

## Chapter 1 : Complete Works of Tacitus by Tacitus

*An Oxford translation of the Agricola by Tacitus. [31] a man of consular dignity, to the government. at the extremity of the island, so short, that the close.*

THE ancient custom of transmitting to posterity the actions and manners of famous men, has not been neglected even by the present age, incurious though it be about those belonging to it, whenever any exalted and noble degree of virtue has triumphed over that false estimation of merit, and that ill-will to it, by which small and great states are equally infested. Of this, Rutilius and Scaurus 1 were instances; who were never yet censured on this account, nor was the fidelity of their narrative called in question: With language we should have lost memory itself, had it been as much in our power to forget, as to be silent. Now our spirits begin to revive. But although at the first dawning of this happy period, 5 the emperor Nerva united two things before incompatible, monarchy and liberty; and Trajan is now daily augmenting the felicity of the empire; and the public security 6 has not only assumed hopes and wishes, but has seen those wishes arise to confidence and stability; yet, from the nature of human infirmity, remedies are more tardy in their operation than diseases: For indolence itself acquires a charm; and sloth, however odious at first, becomes at length engaging. Educated with tenderness in her bosom, 14 he passed his childhood and youth in the attainment of every liberal art. He was preserved from the 65 allurements of vice, not only by a naturally good disposition, but by being sent very early to pursue his studies at Massilia; 15 a place where Grecian politeness and provincial frugality are happily united. He learned the rudiments of war in Britain, under Suetonius Paullinus, an active and prudent commander, who chose him for his tent companion, in order to form an estimate of his merit. Departing thence to undertake the offices of magistracy in Rome, he married Domitia Decidiana, a lady of illustrious descent, from which connection he derived credit and support in his pursuit of greater things. They lived together in admirable harmony and mutual affection; each giving the preference to the other; a conduct equally laudable in both, except that a greater degree of praise is due to a good wife, in proportion as a bad one deserves the greater censure. His family was there increased by the birth of a daughter, who was both the support of his house, and his consolation; for he lost an elder-born son in infancy. The following year 24 inflicted a severe wound on his peace of mind, and his domestic concerns. The fleet of Otho, roving in a disorderly manner on the coast, 25 made a hostile descent on Intemelii, 26 a part of Liguria, in which the mother of Agricola was murdered at her own estate, her lands were ravaged, and a great part of her effects, which had invited the assassins, was carried off. Agricola was therefore appointed as his successor and avenger; but, with an uncommon degree of moderation, he chose rather to have it appear that he had found the legion obedient, than that he had made it so. Vettius Bolanus was at that time governor of Britain, and ruled with a milder sway than was suitable to so turbulent a province. Under his administration, Agricola, accustomed to obey, and taught to consult utility as well as glory, tempered his ardor, and restrained his enterprising spirit. At first he only shared the fatigues and dangers of his general; but was presently allowed to partake of his glory. Cerealis frequently intrusted him with part of his army as a trial of his abilities; and from the event sometimes enlarged his command. Thus, by his spirit in executing orders, and his modesty in reporting his success, he avoided envy, yet did not fail of acquiring reputation. On his return from commanding the legion he was raised by Vespasian to the patrician order, and then invested with the government of Aquitania, 32 a distinguished promotion, both in respect to the office itself, and in the hopes of the consulate to which it destined him. Agricola, however, by his natural prudence, was enabled to act with facility and 69 precision even among civilians. When the court or tribunal demanded his presence, he was grave, intent, awful, yet generally inclined to lenity. When the duties of his office were over, the man of power was instantly laid aside. Nothing of sternness, arrogance, or rapaciousness appeared; and, what was a singular felicity, his affability did not impair his authority, nor his severity render him less beloved. He did not even court reputation, an object to which men of worth frequently sacrifice, by ostentation or artifice: To overcome

in such a contest he thought inglorious; and to be put down, a disgrace. Common fame does not always err, sometimes it even directs a choice. He was immediately appointed governor of Britain, and the pontificate 35 was added to his other dignities. The situation and inhabitants of Britain have been described by many writers; 36 and I shall not add to the number with the view of vying with them in accuracy and ingenuity, but because it was first thoroughly subdued in the period of the present history. Those things which, while yet unascertained, they embellished with their eloquence, shall here be related with a faithful adherence to known facts. Its northern extremity has no opposite land, but is washed by a wide and open sea. But that tract of country, irregularly stretching out to an immense length toward the furthest shore, is gradually contracted in form of a wedge. Thule 41 was also distinctly seen, which winter and eternal snow had hitherto concealed. The cause of this stagnation I imagine to be the deficiency of land and mountains 71 where tempests are generated; and the difficulty with which such a mighty mass of waters, in an uninterrupted main, is put in motion. I shall only add one circumstance: Who were the first inhabitants of Britain, whether indigenous 44 or immigrants, is a question involved in the obscurity usual among barbarians. Their temperament of body is various, whence deductions are formed of their different origin. The swarthy complexion and curled hair of the Silures, 46 together with their situation opposite to Spain, render it probable that a colony of the ancient Iberi 47 possessed themselves of that territory. They who are nearest Gaul 48 resemble the inhabitants 72 of that country; whether from the duration of hereditary influence, or whether it be that when lands jut forward in opposite directions, 49 climate gives the same condition of body to the inhabitants of both. The sacred rites and superstitions 50 of these people are discernible among the Britons. The languages of the two nations do not greatly differ. The same audacity in provoking danger, and irresolution in facing it when present, is observable in both. The same change has also taken place among those of the Britons who have been long subdued; 52 but the rest continue such as the Gauls formerly were. Their military strength consists in infantry: It is seldom that two or three communities concur in 73 repelling the common danger; and thus, while they engage singly, they are all subdued. Growth is quick, but maturation slow; both from the 73 same cause, the great humidity of the ground and the atmosphere. The ocean produces pearls, 61 but of a cloudy and livid hue; which some impute to unskillfulness in the gatherers; for in the Red Sea, the fish are plucked from the rocks alive and vigorous, but in Britain they are collected as the sea throws them up. For my own part, I can more readily conceive that the defect is in the nature of the pearls, than in our avarice. Tacitus is the only writer who says he wrote his own life. Scaurus was consul B. He is the same Scaurus whom Sallust mentions as having been bribed by Jugurtha. As the banishment of Rutilius took place on the accusation of Scaurus, it is possible that, when the former wrote his life, the latter also wrote his, in order to defend himself from charges advanced against him. This whole passage has greatly perplexed the critics. The text is disputed, and it is not agreed why Tacitus asks indulgence. Brotier, Dronke, and others, say he asks indulgence for the inferiority of his style and manner *incondita ac rudi voce*, c. But there would have been no less occasion to apologize for that, if the times he wrote of had not been so hostile to virtue. Hertel, La Bletterie, and many French critics, understand that he apologizes for writing the memoir of his father-in-law so late *nunc*, when he was already dead *defuncti*, instead of doing it, as the great men of a former day did, while the subject of their memoirs was yet alive; and he pleads, in justification of the delay, that he could not have written it earlier without encountering the dangers of that cruel age the age of Domitian. This makes a very good sense. The only objection against it is, that the language, *opus fuit*; seems rather to imply that it was necessary to justify himself for writing it at all, by citing the examples of former distinguished writers of biography, as he had done in the foregoing introduction. But why would it have been unnecessary to apologize for writing the life of Agricola, if the times in which he lived had not been so unfriendly to virtue? Because then Agricola would have had opportunity to achieve victories and honors, which would have demanded narration, but for which the jealousy and cruelty of Domitian now gave no scope. This is the explanation of Roth; and he supports it by reference to the fact, that the achievements of Agricola in the conquest of Britain, though doubtless just as Tacitus has described them, yet occupy so small a space in general history, that they are not even mentioned by any ancient historian

except Dio Cassius; and he mentions them chiefly out of regard to the discovery made by Agricola, for the first time, that Britain was an island. This explanation answers all the demands of grammar and logic; but as a matter of taste and feeling, I can not receive it. Such an apology for the unworthiness of his subject at the commencement of the biography, ill accords with the tone of dignified confidence which pervades the memoir. The best commentary I have seen on the passage is that of Walther; and it would not, perhaps, be giving more space to so mooted a question than the scholar requires, to extract it entire: For Tacitus there appeals to the usage, not of remote antiquity only, but of later times also, to justify his design of writing the biography of a distinguished man. There would have been no need of such an apology in other times. In other times, dispensing with all preamble, he would have begun, as in C. Not that those times could excite in Tacitus any real personal fear, for they were past, and he could now think what he pleased, and speak what he thought. Still he shudders at the recollection of those cruelties; and he treads with trembling footsteps, as it were, even the path lately obstructed by them. He looks about him to see whether, even now, he may safely utter his voice, and he timidly asks pardon for venturing to break the reigning silence. With less accuracy, Suetonius, in his Life of Domitian s. Thrasea, who killed Nero, is particularly recorded in the Annals, book xvi. This last was probably the birth-place of Agricola. These were the imperial procurators. All the offices relative to the finances were in the possession of the Roman knights; of whom the imperial procurators were accounted noble. Hence the equestrian nobility of which Tacitus speaks. In some of the lesser provinces, the procurators had the civil jurisdiction, as well as the administration of the revenue. His books concerning Vineyards are commended by Columella and Pliny. According to the historians of that period, Caius was jealous of him, and took every opportunity of mortifying him. This, from fear of illness, he declined to do; upon which the emperor, alleging that he staid on shore in order to get possession of the city in case any accident befell himself, compelled him to cut his own throat. A particular account of this revolt is given in the 14th book of the Annals. All the infantry were slaughtered; and Petilius, with the cavalry alone, got away to the camp. It was shortly after this, that Suetonius defeated Boadicea and her forces. The first administered justice among the citizens, the second among strangers. The rest presided at public debates, and had the charge of exhibiting the public games, which were celebrated with great solemnity for seven successive days, and at a vast expense. The attack upon the municipal town of this place, called Albium Intemelium, is particularly mentioned in the passage above referred to. They succeeded, in the calends of July, the consuls Vespasian and Titus, who began the year. These, although now first thoroughly known to the Romans, had before been heard of, and mentioned by authors. Pennant supposes that the Thule here meant was Foula, a very lofty isle, one of the most westerly of the Shetlands, which might easily be descried by the fleet. Tacitus, however, rather chooses to explain its stagnant condition from the want of winds, and the difficulty of moving so great a body of waters. But the fact, taken either way, is erroneous; as this sea is never observed frozen, and is remarkably stormy and tempestuous. This certainly proceeds from its insular situation, and the moistness of its atmosphere. It is quite true, that in the farther part of Norway, and so also again in Ireland and the regions about the North Pole, there is, at the summer solstice, an almost uninterrupted day for nearly two months. Tacitus here seems to affirm this as universally the case, not having heard that, at the winter solstice, there is a night of equal duration. He represents that, as the far north is level, there is nothing, when the sun is in the distant horizon, to throw up a shadow toward the sky: And hence he supposes that the brightness of the upper regions neutralizes the darkness on the earth, forming a degree of light equivalent to the evening twilight or the morning dawn, or, indeed, rendering it next to impossible to decide when the evening closes and the morning begins. Pennant has a pleasing remark concerning the soil and climate of our island, well agreeing with that of Tacitus:

## DOWNLOAD PDF FROM MAN TO BOOK : THE CLOSE OF TACITUS AGRICOLA.

### Chapter 2 : Purpose and Literary Form of the Agricola | Dickinson College Commentaries

*The Agricola, or On the life and character of Julius Agricola is a book by Roman historian Tacitus. Written in AD 98, it focuses on the life of Tacitus' father-in-law Gnaeus Julius Agricola, a celebrated Roman general.*

A final salute Section 1: On biography and auto-biography It was a custom in the past not yet relinquished by our own age, indifferent though we may now be to events, to relay to posterity the deeds and manners of famous men; whenever, that is, mighty and noble virtue had conquered and suppressed that vice common to all states, great and small, the ignorance and envy of what is good. Many indeed considered it rather a matter of self-respect than arrogance to recount their own lives, and a Rutilius Rufus or an Aemilius Scaurus could do so without scepticism or disparagement; virtue indeed being most esteemed in those ages which give birth to it most readily. But in this day and age, though I set out to write the life of one already dead, I am forced to seek the indulgence which an attack upon him would not require, so savage is the spirit of these times, and hostile to virtue. Perhaps it was thought that the voice of the people, the freedom of the Senate, and the conscience of mankind would vanish in those flames, since the teachers of knowledge were also expelled and all moral excellence exiled, so that virtue might be nowhere encountered. Indeed we have given signal proof of our subservience; and just as former ages saw the extremes of liberty, so ours those of servitude, robbed by informants of even the ears and tongue of conversation. We would have lost memory itself as well as speech if to forget were as easy as to be silent. The revival Now at last our spirits revive; at the birth of this blessed age, the Emperor Nerva at once joined things long disassociated, power and liberty, while Trajan daily adds to the felicities of our times, so that the public has not merely learned to hope and pray with confidence, but has gained assurance as to the fulfilment of its prayers, and strength. Though it is still in the nature of human frailty that the remedy acts more slowly than the disease, and just as the body is slow to grow, swift to decay, so it is easier to destroy wit and enthusiasm than it is to revive them, while inertia has a certain charm, and the apathy we hate at first we later love. Even though my speech is hoarse and unpractised, I shall not hesitate to compose a record of our former slavery, and our present blessings. His mother was Julia Procilla, a woman of rare rectitude. Raised in her loving care he spent his boyhood and youth cultivating all the civilised accomplishments. He was protected from any temptation towards wrongdoing not only by his own sound and virtuous nature but also by Massilia who provided the foundation to his studies and acted as his guide, he representing a happy mixture of Greek refinement and provincial simplicity. No doubt his noble and aspiring mind desired the beauty and splendour of great and glorious ideas with more violence than restraint. Soon age and reason calmed him, and he preserved, as is most difficult, moderation in his studies. Military apprenticeship in Britain His first military service in Britain AD brought him to the notice of Suetonius Paulinus, a conscientious and disciplined general, who selected him for assessment as a member of his staff. At no time was Britain more troubled or the situation more in doubt: Desire for military glory invaded his spirit, unwelcome in an age which looked unfavourably on those who distinguished themselves and where great reputation was no less a danger than ill-repute. The marriage proved a brilliant ornament and a support to him in his career. They lived in wonderful harmony, through their mutual affection and wish to put each other first, a good wife deserving greater praise the more one finds fault with a bad one. The chances of the quaestorship brought him Asia Minor as his province 64AD , and Salvius Titianus as his pro-consul, neither of which corrupted him, though the province was rich and open to exploitation, while the proconsul was filled with greed, and ready for anything that would buy mutual silence regarding wrongdoing. There, a daughter Julia, later wife to Tacitus was born to him, a help and consolation, since he lost the son he had briefly carried in his arms. His praetorship 68AD followed the same even tenor; no judicial duties falling to his lot. As for the games and other vanities of office, he held the mean between lavishness and thrift, far from extravagance on the one hand, closer to public opinion on the other. Chosen by Galba June 68AD to take an inventory of temple treasures his diligent inquiries showed that the State judged there to have been no sacrilege other than

that perpetrated by Nero. While proceeding to carry out the solemn rites, Agricola heard the news that Vespasian aspired to power, and at once joined his party. Mucianus sent Agricola to levy soldiers and, as he showed energy and loyalty, appointed him to Britain, to command the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix, which had been slow to transfer its allegiance, his predecessor Coelius, it was said, having behaved mutinously: Agricola, both successor and judge, with rare leniency preferred it known that he found the men loyal, rather than forcing them to behave so. Service under Petilius Cerialis Vettius Bolanus was then a milder governor of Britain than a troublesome province requires, and Agricola, being skilled in diplomacy and used to blending his sense of honour with that of expediency, tempered his own ardour, and restrained his enthusiasm, lest it become over-strong. Though at first Cerialis only offered him effort and risk, he later granted him his portion of glory, often allowing him a share of command to test him, sometimes increasing his allotted forces based on success. Agricola never vaunted his actions to augment his own credit. He attributed his good fortune, as the inferior, to his leader and commander. So by virtue of his deference, and his reluctance to put himself forward, he escaped others' envy without lacking distinction. Governorship of Gallia Aquitania

On returning from command of his legion, Vespasian, since deified, enrolled him among the patricians, and granted him governorship of Gallia Aquitania 73AD, an especially significant role both administratively and as a promise of the consulship for which he was destined. Thanks to his native shrewdness, Agricola, though among civilians, dealt with them readily and justly. His official duties and his hours of relaxation were carefully partitioned: With him, as is most rare, an easy manner did not serve to diminish his authority nor his severity of affection. To refer to the honesty and restraint of such a man is almost to insult virtue itself. Fame which even good men often covet, he never sought, neither by parading his virtues, nor by practising intrigue: He was retained for less than three years in Aquitania, and then recalled with hopes of an immediate consulship, to an accompanying rumour that Britain would be granted him as his province, not that he ever spoke of it, but simply because he seemed suitable. Rumour is not always in error; sometimes it even determines the choice. The consul suffectus, 77AD betrothed his daughter Julia, a girl of great promise, to me, then a mere youth, and on conclusion of his office gave her to me in marriage. He was posted immediately thereafter to Britain, and also appointed to the high priesthood. Where earlier writers embellished with rhetoric what was not yet fully discovered, here facts will be faithfully recorded. Livy the most eloquent of ancient and Fabius Rusticus of modern authors respectively likened its shape to a lengthened shoulder-blade, or a double axe-head. And this is its form as far north as Caledonia, a form which tradition extended to the whole; but travelling onwards a vast and irregular tract of land extends to the furthest shores, tapering like a wedge. Under Agricola a Roman fleet first navigated the shore of the furthest sea 84AD, and confirmed Britain as an island, in the same voyage reaching the unexplored islands known as the Orcades the Orkneys and claiming them. But they declared the waves sluggish, resistant to the oar, and likewise unresponsive to the wind, presumably because mountainous land, the cause and origin of storms, is scarcer, and the unbroken mass of deeper water is harder to set in motion. It is not for this work to seek out the nature of the ocean and its tides, besides many have recorded them: I would only add that nowhere has the sea greater power: Their physical traits vary, and lead to speculation. The red-haired, large-limbed inhabitants of Caledonia suggest a Germanic origin; while the dark colouration of the Silures of South Wales, their plentiful curls, and the relative position of Spain, attests to immigrant Iberians in former times, who occupied the area; again, those nearest the Gauls are like them, whether because of the enduring power of heredity, or because the common climate of two projecting lands that face each other moulds the physique. Taking the wider view, it is certainly credible that the Gauls might occupy a neighbouring island; you find the same ceremonies and religious beliefs there; their languages are not too dissimilar, they have the same recklessness in courting danger, and the same anxiety to escape it, when it comes. But the Britons are spirited, not yet emasculated by years of peace. We hear the Gauls too were once warlike: Such are the Britons who were conquered some time ago; the rest remain as the Gauls once were. The Nature of the Land Their strength is on foot, though certain tribes fight from chariots, the charioteer holding the place of honour, while the retainers make war. Once the people were ruled by kings,

now the disputes and ambitions of minor chieftains distract them. Nor do we have a better weapon against the stronger tribes than this lack of common purpose. It is rare for two or three tribes to unite against a mutual danger; thus, fighting singly, they are universally defeated. The weather in Britain is foul, with dense cloud and rain; but the cold is not severe. The extent of daylight is outside our usual measure, the nights in the far north of Britain being clear and short, so that there is only a brief time between dusk and the dawn half-light. To be sure, the flat extremities of the land, with their low shadows, project no darkness, and night never falls beneath the sky and stars. The land is tolerant of crops, except the olive, vine and other fruit of warmer countries, and is prolific of cattle. The crops are quick to sprout but ripen slowly, for a like reason, the plentiful moisture in the soil and atmosphere. Britain produces gold, silver and other metals, the prize of conquest. The sea produces pearls but somewhat cloudy and lead-coloured. Some judge their pearl-gatherers lacking in skill; for pearls are torn from the living breathing oyster in the Red Sea, while in Britain they are only collected when washed ashore: I can more readily believe that the pearls lack quality than that we lack greed. The Roman Conquest As for the Britons themselves, they freely discharge the levies, tributes and imperial obligations imposed on them, if there are no abuses; these they scarcely tolerate, submitting to domination, but not slavery. Julius Caesar, since deified, was the first of the Romans to invade Britain, overawing the natives in a successful campaign and making himself master of the coast 54BC , though he is seen rather to have revealed the island to posterity, than delivered it to them. Augustus, since deified, called it policy, Tiberius precedent. It is common knowledge that Caligula considered invading Britain 40AD , but his fickle mind was quick to repent of it, besides his great designs in Germany were frustrated. Claudius, since deified, took on the great task: The first Consular Governors of Britain The first consular governor appointed was Aulus Plautius AD , soon followed by Ostorius Scapula AD , both distinguished military men; and the nearest regions of Britain were gradually enhanced to the condition of a province; a colony of veterans being founded also. Certain areas were handed over to King Cogidubnus he has remained loyal down to our own times according to the old and long-accepted custom of the Roman people, which even employs kings as useful tools. Veranius AD , who died within a year, succeeded Didius. After him, Suetonius Paulinus AD experienced two years of success, subduing tribes and strengthening garrisons: Stirrings of rebellion With the governor absent, and their fears banished, the Britons began to discuss the ills of servitude amongst themselves, comparing their injuries, and accentuating their grievances: Once they each had one master: Whether working in harmony or discord the pair proved equally inimical to their subjects; one through his centurions, the other through his agents dealt violence and insults alike. Nothing was beyond reach of their greed or lust. On the battlefield the stronger force plundered its enemy, but now it was mainly unwarlike cowards who raided their homes, abducted their children, and demanded levies, as though they would face death except for their country. How great, in fact, was this invading force, if the Britons were to count their numbers? Thus the Germans had cast off their yoke, with only a river and not an ocean to defend them. The Britons had their country, wives, parents to fight for; the enemy fought only out of greed and a desire for luxurious living; they would retreat, as their god Julius Caesar had retreated, if Britons would emulate the courage of their forefathers. Nor should they be cowed by the outcome of one or two battles: Now the gods themselves were taking pity on the Britons, with the Roman governor distant, and his army relegated to a little island; and now they themselves had taken the most difficult step, that of opening the question to debate. Moreover in such matters the danger was not in being bold but in being discovered. Had Suetonius Paulinus not learned of the uprising in his province and rushed to the rescue, Britain would have been lost. The outcome of a single battle restored its former submission; though the majority remained under arms, conscious of their failure, and in personal terror of the governor, fearing that despite his virtues he might deal ruthlessly with those who surrendered, punishing them severely as one who never overlooked an injury done to himself. He settled their differences, but without attempting anything further, handing over to Trebellius Maximus 63AD. Trebellius, less energetic and with no military experience, held the province with a light touch, and even the barbarians learned to forgive the occasional moral error, while the interruption to civil strife provided

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a valid excuse for his inaction. But when the army, accustomed to fighting, became riotous in their idleness, there was trouble and discord. Trebellius, eluding the violence, by fleeing into hiding, shamed and humiliated, was then allowed to govern only on sufferance. There was a pact so to speak, that gave licence to the army, security to the governor, and an end to the mutiny, without bloodshed. Nor did Vettius Bolanus 69AD trouble Britain with discipline, during the strife in Rome; there was the same military inertia, the same disturbances in camp, though Bolanus, who was blameless and had done nothing to earn hatred, won the affection if not obedience of the men. Cerialis appointed by Vespasian However, once Vespasian had strengthened the empire, including Britain, with good generals and excellent troops the enemy hopes withered. Petilius Cerialis 71AD instilled terror by invading the realms of the Brigantes, claimed as the largest tribe of the whole province:

Chapter 3 : TACITUS, Agricola | Loeb Classical Library

*In short, to sum up not merely the mannerisms of Tacitus, but also the salient characteristics of this book, the Agricola is largely a piece of rhetoric, brilliant with purple passages, with sarcasm and epigram, with verbal quips and cranks."*

Life of Cnaeus Julius Agricola, c. To bequeath to posterity a record of the deeds and characters of distinguished men is an ancient practice which even the present age, careless as it is of its own sons, has not abandoned whenever some great and conspicuous excellence has conquered and risen superior to that failing, common to petty and to great states, blindness and hostility to goodness. But in days gone by, as there was a greater inclination and a more open path to the achievement of memorable actions, so the man of highest genius was led by the simple reward of a good conscience to hand on without partiality or self-seeking the remembrance of greatness. Many too thought that to write their own lives showed the confidence of integrity rather than presumption. Of Rutilius and Scaurus no one doubted the honesty or questioned the motives. So true is it that merit is best appreciated by the age in which it thrives most easily. But in these days, I, who have to record the life of one who has passed away, must crave an indulgence, which I should not have had to ask had I an indulgence, which I should not have had to ask had I only to inveigh against an age so cruel, so hostile to all virtue. We have only to read that the panegyrics pronounced by Arulenus Rusticus on Paetus Thrasea, and by Herennius Senecio on Priscus Helvidius, were made capital crimes, that not only their persons but their very books were objects of rage, and that the triumvirs were commissioned to burn in the forum those works of splendid genius. They fancied, forsooth, that in that fire the voice of the Roman people, the freedom of the Senate, and the conscience of the human race were perishing, while at the same time they banished the teachers of philosophy, and exiled every noble pursuit, that nothing good might anywhere confront them. Certainly we showed a magnificent example of patience; as a former age had witnessed the extreme of liberty, so we witnessed the extreme of servitude, when the informer robbed us of the interchanges of speech, and hearing. We should have lost memory as well as voice, had it been as easy to forget as to keep silence. Now at last our spirit is returning. And yet, though at the dawn of a most happy age Nerva Caesar blended things once irreconcilable, sovereignty and freedom; though Nerva Trajan is now daily augmenting the prosperity of the time, and though the public safety has not only our hopes and good wishes, but has also the certain pledge of their fulfillment: As our bodies grow but slowly, perish in a moment, so it is easier to crush than to revive genius and its pursuits. Besides, the charm of indolence steals over us, and the idleness which at first we loathed we afterwards love. Yet we shall not regret that we have told, though in language unskilful and unadorned, the story of past servitude, and borne our testimony to present happiness. Meanwhile this book, intended to do honour to Agricola, my father-in-law, will, as an expression of filial regard, be commended, or at least excused. Cnaeus Julius Agricola was born at the ancient and famous colony of Forum Julii. Each of his grandfathers was an Imperial procurator, that is, of the highest equestrian rank. His father, Julius Graecinus, a member of the Senatorian order, and distinguished for his pursuit of eloquence and philosophy, earned for himself by these very merits the displeasure of Caius Caesar. He was ordered to impeach Marcus Silanus, and because he refused was put to death. His mother was Julia Procilla, a lady of singular virtue. Brought up by her side with fond affection, he passed his boyhood and youth in the cultivation of every worthy attainment. He was guarded from the enticements of the profligate not only by his own good and straight-forward character, but also by having, when quite a child, for the scene and guide of his studies, Massilia, a place where refinement and provincial frugality were blended and happily combined. It was the case of a lofty and aspiring soul craving with more eagerness than caution the beauty and splendour of great and glorious renown. But it was soon mellowed by reason and experience, and he retained from his learning that most difficult of lessons -- moderation. He served his military apprenticeship in Britain to the satisfaction of Suetonius Paullinus, a painstaking and judicious officer, who, to test his merits, selected him to share his tent. He sought to make himself acquainted with the province and known to the army; he would learn from the skilful, and

keep pace with the bravest, would attempt nothing for display, would avoid nothing from fear, and would be at once careful and vigilant. Never indeed had Britain been more excited, or in a more critical condition. Veteran soldiers had been massacred, colonies burnt, armies cut off. The struggle was then for safety; it was soon to be for victory. And though all this was conducted under the leadership and direction of another, though the final issue and the glory of having won back the province belonged to the general, yet skill, experience, and ambition were acquired by the young officer. His soul too was penetrated with the desire of warlike renown, a sentiment unwelcome to an age which put a sinister construction on eminent merit, and made glory as perilous as infamy. From Britain he went to Rome, to go through the regular course of office, and there allied himself with Domitia Decidiana, a lady of illustrious birth. The marriage was one which gave a man ambitious of advancement distinction and support. They lived in singular harmony, through their mutual affection and preference of each other to self. However, the good wife deserves the greater praise, just as the bad incurs a heavier censure. Appointed Quaestor, the ballot gave him Asia for his province, Salvius Titianus for his proconsul. Neither the one nor the other corrupted him, though the province was rich and an easy prey to the wrongdoer, while the proconsul, a man inclined to every species of greed, was ready by all manner of indulgence to purchase a mutual concealment of guilt. A daughter was there added to his family to be his stay and comfort, for shortly after he lost the son that had before been born to him. The year between his quaestorship and tribunate, as well as the year of the tribunate itself, he passed in retirement and inaction, for he knew those times of Nero when indolence stood for wisdom. His praetorship was passed in the same consistent quietude, for the usual judicial functions did not fall to his lot. The games and the pageantry of his office he ordered according to the mean between strictness and profusion, avoiding extravagance, but not missing distinction. He was afterwards appointed by Galba to draw up an account of the temple offerings, and his searching scrutiny relieved the conscience of the state from the burden of all sacrileges but those committed by Nero. The following year inflicted a terrible blow on his affections and his fortunes. The estate itself and a large part of her patrimony were plundered. This was indeed the occasion of the crime. Agricola, who instantly set out to discharge the duties of affection, was overtaken by the tidings that Vespasian was aiming at the throne. He at once joined his party. Agricola, having been sent by Mucianus to conduct a levy of troops, and having done his work with integrity and energy, was appointed to command the 20th Legion, which had been slow to take the new oath of allegiance, and the retiring officer of which was reported to be acting disloyally. It was a trying and formidable charge for even officers of consular rank, and the late praetorian officer, perhaps from his own disposition, perhaps from that of the soldiers, was powerless to restrain them. Chosen thus at once to supersede and to punish, Agricola, with a singular moderation, wished it to be thought that he had found rather than made an obedient soldiery. Britain was then under Vettius Bolanus, who governed more mildly than suited so turbulent a province. Agricola moderated his energy and restrained his ardour, that he might not grow too important, for he had learnt to obey, and understood well how to combine expediency with honour. Soon afterwards Britain received for its governor a man of consular rank, Petilius Cerialis. Cerialis let him share at first indeed only the toils and dangers, but before long the glory of war, often by way of trial putting him in command of part of the army, and sometimes, on the strength of the result, of larger forces. Never to enhance his own renown did Agricola boast of his exploits; he always referred his success, as though he were but an instrument, to his general and director. Thus by his valour in obeying orders and by his modesty of speech he escaped jealousy without losing distinction. As he was returning from the command of the legion, Vespasian admitted him into the patrician order, and then gave him the province of Aquitania, a preeminently splendid appointment both from the importance of its duties and the prospect of the consulate to which the Emperor destined him. Many think the genius of the soldier wants subtlety, because military law, which is summary and blunt, and apt to appeal to the sword, finds no exercise for the refinements of the forum. Yet Agricola, from his natural good sense, though called to act among civilians, did his work with ease and correctness. And, besides, the times of business and relaxation were kept distinct. When his public and judicial duties required it, he was dignified, thoughtful, austere, and yet often merciful; when

business was done with, he wore no longer the official character. He was altogether without harshness, pride, or the greed of gain. With a most rare felicity, his good nature did not weaken his authority, nor his strictness the attachment of his friends. To speak of uprightness and purity in such a man would be an insult to his virtues. Fame itself, of which even good men are often weakly fond, he did not seek by an ostentation of virtue or by artifice. He avoided rivalry with his colleagues, contention with his procurator, thinking such victories no honour and defeat disgrace. For somewhat less than three years he was kept in his governorship, and was then recalled with an immediate prospect of the consulate. A general belief went with him that the province of Britain was to be his, not because he had himself hinted it, but because he seemed worthy of it. Public opinion is not always mistaken; sometimes even it chooses the right man. He was consul, and I but a youth, when he betrothed to me his daughter, a maiden even then of noble promise. After his consulate he gave her to me in marriage, and was then at once appointed to the government of Britain, with the addition of the sacred office of the pontificate. The geography and inhabitants of Britain, already described by so many writers, I will speak of, not that my research and ability may be compared with theirs, but because the country was then for the first time thoroughly subdued. And so matters, which as being still not accurately known my predecessors embellished with their eloquence, shall now be related on the evidence of facts. Britain, the largest of the islands which Roman geography includes, is so situated that it faces Germany on the east, Spain on the west; on the south it is even within sight of Gaul; its northern extremities, which have no shores opposite to them, are beaten by the waves of a vast open sea. The form of the entire country has been compared by Livy and Fabius Rusticus, the most graphic among ancient and modern historians, to an oblong shield or battle-axe. And this no doubt is its shape without Caledonia, so that it has become the popular description of the whole island. There is, however, a large and irregular tract of land which juts out from its furthest shores, tapering off in a wedge-like form. Round these coasts of remotest ocean the Roman fleet then for the first time sailed, ascertained that Britain is an island, and simultaneously discovered and conquered what are called the Orcades, islands hitherto unknown. Thule too was descried in the distance, which as yet had been hidden by the snows of winter. Those waters, they say, are sluggish, and yield with difficulty to the oar, and are not even raised by the wind as other seas. The reason, I suppose, is that lands and mountains, which are the cause and origin of storms, are here comparatively rare, and also that the vast depths of that unbroken expanse are more slowly set in motion. But to investigate the nature of the ocean and the tides is no part of the present work, and many writers have discussed the subject. I would simply add, that nowhere has the sea a wider dominion, that it has many currents running in every direction, that it does not merely flow and ebb within the limits of the shore, but penetrates and winds far inland, and finds a home among hills and mountains as though in its own domain. Who were the original inhabitants of Britain, whether they were indigenous or foreign, is as usual among barbarians, little known. Their physical characteristics are various, and from these conclusions may be drawn. The red hair and large limbs of the inhabitants of Caledonia point clearly to a German origin. The dark complexion of the Silures, their usually curly hair, and the fact that Spain is the opposite shore to them, are an evidence that Iberians of a former date crossed over and occupied these parts. Those who are nearest to the Gauls are also like them, either from the permanent influence of original descent, or, because in countries which run out so far to meet each other, climate has produced similar physical qualities. But a general survey inclines me to believe that the Gauls established themselves in an island so near to them. Their religious belief may be traced in the strongly-marked British superstition. The language differs but little; there is the same boldness in challenging danger, and, when it is near, the same timidity in shrinking from it. The Britons, however, exhibit more spirit, as being a people whom a long peace has not yet enervated. Indeed we have understood that even the Gauls were once renowned in war; but, after a while, sloth following on ease crept over them, and they lost their courage along with their freedom. This too has happened to the long-conquered tribes of Britain; the rest are still what the Gauls once were. Their strength is in infantry. Some tribes fight also with the chariot. The higher in rank is the charioteer; the dependants fight.

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## Chapter 4 : Tacitus - Wikipedia

*THE GERMANY AND THE AGRICOLA OF TACITUS. THE OXFORD TRANSLATION REVISED, WITH NOTES. WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY EDWARD BROOKS, JR. INTRODUCTION. Very little is known concerning the I.*

Agricola died in the year 93 A. At all events, when the heart for literary work returned to him, he soon applied himself to the composition of his tribute to the memory of Agricola. However, because of the prevailing uncertainty as to the date of the *Dialogus* we cannot insist absolutely upon this conclusion, plausible and flattering to Tacitus though it may be. We simply know that if the *Agricola* was not the first of the works published after the death of Domitian, it was certainly the second. In them Tacitus tells his readers plainly what kind of a book he purposes to write and what point of view he will assume in writing it. The work is to be a biography – a literary form which had been well represented in Roman literature prior to Tacitus. Realistic portraiture was not attempted in the style of biographical writing to which the *Agricola* belongs. The object sought was the glorification of some man who had passed away. The author treated his material in a laudatory vein, and the familiar admonition *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* was in the main strictly observed. In such a spirit Tacitus wrote the *Agricola*. The book is frankly conceived as a eulogy; its composition is viewed as an act of pious devotion. It is essential to the appreciation of the treatise that the reader keep these facts in mind. However, the student will inevitably be impressed with the fact that some chapters read more like history than like biography. Agricola was a man of action. His greatest achievements lay in the field of arms and of military administration. It was unavoidable that in describing the career of Agricola in Britain Tacitus should tell us about events and incidents that would fall properly in a history of the Roman conquest of the island. Yet in nearly every chapter he contrives to keep uppermost in the mind of the reader the consciousness that Agricola is the central figure of the narrative. By many an adroit allusion Agricola is made to appear as the hero and the directing genius of the Roman advance. His energy and xvii promptitude, his resourcefulness in the field, the sagacity which he displayed in securing his conquests, his tactful treatment of subjugated peoples, are brought out in bold relief. Contemporary history is introduced, not for its own sake, but to furnish a setting for the exploits of Agricola. The reason is not far to seek. At the time at which Tacitus was busy with the *Agricola*, he had already conceived the project of writing a history of the reign of Domitian and thereby of bringing home to the minds of men by way of contrast the blessings they were enjoying under Trajan. In a word, the interests that were to put the stamp upon his subsequent literary productivity were then claiming his attention. It is not strange, therefore, that he occasionally overstepped the bounds prescribed by rhetorical usage for the biography and introduced certain material for the sake of its intrinsic interest or its dramatic effectiveness rather than because it could lay claim logically to a niche for itself. The mutiny and the desertion of the Usipi, chapter 28, is the clearest case. A more vital connection may be discerned for chapters , in which the history of Anglo-Roman relations is sketched from the first invasion by Julius Caesar down to the beginning of the administration of Agricola. We learn of the progress that had been made in the subjugation of Britain before the coming of Agricola. This preliminary information prepares the reader to be impressed at the manner in which Agricola succeeded where others had failed. This is precisely the aim that Tacitus had in view. Nevertheless the content of these chapters is historical and the historical manner of Tacitus is visible in method of presentation. This is notably the case in chapter 15, where the grievances of the Britons and the motives that incited them to revolt are cast in the form of a speech. What a common device of the ancient historian it was to put into the mouths of characters harangues appropriate to an occasion but wholly or partly fictitious, the student who has read a book of Livy will remember. However, chapters are related in no such manner to the context. They are ethnographical, purely and simply. Tacitus himself tells us that his aim was to correct the erroneous notions disseminated by previous writers, since the complete subjugation of the island had made exact knowledge possible concerning geography and ethnology. Chapters 11 and 12, with their description of peoples, climate, and productions, owe their presence to the same interest in foreign climes and

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racas that inspired the Germania. As to this possibility we can only speculate. At all events the admixture of historical elements is not so pervasive as to force us to deny to the Agricola claim of rhetorical unity. In the actual labor of composition Tacitus could not or did not stifle his literary predilections. The historical studies which were demanding his attention affected his choice of content and colored his method of presentation. Nevertheless in by far the larger portion of the book Tacitus is true to the aim expressed at the outset and repeated in the concluding sentence of the last chapter. He has given to posterity a eulogy of his father-in-law, couched in the form of a biography.

Chapter 5 : Agricola | Open Library

*The Life of Cn̄us Julius Agricola by Tacitus, Part 3; with links to LacusCurtius citations, from The Revised Oxford Translation with Notes, Handy Literal Translations Series, Ancient Roman Authors and Historians, online free e-book on [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)*

Buy this Book at Amazon. Agricola Book 1 [1] 1. To bequeath to posterity a record of the deeds and characters of distinguished men is an ancient practice which even the present age, careless as it is of its own sons, has not abandoned whenever some great and conspicuous excellence has conquered and risen superior to that failing, common to petty and to great states, blindness and hostility to goodness. But in days gone by, as there was a greater inclination and a more open path to the achievement of memorable actions, so the man of highest genius was led by the simple reward of a good conscience to hand on without partiality or self-seeking the remembrance of greatness. Many too thought that to write their own lives showed the confidence of integrity rather than presumption. Of Rutilius and Scaurus no one doubted the honesty or questioned the motives. So true is it that merit is best appreciated by the age in which it thrives most easily. But in these days, I, who have to record the life of one who has passed away, must crave an indulgence, which I should not have had to ask had I only to inveigh against an age so cruel, so hostile to all virtue. Clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus quamquam incuriosa suorum aetas omisit, quotiens magna aliqua ac nobilis virtus vicit ac supergressa est vitium parvis magnisque civitatibus commune, ignorantiam recti et invidiam. Sed apud priores ut agere digna memoratu primum magisque in aperto erat, ita celeberrimus quisque ingenio ad prodendam virtutis memoriam sine gratia aut ambitione bonae tantum conscientiae pretio ducebantur. Ac plerique suam ipsi vitam narrare fiduciam potius morum quam adrogantiam arbitrati sunt, nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem aut obtrectationi fuit: At nunc narraturo mihi vitam defuncti hominis venia opus fuit, quam non petissem incusaturus: We have read that the panegyrics pronounced by Arulenus Rusticus on Rictus Thræsea, and by Herennius Senecio on Priscus Helvidius, were made capital crimes, that not only their persons but their very books were objects of rage, and that the triumvirs were commissioned to burn in the forum those works of splendid genius. They fancied, forsooth; that in that fire the voice of the Roman people, the freedom of the Senate, and the conscience of the human race were perishing, while at the same time they banished the teachers of philosophy, and exiled every noble pursuit, that nothing good might anywhere confront them. Certainly we showed a magnificent example of patience; as a former age had witnessed the extreme of liberty, so we witnessed the extreme of servitude, when the informer robbed us of the interchange of speech and hearing. We should have lost memory as well as voice, had it been as easy to forget as to keep silence. Legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thræsea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum saevitum, delegato triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur. Scilicet illo igne vocem populi Romani et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientiae professoribus atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret. Dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum; et sicut vetus aetas vidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in servitute, adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio. Memoriam quoque ipsam cum voce perdissemus, si tam in nostra potestate esset oblivisci quam tacere. Now at last our spirit is returning. As our bodies grow but slowly, perish in a moment, so it is easier to crush than to revive genius and its pursuits. Besides, the charm of indolence steals over us, and the idleness which at first we loathed we afterwards love. Yet we shall not regret that we have told, though in language unskilful and unadorned, the story of past servitude, and borne our testimony to present happiness. Meanwhile this book, intended to do honour to Agricola, my father-in-law, will, as an expression of filial regard, be commended, or at least excused. Nunc demum redit animus; et quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerva Caesar res olim dissociabilis miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem, augeatque cotidie

felicitatem temporum Nerva Traianus, nec spem modo ac votum securitas publica, sed ipsius voti fiduciam ac robur adsumpserit, natura tamen infirmitatis humanae tardiora sunt remedia quam mala; et ut corpora nostra lente augescunt, cito extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris facilius quam revocaveris: Quid, si per quindecim annos, grande mortalis aevi spatium, multi fortuitis casibus, promptissimus quisque saevitia principis interciderunt, pauci et, ut ita dixerim, non modo aliorum sed etiam nostri superstites sumus, exemptis e media vita tot annis, quibus iuvenes ad senectutem, senes prope ad ipsos exactae aetatis terminos per silentium venimus? Non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse. Hic interim liber honori Agricolae soceri mei destinatus, professione pietatis aut laudatus erit aut excusatus. Each of his grandfathers was an Imperial procurator, that is, of the highest equestrian rank. He was ordered to impeach Marcus Silanus, and because he refused was put to death. His mother was Julia Procilla, a lady of singular virtue. Brought up by her side with fond affection, he passed his boyhood and youth in the cultivation of every worthy attainment. He was guarded from the enticements of the profligate not only by his own good and straightforward character, but also by having, when quite a child, for the scene and guide of his studies, Massilia, a place where refinement and provincial frugality were blended and happily combined. It was the case of a lofty and aspiring soul craving with more eagerness than caution the beauty and splendour of great and glorious renown. But it was soon mellowed by reason and experience, and he retained from his learning that most difficult of lessons--moderation. Gnaeus Iulius Agricola, vetere et inlustri Foroiuliensium colonia ortus, utrumque avum procuratorem Caesarum habuit, quae equestris nobilitas est. Pater illi Iulius Graecinus senatorii ordinis, studio eloquentiae sapientiaeque notus, iisque ipsis virtutibus iram Gai Caesaris meritis: Mater Iulia Procilla fuit, rarae castitatis. In huius sinu indulgentiaque educatus per omnem honestarum artium cultum pueritiam adulescentiamque transegit. Arcebat eum ab inlecebris peccantium praeter ipsius bonam integramque naturam, quod statim parvulus sedem ac magistram studiorum Massiliam habuit, locum Graeca comitate et provinciali parsimonia mixtum ac bene compositum. Memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare se prima in iuventa studium philosophiae acrius, ultra quam concessum Romano ac senatori, hausisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset. Scilicet sublime et erectum ingenium pulchritudinem ac speciem magnae excelsaeque gloriae vehementius quam caute adpetebat. Mox mitigavit ratio et aetas, retinuitque, quod est difficillimum, ex sapientia modum. He served his military apprenticeship in Britain to the satisfaction of Suetonius Paullinus, a painstaking and judicious officer, who, to test his merits, selected him to share his tent. He sought to make himself acquainted with the province and known to the army; he would learn from the skilful, and keep pace with the bravest, would attempt nothing for display, would avoid nothing from fear, and would be at once careful and vigilant. Never indeed had Britain been more excited, or in a more critical condition. Veteran soldiers had been massacred, colonies burnt, armies cut off. The struggle was then for safety; it was soon to be for victory. And though all this was conducted under the leadership and direction of another, though the final issue and the glory of having won back the province belonged to the general, yet skill, experience, and ambition were acquired by the young officer. His soul too was penetrated with the desire of warlike renown, a sentiment unwelcome to an age which put a sinister construction on eminent merit, and made glory as perilous as infamy. Prima castrorum rudimenta in Britannia Suetonio Paulino, diligenti ac moderato duci, adprobavit, electus quem contubernio aestimaret. Nec Agricola licenter, more iuvenum qui militiam in lasciviam vertunt, neque segniter ad voluptates et commeatus titulum tribunatus et inscitiam rettulit: Non sane alias exercitator magisque in ambiguo Britannia fuit: Quae cuncta etsi consiliis ductuque alterius agebantur, ac summa rerum et recuperatae provinciae gloria in ducem cessit, artem et usum et stimulos addidere iuveni, intravitque animum militaris gloriae cupido, ingrata temporibus quibus sinistra erga eminentis interpretatio nec minus periculum ex magna fama quam ex mala. From Britain he went to Rome, to go through the regular course of office, and there allied himself with Domitia Decidiana, a lady of illustrious birth. The marriage was one which gave a man ambitious of advancement distinction and support. They lived in singular harmony, through their mutual affection and preference of each other to self. However, the good wife deserves the greater praise, just as the

bad incurs a heavier censure. Neither the one nor the other corrupted him, though the province was rich and an easy prey to the wrongdoer, while the proconsul, a man inclined to every species of greed, was ready by all manner of indulgence to purchase a mutual concealment of guilt. A daughter was there added to his family to be his stay and comfort, for shortly after he lost the son that had before been born to him. The games and the pageantry of his office he ordered according to the mean between strictness and profusion, avoiding extravagance, but not missing distinction. He was afterwards appointed by Galba to draw up an account of the temple offerings, and his searching scrutiny relieved the conscience of the state from the burden of all sacrileges but those committed by Nero. Hinc ad capessendos magistratus in urbem degressus Domitiam Decidianam, splendidis natalibus ortam, sibi iunxit; idque matrimonium ad maiora nitenti decus ac robur fuit. Sors quaesturae provinciam Asiam, pro consule Salvium Titianum dedit, quorum neutro corruptus est, quamquam et provincia dives ac parata peccantibus, et pro consule in omnem aviditatem pronus quantalibet facilitate redempturus esset mutuam dissimulationem mali. Auctus est ibi filia, in subsidium simul ac solacium; nam filium ante sublatum brevi amisit. Mox inter quaesturam ac tribunatum plebis atque ipsum etiam tribunatus annum quiete et otio transiit, gnarus sub Nerone temporum, quibus inertia pro sapientia fuit. Idem praeturae tenor et silentium; nec enim iurisdictio obvenerat. Ludos et inania honoris medio rationis atque abundantiae duxit, uti longe a luxuria ita famae propior. Tum electus a Galba ad dona templorum recognoscenda diligentissima conquisitione effecit, ne cuius alterius sacrilegium res publica quam Neronis sensisset. The following year inflicted a terrible blow on his affections and his fortunes. The estate itself and a large part of her patrimony were plundered. This was indeed the occasion of the crime. Agricola, who instantly set out to discharge the duties of affection, was overtaken by the tidings that Vespasian was aiming at the throne. He at once joined his party. Chosen thus at once to supersede and to punish, Agricola, with a singular moderation, wished it to be thought that he had found rather than made an obedient soldiery. Sequens annus gravi vulnere animum domumque eius adflixit. Nam classis Othoniana licenter vaga dum Intimilium Liguria pars est hostiliter populatur, matrem Agricolae in praediis suis interfecit, praediaque ipsa et magnam patrimonii partem diripuit, quae causa caedis fuerat. Igitur ad sollemnia pietatis profectus Agricola, nuntio adfectati a Vespasiano imperii deprehensus ac statim in partis transgressus est. Initia principatus ac statum urbis Mucianus regebat, iuvene admodum Domitiano et ex paterna fortuna tantum licentiam usurpante. Is missum ad dilectus agendos Agricolam integreque ac strenue versatum vicesimae legioni tarde ad sacramentum transgressae praeosuit, ubi decessor seditiose agere narrabatur: Ita successor simul et ultor electus rarissima moderatione maluit videri invenisse bonos quam fecisse. Britain was then under Vettius Bolanus, who governed more mildly than suited so turbulent a province. Agricola moderated his energy and restrained his ardour, that he might not grow too important, for he had learnt to obey, and understood well how to combine expediency with honour. Soon afterwards Britain received for its governor a man of consular rank, Petilius Cerialis. Cerialis let him share at first indeed only the toils and dangers, but before long the glory of war, often by way of trial putting him in command of part of the army, and sometimes, on the strength of the result, of larger forces. Never to enhance his own renown did Agricola boast of his exploits; he always referred his success, as though he were but an instrument, to his general and director. Thus by his valour in obeying orders and by his modesty of speech he escaped jealousy without losing distinction. Praeerat tunc Britanniae Vettius Bolanus, placidius quam feroci provincia dignum est. Temperavit Agricola vim suam ardoremque compescuit, ne incresceret, peritus obsequi eruditusque utilia honestis miscere. Brevi deinde Britannia consularem Petilium Cerialem accepit. Habuerunt virtutes spatium exemplorum, sed primo Cerialis labores modo et discrimina, mox et gloriam communicabat: Nec Agricola umquam in suam famam gestis exultavit; ad auctorem ac ducem ut minister fortunam referebat. Ita virtute in obsequendo, verecundia in praedicando extra invidiam nec extra gloriam erat. As he was returning from the command of the legion, Vespasian admitted him into the patrician order, and then gave him the province of Aquitania, a preeminently splendid appointment both from the importance of its duties and the prospect of the consulate to which the Emperor destined him. Many think the genius of the soldier wants subtlety, because military law, which is

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summary and blunt, and apt to appeal to the sword, finds no exercise for the refinements of the forum. Yet Agricola, from his natural good sense, though called to act among civilians, did his work with ease and correctness. And, besides, the times of business and relaxation were kept distinct. When his public and judicial duties required it, he was dignified, thoughtful, austere, and yet often merciful; when business was done with, he wore no longer the official character.

**Chapter 6 : TACITUS - AGRICOLA**

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In the beginning of the next summer, I Agricola received a severe domestic wound in the loss of a son, about a year old. He bore this calamity, not with the ostentatious firmness which many have affected, nor yet with the tears and lamentations of feminine sorrow; and war was one of the remedies of his grief. For we are all undebased by slavery; and there is no land behind us, nor does even the sea afford a refuge, while the Roman fleet hovers around. Thus the use of arms, which is at all times honorable to the brave, now offers the only safety even to cowards. The extremity of Britain is now disclosed; and whatever is unknown becomes an object of magnitude. But there is no nation beyond us; nothing but waves and rocks, and the still more hostile Romans, whose arrogance we can not escape by obsequiousness and submission. These are torn away by levies to serve in foreign lands. Our estates and possessions are consumed in tributes; our grain in contributions. Even our bodies are worn down amidst stripes and insults in clearing woods and draining marshes. Britain every day buys, every day feeds, her own servitude. For we have neither cultivated lands, nor mines, nor harbors, which can induce them to preserve us for our labors. Since then all hopes of mercy are vain, at length assume courage, both you to whom safety and you to whom glory is dear. Acquiring renown from our discords and dissensions, they convert the faults of their enemies to the glory of their own army; an army compounded of the most different nations, which success alone has kept together, and which misfortune will as certainly dissipate. Every incitement to victory is on our side. The Romans have no wives to animate them; no parents to upbraid their flight. Most of them have either no home, or a distant one. Few in number, ignorant of the country, looking around in silent horror at woods, seas, and a heaven itself unknown to them, they are delivered by the gods, as it were imprisoned and bound, into our hands. In the very ranks of the enemy we shall find our own bands. The Britons will acknowledge their own cause. The Gauls will recollect their former liberty. The rest of the Germans will desert them, as the Usipii have lately done. Nor is there any thing formidable behind them: There, tributes, mines, and all the train of punishments inflicted on slaves; which whether to bear eternally, or instantly to revenge, this field must determine. March then to battle, and think of your ancestors and your posterity. They received this harangue with alacrity, and testified their applause after the barbarian manner, with songs, and yells, and dissonant shouts. And now the several divisions were in motion, the glittering of arms was beheld, while the most daring and impetuous were hurrying to the front, and the line of battle was forming; when Agricola, although his soldiers were in high spirits, and scarcely to be kept within their intrenchments, kindled additional ardor by these words: In so many expeditions, in so many battles, whether you have been required to exert your courage against the enemy, or your patient labors against the very nature of the country, neither have I ever been dissatisfied with my soldiers, nor you with your general. Britain is discovered and subdued. We are inferior to our enemies in knowledge of the country, and less able to command supplies of provision; but we have arms in our hands, and in these we have every thing. Not only, then, are we to reflect that death with honor is preferable to life with ignominy, but to remember that security and glory are seated in the same place. Even to fall in this extremest verge of earth and of nature can not be thought an inglorious fate. At present, recollect your own honors, question your own eyes. These are they, who, the last year, attacking by surprise a single legion in the obscurity of night, were put to flight by a shout: Torpid with fear, their bodies are fixed and chained down in yonder field, which to you will speedily be the scene of a glorious and memorable victory. Here bring your toils and services to a conclusion; close a struggle of fifty years with one great day; and convince your countrymen, that to the army ought not to be imputed either the protraction of war, or the causes of rebellion. While Agricola was yet speaking, the ardor of the soldiers declared itself; and as soon as he had finished, they burst forth into cheerful acclamations, and instantly flew to arms. The British troops, for the greater display of their numbers, and more formidable appearance, were ranged upon the rising grounds, so that the first line

stood upon the plain, the rest, as if linked together, rose above one another upon the ascent. The charioteers 8 and horsemen filled the middle of the field with their tumult and careering. At first the action was carried on at a distance. The Britons, armed with long swords and short targets, 9 with steadiness and dexterity avoided or struck down our missile weapons, and at the same time poured in a torrent of their own. When the Batavians, therefore, began to redouble their blows, to strike with the bosses of their shields, and mangle the faces of the enemy; and bearing down all those who resisted them on the plain, were advancing their line up the ascent; the other cohorts, fired with ardor and emulation, joined in the charge, and overthrew all who came in their way: Not the least appearance was left of an engagement of cavalry; since the men, long keeping their ground with difficulty, were forced along with the bodies of the horses; and frequently, straggling chariots, and affrighted horses without their riders, flying variously as terror impelled them, rushed obliquely athwart or directly through the lines. Those of the Britons, who, yet disengaged from the fight, sat on the summits of the hills, and looked with careless contempt on the smallness of our numbers, now began gradually to descend; and would have fallen on the rear of the conquering troops, had not Agricola, apprehending this very event, opposed four reserved squadrons of horse to their attack, which, the more furiously they had advanced, drove them back with the greater celerity. A striking and hideous spectacle now appeared on the plain: Arms, and carcasses, and mangled limbs, were promiscuously strewed, and the field was dyed in blood. Even among the vanquished were seen instances of rage and valor. Night and satiety of slaughter put an end to the pursuit. Success and plunder contributed to render the night joyful to the victor; while the Britons, wandering and forlorn, amidst the promiscuous lamentations of men and women, were dragging along the wounded; calling out to the unhurt; abandoning their habitations, and in the rage of despair setting them on fire, choosing places of concealment, and then deserting them; consulting together, and then separating. Sometimes, on beholding the dear pledges of kindred and affection, they were melted into tenderness, or more frequently roused into fury; insomuch that several, according to authentic information, instigated by a savage compassion, laid violent hands upon their own wives and children. Agricola led his army to the confines of the Horesti. He himself then led back the cavalry and infantry, marching slowly, that he might impress a deeper awe on the newly conquered nation; and at length distributed his troops into their winter-quarters. The account of these transactions, although unadorned with the pomp of words in the letters of Agricola, was received by Domitian, as was customary with that prince, with outward expressions of joy, but inward anxiety. He was conscious that his late mock-triumph over Germany, 15 in which he had exhibited purchased slaves, whose habits and hair 16 were contrived to give them the resemblance of captives, was a subject of derision; whereas here, a real and important victory, in which so many thousands of the enemy were slain, was celebrated with universal applause. In vain had he silenced the eloquence of the forum, and cast a shade upon all civil honors, if military glory were still in possession of another. Other accomplishments might more easily be connived at, but the talents of a great general were truly imperial. There, after being received with a slight embrace, but not a word spoken, he was mingled with the servile throng. He resigned himself to ease and tranquillity, was modest in his garb and equipage, affable in conversation, and in public was 98 only accompanied by one or two of his friends; insomuch that the many, who are accustomed to form their ideas of great men from their retinue and figure, when they beheld Agricola, were apt to call in question his renown: He was frequently, during that period, accused in his absence before Domitian, and in his absence also acquitted. The source of his danger was not any criminal action, nor the complaint of any injured person; but a prince hostile to virtue, and his own high reputation, and the worst kind of enemies, eulogists. Thus Agricola, as well by his own virtues as the vices of others, was urged on precipitously to glory. The year now arrived in which the proconsulate of Asia or Africa must fall by lot upon Agricola; 25 and as Civica 99 had lately been put to death, Agricola was not unprovided with a lesson, nor Domitian with an example. He did not, however, bestow on Agricola the salary 28 usually offered to a proconsul, and which he himself had granted to others; either taking offense that it was not requested, or feeling a consciousness that it would seem a bribe for what he had in reality extorted by his authority. Yet he was softened by the temper and prudence of Agricola; who did not think it necessary, by a

contumacious spirit, or a vain ostentation of liberty, to challenge fame or urge his fate. His decease was a severe affliction to his family, a grief to his friends, and a subject of regret even to foreigners, and those who had no personal knowledge of him. I can not venture to affirm any thing certain of this matter; 32 yet, during the whole course of his illness, the principal of the imperial freedmen and the most confidential of the physicians was sent much more frequently than was customary with a court whose visits were chiefly paid by messages; whether that was done out of real solicitude, or for the purposes of state inquisition. He put on, however, in his countenance and demeanor, the semblance of grief: His figure was comely rather than majestic. In his countenance there was nothing to inspire awe; its character was gracious and engaging. You would readily have believed him a good man, and willingly a great one. For after the full enjoyment of all that is truly good, which is found in virtuous pursuits alone, decorated with consular and triumphal ornaments, what more could fortune contribute to his elevation? Agricola did not behold the senate-house besieged, and the senators inclosed by a circle of arms; 38 and in one havoc the massacre of so many consular men, the flight and banishment of so many honorable women. Soon after, our own hands 43 dragged Helvidius 44 to prison; ourselves were tortured with the spectacle of Mauricus and Rusticus, 45 and sprinkled with the innocent blood of Senecio. Under Domitian, it was the principal part of our miseries to behold and to be beheld: With resignation and cheerfulness, from the testimony of those who were present in your last moments, did you meet your fate, as if striving to the utmost of your power to make the emperor appear guiltless. This is our sorrow; this is our wound: Every thing, doubtless, O best of parents! If there be any habitation for the shades of the virtuous; if, as philosophers suppose, exalted souls do not perish with the body; may you repose in peace, and call us, your household, from vain regret and feminine lamentations, to the contemplation of your virtues, which allow no place for mourning or complaining! This is truly to honor the dead; this is the piety of every near relation. For, while many great personages of antiquity will be involved in a common oblivion with the mean and inglorious, Agricola shall survive, represented and consigned to future ages.

## Chapter 7 : Internet History Sourcebooks

*The Life of Cn̄ius Julius Agricola by Tacitus, Part I; from The Revised Oxford Translation with Notes, Handy Literal Translations Series, Ancient Roman Authors and Historians, online free e-book on [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)*

Though most has been lost, what remains is an invaluable record of the era. The first half of the *Annals* survived in a single copy of a manuscript from Corvey Abbey, and the second half from a single copy of a manuscript from Monte Cassino, and so it is remarkable that they survived at all. In an early chapter of the *Annals*, Tacitus asserts that he wishes to speak about the years of Domitian, Nerva and Trajan. In the *Historiae* the scope has changed; Tacitus says that he will deal with the age of Nerva and Trajan at a later time. Instead, he will cover the period from the civil wars of the Year of Four Emperors and end with the despotism of the Flavians. Only the first four books and twenty-six chapters of the fifth book survive, covering the year 69 and the first part of the work. The work is believed to have continued up to the death of Domitian on September 18, 96. He wrote at least sixteen books, but books 7–10 and parts of books 5, 6, 11 and 16 are missing. Book 6 ends with the death of Tiberius and books 7 to 12 presumably covered the reigns of Caligula and Claudius. The remaining books cover the reign of Nero, perhaps until his death in June 68 or until the end of that year to connect with the *Historiae*. The second half of book 16 is missing, ending with the events of 68. We do not know whether Tacitus completed the work; he died before he could complete his planned histories of Nerva and Trajan and no record survives of the work on Augustus Caesar and the beginnings of the Roman Empire, with which he had planned to finish his work. *Agricola*, a biography of his father-in-law Gnaeus Julius Agricola; the *Germania*, a monograph on the lands and tribes of barbarian Germania; and the *Dialogus*, a dialogue on the art of rhetoric. *Germania* Latin title: *De Origine et situ Germanorum* is an ethnographic work on the Germanic tribes outside the Roman Empire. The *Germania* fits within a classical ethnographic tradition which includes authors such as Herodotus and Julius Caesar. The book begins chapters 1–27 with a description of the lands, laws, and customs of the various tribes. Later chapters focus on descriptions of particular tribes, beginning with those who lived closest to the Roman empire, and ending with a description of those who lived on the shores of the Baltic Sea, such as the Fenni. Tacitus had written a similar, albeit shorter, piece in his *Agricola* chapters 10–11. *Agricola De vita et moribus Iulii Agricolae* [edit] Main article: *Agricola* book The *Agricola* written c. 98. As in the *Germania*, Tacitus favorably contrasts the liberty of the native Britons with the tyranny and corruption of the Empire; the book also contains eloquent polemics against the greed of Rome, one of which, that Tacitus claims is from a speech by Calgacus, ends by asserting that *Auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*. To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace. There is uncertainty about when Tacitus wrote *Dialogus de oratoribus*. Many characteristics set it apart from the other works of Tacitus, so that its authenticity has at various times been questioned. It lacks for example the incongruities that are typical of his mature historical works. Sources [edit] Tacitus makes use of the official sources of the Roman state: He is generally seen [by whom? The minor inaccuracies in the *Annals* may be due to Tacitus dying before he had finished and therefore before he had proof-read his work. Tacitus cites some of his sources directly, among them Cluvius Rufus, Fabius Rusticus and Pliny the Elder, who had written *Bella Germaniae* and a historical work which was the continuation of that of Aufidius Bassus. Tacitus also uses collections of letters *epistolarium*. He also took information from *exitus illustrium virorum*. These were a collection of books by those who were antithetical to the emperors. They tell of sacrifices by martyrs to freedom, especially the men who committed suicide. When he writes about a near-defeat of the Roman army in *Ann. I, 63* he does so with brevity of description rather than embellishment. In most of his writings he keeps to a chronological narrative order, only seldom outlining the bigger picture, leaving the readers to construct that picture for themselves. Nonetheless, where he does use broad strokes, for example, in the opening paragraphs of the *Annals*, he uses a few condensed phrases which take the reader to

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the heart of the story. His historiography offers penetrating—often pessimistic—insights into the psychology of power politics, blending straightforward descriptions of events, moral lessons, and tightly focused dramatic accounts. Throughout his writing, he is preoccupied with the balance of power between the Senate and the Emperors, and the increasing corruption of the governing classes of Rome as they adjusted to the ever-growing wealth and power of the empire. Tacitus noted the increasing dependence of the emperor on the goodwill of his armies. The Julio-Claudians eventually gave way to generals, who followed Julius Caesar and Sulla and Pompey in recognizing that military might could secure them the political power in Rome. His experience of the tyranny, corruption, and decadence of that era 81–96 may explain the bitterness and irony of his political analysis. He draws our attention to the dangers of power without accountability, love of power untempered by principle, and the apathy and corruption engendered by the concentration of wealth generated through trade and conquest by the empire. Nonetheless, the image he builds of Tiberius throughout the first six books of the Annals is neither exclusively bleak nor approving: The entrance of Tiberius in the first chapters of the first book is dominated by the hypocrisy of the new emperor and his courtiers. In the later books, some respect is evident for the cleverness of the old emperor in securing his position. In general, Tacitus does not fear to praise and to criticize the same person, often noting what he takes to be their more-admirable and less-admirable properties. *Prose* [edit] His Latin style is highly praised. The style has been both derided as "harsh, unpleasant, and thorny" and praised as "grave, concise, and pithily eloquent". A passage of Annals 1. Tiberii Gaique et Claudii ac Neronis res florentibus ipsis—ob metum—falsae,.

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### Chapter 8 : Agricola ( edition) | Open Library

*Agricola as Hope for a Troubled Empire Tacitus' Agricola, though it traverses a significant part of Rome's conquest of Britain, is primarily about the man from whom the book takes its title. Tacitus used British conquest to show the reader Agricola's many virtues, and he explained why Romans should strive to follow Agricola's example.*

Nothing is known of his parentage. Though Cornelius was the name of a noble Roman family, there is no proof that he was descended from the Roman aristocracy; provincial families often took the name of the governor who had given them Roman citizenship. In any event he grew up in comfortable circumstances, enjoyed a good education, and found the way open to a public career. Tacitus studied rhetoric, which provided a general literary education including the practice of prose composition. This training was a systematic preparation for administrative office. In 77 Tacitus married the daughter of Gnaeus Julius Agricola. Agricola had risen in the imperial service to the consulship, in 77 or 78, and he would later enhance his reputation as governor of Britain. Moving through the regular stages, he gained the quaestorship often a responsible provincial post, probably in 81; then in 88 he attained a praetorship a post with legal jurisdiction and became a member of the priestly college that kept the Sibylline Books of prophecy and supervised foreign-cult practice. After this it may be assumed that he held a senior provincial post, normally in command of a legion, for four years. By 93 Agricola was dead, but by this time Tacitus had achieved distinction on his own. This distinction not only reflected his reputation as an orator but his moral authority and official dignity as well. First literary works In 98 Tacitus wrote two works: *De vita Julii Agricolae* and *De origine et situ Germanorum* the *Germania*, both reflecting his personal interests. It is laudatory yet circumstantial in its description, and it gives a balanced political judgment. The *Germania* is another descriptive piece, this time of the Roman frontier on the Rhine. Tacitus emphasizes the simple virtue as well as the primitive vices of the Germanic tribes, in contrast to the moral laxity of contemporary Rome, and the threat that these tribes, if they acted together, could present to Roman Gaul. Here his writing goes beyond geography to political ethnography. Tacitus still practiced advocacy at law—in he, along with Pliny the Younger, successfully prosecuted Marius Priscus, a proconsul in Africa, for extortion—but he felt that oratory had lost much of its political spirit and its practitioners were deficient in skill. This decline of oratory seems to provide the setting for his *Dialogus de oratoribus*. The work refers back to his youth, introducing his teachers Aper and Secundus. It has been dated as early as about 80, chiefly because it is more Ciceronian in style than his other writing. But its style arises from its form and subject matter and does not point to an early stage of stylistic development. The date lies between 98 and ; the theme fits this period. Tacitus compares oratory with poetry as a way of literary life, marking the decline of oratory in public affairs: The work reflects his mood at the time he turned from oratory to history. There were historians of imperial Rome before Tacitus, notably Aufidius Bassus, who recorded events from the rise of Augustus to the reign of Claudius, and Pliny the Elder, who continued this work a fine Aufidii Bassi to the time of Vespasian. The work contained 12 or 14 books it is known only that the *Historiae* and *Annales*, both now incomplete, totaled 30 books. Only books iv and part of book v, for the years 69–70, are extant. The narrative as it now exists, with its magnificent introduction, is a powerfully sustained piece of writing that, for all the emphasis and colour of its prose, is perfectly appropriate for describing the closely knit set of events during the civil war of 68–69. As he approached the reign of Domitian, he faced a Roman policy that, except in provincial and frontier affairs, was less coherent and predictable. It called for sharper analysis, which he often met with bitterness, anger, and pointed irony. Perhaps his picture of the emperor Tiberius in the *Annales* owed something to his exercise on Domitian. He had won distinction under Nerva and enjoyed the effects of liberal policy; at the same time, he had lived through the crisis of imperial policy that occurred when Nerva and Trajan came to the succession. Under Trajan he retained his place in public affairs, and in 100 he crowned his administrative career with the proconsulate of Asia, the top provincial governorship. His personal career had revealed to him, at court and in administration, the play of

power that lay behind the imperial facade of rule. From what can be reconstructed from his personal career along with the implications of his subsequent historical thought, it is possible to mark an intellectual turning point in his life after which he began to probe deeper into the nature of the Roman Empire. Although in the *Agricola* he had lightly promised to continue his writing from the Flavian years into the new regime, he now moved not forward but backward. Only books iv, part of book v, most of book vi treating the years 14–29 and 31–37 under Tiberius, and books xi–xvi, incomplete on Claudius from 47 to 51 and Nero from 51 to 66, are extant. In casting back to the early empire Tacitus did not wish necessarily to supersede his predecessors in the field, whose systematic recording he seemed to respect, judging from the use he made of their subject matter. In effect, the *Annals* represents a diagnosis in narrative form of the decline of Roman political freedom, written to explain the condition of the empire he had already described in the *Histories*. Tacitus viewed the first imperial century as an entity. There was in his eyes a comparison to be made, for example, between the personal conduct of Tiberius and that of Domitian, not that they were the same kind of men but that they were corrupted by similar conditions of dynastic power. Yet he did not begin with Augustus, except by cold reference to his memory. The modern world tends to think of Augustus as the founder of the empire. The Romans—one may cite Appian of Alexandria and Publius Annii Florus alongside Tacitus—regarded him, at least during the first part of his career, as the last of the warlords who had dominated the republic. In opening the *Annals*, Tacitus accepts the necessity of strong, periodic power in Roman government, providing it allowed the rise of fresh talent to take over control. That was the aristocratic attitude toward political freedom, but to secure the continuity of personal authority by dynastic convention, regardless of the qualifications for rule, was to subvert the Roman tradition and corrupt public morality. One may, indeed, believe that Tiberius was prompted to assume imperial power because he was anxious about the military situation on the Roman frontier; but Tacitus had no doubts about the security of the Roman position, and he considered the hesitation that Tiberius displayed on taking power to be hypocritical; hence, the historical irony, in interpretation and style, of his first six books. Here, perhaps, Tacitus had some support for his interpretation. A strong, dour soldier and a suspicious man, Tiberius had little to say in his court circle about public affairs. On his death he was blamed for never saying what he thought nor meaning what he said, and Tacitus elaborated this impression. His criticism of dynastic power also stressed the effect of personality: With regard to provincial administration, he knew that he could take its regular character for granted, in the earlier period as well as his own. Sources For the period from Augustus to Vespasian, Tacitus was able to draw upon earlier histories that contained material from the public records, official reports, and contemporary comment. It has been noted that the work of Aufidius Bassus and its continuation by Pliny the Elder covered these years; both historians also treated the German wars. In the light of his administrative and political experience, Tacitus in the *Histories* was able to interpret the historical evidence for the Flavian period more or less directly. Yet contemporary writing may lack perspective. He recognized this problem when, in the *Annals*, he revived the study of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. But to go back a century raises additional problems of historical method. Tacitus first had to determine the factual reliability and political attitude of his authorities and then to adjust his own general conception of the empire, in case it was anachronistic, to the earlier conditions. The strength of his conviction limited his judgment at both points. He underplayed the effect of immediate circumstances and overplayed the personal factor, a tendency that influenced his use of the historical sources. In particular Tiberius, who in spite of his political ineptness struggled with real difficulties, suffered in reputation from this treatment. But Tacitus did not spare any man in power. He controls the performance of his characters; it is magnificent writing, but it is not necessarily strict history. Style and importance Because he was a conscious literary stylist, both his thought and his manner of expression gave life to his work. Greek historiography had defined ways of depicting history: Each method had its technique, and the greater writer could combine elements from all three. Tacitus knew the techniques and controlled them for his political interpretations; as a model he had studied the early Roman historiographer Sallust. It is finally his masterly handling of literary Latin that impresses the reader. He wrote in the grand style, helped by the

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solemn and poetic usage of the Roman tradition, and he exploited the Latin qualities of strength, rhythm, and colour. His style, like his thought, avoids artificial smoothness. His writing is concise, breaking any easy balance of sentences, depending for emphasis on word order and syntactical variation and striking hard where the subject matter calls for a formidable impact. He is most pointed on the theme of Tiberius, but his technique here is only a concentrated form of the stylistic force that can be found throughout his narrative. On the literary side they are appreciated as stylistic masterpieces.

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### Chapter 9 : The Agricola and Germanica of Cornelius Tacitus

*Meanwhile this book, intended to do honour to Agricola, my father-in-law, will, as an expression of filial regard, be commended, or at least excused. 4. Cnaeus Julius Agricola was born at the ancient and famous colony of Forum Julii.*

The bulk of this volume consists of the Annals and the Histories. It also has the Agricola and the Germanica plus one or two sundry writings. There are gaps because some of the books of the Annals have been lost. What there is co This really does contain all the extant writings of Tacitus. What there is consists of plots and counterplots amongst the Roman elite at perhaps the most dangerous moment in history to have belonged to such an elite. Tacitus tells it all in a matter-of-fact way without becoming preachy or judgmental. The History contains an account of the period from early 69 AD to late 70 AD, during which period there were four emperors, and what an extremely interesting time it was as brought to life by Tacitus. The Agricola is a mini-autobiography of the man of the same name, the Germanica is an account of Germany and its tribes. Germany at the time was a good deal larger than it is today by the Roman account, extending east to Finland and Lithuania and including what is now Belgium and Holland. That out of the way, the Annals are a reminder of the importance of old books and what they tell us about the relatively unchanging nature of humans when given power over others. The technology and the names for oppressive political systems may change, but the principle features of those who are corrupted by power do not -- unlimited cruelty in those who have power, base servility to Bad form to start with a disclaimer -- but I only finished the Annals of Tacitus. The technology and the names for oppressive political systems may change, but the principle features of those who are corrupted by power do not -- unlimited cruelty in those who have power, base servility to those supporting the despot. Rather than paraphrase or summarize, I will let this insightful historian speak for himself, and remind us of what we should be looking for in our own time: Even with virtuous training, purity is not easily upheld; far less amid rivalries in vice could modesty or propriety or any trace of good manners preserved. The text is immensely readable and the history contained therein is often fascinating and sometimes mundane Tacitus steps out from behind the writing at times, and the way he understand his role as an historian is important to understanding what he conveys, and how. As a text, this edition lacks maps and could use a directory. Since T Read in parts, and reviewed below accordingly. Since Tacitus jumps around the several fronts of the Roman Empire, some kind of historical atlas would have been helpful. The Annals detail the years of the Roman Empire from the death of Augustus, through Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, and nearly to the end of the reign of Nero. While I cannot speak to the accuracy or spirit of the text as taken from the Latin, I found this translation to be highly accessible and immensely interesting. Tacitus, for example, lived through the reign of Nero, and has a particularly unfavorable opinion of him--this is clearly conveyed in The Annals, and has likely influenced the extraordinarily negative legacy still carried by that emperor almost 2 millennia later. The "Historiae" has a few good moments, but a lot is taken up with troop movements and battles -- a bit tedious. The "Germanica" is interesting. The "Dialogus de Oratoribus" is a rather peculiar work.