



# Sejanus and the Chronology of Christ's death

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## Introduction

Lucius Aelius Sejanus' bearing on church history is not immediately apparent to the church historian. He is well known among Roman historians as the man who almost succeeded in overthrowing Tiberius Caesar. However, his relationship with Pontius Pilate has an important influence on what year one dates the death of Jesus. The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of Sejanus' life, to examine his relationship with Pilate, and finally to understand the impact of this information on the date of Jesus' death.

## An Overview Of Sejanus' Life

### Birth and Youth

Sejanus was born sometime between 4 BCE and 1 BCE in Etruria.<sup>Footnote1</sup> He was born into an equestrian family and thus was not part of Roman nobility. Virtually nothing is known about his youth.

Shortly after Tiberius became emperor in 14 CE, he made Sejanus' father Strabo commander of the Praetorian Guard, the elite corps of Roman soldiers responsible for protecting the city of Rome and the emperor himself.<sup>Footnote2</sup> Strabo was one of Tiberius's most trusted administrators. He was awarded this post because of his life-long loyalty and service to Tiberius.<sup>Footnote3</sup> The earliest reports of Sejanus' adult life place him in Rome with Strabo at this time. Thus, Sejanus almost definitely grew up knowing Tiberius personally and had easy access to him, an advantage which he was to later exploit.

### Early Career

In 16 CE, Sejanus was appointed Commander of the Praetorian Guard by Tiberius when he made Strabo prefect of Egypt.<sup>Footnote4</sup> Sejanus distinguished himself by significantly improving the organization of the Guard. Whereas they had previously been quartered haphazardly with friends and neighbors, Sejanus built barracks for them so that they could be more quickly mobilized in time of need.<sup>Footnote5</sup>

In 17 CE, Sejanus was sent by Tiberius to accompany Drusus to suppress the mutiny of the Pannonian legion.<sup>Footnote6</sup> Drusus was the son of Agrippina and Germanicus, who was seen as the heir-apparent to Tiberius. Again, Sejanus distinguished himself in this assignment and was rewarded for it by Tiberius. This may have been interpreted by Drusus as a lack of confidence in him by Tiberius and thus contributed to Drusus' enmity and rivalry toward Sejanus. Certainly this attitude toward Sejanus emerged after Drusus' father Germanicus died in 19 CE and Drusus became the heir-

apparent.Footnote7

In 23 CE, a fire broke out in a theater in Pompeii which ravaged the city. Sejanus was assigned to handle the situation and restore the city. He did such an effective job that Tiberius ordered a statue of Sejanus in his honor be erected at the site of the new theater.Footnote8

Thus, Sejanus's early career gave clear evidence of excellent administrative ability. Always looking for someone who could ease the burden of administration, Tiberius evidently was impressed by Sejanus's work. Tiberius thus continued to depend more and more on Sejanus and take him into his confidence.Footnote9 This set the stage for Sejanus's rise to power.

## The Rise of Sejanus

In 23 CE, Drusus died after a short, violent illness. Most Roman historians state that Drusus' death was actually due to being poisoned.Footnote10 This explanation is based the testimony of Sejanus' wife shortly before she was executed in 31 CE. She stated that Sejanus and Drusus' wife Lavilla had become lovers and that they had conspired to kill Drusus so that Sejanus could take his place as heir-apparent to Tiberius. Both the goal of Sejanus' ambitions and the real cause of Drusus' death is ambiguous and much debated by modern historians.Footnote11

At any rate, with Drusus dead, Tiberius was in an unenviable spot. Now 64 years old, he had for years wanted to retire from public life, leaving the leadership of the empire to his successor and the Senate. Now he was unable to do so. The oldest male family members were Drusus' children (Drusus, Nero and Gaius), and they were too young to be appointed co-emperors.Footnote12 In presenting these children to the care of the Senate, Tiberius lamented his situation and even expressed a longing for the return of the Republic.Footnote13 Tiberius knew that his desire for the Senate to take a more active role as they did in the Republic was unrealistic. Therefore, he knew he would be unable to retire until one of these children grew to adulthood and demonstrated competence, *unless* he had an administrator so competent and trustworthy that he could safely leave the government in his hands as his regent in Rome. It was to this position that Sejanus immediately aspired. In Tiberius, he found a man strongly motivated to let him attain that role.

As Tiberius gave Sejanus more and more authority, Sejanus used his position to eliminate those who were obstacles to his goal of ultimate power. In 25 CE, he had Cordus, a historian, condemned, ostensibly for justifying Brutus' assassination of Julius Caesar. Roman historians state that the real reason was that Cordus was an outspoken enemy of Sejanus.Footnote14

In 26 CE, Tiberius retired to the remote and almost inaccessible island of Capri, never to return to Rome again.Footnote15 Sejanus had played a major role in convincing Tiberius to do this.Footnote16 He also "proved" his total loyalty to Tiberius by shielding Tiberius with his own body during a cave collapse that year.Footnote17 While still retaining his full imperial authority, he left Sejanus in Rome as his regent. From this point on, Sejanus' power increased dramatically. He was not only Tiberius' spokesman, which made the senators curry his favor; he also carefully controlled all communications to Tiberius on Capri.Footnote18 In this way, Sejanus was able to prey on Tiberius's fears of revolt and use him to eliminate the legitimate successors of Tiberius. Whether Sejanus was actually aspiring to become emperor, or only seeking to eliminate possible heirs so that he would not be eliminated by them when they came into power is not clear.Footnote19 What is clear is that he used his position to eliminate them.

Immediately after Tiberius left Rome, Sejanus attempted to set Agrippina and her grandsons against each other. Through his own agents, Sejanus tried to convince Agrippina and Nero to leave Rome for their safety.<sup>Footnote20</sup> Through the same agents, he was sending a steady report to Tiberius of their activities, attempting to convince him that they were plotting revolt and should be executed. For the rest of 26 CE, neither plan worked. Agrippina and Nero did not flee Rome, and Tiberius was not yet convinced that they constituted a serious threat to his power.

In 27 CE, Sejanus had Sabinus, a supporter of Agrippina, condemned for sedition.<sup>Footnote21</sup> In the same year, he asked Tiberius for permission to marry Lavilla, Drusus' wife.<sup>Footnote22</sup> This would have gained him greater legitimacy with the Roman nobility and improved his chances of actually becoming emperor. Tiberius refused to grant permission, seemingly out of deference to Roman etiquette, while promising Sejanus much greater honor and fame and power in the near future:

"What projects I have turned over in my mind; by what further ties I am preparing to bind you to myself, I will forbear for the present to disclose. This only I will permit myself to say, that there is no place too high for your merits, and your devotion to myself; and when the proper time shall come, whether in the Senate, or before the public, I shall not fail to speak."<sup>Footnote23</sup>

Historians disagree on Tiberius' motives for his reply. Some think that Tiberius should be taken at face value, and that he still fully trusted Sejanus.<sup>Footnote24</sup> Others think that Tiberius was suspicious of Sejanus by now, but also realized that he was in a precarious position since he was in Capri and Sejanus was in control.<sup>Footnote25</sup> If this was the case, Tiberius' reply was calculated to block Sejanus' power move, without arousing Sejanus' suspicions that Tiberius suspected him of revolt.

## **The Peak of Sejanus's Power**

Sejanus reached the peak of his power in 29 CE. Tiberius' mother died during this year, yet he refused to come to her funeral in Rome. This is probably because he had begun to believe Sejanus' charges that Agrippina was actively seeking to assassinate him.<sup>Footnote26</sup> Later that same year, Tiberius accused Agrippina (by letter before the Senate) of adultery and Nero of "vices".<sup>Footnote27</sup> Both were exiled, where Nero eventually committed suicide and Agrippina, after being ill-treated by her guards, starved herself to death.<sup>Footnote28</sup> He also got Tiberius to condemn and imprison Drusus, where he committed suicide.<sup>Footnote29</sup> Only Gaius (now seventeen but with no administrative experience) and Gamellus, a boy of ten, remained alive as heirs from the Julio-Claudian line.<sup>Footnote30</sup> Gaius lived with Tiberius on Capri at this time, making him inaccessible to Sejanus.

In early 30, Sejanus had Gallus, another supporter of Agrippina, condemned for sedition.<sup>Footnote31</sup> When Sejanus got permission from Tiberius to marry Livia Julia (Gaius' sister), he was in a seemingly very advantageous position. With a marital claim to nobility, he was in a better position to be accepted by the nobility if he attempted to seize imperial power. If that route was deemed seemed infeasible, he could persuade Tiberius to appoint him Gaius' supervisor when Tiberius died and thus still retain full control over the Emperor.<sup>Footnote32</sup>

During 30, Sejanus also began to consolidate his power over the Roman armies in foreign lands. He probably realized that in the event of a revolt they could crush him if they did not want him as emperor. So he replaced many of the commanders with men loyal to him, and he deposed many who were loyal to Drusus and his family.<sup>Footnote33</sup>

During the period from 29 to 30 CE, Tiberius made it clear that he regarded Sejanus as his exclusive representative in Rome. The Senate voted that his birthday be honored publicly. Public prayers and sacrifices were offered on behalf of "Tiberius and Sejanus" and oaths were sworn "by the Fortunes of Tiberius and Sejanus".Footnote34 Twice previously during his reign, Tiberius had held the consulship of the Senate with his acknowledged successor: in 18 CE with Germanicus, and in 21 CE with Drusus. Now in 30 CE, Tiberius declared his intentions to make himself and Sejanus consuls the following year.Footnote35 All indications were that soon Tiberius would confer the tribunician power on Sejanus, making him a *de facto* joint-emperor and successor of Tiberius after his death.Footnote36

## The Fall of Sejanus

Probably in early 31 CE, Tiberius received a letter from his widowed sister-in-law Antonia.Footnote37 Perhaps because she had always remained above the intrigues of Roman politics, Tiberius trusted her. She told him that Sejanus was plotting a revolt and detailed many of the ways in which he was doing this. Whether or not this was the first time Tiberius suspected Sejanus is debatable.Footnote38 However, from this time forward, he acts in such a way that makes it clear (at least to us in retrospect) that he knew of Sejanus' treason.

First, Tiberius began to send a "mixed message" about Sejanus to the Roman senators. On the one hand, he continued to lavish praise and power upon him. He referred to Sejanus as "my Sejanus". He fulfilled his promise to make Sejanus a consul of the Senate, and minted coins and erected statues in his honor. On the other hand, he began to speak in a mildly critical way of Sejanus and his allies.Footnote39 He also refused to condemn Arruntus against Sejanus's wishes, and thus prevented Sejanus from gaining full control over the Senate.Footnote40 Later that same year, Tiberius resigned his consulship, thus forcing Sejanus to do the sameFootnote41. Tiberius then made Gaius consul, thus indicating that he had now chosen Gaius as his successor.Footnote42 He forbade all sacrifices to living humans, thus stopping public homage to Sejanus.Footnote43

While Tiberius was thus keeping Sejanus off-balance, he was testing the loyalty other quarters of leadership in Rome. He ascertained that the senators strongly disliked Sejanus even though they had curried his favor. He also found that the Praetorian Guard was loyal to Sejanus only as his (Tiberius') regent.Footnote44

Thus satisfied of his security, Tiberius hatched a brilliant and elaborate plot to depose Sejanus.Footnote45 He made Macro the new commander of the Praetorian Guard. He then sent Macro to Rome with a letter to be read before the Senate. Macro intercepted Sejanus on the way and told him that the letter gave him tribunician power - virtual imperial authority. Once Sejanus went inside, Macro presented proof of his Praetorian authority over Sejanus' guards. He then sent them back to the barracks and surrounded the Senate with his own loyal soldiers. While the purposefully long, rambling letter was read, Macro went to the barracks to assure that no uprising would take place among the troops.

Tiberius' rambling letter ended with a scathing denunciation of Sejanus and demanded his arrest. Stunned, Sejanus was led out. When the senators saw that the common people and the Praetorian Guard rejoiced at Sejanus' arrest, they condemned and executed him the same day - October 18, 31 CE.

## After Sejanus's Fall

Tiberius then launched an investigation into the conspiracy. All of Sejanus' family were killed, as was customary.<sup>Footnote46</sup> Though Tacitus describes this period as a reign of terror and a blood-bath, Seutonius and others disagree.<sup>Footnote47</sup> Tarver says that Tiberius moved in to check the indiscriminate persecution of Sejanus' friends.<sup>Footnote48</sup> Tiberius evidently made a real effort to be just in his investigation. Over the next three to four years, many people were tried. Some were convicted and executed; some were allowed to turn state's evidence; some were acquitted. All in all, several dozen people were executed.<sup>Footnote49</sup> Satisfied that the conspiracy had been sufficiently rooted out, Tiberius dropped the matter around 34 CE. He died shortly thereafter in 37 CE.

### The Relationship Between Sejanus and Pilate

The available evidence indicates that Pilate was appointed to the office of prefect of Judea by Sejanus. This evidence consists of two bases.

#### The Date Pilate Was Sent to Judea

No ancient record dates the beginning of Pilate's rule in Judea exactly, nor do they specifically say that Sejanus appointed Pilate. The only chronological record of Pilate's appointment is found in Josephus who says:

"(Tiberius)...sent Valerius Gratus to be procurator of Judea, and to succeed Annus Rufus...When Gratus had done those things, he went back to Rome, after he had tarried in Judea *eleven* years, when Pontius Pilate became his successor...So Pilate, when he had tarried *ten* years in Judea, made haste to Rome...but before he could get to Rome, Tiberius was dead."<sup>Footnote50</sup> (italics mine)

Josephus infers (and the subsequent chronology demands) that Tiberius sent Gratus very soon after becoming emperor. Tiberius became emperor on September 17, 14 CE.<sup>Footnote51</sup> Pilate was removed from office to appear immediately before Tiberius, but Tiberius died while Pilate was en route. Tiberius died on March 16, 37 CE.<sup>Footnote52</sup> Therefore, Pilate was removed no later than late 36 CE.

Gratus therefore assumed his post in 15 CE at the latest. If he ruled for approximately eleven years, then he was removed in 26 or 27 CE. If Pilate ruled approximately ten years, he must have begun his rule in 26 or 27 CE. Therefore, both agree that Pilate was sent to Judea in either 26 or 27 CE.

Tiberius retired to Capri sometime in 26 CE.<sup>Footnote53</sup> The exact date is not known, but because of the above data, it is very likely that Pilate was sent after Tiberius retired. In that case, he was appointed by Sejanus.<sup>Footnote54</sup> Even if he was appointed slightly before Tiberius retired, it is likely that Sejanus was still the main influence behind the appointment, since Tiberius had granted considerable authority to Sejanus in these kinds of matters by this time.

### Sejanus' and Pilate's Anti-semitic Policies

Josephus details Pilate's hatred and baiting of the Jewish people, which will be elaborated upon below. Philo claims that Sejanus was anti-semitic and planned to destroy the Jewish race completely.<sup>Footnote55</sup> Though Tiberius was probably also anti-semitic, he realized after Sejanus was exposed that many of the charges brought against the Jews were fabricated by Sejanus, so in 32 CE he

issued a decree throughout the Empire not to mistreat the Jews.

It is likely that Pilate was simply carrying out Sejanus' anti-semitic policy. Philo does not actually say this; rather, this is inferred from what Philo says in the following passage.

"Therefore everyone everywhere, even if he was not naturally well disposed toward the Jews, was afraid to engage in destroying any of our institutions, and indeed it was the same under Tiberius though matters in Italy became troublesome *when Sejanus was organizing his onslaughts*. For Tiberius knew the truth, he knew at once after Sejanus' death that the accusations made against the Jewish inhabitants of Rome were false slanders, invented by him because he wished to make away with the nation, knowing that it would take the sole or the principal part in opposing his unholy plots and actions, and would defend the emperor when in danger of becoming the victim of treachery. *And he charged his procurators in every place to which they were appointed to speak comfortably to the members of our nation in the different cities, assuring them that the penal measures did not extend to all but only to the guilty, who were few, and to disturb none of the established customs but even to regard them as a trust committed to their care, the people as naturally peaceable, and the institutions as an influence promoting orderly conduct.*"Footnote56 (italics mine)

It is clear from this passage that Sejanus was propagating anti-semitic policies while he was in power. It is also clear that procurators with jurisdiction over Jewish communities practiced those policies under Sejanus' authority. Finally, it is clear that Tiberius told those procurators that such policy was no longer permissible.

What prefect would have had more policies concerning the Jews than Pilate? Certainly Pilate's treatment of the Jews prior to the fall of Sejanus conforms to Sejanus' policies, as we will see. Pilate must have received Tiberius' edict after Sejanus' execution, for his treatment of the Jews changes after 32 CE, as we will also see. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Pilate was either appointed to his position by Sejanus, or at least that he was a willing executor of Sejanus' policies toward the Jews.

Eusebius, almost quoting Philo, clearly makes the same inference:

"...Sejanus, who was then in great favor with Tiberius, had made every effort to destroy the whole nation of the Jews from the foundation, *and that in Pontius Pilate under whom the crimes were committed against our Savior, having attempted everything contrary to what was lawful among the Jews respecting the Temple at Jerusalem, which was then yet standing, excited them to the greatest tumults.*"Footnote57 (italics mine)

These quotes, together with the chronological data supplied above, indicate that Pilate was probably sent to Judea by Sejanus and that he actively pursued Sejanus's policies with the Jews. Pilate held his post by the favor of Sejanus and he was identified with Sejanus by those over whom he ruled.

## The Effect of Sejanus on Dating Jesus' Death

Before one can meaningfully assess the effect of Sejanus on the dating of Jesus's death, certain facts must be first understood.

### The Possible Dates of Jesus' Death

Since Jesus died while Pilate was procurator of Judea, he must have died roughly between 26 and 37 CE. Furthermore, the New Testament states that he died on a Passover which fell on a Friday. Footnote58 Astronomical calculations ascertain that this occurred possibly on 27 CE, and almost certainly 30, 33 and 36 CE. Footnote59 27 and 36 CE can both be discounted because of Lk. 3:1,2. Footnote60 Therefore, Jesus died either on 30 or 33 CE.

If one assumes that Pilate was appointed by Sejanus and was actively carrying out his policies, two important aspects of the gospel narratives of Jesus' trial make perfect sense if the date is 33 CE, after Sejanus' downfall. However, the same aspects are very problematic if the date is 30 CE, before Sejanus' fall.

#### **Pilate's Change in Behavior Toward the Jews**

As was noted above, Pilate had a consistent record of hostility toward the Jews - even to the point of baiting them several times. Soon after arriving in Judea, he had ordered Roman standards brought within the city of Jerusalem under the cover of night, knowing that it would infuriate the Jewish people's beliefs about the sanctity of the city. When they protested he threatened to kill many of them and not until they bared their throats to be cut did he realize that the move was not worth the trouble. Footnote61

On another occasion, Pilate used money from the Temple treasury to construct an aqueduct. When the Jews assembled outside his quarters to protest, he ordered soldiers to dress like the Jews and mingle among the crowd. On his signal, the soldiers drew clubs hidden in their clothes and beat and killed many of the Jews. Footnote62

Later, possibly in 29/30 CE, Pilate introduced coins engraved with a symbol of Emperor-worship. Footnote63 In Lk. 13:1, Jesus is asked about the "Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices", a reference to the murder of some Jews coupled with purposeful desecration of Jewish worship.

Therefore, the early years of Pilate are characterized by an almost complete disdain for the Jews. He purposefully baited them into reacting and then punished them for reacting. It would be very consistent for him to do this if he was Sejanus' appointee.

Yet the gospels, though clearly cognizant of Pilate's past behavior, present Pilate during the trial as a man fearful of the Jews and eager to please them. He knows Jesus is innocent Footnote64, but gives into condemning him in order to please the Jews. One would expect exactly the opposite reaction from Pilate: that he would insist on Jesus's acquittal *because* the Jewish leaders wanted him condemned. Instead, the gospels say that Pilate tried to release Jesus because the Jewish leaders delivered up out of envy Footnote65 (i.e., to bait them), but that when they threatened him with an appeal to Rome, he backed down and granted their wish. Footnote66

How is this discrepancy to be explained? Such behavior is simply not tenable before Sejanus' demise. As was noted above, Sejanus was executed on 31 CE. From 31 to 34 CE, Tiberius was investigating and prosecuting Sejanus's co-conspirators. If Jesus's trial was after this time, especially if it was after Tiberius's 32 CE decree against mistreating the Jews, Pilate would be very uneasy about any report getting back to Tiberius. Being Sejanus' appointee, he may well have been under suspicion already as it was. However, if Jesus' trial occurred in 30 CE, there would be no reason for Pilate to not continue

his policy of baiting the Jews, since Sejanus was in control and would back him up.

Thus, the drastic change in Pilate's behavior toward the Jews in Jesus's trial is very consistent after 31 CE, but very inconsistent before that time.

### **The Jews' Use of "Amicus Caesaris"**

During the trial of Jesus by Pilate, Pilate several times tells the Jewish leaders that Jesus is innocent. On his final attempt, John records:

"...Pilate made efforts to release him (Jesus), but the Jews cried out, saying 'If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.' *When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat...And so he then delivered him up to them to be crucified.*"Footnote67 (italics mine)

The term "friend of Caesar" (Latin: *amicus Caesaris*) is a technical term reserved for senators, knights and administrators who were meritorious and thus favored by the emperor.Footnote68 To lose this title was to lose not only one's post, but also to possibly complete ostracism from Roman life, as illustrated by Gallus in 26 BCE under Augustus.Footnote69

Therefore, the Jews were uttering a threat to Pilate. They were claiming to have the power to potentially have Pilate stripped of this title. This threat is highly significant for two reasons. First, it is inconceivable that the Jews would utter it as long as Sejanus was in control. They knew that all communication to Tiberius was controlled by Sejanus, and they also knew that Pilate's anti-semitic policies were in accordance with Sejanus' policies.Footnote70 Such a threat makes sense *only* if Tiberius is back in control of the empire *and* if Pilate is under imperial censure or warning because of his association with Sejanus.

Second, even if the Jews did utter such a threat, Pilate would have had no reason to respond to it while Sejanus was in control. Pilate's response becomes intelligible *only* after 31, when Sejanus was deposed.

### **Conclusion**

The fact that Sejanus's downfall came in 31 CE has a very significant impact on dating the death of Jesus. Only 30 or 33 CE are tenable years for Jesus' death. Pilate was probably Sejanus' appointee who actively carried out his anti-semitic policies, and thus was in danger after Sejanus was executed. The behavior of Pilate and the Jews during the trial of Jesus makes sense only after Sejanus' demise. Therefore, 33 CE is the preferable date for the death of Jesus.

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## Footnote1

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1942), p. 116.

## Footnote2

Evidently, Sejanus held this position with his father Strabo already at this time. See Robin Seager, *Tiberius* (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1972), p. 178.

## Footnote3

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 385.

## Footnote4

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 117.

## Footnote5

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 178.

## Footnote6

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 117.

## Footnote7

Augustus designated his step-son Germanicus to be his successor. Tiberius was seen as an emperor-regent for Germanicus until he came of age. This is why after Germanicus' premature death, his wife Agrippina began to clamor that her son Drusus was the rightful successor. See Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 160.

## Footnote8

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 179.

## Footnote9

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 391.

## Footnote10

Tacitus, *Annals* (hereafter Tac. *Ann.*) 4.8; Dio 57.2.2f.; Seutonius, *Tiberius* (hereafter Seut. *Tib.*) 62.1.

## Footnote11

Seager seriously doubts this explanation of Drusus' death (see Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 184,185). Marsh seems to take the story at face value (see Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 164). Smith thinks this is a possibility, but sees Sejanus motivated by self-preservation more than imperial ambition (see Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 122).

Footnote12

Nero was about seventeen at this time. Drusus and Gaius, twins, were about fourteen years old. See Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 164.

Footnote13

Tac., *Ann.* 4.9.

Footnote14

Tac. *Annals* 4.34f; Seut. *Tib.* 61.3. cited in Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 194.

Footnote15

The exact date of Tiberius' departure from Rome is not stated in any of the extant histories.

Footnote16

Sejanus did not persuade Tiberius to make this move; he only played upon this desire that Tiberius already had (see Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 202).

Footnote17

Tac. *Ann.* 4.59 cited in Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 133.

Footnote18

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 402.

Footnote19

Smith believes that Sejanus hoped at the most for becoming guardian of an under-age heir, and that he was motivated by self-preservation to do away with Drusus. See Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, pp. 121,122.

Footnote20

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 135,136.

Footnote21

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 207.

Footnote22

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 177.

Footnote23

Tac. *Ann.* 4.40.

Footnote24

Marsh sees it as clear intention that Tiberius was going to confirm Sejanus as his successor (see Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 175,176).

Footnote25

Seager quotes Dio in contending that Tiberius knew at least by 30 CE of Sejanus' designs and used such flattery to keep Sejanus off guard until Tiberius could safely eliminate him (see Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, pp. 217,218).

Footnote26

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 137.

Footnote27

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 185.

Footnote28

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 211. *This was the first instance of Roman nobility being beaten while under imperial exile.*

Footnote29

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 187.

Footnote30

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 213.

Footnote31

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 141.

Footnote32

Smith calls this the attainment of Sejanus' long cherished goal of a marital alliance with the Julian House.

Footnote33

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, pp. 189,190.

Footnote34

Dio, 58.2,7ff, cited by P.L. Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate and the Date of the Crucifixion", *Church History* 37 (1968), p. 10.

Footnote35

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 214.

Footnote36

P.L. Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate and the Date of the Crucifixion", p. 11.

Footnote37

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 411.

Footnote38

Marsh correctly says it is impossible to say at what point Tiberius began to suspect Sejanus (see Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 192).

Footnote39

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 144.

Footnote40

Charles Edward Smith, *Tiberius and the Roman Empire*, p. 146.

Footnote41

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 195.

Footnote42

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 218

Footnote43

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 219.

Footnote44

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 411.

Footnote45

This plot is detailed in Dio, 53.8-12; Seut., *Tib.* 65.1; *Tac.*, *Ann.* 6.48 and *Josephus, Antiquities (hereafter Jos. Ant.) XVIII.6.6.*

Footnote46

Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 222.

Footnote47

Seager believes Tacitus' report, though says it was embellished by his rhetoric (see Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, pp. 229-233). *Smith maintains that "the number of prosecutions was not large, however, in view of the fact that the emperor apparently was convinced of the actual existence of a conspiracy" (see Charles Edward Smith, Tiberius and the Roman Empire, p. 150). Marsh agrees, saying, "The number of prosecutions is much smaller than might have been expected after what had passed, and the proceedings seem to show that a real attempt was made to secure justice; in short the whole of the Tiberian Terror is a product of imagination and rhetoric quite unsupported by evidence" (see Frank Burr Marsh, The Reign of Tiberius, p. 200).*

Footnote48

J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius The Tyrant*, p. 413.

Footnote49

In an effort to get the whole ordeal behind him, Tiberius in 33 CE had all those still imprisoned for conspiracy executed on the same day. Twenty people were killed (see Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 207).

Footnote50

*Jos. Ant.*, XVIII, II,2; XVIII,IV,2.

Footnote51

Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964)*, p. 261.

Footnote52

Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, p. 261.

Footnote53

Frank Burr Marsh, *The Reign of Tiberius*, p. 181; Robin Seager, *Tiberius*, p. 200; Charles Edward

*Smith, Tiberius and the Roman Empire, p. 133.*

Footnote54

Maier' language is very strong on this point. He says, "It seems more than probable that in 26 AD, Pontius Pilate was nominated to succeed Valerius Gratus as *praefectus Judaeae* by *L. Aelius Sejanus*...*Undoubtedly it was Pontius Pilate's implementation of Sejanus' policy in Palestine which caused the familiar imbroglios with the Jews...*" (see *P.L. Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate and the Date of the Crucifixion", pp. 8,9*). *Hoehner is almost as strong. He says, "It is probable that when Pontius Pilate succeeded Valerius Gratus as prefect of Judea in AD 26 he was appointed by the equestrian Lucius Aelius Sejanus" (see Harold W. Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Part V: The Year of Christ's Crucifixion", Bibliotheca Sacra 131 (October-December, 1974):341). These authors are trying to establish a 33 CE death date for Jesus, so their views on this issue may be somewhat biased. However, other sources not biased in this area also agree that Pilate owed his appointment to Sejanus. See, for example, The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1911), Vol. 12, p.614.*

Footnote55

*Philo, In Flaccum i,1; and Legatio 24,159-161.*

Footnote56

*Philo, Legatio 24, 159-161.*

Footnote57

*Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History ii, V.*

Footnote58

Mk 14:12 makes it clear that Passover began the night of the Last Supper. Jn 19:31 makes it clear that the evening following Jesus' death was the beginning of the Sabbath (Saturday). Therefore, Jesus died on a Friday which was also Passover Day.

Footnote59

*J. K. Fotheringham, "The Evidence of Astronomy and Technical Chronology for the Date of the Crucifixion", Journal of Theological Studies XXXV (1934):146-162.*

Footnote60

Luke states that John the Baptist commenced his ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar", which would be 28/29 CE. This cancels out 26 CE. Since no one can make a case for Jesus' public ministry lasting more than four years, this would also cancel out 36 CE.

Footnote61

*Jos. Ant. XVIII, 3.1.*

Footnote62

Jos. *Ant.* XVIII, 3.2.

Footnote63

Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom (Bern and Munchen, 1957)*, pp. 17,134 n. 7, cited in Harold W. Hoehner, "*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Part V: The Year of Christ's Crucifixion*", p. 343.

Footnote64

Lk. 23:14,15; Mk. 15:14; Mt. 27:23; Jn. 18:38; 19:6

Footnote65

Mt. 27:16; Mk. 15:10

Footnote66

Jn. 19:12-16

Footnote67

Jn. 19:12-16

Footnote68

A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 47n. "The connotation, originally political rather than personal in Republican usage, becomes markedly official in imperial documents, with the suggestion that so and so is the official representative of the Princeps (Emperor)."

Footnote69

Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974)*, p. 133.

Footnote70

P.L. Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate and the Date of the Crucifixion", p. 11.

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