

Reconstructing the Lost Beginning of Suetonius' *Divus Iulius**

ABSTRACT

It appears that the beginning of Suetonius' *Divus Iulius* is now lost. C.L. Roth, in 1865, argued that the work was acephalous by setting out the four things that were missing from the *Divus Iulius*: first, the title of the work; second, the dedication to Septicius Clarus, which is known to us only from John Lydus' sixth-century work *De Magistratibus* 2.6.4; third, the family tree of the Caesars; fourth, the beginning of the *Divus Iulius* with the details about its Trojan and Alban origins, the origin and name of the Caesars, the omens of future greatness, his education, and his first offices. These were, as Roth saw it, all things Suetonius was in the habit of giving in the extant *Lives*.¹ These things are indeed absent from the text as we have it. It remains to test whether those things are all really standard inclusions in a Suetonian introduction.

This paper approaches the lost beginning of the *Divus Iulius* by comparing the constructions of Suetonius' extant openings, in particular the family trees, with Philemon Holland's reconstruction of 1606. The comparative study will consider how the lost part of the *Divus Iulius* might reflect what Suetonius includes in other beginnings, and how it might have differed from those others. The study will also set out the elements that Suetonius appears to have considered essential to an introduction, thereby bringing into focus the places where the interests of renaissance authors differed from his own.

HOW THE *LIVES* BEGIN

Of the eleven complete *Lives*, there are no two identical introductions, but there is a discernible pattern to their contents and structure. We exclude *Titus* and *Domitian*, for which *Lives* the information about ancestors and father may be understood from *Vespasian*; similarly, in *Caligula* and *Claudius*, only the father is necessary, as the Claudii had been comprehensively catalogued in *Tiberius*.² Our analysis will be mainly restricted to

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¹ Roth (1865) xi.

² Power (2009) 218 posits that the introduction to the *Tiberius* is an introduction to the whole group *Tib.-Cal.-Claud.* This may be true, as Suetonius' usual practice is to avoid

the seven *Lives* with extant family trees: *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, *Nero*, *Galba*, *Otho*, *Vitellius*, and *Vespasian*.

The *Galba* is the most complete, in that it has the largest number of single elements where, in other *Lives*, one or another is left out. The contents of this ancestry section may be summarised as follows: a description of the status of the family (on both sides); mention of a notable ancestor on the mother's side; a legendary genealogy (on both sides); a plan to keep to the *familia* as the *gens* is too large a group; reasons for the *cognomen*; three ancestors on the paternal line, beginning with the first consul in the line and proceeding chronologically, but not including every generation, with their name and/or relationship and some short anecdote or description; the father, in the same way as the other ancestors but in greater detail, with a description of him and his achievements, and then the names of his wives, including a comment on the family of Galba's mother, and the names of the children.

Other *Lives* vary from this pattern in their own ways but often include most of these ingredients. The *Nero* (1-5) is very similar but includes more paternal ancestors and omits the references to the mother's family, her family already having been catalogued in previous *Lives*. The *Tiberius* (1-3), in particular, shows several divergences from this pattern, such as giving ancestors out of chronological order and including stories about female relatives. The *Tiberius* is excellent evidence that Suetonius was quite able to exercise *uariatio* – in fact, if that *Life* had been missing its introduction and we had tried to reconstruct it on the basis of other introductions, we would certainly not have produced anything like the original. This cautions against assuming that the beginning of *Divus Iulius* would necessarily follow the pattern of *Galba* slavishly. In fact, even the *Galba*, which includes the largest number of separate elements of Suetonian ancestries, lacks some elements. For instance, it does not refer to other *familiae* in the *gens*, although such information does occur in *Nero* (1.1) and is alluded to in *Tiberius* (1.1); five of the *Lives* – all but *Nero* and *Galba* – also give the town where the family originated. The *Galba* is not a perfect representation, but it is the most representative of this rubric across the *Lives*. While our reconstruction of *Divus Iulius* could not make even the vaguest claim to likelihood without assuming some similarity between the lost part and the other introductions, we also must acknowledge that with the first in the series Suetonius might have seen fit to use a different style or method.

As the *Divus Iulius* begins only in his sixteenth year, we should also consider what usually appears in the next section – the first part of the *Life*

the repetition of catalogues of families, and the introduction to *Vespasian* does introduce the *Titus* and *Domitian*. However, I believe that the introduction to *Tiberius* was tailored to that Caesar, based on the specific ancestral traits called up from among dozens of Claudian ancestors, and was therefore not a generic Claudian introduction.

proper. Common elements in other *Lives* between the ancestry section and adulthood include:

Birth: 'he was born' (in some formulation of *natus est*) in a specific consulship, on a specific day of a month, often an exact time of day, and in a specific location.

Something about the circumstances of his childhood, such as poverty (*Nero* 6.3), persecution (*Tib.* 6), travels (*Calig.* 8-10), and possibly some indication of the manner of his education, which is given only in *Nero* (6.3).

Omens of future greatness occur in the *Lives* of men who reached the top under their own steam (rather than their convenient family connections) either at the beginning or at the end of the *Life*.

These correlate with the list Roth gave of things Suetonius was wont to supply in his introductions, and they also overlap with the categories Brutscher and Strasburger thought would have arisen in the lost section, in their brief considerations of the lacuna.³ Both Strasburger and Brutscher commented on the likelihood that Suetonius' introduction would include a legendary genealogy, in addition to the extant funeral oration at *Iul.* 6.1. They differ in other respects: Brutscher thought Caesar's early education by his mother and tutor might have been a consideration, as such information about Caesar's case does survive in other sources; Strasburger was interested in the etymology of 'Caesar.' It is worth noting that neither formative childhood experiences nor external influences on the child's character (such as his mother, tutor, or friends), which are sometimes proposed for inclusion in this lost introduction, appear in Suetonius' introductions, although they sometimes appear in Plutarch's *Lives*.⁴

RECONSTRUCTING THE LOST SECTION OF *DIVUS IULIUS*

As seven other introductions in Suetonius' series are reasonably similar to each other, one can propose how the beginning of *Divus Iulius* might have looked. In fact, since at least the sixteenth century, scholars have been speculating on the contents of that lost introduction. In 1527, Juan Luis Vives composed a Latin reconstruction in three chapters. Vives also published an edition of Suetonius' *Lives*. His reconstruction was considered more or less satisfactory by Laevinus Torrentius, who copied most of it practically verbatim when he published his 1578 edition of Suetonius.⁵ In 1606, the esteemed Renaissance translator, Philemon

³ Brutscher (1958) 19-20; Strasburger (1966) 78-9.

⁴ On these elements in Plutarch's introductions, see Duff (2008) 11.

⁵ Vives (1527); Torrentius (1578). Torrentius added a whole section on the various other families in the *gens* (with the *cognomina* Mento, Libo, and so on) and generously provided more detail on the ancestors' names, dates, and even references to ancient authors – something the modern scholar is more likely to expect than the ancient scholar likely to

Holland, provided a reconstruction of the lost section of Suetonius, in English, to introduce his translation of the *Lives*. Holland said in the introduction to the 1606 edition:

Now, for that his Julius Caesar sorteth not with the rest, but appeareth ἀκέφαλος, as whose auncestours, birth, childhoode, etc. be not set downe, (which maime I impute rather to the injurie of time, than unto the purpose or oversight of the Authour) I have in some sort supplied that defect, with the labours of Lewis Vives, Torrentius and others, which I finde praefixed in the last and best Editions.⁶

Holland appears not to have compiled his own reconstruction just ‘with the labours’ of others, but to have made a translation of Torrentius, the most recent version. For instance, compare these extracts:

Vives

Gentem Iuliam pro indubitato creditur ab Iulo Aeneae filio manasse, qui Lauinio relicto Albam Longam condidit, in qua & regnavit. Eo mortuo, quum ad Ascanium Lauiniaae atque Aeneae filium Latinum redisset regnum, cura sacrorum ceremoniarumque Latinae ac Troianaee gentis penes sobolem Iuli mansit, ex qua sunt Iulii. Hos cum aliis quibusdam nobilissimus Latinii familiis Tullus Hostilius Romanus rex postquam Albam diruisset, Romam transtulit. Ac in patres cooptavit.

Torrentius

Gentem Iuliam plerisque creditum ab Ascanio Iulo, Aeneae ex Creusa filio, manasse, qui Lauinio relicto Albam Longam condidit. In qua & regnavit. Aliis, iisque certiori fide, ab Iulo, Ascanii filio, repetere uisum potius. Ascanio mortuo, cum ad Silium, Lauiniaae atque Aeneae filium, regnum Latinum redisset, cura sacrorum caeremoniarumque Latinae ac Troianaee gentis penes sobolem Iuli mansit. Ex qua sunt Iulii. Hos cum aliis quibusdam nobilissimis Latii familiis Tullus Hostilius, Romanorum Rex, postquam Albam diruisset, Romam transtulit, & in Patres cooptavit.

There are few significant differences between the two Latin passages. Some of the proper names have been changed (Torrentius preferred to use ‘Iulus’ in reference to the grandson, rather than the son, of Aeneas; he added the name ‘Creusa’); a new sentence has been inserted (*[a]liis . . . potius*) to satisfy those who would disagree with the first explanation of the name ‘Iulus.’ In fact, the differences between the Vives version and the Torrentius version comprise just a few additions by Torrentius, who did not excise any of Vives’ material. He judiciously added a paragraph about the other families of the Julii, which, as we will see, was faithful to

provide. Unfortunately these diligent references to Livy and Spartianus are uncharacteristic of Suetonius’ style.

⁶ Holland (1899) 4. Henceforth all citations of Holland refer to the 1930 edition.

Suetonius' usual methods, if over-enthusiastic in practice; however, Torrentius' insertion of extra details, such as filiations and references to ancient sources, helpful to the reader, are more conscientious than we find Suetonius to be.

Holland's version seems to be a translation of Torrentius' version, rather than Vives', as it includes the extra section. Holland's version of the passage just cited is as follows:

The Julian lineage, as most men are persuaded, is descended from Ascanius Iulus, the son of Aeneas by Creusa; which Iulus, after he had left Lavinium, built Long Alba, wherein also he reigned. Others, grounding upon a more assured evidence, have thought it good to derive the same rather from Iulus, the son of Ascanius. For when, after the death of this Ascanius, the kingdom of the Latins was devolved again upon Silvius the son of Aeneas and Lavinia, the charge of religion and sacred ceremonies of the Latin and Trojan nation both remained yet still in the race and progeny of Iulus, out of which are sprung the Julii. These Julii, with certain other most noble families of Latium, Tullus Hostilius, king of the Romans, after he had razed Alba, translated to Rome, and ranged among the nobility.

From the various differences between Vives and Torrentius, it is clear that Holland was translating Torrentius rather than Vives, and only using Vives insofar as Torrentius had done so. While we are, for all intents and purposes, dealing with a text Holland translated from Torrentius' original, I will refer exclusively to Holland's version and Holland's choices.

Recently, Luigi Pirovano drew attention to Emporius' work on the early life of Julius Caesar.⁷ Written between the fifth and sixth centuries, as a rhetorical exercise in how to praise a man, Emporius' work, Pirovano argues, shows sufficient similarity to the extant parts of Suetonius's *Life* that the Suetonian *Life*, then still complete, might have been Emporius' source, and thus that it might be possible to reconstruct the events of the early parts of Julius Caesar's life and career from Emporius. It is also possible, according to Pirovano, that Emporius' references to the etymology of 'Caesar' and the role of Aurelia could come from Suetonius' *Life*.⁸ Pirovano's work is valuable, but the present study looks at *Divus Iulius* with a different purpose, and through another work, Holland's supplement. It compares that supplement with the introductions of Suetonius' other *Lives*, and analyses how faithful Holland was to his author's tastes and style. The findings permit the construction of a provisional template for a Suetonian introduction.⁹

⁷ Pirovano (2012) on Emporius, *Praeceptum Demonstrativae Materiae*.

⁸ Pirovano (2012) 452.

⁹ For specific information about Caesar's ancestry and youth, it might have been interesting to reconstruct Suetonius' text with reference to the introduction to Plutarch's *Caesar*, but it too is lost. Pelling (2011) 129-32: the beginning is lost, and possibly was lost as early as the third-century manuscript PKöln. Pelling raises the credible possibility that it could be

THE CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE OF HOLLAND'S INTRODUCTION

For the sake of comparison with the graph below, I have assigned categories to the important elements of Holland's introduction:

- A The origin of the *nomen*: from Julius, son of Ascanius.
- B The origin place (*origo*): at Lavinium, Long Alba, and then Rome.
- C The legendary genealogy and connection with religious practice: descent from Ascanius, via Julius, without mention of Aeneas or Venus.
- D Statement of status: patrician and noble.
- E Consulships in the family before the *cognomen* was assumed: in this case, beginning with C. Julius Jul(l)us, cos. 264 a.u.c. = 489 BCE.
- F Other *familiae* and *cognomina* within the *gens*: families with the *cognomina* Mento, Libo, Strabo, and Annalis. This comprises paragraphs two-three.
- G The meaning of the *cognomen*: 'Caesar' might come from cutting, *caedo*, hairy, *caesus*, grey-eyed, *oculis caesiis*, or a foreign word for elephants, *caesai*. These are the etymologies that appear in *Historia Augusta* (*Aelius* 2.3-4).
- H Consuls in the direct line, or at least in the *familia* with the same *cognomen*. It is noted that they rose to the consulship late for such an old family. Holland has either not found any interesting stories about them or not seen fit to include them here.
- I The father's name and career: At the end of the list of consuls appears Caesar's father – 'C. Julius Caesar, who begat the dictator and attained only to the praetorship' – and an interesting story about his father's cousin, who died suddenly at Pisa while tying his shoes. This story is found in Plin. *HN* 54.7.
- J The place and date of birth of the subject.
- K Education and rearing of the subject: his tutor, Gniphio, trained him in Latin, Greek, and oratory. Gniphio's personal characteristics receive more attention than those of any other figure in this section, more even than Caesar's mother and father. The snippet about Gniphio could have come from Suetonius himself, as Gniphio's connection with Caesar's household appears in Suet. *De Gramm.* 7.
- L External influences on the subject's adult traits: Marius, his uncle on his mother's side, whose influence supposedly explains Caesar's later hatred of Sulla and love for the *plebs*.
- M His mother's name: Aurelia, daughter of Cotta.
- N His mother's influence on his upbringing: the qualities of her Latin speech 'garnished' Caesar's own talent for oratory, just as the well-spoken mothers of other famous orators had contributed to their speech. (N) and (K) are together meant to explain Caesar's later eloquence.

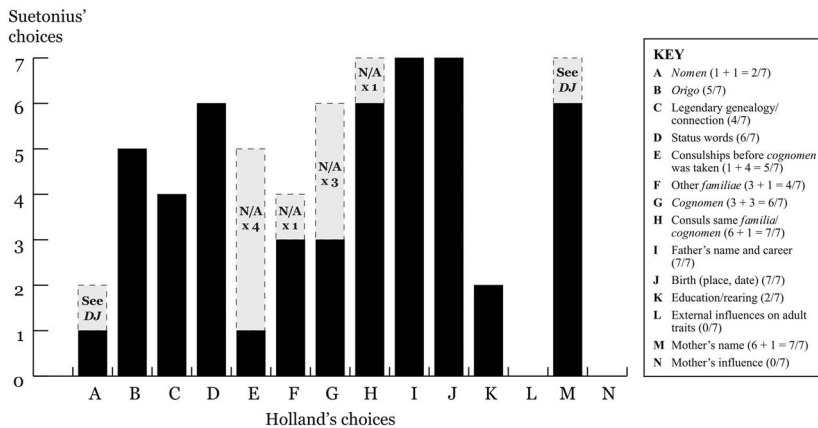
more than coincidental that Suetonius' *Life* is missing exactly the same section; this curiosity had been noticed by Baldwin (1983) 40.

SUETONIAN INTRODUCTIONS

Below is a graph comparing Holland's introduction with Suetonius' seven extant introductions. The elements from Holland (A-N) are plotted latitudinally on the graph as 'Holland's choices'. In turn, Suetonius' introductions are plotted longitudinally on the graph as 'Suetonius' choices'.

Each of Holland's elements is given a score in the pattern $5 + 1 = 6/7$. Because we are using seven Suetonian *Lives*, the final count is out of a possible total of seven. This example represents a count of five introductions that definitely include this information, but which we might call six if we account for the sixth in which it was not relevant. This means there was only one *Life* in which the information might have been available and relevant but for which Suetonius did not give it. This might also be expressed as a final score of 5 out of 6, if we excluded the seventh *Life* from our count on the basis that the information was not relevant there. A score of 6 out of 7, without qualification, would apply to a category which Suetonius uses in six out of seven introductions, and for which the information cannot be shown to apply to the seventh *Life* and might therefore not be meaningful. The scores of $6 + 1 = 7/7$, such as occurs for (M), and of $1 + 1 = 2/7$, as occurs for (A), allow for the possibility that this information is not included in one *Life*, but that it might have been suppressed there because it had been mentioned in the now-lost section of *Divus Iulius*. It is Suetonius' habit to leave out some information about families when it has already been given full treatment in a previous *Life*: for instance, when he omits the Claudii in *Caligula* and *Claudius*, we must assume this is because he is taking this information 'as read' from *Tiberius*.¹⁰

By setting Holland's choices against what appears in extant Suetonian introductions, we can populate the graph as follows:



¹⁰ See e.g. Lindsay (1993) 48 on *Caligula*, and Hurley (2001) 55 on *Claudius*.

Holland's first passage (cited above) incorporates the first topic, the origin of the *nomen* (A), and the second, the place of origin (B). When he begins his reconstruction with the distant ancestor, Iulus, we can infer from this the origin of the name Iulius. The parallel for this sort of reference appears only in one of Suetonius' *Lives*, the *Vitellius*:

exstat Q. Elogi ad Quintum Vitellium Diui Augusti quaestorem libellus, quo continetur, Vitellios Fauno Aboriginum rege et Vitellia, quae multis locis pro numine coleretur, ortos toto Latio imperasse . . .
(*Vit.* 1.2)

There is a little book of Quintus Elog(i)us, addressed to Q. Vitellius, the quaestor of Augustus, in which it is written that the Vitellii rose from Faunus, king of the indigenous peoples, and Vitellia, who used to be worshipped as a goddess in many places, and that they ruled over all Latium . . .

The name 'Vitellius' is not specifically defined or given an etymology, but we are clearly meant to derive it from the name of the demi-goddess.¹¹ As to whether the origin of the *nomen* would arise in our template introduction, one appearance in seven *Lives* is rather flimsy support for its inclusion in Suetonius' *Divus Iulius*. The origin of the name Claudius, for example, was not explained in the *Tiberius* or *Claudius*, although it was an important name in the dynasty that would arise in the series again and again. In the unusual introduction to the *Tiberius*, a second *gens* is described – the adopting family of Tiberius' grandfather, the *gens Livia* (*Tib.* 3). However, the *nomen* of the family, while necessarily given, is neither explained nor linked with a 'first' Livius from whose name we might infer the etymology. It may be, as Brunt pointed out, that the Romans were under no illusions that a common *nomen* meant kinship.¹² However, as he also noticed, Suetonius seems to be fairly flexible with this notion and brings in distant connections with the same *nomen* on a number of occasions: Brunt pointed to the Octavii and the Domitii, to which I would add the unusual case of the Claudii in *Tiberius*. We will soon find that the meaning of the *cognomen* is a common point of discussion, but it seems that the definition of a *nomen* is not necessary for a new (however important) family in the *Lives*.

It is tempting to think, however, that it would have appeared in the *Divus Iulius*, as the *nomen* explains the connection with Troy and Venus, an important part of Julius' image. As the dynasty of the Caesars was, at first, based on family connections, the *nomen* might have been important in the first *Life* of the series. It is also possible that the name 'Iulius' was not explained in the *Caligula* precisely because it had already been defined

¹¹ The etymology of the name has been suggested to be 'golden', from Vitellus (John Lydus, *De Mag.* 1.23.2) or, according to Pauly's *RE* (1961) col. 383, either from 'uitli', 'uitulus', or linked with 'Italia'.

¹² Brunt (1982) 3.

in the *Divus Iulius*. This gives (A) a score of one occurrence (in *Vitellius*) plus one case where it might have been omitted, having been discussed elsewhere (in *Caligula*). This would give us a total of two out of eight, since the *Caligula* is not one of our seven *Lives*. Every family under investigation had a *nomen*, so it cannot be said to be ‘not applicable’, unless the *nomen* in question has already been discussed, as might apply to *Caligula*. Statistically, this is not a convincing case for the inclusion of a definition of the *nomen*, but it might be added to our template based on what we know of Julius himself and the importance of his family connections to his public image. It is also a case where the status of *Divus Iulius* as the first in the series might justify a different treatment from the rest of the set.

(B) is an *origo*, in this case Lavinium and Alba Longa (and, implied by the mention of Aeneas, Troy), information which occurs in five of Suetonius’ seven introductions. A typical example appears in the *Augustus*:

gentem Octaviam Velitris praecipuam olim fuisse multa declarant.

(*Aug.* 1)

There are many signs that the Octavian family was once important at Velitrae.

This is the opening sentence of the *Life*, and it begins with the word *gens*, as do several of the *Lives*.¹³ Only *Nero* and *Galba* do not have a place of origin, and it can be inferred in those cases that the *origo* was Rome for at least the several generations catalogued. Five out of seven is a reasonable majority, and we can expect that this information would occur in any Suetonian introduction if it was relevant – it even occurs in *Tiberius*, when the family had already been at Rome for hundreds of years – and therefore it probably would occur in Suetonius’ *Divus Iulius*. Additionally, we know from other sources¹⁴ that Julius Caesar was fond of his connection with Alba and Bovillae, and through them with his Trojan origins, so we can expect that Suetonius would have mentioned those towns.

Thus far the elements Holland chose to include are somewhat out of balance with the statistics from Suetonian introductions: the *origo* (B) occurs in five out of seven *Lives*, and the meaning of the *nomen* (A) appears in only one out of seven, but with a possible two out of eight if we extend to the *Caligula*. Despite the low score of (A) against other introductions, the *nomen* is relevant to Caesar’s career and the link between him and later Caesars, and therefore it is reasonable to think that Suetonius would have included it. I would add both (A) and (B) to a template of what Suetonius’ *Divus Iulius* would probably include.

¹³ Power (2009) 218.

¹⁴ E.g. Dio 43.43.2: Caesar wore the red boots of the Alban kings; Weinstock (1971) 6-7 for the family’s attachment to Bovillae and Alba.

With the next two items Holland is on firmer ground. In the opening passage, Holland had also referred to the descent of the Julii from Aeneas and Creusa, which is a modest way of mentioning the descent from Venus, as well as the family's custodianship of religious rites. Although, as Brutscher noted, Suetonius does deal 'soberly' with the mythical origins of his Caesars,¹⁵ it is still the case that such information is thought to be worthy of record. A legendary genealogy or connection with divinity (C) appears in four of Suetonius' introductions, including the *Vitellius*, where it is as dubious as the rest of his genealogy.¹⁶ The legendary genealogy is represented by the family tree of Galba:

. . . imperator uero etiam stemma in atrio proposuerit, quo paternam originem ad Iouem, maternam ad Pasiphaam Minonis uxorem referret.

(*Galb.* 2)

. . . when he was emperor, he even put up a family tree in his atrium, on which he took the paternal side back to Jupiter, and the maternal side back to Pasiphaë, wife of Minos.

Suetonius is not weighing in on the veracity of this family tree, but he does feel it deserves mention in the context of Galba's ancestry. It has been noticed that this impressive genealogy might be thought to compete with the grandiose connections of the Julii, given Galba's lack of connection with the ruling family.¹⁷ Caesars with a closer connection to Julius and Augustus need not inflate their histories. For instance, in the *Nero*, there is not a divine genealogy, but there is an ancestral connection in the story about the ancestor's beard becoming bronze at the touch of Castor and Pollux. Nero's family was already noble and convincingly connected with the *domus Augusta*. The story provides an explanation for the *cognomen*, Ahenobarbus, as well as an ancestral connection with divinity (*Ner.* 1.1). A legendary genealogy was a common pretension amongst the nobility in the late Republic, as T.P. Wiseman has shown, and it seems to have been a hobby of the little-known, as well, at least in the early imperial period.¹⁸ The tenuous link between the Vitellii and the demi-goddess Vitellia (*Vit.* 1.1) and the improbable mythological connections of Vespasian's family (*Vesp.* 12) demonstrate that a divine genealogy, however unlikely, was a reasonably common claim, and it appears across the *Lives*. It is possible that a divine connection would have arisen in more of the *Lives* if the Caesars had not descended so often from the same families. As we

¹⁵ Brutscher (1958) 19.

¹⁶ Legendary or religious connections appear in the introductory sections of *Aug.* (1), *Nero* (1.1), *Galb.* (2), and *Vit.* (1.2). There is a reference to the invented mythical genealogy of Vespasian at *Vesp.* 12, which is not in the introductory section.

¹⁷ Murison (1992) 28.

¹⁸ Wiseman (1974) 153-64.

know the divine connections of Julius Caesar were important to his image,¹⁹ and that Suetonius shows an interest in such things in other *Lives*, we can add the legendary genealogy from Venus through Aeneas to Julius to the template.

Next, Holland gives the specific rank of the family (D):

These Julii, with certain other most noble families of Latium, Tullus Hostilius, king of the Romans, after he had razed Alba, translated to Rome, and ranged among the nobility. Late it was ere they rose and mounted to high place of magistracy, but were reckoned almost in the last rank of the patricians of ancient nobility; and of them the Julii bare (*sic*) the principal name.

There are four separate phrases here to denote the high status of the family, which is in the spirit of Suetonius' usage, if a little prolix. A status word such as patrician or noble appears in six *Lives*.²⁰ It is reasonably common for Suetonius to characterise a family with a single status word, such as old, new, noble, common, patrician, or plebeian. For instance, the very opening lines of *Tiberius* emphasise the difference between the patrician line and the plebeian line of the same family.

patricia gens Claudia – fuit enim et alia plebeia, nec potentia minor nec dignitate – orta est ex Regillis oppido Sabinorum. (Tib. 1.1)

The patrician *gens Claudia* – for there was also another line, plebeian, but of no less importance and renown – arose in Regilli, a town of the Sabines.

Likewise, when he comes to give a parallel catalogue of the Livii a little later in *Tiberius*, the first thing to know about them is that they were plebeian—but this has not prevented them from becoming very distinguished. The Livii are introduced as follows:

insertus est et Liuiorum familiae adoptato in eam materno auo. quae familia quanquam plebeia, tamen et ipsa admodum floruit octo consulatibus, censuris duabus, triumphis tribus, dictatura etiam ac magisterio equitum honorata . . . (Tib. 3.1)

He was a member of the family of the Livii, also, because of the adoption into it of his maternal grandfather. This family, although plebeian, was yet very notable, being honoured with eight consulships, two censorships, three triumphs, even a dictatorship and a master of horse . . .

¹⁹ Weinstock (1971) 23-6.

²⁰ Status words appear in: *Aug.* 1-2, e.g. *praecipuus* (1); *inter minores gentis . . . in patricias . . . ad plebem . . .* (2.1); *Tib.* 1.1, particularly with reference to patrician/plebeian status; *Galb.* 2-3, e.g. *nobilissimus magnaue et uetere prosapia* (2); *Oth.* 1, e.g. *patre equite R., matre humili incertum an ingenua* (1.1); *Vit.* 1-2, e.g. *partim ueterem et nobilem, partim uero nouam et obscuram . . .* (1.1); and *Vesp.* 1, e.g. *obscura illa quidem ac sine ullis maiorum imaginibus* (1.1); *honestum genus* (1.3).

It is clear from this passage that the family's plebeian status might be considered to be to its detriment (*quanquam plebeia*), and perhaps that is why the author spells out its prominence in consulships and dictatorships. It was a very famous family despite being plebeian. The plebeian/patrician distinction is the fine line between the very noble Claudii and the very noble Livii, despite the fact that in Suetonius' time the actual difference between patrician and plebeian had diminished significantly.²¹ That the difference in status between the two groups is made so much of here, and not elsewhere, perhaps perpetuates a vein of prejudice in the records of the patrician Claudii themselves – or even in Tiberius' own memoirs, which Suetonius seems to have seen²² – rather than an opinion of our biographer.

Holland is perfectly in tune with Suetonian practice when he gives the family a rank, describing the Julii as 'almost in the last rank of the patricians of ancient nobility'. His concern for precision is Suetonius' too: Andrew Wallace-Hadrill identified that Suetonius was interested in finding out the 'precise degree of nobility' of his subjects.²³ Holland was let down by a lack of vocabulary to distinguish social levels, for the English-speaker must be periphrastic, where Latin abounds in terminology for rank and order. Our example, again, comes from *Vitellius*, where the family's status is carefully investigated without obvious success:

Vitelliorum originem alii aliam et quidem diuersissimam tradunt, partim ueterem et nobilem, partim uero nouam et obscuram atque etiam sordidam.

(*Vit.* 1.1)

Various people attribute various, quite different origins to the Vitellii, some that it was an old and noble family, others that it was really new and obscure, even sordid . . .

Several sections later, a consensus has not been reached, and the biographer must move on with his work: he signals his ambivalence about the early history of the Vitellii with *sed quod discrepat, sit in medio* (*Vit.* 2.1) 'but let this difference of opinion stand.' Even here, where the ancient origins of the family cannot be known for sure, the evidence and the difficulties with it must be acknowledged.

Noble and non-noble families receive different sorts of attention, and Vitellius' family is subjected to the third degree partly because it is unknown. So too, other lesser-known families have their status very clearly spelt out so as to dispel any doubt about their respectability: Otho's father did not come from much of a family, as we can infer from

²¹ In fact the practical differences between patricians and plebeians were no longer clearly marked from as early as the fourth century BC, according to Alföldy (1985) 33.

²² *Tib.* 61.1.

²³ Wallace-Hadrill (1995) 105.

Suetonius' silence on the matter, but he at least had a good background on his mother's side: *materno genere praeclaro multarumque et magnarum propinquitatum*, 'with a distinguished maternal family and with many and great connections' (*Oth.* 1.2). Otho's own mother was a *splendida femina*, a woman of good family (*Oth.* 1.3). The distinction that was wanting on the father's side is sought on the mother's.

For the very noble families of Nero and Tiberius, however, Suetonius chooses not to give a one-word description. He gives instead a list of consulships to demonstrate the same information. In *Galba*, a phrase describing the great nobility of the family stands for the long list of ancestors for which there is not room: *Galba is nobilissimus magnaue et uetere prosapia* (*Galb.* 2). Holland does list the consulships for Caesar's relatives, but he eventually draws a line:

For to rehearse and collect all them of that family, together with the honourable places of every one, which were many in number and of sundry kinds, is not our purpose; and besides, the thing itself is apparent and upon record in the public registers.

In fact Suetonius even does this very thing – excuses the omission of greater detail for want of space – in *Galba*, when he says:

imagines et elogia uniuersi generis exsequi longum est, familiae breuiter attingam.
(*Galb.* 3.1)

To list the *imagines* and inscriptions for the whole *gens* would take so long, that instead I will briefly mention those of the *familia*.

Holland was in accordance with Suetonian practice when he limited the extent of his family tree, and also when he gave the Julii mythical connections and a specific rank. As they are reasonably common across Suetonian introductions, and relevant to what we know about Julius Caesar, we will add a divine genealogy and the ascription of status to our template as well.

The next two elements of Holland's introduction are not essential inclusions, according to Suetonian usage, but there is an argument for each of them in the *Divus Iulius*. Holland begins his family tree proper with consuls from the Julii, before they had become Caesars, (E):

For C. Julius (son of Lucius), surnamed also Iulus, was consul together with P. Pinarius Mamercinus Rufus, in the year after the foundation of Rome city 264; and seven years after, his son, with Q. Fabius Vibulanus (consul) the second time. Again, some space of time coming between, Vopiscus Julius, son of Gaius and nephew of Lucius, bore the consulship with L. Aemilius Mamercinus, third time consul, in the year 280. I find likewise, that in the year 302 Gaius Julius, son of Gaius, and nephew of Lucius, was a decemvir for the enacting and penning of laws, and that in the former election of that magistracy; as also that Gaius Julius, son of Gaius and nephew of Gaius, became consul with Marcus Geganius

Macerinus, in the year 306, and the self-same man a second time, with Lucius Verginius Tricostus, in the year 318; and immediately in the year next following, a third time, with the same Verginius now twice consul.

We saw that in *Galba* the family tree was restricted to those in the *familia* – that is, men with both the *nomen* Sulpicius and the *cognomen* Galba. Here, however, Holland has gone back to the original Julii, before there were Caesares, and that is information that only occurs in one of Suetonius' seven – the *Tiberius*. The list there goes back to the first Appius Claudius and then to Appius Claudius Caecus and Caudex, and includes Claudii from the line of Pulchri as well as from the Neronēs, the father's family.²⁴ Granted, the Julii (like the Claudii) were an old family, but Suetonius' interest appears to be rather more focused on the more recent forebears than on the shadowy figures of the Republic. This might suggest that when Holland went back all the way to the pre-Caesarian Julii he was a little too enthusiastic about the ancient connections of the family. However, as there are four²⁵ other *Lives* to which this category is not applicable because there was not a *cognomen*, this element might hypothetically have occurred up to five times. Perhaps if the families of other Caesars had been prominent enough to have *cognomina* to differentiate them from other branches, it would have made sense to bring up the common ancestors of all the *gentiles*.

Holland's supplement here digresses into two paragraphs on the other *familiae* with the same *nomen* but outside the direct line (F). The long section begins:

Moreover, I have observed in the Julian line a certain house also of the Mentones: and among them one Gaius Julius, colleague in the consulship with T. Quintus Pennus Cincinnatus, in the 322nd year after the foundation of the city. I find likewise Gaius Julius Denter to be master of the horsemen, when Gaius Claudius Crassus Sabinus Regillensis was dictator, for to hold their solemn assembly of election, in the year 405. There were besides of these Julii others going under the name of Libones, and of the same race one triumphed; to wit, Lucius Julius, son of Lucius and nephew of Lucius, companion in the consulate with Marcus Atilius Regulus, in the year 486. But as touching Gaius Julius, son of Lucius and surnamed Caesar Strabo, whom Suetonius also meant in the 55th chapter of Julius Caesar and Cicero praiseth in his *Brutus*, and in the second book of his *Orator*, I doubt whether this addition Strabo should not be taken as a byname.

²⁴ It is possible that the Pulchri are relevant as being ascendants of Tiberius' mother, Livia, but it is unusual for Suetonius to intermingle the mother's and father's lines in this way. Of course, this is not the only way in which the introduction to the *Tiberius* is unusual.

²⁵ *Aug.* (where there is another branch of the family, distinguished by their *ordo* rather than their *cognomen*, but they are only mentioned very briefly; the common ancestor of both lines is 'Gaius Rufus', a quaestor, so we may presume there was no consul before the two branches divided); *Vit.*; *Oth.* (in which the *nomen* and *cognomen* formed an hereditary pair: Murison [1992] 89); *Vesp.* (in which the *cognomen* did not designate a branch of the family, but was a variation of his mother's name, as was Domitian's).

Holland goes on to argue that, although some have thought there were Julii Annales, in his opinion they were really Viliii Annales and irrelevant.

Any sort of mention of other *familiae* occurs in Suetonius only three times.²⁶ This is an optional category, more likely to occur in the family tree of an established family. For instance, this is the very opening section of *Nero*, which does not have the place of origin section that began the *Augustus*, but which does begin, like other *Lives*, with a variation of *gens*:

ex gente Domitia duae familiae claruerunt, Caluinorum et Ahenobarborum.

Of the *gens Domitia* two families have distinguished themselves, the Calvini and the Ahenobarbi.

In the *Augustus*, the line has no *cognomen*, but it is distinguished from another line of Octavii by being from a different *ordo*. It is now thought that Augustus' equestrian line was not actually related to the other, senatorial, line of Octavii,²⁷ but it is enough to note that Suetonius thought they were related, and that it was important to point out the connection, however distant, with the more illustrious family of the same name. Three mentions of other *familiae* is not many. Of the four which do not have it, one might be excused on the basis that in Vitellius' family there is no *cognomen* to differentiate branches of the family, and a different *cognomen* is usually the basis for Suetonius' separation of *familiae* within a *gens*.²⁸ Another two might also be omitted on the basis of the *cognomen* criterion: the Salvii Othones used both names as a pair, and Vespasian's *cognomen* identified his mother, rather than a specific branch of the family. This leaves only one *Life*, the *Galba*, in which the other *familiae* in the *gens* are not mentioned, although there certainly were other families with other *cognomina*. It may be that they do not come into Suetonius' family tree because they were quite distantly related, or because they were by Galba's time no longer prominent. We have already seen that Suetonius excuses his expurgated account of that *gens* (*Galb.* 3.1). All in all, it was reasonable for Holland to stretch to the names of the other families in the *gens* (F), but his long section to the effect seems to have been over-zealous.

Holland moves logically from the other *cognomina* in the family to the Julii Caesares, and an explanation of the name 'Caesar':

In the lineage Julia, then, there was a family also of the Caesars. But what the reason should be of that surname, it is not certainly known; no more than who he was, that first bore the said surname. For before Caesar the

²⁶ *Aug.* (referring to Octavii of a different *ordo* rather than *cognomen*, since Augustus' family had no *cognomen*), *Tib.*, *Nero*.

²⁷ Wiseman (1965) 333.

²⁸ In the *Augustus* the lines are differentiated by *ordo*, rather than name; in the *Tiberius* there are two branches, patrician and plebeian. Several *familiae* are mentioned in the family trees of Tiberius.

dictator, and his father and grandfather, there were Julii named Caesares. As for example, he who (as Livy witnesseth in his 27th book) was in the second Punic war sent from the senate to Crispinus the consul, about the nomination of the dictator. As for the term Caesares, those usually the Roman tongue surnamed so, who were born, either by ripping their mother's womb, or with a bush of hair growing on their heads, or else grey-eyed. Some add, moreover, the tale of an elephant slain in Africa, which the inhabitants there call caesar; and upon that very cause this surname first befell unto Caesar the dictator's grandsire. But Spartianus and Servius, the authors hereof, are of the meanest credit and authority. For not his progeny alone of all the Julii had this surname, but many others besides of his house and kindred, both long before and also together with him.

The meaning of the *cognomen* (G), on which Holland spills considerable ink, does occur in *Tiberius* and *Galba*. The explanation of the name 'Galba' is most like Holland's version, with its several possibilities from Latin and other languages. In a third, *Nero*, the meaning of 'Nero' is not given, because it had already come up in the *Tiberius*. If it were to occur in the *Nero*, it would have to be ironic: Nero supposedly means 'strong and valiant' (*Tib.* 1.2). That introduction, however, does include an explanation of the *cognomen* *Ahenobarbus*, doubling as an allusion to the divine connections of the Domitii, which gives us three *Lives* in which the meaning of the *cognomen* has some kind of explanation. Of the other four, there are two Caesars who have no *cognomen* (*Augustus* and *Vitellius*); a third, the *Vespasian*, where the *cognomen* needs no explanation as it is a version of his mother's name. This gives us a high score of six out of seven: the remaining one, the *Otho*, is the only instance in which the Caesar has a *cognomen*, but it is not explained.²⁹

Caligula has been excluded from our survey, but it is worth noting in passing that his name, 'Caligula', is explained (*Calig.* 9). The meaning of the *cognomen* can be expected to occur if relevant, and from what we know from other sources about Julius, it is relevant here. It will also be a recurring motif of the *Lives*, as it becomes the hereditary title of the *princeps*. It can reasonably be expected to occur here, in the *Divus Iulius*.

To sum up so far, we have come across no elements that occur in every *Life*, but some that appear in the majority of these introductions and which we can safely add to our template: the *origo* (B), the legendary connection (C), the status word (D). The reason for the *nomen* (A) is not a common feature of Suetonian *Lives*, but its inclusion could be justified on the grounds that the *nomen* (with its link with Aeneas) was important to Julius' career and perhaps to the series of Caesars who followed. The early consuls (E), the other families in the *gens* (F), and the meaning of the *cognomen* (G) are a little less safe, but they may be added on the understanding that Suetonius might have used them if they were applicable.

²⁹ It appears that with the Salvii Othones the *nomen* and *cognomen* were passed down as a pair; see above, n. 25.

So far, Holland's choices are reflecting quite accurately our template for a hypothetical introduction to the *Divus Iulius*: (A)-(G) all make it onto our template, albeit some more convincingly than others. On the template (below), I have marked these elements as 'yes' and 'maybe.' Some of the later categories, which Holland uses but which Suetonius does not, will be marked on the template as 'no.'

With (H), (I), and (J), Holland is on very firm ground. (H) is the inclusion of consular forebears with the same *cognomen*, or where that does not apply, in the same line. Holland's catalogue of the Julii Caesares follows on from the explanation of 'Caesar':

Consuls before Julius Caesar the dictator there were, Sext. Julius, son of Gaius, nephew of Lucius, together with Lucius Aurelius Orestes, in the year after the foundation of Rome 596: also Sext. Julius, son of Gaius, nephew of Sextus, was colleague with L. Marcius Philippus in the beginning of the Social war in the year after the city's foundation 662, and in the next year after, Lucius Julius, son of Lucius and nephew of Lucius, bore the consulate with Pub. Rutilius Lupus. Neither before these were any of the Caesars renowned or advanced to the highest office of state. Many years after, out of the same family, Lucius Caesar, son of Sextus and cousin-german to that C. Julius Caesar, who begat the dictator and attained only to the praetorship, who also died at Pisae without any evident sickness, even as he did his shoes on in a morning, that L. Caesar, I say, came to be consul.

This passage incorporates both (H) and (I). The catalogue of consuls in the direct line, (H), appears in six of Suetonius' seven – the only exception is the *Vespasian*, where it is really not applicable, as Vespasian was the first consul in his line. This category will be safely included. (I) is the subject's father, and his name and essential details of his career occur in every single *Life*. In fact, they even occur in the *Caligula* and *Claudius*, two of the *Lives* we are leaving out of our list. This information is a requirement of the introductory section – the only times it does not occur are in the *Titus* and *Domitian*, which is easily explained, as the *Vespasian* answers those questions. The necessary information about the father does occur in Holland, but rather concisely, between the dates of the various consulships and a quaint note on one of the more distant Caesars. It is worth noting that the reference to the father comes not last in the catalogue, as it would in Suetonius, but second last, and that it is the briefest of brief mentions. In *Galba*, the father received the most detailed account of any of the ancestors.

The next element, (J), is even more compulsory: the date and place of birth of the subject. Holland gives the specific place, year, and date of the event:

Well, Caesar the dictator was born at Rome (when Gaius Marius and Lucius Valerius Flaccus were consuls) upon the fourth day before the ides of Quintilis, which month after his death was by virtue of the Antonian law called for that cause July.

The fact that (I) and (J) are missing from Suetonius' *Divus Iulius* is a strong argument for the loss of the beginning. In fact, (J) is the only element of an introduction which occurs in every single Suetonian *Life*, giving eleven out of eleven. For instance:

natus est Augustus M. Tullio Cicerone C. Antonio cons. VIII. Kal. Octob. paulo ante solis exortum, regione Palati ad Capita Bubula, ubi nunc sacrarium habet, aliquanto post quam excessit constitutum.

(*Aug.* 5)

Augustus was born in the consulship of M. Tullius Cicero and C. Antonius, on the 9th day before the Kalends of October, a little before sunrise, in the Palatine quarter at the Oxheads, where he has now a shrine, which was set up some time after he died.

Nero natus est Anti post VIII. mensem quam Tiberius excessit, XVIII. Kal. Ian. tantum quod exoriente sole, paene ut radiis prius quam terra contingeretur.

(*Ner.* 6.1)

Nero was born at Antium nine months after Tiberius died, on the eighteenth day before the Kalends of January, just as the sun rose, so that he was almost touched by the first rays before he was touched by the ground.

The two passages have in common a place, a date in a year, and a time of day. The time of day Suetonius usually provides would have been necessary to anyone wanting to make a horoscope, and Tamsyn Barton shows that astrology was especially fashionable in the period covered by Suetonius' *Lives*.³⁰ Holland's version is close to Suetonian practice, except that he does not give a specific time of day. Holland's reticence suggests that he was unable to find this information in an ancient source and hesitated to make it up for generic consistency.

The final section of the supplement provides (K)-(N) in the course of describing Caesar's childhood:

His bringing up he had with his mother Aurelia, daughter of Gaius Cotta, and his aunt by the father's side Julia, wife of Marius. Whereupon grew the love that he took (a patrician though he were) to the plebeian faction, and the hatred he bore to Sulla. The Greek and Latin tongue, the precepts also and rules of oratory, he learned of M. Antonius Gniphos, a Frenchman born. Who, being of excellent wit and singular memory, courteous besides in his behaviour and of a kind and gentle nature, taught the Greek and Latin grammar and rhetoric withal, first in the house of Gaius Caesar his father, afterwards in his own; and got much thereby, such was the bounty of his scholars, considering that he never compounded with them for any wages or reward. Now was this Caesar wondrous docible and apt to learn, yea, and framed naturally for eloquence.

³⁰ Barton (1994b) 37-46.

His Latin speech was trimly garnished (through domestic acquaintance) by his mother Aurelia, a woman that spoke the Roman tongue purely and elegantly: like as the Mucia, Laelia, Cornelia, and other right honourable dames did, in whose families there arose orators of great name.³¹

There are four separate pieces of information in this passage: (K), (L), (M), and (N). Only (M) is a Suetonian concern: the name of the mother, which we are sometimes left to infer from the name of the maternal grandfather. Suetonius gives at least this minimum amount of information about the mother's family in six out of seven *Lives*. A typical example appears in *Otho*:

ex Albia Terentia splendida femina duos filios tulit . . . (Oth. 1.3)

He had two sons by Albia Terentia, a woman of good family . . .

The bare minimum information – the mother's name – is only missing for *Nero*, and that is because Agrippina's family connections were the same as Caligula's, and the connection between Claudius and Nero, through Agrippina, would be well known from *Claudius*. Omitting families already catalogued seems to be the practice for paternal family lines too.

With (K), (L), and (N) we arrive at the point where Holland clearly diverges from the script. These are also the categories for which it is impossible for us to say whether there was relevant information available to Suetonius or not, and so we cannot populate our graph with a number of 'not applicable' boxes in the place of non-existent actual entries. Holland includes information about the education and rearing of the subject, which I have called (K), and also external influences on character traits, (L). In this case the former is the education with his mother and aunt, and the latter is the influence of his uncle Marius on his political opinions, viz. his hatred of Sulla and love for the *plebs*. Velleius Paterculus also brings in the family connection with Marius when he gives his biographical introduction to Caesar (2.41). The connection that Holland makes between childhood role model and later prejudice is noticeably similar to the passage in Plutarch's *Antony*, where Antony's step-father Lentulus was executed over the Catilinarian conspiracy, inspiring Antony's later hatred for Cicero (Plut. *Ant.* 2.1). Plutarchean usage obviously allows foreshadowing of characteristics through childhood influences,³² and Roth also saw a place for this information,³³ but unfortunately it is rather hard to justify these from Suetonius' other introductions. Education (K) makes only one appearance, with a reference to Nero's tutors, a barber and a

³¹ Cf. Tac. *Dial.* 28, for mothers and their sons' educations.

³² On this see Duff (2008).

³³ Roth (1865) xi.

dancer (*Ner.* 6.3), and perhaps a second is implied in the reference to Vespasian's upbringing with his grandmother (*Vesp.* 2.1). External influence on character traits (L), however, is even more conspicuously absent from Suetonius: not a single one of Suetonius' introductions refers directly to a formative influence on adult traits. The same job is done by the long family trees which catalogue ancestral traits, but never make the connection between a trait and a role-model. (N), the mother's influence on the child's upbringing, is also a figment of Holland's creativity. It occurs nowhere in Suetonius, not even in *Tiberius* or *Nero*, the two *Lives* where the mother is a prominent character. (L) and (N) might be considered to be expressions of the same thing: external influences on the formation of traits. This interpolation goes back to Vives' edition, and may have its explanation in Vives' own particular interest in education.³⁴ Pirovano argues that the allusion to Aurelia, which does appear in Emporius, might therefore have appeared in Suetonius.³⁵ It is also possible that, rather than interpolating it himself, Vives found it in Emporius.

To summarise this part of my argument, the only really essential parts are the father and the birth, (I) and (J), and the mother's name, (M), is also usual. A few things Holland mentions are rarely, if ever, found in Suetonius: (K), education and upbringing, is quite rare, but does appear; (L) and (N), external influences on traits, are not Suetonian concerns at all.

The graph, above, differs from the template, below, in the addition to the template of three final categories: (O), (P), and (Q). These represent three topics that do not appear in Holland, but which are common inclusions of Suetonian introductions. A significant feature of Suetonius' ancestry sections, and one that marks him out from other biographers, is the widespread use of ancestral character traits which often foreshadow similar or ironically different characteristics in the subject himself (O).³⁶ This appears in all seven *Lives* to a lesser or greater extent. It is especially noticeable in *Nero*, where a catalogue of earlier Ahenobarbi moves from one to another, becoming progressively more cruel and more selfish as the generations move towards Nero, with Nero's father the worst of the lot. The ancestral traits foreshadow character traits that Nero also exhibits, sometimes with eerie similarity.³⁷ Where such a line of dissolute ancestors does not present itself, in *Caligula*, the author deploys a slightly different

³⁴ Potter (2008) 264-5 discusses Vives' 1523 work *On the Education of a Christian Woman* and cites several other works from the same era on the subject of the education of girls and women. The role of education in childhood appears to have been of interest to Vives and his peers, but it does not appear to have interested Suetonius.

³⁵ Pirovano (2012) 499.

³⁶ Garrett (2010) 1.

³⁷ The rhetorical function of the coverage of ancestors in *Nero* was first raised by Barton (1994a) 51; Nero's ancestors in more detail: Garrett (2010) 4-5, and Garrett (2013) 74-95.

tactic: he restricts his catalogue to the father rather than the long line of ancestors, and emphasises the virtues rather than the vices for ironic effect later in the *Life*, when the differences become noticeable. A similar method is deployed in *Claudius* where the paternal ancestors had already received a long description in *Tiberius*.

(P) represents the kind of detail about the mother's family that Suetonius never fails to mention in the *Lives* with family trees, but which Holland has left out. Although Holland has identified Aurelia as 'daughter of Cotta', it is usual, in Suetonius, also to add a phrase describing her family, such as *splendida femina* (*Oth.* 1.3) or *probatissima nec ignobili femina* (*Vit.* 3.1), and in many cases it is also Suetonius' practice to add several sentences about the mother's family in a potted version of the father's family catalogue, such as occurs in *Galb.* 3.4 and *Vesp.* 1.3. In *Tiberius* the *gens Liuia*, the family into which Tiberius' great-grandfather was adopted from the Claudii, receives a particularly extensive treatment in the same format as a usual description of the paternal family (*Tib.* 3.1-2). This treatment of the maternal family does not appear in Holland – in fact, even the short phrase describing the status of the family is omitted, with 'daughter of Cotta' standing as a poor substitute.³⁸

A final category, (Q), appears on the template as a reminder that about half of the *Lives* also include, either at the beginning or the end, a catalogue of the omens at birth or in early life that this person would one day attain to greatness. Omens here cover any prediction of the future, including horoscopes and physiognomy. Most of the time, when this information arises, it is in the pre-accession section. Of the eleven *Lives*, six give a prediction in the early section of the *Life*: *Tiberius*, *Galba*, *Otho*, *Vitellius*, *Vespasian*, and *Titus*.³⁹ Tiberius' future greatness was suggested by a variety of signs and horoscopes before his birth and during his life (*Tib.* 14); similarly, Vespasian's future success was predicted by a number of signs from before his birth right up to the reign of Nero. Suetonius lists those signs in a long pre-accession section of the *Life* (*Vesp.* 4-5). In *Galba*, too, there are several signs of future greatness, including a story that links him with Augustus (*Galb.* 4.1-2). In other *Lives* there are predictions of the future by means other than omens: in *Vitellius* (3.2) the child's horoscope is reported to have spelt out the future; *Titus* has

³⁸ As it happens, Holland's usage is most like the treatment of the mothers in *Caligula* and *Claudius*, where Agrippina and Antonia receive no more than names. In those two introductions, the requirements of the series preclude a long catalogue of the father's family, and this discourages the shift of focus to the mother's family. But these are two of the *Lives* we are not using; the only one in our list with a proper ancestry section that does not have it is *Nero*, and perhaps we are supposed to know about her as her ancestry is also Caligula's.

³⁹ *Tib.* 14; *Galb.* 4.1-2; *Oth.* 4; *Vit.* 3.2; *Vesp.* 4-5; *Tit.* 2. Nero has a horoscope, but it predicts terrible things rather than future greatness (6.1); Augustus' omens of future greatness are alone in coming towards the end of the *Life* (94).

no omens but a physiognomist tells him that he, not his friend Britannicus, will rule (*Tit.* 2); Otho's astrologer predicts his ascension during adulthood (*Oth.* 4).

In the seventh, the *Augustus*, the omens of the young boy's future greatness are kept for an extended example at the end of the *Life*, where we learn of the omens before his birth and on the day of his birth that suggested a future ruler would be born, including an unspecified portent, lightning at Velitrae, and dreams of his parents and others (*Aug.* 94).⁴⁰ One of the dreams even suggested divine parentage. Other signs of his importance occurred in his childhood: Suetonius reports his command over the frogs, and the eagle on the Campanian Road that took his food and promptly gave it back. Only in *Augustus* do the omens appear at the end – in other *Lives*, signs of the future appear in the childhood and pre-cession sections.

Omens of future greatness do not arise in the *Lives* of men who reached the throne by default rather than their own initiative: Caligula, Claudius, and Domitian. Nero's horoscope (6.1) predicts, not future greatness, but future terror. It is likely, however, that the omens did appear in the *Divus Iulius*, as he certainly reached power by his own initiative, and omens are known to us from other sources.⁴¹ We know from the *Augustus* that omens might have come later than the introduction, but as the omens do not appear in the rest of the text, it is likely they were part of the lost section. In fact, there is a fragment of Suetonius' *Divus Iulius*, preserved by Servius, which records that 'the invincible ruler of the world had been born.'⁴² If Weinstock is correct to attribute this to the *Divus Iulius*, not the *Augustus*, then it is good evidence that the lost introduction touched on the omens at Julius Caesar's birth.

A TEMPLATE FOR THE *DIVUS IULIUS*

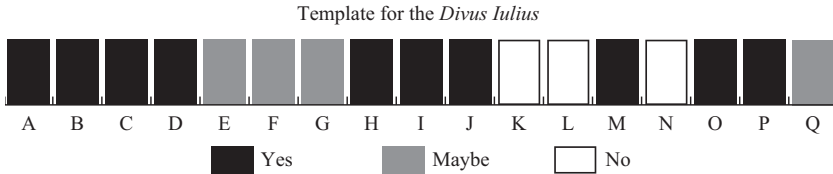
Seven of Suetonius' introductions are similar enough that we have been able, over the course of this analysis, to suggest which elements of Holland's reconstruction would, in fact, appear in the lost section of the *Divus Iulius*. These are presented in a template to accompany the conclusions drawn here. The differences between this template and Holland's reconstruction are: the sections on the early consuls (E), the other families in the *gens* (F), and the meaning of the *cognomen* (G) are allowed, but only

⁴⁰ On the omens in Augustus, see Wardle (2014) 509-38.

⁴¹ Weinstock (1971) 19-26, citing passages from Sidonius Apollinaris and Servius (on which see n. 41 below).

⁴² The fragment is given by Weinstock (1971) 21, n. 6: 'Serv. *Aen.* 6.798: *Suetonius ait in vita Caesaris responsa esse data per totum orbem nasci inuictum imperatorem.*' A similar phrase appears at *Aug.* 94.5, so it has been thought that the reference in Servius is not a fragment but a reference to the extant passage in *Augustus*; Weinstock, however, is confident that this refers not to Augustus, but to Julius Caesar.

provisionally; sections on education and external influences, (K), (L), and (N), are not admitted to our template. Three elements that did not appear in Holland's reconstruction are added to the template as (O) ancestral character traits, (P) the vital statistics of the maternal line, and (Q) omens of future greatness.



A PREFACE

A final thing missing from Holland's introduction was a preface. Perhaps it was wise of Holland to steer clear of speculating on such a thing, as we do not have other Suetonian prefaces to guide us, nor can we really presume to know Suetonius' purpose. In fact, there might not even have been a preface. However, as it is something that appears in other works of similar period and genre,⁴³ it might be worth proposing a few possibilities for what might have been in that preface if there was one.

There is no reason to doubt John Lydus about the dedication to Septicius Clarus; Pliny's letters also began with a letter to the same person.⁴⁴ However, we are not certain whether the whole series of twelve was dedicated to him, or only the *Divus Iulius*. As the other *Lives* have no dedications, let us say the dedication applies to the whole series and would have been attached to this lost beginning.

It is possible that Suetonius' preface gave more information about his project and programme than the short programmatic statement at *Aug.* 9, where the intention of proceeding *per species*, by rubric, is set out. It could be that this preface alluded to previous works on this theme: Jerome (*De Vir. Ill., praef.*) gave Suetonius' predecessors in biography as Santra, Hyginus, Varro, and Nepos. Reifferscheid took Jerome's statement as his first fragment of Suetonius, to be placed not in the *De Vita Caesarum* but in the *De Viris Illustribus*.⁴⁵

⁴³ Prefaces occur in, e.g., Valerius Maximus, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch (see especially *Alexander*), Tacitus, Florus, Strabo, Frontinus, Aulus Gellius. See Woodman (1977) 38 on the tendency to refer to one's own emperor politely, specifically in Florus and Tacitus.

⁴⁴ Lydus actually has 'Septimius' but this has been reliably reconstructed to Septicius: Roth (1865) ix. Maas (1992) 84 notes that Lydus' work *De Magistratibus* is primarily concerned with the Praetorian Prefecture. It is in this connection that he gives the name of the Praetorian Prefect, Septicius Clarus. Lydus also cites Suetonius in several other places, preserving some valuable fragments from his lost works. The connection with Septicius Clarus is made in the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadr.* 11.2), where Suetonius is supposed to have been dismissed from the imperial service along with Septicius.

⁴⁵ Reifferscheid (1860) *Fr.* 1.

We know that the last phrase of the *Domitian* refers to Nerva and Trajan, and that Suetonius often uses a sort of ring composition or bracketing where the beginning of a *Life* or book echoes in its ending.⁴⁶ It is reasonable, then, to propose that the preface referred to Nerva and Trajan, as did the prefaces of Tacitus' *Agricola* and Frontinus (both referring to Nerva) and Florus' *Epitome* (to Trajan), which would create a bracket with the last phrase of the *Domitian*.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude, based on this analysis of the extant Suetonian introductions, that Holland's supplement was basically true to Suetonius' usual practices, with a few exceptions. Holland was too heavy on certain aspects, in particular the very ancient members of the family and the external influences on character, and too light on others, such as the more recent members of the family and the familial character traits. Although he shared Suetonius' interest in the origin of character traits, Holland left out the ancestral anecdotes which are a key part of Suetonius' family trees, and he sought the traits instead in external influences on the young Caesar, possibly due to Vives' interest in the development of characteristics. This analysis of the structure of Suetonius' introductions has made it clear that while the biographer is not blindly following a formula, his practices are formulaic enough that we can reasonably speculate on the contents and structure of the lost section.

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⁴⁶ Power (2014) 58-77.

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