

## Paths to Glory – Tacitus *Historiae* 4.68, the Routes of the Reinforcements Sent to Suppress the Batavian Revolt, and the Career of Sextus Julius Frontinus

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**Abstract:** Tacitus *Hist.* 4.68 details the reinforcements sent from Italy to combat the Batavian Revolt in early AD 70. Tacitus lists three groups of reinforcements made up of different legions and auxiliaries and the three routes which those forces took over the Penine, Cottian and Graian Alps, but these routes seem to be given in an illogical order. The significance of the passage has been overlooked; it actually gives us precise clues of the make-up of these groups of reinforcements, who commanded each, and which route they each took including, significantly, the command of *II Adiutrix* by Sextus Julius Frontinus.

### The Batavian Revolt

In three passages (*Hist.* 4.12–37, 4.54–79, and 5.14–26), Tacitus gives us the details of the Batavian Revolt, fought in AD 69–70. In the tumultuous year of the four emperors in AD 69, the Batavians, along with other auxiliary forces, revolted due to the excessively harsh recruitment measures imposed by provincial governors under pressure to raise more troops for the civil wars being waged between the forces of rival emperors, especially between Vitellius and Vespasian from April onwards. Led by Gaius Julius Civilis, the Batavian Revolt drove Roman garrisons from their forts along the Rhine. Several Gallic and Germanic tribes joined the revolt, possibly in the hopes of establishing an empire of their own. Roman forces were distracted by the fight between Vitellian and Flavian forces and so could not immediately divert troops to deal with the revolt. The victory of Vespasian in Italy was only assured late in AD 69 with

the second battle of Bedriacum in late October and then Vitellius' suicide on December 20; Vespasian was recognised as emperor the following day. He was still in the east, however, but his victory meant attention could now be turned fully to the revolt in the north which had enjoyed unalloyed and uninterrupted success since August. In early AD 70 at Rome, Vespasian's key stakeholder, Gaius (or Caius) Licinius Mucianus, organised the response (Tac. *Hist.* 4.68, Cass. Dio 65.2.1–3, 3.4), organising for legions to be sent from Italy, Britain and Spain. Five legions were dispatched from Italy, seemingly in three groups, and Tacitus (combined with other clues) gives us enough details to work out the routes which each of these groups took.

Tacitus *Historiae* 4.68 is the key passage:

*legiones victrices, octava, undecima, decima tertia Vitellianarum unaetvicensima, e recens conscriptis secunda Poeninis Cottianisque Alpibus, pars monte Graio traducuntur; quarta decima legio e Britannia, sexta ac prima ex Hispania accitae.*

The victorious legions, the Eighth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, and the Twenty-first, which had been of the Vitellian party, as well as the Second, lately enlisted, were led into Gaul, part over the Penine and Cottian Alps, part over the Graian; the Fourteenth legion was called from Britain, the Sixth and First were summoned from Spain.

Here then, we get the reinforcements sent to defeat the revolt. These reinforcements are in five groups – one group sent over each of the Penine, Cottian and Graian Alps, one from Britain (*XIV Gemina*) and one from Spain (*I Adiutrix* and *VI Victrix*). The last two are easy enough to identify and track although one of the Spanish legions (*I Adiutrix*) all but disappears from Tacitus' narrative. At 5.14 we find *VI Victrix* reinforcing Cerialis at Vetera. Later (at *Hist.* 5.19), we find *X Gemina* also summoned from Spain to be with Cerialis as well. The three groups sent over the Alps, however, cause more problems since we do not know which legions or detachments made up each group. There may be clues, however, although ones which have seemingly been overlooked thus far.<sup>1</sup> In Tacitus' passage we seem to get three distinct groups of legions mentioned in Italy – the eighth (*VIII Augusta*), eleventh (*XI Claudia*) and thirteenth (*XIII Gemina*) in one group (described as *legiones victrices* “victorious legions”); then, in a second group, the twenty-first (*XXI Rapax*). *Rapax*, which had supported Vitellius and fought against the Flavian forces at the second battle of Bedriacum in October, was surely not included in the three legions described as *legiones victrices*. At the battle, it had fought against *VIII Augusta* and *XIII Gemina* so, presumably, it was kept separate from them even now. The third group consisted of

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<sup>1</sup> See in general Parker 1928, 143–145.



the newly recruited second legion (*II Adiutrix*) in a separate third group.<sup>2</sup> Acting for Vespasian, Mucianus had appointed Appius Annius Gallus and Quintus Petillius Cerialis as commanders. Mucianus, along with Domitian, would themselves lead troops as well (Frontin. *Str.* 4.3.14). We therefore have three groups of troops and three sets of command. Tacitus is dismissive of Mucianus and Domitian's command (*Hist.* 4.85–86), but Frontinus' evidence suggests a different narrative – most probably that Frontinus (who only describes himself as acting *auspiciis Domitiani*) was the *legatus legionis* of this newly formed legion and that the eighteen year-old Domitian was attached to it with *auspicia*.<sup>3</sup>

### Routes over the Alps

The three routes over the Alps described by Tacitus (*Poeninis Cottianisque Alpibus, pars monte Graio traducuntur*) are peculiar and well worth noting since they are not listed in their order running west to east (which would be: Cottian, Graian, Penine), but in the order of: east-most, west-most, centre (Penine, Cottian, Graian). This unusual order suggests, perhaps, that we should assign the routes to each of the three groups of legions in the same order in which the groups are described – that is the eighth, eleventh and thirteenth over the east-most Penine Alps, the twenty-first over the west-most Cottian Alps, and the second over the central Graian Alps. These routes seem, at first, complicated but they suggest both a system of routes and, combining Tacitus' account with that in Frontinus' stratagem, a chronology of the campaign.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Ritterling 1925, col. 1438–1439. Ritterling argued that the legion was a new one probably formed from the sailors of the Ravennate fleet who deserted to the Vespasianic cause in 69. The legion was, in fact, instituted in March 70 as several constitution diplomas show (*CIL* 16.10, *CIL* 16.11, *AE* 2002, 1733; and see Sharankov 2006, 37–46). These four copies (of the same diploma) presented to different foundation members of the legion, *causarii* (sing. *causarius*), tell us that, as auxiliary members of the fleet, they first had to be made citizens in order to join the legion. These four diplomas (and another four copies of one for *I Adiutrix* dating to 22 December 68 (*CIL* 16.7, 8, 9, and *AE* 1985, 770) are the only constitution diplomas to survive from the empire. Additionally, these diplomas tell us that *Legio II Adiutrix* was instituted early in 70, presumably in order for it to be included in the expedition to confront Civilis (and thereafter be taken to Britain).

<sup>3</sup> Ward Perkins 1937, 102–105. Frontinus only appears in the historical record (*Hist.* 4.39) on January 1, AD 70 as *praetor urbanus*, a post he stepped aside from in favour of Domitian. He may have been offered (or sought out) command of *II Adiutrix* in return for doing so. If so, he may have been one of the men described by Tacitus at 4.68: “all the most eminent citizens were enrolled for the expedition, others at their own solicitation.” J. A. Crook 1955, 168, considered (without argument) that Frontinus' was only a *comes* of Domitian. Command of a legion is more likely. Domitian was hailed as Caesar (*Cass. Dio* 65.1.1, *Tac. Hist.* 3.86, 4.2) and appointed praetor with consular power (*Hist.* 4.39) so granting him *auspicia* is no great stretch of probability. Frontinus' taking up the new position of *legatus legionis* of *II Adiutrix* ties in with his appearance in the historical record and with his stepping aside from the urban praetorship in favour of Domitian in January.

<sup>4</sup> We can also note that *XXI Rapax* was by this method kept separated from its former adversaries at the second battle of Bedriacum.



The next action we hear of in Tacitus' account (*Hist.* 4.70), however, involves *XXI Rapax* at Vindonissa (modern Brugg, Switzerland). This location was, indeed, closest to the route over the Penine Alps and so we would seem to be justified in assigning Cerialis and *XXI Rapax* to that route. We are also told of movements further east, where "Sextilius Felix with the auxiliary infantry, by way of Rhætia, penetrated into the province".<sup>5</sup> This might imply that these actions were easterly and so the twenty-first legion should be assigned the most easterly route, over the Penine Alps. This, however, is the second group of troops described but the first route. If we assign the groups and routes in the same order (which makes sense of Tacitus' list of the routes being out of order), the most easterly route should have been the path of the first group of legions described: *VIII Augusta*, *XI Claudia*, and *XIII Gemina* under the command of Appius Annius Gallus. On this reasoning, *XXI Rapax* (as the second group described and assigned to the second-mentioned route) should be assigned to the west-most route via the Cottian Alps. This route is, however, the furthest away from Vindonissa of the three routes named where *XXI Rapax* is next mentioned. The solution to this apparent confusion comes later in the course of the events of the revolt. At *Hist.* 5.19 Tacitus describes Gallus as being in Germania Superior where Cerialis sent *legio XIV Gemina* to him while another legion from Spain (*legio X Gemina*) joined Cerialis. In order for this to have occurred, it would, therefore, seem that Gallus, with *VIII Augusta*, *XI Claudia*, and *XIII Gemina* took the western-most route via the Penine Alps to Mogontiacum (bypassing Vindonissa at that point) and then remained undertaking operations in Germania Superior where he was later reinforced by *XIV Gemina*.<sup>6</sup>

That leaves two groups of troops and two routes. Again, however, the route over the Graian Alps would be closer to Vindonissa and possible for *XXI Rapax* to take, but we would therefore have the groups of troops described by Tacitus as A, B, C, but then the routes for them as A, C, B. It would therefore seem a better solution to see Cerialis in command of *XXI Rapax* departing via the east-most route, the Cottian Alps, and then proceeding to Vindonissa and on to Mogontiacum via Argentoratum

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<sup>5</sup> Tacitus continues: "They were joined by the Singularian Horse, which had been raised some time before by Vitellius, and had afterwards gone over to the side of Vespasian. Their commanding officer was Julius Briganticus. He was sister's son to Civilis, and he was hated by his uncle and hated him in return with all the extreme bitterness of a family feud". These troops may not have joined the expedition immediately, however, since at *Hist.* 5.14 we are told of Cerialis that "the auxiliary foot and horse that he had ordered up long before had hurried to join him after his victory" at Trier. This would seem to be referring to these Singularian cavalry and the auxiliaries of Sextilius Felix.

<sup>6</sup> At 4.70 we are told of "the approach of the Roman generals at the head of their army" which seems to imply both Cerialis and Gallus. Again at 5.14 Tacitus states that "Neither of the generals loved delay" which suggests some actions in Germania Superior under Gallus but none of the three legions of Gallus (*VIII Augusta*, *XI Claudia* and *XIII Gemina*) are mentioned in any of the actions of Cerialis.



(Strasbourg, France). From there he moved to Vetera where he was joined by the auxiliaries under Felix and Briganticus (unless they, or parts of them, had joined him earlier). The reason for this route (via Argentoratum) too shall become clear. Cerialis was in command of this group – he began with *XXI Rapax* and was joined later by the auxiliaries of Felix and Briganticus. After taking Vindonissa, he advanced to Mogontiacum (*Hist.* 4.71) and then on Trier (*Hist.* 4.85).

The action at Trier (*Hist.* 4.77–78) was a close-run thing but Cerialis prevailed. After being bested at Trier, Civilis withdrew to Vetera. At Trier (*Hist.* 5.14), Cerialis was then reinforced by “the arrival of the Second, Sixth, and Fourteenth legions” and auxiliaries with whom he advanced on Vetera. These reinforcements doubled his forces; he had *XXI Rapax* and, after Cerialis had arrived at Mogontiacum, the legions from *Castra Bonnensis* (modern Bonn) and *Novaesium* (modern Neuss) declared their loyalty to Vespasian and joined him. These were *I Germanica* from *Castra Bonnensis* and *XVI Gallica* from *Novaesium*. These troops were in Cerialis’ line later (*Hist.* 4.77) and so the army which was doubled by the arrival of three legions (*II Adiutrix*, *VI Victrix* and *XIV Gemina*) had consisted of *XXI Rapax*, *I Germanica* and *XVI Gallica*. *XIV Gemina* was marched from Britain under its *legatus* Fabius Priscus through the territory of the Tungri and Nervii (*Hist.* 4.68, 79). The auxiliaries (presumably Felix’ and Briganticus’) were also summoned to Trier. That, therefore, only leaves the second legion, *II Adiutrix*, to assign a route to.

### Frontinus, Domitian and *II Adiutrix*

The last group of reinforcements sent from Italy (*II Adiutrix*) and their route (and why that affects Cerialis’ route) are all that are left to slot into this picture. At *Hist.* 4.85, we are told that “before Domitian and Mucianus reached the Alps, they received news of the success among the Treviri”. This, at least, tells us that Domitian departed later than the other two groups – although it is unclear which force he was marching with in Tacitus’ account, and Tacitus seems to take great efforts to rob Domitian of any role at all (see *Hist.* 4.75, 85–86). At *Hist.* 4.85 Tacitus has Mucianus advise Domitian to not advance any further than Lyon (Lugdunum). The other details of what actually occurred are suggested by Frontin. *Str.* 4.3.14:

*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.*



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.

The city of the Lingones was identified by Ward Perkins as Lyon<sup>7</sup> but surely Langres (Andematunnum), in the territory of the Lingones itself, is meant; Lyon was in the territory of the Aedui. Frontinus' use of *mihi* is unmistakable and tells us that he was there, at Langres taking the surrender of the city on behalf of Domitian. It therefore seems likely that Domitian ignored (or disobeyed) Mucianus' advice (that is, if such advice was ever issued). Langres was 270 kilometres further north than Lyon and we then have evidence of *II Adiutrix* joining Cerialis at Trier so the straight-line-path of this advance seems relatively secure. It is also likely (though something Tacitus obfuscates) that Domitian stayed with the legion as well – it was probably intended that Domitian would be present until the end of the campaign although there is no mention of this in Tacitus' surviving account. Perhaps the late departure and arrival of the legion with Cerialis was intended to (at least partially) keep Domitian safe from any extreme danger. Since fighting was still required when *II Adiutrix* arrived (with Domitian in tow), this plan may not have succeeded.<sup>8</sup> Domitian's presence is suggested by Frontinus' stratagem and an epigram of Martial (2.2) stating that “even as a boy” (*et puer hoc*) Domitian was worthy of the name Germanicus (a title only bestowed on him in AD 83). In Martial, however, it is clearly the end of Civilis' revolt which is referred to.<sup>9</sup> This is the same picture presented in Silius Italicus' *Punica* where “even in boyhood” Domitian was “dreaded by the yellow-haired Batavians”.<sup>10</sup> These might

<sup>7</sup> Ward Perkins 1937, 104 n.1.

<sup>8</sup> We do not know whether, in the final dispositions, *II Adiutrix* was kept out of the fighting to shield Domitian from danger but it is possible – especially since Cerialis had five other legions to use. What is more, he put his auxiliaries into his front line (*Hist.* 5.16) and only had his legions in reserve. It is also worth noting that Frontinus may have been honoured even further if part of his purpose was to keep Domitian safe. Certainly, his later spectacular career under Domitian could be (partially) explained by such a role in AD 70.

<sup>9</sup> “Crete gave a great name, Africa a greater, to their conquerors, Metellus and Scipio; a still nobler name did Germany confer on you, Caesar, from the subjugation of the Rhine; and even as a boy you were worthy of that name. Your brother earned his triumphs over Judea, with the assistance of your father; the laurel which is given from the conquest of the Chatti is all your own.” *Creta dedit magnum, maius dedit Africa nomen, Scipio quod uictor quodque Metellus habet; nobilius domito tribuit Germania Rheno, et puer hoc dignus nomine, Caesar, eras. Frater Idumaeos meruit cum patre triumphos: quae datur ex Chattis laurea, tota tua est.*

<sup>10</sup> 3.606–607: “But thou, conqueror of Germany, shalt outdo the exploits of thy father and brother; even in boyhood thou wert dreaded by the yellow-haired Batavians” (*at tu transcendes, Germanice, facta tuorum, iam puer auricomis praeformidat Batavo*). Indeed, this passage (which must date to after the title of Germanicus was bestowed on Domitian in 83) can be used to date the entire poem – after 83



be attacked as examples of obsequious flattery delivered when Domitian was emperor, but they must still have referred to the fact that Domitian was present in his youth at the end of the Batavian revolt, probably with *II Adiutrix* and at the battle at Vetera (*Hist.* 5.15–18) if not later in the final stages of the campaign. Cerialis would keep *II Adiutrix* with him and take it to Britain to take up his position as governor, a post he took up immediately after the conclusion of the campaign to subdue Civilis' revolt.

Josephus' brief summary of the period (*Bellum Judaicum* 7.85–88) also suggests a greater role for Domitian in the Batavian Revolt:

for as soon as ever the news of their revolt was come to Rome, and Caesar Domitian was made acquainted with it, he made no delay, even at that age, when he was exceeding young, but undertook this weighty affair. He had a courageous mind from his father, and had made greater improvements than belonged to such an age: accordingly he marched against the barbarians immediately; whereupon their hearts failed them at the very rumour of his approach, and they submitted themselves to him with fear, and thought it a happy thing that they were brought under their old yoke again without suffering any further mischiefs. When therefore Domitian had settled all the affairs of Gaul in such good order, that it would not be easily put into disorder any more, he returned to Rome with honour and glory, as having performed such exploits as were above his own age, but worthy of so great a father.

This, too, might be dismissed as flattery, written at Rome by Josephus during Domitian's reign, although most would prefer to date the *Bellum Judaicum* to c.75, written within Vespasian's reign. At that time, praise of Domitian might still be suspect of exaggeration but much less so than if it was written later. There is exaggeration here though. Domitian did not immediately march against the barbarians based on the reconstruction suggested here, but only did so after the first two sets of reinforcements were sent. He was, nonetheless, present for the campaign after the fighting at Trier, the battle at Vetera (*Hist.* 5.14–18) and the end of the campaign (the details of which are lost). Josephus' version of events does, however, correspond with Frontinus' – that the approach of *II Adiutrix*, Domitian and Frontinus made the Lingones return to their loyalty. Josephus' version gives Domitian overall credit for the settlement at the close of the campaign, something Tacitus and modern scholars are unwilling to entertain. It

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and before Domitian's death in AD 96. We might be able to add Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.5–6 to this picture too, although it probably refers to Frontinus' tenure as governor since it refers to Domitian as Germanicus. At Sil. *Pun.* 1.79, however, the "battles of the Rhine" (*proelia Rheni*) won by Domitian might refer to both those fought during the Batavian Revolt and the later campaigns of the early 80s waged by Frontinus.



is likely that Domitian, at most, rubber stamped the arrangements of others (Cerialis especially), but he was probably present up to the end of the campaign in order to do so as Vespasian's representative and in order that the new imperial family take credit for any settlement.

For Frontinus to claim that he was the one to whom the surrender was given, implies that he was in a position of command, most probably that of a *legatus legionis*. The best candidate for the legion he commanded is *II Adiutrix*.<sup>11</sup> This was a new legion and in need of a commander, and Frontinus had recently stepped aside as *praetor urbanus* in favour of Domitian (*Hist.* 4.39). He was the perfect candidate to be the new *legatus*. We also know of no *legatus* for this new legion whereas we are informed of others such as *XIII Gemina's* Vedius Aquila and *XIV Gemina's* Fabius Priscus.

The precise timing of Frontinus' stratagem is not clear but we know from Tacitus' *Hist.* 5.14 that Cerialis had *II Adiutrix* with him in time to face Civilis at Vetera, perhaps fought in July AD 70. This was also when he was joined by *legio XIV* from Britain and *legio VI* from Spain – all those forces converging from different directions. Tacitus makes no mention of Domitian or Frontinus at 5.14, but even if Domitian was absent (although I think he was present), Frontinus as the *legatus legionis* would have been present. One further detail of Tacitus' account of the battle of Vetera may reveal Domitian hiding in plain sight. In his speech of encouragement before the battle (and despite the front line consisting of auxiliaries and cavalry), Cerialis encouraged *XIV Gemina*, *VI Victrix* and *II Adiutrix* especially:

*proprios inde stimulos legionibus admovebat, domitores Britanniae quartadecimanos appellans; principem Galbam sextae legionis auctoritate factum; illa primum acie secundanos nova signa novamque aquilam dicaturos. hinc praevectus ad Germanicum exercitum manus tendebat ...*

He applied the proper spur to each of the legions, calling the Fourteenth the "Conquerors of Britain," reminding the Sixth that it was by their influence that Galba had been made emperor, and telling the Second that in the battle that day they would dedicate their new standards, and their new eagle. Then he rode toward the German army ...

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<sup>11</sup> Ward Perkins 1937, 102–105, argued that this was the legion Frontinus commanded. Birley 1981, 70 and n.10, argues that this suggestion is attractive but cannot be proved. Leiva Petersen considered that it was *XXII Primigenia*: PIR2, Iulius 0322. The arguments presented here shore up and add to Ward Perkins' arguments.





Such encouragement of *II Adiutrix* might take on additional weight if Domitian were present with them (although Tacitus makes sure to give no clue that he was).<sup>12</sup>

The presence of *II Adiutrix* also implies that the taking of Andematunnum took place after the action at Trier (*Hist.* 4.85) and yet before the battle at Vetera since *II Adiutrix* was with Cerialis by that time. This does fit with Tacitus' note at 4.85 that Domitian and Mucianus received word of the success at Trier before they reached the Alps; that is the Graian Alps, the central and last of the three routes to correspond to the third and final group of reinforcements sent to quell the revolt of Civilis. They were probably already on their way to reinforce Cerialis when they received word, and hastened to join him, taking Andematunnum on the way. That Mucianus may have advised Domitian to not advance any further than Lyon (Lugdunum) is probable but it is even more likely that Domitian ignored him and stayed with the legion until the end of the campaign, being present at least as a Flavian representative at the conclusion of the campaign (one lost from the surviving portions of Tacitus' *Hist.* but preserved briefly in Josephus, Martial, Silius Italicus and Frontinus).<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusions

This reconstruction of the chronology allows us to argue with some certainty that the three groups of reinforcements sent to deal with Civilis' revolt in AD 70, as well as the three routes described by Tacitus, are, despite their apparent disorganisation and confusion, actually clues to the chronology and paths the forces took. What is more, taking *Hist.* 4.68 in combination with Frontinus' stratagem 4.3.14, the assigning of *Legio II Adiutrix* to the third mentioned group and third route over the Graian Alps described by Tacitus, strengthens the prospect that it was that legion which Frontinus commanded in AD 70 (Ward Perkins' suggestion). If that command is assured, and then followed by even a normal tenure as *legatus legionis* (of between two and four years) Frontinus would have continued to command *II Adiutrix* after the suppression of the Civilis Revolt. That legion then journeyed to Britain with Cerialis who took up his post as governor after suppressing the revolt; *II Adiutrix* would remain in Britain until Domitian's Dacian wars in the late 80s. In AD 70, Frontinus would have continued to serve in the capacity of *legatus legionis*, fighting at Vetera and during the end of the revolt (on which our sources are, unfortunately, silent). Thereafter, he would have continued on to Britain and continued to serve as *legatus* of his legion in Britain during

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<sup>12</sup> It does, however, ignore their success at Andematunnum, although that seemed to involve no actual fighting.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Jones, however, considered that Frontinus' stratagem related to events after the revolt was suppressed – Jones 1972, 79–90, at 88–90. See also Levick 1982, 50–73. In the aftermath of the campaign, however, *II Adiutrix*, was on its way to Britain with Cerialis so it would not have been sent south again.



Cerialis' campaigns against the Briagntes. Cerialis was Vespasian's son-in-law, husband of Domitilla the Younger, Vespasian's only daughter. It may be a further sign of the favour shown to Frontinus that Cerialis took him under his wing.<sup>14</sup> Frontinus' own tenure as governor of Britain would follow in AD 73, after his suffect consulship in 72 or 73,<sup>15</sup> and his serving with *II Adiutrix* prior to that would give us concrete evidence that he already had some experience of service in Britain, as a *legatus* of perhaps two years' tenure in the province – the normal length of such service. The other Flavianic governors had prior experience in the province: Cerialis as a *legatus* of *Legio X Hispana* in AD 60/61 (Tacitus *Annales* 14.32) and Agricola as a *legatus* of *Legio XX Valeria Victrix* in the early 70s and earlier too on Suetonius Paulinus' staff in AD 60 (Tacitus *Agricola* 5). This experience in the province which they would later govern was something other Flavianic governors had and it may have been a Flavianic policy and one which possibly qualified candidates to then govern the province in which they had such experience. Solid evidence of this policy in regard to Frontinus has, however, been lacking but is suggested by the interpretation of *Hist.* 4.68 and *Frontin. Str.* 4.3.14 presented here. Ward Perkins' whole purpose was to show that all three Flavianic governors of Britain had previous experience in that province to prove the Flavianic "policy" of appointing men "to posts for which their previous careers had especially fitted them".<sup>16</sup> He gave the examples of Funisulanus Vettonianus' career in Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia Superior; and Sex. Sentius Caecilianus in Africa, as well as Petillius Cerialis and Agricola in Britain, to show such a policy. Using the arguments presented here, Frontinus can, then, even more strongly, be added to this list of Flavianic governors with previous experience in their future province.

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<sup>14</sup> It is worth remembering that Gnaeus Julius Agricola was also a *legatus legionis* under Cerialis, commanding *legio XX Valeria Victrix*, a command he would continue under Frontinus' tenure as governor and that he, too, would go on to be consul (in 77) and then govern Britain himself c. 78–84.

<sup>15</sup> Birley considered that his consulship "must" have been in 73. Birley 1973, 179–190, at 189 and n. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Ward Perkins 1937, 105. Establishing Frontinus' prior experience in Britain ignores any other experience (and military or political appointments) Frontinus may have had in other provinces prior to AD 70, when he emerges for the first time on to the page of Roman history as *praetor urbanus*. His meteoric rise from *praetor urbanus* in AD 70 to consul in 72 or 73 and then proconsular governor of Britain later in 73 should be proof enough that Frontinus was supremely favoured by the new regime.



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