

## The Cinaedic Germanicus

Germanicus is not an uncomplicated figure. He has been lionized as a republican hero and characterized as inept and as an anachronism (Pelling 1996: 77-78). He represents at once the aristocracy's last best hope for *libertas*, the worst excesses of a republican general seeking *gloria* and the very potential of tyranny (O'Gorman 2000: 48-49). In this present study, I add to discussions of the problematic nature of Tacitus' Germanicus by demonstrating that at moments in the narrative when Germanicus' ability to make affective use of his voice fails, Tacitus points up Germanicus' corporeality and overtly theatricalizes his actions. In other words, when Germanicus fails to perform aristocratic masculinity effectively, Tacitus portrays him as a *cinaedus*. A *cinaedus* is not necessarily a sexual object, but a sexualized one—hyper-bodily and forever adaptable to the changing desires of his audience (Habinek 2005: 187). Furthermore, the *cinaedus* stands in opposition to and helps to define the *sodalis*—the aristocratic masculine ideal—who has succeeded in disembodied his authoritative voice (Habinek 2005: 189 and Gunderson 2000: 61). Therefore, by rendering Germanicus cinaedic, Tacitus destabilizes for his readers the cultural and political (and therefore literary and historical) significance of the Julio-Claudian prince while reinforcing by way of opposition traditional aristocratic constructions of masculine agency.

At *Annals* 1.34 and following, Germanicus struggles with a mutiny of the Rhine legions. Attempts at exercising his *potentia* as *imperator* as well as the *auctoritas* inherent in the son of the *princeps* and grandson of Augusta fail. Tacitus focalizes this failure through Germanicus' body. Not only does Germanicus act out a parody of a general's address to his troops (1.34.4-1.35.1), but Tacitus also has the prince stage a

feigned suicide attempt (1.35.4). Germanicus' strategy for communication leaves the realm of the authoritative elite man—the realm of the voice—and enters that of the *cinaedus*—the realm of the body. Furthermore, Tacitus' diction opens up opportunities for reading Germanicus as sexualized object. Verbs including *inire* and *inserere* and nouns like *membrum* and *manus* conspire with the theatricalized context of Germanicus' interactions with the mutinous soldiers to create an atmosphere in which Germanicus' body is objectified and his authority (as *imperator* to men under his charge and as a model for Tacitus' readers, the son, brother, father and grandfather of emperors) is destabilized.

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