

Drawing Imperial Lines: Sovereignty and Tacitus' Germanicus

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Abstract This essay focuses on Germanicus' performance of sovereign power in Tacitus' *Annales* 1-2. That power is seen in the differentiation of citizen from non-citizen and Roman territory from non-Roman territory. Roman violence in Germany contrasts with Germanicus in the East. There he recognised a shared history and community. Sovereign power required a recognition of the sovereign by the citizen and of the citizen by the sovereign. An individual's membership and a territory's place within the Roman Empire depended not on innate characteristics but political negotiation. Ancient political geographies gave primacy to the political rather than the territorial in determining citizenship.

Keywords Sovereignty. Tacitus. Germanicus. Germania. Annales. Violence. Citizenship. Mutinies.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Theories of Sovereign Power. – 3 Suppressing the German Mutiny. – 4 Making Germania Roman. – 5 Sovereign Recognition without Transformation: Germanicus in the East. – 6 Conclusions.



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413

1 Introduction

I am concerned with the drawing of a line to separate *civis* and *hostis* in Tacitus, *Annales* 1-2. I argue that this line is drawn thrice in the German episodes. In the mutiny, the line separates the mutinous soldiers from loyal citizens. The second line is drawn in the land to separate German *hostes* and Roman *cives*. Then the account of the German campaigns depicts the implications of Germanicus' decision to move that line from the Rhine to the Elbe.¹ The argument concerns the power that drew those lines and the effect that such lines had. I suggest that the line-drawing depended on sovereign power and Tacitus' narrative concerning Germany in particular focuses on the way in which sovereignty operated. The nature of sovereign power is central to the analysis and will be explored in the next section and in the conclusion where I argue that sovereign power is made evident in the drawing of lines which define the political community and inclusion in or exclusion from that community.

Tacitus' focus on what we would categorise as sovereign power intergrates the German episodes with the themes of imperial power that pervade the *Annales*.² In Germanicus' Eastern engagements, the line is drawn by Germanicus to include Eastern communities within imperial culture, notably the Athenians and Alexandrians, but it is redrawn by Piso and Tiberius to exclude those communities, dramatising the increasing tension between Germanicus and Tiberius and its roots in sovereign power.

In Tacitus' narrative of the mutinies, the division of *hostes* and *cives* was initially a threat posed by Germanicus. The consequence of being classed as *hostis* was political exclusion which would render the individual without rights and subject to arbitrary violence. The soldiers responded to the threat with a performance of their identity as *cives* and *milites* in killing those seen as rejecting imperial sovereignty (*hostes*).³ Subsequently, Germanicus' soldiers further asserted their identity through a violent raid on the Marsi. Lat-

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1 O'Gorman 2000, 23-45, argues that these episodes depict commanders seeking to educate the ignorant soldiers in the interpretation of the symbols of socio-political order. I see the mutinous soldiers not as ignorant readers, but political victims.

2 Goodyear 1972, 30, noted that the German episodes in the *Annales* have a prominence that seems out of keeping with the importance of the episodes and the themes of the work. In reading sovereignty as the theme of these episodes, I remove that anomaly.

3 See Lowrie 2009, 297 on performance bringing representation into reality.

er campaigns followed a different pattern. Rather than raids, these were programmes of conquest in which the territorial aspect of identity came to the fore. Germanicus decided to redraw the boundary between Roman and enemy territory. This required the new territory to be remade, its people and their culture suppressed, and new Roman places of memory to be constructed.

The violence in Germany contrasts markedly with the conciliatory behaviour of Germanicus towards provincial communities in *Annales* 2.⁴ Yet, his acts conformed to the same imperial ideology. Both at Athens and in his Aegean tour, Tacitus' Germanicus endeared himself to local populations through a recognition of multiple points of contact between the history of these communities and that of Rome and his own family. Such commonalities established a shared identity and cultural experience. The dynamic operated differently in Egypt, but similarly recognised a community of experience.⁵ This community existed outside any legal framework. It was an imperial construction in which loyalty to the sovereign was the claim to belonging.⁶

Such community building was less of an option when dealing with the Germans. Whatever the complex realities of interactions on the frontiers, the textual representation was of a history of war and massacre. Nevertheless, in the speeches of Segestes and Arminius, discussed below, Tacitus envisages contrasting pathways for the Germans, one involving continued conflict and freedom as *hostes*, the other peace and subjugation to the political and spatial forms of the Roman community as *cives*.

2 Theories of Sovereign Power

A linking thread in these episodes is the relationship between sovereignty and identity.⁷ In this analysis, I argue that Tacitus offers an extreme understanding of sovereign power which he saw as funda-

⁴ The differences between Germanicus in *ann.* 1 and 2 are noted by Woodman 2015.

⁵ Alston 2011 argued that aesthetics of memory in Germanicus' tour of the East were imperial.

⁶ See the utopian account of imperial belonging in Ando 2000, especially 13-19, and Verboven 2012 for a discussion of economic models of integration.

⁷ Although popular in nineteenth-century histories (Nippel 2015, 35-53), sovereignty has fallen from critical attention. There is a reluctance to employ a modern concept (sixteenth century onwards) for which there is no obvious Latin or Greek translation (Hoekstra 2016, 15-51). Bodin (1576, 1) opted for *maiestas*. Moatti 2018, 116, argues, surely rightly, that *maiestas* was relational and not the absolute quality Bodin envisaged. See also Giovannini, 2015, 15-17, for a short summary of *crimen maiestatis. Imperium*, on which see Vervaet 2014, which captures the sense of power, was always granted and almost always limited in time and space and does not meet normal criteria for sovereignty.

mental to the operation of imperial society. His understanding of sovereign power has both similarities with and differences from those common in modern political philosophy. He can be thus be used to critique such models even as those models provide us with categories for our study.

Jean Bodin, probably the earliest theorist of sovereignty, asserted that a state (*res publica*) was formed when families came together with sovereign power. The presence of the sovereign distinguished the *res publica* from a collation of families or individuals. As a foundational element, the sovereign predated law. The sovereign called law into being and therefore existed outside of law and was unlimited by law.⁸ Like many other political philosophers of the early modern period, Bodin invoked a mythic structure in which political concepts were seen as original to social forms and therefore transcending historical differences.

Bodin influenced Carl Schmitt. Schmitt (1985, 1) famously reduced sovereignty to the apothegmatic '*Soverän ist, wer über den Ausnahmestand entscheidet*' ('Sovereign is he who decides on the exceptional case'). The exceptional case, or state of emergency, or state of siege involves the decision to suspend law. This is a decisionist definition of sovereignty, which I largely adhere to in what follows.

By definition the agency who is able to suspend law must have an existence outside legal frameworks.⁹ This principal informed a distinction derived by Schmitt from Roman history between a dictator appointed to resolve a problem and a dictator appointed to bring into being a new state.¹⁰ Only the latter was sovereign since that dictatorship was unlimited by prior law or convention. For Schmitt, such power was theological or mythological in that the sovereign had an absolute power to decide to the extent of suspending, creating or founding the state.¹¹ Consequently, the sovereign allowed law and society to function as a concession and both could be suspended at the discretion of the sovereign. The state was precarious in the face of sovereign power. As Schmitt puts it:

The sovereign produces and guarantees the situation in its totality. He has the monopoly over this last decision. Therein resides

8 Bodin 1576, 1 and 125, where he asserts the unlimited nature of sovereign power (cf p. 147). See also the discussion in Tuck 2016. Bodin drew on Cicero, particularly *De Republica* 1.26.41; 1.39 or *De Officiis* 2.73, but his model was not Ciceronian: see Schofield 1995 and Wood 1988, 169.

9 Schmitt 1985, xii-xiv. Terminological vagueness is necessary since only the sovereign can define the conditions of a state of emergency.

10 Schmitt 1921; see the discussion in Tuori 2016 and Kalyvas 2000a, 1525-65. On the historicity of such a distinction see Cornell 2015.

11 Schmitt 1985, 36, 47.

the essence of the state's sovereignty, which must be juristically defined correctly, not as the monopoly to coerce or to rule, but as the monopoly to decide.¹²

Andreas Kalyvas's commentary on Schmitt stresses the way in which sovereign power constitutes this quotidian. Yet that power is perpetually revolutionary:

The sovereign dictator is a founder.... For Schmitt, this is an ex nihilo new order, born out of nothingness, and, as such, it represents a total rupture, a legal break, or even a hiatus from the previous system of rules. It cannot be reduced, or traced back, to any anterior procedure, institution, order, or fundamental norm. Although this new order is illegal with respect to the previous system of norms, it constitutes a new revolutionary form of legitimacy based on completely new grounds: the subject that exercises the constituent power. It signifies the radical beginning of a new political regime. Therefore, the sovereign decision that founds this new order is contingent and indeterminate; the decision "emanates from nothingness" and is "created out of nothingness".¹³

Such models of sovereign power function to normalise absolutist regimes in Bodin's case or fascistic regimes in Schmitt's case. Both Bodin and Schmitt reference a democratic residue since the state is seen as a republican formation of citizens. Kalyvas has pointed to 'democratic moments' in Schmitt's thought in identifying the action of the people as constituting the political form and in the institutionalising of politics to protect the people. This last emerges as something close to the *telos* of national politics.¹⁴

But any democratic residue faces fundamental impediments. In the first instance, it presupposes a unitary *populus* which is in itself a mythic construction.¹⁵ The *populus* itself does not have the capacity to make decisions without institutionalisation. Inevitably, real power is transferred to the agency that recognises the *civis* or interprets the will of the people.¹⁶ The sovereign must, by implication, define or recognise the constitution of the *populus*. This involves the decision on the individual case as to membership of the political community.

¹² Schmitt 1985, 13.

¹³ Kalyvas 2000a, 1533.

¹⁴ See most clearly Kalyvas 2000b.

¹⁵ Schmitt 1985, 49, notes that nation or people have no decision-making capability except that which is allowed them by sovereign power.

¹⁶ As discussed by Preuss 1999, who also sees Schmitt's racism as essential to his thinking.

As Giorgio Agamben (1998, 3-8) argues sovereign power functions in its ability to reduce the individual citizen to bare life and to identify the enemy.¹⁷ Schmitt's rabid antisemitism illustrates the precariousness of citizens in the context of the mythology inherent in nationalist populism. If the identification for membership is behavioural, then a sovereign might enforce cultural norms and see the performance of loyalty to the regime as the prerequisites for citizenship. In the Roman imperial examples discussed here, we see decisions taken by the sovereign precisely over individuals' membership of the political community and the territorial limits of the state which are depend on the performance of loyalty to the imperial family.

Such approaches (Bodin, Schmitt, Agamben) claim to uncover the fundamental characteristics of all states, which they see as by nature authoritarian. I see such views as mythological not historical and consequently deeply flawed.¹⁸ Their usefulness lies in their view of sovereignty as a quotidian power intertwined with the functioning of society.¹⁹ I will argue that in the Tacitean account sovereign power was fundamental in determining issues of life and death and affecting everyday behaviours.

Such an understanding differs from the 'last instance' model which is the current *communis opinio* in Roman history. For the Republic, the constitution is interpreted as being amorphous and fluid, finding definition only in the development of constitutional thinking in the Republic's final generation.²⁰ Analogy with the unwritten British constitution explains a separation between residual power (which lies in the British Crown/Roman *populus*) and political practice.²¹ Additionally, the location of sovereign power in the Republican system seems indistinct and incompatible with decisionist theories and the culturally embedded nature of Roman politics would seem to diminish the importance of any theoretical or residual locus of sovereignty.²² The

17 See also Agamben 2005.

18 In Alston forthcoming, I discuss issues of sovereign power in connection with the Augustan regime and the challenge that poses to theological views of sovereignty.

19 Michel Foucault moved from a dichotomous view of sovereignty and social power. In Foucault 1994, which dates from 1977, he argued that power resides in a reciprocity between agents within all social interactions rather than in a concentration at the top of the system. He expressed the view apothegmatically in Foucault 1979, 88-9, as cutting the head from the king in political philosophy. But a few years later, he was arguing for an approach that integrated sovereign power and social power in the concept of governmentality. See Foucault 2010 and 2005, esp. 372-80.

20 Straumann 2011; 2016, esp. 14-25.

21 See the discussion in Straumann 2011. The idea is already present in Merivale 1850-64, 2: 552-3.

22 Lowrie 2007 argues for sovereignty being ill-defined in the Republic. Hammer 2017 argues for a lack of emphasis in Republican Rome on notions of sovereignty. See Arena 2016 for the quasi-transfer of sovereign authority in Ciceronian thought. Ham-

historical experience of aristocratic control would seem to demand a separation between quotidian political operations and a putative or residual democratic sovereignty.²³

For the imperial period, such understandings become more paradoxical, seeing in the Augustan revolution the restoration of popular sovereignty which remained, however, residual.²⁴ Wallace-Hadrill claims that popular sovereignty was fundamental in the Augustan settlement, but also notes that it was merely ceremonial.²⁵ For Paul Veyne, imperial power was a delegation and popular sovereignty remained the basis of imperial power through the Byzantine period.²⁶ Egon Flaig offers a nuanced picture in which an emperor's power depended on that emperor securing the symbolic assent of the people through consensus rituals. Whatever the evident materiality of political power, the decision on the acceptance of the imperial candidate depended on the generation and performance of consensus.²⁷ Flaig (2011) suggests that popular sovereignty survived the transition from Republic to Empire, since in the Republic the senate had governed through a consensual delegation from the people, which was replicated in the imperial period in a delegation to the emperor. John Rich (2015; 2012) also argues for the centrality of consensus in that it underpinned a state of exception which was continuous through the triumviral and Augustan periods and presumably beyond.

The recognition of the sovereign was a ritual that involved a multi-directional communication of power. Consensus rituals legitimated the sovereign and at the same time asked the sovereign to recognise the *populus*. They thanked the sovereign whose decision allowed the

mer 2014, 9, sees popular sovereignty as fundamental, if constructed around notions not in themselves directly translatable as popular sovereignty. For the constitution as embedded in tradition, see Arena 2015; Wood 1988, 144; and Schofield 2015, 113-27.

23 See the nuanced discussion of Jehne 2005, 131-60. Millar 1984 argues that the democratic sovereignty of the people operated within and fundamentally influenced an operationally aristocratic political system. Mouritsen 2017, 16-17, notes the 'undisputed' nature of popular sovereignty, but differentiates these theoretical notions from 'real politics' (3).

24 As Wiseman 2019, 3-8, states polemically.

25 Wallace-Hadrill 1993, 35-7. Compare Ando 2000, 28, for whom popular sovereignty is both fundamental and notional.

26 Veyne 2002, 49-64. This view can be traced back to Mommsen, see Nippel 2015. The conception of the emperor as representative of the people fed into Mommsen's diarchic view of the principate as discussed by Winterling 2005.

27 As set out in Flaig 1992 and conveniently summarised in Flaig 2015a and 2015b. Flaig sees the rituals as holding off civil conflict. His model must depend on all social actors being fully aware of the material realities of power and the consequences of any failure to adhere to the rituals.

res publica to exist.²⁸ In the Germanicus episodes, Tacitus shows us that the consequences of non-recognition would have been civil conflict in which the material instruments of political power would have been crucial. Participants, as Tacitus shows, were capable of making that calculation.²⁹ Consensus rituals were premised on vast disparities of political resource. Yet, there was always a potential for the collapse of that relationship and such a momentary wavering is the dramatic setting for the German mutinies.

I argue that Tacitus portrays sovereign power in the early Tiberian period as consonant with an autocracy (*dominatio*) rather than a free Republic. The sovereign decision is manifested in the arbitrary recognition of the *civis* and the precariousness of the citizen/subject in the face of sovereign power as seen throughout the *Annales*. Yet, Tacitus differs from Schmitt, Bodin and Agamben in depicting the materiality that guaranteed sovereign power which was consequential on the historical processes by which Augustan accumulated power.

The objectionable logic of the decisionist position is to normalise absolute power in a unitary locus within the political system. That locus cannot be challenged since any challenge would be to the fundamental constituting element of the *res publica*. In imperial Rome and contemporary populist rhetorics, such a challenge is treason. In a historicist view, which I detect in Tacitus, sovereign power depended on acceptance which in turn depended on a material ability to enforce acceptance. In fact, it was the successful multiple and everyday performances of the sovereign decision (backed by material power) that established sovereignty as an overarching political power. The performances of imperial power were the drawing of lines which defined who or where was within the Empire. It would be too much to say that such performances created sovereignty, since sovereign power was always underpinned by material power that was acquired prior to any performance, but the performances normalised such power and confirmed its quotidian influence leading to the acquiescence of citizens.

3 Suppressing the German Mutiny

At *Annales* 1.41, Germanicus begins the process of reasserting imperial order in the Rhineland in the face of the mutinies of 14 CE. Having failed to quieten the mutiny, Germanicus prepared to evacuate the women and children from the camp. The news of the evacuation caused concern. The soldiers are made to ask whether the imperi-

²⁸ I see this political logic as underpinning the public expressions of thanks in the decree on Cn. Piso Pater: see Cooley 1998.

²⁹ See Lendon 2006 for a critique of the consensus model.

al family *pergere ad Treviros [et] externae fidei* (would travel to the Treveri and the trust of outsiders) with the *infans in castris genitus, in contubernio legionum eductus* (infant born in camp and raised among the tents of the legions). The question presupposes that the place of the imperial family is with the *internae* of the camp and makes the issue of loyalty and belonging concrete and spatial in relating the imperial family and the camp. This presumption is disrupted by the mutiny so that the 'external' Treviri have become more citizen-like, as in loyal to the imperial family, than those in the camp.

Spatial disruption is central to Tacitus' representation of the political disruption of the mutinies. On the Danube, Percennius' very presence was a disruption bringing the theatre to the camp (1.16); his incitement led to the breakdown of spatial order as the three legions combined as one and the mutineers built themselves a meeting mound (1.18). As the mutiny spread to Nauportus, the legionaries pillaged the local communities as if in enemy territory (1.20). An attempt to suppress the pillaging led to violence in the camp in which the horizontal loyalties between soldiers triumphed over the vertical loyalties to the officers (1.21-4). By the time Drusus met the army, the disorder had extended to the bodies of the soldiers who were *inlucie deformi et vultu, quamquam maestitiam imitarentur contumaciae propiores* ('unwashed, ugly, and their faces which pretended grief, showed defiance') (1.24).³⁰ The signifiers of subordination were lost.

Subordination was restored in the soldiers' response to a lunar eclipse (1.28). Tacitus' Danubian legionaries first connected the omen to a waning in their fortunes and secondly to the disapproval of higher powers. Drusus responded by sending out representatives to erode horizontal loyalties particularly to Percennius and his fellow *provocateur*, Vibulenus, and to persuade the soldiers that only loyalty to the imperial house was politically effective.³¹ The soldiers identified those who were disloyal as enemies and hunted them down (1.29). The soldiers' conversion was fundamentally political: they were precarious before the power of the Caesars and the Caesars' power was the only factor that could change their conditions. They thus needed to secure favour which they did by performing their loyalty.³²

Similar patterns were followed in Germany: Germanicus met soldiers in disorder, reluctant to assemble by their standards (1.34). Any

³⁰ O'Gorman 2000, 30-3, draws a comparison between the dulled armour and the lunar eclipse (*ann.* 1.28).

³¹ Pagán 2005 argues through literary association that the soldiers, like Catiline, had not the potential to govern, which assumes that Sallust's Catiline was not a viable political leader.

³² O'Gorman 2000, 33-45, sees the soldiers as ignorant readers, with their ignorance made evident by their fear at the eclipse. They are eventually educated by their officers. She links this didactic purpose to Tacitus' pervasive concern with understanding.

spatial order he succeeded in establishing was illusory and momentary for when the soldiers offered him the throne and he responded with a threat of suicide, he was met with derision from the spatially disordered *extrema et conglobata inter se pars contionis* (extreme and massed part of the meeting).

These events have been read as revolutionary moments when sovereign power failed to maintain the linguistic, spatial-temporal and political order. For Rancière, the revolutionary potential of the ordinary soldier lay in their appropriation of political language.³³ Rancière (2012, 24-38) also argues that the revolutionary threat was established by the frontier location of the mutiny, in a non-space, unmarked by social convention in which new forms of thought and social practices could emerge. This idea is echoed in Agamben's (2005, 41-70) consideration of the mutiny as emerging from a non-time of the *iusstitium* when the normal conventions of law did not apply.

These normative conventions gave individuals their sense of place in the world. When the crisis was reached, Germanicus' response focuses on this issue of identity:

quod nomen huic coetui dabo? militesne appellem, qui filium imperatoris vestri vallo et armis circumsestidistis? an civis, quibus tam proiecta senatus auctoritas? hostium quoque ius et sacra legationis et fas gentium rupistis.³⁴

What name shall I give to this coming together? Am I to call you soldiers, who have besieged with ditches and arms the son of your emperor, or citizens, by whom the authority of the senate has been rejected? You have also broken the privileges of enemies and the sacredness of the embassy and the laws of nations

Germanicus poses a category question: are those before him soldiers, citizens, or enemies. The harassment of the *imperator* and the rejection of the authority of the senate suggests that they are enemies. Tacitus has already pointed towards that outcome describing Germanicus *non florentis Caesaris neque suis in castris, sed velut in urbe victa facies* (seeming not to be Caesar flourishing in his camp, but as if he was in a fallen city). No longer was the camp a focus of discipline, order and Roman identity, but a place fallen to enemy attack and of anarchic violence.³⁵

33 Auerbach 1953, 36-8, sees the revolutionary potential of Percennius as being suppressed by Tacitus' textual appropriation.

34 Tac. *ann.* 1.41.

35 One could parallel the loss of identity in the Danubian mutiny symbolised by the unwashed bodies and the unkempt armour.

Tacitus' account mirrors Livy's (28.27-9) report of Scipio's suppression of the mutiny at Sucro.³⁶ Scipio's speech runs through the same triptych with a similar content:

quos ne quo nomine quidem appellare debeam scio. ciues? qui a patria uestra descistis. an milites? qui imperium auspiciumque abnuistis, sacramenti religionem rupistis. hostes? corpora, ora, uestitum, habitum ciuium adgnosco: facta, dicta, consilia, animos hostium uideo.³⁷

I do not even know by what name I must call you. Citizens? You who have withdrawn from your country? Soldiers who have renounced the *auspices* of and broken the sacred oath? Enemies? Bodies, features, clothes, and behaviour I recognise as being of citizens; in deeds, words, plans, I see the habits of the enemy

Scipio complains that the soldiers were following the unlikely pairing of Albius and Atrius, whose low status parallels that of Percennius and Vibulenus. The hierarchical organisation of Roman society made the mutineers' low-class leadership seem revolutionary. This situated the mutineers outside the norms of Roman society and raised questions as to whether the mutineers were still Roman or, indeed, sane.³⁸ The holder of *imperium* (Germanicus or Scipio) had to distinguish soldiers, citizens, and enemies. Although Scipio and Germanicus identify characteristics which would allow the categorisation of the soldiers, *corpora, ora, vestitus, habitus* for Scipio, loyalty to the imperial house for Germanicus, these are cues to guide the *imperator*, not determinants. In the absence of other criteria, adherence to the political and social norms, which could be performed through social discipline or expressions of loyalty, could be taken as a marker of Roman identity. In the absence of such adherence, the *imperator* faced a dilemma the resolution of which depended solely on the *arbitrium* of the general.

The consequences of such a decision are evident. The soldiers of Sucro were unarmed and surrounded and the speech a prelude to dramatic exemplary executions. In Germany, the narrative is more complex. In response to Germanicus' demand that they separate the disorderly (1.43), a soldiers' tribunal acted without law or due process to slaughter those seen as guilty of disloyalty (1.44). Such brutality was a prelude to the similarly anarchic suppression of the mutiny at Vetera. Germanicus marched on the camp. He wrote to Caecina

³⁶ Syme 1958, 733; Goodyear 1972, 290; Woodman 2006.

³⁷ Livy, 28.27.

³⁸ The unconventionality of mutineers is persuasively described in Woodman 2006.

explaining that he was identifying the soldiers as enemies. Caecina called together the standard bearers and read them Germanicus' letter. These officers responded by organising a purge of the mutineers (1.48). Tacitus describes that purge in terms of an extreme division within the camp: the soldiers were not able to distinguish enemies or friends: comrades killed each other in a level of civil violence for which there was no precedent.

After the slaughter, Germanicus chose to exercise sovereign power. At Vetera, with the return of the sovereign to the camp, Germanicus concludes the mutinies with his tears and his identification of them as a disaster (1.49). With the restoration of the sovereign, Germanicus distinguished *militēs* and *hostēs* and imperial and social order was similarly restored as an act of *moderatio*.³⁹

Germanicus also offered the troops a further opportunity to perform their loyalty. When the soldiers were first gripped by uncertainty on seeing the evacuation of the imperial family, Germanicus had dangled before them the prospect of a campaign against the Germans.

Legissetis ducem, qui Vari tamen et trium legionum ulcisceretur [...] eluant hanc maculam irasque civilis in exitium hostibus vertant.⁴⁰

You would have chosen a leader who would avenge Varus and the three legions [...] they would erase this mark and turn civil anger to the death of enemies.

That promise is immediately made good. One army was sent into Raetia against the Suebi (1.44), while the soldiers of Vetera were gripped by a desire for war:

truces etiam tum animos cupido involat eundi in hostem, piaculum furoris; nec aliter posse placari commilitonum manis quam si pectoribus impiis honesta vulnera accepissent.⁴¹

And then a desire seized their bloody spirit to march against the enemy, in atonement for the madness, as if their comrades' ghosts could be placated in the receipt of honourable wounds on impious breasts.

39 On imperial moderation in allowing legal process and the social benefits thereof, see Richardson 1997. In contrast to the argument here which sees the suppression of the mutiny as the final and most extreme manifestation of disorder, O'Gorman 2000, 37-9, argues that it represents an ordered resolution according to categories of readers: the standard-bearers understand the letter and live; the soldiers do not and die.

40 Tac. *ann.* 1.43.

41 Tac. *ann.* 1.49.

Tacitus (1.50-1) then recounts a genocidal massacre of the Marsi. Sleeping villagers, women and children were killed. The land devastated for a distance of 50 miles and religious sites destroyed. He describes the Germani as *laeti* (happy, relaxed) because of the *iustitium* following the death of Augustus and the dissension in the Roman camp (1.50). They were unaware of Germanicus' reassertion of sovereign power. The raid, about which there is no ethical qualm in Tacitus, was a reassertion of a permanent war between Romans and Germans. The massacre affirmed the soldiers' status and their separation from the *hostes*. It answered the question Germanicus posed when he talked down the mutineers. As with modern episodes of mass violence, murdering together was community-building for the killers and an ascription to an identity without rights and value for the victims.⁴² In the Tacitean narrative, the soldiers' loyalty is shown through the performance of exemplary violence against precarious *hostes*.⁴³

4 Making Germania Roman

In his speech to mutineers, Tacitus' Germanicus imagines the troops murdering him, selecting another general, and marching off to avenge Varus. The passage can only mean that the soldiers' desire to invade Germany was being restrained by Germanicus or the imperial family. Obedience to the sovereign prevented the large-scale invasion of Germany.

The context would seem to have been set by Augustus' advice: *addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii, incertum metu an per invidiam* (he added the advice to close up the empire within its boundaries, either from fear of uncertainty or through jealousy).⁴⁴ Moderns have discussed whether the Augustan advice reflected a concern with 'natural boundaries' or 'imperial overstretch'.⁴⁵ The concept of the natural boundary follows from the prevalent modern association of land and nation.⁴⁶ Taking the Augustan instruction seriously, critics have used Germanicus' invasions of Germany as a

⁴² See Kalyvas 2006 and Fujii 2011 for the terrible logic in the performative nature of civil conflict.

⁴³ On the centrality of violence to imperial identity, see Morefield 2014, which is discussed in Wingrove 2016.

⁴⁴ Tac. *ann.* 1.11.

⁴⁵ This is a considerable discussion around this matter, but see, *exempli gratia*, Luttwak 1979 to be compared with Mattern 2002. For Augustan policy, see Cornell 1993, Gruen 1990, and Alston 2013. On the unnaturalness of frontiers, see Whittaker 1994.

⁴⁶ See Kedourie 1993 and Gellner 2008.

means of unsettling his 'heroic' representation in the *Annales*.⁴⁷ But there is little reason to believe that the Romans ever saw political boundaries as natural. Instead, the limits of Empire were set by political decision.⁴⁸ Indeed, this is how Tacitus represents Augustus' motivations in providing the advice. Similarly, Tacitus attributes Tiberius' unhappiness about Germanicus' campaigns in 14 CE to concerns over Tiberian sovereignty (*ann.* 1.52). In fact, by 15 CE the Augustan instruction seems to have had no force. Similarly, when Tiberius calls time on the invasion, it was not strategy that was decisive, but the performance of sovereign power and the tensions raised by Germanicus' exercising of that power.⁴⁹ It was the sovereign's prerogative to extend the *termini imperii* and thereby redraw imperial lines.

The consequence of Germanicus' expansionism was a campaign to remake the territory between the Rhine and Elbe as Roman. The requirements of such a transformation are implicit and explicit in the narrative. In 15 CE, Germanicus was able to rescue Segestes, who was under siege by Arminius (1.58). Arminius' rallying speech dramatizes his resistance and the requirements of any accommodation with Roman power:

cerni adhuc Germanorum in lucis signa Romana, quae dis patriis suspenderit. coleret Segestes victam ripam, redderet filio sacerdotium hominum: Germanos numquam satis excusaturos quod inter Albim et Rhenum virgas et securis et togam viderint [...]. Si patriam parentes antiqua mallent quam dominos et colonias novas, Arminium potius gloriae ac libertatis quam Segestem flagitiosae servitutis ducem sequerentur.⁵⁰

There are still in the groves of the Germans the Roman standards which he hung to the paternal gods. Let Segestes live on the conquered bank; let him restore his son to priesthoods for humans; Germans will never excuse that they saw between the Elbe and the Rhine the rods, axes, and toga [...]. If they prefer fatherland, ancestors, and ancient ways to masters and new colonies, they would follow as leader Arminius for glory and freedom not Segestes to shameful servitude.

Arminius' claim is that German *libertas* can be preserved between the Elbe and the Rhine and cultural traditions and the memory of re-

⁴⁷ See Pagán 2002 on Germanicus as excessive and transgressive.

⁴⁸ *Contra* to the modern 'common-sense' assumption as exemplified in Thomas 2009, 65, "Tacitus knew as well as Virgil that... no empire is *sine fine*".

⁴⁹ Tac. *ann.* 2.26.

⁵⁰ Tac. *ann.* 1.59.

sistance can be defended in the forest groves.⁵¹ *Patria, parentes* and *antiqua* are sources of resistance and what is to be defended. Arminius' leadership offers *gloria* and *libertas*. The rhetoric recalls Calgacus' similarly rousing call in *Agricola* 30-2, in which Calgacus stresses the untainted culture of the Northerners, the values of *libertas* and the threats of slavery, and the prior defeats suffered by the Romans. That parallel raises issues as to the plausibility of Arminius' offer to the Germans.⁵²

The threat of Rome was of replicating the transformation of the West Bank on the East Bank. Tacitus' Arminius envisages a dramatic reordering of space and community in the new colonies that should be seen as replacing forest groves.⁵³ The consequence of such a transformation would be the imposition of Roman political symbols (the rods and axes) and the transformation of behaviours, as epitomized by the toga. Arminius represents this subjugation to Rome's political culture as a slavery, performed in the worship of the human gods.⁵⁴ Arminius' account of subjugation is supported by *Annales* 1.54 in which Tacitus recounts the establishing of cult for Augustus in Rome, and perhaps also Segestes' own speech (1.58) in which he asserts the values of quiet and peace in terms that recall the acquiescence of the *nobiles* in their own *servitium* in *Annales* 1.2.

This threat is made real in the killing or enslavement of people and the destruction of their cultural landscape. The campaign against the Marsi saw the killing of men, women and children and the destruction of the temple of Tamfana (1.51). The war against the Chatti in 15 CE led to the women and children being enslaved and the men driven off as well as the burning of the urban centre, Mattium (1.56). Caecina was sent against the Bructeri, who burnt their own possessions and the groves of the gods but were unable to prevent the recovery of a Varan eagle amid the *caedis et praeda* (slaughter and looting) (1.60).

This was the prelude to the most impressive act of Germanicus' territorial and historical appropriation, his visit to the site of Varus' defeat (1.62-3).⁵⁵ The motive for the visit is not presented as a strategic requirement, but a desire on the part of Caesar (1.61: *cupido Caesarem invadit*). This *cupido* recalled the *cupido* that seized the sol-

51 Arminius' version of German landscape history seems close to that of Tacitus, *Germania*. See the discussion in Tan 2014.

52 See Clarke 2001; Woodman with Kraus 2014, s.v.; Lavan 2011. For more other parallels see Adler 2011 and Ash 2009, 85-99.

53 Alston 2018 argues that in the *Agricola* Tacitus envisaged the incorporation into Empire as requiring an erasure of pre-Roman spatial forms.

54 John 1963 and Goodyear 1981, 87 discuss emending the text since Arminius' claim is supposedly foolish.

55 On which see Pagán 1999.

diers of Vetera in 1.49 and fulfils the offer of revenge made in 1.41. Germanicus' desire brings him into alignment with the soldiers and thus restores a crucial identification between sovereign and army.⁵⁶

The expedition to the battlefield was in itself a conquest of the landscape:

praemisso Caecina ut occulta saltuum scrutaretur pontesque et aggeres umido paludum et fallacibus campis inponeret.⁵⁷

Caecina was sent in advance to reconnoitre the hidden passes and to build bridges and causeways over the watery swamps and treacherous plains.

The march brought them to a place of memory:

incedunt maestos locos visuque ac memoria deformis. prima Vari castra lato ambitu et dimensis principiis trium legionum manus ostentabant; dein semiruto vallo, humili fossa accisae iam reliquiae consedissee intellegebantur: medio campi albertia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta vel aggerata. adiacebant fragmina telorum equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora. lucis propinquis barbarae arae, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant.⁵⁸

they came upon the places of grief with their ugly sights and memories. Varus' first camp with its wide enclosure and the scale of its assembly space showed the work of three legions. Then, the partially fallen rampart and the shallow ditch were seen as signs that there a cut-down remnant had taken up a position. In the centre of the plain were the whitening bones, as they had fled or resisted, dispersed or piled together. Fragments of weapons and parts of horses lay near, and heads, nailed to tree trunks. In nearby groves were barbarian altars at which they had sacrificed tribunes and centurions of the *primus ordo*.

This was a place of unspeakable horror and of religion and memories, which Arminius had referenced. The forest was marked by the heads of the dead. But Tacitus' soldiers acted as archaeologists, constructing their narratives of place and history from the chaos before them.

⁵⁶ Pelling 1983 worries that emotion rather than the reason drives Germanicus. It seems to me here and elsewhere that Germanicus' emotions are communal and encourage him to community-building acts.

⁵⁷ Tac. *ann.* 1.61.

⁵⁸ Tac. *ann.* 1.61.

They identified order and then catastrophe in the three-legion camp and the Roman survivors filled in the narration, perhaps sparked into memory by the archaeological activity. The soldiers then monumentalised their memories in a transformatory appropriation of the landscape. Pagán argues that the Teutoburg Wald was uncharted territory, a form of beyond into which Germanicus should not have transgressed, but this was, as Tacitus stresses, a place multiply charted by contested memories:⁵⁹

Igitur Romanus qui aderat exercitus sextum post cladis annum trium legionum ossa, nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegeret, omnis ut coniunctos, ut consanguineos, aucta in hostem ira, maesti simul et infensi condebant. primum extruendo tumulo caespitem Caesar posuit, gratissimo munere in defunctos et praesentibus doloris socius.⁶⁰

And so the Roman army were there, six years after the disaster, in grief and anger, burying the bones of the three legions, not knowing whether the remains were of a stranger or a relative. All were joined as if family, their anger growing against the enemy. Caesar placed the first turf on the mound giving favour to the dead and as a comrade in the sorrow of those present.

The memorial brought together *imperator* and soldier, creating a fictional family that affirmed the boundary between Romans and *hostes* and brought an end to the divisions and political discord that had emerged with the mutinies. It can be contrasted with crucial moment at which the infant Gaius, was entrusted to the *externae* rather the fictive family of the camp. At the battle site, the Roman family was restored. The appropriation of the site asserted control over the place of memory, turning the field of bones into a Roman memorial. That control over the landscape was immediately tested in the Roman retreat. But now neither Germans nor forest nor marsh could stop the legions (1.63). Caecina engineered his way through a hostile landscape and Roman discipline succeeded (1.63-8) in bringing the troops to the Rhine to be met by Agrippina on the bridge, the *de facto* representative of sovereign power (1.69). Germanicus, battered by the sea, similarly returned (1.70).⁶¹

Tacitus reports Tiberian concerns at these events, ascribing three reasons for his unhappiness: hostility to Germanicus, fear that the

59 Pagán 1999.

60 Tac. *ann.* 1.62.

61 With Tan 2014, I read these events as a victory over the Germans and their landscape *contra* Pelling 1993.

soldiers would be demoralised, and religious regulations. The criticism was personal, incorrect (since the soldiers' morale was improved), and arcane, ignoring a religious impetus to perform rites for the dead.⁶² As such, the complaint works to the detriment of Tiberius. It derives primarily from his regarding Germanicus as a potential rival. A similar dynamic operates in the criticism of Agrippina in *Annales* 1.69, for which Tacitus has to enter into the mind of Tiberius. Agrippina's tending to the troops was portrayed as a usurpation of traditional military hierarchy. Tacitus' Tiberius correctly identified the power wielded by Agrippina as stemming from her position in the imperial family. But seeing that power as transgressive failed to recognise that Germanicus and Agrippina represented imperial sovereignty, as did Tiberius himself, which inevitably transgressed prior gendered hierarchies. Tacitus once more nudges us to consider the transformations caused by the emergence of the imperial sovereign and portrays Tiberius as an unreliable interpreter of the situation.

The account of the war in 16 CE repeats the themes of the narrative of the previous year's campaigns. Now Roman troops easily penetrate German territory. The landscape between the Rhine and Elbe offers only limited resistance (2.22). The major battle narrative replays the *clades Variana*, but with German blood marking the land (2.18). Again, Germanicus monumentalises the Roman presence: German vandalism of the mound in the Teutoburg Wald was repaired as was Drusus' altar. The territory was fortified (2.7). Tiberius was hailed as *imperator*. A trophy mound was inscribed with the names of the conquered tribes (2.18). Germanicus erected a second monument to the conquest of the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe (2.22). The slaughter of the Germans was the preconditions for the imposition of Roman order on the landscape: roads, bridges, forts, tombs, trophies, and victory monuments attested subjugation and the redrawing of Roman boundary on the Elbe.

Germanicus' withdrawal from Germany comes as a sudden conclusion of the conquest narrative. Tacitus' report of the 'debate' between Germanicus and Tiberius shows that Germanicus was not swayed by Tiberius' German strategy, but by issues of sovereignty:

Si foret adhuc bellandum, relinqueret materiem Drusi fratris gloriae, qui nullo tum alio hoste non nisi apud Germanias adsequi nomen imperatorium et deportare lauream posset. haud cunctatus est ultra Germanicus, quamquam fingi ea seque per invidiam par-to iam decori abstrahi intellegeret.⁶³

⁶² Tac. *ann.* 1.62.

⁶³ Tac. *ann.* 2.26.

If war must still be waged, he ought to leave some prospect of glory for his brother Drusus, who, as there was then no other enemy, could secure the title *imperator* and the right to the laurel only in Germany. Germanicus hesitated no longer, though he realised that this was a contrivance and that he was withdrawn through jealousy from the honour.

Drusus must be allowed to perform the role of the imperial sovereign; Germanicus could not have a monopoly on honour and glory. The discussion dances around the perception that Germanicus' successes diminished those of Tiberius. This culminating and explicit reference to sovereign rivalry focuses the various references to Tiberian paranoia that punctuate the text. Shifting the discussion to imperial relationships ensured Germanicus' obedience. Tiberius' intervention closes the German episodes of *Annales* 1-2 in stressing Tiberius' sovereign power, not as unchallengeable since Germanicus could presumably still have refused, but as requiring an absence of rivals and thus the subordination of Germanicus.

Germanicus' adventures in Germany were an exercise in imperial sovereignty. The Augustan decision to restrict expansion at first limited the soldiers. But Germanicus (and Tiberius) decided to extend imperial sovereignty into Germany. That decision was transformational, requiring the destruction of the cultural landscape described by Arminius and the imposition of a Roman political geography. Military power imposed that cultural geography. Those who resisted were removed. Monuments of resistance were destroyed. Life in Germany would only have been possible if the Germans followed Segestes and acquiesced in imperial sovereignty. That the process was not completed does not mean that conquest was impossible. The arbitrary nature of the decision to withdraw Germanicus shows that the failure to conquer Germany was not caused by the intractability of German territory but the tensions of sovereign relations.

Those tensions show that in the last instance sovereignty depended on a relationship of obedience, whether the subject was German or Germanicus. The entire of the German episode centred on sovereign relationships. There is a form of negotiation between Germanicus and his mutinous troops. There is an accommodation between Segestes and Rome. There is an acceptance of obedience between Germanicus and Tiberius. Germanicus in Germany builds community with his troops which clearly reinforces his sovereign relationship. Such relations do not hide the clear and evident disparities of power. Nor is Tacitus shy of relating the consequences of a failure of such a relationship. Yet, sovereign power was depicted as fundamentally relational and requiring recognition of the *imperator* by the citizens/soldiers and recognition of the citizens/soldiers by the *imperator*.

5 Sovereign Recognition without Transformation: Germanicus in the East

The violence through which German territory was assimilated to empire in *Annales* 1-2 contrasts markedly with Germanicus' sojourn in the East later in *Annales* 2. The contemporary epigraphic evidence attests Germanicus' presence at a much greater range of sites than Tacitus mentions, showing that his narrative was edited to focus on encounters of particular significance.⁶⁴

The Tacitean account begins in *Annales* 2.53. After a visit to Drusus, Germanicus landed at Actium. As at the Teutoburg Wald, Germanicus acted as archaeologist, visiting the sacred spoils of Augustus and viewing Antony's camp, which recalls that of Varus. The site conjured a contradictory memory of happiness and sorrow. The contrasting interpretations of place repeats in his visit to Ilium, a location *varietate fortunae et nostri origine veneranda* (venerable from the variety of fortunes and as our (Roman) origin).⁶⁵

At Athens, Germanicus chose to recognise the antiquity of the city's relationship to Rome by not parading through with his full contingent of lictors. The Athenians responded with

quaesitissimis honoribus, vetera suorum facta dictaque praeferentes quo plus dignationis adulatio haberet.⁶⁶

most elaborate honours and by proffering their ancient words and deeds by which they made their adulation more dignified.

The sequence in this performance began with Germanicus' choice to recognise a common history with the Athenians. The Athenians replied in two ways: the display of their history showed a compatibility of those cultural symbols with those of Rome, which we can contrast with Arminius' show of cultural difference. The second response was the elaborate honours which amounted to *adulatio*. The Athenians' reaction to recognition of their commonality with Rome was to perform their identity and their subjugation.

Similar associations are evident in Tacitus' account of Germanicus' visit to Egypt. As in his trip to the Teutoburg Wald, the impetus was a personal decision not policy (2.59). In Alexandria, as in Athens, he honoured the locals through a demonstration of community. He, as sovereign, behaved as though at home among them. His engagement with the Egyptian monuments (2.60-1) was more complex. Germani-

⁶⁴ See the material collected by Damon, Palazzolo 2019.

⁶⁵ Tac. *ann.* 2.54.

⁶⁶ Tac. *ann.* 2.53.

cus encountered narratives of imperial fall. These narratives echo the omens from the fall of Troy and the foretelling of his own death by the oracle at Clarus (2.54). Rome's history is set within a wider context of the rise and fall of empires and is thus conjoined with the history of Egypt in the formation of a form of world history. Arguably, such a history differs fundamentally from the single state histories of an Athens or a Rome, uniting those histories within an imperial frame in which political identity is determined by the imperial power, and in which that imperial power is ultimately fragile (since it will fall).⁶⁷

These historical narratives were a choice. The alternative narratives were provided by Piso and Tiberius. With Piso, his narratives are entangled with his disregard for the imperial political and social hierarchy. At Athens, Piso claimed that the recognition of a commonality by Germanicus dishonoured Rome. He proposed a history that severed the current generation of Athenians from their Classical forebears and emphasised conflict with Rome. In contrast to Germanicus, Piso's entry into the city was terrifying and his speech savage. He depicted the Athenians as enemies. Tacitus notes a prior personal enmity between Piso and the Athenians, but Piso's hostility to the provincial population was a performance of difference between himself as a Roman magistrate and a conquered population. It ignored the imperial hierarchies which united Roman and provincial in subjugation to the emperor and his representatives. Piso refused Germanicus' in historical narratives and the identity politics which resulted from them. He repeated this non-recognition in corrupting the troops in Syria (2.55). Later, he disrupted a Nabataean banquet in honour of Germanicus by rejecting a golden crown and assailing the audience with a denunciation of Germanicus' sovereignty, asserting that Germanicus was not in the position of a Parthian king (2.57). The Tacitean narrative in *Annales* 1 and 2 shows Piso as blind, perhaps wilfully so, to the real situation and in denial of the social relations required by sovereign power.

Such blindness makes the resonances between Piso's attitude and that of Tiberius the more notable. Tiberius rebuked Germanicus for his behaviour in Egypt. He stressed that Egypt was not assimilated to or a support of Rome's Empire, but was a threat to it. As with Piso's interpretation of Athenian history, Tiberius found a history of conflict, which is referenced through Augustus, where Germanicus found imperial community.

Throughout the East, Germanicus recognised common histories and experiences. His sovereign decision was to find community not division in history. The response in Athens and Alexandria was

⁶⁷ As argued by Kelly 2010 and separately by Alston 2011. Kelly argues against seeing the Tacitean report of Germanicus in Egypt as an Alexander narrative.

adulatio. As in Germany, recognition by the sovereign generated community. The response to recognition was the performance of loyalty to the imperial persona. But as in Germany, there is more than a flicker of doubt. The threat of violence is repeatedly present either in its recollection or in behaviours. In Athens and Alexandria, Germanicus' recognition is a choice to which Piso and Tiberius offer an intimidating alternative. At Actium, Troy and Thebes, we encounter the spectres of civil conflict and imperial failure, which is the path not taken by Germanicus. The difference between the confident Germanicus of Book 1 and the reflective Germanicus of Book 2 results from a political change. Whereas in Germany Germanicus was free to draw the imperial lines and was recognised as sovereign, in the East, his attempts to define the community were repeatedly thwarted as Tiberius drew the lines differently and Piso refused to accept Germanicus as sovereign. The tour of the East demonstrated to Germanicus that sovereign power was itself precarious, that cities and civilizations might fail, and that he himself was precarious in the face of sovereign power.

6 Conclusions

In my reading, Tacitus' account of Germanicus in Germany and in the East is an exploration of sovereignty. Tacitean sovereignty is powerful and bears some relationship with the mythical sovereignties of Bodin, Schmitt and Agamben. In particular, we see Germanicus exercising the sovereign decisions by which the citizens are recognised as part of the political community and the *termini imperii* decided. The Germanicus episodes continue the historical exploration of the nature of the principate that we see in Tiberius' accession and the general introduction to the *Annales* in 1.1-4 which, whatever the terminological difficulties, stress sovereignty as constitutive of society and politics.

Tacitus' interpretation challenges modern political assumptions. Our nation states give priority to cultural identity. In the Romantic tradition, cultural identity is embedded in landscape.⁶⁸ Through association, the sovereign nation becomes a manifestation of nature not history and emerges from the landscape rather than from political conjunctions.⁶⁹ It is this mythic writing of sovereignty into landscape that made Tacitus' *Germania* a most dangerous book.⁷⁰ But in

⁶⁸ See, for example, the discussion in Güthenke 2008.

⁶⁹ The premodern symbols of nationhood can be used to support mythic origins for the nation. See Smith 2004 and his earlier work, Smith 1986 and 1999.

⁷⁰ See Krebs 2011 and Rives 1999, 1-27. In agreement with these authors, I view nationalistic interpretations as not merely appropriations but misreadings of the *Germania*.

the Germanicus episodes, sovereignty is primarily political not territorial. It operated firstly in the sovereign decision to distinguish the *civis* and the *hostis*. It determined the *termini imperii*. In the conquest of Germany, *hostes* were killed or enslaved. The cultural markers of German identity were degraded or destroyed. The places of memory were transformed, villages and towns destroyed, populations displaced. New monuments were imposed alongside a new infrastructure of roads and forts.⁷¹ The sovereign remade the territory. In the East, assimilation depended on Germanicus' decision to recognise an existing common history and thereby assimilate that political geography. The Tacitean sequence runs from the sovereign decision to the definition of the *civis* and *hostis* to the making of the landscape. It is the reverse of the nationalistic sequence.

In spite of the powerful sovereign we see in *Annales* 1-2, Tacitus' discussion of imperial sovereignty differs considerably from that the extreme theorists of sovereignty. Crucially, imperial sovereignty is relational and depended on multi-directional communication. Subjects had an element of choice. The mutinous soldiers could have chosen not to recognise Germanicus' status. The Germans could have followed Segestes or Arminius. As Germanicus recognised the soldiers, Athenians and Alexandrians as part of the Roman political community, so those groups responded through recognition of his sovereignty. Consensus had to be performed. The political community had to be built. New cultural memories had to be given their monument or, in the East, existing cultural artefacts had to be assimilated into the imperial order. Sovereignty had to be constructed and accepted.

Tacitus takes us beyond the performance to the political choices that the rituals elided. The consequences of a failure to support the sovereign are amply illustrated. In the suppression of the mutinies, anarchy and violence replaced order. The threat of civil war brought troops to loyalty. Genocidal violence was visited upon the German *hostes*. The social benefits of collaboration are also visible. Segestes chose Rome and he and his family were rescued from the violence of Arminius. The soldiers found identity and community in the rituals of death. Athens found security in Germanicus' acknowledgement of a common belonging.

In *Annales* 1-2, sovereign power is transformational and quotidian.⁷² It depends on collaboration and the decision to collaborate depends on the individual's political calculation of the materiality of power (economic resources and violence). In the Tacitean account, imperial sovereignty emerged from the concentration of power on

⁷¹ Such a view is in some tension with minimalistic views of the impact of imperialism. See, for example, Woolf 2001; Ando 2000; Goldstone, Haldon 2009.

⁷² As argued by Bhatt 2017.

Augustus and his successors. It was, therefore, historically contingent. As we learn from Germanicus in the East, sovereign power had a beginning and it would have an end. Such contingency meant that sovereignty always had an element of fragility. There was a chance that the regime would fail, empire would fall and war engulf Rome. Consequently, sovereignty had to be repeatedly asserted and performed. It had to be made real. Imperial lines needed to be seen to be being drawn.

The first two books of the *Annales* explore that assertion of sovereign power through Germanicus. That narrative sets up the great ethical question of the *Annales*. If imperial sovereignty had an element of fragility and crucially depended on collaboration, it implicates citizens in the regime and its crimes. That is, of course, not merely an ethical issue for Roman times.

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