipated; the narrative, through the eyes of the general, focuses on military *labor* and the endurance required. Second, Tacitus' representation of the siege of Cremona is composed by relating the general's decisions and the soldiers' actions in terms of military *labor*, thereby creating a scene in which all military activity seems explicitly tied to the role of military *labor* and the *patientia* required to endure it.

Antonius Primus and his Flavian troops have won the second battle of Bedriacum and continue to march on the city of Cremona. Primus and his soldiers face a massive task, when they arrive at the city; Tacitus calls it a *novum immensumque opus*. This opening line invites us to consider the importance of military *labor*. The noun *opus* can simply mean "work" by which Tacitus might mean that Primus and his soldiers have a huge task in front of them, namely attacking a city after an already long day. It can also mean "fortification" specifically of the military; in this sense Tacitus may be playing with the usage, as he goes on to explain what

exactly the Flavians are facing.[93] What they faced at Cremona were the camps (*castra*), ramparts (*vallum*), and the defenses (*munimenta*) of Otho's troops.[94] These are the physical remains of *labor* left behind by other Roman legionaries. When the Flavian soldiers see these, they freeze, not knowing what to do.[95] Their hesitation comes from Primus' hesitation about how to proceed. It might also be the case that these soldiers freeze because they recognize how difficult a problem this *opus* poses. As Roman legionaries, they would have built the exact same structures on a regular basis and understood the difficulty of the task in front of them. The task for Primus' soldiers was the task of Otho's troops before them: military *labor*. The perspective has shifted from building to deconstructing, but in both cases, what was required was endurance. This point is further emphasized by Tacitus' depiction of Primus' internal debate on the problem in front of him.

Primus' uncertainty about what to do stems primarily from the *munimenta* left behind by Otho's troops. Tacitus outlines Primus' options: (1) attacking a well-fortified city with tired troops is a bad idea, (2) returning to Bedriacum would diminish their victory and was itself an

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[93] Wellesly (1972: 112) on the translation of *opus*: "Either (a) 'task' or (less probably) (b) 'defensive work', i.e. the camp outside Cremona; but this, at any rate in its original form, could scarcely have been a novelty for *XIII*, who had fought at Cremona I and labored for the city as prisoners of war (32.3), though *haesere victories* below gives the impression that it was."

[94] Tacitus does not mention the construction of the camp, although Wellesly (1972: 112) suggests that Tacitus may be alluding to it at *Histories* 2.26.1-2 and 2.41.2.

[95] Tacitus *Histories* 3.26: *ut Cremonam venere, novum immensumque opus occurrit. Othoniano bello Germanicus miles moenibus Cremonensium castra sua, castris vallum circumiecerat eaque munimenta rursus auxerat. quorum aspectu haesere victores, incertis ducibus quid iuberent* ("When they reached Cremona they found a new task of enormous difficulty before them. In the war against Otho the troops from Germany had pitched their camp around the walls of Cremona and then had built a rampart around their camp; these defenses they had later strengthened. At the sight of the fortifications the victorious troops hesitated, for their leaders were in doubt over what orders to give").

incredibly difficult burden (*intolerandus tam long itineris labor*), and (3) if they did take the town, fortifying it themselves would be problematic with the enemy still close at hand. These problems are ones of *labor* and *patientia*. The physical manifestation of the Othonian troops' *labor*, the *munimenta*, creates a situation in which Flavian troops must grapple with a new difficult task (*novum immensum opus*). The situation calls for the Flavian troops to embody a form of *patientia*, for all the options outlined above require endurance from the soldiers. Option (1) pushes the limits of *patientia* too far. The soldiers have fought and marched a great distance; they have endured enough. Option (2), on the other hand, was a different kind of endurance: not more fighting, but more marching – equally pushing the limits of the soldiers' endurance.[96] Option (3) outlines a further possible enactment of endurance, not in fighting or in marching, but if they take the city, the *labor* of fortifying the town and the *munimenta* the Othonians left behind.

Primus' problem was made all the more troubling because the soldiers were willing to endure danger.[97] Unsurprisingly then, Primus chose the third option: take the enemy camp and then take the city. Primus' strategy for taking the Vitellian camp outside of the city involves a division of labor. He assigned each legion to a specific part of the camp, which would have been built by fellow Roman soldiers. He stations legions at the road nearest to the

[96] Wellesley (1972: 113) notes that the journey back to Bedriacum is a distance of 20 to 22 mp.

[97] Tacitus *Histories* 3.26: *quae super cuncta terrebat ipsorum miles periculi quam morae patientior: quippe ingrata quae tuta, ex temeritate spes; omnisque caedes et vulnera et sanguis aviditate praedae pensabantur* ("above all else the thing that terrified the general was the soldiers willingness to endure danger rather than delay, for the troops detested safe measures and put hope in rashness. Every disaster, all wounds and blood, were outweighed by their greed for plunder"). See also Ash (1999: 55-70) on Tacitus' characterization of Vespasian's soldiers, in particular the ways in contrasts with Josephus' account of the civil wars.

camp, a rampart further down the road, and the northern most gate – all of these things were constructed by the soldiers of Otho.[98] Primus' strategy was to assign these legions to specific places in the camp not only as a means of dividing the work of the siege for maximum efficiency, but also to promote the enthusiasm of competition (*Histories* 3.27): *mox vallum portasque legionibus attribuit, ut discretus labor fortis ignavosque distingueret atque ipsa contentione decoris accenderentur* ("Then Antonius assigned to each legion a gate or a part of the wall, that the division of labor might show who was brave and who cowardly, and thus fire the enthusiasm of his troops by making them rivals for glory"). Although the Flavians suffer some casualties, the plan is ultimately successful. After a hard-fought battle over the *castra* outside the city, the soldiers eventually make their way into Cremona, taking the city and the remaining Vitellian troops inside. These Vitellian soldiers used the fortifications built by Otho's troops, and those troops were in turn defeated by Vespasian's. This overlap of Vitellius, Otho, and now Vespasian is here centered on the construction and deconstruction of military fortifications; it provides a cross section of military *labor*. Moreover, we see the importance of military *labor* in the thought process and effectiveness of the commanding general, Primus. Were Primus to have made the wrong decision, the outcome could have been different. It took the experience and knowledge of a competent general to steer the soldiers' *patientia* in the right way and to require the appropriate amount of hard work.

[98] Tacitus *Histories* 3.27: p*roxima Bedriacensi viae tertiani septimanique sumpsere, dexteriora valli octava ac septima Claudiana; tertiadecimanos ad Brixianam portam impetus tulit* ("The sections next the road to Bedriacum the Third and Seventh legions took, the fortification farther to the right the Eighth and the Seventh Claudiana; the Thirteenth assailed the gate toward Brixia").

Tacitus embellishes the story, as he did with the mutinies in 14 AD, but Primus' tactic would make very little sense to Tacitus' audience unless it spoke to a certain level of truth. It was known, for example, that competition was integral for the acquisition of glory and honor – to be explored in the next chapter.[99] Primus used a division of labor for deconstructing the camp and fortifications built by previous Roman soldiers. This tactic also provided competition for the soldiers, which, from the perspective of Primus, was central to their training. From the perspective of the soldier, competition was central to their acquisition of martial glory on the battlefield. These soldiers who fought so hard to win at Bedriacum had a gruelingly tough march to Cremona, and then Primus challenged them further. The soldiers wanted the challenge – perhaps for greed – and that puts their endurance at the center of the narrative, one which seems to have a preoccupation with pointing out the military *labor* of Otho's troops just as much as Vespasian's.

The Flavians ultimately take the city of Cremona; the massacre of the city was infamous. However, there is a moment in Tacitus' narrative between the victorious Flavians and the defeated Vitellians that is worth exploring, as a final point in this case study. After Primus orders his troops to stand down, we see both sets of soldiers face off in a scene focused on the social *iniuria* endured by the defeated troops (*Histories* 3.31):

> *cum Antonius inhiberi tela iussisset, signa aquilasque extulere; maestum inermium agmen deiectis in terram oculis sequebatur. circumstiterant victores et primo ingerebant probra, intentabant ictus: mox, ut praeberi ora contumeliis et posita omni ferocia cuncta victi patiebantur, subit recordatio illos esse quid nuper Bedriaci victoriae temperassent.*

[99] See Lendon (2007: 237-266) for an overview of honor in Rome and the role competition played in it.

> After Antonius had ordered his men to cease firing, they brought out their standards and eagles; a sad line of unarmed men followed, their eyes cast upon the ground. The victorious troops stood about, heaping insults upon them and threatening them with blows; later when the defeated troops offered their faces to every indignity, and with all courage set aside they were ready to endure everything the victors began to remember that these were the troops who had recently shown moderation after they had won at Bedriacum.

The Vitellian troops have lost their courage: *posita omni ferocia*. They accept their defeat and prepare to endure the insults of the victors: *praeberi ora contumeliis … cuncta victi patiebantur*. The emotional and physical abuses suggest a clear hierarchy between the victorious troops and the defeated troops. Usually, this kind of social abuse would take place between legionary soldiers and their commanding officers, or perhaps Roman legionaries and their conquered enemies. Here, however, Roman legionaries abuse Roman legionaries, underscoring the destructive capabilities of civil war. The civil wars of 69 AD have forced these soldiers to endure the social abuse of their fellow soldiers, a marked change from their regular endurance of the larger military system. Civil wars are thus doubly onerous for legionaries' levels of endurance. Not only do they have to endure the usual work required of serving in the military, but they also must face the social *iniuria* of their fellow soldiers.

Similar to the mutinies in 14 AD, the second battle of Bedriacum and the siege of Cremona in 69 AD speak to the prevalence and importance of soldierly endurance as a value for legionary soldiers. Primus recognized the problems that might arise from pushing that endurance too far. He also wanted to keep his troops happy – in this case, to satiate their greed. Unlike the mutinies in 14 AD, the scenes at Cremona do not provide the soldiers with an opportunity to renegotiate any kind of unfair and imbalanced treatment, for Primus gives

them what they want (i.e. to sack Cremona). The Vitellians at Cremona must endure the social *iniuria* of fellow soldiers, not the unfair treatment of commanding officers. Moreover, the case study of Cremona showcases the internal thought process of Primus, an aristocratic general, who needed to engage appropriately the soldiers who were fighting under him. In that sense, Tacitus representation of Primus' decision making gives us an historiographical look into how generals chose to push their soldiers or attempt to appease them. Much like Germanicus' attempts to stop the revolt in Germany, Tacitus represents Primus as effectively navigating his relationship with the soldier in a way that suggests Primus understands how *patientia* and endurance work as a value for soldiers. Primus, much like Germanicus, can take into account the soldiers' behavior, demeanor, and desires. His decision to allow the soldiers to continue marching after a hard fought battle also speaks to his understanding of his soldiers' *patientia* and the limits on what they were capable of doing.

The scenes at Bedriacum and Cremona also align with Tacitus' depiction of the mutinies in 14 AD in the ways they showcase military *labor*, which I have suggested was one of the primary social forces a legionary soldier had to endure. The way Tacitus depicted the siege at Cremona suggested that we might think about military *labor* as such a driving force on soldiers. In particular, Tacitus suggests that soldiers themselves wanted to endure the struggle of continuing on to Cremona after their victory at Bedriacum. As was the case with the soldiers on the Danube and in Germany, these soldiers endure the social system of the military for their own benefit. Here, that comes in the spoils of sacking Cremona.

The siege at Cremona appears to be a significantly different kind of military campaign than the mutinies in 14 AD, precisely because the siege takes place in the context of a civil war. However, the civil wars of 69 were based in part on the failure of Nero to secure an heir. More precisely, the legions were split as to whom they should swear allegiance. The role of soldiers in imperial succession looms heavily over both case studies.

These case studies show that endurance of military *labor* was a central element in how Tacitus represented soldiers and their generals. In both case studies, Tacitus depicts the legions enduring military *labor* in a variety of ways as well as the different ways in which leaders understood or worked with the soldiers' endurance. The mutinies in 14 AD were primarily focused on the unfair and imbalanced treatment of service agreements, including extended years of service and veterans being recalled back, only to do the same work they used to do before reaching the status of *veteranus*. The siege of Cremona, on the other hand, points both to the endurance of military *labor* but also to the social inequality between Roman legionary soldiers, a circumstance unique to times of civil war. Lastly, both case studies point to the role of social-endurance within a larger system of legionary values, where things like courage and rewards are also at play in addition to the role of the commander in how social-endurance manifests itself in the lives of the legionaries.

Overall, Tacitus' representation of legionary endurance speaks more to soldiers' endurance of the harsh conditions of military service, most notably their endurance of military *labor*, which was forced on soldiers from higher ranking individuals within the army. Contrary to Kaster's proposition that *patientia laboris* was strictly in the purview of the natural world for

soldiers, Tacitus' representation of legionary *patientia* puts the value squarely in the social world. This opens the possibility that endurance was an integral value for legionary soldiers as well as being indispensable for the state. This symbiotic relationship between the values of legionary soldiers and the *princeps* himself will be explored next through analysis of Trajan's Column as well as the funerary epitaphs of soldiers.

Two Alternative Perspectives: Trajan's Column and Funerary Epitaphs

Trajan's Column is one of ancient Rome's most remarkable, best preserved, and most familiar monuments. The 125 ft high column, constructed from 20 marble drums, had a square pedestal at its bottom and a continuous frieze some 670 ft long; it still stands in the spot it was originally erected in Trajan's Forum.[100] Construction of the monument was completed in 113 AD and it served as a triumphal monument to Trajan's successful Dacian wars in 101-102 AD and 105-106 AD.[101] The monument memorialized Trajan's victories in Dacia through a continuous frieze, some 670 ft long, twisted around the column, depicting detailed images of the Dacian war; soldiers and their activities in and outside of battle are the primary agents throughout the frieze. Therefore, the monument has been considered a rich source of valuable information on the military in the early 2nd century AD. The column is one of our only reliable sources of information for the Dacian Wars, a military conflict that marked the peak of Roman military and imperial power.[102]

[100] Jones (1993).
[101] It would later function as his tomb, although this seems not to have been its planned use; see Rossi (1971: 14).
[102] One line of Trajan's own *comentarii* survives, and there is a short explanation of the Dacian Wars in Dio Cassius (LXVIII).

The column's rare and unique qualities elicit debate around its usefulness as a source, particularly for scholars of military history. The debate stems, in part, from varying interpretations of the frieze. Some suggest that the column relates the chronicles (historically) of the Dacian campaign.[103] Others, starting with Picard, have theorized that the column was merely emphasizing and synthesizing Trajan's imperial virtues.[104] More recently, a moderate approach has been taken up.[105] This model was first suggested by Rossi.[106] This model would have been a combination of realistic representations and allegorical abstractions to create a mixture of actual images and suggested ideas, which ancient viewers would know and understand. This interpretive model, as Rossi points out, would restore the monument to its original evocative power.[107] An example of this would be the stylized legionary battle formations, which do not reflect actual formations, but are used to create visual signposts for the placement of Trajan in certain scenes or act as markers of legionary movement.[108]

Trajan's Column was not the only imperial monument to celebrate the army in the Dacian Wars. The Tropaeum Traiani was a cenotaph and trophy that commemorated the army – a list of specific individuals who died with glory – during the Dacian Wars. This monument was not in Rome, but was closer to the battles themselves, on the frontier of the Empire. This suggests a different political purpose for the monument but indicates, in conjunction with

[103] Rossi (1971: 98).
[104] Picard (1957: 389)
[105] Kleiner (2007) suggests a combination of approaches: it is neither a direct reflection of historical reality or chronology nor is it only representative. Other studies on the column take a similar methodological approach to a wide variety of questions, in particular see Coulston (2015), Wolfram-Thill (2011), Stevenson (2008), and Volken (2008) for a sample of studies that use a moderate approach to analyzing Trajan's Column.
[106] Rossi (1971).
[107] Rossi (1971: 98).
[108] Coulston (2015: 73).

Trajan's Column, a larger trend to commemorate the army under Trajanic Rome. This concerted imperial appreciation of the army and the individual soldier was something particular to Trajan's Rome. He was, as Pliny says in his *Panegyricus*, a *princeps* who combined the roles of general and comrade-in-arms: *sic imperatorem commilitionemque miscueras* (19.3). The relationship between the *princeps* and the soldier was an important one for Trajan to represent to the people of Rome and the people on the frontiers of the Empire.

The column shows soldiers enduring *labor* and fighting against the Dacians – starting from the bottom of the column – to raise Trajan, the *optimus princeps*, to the height of apotheosis at the top of the column. Most of the scenes on the continuous frieze are not battle scenes, but scenes of military *labor* including the construction of forts and roads, as well as the transportation of supplies on foot and on boat.[109] The other most commonly featured figure is, of course, Trajan. The frequency of both types of scenes express a connection between Trajan, as general of the army, and the importance of soldiers doing the *labor* required to fight a war against the Dacians. There is very little fighting on the frieze.[110] The real focal point of the continuous frieze on the column is Trajan as military general. In most scenes this manifests itself through Trajan's observation of the soldiers' endurance of military *labor*.

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[109] Kleiner (2007: 160-61), Rossi (1971: 98ff).

[110] Rossi (1971: 99) notes, "The theme of the spiral reliefs is centered upon the actors rather than upon the drama, with that attention to iconography and its symbolic significance, which is peculiar to Roman commemorative pictures, wherein everything has its own reason, order and meaning. This principle is clearly demonstrated by the almost excessive richness and exactitude of scenes showing field engineering and military works as contrasted with the scenes of actual fighting." Rossi goes on to suggest that celebrating the army's achievements of *labor* were in fact the more typical way of praising the army, citing in addition to the column, Hadrian's speech to the African army at Lambaesis (*ILS* 2487): "This is, however, in the author's opinion, the typical Roman way of celebrating the *exercitus* in its manifold technical achievements, which were cultivated and valued as much as, or even more than, gallantry in battle."

There are eighteen scenes on the column that show soldiers engaged in military *labor*. Of the eighteen scenes, sixteen show only legionaries and praetorians engaged in doing the work. Two show the *classiarii* and none have the *auxilia*. Rossi notes that the strict exclusion of *auxilia* from the *labor* is likely not representative of historical reality.[111] This manipulated representation of soldierly *labor* focuses strictly on genuinely Roman *milites*. If the representation of *labor* on the column is suggesting that *patientia*, as a value, was both normative for soldiers and beneficial to the *princeps*, then it is also suggesting that this is particular to the *miles Romanus* (and more specifically, legionaries and praetorians). Rossi contends that what is on display here is the discipline of the Roman army, in addition to its bravery (I discuss the later in the next chapter), and that this is exclusively the virtue of the Roman soldier, in service of the *princeps*.[112] I do not disagree that these scenes explicate discipline. I only contend here, as I have above, that discipline in the military comes from the top down; it is a social construct forced on soldiers through the military. Another way to view these scenes of military *labor* would be to view them as explicating the soldiers' endurance of the task demanded. The monument then becomes one that commemorates the soldiers' endurance of the social world of the military, enacting *patientia* as a value in service of both the soldier, their community, and the *princeps* himself.

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[111] Rossi (1971: 119), citing the probability that the *cohors II Brittonum* likely worked on the pillars of the great bridge of Drobetae and Hadrians *adlocutio* to the soldiers at Lambaesis, in which he states that the *auxilia* built their own *castra* and *castella*.

[112] Rossi (1971: 120): "On this matchless 'trophy' the discipline and bravery of the whole imperial army are commemorated, while well-co-ordinated and manifold technical superiority is shown to be an exclusive virtue of the *miles Romanus*, in the strictest and most traditional sense of the term."

I think exploring a few of the scenes from the column will provide useful material to consider this point further.[113] For example, the connection between soldiers, *labor*, and the *princeps* can be seen in scenes 11-12 (Figure 1 below) in which Roman legionaries build a fort under the watchful eye of Trajan.[114] This work was being done by legionaries and not auxiliaries, first pointed out by Rossi, but further expanded by Lepper and Frere.[115]

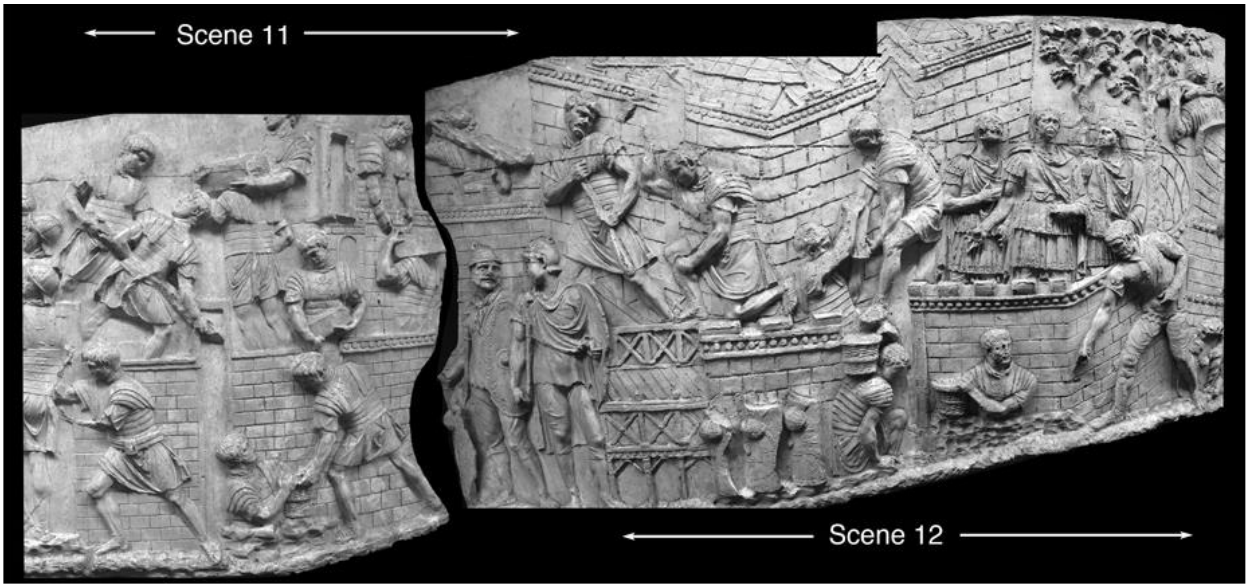

Figure 1 – Roman legionaries build a fort under the watchful eyes of Trajan

[113] I use the traditional numbering of scenes following Cichorius; see Lepper and Frere (1988) for an updated edition of the Cichorius plates from 1896-1900.
[114] All photographs of Trajan's Column have been taken from R.B. Ulrich.
[115] Lepper and Frere (1988: 62), "It is also noteworthy that all the work of cutting turves, excavating ditches, collecting timber, as well as the ensuing joinery, is being done by legionaries, who have laid aside their heavy armour, while the auxiliary troops mount guard." Furthermore, Lepper and Frere argue contra Rossi that while the auxiliaries must have had some skills in military *labor*, it seems reasonable to them that what is being depicted here in the column was the normal practice.

There are two clearly marked auxiliary soldiers standing guard on the left edge of scene 12.[116] It may be the case, as Lepper and Frere suggest, that auxiliaries infrequently participated in military *labor*, when Roman legionaries were present. This would make military *labor* a distinctly Roman activity, and not strictly the activity of any low-ranking military personnel. That is to say, enduring military *labor* was part of what it meant to be a Roman legionary and was less a part of the cultural identity of other types of soldiers, like the auxiliaries standing guard in scene 12. We must take into account the context of the column here. Most what of the column depicts are projections of Roman ideals and values, and the audience of the column would certainly have been considered when the column was constructed. In this instance, the column may be projecting some sense of nationalistic differentiation for a strictly Roman audience.[117] On the other hand, most of the fighting that takes place on the column is done by auxiliaries as opposed to Roman legionaries – exactly what theme is being projected in that case? More likely, the column represents a combination of historical reality and projected ideals and values. This makes the connection of Roman legionaries enduring military *labor* to the *princeps* all the most striking.

Other scenes explicating the relationship between soldier, *labor*, and *princeps* are found in scenes 14-17 in which soldiers are depicted cutting down trees, transporting it, and constructing a fort, again under the eyes of Trajan (Figure 2).

[116] Lepper and Frere (1988) and Rossi (1971) all agree on these soldiers being auxiliary units. More recently, however, Charles (2002) has begun to cast some doubt on our ability to clearly distinguish Roman legionaries and praetorians with auxiliary units.

[117] Considerable work has been done more recently on parsing the column's projection of themes related to nationalism, barbarism, and ethnicity. See Coulston (2015, 2003), De Sena (2011), Vout (2006), and Speidel (2004).

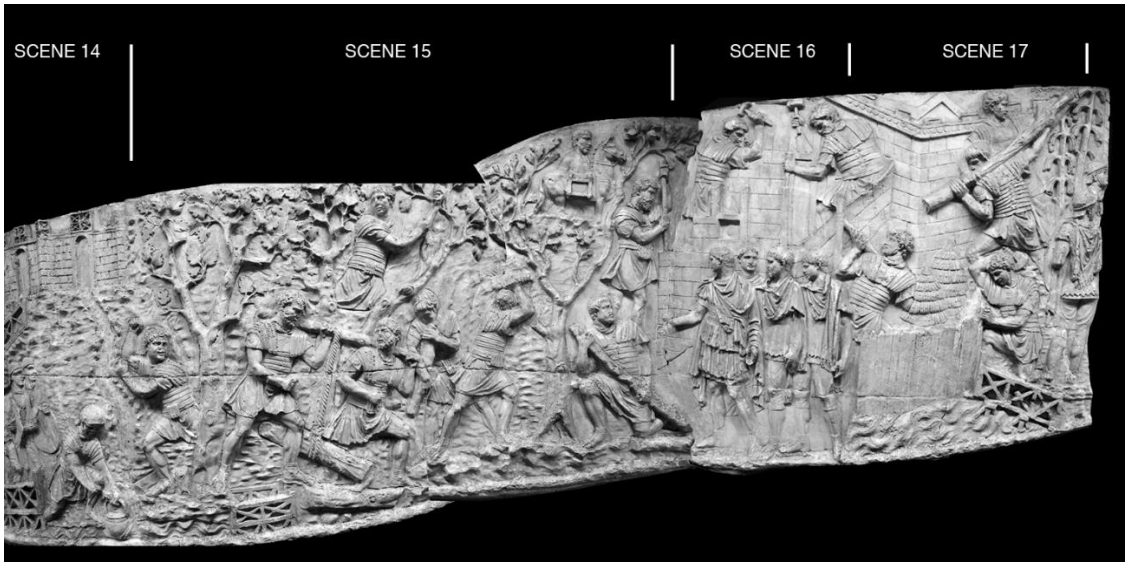

Figure 2 – Roman soldiers cut and transport wood for the constructing of a fort.

There are no auxiliaries on guard here, but these scenes depict military *labor* as the focal point of the frieze as well as the focal point of Trajan's attention. Lepper and Frere suspect a level of realism in this scene that speaks to the artists attempts to get very minute details correct.[118] There are more scenes of this kind than can be fully appreciated here. These two scenes are representative of a type of scene that is prevalent on the column, one which focuses on the role of military *labor* for soldiers (specifically Roman legionaries) and its connection to the *princeps*, Trajan. Another way in which these scenes are representative of the type scenes used throughout the frieze, and of the connection between soldier and *princeps*, is the spatial movement of Trajan. For example, in figure 1 we see Trajan at the very right-hand edge of

[118] Lepper and Frere (1988: 64-65).

scene 12, flanked by two guards, standing on the walls, above the work being done. In figure 2, we see Trajan in scene 16, down below the walls of the fort, seeming to offer a hand or some sort of gesture to the soldiers, who are now directly in front of him on the same level. The spatial movement of Trajan from above the soldiers to on plane with them is suggestive. It was a literary trope for military generals to adopt the experience of their soldiers in order to legitimate themselves to the legions.[119] Trajan's movement throughout the frieze seems to align with this expected behavior of a Roman general.

Scenes of military *labor* on the column, like the two above, highlight the role of the Roman legionary in construction of important military infrastructure. Without proper fortifications, Trajan's methodical campaigns in Dacia would have fared much worse.[120] Trajan was, as mentioned by Pliny, a *princeps* who brought the legions together and his success as a military general played a large role in his success as a political force.[121] The column itself was a testament to this success and seemed to highlight the importance of the legionary's role in constructing it. The soldiers on the column are constructing the military success of Trajan by enduring military *labor*, which in turn helped construct Trajan's own success. The construction of the column attests to the importance of soldiers' ability to tolerate the social system of the military, primarily the military *labor* required for success in and out of battle.

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[119] See Ash (2007: 120), Kraus (1994: 123), and especially Woodman (1989: 198-99) who noticed that Latin authors tend to depict military generals tolerating *labor* in connection with *pericula* and *patientia*.
[120] Ash (2007: 126) on the role of military *labor* in successful campaigns, "The general Corbulo claimed that battles were won with the *dolabra*, the pick-axe with which the marching-camps were built (Front. *Str*. 4.7.2)."
[121] Bennett (1997: 43-74).

Trajan's Column offers us a different perspective on the soldier's experience, particularly their experience of enduring military *labor*. Based on the column, soldiers' endurance of military *labor* was central to the experience of a Roman legionary. Furthermore, Trajan's presence in these scenes of *labor* speak to the power hierarchy and rank structure within the military system and the political system of the Principate, two things that we have previously considered "social systems." Trajan's watchful gaze on the working legionary soldiers reflects that social system and further emphasizes that what the soldiers were enduring was primarily a social system, not a natural one. Additionally, Trajan's Column was a monument that spoke to a different audience than either Tacitus or the funerary epitaphs of soldiers. Trajan's Forum, in which the column stood, was a space for any citizen of Rome, most probably not currently serving soldiers, and more probably plebeians and other citizens of the city. The column's purpose, unclear to be sure, had to connect with the intended audience in a way that made sense. The citizens of Rome, then, would most probably not have been surprised to see the soldiers enduring these tasks of *labor*, but marveled at Trajan's connection to them. For the citizens of Rome, the column might have served to reinforce traditional Roman values, especially military values. It is significant, then, that the column makes a concentrated effort to display Roman legionary soldiers enduring military *labor*.

The funerary epitaphs of Roman legionary soldiers were generally devoid of the military virtues we associate with traditional Roman military activity such as *virtus*, *fortitudo*, and *patientia*. These traditional virtues became the personal qualities of the *princeps* under the Empire, as attested by imperial monuments such as Augustus' *Res Gestae* and Imperial coinage

throughout the first three centuries of the Empire.[122] We should not expect to find anything significant comparing the tombstones of legionary soldiers with the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, but it is striking that soldiers do not consider traditional Roman military virtues important enough to incorporate into their tombstones. These traditional military virtues do not seem to be integral to the funerary inscriptions of higher-class Roman military personnel either. For example, *equites* of the late Republic and early Empire also tend not to display traditional military virtues on their tombstones.[123] Whereas, in the civic sphere, we see the presence of traditional Roman virtues play a large role in self-representation through burial monuments and inscriptions.[124] The difference lies in the role of the emperor as *princeps*, the sole military general of the Roman army, a figure that embodied traditional military values to the political and social detriment of the Roman aristocracy.[125]

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[122] Augustus *Res Gestae* 34: *quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est clupeusque aureus in curia Iulia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiae iustitiae pietatis causa testatum est per eius clupei inscriptionem* ("For this service on my part I was given the title of Augustus by decree of the senate, and the doorposts of my house were covered with laurels by public act, and a civic crown was fixed above my door, and a golden shield was placed in Curia Julia whose inscription testified that the senate and the Roman people gave me this in recognition of my valor, my clemency, my justice, and my piety"); See Norena (2011) on the role of coins in propagating imperial ideology after the Julio-Claudians, particularly the virtues associated with Rome's exemplary past – including *patientia*. Also, see Balmaceda (2017: 33) on *virtus* and the golden shield of Augustus in the curia.

[123] Devijver and Van Wonterghem (1990) evaluate patterns and create classifications for the funerary inscriptions of equestrian officers of the late Republic and early Empire. Nowhere in their analysis do we see virtues appearing customary on inscriptions of this type.

[124] See Forbis (1996) and Pobjoy (2000) for important studies on the inscriptions of municipals and euergetism, both of which rely heavily on traditional Roman civic virtues.

[125] Sailor (2008: 51-52), "From the beginning, the Principate severely restricted opportunities for elite self-display, especially for public celebration of feats of conquest; removal of the possibility of a triumph is only the most familiar of the innovations that arrogated to the house of the *princeps* a monopoly on glory, and military glory in particular." See also Campbell (1984: 348-62), Eck (1984), and Roller (2001: 99-101). For Tacitus' focus on the role of individual *principes* in ruining the lives and careers of successful generals while simultaneously glorifying their own achievement see Griffin (1995: 44-9).

What military personnel considered important for their funerary inscriptions were their name, years served, years lived, sometimes their homeland, and their military unit. Scholars have deduced from these formulaic inscriptions that soldiers valued the structure, rank system, and possibility of career advancement that the military provided.[126] Soldiers under the Empire considered their years served and their rank within the army to be important enough to include in their rather laconic funerary epitaphs. I want to focus here specifically on the years served. I will offer a suggestion that we might consider the number of years served to be symbolic of something close to the value of endurance we have explored up to this point. It is clear that the simple funerary inscriptions of soldiers can be indicative of much more complex processes. For example, Hope has shown how the inclusion of a commemorator on many military tombstones suggests both a connection to a community of soldiers and to the larger military structure in which the soldiers worked and died. Soldiers valued both their community and their military career.[127] These tombstones, however, are representations of a reality, not a direct reflection. They use the rhetoric and imagery of the society in which they existed.[128] That is to say, we should approach this material with caution and shy away from making sweeping claims about the lives of soldiers based only on their funerary inscriptions, a

[126] Speidel (2015: 319-44) and in particular (2012: 176-8), where he notes, "But soldiers expected recognition, respect and rewards for many other reasons too. Above all, for their brave deeds and for the hardships and the deadly dangers of their military service even in times of peace, which they undertook to guarantee the integrity and welfare of the Roman state and of the Empire's civilian inhabitants."
[127] Hope (2001: 31), "The shared common elements of the epitaphs reflect the order and standardization of the military regime." See also Hope (2003a, 2003b, and 2007).
[128] Hope (2000: 181).

medium of representation that was formed and informed primarily by individuals who survived the deceased.

The inclusion of years served on almost every legionary's tombstone, along with his name, and years lived, might represent some kind of communal military value. Soldiers would most likely have viewed their service as something admirable. Their years served could thus function as a measure by which others could view their achievement, particularly if they had yet to reach the status of veteran. Sometimes other achievements are included in funerary epitaphs of legionaries, but not frequently, and military achievements and rewards more broadly will be explored in a later chapter. The amount of years served does not necessarily mean that soldiers valued long careers, although it may. It seems to be the case that once a soldier reached the required number of years served to be discharged and become a *veteranus* they tended not to list their specific number of years served, but merely included *veteranus*. This practice seems to mirror what soldiers did when they achieved a higher military rank than *miles*. Most soldiers that achieved centurion status, for example, did not include all of the ranks they held before getting to the important milestone of *centurio*. So to with the status of *veteranus*, it seems the specific number of years served becomes less important.

Until a soldier reached the required number of years for discharge, their tombstones almost always contain the specific number of years served. While this may represent a number of cultural phenomena, I want to suggest that it may symbolize the soldiers' endurance of the military system. Serving in the military was difficult. Communities of soldiers understood that serving was difficult and seeing the number of years someone had endured that life must have

meant something to members of that community. Each year endured was a year closer to receiving dischargement from their duties and the monetary bonus that came with it.

Demographic work on the Imperial army suggests that the majority of legionary funerary inscriptions contain a number of years served roughly in line with the number of years served required for the status of *veteranus*. This number, as noted before, changed throughout the first two centuries of the empire from 16 to 20[129]. Scheidel's analysis of the inscriptions shows that 26.8% of the funerary inscriptions of legionary soldiers showed years served between 16-20; 21% for years served between 11-15; 21.8% for 6-10 years, and 14% for 1-5 years served. Furthermore, 16.4% of all inscriptions were for years served between 21-25. As Scheidel notes, this trend is somewhat predictable given the increasing chance of receiving an inscription; as soldiers grew older it was more likely they would leave behind people of meaningful connection such as a wife, children, and long-standing military friends.[130]

These data might suggest something as simple as what Scheidel proposes, namely that by merely living longer and creating meaningful relationships, the solder was more likely to receive commemoration from his familial and martial community members. On the other hand, these numbers might suggest that no matter how old a soldier was when he died and no matter how long they served, it was always integral to recognize their years served up until their achievement of *veteranus*. The distribution of percentages between the categories of years served

[129] Soldiers had no legal right to discharge. As Wesch-Klein (2007: 439-40) says, "The observance of these periods of service was based solely on tradition (*consuetudo*) and humanity (*humanitas*). In addition, since discharges did not regularly take place, longer periods of service were common. Starting in the late first century AD, legionaries were generally expected to serve 25 years."
[130] Scheidel (1996: 129).

is not as drastic as we might expect if there was a tendency to commemorate soldiers who merely lived a longer life. For example, soldiers who served between 6-10 years represent 21.8% of the total inscriptions while those that served 11-15 years represent 20%, a lower number than those who served less years. Likewise, the increase in percentage from 11-15 years served to 16-20 years served is 5%, a lower number than the drop off from 16-20 to 21-25, which is a 10.4% decrease. These data backup my suggestion earlier that the tendency to stop including a specific number of years served becomes more normalized after a soldier reached the status of *veteranus*. Scheidel's analysis thus suggests that for legionary soldiers, reaching the benchmark of *veteranus* held real weight in the communities in which these tombstones were being viewed. Likewise, before that benchmark, years served are consistently included, suggesting that the inclusion of years served is less connected to a long and successful military career and connected to something experienced almost equally across the wide range of careers we see represented in the inscriptions up until retirement. It might be worth reiterating the point that once a soldier achieved the status of *veteranus* he was, at that point, supposed to be exempt from the majority of the military *labor* imposed upon soldiers. This was one of the main complaints of Percennius: veterans were being recalled and doing the same work they did before but under a different name. Perhaps it is the case that not only was achieving the status of *veteranus* admirable in and of itself, but it also meant a final release from the drudgeries and extreme work conditions imposed upon soldiers the moment they began serving.[131]

[131] See Speidel (2010) for his suggestion that not only did soldiers consider their service something admirable but that achieving the status of *veteranus* was particularly important; Speidel uses military diplomas as evidence of an increased sense of self-presentation over the first two centuries AD, citing the layout changes of the texts to focus

There is no clear evidence to suggest that the number of years served on a legionary's tombstone is a direct reflection of endurance as a value. However, a year served is more than a number – in the same way we now realize that the inclusion of a *commiles* represents more than a commemorator.[132] Years served represent the hard work, struggle, pain, and toil that went in to surviving that year. Part of that struggle, as I have tried to show above, was soldiers' endurance of enforced military *labor*. In that sense, years served on tombstones are not simple tallies of campaign seasons – or more literally, *stipendia* earned – but a refraction of a cultural experience, one that was informed and shaped in significant ways by the work forced upon legionary soldiers. They are a refraction of everything it took to survive year after year in a harsh and unforgiving career, including the necessary endurance of military *labor*.

Endurance of military *labor* and the larger social system of the military were two principal ways that legionary soldiers enacted the value of *patientia*. It seems to be the case that both in Tacitus and on Trajan's Column a significant portion of the day to day experience of a soldier was enduring military *labor* and the larger social system of the military. If a "year served" on a tombstone was nothing more than a mark of another *stipendia* earned then we might consider the ways in which that *stipendia* came to be earned. It seems to be the case based on Tacitus and Trajan's Column that a significant portion of what went into earning a year's *stipendia* was endurance of military *labor* and endurance of the larger social system of the military. Scholars have moved away from viewing these formulaic epitaphs, and soldiers

on the individual's name and less on their fulfilled contractual obligations as well as the shift to make copies of the diplomas into a more permanent material (although this later shift happened in the early 3rd century AD).

[132] Hope (2003a, 2003b, and 2007).

themselves, as monolithic. Although it is challenging to parse the laconic nature of the inscriptions and the unspoken and unwritten experience of the soldier, we should not hesitate to try and use "years served" in conjunction with other sources in order to understand better the ways in which *patientia* functioned as a military value for legionary soldiers.

These two different perspectives on soldierly endurance provide us with some necessary context for interpreting Tacitus' treatment of soldierly endurance. The prospect of considering "years served" on legionaries' tombstones may open more questions than it answers, but it might also suggest that enduring a year of service in the military was more than just a tally mark. It was a year of hard work, something to be proud of, and something that was integral in the life of a Roman legionary soldier. This perspective, perhaps unsuspectingly, aligns with what seems to be the central message of Trajan's Column: Roman soldiers endure military *labor* and they do it for the *princeps*. In that sense, the soldiers and the *princeps* are working symbiotically. Soldiers who endure military *labor* are doing something valuable for themselves, their families, and their local communities of fellow soldiers. Yet, their endurance also provided the foundation on which the *princeps* stood and Trajan's presence on the column overseeing his soldiers' endurance exemplifies that symbiotic relationship.

One specific element of Tacitus' presentation of *patientia* and soldierly endurance becomes more pronounced given the information these other perspectives provide: aristocratic bias. Not only were aristocratic figures like Tacitus concerned with their status in the political world, but they may have also looked down on the figure of the soldier as someone that not only accepted their "lower" status in the social system of the military, but somehow

incorporated that into their value system which also assisted the goals and aims of the Principate. Soldiers endurance of military *labor*, at times, bordered on servile – a point brought up in more than one mutiny in Tacitus. Yet, endurance of military life was central to the job, and necessary if a soldier wanted not only to survive but succeed. From the perspective of Tacitus, this expected normative behavior of a soldier consistently bordered on the servile, which explains some of the hyperbolic and disparaging remarks Tacitus makes about the common soldier.[133]

Conclusion

Using Kaster's framework of natural and social systems, as well as his range of meanings for *patientia*, I suggested that we might consider the military itself as a social system. In the same ways that the social system of the Principate – the world about which Kaster was primarily speaking – worked on differentials of power, so did the military. The military also functioned, in part, on enforced military *labor*. Therefore, soldiers' endurance and tolerance of the harsh military *labor* required of them might be understood as endurance and tolerance of a social system, according to Kaster's framework. In contrast to Kaster's proposition that soldierly endurance was primarily the endurance of the natural world, or that this was the only sense in which *patientia* was virtuous for a soldier, I have argued that endurance of the social world was the dominant form of endurance enacted by legionary soldiers during the times about which Tacitus was writing and that this was an expected, normative behavior.

[133] Speidel (2010).

Tacitus' representation of legionary soldiers relies heavily on their social endurance. I attempted to bring this to light throughout Tacitus' corpus, but tried to provide significant details of Tacitus' usage of it in two specific case studies: the two mutinies in 14 AD following the death of Augustus and the second battle of Bedriacum in 69 AD. Each case has its own context, irregularities, and historiographical purpose, but they both speak to the role of social endurance in the lives of soldiers and the outcome of two significant moments in Roman history. Tacitus' incorporation of social endurance into these two episodes suggests to us that it was a fundamental military value within his representation of legionary soldiers.

Likewise, these case studies also show us the extent to which the social endurance of soldiers was affected by leadership. Generals like Valens failed to understand the connection between appropriate generalship and the soldiers' social endurance, while others like Germanicus and Primus show us the ways in which generals understood the social endurance of the soldiers. Tacitus' representation of these generals relies, in part, on their understanding of the soldiers' social endurance, when to push it, and when to realize the soldiers have had enough. In that sense, understanding how soldiers' endurance of the social world functions in Tacitus' corpus allows us to see how Tacitus characterizes and represents leadership. I hope to have shown that one way military generals lead effectively is by their own understanding of soldiers' *patientia*.

I tried to balance Tacitus' treatment of the issue by including two other perspectives. First, the funerary epitaphs of soldiers. These are notoriously formulaic and gathering any kind of meaning from them is a difficult task, but a worthy one. I suggested that we might be able to

read into the commonly included "years served" on these epitaphs as not just a tally mark, but an indication of a larger process: each *stipendia* earned was comprised of a complex system of experiences. Foremost in that system may have been the endurance of the military as a social system, more specifically, the endurance of military *labor*. We might then conclude that a potential reason for including years served into the formulae of legionary epitaphs was an indication, at least a subtle nod, to the endurance and tolerance it took to survive in the military.

To contrast this non-elite perspective, I provided analysis of Trajan's column, one of Rome's most extraordinary markers of imperial power and authority. Trajan's column depicts numerous scenes of Roman legionaries enduring military *labor*, perhaps a suggestion that the military, controlled and lead by the *princeps* Trajan, considered soldiers' endurance of military *labor* crucial to its success. Additionally, the presence of Trajan within these scenes of *labor* indicate that the value of social endurance for a legionary was integrally tied to the *princeps* himself. Trajan appears connected to the soldiers' social endurance in a very direct manner. In this way, Trajan's projected success as *princeps* was directly tied to his soldiers' endurance of military *labor*.

Trajan's column projects the ideal of a direct connection between the *princeps* and his soldiers. It projects the idea that the goals and aims of the *princeps* are in sync with the soldiers'. Should a soldier endure the harsh, and sometimes cruel, enforcement of military *labor*, he will be that much closer to retirement and Rome will be one step closer to maintaining its power, success, and dominance. The symbiotic relationship between the *princeps* and the legions

operated on a set of shared values, one of which was endurance of the social world of the military.

The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus: Courage

in honorem et in memoriam fortissimorum virorum qui pugnantes pro republica morte occubuerunt – Roman Funerary Altar; Adamclisi, Romania (*CIL* III 14214)

This chapter argues two main points. First, Tacitus represents the courage (*virtus*) of common soldiers through a symbiotic relationship between soldiers and their commanders. In Tacitus, this symbiotic relationship was beneficial to the soldiers, but more so for their generals, the most powerful of which was the *princeps*. The second point of this chapter examines what role this symbiotic relationship plays in Tacitus' larger historiographical representation of the Roman military. Most importantly, I seek to understand how that relationship creates and promotes courage – a most important military value – and in turn shapes how Tacitus characterizes military leadership. For, those generals who do not understand this relationship with the soldiers are at risk of losing them, or not motivating them to act courageously – a devastating problem during times of war and an even more complicated one during times of civil war.

On the other hand, understanding how to lead soldiers to courageous action without garnering the jealous gaze of a *princeps* was of pressing importance for elite individuals of the Empire who still sought a semblance of traditional Roman glory, another key theme in Tacitus' *oeuvre*. Therefore, by exploring how Tacitus represents the courage of common soldiers, we can see how concerned Tacitus was with writing the history of military leadership during the first century of the Principate, particularly as it related to the complex problems faced by senatorial

men serving in positions of military leadership under a bad *princeps*. I also draw upon several imperial monuments from the time of Tacitus' life to contextualize the author's literary representation of courage. These monuments provide valuable insight into how the Roman state chose to depict courage and the ways in which the courage of soldiers may have existed within, or been cultivated through, a relationship with their commander. With these monuments in mind, we can see that while Tacitus might not have been concerned with writing the history of the common soldier's subjective experience, his representation of soldierly courage in relationship to elite men reveals a nuanced role for the common soldiers throughout his corpus.[134]

Courage was one of the most fundamental virtues ascribed to common soldiers in the Roman empire. Roman soldiers were responsible for helping achieve Roman victory. Roman victory relied on courage from soldiers in as much as it relied on the generals who could instill courage in those same troops. Soldiers would receive rewards for appropriate behavior in such circumstances, as well as remuneration for continued service in the military (chapter three explores this reward system more in depth). Courage was one important avenue for soldiers to distinguish themselves. Acting courageously could increase the social standing of even the

[134] Harris (2006: 303) critiques Tacitus' ability to provide informed historical information about soldiers: "But those who had been close to the actual killing and dying, those who had advanced toward serried ranks of fully armed enemies or withstood their attack, are inherently more likely to show some understanding of this subject than noncombatant historians such as Tacitus." Birley (2000), however, suggests that Alföldy's (1995) new interpretation of the famous inscription *CIL* VI 1574, indicated that Tacitus in fact held the position of military tribune, and puts forward the possibility that Tacitus served his military tribunate position in Britain under his father-in-law, Agricola. While this does not equal the kind of military experience Harris sees as necessary to provide an inherently more accurate representation of what courage looked like, it at least provides Tacitus with some military perspective. See Syme (1958: 68, 157-175) for Tacitus' career (military or civilian) and military knowledge; Syme is more sympathetic to Tacitus' military history than Mommsen, who claimed that Tacitus was the most "unmilitary of historians."

lowest ranked soldiers.[135] These low-ranking soldiers could distinguish themselves by individual acts of courage, primarily through receiving military decorations (*dona militaria*) and other material rewards.[136] Courage on the battlefield thus served two purposes for soldiers: preserving their lives and increasing their social standing among other soldiers of their same rank.[137]

The Romans also understood the general's responsibility in cultivating the courage of the soldiers – a reflection of the general himself. This duty of the Roman general, according to McDonnell, was present in the writings of Polybius and was something that we see frequently in Caesar.[138] Caesar, according to Riggsby, suggests that the military hierarchy, and the role of the general as a spectator, aided in the creation of *virtus*: "The gaze that brings out *virtus* (and so

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[135] Lendon (1997: 244), "Soldiers were fiercely competitive for a reputation for courage, and Roman battles could take on a Homeric cast with a single soldier rushing out from his formation and distinguishing himself with extraordinary heroism, inspiring others to emulate him."

[136] See Maxfield (1981: 67-101) for a summary of all military decorations. Low-ranking soldiers, however, would be unqualified and unfit to receive most of these. Tacitus, however, attests a number of decorations for low-ranking soldiers: *phalerae*, *torques*, *armilla*, the *corona civilis*, *vexillum*, and the *hasta pura*.

[137] Lendon (1997: 239), "Soldiers' membership in the community of the army, in the smaller community of the unit, or in the group of units that shared a campaign, was of tremendous psychological importance to them." On the switch from *manipuli* to *cohortes* as the primary tactical unit see Keppie (1984: 173-174), who notes that, while the maniple exists nowhere in the epigraphic record of soldiers after Augustus, Imperial soldiers instead favoring the cohort or the century on their tombstones, remnants of the Republican military system still existed under the Empire, primarily in the titulature of centurions. For the general organization of the Imperial army see Speidel (1993), Roth (1994), Goldsworthy (1996: 33-38). On the importance of courage for the success of the group see Rosenstein (1990: 96), "But far more important, personal steadfastness preserved the cohesion of the unit and therefore the functioning of the entire system of which it and the men who comprised it were parts." Also see Campbell (2002: 45-6) on the importance of rewards, community, and Roman identity for non-Romans who hoped to acquire Roman citizenship through military service: "Since the rewards of military service included admittance to Roman citizenship and absorption into the Roman way of life, soldiers could identity with the idea of 'Roman'. Therefore, it was not a lofty ideology but the army itself, with its unique identity, discipline, routine and comradeship, that sustained their loyalty in a way of life for which they would fight, and seasoned them to customary displays of courage."

[138] McDonnell (2006: 71): "Here again Polybius presents a distinction that reoccurs in Caesar, who uses the words *diligentia, consilium, ratio,* and *scientia* to describe what the Roman commander contributes and *virtus* to denote what is expected from Roman soldiers. Polybius and Caesar agree that what the Roman general wanted from his men in battle was aggressiveness." For Caesar's use of *virtus* see Ramage (2003: 331-372), McDonnell (2006: 300-319), Riggsby (2006: 83-96), and Grillo (2012: 51-57).

success) is especially one from above. It works because in locating external judgement particularly in the commander, it aligns success with discipline and failure with disobedience."[139] The gaze from above, for Tacitus, ultimately comes from the *princeps* and so the hierarchy has, in a sense, a new rung on the ladder. Yet, military generals in positions lower than the *princeps* were still in positions that required them to win battles and direct soldiers. This meant that military generals above the rank of *miles* were not only dealing with the military hierarchy below them but were also feeling the strain of the hierarchy above them. It was, then, of great importance for leaders to understand the relationship between *princeps*, generals, and soldiers as it pertained to the creation and acquisition of *virtus*, since courage was, from Caesar to Tacitus, the virtue that brought about Roman military success.

Tacitus had a different agenda than Caesar, but even to recognize that Tacitus may have picked up on the historical tradition of representing leadership and *virtus* this way would be doing a service to how most modern scholars view Tacitus as a military historian. Tacitus, to be clear, was most interested in exploring the instability of leadership, particularly when it came to Roman *mores* that had their roots in early Roman history, like the cultivation of *virtus* and martial prowess. Tacitus was concerned with how these long-standing Roman traditions and values changed under the Principate and what the political system of monarchy meant for traditional Roman *mores*. One of these long-standing traditions was the courage of the soldier, for which a competent general and disciplined troops were required. Generals attempted to cultivate their soldiers' courage in such a way that the soldiers would display their bravery

[139] Riggsby (2006: 92).

when it was needed. If all went according to plan, the soldiers could win individual distinction and the general could take credit for the victory, creating a symbiotic relationship.

Given the Romans' robust vocabulary for such a complex concept as courage, the Latin vocabulary explored in the following chapter does not necessarily follow one or two specific words. However, the most common occurrences and usage of words like *virtus*, *fortitudo*, and *animus* all speak to the process and concept of courageous action – the topic of this chapter. Much could be made of the differences between nouns like *animus* and *fortitude*, the one being closely aligned to the expression of the emotional and psychological, whereas the other being more aligned with physical action. The following exploration of the definitions of courage is not an exhaustive study on the concept in Latin, for that is not the purpose of this study. It should, however, properly set the definitions for our purposes of exploring military courage and how the symbiotic relationship between soldiers and generals affected it.

Most scholars of Roman courage have tended to define courage within the framework of *virtus*.[140] For example, both Lendon and Coulston suggest that courage for soldiers was a combination of *virtus* and *disciplina*.[141] While others, like McDonnell include *disciplina* in their definitions, they focus on other elements of martial courage related to the concept of *virtus*.[142] All of these scholars, however, are concerned with *virtus* in a Republican setting, sans Phang, who begins to bridge the gap, but never addresses *virtus* under the Principate in earnest.

[140] Rosenstein (1990), Lendon (1997, 2005), Alston (1998), Barton (2001), McDonnell (2006), Harris (2006), and Phang (2008), all discuss Roman courage under the framework of *virtus* as a traditional Roman value.
[141] Lendon (2005: 312), Coulston (2013: 14)
[142] McDonnell (2006: 59-71); See also Le Bohec (1994: 108), Rosenstein (1990: 92-113), and Barton (2001: 281-282).

It might, therefore, seem apparent that any discussion of courage under the Principate ought to begin with a discussion of *virtus*. The concept was frequently tied to military matters and was central to the identity of any aristocrat in the Roman Republic.[143] The political changes of the Empire forced changes in aristocratic values, or at least how aristocrats wrote about them. The *princeps* himself would keep a sharp eye on any individuals who began to excel in anything related to *virtus*, for fear of being outshone in anyway.[144] The new political realities of the Principate forced senatorial authors like Tacitus to reconsider their conception of *virtus*. One of the most important elements of *virtus* was its relationship with military achievement and military prowess. Even under the strain of the Principate and the renegotiation of values, *virtus* never lost its connection to military affairs. That is to say, *virtus* was a military value under the Republic and was still a military value under the Empire, although *virtus* embodied other values beyond its military significance. This meant that navigating military achievement became all the more dangerous. Tacitus, of course, commends his father-in-law Agricola for finding the balance between behaving like the *maiores* and navigating the new, dangerous political environment of the Principate.

Although *virtus* continued to have a strong connection to the military, and more specifically, military courage, it is a highly politicized virtue that was at the same time conditioned by social context. By this I mean that *virtus* as an ideal, one that was inherently tied to being Roman, likely existed for the lower-class citizens of Rome in a different way than

[143] For *virtus* see Buchner (1967: 376-391), Eisenhut (1973: 14-22), Lind (1992: 25-40), and McDonnell (2006).
[144] Balmaceda (2017: 165).

it did for the aristocracy.[145] Studies on *virtus* tend to focus on its existence as an aristocratic value. The most recent monograph on the topic by Balmaceda confirms the continued focus on aristocratic courage.[146]

The most recent study on *virtus* in Tacitus by Balmaceda delineates the concept into *virilis-virtus* and *humana-virtus*. The former being the kind of martial bravery I intend to explore in this chapter; the latter being the kind of aristocratic *virtus* about which common soldiers had little knowledge or involvement. Balmaceda spends an entire chapter dedicated to Tacitus and exploring the implications of changing values (*humana-virtus*) under the Principate. By contrast, I would emphasize how the *virtus* and *fortitudo* of common soldiers represents a kind of non-elite *virilis-virtus*. The *virilis-virtus* outlined by Balmaceda is precisely the kind of military bravery that Tacitus depicts almost exclusively for common soldiers, not aristocratic generals. Tacitus then uses the bravery (*virtus*) of common soldiers to characterize certain leaders. From these characterizations, we realize that power which relied on the military, as it did in Rome, was stable insofar as leaders appropriately engaged and understood the military values of their soldiers; it was unstable and liable to collapse, when they did not.

The following analysis attempts to show that Tacitus represents soldierly courage within a symbiotic relationship that required a commander who was capable of successfully managing the courage of his soldiers. Additionally, I hope that the following readings, taken together,

[145] Hope (2018: 14) also questions whether or not the rank-and-file soldiers of the Empire were affected by traditional Roman values in the same way the aristocracy was.
[146] Balmaceda (2017) focuses on the role and changing features of *virtus* under the Empire, with a specific focus on how it related to the writing of history and to the historians themselves.

provide enough material to suggest that Tacitus used this symbiotic relationship to comment on the importance of understanding this relationship for senatorial military commanders who themselves were tasked with commanding the legions. One of Tacitus' ostensible objectives was showing senators that it was still possible to serve the state as successful military generals. I suggest that an element of successful military generalship involved interacting with the soldiers and getting the best out of them by cultivating their *virtus*.

Idealized Commander, Idealized Courage: The *Agricola*

In the *Agricola*, Tacitus attempts to represent a man whom he sees as emblematic of how a Roman ought to act under a bad *princeps*.[147] The nature of the *Agricola* is thus aristocratic at its core. It is for that reason that we might not instinctually look to the *Agricola* for its potential to elucidate the courage of common soldiers. Yet, it is precisely because the text aims to represent an exemplary military general that we ought to seek out what it can show us about the courage of common soldiers and the relationship between those soldiers and their general. One element of Tacitus' representation of Agricola are his qualities as a military general, particularly the ways he engages his soldiers and leads them effectively to victory in Britain. Given the purpose of the biography, ostensibly the memorialization of his father in law, Tacitus risks undermining the purpose of the text should he not include Agricola's relationship with the soldiers and how he successfully cultivates their courage. What we see in

[147] See Sailor (2008: 51-119) on the *Agricola* as a text about representation, particularly the problems of representing figures like Agricola in an age when such individuals may be perceived as a threat to the *princeps*.

the *Agricola* is that Tacitus' representation of an ideal military commander both produces and relies on the ideal courage of his soldiers.

In *Agricola* 25-27 Tacitus goes into detail on a specific occasion of noteworthy courage by the soldiers of the 9th legion at the orders of Agricola. Tacitus tells us about Agricola's scouts who reported back to the general that the Caledonians had formed into several columns and were about to attack. In response to this, Agricola split his own forces into three columns. The Caledonians saw this and decided to change their plans; they would attack by night. When the Caledonians burst in on the sleeping Romans, Agricola makes his move. He sends his cavalry and infantry to the flanks of the Caledonians, a move which traps them between the soldiers of the 9th (in the camp) and the cavalry and infantry sent in by Agricola. In *Agricola* 25, Tacitus provides these details regarding Agricola's decision making because they will have an impact on the following melee and the courage of his soldiers.

Tacitus then narrates the turning of events as follows (*Agricola* 26): *et propinqua luce fulsere signa, ita ancipiti malo territi Britanni; et nonanis rediit animus, ac securi pro salute de gloria certabant* ("Dawn was at hand, its gleam already on the Roman standards: the Britons were panic-stricken to find themselves between two fires, while the men of the Ninth Legion regained their courage, and, no longer alarmed for their safety, fought for distinction").[148] The soldiers of the ninth legion were caught off guard while they slept, but Agricola buys time and

[148] The 9th *legio Hispania* was part of the original invading army of Britain but was almost wiped out in 60 AD (Tacitus *Annales* 14.32.3). It was reinforced eventually, but by the time of Agricola's sixth campaign season in 83 AD the 9th was weakened again as has been explained by a reference to *CIL* 14.3612, which states that a vexillation from the 9th was sent to Germany for Domitian's war with the Chatti in 83 AD. See Ogilvie and Richmond (1967: 242) and Woodman (2014: 222) for further explanation of the legion's beginnings and ends.

turns the tide by flanking the Caledonians, a tactic he had good reason to use.[149] This maneuver allows the ninth to regain their courage, a process which Tacitus describes by making *animus* the subject of the sentence: courage returned to the ninth (*nonanis rediit animus*). This is a common way of expressing emotional or intellectual rejuvenation or return, as Tacitus does in the preface of the *Agricola* when he says that after the desolation of Domitianic Rome, life was being restored under Nerva (*Agricola* 3.1): *nunc demum redit animus*.[150] The soldiers in *Agricola* 26 do not have any agency when it comes to enflaming their *animus*; it happens because of Agricola's leadership. The soldiers do, however, have agency as grammatical subject by the end of the sentence when they are bravely fighting for distinction: *ac securi pro salute de gloria certabant*. Perhaps we should not assign too much meaning to the grammatical shift of subject, but it does nicely suggest a distinction worth considering. In Tacitus' formulation, the courage (*animus*) of the soldiers was something distinct from themselves as agents. Courage was something that could change on its own or be changed by effective leaders or generals like Agricola. Soldiers were, as *certabant* attests, also capable of their own subjectivity and actions.

The scene itself was framed by Tacitus as a military masterclass from Agricola. The way in which this exemplary general steers the *animus* of the 9th legion may not be exactly what we expect to see when we say that a general cultivated the courage in his troops, as Agricola does

[149] Woodman (2014: 223) on Agricola's receiving information from his scouts and making a learned decision to buy time for his troops: "Agricola is behaving exactly as a general should." For the importance of scouts in Roman warfare see Austin and Rankov (1995: 42-54).
[150] Woodman (2014: 82), "*redit animus* is a very common phrase, esp. in Ovid, but the exact meaning of *animus* will depend upon the context."

in his speech before the battle of Mons Graupius. However, Agricola's maneuvering and decision-making before the battle and mid-attack allow courage to return to the men of the 9th, which gives them the opportunity to showcase their *virtus*. Shortly following his point about the soldiers vying for glory, Tacitus gives even more detail on how the battle played out.[151]

This battle began with Agricola's military mind on full display, which in the heat of battle gave opportunity for courage to fill his soldiers, who used that chance to act bravely. Tacitus himself says that this display of generalship and courage could have been the end of the war in Britain, if the marshes and forests had not hidden the remaining Caledonians who fled the battle: *quod nisi paludes et silvae fugientes texissent, debellatum illa victoria foret* ("Had not the marshes and forests covered the fugitives that victory would have ended the war"). Tacitus admits that this representation of generalship and soldierly courage might well be summarized as flawless, if only the locals had not the upper hand in terms of geographical advantage.

As if in direct response to this idealized representation of generalship and soldierly courage, the soldiers themselves cried out that nothing could stop their courage (*Agricola* 27): *cuius conscientia ac fama ferox exercitus nihil virtuti suae invium et penetrandam Caledoniam inveniendumque tandem Britanniae terminum continuo proeliorum cursu fremebant* ("The sense of

[151] *Agricola* 26: *ultro quin etiam erupere, et fuit atrox in ipsis portarum angustiis proelium, donec pulsi hostes, utroque exercitu certante, his, ut tulisse opem, illis, ne eguisse auxilio viderentur* ("They even sallied from the camp, and there was hot fighting in its narrow gateway; until the enemy gave way before the efforts of the two Roman armies to prove, the one that they were rescuers, the other that they had not needed rescue"). On the soldiers' reversal of fortune see Woodman (2014: 224): "With the soldiers' break-out, the reversal is almost complete. *ultro erupere* is originally a Livian expression (23.18.6): here the adverb both underlines the Ninth's offensive action and implies that the situation is the reverse of what it has been." On the archaeological evidence of Roman camps in Britain that contain the narrow gates outlined by Tacitus see Ogilvie and Richmond (1967: 63) as well as Jones and McKeague (2009: 123-136) for figures and pictures of the camp. For more on the production of camps in Britain see St. Joseph (1970), Wilson (1974), Maxwell (1998), and Jones (2008).

achievement and the news of victory inspired the army. They began to cry that nothing could bar the way before its courage, that Caledonia must be penetrated, that the farthest shores of Britain must once for all be discovered in one continuous campaign"). In the excitement of their victory, the soldiers cry out that nothing could get in the way of their *virtus*. By using *virtus* here, instead of during the battle itself – where he chose to express bravery as *de gloria certabant* – Tacitus puts an exclamation point on the theme. The soldiers praise their own role in the situation. They praise their own *virtus*, a point highlighted by the reflexive pronoun: *virtutis suae*. The use of the reflexive here pushes the reader to think specifically about the role of the soldiers in this passage, and the role of their courage in the victory.

Put simply, Agricola steered his troops in such a way that their *animus* helped them overcome the fear of the nighttime ambush. The soldiers responded in kind by showcasing their bravery in the battle. At first Tacitus described this as soldiers competing with each other over glory: *de gloria certabant*. But later, when the battle has been won, and the Romans begin looking to the future, the soldiers exclaim that their *virtus* knows no bounds. If we allow for the possibility that Agricola, as the commanding general, was responsible for the victory and therefore received all the praise, then the soldiers' invocation of their *virtus* works under the surface as a praise of Agricola's generalship. Not only have the soldiers won *gloria* for themselves by having followed Agricola's lead, but they in turn give their metaphorical earnings back to the one who led them to victory. The soldiers' victory becomes Agricola's, making clear the symbiotic relationship between them.

Tacitus brings forth this theme of courage and bravery a final time in the *Agricola*, appropriately situated at the beginning of Agricola's exhortation to his troops before the battle of Mons Graupius. He starts his pre-battle exhortation with a call to the soldiers' *virtus* (*Agricola* 33): *septimus annus est, commilitones, ex quo virtute et auspiciis imperii Romani, fide atque opera nostra Britanniam vicistis. tot expeditionibus, tot proeliis, seu fortitudine adversus hostes seu patientia ac labore paene adversus ipsam rerum naturam opus fuit, neque me militum neque vos ducis paenituit* ("For six years, fellow-soldiers, under the auspices of the Roman empire, by your bravery and our dedication and hard work, you have conquered Britain. In all these campaigns and on these battlefields, whether courage was required against the enemy or patience and hard work against Nature herself, I have had nothing to regret in my soldiers, or you in your general"). Now, there are a few wrinkles in the syntax here that need to be ironed out, because they have consequences for our reading. First, there are no parallels in Latin for the phrase *virtus imperii Romani* or *auspicia imperii Romani*. Some editors insert a *vestra* before or after the *virtus* to iron out that side, but a problem still remains with the plural *auspiciis* because auspices can only be held by a single person. Woodman suggests that an emendation of *imperii* to *populi* makes the most sense, unless we assume that *ausipiis* is corrupt.[152]

The second issue here is with the next phrase in the sentence: *fide atque opera nostra Britanniam vicistis*. The problem here is less about the syntax and more about the meaning. Woodman questions whether the second person in *vicistis* essentially equates *nostra* with *mea*, from Agricola's perspective, which would stress the general's loyalty and hard work as opposed

[152] Woodman (2014: 258-59).

to the soldiers' – perhaps a bit on the nose from Agricola. A potential solution is to emend *nostra* to *vestra*, closely mirroring the addition of *vestra* to the phrase before. I think in this instance, because Agricola has used the phrase *commilitones* to address these troops, we might err on the side of assuming Agricola attempted to be inclusive, whether he used *vestra* with *virtus* before this or not. Likewise, the printed *nostra* equally shines light on Agricola's attempts to create a connection to his *commilitones*. Instead of emending the text in this instance, I believe there is an argument to be made that what Agricola does here is both shine light on his soldiers' *virtus* – something that would be dangerous for Agricola to boast about himself – and their hard work (*labor*) as things for which he played a significant role as a general. The *nostra* is thus primarily aimed at the soldiers, which is why some suggest emending it to *vestra*, but it is ultimately Agricola's role in the *virtus* and the *labor* that Tacitus stresses.[153]

Agricola starts this exhortation with an aggressive push to steer his soldiers' *animus*. He does this by creating a connection with his soldiers, hence the use of *commilitones* as well as the reference to how many years they have served together in Britain (*septimus annus est*), and explicitly praising them for their *virtus*, *fides*, and *labor*. These are the values of the soldiers, and Agricola knows it. By invoking these values, Agricola plays his role, that of the effective general. He inflames the soldiers' *animus* by specifically pointing out their *virtus*. *Virtus*, as discussed above, is one of Tacitus' favorite ways of describing the military bravery of soldiers. He also uses *fortis* and rarely *fortitudo*, which coincidentally, he uses in the next sentence – one of the rare occasions in which Tacitus uses the abstract noun: *tot expeditionibus, tot proeliis, seu*

[153] Woodman (2014) prints *nostra* and most translations follow suit, except Puteolanus (14th century).

fortitudine adversus hostes seu patientia ac labore paene adversus ipsam rerum naturam opus fuit, neque me militum neque vos ducis paenituit ("In all these campaigns and on these battlefields, whether courage was required against the enemy, or endurance against Nature itself, I have had nothing to regret in my soldiers, or you in your general"). Agricola then ends this first section of his exhortation by clearing any confusion about the earlier syntactical mess. He states clearly that the soldiers have played their role through their courage, endurance, and hard work, and he has played his role in leading them. Tacitus represents Agricola as fostering bravery in his soldiers by managing their courage. Those soldiers would go on to be victorious at Mons Graupius; this is the ideal symbiotic relationship between general and soldier.[154]

Sailor has argued that one aspect of the *Agricola* is about the problems of representing senatorial men receiving appropriate recognition for feats deemed potentially problematic under a bad *princeps*.[155] The representation of true things, like appropriate military achievement, presented real challenges to historians like Tacitus when living under a tyrannical *princeps* who could not be made equal to someone like Agricola without fear of repercussions. Tacitus' representation of courage relies just as much on Agricola as an effective commander of courage as it does on the soldiers' ability to act bravely when the time truly comes. In depicting courage as the product of symbiotic exchange between general and soldier, Tacitus represents not only the feats of an elite man, but the role of bravery in the lives of soldiers. Representing

[154] Woodman (2014: 260), "For the close intertwining of leader and soldiers cf. Liv. 6.12.11, 8.30.5." See also Keitel (1987: 74).
[155] Sailor (2012: 39) and (2008: 53-4).

Agricola's relationship with his soldiers in this way allows Tacitus to illuminate the military virtues of Agricola during his governorship.

Tacitus holds up Agricola as the ideal example of a military general under the Principate. Agricola ran successful campaigns in Britain. He used his martial prowess to evoke courage in his soldiers, ultimately leading the Romans to significant victories in Britain. Yet, upon his return to Rome he was forced to request excusal from the proconsulship of Asia or Africa – Domitian, of course, being the one to demand the excuse and the one to grant it.[156] Tacitus says that Domitian was softened by the moderation and prudence of Agricola, who never challenged the fame of Domitian or provoked his own fate. While Agricola did reach the consulship, have command over several legions, and received the *ornamenta triumphalia*, Tacitus' depiction of Agricola's return to Rome and quiet retirement suggests a military and political career less fulfilled as he might well have had during an earlier Roman time (one not so hostile to virtues). Tacitus says, however, that Agricola's obedience and submission when joined with activity and vigor allowed him to reach a glory that an ostentatious death could not. Perhaps most importantly, it was a glory that still benefited the state. The benefaction of the state was, after all, a consistently crucial purpose of courageous military action for soldiers and for generals.[157] Agricola, then, took the only available path to *virtus*. That path required him to understand how moderation and prudence might save his life.[158] That path also

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[156] Tacitus *Agricola* 42.4.

[157] For the definition of *virtus* containing an element of benefitting the state or community see Riggsby (2006: 90), Roller (1996: 320-322), Hellegouarc'h (1972: 243), Dahlmann (1970: 17-19), Early (1967: 23), and Buchner (1962: 5).

[158] Tacitus *Agricola* 42.5: *sciant, quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta enisi, sed in nullum rei*

required him to understand how to lead soldiers appropriately, a skill which derived from Agricola's military experience, knowledge of the soldiers, and his ability to evoke and direct his soldiers' courage. The soldiers' courage thus plays a modest, but noteworthy, role in how Agricola was seen as, according to Tacitus, a great man (*magnus vir*) and how he acquired praise under a tyrannical *princeps*.

It was of the utmost importance that Agricola understood how to lead Roman soldiers to courageous action without garnering too much attention from Domitian. Not challenging the fame or testing your fate against a tyrannical *princeps* was a new way of life for those elite individuals of the Empire who wanted to serve the state through their virtues. Nevertheless, Agricola had to find success in Britain. He had to rely on his soldiers for victory. For Roman success in Britain – a historically difficult place for Roman expansion – Agricola needed to understand his relationship with the soldiers. Agricola understood his role as the one to direct, incite, and maintain the courage of his soldiers. With the appropriate leadership from Agricola, the symbiotic relationship between Agricola and his soldiers became a successful one.

Values Under Fire: Civil War, Soldiers, and Courage in the *Histories*

In the *Agricola*, Tacitus used the courage of common soldiers in his representation of Agricola's successful military conquest of Britain. Tacitus made his father-in-law a kind of paradigm for effective generalship – the cultivation of the soldiers' courage being one area in

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publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt ("Those whose habit is to admire what is forbidden ought to know that there can be great men even under bad emperors, and that duty and discretion, if coupled with energy and a career of action, will bring a man to no less glorious summits than are attained by perilous paths and ostentatious deaths that do not benefit the state").

which he was most effective. In the *Histories*, however, Tacitus shows us exactly how that relationship between general and soldier can break down. Sometimes the general effectively incites his soldiers' courage, but the soldiers lack experience or simply do not play their role in acting courageously. On the other hand, the *Histories* is full of absent leaders and ineffective generals whose soldiers *could* have shown their courage, if only they had generals who could have guided and cultivated their courage on the battlefield.

In this section on the *Histories*, I put forward the suggestion that part of Tacitus' purpose in writing the *Histories* was to explore the stability of military leadership under the Principate, particularly during civil war. Civil war problematized even the most positive Roman virtues, and courage in battle became an attack on members of one's own community. In this context, Tacitus represents courage as a result of a symbiotic relationship between generals and soldiers, but that relationship might be functional or ineffective depending on the attributes of individual generals. Certain generals properly understood this relationship and brought about Roman military successes; others could not effectively command their soldiers, and the symbiotic relationship broke down. In the *Histories*, the courage of soldiers becomes one way in which Tacitus highlights the instability of leadership during AD 69.

We must skip over Galba's short reign to find the first examples of a *princeps* trying to steer his soldiers' courage. Otho uses the soldiers' *virtus* as a talking point in his exhortation in the early months of AD 69, when attempting to take control of Rome from Galba. Otho's successful bid for the Principate was due in large part to his reputation among the soldiers stationed in the praetorian camp just outside Rome. Soldiers of the praetorian cohorts play an

integral role in the early narrative of 69. Even though they are not strictly low-ranking soldiers, overlooking Otho's speeches could mean ignoring some potentially fruitful remarks from Tacitus on the courage of soldiers in the *Histories*.[159] Additionally, Tacitus often does not make a distinction between common soldiers and praetorians in his prose, leaving it up to the reader to make the distinction based on context.[160]

As the coup against Galba materializes, Otho gives a speech to his troops to ease their anxiety and create some stability among the men (*Histories* 1.38.1): *idem senatus, idem populi Romani animus est: vestra virtus expectatur, apud quos omne honestis consiliis robur et sine quibus quamvis egregia invalida sunt* ("Likewise the Senate and the Roman people are of the same mind: your courage is expected, for you alone can make good policies effective, and without you the best endeavors are paralyzed"). Otho's purpose is to calm the soldiers' *animus* and get them motivated to fight, like Agricola's purpose in his pre-battle exhortation before the battle of Mons Graupius. Tacitus has each refer the soldiers' *virtus*. Not only does Tacitus have each man mention the soldiers' *virtus*, but they are both in direct speech to soldiers. Each also seems to draw particular attention to the soldiers, here by the inclusion of *vestra*.[161] While these similarities are not extensive, they do speak to the model of generalship embodied by Agricola, particularly his methods of engaging the soldiers' courage.

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[159] See Keitel (1987: 73-82) on the historiographical importance of Otho's speeches in the *Histories*.
[160] Both Damon (2003) and Ash (2007) discuss the ambiguity of praetorian soldiers and common soldiers in their commentaries on the first two books of the *Histories*. Syme (1958: 153) first weighed in on the issue of whether Otho was addressing praetorians in his speeches, arguing that three of the four were certainly addressed to the elite corps (*Histories* 1.29, 1.37, 1.83). Even after the following speech in *Histories* 1.83, Tacitus makes a point to say that no distinction was made between the legionaries and the praetorians.
[161] Perhaps *Histories* 1.83 and Tacitus' use of *vestra virtus* here might be comparandum for the emendation at *Agricola* 33, where the surviving manuscript does not include *vestra*, but surely should.

Otho at least tries to get things right by properly stirring his soldiers' *animus*. In that sense, he seems to recognize the role he plays in commanding these soldiers to victory. On the other hand, this kind of rhetoric coming from Otho seems largely out of place. This led Syme to conclude that the speech is pure Tacitus: "Taken in isolation, or taken literally, the oration seems to disclose a new and exemplary Otho – not the corrupt and ambitious wastrel, but a ruler sagacious in discourse on the duties of the military, noble and eloquent when he invokes the majesty of Rome, the destiny of the Empire, the prestige of the Senate." In Otho's moment of glory, Tacitus depicts him acting the competent general in his speech. Tacitus later contrasts this image with the image of the absent leader. Otho never makes it to the battle of Cremona, where Otho's men lost to the Vitellians. The speech, then, works rhetorically to characterize Otho as a kind of anti-Agricola – to use our ideal general – by the time his men are faced with their final battle.

Even shortly after the end of Otho's exhortation in *Histories* 1.38 we see the consequences of Tacitus' characterization. What Tacitus describes is little short of a disaster (*Histories* 1.38): *rapta statim arma, sine more et ordine militiae, ut praetorianus aut legionarius insignibus suis distingueretur: miscentur auxiliaribus galeis scutisque, nullo tribunorum centurionumve adhortante, sibi quisque dux et instigator; et praecipuum pessimorum incitamentum quod boni maerebant* ("Weapons were hastily grabbed. With no regard for tradition and discipline the troops disregarded the distinctions of equipment between praetorians and legionaries, and seized helmets and shields meant for auxiliaries. All was confusion. No encouragement came from tribunes or centurions. Each man followed his own lead and prompting, and the chief

stimulus for the worst elements was the sorrow of the good"). As Sailor has noted about the scene, Otho succeeds in destroying Roman boundaries, an important step toward the civil war that will plague Rome for the coming year.[162] Otho's attempt to incite the *animus* of his soldiers has succeeded, in a way. He has them so riled up that each is their own leader: *sibi quisque dux et instigator*. His own rhetoric has subverted the speech's purpose, creating a kind of internal, rhetorical chaos that mirrors the chaos of the soldiers and the civil war to come. The soldiers no longer rely on another person for their courage, as each is their own leader: *sibi quisque dux*.

While Sailor uses the terminology of boundaries, we might also consider this scene as embodying the erasure of a hierarchy, namely the one between a general and a soldier. Tacitus uses an ablative absolute to say that there is nobody commanding the soldiers: *nullo tribunorum centurionumve adhortante*. Without the presence of the leader or the general encouraging the soldiers, as Agricola did, the hierarchy between leader and soldiers breaks down. Soldiers are left to their own devices. Otho is not specifically mentioned as being absent, but his absence weighs heavily. For, without clear direction and leadership from the top down, the soldiers descend into individualism. This might have led individual soldiers to success in the battle for which they might have received due rewards (explored in the following chapter). However, soldiers' courage and individual action must happen at the direction of and within the proper relationship to a military leader. Otho's absence and lack of controlled leadership has erased the symbiotic partnership between general and soldier that was integral to the cultivation of courage, and thus to Roman military success.

[162] Sailor (2008: 195-6).

This reading relies on Tacitus representing the courage of soldiers as a symbiotic partnership between the general and the soldier. It is a partnership in which the general is responsible for guiding the soldiers' courage (*animus*) and the soldiers are responsible for acting bravely in the moment. For Tacitus to use this partnership here in his characterization of Otho and the destruction of Roman values, as well as in the biography of his father-in-law, speaks to its importance as a rhetorical tool for the historian. Recognizing the role that the courage of soldiers plays within these key moments in the Tacitean corpus opens up avenues for seeing more clearly how Tacitus writes about the military values of common soldiers and how that participates in Tacitus' representation of military leadership during the Principate.

Tacitus continues to use the courage of common soldiers as a rhetorical tool in his representation and characterization of Otho's leadership in the *Histories*. The example above showed Otho's rhetoric as a destructive force against Roman boundaries and relationships, even though Tacitus subtly hints that Otho attempted to paint himself as a kind of Agricola by calling on the soldiers' *animus* and saying what a leader ought to say. His efforts ultimately led to the overthrow of Galba. Just a few months later, Otho was facing the Vitellian movement and his soldiers were restless and in need of calming after a nighttime mutiny broke out in the city; he, again, flatters their *animus* and *virtus* to calm his soldiers (*Histories* 1.83): *neque ut adfectus vestros in amorem mei accenderem, commilitones, neque ut animum ad virtutem cohortarer (utraque enim egregie supersunt), sed veni postulaturus a vobis temperamentum vestrae fortitudinis et erga me modum caritatis* ("My fellow soldiers, I have not come to fire your hearts with affection for me or to spur your hearts to bravery. For, in commendable fashion, you already have more

than enough of both these qualities. Instead, I have come to ask you to keep your bravery under control and to restrain your friendly feelings for me"). Otho's speech has all the markings of a proper exhortation. He addresses the troops as if he is one of them (*commilitones*); he references their *animus* and their *virtus*; he praises them for already having these in abundance; he even praises their bravery by using the abstract noun *fortitudo*. The usage of *foritudo* has the potential to mark this passage as significant. Tacitus rarely uses *fortitudo*, only six times in his corpus, two of them are in reference to forced suicides, two of them in reference to foreigners, and the other two are here in Otho's speech and in Agricola's exhortation before Mons Graupius discussed above.

Otho seems to recognize the importance of a leader who steers his soldiers' *animus* and he attempts to play the role of the effective leader throughout his second speech. In *Histories* 1.84, Otho continues to play the leader by making explicit reference to how generals steer their soldiers' courage (*Histories* 1.84.7-11): *parendo potius, commilitones, quam imperia ducum sciscitando res militares continentur, et fortissimus in ipso discrimine exercitus est qui ante discrimen quietissimus. Vobis arma et animus sit: mihi consilium et virtutis vestrae regimen relinquite* ("Successful fighting, fellow-soldiers, depends on obedience, not on questioning the general's orders, and the bravest army in the hour of danger is the one that is best behaved before that hour strikes. Arms and courage should be your business; leave to me the job of planning policy and guiding your bravery"). Here we do not see Otho use the rare abstract noun *fortitudo* but the adjectival form in the superlative (*fortissimus*), which creates continuity with the beginning of his speech. Otho's point here is to calm the soldiers' nerves about the recent mutiny, and he does this by

reaffirming their expectations about how things operate: the general orders things and the soldiers do them. He makes this point clear by speaking about something which the soldiers expect and understand, namely that the general steers the soldiers' courage.

Particularly important in this second speech is Otho's suggestion that *animus* rests in the hands of the soldiers: *vobis arma et animus sit*. Whereas he suggests it is his responsibility alone to manage the situation and their *virtus*: *mihi consilum et virtutis vestrae regimen relinquite*. For as much of a role as the soldiers have in the symbiotic partnership that results in Roman military success, Otho still orders the soldiers to leave the steering of their *virtus* to him: *mihi consilium et virtutis vestrae regimen relinquite*.[163] This fits nicely with Riggsby's discussion of *virtus* in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* as well as the way that Agricola engaged the *virtus* of his soldiers. Yet, Otho's absence from the battlefield itself speaks volumes to the character and quality of his military leadership. He was saying the correct things, but in practiced failed to follow the *exemplum* of a successful general.

Otho's second speech works as an example of how Tacitus uses the courage of soldiers as a rhetorical tool. Not only does it begin to create a connection with the kind of leadership embodied by Agricola, but it also works within the *Histories* to characterize Otho as an *exemplum* of an absent leader. Here he is in Rome, saying all the right things (or at least how Agricola would say them), but his later absence at the battle of Cremona, and the Othonian loss to Vitellius pulls the curtain away from Otho's rhetoric and exposes the kind of instability in an individual with which Tacitus seems concerned. This kind of instability is what led to the

[163] Caesar spoke of a similar division of labor at the mutiny of Vesontio (*BG* 1.40.1).

chaos of 69. Tacitus uses the courage of common soldiers in relationship to their military leaders to make that point clear.

The first battle of Bedriacum demonstrates how this system of courage plays out on the battlefield and shows the consequences of Otho's rhetoric. At *Histories* 2.41, Otho and Vitellius have engaged each other in name only; neither is present at the outskirts of Cremona. This specific moment captures some of the ways in which the system of courage can crumble from its expected mode of operation (i.e. what we saw in the *Agricola*). It also speaks to the ways in which the system of courage relied not only on the *princeps*, but the commanders under the *princeps* who act in their stead.

Fabius Valens, one of Vitellius' generals, had ordered the signal for battle and the signal indicating the troops were under arms (*Histories* 2.41.8-11): *dum legiones de ordine agminis sortiuntur, equites prorupere; et mirum dictu, a paucioribus Othonianis quo minus in vallum inpingerentur, Italicae legionis virtute deterriti sunt* ("While the legions were drawing lots to determine the order of march, the cavalry charged out of the camp. Remarkably, they would have been forced back against the rampart by a smaller number of Othonians, but this was prevented by the bravery of the Italian Legion"). The process of determining marching order was left to the legionaries themselves, but this is not necessarily an indication of Valens abandoning the soldiers.[164] It does, however, tell us something about the soldiers' discipline and willingness to participate in the battle. Just as the cavalry willingly rush into the field with

[164] The casting of lots for order in the line, *de ordine agminis sortiuntur*, was a common technique for arranging the battle line. See Vegetius 2.15, 3.14 and Goldsworthy (1996: 133-141).

a direct order from their commander, the legionaries operate as expected with the direct intervention of their commander.[165] Although the Vitellian troops are greater in number, they relied on the *virtus* of the Italian legion to keep themselves in order.

Tacitus points out how the Italian legion did this (*Histories* 2.41.11-15): *ea strictis mucronibus redire pulsos et pugnam resumere coegit. disposita Vitellianarum legionum acies sine trepidatione: etenim quamquam vicino hoste aspectus armorum densis arbustis prohibebatur* ("[the Italian legion] whose men drew their swords and forced the retreating cavalry to return and resume the fight. The battle line of the Vitellian legions was arranged without any fuss, for although the enemy was near, it was impossible to see any sign of an armed force because of the thick plantations"). The cavalry would have been beaten back by an inferior Othonian force, if the Italian legion had not forced them, at sword point, to wheel around and return to battle. Ash suggests that this underscores the lack of leadership on both sides of the battle, because the Italian legion has effectively performed the duty of the general: "The *prima Italica* performs a duty often associated with the ideal general (cf. Antonius Primus: *retinere cedentes*, 3.17.1)." The legionaries effectively steer the *animus* of the cavalry, replacing their absent leader, Valens. Likewise, the soldiers do not appear to need a general to steer their *animus* away from fear, for the soldiers, of their own accord, arrange themselves in a battle line in the middle of the battle, specifically without fear: *sine trepidatione*. If the general's role is to ease the soldiers' fear and anxiety, as Otho attempted to do back in Rome, then the Vitellian general

[165] Ash (2007: 188), "In Plutarch Caecina and Valens trigger this maneuver (Plutarch *Otho* 11.5), but in Tacitus is ambiguous about whether it was spontaneous or in response to orders. Shock cavalry charges are regular (and often decisive) in Livian battle narratives (Oakley (1997) 620)."

has abandoned his responsibilities entirely. This does not stop the soldiers from playing their part.

Tacitus contrasts the self-starting legionaries of Vitellius with the chaos of Otho's troops throughout the remainder of the scene (Histories 2.41.15-21):

> *apud Othonianos pavidi duces, miles ducibus infensus, mixta vehicula et lixae, et praeruptis utrimque fossis via quieto quoque agmini angusta. Circumsistere alii signa sua, quaerere alii; incertus undique clamor adcurrentium, vocantium: ut cuique audacia vel formido, in primam postremamve aciem prorumpebant aut relabebantur*
>
> However, among the Othonians, there were nervous generals, common soldiers hostile to their superiors, a confusion of vehicles and camp-followers, and a road with steep ditches on either side, which would have been narrow even for a column advancing calmly. Some Othonians were massed round their respective standards, others were looking for them. Everywhere there was the confused noise of men running about and calling. Depending on each man's audacity or fearfulness, individuals would surge forward or drift back, making for front or rear.

The Othonian generals are here represented as fearful (*pavidi*) which ultimately leads to poor performance from the soldiers, who themselves become hostile to their commanders: *miles ducibus infensus*. The *virtus* of the Italian legion is contrasted with the hostility of the Othonians toward their own generals. The Vitellian soldiers were able to cast lots, display their *virtus*, and act courageously in the moment by repelling the Othonian troops. The Othonian troops, on the other hand, were fixed in panic; some gather around their standards, but others cannot even find them. Instead of displaying courage in this moment of chaos as the Vitellians did, the Othonians stand in uncertainty: *incertus undique clamor adcurrentium vocantium*. The final image of the scene is one of continued confusion because there is no general to steer the *virtus* of the

soldiers. They do attempt to form a line, but they are left to their own devices and their natural instincts reign supreme: *ut cuique audacia vel formido*. In this moment we might also think about how Otho's soldiers reacted to his second speech back in Rome, where each man was left to his own leadership (*Histories* 1.83): *sibi quisque dux et instigator*. In each case, the commander's job of steering the soldiers' courage has been abandoned, and the soldiers are left to deal with their natural instincts.

The Italian legion in *Histories* 2.41 acted with a kind of self-imposed *virtus* to rally their cavalry into continuing the fight. Even without a leader, these Vitellian legionaries can display their *virtus*. Tacitus characterizes the Vitellians as successful self-starters before they ultimately make it to Rome, where their military virtues and values will suffer the consequences of bad leadership (explored later). Tacitus contrasts the Vitellians with the Othonians who, without a leader, waver between *audacia* and *formido*, with their general nowhere to be found, so their *virtus* remains unguided. It may be no coincidence that Otho would lose the battle of Bedriacum, lose control of Rome, and eventually must take his own life. It may also be part of Tacitus' characterization of Vitellius to show these self-starting troops on Vitellius' march to Rome, only to show just how far these soldiers fall once they reach Rome and become corrupted by the influence of the city. The scene in *Histories* 2.41 highlights Otho's absence and his troops' inability to find their *virtus* without a leader in as much as it sets up the characterization of Vitellius' troops as losing their *virtus* when they leave the city of Rome and return to Bedriacum to fight the Flavians.

It does not take Tacitus long to begin working on Vitellius' characterization as a destructive force for his soldiers' *virtus*.[166] This is most clear when Tacitus begins narrating Vitellius' reign as *princeps* which begins shortly after the battle of Bedriacum discussed above. Vitellius was already growing accustomed to the luxury of being *princeps*. Tacitus tells us how Vitellius' lifestyle was affecting those around him including his soldiers (*Histories* 2.62.7-9): *degenerabat a labore ac virtute miles adsuetudine voluptatum et contemptu ducis* ("The soldiers deteriorated from hard work and courage through their association with delights and their scorn for Vitellius"). The improper conduct of Vitellius as a leader deteriorates his soldiers' military virtues, both their *labor* and their *virtus*. The soldiers become accustomed to delights, shunning hard work, and grow serious contempt for their commander.[167] Vitellius' negative influence on the soldiers' discipline and his negative influence on their ability to cultivate their *virtus* becomes a constant theme for Tacitus' characterization of Vitellius.[168] In this way, Tacitus has used the soldiers' military virtue of courage to explore Vitellius' shortcomings as a general.

Another example of this appears at *Histories* 2.93, where Tacitus says that the corrupting influence of Rome has affected the Vitellian soldiers' *animus* (*Histories* 2.93): *sed miles, plenis castris et redundante multitudine, in porticibus aut delubris et urbe tota vagus,*

[166] Ash (2007) discusses the characterization of Vitellius and his troops. In particular, Ash is concerned with the ways that the individual characteristics of a general (or *princeps*) affects the characterization of the troops. Ash frequently focuses on the moral characteristics of the troops stemming from their leader, particularly the Vitellians and the Flavians who seem set on outdoing each other in mindless destruction.
[167] Ash (2007: 248), "A good general occasionally lets his soldiers celebrated briefly, sometimes as a reward after battle, but for the Vitellian troops, this extravaganza of self-indulgence becomes a (fatally) permanent Saturnalia as they learn dangerous new behavior patterns. Tacitus pointedly calls Vitellius a *dux* just when his actions fail to match the proper conduct of a general."
[168] Ash (1999: 95-126).

non principia noscere, non servare vigilias neque labore firmari: per inlecebras urbis et inhonesta dictu corpus otio, animum libidinibus imminuebant ("As for the soldiers, the barracks were packed, so an overflowing crowd of men camped in colonnades or temples and roamed around the whole city. There was no question of parades, proper sentry duty or a training program. Amid the lures of the capital and pursuits too shocking to be described, they weakened their physical strength by inactivity and their courage by debauchery"). Tacitus comments, again, on the same issues with Vitellius' forces as he describes their departure from the city of Rome (*Histories* 2.99.4-6): *longe alia proficiscentis ex urbe Germanici exercitus species: non vigor corporibus, non ardor animis; lentum et rarum agmen, fluxa arma, segnes equi* ("As the army from Germany left the city it presented a very different appearance from that which it had displayed on entering Rome: the soldiers had no vigor, no morale; they marched in a slow and ragged column, dragging their weapons, while their horses were without spirit"). It is clear in both examples that Tacitus attempts to play on the *corpus/animus* dichotomy.[169] The result of their interaction with the city of Rome has undone them as effective Roman soldiers. Their bodies and mind are no longer up to the task, and their general, Vitellius, is responsible.[170]

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[169] On this topic in Tacitus see Ash (2007: 359-60, 374).

[170] Vitellius' failures as a commander have deteriorated the soldiers so far that they can not even hold up their weapons. The *arma* were an important symbol for soldiers as it features prominently in the tombstone carvings of many soldiers; see Feugere (2002). Likewise, it was during Otho's two speeches in book one of the *Histories* where a strong intratextual connection might be made with the present scene. After Otho's first speech, the firs thing the soldiers did was grab their *arma* (*Histories* 1.38). In his second speech, he specifically says that *arma* ought to be the soldiers' not the general's (*Histories* 1.84).

Tacitus characterizes Vitellius as a destructive force for his soldiers. This characterization began in earnest at the battle of Bedriacum, where neither Vitellius nor his subordinate general, Fabius Valens, were present to steer the courage of the troops. However, their absence did not prevent the soldiers from showing their ability to stay disciplined and show their *virtus*. Their absence does more for the soldiers than their presence, which clearly sparks an aggressive deterioration of military values in the soldiers, as the scenes inside and outside of Rome attest (*Histories* 2.93 and 2.99). This relationship looks nothing like the symbiotic partnership we saw between Agricola and his soldiers. It is an example of what can happen when you have an individual in charge like Vitellius, whose personal qualities showcase just how unstable power could be under the Principate: Vitellius' reign is short lived. Just as with his characterization of Otho, Tacitus uses the normative Roman military virtue of courage, one that relied on leader and soldier to play their roles, to show the instability of Otho and Vitellius as leaders, and more broadly to show the implications of civil war on the most basic and integral military values of Rome's past.

It was not just that Otho and Vitellius had a destructive influence on the troops' morality, a point on which Ash focuses, but that they misunderstood *how* to be the kind of guiding presence that we saw in Agricola's model of leadership.[171] Otho himself said he would be there to guide their leadership; he even ordered his soldiers to leave the guidance of their *virtus* to him. Saying and doing are different. When it came

[171] Ash (2007) and (1999: 117).

down to the battle, Otho was not there; his subordinate generals did not do better. Vitellius certainly did not embody the kind of guiding leadership found in the *Agricola*.

One of Tacitus' major themes in the *Histories* was exploring the potential consequences of a political system in which all power resided in the hands of an individual. On a more appropriate scale for this project, we might apply that theme to the role of military leadership under the Principate, either by the *princeps* himself or by his subordinates, going all the way down the military chain of command. In other words, real problems occur in systems that rely on individuals when those individuals either do not understand how to operate in that system or do not possess the qualities needed to operate in it. Looking at the *Histories* in this way, using Agricola as our model of leadership, exposes real inconsistencies in the system; the results bear fruit in the form of a most contentious year (AD 69). One of the ways those inconsistencies come to light is through looking at how leaders and soldiers operate together in a symbiotic relationship to achieve military success. Without the general steering the *virtus* of the soldiers, and without the soldiers handling their courage, Roman victory remains out of reach. The courage of soldiers impacted how Tacitus represented the ones leading those soldiers. This, in turn, had a much more significant role in how Tacitus represented military leadership and its inconsistencies throughout the *Histories*.

Empire, Generals, and Soldiers: Courage in the *Annales*

The extant portions of the *Annales* cover a much larger range of history than the extant portions of the *Histories* and they also focus more generally on larger political and imperial machinations. This is contrasted with the very detailed account of the year AD 69 in the *Histories*, a text which packs more detail for the time period covered than any other text in Tacitus' corpus. Therefore, it may not be surprising that the *Annales* does not provide as much material to assess when it comes to the courage of soldiers and its cultivation by soldiers and generals. At times, Tacitus' purpose in his historical account of military movements, character, and battles often differs significantly from that of either the *Histories* or the *Agricola*. In the *Histories*, and to an extent in the *Agricola*, Tacitus focused heavily on soldiers and specific actions or interactions between them and their general, often going into detail. In the *Annales*, on the other hand, Tacitus' style and syntax is often short and punchy when describing the actions of soldiers, and it usually works to create narrative tension, highlight a specific general, or dramatize a rebellion. With the aim of the *Annales* more focused on the political back in Rome, there is less material to work with in exploring how the relationship between generals and soldiers cultivated courage and to what extent that relationship bore significant on Tacitus' purpose in writing the *Annales*. With that being stated, Tacitus depicts two military generals who operate within and understand how to cultivate their soldiers' courage effectively: Germanicus and Corbulo.

Germanicus dominates a large portion of narrative in the first two books of the *Annales*, part of which are his campaigns in Germany. In *Annales* 1.49, one of the generals under Germanicus, Caecina, enacted a plan to remove dissidents from the camp by slaughtering them in their sleep. We will return to this scene later. Germanicus arrives after the massacre, cremates the dead, and directs the soldiers' attention toward the Germans across the Rhine. During their first encounter across the Rhine, the enemy Germans wait until the Romans have crossed and extended their line into the forest, where the Germans know their attack will be more successful. This move puts some of Germanicus' legions in danger, but he is quick to inspire courage in the soldiers (*Annales* 1.51.15-20): *turbabanturque densis Germanorum catervis leves cohortes, cum Caesar, advectus ad vicesimanos, voce magna hoc illud tempus obliterandae seditionis clamitabat: pergerent, properarent culpam in decus vertere. exarsere animis unoque impetu perruptum hostem redigunt in aperta caeduntque* ("The light-armed cohorts were falling into disorder before the serried German masses, when the Caesar rode up to the men of the twenty-first, and, raising his voice, kept crying that now was their time to efface the stain of mutiny: "Forward, and make speed to turn disgrace into glory!" They were set ablaze with courage, they broke through their enemies at one charge, drove them into the open and cut them down"). We can see in the first word of the sentence that the

soldiers' discipline was subverted by disorder: *turbabantur*. This sets the stage for Germanicus to inspire the soldiers of the 20th *legio Valeria Victrix*.[172]

Germanicus rushes to the soldiers of the 21st and implores them to march forward and be quick about turning their past shame into glory: *culpam in decus vertere*. Germanicus is referring to the mutinies of the legions in Germany after the death of Augustus and the shaky transition of power to Tiberius. Germanicus' exhortation succeeds. The soldiers are set ablaze with courage: *exarsere animis*.[173] The disorder of the line and the failing of the soldiers' courage has been corrected by the leadership of Germanicus. Once courage has been restored, the soldiers successfully break through the enemy line, drive them into the open (i.e. out of the forests, which got them into trouble in the first place), and cut them down: *unoque impetu perruptum hostem redigunt in aperta caeduntque*. Germanicus' ability as a general, perhaps what ultimately lead to his untimely death, is what Tacitus highlights here. The soldiers lose their marching order as they cross the Rhine, clearly indicating a loss of discipline, which does not bode well for the soldiers' courage. Germanicus, however, as an ideal general, inflames the soldiers to reconnect with their *animus* – and thus their courage. He does this by demanding that they consider turning their past disgrace into glory. This is a successful

[172] The 20th was probably founded by Augustus after Actium in 31 BC. It was among the legions in Claudius' invasion of Britain in 43 AD. It sided with Vitellius in 69 AD, played a part in Agricola's campaigns in norther Britain, and supposedly played a role in the construction of Hadrian's wall.

[173] Goodyear (1972: 321) on the metaphor of fire: "Tacitus may be influenced by Verg. *Aen.* 2.575 *exarsere ignes animo*, but *pace* Koestermann, there is no good reason to suppose that this metaphorical use of *exardesco*, common in Tacitus, as elsewhere, is derived from the language of poetry. If anything, this metaphor should be regarded as Ciceronian: certainly, in most of its applications, it seems first to be attested in Cicero's writings."

demand, because Germanicus knows soldiers desire glory, and he knows that the path to glory lies in courageous action. Once Germanicus has inspired and directed them, the soldiers' *animus* kicks in; they act aggressively and decisively by driving back and cutting down the enemy: *redigunt … caedunt*.

The soldiers' appeared to lose their *animus* standing in front of the Germans: *turbabantur*. This started a chain reaction. What happened highlights a number of the elements that encapsulate Tacitus' representation of soldierly courage and how effective leadership plays a role, namely how the relationship ought to be symbiotic. When soldiers lose their morale or their discipline wanes in the heat of a particularly fearsome moment, the general should be there to steer them to courage, as Agricola did in Britain and as Otho claimed he would in the *Histories*. Germanicus does precisely this. His ability to get the best performance out of his troops and be victorious are proof of the effectiveness of the relationship between general and soldier and the important role that courage plays within it. The courage and steering of *virtus* comes from Germanicus' exhortation: *voce magna hoc illud tempus obliterandae seditionis clamitabat*. Yet, the soldiers themselves are also responsible for reacting to Germanicus' words and exhortation. They are, after all, the ones on the front line. This shows how the relationship was, as I describe it, symbiotic. The soldiers need the general's leadership and experience in managing courage; the general also needs the soldiers' experience in obedience and taking orders. Both parties ultimately benefit from the relationship.

Germanicus himself gets involved in the fighting at *Annales* 2.20, where the Roman was set to face off against Arminius and the Germans: *conlato Illic gradu certatum: hostem a tergo palus, Romanos flumen aut montes claudebant; utrisque necessitas in loco, spes in virtute, salus ex victoria* ("There the conflict raged in close quarters. The enemy was hemmed in by the morass in his rear, the Romans by the river or the hills: the position left no choice to either, there was no hope but in courage, no salvation but from victory"). The circumstances of the battle have confined Germanicus and the Romans, but hope resides in their courage. Germanicus is here leading by example as he does later in *Annales* 2.25, when the Germans declare the Romans unconquerable and praise their courage.[174] Military success relied on the proper cultivation of courage.

Germanicus is not the only general who recognizes the importance of stirring the *animus* of his soldiers. Tacitus spends a considerable amount of time narrating the constant wars on the eastern edge of the empire, where the general Corbulo instills his strict sense of discipline to great effect.[175] Tacitus sets up Corbulo's characterization early in the *Annales*, even before Corbulo is sent to the east. For example, at *Annales* 3.20, the soldiers of a certain Decurius break their line at the start of battle and their commander rushes around the field attempting to get his troops in line; his efforts are

[174] Tacitus *Annales* 2.25: *quippe invictos et nullis casibus superabilis Romanos praedicabant, qui perdita classe, amissis armis, post constrata equorum virorumque corporibus litora eadem virtute, pari ferocia et velut aucto numero inrupissent* ("Their cry was that "the Romans were invincible—proof against every disaster! They had wrecked their fleet, lost their arms; the shores had been littered with the bodies of horses and men; yet they had broken in again, with the same courage, with equal fierceness, and apparently with increased numbers!").
[175] For Corbulo's life, family, and career see Syme (1970: 27-39).

in vain, and he ultimately dies, deserted by his troops.[176] The next time we see extended narrative action in Syria, Tacitus is explaining Corbulo's character and focusing on how his strictness affects both his own soldiers and the enemies (*Annales* 11.19.1-2): *ceterum is terror milites hostisque in diversum adfecit: nos virtutem auximus, barbari ferociam infregere* ("However, the terror he inspired had opposite effects on the soldiers and on the enemy: to us it meant a revival of courage, to the barbarians a weakening of confidence"). The difference between Decurius and Corbulo is drastic. The soldiers who showed their backs to the enemy in 3.20, *terga daret*, are long gone. Corbulo's soldiers heightened their *virtus* – a stark contrast to what was considered one of the most cowardly acts in the Roman military world. Tacitus defines Corbulo's influence as a *terror*. This is primarily because of his insistence on harsh discipline. However, Corbulo's insistence on harsh discipline has assisted his soldiers in promoting their *virtus*. Whereas the soldiers of Decurius committed the most cowardly of acts, the soldiers of Corbulo have done the opposite, in large part due to Corbulo's harshness. Tacitus uses the word *terror* to describe this element of Corbulo's character. Corbulo was known to others besides Tacitus for his reputation as a disciplinarian.[177] His

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[176] *Annales* 3.20.8-13: *primoque impetu pulsa cohorte promptus inter tela occursat fugientibus, increpat signiferos quod inconditis aut desertoribus miles Romanus terga daret; simul excepta vulnera et, quamquam transfosso oculo, adversum os in hostem intendit neque proelium omisit donec desertus suis caderet* ("As the cohort broke at the first onset, he darted eagerly among the missiles, to intercept the fugitives, cursing the standard-bearers who could see Roman soldiers turn their backs to a horde of undrilled men or deserters. At the same time, he turned his wounded breast and his face—with one eye pierced—to confront the enemy, and continued to fight until he dropped forsaken by his troop").

[177] Frontinus *Strategemata* 4.2.3: *Domitius Corbulo duabus legionibus et paucissimis auxiliis disciplina correcta Parthos sustinuit* ("By improving discipline, Domitius Corbulo withstood the Parthians with a force of only two legions and very few auxiliaries").

campaign was successful in the East in part because of his ability to whip his soldiers into shape, and this is something Tacitus highlights throughout the rest of the campaign.[178]

For both generals, their deaths may color how we interpret their ability to lead soldiers effectively. Corbulo, ultimately forced into suicide by Nero, was a successful military general who was able to cultivate his soldiers' courage, albeit in a different (harsher) fashion than that of Germanicus. Germanicus' death, of course, was shrouded in uncertainty – at least as Tacitus tells it in the *Annales* – and his successes as a military general certainly weighed heavily on the relationship between Germanicus and Tiberius.

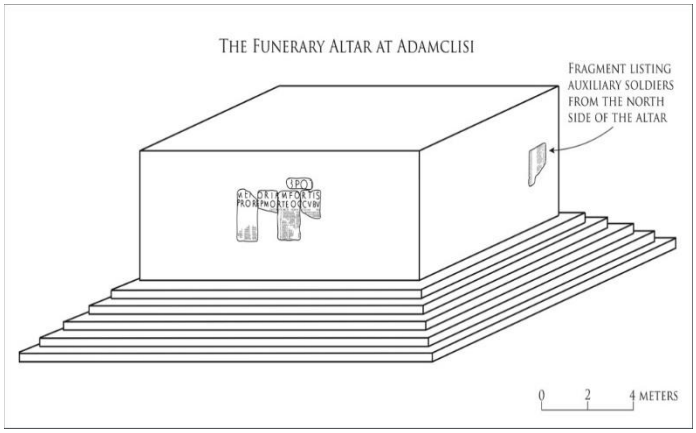
While the relationships between generals and soldiers as it related to the cultivation of courage are not as extensive or robust in the *Annales* as those in the *Histories* or in the *Agricola*, the takeaway appears the same: a competent general should understand how to inspire courage in his soldiers for the benefit of the state (i.e., Roman victory). This means that even though the examples are limited, Germanicus and Corbulo provide key examples of the way in which Tacitus represents the courage of soldiers throughout his corpus, and more importantly, the ways in which he uses it to characterize military leaders under the Principate. It was important for generals to be

[178] Even at the very end of Corbulo's command in Syria Tacitus continued to highlight his style of generalship. For example, in *Annales* 15.16, Corbulo makes his way across the Euphrates to save the besieged military tribune Paetus and his two legions: *Corbulo cum suis copiis apud ripam Euphratis obvius non eam speciem insignium et armorum praetulit, ut diversitatem exprobraret* ("Corbulo, who met them with his own force on the bank of the Euphrates, made no such display of ensigns and arms as to turn the contrast into a reproach").

effective in this regard just as it was equally important for soldiers to act and fight effectively, to display their *virtus*. To display courage in this way was, perhaps, an individual game for gaining military distinction, or simply for survival, but the actions of Roman soldiers were also part of a larger symbiotic relationship within the military system that worked in tandem with the elite military commanders who not only had to lead them effectively to Roman victory, but also may have had to deal with the potential consequences of their success.

The Roman Funerary Altar at Adamclisi

I started this chapter by providing a restored section of the inscription found



on a funerary altar in Adamclisi, Romania, which reads, *in honorem et in memoriam fortissimorum virorum qui pugnantes pro republica morte occubuerunt* ("In honor and memory of the bravest men who died fighting for the Republic"). The fragmentary nature of the inscription and the altar on which it was inscribed have left it nearly impossible to date the altar precisely. Scholars have puzzled over the altar's date and purpose for almost as long as

it has been known.[179] Along with the inscription cited above, the altar includes fragments inscribed with names and origins of soldiers who fought and died; the total number of soldiers listed remains guesswork, but conservative estimates are around 3500.[180] The lists of names and origins are set out in columns underneath the larger inscription cited above.

The site of Adamclisi is more famously known as the site for Trajan's trophy (*Tropaeum Traiani* – Figure 2) commemorating his victory over the Dacians in the Second Dacian War, 105-106 AD. The altar's date and purpose are typically triangulated by its proximity to the *Tropaeum Traiani*. While some scholars, like Hope, caution against reading the monuments out of their individual context, it is important to contextualize them with their surrounding environment. Not only does the altar sit near the *Tropaeum Traiani*, but additional remains of another trophy exist within this complex of monuments. Most scholars date the third monument, quite securely, to Domitian's reign.[181] On the other hand, Trajan's nearby trophy makes it easy – perhaps too easy – to assume that the altar is Trajanic. The debate surrounding the altar's date has been summarized by Turner, who notes that scholars have previously dated the

[179] Baradez (1971), Stefan (2005), Hope (2003), Cooley (2012); For the excavation see Cichorius (1904) and Doruitu (1961).
[180] See Turner (2013) for a new examination of the origins of these soldiers and analysis of the numbers.
[181] Lepper and Frere (1988) argue for a Domitianic date based on the monument's "memorialization" of loss, and thus link its construction to some major Domitianic defeats in the area in the late 80s and early 90s AD.

altar to Domitian's reign.[182] The basis for the Domitianic date is that under Domitian, not Trajan, the Romans suffered heavy defeats in this area of the Empire. This assumes that the altar memorialized those that died in a Roman defeat, which I do not know we can safely assume. Given the rarity of this type of war memorial in ancient Rome, to suggest that the altar's inscription indicates it was erected after a defeat seems likelier than if it were erected after a victory, or erected for remembrance.[183] While the dating of the alter either to Domitian or Trajan's reign bears some significance for how we read the inscription in juxtaposition with Tacitus' depiction of courage, I believe that the monument contextualizes Tacitus' representation of courage by suggesting that the relationship between the leadership of Rome, namely the *princeps*, and the soldiers was still, at least by the time of Domitian, one of the most important relationships the *princeps* had to maintain. Tacitus himself says that an army can make a *princeps*.[184] That

Figure 2 – Reconstructed *Tropaeum Traiani*.

[182] Turner (2013).
[183] On the altar's exceptional status among Roman monuments see Hope (2003: 90-91), Carroll (2006: 160), Cooley (2012: 67).
[184] Tacitus *Histories* 2.76.

we can safely date the altar to *some time* when Tacitus was alive, and writing, might speak to the social and political attitude toward soldiers and their courage.

The funerary altar's inscription almost reads as a definition of *virtus*: it was erected for the honor and memory of the bravest (*fortissimorum*) men who died fighting for the republic. Unlike the rewards of active service, which I explore in the next chapter, this altar honored the *virtus* of men who had already died. The altar likely served as a kind of reward as well, insofar as it showed members of the military how their leaders thought of them, even after death. In that sense, the altar was meant to sustain, perhaps even build, the relationship the existed between those men who currently served in the army and the ones who led them.

The funerary altar commemorating the soldiers' courage, as noted above, was not the only monument in this complex. The more famous *Tropaeum Traiani* sits roughly 250 meters away from the funerary altar and commemorated Trajan's second major victory against the Dacians. Brian Turner suggests a connection between Trajan's trophy and the funerary altar based on Trajan's reputation as a *princeps* of the soldiers: "Whatever the precise order and location of events, the commemoration of his dead soldiers with an altar, and the construction of a great trophy illustrating that the dead had been avenged, would fit the character-profile of an *optimus princeps* who had been praised by his contemporaries for the care he had shown his troops."[185] The trophy itself was an impressive drum shaped monument roughly 30 meters in diameter that

[185] Turner (2013: 284); see also Pliny *Panegyricus* 13 and 89.

Figure 3 – Metope from the *Tropaeum Traiani* showing a Roman

contained 54 metopes showing images of Roman soldiers fighting successfully against the Dacians. Trajan himself is pictured in some of the metopes, similar to the style that would later be seen on Trajan's column in Rome. The images on these metopes do not survive as well as the images on Trajan's column in Rome, but they are worth considering briefly.

Figure 4 – Metope from the

For example, in figure 3 we see a Roman soldier attacking a Dacian. We also see images of soldiers carrying their standards (*signiferi*) as in figure 4. There are also a number of metopes showing Trajan himself, as in figure 5 (pictured on the left) in which the *princeps* appears to be directing, guiding, and overseeing military operations. The metopes on the *Tropaeum Traiani* might suggest a similar kind of relationship as the

Figure 5 – Metope of the *Tropaeum Traiani* showing the *princeps* himself.

one we see throughout Tacitus' corpus: elite men acquire *virtus* through guiding and managing the courage of soldiers; soldiers, in turn, can win their own *virtus* by fighting courageously (see figure 3). The *Tropaeum Traiani*, much like Trajan's column, has significantly more images of soldiers than of himself. This seems to recognize, at least partially, the importance of the relationship between the *imperator* and his *milites*. The general's successful guidance and management of the troops was also the expression of his own *virtus*, like what we saw throughout Tacitus' corpus, particularly in the *Agricola*.

I have brought these monuments into my argument only to provide a kind of historical context in which we might situate Tacitus' written works. I do not suggest that any kind of historical connection between the monuments and Tacitus himself should be considered.[186] A Domitianic or a Trajanic date puts the construction of the funerary altar squarely in Tacitus' lifetime and certainly the *Tropaeum Traiani* was constructed as Tacitus wrote the majority of this corpus.[187] The altar's main purpose in this chapter is to show that the commander-soldier relationship was important not just for Tacitus' representation of military culture, but for officially sanctioned representations of emperors that were meant to project authority and legitimacy during Tacitus' lifetime. In that sense, it was not just Tacitus who was concerned with

[186] Tacitus reached the praetorship in AD 88, which was shortly followed by his service in the provinces, either in the military or as a civilian, from c. 89 to c. 93. These dates, coincidentally, align with the Domitianic dating of the funerary altar at Adamclisi. If we give the altar a dating to coincide with Trajan's victory in the Second Dacian War, AD 105-106, then the altar's construction overlaps with the presumed publication date of Tacitus' *Histories*.
[187] See Amiotti (1990) for Trajanic dating; Dio 67.8.2: τοῖς δὲ τελευτήσασι τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐν τῇ μάχῃ βωμόν τε στῆσαι καὶ κατ᾽ ἔτος ἐναγίζειν κελεῦσαι ("[Trajan] ordered that an altar be erected for those of the soldiers that fell in battle and funeral rites to be performed annually").

elucidating the symbiotic relationship I have put forward in this chapter, but the larger cultural *milieu* of which Tacitus was a part.

Conclusion

The *Histories*, perhaps more than either the *Agricola* or the *Annales*, provides us with the fullest range of how Tacitus represents courage under a variety of emperors and generals. For Tacitus, the courage of low-ranking soldiers depended equally on the soldier to show their *virtus* just as much as it relied on a competent general and a well-functioning military machine. In the *Agricola*, we saw the idealized version of this relationship. Agricola knew exactly how to incite and control the courage of his soldiers so that when the battle was upon them, they were ready to display their *virtus*. Tacitus sought to memorialize his father-in-law by representing his qualities as a commander, showcasing how it was possible to be a good Roman under a bad emperor. In the *Annales*, Tacitus' purpose differs significantly. He uses the courage of soldiers primarily to characterize generals who play important roles in the larger political game in Rome. In that sense, Tacitus aligns Germanicus, and to certain extent Corbulo, with Agricola in how they motivate their soldiers to act bravely when the time comes.

Tacitus' historiographical representation of courage relied equally on the individuals leading as much as it relied on the soldiers acting courageously in the moment. Tacitus portrays this symbiotic relationship as an interplay between the general's attempt to steer the soldiers' *animus* and the soldiers' ability to show their

virtus. This interplay between *animus* and *virtus* benefits the general and the soldier in different ways. In the *Agricola*, we saw that Tacitus used this to praise his father-in-law, a purpose in line with the aim of the biography more broadly – praise for Agricola and blame for Domitian. In the *Histories*, the interplay between *animus* and *virtus* was used by Tacitus to show how unstable power could be if everything relies strictly on the personal qualities of individuals. On the other hand, soldiers themselves benefited from acting bravely and showing their *virtus*. They could win awards and military decorations for such acts of bravery, which I explore in the next chapter. Through bravery, soldiers can live to see another day and win distinction. The Empire, in turn, benefits from successful campaigns which rely on competent soldiers. This last point was a most pressing issue for Romans throughout Tacitus' life and into the 2nd century AD, insofar as these soldiers also needed competent generals who were coming from the ranks of the senatorial elite. As we have seen, particularly in the *Agricola*, the dangers faced by competent military generals under a tyrannical *princeps* were many and significant. Not only did aristocratic men need to understand *how* to manage the courage of soldiers effectively, but they also needed to understand what Agricola seemed to understand so well: obedience and modesty combined with energy and action will bring glory and benefaction to the state, all the while keeping you alive.[188]

[188] Tacitus *Agricola* 42.5: *sciant, quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta enisi, sed in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt* ("Those whose habit is to admire what is forbidden ought to know that there can be great men even under bad emperors, and that duty and discretion, if coupled with energy and a career of action, will bring a man to no less glorious summits than are attained by perilous paths and ostentatious deaths that do not benefit the state").

As much as Tacitus might seem to characterize the low-ranking soldier as an amoral and barbaric figure, their courage was of such importance, historically, that Tacitus made use of it historiographically. The relationship between general and soldier, *animus* and *virtus*, leads us to reconsider the ways in which Tacitus wrote about the military values that led to Roman flourishing under Trajan.

The Military Values of Legionary Soldiers in Tacitus: Rewards

The Imperial Roman military operated, in one sense, on the willing participation of soldiers. Whether these soldiers held military service as having any patriotic significance remains difficult to determine.[189] Even if these soldiers were not enlisting and fighting for the *res publica*, we can be sure that they were rewarded for serving. There are two large categories of what I label "rewards" for common soldiers in the following discussion: honors for courage or bravery on the battlefield (*dona militaria*) and payment for service (*stipendia, praemia*, *donativa*). These categories themselves represent complex systems in which we can find a variety of different ways the honors or money were distributed by military commanders.[190]

In this chapter, I am concerned with elucidating Tacitus' representation of these reward systems and exploring the ways in which that representation may speak to Tacitus' efforts as a historian of the Empire. Tacitus was, as I suggest here, interested in exploring the importance of the military reward system not just from the perspective of elite military commanders winning their own rewards, but their ability to reward common soldiers appropriately. For if a military general cannot participate in this system effectively, he runs the risk of losing the soldiers, as being appropriately rewarded for service was important for soldiers. How a military commander navigates the relationship between himself, military rewards, and soldiers, shows itself to be one aspect of Tacitus' characterization of military

[189] Speidel (2010), Hope (2017).
[190] For military pay see Speidel (1992) and (2000), Alston (1994), Wesch-Klein (1998: 48-54). See Duncan-Jones (1994), Harl (1996: 207-49), and Mattern (1999: 123-61) for Imperial perspective on paying soldiers. On donatives in particular see Veyne (1990: 334-41), Lendon (:1997: 252-64), Roller (2001), and Stäcker (2003: 49-71). Maxfield (1981) remains the standard on the *dona militaria*.

leadership under the Principate. Under the Principate, a long-standing system of military rewards came into conflict with a new order of political and military power which was susceptible to the whims of individuals and which was reliant on deference to the *princeps*. Military generals were required to lead the legions, but also avoid the jealous gaze of the *princeps*. Some of the major scenes throughout Tacitus' corpus revolve around the breakdown of the military reward system, precisely because of the personal qualities of certain individuals and the ways in which they navigate the complicated position of being an aristocratic military leader serving under a *princeps*. On the other hand, Tacitus also uses a properly functioning reward system to highlight the effective qualities of leadership under the Principate, namely those military commanders who blend the right amount of proper military leadership with the appropriate amount of deference to the *princeps*.

Tacitus' representation of this reward system and its importance for the aristocracy also reveals details about the ways in which common soldiers participated in the military reward system. Without the common soldier's proper participation in this system, military generals make themselves available to scrutiny for not leading effectively. Therefore, the soldier's participation in this system would have been an important point to understand for military commanders, who themselves were attempting to navigate a complicated political landscape under the Principate. By exploring common soldiers, their military reward system, and how military commanders understood and participated in that military reward system, we can see that Tacitus' depiction of soldiers and their rewards played a role in how Tacitus represented and wrote the history of military leadership under the Principate.

As stated above, there are two categories of what I label rewards in the following analysis of Tacitus. The honors given to soldiers who act with courage or bravery in a fashion that sets them apart from their fellow soldiers. These honors are known as the *dona militaria*. They will be specifically targeted in this study, and thus explained in more detail below. The *dona* were part of a larger complex reward system by which soldiers could receive appropriate recognition for their bravery. In addition to the *dona*, there were the more traditionally aristocratic rewards such as *gloria*, *virtus*, and even *decus*. Much has been written about Tacitus' treatment of these concepts.[191] Yet, they are almost exclusively the rewards of the aristocracy and we are primarily concerned with how Tacitus utilizes, historiographically, the rewards of the common soldier.[192]

The other category of rewards is remuneration for service. It may be argued that merely paying a soldier for their continued service does not meet the criteria of what we might consider a reward – usually something received *after* an act has earned recognition. Yet, as we will see in the section on remuneration, the normal pay structure of the legions, *stipendia*, was sometimes inconsistently administered.[193] More important for this discussion of remuneration

[191] Most recently, Balmaceda (2017) discusses *virtus* in Tacitus (along with *virtus* in other Roman historians). Sailor (2008) explores aristocratic virtues, passim. See also Syme (1958: 526), Martin (1981: 41) and Birley (2009: 49-50).
[192] Sailor (2008) discusses Tacitus' use of aristocratic rewards (e.g., *gloria*) vis-à-vis the *princeps* and the problems inherent in military success. In particular, Sailor (2008: 74-75) defines how Rome's empire works from the framework of aristocratic military careers: "young men, bursting with desire, learn from examples of military achievement rewarded with glory to seek that glory for themselves… if we extrapolate this experience to the whole population of young elite men, we can imagine empire as an inexhaustibly self-renewing process of expansion: each new achievement rewarded with glory inspires emulators who press on ardently to more achievements, which in turn inspire more emulators."
[193] One of the consequences of this was frequent mutinies, some of which were explored in previous chapters, particularly the mutinies in Pannonia and Germany in book 1 of the *Annales*. On *stipendia* as money for maintenance as opposed to wage, see Brunt (1950: 50), Boren (1983: 432), and Rawlings (2007: 49); Phang (2008:

and its role in the connection between leader and soldier are the *donativa.* Under the Principate, the *donativa* were gifts of money from the *princeps* to the soldiers. The long history of *donativa* in the Roman army, stretching back to the early Republic, came into conflict with the political order of the Principate.[194] By the time Tacitus began his career, it was customary for the *princeps* to give a *donativum* to the soldiers upon his succession. We will see in the section on *donativa* that not giving this customary reward, a personal choice by individual leaders in most accounts, could trigger major institutional crises. This makes it clear that in Tacitus' corpus, a connection exists between the rewards of common soldiers and appropriate and effective leadership in the first century of the Principate.

The *dona militaria* and Payment Systems

"Whenever honor is paid to the brave and punishment of the cowardly is not neglected then an army must have fair expectation." – Onasander, *Strategikos* 34

Onasander dedicated his *Strategikos*, a treatise on the duties of a military general, published no later than 58/59 AD, to Quintus Veranius Nepos. Veranius was a decorated general of the Roman Empire and died during his governorship of Britain – one of his chief goals was to expand the Roman frontier. Veranius was replaced by Gaius Suetonius Paulinus,

166), in particular, notes, "Because the bodily needs of Roman soldiers for food, clothing, and equipment did not significantly change, *stipendia* were raised infrequently and barely kept up with inflation."

[194] Phang (2008: 154-155) on the *donativa* under the Principate, "Emperors could routinize *donativa* in value-rational terms, associating them with the symbolic order of honors rather than the material order of sordid gain. *Donativa* might be routinized by awarding them at imperial accessions, as the legacies of predecessors, at anniversaries, and at other ceremonies that marked the continuity of the regime."

who quickly finished much of Veranius' work in Wales and quelled the famous revolt of Boudica in 60 AD.[195] Agricola, Tacitus' father-in-law, served under Paulinus in Britain.[196] What Onasander recognized as an important element of operating and leading an army was the distribution of rewards for courageous soldiers and proper military conduct – his dedication of the *Strategikos* to Veranius may indicate that the decorated general knew this well, and this may have been one of the reasons Nero appointed him to the governorship of Britain. Whether we ought to make a connection between Veranius, Paulinus, Agricola, and Tacitus, is speculative at best, but Onasander's dedication to Veranius links his discussion of proper military values and systems directly to the aristocracy during a time in which success in the military sphere had the potential to prompt the *princeps* to envy.[197] While aristocratic military achievement had to become, on the surface, less influential politically, the reward system of the common soldiers became more important as Rome began to rely on its soldiers and provinces.[198] Keeping the soldiers happy and willing to continue service was of paramount importance for any new *princeps* after Augustus. Not only did soldiers want to be paid, they wanted to be recognized.[199]

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[195] Tacitus mentions Veranius only in passing as he describes the governors of Britain before Agricola's arrival (*Agricola* 14.9).
[196] *Agricola* 5.
[197] Tacitus points out Domitian's envy of Agricola's success in Britain (*Agricola* 38) and, earlier, to the hostility of those times toward virtues (*Agricola* 1). Veranius, of course, was serving under Nero and Tacitus' comments on autocracy are geared towards Domitianic Rome, but the point may be extrapolated to all tyrannical rulers, like Nero.
[198] Consider Tacitus' comment in the *Histories* that it was then apparent emperors could be made elsewhere than Rome (*Histories* 1.5). The point is geographical, of course, but political as well. Emperors could be made by soldiers (outside of Rome) and not senators (inside of Rome).
[199] The material and epigraphic record proves useful on this point. See Maxfield (1981: 138-9) on the statistical breakdown of *gregarii milites* indicating their awards of distinction on their tombs.

One of the ways in which soldiers could be rewarded for their courageous behavior and proper conduct was through the *dona militaria*.[200]

The *dona* were a particularly useful way of celebrating and rewarding soldiers because they could often be seen by other soldiers in the army. This, in turn, incited other soldiers to emulate the actions and conduct of their fellow-soldiers.[201] The *dona*, similar to other forms of military reward, were in existence for much of the duration of Rome itself. However, military rewards in the form of *dona* during the early and middle Republic was a chaotic system and more *ad hoc* than the finely tuned system of awards in place during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.[202] This highly developed system of military rewards lasted until the Severan period, when the decorations began to appear more as standard dress and not as rewards for military action.[203] The long standing tradition of the *dona* as rewards for military accomplishment were part of the system of military values created and engendered by emperors and aristocratic commanders for hundreds of years. Whether or not this long-standing tradition made any difference to a low-ranking soldier of the empire is hard to know. It seems more likely that for low-ranking soldiers a reward was a reward – an acknowledgement of a brave act – and the *dona* provided a very concrete materialization of that act. The display of these items on military uniforms, in homes, and places where fellow soldiers could see them meant that other soldiers

[200] Expressed as *dona* hereafter for simplicity.
[201] Polybius recognized how rewards for bravery could make men famous among their fellow-soldiers – it was a way to stir up rivalry in the field and was an important element of some of Rome's greatest military victories (Polybius 6.39).
[202] Maxfield (1981: 55).
[203] See Maxfield (1981: 253-254) for the end of *dona militaria* as rewards and their use as decorations for military personnel as late as the 5th century AD.

would recognize the individual honors and rewards of whoever was displaying their *dona*. Thus, the *dona* were intensely communal for the low-ranking soldier in as much as they were intrinsically personal. These military decorations were important for soldiers' self and group identity. We know this, in part, because soldiers, from low-ranks to high ranks, included the names or images of their *dona* on epitaphs.[204] I will explore this point more in depth below.

The *dona militaria* were some 14 odd rewards that came in the form of decorative crowns or items (equivalent to a medal). Most of these, however, would not have been accessible or attainable to low-ranking soldiers. For example, the circumstances needed for the *corona obsidionalis* prevented low-ranking soldiers from acquiring it. Likewise, decorations such as the *corona navalis* (also known as the *corona classica* and *corona rostra*) were generally awarded to aristocrats who fought and won naval battles – a legionary would likely never find themselves in such a situation.[205] Much more common for soldiers below the rank of centurion were the decorations of *torques*, *armillae*, and *phalerae*.[206]

The *torquis* was a neck ring, sometimes consisting of combined chains, usually made of metal. They could, hypothetically, be worn around the neck, but, if actually worn, were usually

[204] Keppie (2003) suggests that the inclusion of the *dona* was statistically *infrequent*. Cf. Maxfield (1981) who points out that not only were common soldiers less wealthy and thus less likely to include more words, or sculptural relief, but that the *dona militaria* themselves are inherently rare – that is precisely why they are special. It must be expected that we see a fewer number of epitaphs with their inclusion.
[205] Marcus Agrippa who commanded a fleet in the war against Sextus Pompeius in 26 BC won the award.
[206] Maxfield (1981: 90ff).

attached the cuirass of the soldier.[207] We know from Livy that Titus Manlius acquired his appellation '*torquatus*' from despoiling the Gallic champion he bested in single combat.[208] The *torquis* was, and remained at least until the time of Tacitus, a reward for soldiers lower than the rank of centurion, usually when fighting a foreign enemy – an important point that Tacitus takes seriously, as we will see. It seems likely that based on stories such as that of Titus Manlius despoiling a slain Gaul, the *torquis* was originally part of the spoils of war. At some point it came to bear enough significance that the army actually produced *torques* and handed them out in place of, or in addition to, spoils of the kind which Manlius found on the slain Gaul.

Similar to the *torquis* in its origin – that is to say, from non-Roman enemies – were *armillae*. These metal bracelets, or perhaps more generally, rings, were another common military decoration for soldiers under the rank of centurion. They too, with their non-Roman connotations, may have originally been acquired through the spoils of war, but soon came to be recognized as a military reward handed down by superiors within the military system.[209] It is worth considering why these military rewards – originally worn as decorations by Roman enemies – became one of the standard military rewards for soldiers of the lowest-rank. Why did aristocrats, or even non-aristocratic members of the military above the rank of centurion, not receive these rewards?

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[207] The famous statue of the Dying Gaul depicts a very clear – and supposedly accurate – torque on the figure of a Gaul. Likewise, the famous epitaph of Marcus Caelius (*CIL* 13.8648) depicts the *torquis* attached to leather straps connected with the shoulder straps of the cuirass.
[208] Livy 7.10.4.
[209] Livy (1.11.8) states that Sabine men and women decorated their arms with heavy, metal bracelets. Likewise, Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.5.8) records Persian nobles who wore necklaces and bracelets. Polybius (2.29.8) also describes the Celts who invaded Etruria in 225 BC as wearing gold *torques* and *armillae*.

Phalerae, however, the third reward most commonly given to low-ranking soldiers, does not appear to have a clear origin traceable to Roman enemies in the same way as the *torques* and the *armillae*. The *phalerae* were small discs, usually made of metal, but sometimes glass or other material, decorated with a variety of images.[210] Sometimes the *phalerae* depicted images of the *princeps*; other times the little discs held images of beasts or mythological figures. Again, like the *torques* and *armillae*, the *phalerae* were awarded strictly to soldiers below the rank of centurion during the Principate. As Stäcker has pointed out, the *phalerae* served a dual purpose: they were rewards for individual bravery, esteemed by low-ranking soldiers and their fellow-soldiers, and they also served as a means of propaganda. The face of the *princeps* would be strapped to the breastplate of soldiers throughout the empire, looking and watching over the other soldiers and the frontiers of his empire.[211] *Phalerae* also appear to have been attached to the military standards. Both of these uses of the *phalerae* will become more important as we discuss the implications of military rewards below.

The *dona* of the Empire appear both in surviving material evidence and literature. The material evidence is rich, primarily coming to us through inscriptions, but archaeological remains and sculptural evidence provide details that the inscriptions leave out. Inscriptions tend to tell us only the name, rank (or unit), of the soldier as well as the awards received. Sometimes, if we are lucky, the inscription might include the name of the awarding *princeps*,

[210] Maxfield (1981: 91-95) suggests that the origin of *phalerae* might be related to horse trapping. The archaeological record makes it hard to distinguish between *phalerae* worn by soldiers and those that might have been part of the horse trappings of men of the equestrian order.
[211] Stäcker (2003: 160-66); see also Maxfield (1981: 213-17).

and even the campaign. Archaeological and sculptural evidence make up for the lack of visual evidence from inscriptions. Some cenotaphs provide visual evidence, which we can then contextualize with an actual person (and any other information found within the inscription) to get a fuller picture of the individual. Archaeological and sculptural evidence lack some of the finer details of inscriptions. It must also be said that we possess very few authenticated examples of *phalerae* in the archaeological record, because of their confusion with other items related to military life.[212] Additionally, these rewards were typically made of metal; they frequently do not survive. However, we have some examples of glass *phalerae* from a number of frontier regions of the Empire, including Britain, the Rhine, and the Danube.[213] It must also be the case that we see less material evidence of the *torques*, *armillae*, and *phalerae* because soldiers below the rank of centurion were the ones that normally received these awards, and they likely lacked the funds or social standing to showcase their military achievements in such a lavish manner.

The *dona militaria* were not the only kinds of rewards low-ranking soldiers could receive. They were, to be sure, the most common reward for military action: the *dona* specifically rewarded military achievement – brave acts on the battlefield, usually against a foreign enemy. Because I am primarily interested in the military value system of low-ranking soldiers, I will focus on the *dona* as they are part of that system of military values. However, the remuneration of soldiers more broadly contained a number of ways the army could reward

[212] See footnote 12.
[213] For a recent study and good bibliography on the archaeological remains of *phalerae* see Buljević (2013). For the general state of the material evidence and its problems see Maxfield (1981: 47-54).

soldiers for their continued service. This included *stipendia*, land grants, *praemia*, and sometimes *donativa*. I will explore *donativa* in more depth later in the chapter. The granting of land became increasingly less frequent under the empire, but we do see soldiers complaining about this (as we did in the last chapter). For this reason, I briefly touch on that here; the same can be said for *praemia*. Tacitus spends little time discussing this payment to veterans. the regular payment for service was also part of the reward system within the military industry. I will spend some time briefly outlining these rewards before moving on to Tacitus' representation of the *dona militaria* and the various forms of remuneration.

Money was an influential motivating factor for military service in the Roman empire. The prospect of recurring *stipendia* – three times a year under the Principate until 84 when Domitian instituted a fourth – as well as a large payment upon completion of service (*praemia*) provided an opportunity for many people of the Empire to improve their already difficult lives. For many people of the Empire, particularly those on the frontiers where war and military recruitment had become the norm, receiving consistent pay, access to medical services, and regular meals was a drastic improvement on what were undoubtedly very harsh conditions.[214]

Payment within the military was primarily based on social standing, not on the difficulty or danger of the post. For example, a centurion under Augustus earned 13,500 *sestertii* a year, whereas soldiers under the rank of centurion earned roughly 750 *sestertii*; a centurion of the first cohort, on the other hand, received 27,000 *sestertii*, and the *primus pilus* earned 54,000 *sestertii*. The *primus pilus*, under Augustus' reforms, was appointed to the

[214] Herz (2007: 307-308).

equestrian order, further strengthening and emphasizing the different pay rates for individuals of different social rank.[215] Incentives such as the possibility of joining the equestrian order, and the financial benefits that came with it, certainly played a significant role in the recruitment of new soldiers and the maintenance of the already existing body of legionaries. The financial incentive that was so important for the low-ranking soldier may not have been as influential on members of the Roman world who already had significant wealth or came from a higher social standing. These individuals, either *equestrian* or senatorial, were more likely to be using military service as a means to progress on the *cursus honorum*. Thus, we can see a difference in the reward system of the low-ranking soldier and the aristocrat. The one willing to endure the harsh condition of military service just for the chance of a better existence; the other advancing their political careers.

The *dona militaria* and *stipendia* made up the bulk of a large system of rewards built into the military system. As I said above, it is important to make a distinction between these. On the one hand, the *dona* are physical manifestations of bravery or courageous actions executed during battle – which we explored in the previous chapter – so it is a natural progression to consider in depth the rewards of that action. However, it is also important to consider how money affected what low-ranking soldiers considered to be their system of military values. The *stipendia* and land/money grants at completion of service are rewards promised for entering and serving; getting a paycheck was not a reward for bravery – it was payment for work. Thus, the difference between the *dona* and other forms of reward is an important one. One is for a

[215] Herz (2007: 308).

soldier's ability to distinguish himself from other soldiers; the other is for participation in that system. The *dona* were material indications of distinction, which is perhaps why we see them somewhat frequently mentioned or pictures on soldiers' epitaphs. Remuneration, on the other hand, was money for participation, perhaps the most important part of an operational army. The difference between rewards of distinction and rewards of participation becomes significant when we look more closely at how Tacitus uses these rewards to characterize leadership.

The *dona militaria* in Tacitus

Tacitus was, almost always, concerned with themes and issues that affected his own class in society. Therefore, awarding of the *dona militaria* do not appear as frequently as, say, *gloria*. The former appears just a handful of time throughout his corpus and the latter a little over 150 times in total. The infrequency of appearance boils down to a few key factors. First, Tacitus uses more than the phrase *dona militaria* to denote the physical awards themselves, or the act of rewarding itself. He uses *praemium*, *decus*, *honor*, and more to indicate either the reward itself or the process.

There are a few examples of soldiers and the *dona militari* in the *Annales* that serve different functions within the larger narrative, but that speak to the importance of rewards on soldiers and leaders alike.

The first scene I want to explore is in *Annales* 3.21 and is set away from Rome in the province of Africa, where the Romans had an ongoing military conflict. Tacitus is our only source for the Roman conflict with Tacfarinas that lasted almost a decade, 15 – 24 AD. While

we do not know the historical legitimacy of Tacitus' claims regarding the conflict, we can see its historiographical importance.[216] Tacfarinas was a former Roman auxiliary soldier. His guerilla style campaign against the Romans in north Africa seems to have been a response to Augustan forays into the area. His tactics caused difficulties for the Romans. However, it was the Romans' lack of courage in defending their outpost near the River Pagyda that caught Tacitus' eye. The soldiers abandoned their posts, fled the battle, and left their commander, Decrius, to the enemy. Decrius attempted to rally his troops to no avail. Tacitus also gives us the enticing detail that Decrius faced the enemy on his own, and despite a wound to his eye, never abandoned the battle and died for his bravery.[217]

Decrius' death and the shameful actions of his soldiers did not go unnoticed. Upon hearing of the incident, Lucius Apronius, the proconsul of Africa, enacted punishments of old. The punishments, as expected, led to great achievements in future skirmishes (*Annales* 3.21):

> *quae postquam L. Apronio (nam Camillo successerat) comperta, magis dedecore suorum quam gloria hostis anxius, raro ea tempestate et e vetere memoria facinore decumum quemque ignominiosae cohortis sorte ductos fusti necat. Tantumque severitate profectum ut vexillum veteranorum, non amplius quingenti numero, easdem Tacfarinatis copias praesidium cui Thala nomen adgressas fuderint. quo proelio, Rufus Helvius gregarius miles servati civis decus rettulit donatusque est ab Apronio torquibus et hasta. Caesar addidit civicam coronam, quod non eam quoque Apronius iure proconsulis tribuisset questus magis quam offensus.*

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[216] It certainly seems to be the case that by including a narrative in Africa Tacitus is adhering to some kind of tradition, perhaps influenced by authors such as Sallust, Caesar, and Livy. Likewise, these excursions outside of Rome not only break up the political machinations of Rome – we just ended the political consequences of Germanicus death in *Annales* 3.1-19 – but they also point to the importance of the provinces on the political goings on in the capital. See Master (2016) for a recent exploration of how and why Tacitus might have focused on the provinces throughout his writing. While Master focuses solely on the *Histories*, I see no reason we should not extend his thesis to the rest of Tacitus' corpus.

[217] Tacitus *Annales* 3.20: *simul excepta vulnera et, quamquam transfosso oculo, adversum os in hostem intendit neque proelium omisit donec desertus suis caderet* ("At the same time he received wounds, and although pierced through the eye, directed his face toward the enemy and did not abandon the battle until, deserted by his men, he fell").

> After this was discovered by Lucius Apronius (he had succeeded Camillus), who was tense more from the dishonor to his own men than from the glory of the enemy, in a deed rare for that time of ancient memory he chose by lot every tenth man of the disgraced cohort, executing them by cudgel. And so much was achieved by his severity that the same forces of Tacfarinas, having attacked a garrison (whose name was Thala), were routed by a detachment of veterans, no more than five hundred in number. It was from that battle that Rufus Helvius, a common soldier, brought back the honor of saving a citizen and was presented by Apronius with torques and a spear. Caesar added the civic crown, complaining (but without being genuinely upset) that Apronius had not bestowed that too by his prerogative of being proconsul.

Africa was the site of many Roman victories and military rewards. It was a hotbed of military achievement even as far back as Metellus' siege of Thala during the Romans' war against Jugurtha.[218] More recently Marcus Furius Camillus, the proconsul that preceded Apronius in Africa, had been awarded the *insignia triumphalia* for his victories against Tacfarinas' earlier efforts against the Romans in 17 AD.[219] Apronius himself would later go on to receive the *insignia triumphalia* for his victories in Africa.[220] It is likely that the interconnectedness of military reward and this particular area of Africa would not have gone unnoticed by Tacitus' audience. For that reason, we ought to consider seriously the implications of Rufus Helvius, a common soldier, receiving his own *dona miltaria* and, in the process, earning the further distinction of having been written about by Rome's most recognized imperial historian.

Tacitus introduces Helvius Rufus, first by his name, and then by his rank: *gregarius miles*. Given the context of the situation, with its echoes of harsh Republican discipline and

[218] Sallust *BJ* 75
[219] Tacitus *Annales* 2.52.
[220] Tacitus *Annales* 4.23.

senatorial *triumphalia*, we might not expect to see a common soldier. Tacitus then says that Rufus won the honor of saving a citizen's life: *servati civis decus rettulit*. Military rewards for common soldiers, such as the *dona militaria* that follow, are usually (passively) awarded to soldiers; soldiers do not typically (actively) acquire them. The active verb *rettulit*, in that sense, may give us further pause. Tacitus then uses the more typical phrasing for receipt of military honors: *donatus*. The use of *donatus* on the tombstones and epitaphs of soldiers has been well documented.[221] We then see typical examples of the kinds of *dona militaria* we might expect a *gregarius miles* to receive: *torques et hasta*. To this point in the scene Tacitus has played with our expectations about military rewards, primarily by setting up the scene as an echo or a resonance of past, aristocratic, military achievement. This is related to Tiberius being the *princeps* who Tacitus characterizes as obsessed with keeping up Augustan and Republican appearances.

Tacitus has properly subverted his reader's expectations about why he took the narrative of the *Annales* to Africa in the first place. He then juxtaposes the *hasta*, a reward strictly for soldiers below the rank of centurion, with the beginning of the next sentence: *Caesar addidit*. Tiberius added the honor of the *corona civica*, in a kind of chiasmus structure, which refers to the honor of saving a citizen's life that Rufus won for himself. Tiberius has taken an active role in doling out military awards to a common soldier in Africa. Tiberius, according to Tacitus, was complaining about having to take such an active role, but he was not

[221] The phrase *donis donatum* usually gets abbreviated to *D.D.* and frequently includes the *princeps* under which they received the honors.

genuinely offended: *questus magis quam offensus*. The *princeps* was annoyed primarily because Apronius had the legal authority to grant the *corona civica*, but for whatever reason, he did not grant it. At first glance, the reason why this might be annoying to Tiberius escapes even a close reader of the text. However, I think the work Tacitus did before his *sententia* on Tiberius' character allow us to see the meaning behind Tiberius' annoyance. Primarily, Tacitus set up the kind of scene we would expect to see in which proper functioning of the military reward system, as it has in the past, operates as usual. Tiberius was not displeased, *offensus*, with the soldier's achievement, as some later emperors may have been, but he is annoyed (according to Tacitus), *questus*, that he must participate in the process. This may be read as another example of Tiberius' play-acting. Tiberius complains about Apronius' failure to participate in the process of awarding a common soldier, but secretly enjoys that he did not. Apronius' failure to award Rufus shows that he understands the dangers of setting himself up as a source of military success and awards, in possible competition with the *princeps*. Apronius' failure to award Rufus also gives Tiberius the opportunity to recognize Roman valor. Tacitus characterizes Tiberius as play-acting at being annoyed when the opposite seems most likely to be true. This is a particularly striking characterization given Tiberius' history as a successful military man himself – Flavus boasted that he received his *corona* from Tiberius. Tacitus has included the *dona militaria* of Rufus Helvius not to portray accurately the military history of this engagement, but to make a point about Tiberius as a leader, particularly his customary *modus operandi* as play-acting Republican ideals, while cultivating imperial power behind the scenes.

Tacitus' representation of this interaction between *princeps* and soldier is all the more striking given an inscription that survives from outside of Rome. The inscription (*CIL* 14.03472) includes the name of a certain Marcus Helvius Rufus Civica and dates to the time period of Tiberius. The inscription's text indicates that this Helvius Rufus not only received the cognomen of Civica but also attained the military rank of *primus pilus*. Additionally, the inscription states that this Helvius Rufus gave a *balneum* to the citizens and inhabits of the area. This Helvius Rufus reached successful military and social positions such that he was able to be a benefactor to his community. Given that the Helvius Rufus from Tacitus was awarded the *corona civica* and the Helvius Rufus from *CIL* 14.03472 had the cognomen associated with just such a military achievement, we may have grounds for assuming the two are one in the same. Absent from the Helvius inscription are any mention of specific military rewards (other than the cognomen) or the awarding commander or *princeps*. We may be justified, then, in interpreting the Tacitean version of this event as a place where Tacitus chooses to highlight the intervention and play-acting of Tiberius. In turn, we might read *Annales* 3.21 as a Tacitean effort to make clear how the military awards of common soldiers factors into the relationship between commanding officers and the *princeps*. However, other ancient sources may note the same event, and all seem to be interested in Tiberius' intervention.[222] Even if Tacitus' inclusion

[222] Gellius 5.6.14 discusses the different requirements for each crown and during his discussion of the civic crown he cites Masurius Sabinus as saying that Tiberius had to decide if a soldier should receive the civic crown, since he had saved a fellow Roman and slain the enemy (two, actually), but did not hold his ground, which was supposedly a requirement. Tiberius decides that the soldier deserves the crown anyway, since the position must have been too perilous to hold. Neither Sabinus nor Gellius cite Helvius by name, by the parallels are striking. Suetonius *Tiberius* 32 also mentions that Tiberius had to rebuke some *consulares exercitibus praepositos* for needing to intervene in the awarding of military rewards.

of Tiberius' intervention is not strictly a Tacitean creation, the presence of other sources regarding a specific event – perhaps even the same common soldier – suggests that the role of the commanding officer, Tiberius' intervention, and the military rewards of common soldiers were, at least generally speaking, part of the narrative that authors were writing about regarding Tiberius and military generalship more broadly under his reign.

The relationship between the *princeps* and the military system was a precarious one, because individuals, like Tiberius, participate in those systems in different ways. Thus, an inherent threat to the stability of that system persists under the Principate. Lastly, this passage characterizes Tiberius as the kind of *princeps* concerned only with keeping the appearance of upholding Augustan values, further emphasizing that one individual may properly navigate the complicated relationship between leader and army, and another may not.

Another example I want to explore in detail occurs in Germany at the river Weser, where Germanicus and his troops have been attempting to subdue local tribes.[223] After the earlier mutiny in Germany (*Annales* 1.31-49), Germanicus led a Roman military conquest into Germany; Tacitus leaves the reasons unstated.[224] Without a clear historical motive from Tacitus, the description of Germanicus' conquests in Germany read more as a blank canvas on which to write about central themes to the *Annales*, and less about the historical accuracy of a

[223] The following analysis of Arminius and Flavus relies heavily on the recent work of Sailor (2019) *passim*.
[224] A new campaign after the mutiny could have benefitted Rome in several ways. Allowing the soldiers some spoils of war could have done a lot in the way of easing tensions between the soldiers and their commanders. Likewise, rewarding the soldiers in this way may have even ingratiated them in significant ways to the Tiberian regime. Germanicus may also have simply been continuing Augustus' aggressive expansion into Europe. Victories there would have restored a certain level of prestige to the Roman army and Tiberius himself.

military conquest. It is within the third year of those conquests we see a striking scene east of the Rhine. The Cheruscan leader Arminius, infamous for his victory at Teutoberg, appears on the banks of the Weser requesting a conversation with his brother Flavus (*Annales* 2.9):

> *Flumen Visurgis Romanos Cheruscosque interfluebat; eius in ripa cum ceteris primoribus Arminius adstitit, quaesitoque an Caesar venisset, postquam adesse responsum est, ut liceret cum fratre conloqui oravit. Erat is in exercitu cognomento Flavus, insignis fide et amisso per vulnus oculo paucis ante annis duce Tiberio. Tum permissu progressusque salutatur ab Arminio; qui amotis stipatoribus, ut sagittarii nostra pro ripa dispositi abscederent postulat, et postquam digressi, unde ea deformitas oris interrogat fratrem. illo locum et proelium referente, quodnam praemium recepisset exquirit. Flavus aucta stipendia, torquem et coronam aliaque militaria dona memorat, inridente Arminio vilia servitii pretia*
>
> The River Visurgis flowed between the Romans and Cherusci. On its bank with the other chiefs stood Arminius, and, having asked whether Caesar had arrived, and received the reply that he was present, he begged that he be allowed a dialogue with his brother. The latter was in the army, with the name Flavus, and was distinguished for his loyalty and having lost an eye to a wound a few years before under the leadership of Tiberius. At that moment he came forward with permission and was hailed by Arminius, who, dismissing his attendants, asked that the archers deployed along our bank should move back; and, after they had withdrawn, he questioned his brother on the origin of his facial disfigurement. As the other repeated the occasion and battle, he inquired what reward he had received. Flavus recalled his increased wages, his torque and crown, and other military rewards, to Arminus' derision of the cheap price of servitude.[225]

There are several important points here for understanding the rewards of soldiers, leadership, and how the connection between giving and receiving awards affected important Roman institutions. First, however, a word on Flavus' position in the Roman army. While Arminius, having received citizenship, took to subverting Roman rule as attested by his role in the Varian

[225] Translation is Woodman (2004).

disaster, Flavus fought in the *auxilia*, received citizenship, and fought against his brother and native people. Flavus' appearance at the Wester compels us to consider issues of naturalization and, in particular, how foreigners became Romans through service in the army. Thus, while Flavus does not represent an *Italian* Roman, he represents well the kinds of soldiers that made up the bulk of the Roman army as it moved further away from using Italian Romans and closer to relying solely on provincials. In that sense, Flavus is a perfect example of the kind of soldier that Rome relied on for its success, and that means that what Tacitus has to say about Flavus and his participation in the reward system of the military is worth considering in detail.

Tacitus describes Flavus as distinguished, *insignis*, for his loyalty and having received a gruesome wound under the leadership of Tiberius: *duce Tiberio*. This becomes important after Flavus lists his rewards of service at the end of the section. In one sense, Flavus attempts to boast of his experience under the current *princeps*, solidifying his position as a Roman soldier. Dylan Sailor, in his recent analysis of the scene, reads the encounter between the brothers as a recreation of a historiographical duel scene, invoking exemplary scenes from Livy.[226] Particularly relevant to this discussion is Sailor's suggestion that Flavus attempts to identify as a Roman: "Flavus is trying to be an exemplary Roman soldier, and Tacitus casts his effort as an attempt to enact a duel scene in which he is the Roman hero." Arminius himself attempts to incite Flavus to bring to bear his Roman identity by asking him about how he got his wound.[227] Immediately upon hearing how Flavus received the wound, Arminus asks him what reward he

[226] Sailor (2019).
[227] What could be more Roman than, having been wounded in battle, bearing those wounds to an audience?

received: *quodnam praemium recepisset exquirit*. In Arminius' mind, a soldier who sacrifices himself in battle should receive a worthy reward.

Flavus uses this opportunity to list his military rewards, almost boastful in his rhetoric, but Arminius' response was less than enthusiastic: *Flavus aucta stipendia, torquem et coronam aliaque militaria dona memorat, inridente Arminio vilia servitii pretia* ("Flavus recounted increased pay, the torque, the crown, and other military rewards, while Arminius mocked the worthless rewards of his servitude"). This highly crafted scene in Tacitus' narrative suddenly gets even more ornate. We know that pay for soldiers did not increase under Tiberius. Likewise, we know that the *corona* was one of the hardest military achievements to acquire and almost impossible for a non-elite. That is, if the *corona* was any version but the *corona civica*, which was available to achieve for any Roman soldier of any class. All they had to do was save the life of a Roman citizen.[228] Thus, if Flavus was actually awarded the *corona civica*, his boast of earning that important distinction also says to his brother: not only do I consider myself Roman, but I save Roman lives. Lastly, the *torquis* was, in origin, stripped from the bodies of non-Romans, like the Gauls, who wore the *torquis* as part of their garb. Its position in this list of other hyperbolic military rewards pushes us further in the direction of understanding the scene as a dichotomy between Roman and non-Roman.

These rewards, according to Arminius, were merely tokens of his brother's servitude. I suggest we might think of this last phrase in connection with Tacitus' original description of Flavus as having served under Tiberius: *duce Tiberio*. We can assume that Flavus either received

[228] Maxfield (1981: 70) goes into more detail on the other necessary components of acquiring the *corona civica*.

some of these rewards directly from Tiberius, the future *princeps*, or from other generals while Tiberius was *princeps*. Receiving these military rewards meant that he was Roman, which is what the two brothers seem to be contending. Arminius sees the point, perhaps before the reader does, namely that by receiving military rewards of the kind which he does, and boasting about them, Flavus acts the part of the effective soldier under the effective general Tiberius – a snapshot of what a functional military reward system looks like. Arminius mocks his brother precisely because this system was so integral to what it meant to be Roman that Flavus' exemplary participation in it meant that he was Roman, and thus a slave. If Flavus failed to receive the awards, let alone boast about them to his own family that he betrayed, Arminius might have been less inclined to reference his brother's servitude.[229] Despite this, Arminius has a point. From his perspective, as Dylan Sailor has noted, Flavus gave up his independence to obey the commands of the *princeps*. This was the kind of servitude against which Arminius was fundamentally opposed.[230]

There is no doubt that Tacitus marked this passage for his readers.[231] Others have offered readings, but none have tried to parse why it was important for Flavus to list his military decorations beyond their importance to show just how Roman he was. The rewards

[229] I would be remiss if I did not at least mention *Annales* 2.10, the conclusion of the fraternal debate between Arminius and Flavus. The two get heated, have words, and Flavus even prepares to cross the river to fight his brother. Nothing comes of the scene after this.

[230] Sailor (2019: 89), "For him [Arminius], these "honors" when bestowed on a Cheruscan can only indicate disgrace, since they are won by surrendering independence and obeying Rome's emperor. What goes for the honors goes for the wound as well. We, and Flavus, began by thinking of his injury as an embodiment of his soldierly *fides* to Rome; in Arminius' account, however, Flavus is not a Roman soldier but a Cheruscan obeying Roman commands, and his wound an index of servility."

[231] As Sailor (2019) most recently argued, the passage has echoes of Livian duel scenes and invites the reader to make connections between Roman past and Roman present.

themselves, perhaps not historically accurate for the individual, connect Flavus to his commander, which Tacitus has clearly marked as Tiberius, *duce Tiberio*. Flavus won those awards under Tiberius *at a time before the present* because Tiberius was, during the argument at the Weser, the current *princeps*. Tacitus' representation of Tiberius here shows a *princeps* functioning effectively as a military leader in the past. Tiberius kept the military reward system functioning properly by rewarding Flavus for his acts of bravery for the state and his continued service. This representation conflicts somewhat with how Tacitus portrays Tiberius at other times in the *Annales*. A common theme in Tacitus' characterization of Tiberius is his effort to put up a Republican, or at least an Augustan, façade. Tacitus uses military rewards such as *stipendia*, *torques*, and the *corona* to aid his characterization of Tiberius as having his leadership qualities affected by attaining the highest political position. Tiberius was, in the past, an effective military leader, but now, in the present, he remains out of the picture, confined to an ablative absolute, *duco Tiberio*. Flavus defends that system by his boastful rhetoric. He acts as a mouthpiece for how the military as an institution relied on the *dona militaria* to make soldiers feel important, while simultaneously making them feel Roman. Tacitus has Flavus work in conjunction with Tiberius to put forward the best possible case for Roman military *mores*. Arminius, on the other hand, sees the problems inherent in this system: lack of freedom. The argument between Arminius and Flavus was kindled by Flavus' boasting of his military rewards and was stoked by Arminius' critique of the system by which Flavus received those honors. If Tacitus' point in this scene is to draw out the complexities of what it means to be Roman, and the scene rests on the *dona militaria*, or what Arminius calls *vilia servitii pretia*, then we can

begin to see how the soldier-reward-leader connection plays a significant role in how Tacitus portrays the precarious nature of leadership under the Principate. For it is clearly the case here that Tiberius, the one who awarded Flavus in the first place, has now taken a back seat to such important military affairs. This, in turn, aligns with Tacitus' broader characterization of Tiberius as only feigning a return to the Republic, or upholding Augustan standards, and not actually embodying what stable leadership required. At least for Tiberius, putting up the façade was more successful than completely ignoring it, as his long reign over Rome attests.

The juxtaposition of *Annales* 2.9 and 3.21 shows that Tiberius was, in the past, the kind of leader who understood and participated in the military reward system of common soldiers, as Flavus himself attested. Tiberius' personal characteristics are magnified by his advancement to *princeps*. His feigned annoyance at being involved in the awarding of military honors shows that whatever kind of stability Tiberius perpetuated as a military general has disappeared on the surface. Tacitus' characterization of Tiberius as such makes his leadership even more precarious in comparison to Augustus, whose generous and effective relationship with the soldiers colors Tiberius' military disappointments.[232]

A quick detour into Tacitus' characterization of Tiberius may be useful for the points made above. Tacitus begins this characterization of Tiberius at the outset of his succession in *Annales* 1.6, where not only does Tacitus tell us about the first crime of the new Principate (*primum facinus novi principatus*) but also that this crime was done following the instructions of

[232] Tiberius attempted to consolidate Roman power by stopping foreign conquests. His previous military experiences and success went to the wayside as he grappled with the power of being *princeps*.

Augustus (*patris iussa simulabat*). Tacitus characterizes Tiberius as concerned, above all, about keeping the appearance of Republican values and institutions. Shortly after this, in *Annales* 1.7, Tacitus says the following about Tiberius' succession:

> *Sex. Pompeius et Sex. Appuleius consules primi in verba Tiberii Caesaris iuravere, apudque eos Seius Strabo et C. Turranius, ille praetoriarum cohortium praefectus, hic annonae; mox senatus milesque et populus. Nam Tiberius cuncta per consules incipiebat tamquam vetere re publica et ambiguus imperandi: ne edictum quidem, quo patres in curiam vocabat, nisi tribuniciae potestatis praescriptione posuit sub Augusto acceptae.*
>
> Sextus Pompeius and Sextus Appuleius as consuls were the first to swear allegiance to Tiberius Caesar, and in their presence Seius Strabo and C. Turranius, the former being prefect of the praetorian cohorts, the latter of the food supply; next came the senate, soldiery, and people. For, in fact, Tiberius initiated everything through the consuls, as though it were the old Republic; and, being ambivalent about commanding, even when he posted the edict by which he summoned the fathers to the curia, he headed it only with the tribunician power received under Augustus.

Everything starts with the consuls for Tiberius. They are the first to swear allegiance to Tiberius, in the first sentence of the section. Yet, by Tiberius being the grammatical subject of *incipiebat*, Tacitus makes Tiberius the one who arranged for the consuls to swear first. Everyone, including the soldiers, swore this way because Tiberius planned it. Doing it this way, consuls first, also creates a façade for Tiberius, namely that he was acting in accordance with Republican tradition. Tiberius, according to Tacitus, understood the importance of upholding the appearance of Republican traditions – a powerful political move on his part. Tacitus bolsters Tiberius' play-acting by suggesting that it was as if he was *ambiguus imperandi*. Yet, this phrase depends on *tamquam*. Tacitus once again highlights Tiberius' disingenuousness. Tiberius was, on the surface, mindful of Republican traditions and institutions, but under the

surface was willingly taking on the role of *princeps*. This character element of Tiberius, as I attempted to argue above, comes through the scenes in both *Annales* 2.9 and 3.21, primarily through the military reward system of low-ranking soldiers. If these readings can be sustained, then we must consider what role the military awards of common soldiers play in Tacitus' overall depiction of military leadership under the Principate.

To this point we have only considered the connection between soldiers, rewards, and leaders in the Tiberian hexad. Tacitus also uses this connection in the *Histories*. In this text, however, common soldiers and their rewards become a site of realization about the complexities and destructive nature of civil war. The *dona militaria* were given to Roman soldiers for courage in battle against non-Romans, and so the traditional mode of winning distinction for soldiers becomes unattainable. This long-standing Roman institution of rewarding soldiers for proper behavior in battle deteriorates in the civil wars of 69. Additionally, one of the ways in which soldiers were rewarded outside of battle was the *donativa*, which also plays a significant role in Tacitus' characterization of how leaders and individuals handled the need for rewarding soldiers. For it was certainly the case that the leader who managed the soldier-reward-leader connection, even during civil war, was the one that came out on top.

The chaos of 69 AD was based almost entirely on the relationship between leaders and soldiers.[233] Tacitus structures his narrative of this chaos around the successes and failures of

[233] Rhiannon Ash's (1998) work in this area remains indispensable on the issue of Tacitean characterization of leaders and soldiers in the *Histories*.

leaders attempting to adhere or diverge from normal Roman institutions. This point has been made by Ash and others.[234] My analysis of this issue in the *Histories* merely adds to what is already a well-established reading of the text. Ash, for instance, shows through close readings and analysis of the various emperors in the *Histories* that the qualities of each *princeps* trickle down to the troops. My addition to the conversation is that the personal characteristics of each *princeps* affect the troops specifically by their continuation or divergence from traditional modes of rewarding soldiers. These character flaws, or strengths, serve Tacitus' main point: the relationship between the *princeps* and the soldiers can be unstable under the Principate because of the personal characteristics of powerful individuals. This, in turn, suggests that it was important for leaders to recognize the importance of rewarding soldiers, in whatever way they could, in order to stabilize power.

The *Histories* begins shortly after Galba's violent acquisition of power and the start of his short-lived reign; this is followed quickly by Otho's takeover. Both reigns are situated in the city of Rome and often the soldiers involved in their narratives are the praetorians, not the legions. For that reason, I pass over their narratives for the time being to explore Vitellius and Vespasian in more depth.

Tacitus rarely mentions Vitellius in the first half of book one. His absence until *Histories* 1.50 might have surprised Tacitus' ancient audience.[235] The lack of a Vitellian appearance to this point, as Ash has argued, serves Tacitus' characterization of Vitellius as an

[234] Ash (1998), Master (2016).
[235] See Ash (1998: 105-125).

impotent and unnoteworthy leader – a slight twist on the kinds of characterizations of Vitellius in other ancient works.[236] Tacitus' Vitellius was not a *princeps* who made aggressive moves to acquire power by relying on his relationship with the troops. He was a passive figurehead that got swept up in the frenzy of the legions in Lower Germany. His impotent and lazy personal characteristics, as Ash has pointed out, deteriorated the soldiers' military capabilities. Tacitus lays down the groundwork for this characterization starting in *Histories* 1.51:

> *nunc initia causasque motus Vitelliani expediam. caeso cum omnibus copiis Iulio Vindice ferox praeda gloriaque exercitus, ut cui sine labore ac periculo ditissimi belli victoria evenisset, expeditionem et aciem, praemia quam stipendia malebat. diu infructuosam et asperam militiam toleraverant ingenio loci caelique et severitate disciplinae, quam in pace inexorabilem discordiae civium resolvunt, paratis utrimque corruptoribus et perfidia impunita.*
>
> I will not explain the origin and causes of the uprising of Vitellius. After the destruction of Julius Vindex and his entire force, the Roman army had acquired a taste for loot and glory. This was only natural, for without exertion or danger it had won a war that had been extremely profitable. The men now preferred campaigns and set battles, and the rewards of war rather than their normal pay. They had long endured harsh and unrewarding service in an uncongenial area and climate, under strict discipline. Yet discipline, however inflexible in peacetime, is relaxed in civil conflicts, where agents are ready to encourage disloyalty on either side, and treachery goes unpunished.

This new desire for *praeda* and *gloria* as opposed to the normal payment of *stipendia* suggests the soldiers have turned away from the traditional modes of reward.[237] They have turned to a more

[236] Ash in particular relies on the characterizations of Vitellius in Suetonius and Plutarch.
[237] Master (2016: 137-8) suggests that *Histories* 1.51 turns away from the traditional modes of annalistic history by turning the customary *res externae* of the tradition to the story of Vitellius' revolt, which is both external from Rome, but about Romans and civil war: "The core issue is the blurring of the civil war and the foreign war. The narrator blends the two wars to establish, on the structural level, the narrative conceit that Vitellius and his legions occupy a strange space – not Roman, but not foreign either. They appear hybrid."

violent and greed-driven method to acquire what they feel they deserve.[238] It was not only the profitable rewards of defeating Vindex, but it was also that they felt undervalued from the start: *diu infructuosam et asperam militiam toleraverant*. Tacitus adds clarification to these statements: civil war caused havoc on traditional institutions. Discipline was relaxed, disloyalty was rewarded, and treachery goes unpunished in civil war. Not only were things like discipline and loyalty under fire, but so was the reward system of soldiers, as the entire section up to that point attests. What ends with a statement on the dangers of civil war began with a statement about Vitellius: *nunc initia causasque motus Vitelliani expediam*. We might, therefore, make a connection in our reading between Vitellius as a leader and the problems that stem from civil war, one of which, as *Histories* 1.51 shows, was the ways in which soldiers were rewarded.[239]

Tacitus has also juxtaposed *praeda* with the aristocratic *gloria*, perhaps to signal his readers to pay attention to the military rewards ahead, both the ones gained from pillaging and the ones gained from more traditional means.[240] The soldiers themselves prefer these more immediate rewards than the usually delayed installments of payment: *praemia quam stipendia malebat*. It is not surprising to see *ferox praeda* in first position after the initial ablative absolute, since rewarding Vitellian soldiers with license to acquire *praeda* would become the status quo. It was Valens and Caecina, the two Vitellian generals, that tended to resort to this tactic.

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[238] See Rich (1993) contra Harris (1979: 74-6) as well as Momigliano (1958) and Finley (1986) on the financial incentives of war in ancient Rome. On the spoils of war (*praeda* and *manubiae*) more generally see Millar (1963), Shatzman (1971), Harris (1979: 75), and Ziolkowski (1993), and Gilliver (1996). See also Polybius 10.15.4-16 on the distribution of spoils after a battle.

[239] For spoils of war (*praeda*) in civil war see Campbell (1984: 366-7) and (2002: 80-81).

[240] I discuss *gloria* briefly at the end of the chapter, but consider this reward more or less strictly aristocratic. Sometimes Tacitus tells us that entire legions fight for *gloria* (*Agricola* 26), but *gloria* usually appears in contexts of aristocratic military achievement.

Vitellius himself was somewhat ignorant of what went on in the field under his own name. Tacitus remarks that Vitellius does not even know his soldiers were victorious at the first battle of Cremona.[241] In *Histories* 1.51, Tacitus sets up Vitellius' movement, and short reign as *princeps*, to be a place in which important Roman institutions, like traditional modes of rewarding soldiers, become increasingly problematic. This was not only because Rome was in civil war, but because Vitellius himself lacked the qualities that would make an effective *princeps*.

The soldiers' desire for *praeda* also acts as a rejection of the *dona militaria*. By desiring spoils of war, the soldiers are thereby giving up on the normal pathway to acquiring more legitimate military rewards. This rejection of the normal system of military rewards plays a role in Tacitus' broader characterization of Vitellius as an impotent and lazy leader; under Vitellius, the easy way out becomes the norm. Tacitus even tells us specifically that the soldiers willingly hand over their hard earned *dona* to Vitellius himself in order to show their support for his campaign (*Histories* 1.57):

> *nec principes modo coloniarum aut castrorum, quibus praesentia ex affluenti et parta victoria magnae spes, sed manipuli quoque et gregarius miles viatica sua et balteos phalerasque, insignia armorum argento decora, loco pecuniae tradebant, instinctu et impetu et avaritia*
>
> Not only the chief men of the colonies and camps who had present wealth in abundance and great hopes should they secure a victory, but also whole companies and common soldiers, prompted by excitement and enthusiasm and also by greed, contributed their own spending money, or in place of money their belts and bosses, and the decorations of their armor adorned with silver.

[241] Tacitus *Histories* 2.57.

Tacitus again clearly marks these soldiers as legionaries: *gregarius miles*. The *balteos* was worn by common soldiers from the left shoulder to the right hip and carried the sword, an important ideological symbol for the Roman soldier.[242] Tacitus has paired the *balteos* with the *phalerae* by inclusion of the enclitic *-que*. The *phalerae*, as discussed previously, held immense ideological value for the *princeps* and the soldier. By pairing the *balteos* with the *phaleras*, Tacitus pairs their ideological importance. More importantly for our discussion are the *insignia* that these soldiers willingly hand over to Vitellius to support his claim for power. Relinquishing the *insignia* back to the potential *princeps* is a reversal of the normal operation of awarding military honors, which come from the top and are given to those on the bottom. This, in turn, neatly picks up on the point Tacitus made at the outset of his Vitellian narrative in *Histories* 1.50, namely that soldiers under Vitellius do not prefer traditional modes of earning military rewards.

Vitellius' entrance into Rome was marked by common soldiers and their *dona*.[243] Upon his entrance to Rome, Vitellius lines up his troops to make a show for the people of Rome. Behind the centurions, the common soldiers made their appearance (*Histories* 2.89): *militum phalerae torquesque splendebant: decora facies et non Vitellio principe dignus exercitus* ("The medals and torques of the soldiers were shining: it was a noble sight an army that deserved a better *princeps* than Vitellius"). Tacitus again puts the soldiers, their military rewards, and Vitellius in conversation with each other. The *adventus* scene has the soldiers displaying their awards, as opposed to giving them away as they did in *Histories* 1.57, but it is not hard to imagine why

[242] Chilver (1979: 118).
[243] For the *adventus* topos see Ash (2007: 348), Oakley (2005: 100-3), Woodman (1977: 130-6), Weinstock (1971: 289-339), and Pearce (1970: 313-16).

Vitellius might take seriously the image he projected to the Roman people, specifically the image of his connection with the troops. Tacitus' point regarding the quality of Vitellius as a leader becomes more forceful when we recall that Vitellius' soldiers already gave up some of their *dona*, when Vitellius' movement was still in its early stages. The soldiers may have earned more *dona* at Cremona. This would indicate that Vitellian soldiers received *dona militaria*, awards for Roman soldiers who fought bravely against non-Romans. That would certainly make Tacitus' point about the soldiers deserving a better *princeps*. It may also be that Tacitus simply uses a type scene on Vitellius' entrance to juxtapose an effective army with an ineffective leader. Either way, Vitellius' incompetence stands out, particularly in his relationship with the troops. Additionally, Vitellius' incompetence stands out earlier in the scene when his knowledge of Roman customs almost admits him to commit a huge faux pas. As he was attempting to ride into Rome on horseback, Vitellius was dressed in full military garb. His advisors warn him against this, for entering the city of Rome wearing the *paludamentum* would have marked him as a conqueror.[244] This highlights Vitellius' ignorance of Roman institutions.

This scene gains even more importance when we look at what happens to the soldiers during their stay in Rome. When the soldiers leave to fight the Flavians, Vitellius' effect on them has destroyed any semblance of military worth. The troops gave up their *dona militaria*, representations of the traditional Roman institution of rewarding soldiers, for the *praeda* and

[244] On the *paludatus* as marker of conquerer see Ash (2007: 348), citing Marshall (1984: 122); See also Master (2016: 176) on the implications of Vitellius' mistake for Tacitus depiction of Vitellius and his soldiers as neither Roman nor non-Roman, but some type of hybrid.

spoils of war back in *Histories* 1.51. Since that moment, the soldiers began a steep decline into the antithesis of a Roman soldier. Vitellius' personal qualities affected his soldiers to the point that when they finally left Rome, they looked nothing like Roman soldiers (*Histories* 2.99):

> *Longe alia proficiscentis ex urbe Germanici exercitus species: non vigor corporibus, non ardor animis; lentum et rarum agmen, fluxa arma, segnes equi; impatiens solis pulveris tempestatum, quantumque hebes ad sustinendum laborem miles, tanto ad discordias promptior*
>
> The appearance of the German army as it left Rome was vastly different from before. There was no physical vigor, no passion in their hearts; the column was slow and straggling, their weapons were being carried anyway they liked, their horses were sluggish. The soldiers could not endure sun, dust, or hot weather, and as their ability to put up with hard work was blunted, so their readiness for making trouble grew

Vitellius' passitivty and indulgence to allow his soldiers such license has turned them into the antithesis of the soldiers that entered Rome with him in *Histories* 2.89. Tacitus suggests, then, that Vitellius' instability and passivity has destroyed the soldier-reward-leader connection. This point carefully ties into the remark Tacitus makes in *Histories* 1.50, before he introduces Vitellius' narrative proper, on the kinds of leaders that were Vitellius and Otho (*Histories* 1.50): *tum duos omnium mortalium impudicitia ignavia luxuria deterrimos velut ad perdendum imperium fataliter electos* ("Here then were the two most despicable men in the entire world by reason of their unclean, idle, and pleasure-loving lives, apparently appointed by fate to destroy the empire"). Vitellius' personal characteristics were appointed by Fate to destroy the empire. One of the ways in which he does that was by not recognizing the importance of his relationship the soldiers and how to reward them in such a way so as to get the best out of them.

When it comes to Vespasian – and the Flavian generals who do most of his military work – there is even more of an emphasis by Tacitus on the hunger for *praeda*. One of the most gruesome scenes in the *Histories* occurs after the Flavians, under the command of Antonius Primus, defeat the Vitellians at Bedriacum. Primus then allows the Flavian soldiers to rape and pillage the city and its inhabitants. To suggest that that this would be considered a reward for military action would be to stretch too far the meaning of the word, but the *stipendia* which soldiers received was notoriously low, and so in that sense, the *praeda* may be seen as a kind of remuneration under civil war. It must have been the case that awarding Roman soldiers for their actions in battle *against other Romans* was entirely looked down upon. Yet, the soldiers must be paid for their service in some way. This lies at the heart of why we see such greed, plunder, and license from the soldiers in the *Histories*. Sometimes they operate as a collective and on a whim, but they are also frequently managed by effective leaders. One such leader was Antonius Primus. He may be, in Tacitus' representation, almost entirely credited with the Flavian victory at Bedriacum and thus the successful push into northern Italy and the effective maneuver to cut off Vitellian supporters coming down from Germany. These were the first instrumental moves toward a Flavian victory. The importance of leaders in situations like civil war still reign supreme, no matter how stable or unstable the political situation.

Antonius Primus puts his leadership on full display when some of his soldiers turn mutinous before the Flavian attack on Cremona. In *Histories* 3.10, Primus attempts to quell the rising anger of the soldiers by attempting a bold move: *opposuit sinum Antonius stricto ferro, aut militum se manibus aut suis moriturum obtestans, ut quemque notum et aliquo militari decore insignem*

aspexerat, ad ferendam opem nomine ciens ("Antonius drew his sword and pointed it at his breast, declaring that he would die by his soldiers' hands or by his own; at the same time he called by name to his assistance every soldier in sight whom he knew or who had some military decoration").[245] Aside from the theatrics, Primus makes a strong move by recognizing his soldiers by their military achievement. Kenneth Wellesley makes a connection between the *aliquo militari decore* here and the list of *dona militaria* that the soldiers relinquish to Vitellius in *Histories* 1.57.[246] It seems to be the case that soldiers certainly valued military rewards like the *dona militaria* to some extent.[247] Recognition of their achievements, and calling them by name, calms down the soldiers for the time being. Primus' ability to recognize the soldiers' achievements proves to be both a sign of Primus' understanding of what the soldiers need and a step towards victory at Bedriacum because recognition of that need led to controlling the soldiers' anger.

After Primus and the Flavians are victorious at Bedriacum, the soldiers want a reward for their hard work and see the city of Cremona primed for a night raid. Tacitus says that soldiers were publicly suggesting they continue on to Cremona to secure the surrender of the enemy, while secretly they were thinking to themselves that a city in such a situation could be stormed and looted, particularly since nighttime was upon them. The difference between night and day turns out to be a significant one for how Primus resolves the soldiers' desire for plundering. Tacitus describes the soldiers' internal monologue as follow (*Histories* 3.19):

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[245] The parallels between the actions of Primus here and the actions of Germanicus attempting to quell the rebellious soldiers during the revolt in Germany are striking.
[246] Wellesley (1972: 90); Tacitus *Histories* 1.57: *balteos phalerasque insigni armorum argento decora*.
[247] To be explored below by analysis of the *dona militaria* on the epitaphs of common soldiers.

> *quod si lucem opperiantur, iam pacem, iam preces, et pro labore ac vulneribus clementiam et gloriam, inania, laturos, sed opes Cremonensium in sinu praefectorum legatorumque fore. Expugnatae urbis praedam ad militem, deditae ad duces pertinere.*
>
> If, however, they waited until light, there would be peace terms and appeals for mercy, and in return for all their work and wounds, the only recompense would be the useless glory of having granted clemency, while the riches of Cremona would be pocketed by the auxiliary and legionary commanders.

The soldiers then indicate that if they are not allowed on to Cremona, they will mutiny. Primus attempts to mollify their emotions by giving an impassioned speech on the roles of soldiers and leaders in war (*Histories* 3.20):

> *tum Antonius inserens se manipulis, ubi aspectu et auctoritate silentium fecerat, non se decus neque pretium eripere tam bene meritis adfirmabat, sed divisa inter exercitum ducesque munia: militibus cupidinem pugnandi convenire, duces providendo, consultando, cunctatione saepius quam temeritate prodesse*
>
> Then Antonius pushed his way into the thick of the companies. When his appearance and prestige had secured silence, he assured them that he had no intention of robbing such deserving troops of credit or reward, but added that commanders and men had different functions to perform. A fighting spirit was excellent in soldiers, but commanders more often rendered service by deliberation and caution than by recklessness.

Standing among the legions, Primus' first rhetorical move plays on the importance of honor (*decus*) and rewards (*pretium*) to deserving (*meritis*) soldiers. He understands that being stingy with giving the soldiers what they are owed is the quickest way to mutiny. In a show of his rhetorical literacy, Primus moves the conversation away from the immediate rewards of their hard-fought battle to a loftier topic: the functions of leaders and soldiers in a properly run army. His rhetorical ploy works to a certain extent. The soldiers are mollified by his arguments and disperse, until they hear rumors of a rapidly approaching Vitellian force coming to save

their own stranded inside of Cremona. It was this, as Tacitus notes, that was the final straw in accepting Primus' words of advice.[248] Ultimately, the Flavians take Cremona and as Primus takes his leave to the baths, the soldiers engage in sacking the city.[249]

Tacitus' characterization of Primus stands as a critical element of the *Histories*, primarily because he, not Vespasian, was the more forceful military leader. At times, Primus successfully navigated the soldier-reward-leader connection (*Histories* 3.10, 3.60). Other times, he may have let things go too far (*Histories* 3.33 ff). This makes clear that no matter how strong a relationship there is between a general and a soldier, the individual may not always be able to overcome the collective power and desires of the soldiers.[250] Yet, this does not take away at all from Primus' ability to control his troops, as flawed as he may have been after the civil wars ended – his impact on Flavian success was second to none.[251]

Perhaps more than anything, what the *Histories* tell us about the relationship between leaders, soldiers, and rewards, is that traditional modes of rewarding soldiers undergoe a kind of crisis in civil war. The *dona militaria* do not appear in either the Vitellian or the Flavian narratives as a reward for service or bravery. Their appearance was symbolic of the destruction of the traditional modes of awarding soldiers, as the scene in *Histories* 1.57 attests. Leaders were unable to reward soldiers with *dona* in the *Histories* because these soldiers are always fighting

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[248] Tacitus *Histories* 3.21.
[249] It was a common literary conventional in Latin historiography, and Latin literature in general, to describe the sacks of cities (cf. Sallust *BC* 51.9, Livy 21.51.1, 29.17.15, Vergil *Aeneid* 2). This tradition may stem from one element of Rome's origin myth, the sack of Troy.
[250] Some soldiers go so far as to request rewards for killing their own family members (*Histories* 3.50), a gruesome request, but appropriate for representing the gruesome nature of civil war.
[251] Ash (1998: 162).

Romans. Several of the *dona militaria*, such as the *torques* and the *armillae*, were the kinds of spoils a Roman would take from a Gaul, or some other non-Roman. Leaders during civil war might be wary of the implication of rewarding their own soldiers with these kinds of items, since it ultimately means that they consider the enemy force to be non-Roman. For any of the four *principes* in 69 AD, convincing the conquered troops to fight for you would have been a top priority, and therefore adhering to the traditional modes of rewarding soldiers does more harm than good. This may also be why the soldiers outside of Cremona lament the empty nature of *gloria*. They know they cannot actually acquire *gloria* because they are fighting against Romans. In this sense, we might also recall the examples of the *dona militaria* in the *Annales*, where they always occur in situations involved in Roman identity vis-à-vis non-Romans.

Vitellians and Flavians have an appetite for the spoils of war (*praeda*) more than traditional modes of military reward and remuneration, such as the *dona militaria*, *gloria*, and *stipendia*. The soldiers may have had a point in desiring more than what they were being paid.[252] Likewise, traditional modes of rewarding military achievement such as the *dona militaria* or *gloria* were significantly hindered during the civil war. The civil wars of 69 AD were themselves a byproduct of unstable leadership and that instability continually develops through the narrative by certain leaders' effective or ineffective engagement with the important connection between soldiers, rewards, and their leaders. This contrasts nicely with the more traditional *dona militaria* that Tacitus highlighted at key moments in the *Annales*, specifically in military contests between Romans and non-Romans and where the building blocks of Roman

[252] Their *stipendia* did not increase from the time of Tiberius to the time of Domitian.

identity were at stake. The circumstances of war, either foreign or civil, thus play a role in how leaders reward soldiers. Individual leaders navigate those circumstances their own way, in part based on their natural characteristics as a leader. So you have figures like Antonius Primus, whose leadership saw the pillage and destruction of Cremona, but whose decisions to allow such license led to the establishment of the Flavian regime. In hindsight, Tacitus can discuss the implications of Flavian victory, but he cannot deny that Flavian victory ended the civil wars and allowed Roman to focus, again, on its external enemies. In this way, a return to more traditional modes of military reward were just on the horizon.

Imperial Remuneration: The *donativa*

By the time Tacitus was writing, the *donativa* had become a customary gift of money to soldiers upon the succession of a new *princeps*.[253] In the Republic, *donativa* were little more than rewards handed out to soldiers for successful military campaigns.[254] Money, it seems, was not the sole focus for soldiers during this period in Rome's history. That was, at least until the late Republic, when soldiers began to demand more money with success.[255] From that point on we

[253] Cf. the definition in the *OLD*, "a sum of money given as a gratuity to each soldier by the Roman emperor on an occasion of public rejoicing."
[254] Brunt (1962: 77).
[255] Chrissanthos (1999) looks at mutinies in the Republic and their associated reasons. Soldiers did not mutiny primarily for purposes of money until the later Republic, when a correlation between purpose and success becomes relevant. The successful mutinies were predicated on pay (*stipendia*), loot (*praeda*), and bonuses (*donativa*), and all happened during the years 55 – 44 BC.

see a gradual increase in reliance on the *donativa* to symbolize the connection between the *princeps* and the soldiers. It was likely the case that emperors saw little of the troops outside of Rome in the 1st century AD. This meant that soldiers relied more on the relationship to local commanders, but the symbolic relationship with the *princeps* remained steady and integral for the stabilization of power. Sara Phang summarizes the symbolic necessity of the *donativa* on the relationship between the *princeps* and the soldiers: "Emperors could routinize *donativa* in value-rational terms, associating them with the symbolic order of honors rather than the material order of sordid gain."[256] In other word, the use of the *donativa* as reward for service and not as a bribe for military support, allowed for the stabilization of power. Should a *princeps* abuse, or disregard, that symbolic connection between the soldier and their leaders, this usually led to disruption in the military system. The use of the *donativa* in this way originated with Augustus, and Tacitus himself points this out to us early in the *Annales*. Tacitus points to a watershed moment in the formulation of the *donativa* as symbolic reward when his describes Augustus' move to consolidate power (*Annales* 1.2):

> *posito triumviri nomine, consulem se ferens et ad tuendam plebem tribunicio iure contentum, ubi militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit, insurgere paulatim, munia senatus, magistratuum, legum in se trahere*
>
> Putting aside the name of triumvir, he presented himself as consul and as content with his tribunician prerogative for protecting the plebs; but, when he had enticed the soldiery with gifts, the people with food, and everyone with the sweetness of inactivity, he gradually increased his power and drew to himself the responsibilities of senate, magistrates, and laws.

[256] Phang (2008: 154-55).

Augustus' gift to the soldiers was among a number of political moves that Augustus made to consolidate power. This began a long and complicated process of emperors paying soldiers, which in turn provided the foundation for the expected *donativa* from a new *princeps* upon their succession. As discussed above, Tiberius struggled navigating the complicated waters of post-Augustan military affairs, in part because Augustus may have given the soldiers an additional *donativa* on his death, as indicated in Augustus' *Res Gestae*.[257] The history of the *donativa* between Tiberius and Nero is murky, because *Annales* 6-11 do not survive. It is not until Tacitus' narration of Nero's succession that we get confirmation of the *donativa* tradition. Nero says that he will pay the soldiers upon his succession, like his father Claudius.[258] Campbell summarizes the final stage of the transition of the *donativa*: "The payment to the troops at the start of the reign became now virtually an obligation, not a gift, and tied the emperor more closely to the support of the army."[259] While the *Annales* gives us some insight into the foundation of the *donativa* as an imperial institution, Tacitus explores its consequences in much more depth in the *Histories*. It seems that the civil wars of 69 AD began, in part, because Galba refused to adhere to this new imperial institution.

The *donativa* occurred primarily on the succession of a new *princeps*. For that reason, there are few examples of it in Tacitus, but most occur in the *Histories*, where we have four chances to see how Tacitus colors it. Galba was, according to Tacitus, a rather stingy leader,

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[257] Augustus *Res Gestae* 15-24.
[258] For the role of donatives and the relationships between Julio-Claudian rulers and their subjects see Roller (2001: 174), Stäcker (2003: 389-97), Veyne (1990: 334-43), and Millar (1977: 195-6). Suetonius also helps us here when he says that Claudius was the first of the Caesar to resort to outright bribery for the allegiance of the soldiers; Suetonius *Claudius* 10.
[259] Campbell (1984: 187-88).

and his refusal to pay the praetorian guard and the urban cohort the expected *donativa* lead to serious consequences for his control. For it was Otho who played on the city soldiers' anger at the unpaid donative. Likewise, Galba's refusal to pay the donative had consequences for the soldiers in Germany who were expecting the donative as well. This led to the eventual rise of Vitellius. Tacitus makes it clear early in the *Histories* that the soldier-reward-leader relationship would be a central part of his narrative. Tacitus frequently mentions Galba's failure to secure the loyalty of the troops by giving them their expected donative.[260] Galba, as he gets stabbed to death by common soldiers, requests that he get one more day to pay the donative.

Vespasian and his commander Mucianus knew well the importance of paying the legions their donative. So, when the soldiers in the east swore allegiance to the Flavian, Vespasian gave them their donative, but made sure it was not extravagant (*Histories* 2.82): *donativum militi neque Mucianus prima contione nisi modice ostenderat, ne Vespasianus quidem plus civili bello obtulit quam alii in pace, egregie firmus adversus militarem largitionem eoque exercitu meliore* ("Mucianus had not shown the soldiers more than a modest donative at the initial assembly. Nor did Vespasian offer more in civil war than others have in times of peace; he was impressively and firmly opposed to bribing his soldiers, and therefore had a better army"). The text suggests that Vespasian and Mucianus have learned from their predecessors' mistakes. While others, like Ash, suggest that this passage has an implicit point of comparison between the bribery of the Vitellian army and the bribery seen here, I suggest that Tacitus also makes an implicit comparison between the characteristics of the leaders and how they navigate, what was

[260] *Histories* 1.5, 1.18, and most importantly, 1.41.

by this point, an established imperial tradition.[261] Vitellius rewarded his soldiers with license; this led to their deterioration into men who looked nothing like a Roman. Vespasian, on the other hand, was the kind of leader who would both give a little but require a lot; this led to a more efficient army, *exercitus melior*. A more efficient army led to Flavian victory and the establishment of stable power.

The *donativa* was one of the ways in which emperors could reward soldiers for swearing allegiance, and it is for that reason part of what I consider to be the larger military reward system for common soldiers of the empire. We can see here with just a few key examples that the personal characteristics and qualities of the individual *principes* has a profound impact on the soldier-reward-leader relationship. It was also the case that the *principes* were solely the ones responsible for engaging that relationship via the *donativa*, as lower ranked commanders were not allowed to hand out such symbolic gifts, lest they push their authority too close to that of the *princeps*.[262] Those who engage that system in a way that benefits all involved, both soldiers and leaders, end up stabilizing power in a way that those who misunderstood the relationship could not. This is one of the reasons why the Flavians turn out to be successful in the *Histories*.

The Material Record of the *dona militaria* of Common Soldiers

At the heart of the soldier-reward-leader relationship is recognition. Soldiers wanted to be recognized, either by their merely being a soldier or they wanted to be recognized for their

[261] Ash (2007: 322).
[262] See Phang (2008: 179-80), who also cites the *SC de Gn. Pisone Patre*, claiming that Piso had corrupted the soldiers by giving them donatives *in his name*; *SC de Gn. Pisone Patre* II.54-7.

individual efforts in battle. Recognition was at the heart of the *dona militaria*. Soldiers were being recognized for the ways in which they separated themselves from their fellow soldiers in legitimate ways. On the other hand, soldiers also valued their communal experience in the Roman Army, especially the system of ranks that allowed professional progression. So the corporate nature of the Roman army allowed any given soldier to participate in professional advancement as well as receive recognition for their individual contributions, which set them apart from the other soldiers. In fact, it was necessary for soldiers to separate themselves on the battlefield – breaking formation – to engage in forceful penetrations of the army to overcome stalled attacks. These were moments of individual distinction. This individuality, as Goldsworthy notes, has generally escaped the notice of scholars: "… this is perhaps because individual displays of this kind do not conform to the traditional view of the disciplined Roman soldier, whose strength lay in his ability to act as a group."[263] The *dona militaria* were the markers of this kind of individual distinction. The material record left behind by soldiers in the form of epitaphs attests that recognition from leaders was important to their identity as people and as Roman soldiers.[264]

There are two fundamental problems in looking for the *dona militaria* in the epitaphs of common soldiers and for these reasons I do not want to push this point too far. First, common soldiers were not as wealthy as some of their higher-ranking compatriots and so their

[263] Goldsworthy (1998: 264).

[264] Hope (2001) demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between individual identity and corporate identity by studying the funerary inscriptions of soldiers from the regions of Aquileia, Mainz, and Nimes. She points out that the standardization of military epitaphs reflects the standardization of the formulae used in the inscriptions themselves: "The shared and common elements of the epitaphs reflect the order and standardization of the military regime," (38).

epigraphic record looks sparse in comparison to some of the magnificent inscriptions we see. Second, the *dona militaria* are not meant for every soldier. They are by their very nature a reward for a select few individuals. We must take these points into consideration when looking for the *dona militaria* in the material record left behind by soldiers. For example, the soldiers' tombs we will look at below were not common soldiers at the time of their death, and speculation about where they began their military career would require too much imagination. The following examples are meant only to serve as some historical insight into the possible connection between soldiers, rewards, and leaders. They show us that, at least to some extent, soldiers valued the reward system and considered the rewards themselves markers of their own identity. It seems likely, then, that for a leader to understand this would be of real importance. Ignoring it, as we saw in Tacitus, could lead to instability.

Stele of Marcus Caelius, died 9 AD in the battle of Teutoburg forest.

A fruitful funerary epitaph to consider is that of the 1st century soldier, Marcus Caelius.[265] His burial marker memorializes his military achievements primarily through the

[265] See Kampen (2013: 180-197) for a recent discussion on the tombstone, particularly her comments on the peculiarities of using it due to its uniqueness. The uniqueness is less about his military representation and more about the inclusion of his freedmen, given that he died on the periphery of the empire.

sculptural relief that survives. The inscription itself sticks to the expected formula, although it does include the detail that he died in the Varian disaster. As mentioned above, Caelius was not a *gregarius miles* when he died, and not even a centurion, but a *primus pilus*, that is the senior centurion who commands multiple centuries. However, the rewards he is picture wearing here are rewards primarily given to soldiers *below* the rank of centurion and so Caelius must have been a *gregarius* at some point. He is pictured in the sculptural relief with the *corona civilis*, *torques*, *armillae*, and *phalerae*. It was clearly important for Caelius, or those who buried him, to include these military decorations as part of his identity. The tombstone speaks to his individuality primarily through the *dona militaria* because they are, like Caelius' tombstone, unique.

If we think back on Tacitus depiction of Arminius and Flavus at the Weser we might read that passage in a different way, in light of how soldiers themselves would have used such military decorations in their personal identity. Perhaps it is a coincidence that Caelius died at the hands of Arminius during the Varian disaster, but his use of the *dona militaria* to represent his identity mirrors that of Flavus. What Flavus viewed as markers of his Roman identity were the *dona* that he boasted about to his brother Arminius, who in turn felt those were indicators of his servitude. Based on Caelius' tombstone, we can see an element of Flavus' perspective in the material record.

Another example worth considering is a sculpted panel that was found in Augusta Emerita (modern Spain). It serves as a useful warning against the dangers of separating text from context when it comes to burial markers.[266] The text of the panel indicates that a man named Voconius had a family, all listed in the inscription – a wife, daughter, and a son. Nowhere in the inscription does it say that Voconius was a soldier. We may infer that because Augusta Emerita was a veteran colony founded by Augustus that Voconius may have been a soldier, but the text is not explicit.[267] Emerita was, coincidently, also mentioned by Tacitus in *Histories* 1.78. Otho wanted to obtain the support of the provinces and so sent more people to Emerita.[268] Coincidence aside, we know that Voconius was a soldier because the inscription's place of discovery (a veteran colony) as well as the sculptural relief around the inscription. The panel was decorated with images of the *dona militaria*, including *torques*, *armillae*, and *phalerae*. The *torques* and *armillae*, pictured on the left and right, above the inscription, are split in the middle by *phalerae* that are depicted still mounted on the harness

Tombstone panel of C. Voconius showing his torques, armillae, and phalerae (AE 2000, 691). Augusta Emerita, Spain. Museo de Arte Romano, Merida.

[266] Keppie (2003) and Speidel (2014) are used throughout in my discussion of the panel. See also
[267] Cassius Dio *Roman History* 53.26.1.
[268] Damon (2003: 255-6) says that Otho likely would likely have spent most of his eight years in Spain working out of Emerita and that sending new settlers to the colony meant that new revenue could be acquired by working land not previously cultivated.

that would drape over the breastplate. As Keppie notes, the panel does not survive in isolation, but was set into the external wall of a large tomb containing frescoes of the family members pictures in togas; nowhere in the frescoes are either the father or the son pictures in military garb: "The monument is a conspicuous testimony to social advancement: a veteran marries a local girl of non-Roman origin, and his son serves as a magistrate in the *colonia*."[269] The panel's inclusion of the *dona militaria* and the setting of the family's tomb in a veteran colony meant that the inscription need not provide those details. In the case of Voconius, the *dona militaria* were part of his identity. His family wanted people to remember him by those medals which represented the recognition he received while serving in the army. The *phalerae* acted as symbols of recognition, not just for the one displaying them (Voconius), but the one who may have awarded them or was possibly even pictured on them.[270] The face of the *princeps* was a common theme for the *phalerae*. These *phalerae* functioned as symbols of connection between soldiers and leaders and the appearance of this connection was important for the stabilization of power, as Ramsay MacMullen says, "Power depends in part on the appearance of it, on perception, on symbols and gestures."[271]

These examples are unique and should not be considered representative, necessarily, of a large trend in the ways that common soldiers dealt with self-representation or how they may have felt about recognition within the military. However, I think they do provide some valuable historical context for the system on which this chapter has focused: the military

[269] Keppie (2003: 45).
[270] Stäcker (2003: 160-66); Maxfield (1981: 213-17).
[271] MacMullen (1986: 518).

reward system of common soldiers. If we can say, based on these examples, that soldiers cared about their military careers and the rewards they earned in it, then we might use that information to contextualize Tacitus' depiction of the soldier-reward-leader relationship throughout his corpus. What Tacitus was representing, at its core, was the need for leaders to reward their soldiers properly, if they wanted to maintain a stable empire. That system, in turns out, was beneficial not only to the individuals in charge, but also for the soldiers who found real value in earning those rewards.

Conclusion

The personal qualities and characteristics of certain leaders affected the ways in which common soldiers were rewarded for their military bravery and service. By looking at a few key examples, we have seen that Tacitus' representation of the soldier-reward-leader connection was more than an attempt at historical accuracy, but an effort by the historian to suggest that the stability of power at Rome depended on that connection. Figures like Galba and Vitellius show us the ways in which an individual's personal characteristics undermine the reward system and lead to the destruction of Roman institutions and identity. Other characters like Tiberius and Antonius Primus find ways of navigating that system that, while unconventional, are appropriate for their own historical circumstances, whether Rome was at war with an enemy or with itself. Primus serves as an effective leader who keeps the balance of the soldier-reward-leader relationship in check and functional, although it was far from moral. Yet, he was successful in a way that others were not. His successes stemmed from his ability to control the

soldiers and his successes led to the establishment of the Flavian dynasty. Tacitus lays bare the realities of power, namely that under the Principate, power relied on the *princeps*, and his generals, to engage the soldier-reward-leader relationship in an effective manner. That relationship functioned on a system of rewards that was changing in real time. Ultimately, the reality of the military reward system in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD was its reliance on a single individual meant that power could simultaneously be stable, but always on the brink of failure.

Conclusion

This project set out to investigate the military values of legionary soldiers in Tacitus. As opposed to focusing on the non-citizen *auxilia*, or the aristocratically-biased interpretation of soldiers as an unruly mob, or even the moral characterization of soldiers (as influenced by their leaders), my questions were focused the military values that made the Roman military successful.[272] In the same way that we might say the Roman aristocracy had military values, such as *virtus*, I sought to explore the military values of the citizen *milites*. Among the many studies on Tacitus and his view, or representations, of soldiers, this project sought to view them through the lens of courage, endurance, and the rewards of military service. The attempted focus on these military values and systems makes this project different from these previous studies on soldiers in Tacitus most of which do not consider the extent to which military values played a role in Tacitus' representation of soldiers. Others, like Speidel, have attempted to ask and answer similar questions about the Imperial Roman army and its values more broadly, but from a more historical framework, and not necessarily within Tacitus.[273] While scholars like Speidel point out that Tacitus' representation of soldiers leaves little in the

[272] As cited before, studies on the *auxilia* including Master (2016) and Haynes (2013) are relevant for reading soldiers in Tacitus. Likewise, Kajanto (1960) and Coulston (2013) argue for an aristocratic hostility toward the soldier. Lastly, Ash (1999) views soldiers in the *Histories* as characterized by the moral and ethical character of their leaders.

[273] Speidel's research (2012) on the Imperial Roman army focuses on material evidence and the historical reality of living life as a soldier.

way of honorable service, the research put forward in this dissertation suggests that perhaps there is room for viewing soldiers and their values in a more sophisticated way.[274]

It turns out that the military values of legionary soldiers, perhaps expectedly, are a product of or maintain themselves through the relationship between soldiers and their military generals. I say expectedly, because we must take it as a given that the relationship between soldiers and leaders creates military success. Yet, investigations into soldiers and leaders in Tacitus have not focused specifically on military values, but, as the work of Ash attests, on the moral and ethical narrative implications of the relationship between soldiers and their leaders. In other words, there has yet to be – at least to my knowledge – any significant work done on Tacitus' representation of the military values of low-ranking soldiers. These values, ultimately, exist within the relationship between soldiers and their military commanders. As such, one of the primary findings of this study suggests that the military values of low-ranking soldiers are significant to Tacitus' narrative in as much as they are the proving ground for a Roman aristocrat's success as a military general during the 1st century of the Principate.

Chapter 1 explored the value of endurance, or *patientia*, and the role of military *labor*. In particular, I suggested that Kaster's framework of endurance of the natural world does not fit the Tacitean corpus as much as endurance of the social world. Endurance of the social world meant enduring the socially constructed hierarchy of the military and the harsh realities of military life. It was, ultimately, the decision of the presiding general how and when to force

[274] Speidel (2012) wonders, rhetorically, whether Tacitus' own (potential) senatorial command in the provinces affected his relationship with soldiers: "Did he let the soldiers know how much he despised their sort?"

soldiers to work, thereby coaxing out of them the endurance of such work. Understanding and managing this military value must have been important for Roman military generals. Trajan's column, which pictures just such activity, stands as a monument to the importance of managing *patientia laboris* as a military value. The images of Trajan overlooking the soldiers as they engage in *labor* suggest that managing the endurance of soldiers and directing them appropriately through the harsh *labor* of military life was not only part of what it meant to be a Roman general, but that it was also part of how generals, or at least the *princeps*, viewed their own success. For if the successful management of soldiers and their endurance – as it related to military *labor* – was not part of how Trajan viewed his own success, or how he wanted his success to be viewed by the inhabitants of Rome, then we might expect to see the images on Trajan's column showing us something entirely different.

In addition to the images on Trajan's column, I also suggested that the customary inclusion of years served on the tombstones of soldiers might reflect a sense of pride in how many campaigns or years a soldier managed to endure existence in the military. In this sense, years served were markers of *labor* endured and therefore are a kind of refraction of the value explored in Tacitus' corpus and found on Trajan's column. The representation of Trajan's success on the column was clearly tied to his management of the soldiers' endurance and their ability to complete difficult and hard manual work. If the soldiers themselves value this endurance to any extent, then the relationship between the general and the soldier, as it related to military *labor*, becomes mutually beneficial. Tacitus' representation of *patientia* was built on legionaries' endurance primarily being of the social world, as I argued in this chapter,

and if we consider the implications of the material evidence, then we may conclude that what Tacitus shows us in his representation is the importance of understanding and managing the endurance of soldiers for aristocratic generals who want to achieve military success. This point further suggests that we reconsider not only the potential importance of legionary soldiers in Tacitus' corpus, but that Tacitus was concerned about the intricacies of military leadership – specifically the values of legionary soldiers – under the Principate far more than Tacitean scholarship has made apparent.

In chapter 2, I suggest that soldiers and their military generals had a symbiotic relationship when it came to the military value of courage (*virtus*). An effective general, who understands how to cultivate and manage the courage of soldiers – like Agricola – shows us how influential such an individual could be. Likewise, under the command of ineffective generals who fail to cultivate their soldiers' courage properly, the outcomes could be disastrous – here we should think of Otho's generals at Bedriacum. The symbiotic relationship between soldiers and leaders could thus produce *virtus* under the right circumstances, procuring victory for Rome, success for the general, and perhaps personal distinction for individual soldiers. Secondly, this chapter sought to point out the complicated political position which military generals were forced to navigate. The *princeps* still relied on *legati* to command soldiers in the provinces. Yet, those generals ran the risk of competing against the *princeps* himself if he were to be too effective in his command. The underlying point Tacitus makes in representing the value of courage this way is that understanding how to cultivate the courage of the legions was a responsibility of the aristocratic generals, primarily in the provinces. The representation of

courage, then, not only tells us something about soldiers themselves, but also about how Tacitus portrays the soldier from the perspective of those who were responsible for leading them. The representation of soldiers' courage was thus important for military generals in Tacitus' corpus. In a similar fashion to Tacitus' representation of endurance, the value system of the legionary soldiers needed to be properly understood and managed by the commanding officers. At times, Tacitus used his representation of this military value to explicate certain elements of figures in his narrative, as we saw with his description of Helvius Rufus. At other times, Tacitus used his representation of courage to show, as he did with endurance, how important it was for officers to understand these values, if they wanted to succeed. Yet, the Principate brought with it the added trouble for aristocratic generals of needing to be successful, but not too successful. In that sense, Agricola may have been correct when he suggested that obedience, modesty, energy, and action would bring glory and benefaction to the state – and you would keep your life.[275] For a general to understand this and follow through on it, they would need to know how to lead soldiers to courageous action, when to steer their *animus*. Tacitus, I argued in chapter 2, represents the military value of courage in such a way so that the reader understands the importance of this value on the success or failures of aristocratic generals.

Chapter 3 continued to explore Tacitus' representation of military values, legionary soldiers, and how generals interacted with both by exploring military rewards and payment systems. The chapter argues that there was a system of rewards and payment that relied on the

[275] Tacitus *Agricola* 42.5.

military general's appropriate navigation of those systems lest they fail and face the consequences of soldiers who expect a certain outcome but get something far different (or nothing at all). For example, soldiers sought individual distinction through *dona militaria* and rightly became accustomed to receiving the *donativa*. If a military general failed to understand the importance of these distinctions and payment, it could strain their relationship with the soldiers, leading to instability. Tacitus uses military rewards and payment systems to represent certain qualities in individual leaders, both effective and disastrous. An effective general, someone like Germanicus, understood the value of payment and recognition of service. He used this to his advantage in quelling the mutinous soldiers in Germany. Other generals – Valens, for example – did not seem to understand the importance of rewarding the soldiers appropriately and he suffered the consequences. Tacitus' depiction of military rewards and payment systems are thus a kind of proving ground for leaders. To lead effectively, a general must understand the ways in which to engage these systems. If we extrapolate this point one step further, we can see that all of the issues of leadership come down to the inherent and natural qualities or abilities of each general. Generals like Corbulo and Germanicus knew the value systems of soldiers, including how to pay them, or at least convince them not to revolt because of lack of payment. Other generals who did not understand these systems failed to control their soldiers and failed to succeed to the extent that was possible under the Principate. The qualities of individuals are what make the difference; how one individual interacts with the soldiers can play a significant role in the outcome of events. We might make a final extrapolation from this, namely that through Tacitus' representation of military awards and

payment we can see the stability of the military itself beholden to the characteristics of individuals.

Tacitean scholarship has, as I have suggested, failed to account properly for the implications of common soldiers and their military values in Tacitus' corpus. The suggestions by scholars like Kajanto, Coulston, and Speidel that soldiers are merely an unruly mob incapable of being mentioned in the same breath as important military values seems to stem from earlier judgements about Tacitus' efficacy as a military historian.[276] Yet, there have been others who have attempted to understand Tacitus' depiction of soldiers and leaders in a way that does not dismiss them *prima facie*.

In particular, Ash's *Ordering Anarchy: Armies and Leaders in Tacitus' Histories* argues that Tacitus depicts all four armies in the civil war of AD 69 in a way that is just as complex, variegated, and important as his depiction of their emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian). She suggests that Tacitus' depiction of the armies acknowledges their complexities, motivations, and sense of collective morality. Her analysis of the *Histories* suggested that ultimately what happened in that most turbulent and violent year of AD 69 was a failure in leadership. One of her primary points of comparison is the representation of these leaders and their armies in Plutarch, whose explanation for the civil war relied more on the spontaneous collective madness of the time. Ash suggests that Tacitus' depiction of the civil wars differed from Plutarch's: "Tacitus presents us with a much more rational picture of a civil war which

[276] Kajanto (1970), Speidel (2012), and Coulston (2013); Mommsen (1885) seems to be the earliest proponent of the indictment of Tacitus as a poor military historian.

gradually gains momentum, but which could have potentially ended much earlier if the right leader had intervened."[277] Ash further suggests that the role of the right leader was filled by Trajan, who entered into the Principate in AD 98, close to the ending of what we presume would have been the culmination of Tacitus' *Histories*. Lastly, Ash then extrapolates what this meant for Tacitus' overall purpose: "Tacitus has crafted the narrative of the *Histories* and the *Annals* as a pair which, particularly when considered together, show how vulnerable the imperial structure was to self-destructive forces generated by the disastrous combination of flawed emperors and frustrated armies."[278]

What my research shows us is that reading Tacitus' soldiers as a mere mob, incapable of interacting with important Roman military values, runs the risk of missing what seems to be an important part of Tacitus' purpose as a historian – writing about leadership under the Empire. In this aspect, my research and the work of Ash come to the same conclusion: Tacitus was concerned with how soldiers and military leadership affected imperial structures. Whereas Ash got to this conclusion through analysis of literary characterization (both soldiers and leaders), I got there through analysis of how soldiers and leaders interacted through the military values. Likewise, I attempted to contextualize Tacitus' representation of these values through the use of material evidence, further strengthening the idea that Tacitus was not representing soldiers as an unruly mob due to aristocratic bias, but that his depiction of soldiers speaks to a larger issue that was concerning for his *milieu*: the potential consequences of bad leadership. There

[277] Ash (1999: 169).
[278] Ibid.

are limitations to this reading to be sure. In particular, Tacitus does portray soldiers as barbaric and blood thirsty – at times. However, he also portrays them as a properly functioning cog in Roman imperialism, fighting alongside the likes of Agricola, showing their *virtus* for all to see.[279] Lastly, my focus on military values adds complexity to the representation of soldiers and leaders that Ash brought to the surface. My readings attempt to answer the question of how Roman military generals could avoid the problem of a frustrated army: understanding their military values. Self-destructive, aristocratic military generals who failed to understand this could cause serious problems, as the year AD 69 can attest.

I hope to have shown that through close readings of Tacitus and with some material evidence for contextualization, the military values of legionary soldiers add nuance to the way in which Tacitus depicts soldiers. Additionally, I think this research suggests a further conclusion: Tacitus was interested in writing about military leadership under the Principate. This was, after all, one of the complicated jobs of Roman aristocrats under the *princeps*. Tacitus himself was a member of this group. In that sense, Tacitus writing about the military values of legionary soldiers and how those values stem from or are managed by military leaders may be Tacitus' attempt at writing about the dynamics of a complicated position that he himself may have known all too well.[280] Reading Tacitus' portrayal of soldiers through the lens of military values and how aristocratic generals engaged those values means that as readers of Tacitus we must begin to accept the possibility that Tacitus was less of the biased aristocrat with pure

[279] Tacitus *Agricola* 33 stands as, perhaps, the premier example of exactly how a Roman general ought to lead.
[280] See Birley (2000) for Tacitus' potential career commanding a legion between 90 – 93 AD. Birley suggests that a legion on the Rhine or Danube was statistically more likely. Contra Birley, Bowerstock (1993) argues for Tacitus' position as a legate under the proconsuls of Achaia and Asia during these years.

disdain for soldiers, and more of a rational historian attempting to present the realities of life under the Principate.

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