

# REMEMBERING JULIO-CLAUDIAN EMPERORS AS PATRONS OF LITERATURE

*Relembrando imperadores da dinastia júlio-claudiana como Patronos da Literatura*

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## ABSTRACT

The Julio-Claudian period, beginning with the reign of Tiberius, is one of the more neglected, and even actively disparaged periods in ancient literary history. It tends to be defined exclusively in terms of Latin literature, and not of Greek, and to be considered less as a period than simply as an unstructured stretch of time between the Augustan and Neronian periods. The metaphors most often applied to it run from the relatively generous “fallow period” to the more pejorative “wasteland.” This common perception is badly in need of reconsideration. In this article, I will discuss some of the misconceptions that on which low opinions of the period have been based. I will also show that the efforts of Tiberius in particular, when properly understood, take on a much more favorable appearance. In particular, I will consider his sponsorship of major institutional and administrative projects to support literary activities, his promotion of literary scholarship, his role in continuing the management and development of the Greek literary canon, and his even-handed treatment of Latin and Greek writers and orators. When these factors are properly evaluated, a different picture of Imperial literature will emerge; and the Julio-Claudian period begins to look foundational, rather than as a kind of literary dead zone

**Keywords:** History of the Roman Empire, Julio-Claudian Dynasty, Emperor Tiberius, Patronage.

## RESUMO

O período da dinastia júlio-claudiana, iniciado com o governo de Tibério, é um dos mais negligenciados e depreciados dos períodos relacionados à História da Literatura Antiga Clássica. Ele tende a ser caracterizado somente por uma literatura latina, e não por uma literatura grega. Dessa forma, não é valorizado como um período histórico estruturado entre o governo de Augusto e o de Nero. É visto como um período pobre em termos de produção literária. É necessário que esse tipo de posição seja revisado. Neste artigo, discutirei o quanto esta visão é equivocada, mostrando vários feitos de Tibério em prol da literatura greco-romana. Considerarei, em particular, seu patrocínio a grandes projetos institucionais e administrativos para apoiar atividades literárias, sua promoção de incentivos literários, seu papel na continuação da administração e desenvolvimento do cânone literário grego e seu tratamento imparcial a escritores e oradores latinos e gregos. Quando esses fatores são avaliados adequadamente, um quadro diferente da literatura imperial emerge; e o período júlio-claudiano começa a se tornar fundamental, e não tratado como um arco temporal não produtivo.

**Palavras-chave:** História do Império Romano, Dinastia júlio-claudiana, Imperador Tibério, patronagem.

Dossiê *Memórias e Mortes de Imperadores Romanos (I a.C. – VI d.C.)*

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**T**he Julio-Claudian period is one of the more neglected, and even actively disparaged periods in ancient literary history. It tends to be defined exclusively in terms of Latin literature, and not of Greek, and to be considered less as a period than simply as an unstructured stretch of time between the Augustan and Neronian periods. The metaphors most often applied to it run from the relatively generous “fallow period” to the more pejorative “wasteland.”<sup>1</sup> This common perception has its roots in ancient opinion. Suetonius’ chapter on Tiberius’ literary taste is an indispensable point of reference:

He was greatly devoted to liberal studies in both languages. In his Latin oratory he followed Messala Corvinus, to whom he had given attention in his youth, when Messala was an old man. But he so obscured his style by excessive mannerisms and pedantry, that he was thought to speak much better offhand than in a prepared address. He also composed a lyric poem, entitled “A Lament for the Death of Lucius Caesar,” and made Greek verses in imitation of Euphorion, Rhianus, and Parthenius, poets of whom he was very fond, placing their busts in the public libraries among those of the eminent writers of old; and on that account many learned men vied with one another in issuing commentaries on their works and dedicating them to the emperor. Yet his special aim was a knowledge of mythology, which he carried to a silly and laughable extreme; for he used to test even the grammarians, a class of men in whom, as I have said, he was especially interested, by questions something like this: “Who was Hecuba’s mother?” “What was the name of Achilles among the maidens?” “What were the Sirens in the habit of singing?” Moreover, on the first day that he entered the senate after the death of Augustus, to satisfy at once the demands of filial piety and religion, he offered sacrifice after the example of Minos with incense and wine, but without a fluteplayer, as Minos had done in ancient times on the death of his son. (SUETONIUS, *Lives of the Caesars*, III, 70).

The paragraph is a kind of masterpiece if understated invective, but most of it can be read, together with additional evidence from Suetonius and other sources, quite differently. That is what I shall try to do here.

My interest in studying Roman literary culture under Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius stems from my research into late antique scholarship on Vergil and its antecedents dating back to this time (FARRELL, 2008), (*Id.*, 2016). Scholarship has traditionally been considered not to be not a literary but paraliterary genre, but this prejudicial attitude has begun to change. Much as the entire Hellenistic period is has come to be better appreciated as a time when creative literature and various forms of scholarship were cultivated by the same patrons and often by the same authors, the entire Julio-Claudian period stands to benefit from a similar reassessment. We know for instance that Vergil attracted scholarly attention even during his own lifetime, which ended when Augustus’ regime was still fairly young. (I will return to that point below.) The volume of Vergilian scholarship obviously increased after the *Aeneid* was made public soon

after the poet's death and continued to grow during the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE, when other forms of literary scholarship were flourishing, as well.

A second point is how closely dependent this Latin scholarship is on Greek scholarship. On the one hand, of course, it only makes sense that this would be so. On the other, the fact that many passages in Servius' commentary on Vergil's canonical works read as if they were almost word-for-word translations of Greek scholarship that now survives in fragmentary form as marginal scholia in medieval manuscripts, is extremely suggestive.<sup>2</sup> The possibility that the later Greek scholia derive from a Latin source such as Servius is approximately zero. Therefore, when one considers the verbatim similarities sometimes found between Servius' note on a particular passage of, say, the *Aeneid*, then it is difficult not to believe that Servius' dependence on a Greek commentary on Homer resembles Vergil's intertextual relationship to Homer himself. Because Servius' commentary is known to depend on earlier Vergilian scholarship, including works known to have been produced in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, it seems very likely that this period was an important contact zone between Greek and Latin scholarship, particularly since the first and most influential commentaries on some of Vergil's Greek models, like Theocritus and Apollonius, were just being written at that time.<sup>3</sup> Thus, if one considers scholarship as an aspect of literary activity, Tiberius' interest in this area should not be dismissed, but investigated with an open mind.

Even if one does not count literary scholarship as a form of literature, however, the period in question is hardly the wasteland it is often considered. This is a puzzling belief, because even if we count only what is firmly datable and survives in some bulk, quite a lot was actually produced. In Latin, we have (in approximate chronological order) the *Histories* of Velleius Paterculus, the *Exempla* of Valerius Maximus, and Celsus' encyclopedia, all definitely or probably written under Tiberius, and the medical work of Scribonius Largus, the *Fables* of Phaedrus, Pomponius Mela's *Chorographia*, Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*, and about half the works of Seneca the Younger, all datable to the time of Claudius. With some probability, we can also place here a good part of the *Appendix Vergiliana* and the *Appendix Tibulliana*, as well as Q. Curtius Rufus' history of Alexander the Great to the Julio-Claudian period, as well. Other surviving works may belong to this period, and we know of others that are lost. In terms of quantity, then, the idea that this was a barren or fallow period is hard to understand.

A second obstacle, related to the first, is a tendency for imposing figures like Augustus and Nero to act, as if by gravitational force, to attract into "their" periods anything deemed interesting or apposite that was produced in adjacent years. They do this selectively, however, leaving out and even jettisoning works that do not strike literary historians as sufficiently Augustan or Neronian, whatever their actual date. For instance, Sallust wrote all his historical works and Varro his *De re rustica* just when Vergil was writing his *Eclogues* and Horace his *Satires*. As a group, these very different works all reflect the tense and uncertain Triumviral years much more clearly than they do the years before Philippi or after Actium. Nevertheless, Sallust and Varro are read as two of the last, fading voices of Republicanism, Vergil and Horace as harbingers

of a new era. This is understandable, but it is only one approach, and if others are not borne in mind, it can be very misleading. Conversely, of the works I've mentioned, only Horace's *Satires* were the work of someone associated with Maecenas. It was under Maecenas' influence that the masterpieces of the twenties were produced, and it is in this decade, above all, that our conception of an Augustan period is grounded. But Maecenas virtually disappears from view after 23, and Vergil as well as Tibullus die in 19.<sup>4</sup> After that time, the literary landscape looks very different. The only writer of the next generation whose work bears comparison to that of the earlier Augustans is Ovid; and if his work had perished — as he apparently feared would happen, after his relegation to Tomis, if they were removed from or denied access to imperial libraries — the later Augustan period would look every bit as fallow, or even more so, than the decades that followed.<sup>5</sup> In that case, Augustus himself, in contrast to Maecenas, would look no more effective as a patron of letters than (say) Tiberius, if not less so in certain important respects.<sup>6</sup>

There is another point: Ovid, in parts of the *Fasti* and in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, is our first indisputably Tiberian poet; but he is seldom really considered as such.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, Manilius, whose poetry is much less accessible than Ovid's, also wrote during the transitional period from Augustus to Tiberius, but Manilius is seldom considered an Augustan poet in the fullest sense (VOLK, 2009, p. 1-13). The same is true of Germanicus, who must have written his *Aratea* during Augustus' lifetime; nor are other indisputably contemporary authors, such as Grattius and Aemilius Macer, usually numbered among the Augustans. It is no accident that these poets worked in the didactic genre, and that they largely followed Nicander in putting quite technical subjects into verse, rather than emphasizing the more familiar subjects, as Vergil and Ovid had done. As a result, literary historians generally contrive to deal with their poetry, along with that of Manilius, as a branch of technical literature, as if it were categorically different from the major Augustan masterpieces and better aligned with the curious taste of a later and less sublime period.<sup>8</sup>

At the other end of the Julio-Claudian period, of course, we have the even more glaring example of Seneca, a name inseparably linked to that of Nero, even though Seneca produced a good half of his imposing oeuvre under Gaius and Claudius (MARSHALL, 2014). What is more, Seneca gives the impression that even before Nero there was a more active literary scene than we normally imagine. Columella evidently published his massive treatise on agriculture after Nero's accession, but he mentions Young Seneca as still living, and compliments him as a *vir excellentis ingenii et doctrinae*. He must have written this before Nero began to turn against his old counselor, and perhaps not very long after Claudius recalled Seneca from exile on Corsica in 49. We cannot be sure, so I did not include Columella in my estimate of surviving Julio-Claudian literature. At any rate, he seems to have had no connection at all to Nero's court, whenever he actually wrote.

So there is a clear tendency for some writers to be attracted from the Julio-Claudian period into either the Augustan or Neronian period, and for others who belong to those periods chronologically to be "transferred" to the Julio-Claudian writers as

representatives of “technical literature” or some other generic category, without clear reference to any particular period.

My third point is that both of these things happen with Greek authors, as well; and this can have very profound consequences. I believe this is the case with Nicetes of Smyrna, the man with whom Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, associates the beginning of the Second Sophistic. Philostratus places Nicetes in the time of Nero, and although he does not claim that there was a close association between them, he does state that Nero had a good opinion of Nicetes, whether he knew him personally or simply respected him as a man of learning. Philostratus tells a story about Nicetes’ dealings with a Roman official named Rufus, who was a minor official in Nicetes’ native Smyrna before attaining a more elevated position in Gaul (PHILOSTRATUS, *Lives of the Sophists*, 511). After his promotion, Rufus supposedly remembered a minor offense that Nicetes had once committed against him in Smyrna, and he wrote to Nero to file an official complaint. Philostratus, representing Nero as a stereotypically wise emperor, tells Rufus to summon the sophist to Gaul, hear his defense, and make his own decision about what should be done. The result, of course, is that Nicetes moves Rufus to forgiveness.

There is very little in this anecdote to tell us anything about Nicetes’ actual oratory, or really any specific connection between him and the emperor. As an origin story for a movement as vast and significant as the Second Sophistic, it strikes me, at least, as somewhat unimpressive and certainly not convincing. That is the spirit in which Philostratus offers it, however, and this was been felt by modern scholars to warrant some rather large inferences. For instance, Sigrid Mratschek writes in a recent companion volume to “the Neronian Age,” that “Nero paved the way, far in advance, for the second great transformation of the Roman world under the Principate, which culminated in the Second Sophistic and the humanitarian *imperium* of the second century.” “It is indicative,” she continues, “that Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists*, 511–512) attributed the renaissance of Sophistic thinking to Nicetes of Smyrna under Nero, and that his father, Philostratus the Elder, wrote a dialogue *Nero* under the Antonines” (ADLER, 1928-1938; MRATSCHEK, 2013; BOWERSOCK, 1969, p. 15–16 e 43–44).” All of this may be significant, and it may even make sense to regard Greek and Roman political and social life under Nero not only as anticipating, but as being very much informed by Second Sophistic habits and ideas; but I think it is a mistake, on the evidence of this anecdote, to find in Nero and his regime the original impetus that created those ideas and habits. That is certainly not the point of Philostratus’ anecdote, which tells us very little about Nicetes and his oratory, or about any specific connection between him and the emperor.

A much better story about the Second Sophistic involves an episode of ethnic strife that occurred in Alexandria under Gaius in 38 CE. It was inadvertently provoked when Gaius sent his friend, the Jewish prince Herod Agrippa, to Alexandria to check up on the prefect of Egypt, Aulus Avilius Flaccus. Native Egyptians, already at odds with the Jewish community in Alexandria, reacted badly to the unannounced arrival of a Jewish prince as the Emperor’s representative. Flaccus evidently encouraged their

resentment, thus stirring up what some consider the first pogrom in history (PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *The First Pogrom*). Eventually, two men of impeccable Hellenistic credentials, the Platonic philosopher Philo and the Greek grammarian Apion, both of Alexandria, were sent to Rome in 40 ce to represent the interests of their respective communities before Gaius, the Jews in Philo's case and the Egyptians in that of Apion. We do not have the texts of the actual speeches they made, nor does it seem that Gaius even allowed Philo to respond adequately to Apion's charges against the Jewish community. Luckily for them, Gaius died before he could take any action. But our accounts of this remarkable hearing raise many interesting questions.

For instance, what language did Philo and Apion speak? It was usual in official proceedings before governors in the provinces or before the Senate in Rome, to insist that Latin be used.<sup>9</sup> Philo was extremely accomplished in Greek, but specialists do not believe that he was fully competent in Hebrew. Would he have needed, as a leader of the Alexandrian Jewish community, to know the language of the imperial administration? We simply don't know. Apion, for his part, was a native Egyptian, not a Greek, and his mother tongue was evidently demotic; but his proficiency in Greek was such that he became famous as a *grammaticus*. He seems also to have been at least conversant with Latin. He wrote a treatise on the Latin language and he is credited as the source of an Aesopic tale set in the Circus Maximus.<sup>10</sup> Apion is also reported by the *Suda* to have taught in Rome under both Tiberius and Gaius (ADLER, 1928-1938).

As this sobriquet indicates, Apion's chief talent was for self-promotion. Young Seneca tells us (*Epist.* 88.40) that Apion undertook a lecture tour, on Homer, throughout all of Greece (*tota circumlatus est Graecia*), also under Gaius, and that in the process he got all the cities he visited to add the name of Homer to his own, presumably by honorific decree. Other testimonia agree with the general impression that Apion was an insufferable narcissist.<sup>11</sup> But he is hardly the only grammarian of whom this can be said. One of the better known, whose contributions to the *ars grammatica* are more important than Apion's, was a contemporary, the notorious Remmius Palaemon. According to Suetonius (*Grammarians*, 23), Palaemon was the most eminent Latin grammarian in Rome from the time of Tiberius into that of Claudius, both of whom nevertheless declared that there was no one less fit to be trusted with the education of the young. Suetonius stresses Palaemon's arrogance, specimens of which include his calling the great M. Terentius Varro a pig, and boasting that *litterae* — by which he presumably meant the profession of the *grammaticus* — was born with him and would likewise die with him. His third great outrage was to claim that Vergil's use of the name Palaemon for the judge of the singing contest in *Eclogue* 3, was in fact a prediction that he, Remmius Palaemon himself, would one day be the ultimate arbiter of poets and poetry. Here again I believe that we can detect Suetonius interpreting an anecdote *in malam partem*.

We happen to know that Asinius Saloninus boasted about being the miraculous child of *Eclogue* 4, which is addressed to his father, C. Asinius Pollio, consul of 40 BCE (VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, IV, 11). I have suggested elsewhere that Palaemon's remark

is actually the satirical rejoinder of an imperious critic, not the raving of a delusional madman (FARRELL, 2016, p. 410). If that is right, the fact that a freedman grammarian could speak so freely to an eminent senator tells us something about the social life of this period. The same impression arises from another anecdote, this one concerning M. Pomponius Marcellus, whom Suetonius calls *sermonis Latini exactor molestissimus* (SUETONIUS, *Grammarians*, 22; DIO CASSIUS, *Roman History*, LVII, 17, 1-3). In the story, Tiberius asks for comment on a decree that he has just made public. Marcellus begins the discussion by objecting to something in the decree as an offence against correct Latinity. At this, C. Ateius Capito, a senator and a respected jurist, excused Tiberius by saying that what he had said was in fact good Latin, or that if it wasn't, it would be regarded as such in future, presumably on the strength of Tiberius' having said it. But Marcellus persisted, declaring, "You have it in your power to grant citizenship to men, Caesar, but not to a word" – implying, of course, that such power rested with him, Marcellus.

One might have assumed that Tiberius was attempting to incite a contest in self-abasement and flattery, and Capito evidently understood him to be doing just this. Instead, the self-assertive Marcellus emerges as the hero of this tale, this agrees with Suetonius' general comment on Tiberius' fondness for professional *grammatici*. It is certainly true that men of this profession were not always held in the highest esteem in Roman society. Under Tiberius, it seems, it was possible to be something of a celebrity grammarian. Instead of attributing this interesting fact to Tiberius' eccentricity, I believe that the evidence suggests a more charitable and more plausible interpretation.

It is true that Tiberius seems to have enjoyed the company of pedants and that is reputed to have been a stickler about proper usage himself. His kibbitzing with M. Pomponius Marcellus agrees with this reputation as does his apparent readiness to defer to such men. In Cassius Dio's version of the anecdote concerning linguistic citizenship, it is actually Tiberius who consults Marcellus, unfortunately after he has issued an edict (not a speech), as to whether he had committed a fault against usage. If he expected the kind of automatic flattery that Suetonius' version puts in the mouth of the fawning Ateius Capito, then he was disappointed; but there is no reason to think that he was. Certainly neither Suetonius nor Dio tells the story in a way that suggests that Tiberius was displeased with Marcellus' high-handed defense of his expertise.

Similarly, it is notable that we have two pronouncements by Tiberius on two eminent grammarians, one Roman and one Greek, to the effect that one should not be entrusted with the education of the young, and that the other filled the world with the sound of his own self-praise. What strikes me most about these *dicta* is the disparity between the apparent disapproval that they convey and the apparent absence of any real *animus* on the part of Tiberius, or of unhappy consequences for the grammarians involved. One is forced to conclude that this dour and eventually paranoid *princeps* cultivated an atmosphere of *libertas* at least in this one area, at least as regards the opinion of experts, whatever their birth or social status, because it was an area that interested him, as well. Notably, his interest did not extend to really active involvement; but he does seem to have tolerated, and perhaps even promoted the position of

grammarians and other paraliterary men, even if his promotion of poetry and literary prose is not so much in evidence.

Instead of *belles-lettres*, I infer, Tiberius focused on literary institutions, as George Houston very clearly shows in his important paper, “Tiberius and the Libraries” (HOUSTON, 2008). For instance, towards the end of his life, Tiberius established the first new library in Rome since the *porticus Octavia* library some fifty years before. Tiberius did not live to dedicate it, but he did plan it, and on a grand scale. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, XXXIV, 43) attests that the library was dominated by a bronze statue of Apollo some fifty feet high, not counting its base; and Houston calculates from this figure that the library must have been equal in height to the two largest Roman libraries that we know, the library of Celsus in Ephesus and that of Trajan in Rome, both of them much later than Tiberius’ library. We also know that Tiberius brought the colossal statue of Apollo from Syracuse to Rome expressly for installation in the library (SUETONIUS, *Lives of the Caesars*, III, 74). The mere transportation of such an object would have been an event. So, we have to infer that Tiberius intended this library to make a special impression.

The next point is that Tiberius decisively advanced the process of regularizing the administration of imperial libraries. Under Augustus, as Houston argues, the three existing libraries — on the Palatine, in the Porticus Octavia, and in the *atrium libertatis* — had no functional relationship to one another that we can identify. They were not coordinated in terms of holdings, organization, personnel, or any other administrative aspect. They were also staffed by skilled, but probably non-specialist slaves and freedmen from the *familia Caesaris*. It was Tiberius who appointed the first commissioner of libraries, a freeborn citizen of Greek heritage named Tiberius Iulius Pappus. This Pappus is the son of one Zoilus, who is probably C. Iulius Zoilus, a freedman from Aphrodisias who became an agent of the future Augustus in about 40 BCE. Pappus’ burial inscription styles him as a *comes* of Tiberius, which Houston explains not as indicating a formal rank, as would be the case in later times, but rather, less formally, as a member of his retinue. This would make him somewhat comparable to the better known Thrasyllus of Mendes, himself a *grammaticus* and also an astrologer who was Tiberius’ companion from the time of his self-imposed exile on Rhodes. Our sources do not suggest that Pappus was so imposing a figure as Thrasyllus, but Houston makes a good case that his relationship to Tiberius was broadly similar. In any case, Tiberius entrusted Pappus with an unprecedented post as supervisor of all imperial libraries. This was not yet the even more distinguished equestrian administrative post of *procurator bibliothecarum*, which would not come into being until the Flavian period, but it was a crucial forerunner of that position. As such, it marks a stage in the development of Roman libraries from extensions of the *domus Augusta* to a branch of the imperial administration, and it presumably attests the growing importance of this area in Tiberius’ opinion.

A third point that Houston makes concerns Suetonius’ report that Tiberius caused the works of Parthenius of Nicea, Euphorion of Calchis, and Rhianus of Crete, along with their portrait busts, to be placed in *publicis bibliothecis inter veteres et praecipuos auctores*



(SUETONIUS, *Lives of the Caesars*, III, 70). Suetonius, as I noted at the beginning of this paper, explains this decision in terms of Tiberius' personal enthusiasm for these authors, whom the princeps himself imitated in Greek. Many modern interpreters have taken this as evidence that Tiberius' taste in poetry was merely eccentric and his library policy willful, as if this act were comparable to Gaius' making his horse consul. Houston takes a more sensible approach by evaluating the stature of Rhianus, Euphorion, and Parthenius in the eyes of ancient authorities. In his opinion, it is surprising that works by these poets were not already found in imperial libraries, and he draws the further inference that official holdings in Greek literature may have included some surprising gaps, certainly before Tiberius' inclusion of Parthenius, Euphorion, and Rhianus, and perhaps after that, as well. If Houston is right, then Tiberius' accessioning of the works of these writers begins to look quite different from an indulgence of personal eccentricity.

The first point I would make here is that we are evidently talking about an act of canonization. Just as Horace declared that he would realize his life's ambition if Maecenas shelved his *Odes* together with the lyric poets of Greece, and as Ovid feared that he would not be counted by posterity among the canonical poets of Latin literature if Augustus had his works removed from the Palatine and other libraries, so to the act of depositing Parthenius, Nicander, and Rhianus is an act of canonization. Remarkably, it involves the canonization of three Greek poets by the Roman emperor in Rome. Whether these poets now found their way into all four libraries in Rome, which Tiberius had for the first time placed under a single administrator, or indeed, whether Tiberius caused them to be deposited in imperially-sponsored libraries throughout the empire, is an interesting, but open question. We simply don't know much about this sort of thing. When Aulus Gellius discovered a copy of Livius Andronicus' *Odyssey* in the library of Patrae, was he happening upon an extraordinary find, or does the presence of such an obscure Latin text in a Greek city tell us something about policies that date back to the time of Augustus, who refounded Patrae as a colony after his victory at Actium? (GELLIUS, *Attic Nights*, XVIII, 9; HOLFORD-STREVEN, 2003, p. 169).

Using what we know at present, these questions can't be answered. But if we ask, when was any author formally added to the Greek canon in Rome by an act of the Roman imperial administration, I think we can safely say, never before this occasion. To be sure, the literary canon was a contested and evolving thing, and despite the existence of the Alexandrian Museum with its library and its scholarly staff, the Greek canon had never been entirely fixed (FARRELL, 2012). That said, it appears that it had not changed much since the Romans began taking control of the Hellenistic world, and in the late Republican and Augustan periods, an impressive number of Greek intellectuals spent as much or more time in Rome as they did in Alexandria or anywhere else. We can now say that the reputation even of classical authors like Demosthenes was considerably enhanced by the interest taken in them specifically at Rome, and by Roman intellectuals as well as Greek (JONGE, 2008; HUNTER; JONGE, 2018). If one bears this in mind, then Tiberius' act of canonization looks like a logical and, as it were, *de iure* extension of a process that had been underway, *de facto*, for some considerable time.

Further, this inference is corroborated if we consider the particular authors whom Tiberius chose to canonize. Rhianus was a friend and contemporary of Eratosthenes, who lived from 275-95 BCE (ADLER, 1928-1938). This makes him about one generation younger than Aratus, Apollonius, and Callimachus, a bit younger still than Theocritus, and quite a bit younger than poets like Philotas or Hermesianax. Euphorion also seems to belong to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (ADLER, 1928-1938). Parthenius, of course, is securely placed in the first century BCE, and is even said to have lived long enough to witness Tiberius' ascent to the Principate in 14 CE.<sup>12</sup> So, we are talking about three Greek poets who lived and worked after the time of the great Hellenistic masters. There is no evidence that anyone in Alexandria was moved to insert these poets into the canon. With one of the later Hellenistic poets, Nicander, the situation is a bit different, and perhaps instructive.

Quintilian mentions Nicander in his account of the Greek canon, and he justifies doing so by noting that his works were imitated by Macer and by Vergil (*lo* 10.1.56). That is not Quintilian's usual way: his opinions on the Greek canon are notably tralatitician, and they generally reflect the opinions of Greek critics, not the practice of Roman poets. We do have scholia on Nicander, and these cite the aforementioned scholar Theon of Alexandria, a contemporary of Dionysius of Halicarnassus who wrote commentaries on Theocritus, Apollonius, and others, evidently including Nicander. I cannot go into the implications of this here except to say that there clearly was interest in Nicander in Rome as well as Alexandria at the time of Augustus, and that Tiberius' canonization of this poet looks like a recognition of this fact.

Finally, we know that Parthenius was a prolific writer, and we have clear evidence that he was particularly influential on Roman poets, possibly from the time of Cinna and Catullus, and certainly from that of Gallus and Vergil (CAMERON, 1995, p. 194-206). It would not be absurd to say that his influence on Latin literature was greater than on Greek. In this light, there is no reason to suppose that Tiberius' good opinion of him was a mere eccentricity. Rather, it can be seen as expressing a perspective on literature that privileges the asymmetrical, but mutual relationship between the Greek and Roman classics. Moreover, it is a perspective that does not relegate the Greeks to the distant position of an older or formerly classical language and present the Romans only as their recent successors. Rather, by continuing to extend the Greek canon to include fairly recent authors, Tiberius' effort can be seen as insisting on the continued vitality of Greek literature. Further, by depositing these works in a Roman library, he certainly seems to be asserting imperial custody over the Greek canon as well as the Roman. More than that, in the case of Nicander and especially Parthenius, he may be acting on the assumption that interaction between Greek and Roman authors is an important criterion for adjudicating access to the canon.

There is a lot more that can be said but it must await another occasion. To sum up, I have focused on just a few aspects of literary patronage that contradict some of the ways in which the Julio-Claudian emperors, and Tiberius in particular, were remembered from this point of view in antiquity in ways that have been influential on modern literary historians. These include both a recognition of the sheer amount of

literature that was produced under Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius, a willingness to acknowledge that Greek and Latin literature were more intimately connected with each other than previous literary historians have done, a readiness to expand the definition of literature, and an appreciation of imperial patronage directed towards institutional and administrative support for literature rather than on the cultivation of individual writers. In general, I have focused on what appear to be sharp differences between this period and those that preceded and followed it. One could add nuance to this general picture by exploring elements that make the development of literary culture from the regime of Augustus through that of his first three successors and down to the time of Nero look more continuous than they commonly do, or are represented as being. That, however, as I have said, must await another occasion.

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## Notas

<sup>1</sup> Typical is Gian Biagio Conte (1994, p. 411): “The crisis in patronage is already manifest with Tiberius, who does not even appear to address the problem of organizing a program of cultural hegemony (his own taste for light Alexandrian poetry is indicative of this indifference).” He continues, “The situation does not seem to have improved much with Claudius, although personally he had an excellent reputation as a man of learning and wrote many works in both Latin and Greek,” a sentence that may be compared with Suetonius (*Lives of the Caesars*, V, 41–42).

<sup>2</sup> The point is made by Eduard Fraenkel (1949, p. 153); cf. Gino Funaioli (1930, p. 234).

<sup>3</sup> Theon of Alexandria, a scholar produced commentaries on both authors. Whether there was an early commentary on Theocritus is not clear. See Claudio Meliaddò (2019).

<sup>4</sup> On Maecenas see Gordon Williams (1990), Peter White (1991), and Phoebe Lowell Bowditch (2010, p. 71–72) with further references.

<sup>5</sup> Ovid dramatizes the exclusion of his books from Augustan libraries in *Tristia*, III, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Horace’s *Epistle to Augustus* seems to betray a certain anxiety as to the position of literature under Augustus’ patronage in the teens, particularly in its comments on Alexander the Great as a very indifferent patron of literature in contrast to the visual arts.

<sup>7</sup> Exceptions include Ronald Syme (1978), R. Elaine Fantham (1985), Peter Knox (2004), Sanjaya Thakur (2008).

<sup>8</sup> Again, Conte (1994, p. 426–39) is typical.

<sup>9</sup> Suetonius notes that Tiberius, despite his own fondness for Greek and proficiency in the language insisted that Latin be used for certain official purposes (SUETONIUS, *Lives of the Caesars*, III, 71).

<sup>10</sup> περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς διαλέκτου (ATHENAEUS, *The Deipnosophists*, XV, 680d); (GELLIUS, *Attic Nights*, I, 14).

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion of Cynthia Damon (2008).

<sup>12</sup> On Parthenius see (PARTHENIUS OF NICAIA, 1999).

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