

# THE STRUCTURE OF TACITUS' *ANNALS*

## Three Hexads or Two 'Ogdoads'?

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### Quotations:

**1.** Jerome, *Comm. ad Zach.* III.14:

Cornelius Tacitus, qui post Augustum usque ad mortem Domitiani uitas Caesarum triginta uoluminibus exarauit.

**2.** From Tacitus' obituary of Tiberius (A. 6.51.3):

morum quoque tempora illi diuersa: egregium uita famaue quoad priuatus uel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit; occultum ac subdolum fingendis uirtutibus donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere; idem inter bona malaque mixtus incolumi matre; instabilis saeuitia sed obtectis libidinibus dum Seianum dilexit timuitue: postremo in scelera simul ac dedecora prorupit postquam remoto pudore et metu suo tantum ingenio utebatur.

**3.a.** The first crime of Tiberius' principate (1.6.1):

Primum facinus noui principatus fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes, quem ignarum inermumque quamuis firmatus animo centurio aegre confecit.

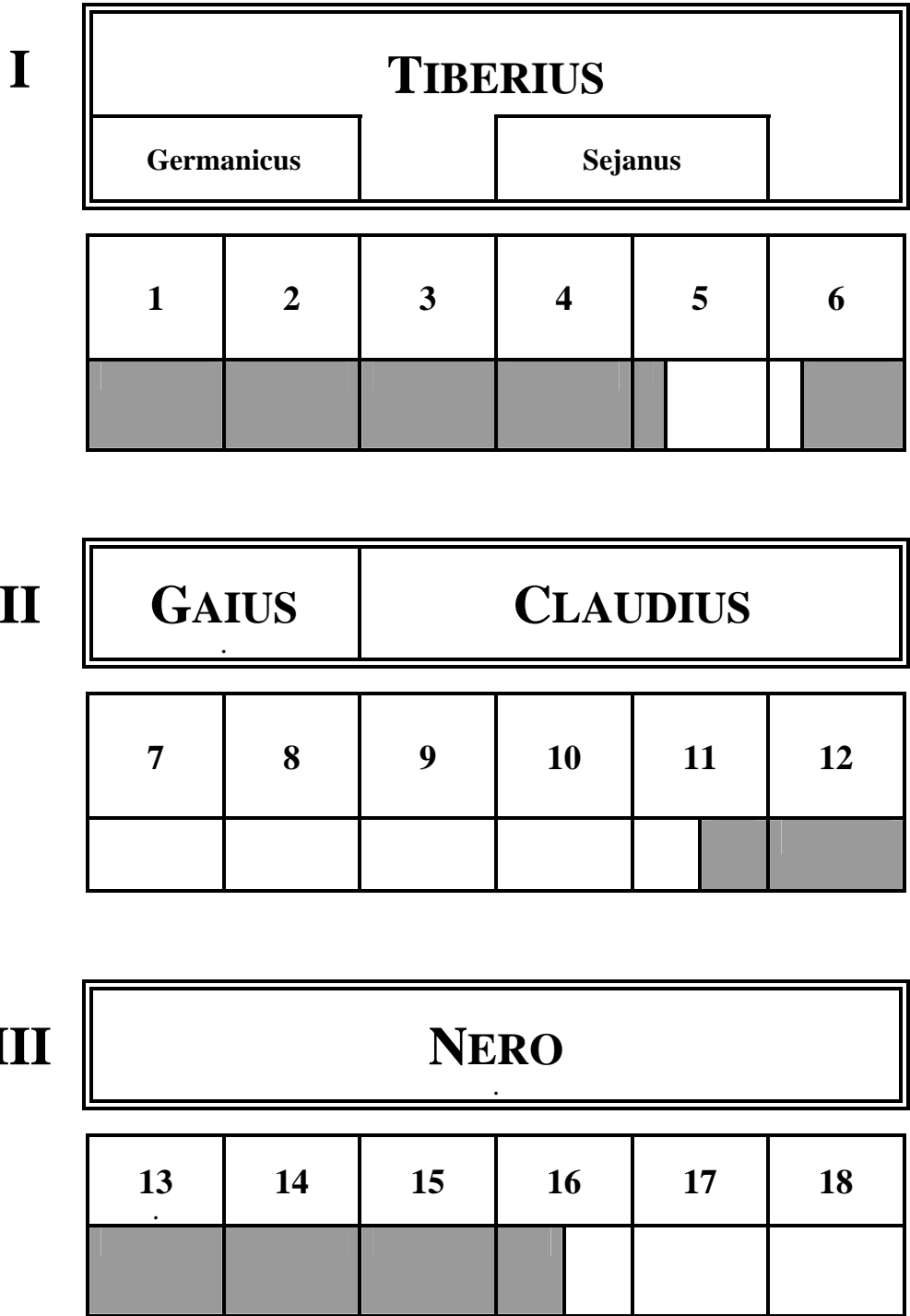
**3.b.** The first crime of Nero's principate (1.6.1):

Prima nouo principatu mors Iunii Silani proconsulis Asiae ignaro Nerone per dolum Agrippinae paratur, non quia ingenii uiolentia exilium inritauerat, segnis et dominationibus aliis fastiditus, adeo ut C. Caesar pecudem auream eum appellare solitus sit: . . .

**4.** Syme on the need for eighteen books (Tacitus [Oxford, 1958], 687):

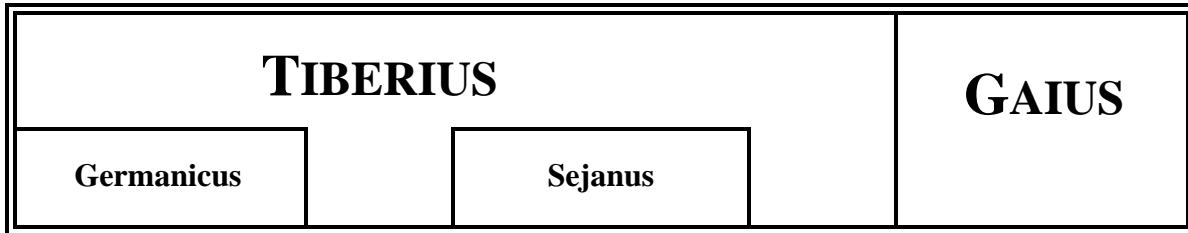
"Further, there is a corollary [to the idea that the *Histories* had 14 books], and very painful: sixteen books for the *Annales*. The events from the suicide of Thrasea Paetus in 66 (*Ann.* XVI.35) to the end of Nero's reign would have to be confined and terminated in Book XVI. Those events were considerable — in themselves, for Tacitus, and for the structure. To say nothing of what happened at Rome, there is the Jewish revolt, the tour in Hellas, and the risings in the West: pageantry, tumult, and doom. There is no way out, unless one ignores the history of 66-68. The mere total of years in a reign is no clue to proportions; and it does not help to suppose that Tacitus, being an old man, was in a hurry, and so compressed his finale. There are no signs of compression in what survives of Book XVI."

**The Structure of Tacitus' *Annales*: Three Hexads? (Syme)**



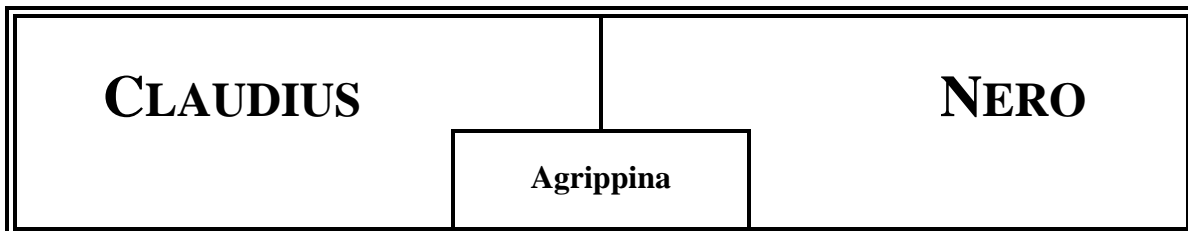
**The Structure of Tacitus' *Annales*: Two 'Ogdoads'?**

**I**



<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

**II**



<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>

**Significant Dates:**

<b>1. Tiberius</b>	Birth:	42 B.C.E.	(November 16)	
	Accession:	14 C.E.	(September 17)	Age: 54
	Death:	37 C.E.	(March 16)	Age: 77
<b>2. Gaius</b>	Birth:	12 C.E.	(August 31)	
	Accession:	37 C.E.	(March 16)	Age: 24
	Death:	41 C.E.	(January 24)	Age: 28
<b>3. Claudius</b>	Birth:	10 B.C.E.	(August 1)	
	Accession:	41 C.E.	(January 26)	Age: 49
	Death:	54 C.E.	(October 13)	Age: 63
<b>4. Nero</b>	Birth:	37 C.E.	(December 15)	
	Accession:	54 C.E.	(October 13)	Age: 16
	Death:	68 C.E.	(June 9)	Age: 30