

Historical and literary allusions in Stages 1-40

(This list of *dramatis personae* excludes emperors, empresses and authors)

Unit 1

Caecilius: 153 wax tablets containing his business records were found in his house in Pompeii. A bronze head found in the house may be Caecilius himself, or may be his father, uncle or another ancestor.

Quintus: An election notice on the wall of Caecilius' house shows that he had a son called Quintus (and another called Sextus): 'Quintus Caecilius and Sextus Caecilius ask for Ceius Secundus as duovir' (CIL 4.3433 = ILS 6404a).

Cerberus: There is a mosaic of a relaxed-looking dog inside the entrance to Caecilius' house.

Priscus (*actores*): The name may be borrowed from Marcus Holconius Priscus, who aimed (so the election graffiti of Pompeii show) to become duovir in the last set of elections in Pompeii before the eruption of Vesuvius.

Actius (*actores*): A number of graffiti on the walls of Pompeii and Herculaneum refer to Actius Anicetus and his troupe of actors, such as one begging Actius, 'our favourite', to come back quickly. Another inscription from Puteoli (CIL 10.1946 = ILS 5183) refers to Gaius Ummidius Actius Anicetus, a pantomime actor, possibly the same man.

Sorex (*actores*): A bronze bust of Gaius Norbanus Sorex, a famous actor, was found in the Temple of Isis at Pompeii. The inscribed support of another bust was found in the building of Eumachia. Sorex also set up his own portrait bust as an offering to Diana in her sanctuary at Nemi (25km SE of Rome); this may date to the first half of the 1st century AD.

Felix: The inscription on the stone shaft supporting the bronze head of Caecilius or his ancestor shows that it was put up by a freedman called Felix: 'To the guardian spirit of our Lucius, Felix, a freedman, (set this up)'. This Felix may have been Caecilius' ancestor Lucius Caecilius Felix (mentioned in one of the of the 153 documents found in Caecilius' house), or may have been a freedman of the family with the same name.

fabula mirabilis: Based on Petronius' *Satyricon* 62.

Regulus (*gladiatores, in arena*): His games in Pompeii ended in fighting between the Pompeians and Nuceria in the audience, as described in Tacitus' *Annals* 14.17.

pastor et leo: Based on *Noctes Atticae* 5.14.

Milo (*in palaestra*): The name is perhaps borrowed from Milo of Croton, a 6-time Olympic athlete in the 6th century BC.

Sceledrus (*in apodyterio*): His name is borrowed from a slave in Plautus' *miles gloriosus*.

Anthrax (*in apodyterio*): His name borrowed from a cook in Plautus' *Aulularia*.

Holconius (Stage 11 stories, *ad urbem*): The Holconii were an influential family in Pompeii.

A statue of an earlier member of the family, Marcus Holconius Rufus (1st century BC-early 1st century AD) was found there. An inscription (CIL 10.838=ILS 6361a) tells us that he held the duovirate 5 times in Pompeii, was quinquennial twice, military tribune, priest of Augustus, and patron of the colony of Pompeii. Along with his relative (probably a brother), Marcus Holconius Celer, he paid for improvements to the Great Theatre (inc. CIL 10.833-834=ILS 5638). Marcus Holconius Celer was also duovir, quinquennial designate and priest of Augustus (CIL 10.840=ILS 6362). Inscriptions show that in later years Marcus Holconius Gellius (CIL 10.895) and Marcus Holconius Macer (CIL 10.904) held influential offices. Graffiti on the walls of Pompeii show that Marcus Holconius Priscus stood as duovir (CIL 4.7164, CIL 4.7585) in the set of elections before the destruction of Pompeii; he is the Holconius of our stories.

Stage 12 stories: Based on Pliny's *Letters* 6.16, 20.

Unit 2

Salvius: An inscription (CIL 9.5533=ILS 1011), found near his home town of Urbs Salvia, outlines his achievements: 'To Gaius Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus, ... consul, proconsul of the province of Macedonia, imperial legate, justice of Britain, legate of the 5th Legion Macedonica, member of the Arval Brotherhood, enrolled among the ex-tribunes by the divine Vespasian and the divine Titus, enrolled by the same among the ex-praetors, 4-time quinquennial, and patron of the colony. He was chosen as proconsul of the province of Asia by lot but excused himself'. Pliny's

Letter 2.11.17 refers to Salvius' ability as a public speaker. *Letter 3.9.33* says that Salvius was prosecuted during the reign of Domitian but does not mention the charge. Salvius' name is missing from the attendance lists of the Arval Brothers AD 89-91, which may indicate a period of exile.

Rufilla: An inscription (CIL 9.5534=ILS 1012) at Urbs Salvia provides all that is known about Salvius' wife Rufilla: 'Gaius Salvius Vitellianus set this up in his lifetime to Vitellia Rufilla, daughter of Gaius, wife of Gaius Salvius Liberalis the consul, priestess of the welfare of the emperor, the best of mothers'. Her name suggests that she may have been a member of the gens Vitellia, one of the most influential and important families in Rome.

Pompeius Optatus (*coniuratio*): His name is borrowed from a slave-master who set up a tomb for 3 of his slaves near Chester (RIB 560).

Salvius fundum inspicit: Based on Cato's *de agri cultura* 2.

Cogidubnus: Tacitus mentions in *Agricola* 14 that certain *civitates* were bestowed on King Cogidubnus, who remained absolutely loyal *ad nostram usque memoriam*. Cogidubnus' name (or should that be Cogidubnus?) also appears in the dedicatory inscription (RIB 91) of the temple of Neptune and Minerva in Chichester. It is in fact unknown whether Cogidubnus was still alive at the time of our stories.

caerimonia: Based on Herodian's *History* 4.2.

ludi funebres: Based on *Aeneid* 5.114-285.

Dumnorix (*ludi funebres*, Stage 16 stories): His name is that of a chieftain of the Aedui, a Celtic tribe in Gaul in the 1st century BC.

ad templum: Based (loosely) on Horace's *Satire* 1.9.

mercator Arabs: Based on *Arabian Nights: The Second Voyage of Sinbad*.

Stage 19 stories: Based on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* 11.3-4, 9-11, 16-17.

Unit 3

Lucius Marcius Memor (stories in Stage 21-28, 40): An inscription was found on a statue base in the temple precinct at Bath: 'Lucius Marcius Memor, hauspex, gave this statue as a gift to the goddess Sulis'.

Vilbia (stories in Stage 22): Her name is borrowed from a curse tablet (RIB 154): 'May he who has stolen Vilbia from me dissolve like water. May she be dumb, who devoured her, whether it be Velvinna or Exsupereus or Verianus or everinus or Augustalis or Comitianus or Catus Minianus or Germanilla or Jovina'. In fact *vilbia* may not be a girl's name at all, but a noun meaning 'brooch'.

Modestus (stories in Stage 22): He is modelled on a character in Plautus' *miles gloriosus*. His name is borrowed from Gaius Murrius Modestus from France, soldier of the Second Legion Adiutrix, whose tombstone (RIB 157) was found in Bath.

Strythio (stories in Stage 27): He is modelled on a character in Plautus' *miles gloriosus*.

Agricola (stories in Stage 24-40): He is the star of Tacitus's *Agricola*, and receives a passing mention in an inscription (RIB 3123) found in St Albans.

Nigrina (*in horreo, Modestus promotus I*): The name is borrowed from a gravestone (RIB 543) found at Chester, dedicated to Caius Valerius Victor and his wife Voconia Nigrina.

nox: The lament in the final line echoes the Psalm 22(21):1.

Quintus Haterius Latronianus (*nox II, salutatio I, damnatio*): He is fictional. However, the Haterii family was real. The relief of a crane on the tomb of the Haterii (just outside Rome) implies that at least one member of the family was involved in the construction of public buildings. The tomb also shows the Colosseum and Arch of Titus in relief.

cena Haterii: Based on Petronius' *cena Trimalchionis*.

Masada: This story is based on Josephus' *Jewish Wars* 7.8-9. The name of **Eleazarus** Ben Yair may also appear on a piece of pottery found at Masada. The actions of **Lucius Flavius Silva** are also commemorated in an inscription found in Jerusalem. Silva was, like Salvius, from Urbs Salvia; the two were likely related. There, an inscription tells us about Silva's career and shows that he commissioned an

amphitheatre: 'Lucius Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus, son of [...], from the Velina tribe, consul, pontifex, propraetorian legate of Augustus of the province of Judaea, admitted to the patricians by the censors - the divine Vespasian and the divine Titus, admitted to the ex-praetors by the same, legate of the legion XXI Rapax, tribune of the people, quaestor, military tribune of the Legion IIII Scythica, member of the three-man board for capital punishments, twice member of the four-man board of censors, patron of the colony, in his own name and in the name of his mother [...] and his wife [...] with his own money and on his own land he had built an amphitheatre and dedicated it with 40 regular pairs of gladiators'. That two women and five children did not join in the mass suicide at Masada is recorded by Josephus, but they are not named. Our sequel at the Arch of Titus is imaginary.

Euphrosyne (stories in Stages 31-32): The name is borrowed from a funerary inscription (CIL 33898=ILS 7783) found in Rome: 'Euphrosyne, dutiful, learned in the nine Muses, philosopher. She lived 20 years'.

C. Rabirius Maximus (*salutatio I*): Martial's *Epigram* 7.56 identifies *Rabirius* as the architect of Emperor Domitian's palace.

Eryllus (*salutatio II, Euphrosyne revocata, cena Haterii*): He is modelled on Caius Petronius, Nero's *arbiter elegantiae*, described in Tacitus' *Annals* 16.18-19.

Titus Flavius Sabinus (*cena Haterii, philosophia*): Consul with his cousin, the Emperor Domitian, in AD 82, his career is mentioned by, *inter alia*, Cassius Dio, Tacitus, and Suetonius. Like his brother, **Titus Flavius Clemens** (*Tychicus*, stories in Stage 38), Sabinus was executed by Domitian. Clemens was married to Flavia Domitilla, a niece of Domitian who named their sons as his heirs (Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 15). In AD 95, the year in which he was consul with Domitian, Clemens was put to death for 'atheism', a charge which (as Cassius Dio notes in *Roman History* 67.14) was brought against many Jews; Clemens may have become a Christian.

Tychicus: The name is borrowed from Paul's disciple mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7. His speeches have echoes of Acts 17:23-24 and Thessalonians 4: 16-17.

Myropnous (stories in Stages 33-34, 40): A Florentine tomb from the 2nd century AD has a (Greek) inscription: 'To the gods and [...] Myropnous dwarf player for a chorus of singers and dancers'. On the tomb he is depicted playing the pipes.

Paris (stories in Stages 33-34, 40): The actor Paris is mentioned in Juvenal (*Satires* 6.82-87, 7.87-92), and Martial offers a glowing epitaph (*Epigram* 11.13). Paris' affair with Domitia, and Domitian's hostility towards him appear in Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 3, 10 and Cassius Dio's *Roman History* 67.3. In the story *Tychicus* Paris imitates the death of Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid* 4. In *in aula Domitiani* he acts out a scene from Homer's *Odyssey* 8.266+ / Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 4.169+.

Tiberius Claudius Epaphroditus (stories in Stage 34-39): A marble inscription (ILS 9505) was found in his gardens on the Esquiline: 'To Augustus' freedman Epaphroditus, attendant of the Caesars, assistant to the tribunes [...] presented with pure spears and golden crowns'. His name implies that he was freed by Emperor Claudius. Close to Emperor Nero (Tacitus' *Annals* 15.55, Suetonius' *Life of Nero* 49.3), he also (according to Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 14.4) went on to become a *libellis* to Emperor Domitian, by whom he was eventually executed.

honores: Based on Suetonius' *Life of Domitian*.

Unit 4

Manius Acilius Glabrio (stories in Stage 35-37, 40): Consul in AD 91 and member of Domitian's council, Glabrio's exile and execution are mentioned in Juvenal's *Satire* 4.94, Dio Cassius' *Roman History* 67. 14 and Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 10. The CLC attributes to Glabrio the viewpoint of those who mocked Domitian's German triumph as described in Tacitus' *Agricola* 39. The trials of the Vestal Virgins upon which Glabrio comments in *ex urbe* are mentioned in Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 8 and Pliny's *Letter* 4.11.

C. Helvidius Lupus (*ex urbe, vita rustica*), **Helvidius** (stories in Stage 38): The Helvidii, most notably Helvidius Priscus and Helvidius Priscus the Younger, were traditionally hostile to the emperors (see Tacitus' *Histories* 2.91, Suetonius' *Life of*

Vespasian 15, Dio Cassius' *Roman Histories* 65.12). The family is mentioned in a number of the letters of Pliny, who was friends with Helvidius Priscus the Younger. Lupus and Helvidius are the imaginary brother and nephew of Helvidius Priscus the Younger.

Marcus Valerius Martialis, epigrammata Martialis: Beyond **Sabidius'** appearance in Martial's *Epigram* 1.32, nothing is known about him. The prostitute **Thais** is mentioned in several of Martial's epigrams (3.8, 3.11, 4.12, 4.50, 4.84, 5.43, 6.93, 11.101), with comments on her appearance, smell and 'availability'. **Laecania** also appears in *Epigrams* 5.43 and 7.35; **Pontilianus** in *Epigrams* 5.66, 7.3 and 12.40; **Diaulus** in *Epigrams* 1.30 and 1.47; and **Fidentinus** in *Epigram* 1.29, 1.38, 1.53 and 1.72. **Tucca** appears in *Epigrams* 1.18, 6.65, 7.41, 7.77, 9.75, 10.13, 11.70, 12.41 and 12.94 (this last on Tucca's habit of copying Martial's own style). Some or all of these characters may have been Martial's literary constructs.

epistula: Based on Tacitus' *Agricola* 39.

L. Catullus Messalinus (*amici principis, consilium Domitiani II*): Pliny (*Letter* 4.22) and Juvenal (*Satire* 4.113+) speak of Messalinus' membership of Emperor Domitian's council, his savage and bloodthirsty nature, and his blindness.

Q. Vilbius Crispus (*amici principis, consilium Domitiani I*): Juvenal speaks of the eloquence of this member of Domitian's council in *Satire* 4.81-93, but laments that he did not dare to speak the truth to the emperor. Tacitus also speaks of Crispus' eloquence (*Dialogus* 8) and his wealth, power and *ingenium*, but counts him amongst the men of distinction rather than virtue (*Histories* 2.10). An example of Crispus' wit is found in his comment reported by Suetonius (*Life of Domitian* 3) that Domitian wasn't with anyone, 'not even a fly!' Another example of his wit is found in Cassius Dio's *Roman Histories* 64.2.

A. Fabricius Veiento (*consilium Domitiani I*): After exile by Nero (Tacitus' *Annals* 14.50), Veiento's prospects improved. His career is outlined on an altar which he dedicated in Germany (CIL 13.7253=ILS 1010): 'Aulus Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento, consul three times a consul, member of the board of fifteen for conducting the sacred rites, member of the college of priests of the imperial cult, member of

the college of priests of the Flavian emperors, member of the colleges of priests of the Titiales and Attica, willingly satisfies his vow to deserving Nemetona'. Veiento's prudence in prophesying in such a manner as to please Emperor Domitian is mentioned briefly by Juvenal (*Satire* 4.111+). Veiento went on to become intimate with Domitian's successor Nerva (Pliny's *Letter* 4.22).

Cornelius Fuscus (*consilium Domitiani I*): Fuscus' good birth and early career and influence are described in Tacitus' *Histories* (2.86, 3.4, 3.12, 3.42, 3.66, 4.4). Juvenal (*Satire* 4.110+) mentions him as a member of Domitian's council: his wealth and his death in battle at Dacia. His military activities in Dacia are briefly described by Cassius Dio (*Roman Histories* 67) and Suetonius (*Life of Domitian* 6).

Sparsus (Stage 38): His name is borrowed from Sextus Julius Sparsus, the suffect consul in AD 88, who is probably the very wealthy Sparsus appearing in Martial's *Epigram* 12.57.

confarreatio II: The song is from Catullus 61.

L. Ursus Servianus (*cognitio, damnatio*): Lucius Iulius Ursus Servianus was a friend of Pliny the Younger and appears in many of his Letters (3.17, 6.26, 7.6, 8.23 10.2). We garner more information about his career under the emperors following Domitian from Cassius Dio's *Roman History* 69.17; the *Augustan History, Life of Hadrian* 1-8; and inscription CIL 6.2185.

Vitellianus (*desperatio I*): An inscription reveals the name of Rufilla's son; see 'Rufilla' under Unit 2 above. Another inscription about Vitellianus has been reconstructed as follows: 'Gaius Salvius Liberalis, son of Gaius of the Velina tribe, and Gaius Salvius Vitellianus, son of Gaius of the Velina tribe, members of the 4-man board of censors, decorated the council house which they had constructed from the ground earlier [...] with marble columns [...] statues, added porticoes [...] with [...] money added beyond [...] for upkeep'. However, this inscription is extremely fragmentary, and one should be very wary of this reconstruction.

Publius, Titus (*heredes principis, inquisitio*): The sons of Titus Flavius Clemens were named as heirs of Domitian; he renamed them Vespasian and Domitian (Suetonius'

Life of Domitian 15). The boys' paraphrasing of the poet Ovid is a discipline recommended in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* 1.9.2.

inquisitio: Domitian's habit of stabbing flies is based on Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* 3.