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Fired or Retired? Reevaluating the End of Suetonius' Career

1. *Historia Augusta, Hadrian, 11.3* (Trans. Magie, 1991)

*Septicio Claro praefecto praetorii et Suetonio Tranquillo epistularum magistro multisque aliis, quod apud Sabinam uxorem iniussu eius familiaris se tunc egerant, quam reverentia domus aulicae postulabat, **successores dedit**, uxorem etiam ut morosam et asperam **dimissurus**, ut ipse dicebat, si privatus fuisset.*

He removed from office Septicius Clarus, the prefect of the guard, and Suetonius Tranquillus, the imperial secretary, and many others besides, because without his consent they had been conducting themselves toward his wife, Sabina, in a more informal fashion than the etiquette of the court demanded. And, as he was himself wont to say, he would have sent away his wife too, on the ground of ill-temper and irritability, had he been merely a private citizen.

2. *Historia Augusta, Hadrian, 9.4-5*

*Cui cum **successorem dare non posset, quia non petebat, id egit ut peteret**, atque ubi primum petiit, in Turbonem transtulit potestatem; cum quidem etiam Simili alteri praefecto Septicium Clarum **successorem dedit**.*

And as he could not appoint a successor for Attianus except at the latter's request, he contrived to make him request it, and at once transferred the power to Turbo; at the same time Similis also, the other prefect, received a successor, namely Septicius Clarus.

3. Pliny, *Epistles*, 9.13.22-23 (Trans. Radice, 1969)

*obtinui tamen quod intenderam: nam collega Certi consulatum, **successorem Certus accepit**.*

But I won my point. The consulship was given to Certus' colleague, and Certus was removed from his Treasury post.

4. Suetonius, *De Grammaticis*, 16 (Trans. Rolfe, 1997)

*cum filiam patroni nuptam M. Agrippae doceret, suspectus in ea et ob hoc **remotus**, ad Cornelium Gallum se contulit vixitque una familiarissime.*

While he was teaching his patron's daughter, who was the wife of Marcus Agrippa, he was suspected of improper conduct towards her and dismissed; whereupon he attached himself to Cornelius Gallus and lived with him on most intimate terms.

5. Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 88.1 (Trans. Rolfe, 1998)

*nec ego id notare, nisi mihi mirum uideretur tradidisse aliquos, legato eum consulari **successorem dedisse** ut rudi et indocto, cuius manu 'ixi' pro ipsi scriptum animaduernerit.*

I should not have noted this, did it not seem to me surprising that some have written that he cashiered a consular governor, as an uncultivated and ignorant fellow, because he observed that he had written *ixi* for *ipsi*.

6. Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 63.2

*unum et alterum consulares oblati prouinciis **non ausus a se dimittere** usque eo detinuit, donec **successores** post aliquot annos **praesentibus daret**.*

He had assigned provinces to one or two ex-consuls, of whom he did not dare to lose sight, but he detained them at Rome and finally appointed their successors several years later without their having left the city.

7. *Historia Augusta*, *Hadrian*, 24.7

*Antonini adoptionem plurimi tunc factam esse doluerunt, speciatim Catilius Severus, praefectus urbi, qui sibi praeparabat imperium. Qua re prodita **successore accepto dignitate privatus est**.*

The adoption of Antoninus was lamented by many at that time, particularly by Catilius Severus, the prefect of the city, who was making plans to secure the throne for himself. When this fact became known, a successor was appointed for him and he was deprived of his office.

8. *Historia Augusta*, *Severus Alexander*, 21.3-4 (Trans. Magie, 1991)

*Praefectis praetorii suis senatoriam addidit dignitatem, ut Viri Clarissimi et essent et dicerentur. Quod antea vel raro fuerat vel omnino diu non fuerat, eo usque ut si quis imperatorem **successorem praefecto praetorii dare vellet**, laticlaviam eidem per libertum summitteret, ut in multorum vita Marius Maximus dixit.*

His prefects of the guard he would promote to the rank of senator in order that they might belong to the class of the The Illustrious and be so addressed. Previous to his time such promotions had been made rarely, or, if made at all, had been of short duration; indeed—as Marius Maximus says in many of his biographies—whenever an emperor wished to appoint a successor to the prefect of the guard, he merely had a freedmen take him a tunic with the broad stripe.

9. *Historia Augusta, Severus Alexander, 32.1-3*

*Inuriam nulli umquam amicorum comitumve fecit nec magistris quidem aut principibus officiorum. Praefectis autem semper detulit, adserens eum qui mereatur iniuriam pati ab imperatore **damnandum esse, non dimittendum**. Si umquam alicui **praesentium successorem dedit**, semper illud addidit, "Gratias tibi agit res publica," eumque muneratus est, ita ut privatus pro loco suo posset honeste vivere, his quidem muneribus : agris, bubus, equis, frumento, ferro, impendis ad faciendam domum, marmoribus ad ornandam, et operis quas ratio fabricae requirebat.*

He never showed harshness to any of his friends or companions, or, for that matter, to any of the heads of the bureaus or the chiefs of staff. Indeed, he would always refer their cases to the prefects of the guard, declaring that if any one deserved harsh treatment from the emperor, he ought to be condemned and not dismissed. Whenever he appointed a successor to anyone in the man's own presence, he would always add, "The State is grateful to you"; and he would reward him, too, in order that after his retirement he might live respectably and in keeping with his rank, presenting him with such gifts as lands, cattle, horses, grain, tools, the cost of building a house, marbles for beautifying it, and the labour which the character of the construction demanded.

10. *Historia Augusta, Hadrian, 16.11*

*doctors, qui professioni suae inhabiles videbantur, ditatos honoratosque a professione **dimisit**.*

Teachers who seemed unfit for their profession he presented with riches and honours and then dismissed from the practice of their profession.

11. *Historia Augusta, Hadrian, 21.11*

*Parthos in amicitia semper habuit, quod inde regem **retraxit**, quem Traianus **imposuerat**.*

The Parthians always regarded him as a friend because he took away the king whom Trajan had set over them.

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