TACITUS HISTORIES 1

Exam Sections
Latin: 4-7, 12-14, 17-23, 26-36, 39-44, 49

English: 24-25, 37-38, 45-48

*Chapters 1-3: According to Tacitus historical accuracy suffered a reverse when Octavian came to power in 31 BC at the Battle of Actium. Historians were too influenced by either flattery or hatred of the Emperors to do full justice to the truth. Tacitus will not be so influenced as he begins his history with the second consulate of Galba in 68 AD, the beginning of a period filled with turmoil and disaster.*

***4 - General rejoicing in Rome over the death of Nero***

finis Neronis, ut laetus primo gaudentium impetu fuerat, ita varios motus animorum non modo in urbe apud patres aut populum aut urbanum militem, sed omnes legiones ducesque conciverat, evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri.

Nero’s end, although it had been joyous in the initial impulse of people rejoicing, had nevertheless aroused various emotions of minds not only in the city among the Fathers or populace or city militia, but (also among) all the legions and commanders, for a secret truth of imperial power had been made public, (namely) that a *princeps* could be made somewhere other than in Rome.

sed patres laeti, usurpata statim libertate licentius ut erga principem novum et absentem;

But the Fathers (were) happy, their liberty immediately being put to use somewhat unrestrainedly as (expected) toward a new and absent *princeps*;

primores equitum proximi gaudio patrum;

the foremost of the Knights (came) very close to the joy of the Fathers;

pars populi integra et magnis domibus adnexa, clientes libertique damnatorum et exulum in spem erecti:

that part of the people that was sound and connected to great houses, the clients and freedmen of those condemned and exiled, (were) buoyed up to hope;

plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta, simul deterrimi servorum, aut qui adesis bonis per dedecus Neronis alebantur, maesti et rumorum avidi.

the plebs, sordid and habituated to the circus and theatres, along with the basest of the slaves, or those who after gnawing away at their property were being supported by means of Nero’s disgraceful practices, were despondent and avid for tittle-tattle.

***5 – Praetorian soldiers increasingly disillusioned with Galba***

miles urbanus, longo Caesarum sacramento imbutus et ad destituendum Neronem arte magis et impulsu quam suo ingenio traductus, postquam neque dari donativum sub nomine Galbae promissum neque magnis meritis ac praemiis eundem in pace quem in bello locum praeventamque gratiam intellegit apud principem a legionibus factum, pronus ad novas res scelere insuper Nymphidii Sabini praefecti imperium sibi molientis agitatur.

The city military, (although) steeped in their longstanding oath of allegiance to the Caesars and led on to abandon Nero by craft and pressure rather than by their own natural character, after they understand (i) that the donative promised in Galba’s name is not being given, and (ii) that there is not the same opportunity in peace as in war for great merits and rewards, and (iii) that any influence over a *princeps* made by legions has been pre-empted, (then), prone to revolution, they are further agitated by the crime of the Prefect Nymphidius Sabinus striving for imperial power for himself.

Nymphidius quidem in ipso conatu oppressus, set quamvis capite defectionis ablato manebat plerisque militum conscientia, nec deerant sermones senium atque avaritiam Galbae increpantium.

Nymphidius indeed was crushed in the very attempt, but although the head of the mutiny was removed, there remained for most of the soldiers a sense of complicity, nor was there a shortage of talk from those railing against Galba’s old age and ‘avarice’.

laudata olim et militari fama celebrata severitas eius angebat aspernantes veterem disciplinam atque ita quattuordecim annis a Nerone adsuefactos ut haud minus vitia principum amarent quam olim virtutes verebantur.

His strictness, formerly praised and celebrated in the talk of the military, was choking those who spurned the old discipline and who been so conditioned for fourteen years by Nero that they loved the vices of their *principes* no less than they had once reverenced their virtues.

accessit Galbae vox pro re publica honesta, ipsi anceps, legi a se militem, non emi; nec enim ad hanc formam cetera erant.

Added to this was the saying of Galba, honourable for the state but risky for himself, that a soldier was chosen by him, not bought; for not in keeping with this standard was everything else.

***6 – Galba’s inauspicious entry into Rome***

invalidum senem Titus Vinius et Cornelius Laco, alter deterrimus mortalium, alter ignavissimus, odio flagitiorum oneratum contemptu inertiae destruebant.

Titus Vinius and Cornelius Laco, one the worst of mortal men, the other the laziest, were destroying the weak old man, weighed down (as he was) by (the people’s) hatred of the crimes (of the former) and their contempt for the inertia (of the latter).

tardum Galbae iter et cruentum, interfectis Cingonio Varrone consule designato et Petronio Turpiliano consulari: ille ut Nymphidii socius, hic ut dux Neronis, inauditi atque indefensi tamquam innocentes perierant.

slow and bloody had Galba’s journey been, with Cingonius Varro the Consul-designate and Petronius Turpilianus a man of consular rank put to death: the former, as being an ally of Nymphidius, and the latter, as being Nero’s general, had perished unheard and undefended as if they were innocent men.

introitus in urbem trucidatis tot milibus inermium militum infaustus omine atque ipsis etiam qui occiderant formidolosus.

His entrance into the city, after so many thousands of unarmed soldiers had been butchered, was inauspicious in its omen, and even for those who had done the killing truly frightful.

inducta legione Hispana, remanente ea quam e classe Nero conscripserat, plena urbs exercitu insolito;

Now that a Spanish legion had been led in (and) that which Nero had conscripted from the fleet remained, the city was filled with an unusual army.

multi ad hoc numeri e Germania ac Britannia et Illyrico, quos idem Nero electos praemissosque ad claustra Caspiarum et bellum, quod in Albanos parabat, opprimendis Vindicis coeptis revocaverat:

In addition to this, there were many detachments from Germany and Britain and Illyricum, whom Nero likewise, after selecting them and sending them forth to the barriers of the Caspian (Gates) and the war he was preparing against the Albani [possibly a mistake for Alani], had recalled to crush Vindex’s attempts:

ingens novis rebus materia, ut, non in unum aliquem prono favore, ita audenti parata.

plentiful tinder for a revolution, as, owing to its favour not being inclined toward any one person, it was accordingly available for anyone who dared.

***7 – Politically motivated executions reflect badly on Galba***

Forte congruerat ut Clodii Macri et Fontei Capitonis caedes nuntiarentur.

It had happened at the same time that the executions of Clodius Macer and Fonteius Capito were announced.

Macrum in Africa haud dubie turbantem Trebonius Garutianus procurator iussu Galbae, Capitonem in Germania, cum similia coeptaret, Cornelius Aquinus et Fabius Valens legati legionum interfecerant antequam iuberentur.

As regards Macer who was undoubtedly causing trouble in Africa, the Procurator Trebonius Garutianus under orders from Galba had executed him, (and) as regards Capito in Germany, when he attempted something similar, the Legates of the legions Cornelius Aquinus and Fabius Valens had executed him (but) before being ordered to do so.

fuere qui crederent Capitonem, ut avaritia et libidine foedum ac maculosum, ita cogitatione rerum novarum abstinuisse, sed a legatis bellum suadentibus, postquam impellere nequiverint, crimen ac dolum ultro compositum, et Galbam mobilitate ingenii, an ne altius scrutaretur, quoquo modo acta, quia mutari non poterant, comprobasse.

There were those who believed (i) that Capito, although besmirched and tainted by avarice and lust, had nevertheless abstained from any thought of revolution, but (ii) that (it was) by the Legates urging (him) to war, that the charge and, what is more, the deception had been contrived following their failure to incite him, and (iii) that Galba due to the changeableness of his character, or to avoid probing too deeply, had thoroughly approved (these) deeds, however they were carried out, since they could not be changed.

ceterum utraque caedes sinistre accepta, et inviso semel principi seu bene seu male facta parem invidiam adferebant.

But each execution was unfavourably received, and once a *princeps* has become unpopular, his deeds, whether well or badly (carried out), would bring him equal unpopularity.

venalia cuncta, praepotentes liberti, servorum manus subitis avidae et tamquam apud senem festinantes, eademque novae aulae mala, aeque gravia, non aeque excusata.

Everything (of Galba’s) was up for sale; (his) freedmen were especially powerful; the hands of (his) slaves were avid for windfalls and rushing about as though in the presence of an old man; and the new court had the same evils (as before), equally grievous, (but) not equally excused.

ipsa aetas Galbae inrisui ac fastidio erat adsuetis iuventae Neronis et imperatores forma ac decore corporis, ut est mos vulgi, comparantibus.

The very age of Galba was a source of ridicule and disgust to those accustomed to Nero’s youth and to those who compared Emperors according to their appearance and physical grace, as is the custom of the mob.

*Chapters 8-11: Tacitus now considers the state of affairs outside Rome. Most worrying are the feelings amongst the German legions, who are described as anxious and angry. Under their Commander Verginius Rufus they had defeated Julius Vindex, and now many of them wanted him to be Emperor. However, as he had been summoned to Rome under guise of friendship and had not returned, they were now largely leaderless. They were also very unhappy at Fonteius Capito’s execution. Two future Emperors are mentioned by Tacitus: (i) Vitellius, whom Galba had sent at the end of 68 to command the disaffected troops in Lower Germany; and (ii) Vespasian, who is fighting a war against the ‘Judaeans’. Tacitus ends by darkly foreshadowing the death of Galba and the near destruction of the Roman state.*

***12 – Succession openly discussed as legions in Germany demand a new Emperor***

paucis post kalendas Ianuarias diebus Pompei Propinqui procuratoris e Belgica litterae adferuntur, superioris Germaniae legiones rupta sacramenti reverentia imperatorem alium flagitare et senatui ac populo Romano arbitrium eligendi permittere quo seditio mollius acciperetur.

A few days after the Januarian Calends, a despatch of the Procurator Pompeius Propinquus is brought from Belgic (Gaul), (reporting) that the legions of Upper Germany, having broken all respect for their oath of allegiance, were demanding a different Emperor and permitting the Senate and Roman people the choice of electing (him), so that their sedition might be received more mildly.

maturavit ea res consilium Galbae iam pridem de adoptione secum et cum proximis agitantis.

That situation hastened the resolution of Galba, already for some time turning over with himself and with his close associates the matter of adoption.

non sane crebrior tota civitate sermo per illos menses fuerat, primum licentia ac libidine talia loquendi, dein fessa iam aetate Galbae.

Nor indeed more topical had (any) discussion been in the whole State throughout those months, firstly because of the licence and itch to talk of such things, and then because of Galba’s now weary (old) age

paucis iudicium aut rei publicae amor: multi stulta spe, prout quis amicus vel cliens, hunc vel illum ambitiosis rumoribus destinabant, etiam in Titi Vinii odium, qui in dies quanto potentior eodem actu invisior erat.

To few was there (good) judgement or (any) love of the State: many due to foolish hope, depending on whom he was a friend or client of, were marking down this man or that in their self-serving gossip, also out of hatred toward Titus Vinius, who, the more powerful (he became) every day, was *ipso facto* more hateful.

quippe hiantes in magna fortuna amicorum cupiditates ipsa Galbae facilitas intendebat, cum apud infirmum et credulum minore metu et maiore praemio peccaretur.

In fact Galba’s very easygoingness was intensifying his friends’ greediness, open-mouthed as it was at its great good fortune, since, in the presence of one who was infirm and credulous, sin might be committed with less fear and greater reward.

***13 – Early career of Otho, Vinius’ choice for next Emperor***

potentia principatus divisa in Titum Vinium consulem Cornelium Laconem praetorii praefectum; nec minor gratia Icelo Galbae liberto, quem anulis donatum equestri nomine Marcianum vocitabant.

The power of the Principate was divided between the Consul Titus Vinius (and) the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard Cornelius Laco. Nor did Galba’s freedman Icelus have less influence, he whom people were constantly calling by the equestrian name Marcianus because he had been gifted (by Galba) with (golden) rings.

hi, discordes et rebus minoribus sibi quisque tendentes, circa consilium eligendi successoris in duas factiones scindebantur.

These men, (ever) at odds with one another and (even) in lesser matters striving each for himself, were split into two factions over their advice for electing a successor.

Vinius pro M. Othone, Laco atque Icelus consensu non tam unum aliquem fovebant quam alium.

Vinius was for Marcus Otho, (whereas) Laco and Icelus were in agreement not so much in favouring a single individual as someone else.

neque erat Galbae ignota Othonis ac Titi Vinii amicitia; et rumoribus nihil silentio transmittentium, quia Vinio vidua filia, caelebs Otho, gener ac socer destinabantur.

Nor was Otho’s and Titus Vinius’ friendship unknown to Galba; and according to the gossip of those who pass over nothing in silence, because Vinius had a widowed daughter and Otho was a bachelor, they were being marked down as son-in-law and father-in-law.

credo et rei publicae curam subisse, frustra a Nerone translatae si apud Othonem relinqueretur.

I believe that some concern for the State also influenced (Galba), for in vain had it been removed from Nero if were to be left with Otho.

namque Otho pueritiam incuriose, adulescentiam petulanter egerat, gratus Neroni aemulatione luxus.

For Otho had spent his boyhood heedlessly, his adolescence impudently, making himself agreeable to Nero by emulation of his profligacy.

eoque Poppaeam Sabinam, principale scortum, ut apud conscium libidinum deposuerat, donec Octaviam uxorem amoliretur.

And for that reason (Nero) had entrusted Poppaea Sabina, the imperial whore, (to him) as to one privy to his lustful affairs, until he should rid himself of his wife Octavia.

mox suspectum in eadem Poppaea in provinciam Lusitaniam specie legationis seposuit.

Soon, having fallen under suspicion in regard to the same Poppaea, (Nero) banished him to the province of Lusitania on the pretext of a legation.

Otho comiter administrata provincia primus in partes transgressus nec segnis et, donec bellum fuit, inter praesentes splendidissimus, spem adoptionis statim conceptam acrius in dies rapiebat, faventibus plerisque militum, prona in eum aula Neronis ut similem.

Although his province was administered civilly, Otho was the first to change sides, nor was he unenergetic, and while the (civil) war was on, he, as the most illustrious among those at hand, was daily seizing more keenly on his immediately conceived hope of adoption, most of the soldiers favouring (him) and the court being inclined to him as he was like Nero.

***14 – Galba calls a privy council to elect his successor***

sed Galba post nuntios Germanicae seditionis, quamquam nihil adhuc de Vitellio certum, anxius quonam exercituum vis erumperet, ne urbano quidem militi confisus, quod remedium unicum rebatur, comitia imperii transigit;

But Galba, following news of the German sedition, although nothing still was certain concerning Vitellius [*he had in fact turned against Galba, receiving formal support from his legions for his imperial bid on 3 January*], and anxious as to how far exactly the violence of the armies might erupt, (and) trusting not even the urban soldiery, conducts an imperial election, (something) he considered the only remedy.

adhibitoque super Vinium ac Laconem Mario Celso consule designato ac Ducenio Gemino praefecto urbis, pauca praefatus de sua senectute, Pisonem Licinianum accersiri iubet, seu propria electione sive, ut quidam crediderunt, Lacone instante, cui apud Rubellium Plautum exercita cum Pisone amicitia;

When Marius Celsus the Consul-designate and Ducenius Geminus the City Prefect had been invited thereto in addition to Vinius and Laco, (then Galba), having first said a few words about his old age, orders Piso Licinianus to be fetched, either of his own choice or, as some believed, at the insistence of Laco, who had a friendship with Piso cultivated at the house of Rubellius Plautus;

sed callide ut ignotum fovebat, et prospera de Pisone fama consilio eius fidem addiderat.

but craftily as though unknown (to him) was (Laco) supporting (him), and the favourable report concerning Piso had added credibility to his advice.

Piso M. Crasso et Scribonia genitus, nobilis utrimque, vultu habituque moris antiqui et aestimatione recta severus, deterius interpretantibus tristior habebatur: ea pars morum eius quo suspectior sollicitis adoptanti placebat.

Piso, born of Marcus Crassus and Scribonia, of noble descent on both sides, in look and bearing (a man) of the ancient type and by right estimation serious-minded, was held by those interpreting things in a pejorative light to be rather morose: (but) that part of his character, the more suspect it was to those alarmed by it, (the more) it pleased the one adopting him.

*Chapters 15-16: After taking Piso by the hand, Galba addresses him in direct speech. This marks the adoption of Piso. Galba justifies adoption as a mode of succession, praises Piso’s qualities, warns him of the corrupting influence of success, tells him to beware of adulation, and reminds him of the necessity of doing the right thing. Regarding himself, he claims that he became the Emperor without any ambition on his part; that this act of adoption will make him look less old in the eyes of his critics; and, somewhat naively, that his age is the only reproach levelled at him.*

***17 – Piso calmly accepts adoption***

Pisonem ferunt statim intuentibus et mox coniectis in eum omnium oculis nullum turbati aut exultantis animi motum prodidisse.

Men say that, to those looking on and shortly to the eyes of all cast upon him, Piso betrayed no movement of a disturbed or exultant mind.

sermo erga patrem imperatoremque reverens, de se moderatus; nihil in vultu habituque mutatum, quasi imperare posset magis quam vellet.

His speech toward his father and Emperor was reverent, with regard to himself restrained; nothing in his countenance and bearing was changed, as though he were capable of ruling rather than desirous of it.

consultatum inde, pro rostris an in senatu an in castris adoptio nuncuparetur.

It was then discussed (whether) the adoption should be proclaimed from the front of the *rostra* or in the Senate or in the (Praetorian) Camp.

iri in castra placuit: honorificum id militibus fore, quorum favorem ut largitione et ambitu male adquiri, ita per bonas artes haud spernendum.

It was decided that they go to the Camp: that (it was said) would be a mark of honour to the soldiers, whose support, just as it was acquired unworthily by largesse and bribery, was likewise not to be spurned (when acquired) through worthy methods.

circumsteterat interim Palatium publica expectatio, magni secreti impatiens; et male coercitam famam supprimentes augebant.

Meanwhile an expectant public had taken a stand around the Palatine, impatient of the great secret; and those suppressing the badly contained rumour were compounding it.

***18 – Galba announces the adoption in the Praetorian Camp***

quartum Idus Ianuarias, foedum imbribus diem, tonitrua et fulgura et caelestes minae ultra solitum turbaverunt.

The fourth day before the Januarian Ides [10 January], a day foul with heavy showers, (this) did thunder and lightning and celestial menaces unusually disturb.

observatum id antiquitus comitiis dirimendis non terruit Galbam quo minus in castra pergeret, contemptorem talium ut fortuitorum; seu quae fato manent, quamvis significata, non vitantur.

That, respected from ancient times (as a reason) for breaking up assemblies, did not deter Galba from proceeding to the Camp, being a scorner of such things as fortuitous; or else because (he thought that) things settled by fate, although portended, are not avoided.

apud frequentem militum contionem imperatoria brevitate adoptari a se Pisonem exemplo divi Augusti et more militari, quo vir virum legeret, pronuntiat.

Before a packed assembly of soldiers, with imperial brevity, he proclaims that Piso is being adopted by him following the example of the Divine Augustus and the military custom whereby (one) man would choose (another) man.

ac ne dissimulata seditio in maius crederetur, ultro adseverat quartam et duoetvicensimam legiones, paucis seditionis auctoribus, non ultra verba ac voces errasse et brevi in officio fore.

And lest the (German) sedition (if) concealed be credited to a greater degree, he further declares that, as there were (only) a few agents of sedition (involved), the 4th and 22nd Legions had not strayed beyond words and expressions and would be (back) on duty shortly.

nec ullum orationi aut lenocinium addit aut pretium.

Nor to his oration does he add any kind of allurement or monetary reward.

tribuni tamen centurionesque et proximi militum grata auditu respondent: per ceteros maestitia ac silentium, tamquam usurpatam etiam in pace donativi necessitatem bello perdidissent.

However, the tribunes and the centurions and the nearest of the soldiers respond (with) things pleasing to hear. Throughout the rest there is gloominess and silence, as though they had lost through war their need of a donative that they had enjoyed even in peacetime.

constat potuisse conciliari animos quantulacumque parci senis liberalitate: nocuit antiquus rigor et nimia severitas, cui iam pares non sumus.

It is generally agreed that their spirits could have been conciliated by some liberality of the parsimonious old man, however paltry. (What) harmed (him was his) old-fashioned rigour and excessive strictness, (something) to which we are no longer equal.

***19 – Senate embraces Piso & votes to send legates to Germany***

inde apud senatum non comptior Galbae, non longior quam apud militem sermo: Pisonis comis oratio.

After that Galba’s speech before the Senate was no more adorned, no longer than before the soldiers. Piso’s oration was courteous,

et patrum favor aderat: multi voluntate, effusius qui noluerant, medii ac plurimi obvio obsequio, privatas spes agitantes sine publica cura.

and the goodwill of the Fathers was there (to support him): (i) many spontaneously, (ii) more effusively (those) who had not wanted him, and (iii) somewhere in-between, with a ready obsequiousness, the majority, mulling (solely) over their private hopes without concern for the public.

nec aliud sequenti quadriduo, quod medium inter adoptionem et caedem fuit, dictum a Pisone in publico factumve.

Nothing else in the following four-day period which fell between his adoption and murder was said or done by Piso in public.

crebrioribus in dies Germanicae defectionis nuntiis et facili civitate ad accipienda credendaque omnia nova cum tristia sunt, censuerant patres mittendos ad Germanicum exercitum legatos.

With reports of the German defection becoming daily more frequent, and as the citizen body are quick to accept and believe every item of news when it is grim, the Fathers had voted for legates to be sent to the German army.

agitatum secreto num et Piso proficisceretur, maiore praetextu, illi auctoritatem senatus, hic dignationem Caesaris laturus.

Secretly it was discussed whether Piso should also set out, so that with the greater show *they* might convey the authority of the Senate, and *he* the dignity of Caesar.

placebat et Laconem praetorii praefectum simul mitti: is consilio intercessit.

It was resolved that Laco also, the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, be sent at the same time. He vetoed the plan.

legati quoque (nam senatus electionem Galbae permiserat) foeda inconstantia nominati, excusati, substituti, ambitu remanendi aut eundi, ut quemque metus vel spes impulerat.

The legates also – for the Senate had relinquished their election to Galba – were with appalling inconstancy nominated, excused, and substituted based on their manoeuvring to remain or to go, depending on how fear or hope had impelled each man.

***20 – Nero’s handouts to be repaid, several tribunes sacked***

proxima pecuniae cura; et cuncta scrutantibus iustissimum visum est inde repeti ubi inopiae causa erat.

The next concern was (that) of money; and to those scrutinising everything it seemed fairest that it be re-sought thence where the cause of the shortage lay.

bis et viciens miliens sestertium donationibus Nero effuderat: appellari singulos iussit, decima parte liberalitatis apud quemque eorum relicta.

22,000 x 100,000 sesterces (2.2 billion sesterces) had Nero squandered in handouts: (Galba) ordered that each (recipient) be sued, (only) one tenth part of the bounty being left with each of them.

at illis vix decimae super portiones erant, isdem erga aliena sumptibus quibus sua prodegerant, cum rapacissimo cuique ac perditissimo non agri aut faenus sed sola instrumenta vitiorum manerent.

But scarcely did (such) tenth portions remain over to them – the same extravagances occurring with respect to the money of others as those wherewith they had squandered their own – since there remained to the most greedy and depraved of them neither land or capital but only the instruments of their vices.

exactioni triginta equites Romani praepositi, novum officii genus, et ambitu ac numero onerosum: ubique hasta et sector, et inquieta urbs actionibus.

Thirty Roman Knights were put in charge of the debt-collection, a new kind of office, and owing to financial corruption and the numbers involved an onerous one. Everywhere there were auctions (lit. the spear) and speculators, and the city was unsettled over the proceedings.

ac tamen grande gaudium quod tam pauperes forent quibus donasset Nero quam quibus abstulisset.

And yet there was great joy because those on whom Nero had lavished gifts were going to be as poor as (those) whom he had robbed.

exauctorati per eos dies tribuni, e praetorio Antonius Taurus et Antonius Naso, ex urbanis cohortibus Aemilius Pacensis, e vigilibus Iulius Fronto.

During those days tribunes were sacked: from the Praetorian Guard Antonius Taurus and Antonius Naso, from the urban cohorts Aemilius Pacensis, (and) from the night watchmen Julius Fronto.

nec remedium in ceteros fuit, sed metus initium, tamquam per artem et formidine singuli pellerentur, omnibus suspectis.

Nor was this a remedy against the rest, rather the beginning of fear, as though by cunning and terror they were being driven out one by one, everyone being viewed with suspicion.

***21 – Otho’s reasons for a speedy rebellion***

interea Othonem, cui compositis rebus nulla spes, omne in turbido consilium, multa simul extimulabant, luxuria etiam principi onerosa, inopia vix privato toleranda, in Galbam ira, in Pisonem invidia;

Meantime many things were simultaneously spurring on Otho, for whom (there lay) no hope in settled conditions (and whose) whole plan (depended) on disorder: (i) his extravagance, onerous even for a *princeps*, (ii) his penury, scarcely tolerable by a private person, (iii) his anger against Galba, (iv) his jealousy of Piso.

fingebat et metum quo magis concupisceret: praegravem se Neroni fuisse, nec Lusitaniam rursus et alterius exilii honorem expectandum.

He even fabricated fear in order to grow more covetous, (telling himself that) he had been burdensome to Nero, and another (dose of) Lusitania and the ‘honour’ of another exile was not to be expected;

suspectum semper invisumque dominantibus qui proximus destinaretur.

that ever suspect and odious to those in power was the man marked out to be his successor;

nocuisse id sibi apud senem principem, magis nociturum apud iuvenem ingenio trucem et longo exilio efferatum: occidi Othonem posse.

that this had (already) harmed him with the aged *princeps*, (and) would harm him (even) more with the young one, fierce (as he was) by nature and made savage by his long exile: Otho might be killed.

proinde agendum audendumque, dum Galbae auctoritas fluxa, Pisonis nondum coaluisset.

that accordingly things must be done and dared while Galba’s authority was in flux (and) Piso’s had not yet taken a firm root;

opportunos magnis conatibus transitus rerum, nec cunctatione opus, ubi perniciosior sit quies quam temeritas.

that a transitional state of affairs was opportune for mighty ventures, and that there was no need of delay when inertia is more ruinous than temerity;

mortem omnibus ex natura aequalem oblivione apud posteros vel gloria distingui; ac si nocentem innocentemque idem exitus maneat, acrioris viri esse merito perire.

that death, equal to all alike by nature, was in the eyes of posterity distinguished by either oblivion or fame; and if the same exit awaits guilty and innocent (alike), (then) it belonged to the more spirited man to perish meritoriously.

***22 – Astrologers influence Otho***

non erat Othonis mollis et corpori similis animus.

Otho’s mind was not soft like his body.

et intimi libertorum servorumque, corruptius quam in privata domo habiti, aulam Neronis et luxus, adulteria, matrimonia ceterasque regnorum libidines avido talium, si auderet, ut sua ostentantes, quiescenti ut aliena exprobrabant, urgentibus etiam mathematicis, dum novos motus et clarum Othoni annum observatione siderum adfirmant, genus hominum potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax, quod in civitate nostra et vetabitur semper et retinebitur.

Even the intimates among his freedmen and slaves, who were kept more decadently than in a private household, and who held out to him as his own, if he dared, Nero’s court and luxuries, its adulteries, marriages and other fancies of despotism for one greedy for such things, were reproaching him for keeping quiet as though these things belonged to others. Also egging him on were the astrologers, all the while affirming from their observation of the stars new ‘movements’ and a bright year for Otho – a class of men treacherous to those in power (and) deceptive to those who live on hope, (a class) which in our State will always be both proscribed and retained!

multos secreta Poppaeae mathematicos, pessimum principalis matrimonii instrumentum, habuerant:

Poppaea’s secret dealings had involved many astrologers, the most wicked instrument of an imperial marriage!

e quibus Ptolemaeus Othoni in Hispania comes, cum superfuturum eum Neroni promisisset, postquam ex eventu fides, coniectura iam et rumore senium Galbae et iuventam Othonis computantium persuaserat fore ut in imperium adscisceretur.

One of these, Ptolemaeus, a companion to Otho in Spain, when he had promised (him) that he would outlive Nero, (and) after credibility (had accrued to him) from the event, now, by means of the conjecture and gossip of those reckoning on Galba’s old age and Otho’s youth, had persuaded (him) that he would be adopted into the imperial court.

sed Otho tamquam peritia et monitu fatorum praedicta accipiebat, cupidine ingenii humani libentius obscura credendi.

But Otho was welcoming (all this) as though it had been predicted with expertise and the advice of the fates, owing to the desire of human nature too willingly to believe things obscure.

nec deerat Ptolemaeus, iam et sceleris instinctor, ad quod facillime ab eius modi voto transitur.

Nor was Ptolemaeus, now also an instigator of crime, remiss in regard to whatever is very easily passed on to from a desire of that kind (i.e. its practical implementation).

***23 – Otho ingratiates himself with his disaffected soldiers***

sed sceleris cogitatio incertum an repens: studia militum iam pridem spe successionis aut paratu facinoris adfectaverat, in itinere, in agmine, in stationibus vetustissimum quemque militum nomine vocans ac memoria Neroniani comitatus contubernales appellando;

But as to his contemplation of crime, it is doubtful whether it was (something) sudden. Already for some time now, either from hope of succession or readiness for villainy, he had striven to gain the devotion of the soldiers on the march, on parade, or at their posts, calling every oldest member of the soldiers by his name, and by terming them ‘messmates’ based on the memory of their Neronian retinue-service.

alios agnoscere, quosdam requirere et pecunia aut gratia iuvare, inserendo saepius querelas et ambiguos de Galba sermones quaeque alia turbamenta vulgi.

Some he would recognise, some he would ask after and help with his money or influence, all too often injecting complaints and ambiguous remarks about Galba and other things which were means of disturbing the rabble.

labores itinerum, inopia commeatuum, duritia imperii atrocius accipiebantur, cum, Campaniae lacus et Achaiae urbes classibus adire soliti, Pyrenaeum et Alpes et immensa viarum spatia aegre sub armis eniterentur.

The exertions of their marches, the shortage of provisions, the harshness of military command were (all) being accepted rather grimly, since, accustomed (as they were) to visiting the lakes of Campania and the cities of Achaea in fleets, they were (now) struggling with difficulty under arms to mount the Pyrenees and Alps and cover the immense distances of the roads. [Tacitus errs here, as it was praetorians who accompanied Nero in a leisurely manner to Campania and Achaea, and they did not march from Spain to Rome with Galba.]

***24 – Otho wins over soldiers’ loyalties with secret bounties***

To the blazing flames of the soldiers’ discontent more fuel had been added, in a sense, by Maevius Pudens, one of Tigellinus’ [Nero’s chief adviser] closest associates. In an effort to attract all who could be most easily swayed or were penniless and greediest for change and new opportunities, he ventured gradually, whenever Galba dined at Otho’s house, to distribute one hundred sesterces per man to the cohort escorting the Emperor, ostensibly as a tip to pay for their meal. This kind of official largesse Otho supplemented with gifts of a more private nature to certain individuals and was so passionate in his desire to corrupt that to Cocceius Proculus, one of the bodyguards, who had a conflict with a neighbour over boundaries, he gave the entire neighbour’s farm that he had purchased with his own money. (Such doings were possible) thanks to the obtuse indifference of the Prefect (Laco), a man no more capable of seeing what was in plain view than what was hidden.

***25 – Onomastus introduces two key officers of the speculatores (imperial bodyguards) to Otho***

In the end Otho assigned the execution of the projected crime to his freedman Onomastus, who introduced to him Barbius Proculus, one of the men in charge of passing on the watchword of the *speculatores* [elite troops of Praetorian Guard used by Emperors for clandestine operations], and Veturius, an adjutant in the same unit. Otho, having assured himself that they were both astute and daring by conversing with them on various subjects, loaded them with gifts and promises and gave them money with which to tempt the loyalty of many others. (Thus) two common soldiers took on the responsibility of transfering the imperial power – and indeedsucceeded. Few were admitted to the secrecy of the plot, and those privy to it were trying to rally the undecided guardsmen by various expedients, (such as) giving the lead soldiers to believe that the promotions received from Nymphidius made them suspect (in the eyes of Galba) and by stirring up the anger and frustration of the rank and file and others at having the donative so often postponed. Some were fired by the memory of Nero and the longing for past licence, but all were terrified by the prospect of being transferred out of the Praetorian Guard.

***26 – Mutiny almost breaks out on evening of 14th***

infecit ea tabes legionum quoque et auxiliorum motas iam mentes, postquam vulgatum erat labare Germanici exercitus fidem.

That contagion also infected the now unsettled minds of the legions and auxiliaries after it had become public knowledge that the German army’s loyalty was wavering.

adeoque parata apud malos seditio, etiam apud integros dissimulatio fuit, ut postero iduum die redeuntem a cena Othonem rapturi fuerint, ni incerta noctis et tota urbe sparsa militum castra nec facilem inter temulentos consensum timuissent,

And so prepared (for action) was the sedition among the bad, (and) among the sound also so feigned the ignorance, that on the day following the Ides they would have bundled [lit. they were on the point of bundling] off Otho as he returned from dinner, had they not feared (i) the uncertainties of the night and (ii) (the fact that) the soldiers’ camp was dispersed through the whole city and (iii) (the fact that) consensus (would) not be easy among the intoxicated.

non rei publicae cura, quam foedare principis sui sanguine sobrii parabant, sed ne per tenebras, ut quisque Pannonici vel Germanici exercitus militibus oblatus esset, ignorantibus plerisque, pro Othone destinaretur.

Nor had they any concern for the State, which, (even whilst) sober, they were preparing to befoul with the blood of their own *princeps*, but (they were afraid) that (iv) in the darkness, as each man encountered the soldiers of the Pannonian or German army, he might be fixed upon instead of Otho, as most of them did not know (Otho).

multa erumpentis seditionis indicia per conscios oppressa: quaedam apud Galbae aures praefectus Laco elusit, ignarus militarium animorum consiliique quamvis egregii, quod non ipse adferret, inimicus et adversus peritos pervicax.

Many indications of the erupting sedition were suppressed by the plotters. Some did the prefect Laco ridicule in Galba’s very hearing, ignorant (as he was) of military minds, and hostile to any counsel, however outstanding, which he himself was not bringing to the table, and stubbornly opposed to men of experience.

***27 – Conspiracy goes into action on the 15th as Galba is sacrificing***

octavo decimo kalendas Februarias sacrificanti pro aede Apollinis Galbae haruspex Umbricius tristia exta et instantes insidias ac domesticum hostem praedicit, audiente Othone (nam proximus adstiterat) idque ut laetum e contrario et suis cogitationibus prosperum interpretante.

On the 18th (day before) the Februarian Calends, the soothsayer Umbricius predicts to Galba, as he is sacrificing before the Temple of Apollo, that the innards are unfavourable [lit. gloomy] and that an ambush is impending and that the enemy is domestic – (all this) while Otho was listening, for he had taken up a position very close by, and interpreting it in a contrary sense as something auspicious [lit. joyful] and prosperous to his designs.

nec multo post libertus Onomastus nuntiat expectari eum ab architecto et redemptoribus, quae significatio coeuntium iam militum et paratae coniurationis convenerat.

Not long afterwards, his freedman Onomastus announces that he is expected by his architect and purchasers – the sign agreed upon that the soldiers were now assembling and that the conspiracy was ready.

Otho, causam digressus requirentibus, cum emi sibi praedia vetustate suspecta eoque prius exploranda finxisset, innixus liberto per Tiberianam domum in Velabrum, inde ad miliarium aureum sub aedem Saturni pergit.

When Otho, to those asking the reason for his departure, had fabricated (the story) that estates, suspect due to their antiquity, were being bought by him and for that reason had to be examined first, he proceeds leaning on his freedman through the *Domus Tiberiana* into the Velabrum, and thence to the golden milestone at the foot of the Temple of Saturn.

ibi tres et viginti speculatores consalutatum imperatorem ac paucitate salutantium trepidum et sellae festinanter impositum strictis mucronibus rapiunt;

There twenty-three *speculatores* – after he had been hailed as Emperor, and shown alarm at the small number of those saluting him, and been hastily placed in a chair – hurry him off with drawn swords.

totidem ferme milites in itinere adgregantur, alii conscientia, plerique miraculo, pars clamore et gladiis, pars silentio, animum ex eventu sumpturi.

Almost as many soldiers attach themselves en route, some from complicity, most in amazement, some with clamour and swords, others in silence, intending to make up their minds from the outcome.

***28 – Reaction in the Praetorian Camp***

stationem in castris agebat Iulius Martialis tribunus.

The Tribune Julius Martialis was performing guard-duty in the Camp.

is magnitudine subiti sceleris, an corrupta latius castra et, si contra tenderet, exitium metuens, praebuit plerisque suspicionem conscientiae;

He – owing to the magnitude of the sudden crime, or fearing the Camp had been more widely corrupted and his own destruction if he were to tend against it – presented to the majority a suspicion of (his own) complicity.

anteposuere ceteri quoque tribuni centurionesque praesentia dubiis et honestis, isque habitus animorum fuit ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur.

The rest of the tribunes and centurions also preferred the present situation to one that was uncertain and honourable, and such was the state of their minds that few dared, more desired, all condoned the foulest crime.

***29 – Piso tests out the feelings of the Palatine cohort***

ignarus interim Galba et sacris intentus fatigabat alieni iam imperii deos, cum adfertur rumor rapi in castra incertum quem senatorem, mox Othonem esse qui raperetur, simul ex tota urbe, ut quisque obvius fuerat, alii formidine augentes, quidam minora vero, ne tum quidem obliti adulationis.

Meanwhile Galba, unaware (of all this) and intent on his rites, was wearying the gods of another man’s empire, when there is brought him a rumour that some senator or other was being bundled off to the Camp, (and) shortly afterwards that it was Otho who was being bundled off, (the rumour arising) simultaneously from all over the city, as each had crossed his path, some exaggerating through fear, some (saying) less than the truth, not even at that time forgetting their flattery!

igitur consultantibus placuit pertemptari animum cohortis, quae in Palatio stationem agebat, nec per ipsum Galbam, cuius integra auctoritas maioribus remediis servabatur.

While they deliberated, therefore, it seemed a good idea to sound out the mind of the cohort that was carrying out guard duty on the Palatine, and (yet) not through Galba himself, whose authority was to be kept intact for more substantial remedies.

Piso pro gradibus domus vocatos in hunc modum adlocutus est:

Piso, after the men had been called together before the steps of the *Domus* (*Tiberiana*), addressed them in the following manner:

“sextus dies agitur, commilitones, ex quo ignarus futuri, et sive optandum hoc nomen sive timendum erat, Caesar adscitus sum.

“The sixth day is (now) passing, my fellow soldiers, since I, ignorant of the future and (not knowing) whether this title was (something) to be desired or feared, was adopted as Caesar.

quo domus nostrae aut rei publicae fato in vestra manu positum est, non quia meo nomine tristiorem casum paveam, ut qui adversas res expertus cum maxime discam ne secundas quidem minus discriminis habere:

With what fate to our house or republic (I was adopted) has been placed in your hands. (I say this) not because I fear on my own account a rather gloomy outcome, as I am one who has (already) experienced adversity, especially (now) when I am learning that not even prosperity holds less danger.

patris et senatus et ipsius imperii vicem doleo, si nobis aut perire hodie necesse est aut, quod aeque apud bonos miserum est, occidere.

(No,) it is the plight of my father and of the Senate and of the Empire itself that I grieve over, if it be necessary for us either to perish today or, what is equally wretched in the eyes of the good, to kill.

solacium proximi motus habebamus incruentam urbem et res sine discordia translatas: provisum adoptione videbatur ut ne post Galbam quidem bello locus esset.’

As a consolation in the last uprising we had a city free from bloodshed and affairs transferred without discord; (and) it seemed to have been provided for by (this) adoption that not even after (the reign of) Galba would there be any occasion for war.

***30 – Continuation of Piso’s speech***

“nihil adrogabo mihi nobilitatis aut modestiae; neque enim relatu virtutum in comparatione Othonis opus est.

“Nothing will I claim for myself of nobility or self-restraint, for there is no need of a recital of (my) virtues in comparison with Otho’s!

vitia, quibus solis gloriatur, evertere imperium, etiam cum amicum imperatoris ageret.

His vices, in which alone he boasts, turned the Empire upside down, even when he was playing the Emperor’s friend!

habitune et incessu an illo muliebri ornatu mereretur imperium?

Was it by his bearing and gait or by that womanly attire (of his) that he was supposed to deserve imperial power?

falluntur quibus luxuria specie liberalitatis imponit: perdere iste sciet, donare nesciet.

Deceived are those upon whom (his) extravagance imposes with the appearance of generosity: the fellow will know how to squander (money), he will not know how to give (it)!

stupra nunc et comissationes et feminarum coetus volvit animo: haec principatus praemia putat, quorum libido ac voluptas penes ipsum sit, rubor ac dedecus penes omnes; nemo enim umquam imperium flagitio quaesitum bonis artibus exercuit.

Nowadays debaucheries and drunken revelries and companies of women are what he turns over in his mind: these he supposes to be the prizes of the Principate, and the desire and pleasure thereof are supposed to fall to him, the shame and disgrace to everyone else! For no one ever exercised imperial power by fair means once it had been acquired by scandalous conduct.

Galbam consensus generis humani, me Galba consentientibus vobis Caesarem dixit.

The consensus of the human race declared Galba Caesar, (and) Galba, with your consent, declared me Caesar.

si res publica et senatus et populus vacua nomina sunt, vestra, commilitones, interest ne imperatorem pessimi faciant.

If the Republic and the Senate and the People are (but) empty titles, (then) it concerns you, my fellow soldiers, to ensure that scoundrels make not the Emperor.

legionum seditio adversus duces suos audita est aliquando: vestra fides famaque inlaesa ad hunc diem mansit. et Nero quoque vos destituit, non vos Neronem.

The mutiny of legions against their own leaders has occasionally been heard of: (but) your own loyalty and reputation has to this day remained unimpaired. And also Nero deserted you, not you Nero.

minus triginta transfugae et desertores, quos centurionem aut tribunum sibi eligentes nemo ferret, imperium adsignabunt?

Shall fewer (than) thirty renegades and deserters, whom no one would tolerate electing a centurion or tribune for themselves, assign imperial command?

admittitis exemplum et quiescendo commune crimen facitis?

Are you going to allow (this) precedent and by (your) quiescence make the crime a shared one?

transcendet haec licentia in provincias, et ad nos scelerum exitus, bellorum ad vos pertinebunt.

This lawless spirit will spill over to the provinces, and the consequences of (these) crimes will reach Us and of these wars you.

nec est plus quod pro caede principis quam quod innocentibus datur, sed proinde a nobis donativum ob fidem quam ab aliis pro facinore accipietis.”

What is given for the murder of a *princeps* is no more than that which is given to the innocent, but just as much a donative from Us will you receive on account of (your) loyalty as from others for villainy.”

***31 – The troops gravitate to Otho’s side***

dilapsis speculatoribus cetera cohors non aspernata contionantem, ut turbidis rebus evenit, forte magis et nullo adhuc consilio rapit signa quam, quod postea creditum est, insidiis et simulatione.

After the *speculatores* had slipped away, the rest of the cohort, (although) not despising the speaker, (nevertheless), as happens in confused situations, grab hold of their standards more by chance and with no plan as yet rather than, as was afterwards believed, out of treachery and pretence.

missus et Celsus Marius ad electos Illyrici exercitus, Vipsania in porticu tendentes; praeceptum Amullio Sereno et Domitio Sabino primipilaribus, ut Germanicos milites e Libertatis atrio accerserent.

Celsus Marius was sent to picked men of the Illyrian army encamped in the Vipsanian Colonnade; (and) instructions (were given to) the *primipilares* (chief centurions) Amullius Serenus and Domitius Sabinus to summon the German troops from the Hall of Liberty.

legioni classicae diffidebatur, infestae ob caedem commilitonum, quos primo statim introitu trucidaverat Galba.

No trust was placed in the marine legion, hostile (as they were) owing to the slaughter of their fellow soldiers, whom Galba had immediately butchered at his initial entrance.

pergunt etiam in castra praetorianorum tribuni Cetrius Severus, Subrius Dexter, Pompeius Longinus, si incipiens adhuc et necdum adulta seditio melioribus consiliis flecteretur.

The tribunes Cetrius Severus, Subrius Dexter, Pompeius Longinus even proceed to the Camp of the Praetorians (to see) if the still incipient and not yet fully-grown mutiny might be swayed by better counsels.

tribunorum Subrium et Cetrium adorti milites minis, Longinum manibus coercent exarmantque, quia non ordine militiae, sed e Galbae amicis, fidus principi suo et desciscentibus suspectior erat.

Of these tribunes, the soldiers assailed Subrius and Cetrius with threats, (and) Longinus they restrain with their hands and disarm, not because of his military rank, but because he was one of Galba’s friends, faithful to his *princeps*, and (thus) somewhat suspect to those breaking their allegiance.

legio classica nihil cunctata praetorianis adiungitur; Illyrici exercitus electi Celsum infestis pilis proturbant.

The marine legion without the slightest delay joins the praetorians. The picked men of the Illyrian army drive Celsus off with javelins poised.

Germanica vexilla diu nutavere, invalidis adhuc corporibus et placatis animis, quod eos a Nerone Alexandriam praemissos atque inde rursus longa navigatione aegros impensiore cura Galba refovebat.

The German detachments wavered for a long time, their bodies still weak and yet their minds placated, because, after they had been sent off to Alexandria by Nero and had then been sick on the long sea journey home again, Galba had been reviving them with some rather costly care.

***32 – Plebs gather on Palatine; Titus Vinius counsels staying in palace***

universa iam plebs Palatium implebat, mixtis servitiis et dissono clamore caedem Othonis et coniuratorum exitium poscentium ut si in circo aut theatro ludicrum aliquod postularent:

The whole populace was now filling the Palatine, along with intermingled groups of slaves and the dissonant clamour of those calling for Otho’s execution and the conspirators’ destruction, as if they were demanding some show or other in the circus or theatre.

neque illis iudicium aut veritas, quippe eodem die diversa pari certamine postulaturis, sed tradito more quemcumque principem adulandi licentia adclamationum et studiis inanibus.

Neither good judgement nor truthfulness were theirs, seeing that on that same day they were to demand the opposite with equal combativeness, but (they acted) according to their traditional practice of flattering any *princeps* with a licence of acclamations and inane enthusiasms.

interim Galbam duae sententiae distinebant: Titus Vinius manendum intra domum, opponenda servitia, firmandos aditus, non eundum ad iratos censebat; daret malorum paenitentiae, daret bonorum consensui spatium;

Meanwhile two viewpoints were holding Galba back: Titus Vinius was proposing that they wait inside the house, have the slaves mount resistance, have the entrances firmed up, and not go out to the angry (mob); (he) should allow time for the regrets of the bad (to form), he should allow time for the consensus of the good.

scelera impetu, bona consilia mora valescere; denique eundi ultro, si ratio sit, eandem mox facultatem, regressum, si paeniteat, in aliena potestate.

Crimes gain strength by impulsive action, good counsels by delay. After all there would soon be the same opportunity for going out of his own accord, should there be good reason for it, (but) his return, should he regret (going out now), would be in another man’s power.

***33 – Arguments for leaving the ‘safety’ of the palace***

festinandum ceteris videbatur antequam cresceret invalida adhuc coniuratio paucorum: trepidaturum etiam Othonem, qui furtim digressus, ad ignaros inlatus; cunctatione nunc et segnitia terentium tempus imitari principem discat.

To the rest it seemed best to hurry before there should grow the yet frail conspiracy of a few. Also Otho would be in a state of anxiety, seeing as he had slipped away furtively (and) been carried off to those unacquainted with him, (but) now, due to the delay-tactics and inactivity of those wasting time, he might be learning to play the *princeps*!

non expectandum ut compositis castris forum invadat et prospectante Galba Capitolium adeat, dum egregius imperator cum fortibus amicis ianua ac limine tenus domum cludit, obsidionem nimirum toleraturus.

They should not wait for (Otho) to invade the forum once he had got the Camp under his control, and with Galba looking on to approach the Capitol, while their outstanding Emperor with his brave friends bars the house with as much as a door and a threshold, no doubt ready to sustain a siege!

et praeclarum in servis auxilium si consensus tantae multitudinis et, quae plurimum valet, prima indignatio elanguescat.

And just splendid would be the help (to be found) in slaves if the consensus of such a large crowd and, what has most strength, their initial indignation, should wane!

proinde intuta quae indecora; vel si cadere necesse sit, occurrendum discrimini: id Othoni invidiosius et ipsis honestum.

Accordingly, unsafe was what unbecoming. Even if it were necessary to fall, they should meet the crisis; that would be more invidious to Otho and honourable for themselves.

repugnantem huic sententiae Vinium Laco minaciter invasit, stimulante Icelo privati odii pertinacia in publicum exitium.

When Vinius fought back against this view, Laco assailed him menacingly, Icelus goading him on owing to the stubbornness of his private hatred – all to the public ruin.

***34 – Galba sends Piso to Praetorian Camp***

nec diutius Galba cunctatus speciosiora suadentibus accessit.

Delaying no longer, Galba acceded to those urging what was more specious.

praemissus tamen in castra Piso, ut iuvenis magno nomine, recenti favore et infensus Tito Vinio, seu quia erat seu quia irati ita volebant; et facilius de odio creditur.

However, Piso was sent ahead to the Camp, as he was (supposedly) a young man of great name, of recent favour, and hostile to Titus Vinius – either because that was (actually) the case or because they in their anger wished it so; and it is easier to believe (that it was all) about hatred!

vixdum egresso Pisone occisum in castris Othonem vagus primum et incertus rumor: mox, ut in magnis mendaciis, interfuisse se quidam et vidisse adfirmabant, credula fama inter gaudentes et incuriosos.

Scarcely yet had Piso left than there was an initially vague and uncertain story that Otho had been killed in the Camp. Soon, as (is the case) in great deceptions, some were affirming that they had been present and seen (this), (such) common talk being (all too) easily believed [lit. credulous] among the jubilant and incurious!

multi arbitrabantur compositum auctumque rumorem mixtis iam Othonianis, qui ad evocandum Galbam laeta falso vulgaverint.

Many were thinking that the story had been concocted and amplified by the now commingled Othonians, who had falsely published the joyful tidings to lure Galba out.

***35 – False report of Otho’s death lures Galba out of Palace***

tum vero non populus tantum et imperita plebs in plausus et immodica studia sed equitum plerique ac senatorum, posito metu incauti, refractis Palatii foribus ruere intus ac se Galbae ostentare, praereptam sibi ultionem querentes, ignavissimus quisque et, ut res docuit, in periculo non ausurus, nimii verbis, linguae feroces;

Then indeed not only did the people and the inexperienced plebs burst into applause and immoderate enthusiasm but (also) most of the Knights and Senators, (and) incautiously, their fear laid aside, after breaking down the doors of the palace, they rush inside and present themselves to Galba, complaining that vengeance had been wrested from them – each of them a total coward and, as the event taught, unprepared to venture into danger, excessive in their words, warlike of tongue!

nemo scire et omnes adfirmare, donec inopia veri et consensu errantium victus sumpto thorace Galba inruenti turbae neque aetate neque corpore resistens sella levaretur.

No one knows (anything) and (yet) all are making claims, until Galba, vanquished by the dearth of truth and the consensus of those in error, taking up his breastplate, resisting the onrushing crowd with neither his years nor his body, was hoisted on a chair.

obvius in Palatio Iulius Atticus speculator, cruentum gladium ostentans, occisum a se Othonem exclamavit; et Galba ‘commilito’, inquit, ‘quis iussit?’ insigni animo ad coercendam militarem licentiam, minantibus intrepidus, adversus blandientes incorruptus.

Coming to meet (him) on the Palatine the *speculator* Julius Atticus, showing off a bloodstained sword, exclaimed that Otho had been killed by him. And Galba said, ‘Comrade soldier, who gave the order?’ with a spirit remarkable for curbing military licence, intrepid before those making threats, incorruptible against flatterers.

***36 – Praetorian Camp excitedly hail their new Emperor***

haud dubiae iam in castris omnium mentes tantusque ardor ut, non contenti agmine et corporibus, in suggestu, in quo paulo ante aurea Galbae statua fuerat, medium inter signa Othonem vexillis circumdarent.

Not in any doubt now were the minds of all in the Camp, and so great was their ardour that, not content with a column and their bodies, on a platform whereon a little beforehand a golden statue of Galba had been, they surrounded Otho, in the middle among the standards, with their ensigns.

nec tribunis aut centurionibus adeundi locus: gregarius miles caveri insuper praepositos iubebat.

Neither tribunes nor centurions had any opportunity of approaching him; the common soldiers were ordering that officers above all should be treated warily.

strepere cuncta clamoribus et tumultu et exhortatione mutua, non tamquam in populo ac plebe, variis segni adulatione vocibus, sed ut quemque adfluentium militum aspexerant, prensare manibus, complecti armis, conlocare iuxta, praeire sacramentum, modo imperatorem militibus, modo milites imperatori commendare.

Everything resounds with shouts and commotion and mutual exhortation, not like (that found) among the people and plebs, their cries varying in lazy adulation, but rather, when they had spotted any of the soldiers streaming in, they grab him with their hands, clasp him in their arms, place him next to them, dictate the oath of allegiance to him, (and) now commend the Emperor to the soldiers, now the soldiers to the Emperor.

Nec deerat Otho protendens manus adorare vulgum, iacere oscula et omnia serviliter pro dominatione.

Nor was Otho remiss in venerating the rabble by stretching forth his hands, in throwing them kisses, and (doing) everything in a servile manner for the sake of supreme power.

Postquam universa classicorum legio sacramentum eius accepit, fidens viribus, et quos adhuc singulos exstimulaverat accendendos in commune ratus, pro vallo castrorum ita coepit.

After the whole legion of the marines had taken the oath of loyalty to him, then he, confident in his strength, and thinking that those whom he had hitherto incited as individuals should be inflamed *en masse*, he began thus from the front of the Camp’s wall:

***37 – Otho paints Galba as criminally vindictive***

“Fellow soldiers, in coming before you I cannot say who I am, for I consider myself neither a private citizen, since you have named me *Princeps*, nor a *Princeps* as long as someone else sits on the throne. Your own name will be in doubt as long as the question remains whether you have in your camp an Emperor or an enemy. Do you hear how they clamour for both my death and your punishment? So it is clear that we can only perish or be saved together. Probably Galba has already promised [our elimination], being a man of such exceptional leniency that he massacred, without anyone asking for it, so many thousands of most innocent soldiers. Horror fills my heart each time I call to mind his calamitous entry into Rome and this massacre, his only victory, when in view of the whole city he ordered the decimation of men who had surrendered to him whilst pleading for mercy, and for whose safety he had given his word. Having entered the city under these auspices, what glory did he bring to the Principate, except the murder of Obultronius Sabinus and of Cornelius Marcellus in Spain, of Betuus Cilo in Gaul, of Fonteius Capito in Germany, of Clodius Macer in Africa, of Cingonius on his way hither, of Turpilianus in Rome, of Nymphidius in this camp? Is there a province anywhere which he has not stained with blood or, as he puts it, purged by correction? For he calls remedies what others call crimes, and just as improperly he refers to his cruelty as severity, to his avarice as parsimony, and to the abuse and insults you receive as discipline. It is now seven months since Nero’s fall and already Icelus has stolen more than any Polyclitus, Vatinius, and Aegialus [freedmen who had curried favour with Nero] ever squandered away. Even Titus Vinius would have adopted more restraint in his greed and excesses had he been Emperor; as matters stand, he has held us in subjection as if we were his property and despises us for belonging to another. His house alone is sufficient to provide the donative which is never given you, but is daily flung in your faces as a reproach.

***38 – Otho claims the gods’ backing and opens up the arsenal***

“To make sure you have no hope even in his successor, Galba has summoned from exile the man whose gloominess and avarice he judged most like his own. You saw, my fellow soldiers, that the gods themselves signified their disapproval of that unlucky adoption by a memorable storm. Even the Senate, even the Roman people share our sentiments. They count now on your valour: in you is all the strength required by noble undertakings; without you they are destined to fail, however meritorious they may be. I am calling you not to war or to danger: all Roman armies are with us. A single cohort in civilian clothes defends not Galba, rather it detains him. As soon as they see you, as soon as they hear from me the password, the only fighting that will occur will be a contest as to who will oblige me most. There is no room for hesitation in a venture that can only be praised after it has succeeded.” Then he ordered them to open the arsenal. Arms were seized in haste without regard to established miltary custom and procedures that made it possible to tell Praetorian from legionary soldiers by the insignia they wore. Helmets and shields were grabbed pell-mell, though they were meant for auxiliary troops, with no tribune or centurion intervening to keep order. Each man was his own guide and instigator, and the principal incentive for the wicked to misbehave was the consternation of the decent few.

***39 – Galba approaches Forum, gets bad news,***

iam exterritus Piso fremitu crebrescentis seditionis et vocibus in urbem usque resonantibus, egressum interim Galbam et foro adpropinquantem adsecutus erat;

Piso, now frightened off (from the Camp) by the din of the growing sedition and by the cries that resounded right into the city, had caught up with Galba who had left in the interim and was (now) approaching the Forum.

iam Marius Celsus haud laeta rettulerat, cum alii in Palatium redire, alii Capitolium petere, plerique rostra occupanda censerent, plures tantum sententiis aliorum contra dicerent, utque evenit in consiliis infelicibus, optima viderentur quorum tempus effugerat.

By now Marius Celsus had brought back unhappy tidings, while some were recommending that they return to the Palatine, others that they make for the Capitol, very many that the *rostra* be seized, (and) even more merely contradicting the opinions of others, and, as (often) happens in the case of unfortunate plans, those (plans) seemed best whose time had fled for good.

agitasse Laco ignaro Galba de occidendo Tito Vinio dicitur, sive ut poena eius animos militum mulceret, seu conscium Othonis credebat, ad postremum vel odio.

Laco is said to have discussed killing Titus Vinius, without Galba’s knowledge, either in order that his punishment appease the soldiers’ spirits, or (because) he believed (him) Otho’s accomplice, or ultimately out of hatred.

haesitationem attulit tempus ac locus, quia initio caedis orto difficilis modus; et turbavere consilium trepidi nuntii ac proximorum diffugia, languentibus omnium studiis qui primo alacres fidem atque animum ostentaverant.

The time and the place brought (him) hesitation because, once a start of slaughter has arisen moderation is difficult; and alarming messages and the defections of his closest associates disrupted his plan, since the enthusiasms of all who had at first so energetically paraded their loyalty and courage were waning.

***40 – Otho despatches his followers into the Forum***

agebatur huc illuc Galba vario turbae fluctuantis impulsu, completis undique basilicis ac templis, lugubri prospectu.

Galba was being driven hither and thither by the varying pressure of the swelling crowd, basilicas and temples having been filled on all sides, the outlook mournful.

neque populi aut plebis ulla vox, sed attoniti vultus et conversae ad omnia aures; non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus et magnae irae silentium est.

Neither from the people or the plebs was there any sound, but awestruck were their faces and focused on everything were their ears; there is no commotion, no peace of mind, (just) the kind of silence that arises from great fear and great indignation.

Othoni tamen armari plebem nuntiabatur; ire praecipites et occupare pericula iubet.

However it was being reported to Otho that the plebs were being armed; (so) he orders (his followers) to go post-haste and forestall (any) dangers.

igitur milites Romani, quasi Vologaesum aut Pacorum avito Arsacidarum solio depulsuri ac non imperatorem suum inermem et senem trucidare pergerent, disiecta plebe, proculcato senatu, truces armis, rapidi equis forum inrumpunt.

Therefore, Roman soldiers – as though they were on their way to drive a Vologaesus or a Pacorus from the ancestral throne of the Arsacidae, and not going forth to slaughter their own Emperor, unarmed and elderly as he was – flinging aside the plebs, trampling down the Senate before them, ferocious in their weapons, galloping on their horses, burst into the Forum.

nec illos Capitolii aspectus et imminentium templorum religio et priores et futuri principes terruere quo minus facerent scelus cuius ultor est quisquis successit.

Nor did the sight of the Capitol and the sanctity of the overhanging temples and past and future *principes* deter them from committing a crime whose avenger is whosoever has succeeded.

***41 – Galba is slain***

viso comminus armatorum agmine vexillarius comitatae Galbam cohortis (Atilium Vergilionem fuisse tradunt) dereptam Galbae imaginem solo adflixit: eo signo manifesta in Othonem omnium militum studia, desertum fuga populi forum, destricta adversus dubitantes tela.

Once the column of armed men was sighted at close quarters, the banner-bearer of the cohort accompanying Galba – men say he was Atilius Vergilio – tore down Galba’s image and dashed it to the ground. At that signal the enthusiasm of all the soldiers for Otho was obvious, the Forum was deserted by the flight of the people, weapons were unsheathed against waverers.

iuxta Curtii lacum trepidatione ferentium Galba proiectus e sella ac provolutus est.

Near the *Lacus Curtius*, Galba, owing to the alarm of those carrying (him), was hurled from his chair and rolled headlong.

extremam eius vocem, ut cuique odium aut admiratio fuit, varie prodidere.

People have variously reported his last utterance depending on whether each had hatred or admiration (for him).

alii suppliciter interrogasse quid mali meruisset, paucos dies exolvendo donativo deprecatum: plures obtulisse ultro percussoribus iugulum: agerent ac ferirent, si ita e re publica videretur.

Some (say) he asked suppliantly what harm he had deserved, that he pleaded for a few days to pay the donative in full; a greater number (say) he freely offered his throat to his assassins: let them come come and strike (him) if so seemed it good for the republic.

non interfuit occidentium quid diceret.

It was of no concern to his killers what he was saying.

de percussore non satis constat: quidam Terentium evocatum, alii Laecanium; crebrior fama tradidit Camurium quintae decimae legionis militem impresso gladio iugulum eius hausisse.

Regarding the man who struck him down there is no real agreement: some (say he was) Terentius an *evocatus* [elite bodyguard or re-enlisted veteran], others Laecanius; a more frequently told story had it that Camurius, a soldier of the XV Legion, had drained his throat by pressing his sword into it.

ceteri crura brachiaque (nam pectus tegebatur) foede laniavere; pleraque vulnera feritate et saevitia trunco iam corpori adiecta.

The rest of them mangled his legs and arms in a vile manner (for his breast was protected). Most of the wounds were added to his already dismembered body out of pure wildness and savagery.

***42 – Titus Vinius despatched before the Temple of the Divine Julius***

Titum inde Vinium invasere, de quo et ipso ambigitur consumpseritne vocem eius instans metus, an proclamaverit non esse ab Othone mandatum ut occideretur.

Then they went for Titus Vinius, about whom himself also it is uncertain whether instant fear entirely took away his voice or whether he cried out that there was no order from Otho that he be killed.

quod seu finxit formidine seu conscientiam coniurationis confessus est, huc potius eius vita famaque inclinat, ut conscius sceleris fuerit cuius causa erat.

Whether he fabricated this out of terror or whether he admitted his complicity in the conspiracy, it is to the latter rather that his life and reputation incline (our belief), (namely) that he was in fact complicit in a crime of which he was a cause.

ante aedem divi Iulii iacuit primo ictu in poplitem, mox ab Iulio Caro legionario milite in utrumque latus transverberatus.

Before the temple of the Divine Julius was he felled, by an initial blow to the back of the knee, (and) shortly afterward he was run through in each side by the legionary soldier Julius Carus.

***43 – Piso slaughtered in the Temple of Vesta***

insignem illa die virum Sempronium Densum aetas nostra vidit.

On that day our age beheld a quite remarkable man, Sempronius Densus.

centurio is praetoriae cohortis, a Galba custodiae Pisonis additus, stricto pugione occurrens armatis et scelus exprobrans ac modo manu modo voce vertendo in se percussores quamquam vulnerato Pisoni effugium dedit.

(This) centurion of the Praetorian Cohort, added to Piso’s protection by Galba, (by) running up to the armed men with drawn dagger and upbraiding them for their crime and by directing the assassins toward himself now with his hand, now with his voice, gave the albeit wounded Piso a means of escape.

Piso in aedem Vestae pervasit, exceptusque misericordia publici servi et contubernio eius abditus non religione nec caerimoniis sed latebra inminens exitium differebat, cum advenere missu Othonis nominatim in caedem eius ardentis Sulpicius Florus e Britannicis cohortibus, nuper a Galba civitate donatus, et Statius Murcus speculator, a quibus protractus Piso in foribus templi trucidatur.

Piso managed to get to the Temple of Vesta, and, having been taken in by the mercy of a public servant and hidden in his apartment, he was deferring his looming destruction not by means of the sanctity and rites (of the place) but by his hiding-place, when there arrived, by express despatch of Otho aflame for his slaughter, Sulpicius Florus of the British cohorts, a man recently gifted with citizenship by Galba, and the *speculator* Statius Murcus. By these is Piso dragged forth and butchered in the temple doorway.

***44 – Otho and his assassins glory in their coup***

nullam caedem Otho maiore laetitia excepisse, nullum caput tam insatiabilibus oculis perlustrasse dicitur, seu tum primum levata omni sollicitudine mens vacare gaudio coeperat, seu recordatio maiestatis in Galba, amicitiae in Tito Vinio quamvis immitem animum imagine tristi confuderat**.** Pisonis ut inimici et aemuli caede laetari ius fasque credebat.

No other slaying is Otho said to have welcomed with greater joy, no head to have surveyed with such insatiable eyes, either because then for the first time his mind, relieved from all solicitude, had begun to have leisure for joy, or else because the recollection of his treason in the case of Galba and of his ‘friendship’ in the case of Titus Vinius had been troubling his albeit callous mind with its depressing image. (But) over the murder of Piso, as a personal enemy and rival, he believed it lawful and proper that there be rejoicing.

praefixa contis capita gestabantur inter signa cohortium iuxta aquilam legionis, certatim ostentantibus cruentas manus qui occiderant, qui interfuerant, qui vere qui falso ut pulchrum et memorabile facinus iactabant.

Their heads, affixed to pikes, were borne between the cohorts’ standards, alongside the legion’s eagle, whilst those who had done the killing, who had taken part in it, who were truthfully or lyingly boasting of their crime as something beautiful and memorable, vied to display their bloodstained hands.

plures quam centum viginti libellos praemium exposcentium ob aliquam notabilem illa die operam Vitellius postea invenit, omnesque conquiri et interfici iussit, non honori Galbae, sed tradito principibus more munimentum ad praesens, in posterum ultionem.

More than 120 petitions from those demanding a reward on account of some notable service that day did Vitellius subsequently discover, and he ordered that all be hunted down and killed, not for the honour of Galba, but – in accordance with the custom passed down to *principes* – as a safeguard for the present and (a warning of) vengeance for the future.

***45 – Senators rush to display their loyalty to Otho; Otho spares Marius Celsus***

One would have thought it was not the same Senate, the same people that now rushed to the Praetorian Camp, struggled for precedence, raced to overtake those ahead, cursed Galba, extolled the soldiers’ choice, kissed Otho’s hand: the more insincere their marks of affection, the more prodigal of them they were. Otho did not snub anyone, and by his words and mien he tried to moderate the ardour and grimness of the troops. They were clamouring for the execution of Marius Celsus, the Consul-designate and Galba’s faithful friend to the very end: his industry and honesty were resented as if they were vices. It was obvious they were seeking a pretext to engage in massacre and pillage and cause the ruin of every decent citizen. Otho did not as yet have sufficient authority to prevent crimes, but he had enough to order them. So he pretended to be angry with Celsus and ordered him arrested. By promising he would deal more severely with him later, he was able to rescue him from his impending end.

***46 – New prefects appointed, military exemption fees to be paid by Treasury***

Thereafter the soldiers had their way in everything, such as choosing their own Prefect, Plotius Firmus, a former legionary, later head of the city watch and one of Otho’s supporters even while Galba was alive. He was given an associate, Licinius Proculus, a close friend of Otho, suspected for that reason of having seconded his plans. Flavius Sabinus was appointed City Prefect, conforming in this with Nero’s choice, under whom he had held the same office, but many favoured Sabinus because they saw in him his brother Vespasian. The troops pressed for the abolition of the payments usually made to centurions for exemptions from duty (in effect these were a kind of annual tribute the common soldier had to pay). A quarter of each maniple might be absent on furloughs or even lounging around the camp, provided the centurion had received his fee. No one scrupled about imposing an excessive charge nor cared how soldiers were to find the money. Robbery, looting, or the meanest occupations were the means used to purchase relief from military drudgery. It was also common practice to wear down the most affluent soldiers with hard work and ill-usage until they bought the dispensation. After spending all his money this way and being at the same time enervated by prolonged inactivity, a soldier would return to his unit penniless instead of prosperous, despondent instead of spirited. As more and more soldiers were in turn perverted by the same penury and lack of discipline, they were ready to plunge into sedition and discord, and ultimately into civil war. But Otho, to avoid alienating the goodwill of the centurions by gratifying the common soldiers, promised he would pay for the annual exemption fees out of the imperial revenue, an undoubtedly expedient measure observed by good Emperors that came later as a permanent feature of the service. The Prefect Laco was sent away, under pretext of confinement, to an island, but a re-enlisted veteran, who had been sent ahead of Laco to the island to assassinate him, ran him through with a sword. Marcianus Icelus was dealt with publicly, as is the custom with freedmen.

***47 – Otho flattered in the Curia, Piso and Titus Vinius buried***

After a day spent in crime, the last outrage was the rejoicing [that ended it]. The City Praetor called the Senate together, and all the other magistrates competed for primacy in adulation. Senators came rushing into the Curia to give Otho the powers of a tribune, the title of Augustus, and all the honours of a *princeps*. Everyone was doing his utmost to make him forget all the mocks and insults flung at him [earlier] from all sides. Whether the injury had lodged in the depth of his heart no one had occasion to find out. Had he ignored the affronts, or did he intend to avenge them later? The answer is uncertain in view of the brevity of his reign. The Forum was still covered with blood and strewn with corpses when Otho was borne through it to the Capitol, thence to the imperial palace. He gave permission for the bodies to receive burial or be cremated. Piso was laid out by his wife Verania and his brother Scribonianus, Titus Vinius by his daughter Crispina, after they had searched for and ransomed the heads which the assassins had kept as saleable objects.

***48 – Obituaries of Piso and Titus Vinius***

Piso, a man more famous than fortunate, was almost thirty-one years of age [when he died]. Of his brothers, Magnus had been put to death by Claudius, Crassus by Nero. He himself was long in exile, was Caesar for four days, and thanks to Galba’s precipitate adoption, derived no other benefit from being preferred to his elder brother Scibonianus than to be killed before him. Titus Vinius lived fifty-seven years and had a chequered career. His father came from a family that counted praetors among its members; his maternal grandfather was one of the proscripts [under the second triumvirate]. The first taste of military life brought him dishonour. He had for his legion commander one Calvisius Sabinus, whose wife, driven by unseemly curiosity to visit the camp, entered it one night disguised as a soldier and, after indulging her caprice as far as trying out guard duty and performing other military functions, she ended up prostituting herself in the legion’s headquarters, no less. Titus Vinius was held responsible for the crime; therefore he was put in chains by Caligula’s orders, but was later released when times changed. He advanced through the ladder of public offices without setbacks and was given command of a legion after his praetorship, a post he filled creditably. Soon after, however, he stained his reputation by a sordid act, having purloined –so they say—a golden cup from Claudius’ table. So next day Claudius directed that he alone of all the guests be served using earthenware. But, as Proconsul, Vinius governed Gallia Narbonensis with strict honesty. Then, as he was drawn towards his ruin by Galba’s friendship, he proved himself audacious, shrewd, and efficient and showed the same passionate zeal in both his callousness and his industry, as inclination moved him. His testament was annulled because of his immense fortune, but the last wishes of Piso, who was poor, were respected.

***49 – Burial & obituary of Galba***

Galbae corpus diu neglectum et licentia tenebrarum plurimis ludibriis vexatum dispensator Argius e prioribus servis humili sepultura in privatis eius hortis contexit.

Galba’s body – long neglected and owing to the licence afforded by the dark abused with very many outrages – did his steward Argius, one of his former slaves, cover over with a shallow burial in his private gardens.

caput per lixas calonesque suffixum laceratumque ante Patrobii tumulum (libertus is Neronis punitus a Galba fuerat) postera demum die repertum et cremato iam corpori admixtum est.

His head, impaled and lacerated by sutlers and soldiers’ servants, was finally discovered the next day before the tomb of Patrobius – he had been a freedman of Nero punished by Galba – and it was (now) mixed in together with his already cremated body.

hunc exitum habuit Servius Galba, tribus et septuaginta annis quinque principes prospera fortuna emensus et alieno imperio felicior quam suo.

This is the end that Servius Galba had, (a man who) in his seventy-three years had measured out (the reigns of) five *principes* with prosperous fortune, and (who had been) more fortunate in another’s reign than in his own.

vetus in familia nobilitas, magnae opes: ipsi medium ingenium, magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus.

Ancient nobility lay in his family, great wealth. He himself had a mediocre character, free from vices rather than attended by virtues.

famae nec incuriosus nec venditator; pecuniae alienae non adpetens, suae parcus, publicae avarus; amicorum libertorumque, ubi in bonos incidisset, sine reprehensione patiens, si mali forent, usque ad culpam ignarus.

Of his reputation he was neither careless nor self-advertising. Of the money of others he was not grasping, of his own frugal, of the public’s avaricious! Of his friends and freedmen, when he should chance on good ones, he was forbearing and without criticism, but should they be wicked, he was ignorant to a fault.

sed claritas natalium et metus temporum obtentui, ut, quod segnitia erat, sapientia vocaretur.

But the fame of his lineage and the fear of the times served as a veil, so that what was (in fact) indolence was called wisdom.

dum vigebat aetas militari laude apud Germanias floruit.

While his time of life was in its vigour, he flourished with military credit in the Germanies.

pro consule Africam moderate, iam senior citeriorem Hispaniam pari iustitia continuit, maior privato visus dum privatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset.

As Proconsul he governed Africa with moderation, (and) now as an older man he governed Hither Spain with equal justice, appearing greater than a *privatus* [a man outside the imperial family] while he was a *privatus*, and in the consensus of all one who would have been capable of imperial rule, should he not have ruled!

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