

Brothers in Arms: Fraternal Harmony and Discord in the *Histories* of Tacitus

Scholars tend to understand a harmonious relationship between brothers to be the foundation of an internally peaceful state (Wiedemann 1993). One does not need to look very far in Latin literature to discover the perceived connection between fraternal discord and civil war: the Romans often contended that the seeds of their internal conflicts were sown at the city's foundation when Romulus killed (or allowed the killing of) Remus. Much later in time, Tacitus loads many pairs of brothers into his *Histories*, the narrative of the civil war of AD 69. Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian each has a brother who plays an important role in the fighting (Salvius Titianus, Lucius Vitellius, and Flavius Sabinus). In addition to these pairs there are also the unequally talented children of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. Modern scholarship has not paid much attention to these sets of brothers—much less to the fact that all of them more or less get along swimmingly, at least during AD 69. The *Histories*, however, are not entirely without reference to the potential for fraternal rivalry. Titus plays the role of the favorite son in preference to the younger and embittered Domitian, and Galba explicitly notes that he chose Piso Licinianus as his adopted son over his older brother who because of his ample talent and primogeniture would have been a more natural choice. Nonetheless, I plan to explore the tension between the apparent harmony of brothers, who play the leading role in the civil war, and the internal disintegration of the Roman Empire in the *Histories*.