

Projekttitle: eManual Alte Geschichte
Modul [optional]:
Autor_in: Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodrigg
Lizenz: CC-BY-NC-SA

Tac. Ann. IV, 57-60

Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodrigg)

Meanwhile, after long reflection on his purpose and frequent deferment of it, the emperor retired into Campania to dedicate, as he pretended, a temple to Jupiter at Capua and another to Augustus at Nola, but really resolved to live at a distance from Rome. Although I have followed most historians in attributing the cause of his retirement to the arts of Sejanus, still, as he passed six consecutive years in the same solitude after that minister's destruction, I am often in doubt whether it is not to be more truly ascribed to himself, and his wish to hide by the place of his retreat the cruelty and licentiousness which he betrayed by his actions.

[...]

It happened at this time that a perilous accident which occurred to the emperor strengthened vague rumours and gave him grounds for trusting more fully in the friendship and fidelity of Sejanus. They were dining in a country house called "The Cave," between the gulf of Amuclæ and the hills of Fundi, in a natural grotto. The rocks at its entrance suddenly fell in and crushed some of the attendants; thereupon panic seized the whole company and there was a general flight of the guests. Sejanus hung over the emperor, and with knee, face, and hand encountered the falling stones; and was found in this attitude by the soldiers who came to their rescue. After this he was greater than ever, and though his counsels were ruinous, he was listened to with confidence, as a man who had no care for himself. He pretended to act as a judge towards the children of Germanicus, after having suborned persons to assume the part of prosecutors and to inveigh specially against Nero, next in succession to the throne, who, though he had proper youthful modesty, often forgot present expediency, while freedmen and clients, eager to get power, incited him to display vigour and self-confidence. "This," they said, "was what the Roman people wished, what the armies desired, and Sejanus would not dare to oppose it, though now he insulted alike the tame spirit of the old emperor and the timidity of the young prince."

Nero, while he listened to this and like talk, was not indeed inspired with any guilty ambition, but still occasionally there would break from him wilful and thoughtless expressions which spies about his person caught up and reported with exaggeration, and this he had no opportunity of rebutting. Then again alarms under various forms were continually arising. One man would

avoid meeting him; another after returning his salutation would instantly turn away; many after beginning a conversation would instantly break it off, while Sejanus's friends would stand their ground and laugh at him. Tiberius indeed wore an angry frown or a treacherous smile. Whether the young prince spoke or held his tongue, silence and speech were alike criminal. Every night had its anxieties, for his sleepless hours, his dreams and sighs were all made known by his wife to her mother Livia and by Livia to Sejanus. Nero's brother Drusus Sejanus actually drew into his scheme by holding out to him the prospect of becoming emperor through the removal of an elder brother, already all but fallen. The savage temper of Drusus, to say nothing of lust of power and the usual feuds between brothers, was inflamed with envy by the partiality of the mother Agrippina towards Nero. And yet Sejanus, while he favoured Drusus, was not without thoughts of sowing the seeds of his future ruin, well knowing how very impetuous he was and therefore the more exposed to treachery.