THE FACE OF THE CAESARS: PHYSIOGNOMY IN SUETONIUS' DE VITA CAESARUM

by

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(Under the Direction of James C. Anderson, Jr.)

ABSTRACT

In his De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius recounts the lives of the Roman emperors through an extensive analysis of their public and private lives. While the reason for including certain facts, such as political contributions, in the biographies is obvious, personal information about the men, including appearance, is instead simply disregarded as trivial. However, once these details are contextualized within the literary traditions at the time of composition, they can be more rightly understood to reveal the entire person of the emperor. This study is an examination of the appearances of Julius Caesar and Augustus, as found in their respective biographies, in light of the theory of physiognomy, which had reemerged as a popular trend in Suetonius' own political circle. Once infused with the idea that outer appearance reveals truths about the soul, these descriptions become a particular rhetorical device, by which Suetonius creates a microcosmic portrait of each man's character.

INDEX WORDS: Physiognomy, Suetonius, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Physical Appearance

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For Chip

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no period of Roman history was riddled with more uncertainty than the fall of the Republic, in the first century BCE. As power began to slip away from a Senate disconnected with the populace, self-aware and ambitious individuals competed for their share of control. More men than ever were entering the *cursus honorum*, widening the gap between those who would succeed in attaining the highest offices, and those who would inevitably fail.[1] In order to thrive, one had to be extraordinary. But those extraordinary men did not fit within the traditional confines of a republican political system, which sought to establish a society of equals. Extraordinary men would not, and did not, settle for ordinary honors. When these large personalities began to collide, the Roman people found themselves divided and sunk into civil warfare.

As the power system of Rome began to shift from the rule of a collective body to that of an individual, the telling of history was revolutionized as well. The decisions of the Senate no longer carried the same force that it once had, thus rendering the usual annalistic style of historiography insufficient to recount the instability of the time. The story of Rome was now the story of those individuals who dared to step beyond the limitations of their expected roles, and the repercussions that their boldness had on their contemporaries. Such lives began to determine the course of history, and therefore biography became the appropriate genre by which to recount

[1] Mary Beard and Michael Crawford, *Rome in the Late Republic* 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth Publishers, 1999):69.

that transition[2]. This is particularly evident in Suetonius' second century CE work, De Vita Caesarum, which chronicled the development of the Roman Empire within a series of twelve books, beginning with the life of Julius Caesar and continuing through the first eleven emperors.

To understand the empire meant understanding the men who played a central role in its establishment. Suetonius' first two accounts – the *Divus Julius* and the *Divus Augustus* – describe the beginning of a familial dynasty through the lives of Julius Caesar and Augustus, respectively, as well as the restructuring of Roman life to accommodate these changes. The biographies, however, do not only seek to describe how this happened, but also why. What was it about Julius that enabled him to destabilize the entire Republic? Why was he killed in his pursuit of power, while his heir was able to rule for over forty years? There is no doubt that their lives were interconnected. Augustus' success was determined by Julius' legacy and vice versa. What the genre of biography offers as an answer to this question is a concentration on the individual's character, lacking in historiography.[3] Although Julius and Augustus were similar in their ambitions, i.e. to gain political power, Suetonius' record of their lives suggest distinct motivations that impel their particular decisions and actions, to the failure of the former and the success of the latter.

Evidence suggests that Suetonius was able to complete at least these two biographies while still employed in the imperial archives, before his dismissal in 121 CE. Therefore, he had access to numerous first-hand insights into the personal and public lives of both men[4]. His presence in the courts of Trajan and Hadrian also meant that he would have been exposed to the

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[2] Gian B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. by Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1994): 548.

[3] Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 12-13.

[4] G.B. Townend, "Suetonius and his Influence." In *Latin Biography*, edited by T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967): p. 87-88.

contemporary cultural movements in the elite class while he was composing, an influence that is frequently overlooked when studying the De Vita Caesarum. The onset of the Second Sophistic, an era characterized by the resurgence of ancient Hellenistic ideas from within Suetonius' own political circle, created an atmosphere of academic competition, in which the educated elite were compelled to boast their own intellectual capabilities by elucidating new understandings of the world around them through the use of less well-known sciences.[5]

One theory that emerged, and the basis for this thesis, was physiognomy, the use of physical appearance to reveal a person's individual character traits. Chapter one contextualizes this practice within the culture of the second century CE, especially in relation to the concurrent developments in biography and the function of physical descriptions in literature. Once it is understood how physiognomy came to be incorporated into Roman thought, and into the genre of biography in particular, chapters two and three explore its influence on Suetonius' *Divus Julius* and the *Divus Augustus*, as a particular rhetorical device by which the author creates a microcosmic portrait of each man's character. What distinguishes these two men can be as obvious as their different physical appearances, but only for those who are learned enough and careful enough to interpret it. If physiognomy is used to reveal the natures of Julius and Augustus, then the particular features that Suetonius chooses to emphasize – as related to those evident in imperial portraiture – point to particular virtues and vices that determined their respective political failure and success, corresponding to the anecdotal evidence found throughout the biographies themselves.

[5] David Rohrbacher, "Physiognomy in Imperial Latin Biography." *ClAnt* 29.1(Apr., 2010): 98.

CHAPTER 2

THE SUETONIAN STRUCTURE

Suetonius has become an unfortunate victim of his own rhetorical strategies. In creating his biographies of the Caesars, there is no doubt that he succeeds in appealing to the innate human fascination with intrigue. One of the primary appeals that his De Vita Caesarum has for modern audiences is his inside look into the scandals that riddled the lives of the emperors and their families. However, when readers succumb to the temptation of reading Suetonius solely in this manner, his work comes to be seen as simply an ancient edition of the "National Enquirer", rather than as a series of biographies. The subtle nuances of the details included by the author become lost as they are noted, but not further contextualized.

This practice of under-analysis is particularly evident when considering the appearances of the emperors. Far from being trivial, Suetonius' portrayals are involved in an ongoing debate about the body and its connection with the interior workings of the soul. By the second century CE, in imperial Rome, philosophical, historical, scientific, rhetorical, and literary thought were all engaged in trying to find a common thread between these two realms. Mention of physical form became significant in what the body could reveal about a person's character. Suetonius' depictions of the emperors – once they are viewed within the literary tradition of describing appearances, the development of biography as a means of investigating inner character and the budding interest in physiognomy – can be appreciated as consciously employed rhetorical devices, reflecting a contemporary concept about the interactions between body and soul.

In order to understand Suetonius, and thereby value his use of physical appearance in De Vita Caesarum, it is important to acknowledge his role as a biographer. The genre had changed remarkably since its inception in the fifth century BCE, to the extent that what had been considered biography at that time would have been almost unrecognizable in Suetonius' day. Its development began, not as a narrative of a historical life, but as an exploration of human potential, as is evident in the genre's foundation in mythology.[6] The lives of mythical heroes, such as Heracles and Theseus, captured the attention of audiences through the exotic nature of their adventures, as a contrast to the day-to-day lifestyle of the average listener. Their stories grew to incorporate not only what they did, but who their parents were, how they were born, and how they died. The background and nature of the heroes became an essential part of the narrative, creating a complete understanding of that person; thus, simple stories expanded into a succession of tales that detailed entire events, such as in the Trojan War Epic Cycle[7].

In time, interest in such heroes spread beyond the mythological realm to a more tangible inquiry. Just as audiences devoured the legends of Achilles and Hector, they also developed a curiosity about the man who made these characters so vivid. Some scholars believe that the first true biography was a fifth century BCE account of Homer's life, based on extensive research conducted by the Homeridae and intellectuals such as Theagenes of Rhegium.[8] However, because most of their information seems to have come from tradition and possibly biographic traces lingering in the epics, it is likely that this work was more a hypothesis about his life, rather than a realistic account. Similarly, the Socratics' literary attempts did not center on achieving an

[6] Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 7.
[7] Duane R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928): 11.
[8] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography: Four Lectures* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971): 28.

accurate portrayal of Socrates, as much as on discovering his potential.[9] His role as a philosophical leader was more important than the actual events of his life. The dialogues of Plato, while centered on particular conversations that Socrates might have had, are somewhat ambiguous as to whether or not they actually did occur.[10] Although brilliant as philosophical treatises, their value as biographies has to be questioned.

However, with the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, and the consequential subjugation of the Greeks to a foreign power, the intellectual atmosphere of Athens changed, and with it, the genre of biography.[11] No longer flirting between truth and fiction, the aim of learning began to shift towards attaining a systematic understanding of the world, a difference clearly evident in the comparison of Plato's dialogues to Aristotle's handbooks. Matter-of-fact and logical, Aristotle and his school, the Peripatetics, worked with the realities of life, instead of the potential. They endorsed a more analytical approach based on observation and examination. This "scientific" mindset motivated interest not only in the individual, but in what makes him unique, i.e. his character and virtues.[12] Rather than focus on what could be true, the disciples of the Aristotelian school delved into the details of a life, in attempts to come to a logical explanation as to what makes a person who he is. Literary developments, for this reason, tended towards the accumulation of anecdotes, which portrayed a person's personality through his daily activities.[13]

From these simple collections of stories, the biographic genre was able to take shape. Once anecdotes began to be organized into a clear framework, the life of a particular person could be analyzed and then demystified. The father of this development was the Pythagorean-

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[9] Cox, 1983, p. 7.
[10] Stuart, 1928, p. 113.
[11] Momigliano, 1971, p. 65.
[12] George Boys-Stone, "Physiognomy and Ancient Psychological Theory." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 97.
[13] Momigliano, 1971, p. 69.

turned-Peripatetic, Aristoxenus, in the fourth century BCE[14]. His complicated situation between philosophical schools provided him the insight to write about all of them, having observed for himself the ideals of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras through their respective disciples. His biographies, however, were not limited only to these four philosophers, but also concerned poets and musicians. There seems to be an emphasis on occupation, which allowed him to make comparisons between the men, and then identify unique distinctions in each one's character and ethical standards.[15] This structure is precisely the foundation from which Suetonius built his own biographies of the Caesars. However, once Aristoxenus began organizing anecdotes to a particular end, he also infused biography with a certain subjectivity. His alleged impartiality in dealing with each of the four philosophical schools equally is not enough to negate his clear preference for some over the others. He does not simply take record of a life, but subtly passes judgment on it, within clear moral terms.[16]

Even in this earliest known form of biography, the description of physical appearance was incorporated into the understanding of an individual's nature. Although Aristoxenus' works have been largely lost to modern scholars, thereby making it impossible to know the extent to which such depictions were regular elements of his biographies, at least one surviving fragment, found in Cyrillus of Alexandria's Contra Julianum 6.185, indicates the importance of form when considering character[17]:

> τοῦτον λέγειν, ὅτι οὐ πολλοῖς αὐτός γε πιθανωτέροις ἐντετυχηκὼς εἴη, τοιαύτην εἶναι τήν τε φωνὴν καὶ τὸ στόμα καὶ τὸ ἐπιφαινόμενον ἦθος, καὶ πρὸς πᾶσι δὲ τοῖς εἰρημένοις τὴν τοῦ εἴδους ἰδιότητα.

[14] Cox, 1983, p. 10.
[15] Momigliano, 1971, p. 75.
[16] Cox, 1983, p. 10-11. Aristoxenus was particularly critical of Socrates, accusing him of irascibility, being uneducated, and sexual licentiousness. On the other hand, Pythagoras is endowed with the reason and wisdom, thus establishing for his school a tradition of virtue. In this way, Aristoxenus is able to comment not only on the philosophical leaders through these biographical caricatures, but also on their respective schools, for being founded upon the moral integrity and/or failings of such men.
[17] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001): 149.

> That man said that he, at any rate, lived, having not met many people more persuasive [than Socrates], and that so great was his voice, his speech, and his apparent character, and, in addition to everything having been spoken, so great was the particular nature of his form.

Socrates' philosophic message is augmented by his body. Although his words are exceptionally persuasive, his unusual appearance provided him with additional authority, attracting others to him, and calling them to believe in him. These two elements of himself, the corporeal and non-corporeal, complement each other to create a charismatic person. Even Aristoxenus, despite his otherwise unfavorable views of Socrates, evidently could not deny the power such a combination could have.

Although Socrates' lack of beauty might not affect his persuasiveness, it does question his moral integrity. Aristoxenus' characterization of the philosopher's appearance, as being ἰδιότητα, relates to a body that is not only particular to him, but even peculiar or strange[18]. He does not fit into the standard ideals of how a person should look. Although he is not repulsive enough to repel people away from him and his opinions, he is so unique that he instead garners attention. Aristoxenus' scathing description of the philosopher's character likewise characterizes him as flawed and even dangerous, in his ability to seduce others into his philosophy. Just as Socrates is abnormal in body, he is also abnormal in his nature. The quality of the former is seen to correlate with the quality of the latter. As the relationship between the corporeal and incorporeal continued to be infused into physical descriptions in Greek literature, this idea of attractiveness became even more prevalent as a particular sign of virtue. In the third century BCE, Satyrus, whom Saint Jerome named with Aristoxenus as a predecessor to Suetonius[19],

[18] *A Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968): s.v. "ἰδιότης".
[19] Momigliano, 1971, p. 73.

wrote an idealized life of τοῦ καλοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου.[20] The physical appearance of Socrate's protégée was a complement to his spirit. To be beautiful in body assumed an inner beauty as well.

At the same time, a similar principle was emerging in Rome, although in a different medium. Funerary inscriptions, such as that of Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus, *CIL* 1^2.6-7, used general descriptions of the body as a way of praising the virtues of the deceased[21]:

> Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus, Gnaivod patre
> prognatus, fortis vir sapiensque - quoius forma virtutei parisuma
> fuit - consul, censor, aidilis quei fuit apud vos - Taurasia<m>, Cisauna<m>
> Samnio capit - subigit omne<m> Loucanam opsidesque abdoucit.
>
> Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus, born from Gaius, his father,
> A brave and wise man, whose form was most equal to his virtue,
> He was a consul, censor, and aedile among you;
> He captured Taurasia and Cisauna in Samnium,
> He subdued all of Lucania, and he led away hostages.

Like the account of Socrates' persuasiveness through voice and body, this inscription tells how Barbatus' form draws attention to his morals, but here they are placed on equal planes, so that one is indicative of the other. His soul was so dignified, that its integrity was evident even through his appearance. It would be enough to mention his virtues, that he was brave and wise, but the addition of his physical form, even without any details, heightens respect for him. The purpose is not to give particular features, such as hair or eye color, but to portray the individual's true nature. Mention of the body is only important within the context of the person's soul.

Once Barbatus' moral integrity is attested in the first two lines, the rest of the inscription can be read as further evidence for his respectability. Not only is his body and soul equally beautiful, but the listing of his accomplishments shows that he also lived his life in the service of

[20] Geneva Misener, "Iconistic Portraits." *CP* 19.2 (Apr., 1924): 109.
[21] Arthur E. Gordon, *Illustrated Introduction to Latin Epigraphy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1983): 81(no. 5) and Plate 4.

Rome, and to the great honor of his family. While inscriptions such as this one can hardly be called biography, the inclusion of personal details served as a gateway for the genre into Latin literature. The common funerary rituals practiced by the Romans – including the *laudatio funebris* and the wearing of funerary masks portraying ancestors with magisterial rank, as well as sepulchral epigrams – were designed to emphasize the importance of individual lives, and to point to his life as a moral example for those surviving him.[22] Personal achievements, family background, and the appearance of deceased family members are all commemorated as a way of celebrating that person and what made him worthy of remembrance. The prestige of political offices and military victories could be passed on through generations, for the personal benefit of establishing a place for oneself within the framework of Roman society.[23]

It was from this foundation in funerary traditions that Marcus Terentius Varro would establish himself as the father of Roman biography. His Hebdomades, written in 39 BCE, was a collective biography of over seven hundred men as seen through visual portraits, recalling the common practice of placing ancestral images in the atrium of Roman households. Each man's family, offices, military victories, and character – the essential elements of the sepulchral inscription of Barbatus and eventually of Suetonius' own biographies – were listed systematically next to their sculpture in the form of traditional *tituli*, thereby highlighting their significance.[24] However, Varro did not limit his gallery only to the elite Roman men. Poets, philosophers, priests, and even dancers – of both Greek and Roman origin – were honored.[25] Just as the funerary traditions celebrated a man as a contribution to his familial honor, Varro brought

[22] Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 179.
[23] Stuart, 1928, p. 212.
[24] The tradition of the *tituli* is attested in Cornelius Nepos, Vitae, XXV, 18.5-6: Namque versibus qui honore rerumque gesztarum amplitudine ceteros populi Romani praestiterunt exposuit its, ut sub singulorum imaginibus facta magistratusque eorum non amplius quaternis quinisque.
[25] Gian B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. by Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1994): 214.

the Romans into a sort of "family history" of ancient civilization, so that their virtues might be understood within the greater context of the Mediterranean World. This concept, one also assumed in Cornelius Nepos' parallel biographies De Viris Illustribus[26], incorporated historiography into the genre of biography. While such an author might tell the story of one life, he also became responsible for situating that life within the development of civilization as a whole.

While the general type of depiction found in these funerary elements suggests that appearance consistently represents the integrity of an individual, descriptions of the body also emerge in more situation-based terms. The idea that the mind is evident through the body has its roots in rhetoric, as described in Cicero's De Oratore, III, 221:

> Animi est enim omnis actio et imago animi vultus, indices oculi:
> nam haec est una pars corporis, quae, quot animi motus sunt,
> tot significationes et commutationes possit efficere;
> neque vero est quisquam qui eadem conivens efficiat.
>
> For every action is of the mind, and the face and the signs of the eye are a likeness of the mind: For this is one part of the body, which may be able to make as many expressions and alterations, as many movements of the mind there are; And there is no one who may form these same things while closing their eyes.

The eyes and face are gateways for the mind, in that a man's inner thoughts become known through the particular arrangement of physical features. The body, then, is a physical manifestation of the soul.[27] It becomes a means of persuasion, by which a person is able to project his ideas onto an audience, convincing them that he is trustworthy and that his opinions are valuable.

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[26] Conte, 1994, p. 222.

[27] Elizabeth Evans, "Roman Descriptions of Personal Appearance in History and Biography." *HSCP* 46 (1935):46.

Similar descriptions of the body, relating to the sudden incurrence of emotion, are found in Roman works of historiography. Rather than a exhibiting a conscious manipulation of features to reflect certain thoughts, as might be used in oratory, military generals and government leaders are often described physically in terms of their reactions to particular circumstances, such as in Livy's description of Scipio Africanus before the battle at Sucro, in Ab Urbe Condita, 28.26.14-15:

> tum omnis ferocia concidit et, ut postea fatebantur, nihil aeque eos terruit quam praeter spem robur et colos imperatoris, quem adfectum uisuros crediderant, uoltusque qualem ne in acie quidem aiebant meminisse. sedit tacitus paulisper donec nuntiatum est deductos in forum auctores seditionis et parata omnia esse.
>
> Then every courage subsided and, as they confessed afterward, nothing frightened them in a like manner as, contrary to hope, the strength and color of the general, Whom they had believed they would see weakened, and a face, such as they were saying that they remembered not even in battle. He sat silent for a little while, until it was reported that the leaders of the sedition had been led into the forum and that everything was prepared.

Even before he utters a word, Scipio is able to subdue his army by his appearance, in his strength and color. Much like Cicero's description of the orator, the body becomes an essential tool by which Scipio is able to convey his authority. Unlike the orator, though, his features are less designed, as they are instinctive, given the tense moments before battle.[28] The description is still general, although slightly more detailed in what exactly strikes the audience. Strength and color are signs of inner vitality; this sudden vividness in Scipio's body surprises his men. The soldiers' previous conception of their general as an invalid also suggests an alternative perspective. Just as a superior body indicates a superior soul, a weak body reflects a weak-minded man.

At the same time as these general accounts of the body were being used to show its connection to the mind, however, a new manner of physical description was being developed through the Alexandrian school of thought. Rather than mentioning the body in a way that was

[28] Evans, 1935, p. 56.

vague and usually idealized, the tradition of detailed literary portrayals, or *iconismus*, developed in Egypt as a means of official classification.[29] Founded through the need to distinguish one individual from another in legal matters – including wills, military enrollments, contracts, and real estate – the purpose of the *iconismus* was to emphasize the unique aspects of a person's appearance, thus making him identifiable.

When such *iconismi* were introduced into Greece during the early Ptolemic period, they transitioned easily into literature. Having its origin in daily life, it was an appealing way to reveal, or persuade one's readership of, the real-ness of a particular individual. *Iconismi* were used in two specific ways[30]: first, as a caricature, by which judgment can be made on a person through the sarcastic analysis of his features; secondly, as a means of identification and information, according to the portrait descriptions' original use. In either method, though, understanding of the person described is only gained through the in-depth observation of the details of which makes that person unique. Thus, the *iconismus* provided a way to depict fictitious portraits as if they were real, or, in the case of historical descriptions, as the person actually appeared when they lived.

The effective use of the *iconismus* can perhaps be most prominently seen in Suetonius' Greek predecessor, Plutarch. Writing his Βίοι Παράλληλοι a generation before the De Vita Caesarum, Plutarch uses appearance not simply as an addendum, but as a rhetorical and artistic device by which he can point to the moral integrity of the men he writes about.[31] For instance, while introducing the life of Alexander, in book I.2.1-3.6, he portrays himself not only as a biographer, but more particularly as an artist:

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[29] Misener, 1924, p. 97.
[30] Misener, 1924, p. 115-116.
[31] G.B. Townend, "Suetonius and his Influence." In *Latin Biography*, edited by T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967): p. 92.

> οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους,
> οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας,
> ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε
> μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων.
> ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ ζῳγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου
> καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνουσιν,
> ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες,
> οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι,
> καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἑκάστου βίον,
> ἐάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας.
>
> For I am not writing histories, but lives;
> In the most distinguished deeds, there is not wholly an explanation of virtue or vice, but a small thing, either a phrase or a game, often made a reflection of character better than battles where tens of thousands die or the greatest marshallings or the sieges of cities.
> In fact, just as painters take up likenesses from the face
> and from the meanings of the eyes, in which character is reflected,
> considering last the things of the remaining parts,
> in this way I am devoted to undertake instead the signs of the soul,
> and through these, to characterize each life,
> their greatness and their contests conceded to others.

According to Plutarch, the value of a man's life is found in looking at his soul, rather than his accomplishments; thus, he presents the traditional distinction between the biographic and historical literary genres.[32] While a spectacular military victory might indicate a person's capabilities and his worth to his society, it does not reveal what type of person he is, i.e. whether he is motivated by avarice, fear, clemency, anger, etc. In order to know, there has to be an investigation more in-depth than his surface deeds. True understanding comes from the analysis of the details of his life, including his pleasures and his manner of speaking. These less immediate elements reveal more fully his inclination to particular virtues or vices, when outside of the public eye. In the same way, the individual features of the face and eyes can create a greater impression of character for an artist than if he were to look only at the full body. Plutarch sees these physical features as gateways to the soul, strikingly similar to Cicero's claim in De

[32] Cox, 1983, p. 12-13.

Oratore.[33] Through a process similar to a sculptor chipping away marble to reveal the statue within, Plutarch makes use of the minute events of each life, hoping to shape for his audience the real man. The purpose of the biography written in this manner, then, is to give the soul substance, and thereby make each man not only historical, but also relatable.

Plutarch's relationship with the visual is not only addressed through his portrayal of himself as a sculptor, though. In many of his biographies, he describes his subjects in relation to actual statues, with which his audience might have already been familiar. Because of this prior association, they have a certain freedom to critique Plutarch's words, by comparing them to physical likenesses that were found in their everyday lives. Often, these physical descriptions would also be matched with anecdotes, to complement the literary portrait, as seen in the Life of Sulla, II.1-2:

> Τοῦ δὲ σώματος αὐτοῦ τὸ μὺν ἄλλο εἶδος ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνδριάντων φαίνεται,
> τὴν δὲ τῶν ὀμμάτων γλαυκότητα δεινῶς πικρὰν καὶ ἄκρατον
> οὖσαν ἡ χρόα τοῦ προσώπου φοβερωτέραν ἐποίει προσιδεῖν.
> ἐξήνθει γὰρ τὸ ἐρύθημα τραχὺ καὶ σποράδην καταμεμιγμένον τῇ λευκότητι·
> πρὸς ὃ καὶ τοὔνομα λέγουσιν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι τῆς χρόας ἐπίθετον,
> καὶ τῶν Ἀθήνησι γεφυριστῶν ἐπέσκωψέ τις εἰς τοῦτο ποιήσας·
>
> συκάμινόν ἐσθ' ὁ Σύλλας ἀλφίτῳ πεπασμένον.
>
> τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις τῶν τεκμηρίων οὐκ ἄτοπόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι περὶ ἀνδρός,
> ὃν οὕτω φιλοσκώμμονα φύσει γεγονέναι λέγουσιν,
> ὥστε νέον μὲν ὄντα καὶ ἄδοξον ἔτι μετὰ μίμων καὶ γελωτοποιῶν
> διαιτᾶσθαι καὶ συνακολασταίνειν
>
> Another form of his body is seen in the case of his statues,
> but the grayness of his eyes, terribly sharp and strong,
> was made more fearful to look upon by the complexion of the face.
> For a harsh redness was blooming and it was mixed here and there with a whiteness. And they say that his additional name fell to him by his complexion, and someone out of the Athenian abusers made fun, having made this:
>
> "Sulla is a mulberry, having been sprinkled with meal."

[33] James A. Francis, "Living Icons: tracing a Motif in verbal and Visual Representation from the Second to Fourth Centuries CE." *AJP* 124.4 (Winter, 2003): 576.

> It is not out of place to proclaim such things of proofs about that man, whom they say became so fond of jesting by nature, that he, still being young and obscure, spent some time and lived dissolutely with actors and jesters

Plutarch evokes statues of Sulla as a point of reference, from which he is able to paint a fuller picture of the man. While considering Plutarch's characterization, his audience would be able to recall those images and, from that foundation, add details that could not be sculpted, such as gray eyes and a blotchy complexion.[34] Sulla is no longer simply that publicly displayed statue; he becomes more individualized and more like an actual man. This technique of adding to the preconceived notions about an individual is frequently used throughout the Βίοι Παράλληλοι. A formulaic introduction – τὸ μὲν ἄλλο εἶδος – also initiates descriptions of Cato the Elder, Philopoemen, Artraxes, Fabius Maximus, and Alexander. Such regularity of structure across so many lives suggests that these complex *iconismi* had by this time become a regularly employed tool in the biographic genre.[35]

The connection between a person's nature and his body is made even more evident in the Βίοι Παράλληλοι, since Plutarch discusses the nuances of character directly following physical description. Sulla's complexion is brought into direct relation with his love of troublemaking, as though an explanation of his mischievous ways. This use of appearance as a transition into the description of moral character can only work, though, if one is willing to consider physical features as a signpost for the inner workings of the mind, a practice found in the quasi-scientific theory of physiognomy. Even the language Plutarch uses to describe Sulla's features seems to be reminiscent of the technical terms found in the physiognomic handbooks.[36] Although it was not until the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, while Suetonius was composing the De Vita Caesarum,

[34] W. Jeffrey Tatum, "The Regal Image in Plutarch's Lives." *JHS* 116 (1996): 136.
[35] Misener, 1924, p. 117.
[36] David Rohbacher, "Physiognomics in Imperial Latin Biography." *ClAnt* 29.1 (Apr., 2010): 100.

that this science would reach its peak popularity, the fact that it was already developing in the genre, as a means of explicating the character of historical individuals, strongly foreshadows the influence it would have on physical appearance in the biographies of the Caesars.

The practice of physiognomy had developed long before Plutarch, as early as the fifth century BCE in Greece, the same time in which biography itself was developing as a genre. While its origin is attributed to Hippocrates' scientific handbooks, it became known primarily through the later works of Aristotle[37], including the Ἀναλυτικών προτέρων, II. XXVII.7-14, in which he states:

> Τὸ δὲ φυσιογνωμονεῖν δυνατόν ἐστιν,
> εἴ τις δίδωσιν ἅμα μεταβάλλειν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὅσα φυσικά ἐστι παθήματα. μαθὼν γὰρ ἴσως μουσικὴν μεταβέβληκέ τι τὴν ψυχήν,
> ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν φύσει ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος,
> ἀλλ' οἷον ὀργαὶ καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι τῶν φύσει κινήσεων.
> εἰ δὴ τοῦτό τε δοθείη καὶ ἓν ἑνὸς σημεῖον εἶναι,
> καὶ δυναίμεθα λαμβάνειν τὸ ἴδιον ἑκάστου γένους πάθος καὶ σημεῖον,
> δυνησόμεθα φυσιογνωμονεῖν.
>
> It is possible to judge a man's character from his features,
> if one grants that both the body and the soul changes only so far as it is with respect to natural changes.
> Likewise, a man, having learned music, has changed his soul,
> but this experience is not natural for us,
> but it is like how angers and desires are the origins of emotions.
> If, then, this is granted, both that there is one sign of one change,
> and that we would be able to detect our own change and sign of each kind,
> we will be able to judge a man's character from his features.

It is here that the basic function of physiognomy is clearly defined: to be able to read the soul, i.e. a person's innate character traits, through the physical features of the body.[38] The natural dispositions of an individual bear particular signs on the body, linking the two into one entity. One physical feature tells of one character trait, although a character trait can be made evident

[37] Boys-Stone, "Physiognomy and Ancient Psychological Theory." 2007, p. 97.
[38] Simon Swain, "Introduction." *In Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 12.

through a wide variety of different features. The way in which these physical attributes correspond with each other within one body relates to the entire makeup of personality in that person.

Although Aristotle addressed physiognomy in many of his works, including the Ἀναλυτικών προτέρων, Περί ζώιων γενέσεως, Περί ψυχής, and Τῶν περί τα ζώα, there is no evidence that he wrote a treatise solely based on this subject. However, the extent to which the idea pervaded the Peripatetic school is evident in the earliest surviving physiognomic work, the Φυσιογνώμονικα, a handbook written by a follower of Aristotle in the third century BCE. This was perhaps the most influential work for later physiognomists in both Greece and Rome. Based on the amount of detail with which the author outlines each physical body part, the potential appearances they can take, and the corresponding character traits per form, the Φυσιογνώμονικα seems to have been written with the purpose of correcting the faulty interpretations of earlier studies, errors which are to be expected from a theory that is characteristically debatable.[39] The subjective nature by which physiognomy was practiced made it easy for the meaning of features to be confused or changed, based on the one deciphering. The Peripatetics, however, claimed authority over physiognomic ideas, and also ensured the theory's survival into the second century CE, as is evident through Pliny the Elder, who considered physiongomy significant enough to include it in his description of Aristotle's corpus in his Naturalis Historia, XI. 274.1-7, although he himself was unconvinced by it:

> igitur vitae brevis signa ponit raros dentes, praelongos digitos,
> plumbeum colorem pluresque in manu incisuras nec perpetuas.
> contra longae esse vitae incurvos umeris et in manu unam aut duas incisuras
> longas habentes et plures quam XXXII dentes, auribus amplis.
> nec universa haec, ut arbitror, sed singula observat, frivola, ut reor,
> et volgo tamen narrata.

[39] Robert Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1995): 88-89.

> Therefore, [Aristotle] supposes that the signs of a short life are few teeth,
> very long fingers, a leaden color, and many intermittent indentations in the hand.
> On the contrary, he sets forth that the signs of a long life are those curved in their shoulders and having long indentations in one or two hands,
> having more than thirty two teeth, and those with full ears.
> These things are not universal, as far as I observe, but he notes individual things, trivial things, as I reckon, and nevertheless having been reported in a mass.

Pliny the Elder's commentary on Aristotle and physiognomy came at the beginning of an era marked by debate and scholarship, a period important for the longevity of many Greek treatises and would continue even into the third century CE. In a renaissance of Hellenistic culture, the Second Sophistic renewed interest in rhetoric and oratorical skill, in particular, while also emphasizing the value of individual education.[40] Particular *τέχνη*, such as physiognomy, became a means by which elite members of society could display worldly knowledge before their peers. Men were able to gain prestige as they not only mastered ancient and obscure arts, but also educated others in them.[41] Aristotle particularly came into vogue, as one of the foremost authorities of rhetoric and rhetorical training. Physiognomy, then, as an idea of Aristotelian heritage, returned to the forefront of study, but this time, it was particularly useful for the rhetorical demonstrative purposes of contemporary orators.

It is no surprise, then, that the foremost physiognomist of the second century CE was a rhetorician. Polemon the Sophist was born into a wealthy family in Laodicea, and had gained his reputation teaching rhetoric in Smyrna before being sent to Rome as an ambassador to the emperor Trajan. Under his rule, and that of his successor, Polemon became influential around the Mediterranean world, even traveling to Athens with Hadrian in order to dedicate the new Temple

[40] Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophisitc: a Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Psychology Press, 1993):16.
[41] Rohrbacher, 2010, p. 98.

of Olympian Zeus.[42] For all his popularity, though, only two of his speeches have survived from antiquity. His treatise on physiognomy, however, was paraphrased and revisited even into the fourteenth century CE.[43]

The question remains, then, why this particular theory would have been of such interest to Polemon. It has been suggested that perhaps his physiognomic treatise was written in response to the contemporary trend of studying the psychology of the mind.[44] Physiognomy would then offer a way of quickly recognizing a person's character, and diagnosing signs of mental instability. However, Polemon offers no scientific justification for his ideas. He does not state why a certain feature may result in a particular disposition, but simply lists the signs of the body as related to the character of the soul. Nor is there any indication that Polemon viewed physiognomy in a philosophical sense, as if it could bring a person to a greater understanding of true wisdom. It is likely, then, that his interest in physiognomy was intrinsically rhetorical, not only in relation to his profession, but also as a means of gaining power within the competitive spirit of the Second Sophistic.

As a rhetorician, Polemon would have been well-versed in such oratorical strategies as suggested by Aristotle and Cicero, understanding the power that the face and eyes can hold over an audience, in manipulating their emotions to sympathize with an orator's argument. The connection between mind and body would not have been a new concept to him, nor the idea that

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[42] Simon Swain, "Polemon's Physiognomy." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 157-8. Philostratus included a biography on Polemon in his Lives of the Sophists, which has preserved for us many of the details pertaining to his career and political relationships.

[43] Swain, "Introduction." 2007, p. 2-5. The first physiognomic treatises that attempt to rework Polemon's work, the Φυσιογνώμονικων of Adamantius the Sophist and the Physiognomonia by an anonymous Latin author, were written in the fourth century CE, suggesting that Polemon's original survived at least until the fall of Rome. A lost fifth- or sixth-century Syriac translation seems to have been the basis for the work's translation into Arabic, first introduced in the ninth century. The Arabic survives through the extant fourteenth century manuscript of the Leiden Polemon.

[44] Swain, "Introduction." 2007, p. 11.

his audience makes assumptions on his character, whether or not he is trustworthy, based on the arrangements and movements of his body. Physiognomy essentially carries this same idea, only it expands the influence of the body outside of the professional realm into daily life. It is not only the rhetorician who reveals himself through his body, but anyone, in his facial features as well as through the make-up of his entire body.

Although Polemon's treatise itself is lost, and scholars can only piece together his ideas through the paraphrases of later centuries, Polemon seems to have frequently sprinkled his treatise with descriptions of his acquaintances, in the kind of detail that belongs to the *iconismus* style of personal description.[45] Unlike Plutarch, he would describe contemporaries as well as historical figures, even those people he was not well acquainted with, such as a Cyrenian man whom he happened upon only once[46]:

> I have seen a man, whom I will not name, of the people of Cyrene, who had dots in his eyes like millet, spread throughout the pupil, some red, and some black, and they glittered like fire. He was completely immersed in evil, indulging himself in desire, like fornification, immorality, and impudence, and he had no religion or faith. All disgraceful things were combined in him. I only observed him once, but the signs of evil corroborated one another.

Just as an orator is perceived as trustworthy or untrustworthy through his bodily expressions, so Polemon is able to pass judgment on this stranger, whom he had never seen before nor would ever see again, by one glance at his appearance. This power does not belong to oratory alone, but has real-world applications.

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[45] Misener,1924, p. 121.

[46] Of the surviving physiognomics texts, the Arabic text, the Leiden Polemon, is the only account that preserves Polemon's observations of his contemporaries. An English translation of the original Arabic is provided by Robert Hoyland. "The Leiden Polemon." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 351.

As an eminent figure in the empire, Polemon would have been exposed not only to many different types of people, but also to many very powerful people. His position in the imperial court was itself a result of fortune; having come as an ambassador from Smyrna in 113 CE, and already then being granted the privilege of traveling without having to pay port dues, he remained in the good graces of the successive emperors for the rest of his life[47]. In a time of oratory, as the emperor's orator, there was a significant amount of pressure on Polemon to be the best, and to surpass his colleagues. To be able to apply his courtroom tactics to his everyday life, as he was through physiognomy, would have given him some advantage. The fact that most of the physiognomic signposts noted in the treatises are negative, suggests that Polemon was also using the theory as a way of creating invectives against his rivals.[48] A common rhetorical tool, Cicero also recounts the usefulness of causing laughter in an audience in De Oratore, II, 238.4-239.3:

> quam ob rem materies omnis ridiculorum est in eis vitiis,
> quae sunt in vita hominum neque carorum neque calamitosorum
> neque eorum, qui ob facinus ad supplicium rapiendi videntur;
> eaque belle agitata ridentur.
> Est etiam deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies ad iocandum
>
> On account of which matter, every occasion of the ridiculous is in these faults,
> which are in the life of men neither esteemed nor unfortunate
> nor of those who seem to be about to about to be dragged off
> to the punishment for their crime; these things,
> having been conducted well, are laughed at.
> There is also a good enough opportunity for joking of ugliness
> and of the blemishes of the body.

When used correctly, invective can create a relationship between the audience and the rhetorician. Well-placed and tasteful, it allows the people to observe and appreciate the acuteness of the orator. At the same time, such laughter unites the speaker and his audience against the one

[47] Swain, "Polemon's Physiognomy." 2007, p. 156.
[48] Tamsyn Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine Under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002):113.

being derided, in a mutual understanding of the weakness or moral failings of that victim. When an audience laughs, they show their agreement with the one who makes the joke, convinced by the observation made. For Polemon, his treatise became an ideal way to put his vindictive spirit to use, by using his rivals as examples of negative physiognomic truths[49]:

> Tales fuisse oculi Celti cuiusdam a Palemone quidem auctore referuntur,
> qui eunuchum sui temporis fuisse hunc hominem descripsit.
> Nomen quidem non posuit, intelligitur autem de Favorino eum dicere.
> Huic cetera corporis indicia huiusmodi assignat: tensam frontem, genas molles,
> os laxum, cervicem tenuem, crassa crura, pedes plenos tanquam congestis pulpis,
> vocem femineam, verba muliebria, membra et articulos omnes
> sine vigore, laxos et dissolutos
>
> Indeed, the eyes of a certain Celt are reported to have been such by the author Polemon, who portrayed that man to have been the eunuch of his time.
> It is true that he did not put a name, but it is known that he is talking about Favorinus. He assigns to this man other bodily signs of this kind: a drawn brow, flabby cheeks, a drooping face, a thin neck, thick legs, feet plump, as if having been heaped up with flesh, a feminine voice, womanly words, and all his limbs and joints without strength, loose and weakened.

Favorinus is characterized as embodying everything a Roman man should avoid becoming: flabby, weak, and effeminate. In crafting the man to be so contrary to the ideals of masculinity, Polemon deprives Favorinus of any respect from his contemporaries. Despite omitting the man's name, perhaps to portray some sense of tactfulness, the reference is not missed, even by this Latin author, writing two centuries later; nor was it likely overlooked by Polemon's audience.

Among the men with whom Polemon would have come in contact was Suetonius, who was employed as the head of the public libraries under Trajan and then head of the imperial archives during Hadrian's rule, until he was dismissed in 122 CE.[50] Although there is no

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[49] Anonymus Latinus, "Book of Physiognomy." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 583.

[50] G.B. Townend, "The Hippo Inscription and the Career of Suetonius." *HZ* 10.1 (Jan., 1961): 104. Much of the biographic information about Suetonius available is derived from the honorific inscription dedicated to him at the site of Hippo Regius in Algeria. Although fragmentary, both Trajan (<di>vo Tr<iano> in line 4) and

evidence of direct contact between the two men, their proximity within the court of the emperors would have made it very likely that Suetonius was at least exposed to Polemon's ideas on both rhetoric and physiognomy, especially since Suetonius exhibited a similar interest in the body. Before undertaking the De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius wrote a now lost treatise on physical deformities, called the De Vitiis Corporalibus, in which he systematically described the parts of the bodies and the various defects that might occur in each.[51] This practice was not only relevant to the aforementioned scientific interests of the Second Sophistic, but also mimicked the format of the physiognomic treatises, in focusing on the individual parts of the body methodically.

However, Suetonius' interest in physiognomy is more clearly evident in the remaining fragments of another lost work, Περὶ βλασφημιῶν καὶ πόθεν ἑκάστη, in which he characterizes the nature of the blasphemer.[52] In this work, many of the terms seem to be drawn directly from the physiognomic treatises, in particular from the pseudo-Aristotelian Φυσιογνώμονικα. For example, in the Aristotelian manual, 811[a]17, one of the signs of an untrustworthy person is the length of his or her neck:

> οις δε βραχυς τραχηλος αγαν, επιβουλοι.
>
> To those with a very short neck, they scheme.

When compared to a fragment in Suetonius' work, IV. 70, the terms are identical:

> βυσαυχην, ο επιβουλευτικος
>
> short-necked, as one who schemes

This seems to be strong evidence that Suetonius was not only aware of the teachings of physiognomy, but knew it well enough to cite as evidence towards the nature of the blasphemer.

Hadrian (<Trai>iani Hadrian<i> in line 8) seemed to be references in relation to Suetonius' political offices (<a> stvdiis a byblio<thecis>/ <ab e>pistvlis).

[51] Evans, 1935, p. 62.

[52] Evans, 1935, p. 62.

This possibility that physiognomy formed a part of Suetonius' descriptions creates a new perspective by which his portrayals of the emperors in the De Vita Caesarum can be viewed. Rather than being trivial facts, they are infused with the literary traditions and rhetorical ideas of his time, suggesting an inherent connection between man's body and soul. Plutarch in particular provided a precedent for Suetonius through his use of detailed *iconismi* in the genre of biography, himself utilizing physical features as a transition into discussion on character.[53] Polemon, however, was able to influence Suetonius in showing how the body is not only a corporeal manifestation of the soul, but a rhetorical tool that can be manipulated. The way one portrays oneself and others affects how people think of them. Positive features build trust, while emphasis on the negative creates distrust. By highlighting one feature over another, Suetonius can then fashion the emperor's nature as either virtuous or malicious through appearance.[54] Depending on what traits he draws the audience's attention toward, he is able to affect how that emperor is remembered.

In this way, the use of physiognomy relates closely to the basic nature of biography. While the genre seems to imply a closeness to reality, it is impossible to give a completely unbiased account of an entire life. Biography is innately selective, in what is deemed significant enough to include and what is considered of secondary importance.[55] Much like the early tales of mythological stories and the ideal Socrates, it balances between truth and fiction, in that each life is aimed toward a certain purpose. It is this idea that separates biography from historiography. This genre, as evident through the scientific mindset of the Peripatetics, is more than a listing of facts, but the examination of those facts in order to reach a deeper understanding of a given individual. For the same reason, physiognomists, many of whom also belonged to the Peripatetic

[53] Townend, 1967, p. 84.
[54] Cox, 1983, p. 15.
[55] Momigliano, 1971, p. 11.

school, examined the physical features of the body. Suetonius' systematic listing of the events through a *per species* approach to the lives of the Caesars reflects this mindset.[56] His De Vita Caesarum is focused, but that does not mean that it is objective. His goal is not to create a complex picture of the state of Rome, but a portrait of its leader. Linear chronology, therefore, gives way to the use of episodic anecdotes and personal details.[57] These can be arranged, reviewed, re-categorized, and fashioned into a clear verdict on each man and his nature.

It is this careful structuring, incorporating the prominent literary and intellectual trends of the times, that is often glossed over in modern scholarship. Suetonius' descriptions of the emperors are not meant to be looked at casually, but to be understood within a particular context. Drawing on the traditions of describing the body, from early inscriptions to the annals, the biographic genre evolving since fifth century Greece, and in particular considering the prevalence of physiognomy in the Second Sophistic, these literary portraitures are more than simply depictions, but constitute a means by which the true nature of the emperor may be fully revealed. The face cannot mask the soul, nor can a man hide his face. In these depictions, then, is the truest representation one can have of an emperor's character, devoid of all idealization or mythology that may surround him. In only a paragraph, Suetonius is able to summarize an entire life. Without careful study, the message can easily be missed.

[56] Andrew Wallace-Handrill, *Suetonius: the Scholar and his Caesars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 69.
[57] Conte, 1994, p. 548.

CHAPTER 3

NOT A REX, BUT A CAESAR

By the time Suetonius was composing the De Vita Caesarum, the name "Caesar" was synonymous with imperial rank and power. The title reflected not only the authority of an individual head of state, but the governance of Rome over the entire Mediterranean. At one time, however, "Caesar" was simply the name of a fairly inauspicious Roman family. They enjoyed their distinction as one of the original patrician clans, and were prevalent in political offices until the third century BCE, but afterward, they had fallen outside of public attention.[58] However, it was this name, from this family, that collapsed the Roman world into a renewed series of civil wars and bloodshed, from which the empire would be able to rise. It was by this name that Suetonius, in *Divus Julius* LXXIX.2, illuminates the instability that characterized the last years of the Republic:

> quanquam et plebei regem se salutanti
> Caesarem se, non regem esse responderit
>
> And, nevertheless, he would respond to the plebian greeting him as a king,
> That he was Caesar, not a king.

This anecdote perhaps best exemplifies the controversy surrounding the life of Gaius Julius Caesar and his role in the dismantlement of the Roman republican system. By his response to this simple greeting as a *rex*, Julius was given the opportunity either to accept or deny any intention of re-establishing the monarchy. His answer is ambiguous, though. On a most basic interpretation, it can be taken literally to express his disinterest in the kingship. Most scholars agree that Julius was making a pun, contrasting his own name with that of another Roman

[58] W. Jeffrey Tatum, *Always I Am Caesar* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 29.

family, the Rex clan.[59] By claiming mistaken identity, he is able to laugh off the salutation, and thus avoid controversy. It is especially important to remember, though, that the Rex clan was also part of Julius' own family history, as recounted during his funeral address in honor of his aunt Julia, in *Divus Julius* VI.1:

> Amitae meae Iuliae maternum genus ab regibus ortum,
> paternum cum diis inmortalibus coniunctum est.
> nam ab Anco Marcio sunt Marcii Reges, quo nomine fuit mater;
> a Venere Iulii, cuius gentis familia est nostra.
> est ergo in genere et sanctitas regum, qui plurimum inter homines pollent,
> et caerimonia deorum, quorum ipsi in potestate sunt reges
>
> The maternal family of my aunt Julia rose from the kings,
> And her father's family has been joined with the immortal gods.
> For the Marcii Reges, by which name my mother lived, are from Ancus Marcius;
> The Julians, of which race our family exists, are from Venus.
> Therefore, in my ancestry there is both the sanctity of the kings, who are valued foremost among men, and the divinity of the gods, in whose power the kings themselves exist.

Although having claim to the ancient authority of the Rex clan, Julius saw himself as more than that. His connection with the Julians also infused him with a divine power. To be a Caesar, then, was to be greater than a mere *rex*.[60] He was not limited to the earthly realm, but could supersede it, approaching the more celestial. Julius claimed power unmatched in Rome since the deification of Romulus, spanning even beyond the confines of the mortal world, an assumption that would foreshadow the imperial connotations associated with his name.

Whether Julius intended to pursue such unparalleled heights, attain a monarchy, or was simply a shrewd politician with an eye for opportunity, his life and his relationship with the Roman people are fundamental to understanding the authoritarian role of future Caesars. As a biographer, Suetonius was careful not to get too involved in the historical debate concerning

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[59] Suetonius, "Divus Julius." In *De Vita Caesarum*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001): 132.

[60] Monroe E. Deutsch, "I am Caesar, Not Rex." *CPh* 23.4 (Oct., 1928): 397.

Julius' motivations. Rather, he approached the *Divus Julius* through a pattern of *per species* narration, by which he was able to analyze every component of this life, both in the public and private domains, with a façade of objectivity.[61] The biography is a means of demystification, not an accusation, of Julius. Rather than pass judgment on his public contributions, Suetonius instead ends this discussion and turns to more intimate details of his private life in *Divis Julius* XLIV.4:

> Talia agentem atque meditantem mors praeuenit.
> de qua prius quam dicam, ea quae ad formam et habitum et cultum et mores,
> nec minus quae ad ciuilia et bellica eius studia pertineant,
> non alienum erit summatim exponere
>
> Death prevented him doing and intending such things.
> But before I talk about which death, it would not be inappropriate to put forth briefly those things which may pertain to his form, his appearance, his dress, and his practices, and no less those things which are relevant to his civil and military endeavors.

For the purposes of the biography, developing an understanding of Julius as a person is more important than the consequences of his legislative actions.[62] It is significant, for the focus on physiognomy and the relationship between body and soul, that appearance is set forth as a point of transition between Julius' public and private activities. By his appearance and dress, character is revealed. It is a practice similar to, and perhaps drawn from, Plutarch's use of physical description in his biography of Sulla, as mentioned in chapter one.[63] With the rise of physiognomy in the Second Sophistic, however, Suetonius was not limited to developing Julius' character directly following his discourse on appearance. Writing for an audience more familiar with the quasi-science, Suetonius was able to use the *iconismus* in a way that mimicked how it was practiced. The portrayal of Julius is only a first indication of particular virtues and vices,

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[61] Gian B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. by Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1994): 549.
[62] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography: Four Lectures* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971): 11.
[63] Chapter 1, p. 11-13

similar to the moment when a physiognomist first lays eyes on an individual to be judged. While it is possible to determine the physiognomic signs within a moment's glance, continued observation is encouraged in order that those readings can be proved true.[64] The anecdotes about Julius' life that follow the *iconismus*, then, serve a distinct purpose, to augment interpretation, not digress from it. Suetonius' description of Julius' physical appearance in *Divus Julius* XLV.1-2 is more than simply a transition. It is also a foreshadowing of the character traits to be developed:

> Fuisse traditur excelsa statura, colore candido, teretibus membris,
> ore paulo pleniore, nigris uegetisque oculis, ualitudine prospera,
> nisi quod tempore extreme repente animo linqui
> atque etiam per somnum exterreri solebat.
> comitiali quoque morbo bis inter res agendas correptus est.
> circa corporis curam morosior, ut non solum tonderetur diligenter ac raderetur,
> sed uelleretur etiam, ut quidam exprobrauerunt, caluitii uero deformitatem
> iniquissime ferret saepe obtrectatorum iocis obnoxiam expertus.
> ideoque et deficientem capillum reuocare a uertice adsueuerat
> et ex omnibus decretis sibi a senatu populoque honoribus non aliud aut recepit
> aut usurpauit libentius quam ius laureate coronae perpetuo gestandae.
>
> It is handed down that he had been of a tall height, with fair coloring, round limbs,
> a slightly bigger mouth, black and animated eyes, and with good health,
> except for the fact that, at the end of his life, he was accustomed
> to suddenly faint and to also be frightened by a dream.
> Twice he was seized by epilepsy in the course of conducting his affairs.
> He was rather scrupulous concerning the care of his body, so that he was not only
> trimmed and shaved diligently, but he was also plucked, as certain people have
> accused, and he endured the disfigurement of baldness most unwillingly,
> often having experienced this as subject to the jokes of his detractors.
> Therefore, he used to draw forward his thinning hair from the top of his head and,
> out of all the honors having been voted to him by the Senate and people,
> not any did he receive or make use of more willingly
> than the right of wearing the laurel crown continually.

The description of Julius begins with an appraisal of the general features of his body – his height, complexion and limbs – and quickly narrows in on the features of his face and eyes; then,

[64] Simon Swain, "Polemon's Physiognomy." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Sou: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 196.

it delves even deeper, beyond the physical domain, into accounts of his health, personal habits, and even his self-consciousness. The conciseness with which Suetonius shifts from appearance to hints of Julius' character is so smooth that it is almost overlooked. The connection between the discussion of the body and of the soul is natural, even logical in its transitions, with the eyes serving as the bridge to gap these two aspects of Julius' personality.

The eyes, it should be recalled, have particular significance in physiognomy as the gateway to the soul. Their prevalence is highlighted in all four of the surviving physiognomic texts: the Leiden Polemon TK 3207 fos. $46^{a}5$-$^{b}13$, Φυσιογνώμονικων of Adamantius the Sophist B1, the Physiognomonia by Anonymus Latinus 20, the Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle $814^{b}1$. Those treatises believed to be closest to Polemon's original, the work of Adamantius and the Leiden Polemon, devote as much as thirty percent of each composition solely to the various characteristics within the eyes.[65] Other physical attributes are then organized into a hierarchical system, based on those which hold the most evidence for a person's character. According to Adamantius and the Pseudo-Aristotle, following the eyes as the most important, are those facial features closest to the eyes, including the forehead, nose, mouth, and cheeks. The shoulders, hands, feet, and legs are placed third, and the area around the stomach is last.[66] In Suetonius' description of Julius, the biographer begins with the signs of the least significance, those that relate to the most basic attributes of the body, and moves up the scale to the most crucial, as though applying the physiognomic principle in reverse. Through the mention of only five features, Suetonius shifts into his theme of character, beyond the physical, gradually making clearer the insubstantial truths about what sort of person Julius was.

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[65] Simon Swain, "Introduction." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 12.

[66] Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B1; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, $814^{b}1$.

This is not to say that the first two features of Julius' *iconismus*, his height and complexion, are negligible, despite falling outside the range of the usual physiognomic hierarchy. As Adamantius makes evident in his Φυσιογνώμονικων, A3, even before he lays out the structural division of physical features, it is the combination of a man's various traits that creates creates the fullest portrayal of his nature, more so than any individual characteristic:

> Τῶν δὲ σημείων αἱροῦ τὰ μέγιστα καὶ δοκιμώτατα
> καὶ ἄλλοις ἄλλων μᾶλλον πείθου· ἄλλα γὰρ ἄλλων δυνάμει προέχει.
> μέγιστον δὲ αἱ μίξεις τῶν σημείων τὸ διάφορον ἀπεργάζονται ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ·
> τὰ γὰρ πολλὰ ἤθη καὶ βουλεύματα τῶν ἀνθρώπων
> ἐκ τῆς μίξεως τῶν σημείων κατανοεῖται.
>
> Take up the best and most notable of the signs
> And trust some more than others. For one value is superior to others.
> The mingling of the signs produces the greatest difference in this skill. For the
> Many characters and purposes of men are observed in the mixing of these signs.

Just as a person is not viewed only in terms of his eyes or mouth, physiognomy also requires an understanding of the relationship between the features. The revelations of more significant details can be augmented or tempered by lesser attributes, allowing for a gradation of character. While many people might have blue eyes, their natures are individualized through their particular body sizes and skin tones. Height, in particular, seems to have been one of the least important components of physiognomic practice, as evident by its absence in all but one of the surviving treatises. However, its presence in the Pseudo-Aristotle's Φυσιογνώμονικα, 813^{b}9-11, the oldest of extant physiognomic texts and the only one which may have been directly known to Suetonius[67], affirms its relevance to the portrayal of Julius' personality:

> Οἱ μικροὶ ἄγαν ὀξεῖς· τῆς γὰρ τοῦ αἵματος φορᾶς μικρὸν τόπον κατεχούσης
> καὶ αἱ κινήσεις ταχὺ ἄγαν ἀφικνοῦνται ἐπὶ τὸ φρονοῦν.
> οἱ δὲ ἄγαν μεγάλοι βραδεῖς· τῆς γὰρ τοῦ αἵματος φορᾶς
> μέγαν τόπον κατεχούσης αἱ κινήσεις βραδέως ἀφικνοῦνται ἐπὶ τὸ φρονοῦν

[67] Elizabeth Evans, "Roman Descriptions of Personal Appearance in History and Biography." *HSCP* 46 (1935): 51.

> Very short men are hasty, for the movement of the flow of blood,
> occupying a small area, arrives at the brain very quickly.
> And very tall men are slow, for the movement of the flow of the blood,
> occupying a large area, arrives slowly at the mind.

The use of βραδεῖς is brought into direct contrast with ὀξεῖς, showing that height does not reflect the faculty of the mind, as much as its zeal.[68] The claim that Julius was in any way ignorant in his ascension to power would be ridiculous. Suetonius' accounts of Julius' early successes are littered with evidence of the manipulations, bribes, and plots which focused on gradually gaining him public favor.[69] There is no doubt that he had the political savvy to succeed in the last years of the Republic.[70] Julius' "slowness" instead suggests a certain conscientiousness in his actions, which parallels his deliberate steps toward dominion. Even in his military campaigns, described in *Divus Julius* LVIII.1, his command of his troops shows his concern with the bigger picture, as much as taking the opportunities that are immediately available:

> in obeundis expeditionibus dubium cautior an audentior,
> exercitum neque per insidiosa itinera duxit umquam
> nisi perspeculatus locorum situs, neque in Britanniam transuexit,
> nisi ante per se portus et nauigationem et accessum ad insulam explorasset
>
> It is uncertain whether he was more cautious or more bold in going out on campaigns, for he never led his army along dangerous marches, unless having explored the situation of places thoroughly, nor did he cross into Britain until he himself explored the harbors, the sailing, and the approach to the island.

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[68] *A Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968): s.v. "βραδυς".

[69] *Divus Julius* III.1 – cut short his military service in Cilicia to participate in revolution planned by Marcus Lepidus after Sulla's death; X.1-2 – Julius' extensive building projects and public games as an aedile, to appeal to the public masses; XI.1- attempt to leverage his newfound popularity in order to gain command of Egypt;XII.1- bribed a man to charge Gaius Rabirius with treason; XIII.1 – in losing the governance of Egypt, Julius sought the office of the pontifex maximus, again with the use of bribes; XVIII.2- Julius gave up his military triumph for his exploits in Spain, in order to become a candidate for the consulship; XIX.1 – alliance between Lucius Lucceius and Julius, in order to gain the consulship;XXI.1 - XXII.1- married the daughter of Lucius Piso, and married his daughter to Gnaeus Pompey, and from their alliance was able to gain the province of Gaul

[70] Llewwlyn Morgan, "'Levi Quidem de re…': Julius Caesar as Tyrant and Pedant." *JRS* 87 (1997): 24.

Despite what might be assumed from other decisions throughout his career and narrated in the biography, Julius is not characterized as being hasty.[71] He has the wherewithal to judge each break of fortune for the likelihood of success, before acting upon it. He knows when to restrain himself and when to use the element of surprise. His "slowness", as depicted through his tall stature, is a positive physiognomic sign, representing his intelligent and skillful handling of power and *illa constantia eius*.[72]

In the same way, complexion also adds to Suetonius' developing portrayal of Julius' nature. Although still not prominent in all the physiognomic texts, the connotations of coloring seem to have borne slightly more influence on later authors, including Adamantius the Sophist, who used the pseudo-Aristotle and Polemon as the foundation for his own Φυσιογνώμονικων.[73] Through him, a basic classification of the various skin colors is provided, in Book II.33:

> Δῆλον δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν προλελεγμένων, ὡς ἡ μὲν μέλαινα χροιὰ δειλίαν
> καὶ πολυμηχανίαν μηνύει, ἡ δὲ λευκὴ καὶ ὑπόξανθος ἀλκὴν καὶ θυμὸν λέγει,
> τὸ δὲ πάνυ λευκὸν ἄκρατον εἰς ἀνανδρίαν φέρει,
> πυρρὸν δὲ τὸ σῶμα πᾶν δολεροῦ καὶ πολυτρόπου ἀνδρός ἐστι δεῖγμα.
>
> It is clear from the things having been said before, how a dark color indicates cowardice and resourcefulness, how a white and yellowish color express strength and courage, how a very pure white conveys unmanliness, and how an all red body is evidence of a deceitful and wily man.

The difference between a white and very white complexion, although seemingly negligible from an aesthetic point of view, is significant in physiognomy for its distinction between the masculine and feminine types. Like the significance of the eyes, this dichotomy is prevalent in

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[71] Suetonius charges Julius with rashness in only three instances, all of which narrowly avoided disastrous consequences : *Divus Julius* VIII.1 – incited Latin colonies to demand citizenship, until the consuls settled legions there to prevent military outbreak; XX.5 – bribed a man to declare an assassination attempt against Pompey, but when he failed to make the conspiracy believable, Julius had him poisoned; XXXV.1 – war against King Ptolemy after the death of Pompey, despite the lack of supplies, the winter season, and being within enemy territory.

[72] *Divus Julius* LXIII.1

[73] Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων , A1.

all four extant treatises[74], suggesting it as a fundamental elements of physiognomic practice. Whether a person tends more towards the masculine ideal, as with white skin, or the feminine, as indicated by a more pallid tone, has important implications in determining whether he or she is more virtuous or vicious, which Adamantius himself makes clear in his Φυσιογνώμονικων II.2:

> βελτίω δὲ τὰ ἄρρενα τῶν θηλειῶν·
> ὡς γὰρ ἐπιπλεῖστον τὸ μὲν ἄρρεν γενναῖον, ἄδολον, δίκαιον, θυμοειδές,
> φιλότιμον, ἄκακον· τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἀγεννές, πικρόν, δολερόν, κουφόνουν,
> ἄδικον, φιλόνεικον, θρασύδειλον
>
> The masculine is better than the feminine.
> For thus the most masculine is noble, honest, just, spirited, ambitious, and simple
> The feminine is low-born, bitter, deceitful, treacherous, unjust, contentious,
> and a braggart.

Although Adamantius used a single adjective, λευκὴ, to describe both shades of white, Latin vocabulary seems to offer a clearer distinction between the two. *Candidus*, similar to the Greek λευκὴ[75], suggests a color that is not just white, but of a shining and clear appearance. It has more than one dimension, as though infused with light, embodying a certain vitality in it. On the other hand, *albus* reflects a duller shade, one more frequently associated with the paleness of sickness or fear, and therefore reminiscent of feminine weakness.[76] Suetonius' simple choice of words in this description then situates Julius in line with the masculine ideal. In the same way, the Aristotelian Φυσιογνώμονικα 806^{b}3-5 points to how a more moderate tone of white, one also saturated with another shade, indicates the best character:

> αἱ μὲν οὖν χροιαὶ σημαίνουσιν αἱ μὲν ὀξεῖαι θερμὸν καὶ ὕφαιμον,
> αἱ μὲν ὀξεῖαι θερμὸν καὶ ὕφαιμον, αἱ δὲ λευκέρυθροι εὐφυΐαν,
> ὅταν ἐπὶ λείου χρωτὸς συμβῇ τοῦτο τὸ χρῶμα.

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[74] Leiden Polemon, trans. by Robert Hoyland, TK 3207, fo. 65^{a}9-^{b}1; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B33; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 79; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, 812^{a}12-25.

[75] P.G.W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982): s.v. "candidus"; *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968, s.v. "λευκος".

[76] This distinction is made in Servius' commentary on Vergil's *Georgics*, III. 82.

> A bright complexion indicates a man hot-headed and sanguine;
> a whitish-red points to a man with a good disposition,
> when this color is found on smooth skin.

The author warns of an additional qualification, before judgment is passed on the signs of the skin. Texture, as well as complexion, must be analyzed, in order to assess accurately that a person is of good disposition. However, this detail is missing from Suetonius. In this instance, when literary evidence is insufficient to confirm or deny the connection to a physiognomic value, artistic representation, such as the marble bust of Julius known as the Tusculum Head (Fig. 1), serves as an invaluable resource, much as statuary was used as a point of reference for Plutarch's physical descriptions.[77] Believed to be the oldest sculptural portrait of Julius, the Tusculum Head portrays an aged man, with wrinkles on his forehead and framing his eyes and mouth. His long and scrawny neck also is deeply furrowed.[78]

These features, as uncomplimentary as they seem, are not unique to Julius' contemporary portrayals. Several of the characteristics of the Tusculum Head – including the lined countenance and long neck, as well as a prominent Adam's apple and receding hairline – link the bust with the veristic representations on his coin-portraits from as early as 48 BCE.[79] In that year, by the authorization of the Senate, Julius became the first man to be depicted on minted coins within his own lifetime. In particular, the *denarii* struck by Mettius in 44 BCE (Fig. 2), which have been accepted as the best contemporary images of Julius, share many of the idiosyncrasies found in the marble portrait.[80] These coins, spread widely throughout the Mediterranean world by commerce, made Julius' appearance accessible to the Roman public.[81] Thus, the features unique

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[77] Chapter 1, p. 11-12.
[78] Flemming Johansen, *Catalogue: Roman Portraits I* (Copenhagen: NY Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1994): 14.
[79] J.M.C. Toynbee, "Portraits of Caesar." *GaR*, Second Series 4.1 (1957): 4.
[80] Jiří Frel, "Caesar." *GettyMusJ* 5 (1977): 55.
[81] Sheldon Nodelman, "Roman Portraits/Introduction." In *Roman Portraits: Aspects of Self and Society, First Century BC – Third Century AD*, published by the Regents of the University of California, Loyola Marymount University, and the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles: Alan Lithograph, Inc., 1980): 17.

to that face became analogous with the man himself. Julius was recognizable through such characterizations, leading to their continuous inclusion in portraiture as a means of his identification.

Suetonius' use of physiognomy as a rhetorical tool, however, frees him from this tradition of depicting Julius. His focus is not to record every detail attentively, as much as it is to form a new portrait, one which describes both character and physical form[82]. The emphasis or omission of certain features, such as whether Julius' skin was rough or smooth, in consideration of a physiognomic understanding, helps to create an overall impression of the entire man.[83] Suetonius does not lie to make the physiognomy work, but neither does he include features that would render the physiognomy inconsistent, such as wrinkles contradicting complexion. Not only would this detail undermine the pseudo-Aristotelian claim about skin tone, but it would also change the entire perspective of Julius' character, according to Anonymus Laatinus' analysis on foreheads in his Physiognomia, 17[84]:

> Quibus frons aspera est, ut in ea existant sicut colles et cava quaedam tanquam defossa, versuti et avari sunt, si non insani sint et stulti.
>
> For whom there is a rough forehead, so that hills and certain hollows, as if ditches, may thus appear on it,
> they are cunning and greedy, if they may not be insane and foolish.

Suetonius is manipulating his account of features in order to fit the moral implications of his biography.[85] By concealing the condition of Julius' skin, without deceiving or admitting the truth, he makes the pseudo-Aristotle's qualification irrelevant, because it can neither be proved nor refuted. The focus shifts to its positive reading, which endows Julius with a nobleness and

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[82] Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 15.
[83] Evans, 1935, p. 63.
[84] A similar interpretation for wrinkles on the forehead is found in Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνωμονικα , B26.
[85] Paul Plass, *Wit and the Writing of History: the Rhetoric of Historiography in Imperial Rome* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988): 81.

masculinity befitting his tall stature. Suetonius creates a respectable foundation for Julius' character, upon which the other features, those which are included within the physiognomic hierarchy, can then be built.

With Julius' third feature, his *teretis membrum*, Suetonius moves his description to characteristics more prevalent in physiognomy. Although still removed from the key qualities of the face, the limbs place third on the theory's scale structure, thereby bearing more significance than the interpretations of general size and coloring. Unlike the previous features, for which there was minimal mention in the surviving treatises, the shape and strength of different members are attested in all four, including the arms in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fo. $61^{a}12$-$^{b}10$:

> Judge as best and strong the upper arms and forearms, and likewise the upper arms that are rounded,

the thighs in Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia, 69:

> Cum autem moderatae plenitudinis sunt <κνημαι> et moderatae magnitudinis, solidae et discretae, quod Graeci appellant διηρθρωμενον, optimi ingenii sunt indices
>
> When the legs are of moderate thickness and of moderate size, hard and distinct, that which the Greeks call "articulated", they are signs of the best character,

and the lower legs[86], as in the Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle $810^{a}28$-31:

> ὅσοι τὰς <κνήμας> ἔχουσιν ἠρθρωμένας τε καὶ νευρώδεις καὶ ἐρρωμένας, εὔρωστοι τὴν ψυχήν· ἀναφέρεται ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρρεν.
> ὅσοι δὲ τὰς κνήμας λεπτὰς νευρώδεις ἔχουσι, λάγνοι·
> ἀναφέρεται ἐπὶ τοὺς ὄρνιθας.
>
> As much as they have well-articulated, muscular, and powerful legs, they are strong in respect to their spirit; it makes reference to masculinity.
> And inasmuch as they have thin and muscular legs, they are lustful;
> it makes reference to birds.

[86] A similar interpretation for wrinkles on the forehead is found in Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνωμονικα , B8.

The particular limbs to which Suetonius is referring is not important. All of them have precedent in the treatises as representing the best and most masculine character. This understanding of Julius, begun with his general features, is now also incorporated into the hierarchy. Rather than being secondary factors, his height and color serve to augment the physiognomic interpretation of his limbs. The three characteristics work together, strongly pointing towards a virtuous nature.

Similarly, in the thirty-two chapters which Suetonius devoted to Julius' character, the majority – twenty sections from *Divus Julius* LV to LXXV – is a glowing review of the extraordinary talent and courage which he displayed throughout his career: in his political abilities, his military command, and his relationship with the Roman people, such as in *Divus Julius* LV.1:

> Eloquentia militarique re aut aequauit praestantissimorum gloriam aut excessit.
>
> In his eloquence and in military matters, he either equaled the glory of the most eminent men, or he surpassed them.

In order to gain office in Republican Rome, rhetorical prowess was a necessary skill to distinguish oneself in the increasingly competitive *cursus honorum*.[87] Especially if one's family was not at the political forefront, such as the Julii, and lacked the funds to back a campaign, eloquence and charisma were what made a candidate stand out. Voice became a sign of *virtus*, a means by which a man was able to participate within the governmental system and fulfill his duty to the state.[88] Suetonius, by commending Julius on his outstanding *eloquentia*, even suggesting that he excelled beyond such renowned contemporary rhetoricians as Hortentius and Cicero, acknowledged the dictator's manliness in being able to rise through the ranks of power.

[87] Thomas Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): 26.
[88] Habinek, 2005, p. 6.

Julius' ability in was was no less pronounced. Warfare was a way to authority, inasmuch as it was a way to money and prestige, a fact which he seems to have understood, as emphasized in *Divus Julius* XXII.1:

> Socero igitur generoque suffragantibus ex omni prouinciarum
> copia Gallias potissimum elegit, cuius emolumento et oportunitate
> idonea sit materia triumphorum.
>
> Therefore, with his father-in-law and son-in-law supporting,
> he particularly chose, from every number of provinces, the Gauls,
> from the advantage and opportunity of which there may be suitable material
> for triumphs.

Military campaign was one of the few ways in which an individual might gain recognition outside the political realm. Once Julius had achieved the consulship, there was nothing left for him to aspire to, beyond a life of retired leisure. This life, however, would not gain him public honor nor protect him from his debts.[89] In order to maintain his position, it was necessary not only to return to the provinces, but to excel there, which Suetonius attests to in *Divus Julius* LVII.1:

> Armorum et equitandi peritissimus, laboris ultra fidem patiens erat.
> in agmine nonnumquam equo, saepius pedibus anteibat,
> capite detecto, seu sol seu imber esset
>
> He was very skillful of weapons and of riding, and he was enduring of labor,
> beyond what it is to be believed. In the battle line, he was sometimes leading
> from his horse, but more often on foot, with his head uncovered,
> whether there was sun or rain.

Julius' endurance, even in the worst conditions, sets an example for how a Roman is to conduct himself on campaign. He does not allow himself the luxuries expected of a general, but instead fights as a common foot soldier, enduring the same struggles as his men. As suggested from his weathered appearance on the Tusculum Head, a testament to his masculinity, Julius was a man of

[89] Tatum, 2008, p. 45.

action.[90] His strength and courage, as well as his eloquence, provide him with a powerful combination of talents, especially in the final years of the Republic as violence became an increasingly effective means of meeting one's own needs and making opinions heard, even more than the traditional methods of oratorical debate.[91]

Eloquence and martial ability mean little, however, without the support of the public masses to back one's political endeavors and ambitions. As suggested from the physiognomy of Julius' complexion, he also embodied a personality that attracted others to him, encouraging them to trust him. In his case, this character particularly included a certain degree of liberality, evident in *Divus Julius* LXV.1, by which he was able to both manage and maintain his military troops:

> Militem neque a moribus neque a fortuna probabat,
> sed tantum a uiribus, tractabatque pari seueritate atque indulgentia.
>
> He was judging his soldier neither by his customs nor his fortune,
> but only by his courage,
> and he was managing them with equal strictness and indulgence.

Like his approach to the invasion of Britain, Julius maintained balance in his command of the troops. On the one hand, he must keep his men disciplined, in order to win battles and to have them respect his authority, but in allowing them the freedom to enjoy themselves periodically, he also created an army that was loyal to him – the one who provided for their well-being – rather than to the more nebulous *res publica*.[92] Julius' concern is not virtues, but *virtus*, a masculinity that parallels his own.[93] As long as his soldiers continued to prove themselves capable in battle,

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[90] Frel, 1977, p. 55.
[91] Mary Beard and Michael Crawford, *Rome in the Late Republic* 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth Publishers, 1999):6.
[92] Tatum, 2008, p. 56-57.
[93] Tatum, 2008, p. 50.

pleasures such as perfumes and riches only served to remind them of what they had to lose.[94] This scheme clearly worked for him. Even in a time of intense political turmoil and civil war, mutinies against Julius were infrequent and never brought to fruition, an achievement that Suetonius does not claim for any future emperor.[95]

The same sense of tolerance also characterized Julius' relationships with those outside of the military. Suetonius defined him by his *facilitas indulgentiaque*[96], the same principles that governed his soldiers. This affability, in particular, enabled him to make and keep friendships easily, even when his goodwill was not reciprocated, as Suetonius mentions in *Divus Julius* LXXIII.1:

> Simultates contra nullas tam graues excepit umquam,
> ut non occasione oblata libens deponeret.
>
> In turn, he never prolonged any grudges so serious,
> That, with the opportunity offered, he would not set it aside willingly.

Julius' liberality not only excused his colleagues from their personal vices, but even from their wrongs against him. Thus, in the *Divus Julius*, he embodies the same sense of *clementia* by which he seems to have defined his own career. In Julius' De Bello Gallico and De Bello Civile, the word *clementia*, or one of its synonyms -- *mansuetudo*, *lenitas*, or *misercordia* -- was used in eleven different passages, each in regard to his treatment of a defeated enemy.[97] It is likely that Suetonius drew from these first-hand accounts in composing his biography, which would explain

[94] *Divus Julius* LXVII.1-2

[95] Although Suetonius' account of Vespasian's command techniques bear the closest resemblance to those of Julius, balancing discipline with a certain degree of leniency, he mentions the emperor's severity as a necessary safeguard against the army's tendency towards licentiousness and the civil struggles among various provinces, free cities, and kingdoms (*Divus Vespasianus* VIII.2). Likewise, Suetonius ends this biography by reaffirming that Vespasian endured *assiduas coniurationes* throughout his reign (*Divus Vespasianus* XXV.1).

[96] *Divus Julius* LXXII.1

[97] Cornelia Catlin Coulter, "Caesar's Clemency." *CJ* 26.7 (Apr., 1931): 513.

the presence of clemency as a significant addition to Julius' merits.[98] At the time, however, Cicero, in his letter to Atticus, VIII.13.1, expressed an understandable skepticism about the extent to which this mercy was truly derived from virtue, rather than deceit:

> Sed videsne in quem hominem inciderit res publica, quam acutum, quam vigilantem, quam paratum? si mehercule neminem occiderit neque cuiquam quicquam ademerit, ab iis qui eum maxime timuerant maxime diligetur.
>
> But do you see upon what kind of man the Republic has fallen? How keen he is, how vigilant, and how prepared? If, by Hercules, he killed no one nor took anything away from anyone, he is deemed most worthy by those who had feared him the most.

It is easy to call a man a tyrant, when he slaughters his fellow citizens. If he does not, and instead reinstates them within Roman society with his forgiveness, his image is of someone who is establishing peace and returning the state to some sense of normalcy.[99] After years of civil discord, the public mind was likely to favor such a man; this support, however, had consistently been the motivation behind the manipulative and self-promoting actions of Julius' earlier career. How, then, is this strategy different? In *Divus Julius* LXXIV.1.1, however, Suetonius clearly confronts Cicero's pessimistic view:

> sed et in ulciscendo natura lenissimus
>
> But, by nature, he was also most lenient in exacting his revenge

The presence of *natura* expresses Suetonius' own understanding that this clemency is an innate virtue. Julius does not act through fraud, nor can he be blamed for how well this forgiveness was able to endear him to the Roman people. Instead, it augments his sense of justice and discretion, as also indicated through his masculine body. His instinctive mercy is therefore a credit to his character, and not to be questioned.

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[98] Andrew Wallace-Handrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and his Caesars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 63.

[99] Tatum, 2008, p. 3.

Suetonius was not the first to use such virtue in Julius' defense. After the dictator's death in 44 BCE, portraits of the Tusculum style, which depicted an active military general, became obsolete. Julius himself, however, was still central to political conflicts, as a new generation of leaders – including Octavian and Marc Antony – began to use their connections with the former dictator to legitimize their own claims to power.[100] A new approach to portraiture, which reflected this magisterial aspect of Julius' character, became necessary. Thus, the Campo Santo style emerged. In one piece, the Berlin Caesar (Fig. 3), the veristic tradition, as seen in the Tusculum head, is still prevalent. However, the idiosyncrasies are more pronounced. [101] His deeply set eyes, hollowed cheeks, distinct bone structure, sagging skin and drooping lips make it clear that death is already taking its course on the visage of this once strong man. Although Julius would have only been in his fifties when he died, his portrait makes him appear to be much older.

From its conception, realism in Roman portraiture was especially rooted in the tradition of aristocratic funeral masks, as discussed in chapter one.[102] Dating back to Etruscan rites, such *imagines maiorum* were used to preserve the faces of the dead, and were carried by relatives of the deceased during funeral processions. Although the physical appearances of these early masks seem to have been individualized to some extent, so that they were identifiable by family and friends, the performative quality of the rituals themselves suggests that they were also meant to embody recognizable characters.[103] Not unlike the use of theatrical masks to portray stock comic figures in Roman theatre, standardized types of *imagines* – such as the wise orator or severe judge – personified a person's values and political station, in a manner that could be immediately

[100] Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 61.
[101] Frel, 1977, p. 8.
[102] Chapter 1, p. 6
[103] Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 34.

understood by all onlookers.[104] As a result, these masks undertook a style that emphasized the intense treatment of physical details, in which every unsightly wrinkle, mole, wart, and blemish was diligently noted, in order to effectively communicate the maturity that was necessary to take part in particular roles within the magisterial aristocracy[105]. The resulting style thus combined stereotypes with particular attention to individual idiosyncrasies that coincided with those preconceived types. As Campo Santo portraiture developed, this precision extended even to expressing the effects of *rigor mortis* in the sculpture. Features such as those prominent on the Berlin Caesar, although not as drawn than the style's title portrait, the Caesar of Campo Santo (Fig. 4), became particularly characteristic of these types of portraits.[106] In the case of the former piece, its date of composition, believed to be between 44 and 42 BCE as a commemorative portrait commissioned by Cleopatra[107], strongly corresponds with the assassination of Julius, and perhaps even the subsequent creation of funeral regalia in his honor.

In addition to the realistic depiction of death, however, the bust also differs from the Tusculum head in the sentiment associated with the piece. Instead of portraying a man in his prime, Julius is frail and aged, giving him a gentle appearance. Although the eyes will be discussed in more detail later, it is appropriate to note here the intellectual dimension added by his incised pupils, infusing him with a Stoic and serene demeanor, even after having suffered such a violent death. [108] This is not the vicious tyrant that his assassinators claimed him to be. Instead, Julius is a victim whose injustice should be avenged. The calculated manipulation of

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[104] Flower, 1996, p. 115.

[105] The *Lex Villia Annalis*, established in 180 BCE, set a minimum age limit for the political offices of the *cursus honorum* in Republican Rome, and forced a two-year waiting period between holding lesser magisterial posts. By this law, a man had to be at least 30 years old in order to hold a quaestorship, 37 to become an aedile or tribune, 40 for a praetorship, and 43 to be elected consul.

[106] Frel, 1977, p. 59.

[107] Kleiner, 1992, p. 45.

[108] K. Patricia Erhart, "Roman Portraits/Introduction." In *Roman Portraits: Aspects of Self and Society, First Century BC – Third Century AD*, published by the Regents of the University of California, Loyola Marymount University, and the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles: Alan Lithograph, Inc., 1980): 9.

features, in order to produce a particular emotion on the viewer, gives a certain 'baroque' quality to its composition.[109] Although Julius is not fully idealized, it is clear that his virtues are meant to be emphasized.

The Campo Santo style of portraiture, however, also illuminates a discrepancy between the artistic representations of Julius and Suetonius' list of features, as the biographer moves to describe the face. Unlike the previous characteristics, which either were unable to be transferred into sculptural portrayals, like complexion, or cannot be validated because of our lack of full-body sculptures, as in the case of height and limbs, Julius' *os paulum plenius* can be compared to extant portrait busts. The differences are immediately apparent. While the Tusculum Head does have a face slightly fuller on the left side[110], although still diminished under prominent cheekbones, the later portrait types emphasize its sunken appearance. Both the Berlin Caesar and the Caesar of the Campo Santo have a distinctive bone structure, which creates a drawn appearance on the forehead and around the eyes. However, there is no fleshiness to fill out his face from beneath these sharp angles. In the Berlin Caesar, Julius' skin simply hangs down, making his cheeks appear hollow from the folds.[111] His visage looks thin, almost to the point of emaciation. The artist carefully defined the creases of the forehead, mouth, and neck, emphasizing the skeletal quality.[112]

The clear inconsistency has led some scholars to call for an emendation of Suetonius' text, in order that these two ancient sources of Julius' appearance may coincide more definitively. Suggestions have included *ore pallidore*, "a more pale face", *ore paulo oblongiore*, "a face slightly more oblong", *ore depleniore*, "a face more drawn in", and *ore paulo leniore*, "a

[109] Jeremy Tanner, "Portraits, Power, and Patronage in Late Republican Rome." *JRS* 90 (2000): 19.
[110] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Roman Historical Portraits* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978): 37.
[111] Toynbee, 1978, p. 34.
[112] Kleiner, 1992, p. 46.

face a little more mild", which seems to have had particular appeal because of the descriptions of expression found in the later biographies.[113] However, not only is there is no manuscript evidence to validate these modifications[114], but the proposals do not seem to account for how these changes relate to the existing Suetonian text. In particular, the first suggestion contradicts the mention of Julius' skin tone, *color candidus*. Is Julius' face, then, a different color than his body? Likewise, when Suetonius mentions expression throughout his biographies, he more often employs the term *vultus*.[115] Although *os* is used frequently throughout these first four biographies, in ten different passages, only two instances use it corresponding to the face.[116] Rather than translating Julius' features in this way, then, it should be taken more in line with Suetonius' other uses, to refer more specifically to the mouth.[117]

By thus narrowing his focus to the mouth alone, Suetonius elevates his list of features to the second tier of the physiognomic hierarchy, to which only the eyes are more important. Just as coloring and limbs indicated the best and most manly character, the Physiognomonia by Anonymus Latinus, 48, has a similar understanding for a man with a large mouth[118]:

> Os parvum muliebre est potius et tam vultibus
> quam animis muliebribus convenit; quod maius est,
> virilibus animis et vultibus convenit
>
> A small mouth is rather womanly and it is suitable for womanly faces,
> As much as womanly minds; the mouth which is larger is suitable
> For masculine minds and faces.

Although the Physiognomonia was not written until almost two hundred years after the De Vita Caesarum, the linguistic distinction between *vultus* and *os* is still evident. *Vultus* is assimilated to

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[113] Monroe E. Deutsch, "Concerning Caesar's Appearance." *CJ* 12.4 (Jan., 1917):249.
[114] Deutsch, 1917, p. 247.
[115] *Divus Augustus* LXXIX.1; *Tiberius* LCVIII.3; *Caligula* L.1
[116] *Tiberius* LX.1; *Caligula* XXV.4
[117] *Divus Julius* XXX.5, LXXXVIII.1; *Divus Augustus* LXXXIV.2, XCIV.8; *Tiberius* XLIV.2, XLV.1, LIII.2; *Caligula* 1.2
[118] A similar interpretation for wrinkles on the forehead is found in Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνωμονικα , B24.

more abstract concepts of character, such as the *animus*, while the *os* is a particular, concrete sign that testifies to it. Expression can have a manifestation through the arrangement of certain facial features, but because it cannot be consistently observed as an unchanging feature of the face, it does not have its own place within the physiognomic treatises.

By interpreting the *os* in relation to the mouth, rather than the face, not only does Suetonius' description more closely resemble Julius' portrait busts, as is especially evident by the wide proportion of the mouth on the Berlin Caesar, but it also parallels the physiognomic understanding of the previous characteristics. Even in the more meaningful features of the quasi-science, Julius still shows the signs of a strong, masculine character. Its permeation throughout his entire body is significant, calling attention to and justifying his virtues. However, the ambiguous meaning of *os* cannot be completely set aside. If it could relate to the face rather than the mouth, it then introduces doubts to an otherwise entirely praiseworthy nature. Although a full face is incompatible with artistic traditions of Julius, and a Roman audience would have most likely been aware of the conflict, it is worth noticing that a fleshy face carries its own significance in the physiognomic treatises, both in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $57^{b}14$-$58^{a}8$:

> If there is much flesh on the face, it indicates that
> he loves the deeds of women and loves rest

and in the Φυσιογνώμονικων of Adamantius, B28:

> Πρόσωπον τὸ πᾶν ἀνθρώπου σαρκῶδες μὲν ὄν
> εὐπαθοῦς καὶ ἡβῶντος ἀνδρός
>
> The whole of a man's face being fleshy
> [is] of an extravagant and youthful man.

A simple misreading of *os* can result in a reinterpretation of Julius' physiognomy. Contrary to the previous accounts of his masculinity, a full face reveals effeminacy and an irresponsible love

of pleasures. Julius' excellence is thus called into question, as his most important features are suddenly distinct from the understanding of the rest of the body. He no longer represents the ideal character, but one subject to vice.

It is particularly significant that these charges made through the physiognomy of the face also correlate with accusations of Julius made during the course of his life, such as in Suetonius' description of the dictator's fashion in *Divus Julius* XLV.3, immediately following his discourse on appearance:

> Etiam cultu notabilem ferunt: usum enim lato clauo ad manus fimbriato
> nec umquam aliter quam ut super eum cingeretur,
> et quidem fluxiore cincture, et quidem fluxiore cinctura
>
> They also say that he was remarkable in his dress, and that he wore a wide-striped tunic, fringed to his hands, and that he was never otherwise girded than above that, and indeed with a rather loose belt.

Dress was not only a matter of clothing, but a particular cultural symbol for the aristocratic class. It designated those men who had achieved political office and were active participants in the working of the government.[119] To wear the traditional toga and tunic of the senatorial class was a sign of *virtus*, a man's duty to his state. Roman aristocrats, in an attempt to identify themselves with the glory days of history, when their ancient ancestors developed the foundations of Rome, generally kept their attire simple[120], making Julius' style appear all the more gaudy. As a member of the elite class, he was entitled to wear the traditional tunic, but the addition of frivolous details, such as fringe and long sleeves, negated the meaning. Men concerned with the state of the government did not worry about their clothes. Such meticulous attention to appearance was considered womanly[121] and therefore unworthy of the garment.

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[119] Caroline Vout, "The Myth of the Toga: Understanding the History of Roman Dress." *G&R* 43.2 (Oct., 1996): 214

[120] Tatum, 2008, p. 33.

[121] H.E. Butler and M. Carey, ed., *C. Suetoni Tranquilli: Divus Julius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927): 107.

Allegations of effeminacy and unmanliness were common rhetorical tools, by which a man might undermine his rival in the public's opinion.[122] Although Suetonius initially asserts that Julius maintained his *pudicitia* throughout his life[123], his claim unravels with a series of examples, pointing to particular royalty and aristocrats he seduced, until finally even he is forced to accept the claim of Curio in *Divus Julius* LII.3:

> at ne cui dubium omnino sit et impudicitiae et adulteriorum flagrasse infamia, Curio pater quadam eum oratione omnium mulierum uirum et omnium uirorum mulierem appellat.
>
> But lest there should be doubt to anyone at all that he suffered from the disrepute of shamelessness and adultery, the senator Curio calls him, "All women's man and all men's woman."

Julius' suspected relationship with Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia, clearly caused enough scandal to merit Suetonius mentioning it twice in the course of the biography[124], but all of his numerous sexual affairs, with women as well as men, serve the same purpose in calling his masculinity into question. Curio's accusation of Julius' bisexual activities addresses a similar issue found in the physiognomic treatises, i.e. how to discover the balance between a person's masculine and feminine tendencies. According to the Leiden Polemon TK 3207, fos. $43^{b}2$-$44^{a}13$, the existence of femininity in a man does not necessitate that he will be feminine. A true man is one who is able to overcome such shameful impulses and still lead a noble life:

> I will summarize for you the subject of masculinity and the significance of femininity. The male is the more powerful of these, bolder, and less shameful, with a greater tendency to truth and loyalty, more strong-minded, more desirous of honor, and more reverent. The female is the opposite of that kind of nature. She has little boldness, much cunning, and bitter outlook. She hides her thoughts, is contrary, tyrannical, loves quarrelling, and is tough and strong.

[122] Habinek, 2005, p. 7.
[123] *Divus Julius* XLIX.1
[124] *Divus Julius* II.1; XLIX.1-4

With whom Julius conducts these affairs is not as important as his disregard for his own reputation and honor. His lack of continence loses him the respect of his contemporaries, as well as those remembering his life through Suetonius' biography. His shamelessness, *infamia*, degrades his masculinity even more than the accounts of his *adulterium*.

Although there is more evidence to suggest that the correct interpretation of *os paulum plenius* refers to the mouth, rather than the face, the latter's physiognomic reading and Suetonius' judgement of Julius' life are strikingly similar. A wider mouth validates his masculine character, even into the higher reaches of the hierarchy, but the ambiguity infuses uncertainty into this understanding. Once vice has been introduced, Julius cannot return to the ideal nature that Suetonius previously built for him. Perhaps, then, the subtlety of this description serves as a foreshadowing of the direction that the physiognomic personality analysis will soon take, introducing a gradation of character into an otherwise heroic man.

It is not until Suetonius reaches Julius' eyes, the feature which is given the most extensive description in having two characteristics instead of only one, that the suggestion of character flaws overshadows his entire portrait. The eyes, bearing the highest priority in the theory of physiognomy, are believed to give the clearest indications of a person's nature. However, Julius' former masculinity and nobleness are suddenly undercut by his *nigri uegetique oculi*. The color black, in particular, according to Adamantius' Φυσιογνώμονικων A11, designated villainy[125]:

> καὶ οἱ μὲν μέλανες ὀφθαλμοὶ ἄνανδρα ἤθη καὶ φιλοκερδῆ καὶ ἄπιστα δηλοῦσιν
>
> And black eyes disclose an unmanly, greedy, and untrustworthy character.

The possession of these threefold vices -- effeminacy, avarice, and treachery -- make such a man incapable of operating within the norms of society. The label ἄνανδρα denotes a lack of *virtus*,

[125] A similar interpretation for black colored eyes is found in Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomica, 27.

i.e. showing no sense of duty or loyalty to the *res publica*, while greed further disconnects this person from his fellow citizens, as he subjugates their needs to his own. A man with black eyes thinks and acts only for himself, and therefore is dangerous to the community as a whole, especially if he is in a position of power. This feature is so critical, that within the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fo. $51^{b}8$-13, it is situated within its own class, against which other characteristics can be judged:

> If they have these signs, put them in the same category as black eyes,
> so judge for them bad company. Beware of the company of their owner,
> for you will find him immoral and of bad faith.

It is not enough to be forewarned by black eyes, but people possessing them must also be actively avoided. When the trait appears on a man of such aspirations as Julius, though, Rome would hardly be able to avert confrontation with him, particularly when his demands exceed traditional honors, as Suetonius puts forth in *Divus Julius* LXXVI.1:

> non enim honores modo nimios recepit: continuum consulatum,
> perpetuam dictaturam praefecturamque morum, insuper praenomen Imperatoris,
> cognomen Patris patriae, statuam inter reges, suggestum in orchestra;
> sed et ampliora etiam humano fastigio decerni sibi passus est
>
> For he not only received excessive honors: successive consulships,
> perpetual dictatorship, and the oversight of morals,
> on top of the praenomen "Imperator", the cognomen "Father of the Fatherland",
> a statue among the kings, and a platform in the orchestra;
> but he also allowed himself to be voted things greater than his human dignity.

While a certain amount of ambition was characteristic of a masculine nature[126], Suetonius makes it clear that Julius far surpassed any reasonable limit. Not only did he assume the power of a tyrant, destabilizing the communally-focused structure of the Republic, but he also encroached on the authority of the gods. His goals reflect the same incontinence which prompted his sexual escapades and his flamboyant clothing, as suggested by the secondary explanation of *os paulum*

[126] Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνωμονικα, B2.

plenius. Although he has more authority than any man before him, he still is not satisfied. The similarity in the physiognomic interpretations, in both the face and the eyes, reflects how deeply Julius' excessive need for power permeated his soul.

He did not stop at merely accepting these titles and honors, though. To make his situation worse, Julius also publicly made his cynical opinions about the contemporary system known, as Suetonius describes in *Divus Julius* LXXVII.1:

> nec minoris inpotentiae uoces propalam edebat, ut Titus Ampius scribit: nihil esse rem publicam, appellationem modo sine corpore ac specie.
>
> And he was openly putting forth voices of no less self-restraint, as Titus Ampius writes: that the republic was nothing, only a name without substance or shape.

Julius' ambition blinded him from understanding the precariousness of his position. He was an authority figure, but one still subject to the standards of the Republic. While Julius participated within the traditional roles of Roman society, he did not conform completely to them, instead using them for his own benefit.[127] The self-importance exhibited in his claim to political and divine powers removed him from a system that demanded uniformity. His disregard for public policy and magisterial appointment[128] incited hostility, which Suetonius suggests contributed to his demise. His immoderation within his personal life was deplorable, but this seizure of honors and power within the public realm was inexcusable.

If their color were not enough to warn of Julius' base nature, Suetonius' addition of a second characteristic to the eyes, their vigorous or animated quality, augments the negative interpretation. Although there is no physiognomic term which directly correlates with the Latin *vegetus*, a similar idea is present in the comparison between the brightness and dullness of the eyes, as in Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia 35:

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[127] Morgan, 1997, p. 29.
[128] *Divus Julius* LXXVI.3

> Lumen autem <non> ita bonum est, si corusci sint. Oculi enim corusci
> si quidem glauci sint et sanguinolenti, temeritatem indicant et prope insaniam,
> χαροποι autem suspicacem in omnibus rebus hominem declarant.
> Nigri corusci taeterrimi oculi: timidum ac subdolum designant.
>
> However, light is not good in this way, if they may be shining. For if, in fact,
> The shining eyes may be grey and blood-red, they indicate rashness and near
> insanity, but bluish-grey eyes declare a man suspicious in all matters.
> Black shining eyes are the foulest: they indicate a man fearful and crafty.

The eye's vividness, in both color and sparkling character, reveals the liveliness of the soul within. The adjective *coruscus*, like *vegetus*, relates specifically to swift, trembling motions, but it can also be used figuratively, referring to a person's reason and ability to make quick decisions.[129] No matter the color augmenting the character of the eye, its vigorous activity is not to be trusted. It reflects a mind that is similarly in constant motion, and thereby hyper-sensitive to its surroundings. It is easy to see how this might make a person prone to exaggeration, perceived hastiness, and paranoia, but especially when it is paired with a dark coloring, and the vices entailed in that feature, the focus of the active mind can turn toward treacheries.

While *coruscus* relates particularly to what might be viewed from the outside, a characteristic evident to other people looking upon the eyes, *vegetus* might also be used to describe a more internal trait, the strength of one's own vision, as suggested by the Latin *acer*.[130] On the one hand, the physiognomy does not change, as is evident in Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomia 36, where the interpretation of eyes *acriter intuentes* directly follows the description of those *corusci*[131]:

> Oculi acriter intuentes <id est γοργον>, ut a Graecis dicitur, molesti sunt,
> sed qui humidi sunt, bellatorem indicant,
> veridicum, velocem in agendis rebus, improvidum, innoxium.

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[129] Glare, 1982, s.v. "corsuscus".

[130] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, ed., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1879): s.v. "vegetus".

[131] A similar interpretation for keen eyes is found in Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $51^{b}13$-$52^{b}4$; Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $73^{b}12$-$74^{a}1$; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 40.

> Qui autem intendunt acriter et sunt idem cavi, parvi, sicci,
> saevos, insidiosos atque ex occulto nocentes, omnia audentes,
> omnia perpetrantes indicabunt
>
> Eyes gazing keenly <that is "fierce">, as it is called by the Greeks,
> are troublesome, but those which are wet, they indicate a warrior,
> a truthful man, one quick in doing things, a man not looking ahead, and harmless.
> However, those eyes which focus closely and are likewise hollow, small, and dry,
> they will designate savage men, plotting and doing harm from concealment,
> daring and accomplishing all things.

Similar to the *coruscus* designation, this type of eye is also troublesome and men possessing this feature should be approached with caution. However, its physiognomy depends on its surrounding features, much as Aristotle's description of pale skin was based on texture. The interpretation can be tempered, if it is matched with a moistness of the eye, or the presence of an insidious nature can be validated by their dryness, size, and setting.

Once more, Suetonius does not give enough details for the practitioner of physiognomy to make a definitive decision, but this time, the portrait tradition does little to suggest one interpretation over the other. Especially in the later Campo Santo style, deeply-set eyes, as well as sunken cheeks and drooping skin around the mouth, were techniques by which artists began to realistically represent death through the effects of *rigor mortis*. However, the eyes themselves were never subject to a similar manipulation.[132] The vitality of the man's spirit was present here, although his body was no longer alive. Rather than sharing the deformed and veristic characteristics of the rest of the face, then, the eyes remained idealized, making them harder to interpret according to the physiognomic theory. Those of the Campo Santo Caesar are hollowed, but in contrast, they are also proportionally large and wide open[133], seeming to glance upward from beneath overhanging brows. The ethereal effect recalls the "melting" expression on Lyssipus' statue of Alexander the Great (Fig. 5), to which Polemon was thought to be referring

[132] Frel, 1977, p. 59.
[133] Toynbee, 1978, p. 34.

when he mentioned the moistness of the eyes in his own physiognomic work.[134] The classical influence suggests the transition of Roman portraiture into the more idealizing style of the Augustan regime. While Julius' face still has the tightened condition due to *rigor mortis*, as well as the traditionally hollow cheeks and lined neck, the bags beneath his eyes have been smoothed out and his hair appears much fuller. He has a more youthful vitality than the previous pieces, which strongly corresponds its date of composition with the deification of Julius[135]. While still subject to some of the deteriorating effects of age and death, his eyes and general appearance suggest a divine nature. This look conflicts, then, with the negative interpretation of their sunkenness. Likewise, the glass eyes of the Berlin Caesar gaze slightly above and to the right of the viewer. Their large size and stark color contrasts with the dark green medium of the statue, drawing attention straight to them, although they are set deeply into the recesses of the head.

However, while the *oculi acriter intuentes* use the size and placement of the eyes as qualifications for its physiognomic reading, these features also stand on their own as evidence of a base nature. In the physiognomic treatises, there is little discussion about the vices of eyes that are small[136] or those that are sunken[137], but three of the later texts emphasize the significance of having both[138], as in the Φυσιογνώμονικων of Adamantius, A12:

> κοίλων γὰρ καὶ μικρῶν ἤθη δόλια, ἐπίβουλα ἀνθρώποις,
> ζήλῳ καὶ φθόνῳ τετηκότα, ξηρότεροι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς τοῖς εἰρημένοις κακοῖς
> ἀπιστίαν, προδοσίαν, σημαίνουσιν

[134] Ján Elsner, "Physiognomics: Art and Text." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 211. The composition of Lyssipus' statue with the neck slightly bent to the left and large eyes glancing upward, became a well-established tradition of ancient portraiture, surviving from Alexander's own time through the second century CE, by means of various Hellenistic and Roman imitations. In the *Life of Alexander* IV.1, Plutarch mentions that the practice of reproducing these elements began as early as Lyssipus' own contemporaries. It is possible, therefore, that the artist of the Campo Santo Caesar was at least aware of the statue, if not influenced by it for his own piece.

[135] Kleiner,1992, p.46.

[136] Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $46^{b}13$-$47^{b}5$

[137] Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 31.

[138] A similar interpretation for small and hollow eyes is found in Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $50^{a}14$-$^{b}8$; Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $51^{b}13$-$52^{b}4$; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 31.

> For a man of hollow and small eyes, there is a treacherous character, plotting against men, and consumed by jealousy and malice, while those having dry eyes show faithlessness, betrayal, in addition to the mentioned evils.

Although being *acriter* is in itself troublesome, and therefore it should be enough to raise a suspicion of vice, its worst character traits are drawn from its qualifying features, not the fact that the person's eyesight is keen. The warnings of treachery, betrayal, and malice only apply in conjunction with the smallness of the eye and its setting, which bear those same judgments on their own. Why, then, does Suetonius not use these details, and solidify the signs of tyranny and destruction? Perhaps because *vegetus* leaves some doubt. With the moistness or dryness of Julius' eyes – the only feature whose opposite would create a contrasting reading – suppressed in Suetonius' description, neither the positive nor the negative interpretation can be claimed with any certainty, although the expressions of certain portraits do tend toward the former. In the same way, Julius' military prowess and boldness have precedent in the biography, as well as his ambition and arrogance. There is still the lingering chance that Julius' soul is not completely evil, but correlates, at least in some small degree, to the ideals that have been suggested through his body.

The description of health and hygiene, while probing deeper into Julius' personal habits and psychology, are not related to the study of physiognomy, because they are not permanent features of the body.[139] Julius' fainting spells only occurred towards the end of his life, while his fits of epilepsy happened twice in total. Likewise, the imperfect forms of *tonderetur*, *raderetur*, and *velleretur* suggest the habitual maintenance of his appearance. Physiognomy, however, does not deal with these momentary conditions of the body, as much as with those traits which cannot be altered and do not require regular upkeep. The last feature that can be taken into consideration

[139] Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνωμονικα, A3; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 11; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνωμονικα, 805^{a}1-11.

with the quasi-science, then, is Julius' baldness, the physiognomy of which falls in line with the negative portrayal of his eyes, such as the Φυσιογνώμονικων of Adamantius the Sophist, B37, demonstrates[140]:

> Ἄνδρα οὐλότριχα <πάνυ> δειλὸν καὶ κερδαλέον λέγε,
> τὸν δὲ ἰθύτριχα ἀγριώτερον καὶ ἀνοητότερον.
> ἀρίστη δὲ κόμη ἡ τὸ μέσον τούτων ἔχουσα,
> ὥσπερ καὶ πυκνότης τριχῶν ἄκρα θηριώδης
> καὶ ψεδνότης δὲ κακοηθείας καὶ δόλου σημεῖον.
>
> Say that a curly-haired man is very cowardly and cunning,
> And that the straight-haired man is more savage and unintelligent.
> The best hair is the one keeping in the middle of these,
> As the extreme thickness of hair is beastlike
> And baldness is the sign of a malignant character and treachery.

Hair carries the same level of physiognomic significance as the features of the face, because of their equal proximity to the eyes. According to the pattern which Suetonius used to discuss Julius' other characteristics, moving from the least importance to the most noteworthy, this trait should have been situated before or after the *os paulum plenium*. However, Suetonius does not put it in the expected position, but withholds it until the end, as a mark of Julius' self-consciousness about his appearance. As he turns from Julius' body to a deeper investigation of his nature, this reserve appears justified, because of the negative physiognomy that accompanies baldness. Treachery and deceit, the same traits interpreted from Julius' eyes, is the last image that Suetonius leaves for his audience. With no more features left to soften this interpretation, it becomes the characterization which defines the rest of the biography, up to Julius' death.

The portrait that Suetonius has made of Julius Caesar is one of a man who must be approached with extreme caution. The extent to which Suetonius covers Julius' attractive qualities, both in the corporeal and incorporeal realms, is a testament to his natural charisma. The

[140] A similar interpretation for small and hollow eyes is found in Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fo. 64^{a}4-13 and Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 14.

majority of the descriptions about Julius' physical features and his character development tend towards a positive understanding of his life. Whether it was his ideal masculine form or his liberality in dealing with other people, there was something about this man that attracted attention and, more importantly, political support.[141] He had the intelligence and the perseverance to achieve his goals in such a way that, even in the onset of civil war, people still sided with him. However, the indications of positive character traits only occur in the lesser features of the body. As Suetonius focuses on the face, and the eyes in particular, warnings of Julius' arrogance and avarice become dominant. In the same way, Suetonius structures his discourse on Julius' character so that the description of vices is interrupted by a lengthy digression on virtue. By the time that he returns to Julius' ambitious and arrogant traits, his immoderation and immorality are almost forgotten, in light of his military prowess, literary accomplishments, clemency, and indulgence. It was this that seems to have made him the most dangerous: his beautiful exterior lured many Romans into a sense of trust, blinding them from noticing the insidious nature that was beneath it.

The dichotomy between Julius' virtues and vices, mimicked by the presence of both positive and negative physiognomic signs, also reflects the contradictory views taken about his life in general. Although Julius was dishonest and controversial, and Suetonius himself acknowledges that Julius' assassination was justified[142], he was also greatly respected. He tore apart the Republic, but through him the Empire, which Suetonius recognizes as a necessary governing force[143], was able to rise. He did not gain a kingship, but he surpassed it by instead becoming the first Caesar.

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[141] Tatum, 2008, p. 135.
[142] *Divus Julius* LXXVI.1
[143] Plass, 1988, p. 81.

CHAPTER 4

ONCE SATIATED

Although Julius made the name of "Caesar" synonymous with power, it lacked acceptance as an established, authoritative role within Roman society. "Caesar" still related solely to the controversial, albeit charismatic, individual who rose through the ranks of political office with frightening success. Julius had been a threat to the Republic, and therefore was removed from it. His death, however, did not restore senatorial authority, as his assassins had hoped; it simply created a vacancy for autocracy, to be filled by anyone who might similarly gain enough military and political support to force recognition of his rule.[144] Thus, one Caesar created the opportunity for another. In his will, Julius chose Gaius Octavius Thurinus, his nephew, as the successor to his legacy, and the heir to his fortune, providing him with the means to pay the extraordinary awards promised by Julius to the army and the Roman masses.[145] Thus, Octavius would be able to garner their support and situate himself as a forerunner in the race to power.

His succession, however, was conditional. In the tradition of *condicio nominis ferendi*, he could only accept this inheritance if he also agreed to adopt Julius' name as his own.[146] Much like his uncle's dilemma in being lauded as *rex*, Octavius' future suddenly depended on how he

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[144] Christopher Hibbert, *Rome: The Biography of a City* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985): 32.
[145] Michael Grant, *The Twelve Caesars* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975): 54.
[146] W. Jeffrey Tatum, *Always I Am Caesar* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 174. This was a fairly common practice within Roman families when an older, wealthy member lacked a son. However, evidence that this tradition was also employed by women, as well as men, suggests that it lacked recognition as a legal adoption. The acceptance of this condition would not have been enough to justify Octavius' elevated status as a "son" of Julius. Even the more common practice custom of adoption through *patria potestas* would have been irrelevant, because it was not binding after death. Tatum suggests that official recognition of this new relationship as legitimate might have occurred primarily through legislative manipulations by Cicero and increased support from the Roman public, after Octavian's pay-out from his inheritance of Julius' funds.

responded to a new designation. On the one hand, if he were to refuse the name, Octavius might avoid the political turmoil and uncertainty that then characterized Rome. He could return to his studies in Apollonia and live a safe, unremarkable existence.[147] If he were to accept, he would have to face the same accusations of arrogance and avarice, which motivated the conspiracy against Julius' life. Although not bearing quite the same stigma as claiming a kingship, legally becoming a Caesar would have similar consequences, because it meant aligning oneself with a political opinion at odds with the Republic[148], a danger which was clearly expressed to him by his immediate family, as mentioned in *Divus Augustus* VIII.2:

> ceterum urbe repetita hereditatem adiit, dubitante matre,
> uitrico uero Marcio Philippo consulari multum dissuadente.
>
> But, with the city revisited, he entered into his inheritance,
> with his mother doubting and even with his step-father,
> the ex-consul Marcius Philippus, strongly advising against it.

Octavius, however, chose to ignore their advice. In becoming Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, and thereby following in his uncle's footsteps, the eighteen-year-old not only assumed a new name, but new ambitions, for both himself and the *res publica*.[149]

This was not, however, the last transformation that Octavius was to make within his lifetime. After the Battle of Actium, at the apex of his power, he was also granted the name "Augustus", according to *Divus Augustus* VII.2:

> postea Gai Caesaris et deinde Augusti cognomen assumpsit,
> alterum testamento maioris auunculi, alterum Munati Planci sententia,
> cum quibusdam censentibus Romulum appellari oportere quasi et ipsum
> conditorem urbis, praeualuisset, ut Augustus potius uocaretur,
> non tantum nouo sed etiam ampliore cognomine, quod loca quoque religiosa
> et in quibus augurato quid consecratur augusta dicantur,

[147] William C. McDermott, "Augustus." *Classical Weekly* 32.4 (Oct., 1938): 41.
[148] Richard Holland, *Augustus: Godfather of Europe* (Sparkford: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004): 66.
[149] Tatum, 2008, p. 173.

> ab auctu uel ab auium gestu gustuue, sicut etiam Ennius docet scribens:
> Augusto augurio postquam incluta condita Roma est.
>
> Afterward, he adopted the name of Gaius Caesar and then of Augustus, the one by the will of his great uncle, and the other by the judgment of Munatus Plancus; With certain people proposing that it is fitting for him to be called Romulus, as if he himself was also the founder of the city, Munatus Plancus prevailed, so that he might rather be called Augustus, not only by a new name but even a greater one, because religious sites and those in which anything is consecrated after taking Auspices is called "august", from a growth or from the movement or eating of birds, such as Ennius also teaches, writing:
> Then glorious Rome was founded by august augury

With Octavius' victory over Antony and Cleopatra, the power contests that had motivated a century of civil wars came to an end, and the city could begin to rebuild under the command of a single leader. [150] This provided another opportunity for Octavius himself to change. His relationship with his predecessor had given him an initial impetus to start his political career, but if he hoped for this success to continue, he could not simply be another Julius, who was defined by his own political aims, disregarding the traditional values of the Roman people.[151] Instead, he distinguished himself with an original title, "Caesar Augustus". Its religious connotations looked ahead to an auspicious future for all of Rome, thus appealing to the ideals of the Republic, while its etymological link to the word *auctoritas* asserted Octavius' own authoritative role within this new society.[152] He did not abandon the ambitions assumed with his uncle's name, but they were revised, in order to fir the needs of a state already evolving from its Republican traditions.

The essential question, then, in understanding this young man, and Suetonius' account of his life, is to what extent these three roles – Octavius, Caesar, and Augustus – were all contained within one character. Did taking up his uncle's name also require a new identity to fulfill his own

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[150] Philip Matyszak, *The Sons of Caesar: Imperial Rome's First Dynasty* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 2006): 91.

[151] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. by Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988): 33

[152] Grant, 1975, p. 54.

political aims or did he already possess an innate ability to command? Were the personal vices found in Octavius inflicted on the entire Roman Empire, once Augustus was its *princeps*? Even as Suetonius progresses his *per species* discussion to account for the emperor's character, in *Divus Augustus* LXI.1, his public life, as a Caesar and as Augustus, continues to be so dominant that it is difficult to disentangle his true nature from it:

> Quoniam qualis in imperis ac magistratibus regendaque per terrarum orbem pace belloque re p. fuerit, exposui, referam nunc interiorem ac familiarem eius uitam quibusque moribus atque fortuna domi et inter suos egerit a iuuenta usque ad supremum uitae diem.
>
> Since I have put forth how he was in military commands and in magistracies, and in ruling the state, in war and in peace, throughout the world, I will now mention his inner and domestic life, and by what morals and fortune he conducted it at home and among his household, from his youth to the last day of his life.

Rather than using physical appearance as a transition to character, as in the *Divus Julius*, Suetonius instead calls attention to Augustus' relationship with his family, *fortuna domi et inter suos*. Although Julius had also invoked his ancestry as a testimony to his inevitable leadership, the relative anonymity of the Julii at that time was more detrimental than advantageous.[153] Julius' power was built upon his own manipulations of the system – though plots, bribes, and marriages – as much as his actual involvement in it. When Augustus entered the political contest, however, it was particularly because of family, i.e. his relationship to Julius Caesar. Family became his primary source of propaganda, as he called for the support of the Roman people in his quest to avenge his adopted father.[154] Just as this selfless duty to his family was the first impression that had circulated of Augustus' character, so it was also a logical starting point for Suetonius' description.

[153] Tatum, 2008, p. 29.
[154] Grant, 1975, 54-55.

However, of the thirty sections devoted to Augustus' character before his death (*Divus Augustus* LXI – XCVI), the first fifteen relate particularly to his domestic affairs, not only his marriages and children, but all interactions that would have been visible to the public, including his relationships with his friends, his housing, meals, and holidays.[155] Augustus expected the traditions established within his household to serve as a moral example for the Roman people and, in the future, to become integrated into the foundation of a familial dynasty.[156] Therefore, even his personal life was part of his public responsibilities, balancing between privacy and propaganda. His removed position at the head of the state meant that few people saw him, much less had personal contact with him. Therefore, the information that he reveals about himself could be selective, in what would best suit his own aims. It is not until *Divus Augustus* LXXIX.1-2, the description of Augustus' physical appearance, that Suetonius begins to delve deeper, penetrating even that façade:

> Forma fuit eximia et per omnes aetatis gradus uenustissima,
> quamquam et omnis lenocinii neglegens; in capite comendo tam incuriosus,
> ut raptim compluribus simul tonsoribus operam daret ac modo tonderet modo
> raderet barbam eoque ipso tempore aut legeret aliquid aut etiam scriberet.
> uultu erat uel in sermone uel tacitus adeo tranquillo serenoque,
> ut quidam e primoribus Galliarum confessus sit inter suos,
> eo se inhibitum ac remollitum, quo minus, ut destinarat, in transitu Alpium
> per simulationem conloquii propius admissus in praecipitium propelleret.
> oculos habuit claros ac nitidos, quibus etiam existimari uolebat inesse quiddam
> diuini uigoris, gaudebatque, si qui sibi acrius contuenti
> quasi ad fulgorem solis uultum summitteret; sed in senecta sinistro minus uidit;
> dentes raros et exiguos et scabros; capillum leuiter inflexum et subflauum;
> supercilia coniuncta; mediocres aures; nasum et a summo eminentiorem
> et ab imo deductiorem; colorem inter aquilum candidumque;
> staturam breuem, – quam tamen Iulius Marathus libertus etiam memoriam eius
> quinque pedum et dodrantis fuisse tradit – , sed quae commoditate et aequitate

[155] *Divus Augustus* LXI-LXV – family history; LXVI – relationship with friends; LXVII – relationship with clients, freedmen, and slaves; LXVIII-LXXI – accusations of vice; LXXVII – housing, furniture, clothes; LXXIV – celebrations of dinner parties, festivals, and holidays; LXXVI-LXXVIII – eating and sleeping habits

[156] Zanker, 1988, p. 159-160.

> membrorum occuleretur, ut non nisi ex comparatione astantis alicuius procerioris intellegi posset.
>
> His form was excellent and most graceful through all the stages of his life, although disregarding all primping; He was so indifferent of the adornment of his head, that he hurriedly gave the work to many barbers at the same time and one just clipped, one just shaved his beard and at that same time, he would either read something or even write. Whether in conversation or quiet, he was with such a calm and serene demeanor, that a certain man of the leaders of the Gauls confessed among his own people, that he was held back and softened by this, that he, having been admitted rather close during his crossing of the Alps on the pretense of a conversation, did not hurl him from a cliff, as he resolved. He had clear and shining eyes, in which he wished there to be judged some divine force. And he was rejoicing, if, considering a person keenly, anyone might lower their face to him as if to the brightness of the sun; but in his old age, he saw less from his left eye. His teeth were far apart, small, and rough; his hair was slightly curly and light blonde; his eyebrows met; his ears were of moderate size; and his nose was more projecting from the top and more drawn in from the bottom. His complexion was between dark and light, and his stature was short – although his freedman, Julius Marathus, also passes down his memory that he was five feet and nine inches – but which stature was hidden by the proportion and symmetry of his limbs, so that it was not able to be noticed, unless from the comparison of someone taller standing nearby.

Although there are still a few references to the emperor's outside responsibilities, including his penchant for working while being groomed and his encounter with the Gallic chieftain, the Augustus described in this passage is, in principle, isolated from the influences of family and office. Similar to a modern snapshot, the *iconismus* is a portrayal lacking context.[157] There is no indication of where or when it might have been taken, or of the concerns pressing upon Augustus' mind at that moment. All that is left, outside of these conditions, is simply the body that bore such troubles every day, and the signs of character found upon it. The description, situated almost exactly halfway through Suetonius' account of character, then creates a clear division between the aspects of Augustus' life that are dominated by publicly-visible domestic issues – his *familiaris vita* – and those aspects which actually distinguish the emperor as a unique

[157] Geneva Misener, "Iconistic Portraits." *CP* 19.2 (Apr., 1924): 99.

individual, his *interior vita*.[158] It is not until this consciousness of the public eye is removed that a brief glimpse can be caught of Augustus' true nature. Once this is extracted, it reveals the ambitions, concerns, virtues, and vices that motivated his major decisions, and thus permits a fuller understanding, and fairer judgment, of the emperor, looking back upon the entirety of his life just before his death.

Suetonius' portrayal of Augustus is much more detailed than Julius' *iconismus* in the previous biography; it includes more than twice the number of physical features, many of which are illustrated by means of two or three attributes. The opportunity for physiognomic interpretation is therefore much greater. It is also significant that the two descriptions are structured in a distinctly contrary manner. While the former narrows in on the most revealing characteristics, so that a complete understanding of nature cannot be reached until the end, the latter begins instead with the overall impression of appearance, derived from Augustus' *forma eximia*. Although there is no particular physiognomic trait associated with general beauty[159], the earliest incorporations of physical appearance into biography, in literature as well as on funerary epigrams, often assumed that a beautiful exterior reflected a superior soul, as mentioned in chapter one.[160] In De Vita Caesarum, Suetonius tends to follow a similar pattern, marking out the best emperors as also being exceptionally handsome, while those rulers inclined to vice are

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[158] *Divus Augustus* LXXX.1-LXXXII.2- health and weaknesses; LXXXIII.1 – pastimes and interests; LXXXIV.1-XC.1 – education and styles of writing and speaking; XCI.1-XCVI.2 – religious beliefs and superstitions

[159] The only mention of general beauty found within any of the four surviving physiognomic treatises is in the Leiden Polemon, trans. by Robert Hoyland, fo. $72^{a}8$- $^{b}2$, in his description of the ideal Greek form. Much like the qualifications that the pseudo-Aristotle placed on the physiognomy of a pale complexion, a beautiful face is only one indication of a fuller characterization, not functioning to define nature on its own. However, it should also be noticed that many of the traits associated with the pure Greek – including his stature, limbs, hair, the shape of his face, and proportions – are also shared by the physiognomic personification of the masculine ideal, the lion. Augustus' association with a leonine form will be discussed later, but for now, it is sufficient to note that his possession of such a characteristic of the Greek ideal serves as a testament to his masculinity. It is also important to remember that physiognomy itself arose in Greece, and was reintroduced in second century CE Rome by a rhetorician from Smyrna during a renaissance of Greek arts. It is natural to assume, given its origins, that emphasis would be given to the Greek form as a sign of the best and most virtuous character.

[160] Chapter 1, p. 5.

described as being repulsive.[161] Therefore, rather than laying the foundation for his assessment of Augustus on less important details, Suetonius proposes a physiognomic conclusion right away, even before the features are dissected for individual analysis[162], a strategy encouraged by Anonymus Latinus in his Physiognomonia 45:

> Et motus magnum est indicium tam totius corporis quam etiam singularum partium, sed et omnis aspectus qui ex omni circumstantia et qualitate corporis occurrit, quem Graeci ἐπιπρέπειαν dicunt, in quo auctores omnes physiognomoniae maximam partem constituunt. Eius nominis significatio concipienda tibi est atque dinoscenda. Frequenter enim ad eam signa referuntur. Nam timidum et audacem, mitem et impium, apertum et subdolum universi corporis facies indicabit, et singula quae minuta sunt et parvula in unam speciem conveniunt ita ut aspicienti faciem occurrat proprietas aliqua quae in eodem corpore conspicitur constituta, quae mentem et animi incerta declarat.
>
> And motion, as much of the entire body as of the individual parts as well, is a great indication, but so is the whole view, which presents itself from every situation and from the every quality of the body, that which the Greeks call "congruity", on which all the authors of physiognomy set the greatest share. The meaning of this name must be understood and be thought fitting by you. For frequently signs are attributed to this. For the form of the whole body will indicate a fearful man and one daring, one gentle and one impious, one frank and one cunning; those individual signs, which are small and trivial, thus come together into one appearance, so that some quality, which is seen to have been established in the same body and which makes clear the mind and the uncertainties of the spirit, may suggest its form to the one looking.

Equally important to the distinction of each trait is how well it works within the framework of the entire body. If an attribute complements those features surrounding it, then it helps create a balance in overall form, thereby also revealing harmony in character. Augustus' beauty, as the sum of all his bodily characteristics, then provides an immediate insight into a similarly agreeable nature.

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[161] Paul Plass, *Wit and the Writing of History: the Rhetoric of Historiography in Imperial Rome* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988): 80.

[162] A similar interpretation of the importance of overall appearance is found in Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, A3.

This concept is also evident through the contemporary developments in sculpture. As mentioned in chapter two, the focus of Republican portraiture was on realism.[163] Wrinkles, sagging skin, and other signs of aging were not to be hidden, but were embraced as a sign that the individual was mature enough to participate in political offices. For this reason, young men were rarely depicted, simply because they did not yet have the opportunity to distinguish themselves.[164] However, as the dynamics of the government began to shift away from Republican ideals, this traditional emphasis on age became irrelevant. Octavius was only eighteen years old when he began his political career and thirty-two when he won the Battle of Actium. Artists, therefore, were forced to look for a new model upon which to base the young leader's honorific statues.

Inspiration came particularly from the fifth century BCE, which provided not only a standard statuary motif of beautiful, athletic youths, more appropriate for the adolescent Octavius, but also an opportunity for propaganda as he aged.[165] Since this portrait style was already intrinsically idealized, there was a flexibility in how Augustus might choose to portray himself. Rather than limiting his portraits to his actual physical features, he could instead give priority to how he wanted to look, gratifying the expectations of how an emperor ought to appear.[166] Even into his seventies, his depictions maintained the same youthful beauty that was both timeless and aristocratic. This agelessness, created through the Classical principles of proportion and symmetry, in addition to the pieces' generally stoic demeanor, thus established a visual representation that seemed to mimic the austerity associated with his title, "Augustus".[167]

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[163] Chapter 2, p. 18.
[164] Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 62.
[165] Kleiner, 1991, p. 62.
[166] Niels Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988): 47.
[167] Zanker, 1988, p. 99.

In the same way, physiognomy's quintessential example of the masculine character-type, the lion, is distinguished by the moderation and proportionality of its physical appearance[168], as made evident in the Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle, $809^{b}14 – 810^{a}8$:

> τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων, φαίνεται τῶν ζῴων ἁπάντων λέων τελεώτατα μετειληφέναι τῆς τοῦ ἄρρενος ἰδέας. ἔστι γὰρ ἔχων στόμα εὐμέγεθες, τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον τετραγωνότερον, οὐκ ἄγαν ὀστῶδες, τὴν ἄνω τε γένυν οὐ προεξεστηκυῖαν ἀλλὰ ἰσορροποῦσαν τῇ κάτω, ῥῖνα δὲ παχυτέραν ἢ λεπτοτέραν, χαροποὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐγκοίλους, οὐ σφόδρα περιφερεῖς οὔτε ἄγαν προμήκεις, μέγεθος δὲ μέτριον, ὀφρὺν εὐμεγέθη, μέτωπον τετράγωνον, ἐκ μέσου ὑποκοιλότερον, πρὸς δὲ τὰς ὀφρῦς καὶ τὴν ῥῖνα ὑπὸ τοῦ μετώπου οἷον νέφος ἐπανεστηκός. ἄνωθεν δὲ τοῦ μετώπου κατὰ τὴν ῥῖνα ἔχει τρίχας ἐκκλινεῖς οἷον ἄν ἄσιλον, κεφαλὴν μετρίαν, τράχηλον εὐμήκη, πάχει σύμμετρον, θριξὶ ξανθαῖς κεχρημένον, οὐ φριξαῖς οὔτε ἄγαν ἀπεστραμμέναις· τὰ περὶ τὰς κλεῖδας εὐλυτώτερα μᾶλλον ἢ συμπεφραγμένα· ὤμους ῥωμαλέους, καὶ στῆθος νεανικόν, καὶ τὸ μετάφρενον πλατὺ καὶ εὔπλευρον καὶ εὔνωτον ἐπιεικῶς· ζῷον ἀσαρκότερον τὰ ἰσχία καὶ τοὺς μηρούς· σκέλη ἐρρωμένα καὶ νευρώδη, βάσιν τε νεανικήν, καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ἀρθρῶδες καὶ νευρῶδες, οὔτε λίαν σκληρὸν οὔτε λίαν ὑγρόν. βαδίζον δὲ βραδέως, καὶ μεγάλα διαβαῖνον, καὶ διασαλεῦον ἐν τοῖς ὤμοις, ὅταν πορεύηται. τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸ σῶμα τοιοῦτον· τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν δοτικὸν καὶ ἐλεύθερον, μεγαλόψυχον καὶ φιλόνικον, καὶ πραῢ καὶ δίκαιον καὶ φιλόστοργον πρὸς ἃ ἂν ὁμιλήσῃ.
>
> Thus laying claim to this, the lion, of all the animals, seems to share the most perfect form of the masculine. For, he has a good-sized mouth, a square face that is not to bony, an upper jaw that does not stick out but is equally balanced with the lower, a nose that is thick rather than thin, bright and sunken eyes that are neither exceptionally round nor very protruding, a moderate height, a good-sized brow, a square forehead that is slightly concave in the middle, and on the brow and the nose he had some shadow having risen from the forehead. From the top of the forehead down to the nose, he has hair turning outward, as on a lion. He has a moderately sized head, and a neck that is long and thick in proportion, having been furnished with golden hair, neither too bristling nor too curly. Around his collarbones, he is more relaxed than compact; his shoulders are strong, his chest is large, and his torso is broad, suitable for good lungs and a stout back. He is a rather lean animal, in respect to his hips and thighs; his legs are strong and muscular, and he has a vigorous step, a wholly well-jointed and sturdy body, neither very hard nor very supple. Whenever he walks, he goes walking slowly, taking great strides and moving in his shoulders. These things are connected with such a body, and in his soul, he is generous and independent, magnanimous and contentious, gentle and just and loving towards his companions.

[168] Similar interpretations of the lion as the masculine ideal are found in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $42^{b}4$-$43^{b}1$; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B2; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 122.

The general characteristics of the masculine ideal are not only its strength and power, but also the regularity of its features. Nothing about it is too big or too small, too curly or too straight, but it is precisely the right size in proportion to the rest of the body. The feminine, on the contrary, is distinguished by its disproportion and weakness.[169] It is represented by the extremes of physique, and therefore implies a character that is likewise excessive. However, it should be noted that even the lion, as the perfect masculine form, is not without its faults, as indicated in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3245, fos. $24^{a}2$-$25^{a}9$:

> For in masculinity there is femininity, and in femininity there is masculinity, and the name of male or female falls to whichever has precedence.

Masculinity is not simply the absence of femininity, but the subjugation of it, so that it does not overly influence the mind.[170] Such a nature is, like the body, also between extremes, containing aspects of both virtue and vice. While the lion may be proud and ambitious, it is able to harness those characteristics into an acceptable outlet. This understanding of the lion's character is made clearer in later physiognomic treatises[171], such as Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia 122:

> Leo animal est edendi avidum magis quam bibendi, saevum cum irritatur, quietum cum non impellitur, vehemens cum cibo indiget, tranquillum cum satiatum est, forte et invictum cum dimicat.
>
> The lion is an animal eager for eating more than for drinking, fierce when it is provoked, quiet when it is not compelled, violent when it is in need of food, calm when it is full, brave and invincible when it fights.

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[169] Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $24^{a}2$-$25^{a}9$; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B2; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 6; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα,$809^{b}14 – 810^{a}8$

[170] A similar understanding of the mixing of masculine and feminine traits is found in Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 10.

[171] A similar understanding of the mixing of masculine and feminine traits is found in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $42^{b}4$-$43^{b}1$.

When a lion is threatened, whether by a lack of basic necessities or by some external force, it does not respond with mildness, justice, or such other virtues associated with its masculine form. Instead, it reacts to the dangers, using the emotions of the situation as a motivation to defend itself. There is a balance between the lion's positive and negative characteristics, so that while the former are more prevalent, the latter can be acted upon when necessary. Likewise, the lion-like person is not always the most honorable. While he may be magnanimous in times of peace, he is not afraid to resort to violence and cruelty for the sake of his own needs. However, this tendency is only temporary. Once the threat is removed, the man of the masculine ideal is able to check his fury and subdue it to the influence of his better qualities. Such a man is in control of his emotions, even as he occasionally indulges in them.

This element of femininity within a fundamentally masculine character can likewise be found in the second description of Augustus' form, *uenustissimus*. The word itself is etymologically derived from the name of Venus.[172] Distinguished not only by her prevailing feminine eroticism, but also by her frequently deceptive and unpredictable personality, no divinity could be further from the ideals of masculinity.[173] Likewise, in his De Officiis, I.130.1-6, Cicero uses this term in direct reference to a more feminine type of beauty, one that is particularly unacceptable for Roman men[174]:

> Cum autem pulchritudinis duo genera sint, quorum in altero venustas sit, in altero dignitas, venustatem muliebrem ducere debemus, dignitatem virilem. Ergo et a forma removeatur omnis viro non dignus ornatus, et huic simile vitium in gestu motuque caveatur.

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[172] P.G.W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): s.v. "candidus"; *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968, s.v. "venustus".

[173] Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004): 203-204.

[174] Michael Adams, ed., *Divi Augusti Vita* (London: Macmillian and Co., Ltd., 1939): 194.

> However, when there may be two types of beauty, in one of which there is loveliness and in the other dignity, we ought to consider loveliness to be womanly and dignity to be manly. Therefore, every adornment not worthy for a man should be removed from his form, and he should beware the vice similar to this in both his gesture and his movement.

Much like the physiognomic treatises, Cicero creates a clear distinction between that which is masculine, as the ideal type, and that which is feminine, as the weaker and less moral. The description of Augustus as being *uenustissimus* then also characterizes him as being contrary to *dignitas*. The emperor was no different from other people, in being prey to certain vices. His, however, were especially dangerous because of his position, when those faults were found to be contrary to his established standards of public decorum.[175] In particular, his sexual exploits incurred such renown that, as mentioned in *Divus Augustus* LXIX.1, even those closest to him were powerless to defend his actions:

> adulteria quidem exercuisse ne amici quidem negant, excusantes sane non libidine, sed ratione commissa, quo facilius consilia aduersariorum per cuiusque mulieres exquireret.
>
> Indeed, not even his friends deny that he occupied himself with adultery, alleging that it was committed not from passion, but from business, so that he might more easily ascertain the plans of his adversaries through their wives.

This excise does little to preserve Augustus' reputation. Suetonius himself does not seem to accept it, later returning to *libidines* as the particular motivating force behind the emperor's penchant for violating maidens.[176] As should be recalled from the accounts of Julius' adulteries, it is not the fact that these actions took place that is detrimental to his masculinity, as much as his shamelessness in conducting them.[177]

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[175] Matyszak, 2006, p. 106.
[176] *Divus Augustus*, LXXI.1
[177] Chapter 2, p. 24; in *Divus Augustus* LXIX.2, Suetonius further augments the audacity of the emperor's sexual exploits with a charge by Mark Antony, claiming that Augustus had even gone so far as to take a consul's wife from her husband at a dinner party, so that she might satiate his lust.

However, *venustas* also carries an additional meaning, relating more to the movement of a person's body, rather than his or her physical form. In this sense, it describes the way that Augustus carried himself as being exceptionally elegant. Just as the importance of the overall body corresponded with the significance of gait in Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia 45, this second description would have an impact equal to *forma eximia*, as general observations foretelling the outcome of physiognomic interpretation. In the same way that Augustus' beauty, as the sum of all the other traits, relayed a noticeable harmony in his features, thereby indicating a masculine character, so his limbs also coordinated with each other to emulate the walk of the lion, as described in Adamantius the Sophists's Φυσιογνώμονικων B40[178]:

> χεῖρας δὲ καὶ πόδας καλόν ἐστι φορᾶς τε ἔχειν κατὰ ταὐτὸν τῷ παντὶ <σώματι> καὶ κινήσεως. ὁ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὤμοις ὑποκινούμενος καὶ ἅμα πράως κεκυφὼς μεγαλονοίας καὶ ἀνδρίας εὖ ἥκει· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ λέων βαίνει.
>
> It is beautiful to have hands and feet in complete accordance with the carrying and motion of the entire body. And he, moving lightly in his shoulders and at the same time having stooped gently, relates very closely to magnanimity and manliness. For the lion also walks in this way.

This interpretation creates a much more favorable view of Augustus than the former. As mentioned before, the presence of femininity does not invalidate the signs of masculinity. The word itself reflects how both qualities can be present in the same entity, as suggested in the Leiden Polemon. The dominance of one or the other depends upon the reading of additional signs.[179] The pairing of *eximia* and *uenustissima* to describe Augustus' *forma* establishes an inclination towards the masculine, given the positive association with the former and the varied connotations of the latter, but even now, it is clear that Augustus was not perfect. The suggestion of femininity foreshadows a vicious streak that will mar his otherwise ideal countenance.

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[178] A similar interpretation for the judgment of overall appearance is found in Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomica, 76.

[179] Leiden Polemon, TK 3245, fos. 24[a]2-25[a]9.

Neither the discussion of hygiene nor expression is relevant to the theory of physiognomy, being a habitual behavior and an abstract quality, respectively.[180] However, it is worth noting that Augustus' *vultus* can reveal certain truths about character, on account of the intrinsic relationship between the two, as was suggested in the Physiognomonia by Anonymus Latinus, 48.[181] If *vultus*, as opposed to *os*, shares some association with a person's *animus*, then the characterization of Augustus' look as being calm and serene reveals a similar nature for him. Suetonius also expresses this virtue in *Divus Augustus* LI.3, when Tiberius questions the emperor's policy on freedom of speech:

> "aetati tuae, mi Tiberi, noli in hac re indulgere et nimium indignari quemquam esse, qui de me male loquatur; satis est enim, si hoc habemus ne quis nobis male facere posit."
>
> "My Tiberius, do not indulge in this condition of your age, and do not be too indignant that there is anyone who may speak evil about me; for it is enough if we manage this, lest anyone should be able to do evil to us."

Augustus' response to Tiberius' concerns is very matter-of-fact. He is aware of the precarious nature of his leadership position, and he accepts the existence of some hostility against him.[182] Rather than attempting to quell those complaints, which would have associated him with the Republican characterization of a tyrant[183], he views them as a natural consequence of having authority. The characterization of Augustus as *tranquillus* and *serenus*, then, is reminiscent of the lion described in Anonymus Latinus, 122. Just as a lion is *quietus* and *tranquillus* only when it is fully satiated in its need for food and free from outside threats, Augustus also eventually reached a point at which he was able to be tolerant, because he was finally secure in his own rule. The

[180] Chapter 2, p. 31; Chapter 2, p. 21
[181] Chapter 2, p. 21; A small mouth is rather womanly and it is suitable for womanly faces, as much as womanly minds; the mouth which is larger is suitable for masculine minds and faces.
[182] Grant, 1975, p. 62.
[183] Thomas Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): 10.

comparison, however, must also work in the opposite direction. While Augustus was confident in the stability of the Roman Empire later in his career, or at least far enough along to discuss such matters with Tiberius, the implication is that he was not always so self-assured. His identification of his step-son's youth as a catalyst of aggravation particularly suggests that Augustus experienced similar anxiety in his own early adulthood. The youthful impulse to condemnation is juxtaposed with a more mature patience.[184]

After Suetonius offers this description of Augustus' general presence, he begins to treat the emperor's attributes in more detail. His attractiveness, movement, and expression have already established his character to be lion-like, and therefore tending towards the masculine ideal, although also infused with traces of femininity. His individual features, then, are simply the elements that comprise the whole, each building up to that final judgment. Since his overall appearance points to a generally positive nature, the majority of those traits within the physiognomic hierarchy should also be inclined to a similar reading. Unlike the description of Julius in the previous biography – which seduced the physiognomist into a false understanding of virtue through an abundance of beautiful, though insignificant, features – the clearest indications of character, the eyes, are communicated first in the *Divus Augustus*, and followed by those of increasingly less significance. There is no deception or dramatic shift in tone. Augustus' physiognomy is instead straightforward and immediate, from the very beginning.

Even the characterization of Augustus' eyes is in direct contrast to that of his predecessor. While Julius' *nigri uegetique oculi* indicate avarice and treachery, Augustus encourages trust with eyes that are instead *clarus* and *nitidus*. In particular, the *clarus* seems to serve as a foil to *niger*, suggesting the transparency of his nature, as opposed to the darkness invoked from the color black. Just as the structure of the discussion of features dispels ambiguity

[184] John C. Rolfe, "Suetonius and his Biographies." *PAPhS* 52.209 (Apr., 1913): 222.

about Augustus' character, his eyes also cannot hide any secrets. Therefore, according to Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia 34, Augustus must also possess a personality that is opposite to that of Julius[185]:

> Oculi caligine obsiti malis artibus imbuti sunt, infideles, intemperantes. Unde intelligendum est optimos esse contrarios id est perlucidos oculos, si nullum extat aliud indicium quod impugnet.
>
> Eyes covered with darkness have been instructed in evil skills, are unfaithful and without restraint. From there, it must be understood that the best eyes are those opposite, that is, very bright, if no other sign which may counter it is visible.

Both adjectives used to describe Augustus' eyes, *clarus* and *nitidus*, relate to the presence of light similar to Anonymus Latinus' *perlucidus*.[186] The opposite of darkness, *niger*, is light. If darkness conveys evil, then light portrays that which is opposite, goodness. Therefore, while Julius' dark eyes represent the worst character traits – the threefold vices of effeminacy, avarice, and treachery[187] – then the luminous eyes of Augustus are evidence of the best nature, embodying masculinity and a conscientiousness for the good of others, as is suggested in *Divus Augustus* XXVIII.1-2:

> sed reputans et se priuatum non sine periculo fore et illam plurium arbitrio temere committi, in retinenda perseuerauit, dubium euentu meliore an uoluntate. quam uoluntatem, cum prae se identidem ferret, quodam etiam edicto his uerbis testatus est: 'ita mihi saluam ac sospitem rem p. sistere in sua sede liceat atque eius rei fructum percipere, quem peto, ut optimi status auctor dicar et moriens ut feram mecum spem, mansura in uestigio suo fundamenta rei p. quae iecero.' fecitque ipse se compotem uoti nisus omni modo, ne quem noui status paeniteret.
>
> But thinking that he himself, as a private citizen, would not be without danger and that the state would be hastily entrusted to the judgment of many people, he continued to retain it, and it is doubtful whether it was with better intention or result. When it was continually brought before him, he demonstrates this intention

[185] A similar interpretation for the comparison between bright and dark eyes is found in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $51^{b}13$-$52^{b}4$; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, A15.
[186] Glare, 1982, s.v. "clarus", "nitidus".
[187] Chapter 2, p. 25.

> in his own words, in a certain edict: "Thus, I am pleased to place an unharmed and sound state on its own foundation and to receive this act's reward, which I seek, so that I may be called the author of the best government and so that I, dying, may bear with me the hope that the ground-work of the state which I have established will remain in the same place." He himself, striving in every way, obtained his wish, lest anyone might be dissatisfied with the new rule.

Suetonius does not accept Augustus' claim in the Res Gestae that he had handed control back to the Senate[188]; instead the biographer openly acknowledges the establishment of a new system of government in its place, i.e. an empire[189]. The question remains, however, for whom did Augustus' intention and its results actually benefit? On the one hand, Suetonius asserts that a return to the Republican system would have been *temere*. Rome itself needed a strong government to keep from collapsing back into the cycle of civil wars, and the competitive atmosphere of the Senate had already been proven to fuel the need for personal glory and disregard for traditional political boundaries if it was left unchecked, as evident through Julius' career. On the other hand, Augustus not only had the opportunity to surpass his uncle by maintaining ultimate power, but he also had much to lose if he were to return to being a private citizen. His own safety was not only a motivating factor in making his decision, but even listed first, before the welfare of the state.

Rather than being advantageous for one over the other, Suetonius seems to characterize the transition into the imperial government as best for both parties. The well-being of Rome had thus become interconnected with Augustus' own well-being. The *res publica* needed unified leadership, such as could be provided under a single man, but Augustus needed its Republican guise in order to protect himself from suspicious aristocrats.[190] This balance was achieved by the

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[188] *Res Gestae* XXXIV – In consulate sexton et septimo, postqu[am b]el[la civil]ia exstinxeram, per consensum universorum [po]tens re[re]m om[n]ium, rem publicum ex mea potestate in senat[us populi]que R[om]ani [a]rbitrium transtuli.

[189] John M. Carter, ed., *Suetonius: Divus Augustus* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982): 127-128.

[190] Grant, 1975, p. 62.

foundation of a government that looked the same on the surface, with all the traditional offices and honors, but underneath was drastically different. While Augustus provided stability for his subjects, he also secured continuous authority for himself. Both of his leonine impulses, predatory and virtuous, are satiated.

In the same way, the shine of Augustus' eyes reflects a person certain of what his role is within his community. *Nitidus* lacks the connotation of quick, trembling movement, as was found in Julius' *vegesti oculi*, and the hyper-sensitivity that was physiognomically linked to it. Instead, it refers to an inner glow, as though the eyes reveal a soul that has nearly been polished to its perfect form.[191] Augustus' authority had already been firmly established. The people recognized that they needed him, so he continued to remain relevant within the Roman state. However, the luminous quality of his eyes, which Suetonius augments with the anecdote about Augustus' intense gaze, also creates some ambiguity concerning the totality of Augustus' goodness, as suggested by the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $51^{b}13$-$52^{b}4$:

> As for eyes from which it is as if rays of light emanate, they are cunning, treacherous to companions, of little faith, and never far from a desire for fornification and the other desires. We will talk about these eyes and their character, and also those clear shining ones that are like them, because you will find them good, if other signs do not spoil them.

On the one hand, the description of Augustus' eyes as *clarus* and *nitidus* directly parallels Polemon's description of the more noble character, i.e. as having clear and shining eyes. On the contrary, the mention of light beams recalls the *fulgor solis* in Suetonius' anecdote. It is important, however, that this story does not specifically characterize Augustus' eyes as being naturally keen. The impression is that he consciously stares in this way, because he likes, *gaudebat*, the reaction he receives. Rather than being a physiognomic sign, it seems to become a

[191] Glare, 1982, s.v. "nitidus".

kind of ritual action for when a person enters into the emperor's presence. Augustus exerts his authority by assuming the same gaze attributed to Alexander the Great, a role model of superhuman ability and world domination.[192] When people respond to it, they acknowledge and accept his superior role. The ritual then corresponds to power relations, as much as the emperor's simple pleasure.

Although the mention of light radiating from Augustus' eyes is not one of his defining features, as much as a response from others to his appearance, its juxtaposition to the more refined *nitidus* reflects the ideas of the Leiden Polemon, about how minimal the differentiation can be between the kind of light that reveals a good character and that which indicates an evil nature. Much as the ambiguous translation of Julius' *os paulum plenius* detracts from an otherwise positive assessment of the feature[193], the similarity in characterizations of light is enough to introduce uncertainty to the development of his nature. Likewise, the interpretation of Augustus' retention of power, instead of reestablishing the Republic, might easily be construed as a result of selfish ambition, rather than also being in consideration of what's best for Rome. It is only with the addition of other qualifications, such as *clarus*, that the reader can decide to which type such eyes belong.[194] Especially as Suetonius' description progresses to those traits

[192] Carter, 1982, p. 196. Alexander had been frequently referenced in the competitive atmosphere of the late Republic as the archetype for an imperial military leader, granting him an almost mythological renown. His famous "melting" expression, as evident in Lyssipus' bust, was likewise believed to have some divine force to it. Augustus' assumption of this look would have likely been a familiar allusion to the republican aristocrats of his generation. Another suggestion is that Suetonius' mention of the emanation of light from Augustus' eyes is instead meant to associate him with Apollo, the sun god, with whom the emperor had a special connection.

[193] Chapter 2, p. 21-22.

[194] Simon Swain, "Polemon's Physiognomy." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam,* edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 168. The excerpt from the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $51^{b}13$-$52^{b}4$, also includes a description of Emperor Hadrian's eyes as being "of such a description (i.e. clear and shining), except that they were full of beautiful light. They were bluish-black, with sharp vision." Although Hadrian seems to possess features similar to Julius, the mention of light in his eyes, such as is found in Augustus' description, is clearly meant to be a redeeming quality. On account of this solitary feature, he is protected from negative

belonging to the second tier of the physiognomic hierarchy – the facial features – the suspiciousness becomes more noticeable. Although the significance of these attributes is not as strong as the understanding of overall appearance and of the eyes, their prominence on Augustus' visage suggests more obvious vices.

Suetonius begins this second physiognomic set with an extensive, tripartite description of Augustus' teeth, one of the few physical features which are not handled in any of the four surviving treatises nor verified by any portrait sculpture.[195] While the detail may simply be included as a nod to Suetonius' own position, in being able to access the private records of the imperial archives, it would be unreasonable to accept the rest of Augustus' physical description as a physioignomic discourse, while disregarding this aspect as merely an interesting piece of trivia. Perhaps the mention of teeth was instead a challenge for Suetonius' erudite contemporaries of the Second Sophistic.[196] Rather than practicing physiognomy through the simple approach of recall-and-identify, those who claimed to be sufficient in the theory would be forced to apply their knowledge and debate their findings. It demands involvement with the text, the treatises, and with the other members of the audience.

Suetonius uses three qualities, more than any other feature, to define Augustus' teeth, perhaps for this particular purpose of aiding in the analysis of its physiognomy without the assistance of the theory's ancient predecessors. What is immediately evident about *rarus*,

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characterization. This example would have been risky for Polemon to make, as a member of the imperial court, but clearly demonstrates the necessity of avoiding hasty judgments.

[195] Ján Elsner, "Physiognomics: Art and Text." In *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam*, edited by Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 216. While teeth seem to have been included in some of the fifth-century BCE bronze statues of Greece, it is rare to find them included in any Roman pieces of metal work, and there are no examples in marble portraiture. The omission of this feature in marble, the dominant medium in the second century CE, suggests a possible connection between artistic representations and the revival of physiognomy. In the same way that the "melting gaze" became associated with a positive character on account of Lyssipus' statue of Alexander, the abundance of public portraits would have provided additional fodder for Polemon's treatise, in addition to the appearance of his contemporary rivals.

[196] David Rohbacher, "Physiognomics in Imperial Latin Biography." *ClAnt* 29.1 (Apr., 2010): 103.

exiguus, and *scabrus* is that all three adjectives relate to immoderation and a certain sense of weakness.[197] There is implied a comparison with other teeth, against which Augustus' are clearly inferior, being farther apart, smaller, and rougher than would normally be expected. Even this basic understanding, though, is enough to gain a general insight into the character of the emperor. While there might not be a direct correspondence between each feature and a specific character trait, the trend of excess recalls the feminine model, as evident in the Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle, $809^{b}14 – 810^{a}8$:

> ἡ δὲ πάρδαλις τῶν ἀνδρείων εἶναι δοκούντων θηλυμορφότερόν ἐστιν, ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὰ σκέλη· τούτοις δὲ συνεργεῖ καὶ τι ἔργον ῥώμης ἀπεργάζεται. ἔστι γὰρ ἔχον πρόσωπον μικρόν, στόμα μέγα, ὀφθαλμοὺς μικρούς, ἐκλεύκους, ἐγκοίλους, αὐτοὺς δὲ περιπολαιοτέρους· μέτωπον προμηκέστερον, πρὸς τὰ ὦτα περιφερέστερον ἢ ἐπιπεδώτερον· τράχηλον μακρὸν ἄγαν καὶ λεπτόν, στῆθος ἄπλευρον, καὶ μακρὸν νῶτον, ἰσχία σαρκώδη καὶ μηρούς, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὰς λαγόνας καὶ γαστέρα ὁμαλὰ μᾶλλον· τὸ δὲ χρῶμα ποικίλον, καὶ ὅλον ἄναρθρόν τε καὶ ἀσύμμετρον. ἡ μὲν οὖν τοῦ σώματος ἰδέα τοιαύτη, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μικρὸν καὶ ἐπίκλοπον καὶ ὅλως εἰπεῖν δολερόν.
>
> Of the animals reputed to be brave, the leopard is the most womanly, except in the legs, working with these to accomplish any feat of strength. For they have a small faces, big mouths, small and white eyes sunken in but themselves flat; the female also has an oblong forehead, curved rather than level towards the ears; her neck is too long and thin, her chest is narrow, her back is long, her hips and thighs are fleshy, and those features near the flanks and stomach are very flat. Her complexion is mottled, and her whole body is disproportionate and without articulated joints. Indeed, such is the form of her body, and, concerning her soul, she is petty, cunning, and wholly treacherous.

Just as the lack of uniformity in the feminine body communicates a destructive nature, the irregularity of Augustus' teeth suggests instability in his character. While his demeanor may be generally *tranquillus* and *serenus*, he is still liable to losing his composure and thereupon acting with undue force, especially when his own ambitions are in jeopardy. This tendency is evident particularly when Suetonius recounts Augustus' early career, such as in *Divus Augustus* XIII.1:

[197] J. Couissin, "Suétone Physiognomoniste dans Les Vies des XII Césars." *REL* 31 (1953): 244.

> nec successum uictoriae moderatus est, sed capite Bruti Romam misso, ut statuae Caesaris subiceretur, in splendidissimum quemque captiuum non sine uerborum contumelia saeuiit
>
> Nor did he moderate the success of his victory, but, with the head of Brutus sent to Rome so that it might be cast under a state of Caesar, he raged upon each of the most illustrious captives, not without the abuse of words.

In his first military victory, Augustus already differentiated himself from his predecessor, but in such a way that made him seem to be a much worse alternative. Julius' standard of *clementia* was gone; Augustus took full advantage of his superior position by defiling the dead and mocking the conquered.[198] Although Brutus and the conspirators had lost their citizenship through the legislation of the *Lex Pedia*, thereby perhaps mitigating some sympathy for them, a Roman was expected to handle himself with decorum, even on the battlefield.[199] Instead, these actions recalled the same barbarism by which the Egyptians overcame Pompey. However, this is only one perspective of the story. The characterization which Suetonius suggests through this anecdote greatly contrasts with the presentation that Augustus gives of himself in the Res Gestae, III.1-3:

> [B]ella terra et mari c[ivilia ex]ternaque toto in orbe terrarium s[saepe gessi] victorque omnibus v[eniam petentibu]s civibus peperci. Exte[rnas] gentes, quibus tuto [ignosci pot]ui[t, co]nservare quam excidere ma[lui].
>
> I have many times waged civil and foreign wars, on land and by sea, throughout the whole world; and as a victor, I spared all citizens seeking forgiveness. I preferred to preserve rather than destroy the foreign people, for whom it was possible to be forgiven safely.

[198] Hannestad, 1988, p. 42.
[199] Adams, 1939, p. 90.

An alternative version about the aftermath of the Battle of Philippi was clearly available to Suetonius[200], but he chose to include one less favorable of Augustus. While maintaining the objective façade intrinsic to a biographer, he uses this opportunity to emphasize flaws, even as he accounts for accomplishments. Augustus' victory over the conspirators is juxtaposed with his merciless punishments, making it already evident that his character cannot be considered completely perfect. In these moments of contention and personal vindication, the virtue apparent in his eyes and overall body becomes lost in the onset of an almost predatory frenzy.

These feminine character traits not only affects Augustus' military persona, but also his entrance into Roman politics. According to the *Lex Villia Annalis* established in 180 BCE, the minimum age to hold the consulship was 42 years old.[201] In 43 BCE, Augustus was only twenty, therefore not even old enough for a quaestorship, and he lacked any experience in the lower magistracies of the *cursus honorum*. Rather than spending his time in entry-level offices and earning his political tenure in the traditional manner of the Republic, Augustus instead marched against the senate for a dispensation from the *Lex Villia Annalis*, thus following more in the footsteps of the dictators, as is evident in *Divus Augustus* XXVI.1:

> consulatum uicesimo aetatis anno inuasit admotis hostiliter ad urbem legionibus missisque qui sibi nomine exercitus deposcerent
>
> He entered upon the consulship violently, in his twentieth year of age, with his legions hostilely led against the city, and messengers, who demanded the office for him in the name of the army.

Augustus was no better than Sulla or Julius, using violence to express his demands. It cannot be denied that his position within Rome was volatile, and the longer he waited to take political action, the more susceptible he became to being sued, deprived of his properties, banished, or

[200] Andrew Wallace-Handrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and his Caesars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 63.
[201] Adams, 1939, p. 116.

even killed.[202] Action was necessary, but Suetonius does not give any indication that he attempted his appeal in the more Republican approach of rhetorical debate. The senate had been known to make exceptions to the law occasionally.[203] Instead, the young leader steps exactly into the vacancy that Julius had left for him, using military support to muscle his way into the political system, despite the Senate's clear unwillingness.[204] In leading his army against the senate, displaying the ἐπίκλοπον and δολερόν of the panther, his own ambitions effectively led him to renew the conflict of the civil war.[205]

The instability marked by the physiognomic connotations of Augustus' teeth is further augmented by the particular presence of another facial feature in Suetonius' description. The emperor's eyebrows, *supercilia coniuncta*, show a similar tendency to emotional reactions, but rather than drawing attention to his cruelty as a part of his character, they instead focus on the consequences of his actions, as suggested in Adamantius' Φυσιογνώμονικων, B37:

> οἱ δὲ σφόδρα συνόφρυες ἀνιαροί· πρέπει γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀνία.
>
> And those whose brows are joined together closely are grieved,
> because grief is fitting for them

Interpretations for joined eyebrows, unlike for teeth, are found in all four of the surviving physiognomic treatises[206], signifying it as one of the more immediate signs of the theory. This understanding of the brows serves to create a balance in the overall structure of the face; the lower half reveals a vicious nature, while the upper portion illustrates one that is more subdued. Although the two features reflect opposite characteristics, they are similar in that both indicate

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[202] Holland, 2004, p. 91.
[203] Adams, 1939, p. 116.
[204] *Divus Augustus* XXVI.1 – *cunctante senatu*
[205] Holland, 2004, p. 95.
[206] Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fo. 73[a]13-[b]2; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B37; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 18; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα,812[b]25-26.

difficulty in restricting impulses, a trait which is associated more with femininity than the dominant and controlled masculine ideal.[207] Augustus seemed to have noticed this weakness in himself, as in *Divus Augustus* XXVII.2, when he tried to show his remorse and make amends after his merciless use of proscriptions:

> cuius tamen pertinaciae paenitentiam postea T. Vinium Philopoemenem, quod patronum suum proscriptum celasse olim diceretur, equestri dignitate honorauit
>
> Nevertheless, on behalf of his repentance of his obstinacy, he afterward honored Titus Vinius Philopoemen by means of equestrian rank, because it was once said that he had hidden his own proscribed patron.

There is a clear distinction between Augustus' past and present mindset in this passage. It is only after he has satiated his bloodlust, *postea*, that his regret becomes evident, similar to how the revelation of the teeth is followed by the physiognomy of the eyebrows. Although Augustus' repentance is undercut by its mention between two acts of cruelty – his proscriptions and his torture of Quintus Gallus – it promised a conversion to a more magnanimous state of mind in the future, one more inclined to *clementia*.[208] However, especially once he asserts his own individual power, this acknowledgement of his flaws developed into an extreme self-consciousness about the public's opinion of him, as in *Divus Augustus* LVI.3, when he was faced with the unpleasant task of having to choose between being an emperor and being a friend:

> cum Asprenas Nonius artius ei iunctus causam ueneficii accusante Cassio Seuero diceret, consuluit senatum, quid officii sui putaret; cunctari enim se, ne si superesset, eripere legibus reum, sin deesset, destituere ac praedamnare amicum existimaretur

[207] Maud W. Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiongomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E." In *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, edited by David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990): 393.

[208] Carter, 1982, p.123.

> When Nonius Asprenas, having been joined closely to him, was addressing a case of poisoning, with Cassius Severus accusing him, Augustus consulted the senate about what they considered to be necessary of his duty. For he supposed that he delayed, lest, if he might advocate for him, he snatches a guilty man from the laws; but if he did not assist him, he abandoned and condemned a friend.

Although Augustus had been firmly established as a head of the Roman state, and he could take confidence in his continued involvement in the workings of the government, particularly after the Second Settlement of 23 BCE, he did not have the charismatic nature that so easily attracted friendships and political support to Julius.[209] Therefore, when he did establish close relationships, he was more sensitive to the interactions that took place within them.[210] In this case, his role as an authority figure conflicted with his friendship, and he simply froze without making a decision. His hesitations, though, were not about his moral inclinations or his relationship with Nonius, but what might be thought about him, whichever side he took. What causes him grief is not the situation, as much as fear for his own public appearance.

In contrast to Augustus' overall appearance and the primary signals of his eyes, negative features become a lot more prevalent on this second level of the physiognomic hierarchy. Both the teeth and the eyebrows not only insinuate, but actually indicate particular flaws in the emperor's character. Unlike Julius, whose face and body masked his treacherous nature, Augustus' vices are explicit, in both their prominence on the face and in his first acts as a young political leader. Although very shrewd and self-sufficient for his age, Augustus' early career was marred with accounts of cruelty[211], bumbled military exploits[212], and ill-wrought relationships.[213]

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[209] Hibbert, 1985, p. 34.

[210] *Divus Augustus* LXVI.1

[211] *Divus Augustus* XIII.1 – after the battle of Philippi, he refused burial to a supplicant, forced a father and son to gamble for who would be killed and who would be spared; XV.1 – after the battle of Perusia, he took vengeance by declaring to those who asked for mercy, "You must die," and sacrificing prisoners of war on an altar before the deified Julius on the Ides of March.

[212] *Divus Augustus* XIII.1 – ill and defeated in the first battle of Philippi; XVI.1 – in Sicilian war, his fleet was twice destroyed by storms, and he fell comatose right before battle with Sextus Pompeius; XVI.3- he was

However, with study of his later political exploits, and further physiognomic analysis of his appearance, it is found that Augustus was far from incompetent. Although his negative characteristics are more prevailing here, compared to other physiognomic levels, they still are not dominant. Three positive traits – his hair, ears, and nose – are interwoven into the description, thus dividing the reading of his vices with reference to his virtues. In a similar way, the arrangement of features which Suetonius uses in his description seems to create a visual picture. In studying the human face, the mouth and eyebrows can be seen to occupy similar vertical positions on opposite planes. The horizontal alignment of the ears, nose, and eyes, however, visually dissect those two planes, thereby isolating the negative features from each other and drawing attention to the concentration of positive ones at the center. In either case, there is a clear subordination of those traits that reveal vice to those that show virtue.

After Suetonius describes Augustus' teeth, he begins his introduction of the emperor's more positive features with the hair, which itself is extensive in its double characteristics, *capillus leuiter inflexus et subflavus*. As it should be recalled from the description of Julius, the texture that is best is between curly and straight, with baldness being a sign of treachery.[214] Unlike in the *Divus Julius*, however, the discussion of hair is now situated on its appropriate tier within the physiognomic hierarchy. While Suetonius seems to have purposefully withheld mention of Julius', in order to reflect the self-consciousness the dictator felt towards his

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ambushed by Pompey's admirals and barely escaped, in addition to almost being captured after mistaking Pompey's ships for his own.

[213] *Divus Augustus* X.3 – attempted a conspiracy against Antony, for his attacks on Mutina; XII.1 – abandoned the cause of the optimates after the Battle of Mutina, even imposing a fine on the people of Nurisa for erecting a monument for those who died; XIII.3 – when entrusted with administration of Italy in the triumvirate, he failed to satisfy both the veterans and the landowners of Italy; XVII.3 – after the battle of Actium, he delayed in Brundisium in order to settle a mutiny of soldiers by paying their demands.

[214] Chapter 2, p. 31; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B37 - Say that a curly-haired man is very cowardly and cunning, and that the straight-haired man is more savage and unintelligent. The best hair is the one keeping in the middle of these, as the extreme thickness of hair is beastlike and baldness is the sign of a malignant character and treachery.

appearance and to augment the overall negative characterization of his personality, there is no reason for Augustus to be so concerned. Directly following the discourse on the physiognomic merit of the eyebrows, the Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle, 812[b]31-34, praises the person with hair between two extremes:

> ἐπειδὴ οὖν αἵ τε φριξαὶ καὶ αἱ σφόδρα οὖλαι δειλίαν ἀναφέρουσιν, αἱ ἄκρουλοι ἄν εἶεν πρὸς εὐψυχίαν ἄγουσαι· ἀναφέρεται δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν λέοντα.
>
> For otherwise, the bristly and the very thick [hair] recalls cowardice. That hair curling at the tips should be attributed to courage; it also appears in the lion.

Rather than being a feature to hide, Augustus' hair celebrates his character as belonging to the masculine ideal. It was the same sense of courage which had initially drawn Julius' attention to his nephew, as recorded in *Divus Augustus* VIII.1:

> profectum mox auunculum in Hispanias aduersus Cn. Pompei liberos uixdum firmus a graui ualitudine per infestas hostibus uias paucissimis comitibus naufragio etiam facto subsecutus, magno opere demeruit, approbata cito etiam morum indole super itineris industriam.
>
> Having followed after his uncle, who soon set out into Spain against the sons of Gnaeus Pompey, through roads overrun with enemies, with very few companions, and with a shipwreck made, Augustus, although scarcely well from a grave illness, was very much honored, with the nature of his habits quickly approved even over the perseverance of his journey.

It is impossible to know whether or not Julius would have otherwise taken such an interest in Octavius, but, according to Suetonius' account, this audacity is what first distinguished the young man, before his other virtues could be ascertained. As the initial connection between Julius and the future Augustus, then, it set the events of the rest of the latter's life in motion.[215] Even in his imperial career, this same characteristic was evident in his relationship with the Roman people. As Suetonius recounts in *Divus Augustus* XLII.1, Augustus was not one to be

[215] Tatum, 2008, 172.

antagonized. Although his public image was still clearly at the forefront of his mind when issuing authoritative statements, it did not inhibit him from exercising his rule over his subjects, and thereby maintaining the appearance of an emperor:

> sed ut salubrem magis quam ambitiosum principem scires, querentem de inopia et caritate uini populum seuerissima coercuit uoce: satis prouisum a genero suo Agrippa perductis pluribus aquis, ne homines sitirent.
>
> But so that you might perceive a health-giving *princeps* rather than an ambitious one, with a most severe voice he checked the people complaining about the lack and costliness of wine, "Enough has been provided by my son-in-law Agrippa from the abundance of water brought in, lest men should be thirsty."

Much like Julius' command of his troops, Augustus' leadership was characterized throughout Suetonius as maintaining a balance between strictness and generosity.[216] He was as willing to reward moral behavior as he was to punish vices, even when that conflicted with his relationships with friends, such as Nonius Asprenas, and family, as will be mentioned later. This weighing between positive and negative reinforcement is even found to be reflected within the characteristics of Augustus' hair itself. While its texture relates to a certain brashness of character, the color, *subflavus*, indicates a person more studious and gentle[217], as mentioned in Adamanatius' Φυσιογνώμονικων, B37:

> μέλαινα κόμη δειλίαν καὶ πολυκέρδειαν ἀγγέλλει, ἡ δὲ ἄγαν ξανθὴ καὶ ὑπόλευκος, ὁποία Σκυθῶν καὶ Κελτῶν, ἀμαθίαν καὶ σκαιότητα καὶ ἀγριότητα, τὸ δὲ πράως ὑπόξανθον εἰς εὐμαθίαν καὶ ἡμερότητα καὶ εὐτεχνίαν συντείνει.
>
> Dark hair announces cowardice and cunning; hair that is too yellow or too white, of such quality of the Scythians and Celts, reports ignorance, awkwardness, and cruelty; gently yellow hair tends towards an eagerness for learning, gentleness, and skill in art.

[216] Hibbert, 1985, p. 34.
[217] A similar interpretation of light blonde hair is found in Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 14.

One of the last character traits that Suetonius divulges before returning to the emperor's death was Augustus' enthusiasm in his own pursuit of knowledge, as well as in the development of Rome as a cultural center. Like young aristocrats of his time, many of whom completed their educations abroad, Octavius was exposed to the Hellenistic traditions early in his life.[218] At that time, Greek was the language of the aristocratic and the erudite[219], and so it is significant that Augustus exhibited a passion for its study, as Suetonius mentions in *Divus Augustus* LXXXIX.1:

> Ne Graecarum quidem disciplinarum leuiore studio tenebatur. in quibus et ipsis praestabat largiter magistro dicendi usus Apollodoro Pergameno, quem iam grandem natu Apolloniam quoque secum ab urbe iuuenis adhuc eduxerat, deinde eruditione etiam uaria repletus per Arei philosophi filiorumque eius Dionysi et Nicanoris contubernium;
>
> He was held by a not trifling eagerness of Greek studies, and in these very studies, he largely excelled, having employed Apollodorus Pergamon, whom he had brought – already advanced in years – with him to Apollonia from Rome when he was still a youth, as his teacher in speaking, and then he was inspired by varying knowledge through the companionship of the philosopher Areus and of his sons Dionysus and Nicanor.

Augustus was not simply a mindless tyrant, but an educated aristocrat.[220] Although he never learned Greek fluently, he appreciated the contributions of that civilization to the Mediterranean world, and the influence that it still exerted, particularly through the literature of the time.[221]

Perhaps more significant in relation to the characterization of Augustus' leadership, however, is Adamantius' use of ὑπόξανθον to describe this color of hair. Although written at least seven centuries later, the term recalls the description of the lion found in the

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[218] Habinek, 2005, p. 60.

[219] Tatum, 2008, p. 173-174.

[220] Augustus' enthusiasm for the Greek culture may also be related to the character of the pure Greek, whose image was evoked with the mention of the emperor's beauty. According to Adamantius' description in Φυσιογνώμονικων, II.32, this designation is given to εἰ δέ τισι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ Ἰωνικὸν γέωος ἐφυλάχθη καθαρῶς/ to anyone who has correctly cherished the Hellenistic and Ionian race. As mentioned before, because beauty is only one of a series of characteristics that define the Greek ideal, I am hesitant to push the connection, but the possibility is worth noting.

[221] Grant, 1975, p. 57.

Φυσιογνώμονικα attributed to Aristotle, which characterizes its mane as being ξανθαῖς.[222] The lion-like masculinity suggested by the texture of Augustus' hair is therefore firther augmented by its color. This link is essential to understanding the seemingly contradictory physiognomic interpretations of these two signs, i.e. while the curliness of the hair points to a bold nature, the color suggests gentleness. Although these features are contradictory to each other, they are both prevalent as a designation of the masculine ideal. That discrepancy, therefore, is itself characteristic of the lion. The balance between Augustus' harshness and mercy reflects the leonine nature that it is itself between the extremes of virtue and vice. One characteristic does not have to cancel the other; one is able to be predominant to the other, given the circumstances of a particular moment. Just as the lion may resort to violence when threatened, but is peaceful once its needs are satiated. Augustus' character also reflects an oscillation between hostility and clemency. His early career in particular was marked by an onslaught of merciless killing and cruelties. Like the lion fighting against aggressors, though, confrontations against enemies were necessary, given the instability of the times. If Octavian did not kill, he would have been killed, as the example of his uncle, and the ultimate failure of his *clementia* to protect him, proved.[223] Once Augustus gained sole power, however, Suetonius' accounts of his cruelty diminish, and he more frequently recalls acts of patience and justice. The turning point is clearly seen after the Battle of Actium, with the death of Antony and Cleopatra in *Divus Augustus* XVII.4-5:

> et Antonium quidem seras condiciones pacis temptantem ad mortem adegit uiditque mortuum. Cleopatrae, quam seruatam triumpho magno opere cupiebat, etiam psyllos admouit, qui uenenum ac uirus exugerent, quod perisse morsu aspidis putabatur. ambobus communem sepulturae honorem tribuit ac tumulum ab ipsis incohatum perfici iussit. Antonium iuuenem, maiorem de duobus Fuluia genitis, simulacro Diui Iuli, ad quod post multas et irritas preces confugerat, abreptum interemit. item Caesarionem, quem ex Caesare patre Cleopatra

[222] Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, $809^{b}14 – 810^{a}8$.
[223] Matyszak, 2006, p. 91.

> concepisse praedicabat, retractum e fuga supplicio adfecit. Reliquos Antonii reginaeque communes liberos non secus ac necessitudine iunctos sibi et conseruauit et mox pro condicione cuiusque sustinuit ac fouit.
>
> And, indeed, he drove Antony, attempting late proposals of peace, to death and he gazed upon the dead man. He even brought to Cleopatra, whom he greatly wished to be saved for his triumph, Psyllos, who would draw out the venom and the poison which had killed her through a bite of an asp, it was thought. He bestowed on them the joint honor of burial and he ordered the tomb begun by them to be finished. He killed the young Antony, the older of two boys born from Fulvia, having been seized from an image of Divus Julius, to which he had fled after many vain prayers. Likewise, he killed Caesarion, brought back from flight in humiliation, whom Cleopatra claimed to conceive from Caesar as the father. He left unharmed the remaining children, common to Antony and Cleopatra, just as though joined to him by necessity, and he soon supported and fostered them, in the manner of his own children.

In this single episode, acts of cruelty are dispersed with acts of kindness. In his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus had no obligation to allow them to be buried together, no less in the tomb they themselves had decided upon. As the victor, he had the right to lead their children through the streets of Rome in triumph.[224] With their death, however, Antony and Cleopatra ceased to be a threat. There was no reason for Augustus to continue his cruelty, because his power was finally solidified. In the same way, the younger children of Antony and Cleopatra had no claim to the parents' kingdom upon their death, nor any inheritance that might prove detrimental to Augustus' own career. Their death or humiliation would not have proved anything.

Antyllus, however, as his father's heir, and Caesarion, whose bloodline challenged that of Augustus own position as Julius' successor, did have the right to power. [225] Additionally, it would be easy for the two boys to call upon their parents' supporters in order to seek vengeance, just as Augustus himself had done after the assassination of his adopted father. The survival of

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[224] Joel Allen, *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 97.

[225] Matyszak, 2006, p. 91. In the Life of Antony LXXXI.5, Plutarch described Octavius' motivation for killing Caesarion, by quoting him to have said, "One can have too many Caesars."

these two boys meant a ready enemy and a continued rivalry. Promises and entreaties could not prove that they would not be seditious later. Rather than take that risk, Augustus was compelled to eliminate the possibility immediately.

It is after these events, once his power is established and all likely threats to him have been eliminated, that Augustus can settle into his rule, like the lion with its hunger satisfied. In the same way, Suetonius began the biography with accounts of the emperor's military exploits, and the misdeeds that occurred during that time, but then turns to the domestic services enacted for the state of Rome. It is only at that point that Suetonius begins to make mention of the more honorable aspects of Augustus' imperial rule, such as in *Divus Augustus* LI.1:

> Clementiae ciuilitatisque eius multa et magna documenta sunt.
>
> There are many, extensive examples of his clemency and courtesy.

His virtues became prevalent in times of peace. The tone of the biography shifts, beginning with *Divus Augustus* XXIX.I and through the interpretation of character. Rather than focusing on destructive tendencies as before, Suetonius instead emphasizes how the emperor's political powers are used to benefit the community, organizing them into a consolidated empire.[226] Every person has their place, and through his continued justice, generosity, and tolerance during his reign, although established on violence, Augustus was able not only to coordinate them, but to gain a consensus of support from them, described in *Divus Augustus* LVIII.1:

> Patris patriae cognomen uniuersi repentino maximoque consensu detulerunt ei: prima plebs legatione Antium missa; dein, quia non recipiebat, ineunti Romae spectacula frequens et laureata; mox in curia senatus, neque decreto neque adclamatione, sed per Valerium Messalam.

[226] Andrew Wallace-Handrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and his Caesars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 101.

> All together, they offered to him the title "Father of the Fatherland," unexpectedly and with the greatest consent: the plebeians were first, with a legation sent to Antium, and then, since he did not accept it, they – numerous and crowned with laurel – also attend the shows for him entering into Rome; and soon the senate in the Curia, neither by decree nor by acclamation, but through Valerius Messala.

This title was significant for Augustus, as evident by its prominence at the close of the Res Gestae. Traditionally given to Roman leaders who preserved the state from political or martial crisis, it particularly recognized the individual as a second founder of Rome.[227] The honor, therefore, is the culmination of Augustus' ambitions, as expressed in his initial desire to take up the name of Romulus in 27 BCE. Augustus' potential was finally recognized and lauded.[228]

Although Augustus' virtues became more pronounced during this time, his vices did not disappear. As mentioned before, he still possessed an acute sensitivity to the opinions of others, which influenced his political and personal decisions, as in *Divus Augustus* LXV.2:

> Aliquanto autem patientius mortem quam dedecora suorum tulit. nam C. Lucique casu non adeo fractus, de filia absens ac libello per quaestorem recitato notum senatui fecit abstinuitque congressu hominum diu prae pudore, etiam de necanda deliberauit
>
> However, he endured the death of his family members somewhat more patiently than their dishonor. For he, although not broken by the death of Gaius and Lucius, made it known about his daughter to the senate while absent, and with the announcement recited by a quaestor; for a long time, he refrained from the company of people out of shame, and he even deliberated about killing her.

Since Augustus and Livia could not have children, the imperial bloodline continued solely through Julia. She was essential to the establishment of a dynasty, as the wife or mother of the next emperor.[229] Thus, when her adulteries were discovered, the criticism against her was more political than personal, particularly because her indiscretions were revealed in the same year that

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[227] Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 273.
[228] *Divus Augustus*, LVII.1.
[229] Charles Brian Rose, *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997): 13.

Augustus was hailed as "Father of the Fatherland". If the emperor could not control his own daughter, and keep her within the strict moral legislations of the *Lex Julia* and the *Lex Papia,* then how could he be expected to implement these same reforms on the Roman people? Likewise, her actions weakened her sons' legitimacy and threatened to indict Tiberius for pimping, if he did not divorce her.[230] Her disgrace endangered Augustus' authority, as well as his legacy, and he was forced to confront it with the eyes of his subjects upon him. There is no *clementia* for his daughter; *pudor* takes precedence, even motivating him to think of killing her. Although not near the magnitude of the proscriptions, the same inclination to emotional and rash responses to opposition is still evident, even at the height of his career. Like his relationship with Nonius Asprenas, his role as emperor was of primary importance, even if it meant the sacrifice of his daughter and grandchildren.[231]

Returning to the features of Augustus' countenance, the remaining characteristics – the ears and nose – augment the masculine nature already established through the physiognomy of his beauty, gait, expression, eyes and hair. When situating these traits back on to the visual plane of the face, the ears serve as the outside limits of the horizontal divide, which cuts the vertical alignments of the negative features. Their description as *mediocres aures* embodies a sense of moderation and proportionality that recalls the appearance of the lion, and therefore suggests the best character[232], as is also apparent in the Φυσιογνώμονικων, B29, of Adamantius the Sophist:

> τετράγωνα δὲ ὦτα μεγέθους αὐτάρκως ἔχοντα εὐαίσθητοι καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι
>
> Keen and manly men have square ears of sufficient size.

[230] Barbara Levick, *Augustus: Image and Substance* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2010): 186.
[231] Julia's children, Julia the Younger and Agrippa Postumus, were also banished in 8-9 AD.
[232] Similar interpretations of the ears are found in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. $55^{b}4$-$56^{a}8$;Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, $812^{a}9$-11.

Especially in his later career, one of Augustus' strengths was his perceptive ability to restructure certain traditional Roman establishments in such a way that would both garner loyalty and buffer him from challenges to his authority. This trait was especially important when he was dealing with the army. As mentioned before, Augustus did not have the natural leadership over his soldiers that Julius had, making it necessary for him to deal with frequent mishaps and mutinies during his first years. By 6 CE, however, as suggested in *Divus Augustus* XLIX. 2, he reorganized them into a system that derived their reward from him alone, as their sole *imperator*:

> quidquid autem ubique militum esset, ad certam stipendiorum praemiorumque formulam adstrinxit definitis pro gradu cuiusque et temporibus militiae et commodis missionum, ne aut aetate aut inopia post missionem sollicitari ad res nouas possent. utque perpetuo ac sine difficultate sumptus ad tuendos eos prosequendosque suppeteret, aerarium militare cum uectigalibus nouis constituit.
>
> Moreover, whatever there was of soldiers, and wherever they were, he affixed it to a certain pattern of pay and recompense, with the rewards of discharge set according to the rank of each man and his time of service, lest they might be able to be roused to new things after their discharge by age or poverty. And so that it might be always at hand and taken up without difficulty, for the caring and enlistment of these soldiers, he established a military treasury with the new taxes.

Augustus understood what was necessary in order to maintain the empire, and one important feature was his control of the army.[233] By provisioning for salaries and pensions from himself, rather than from senatorial funds, he created a professional army which depended on him for its sustenance.[234] Thus, he could regulate soldiers' pay and the duration of their service, leaving them little opportunity to complain until after his death in 14 CE. Although the reform itself was largely unsuccessful in providing satisfactory recompense for the army's services, it is significant that the soldiers now looked to the emperor as their commander-in-chief, rather than a

[233] Matyszak, 2006, p. 123.
[234] Adams, 1939, p. 161.

variety of different politicians, as in the late Republic.[235] To this end, Augustus was able to unite the army, like the Roman people, into one coherent entity, with himself established as its indisputable head.

A similar principle was also used for the designation of political magistracies, as suggested by *Divus Augustus* XXXVII. 1:

> quoque plures partem administrandae rei p. caperent, noua officia excogitauit: curam operum publicorum, uiarum, aquarum, aluei Tiberis, frumenti populo diuidundi, praefecturam urbis, triumuiratum legendi senatus et alterum recognoscendi turmas equitum, quotiensque opus esset.
>
> So that many men might also take share in the administration of the state, [Augustus] devised new offices: the care of public works, of the roads, of the water supplies, of the Tiber's canal, of the dividing of grain for the people; a prefecture of the city; a three-man committee for choosing the senate and another for investigating the crowds of equites, as often as there might be a need.

As mentioned before, even as Roman government was shifting towards a more imperial form, the transition was made through the maintenance of certain Republican facades. The continuation of political elections and magisterial opportunities were important for keeping the populous involved in the *res publica*, while not detracting from Augustus' own newly established role at its head.[236] While not everyone was fooled by the emperor's strategy for retaining power, certain aristocrats appreciated the chance to assert their dignity with respect to the lower classes, in still holding the offices of their ancestors, while *novi homines* experienced a greater social mobility.[237] In return, Augustus gained credit for the extensive reforms to the city undertaken during his regime, as he boasts in *Divus Augustus* XXVIII. 3:

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[235] Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 260-261. The mutinies of 14 CE are recounted both in Suetonius' *Divus Tiberius* XXV.1-2 and Tacitus' *Annals* I.17.

[236] J.S. Richardson, "Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power." *JRS* 81 (1991): 8.

[237] Habinek, 2005, p. 11.

> Vrbem neque pro maiestate imperii ornatam et inundationibus incendiisque obnoxiam excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus marmoream se relinquere, quam latericiam accepisset.
>
> Indeed, he cultivated the city, not adorned for the greatness of the empire and liable to floods and fire, so that he might rightly boast that the city of bricks which he had received, he leaves a city of marble.

The positive and negative aspects of Augustus' character have thus far been balanced with two physical features each in Suetonius' description, but the negative has had one more quality listed among its attributes. In the exact center of the face, at the axis between the negative vertical features and the positive horizontal characteristics, the nose is significant in determining the overall assessment of this second tier on the physiognomic hierarchy, as tending more towards virtue or vice. With the inclusion of two details concerning this feature, *a summo eminentior et ab imo deductior*, each of which is chronicled as a positive trait by two physiognomic treatises, Augustus' masculinity is thus affirmed, not only by the more numerous physical manifestations of virtue than vices, but also in having more descriptive details that accompany them. Thus, the curved nose, as characterized in Anonymus Latinus' Physiognomonia 51, relates to the best sort of character[238]:

> Curvae nares, quas Graeci γρυπὰς vocant, magnanimis attributae sunt; humiliores, quas Graeci σιμὰς dicunt, libidinosis.
>
> Curved noses, which the Greeks call "aquiline", have been bestowed to noble men; flatter ones, which the Greeks call "snub", are attributed to lustful men.

As has been seen with the lion motif, animal comparisons are a common methodology for the practice of physiognomy, but it is not limited only to the lion and the panther. Three of the surviving treatises include a run-down of animal appearances and character traits, so that

[238] Similar interpretation of the nose is found in the Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fo. $56^{a}8$-$^{b}4$.

similarities might be more easily noticed when studying human subjects.[239] The eagle, however, is particularly significant because it is named as the most masculine of birds, i.e. the aviary equivalent of the lion.[240] Therefore, the same connotations of bravery, wisdom, and foresight that characterized Augustus' imperial career through his leonine form are also invoked through suck aquiline features as the curved nose or, found in the pseudo-Aristotle's Φυσιογνώμονικα, 811[a]36-37, its demarcation from the face:

> οἱ δὲ γρυπὴν ἔχοντες καὶ τοῦ μετώπου διηρθρωμένην μεγαλόψυχοι· ἀναφέρεται ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀετούς.
>
> And those having an aquiline nose, one differentiated from the forehead, is magnanimous. It also calls to mind eagles.

It should be recalled from the previous chapter, in the discussion of Julius' limbs, that the smooth articulation of the joints is an indication of the best nature, regardless of what member this characterization belongs to.[241] The nose is no exception. In fact, the pseudo-Aristotle even uses similar vocabulary to describe both the projection of the nose from the face, διηρθρωμένην, and the definition of the legs, ἠρθρωμέναϛ[242], thereby suggesting a similarity in their character. Likewise, a particular connection with the character of the lion is evident through the pseudo-Aristotle's use of the word μεγαλόψυχον in describing the physiognomy of the demarcated nose, the same word which had been used in his earlier description of the lion's soul.[243]

However, by the time that Polemon was reintroducing physiognomy into the Roman world, and Suetonius was writing DeVita Caesarum, the symbol of the eagle was a much more significant than simply its relationship to the leonine form. Its connection with Jupiter Optimus

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[239] A similar interpretation for small and hollow eyes is found in Leiden Polemon, TK 3207, fos. 42[b]4-43[b]1; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B2; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 118-131.
[240] Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 8.
[241] Chapter 2, p. 12-13.
[242] Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, 810[a]28-31.
[243] Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, 809[b]14 – 810[a]8.

Maximus, king of the gods, lent an understanding of supreme authority to it, while its consistent presence at the top of the legionary standards since the time of Marius related to military conquest and expansion.[244] The eagle also carried religious motifs, as a symbol of the divine favor, as found in Cassius Dio's account of Augustus' funeral in *Historiae Romanae*, LVI.42.2-3:

> ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐς τὴν πυρὰν τὴν ἐν τῷ Ἀρείῳ πεδίῳ ἐνετέθη, πρῶτοι μὲν οἱ ἱερῆς πάντες περιῆλθον αὐτήν, ἔπειτα δὲ οἵ τε ἱππῆς, οἵ τε ἐκ τοῦ τέλους καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, καὶ τὸ ὁπλιτικὸν τὸ φρουρικὸν περιέδραμον, πάντα τὰ νικητήρια, ὅσα τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐπ' ἀριστείᾳ ποτὲ παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰλήφεσαν, ἐπιβάλλοντες αὐτῇ. κἀκ τούτου δᾶδας ἑκατόνταρχοι, ὥς που τῇ βουλῇ ἐδόκει, λαβόντες ὑφῆψαν αὐτήν· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἀνηλίσκετο, ἀετὸς δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀφεθεὶς ἀνίπτατο ὡς καὶ δὴ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναφέρων.
>
> And when the body was placed on the pyre in the Campus Martius, all the foremost men of the priests surrounded it, and thereafter those of the equites and those from any office and others; and then a heavily armed guard ran around it, throwing to it all the spoils which any of them had received at any time for their prowess. After this, they took the funeral torches, so that where it seemed good to the senate, they lit it, having been taken from below. It was consumed, and some eagle, having been released from it, flew away, as if carrying his soul to heaven.

The sighting of an eagle on the day of Augustus' funeral would have been auspicious enough of the gods' approval, but the particular action of the bird rising from the flames of the emperor's funeral pyre suggests more than mere divine acknowledgement. Rather, the eagle becomes a sign of apotheosis, for its role in bearing the soul upward to the gods.[245] Although this anecdote is not recounted in the *Divus Augustus*, nor is it believed that the tradition of releasing an eagle from the funeral pyre was yet established during the Augustan era[246], its practice in Suetonius' own time offers insight into what the eagle's physiognomy might have meant for the biography's

[244] Andrew Alföldi, "Hasta-Summa Imperii: The Spear as Embodiment of Sovereignty in Rome." *AJA* 63.1 (Jan., 1959): 17.
[245] Rudolf Wittkower, "Eagle and Serpant: A Study in the Migration of Symbols." *JWI* 2.4 (Apr., 1939): 311.
[246] Peter Michael Swan, *The Augustan Succession: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History, Books 55-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 343.

audience. Just as this bird embodied many aspects of Roman life, so Augustus himself became a military, political, religious, and divine leader. In recalling this image, in particular on this last feature of the second physiognomic tier, Suetonius not only asserts the emperor's masculinity, but also the totality of his rule, and his ability to diffuse his influence into many facets.

With the second level of the physiognomic hierarchy thus concluded, Suetonius' description of Augustus' appearance expands beyond the confines of the face to those attributes that have less significance in determining the emperor's character. Unlike Julius' *iconismus* in the previous chapter, which emphasized the quality of these features in order to build contrast with the eyes, the *Divus Augustus* barely draws any attention to them. The third and fourth tiers – the limbs and stomach, respectively – are completely eliminated, while the next traits that are mentioned – complexion and height – are not part of the physiognomic structure at all. Once the clearest signs of character have been analyzed, there is little that these outlying elements can do that will change the final evaluation. There is no need for two or three additional adjectives per feature, as there were for those that came before. They are auxiliary, serving to augment or detract from their more important counterparts, but not invalidate them.[247]

It is expected, therefore, that Augustus' complexion, *color inter aquilum candidumque*, will align itself with the masculine character, as is also attested through his overall appearance, eyes, hair, ears, and nose. Even the wording of the description seems to recall the moderation and balance that distinguished the leonine form. Suetonius lays out two examples of color, and positions the emperor's complexion within that range. However, the shades that he chooses to limit his sketch are not actually extremes. *Candidus*, in particular, brings to mind Julius' skin tone, *color candidus*. As described in the previous chapter, this marks the masculine ideal,

[247] Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, A3.

differentiated from the pale, effeminate shade of *albus* by a slight infusion of color.[248] If this serves as the limit of Augustus' complexion, the whitest that it can be, then *inter* instead demands the understanding that his coloring is not the most masculine, but instead more inclined towards darkness. In the other direction, *aquilum* is likewise not as strong a term for darkness as *niger*.[249] Rather than being an extreme black, it assumes some mixing of white, to mitigate its depth of color.

The sense of balance implied in the wording of the description is still present, but the entire spectrum has been shifted. Rather than being the middle characteristic between two completely contrasting qualities, Suetonius situates the comparison already on the darker end. According to the physiognomic texts, then, Augustus' character is likewise more inclined to treachery than effeminacy.[250] However, the proximity of his complexion to *candidus* still expresses the abundant influence that virtue has on the soul. The presence of white, in both *candidus* as one limit and in *aquilus* as the other, mitigates the deep-seeded presence of deception and brings the shade closer to the ideal. Therefore, Augustus' nature is not completely virtuous, but neither is it vicious. The presence of positive and negative aspects, with its tendency towards the more former, thus suggests, on a smaller scale, the same assessment made of Augustus' body as a whole. His character is not perfect, but rather reflects the masculine nature of the predatory lion.

A similar understanding can be found in the interpretation of Augustus' stature, *statura brevis*. Twice throughout the *Divus Augustus*, Suetonius mentions how short the emperor was, once in his discussion of appearance, but also in section LXXIII.1, in his account of clothing:

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[248] Chapter 2, p. 8-11.
[249] Adams, 1939, p. 195.
[250] Leiden Polemon, trans. by Robert Hoyland, TK 3207, fo. 65^{a}9-^{b}1; Adamantius the Sophist, Φυσιογνώμονικων, B33; Anonymus Latinus, Physiognomia, 79; Pseudo-Aristotle, Φυσιογνώμονικα, 812^{a}12-25.

> togis neque restrictis neque fusis, clauo nec lato nec angusto, calciamentis altiusculis, ut procerior quam erat uideretur.
>
> [He dressed] with his toga neither tailored nor loose, with his band neither wide nor narrow, and with rather high shoes, so that he might seem taller than he was.

Perhaps it was at this height, in his high shoes, that Julius Marathus measured Augustus to *quinque pedum et dodrantis*, humoring the emperor with the extra couple of inches that he clearly desired. However, even this stature, which converts to approximately five feet and six inches[251], would not have been exceptional. According to a recent study on Graeco-Roman skeletal remains, the average height of Roman males in the first century BCE seems to have been about five feet and five inches, with the tallest people reaching five feet and eight inches.[252] Even at his tallest estimation, then, Augustus was barely above average. If Julius Marathus was attempting to exalt Augustus' image by exaggerating his height, then this estimation was a poor attempt, especially if it is believed that his shoes were part of the measurement. Without that additional inch or two, the emperor would be average, or perhaps slightly below. Rather than being negative, Suetonius' *tamen* seems more appropriately concessive, acknowledging the freedman's judgement to be generally compatible with his own view.[253]

In either case, it is unlikely that Augustus' shortness would have been especially noticeable among his peers, but Suetonius still makes a conscious effort to assert this point, perhaps for the particular purpose of its physiognomy. As should be recalled from the previous chapter, the pseudo-Aristotle's Φυσιογνώμονικα, 813^{b}9-11, is the only treatise which comments on height, claiming that very short people, μικροὶ ἄγαν, are inclined to rash decisions, while very

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[251] Adams, 1939, p. 195.
[252] Geoffrey Kron, "Anthropometry, Physical Anthropology, and the Reconstruction of Ancient Health, Nutrition, and Living Standards." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 54.1(2005): 73-74.
[253] Glare, 1982, s.v. "tamen".

tall men, ἄγαν μεγάλοι, are more deliberate in their actions.[254] Based on our understanding of Augustus' stature, however, the intensifier ἄγαν would be too strong to accurately describe the emperor's stature. While he is perhaps somewhat small, or at least smaller than he would like to be, he was still technically about average height. Likewise, as is evident in *Divus Augustus* XXV.4, Augustus was not hasty, but showed himself to be as conscientious as his taller predecessor[255]:

> nihil autem minus perfecto duci quam festinationem temeritatemque conuenire arbitrabatur. Crebo itaque illa iactabat: σπεῦδε βραδέως· ἀσφαλὴς γάρ ἐστ' ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατηλάτης et: 'sat celeriter fiery quidquid fiat satis bene.' proelium quidem aut bellum suscipiendum omnino negabat, nisi cum maior emolumenti spes quam damni metus ostenderetur.
>
> However, he thought nothing less ideal for a leader than to combine haste and thoughtlessness. And so, he was frequently proclaiming these things: 'Make haste slowly,' 'A safe general is better than a bold one,' and 'It is done quickly enough, whatever may be done well enough.' Indeed, he altogether refused taking up battle or war, unless it was shown to have greater hope for benefits than fear of loss.

Similar to Suetonius' description of Augustus' complexion, the physiognomy must be adjusted in order to have an accurate portrayal of character. Augustus is not short enough to embody the nature of such an extreme, but Suetonius also denies that he was tall. His height, therefore, must be understood as ranging between the two, but more prone towards the former. While Augustus may have valued precaution in his actions, the volatility of his emotions made him liable for temperamental eruptions, as has been noted in his sudden acts of severity or cruelty. However, true to his leonine form, these flare-ups have been seen to settle once Augustus is at peace. His rashness is circumstantial, and therefore cannot be portrayed by an extreme physical manifestation.

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[254] Chapter 2, p. 6-7.
[255] Chapter 2, p. 7-8; *Divus Julius* LVIII.1, LXIII.1.

Augustus' height is so subtle, in fact, that it could easily be missed or misunderstood by the untrained eye, as Suetonius makes clear in his description of Augustus' proportionality, *commoditas et aequitas membrorum*. The congruity of his body serves to mask his instability, instead drawing attention back to his masculine nature, as in the pseudo-Aristotle's Φυσιογνώμονικα, 814[a]1-3:

> οἱ ἀσύμμετροι πανοῦργοι· ἀναφέρεται ἐπὶ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὸ θῆλυ. εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἀσύμμετροι πανοῦργοι, οἱ σύμμετροι δίκαιοι ἄν εἴησαν καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι.
>
> The disproportionate are wicked; it is derived from emotion and the feminine. For, if the disproportionate are wicked, the proportionate should be upright and manly.

Just as the last feature in Julius' *iconismus*, his balding hair, augmented the reading of his black and flashing eyes, this last feature in the *Divus Augustus* also complements the emperor's most revealing traits, as an additional sign of his masculinity. It should be noted, though, that proportionality is determined not by the individual limbs, but by their relationship with one another. Therefore, this description does not fit on the same physiognomic tier as complexion and height, which are independent characteristics; it creates a ring composition back to the first detail of Augustus' appearance, his beauty, which also established a positive physiognomic judgement as the sum of all the other features. The last impression of his character, which will endure through the emperor's death and deification, shares the same promise of magnanimity that was suggested in the first.

Augustus' nature can thus be understood as wholly good, despite a few obvious indications of vice. The physiognomic theory dictates that the body possesses only the signs of permanent character traits. Therefore, the dichotomy between the cruelty of the emperor's early career and the virtue of his later is not due to three separate identities, as an Octavian, a Caesar,

and an Augustus. Instead, the emperor's appearance suggests that these roles simply emphasize different aspects of one character, that of the lion. As Augustus, he is complacent and even beloved by his subjects. This serenity, however, is only possible once his power is established. As Octavius, the heir of Julius, he is predatory and defensive of his authority, both in deeds and in his relationships with those around him. He is driven to assert himself, even against friends and family. As a Caesar, the title he maintained even upon abandoning the name of Octavian, he is a fusion of the two. His own well-being is equivalent to that of the Roman state; thus he balances the needs of both in making political and personal decisions. It is this moderation that will not only define Augustus' own character as masculine, but also become the model of behavior for future emperors. Although he was not perfect, he redefined the role of the Caesar to fit within the newly restructured government. To be a "Caesar" came to mean"To be Augustus-like". To be Augustus-like entailed becoming an established head of the entirety of the now-acknowledged Roman Empire.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In both the *Divus Julius* and the *Divus Augustus*, the physiognomic interpretation derived from Suetonius' physical descriptions of the two men coordinates closely with the understanding of character found in the remainder of their biographies. Just as Julius' natural charisma invites political support, despite his avarice and immoderation, the beauty of his body distracts from the dark nature found in his black, trembling eyes. Likewise, Augustus' tendency to impulsively react to threats against his power was immediately evident in both his early career and upon his face; once he is removed from such stressful situations, though, he is able to rule with the control and integrity implied by the proportionality of his body. Each man is subject to his own set of vices. The difference is the extent to which those characteristics are able to influence their lives. Julius' incontinence defines his nature; its presence in his eyes relates to its prevalence in his soul. It motivates his actions, and blinds him to the precariousness of his continued manipulations of others. Augustus' eyes, however, show a generally ideal character. The fact that his flaws occur instead upon the face suggests that while the emperor is not perfect, his shortcomings are circumstantial more than they are innate. Augustus might not have been able to gain power as efficiently as his predecessor, but he was able to use it more effectively, and therefore retain it.

Thus, the literary portrayals of Julius and Augustus seem to create a microcosmic representation of their biographies as a whole, reducing the intricacies of their virtues and vices to the concrete details of their eyes, noses, faces, and bodies. In the final chapters before

Suetonius recounts each man's death, he allows his audience to "see" the men, evoking both a visual image of their physical forms and, through the theory of physiognomy, a personification of their innate characters. Especially when such descriptions are taken in conjunction with the development of character, the portrayals offer an opportunity for an elite few, who have indulged in the resurgence of this ancient *τέχνη* in the competitive atmosphere of the Second Sophistic, to look back upon the deeds of Julius and Augustus, and understand their actions in a deeper sense. By placing these descriptions at the end of the biography, Suetonius invites a reevaluation of history, in light of the personal inclinations that motivated the dramatic restructuring of Roman society in the first century BCE. From behind the deceptions and decorum, Julius and Augustus emerge in their truest forms, but only for those readers, modern as well as ancient, who are engaged enough with the text to be able to recognize and interpret it.

However, it must be taken into consideration that the practice of physiognomy itself is not without complications. As a fundamentally subjective science, it is impossible to know to what extent my interpretations correspond with what Suetonius intended. While I believe that there is a parallel between my reading and the impressions of character provided in the biographies' anecdotal evidence and overall structure, the connections are my own. The issue is further aggravated by the loss of Polemon's original treatise, depriving modern scholars of the possibility of linguistic indicators, such as were evident in the characterizations of the blasphemer in chapter one. Further research into the portrayals of later emperors might help in revealing a clearer pattern of which physical features and character traits were believed to have lent themselves to interpretation. While Suetonius' departure from his position in the imperial archives after the completion of the *Divus Augustus* might impact both the quality of the descriptions and the physiognomy that Suetonius is able to infuse into them, it would be

particularly interesting to see how the portrayals change in order to accommodate more flagrantly immoral rulers, such as Caligula or Nero. With the precedent set forth in these first two biographies, this analysis might prove significant for the understanding of the lives of later emperors as a whole.

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APPENDIX A

NOT A REX, BUT A CAESAR: IMAGES

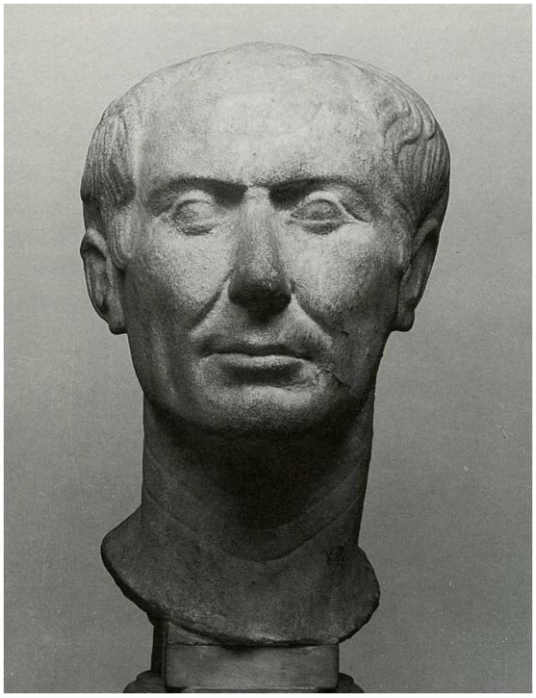

Fig. 1. Marble Portrait Head, 1st century B.C.E.
Julius Caesar
Tusculum, Italy, 1824.
Turin, Castello di Agliè.
Photo from Flemming Johansen, Catalogue: Roman Portraits.

Fig. 2. AR Denarius, 44 B.C.E.
Julius Caesar
M. Mettius, Rome.
Photo from Diana E.E. Kleiner Roman Sculpture

Fig. 3. Green Diabase Portrait, 1st century B.C.E.
Julius Caesar
Egypt
Berlin, Staatliche Museum
Photo from www.vroma.org.

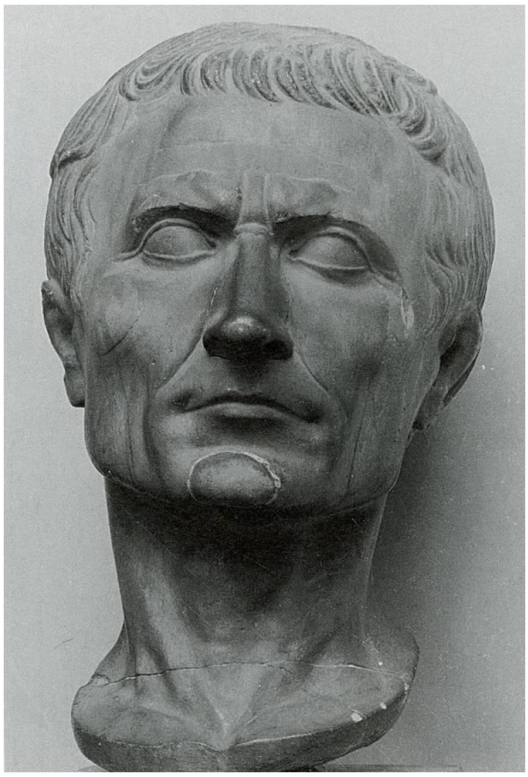

Fig. 4. Marble Portrait Head, 1st century B.C.E.
Julius Caesar
Pisa, Campo Santo.
Museo delle Sinopie, No. 21867
Photo from Diana E.E. Kleiner, Roman Sculpture.

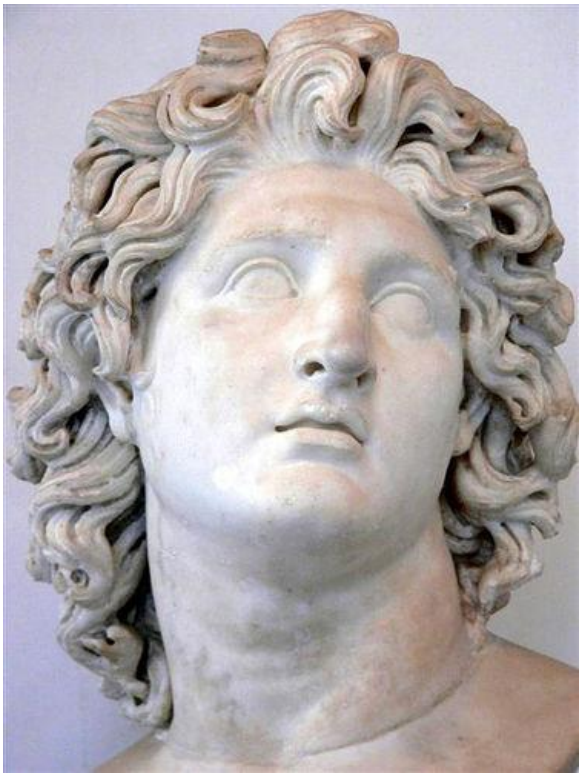

Fig. 5. Roman Marble Copy of Greek Original
By Lysippos, 3rd – 2nd century B.C.E.
Alexander the Great, Detail.
Rome, Capitoline Museum.
Photo from Heritage Key