

Introduction

I THE IMPORTANCE OF THE *SENATUS CONSULTUM* *DE CN. PISONE PATRE (SCPP)*

If Augustus' account of his achievements in the *Res Gestae* deserves the accolade of being known as the 'queen of inscriptions',¹ then it is only fair to follow Yakobson in hailing the senatorial decree concerning Gnaeus Piso senior (*Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* = *SCPP*) as the 'princess of inscriptions'.² Not only does the inscription give fresh insights into one of the crisis points in Roman history, which witnessed the sudden death of Tiberius' heir Germanicus and the threat of instability in the eastern Mediterranean on the fringes of the Roman empire (see §2), but it also illustrates the development of political discourse under Tiberius, as the Senate sought to define its relationship with the imperial family. In this way, it complements other Tiberian voices – notably Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus – in illuminating the ways in which the leadership of Roman society by members of the imperial family became justified (see §5–6). This decree is particularly valuable in offering a contemporary, alternative interpretation of events to what has been until recently dominated by the colourful narrative of Tacitus, who deals with these same events in books two and three of his *Annales*, describing them with the benefit of having experienced the Principate as a political system for over a century (see §3). Unlike Tacitus, the Senate of AD 20 could not know how the Principate was to develop in successive years: its perspective reveals instead the shifting relationship between Senate and imperial family, and the Senate's role in creating a new imperial political discourse. The fact that Tacitus devotes so much space to Germanicus' activities in the East and the subsequent trial of Piso demonstrates that he regarded this episode as pivotal for the shaping of the Principate. What this inscription now confirms is that the importance of these events was equally recognised by contemporary observers. As will also become clear, analysis of this inscription shows that readers need to be just as conscious about authorship, bias, and rhetoric in interpreting this inscribed decree as any literary text.

¹ Mommsen ([1887] 1906) 247; discussed by Cooley (2009) 1–3. ² Yakobson (1998).

As well as providing new insights into politics at Rome, the proliferation of copies of the decree also offers a fresh opportunity to assess the relationship between the provinces – particularly Baetica in southern Spain, where almost all of the known copies of the text have been found so far – and the centre of power at Rome. By considering the multiple copies of the inscription within the wider context of the coins minted in the province, we can trace how the local elite of Baetica reacted to the train of events unfolding at Rome (see §4).

In short, whereas the establishment of the Principate at Rome has generally been considered to have been the achievement of Augustus, close reading of the *SCPP* in the context of other contemporary texts, coins, and inscriptions reveals the importance of the Tiberian era in further shaping the evolution of dynastic rule at Rome. It also allows us to analyse the contribution made by different individuals and groups in negotiating the political changes that were taking place in the aftermath of Augustus' death in AD 14, and how the Principate was not simply inherited from Augustus as a fixed entity but was further transformed under his successor Tiberius.

2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On 10 October AD 19, Germanicus Caesar died aged thirty-three at Antioch on the Orontes following a period of illness whilst on a mission in Syria.³ He was a key link in the dynastic chain of the Caesars, as not only was he married to Augustus' granddaughter, Agrippina, but he had also been adopted by Tiberius as his son in AD 4, having up until then been his nephew (son of Tiberius' brother, the elder Drusus, and Antonia) (Fig. 1).⁴ After Augustus' death, Germanicus was in effect second in command to Tiberius,⁵ something which – along with Ovid's conceit that he was simply a fellow-poet – helps to explain why Ovid turned to him for help from exile.⁶ Both Germanicus and the younger Drusus, Tiberius' son who was a few years younger than Germanicus, were regarded as helping Tiberius to govern Rome in the view of the contemporary observer, Strabo:

At any rate, never has it been permitted to the Romans and their allies to enjoy so much peace and abundance of good things as both Caesar Augustus supplied from the moment he took on absolute power and as now too his successor, his son

³ For a narrative of the period from AD 15–20, see Seager (2005) 81–100, largely a summary of Tacitus. Germanicus' death: Degraffi (1963) 209 – *Fasti Antiaties Ministrorum*, 10 Oct. = LACTOR 19, J7g. Birthday on 24 May: Scheid (1998) 30 – *CFA* 12c, 31 = LACTOR 19, A38j; age at death: Suet., *Calig.* 1.2 – *annum agens aetatis quartum et tricensimum diuturno morbo Antiochiae obiit* – with Wardle (1994) 105. Contrast Levick (1966) 238–39, who argues that Germanicus was aged thirty-four.

⁴ *PIR*² I 221, Germanicus Iulius Caesar.

⁵ Tiberius' son Drusus was younger than Germanicus, and so his career at this time was slightly behind that of his adoptive brother: Sumner (1967).

⁶ Herbert-Brown (1994) chapter 5; Ov., *Pont.* 4.8.27–88, with Myers (2014).

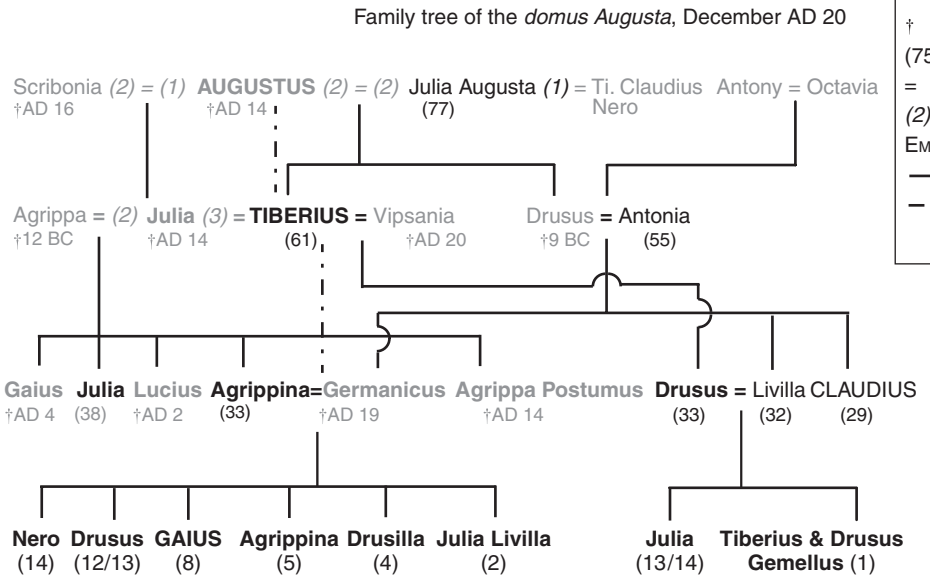


Fig. 1. Family tree of the *domus Augusta* in December AD 20 (courtesy of M.G.L. C)

Tiberius supplies, who is making Augustus the model for his administration and edicts, whilst Tiberius' sons Germanicus and Drusus in turn assist their father.⁷

Their role in Augustus' hopes to hand down his *statio* ('position') to the next generation and beyond⁸ is reflected in their inclusion in dynastic statuary groups from at least AD 7/11.⁹ During Augustus' lifetime, Germanicus had gained experience first as quaestor and then as consul in AD 12. Commanding troops in Germania from AD 13, he resisted pressure from those mutinying to seize power from Tiberius, recovered the standards lost in the Varus disaster of AD 9, and led his men on an expedition as far as Ocean, albeit with rather mixed results, before returning to Rome to celebrate a triumph in AD 17.¹⁰ He must have been viewed as an ideal Roman in many respects, being of noble family, a military victor, and happily married with nine children.

Tacitus draws a vivid picture of Germanicus that presents him as an emotional, popular figure, known for his *comitas* ('approachability'); but the multivalent nature of his depiction also challenges the reader to make sense of its complexities.¹¹ Rather than representing Germanicus as an undiluted heroic figure,¹² Tacitus' characterisation of Germanicus is full of complexities and ambiguities, whereby he emerges potentially both as a 'naive and innocent youth' and a 'clever and dangerous image-maker'.¹³ Tacitus implicitly challenges his readers to make sense of Germanicus as a character in whose actions past and present interact,¹⁴ and whose open behaviour may be taken as illustrating an alternative to the secretive world of the Principate.¹⁵ To some extent, it is true that Tacitus creates the character of an emotionally demonstrative Germanicus as a foil to the secretive Tiberius, commenting in the passage that formally introduces his character in the *Annales*: *nam iuueni ciuile ingenium, mira comitas et diuersa*

⁷ Strabo 6.4.2: οὐδέποτε γοῦν εὐπορήσαι τοσαύτης εἰρήνης καὶ ἀφθονίας ἀγαθῶν ὑπῆρξε Ῥωμαίοις καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις αὐτῶν, ὅσῃν Καῖσάρ τε ὁ Σεβαστὸς παρέσχεν ἀφ' οὗ παρέλαβε τὴν ἔξουσιαν αὐτοτελή, καὶ νῦν ὁ διαδεξάμενος υἱὸς ἐκείνου παρέχει Τιβέριος, κανόνα τῆς διοικήσεως καὶ τῶν προσαγμάτων ποιούμενος ἐκείνου, καὶ αὐτὸν οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ Γερμανικὸς τε καὶ Δρουσὸς ὑπουργοῦντες τῷ πατρί.

⁸ On the distinction between passing on a *paterna statio* rather than the *principatus*, see Cooley (2019).

⁹ Examples before AD 14: Rose (1997) 96, cat.24, portraits of Germanicus and Drusus from Nomentum (Latium); 132, cat.59, portraits of Livia, Drusus and Germanicus from Asido (Baetica); 134, cat.62, inscriptions of Germanicus and Drusus from Segobriga (Tarraconensis); 138, cat.68, inscribed base for (in order) Drusus, Tiberius, Augustus, Germanicus from Athens (Achaea); 174, cat.114, inscribed base for Germanicus, Drusus, Tiberius from Ephesus (Asia).

¹⁰ Tac., *Ann.* 1.31–52 (mutiny); 1.55–71 (response to Varus disaster and campaigns of AD 15); 2.5–26 (campaigns of AD 16); 2.41 (triumph).

¹¹ Brief overview of scholarship on Tacitus' presentation of Germanicus in Goodyear (1972) 239–41; further analysis in Pelling (2012, a revised version of a chapter first published in 1993); O'Gorman (2000) chapter 3; Williams (2009); B. Kelly (2010) on Germanicus in Egypt, which is complemented by Low (2016) on his activities in the Black Sea region; Poulsen (2020).

¹² View of Daitz (1960) 37, 48, challenged by Shotter (1968).

¹³ Rutland (1987), 164. ¹⁴ O'Gorman (2000) 46–69. ¹⁵ Pelling (2012).

2 *Historical Context*

5

ab Tiberii sermone uultu, adrogantibus et obscuris ('for the young man had an unassuming character, and an approachability that was remarkable and the opposite of Tiberius' conversation and demeanour, which were arrogant and secretive').¹⁶ Nevertheless, documentary sources support the view that Tacitus did not entirely invent this character for him. Fragments of a speech and edict delivered by Germanicus in Alexandria, which are preserved on contemporary (or near-contemporary) papyri, fit the rather histrionic tone of his character as depicted by Tacitus.¹⁷ In addressing an enthusiastic crowd in Alexandria, Germanicus dwells upon the personal hardships he is facing in being wrenched away from his family and close friends in order to be sent on his mission to the East, but flatters his audience in stating that being able to see Alexandria and receiving such a warm reception has made it all worthwhile.¹⁸ In the edict, he turns down divine honours, threatening (humorously?)¹⁹ to 'appear before you seldom' (μη πολλάκις ὑμεῖν ἐμφανίζεσθαι) if disobeyed, and stating that the acclamations 'are hateful to me and fitting for the gods' (τὰς δὲ ἐπιφθόνου[ς] ἔμοι καὶ ἰσοθέου[ς]).²⁰ These papyri texts therefore support Tacitus' depiction of Germanicus as someone who speaks effusively and informally, expressing his personal feelings, and in return receiving enthusiastic responses from his audiences. At the same time, Tacitus' Germanicus is not without his faults, particularly in his lacklustre handling of the mutiny on the Rhine in AD 14, which contrasts so starkly with the competence of Drusus' handling of the parallel mutiny in Pannonia.²¹

News of Germanicus' death did not reach Rome until 8 December, whereupon the Senate decreed a *iustitium*, a period of public mourning when the temples closed and all business ceased.²² This official period continued throughout the rest of December, even interrupting the usual celebration of the Saturnalia, and lasted until the end of March, when Germanicus' ashes were interred in the Mausoleum.²³ The outpouring of public grief that ensued, however, was unprecedented in its scale and intensity: it had already begun even before the official announcement of his death was made, and it continued for some weeks, causing Tiberius to

¹⁶ Tac., *Ann.* 1.33.2, with Goodyear (1972) 252. Ross (1973) 220, however, argues that Germanicus is closer to a counterpart than a foil to Tiberius.

¹⁷ Shotter (1968) 206–07.

¹⁸ *P.Oxy.* no.2435 recto, with commentary ad loc. = LACTOR 19, J7e. ¹⁹ Post (1944) 82.

²⁰ Hunt and Edgar (1956) no.211 = LACTOR 19, J7d, with analysis of dating from handwriting by Zucker in von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Zucker (1911) 795–96.

²¹ Tac., *Ann.* 1.16–52. Ross (1973) 211–20; Fulkerson (2006); Pelling (2012) 285–97.

²² Bargagli and Grosso (1997) 23 – *Fasti Ostienses* frag.Cd left 33–34 = LACTOR 19, J7h. Goodyear (1981) 432–33 wonders whether the inscription is an accurate record, on the grounds that it seems surprising for such news to take almost two months to reach Rome, but arguably the Senate delayed making this announcement (cf. Wardle 1994: 121): such a delay would help to explain why mourning first broke out unofficially among the people.

²³ Suet., *Calig.* 6. On the duration of the official *iustitium*, compare Fraschetti (1988: it ceased at the end of December) and Crawford (1996, 539–41: it continued until Germanicus' ashes were interred, as had happened for Gaius Caesar).

issue an edict towards the end of March in an attempt to restore normality to the city.²⁴ The grief at Rome is described by Tacitus as exacerbated by the fact that rumours of Germanicus' death had earlier reached Rome, but had subsequently been contradicted by false reports of his recovery, leaving the populace ill-prepared for the eventual news of his death. Suetonius adds dramatically to this picture by describing the extreme response to Germanicus' death by the people of Antioch, in whose city he had died, as they stoned temples, destroyed altars, cast out their household gods, and even exposed newborn infants.²⁵ Another echo of extravagant responses to Germanicus' death can be found in a Greek epigram by Bassus, who has Hades declare that the entrances to the Underworld should be blocked since Germanicus is destined for the stars.²⁶ The equestrian Clutorius Priscus too is known to have composed a poem lamenting the death of Germanicus, for which he was rewarded by Tiberius.²⁷ Such responses to Germanicus' death may have reflected the shifting of people's affection away from the abstract idea of the state onto the state as represented in the person of their leader, along with a shift towards associating the welfare of the state with the welfare of that leader.²⁸ The degree to which public distress at his death led towards social disintegration will be relevant when we later consider the way in which the Senate responded to this crisis through the passing and publication of their decree in AD 20.

By the end of December, the Senate had held two meetings in order to decide what honours would be fitting in Germanicus' memory, and the incoming consuls for AD 20 were instructed to present the Senate's proposals to the people for formal ratification. In addition to Tacitus' selective account of these honours, we also have much more detailed epigraphic evidence in the form of the *Tabula Siarensis* and *Tabula Hebana*, inscribed on bronze, of which the *Tabula Hebana* (found in Etruria) overlaps with and continues the text of the *Tabula Siarensis* (found in Baetica).²⁹ Three bronze fragments of a tablet from Rome also overlap with thirty lines of the *Tabula Siarensis*.³⁰ In addition, a new fragment of a bronze inscription from Umbria has now been published which also partially overlaps with the *Tabula Siarensis*, but includes just over nine new lines of text, which record part of the motion (*relatio*) introducing the subject of Germanicus' honours for discussion in the Senate.³¹ The epigraphic and literary accounts are not identical, since Tacitus chooses to focus upon the new

²⁴ Tac., *Ann.* 3.6. ²⁵ Suet., *Calig.* 5. ²⁶ *Palatine Anthology* 7.391 = LACTOR 19, J7j.

²⁷ Tac., *Ann.* 3.49; Cass. Dio 57.20.3. ²⁸ Versnel (1980).

²⁹ Tac., *Ann.* 2.83; *Tabula Siarensis*: *AE* (1984) 508; *Tabula Hebana*: *AE* (1949) 215, overlapped by another fragment from Baetica, from Carissa Aurelia: *AE* (2000) 725; Crawford (1996) no.37 = LACTOR 19, J8; Lott (2012) sections 2.3–2.4, 3.3–3.4. On the Todi fragment, compare Crawford (1996) 507, 542–43 and Lott (2012) 49–50. Cipollone (2012) 83–86 reviews all the epigraphic fragments.

³⁰ *CIL* VI 31199; Crawford (1996) no.37; Lott (2012) sections 2.5, 3.5.

³¹ Cipollone (2012) = *AE* (2012) 467.

honours being devised for the occasion.³² These include three arches: in the Circus Flaminius at Rome; on Mount Amanus in Syria; and next to the burial mound of Germanicus' father Drusus beside the river Rhine in Germania.³³ These arches commemorated the different spheres of Germanicus' activities, centrally in Rome, and on the western and eastern borders of the empire.³⁴ In addition, other honours were modelled upon those previously granted by the *lex Valeria Cornelia* to Lucius and Gaius Caesar on their deaths in AD 2 and AD 4,³⁵ and Tacitus simply omits some of these, notably the decision to establish five new *centuriae praerogativae* named after Germanicus to supplement the ten *centuriae praerogativae* already created in honour of Lucius and Gaius in AD 5: these were privileged groups who were permitted to be the first to cast their votes at elections for consuls and praetors, giving a strong steer as to which candidates should be preferred. The *Tabula Hebana* contains extensive instructions about exactly how this should be done, on the model of the previous electoral centuries named in honour of Lucius and Gaius.³⁶ Overall, Tacitus' selection of some honours but not others seems designed to convey that Germanicus' death was being treated as an exceptional crisis, and to avoid giving the impression that his honours simply followed the pattern set under Augustus in the cases of Lucius and Gaius Caesar.

Germanicus' death was not just regarded as an unfortunate tragedy: rumours soon spread that he had been poisoned. The senator Cn. Calpurnius Piso and his wife Plancina were suspected of having had a hand in his death, with the arrest in Syria of Martina, who was both a notorious poisoner and friend of Plancina;³⁷ this created a crisis for Tiberius and his mother Iulia Augusta, since if this were true, they might likewise be implicated in this murder.³⁸ A charge of poisoning was brought against Piso at his trial, as Pliny the Elder records the existence of a speech for the prosecution made by Publius Vitellius, in which the failure of Germanicus' heart to burn during cremation at Antioch is cited as evidence that he had been poisoned.³⁹ It is likewise a prominent theme in Tacitus' account of the trial: he chooses to conclude the episode by alluding to it as 'the end of avenging the death of Germanicus' (*is finis fuit ulciscenda Germanici morte*),⁴⁰ despite the fact that it was the one charge that had been dismissed.⁴¹ The accusation seems in part to stem from Germanicus himself, given that he is described as accusing Piso as being the cause of his death in the *SCPP* (see line 28). In addition, Tacitus creates a still more sinister atmosphere by describing in vivid detail the discovery of

³² González (1999).

³³ Remains of this arch have been identified at Mainz-Kastel: Frenz (1989). ³⁴ Potter (1987).

³⁵ *CIL* XI 1420–21; Lott (2012) sections 2.1–2.2, 3.1–3.2.

³⁶ *Tabula Hebana* lines 6–16 = Crawford (1996) no.37 = LACTOR 19, J8m–n.

³⁷ Tac., *Ann.* 2.74.2. ³⁸ Tac., *Ann.* 2.69.3, 3.12.2.

³⁹ Plin., *HN* 11.187 = LACTOR 19, P2c. ⁴⁰ Tac., *Ann.* 3.19.2. ⁴¹ Tac., *Ann.* 3.13–14.

incantations, curses, and lead tablets inscribed with Germanicus' name, as well as sinister human and organic remains, which all pointed to the deployment against Germanicus of magical practices.⁴² If such details were in circulation at the time of the trial, these may point to the common tendency to associate charges of poisoning with witchcraft, and reflect the atmosphere of paranoia and anxiety that surrounded Germanicus' death at Rome.⁴³ They also feature in Suetonius and Cassius Dio,⁴⁴ although they are completely absent from the *SCPP*. The silence of the *SCPP* need not, however, indicate that Tacitus invented these details as dramatic enhancements of his narrative,⁴⁵ given that the Senate does not choose to dwell on the charge of murder in its official account of events.

The death of Germanicus occurred at a time of ever worsening relations between Germanicus and Piso, for which several reasons can be put forward. Firstly, the circumstances of Germanicus' appointment for a special mission in the East in AD 17 were not conducive to creating a good working relationship between the two men.⁴⁶ The types of problems which had arisen in the East were considered to require the authority of Tiberius himself or of one of his sons,⁴⁷ especially since they involved delicate negotiations with kingdoms on the fringes of the Roman empire, and notably with the powerful Parthian empire. For some years the royal succession in Armenia (a crucial 'buffer-state' client kingdom between the Roman and Parthian empires) had been disputed, and tensions between pro-Roman and pro-Parthian factions had come to a head in AD 16 with the detention (albeit with the retention of his dignity and luxuries, according to Tacitus) in Syria of the former Parthian king Vonones by the Roman governor, Q. Caecilius Metellus Creticus Silanus,⁴⁸ after strong protests against his position in Armenia had been made by the Parthian king Artabanus III.⁴⁹ Eldest son of the Parthian king Phraates IV (who ruled 38–2 BC), Vonones had been sent by his father along with his three brothers to be brought up in Rome before eventually being nominated as king of Parthia at the Parthians' own request by Augustus in AD c.11/12.⁵⁰ Deposed a few years later by the Parthians, who considered him too Roman in outlook, Vonones had then become king of Armenia, but repeated military pressure from the Parthian king, Artabanus III, forced him by AD 15 to flee to Syria, where he was subsequently detained by Silanus, in an attempt to prevent a further outbreak of fighting in this tense region.

Nor was this delicate situation the only challenge: in addition, the newly annexed kingdom of Cappadocia needed to be set up as a province, whilst the deaths of the kings of Commagene and Cilicia – both

⁴² Tac., *Ann.* 2.69; Tupet (1980); Damon (1999b) 158–60 on Tacitus' decision to focus on the alleged murder, in contrast to the *SCPP*.

⁴³ Versnel (1980) 614–15. ⁴⁴ Suet., *Calig.* 3.3; Cass. Dio 57.18.9.

⁴⁵ Contra, Gordon and Simón (2010) 9 n.36. ⁴⁶ Tac., *Ann.* 2.43. ⁴⁷ *SCPP* lines 29–32.

⁴⁸ *PIR* C64. ⁴⁹ Tac., *Ann.* 2.1–4. ⁵⁰ *RGDA* 33, with Cooley (2009) 255; *PIR* V994.

westerly neighbours of Armenia – prompted uncertainty over the futures of those territories.⁵¹ Consequently, according to the *SCPP* (lines 33–36), a *lex* was passed formally giving Germanicus *imperium* greater than that of other Roman proconsuls, but lesser than that of Tiberius. Our other contemporary documentation, the *Tabula Siarensis*, recalls how Germanicus ‘was sent as proconsul to the overseas provinces and in setting them and the kingdoms of that region in order according to the instructions of Tiberius Caesar Augustus ...’ (*pro co(n)s(ule) missus in transmarinas pro[u]incias atque / in conformandis iis regnisque eiusdem tractus ex mandatis Ti(beri) C(a)esaris Au[g](usti)*).⁵² On the face of it, Germanicus’ powers were in this way explicitly defined as greater than those held by the proconsuls currently governing the eastern provinces of Asia, Pontus-Bithynia, Cyprus and Crete/Cyrene, Achaea, and Macedonia.⁵³ It is not to be assumed, though, that Germanicus was not also supposed to have greater authority than the legates governing provinces (including Syria) who were Tiberius’ nominees, and therefore did not themselves hold *imperium*.⁵⁴ Tacitus makes this explicit by specifying that Germanicus’ *imperium* was to be greater than that of ‘those who held office by lot or by being sent by the *princeps*’ (*quam iis qui sorte aut missu principis obtinerent*),⁵⁵ thus avoiding any ambiguity about Germanicus’ authority in relation not only to proconsuls (chosen by lot) but also to imperial legates (appointed by the *princeps*). Tiberius had replaced the current legate of Syria, Creticus Silanus, whose daughter was betrothed to Germanicus’ eldest son Nero,⁵⁶ with Piso as his new appointee.⁵⁷ This was in itself unexceptional, given that Silanus had been governor since AD 11, but Tiberius perhaps also did not want Germanicus’ actions in the East to go unscrutinised, especially since four legions were at the time stationed in Syria, and so he appointed Piso to replace Silanus.⁵⁸ Piso was instructed to act as Germanicus’ ‘aide’ (*adiutor*), a term which denoted that he had a formal duty to work with

⁵¹ Tac., *Ann.* 2.42. On the intertwined problems of Armenia, Commagene, Cilicia, and Parthia, see Olbrycht (2016); Germanicus’ mission is summarised in Sawiński (2021) 88–90.

⁵² *Tabula Siarensis* = Crawford (1996) no.37, frag. a, lines 15–16 = LACTOR 19, J8b.

⁵³ Eck, Caballos, Fernández (1996) 159 n.420.

⁵⁴ Eck, Caballos, Fernández (1996) 158–61; cf. Zecchini (1999) 316–19 and Hurlet (1997) 181–97 for a summary of the problem.

⁵⁵ Tac., *Ann.* 2.43.

⁵⁶ Her epitaph, *CIL* VI 914, commemorates her as *Iunia Silani [f(ilia)] / [spo]nsa Neronis Caes[aris] / [hic sita est]*, showing both the value given to this betrothal and her death before marriage, some time before AD 20, when Nero married Tiberius’ granddaughter Julia instead.

⁵⁷ Tac., *Ann.* 2.43.2, with pluperfect tenses *demoverat* and *praefererat*.

⁵⁸ Shotter (2000) 345–48 accepts Tacitus’ depiction of tensions between Germanicus and Tiberius. Drogula (2015) argues against accepting the logical implication of Tacitus’ narrative, that Piso was appointed to keep Germanicus in check, suggesting (128) that the two appointments (of Germanicus and Piso) ‘would barely seem connected’. This, however, ignores the fact that the Senate calls Piso the *adiutor* of Germanicus in *SCPP* lines 29–31, confirming Tacitus’ use of this description at *Ann.* 3.12.1.

Germanicus, beyond his role as imperial legate.⁵⁹ In Piso's case, it appears that he interpreted his role as *adiutor* as being to challenge Germanicus if he felt that he was acting inappropriately; furthermore, Piso appears to have regarded himself as answerable only to Tiberius.⁶⁰ Given that Germanicus proceeded to enter Egypt illegally in AD 19,⁶¹ interfering with the grain supply,⁶² addressing crowds at Alexandria, and touring the country (ostensibly as a sightseer), it seems that there was a need for scrutiny of Germanicus' actions, especially since they may have resulted in a grain shortage in Rome shortly afterwards.⁶³ Admittedly, by the beginning of AD 19 Germanicus had successfully completed the specific tasks for which he had been despatched eastwards, having settled a new king in Armenia, and organised the administration of Cappadocia and Cilicia, but it is perhaps doubtful whether Tiberius had also mandated him specifically to intervene in Egypt.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the speech delivered by Germanicus to crowds in Alexandria illustrates how Germanicus embraced a distinctive conception of Roman imperial power. In the speech, he alludes to his having been sent 'by my father to settle the overseas provinces' (ἐγὼ πεμφθεὶς ... ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς [ἐ]πι τὸ καταστησάσθαι ταῖς πέραν θαλάσσης ἐπαρχίας):⁶⁵ this both echoes the official description of his mission found in the *SCPP* lines 30–31, when the Senate states that Germanicus 'had been dispatched by our *Princeps* in accordance with the authority of this body to put overseas affairs in order', and yet at the same time omits any mention of the role of the Senate in authorising his mission and granting him *imperium*. Another papyrus shows that Germanicus welcomed divine honours for Tiberius and Iulia Augusta, something which is at odds with Tiberius' own attitude to emperor-worship.⁶⁶ The fact that Germanicus was Antony's grandson was perhaps also difficult to forget.

From these contemporary documents, we can see how Germanicus' public statements were not always in tune with what Tiberius might have preferred him to say, suggesting that he was prepared to strike out on an independent pathway in representing the Roman rulers to the people of Alexandria. This may partly be explained by the geographical context, given

⁵⁹ Damon (1999b) 150 n.15. ⁶⁰ Shotter (1974) 234–37; Zecchini (1999) 312–16.

⁶¹ Tac., *Ann.* 2.59.

⁶² Joseph., *Ap.* 2.63; Suet., *Tib.* 52.

⁶³ On Germanicus in Egypt, see B. Kelly (2010), and Woodman (2015) 256–62 for echoes of Livy's Aemilius Paullus which underline Germanicus' naivety; cf. the way in which Tacitus' narrative implicitly justifies some of Tiberius' concerns about Germanicus' behaviour: Pelling (2012) 302–03; Rutland (1987) 158 points out that Tiberius was forced to compensate for the shortage of grain in Rome at Tac., *Ann.* 2.87, with Goodyear (1981), 376–77, although Wilcken (1928) observes that the timing of Germanicus' visit would have meant that the grain for Rome had already been shipped from Alexandria. Sawiński (2021) 31–32 briefly explores an alternative perspective.

⁶⁴ Hurlet (1997) 202–06 suggests that there may have been scope for Germanicus to believe that he was in fact entitled to enter Egypt, given the broad remit of his *imperium*.

⁶⁵ *P.Oxy.* no.2435 recto = LACTOR 19, J7e.

⁶⁶ Hunt and Edgar (1956) no.211 = LACTOR 19, J7d. Pani (1987), (1993) 236–49; cf. Levick (1999) 139–40.