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S. J. V. MALLOCH

Frontinus and Domitian: the politics of the Strategemata

I

In Rome of the late first century A.D. few aristocrats could compete with the preeminence of Sextus Iulius Frontinus. A career that boasted a consulship (72 or 73) and governorship of Britain under Vespasian (73/4–77), a legateship of the Lower German army (81–83/4) and proconsulship of Asia under Domitian (c. 84–5), and oversight of the water supply under Nerva (from 97) rose to the awesome heights of second and third consulships with Trajan in a crucial period of transition, the second as *suffectus* in 98, the third as *ordinarius* in 100.¹ Frontinus' near-consecutive consulships were unheard of outside the imperial family,² and a third consulship elevated him to a status approaching that of the *princeps* himself.³ The distinction does not merely illustrate his support of the post-Domitianic dispensation: it illustrates his immense political importance to Trajan at the time of his succession.⁴ Contemporaries too observed Frontinus' eminence. The younger Pliny is praising Frontinus' political eminence when he calls him a *princeps uir* and claims that *ciuitas nostra* considered him *spectatissimus* (Epist. 4. 8. 3; 5. 1. 5). Tacitus too had Frontinus' qualities as a statesman

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¹ See BIRLEY 2005, 68–71; for a fuller exposition see ECK 1989, 47–62. For the legateship of the lower German army see ECK – PANGERL 2003, 210, and also below. For Frontinus' tenure as *curator aquarum*, to 100 or to his death, see also RODGERS 2004, 5–8.

² The consecutive consulships held by Marcus Agrippa II in 28 and III in 27 can be interpreted as rewards for the crucial victories he secured for Octavian: so ECK 2002, 219 n. 27. The precedent of Agrippa is suggestive of how Trajan's reward of consulships to Frontinus could be interpreted, but Agrippa's privileged position and marriage into the imperial family place him in a different category to Frontinus.

³ Cf. Plin. Epist. 2. 1. 2 (sc. Verginius Rufus) *perfunctus est tertio consulatu, ut summum fastigium priuati hominis impleret, cum principis noluisset*; Pan. 60. 4–5 (at 61. 2–6, however, Pliny takes care to assert Trajan's supremacy; cf. below on Aelian). Eight senators achieved three consulships between 27 B.C. and A.D. 100: ECK 1989, 60.

⁴ See below on Frontinus' role in the succession of Trajan.

in mind when he judged him to be as great a man as the times allowed (Agr. 17. 2 *uir magnus quantum licebat*). Frontinus also received accolades as a military man. Tacitus' judgment comes amid praise of Frontinus' governorship of Britain, a military command. Aelian was inspired to pursue his studies of Greek tactical science after discussing the subject at Formiae with «the distinguished consular» Frontinus, «a man of great reputation by virtue of his experience in war» (Tact. Praef. 3);⁵ Frontinus stands out here as an authoritative source (cf. 1. 2), and as a source of authority for Aelian's own theoretical enterprise. Later, Vegetius singles Frontinus out from the *complures* who wrote on military science after Cato and observed that his *industria* had won Trajan's approval (2. 3. 7 *diuo Traiano ab eiusmodi comprobatus industria*; cf. 1. 8. 1). The codification of Frontinus' military experience and knowledge in works such as the *Strategemata*, written under Domitian, contributed to his exceptional standing among contemporaries and posterity. This should not surprise: these works were part of Frontinus' public *persona*, and the offices and commands that he held provide one context for understanding why he wrote what he did. What, in turn, do these writings contribute to our understanding of Frontinus' public *persona*? How and where does his *Strategemata*, the lone survivor of his military treatises, position him politically during the principate of Domitian? Did Frontinus later react against Domitian after his death, in the manner of a Martial, a Tacitus, or a Pliny?

Scholars seem to sidestep these questions when they describe the *Strategemata* as «simply antiquarian».⁶ R. H. RODGERS claims in the introduction to his edition of the *De Aquaeductu* that the *Strategemata* «reveals their author's antiquarian bent; like his grammatical writings, they were «safely apolitical»».⁷ Such descriptions in fact imply a political position: Frontinus played it safe. The assumption is that writing on military strategy under Domitian was a dangerous business, and there is a hint too that Frontinus might have painted Domitian in darker colours, had he been free to do so. Recently the *Strategemata* has been politicised along these lines in an attempt to recruit Frontinus into the ranks of those Silver Latin authors who are held to be «subversive» of Domitian. There is a whiff of the old school of interpretation in the remark of A. TURNER that Frontinus included *exempla* about Domitian «simply because of their practicality», but more radically he claims that Frontinus' praise of Domitian's generalship «does not mean that Frontinus did not intend criticism of that *princeps* to be understood at some level», particularly in his silence about imperial generals, «the

⁵ Aelian is careful to establish the all-time primacy in military distinction of the emperor to whom he dedicated the work (praef. 4), Trajan (DEVINE 1989, 31) or possibly Hadrian (MATTHEW 2012, 134–37). Translations of Aelian are DEVINE's.

⁶ So HANSON 2007, 3. The *Strategemata* is considered strictly in terms of its usefulness on military matters by GILLIVER 2007, 124–25.

⁷ RODGERS 2004, 3. In the reference that RODGERS supplies, SYME 1958, 68, does not use the expression «safely apolitical», but wrote that the *Strategemata* were «for the most part, literary and antiquated».

only way in which a writer like Frontinus could convey the jealousy and despotic nature» of Domitian.⁸ This interest in Frontinus' presentation of Domitian and imperial figures is appropriate, but the inferences, drawn tendentiously, are unsound.

Frontinus' inclusion in the *Strategemata* of a select number of *exempla* dating to the principate is a significant methodological manoeuvre that bestows implicit praise on Domitian, the emperor who attracts the most *exempla*, and his presentation of Domitian in those *exempla* is complimentary, often explicitly so. Frontinus also associates himself with exemplary status by narrating an *exemplum* in which he appears under the command of Domitian, and his positive connection with Domitian suggests how the emperor's other appearances in the *Strategemata* should be read. Frontinus' praise of and identification with Domitian in a text written during his principate advertised a sympathetic, active involvement with the regime. An important question follows: how problematic for Frontinus was his support of Domitian after 96? Frontinus' presentation of Domitian in the *De Aquaeductu* demonstrates that he did not fall in with the loud reaction against him by contemporaries such as the younger Pliny. Pliny gives the impression, not altogether unbiased, that Frontinus was not inclined to agonise about the past. This was more than a matter of personality. Frontinus was too powerful a figure on the political scene to need to excuse his conduct under Domitian.

II

The literature of stratagems in Greece and Rome arose from a variety of influences, in Greece from the warfare that permeated Homer and Herodotus, in Rome from Greek precedents and from *laudationes funebres* of great men. A distinct genre of military literature had developed in the Greek world by the fourth century B.C. with the aim of instructing through example.⁹ Stratagems could be collected for use in rhetorical schools or deployed within texts on war (e.g. Aeneas Tacticus' *Strategika*; Pyrrhus' *Tactica*) or form works in themselves, such as Frontinus'.¹⁰ While the *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri IX* of the Tiberian Valerius Maximus is the earliest extant collection of *exempla*, which contains one chapter of stratagems,¹¹ Frontinus' *Strategemata* is the first extant independent collection of stratagems, even if it is a supplement to a work, now lost, on the *rei militaris scientia*.¹² According to E. WHEELER,

⁸ TURNER 2007, 443, 445.

⁹ WHEELER 2010, 19–22.

¹⁰ For Pyrrhus' *Tactica*, which contains *strategemata*, cf. Front. Strat. 2.6.10; WHEELER 1988, 14 n.40; 2010, 21.

¹¹ 7. 4. Relevant material also occurs at 7. 2; 7. 3; 9. 6. See WHEELER 1988, 14–17; 2010, 22.

¹² Strat. 1. praef. 1: *cum ad instruendam rei militaris scientiam unus ex numero studiosorum eius accesserim, eique destinato quantum cura nostra ualuit satisfacisse uisus sim, debere adhuc institutae arbitror operae ut sollertia ducum facta*. See WHEELER 1988, 19; 2010, 21. References in other authors to Frontinus may be to the lost work on military science and the *Strategemata*: Aelian

Frontinus comes at the beginning of a «golden age» for collections of stratagems (in terms of known and surviving works) that ends with Polyaeus, and thereafter the genre disappears until the Byzantine period.¹³

Frontinus marshals 583 *exempla* illustrating *sollertia ducum facta*, ie. *strategemata*, to inspire *duces* to devise and execute similar deeds.¹⁴ He emphasises the practical value of his work by claiming in the preface that it was arranged thoughtfully and could be consulted quickly.¹⁵ Structure reflected utility. The first three books treated *strategemata*: strategy before the battle, strategy during and after the battle, and strategy for sieges; a fourth book collected *exempla* under the broader concept of *strategika*.¹⁶ An index in the preface of each book lists the *species* that constitute the strategy under consideration, and *exempla* are arranged under each *species* according to the name of the general (or peoples) responsible for the *exemplum*: e.g. Strat. 1. 2 *de explorandis consiliis hostium*: 1. 2. 1 *Scipio Africanus* ..., 1. 2. 2 *Q. Fabius Maximus bello Etrusco* ..., 1. 2. 3 *Carthaginenses* ..., etc. The pragmatism of Frontinus' approach is thrown into relief by the structure adopted by Polyaeus in his *Strategika*, which he wrote in the context of the Parthian war of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161–66).¹⁷ The *Strategika* is more broadly conceived than the *Strategemata*, more overtly literary in its pretensions, and structured differently.¹⁸ Polyaeus presented his text as a «guidebook of military knowledge» that offered its dedicatees a «collection of past experiences» and their generals in the field a practical, inspirational handbook of stratagems (1. praef. 2, cf. 5.

(above); Vegetius 1. 8. 11 (*perstringenda* may point to the *Strategemata*), 2. 3. 7. But cf. MEISSNER 1999, 79 n. 202, 96–97; RODGERS 2004, 3 n.16 (Aelian and Vegetius refer to the lost work).

¹³ WHEELER 2010, 19.

¹⁴ Strat. 1. praef. 1 *ita enim consilii quoque et providentiae exemplis succincti duces erunt, unde illis excogitandi generandique similia facultas nutriatur; praeterea continget ne de euentu trepidet inuentionis suae, qui probatis eam experimentis comparabit*. The *sollertia ducum facta* are not meant to be unthinkingly imitated but used by readers to nourish their creation of similar strategies for their particular context: how to think about strategy as much as what to think. Thus also, with reference to Valerius Maximus, LANGLANDS 2008, 160; 2011, 122.

¹⁵ Strat. 1. praef. 2: *illud neque ignoro neque infitior, et rerum gestarum scriptores indagine operis sui hanc quoque partem esse complexos, et ab auctoribus exemplorum quidquid insigne aliquo modo fuit, traditum; sed ut opinor occupatis uelocitate consuli debet. longum est enim singula et sparsa per immensum corpus historiarum persequi, et hi, qui notabilia excerpserunt, ipso uelut aceruo rerum confuderunt legentem. nostra sedulitas impendit operam ut, quemadmodum res poscet, ipsum quod exigitur quasi ad interrogatum exhibeat. circumspectis enim generibus praeparaui opportuna exemplorum ueluti consilia*.

¹⁶ The work concludes with yet more *strategemata* (4. 7). For Frontinus' distinction in terminology see WHEELER 1988, ch. 1; 2010, 33–4. The authenticity of book 4 has not seriously been challenged since the first half of last century: see CONNOR 1921, appendix; and in particular BENDZ 1938.

¹⁷ For the date of composition see WHEELER 2010, 9–10.

¹⁸ For such differences see WHEELER 2010, 36. For structure as suggestive of Polyaeus' literary and other interests see WHEELER 2010, 31; PRETZLER 2010, 89–90.

praeef.),¹⁹ which cover «acts that show generalship against public and private enemies» in war and in peace (1. praeef. 13, 3. praeef., 8. praeef.).²⁰ Polyaeus arranged the 900 stratagems into 8 books according to theme, ethnography, and geography (e.g. book 7: barbarians), and within each book *exempla* are arranged according to individuals or groups of people.²¹ This different approach to structuring his text was perhaps influenced partly by a desire to avoid competing with Frontinus' *Strategemata*, which Polyaeus seems to have sought to complement rather than to replace,²² and partly by a politicised interest in biography and ethnography (book 4 celebrates Polyaeus' ancestors, the Macedonians). The result was «literary and readable»²³ – and demonstrates that the layout of Frontinus' text was better suited for use as a practical guide.

Assertions of practicality are a defining feature of a didactic genre that flourished in many branches in a culture where *exempla* were learnt actively from eminent elders (cf. Tac. Dial. 34. 1; Plin. Epist. 8. 14. 4–5) and through reading texts (cf. Quint. 12. 2. 29–30).²⁴ Frontinus himself observes this distinction in the preface to the *De Aquaeductu* (cf. too Colum. 1. 1. 3–4). He states that he wrote the work to educate himself on the duties of an unfamiliar office and that he considered it disgraceful for a *tolerabilis* but inexperienced office-holder to learn the ropes from the practical experience of his *adiutores*, as was often the case with inexperienced men (Aq. 2). Unsurprisingly Frontinus comes down on the side of learning from theory. Similarly he had written the *Strategemata* to instruct future *duces*, but that text was the literary expression of his own practical experience. Dismissing the sincerity of Frontinus' motivation or the claims of utility in didactic literature as *merely* literary *topoi* is hypercritical and ahistorical. Military literature had its place, particularly in a society that had no formal structures for teaching strategy to budding generals.²⁵ When Cicero boasts that the outstanding commanders of the first century B.C. learnt their art in war rather than in books, he admits that warcraft could be studied in books,²⁶ and as governor of Cilicia he knew that the advice about tactics that he received from L. Papinius Paetus derived from military manuals.²⁷ When Petilius Cerialis ravaged the island of the Batavi in 70 but spared the property of their leader Iulius Civilis he proceeded *nota arte ducum*

¹⁹ The preface to book 8 expands the audience: «the emperors, the Roman empire, and the Greeks». Polyaeus' didactic aims are taken seriously by WHEELER 2010, 30, but are subordinated to his interest in the «shape of the past» by PRETZLER 2010, 89–90.

²⁰ For the idea of «strategem» in Polyaeus see WHEELER 2010, 34.

²¹ Cf. PRETZLER 2010, 89.

²² WHEELER 2010, 30–1.

²³ WHEELER 2010, 31.

²⁴ See e.g. CAMPBELL 1987, esp. 18–20.

²⁵ CAMPBELL 1987, 22.

²⁶ Font. 43 *non litteris homines ad rei militaris scientiam, sed rebus gestis ac uictoriis eruditos*; cf. Sall. Iug. 85. 13.

²⁷ Cicero shows familiarity with Pyrrhus' *Tactica*, Cineas' epitome of Aeneas, and the *Cyropedia* in a playful opening about tactics (Ad Fam. 9. 25. 1 = SB 114). WHEELER 1998, 13; 2010, 29, suggests that Cicero read these works to prepare for his command.

(Hist. 5. 23. 3); Polyaeus has Dionysius I deploy the same stratagem, but observed that other generals used it too (Strategika 5. 2. 18). How did these generals know of the stratagem, and how did Tacitus and Polyaeus know that it was one? Military treatises probably played a role, in addition to the works of history that authors such as Frontinus state they used (Strat. praef).²⁸ Of course Frontinus could not delimit his audience, and the specialised subject matter and accessible arrangement of such texts would have offered rich pickings for bookish historians like Ammianus and for lawyers and orators seeking illustrative material.²⁹ When the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* deferred treatment of the subject of proposing a *dolus* during a state crisis to a separate work on *res militaris aut administratio rei publicae* he revealed at once the relevance of the subject to orators and the appropriateness of discussing the subject in a *military* text.³⁰ Frontinus' *Strategemata* was not a rhetorical handbook.

The *Strategemata* consists of *exempla* dating predominantly from the Greek and Hellenistic and Roman Republican past: 567 out of a total of 583. The emphasis on ancient *exempla* was partly shaped by Frontinus' source material: many of the *exempla* were already available in the works of writers such as Valerius Maximus (cf. Strat. praef.). But Frontinus' preference was also an expression of the esteem in which ancient *exempla* were held in the literary and rhetorical culture of Rome. Cicero asserted the power of ancient *exempla*, and on at least one occasion their superior authority to recent *exempla* (Part. 96). Quintilian too extolled past *exempla* (12. 2. 29–31). The concern of Tacitus (Ann. 3. 55. 5) and the younger Pliny (Epist. 6. 21. 1, cf. 5. 17. 6) to champion the value of recent *exempla* is suggestive of contemporary preference for past models of conduct,³¹ and this preference, as J. BURCKHARDT observed,

²⁸ The stratagem occurs in relation to Pericles at Thuc. 2. 13. 1 and Fabius Maximus at Liv. 22. 23. 4 (*una fraude ac dolo Hannibalis*). Polybius stated that the art of generalship could be learnt through reading history (11. 8. 1), as did Fronto (p. 128, 3–4) in the second century A.D.

²⁹ Valerius Maximus aimed his collection vaguely at those looking for *exempla* to follow (1. praef.: *ut documenta sumere uolentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit*), and his fourth-century epitomator Iulius Paris expected to number busy professionals among his own readers (praef.: *exemplorum conquisitionem cum scirem esse non minus disputantibus quam declamantibus necessariam*). On Valerius' audience see WARDLE 1998, 12. For Ammianus cf. MOMIGLIANO 2012, 135.

³⁰ Rhet. 3. 3 *dolus consumitur in pecunia, pollicitatione, dissimulatione, maturatione, mentione, et ceteris rebus de quibus magis idoneo tempore loquimur si quando de re militari aut de administratione rei publicae scribere uelimus*. Cf. WHEELER 2010, 21. For *dolus* as a synonym for stratagem see WHEELER 1989, 58–63.

³¹ Livy also regarded the recent past as offering compelling *exempla* (e.g. 9. 34. 14): see CHAPLIN 2000, 120–36. For Tac. Ann. 3. 55. 5 see WOODMAN – MARTIN 1996, ad loc. Tacitus devalues a rhetorical recourse to antiquity in other ways. At 11. 23–24, opponents of the admission of the *primores Galliae* to the Roman senate in 48 claim the Gallic sack of 390 as a more effective warning sign than recent history, but it comes across as bad taste in a weak speech preoccupied with a jaundiced view of the past; Tacitus has Claudius in turn disdain delving deeply into the distant past (see MALLOCH 2013, on 11. 23. 4; 11. 24. 2). At 15. 43. 5 the preference for the layout and architecture of old Rome that Tacitus attributes to contemporary critics of Nero's building pro-

was a feature of the literary culture of the Roman empire extending into later antiquity.³²

Polyaenus' selection of material confirms this trend in the same genre as Frontinus' *Strategemata* and from a Greek point of view. Polyaenus' *exempla* ranged widely in chronological terms, from mythical figures such as Dionysus, Pan, and Hercules (1. 1; 1. 2; 1. 3), down through Greeks, Macedonians, and barbarians to the Romans as late as Octavian (8. 24: all 43 B.C.?) – and no further. In the preface to book 6 Polyaenus claims that he will record the «many good stratagems» that demonstrate the «excellence» of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in their victorious campaign in the east, but he does not seem to have fulfilled his vow and certainly none occurs in the surviving text. Polyaenus' decision to exclude imperial *exempla* that were available in Frontinus and subsequently at least for Trajan and give scant attention to Rome (in book 8) has reasonably been read within the context of the preference of authors in the second Sophistic for the Greek classical past, when Greece's achievement rivalled Rome's, over contemporary history and themes that only reminded the Greeks of their lost autonomy.³³ If readers of Polyaenus perceived a gap in his selection of material, they presumably thought it normal, if not appropriate.³⁴

III

The absence of imperial *exempla* in the *Strategemata* would not have concerned readers in a culture that habitually looked to precedents from the Roman republican past and beyond. But Frontinus *does* include *exempla* dating to the principate: one concerns Tiberius (as *priuatus*), three the Varian disaster of A.D. 9, five Cn. Domitius Corbulo, two Vespasian, and five Domitian (one of which features Frontinus himself). If the abundance of *exempla* from earlier periods of history posed the question, «what to leave out?», the recent past posed different challenges: «should I include imperial *exempla*? If so, which ones?». This was not a question of updating the genre.³⁵ Frontinus' inclusion of imperial *exempla* enhanced the continuity between warfare past and

gramme after the fire of 64 is not decisive: Nero's efforts have just been praised by Tacitus in his own voice. The younger Pliny can remark on the absence of contemporary excellence, when it suited him to do so (Epist. 3. 21. 3); conversely, contemporaries can be exalted as exemplars because they compared well with figures from the past: see WHITTON 2013, 9.

³² BURCKHARDT 1853, 285: «Ein viel stärkeres, obschon stillschweigendes Zeugniß liegt darin, daß alle Philosophen und Rhetoren – und auch die Dichter wenn sie nicht betteln gehen – daß also die ganze freie Literatur des zweiten, dritten und vierten Jahrhunderts ohne Noth von keinem Menschen und keinem Gegenstande spricht, der über das Ende der römischen Republik herabreicht». For the Roman preoccupation with the republican past see GOWING 2005, 158; GALLIA 2012.

³³ BOWIE 1974, esp. 183, 208–09; WHEELER 2010, 23.

³⁴ Cf. BOWIE 1974, 189: «the omission presumes acquiescence on the part of writer and reader in so glaring a lacuna». «Glaring» perhaps more to us than to the ancients.

³⁵ Pace WHEELER 2010, 22, 42.

present that underpinned the purported practical value of the *Strategemata* going into the future.³⁶ His selection of imperial *exempla* was also important. The scarcity of these *exempla* drew attention to their subjects amid a crowd of past heroes, and this context enhanced their subjects' status as *uiri militares* through association.³⁷ Frontinus' commemoration of Domitian singles him out as representative of contemporary military excellence, and some of the more recent non-Domitianic *exempla* provide him with distinguished precedents that reflect well on him. Frontinus' compositional decisions aided Domitian's quest for recognition as a general.

Those *exempla* dating from the early first century hardly present the principate as exemplifying military excellence. Four date to the reign of Augustus, but the founder of the principate is kept firmly out of the picture: his reliance on his generals, not to mention imputations of cowardice, made him a problematic exemplar of generalship in the field;³⁸ Polyaeus would show Octavian achieve success by avoiding battle (8. 24. 7) and otherwise as advising his generals (8. 24. 4) and disciplining or administering to his troops. Frontinus instead singles out Tiberius' display of fine judgement in timing a battle during the Pannonian wars. When the *barbari* formed for battle in poor weather, Tiberius held his troops back and allowed the enemy to be weakened

³⁶ Hence the small number of imperial *exempla* should not be read as implying that warfare was different under the empire, pace CHRISSANTHOS 2013, 326, cf. 320–1. Similarly, the usefulness of the text in the present was not compromised by its preoccupation with the past, pace GOODYEAR 1982, 672. Conflation of past and present in Frontinus: cf. GALLIA 2012, 203; in relation to *exempla* generally: CHAPLIN 2000, 197–202; ROLLER 2004, 32–3.

³⁷ TURNER 2007 concedes that Frontinus does not criticise Domitian openly in the *Strategemata*, but in a desperate methodological gamble claims that «silence about these contemporary figures and even himself (except, perhaps, in one isolated incident from Domitian's youth [sic]) may have been the only way in which ... Frontinus could convey the jealousy and despotic nature of his *princeps* to a discerning audience of educated Romans, who were often well aware of the constraints under which writers were placed during the principate» (445). But could the subtle Domitian not detect the criticism? Suetonius (Dom. 10.1) remarks that he executed Hermogenes of Tarsus because of allusions (*figurae*) in his history (cf. MASON 2003, 560; KRAUS 2005, 184). TURNER attempts to buttress his argument from silence by invoking Tacitus' remark that the *imagines* of Brutus and Cassius were conspicuous by their absence from the funeral of Iunia Silana in 22 (Ann. 3. 76. 2). Frontinus' «silence» about contemporaries in the *Strategemata* apparently only draws attention to their absence, and TURNER seems to assume that readers would have attributed that absence, not to choices freely made by Frontinus, but to the restrictions of Domitian's rule, which must be inferred from the historical context. The analogy is false. The *imagines* of Brutus and Cassius draw their power from their unexpected *absence* from a situation in which they were expected to appear, whereas it is the *presence* of imperial *exempla* in a text in which they were not expected to appear that renders them distinct. In any case, Frontinus wrote the *Strategemata* before Tacitus wrote the *Annals*, and there is nothing in the funeral itself which suggests an analogy with Frontinus' method in the *Strategemata*.

³⁸ Cf. Plin. Nat. 7. 148 (Philippi); Suet. Aug. 10. 4 (Mutina), 16. 2 (Naulochus); CORNELL 2013, no. 60 F7 (C. SMITH). Augustus' reputation was the subject of propaganda, hostile and apologetic. See CHARLESWORTH 1933, 174–75; SMITH – POWELL 2009, index «Augustus, military failures».

by exhaustion and the bad conditions: *deinde, ubi fessum stando et pluuias non solum sed et lassitudine deficere animaduertit, signo dato adortus superauit* (Strat. 2. 1. 15). The anecdote recalls a period (12–10 B.C. or A.D. 6–9) when Tiberius was laying claim to be the leading general of his generation, before he notoriously declined to act in a military capacity during his reign. As representative of warfare under Augustus in the *Strategemata*, Tiberius' exemplary conduct is overshadowed by three *exempla* that date to the Varian disaster of A.D. 9 (2. 9. 4; 3. 15. 4; 4. 7. 8). Frontinus' interest in the defeat reinforces the impression conveyed by writers such as Tacitus (Ann. 1. 60. 3–62. 2) that it was regarded as one of the greatest military disasters of the early principate: it is the German *dux*, Arminius, who provides a lesson in victory (2. 9. 4 *Arminius dux Germanorum capita eorum quos occiderat similiter praefixa ad uallum hostium admoueri iussit*), the Romans only lessons in the hardships of defeat: successful ruses enabled the survivors to convince the enemy that they could withstand a long siege (3. 15. 4), and the centurion Caedicius to prevent the torching of camp at Aliso (4. 7. 8). Frontinus documents several legacies of the disaster for Rome. The citation of Arminius alone of the enemies of Rome under the rubric *de his quae post proelium fiunt: si res prospere cesserit, de consummandis reliquiis belli* (2. 9. 4) reinforces his reputation as the *liberator haud dubie Germaniae et qui non primordia populi Romani, sicut alii reges ducesque, sed florentissimum imperium lacessierit, proeliis ambiguus, bello non uictus* (Tac. Ann. 2. 88. 2). The focus on Varus' soldiers in the other anecdotes suggests that one strain in the reception of the disaster at Rome sought to salvage moments of glorious, exemplary conduct. That such moments focussed on the soldiers was part of the criticism of the commander, Varus.³⁹ Velleius Paterculus, for example, praises the *uirtus* of Caedicius and his men for devising a successful strategy of survival, of which the ruse in Frontinus was a part,⁴⁰ and remarks that the disaster owed more to lack of judgement on Varus' part than to an absence of *uirtus* in the troops.⁴¹

The *exempla* dating to the later first century provide important context and comment on those featuring Domitian. Two focus on Vespasian during the Jewish War of 70. In the first he exercised good judgment about timing a battle (cf. Tiberius above) by engaging the Jews on their Sabbath (2. 1. 17). In the second he displayed goodwill and moderation by honourably discharging a man who was ill suited to military service (4. 6. 4). Cn. Domitius Corbulo attracts the highest number of the imperial *exempla* besides Domitian himself. This focus is unsurprising: Corbulo was one of the

³⁹ For «exemplary sub-elite actors» such as soldiers see ROLLER 2004, 6.

⁴⁰ Velleius places Caedicius at Aliso (see next n.). WOLTERS 2009, 109–10, considers it possible that all three anecdotes in Frontinus took place there.

⁴¹ 2. 120. 4 *L. etiam Caedicii praefecti castrorum eorumque, qui una circumdati Alisone immensis Germanorum copiis obsidebantur, laudanda uirtus est ...*; 2. 120. 5 *magis imperatoris defectum consilio quam uirtute destitutum militum*. The same judgement of Varus occurs at Sen. Contr. 1. 3. 10; Tac. Ann. 1. 58. 2; Suet. Tib. 18. 1; Florus 2. 30. 33–4; Dio 56. 19. 1–3. Recent scholarship is sceptical of a tradition that turned him into an incompetent scapegoat for the disaster: see ECK 2010, 24–5.

most eminent generals of the early principate, and Frontinus could have served under him in the east and had first-hand experience there of the incidents that he illustrates here.⁴² While Corbulo doubtless urged his own distinction in memoirs of a distinguished career that his forced suicide under Nero fatally acknowledged, Frontinus is the first extant author to accord him exemplary status, and Tacitus will follow suit.⁴³ When Vespasian is contemplating seizing power, Tacitus has C. Licinius Mucianus refer to Corbulo as *capax imperii: abiit iam et transuictum est tempus, quo posses uideri non cupisse: confugiendum est ad imperium. an excidit trucidatus Corbulo?* (Hist. 2. 76. 3). Tacitus goes on to present Corbulo as an *exemplum* in the Annals. In a legateship in lower Germany in the 40s that would establish his *gloria* (Ann. 11. 18. 2) Corbulo appears as a dynamic general of the republican school of warfare who throws into relief Claudius' modern passive method of conducting *res externae* through diplomacy and his suspicion of military brilliance. Later in the east Corbulo evokes the republican general Lucullus (Ann. 13. 34. 2; 15. 27. 1). His enforced suicide under Nero would have allowed Tacitus to revisit the theme of the distinguished general v. the jealous and suspicious emperor that dominated the early books of the Annals.⁴⁴

In his first appearance in Frontinus Corbulo convinces the Armenians holding out in Tigranocerta to surrender by catapulting the head of one of their captured nobles into the middle of a council meeting:

(si res prospere cesserit, de consummandis reliquiis belli) Domitius Corbulo, cum Tigranocertam obsideret et Armenii pertinaciter uiderentur toleraturi obsidionem, in Vadandum ex megistanis quos ceperat animaduertit, caputque eius ballista excussum intra munimenta hostium misit. id forte decidit in medium concilium, quod cum maxime habebant barbari; ad cuius conspectum uelut ostento consternati ad deditionem festinauerunt. (2. 9. 5)

Tacitus' version of the surrender of Tigranocerta is drawn with less lurid colouring. After surviving an assassination attempt at the hands of the Tauraunites, Corbulo's envoys report of Tigranocerta that *patere moenia ... intentos populares ad iussa*, and Tacitus pointedly observes that the city was spared any humiliation in order to maintain its willing obedience (Ann. 14. 24. 4 *nec quicquam urbi detractum, quo promptius obsequium integri retinerent*). Tacitus' Corbulo behaves with a moderation that recalls his appropriate handling of barbarians along the march (13. 23. 2) and stands in contrast to the dramatic, decisive severity displayed by Corbulo in Frontinus' version.

⁴² For this possibility see ECK 1989, 50; BIRLEY 2005, 69. Of course, Frontinus need not have served under Corbulo to want to include him in the Strategemata, and there is some scepticism about according him a place in Corbulo's army: see VERVAET 2003, 452.

⁴³ Corbulo's self-serving agenda is implied in his critical attitude towards Paetus: Tac. Ann. 15. 16. 3 *quae ut augendae infamiae composita, sic reliqua non in obscuro habentur*. For Corbulo's biography and memoirs see now CORNELL 2013, no. 82 (B. LEVICK).

⁴⁴ For Tacitus' characterisation of Corbulo see MALLOCH 2013, on 11. 18–20. The Lucullan echoes are discussed by ASH 2006.

Frontinus and Tacitus both invest in Corbulo's *seueritas*, which was one indication of his greatness.⁴⁵ Three anecdotes in Frontinus illustrate Corbulo's penchant for strict military discipline, and a fourth draws the moral:

(de disciplina) Domitius Corbulo in Armenia duas alas et tres cohortes, quae ad castellum Initia hostibus cesserant, extra uallum iussit tendere, donec adsiduo labore et prosperis excursionibus redimerent ignominiam. (4. 1. 21)

Domitius Corbulo in Armenia Aemilio Rufo praefecto equitum, quia hostibus cesserat et parum instructam armis alam habebat, uestimenta per lictorem scidit eidemque ut erat foedato habitu perstare in principiis, donec mitterentur, imperauit. (4. 1. 28)

(de effectu disciplinae) Domitius Corbulo duabus legionibus et paucissimis auxiliis disciplina correcta Parthos sustinuit (4. 2. 3)

(de uariis consiliis) Domitius Corbulo dolabra hostem uincendum esse dicebat. (4. 7. 2)

Frontinus' approach to Corbulo's *seueritas* is thrown into sharper relief when set beside Tacitus' narrative of Corbulo's eastern campaign. That narrative reveals that Frontinus inadequately describes the number of troops at Corbulo's disposal (4. 2. 3);⁴⁶ no doubt a reduction in troop numbers enhanced the effectiveness of Corbulo's disciplinary regime. Tacitus also describes Corbulo's punishment of troops in Armenia by forcing them to camp *extra uallum* (Ann. 13. 36. 3). His fuller version has the troops not merely give way before the enemy, but routed after disobeying orders not to attack; only when the rest of the army intervenes for them were they spared further disgrace. The explicitness of Tacitus' endorsement of Corbulo in this episode is brought out by the context. In the preceding chapter he lavishes detail on Corbulo's battle *aduersus ignauiam militum* (13. 35) and openly defends the execution of soldiers who had deserted: *idque usu salubre et misericordia melius apparuit: quippe pauciores illa castra deseruere quam ea, in quibus ignoscebatur*. Tacitus' concern to put a positive spin on Corbulo's *seueritas* is consistent with his rationalisation of similar conduct during Corbulo's legateship of lower Germany (11. 18. 3) and part of his endorsement of Corbulo's promotion of himself as an exemplary *uir militaris*: *ipse cultu leui, capite intecto, in agmine, in laboribus frequens adesse, laudem strenuis, solacium inualidis, exemplum omnibus ostendere* (13. 35. 4). Frontinus' use of a simpler «misdemeanour» – there is no sign of initial disobedience at Strat. 4. 1. 21 – makes Corbulo seem more strict than he does in the version that Tacitus takes up, but literary comparisons are not needed to demonstrate that Frontinus is marking *his* position on the reception of Corbulo's *seueritas*: it is a model to imitate, part of Corbulo's exemplary status as a *uir militaris*. Frontinus' inclusion of Corbulo in the *Strategemata* and

⁴⁵ Cf. LANGLANDS 2008, 165.

⁴⁶ Cf. Tac. Ann. 13. 8. 2; 13. 35. 2; 13. 40. 2; VERVAET 2003, 437.

Tacitus' investment in his image as a strict, old-time general demonstrate that he was a live figure in the political-military culture of the late first and early second centuries.

How do the imperial *exempla* that Frontinus deploys relate to those about Domitian? The few earlier *exempla* do not distract attention from him: the *priuatus* Tiberius in his one *exemplum* does not overshadow Domitian in his five, and the *exempla* about the Varan disaster focus on a foreign leader and on acts of soldierly glory. It may be tempting to read the *exempla* focussing on Corbulo and Vespasian against Domitian: they undermine his exploits by comparison and the qualities and successes of Corbulo and Vespasian create «anxiety» about *his* qualities and achievements as a general. A stronger reading has these *exempla* work for Domitian. The implicit comparison implied by the presence of Domitian's father in the text could be flattering for the son, as Silius Italicus (Pun. 3. 595–629) knew when he compared the military achievements of Vespasian and Domitian, father and son, to the advantage of the latter. Corbulo too bestowed glory through association. Any mention of Domitius Corbulo would have evoked Domitian. Around 69 Domitian married Corbulo's daughter, Domitia Longina,⁴⁷ and probably hoped to acquire some of his father-in-law's glory in the process. Her previous marriage into a family of military distinction, the Plautii, would have increased her value,⁴⁸ and marriage to Domitian would see her again attached to a *uir militaris* – or to one who wanted to be regarded as such.⁴⁹ Corbulo lived on through Domitia and her name, just as the emperor's own name *Domitianus* was evocative of *Domitius*. The presence of Corbulo and Vespasian in the *Strategemata* confirms by association the elevation of Domitian among the eminent *uiri militares* of history.

IV

Domitian is the subject of four *exempla*, and he has a deciding presence in a fifth that also features Frontinus. All but the last treat the campaign against the Chatti in 83 that allowed Domitian to claim the much-needed military glory his father Vespasian and his brother Titus had denied him during their reigns (cf. Suet. Dom. 2. 1–2). Domi-

⁴⁷ Suet. Dom. 1. 3, cf. 10. 2; Dio/Xiph. 66. 3. 4.

⁴⁸ Dio/Xiph. 66. 3. 4. Marriage to Plautii attractive: see LEVICK 2002, 201–02. She observes that Domitia's husband, L. Aelius Lamia Plautius Aelianus (PIR² A 205), was the son of the «great» governor of Moesia, Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus (PIR² P 480), and related to A. Plautius (PIR² P 457), the conqueror of Britain, and to M. Plautius Silvanus (PIR² P 478), who won glory in the Balkans.

⁴⁹ Dio/Xiph. (65. 3. 4) places the marriage after the northern uprisings, which must include the revolt of Civilis, but MURISON 1999, on Dio 66. 3. 4, places the marriage before Domitian set out for the north with Mucianus. As LEVICK 2002, 202 n. 19, points out, Domitian may still have desired the reflected military glory that she would bring to the marriage.

tian's campaigns extended Rome's presence in the *agri decumates* (see below), but the Chatti themselves were not completely vanquished.⁵⁰

The later historical tradition denied Domitian military glory. Tacitus' statement that the Germans *proximis temporibus triumphati magis quam uicti sunt* (Germ. 37. 5) is regularly interpreted as a barbed comment aimed particularly at Domitian's war that Tacitus will later describe as earning him a *falsum triumphum* (Agr. 39. 2).⁵¹ The subtext was perhaps hinted at or elaborated by Pliny when he implies that Domitian was defeated (Pan. 11. 4; 16. 3, cf. 82. 4–5). Suetonius' minimalist claim that Domitian went to war against the Chatti of his own accord (*sponte*) seems critical in view of the provocations that he records for Domitian's other campaigns, and this impression is confirmed by the tepid statement *de Chattis Dacisque post uaria proelia duplicem triumphum egit* (Dom. 6. 1).⁵² Dio, in the excerpt of Xiphilinus, aligned his account more closely with the attitudes of Tacitus and Pliny when he observed bluntly that Domitian did not see action at all in Germany, and he despaired of recording the honours showered insincerely upon him (67. 4. 1–2).

The contemporary response could not have been more different. Domitian received imperial salutations, celebrated a triumph,⁵³ and took the *cognomen* «Germanicus», which he exploited for the rest of his life, especially on his coinage.⁵⁴ Frontinus fell in with the laudatory reception of Domitian's German military achievements during his reign. His commemoration of Domitian in the *Strategemata* instantly accords him exemplary status,⁵⁵ but he also deploys praise implicitly and explicitly. Frontinus implicitly praises Domitian through his arrangement of *exempla*. He places the first Domitianic *exemplum* in the first category of the first book (1. 1. 8 *de occultandis consiliis*), and it is the only *exemplum* dating to the imperial period in that category. Frontinus commences his work by presenting Domitian as representative of military excellence in the imperial period, and he will maintain that status throughout: he is the only imperial commander in the categories in which he appears.⁵⁶ Domitian gains from this uniqueness, and the alignment of his achievements with those of his Greek and Roman predecessors in war implies a continuity that works in Domitian's favour.

⁵⁰ See DRINKWATER 1983, 59; JONES 1992, 128–31; GRIFFIN CAH² XI 64. For subsequent actions by the Chatti cf. Suet. Dom. 6. 2; Dio/Exc. U^G 43 (p. 399) 67. 5. 1; JONES 1992, 150.

⁵¹ Tacitus' remark has been interpreted as referring to Domitian's Chattan war since at least the time of LIPSIVS: see his n. ad loc.

⁵² Suetonius, notoriously lacklustre about his subjects' wars, doubtless provided the source of the brief notices in later latin texts (cf. Aur. Vict. Caes. 11. 4; Epit. de Caes. 11. 2; Eutrop. 7. 23).

⁵³ Tac. Agr. 39. 2; Stat. Theb. 1. 18; Suet. Dom. 13. 3.

⁵⁴ «Germanicus» appears on coins from 28 August 83 at the latest, and on inscriptions from 3 September 84 at the latest (CIL XVI 30). See BUTTREY 1980, 52–56.

⁵⁵ For the act of commemoration in an exemplary context see ROLLER 2004, 5.

⁵⁶ Domitian embodies a uniqueness that Pliny will later apply in expanded form to Trajan: Pan. 13. 5.

In four of the five *exempla* featuring Domitian (1. 1. 8; 1. 3. 10; 2. 11. 7; 4. 3. 14) Frontinus does not merely narrate a successful strategem (his method at 2. 3. 23) but explicitly praises Domitian in the process:

(*de occultandis consiliis*) *Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus cum Germanos qui in armis erant uellet opprimere, nec ignoraret maiore bellum molitione inituros si aduentum tanti ducis praesensissent, projectioni suae census optexuit Galliarum; sub quibus inopinato bello adfusus, contusa immanium ferocia nationum prouinciis consuluit.* (1. 1. 8)

Frontinus has Domitian undertake a war of conquest in response to developments in Germany (*Germanos qui in armis erant*) and with an eye to the interest of the provinces. He has Domitian generate surprise through careful planning of a pretext for his presence in the region, a census in the tradition of Drusus' in 12 B.C.;⁵⁷ there is no lack of motivation here that would characterise Suetonius' version. Frontinus' deployment of the *cognomen* «Germanicus» in close proximity to the source of the award legitimises the official response to a war fought against ferocious and savage *nationes*. Such barbarian stereotypes are no less effective in a text than they would be on a monument in magnifying Domitian's success, and they stand in contrast to the opposite tendency to denigrate Domitian's victory by claiming that he purchased and dressed up slaves for his sham triumph (Tac. Agr. 39. 1; cf. Plin. Pan. 16. 3). Frontinus' use of a conditional clause to provide a reason for creating surprise among the Germans offers an opportunity to praise Domitian in circumstances that did not come to pass and among peoples beyond as well as within the limits of the empire: he is a *tantus dux* whose approach would generate *maior molitio*. The judgment might be focalised through Domitian himself but this was no self-praise: *nec ignoraret* implies that he was aware of what was common knowledge. Frontinus' device of positing a situation that did not eventuate will recur in his handling of Domitian (see below). Here he renders Domitian more conspicuous through his silence about the exploits of the other commanders in this category. Praise is deployed explicitly only in relation to Domitian.

(*de constituendo statu belli*) *Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus, cum Germani more suo e sal-tibus et obscuris latebris subinde impugnarent nostros tutumque regressum in profunda siluarum haberent, limitibus per centum uiginti milia passum actis non mutauit tantum statum belli, sed et subiecit dicioni suae hostes, quorum refugia nudauerat.* (1. 3. 10)

From the larger picture Frontinus zooms in to illustrate Domitian's capability as a commander on the ground: his establishment of a military road network (*limitibus per centum uiginti milia passum actis*) brings about the exposure and defeat of the enemy.⁵⁸ In another *exemplum* emphasising victory in Germany (2. 3. 23 *de acie ordi-*

⁵⁷ Liv. Per. 138–39; ILS 212. 2. 36–9.

⁵⁸ Laying the enemy bare seems more likely the result of driving roads into enemy territory (cf. TLL 7. 2 1410. 29–84; ISAAC 1988, 127; MOSCHEK 2011, 55–6, 61) than of establishing *limites* laterally (cf. SCHOENBERGER 1969, 159). *limitem agere* is a standard expression for

nanda) Frontinus illustrates Domitian's skill in similar circumstances in the field: in response to the Germans' exploitation of the forest to their advantage he ordered his cavalry to fight on foot: *quo genere consecutus ne quis iam locus uictoriam eius moraretur*. In our passage Frontinus takes a step further and emphasises Domitian's achievement by commenting outside the parameters of the category: Domitian not only changed the nature of the war (*non ... tantum*) but defeated his enemies too (*sed et*). This subjection of the Chatti, the (generous) official outcome of the campaign, places the construction of *limites* in a different light: what seems like a mere tactic becomes an extension of empire through victory, and Domitian becomes the only Roman credited with expansion by Frontinus. Domitian's *limites* combined with forts and watch-towers to provide a system of military installations in the Taunus mountains and Wetterau region which he linked over time with the forts established in the Upper Neckar by Vespasian. The territory would fall within the province of Upper Germany, which Domitian established c. 90. The expansion of Roman territory that commenced with Domitian's campaigns is confirmed by Tacitus, despite his hostility (Germ. 29. 3).⁵⁹

(*de dubiorum animis in fide retinendis*) Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus, eo bello quo uictis hostibus cognomen Germanici meruit, cum in finibus Cubiorum castella poneret, pro fructibus locorum quae uallo comprehendebat pretium solui iussit; atque ita iustitiae fama omnium fidem adstrinxit. (2. 11. 7)

Frontinus describes the loyalty of the Cubii that Domitian earned by compensating them for the *fructus* of the territory that he had appropriated for his *castella*. The war in question is identified by the mention of the *cognomen* «Germanicus» in the relative clause, but the clause is not merely descriptive: the ablative absolute asserts the legitimacy of Domitian's grant of «Germanicus». The climax of the anecdote is Frontinus' claim that the *fama* of Domitian's *iustitia* in compensating the local population won the loyalty of everyone. Frontinus is glossing Domitian's action by attributing *iustitia* to him (compensation alone could have generated loyalty), and Domitian gains by being eulogised alongside Scipio Africanus, for his *multiplex magnificentia* (2. 11. 5). *Iustitia* was one of the more popular of the so-called emperor's «virtues». It was attributed to Augustus, in poetry and on the golden shield that the senate presented to him in 27, and it was associated with Nerva and Trajan too.⁶⁰ *Iustitia* may not have

driving a road: cf. Virg. Aen. 10. 514; Tac. Germ. 29.3 with ANDERSON 1938, ad loc., and MOSCHEK 2011, 50–52; TLL 7.2 1416.34–37.

⁵⁹ See DRINKWATER 1983, 59–61; JONES 1992, 131; RIVES 1999, on Tac. Germ. 29.3.

⁶⁰ Augustus: in poetry cf. e.g. Hor. Carm. 3.1–6 with NISBET – RUDD 2004, 38–9; FEARS 1981, 885, 886, 889–90. For the golden shield see the example from Arles (ILS 81); cf. RG 34.2 with COOLEY 2009, ad loc. Nerva and Trajan: cf. below (De Aquaeductu); FEARS 1981, 902–03; RAMAGE 1989, 649 n. 19. On *iustitia* see also RE XXIV.2 2248; WALLACE-HADRILL 1981, 298–323; CLASSON 1988, 301; NORENA 2011, 60–66.

been a «virtue» that Domitian actively boasted, but that was no reason for not applying it to him in the right situation and associating him with distinguished imperial predecessors.

(*de continentia*) *auspiciis Imperatoris Caesaris Domitiani Augusti Germanici, eo bello quod Iulius Civilis in Gallia mouerat, Lingonum opulentissima ciuitas, quae ad Ciuilem descuerat, cum adueniente exercitu Caesaris populationem timeret, quod contra expectationem inuiolata nihil ex rebus suis amiserat, ad obsequium redacta septuaginta milia armatorum tradidit mihi.* (4. 3. 14)

Frontinus himself enters an anecdote as the general to whom the Lingones hand over seventy thousand men in the revolt of Civilis in 70, but his role is passive and the emphasis falls on Domitian.⁶¹ Flavian propaganda sought to embellish his role during the revolt,⁶² and Frontinus participated in the process with his own significant nuances. Frontinus' opening assertion that Domitian held *auspicia* attributes to him a prominence in the Roman response to the revolt that is starkly at odds with his representation in the historical tradition. In fact the response was handled by C. Licinius Mucianus, who placed Annius Gallus and Petilius Cerialis in command of advance troops that had been despatched to deal with the situation (Tac. Hist. 4. 68. 1). Mucianus marched north with Domitian in 70,⁶³ but they had not even passed the Alps when news reached them that the revolt was under control (cf. Hist. 4. 68. 3; 4. 85. 1). Domitian therefore played no significant role in suppressing the revolt; even Josephus, who inclines to Domitian here,⁶⁴ emphasises the reality as he sought to downplay it with a counterfactual: Domitian would have suppressed the revolt if Cerialis had not arrived first (Bell. Iud. 7. 84–85). Frontinus' tendentious presentation of Domitian's role is one strategy of embellishment. He also shared with Josephus an interest in representing the enemy as submitting to Domitian. Josephus has Domitian respond to news of the revolt with a keenness that belied his youth and display his father's prowess and his own good training in marching his troops north. The terror inspired by his approach prompts «the barbarians» to put themselves at his mercy in order to avoid disaster (Bell. Iud. 7. 88). Frontinus embellishes his version. It is the Lingones who feared devastation at the hands of Domitian's approaching army, and they give themselves up, not at Domitian's approach, but only when the conduct of the army demonstrated that their fears were unfounded. Frontinus works hard to generate a sense of foreboding by establishing and repeating the expectation of devastation, only then to

⁶¹ Frontinus probably commanded a special force that made up part of the *exercitus Caesaris*: BIRLEY 2005, 69.

⁶² Jos. Bell. Iud. 7. 85–88; Mart. 2. 2. 4; BIRLEY 1973, 187; BEARD 2003, 549 n. 18 (but Frontinus' version of the surrender of the Lingones renders it unlikely that Josephus invented the «victory»). For Silius see below.

⁶³ Domitian evidently still had the consular *imperium* that he had received with the praetorship (Tac. Hist. 4.3.4) and maintained when he was *praetor urbanus* (Suet. Dom. 1.3; cf. Tac. Hist. 4. 39. 2). See JONES 1992, 15–18.

⁶⁴ For Josephus' relations with the Flavians see KRAUS 2005, 197 with bibliography.

defeat it (... *populationem timeret, quod contra expectationem inuiolata nihil ex rebus suis amiserat*). The Lingones' terrorised expectation turns Domitian into an awesome figure, as he is in Josephus' version, but by delaying the surrender of Lingones until they realised that their city was safe Frontinus can present Domitian as a good general, in control of his army and, again, mindful of the local population (cf. above 2. 11. 7).

Domitian emerges from Frontinus' anecdote looking more important than the historical tradition suggests he was. Frontinus too gains from being associated with an emperor whose conduct he has embellished: modest *mihi* at the end of the passage links with *auspicii Imperatoris Caesaris Domitiani Augusti Germanici* at the start to create a frame for the *exemplum*. This was not the first time that their paths had crossed. At the start of the same year (70), Frontinus convened the senate as urban praetor in the absence of the consuls, Vespasian and Titus (Tac. Hist. 4. 39. 1).⁶⁵ He soon resigned the office to make way for Domitian (Hist. 4. 39. 2 *mox eiurante Frontino Caesar Domitianus praeturam cepit*; cf. OLD *eiuro* 3). Whether Frontinus acted on his own initiative or not cannot be determined but he was probably well disposed to the Flavians and acting in their interests. His extraordinarily rapid rise, from his praetorship in 70 to his legateship of Britain from 73/4, are evidence of Frontinus' support and exertions for a grateful new dynasty.⁶⁶ The *exemplum* from the revolt of Civilis allowed Frontinus to advertise an early and glorious instance of a connection that would prove so advantageous to both parties.

V

Frontinus is not alone among his contemporaries in celebrating Domitian's military achievements. Silius Italicus, for example, has Venus predict *inter alia* that «Germanicus» will outdo the *facta* of his father and brother and claim that in his youth (i.e. in 70) he terrified the Batavians (Pun. 3. 607–08), and flattery permeates the Domitianic poetry of Statius and Martial.⁶⁷ Domitian placed enormous emphasis on his military achievements and the writers of the period were caught up in the propaganda. But ascertaining their autonomy is complicated by Domitian's patronage of the arts. Martial and Statius acknowledged his inspiration and received privileges in return, Martial the *ius trium liberorum* (2. 91–92),⁶⁸ Statius a water supply for his Alban home (Silu. 3. 1. 61–4). Statius even submitted work for the judgement of Domitian (Silu. 1. praef. 17–19; 4. praef. 29–31), whose oratorical and poetical talents were praised by contemporaries (e.g. Sil. Pun. 3. 618–21; cf. Quint. Inst. 10. 1. 91). Josephus tells how Domi-

⁶⁵ See HEUBNER 1976, ad loc.

⁶⁶ ECK 1989, 52–3, observes Frontinus' rapid promotion, practically unparalleled among contemporaries. CROOK 1955, 168 n.176, describes Frontinus as an *amicus* of the Flavians.

⁶⁷ E.g. Mart. e.g. 7. 1; 7. 2; 7. 7; 8. 65; 9. 5(6). 1; 14. 34; WATSON 2003, 9–12. RAMAGE 1989, 704, collects many references.

⁶⁸ Domitian confirmed the grant by Titus: cf. Mart. 3. 95. 5–6.

tian continued the patronage exercised by Vespasian and Titus and punished his unsuccessful accusers (Vita 429). Quintilian was entrusted by Domitian with the education of his great-nephews, and received *insignia consularia* as a reward for that *honor iudiciorum caelestium* (Inst. 4. praef. 2; Auson. 21 [419 S.] 31).

Dating Frontinus' *Strategemata* to the latter part of Domitian's reign places its composition in an apparently quiet moment during a distinguished career.⁶⁹ Frontinus clearly did not depend on Domitian's patronage of his literary endeavours. Equally clearly he was not untouched by the imperial expectations that exerted such pressure on the reception of Domitian's military campaigns. Frontinus exploited both to his advantage. In the *Strategemata* he publicly associated himself with Domitian during the revolt of Civilis in 70, and a recently discovered and supplemented diploma places him in command in Germany also under Domitian:⁷⁰

[--- et] III Breucor[um, quae sunt in Ger]mania sub Sex. Iul[io Frontin]o, qui qu[ina] et uicena plu[ra]ue stipendia meruerunt item dim[issis] ho[nesta missione emeritis stipendiis---]

Two dates for Frontinus' command are possible, one between 73 and 74 (between his first consulship and his proconsulship of Asia), the other between c. 81 and 83/4.⁷¹ The latter date, the more reasonable one on chronological grounds, places Frontinus as legate of the army of Lower Germany during Domitian's war against the Chatti, a command that at once reveals Domitian's faith in his loyalty and ability. Frontinus would have been involved in the campaigns and witnessed Domitian's execution of the war first hand. That experience provided him with the *exempla* about Domitian that he would record in the *Strategemata*, just as he might have deployed first-hand experience under Corbulo.

Glorifying Domitian's performance in war would have been congenial to an emperor greedy for recognition of his talents. But Frontinus did not design the *Strategemata* to celebrate Domitian, in which case he might have dedicated it to him and included more *exempla* illustrating his exploits.⁷² Nor is it credible that Frontinus was coerced into a particular characterisation of Domitian: claims that Domitian practically abolished free speech were relevant primarily to men unsympathetic to the regime (cf. Tac. Agr. 2), and a writer could choose to praise the emperor. Such a man

⁶⁹ For the time of composition see BENDZ 1938, 265–6; ECK 1989, 56; RODGERS 2004, 3; BIRLEY 2005, 70. There is no evidence that Frontinus was «apparently out of favour under Domitian», pace SHERWIN-WHITE 1966, on Epist. 4. 8. 3.

⁷⁰ For the inscription, reproduced in part below, see AE 2003, no. 2054; ECK – PANGERL 2003.

⁷¹ Frontinus would have been the successor of Novius Priscus, who was still in office in January/February 80, and would have vacated his command in time to be attested in his proconsulship of Asia in 84/5. See ECK – PANGERL 2003, 209–10.

⁷² Yet a dedication was not decisive: Quintilian too praised Domitian without dedicating his *Institutio oratoria* to him. The absence of a dedication does not therefore imply criticism: so rightly TURNER 2007, 436–38, 443.

was Frontinus. He created a reciprocal relationship of benefit with Domitian through the *Strategemata*. Frontinus, experienced in war himself, lent credibility to Domitian by elevating his military achievements to exemplary status. This expressed on a textual level a real-life association between the two men that dated at least to 70, but more obviously to Domitian's recent German campaigns. The association also served to bolster Frontinus' reputation as a «man of war» by drawing him closer to the *princeps*, and his literary *persona* benefited as well: Frontinus' background lent authority to his *Strategemata* and he became the authoritative «author of war».⁷³ The inclusion of material concerning Domitian's Chatti war may indicate that Frontinus wrote the *Strategemata* earlier than the «lull» he apparently experienced in the latter years of Domitian's reign. As much as he claimed to be looking to the practical needs of the future, Frontinus composed a text that exploited the moment. The *Strategemata* played a role in enhancing its author's status by capitalising on the official propaganda of a militarily active, victorious emperor and on imperial high expectations.

VI

Writers reacted in varying degrees to Domitian's memory after his murder in 96. Typical seem to be the responses of Martial and the younger Pliny. Their works are heavy with criticism of the dead tyrant. Martial compares Domitian unfavourably with his successors (e.g. 10. 72; 11. 7; 12. 5). In the *Panegyricus* Pliny denigrates Domitian as part of his praise of Trajan, and in his letters he presents himself as nearly dying a martyr under Domitian and barely surviving the downfall of his friends, *tot circa me iactis fulminibus quasi ambustus* (Epist. 3. 11. 3; 4. 24. 4–5; 7. 27. 14; Pan. 90. 5). Pliny's claim of vulnerability was integral to his project of associating himself with the victims of Domitian's principate (cf. e.g. Epist. 2. 18; 3. 16; 4. 21; 7. 19); he was a «survivor» engaged in self-fashioning for a new regime. In fact he owed his flourishing senatorial career to Domitian and was in favour to the end.⁷⁴ Tacitus too paints a consistently dark portrait of Domitian in the *Agricola* and in the *Histories* and he too was concerned to mark a break with negative aspects of a past in which he felt all were

⁷³ Hence, Frontinus is able to claim that he is writing the *Strategemata* for others, not *meae commendationis causa* (1. praef. 3). This statement is part of the rhetoric of practicality (cf. 1. praef. 1), not a disingenuous literary *topos*: it is Frontinus' experience in war that creates authority for the *Strategemata*. Onasander offers a comparison in his *Strategikos*: he admits that not everything he writes about derives from his own experience, but he claims authority from the experience of others (praef. 7–10; FORMISANO 2011, 47).

⁷⁴ For Pliny's «project» see WHITTON 2010, 126; 2012, 353–55; 2013, p. 7 and Epist. 2. 18 n. A notable exception to his strategy occurs at Epist. 8. 14. 9 (see WHITTON 2010, 126). For Pliny's career see WHITTON 2013, 6; for his favour cf. Epist. 7. 33. 9 with SHERWIN-WHITE 1966, ad loc.

implicated.⁷⁵ At the same time he could handle Domitian rather differently. He uses him to establish his credentials as an historian: in setting out his political experience in the preface to the Histories, Tacitus acknowledges that he owed further advancement to Domitian (1.1.3), and in explaining why he refers readers of the Annals to the Domitianic books of the Histories for his discussion of the calculation of the timing of the *ludi saeculares*, he emphasises the prominent role he played in Domitian's *ludi saeculares* of 88 as a *quindecimuir* and praetor, positions that gave him privileged insight into the organisation of the *ludi* and thus authority to write about them (11. 11. 1).⁷⁶ Tacitus can portray Domitian as a tyrant in history, but to refashion his career under Domitian in the manner of a Pliny would have been historiographically counterproductive. Tacitus the historian needed the experience and status that Tacitus the politician had enjoyed under Domitian.

Frontinus provides only one literary indication of his attitude to Domitian after his death, at Aq. 118:⁷⁷

commoda publicae familiae ex aerario dantur, quod impendium exoneratur uectigalium reditu ad ius aquarum pertinentium. (2) ea constant ex locis aedificiisue quae sunt circa ductus et castella aut munera aut lacus. (3) quem reditum prope sestertiorum ducentorum quinquaginta milium alienatum ac uagum, proximis uero temporibus in Domitiani loculos conuersum, iustitia diui Neruae populo restituit, nostra sedulitas ad certam regulam redegit, ut constaret quae essent ad hoc uectigal pertinentia loca.

Domitian's expropriation of the revenue from the rent of water-rights looks bad in comparison to the policy of Nerva: diminutive *loculos* suggests that Domitian used the money for his own purposes (i.e. it went into the *fiscus*), when in fact he may have used it to support the *familia Caesaris*, which was paid from the *fiscus* (cf. 118. 4). This was an easy, if not cheap, point to make (250,000 sesterces is «eine lächerlich kleine Summe»⁷⁸). Frontinus could praise Nerva's *iustitia* and promote himself as *curator aquarum*, an office that brought prestige and close contact with the emperor.⁷⁹ Criticism of Domitian sits merely in the background (in a participial phrase) and is dampened by the observation that previously the money had gone missing altogether.⁸⁰ This is all quite tepid in comparison to the hostility of Pliny and Tacitus. If Frontinus

⁷⁵ For Tacitus' attitudes to the so-called «Stoic martyrs» and to the *delatores* see WHITTON 2012, 353–55. The rhetoric of shared guilt for the ills of Domitian's principate is prominent in the *Agricola*: e.g. 2. 3, 45. 1; SAILOR 2008, 70–1; WHITTON 2010, 126; WOODMAN – KRAUS 2013, ad loc.

⁷⁶ See further MALLOCH 2013, ad loc.

⁷⁷ At Aq. 102 Domitian appears merely as a date.

⁷⁸ ECK 1989, 58.

⁷⁹ ECK 1989, 59. For Frontinus' self promotion in the *De Aquaeductu* see now KOENIG 2013, 370–74.

⁸⁰ GRIFFIN, CAH² XI 74; CARRADICE 1983, 154–55.

did react against Domitian, it was muted. But most likely he did not: he did not need to.

Frontinus thrived under Domitian's successors. He reached the peak of his political career when he held his third consulship with Trajan in 100. In his *Panegyricus*, Pliny draws attention to Frontinus' third consulship, the short interval between his holding the office for the second and third time, and the fact that Trajan's holding the office himself for the third time almost placed the men on a par. The distinction was extraordinary. Trajan was rewarding Frontinus, Pliny makes clear, for political rather than military services rendered.⁸¹ The background has been elaborated by W. Eck on the basis of Trajan's grant of consulships early in his principate: Frontinus engineered Trajan's succession.⁸² Pliny's evidence places Frontinus in Rome in 97. There he worked with others such as L. Iulius Ursus, also cos. II and III in 98 and 100,⁸³ to engineer Nerva's adoption of Trajan, whose command in upper Germany located him close to Italy with three legions. In this scenario Frontinus is a determining agent: Trajan «may have agreed» that he was a better candidate to succeed Nerva than the other contender M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus (cf. Plin. Epist. 9. 13. 11), and Nerva, whenever he was brought in on the plan, was «probably only a tool in their hands».⁸⁴ Frontinus had the *auctoritas*, initiative, and connections to play the political game at the highest level, and the second and third consulships were his reward for the throne from a grateful Trajan. Such *auctoritas* made Frontinus' praise of Domitian in the *Strategemata* unproblematic, and irrelevant. He was, simply, untouchable: he sat above «the ideological and careerist squabbles of the main body of the senate».⁸⁵

Frontinus' success allowed him to bestride two regimes that were more continuous than the sources would have posterity believe. The careers of Tacitus and Pliny thrived under the same circumstances, and the noisy atmosphere of hostility and apologetics after Domitian's death risk making a strong reaction appear normal. Frontinus seems unusual primarily because the apologists sound loudest in the historical record, but others who leave no literary traces flourished under the same circumstances, L. Iulius Ursus, for example. Frontinus was confident of the rightness of his conduct. In a letter to Cremetius Ruso, Pliny compares the attitude taken to funerary monuments by Verginius Rufus, whose decision to have a monument Pliny defends, and Frontinus, whose rejection of a monument Ruso judged *melius rectiusque* and *parcior ... et presior* (Epist. 9. 19. 1; 9. 19. 6). Frontinus dismissed a monument as needless: his *memoria* would endure if his life deserved it (9. 19. 6 *impensa monumenti superuacua est; memoria nostri durabit, si uita meruimus*). Pliny is right that Frontinus' gesture was no

⁸¹ Pan. 60. 5 *bellorum istud sociis olim, periculorum consortibus, parce tamen tribuebatur; quod tu singularibus uiris, ac de te quidem bene ac fortiter sed in toga meritis praestitisti*; 62. 2.

⁸² See Eck 2002, 219–26; cf. 1989, 60; SYME 1958, 13.

⁸³ PIR² J 630; New Pauly Iulius II 140.

⁸⁴ Eck 2002, 224, 226.

⁸⁵ LEVICK 1999, 178.

more moderate or restrained than Verginius.⁸⁶ The confidence that he betrays in the endurance of his *fama*, which was not to be established (or circumscribed) by a monument, also suggests a personality that would not agonise about past conduct. His claim that a deserving *memoria* will survive is not inappropriate for the author of the *Strategemata*: it attributes exemplary value to his *uita*. Frontinus, in other words, will attain the status of the great generals he writes about, and appears alongside, in the *Strategemata* – but his life will provide lessons in politics too.

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⁸⁶ Epist. 9. 19. 7 *an restrictius arbitraris per orbem terrarum legendum dare duraturam memoriam suam quam uno in loco duobus uersiculis signare quod feceris?* Pliny claims to be defending Verginius rather than criticising Frontinus, but his attitude to the latter is clear, not least in his sententious ending to the letter. Verginius had unrivalled *gloria* in Pliny's view: Epist. 2. 1. 12. For Pliny and Verginius see WHITTON 2012, 351–52; 2013, on Epist. 2. 1.

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