

works on military matters (witness the *Tactica* of Asclepiodotus and Aelian, and the works of Onasander and Vegetius).⁸ Valerius Maximus, in another form of early imperial didactic literature, may provide a precedent both for the general absence of contemporary material and for the context for the intrusion of the author into such a work.⁹ Valerius is far more visible in his own work but he does have an anonymous anecdote which can only relate to Sejanus¹⁰ and this may have interesting ramifications for Frontinus' own anonymous stratagems¹¹ Thus more significant is the fact that contemporary allusions exist at all, and why, since they do, there are so few. It is therefore necessary that we ask why Frontinus included contemporary stratagems and why these particular ones; what were his selection criteria?

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It is
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Discuss them
under section
heads
receiving them
groups
Why not order
them as you
discuss them
in the text?
1) Corbulo pp. 4-10
2) Vespasian pp. 11-14
3) himself pp. 12-14
4) Domitian pp. 14-

The contemporary references fall into four groups: four concern Domitian's Chatti war of AD 82-83,¹² two concern Vespasian (one from the Judean campaign and one un-dateable),¹³ and five concern Domitian Corbulo's Parthian campaigns of AD 58-63.¹⁴ Frontinus himself appears explicitly in only one stratagem (4.3.14), dating from the campaign against Civilis in AD 70; and he seems to give the credit to Domitian. These stratagems are not collected in one place but are scattered throughout the work, but, as we will see later, there is one detectable pattern which may be significant.

All twelve references date from the period when we know Frontinus was or could have been militarily active, and none are from a time when we know he was not. This allows the hypothesis that all twelve stratagems are from Frontinus' own experience; either as participant, witness, or author, and could be taken as evidence of his career.

American Philological Association (University Park, 1974); and G. Bowersock *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969).

⁸ For the *Tactica* of Arrian see P. Stadter 'The Ars Tactica of Arrian: Tradition and Originality' *Classical Philology* 73 (1978), 117-128; Everett L. Wheeler 'The Occasion of Arrian's *Tactica*' *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978), 351-365; and Flavius Arrianus *ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΑΚΤΙΚΑ and ΕΚΤΑΞΙΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΑΛΛΑΝΩΝ*, translated by J. De Voto, (Chicago, 1993), Introduction, pp. i-iii.

⁹ *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 2.6.8 and 4.7 ext.2.

¹⁰ *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 9.11 ext.4. See Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, translated by D. R. Shackelton Bailey (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2000), Introduction pp. 2-

¹¹ See Below.

¹² 1.1.8, 1.3.10, 2.3.23, and 2.11.7.

¹³ 2.1.17 and 4.6.4.

¹⁴ 2.9.5 (Cf. Tacitus *Annales* 14.24; and Dio 62.20), 4.1.21 (Cf. Tacitus *Annales* 13.36), 4.1.28 (not found in Tacitus), 4.2.3 (Cf. Tacitus *Annales* 13.8, and 35; and Dio 62.19.), and 4.7.2 (not found in Tacitus).

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However, all twelve are connected in some way with the Flavian Court – Domitius Corbulo was the empress Domitia's father (she married Domitian in 70). Frontinus wrote the *Strategemata* during the reign of Domitian and after 83 when Domitian was given the title *Germanicus*, which is what Frontinus titles him in the first contemporary stratagem (1.1.8).¹⁵ It is possible Frontinus continued writing books one to three or added the fourth book after his return from the Asian proconsulate in 87. The fourth book was a later addition and was at one time considered interpolated.¹⁶ One thing that book four shows is that its contemporary content is entirely consistent with books one and two (there are no contemporary references in book three). Only a very observant pseudo-Frontinus could have known to include only stratagems of Corbulo, Vespasian and Domitian and only in relatively sparse quantity.

This is all intriguing and suggestive but attention should be drawn to one further aspect which is possibly the most suggestive of all, and that is the pattern in which the anecdotes fall. Two of the anecdotes occur in book one and four in book two, and the other six in book four. Not so significant you would think. However, the first two books contain the four stratagems of Domitian's Chattan war, one (unimpressive) stratagem of Vespasian, and one stratagem of Corbulo. In book four we have the stratagem in which Frontinus himself appears (although he is careful to give overall auspices to Domitian), another Vespasian stratagem and four highly complimentary stratagems of Corbulo.

The possible ramifications of the choice of these stratagems are intriguing. One possibility is Frontinus' presentation of autobiographical material. This autobiography is however very subtle,

¹⁵ See G. Gundermann 'Quaestiones de Iuli Frontini Strategematon Libris' *Fleckeisen Jahrbucher Supplementband* 16 (1888) 318. The *Strategemata* is dated between 84 and 96 because of Frontinus' references to Domitian as *Germanicus*. Although A. N. Sherwin-White *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford, 1966), 4.8.3 has dated the *Strategemata* after the wars of 88, Everett L. Wheeler 'The Modern Legality of Frontinus' Stratagems' *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 43.1 (1988), 7-29, at 12, argues that it was probably composed between 84 and 88.

¹⁶ See *Pref.* 1. The format to book four is set out the same as the first three although as the preface to book four admits, it sets forth those stratagems which seem to fall less naturally into the classifications of books one to three; they are illustrations of military science rather than specific stratagems. In 1938 Gerhard Bendz, *Die Echtheitsfrage des vierten Buches der Frontinischen Strategemata* (Dissertation, Lund, 1938), seemed to have solved the problem of authenticity but the issue has not gone away. Book four was contended to have been written by a pseudo-Frontinus and added to the first three books as late as the fourth or fifth century. See Everett L. Wheeler *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery*, Supplement to *Mnemosyne* 108 (New York, 1988), 2. See the Loeb introduction xix-xxvi, for a summary of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship. See also B. Campbell 'Teach Yourself How to be a General' *JRS* 77 (1987), 13-29, at 15; and C. Smith 'Onasander on How to be a General' in *Modus Operandi. Essays in honour of Geoffrey Rickman*, edited by Michel Austin, Jill Harries, and Christopher Smith, (London, 1998), 151-166, at 163 n. 52, who raises another argument for the book's lack of authenticity.

there is only one occurrence of *mihi*.¹⁷ For his contemporary material Frontinus only chooses examples which notice the imperial house and thus by both selection and omission he recognises its primacy in the state. That most contemporary anecdotes in book four concern Corbulo is not altogether surprising since book four concerns military discipline, though the choice may have been made with an eye to Domitia Longina or to figures to whom Corbulo might have served as an exemplar. It is possible that their pattern suggests some kind of shift in atmosphere or ambience at the Domitianic court or Frontinus' providing a subtle marker to show where his loyalty lay. ^x Corbulo was the only individual possible to include that associated Frontinus with the military community. Frontinus also places himself in book four although safely through his association with Domitian. This too may have been to mark his association with the military community. This may suggest that book four may have been composed closer to AD 96. All twelve may also represent sycophancy toward the imperial house. Whatever the reasons (and the above are not all mutually exclusive), they are subtle: anecdotes sprinkled over the whole collection which was not dedicated to any individual and which can hardly have been higher on the reading lists of anyone then than it is today.

A closer examination of the stratagems reveals that we have no other source for the Domitian stratagems, the two Vespasian stratagems, nor for Frontinus' own stratagem involving the Lingones. Only for Corbulo's stratagems are there alternative sources in Tacitus and Dio Cassius, and yet two of the five stratagems are not found there either. And even for those three where we have Tacitus and Dio, Frontinus furnishes details not found in those accounts. In sum: they all assume either non-extant written sources or autopsy or both.

The earliest contemporary stratagems are those from the Parthian Campaigns of Domitius Corbulo.¹⁸ Frontinus' references show that he had, at least, more than a cursory knowledge of the campaigns, if not personal experience in them. There will have existed other sources: Corbulo's own memoirs, possibly even documentary sources such as reports from Corbulo to Rome (possibly incorporated in *acta senatus*) treating these campaigns, and perhaps other laudatory

¹⁷ *Strategemata* 4.3.14.

¹⁸ 2.9.5, 4.1.21, 4.1.28, 4.2.3, and 4.7.2. Syme, *Tacitus* 790, includes Frontinus as one of the possible legionary commanders of Corbulo and G. Houston, *Roman Imperial Administrative Personnel during the Principates of Vespasian and Titus (AD 69-81)* (Chapel Hill, 1971), 134, considered that Frontinus' references to Corbulo could be taken as evidence that he served under that commander. See also Ronald Syme 'Partisans of Galba', *Historia* 31 (1982), 460-43, 472; and Barbara Levick *Vespasian* (London and New York, 1999), 158.

Frontinus includes the Hasdrubal anecdote at 2.9.2²⁵ and the proximity of the two ensures that no negative connotation was intended; in fact, just the contrary.²⁶

If, as it seems, this stratagem was not seen as unfavourable to Corbulo, then it might have appeared in Corbulo's own accounts or any laudatory account or been introduced from Frontinus' own knowledge. Since all should have been available to Tacitus, it remains odd that he uncharacteristically omitted the dramatic detail. He, at least, may have seen it as unfavourable (unlike the generals).²⁷

4.1.21: 'Domitius Corbulo, when in Armenia, ordered two squadrons and three cohorts, which had given way before the enemy near the fortress of Initia, to camp outside the entrenchments, until by steady work and successful raids they should atone for their disgrace.'²⁸

The concern with discipline is a theme of, not only Frontinus' remaining Corbulo stratagems, but Tacitus' account as well; indeed it is a literary topos. However, that does not mean we cannot use the details of this particular disciplining. Frontinus names the location, the fortress Initia, which Tacitus omits. Tacitus, but not Frontinus, names the officer, Paccius Orfitus, who, because he disobeyed orders, caused the defeat. However, Frontinus omits the circumstances for the punishment, ^{which are} ⁱⁿ found Tacitus – the indiscipline and inexperience of the troops are subsidiary to Frontinus' interests which are the discipline and punishment. Tacitus does not give the number of units, only stating a few squadrons and omitting the cohorts.²⁹ However, both Tacitus and

²⁵ 'Claudius Nero, having met the Carthaginians on their way from Spain to Italy under the command of Hasdrubal, defeated them and threw Hasdrubal's head into Hannibal's camp. As a result, Hannibal was overwhelmed with grief and the army gave up hope of receiving reinforcements.' *Claudius Nero, victis Poenis, quos Hasdrubale duce in Italiam ex Hispania traicientes exceperat, caput Hasdrubalis in castra Hannibalis eiecit; quo factum est, ut et Hannibal luctu [nam frater occisus erat] et exercitus desperatione adventantis praesidii affligerentur.*

²⁶ Indeed the title to chapter 9 'On bringing the war to a close after a successful engagement' (*si res prospere cesserit, de consummandis reliquiis belli*) reflects the expediency of such actions rather than any judgement on their morals.

²⁷ Tacitus likewise omits the incident of *Strategemata* 2.9.4: Arminius' display of the heads of the defeated on spears.

²⁸ *Domitius Corbulo in Armenia duas alas et tres cohortes, quae ad castellum Initia hostibus cesserant, extra vallum iussit tendere, donec adsiduo labore et prosperis excursionibus redimerent ignominiam. Cf. Tacitus Annales 13.36.*

²⁹ 'a few squadrons had come from the neighbouring forts, and because of their inexperience they were demanding battle.' *paucae e proximis castellis turmae advenerant pugnamque imperitia poscebant.* Tacitus also states that these squadrons were freed on the petition of the whole army. This information is not included in Frontinus' account; it might have been considered to undermine the stratagem.

Put in Tacitus in the text

He may have been of senatorial origin, a *novus homo* or an equestrian.³⁷ A Roman senator could become praetor at the age of thirty, occasionally younger. However, Frontinus held the consulship in 73 and, if he was thirty in 70, would have only been thirty-two or thirty-three. Frontinus' rapid and abnormal promotion from *praetor urbanus* in 70 to consul in 73 cannot be explained by his origins or by the career patterns structured by scholars, often too mechanistically, for 'normal' careers. This part of Frontinus' career evolved in the anomalous times of civil war and its aftermath. Syme suggested that Frontinus may have been an equestrian officer who came to the praetorship very late and was perhaps adlected into the Senate under Galba.³⁸ There is no good reason and no need to hypothesise this patronage of Galba for Frontinus' career is explicable as a Flavian partisan from 69. A *praetor urbanus* who resigned in favour of the emperor's son and was rewarded with a consulship less than three years later should dispel any doubt that Frontinus was firmly in the Flavian camp and was probably there from the start.

A plausible partial career can be constructed on this basis, which sees Frontinus as serving with Corbulo, moving to Egypt in a legionary command, serving with Vespasian and returning to Rome to become praetor in 69.

Three of the legions involved in both the Parthian war of Corbulo and Vespasian's Jewish War provide interesting possibilities for Frontinus. X Fretensis, V Macedonica and XV Apollinaris

³⁷ W. McDermott, 'Stemmata Quid Faciunt? The Descendants of Frontinus' *Ancient Society* 7 (1976), 229-261, at 255, asserts 'surely he was *novus homo* as were his son-in-law and his grandson' but the argument is inherently illogical.

³⁸ Syme *Tacitus*, 790. Syme himself admitted that there is only one adlection to the senatorial order by Galba on record: R. Syme 'Pliny the Procurator', *HSCP* 73 (1969), 201-236, 228. By 1984, Syme's attitude had firmed ('P. Calvisius Ruso: One Person or Two?' *ZPE* 56 (1984), 173-192, at 177), arguing 'Frontinus cannot pass muster as a patrician. Rather a former equestrian officer, of age towards forty, adlected to the senate by Galba.' Anthony Birley (*Fasti*, 70 and n.8) also considered that Frontinus was equestrian arguing that the knowledge of Spain and Africa in Frontinus' writings in the *corpus agrimensorum* suggests that he may have been a procurator in both Africa and Spain in the 60s and was holding some procuratorial post in Spain in AD 68 and may have been 'rewarded by Galba for rapid adherence to his cause.' Birley cites *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* I.I, C. Thulin (editor) (Leipzig, 1913), 9 and 44 on Spain, and 45 and 48 on Africa. Frontinus may equally likely have been a quaestor in either Africa or Spain. Before writing *The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Birley considered ('The Roman Governors of Britain' *ES* 4 (1967), 63-102, at 67) that 'it is even possible that he was a patrician: otherwise the short interval between praetorship and consulate is difficult to explain.' In *Fasti*, 70, Birley argued that it was highly unlikely that Frontinus was a patrician. Houston, *Roman Imperial Administrative Personnel*, 134, argued that 'it seems better to assume with Syme that he simply reached the praetorship late.' Jones *Senatorial Order*, 51-52, includes Frontinus as one of Vespasian's patrician appointees to imperial consular provinces and one of nine or ten patricians to govern either Africa or Asia in Domitian's reign.

however 1

This is convincing

2.1.17: 'The deified Vespasian Augustus attacked the Jews on their Sabbath, a day on which it is sinful for them to do any business, and so defeated them.'⁴⁵

4.6.4: 'When the Deified Vespasian Augustus learned that a certain youth, of good birth, but ill adapted to military service, had received a high appointment because of his straitened circumstances, Vespasian settled a sum of money on him, and gave him an honourable discharge.'⁴⁶

Frontinus could surely have provided many other stratagems of Vespasian but does not. It is possible that he only includes these two because he witnessed them. Vespasian's dismissal of the inappropriate military appointment is not recorded anywhere else and certainly seems to suggest autopsy. If Frontinus witnessed 2.1.17 in Palestine, then 4.6.4 could have taken place there as well. Tacitus probably used Vespasian's *commentarii* on the Jewish War⁴⁷ and so Frontinus' information could have included details from them not used by Tacitus, an alternative source,⁴⁸ or autopsy. However, his inclusion of only two anecdotes, and two not especially enlightening anecdotes at that, still remains puzzling.

Suffice it to say that Frontinus' holding the praetorship in 70 proves he could have been present in the campaigns of Corbulo, possibly as a junior officer,⁴⁹ and in Palestine, Frontinus could have held some military position. We have already ^{argued} seen that Frontinus was a partisan of the Flavians; ^{also} ^{his attachment to} ~~but~~ it is possible that if he was with Corbulo ^(if such a condition existed) he was there through the general's patronage. This

⁴⁵ *Divus Augustus Vespasianus Iudaeos Saturni die, quo eis nefas est quicquam seriae rei agere, adortus superavit.* The only account Josephus gives of a Roman attack on the Sabbath is in relation to Pompey at *Bellum Iudaicum* 1.3-5. He again refers to this at 2.16.

⁴⁶ *Divus Augustus Vespasianus, cum quendam adulescentem honeste natum, militiae inhabilem, angustiarum rei familiaris causa deductum ad longiorem ordinem rescisset, censu constituto honesta missione exauctoravit.*

⁴⁷ Syme *Tacitus*, 178 and 297. Cf. 178 n. 2 where Syme cites W. Weber, *Josephus und Vespasian* (1920) 106 ff., who insisted that Tacitus only knew Vespasian's *commentarii* through Pliny the Elder. If so, Frontinus may have used Pliny the Elder as a source.

⁴⁸ Possibly M. Antonius Julianus. See Syme *Tacitus*, 178 n.3.

⁴⁹ Towards the end of the first century the *legatus legionis* was usually chosen from the ranks of ex-praetors, although he could be chosen from ex-quaestors. There are three known examples of ex-quaestor legati legioni for the period; Titus, Tettius Julianus, and A. Larcus Lepidus Sulpicianus. Brian W. Jones 'Titus and some Flavian Amici' *CP* 49 (1954), 454-462, at 460 n.57. Birley, *Fasti*, 14, argues that 'under the Julio-Claudians it was not uncommon for men to command legions before the praetorship, whether as ex-quaestors or as ex-tribunes or as ex-aediles. But this practice virtually died out from the beginning of the Flavian period.' It is possible Frontinus served in the east as a junior officer or as a *legatus legionis*. This reconstruction is not helped by the fact that Tacitus' chronology of Corbulo's campaigns is confused despite his use of Corbulo's own account. See n. to *Annales* 13.35 in Tacitus *The Annals*, translated by J. Jackson (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937).

a bit strong

This section needs to be re-written to include, perhaps some of n. 49 in the text?

would have ensured obligations and what is more, contemporaries would have known of the connection and Frontinus' attachment to the memory of Corbulo – he would not need to have made an explicit mention of his presence if it were generally known.

Frontinus includes an anonymous stratagem which might relate to the journey of the detachment under Mucianus to Rome:

1.10.4: 'Scorylo, a chieftain of the Dacians, though he knew that the Romans were torn with the dissensions of the civil wars, yet did not think he ought to venture on any enterprise against them, inasmuch as a foreign war might be the means of uniting the citizens in harmony. Accordingly he pitted two dogs in combat before the populace, and when they became engaged in a desperate encounter, exhibited a wolf to them. The dogs straightway abandoned their fury against each other and attacked the wolf. By this illustration, Scorylo kept the barbarians from a movement which could only have benefited the Romans.'⁵⁰

Tacitus informs us that the Dacians were causing trouble in Moesia in 69.⁵¹ Tacitus credits the cessation of activity to Mucianus and *VI Ferrata* en route to Italy, and it is possible Frontinus' stratagem relates to these activities. ^{If so, it} ^{why} ^{deleted these details} ~~is understandable that Frontinus had shorn it of any allusions which~~ ^{that} connected it specifically to the civil war and to Mucianus in particular. Scorylo is otherwise unknown. In relation to this anecdote the example of Valerius Maximus ^(*) may be of assistance. Valerius' anonymous 9.11. ext.4 is almost universally interpreted as relating to Sejanus – a touchy subject at best under Tiberius. Any anecdote relating to Mucianus might also have been a sensitive subject at any time under Domitian and Frontinus may have avoided a politically dangerous allusion by couching the anecdote anonymously.⁵²

Frontinus includes only one stratagem that is explicitly from his own experience and it comes from AD 70 following soon after his resignation as *praetor urbanus*. This stratagem was at one time considered ^{to have been} interpolated because of the doubt regarding the authenticity of the fourth book.

⁵⁰ *Scorylo dux Dacorum, cum sciret dissociatum armis civilibus populum Romanum neque tamen sibi temptandum arbitraretur, quia externo bello posset concordia inter cives coalescere, duos canes in conspectu popularium commisit iisque acerrime inter ipsos pugnantibus lupum ostendit, quem protinus canes omissa inter se ira adgressi sunt. Quo exemplo prohibuit barbaros ab impetu Romanis profuturo.*

⁵¹ Tacitus *Historiae* 3.46.

⁵² See Jones *Domitian*, 15.

(*) noted at the outset of this paper (p. 2)

This needs to be expanded
it is too abrupt this way. The only prev. ref. is on p. 2

A bit
ambitious?

⊕ ref. to authenticity debate necessary. (n. 16?)
you say that the issue is still debated!

With the acceptance of the fourth book's authenticity, faith is also restored in this stratagem, although its singularity causes disquiet.

4.3.14: 'In the war waged under the auspices of the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus and begun by Julius Civilis in Gaul, the very wealthy city of the Lingones, which had revolted to Civilis, feared that it would be plundered by the approaching army of Caesar. But when, contrary to expectation, it remained unharmed and lost none of its property, it returned to its loyalty, and handed over seventy thousand armed men to me.'⁵³

Frontinus seems to frame his stratagem under Domitian's *auspicia* in order to pay credit to Domitian and still include his own contribution with as little risk as possible. The use of *mihi* suggests that Frontinus held some kind of command. However, the only information Frontinus himself gives us is that he was acting *auspiciis Domitiani*. It is possible that Domitian did hold *auspicia* in 70 – he was hailed as Caesar and appointed praetor with consular power.⁵⁴ As an ex-praetor, Frontinus might well have become *legatus legionis* although other posts have been suggested.⁵⁵ It is arguable that Frontinus was offered the command in return for his resignation as *praetor urbanus*; indeed, his resignation would ensure obligations. It is even possible that Frontinus hunted out the command.⁵⁶ Frontinus' command strongly suggests that he had proven himself capable of command earlier in his military career – the stratagems of Corbulo and Vespasian suggest places where he could have gained such experience.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Auspiciis Imperatoris Caesaris Domitiani Augusti Germanici bello, quod Iulius Civilis in Gallia moverat, Lingonum opulentissima civitas, quae ad Civilem desciverat, cum adveniente exercitu Caesaris populationem timeret, quod contra expectationem inviolata nihil ex rebus suis amiserat, ad obsequium redacta septuaginta milia armatorum tradidit mihi.* This is the only occurrence of *mihi* in the main text of the *Strategemata*. See below.

⁵⁴ See Jones *Domitian*, 15. Jones argues, however, that Mucianus held the real power and although he probably was dead by 77 (Syme, *Tacitus*, 791, adduces the fact by Pliny (*N.H.* 32.62) quoting Mucianus on the subject of oysters), Domitian may have remained sensitive to the subject of Mucianus.

⁵⁵ Kappelmacher *Iulius* 243, col. 591. J. Ward Perkins 'The Career of Sex. Julius Frontinus' *Classical Quarterly* 21 (1937), 102-105, at 102, argues that the stratagem suggests command of a legion. J. A. Crook, *Consilium Principis* (Cambridge, 1955), 168, argued that Frontinus was a *comes* of Domitian in the campaign. Crook gives no reasons for this conclusion. Frontinus was a very recent ex-praetor and he is far more likely to have been the commanding officer of a legion than higher in the command structure. It seems more likely that it was as a *legatus legionis* that this surrender was made to him.

⁵⁶ Tacitus (*Historiae* 4.68) comments that 'all the most eminent citizens were enrolled for the expedition, others at their own solicitation.' *Adsumuntur e civitate clarissimus quisque et alii per ambitionem.*

⁵⁷ He may have been a *tribunus militum* of distinction, or a *legatus legionis* before his praetorship. It is of interest that one of the few ex-quaestor *legati* was Tettius Julianus – Frontinus' co-praetor on January 1. He

The next post we know of for Frontinus was the consulship of 73 followed by the governorship of Britain until late 77 or early 78. Some scholars believe he included one stratagem from his governorship of Britain. A. Dederich and A. Kappelmacher, date 1.5.26 to Frontinus' campaign in Wales.⁵⁸

1.5.26: 'To produce a like misconception in the minds of our men, the [Silurians], in various places, tied bullocks to trees with halters. The animals, being thus separated, bellowed incessantly and produced the impression that the Silurians were still there.'⁵⁹

The emendation alters the manuscript reading *Ligures* without cause.⁶⁰ We have no information on the Welsh campaign in extant narratives other than the brief note in Tacitus' *Agricola*⁶¹ and as the stratagem does not have a strict historical circumstance, the emendation is not falsifiable. It also allows for Frontinus to have made reference to his own campaign in Britain, something which commentators think he would have done, and as such the emendation is attractive. However, none of the manuscripts supports it and it should be rejected.

verifiable?

The first group of contemporary stratagems encountered in the *Strategemata* are also the latest in date and relate to Domitian's war against the Chatti, AD 82-83 – occurring twelve years after that of AD 70. There are no stratagems from the interim period. The Domitian stratagems begin early

his? afterward

was deprived of office on the grounds of desertion of Vespasian although it was soon restored to him (Tacitus *Historiae* 4.39).

⁵⁸ Kappelmacher, *Iulius* 243, col. 592; A. Dederich 'Bruchstücke aus dem Leben des Sextus Julius Frontinus' *Zeitschrift für die Alterthumswissenschaft* 105 (1839), 838. The stratagem follows 1.5.25: Darius' deception of the Scythians by leaving dogs and asses in camp. When the Scythians heard these braying and barking, they imagined Darius was still there. Cf. Herodotus 4.135.

⁵⁹ *Eundem errorem obiecturi nostris [Silures] per diversa loca buculos laqueis ad arbores alligaverunt, qui diducti frequentiore mugitu speciem remantium praebebant hostium.*

⁶⁰ Ireland *Iuli Frontini Strategemata, apparatus criticus* 1.5.26, attributes the emendation to Dederich.

⁶¹ Tacitus *Agricola* 17. '...but Julius Frontinus was a great man, and so far as was humanly possible sustained the burden cast on him: his arms reduced the Silures, a powerful and warlike race; he surmounted not only the valour of the enemy but also the physical difficulties of their land.' *...sustinuit molem Iulius Frontinus, vir magnus, quantam licebat, validamque et pugnacem Silurum gentem armis subegit, super virtutem hostium locorum quoque difficultates eluctatus.* See Kappelmacher *Iulius* 243, col. 591. Sheppard Frere *Britannia*³ (London, 1987), 62, argues that the Silures 'were to prove themselves the toughest and most successful opponents which the Roman army was to encounter' in Britain. References to the Ligures in historical narratives do not contain the stratagem. See A. R. Birley 'Petillius Cerialis and the Conquest of Brigantia' *Britannia* 4 (1973), 179-190, at 189.

in the work at 1.1.8 and they too have led to a great deal of argument as to their exact significance.

These stratagems (along with Statius' *Silvae*) have been argued to provide a balance for modern readers to the *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian found in the accounts of Pliny and Tacitus.⁶² They present a Domitian unlike the one we are used to seeing – at the front making decisions and acting like an emperor. This picture seems to some to be that of a sycophantic and careful courtier, writing while Domitian was still alive. An alternative view is that of a mature and astute statesman who understood Domitian's policies. Jones argued that by AD 88 it was by no means certain that every senator regarded Domitian's foreign policy as disastrous.⁶³ Dutiful respect of Domitian and praise of his measures during his lifetime does not amount to sycophancy – indeed *obsequium ac modestia*, the phrase Tacitus uses to praise Agricola's conduct, could be considered a principled behaviour as much as a catch phrase for survival during such a period.⁶⁴ Frontinus' brief allusions should be considered all the more important as the main sources are not available.⁶⁵

1.1.8: 'When the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus wished to crush the Germans, who were in arms, realising that they would make greater preparations for war if they foresaw the arrival of so eminent ^{an} commander as himself, he concealed the reason for his departure from Rome under the pretext of taking a census of the Gallic provinces. Under the cover of this he plunged into sudden warfare, crushed the ferocity of these savage tribes, and thus acted for the good of the provinces.'⁶⁶

⁶² Jones *Senatorial Order*, 3.

⁶³ Jones *Senatorial Order*, 23. 'Some may well have been dissatisfied with aspects of it, while the more intelligent probably assessed it in much the same way as Frontinus had described Domitian's activities in Germany.'

⁶⁴ Tacitus *Agricola* 42. See Birley's note to *Agricola* 17. Both Frontinus and Agricola are described as great men and here Tacitus expounds that great men can exist even under bad emperors by showing respect and moderation.

⁶⁵ See G. Perl 'Frontin und der "Limes": Zu Strat. 1,3,10 und 2,11,7' *Klio* 63 (1981), 563-583, at 563. For the Chattan campaign see Jones *Domitian*, 128-131, and Parker *Roman Legions*, 150-151. There are major problems with the sources which make knowledge of the exact movements of the legions impossible. Jones (*Senatorial Order*, 2-3) records that only three of the Domitianic senators left accounts of his reign: Pliny, Tacitus and Frontinus; Pliny and Tacitus are 'unreservedly hostile,' whilst 'the more experienced Frontinus seems to have approved of, or at least understood, what Domitian was trying to do.'

⁶⁶ *Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, cum Germanos, qui in armis erant, vellet opprimere nec ignoraret maiore bellum molitione inituros, si adventum tanti ducis praesensissent, profectioni suae census obtexuit Galliarum; sub quibus in opinato bello adfusus contusa immanium ferocia nationum provinciis consuluit.*

Jones uses 1.1.8 to date the beginning of the campaign to spring 82, and dates its end to summer 83 on the evidence of 2.11.7.⁶⁷

1.3.10: 'When the Germans, in accordance with their usual custom, kept emerging from woodland-pastures and unsuspected hiding-places to attack our men, then finding a safe refuge in the depths of the forest, the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus, by advancing the frontier of the empire along a stretch of one hundred and twenty miles, not only changed the nature of the war, but brought his enemies beneath his sway, by uncovering their hiding-places.'⁶⁸

1.3.10 is unclear and has generated much differing opinion. Frontinus' phrasing *limitibus per centum viginti milia passuum actis* could mean either that he drove 120 miles of (military roads) into enemy country, or that he constructed fortified boundaries extending for 120 miles.⁶⁹ The term *limes/limites* is a difficult one to interpret. It later developed a meaning of fortified boundaries, but there is scant evidence that it held this meaning in the Flavian period. Frontinus' stratagem is the earliest reference to the *limites* of Domitian⁷⁰ and therefore the problem exists of interpreting what they were exactly. Various scholars have argued for differing interpretations based on their own agendas.⁷¹

⁶⁷ See Brian W. Jones, 'The Dating of Domitian's War Against the Chatti' *Historia* 22 (1972), 79-90, at 88-90. He argues that the Chatti always seemed to have attacked the Romans at times of weakness, such as in AD 9 and 69/70. Therefore the change of emperor in September 81 would be another such opportunity. 2.11.7 implies that the title was conferred after hostilities had ceased. Jones also argues that this stratagem is associated with the period of consolidation and reorganisation after the campaign. See also B. Levick 'Domitian and the Provinces' *Latomus* 41 (1982), 50-73, at 64.

⁶⁸ *Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus, cum Germani more suo e saltibus et obscuris latebris subinde impugnarent nostros tutumque regressum in profunda silvarum haberent, limitibus per centum viginti milia passuum actis non mutavit tantum statum belli, sed et subiecit ditioni suae hostes, quorum refugia nudaverat.*

⁶⁹ Jones, *Domitian* 130 and nn. 25-27. Syme, 'Flavian Wars and Frontiers' *CAH* 11 (Cambridge, 1936), 162-163, argued that Domitian, over a front of one hundred and twenty miles, 'drove military roads deep into the broken and wooded country that hitherto had secured them [the Chatti] immunity and thus opened access to their fortresses.' Pat Southern, *Domitian, Tragic Tyrant* (London and New York, 1997), 85, argues that such a penetration to Kassel, an area in the Chattan heartland perhaps vital to their economic or spiritual survival *circa* 120 miles north-east of Mainz, would make sound military sense.

⁷⁰ Jones, 'Dating of Domitian's War,' 80 n.9.

⁷¹ B. Isaac, 'The meaning of the terms *limes* and *limitanei*' *JRS* 78 (1988), 125-147, argues that *limes* does not mean any kind of permanent defensive structure for the first three centuries of the empire. On 127, Isaac favours the interpretation of military roads. Jones, *Domitian*, 130 and nn. 25-27, agrees. Isaac sees these *limites* as military roads driven into enemy country enabling Roman troops to move safely. See also G. Perl, 'Frontin und der "Limes"', 563. However, H. Schönberger, 'The Roman Frontier in Germany: an Archaeological Survey' *JRS* 59 (1969), 144-197, at 159, offers another interpretation. He cites E. Fabricius *ORL A Strecke* 3 (1936), 45, arguing that Domitian had *limites* laid out over a distance of 120 Roman

2.3.23: 'The Emperor Caesar Augustus Germanicus, when the Chatti, by fleeing into the forests, again and again interfered with the course of a cavalry engagement, commanded his men, as soon as they should reach the enemy's baggage-train, to dismount and fight on foot. By this means he made sure that his success should not be blocked by any difficulties of terrain.'⁷²

2.11.7: 'When the Emperor Caesar Augustus Germanicus, in the war in which he earned the title of 'Germanicus' by conquering the Germans, was building forts in the territory of the Chatti,⁷³ he ordered compensation to be made for the crops of the land which he was including within his fortifications. Thus the renown of his justice won the allegiance of all.'⁷⁴

This stratagem seems to corroborate Suetonius' favourable assessment that Domitian 'was most conscientious in dispensing justice'.⁷⁵ Barbara Levick argues that Frontinus' stratagem and Statius (*Silvae* 5.2.91-93) show that Domitian prided himself on his justice.⁷⁶ Frontinus'

miles. Fabricius argued that this interpretation suited the layout in the Taunus and Wetterau. Schönberger argues that these roads were protected with wooden watchtowers 500-600 metres apart although on level ground they could be up to 1000 metres apart. This is indeed the layout of that frontier. Southern *Domitian*, 84-85, argues against Fabricius' interpretation and that Frontinus' *limites* and the establishment of a frontier were two separate concepts, 'one referring to the course of the war and the other a result of it.' See also Luttwak, *Grand strategy*, 214 n. 103; and H. Düntzer, 'Domitian in Frontinus Strategemata', *Bonner Jahrbucher* H 96/97 (1896), 172 - 183, at 182-183.

⁷² *Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus, cum subinde Chatti equestre proelium in silvas refugiendo deducerent, iussit suos equites, simulatque ad impedita ventum esset, equis desilire pedestrique pugna conflare; quo genere consecutus est, ne quis iam locus victoriam eius moraretur. Cf. Tacitus Germania 30.* Somewhat melodramatically, Tacitus maintains that the Chatti do not just go out to do battle, they wage war, and that they do not make sudden forays or engage in chance encounters. This differs, not only from Frontinus' account, but also from what we know of German tactics. Tacitus' comment would seem to undermine his own opinion expressed elsewhere (*Germania* 37, *Agricola* 39) that the victory was a sham.

⁷³ The Loeb text has *in finibus Cubiorum* but the emendation to the Chatti is preferable. See Ireland *Iuli Frontini Strategemata, apparatus criticus* 2.11.7.

⁷⁴ *Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus eo bello, quo victis hostibus cognomen Germanici meruit, cum in finibus Chattorum castella poneret, pro fructibus locorum, quae vallo comprehendebat, pretium solvi iussit; atque ita iustitiae fama omnium fidem adstrinxit.*

⁷⁵ Suetonius *Domitian* 8. *Ius diligenter et industrie dixit*, '... and kept such a tight hold on the city magistrates and provincial governors that the general standard of honesty and justice rose to an unprecedented high level.' *Magistratibus quoque urbis provinciarumque praesidibus coercendis tantum curae adhibuit, ut neque modestiores unquam neque iustiores exstiterint ...*

⁷⁶ Levick, 'Domitian and the Provinces,' 64. She argues that 'the emphasis put by contemporary writers such as Statius and Frontinus on Domitian's justice and even-handedness does give some support to Suetonius' favourable estimate. Obsequious flattery the comments of Statius and Frontinus may be, but the very fact that they chose that material suggests that Domitian prided himself on his justice.'

stratagems do seem to show that he was either aware of Domitian's good strategy and his justice, or his wish to have them recognised.

The suggestion that Frontinus was a *comes* of Domitian in the Chattan campaign was first made in 1886.⁷⁷ Among others, Syme and Wheeler have argued that Frontinus commanded during the war and his presence might imply he was partly or even largely responsible for Domitian's strategy.⁷⁸ That is purely speculative, however, for his recording of the stratagems themselves he would only need to have had a literary source or to have been present. And that he was present seems relatively certain – he seems to have been appointed governor of Lower Germany during the war or soon thereafter. Frontinus' presence is supported by three inscriptions; the first found near Oppenheim dedicated by a daughter of Frontinus,⁷⁹ the second also found near Oppenheim dedicated by Frontinus' daughter's own child,⁸⁰ and the third, found at Sanctena, near the Roman legionary fort of Vetera Castra, refers to Frontinus himself.⁸¹

Frontinus is likely to have taken his family with him as governor but not as *comes*; the presence of three generations is however, striking. Certainly the two inscriptions from near Oppenheim were within the region of operations for the Chattan war.⁸² We therefore have corroborative

⁷⁷ J. Asbach *Westdeutsche Zeitung* V (1886), 369.

⁷⁸ Syme *Tacitus*, 214 and n.3; Wheeler 'Modern Legality', 12. See Jones *Senatorial*, 3. If Frontinus was responsible for the strategy then his balanced account of the conduct of Domitian may be easily explained.

⁷⁹ To the gods Apollo and Sirio Julia Frontina | fulfilled her vow with money gladly, properly, and freely *Deo. Apollini. Et. Sirione. Iulia Frontina. | V.[otum] S.[oluit] P.[ecunia] L.[aeta] L.[ibens] M.[erito]* Dederich, 'Bruchstücke,' 841, although without reference. See J. Sandys *Latin Epigraphy: an introduction to the study of Latin epigraphy* (Cambridge, 1927), 311. This was most probably dedicated by a daughter of Frontinus. Another possibility is *votum soluit posuit* ... 'fulfilled her vow with this building.' The second inscription seems to have been dedicated by Frontinus' daughter's own child.

⁸⁰ If Frontinus was born in 35 and married at the usual age of twenty-two he could quite easily have grandchildren by the 80s. What is more, if Frontinus' family were in Germany with him the presence of grandchildren is not unexpected. We can perhaps postulate that this is the child of the Julia Frontina of the first inscription. Dedicated to Julia Frontina | daughter of Sex. Frontinus | my mother. *JULIAE · SEX · F | FRONTINAE | MATRI. CIL VI 20483.* McDermott 'Stemmata Quid Faciunt?', 254, rejects the possibility that this is the same Julia who married Q. Sosius Senecio. See *CIL VIII.7066* for family. Again, if Frontinus married in approximately 57 he could quite easily have had more than one daughter old enough to be in Germany

⁸¹ [Thank offering to | Jupiter Optimus Maximus and J]UNO | AND [Miner]VA. FOR | [the successful discharge of the imperial office of S]EXTUS JULIUS | [Fro]NTINUS. [*i*o*v*i *o*p*t*i*m*o *m*a*x*i*m* *i*]UNONI | [*miner*]VAE. PRO | [*salute s*]EXTI JUL | [*fro*]NTINI. *CIL. XIII. 8624.* Eck 'Die Gestalt Frontins,' 54 Bild 1. Eck conjectures the addition of [*leg(ati) Aug(usti)?*] to the end of the inscription. See Ward Perkins 'Sex. Julius Frontinus,' 102-105. Syme, Review of Stein and Ritterling, 97. There is no reason to suppose that Frontinus had been unwell, as Bennett and McElwain do (Loeb Introduction, xvii), interpreting *salute* to refer to Frontinus' own health.

⁸² Jones argues that Domitian and his court may have spent time at Mogontiacum/Mainz, the legionary base of both the legions XIV Gemina and XXI Rapax. Jones *Domitian*, 128.

more over,
 evidence of Frontinus' presence in Germany; as well Frontinus' stratagems of that campaign provide information ^{that} none of the other extant sources do. What is more, the composition date for the *Strategemata* may have ^{come} meant it was too soon after the war for an official record to have been published. There is no evidence of other sources for this war and ^{indication} not that Domitian left *commentarii*. However, since most emperors and some generals left *commentarii* we might assume Domitian did so too. It therefore remains for us to judge whether Frontinus would have used this or whether he used autopsy. From the arguments based on Frontinus' other contemporary stratagems, autopsy is possible.

Frontinus disappears from our sight later under Domitian, but not necessarily from a contemporary public presence. We know nothing ^{certain} from the time of his proconsulship of Asia in 86/87 until 96.⁸³ Like several contemporaries, Frontinus' career continued, and even flourished, after Domitian's death. Frontinus was brought out of retirement by Nerva in AD 96 to be part of the *Vviri Publicis Sumptibus Minuendis*⁸⁴ and then ^{to serve as} *curator aquarum* in 97. In 98 he held his second consulship with Nerva, and in 100 he and Trajan held their third ordinary consulships together.⁸⁵ He was clearly highly respected by both Nerva and Trajan and he also garnered praise from Pliny the Younger and Tacitus as being one of the most eminent men in Rome.⁸⁶

Rewrite sentence
 If Frontinus was writing the *Strategemata* after 87 then this is the context, that of the writing of the text and Frontinus' political connections, in which the choice of stratagems and those to whom they are attributable, both superficially and at deeper levels, was made. However, if books one to three were written after 83 this context may only fit for the later addition of book four. At all stages of his career Frontinus seems to have been regarded as a thorough, conscientious, capable, and trustworthy individual. He therefore possibly did not include stratagems of his own

^{references to him in}
 83 However, the dates of the references in Aelian's *Tactica* (pref. 3), Martial's *Epigrammata* (x.58), and ~~at least one of~~ Pliny's references to him (*Epist.* 5.1) possibly come from this period.

84 Pliny *Panegyricus* 62.2. Cf. 61.6.

85 Birley, *Fasti*, 72, argues that this exceptional honour suggests that 'Trajan had a debt to repay.'

86 Pliny *Epist.* 5.1, Tacitus *Agricola* 17, Vegetius *De Re Militari* 2.3. However, Deane R. Blackman and A. Trevor Hodge *Frontinus' Legacy* (Michigan, 2001), 139, cite Christopher Bruun *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome* (Helsinki, 1991), 14 n.9, who interprets *Epist.* 9.19.1.6 as Pliny criticising Frontinus for arrogant egotism. This interpretation holds no weight since Pliny explicitly praises Frontinus but the context is to give more praise to Verginius Rufus. The brevity of Tacitus' account of Frontinus, one sentence in the *Agricola*, has also been interpreted as high praise. Birley maintains, (note to *Agricola* 17, 78) that Tacitus is 'irritatingly brief here' but argues that as Frontinus was *cos. II* when Tacitus was composing the *Agricola*, and was soon to share a *cos. III* with Trajan in 100, then 'presumably it would have been inappropriate to say more about a man then so prominent.' Birley ~~leaves unexplained any reason as to why this would be so.~~
 does not explain

because he did not wish to be showy or to incur suspicion.⁸⁷ This was common sense, regardless of sycophancy. Any significant military figure could not highlight his own achievements or those of any other general under the suspicious Domitian. However, the pattern of Frontinus' anecdotes, especially in book four, may have been a subtle sign of where his loyalties lay. Their content is consistent with the earlier books, so there was little possibility Frontinus could be accused of anything untoward – he even gives Domitian some credit in his own stratagem. Corbulo was connected with the imperial house and so was a safe inclusion. However, his anecdotes would presumably have only vaguely appealed to Domitia and it is unlikely she would have rushed to read them as a minor part of the *Strategemata*. As we have seen, Corbulo's association with stratagems recording military discipline may have been a natural one, but the inclusion may also have been to depict a (safe) individual who nonetheless represented virtuous military qualities. Frontinus may be displaying the stratagems of an individual remembered as an icon of generalship; a commander's commander. He may also have been preserving the (possibly elsewhere unrecorded) memory of a patron. In so doing, Frontinus may have been displaying universal exempla of generalship from contemporary material which stood for all contemporary generals (such as himself or Agricola) whom it may not have been safe for Frontinus to depict in too prominent a way. Frontinus may also have been marking his alliance with the military presence at court by the number of Corbulo anecdotes in book four. Such a military association would have been a natural one for a man of Frontinus' career, even in retirement,⁸⁸ and he may have felt the need when book four was composed, to reassert his affiliation or reassure his readers of it. Frontinus' inclusion of Corbulo may have been designed to strike a chord with contemporary military figures. Book four is also where Frontinus considers justice – a factor Frontinus seems to have recognised in regard to Domitian in book two, but not in book four. Frontinus also, despite his general adherence with the content of books one and two, seems to take more risks in the content of book four. Whilst very careful regarding how he frames it, he includes his own stratagem and he does not refer to Domitian elsewhere in the book, instead using examples of Vespasian and Corbulo of which there are five anecdotes in book four, almost as many as in books one and two combined.

W/ no few ?
stratagems ?

⁸⁷ See Tacitus *Agricola* 42. Modesty can also be discerned in the *De Aquis*; see *Pref.* 1-3. Pliny's praise at *Epist.* 9.19.1.6 can also be interpreted as in such a way. 'He forbade a monument to be erected to him; but in what words? 'The expense of a monument is pointless; our memory will endure if we have deserved it in life.' *Vetuit extrui monumentum; sed quibus verbis? Impensa monumenti supervacua est; memoria nostri durabit, si vita meruimus.*' This phrase is usually found translated in the singular which does not necessarily convey the more generalised sense in which it was recorded.

⁸⁸ See Aelian *Tactica* *Pref* 3.

The contemporary stratagems in book four could be used to argue that Frontinus was showing a movement away from explicit support of Domitian, possibly as a sign in case the increasingly isolated Domitian was toppled.⁸⁹

Frontinus' autopsy and his own career may partly explain the contemporary material he includes. What it does not explain is why he only includes stratagems of Domitius Corbulo, Vespasian and Domitian, nor the trend towards Corbulo in book four. Some contemporaries may have known the details of Frontinus' career and if they read the *Strategemata* they could have made the connection between it and the stratagems of Corbulo, Vespasian, and Domitian; possibly even Scorylo. We cannot know because Frontinus almost never tells us he is present; he is nigh on unnoticeable. Even under an autocrat or tyrant to be a witness to a contemporary event would be no crime but Frontinus only states his presence once. For the other stratagems his presence can only be an assumption as no autopsy is explicit. ^{He} It seems to be taking *modestia* too far.

If we consider for a moment that Frontinus was the 'malleable statesman', the twelve references take on an entirely different light. The four from the Chattan wars give overwhelming credit to Domitian and Frontinus' own stratagem highlights Domitian. There are two stratagems of Domitian's father Vespasian, to modern readers inexplicably outnumbered by his son's five anecdotes. And lastly there are five stratagems of Domitian's ^{father-in-law} wife's father. Frontinus may have omitted stratagems from Britain because there was nothing for which he could obviously give Domitian credit, ~~and so he left them out altogether~~. In this light, the nature of the twelve stratagems ³ easily take on the appearance of their author attempting to curry favour with the imperial family. In such a light Frontinus could well be painted with the sycophant brush.

Seen in the context of the entire collection, they are essentially unremarkable.
 However, these stratagems cannot be considered sycophantic – they are too subtle, and subtle sycophancy is an oxymoron. ~~They are almost unnoticeable, like Frontinus himself in them,~~ ^{and they represent but} a few anecdotes sprinkled through the work. As Barbara Levick argued, Frontinus got to the top and stayed there because he provided effective service and knew his place.⁹⁰ That is ~~not tantamount~~ ^{he can no more be accused} of sycophancy; ^{than can} no one accuses Agricola of being the sycophant of Domitian. *obsequium ac modestia agnom.* ^{best describes the condition & here are} Rather these stratagems ~~could simply be~~ ^{and how to behave so an} an example of an astute Frontinus knowing what to say, ~~and could be taken as an exemplum of how~~ to survive under a tyrant.

⁸⁹ Frontinus may have wished to show, however subtly, if the question ever arose, of which way he was leaning as Domitian sank into *saevitia*.

⁹⁰ B. Levick *Vespasian* (London and New York, 1999), 158.

Frontinus does not fill his collection with inappropriate stratagems of the emperor or the imperial family as we would expect of a true sycophant – indeed these stratagems are the modicum of *obsequium*. What is more, Frontinus’ previous and subsequent service show that he was not remotely suspected of sycophancy and contemporary opinion of him at the time of Domitian’s fall certainly betrays no trace of such an accusation.

As an author, it is hardly inexcusable (or sycophantic) that Frontinus would include a small number of anecdotes from his own experience which might attract imperial attention or procure an imperial audience even if such material was not the norm for the genre. We might interpret this small collection as objects of delight, hidden within the *Strategemata* for discovery by the emperor, his family, or his retinue. At the time when he wrote, Frontinus would not have wanted to pay too much attention to himself or even to Vespasian. By concentrating on Domitian and Domitius Corbulo he could still deliver items of delight for the imperial family without any danger whatsoever.⁹¹ However, again we must ask who would have noticed such a small contribution.

book 1-2
book 2-4

On balance it would seem most likely that in all twelve stratagems Frontinus was providing stratagems from his own personal experience which were not included in any other contemporary account. They may therefore provide a subtle autobiography of Frontinus’ career.⁹² Most importantly they may provide evidence of his career prior to 70. Frontinus’ personal absence from all ^{except} one of these contemporary anecdotes should not be viewed as an obstacle and may be explained as his avoiding possible indelicacies and instead giving respectful credit (whether deserved or not) to the emperor himself or members of his family. They may provide evidence of his career prior to 70, show dutiful respect to the emperor and also where his loyalties lay but these are all features of autobiography.

Rewrite

Some would argue that sycophancy is sycophancy regardless of whether you engage in it a little or a lot. Such hardline attitudes generally occur well after (or in the absence of) the danger of

from book 4

⁹¹ It might be possible that the ~~book four~~ anecdotes show Frontinus’ allying himself to a pro-military or possibly anti-Domitian party. He must have done this away from court (it is possible book 4 was composed after 87, and books 1-3 between 83 and 86). This would cast an entirely different light on the stratagems and on Frontinus’ return to politics in 96.

⁹² It is arguable that Frontinus’ use of *mihi* in 4.3.14 is hardly subtle, but rather an obvious and forceful presence. However, its singularity counts against this. In comparison to the pronouns used by Valerius Maximus *mihi* is still subtle; Valerius’ presence is much more forceful even though he only explicitly mentions himself in two anecdotes. I thank Dr. Doug Kelly and Sarah Lawrence respectively for these observations.

* The Domitian Corbulo anecdotes from book 4, however

Develop further

Delete
This does not really add to the text.

non-compliance. Writing in the reign of Domitian, being sensible and not inviting your own death should not be interpreted as sycophancy but rather as common sense. We cannot know if the *Strategemata* was read by an imperial audience – certainly it was not addressed to one. The accidental discovery of its contemporary material and/or the reporting of it may have meant Frontinus would be cast in a good light and he certainly would have done himself no disservice. Such subtle goodwill cannot be interpreted as sycophancy. At the same time Frontinus may have been more subtle still and may have been providing evidence of his own career from his own experiences – evidence (as far as we know) not published elsewhere.

Why such a hang up over sycophancy?

Tacitus would have noted him were he considered this.

According to Pliny, Frontinus once said something like 'our memory will endure if we have deserved it in life'.⁹³ What Frontinus may not have told us is that we would have to know where to look and that it would be hard to find.

Rewrite

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⁹³ Pliny Epist. 9.19.1.6. *memoria nostri durabit, si vita meruimus.*

