The Suda’s Flavian Erasure

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The Suda is an important, oft-used, and almost unavoidable source for scholars of the history of Greek literature—yet it is well known to be unreliable. When using unreliable sources, it is helpful to know the nature of their unreliability. The Suda displays a pervasive and systematic erasure of the Flavians. It is as if nothing happened, and no one wrote, during the 27 years of Flavian rule—or even that those years did not occur.

The Suda treats the Flavian era in three peculiar ways: (1) the Flavians are hardly ever used as epochal markers, in contrast to Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Trajan, Hadrian, and even Nerva; moreover, (2) some entries seem to imagine that very little time intervened between Nero and Nerva; and (3) many entries having to do with authors of the Flavian period are oddly curtailed or absent. Given that the Suda includes entries


on all three Flavian emperors, and highly praises both Vespasian (β 246, οὗτος τοῖς ἀρίστοις τῶν πώποτε βασιλέων παραβάλλεσθαι ἄξιος ἦν) and Titus (τ 691, ἀνὴρ πᾶν ἀρετῆς συνειληφὼς γένος), it seems very unlikely that (the compilers of) the Suda intended the erasure.

1. Erasing a dynasty

Let us first examine the use of emperors in the first and second centuries CE as epochal markers. The entries in the Suda for the Roman emperors are relatively full. Vespasian is praised (β 246, cross-referenced at o 833), Titus also (τ 691), and Domitian is expectedly condemned (in the peculiar doublet δ 1351+1352). There are even entries for the ephemeral emperors Otho (o 92) and Vitellius (β 309), though not for Galba.

Many emperors are used as epochal markers for various writers, expressed as γέγονεν under so-and-so. First, Tiberius (for whom there are entries: κ 1198, τ 551, and τ 552), who ruled 23 years, is used as an epochal marker 10 times in the Suda. Caligula (κ 216, also known as Gaius γ 11+12), who reigned 4 years, serves as an epochal marker 5 times. Claudius (κ 1708), who ruled 13 years, is used as an epochal marker 11 times.

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3 From the Historia Chronike of John of Antioch, FHG IV 578 frr.99, 102.
4 The verb γέγονεν in the Suda almost certainly means “was active,” as shown by E. Rohde, “Τέγονε in den Biographica des Suïdas,” RhM 33 (1878) 161–220, 368, and 34 (1879) 620–622 (rpt. Kleine Schriften I [Tübingen/Leipzig 1901] 114–184); (a) the verb refers to birth only for persons who lived before ca. 300 BCE (p.177/131–132); (b) and over 105 cases of 129 refer to the period of activity (p.219/177).
5 Α 735 (Athenodoros of Tarsos); Α 3215 (Apion of Oasis); γ 12 (emperor Gaius); δ 1170 (Dionysios the Areopagite); Θ 151 (Theodoros of Gadara); κ 1201 (the city Caesarea in Cappadocia); π 664 (Parthenios of Nicaea); π 2127 (Potamon of Mytilene); σ 61 (Sallustius the doctor); and σ 1155=1187 (Strabo).
6 Α 2634 (Anteros); Α 3198 (Appian); Α 3420 (Apollonios of Tyana); τ 503 (Josephus), and ϕ 448 (Philo of Alexandria).
7 Α 2634; Α 3215; Α 3420; β 246 (Vespasian); δ 1118 (Diktyos, cf. δ 1117); η 463 (Herakleides of Pontos, Jr.); ν 10 (the Nazirites) ~ χ 523 (the Christians);
Nero (v 254), who ruled 14 years, serves as a marker 14 times.\footnote{\textcopyright{} 388 (the Sicarii); \varphi{} 448 (Philo); and \varphi{} 798 (the phoenix).} Even Galba, despite lacking his proper entry, is used as an epochal marker once, \alpha{} 943 (the Athenian orator Akusilaos).

In the period immediately following the Flavians, likewise, Nerva (v 252), who ruled less than 2 years, serves 4 times as an epochal marker.\footnote{\alpha{} 3420 (Apollonios); \beta{} 309 (Vitellius); \delta{} 875 (Didymos); \delta{} 1173 (Dionysios of Alexandria); \varepsilon{} 2004 (Epaphroditos of Chaeroneia); \varepsilon{} 2424 (Epictetus); \eta{} 3612 (Euodos of Rhodes); \kappa{} 2098 (L. Annaeus Cornutus); \mu{} 1305 (Musionius Rufus); \omicron{} 82 (Otho); \sigma{} 965 (Nero’s boyfriend Sporos); \varphi{} 422 (Philostратos); and \varphi{} 447 (Philo of Byblos).} Then Trajan (\tau{} 902), who ruled 19 years, is used 17 times as an epochal marker.\footnote{\alpha{} 3918 (Aristokles of Pergamon); \alpha{} 4106 (Archibios son of Ptolemaios); \alpha{} 4107 (Archigenes of Apamea); \alpha{} 4409 (Abgar of Edessa) \sim{} \varepsilon{} 207 (Edessa); \delta{} 23 (Dacia); \delta{} 1173 (Dionysios); \delta{} 1240 (Dio of Prusa); \delta{} 1352 (Domitian); \eta{} 545 (Herodes Atticus); \lambda{} 683 (Lucian); \pi{} 1793 (Plutarch); \pi{} 1889 (Polemon of Laodicea); \pi{} 3037 (Ptolemaios ‘Quail’); \rho{} 241 (Rufus of Ephesos); \sigma{} 851 (Soranos of Ephesos); and \varphi{} 4 (Favorinus).} Hadrian (\alpha{} 527, based on Cassius Dio, Book 69), who ruled 21 years, serves about 30 times as an epochal marker.

In contrast, Vespasian (ruled 10 years) and Titus (2 years) are each used only once as an epochal marker, and that together: \beta{}

\begin{itemize}
\item \alpha{} 3918 (Aristokles of Pergamon);
\item \alpha{} 4106 (Archibios son of Ptolemaios);
\item \alpha{} 4107 (Archigenes of Apamea);
\item \alpha{} 4409 (Abgar of Edessa) \sim{} \varepsilon{} 207 (Edessa);
\item \delta{} 23 (Dacia);
\item \delta{} 1173 (Dionysios);
\item \delta{} 1240 (Dio of Prusa);
\item \delta{} 1352 (Domitian);
\item \eta{} 545 (Herodes Atticus);
\item \lambda{} 683 (Lucian);
\item \pi{} 1793 (Plutarch);
\item \pi{} 1889 (Polemon of Laodicea);
\item \pi{} 3037 (Ptolemaios ‘Quail’);
\item \rho{} 241 (Rufus of Ephesos);
\item \sigma{} 851 (Soranos of Ephesos); and
\item \varphi{} 4 (Favorinus).
\end{itemize}
200 (on the statue of Hadrian in Jerusalem). Likewise Domitian, who ruled 15 years, is used only once: τ 428 (on Juvenal). There is also the doublet paraphrase of Josephus’ autobiography (τ 503+504), which mentions the Flavians—simply because it is a paraphrase of Josephus. In sum, for the 27 years of Flavian rule, there are only three or four chronological references, an average of one every ten years.

Thus, for the 55 years prior to the Flavians, i.e. under Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and the three brief emperors of 69 CE, there are 41 chronological references in the Suda, a little less than one per year. Likewise, for the 42 years following the Flavians, under Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian, there are about 50 such references, well more than one per year. Three of these four Julio-Claudians, and both Trajan and Hadrian, are mentioned in quotations,12 which do not constitute epochal markers—and likewise Vespasian (β 433, ε 1094) and Domitian (η 174, θ 307) are mentioned in quotations.

2. Erasing three decades

Secondly, there are six entries that assume that very little time passed after Nero and before Nerva, or even that Nerva followed almost immediately after Nero.

First is α 3420, of Apollonios of Tyana, based on Philostratos’ Life of Apollonios (perhaps mostly from Book 1), saying that ἠκµαζε ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου καὶ Γαίου καὶ Νέρωνος καὶ μέχρι Νέρβα. That disorders the three Julio-Claudians (Gaius should of course precede Claudius), and erases all the Flavians (the mention of the three Julio-Claudians shows that it was not only the termini of the period that were intended as markers, but each emperor of the whole period). That erasure is peculiar, since Philostratos’ VA itself includes a scene with Nero (4.35–47), but also: (1) a major scene with Vespasian (5.27–41), (2) a scene with Titus (6.29–34), and (3) a massive and climactic scene with Domitian, in Books 7 and 8. Nerva only appears in

12 E.g. Tiberius in σ 215, Claudius in φ 142, Nero in ε 395, Trajan in β 430, and Hadrian in π 850.
the same two books as Domitian: see 7.8–11, 20, 32–33, 36.3, and 8.7.31–32 (in Apollonios’ long defense speech intended for Domitian), and 8.27. The Suda quotes a mention of Domitian from 8.5 (µ 1262, repeated in Domitian’s second entry δ 1352).

Second is the pair ε 2004, of the grammarian Epaphroditos of Chaeroneia, saying that he ἐν Ἑραπόλεως τῆς Φρυγίας, φιλόσοφος, δοῦλος Ἐπαφροδίτου, τῶν σωματοφυλάκων τοῦ βασιλέως Νέρωνος … καὶ διατέινας μέχρι Μάρκου Ἀντωνίνου. The name Marcus Antoninus in the Suda refers to the emperor we normally designate Marcus Aurelius (ruled 161–180). Thus, Epictetus is said to have been

15 This Epaphroditos, distinct from the grammarian above, was the savior of Nero in 65 CE (Tac. Ann. 15.55) and died ca. 95 (Suet. Dom. 14).
16 See the entry on M. Aurelius µ 216, based on Cassius Dio 71.34.2–
active from ca. 65 CE or earlier to ca. 165 or later. The dates of Epictetus are somewhat uncertain; however, we do know that he was: (1) a student of Musonius Rufus, (2) exiled from Rome by Domitian (according to Gellius 15.11.3–5, cf. Suet. Dom. 10.3 and Philostr. VA 7.4.2), (3) a teacher of Arrian, and (4) known to Hadrian, according to HA Hadrian 16.10. Probably, Epictetus died by ca. 130. That is, the Suda entry, in dating the death of Epictetus to ca. 160, appears to erase ca. 30 years of history, in particular, the Flavians.

Fourth is Caecilius, one of the Suda’s eleven named sources, whose entry, κ 1165, states ῥήτωρ, σοφιστεύσας ἐν Ρώμῃ ἐπὶ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος καὶ ἕως Ἀδριανοῦ. That would mean that he was active from ca. 10 CE or earlier, to ca. 120 CE or later. The Suda τ 588 synchronizes Timagenes with Caecilius in the first century BCE, and Dionysios of Halicarnassos Pomp. 3.20 (ca. 30 BCE) mentions Caecilius, so his activity in the Augustan era is secured, and the terminus of ca. 120 CE is rendered even more impossible. Apparently, Caecilius (was attested to have) survived until ‘after Tiberius’, which had become or was understood as ‘Tiberius Nero’, i.e. the last of the Julio-Claudians, and then owing to the erasure of the Flavians, the terminus ante for Caecilius was extended to ___ 35.2. For the same nomenclature of the emperors ‘Antoninus’ and ‘Marcus’ in the Suda see esp. α 3868 (Arrian); i 448 (Justin Martyr); κ 1199 (the name ‘Caesar’); and μ 205 (Marcellus of Side). Well before the Suda, see e.g. John Malalas 11.28. The confusion over the names in π 1970, on Polycarp, is clearly due to the Suda copying from two distinct sources (one unidentified and the other Jerome De vir. ill. 17), each using distinct nomenclature.

18 F. W. Jenkins, BNJ 183 T 1.
19 Jenkins, BNJ 183 T2b = J. McInerney and D. W. Roller, BNJ 88 T 1.
20 The extended career here given to Caecilius seemed acceptable to Adam Daub, Studien zu den Biographika des Suidas (Freiburg i. B. 1882) 57–60, but Barry Baldwin, “Aspects of the Suda,” Byzantion 76 (2006) 11–31, remarks “even modern tenure does not permit such longevity” (22).
Hadrian.\textsuperscript{21}

Fifth is φ 421+422, of two of the Philostratoi: the father is said to have lived in the time of Nero (φ 422, γέγονός ἐπὶ Νέρωνος), whereas the son is said to have lived in the mid-third century, in the time of Severus and Philip (φ 421, ἐπὶ Σευήρου τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ ἕως Φιλίππου). The prosopography of this family is tangled, but the ‘son’ here is evidently the grandson, author of the \textit{Life of Apollonios}, ca. 220 CE.\textsuperscript{22} The Flavians are erased, and further distortion has been somehow introduced: perhaps the (grand-)father had been placed a century or more before the author of the \textit{Life of Apollonios}, i.e. ‘under Trajan and before’, a ‘before’ that was then projected backward to Nero?\textsuperscript{23}

Sixth is φ 447, of Philo of Byblos, saying that he lived in the time of Nero and wrote in the time of Hadrian, γέγονεν ἐπὶ τῶν χρόνων τῶν ἐγγὺς Νέρωνος καὶ παρέτεινεν εἰς μακρὸν ... γεγραμμέναι δὲ αὐτῷ ... Περὶ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀδριανοῦ, ἐφ’ οὗ καὶ ἵν ὁ Φίλων; the entry also records that Philo said he was 78 in the 220\textsuperscript{th} Olympiad (101–104 CE) when Herennius Severus was consul, which would mean that he was born 23–26 CE.\textsuperscript{24} The \textit{Suda} again erases the Flavians, and accords to Philo an extraordinary life span of over 100 years (or even 115, if his work on Hadrian was written, as seems necessary, after Hadrian’s death).\textsuperscript{25} Three other testimonia from the \textit{Suda} seem to confirm

\textsuperscript{21} For the same or a similar shift, see on Theodoros, below.


\textsuperscript{23} A. Kaldellis and C. López-Ruiz, \textit{BNJ} 790 T 1 (who interpret γέγονεν here as ‘was born’) = J. Radicke, \textit{FGrHist} IV.7 1060 T 1 (who argues that the \textit{Suda} computed Philo’s \textit{floruit} as 38 years before the 220\textsuperscript{th} Olympiad, i.e., as 63–66 CE, and attaches the age of 78 years to Herennius Severus when he was consul, and then rejects the \textit{Suda’s} account).

\textsuperscript{24} Rohde (n.4: 175–177/130–132) addresses the problem of Philo and points out that the age and Olympiad in the \textit{Suda} entry are expressed in numerals (ὅταν ἦγεν η’ καὶ ο’ ἐτος, ὀλυμπιάδι δὲ κ’ καὶ δύοκοσιοιη’) that could easily have become corrupted. A. I. Baumgarten, \textit{The Phoenician History
that Philo was active under Hadrian: ε 3045, Philo’s student Hermippos also active under Hadrian; π 809, Paulus of Tyre, a contemporary of Philo, lived (γεγονός) at the time of Hadrian; and perhaps η 546, Herodian of Alexandria, who lived (γέγονε) under Marcus Aurelius, was younger than Philo (but evidently somehow comparable). Philo of Byblos was likely active as early as Trajan, and the evidence may have stated ‘and before’, which was then interpreted, due to the erasure of the Flavians, as ‘under Nero’.

3. Erasing authors and works

Thirdly, there are nine or more entries concerning Greek writers from the Flavian era that are oddly curtailed or missing. The sole Flavian author who is by the Suda unambiguously dated to the Flavian period is Juvenal: ι 428, οὗτος ἦν ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ βασιλέως Ρωμαίων; the entry also records his exile. Other well-known Latin authors of the Flavian era, such as Martial, Pliny, Quintilian, Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, are absent. Even the Greek authors of the era are ill-served.

First is δ 1240, on Dio of Prusa, son of Pasikrates, the sophist later called ‘Golden-Tongued’, whose period of activity is given as διέτριψε τὸ πλεῖστον παρὰ Τραϊανῷ τῷ Καίσαρι. We know a good deal about the career of Dio, most of which predates Trajan: he reached Rome when Vespasian was emperor, was among those banished by Domitian, and died late in Trajan’s reign. Thus the Flavian majority of Dion’s career is erased.

Second is Irenaios of Alexandria, one of the Suda’s eleven named sources, ει 190, with no date. He was a pupil of Heliodoros and is quoted by Erotianus fr.60 (p.116.8 Nachmanson),

of Philo of Byblos (Leiden 1981) 32–35, accepts the long life. V. Palmieri, Herennius Philo: De Diversis Verborum Significationibus (Naples 1988) 17–22, points out that the date of the suffect consulship of Herennius Severus is known to have been 128, which does not correspond to any of the data in the Suda; he concludes that Philo was born ca. 54 (and precisely in 50), and lived into the reign of Hadrian.

25 Kaldellis and López-Ruiz, BNJ 790 TT 2a, 2b, 3.


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so that his period of activity was ca. 55–75 CE. Apparently, the only record of his activity pointed to the era under erasure.

Third is θ 151, Theodoros of Gadara, who διδάσκαλος γεγονός Τιβερίου Καίσαρος (was a teacher of Tiberius), yet whose son Antonius was a senator in the time of Hadrian, ἐπὶ Ἀδριανοῦ Καίσαρος ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Ἀντώνιος συγκλητικὸς ἐγένετο. The Suda also records that Theodoros συνεκρίθη περὶ σοφιστικῆς ἀγωνισάμενος Ποτάμων καὶ Ἀντιπάτρῳ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Ῥώμῃ: in Rome he debated two men, Potamon of Mytilene, also an Augustan orator (π 2127), and Antipater of Damascus (α 2705). Theodoros was indeed an Augustan figure (Strab. 16.2.29), and taught Tiberius (Suet. Tib. 57). Suetonius records that Theodoros said that Tiberius was πηλὸν αἵματι πεφυράμενον, which the Suda has transferred to Alexander of Aigai speaking of Nero, α 1128 (and ν 254). Perhaps the displacement of the son of Theodoros by a century occurred because ‘Tiberius’ had become or was understood as ‘Tiberius Nero’, i.e. Nero; then the son of the ‘tutor of Nero’ was placed ‘after Nero’, and with the Flavians erased, that meant Trajan or Hadrian.

Fourth is the doublet on Josephus, i 503+504: in the first entry (which clearly was included because of AJ 18.63–64), the mentions of Vespasian and Titus derive from the second entry, whereas the mention of Domitian is the terminus for the Jewish Antiquities. The second entry is a close paraphrase of BJ 3.398–408 (where the mentions of Vespasian and Titus are not epochal markers, but simply the names present in the text), on
the capture of Josephus. The *Suda* quotes Josephus well over 200 times.\(^{32}\) That is, the *Suda* provides a longish pair of entries on an author regarded as important, but gives his period of activity only implicitly through the quotations in the entries, and makes no explicit statement about when ‘he lived’. Evidently the compiler(s) of the *Suda* did not know.

Fifth is a pair of obscure Kritons, and an erasure: \(\kappa\) 2453+2454, on the historian Kriton of Pieria, known only from this testimonia,\(^{33}\) plus Kriton of Naxos, who wrote an *Octaeteris* (an astronomical work on the calendar), apparently cited only by Pliny (HN 18.312). In contrast, the *Suda* quotes the historian-and-pharmacist Kriton 5 or 6 times,\(^{34}\) and 11 further passages cited anonymously are reliably assigned to him.\(^{35}\) The *Suda* provides no proper entry for this Kriton, offering only an apparently marginal annotation treated as an entry, \(\kappa\) 2452, which says merely: Κρίτων ἔγραψεν ἐν τοῖς Γετικοῖς (“Kriton wrote in his *Getika*”), and the entry \(\rho\) 241, on Rufus of Ephesos, which synchronizes Kriton with Rufus and Trajan.\(^{36}\) The reference to him by Martial (11.60.6) shows that Kriton was active in Rome under Domitian.\(^{37}\) This Kriton was from

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\(^{32}\) Add to the almost 200 citations listed in A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon* V (Leipzig 1938) 89–90, the 35 listed in C. Theodoridis, *Photii Patriarchae Lexicon* II (Berlin/New York 1998) LXXXIII–LXXXVIII.

\(^{33}\) V. Costa, *BAJ* 277, and contrast T. M. Banchich, *BAJ* 200 (for the inscriptions see *BAJ* 200 F 19).

\(^{34}\) α 4035, β 388 = ε 1235, γ 208, δ 368, and κ 114 are Banchich, *BAJ* 200 F 4–8.

\(^{35}\) I. Russu, “Getica lui Statilius Crito,” *StClas* 14 (1972) 111–128, followed by Banchich, *BAJ* 200: see α 2923 (F 9), α 3115 (F 17), ε 426 (F 14), ε 1864 (F 11), ε 1961 (F 12), ε 2038 (F 10), θ 413 (F 15), ιτ 53 (F 18), υ 181 (F 19), υ 483 (F 13), and υ 503 (F 16).

\(^{36}\) Banchich, *BAJ* 200 T 4; see below for Rufus, who is likewise displaced.

Herakleia Salbake in Caria, and a doctor from Herakleia ‘Albake’ is mentioned in δ 1140 (the second of a doublet about the grammarian Diogenianus).

Sixth is Musonius Rufus, μ 1305, dated to the time of Nero (γεγονός ἐπὶ Νέρωνος), and said to be acquainted (γνώριμος) with Apollonios of Tyana. The Suda adds a claim that Nero executed Musonius, although in fact he was exiled by Nero (Tac. Ann. 15.71, Philostr. VA 7.16), and survived well into the Flavian era, meeting Vespasian (Tac. Hist. 3.81; Cassius Dio 65.13), and teaching Epictetus.

Seventh is Niketes the sophist, ν 387 (undated), and his student Scopelianus, σ 655, two significant sophists and orators of the Flavian era. Pliny Junior heard Niketes in Rome ca. 79 CE (Ep. 6.6.3), and Tacitus (Dial. 15.3) says he was the reviver of oratory around that time. Scopelianus was the student of Niketes, active in the time of Nerva (γεγονός ἐπὶ Νέρβᾳ), a correspondent of Apollonios of Tyana—and sent as an envoy to Domitian.

Thus, Niketes preceded Scopelianus, but (like Irenaios, above) has no date—since the Flavian emperors are erased. Moreover, the Suda entry for Niketes is something of an after-thought, simply copied from entry α 1002, a lexicographical entry on the word ἁκροθίνια. The Suda is in general very interested in men of the ‘second sophistic’ (δεύτερος σοφιστής) and mentions over a dozen of them. So it is

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38 Scarborough, in The Craft 389.
39 Based apparently on Philostr. VA 4.46.
43 A label it uses, φ 421 (on Philostratos), and indeed derived from Philostratos, VS 1.19.
44 For example, Adrianos α 528; Aristeiakes α 3902; Aristokles α 3918; Aspasios α 4203+4204+4205; Dio δ 1240; Dionysios of Halikarnassos, Jr. δ

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most peculiar that the man known for starting the movement, and praised by Greeks and Latins alike, is (nearly) erased.

Eighth is Plutarch, π 1793, γεγονὼς ἐπὶ τῶν Τραίανον τοῦ Καίσαρος χρόνων καὶ ἐπίπροσθεν ("lived in the times of Trajan and before"). None of Plutarch’s activity was as early as the reign of Nero, and he mentions as contemporaries all three Flavians, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. Again the Flavians are erased, and thus the Flavian portion of Plutarch’s career is erased.

Ninth is Rufus of Ephesos, ρ 241, who is said to γεγονὼς ἐπὶ Τραίανον σὺν Κρίτων ("lived in the time of Trajan, at the same time as Kriton"); on Kriton, see above. Damokrates’ verses on the Egyptian compound kuphi (preserved in Galen Antid. 2.2 [XIV 117–119 K.] cite Rufus’ recipe (119, Ῥοῦφος μὲν οὕτω δεῖν ἔφασκε σκευάσαι). Damokrates worked under Vespasian, and so Rufus must have been active already under Vespasian, i.e. by ca. 70 CE.

Three other biographical puzzles provide confirming evidence. There is ι 450, on Justus of Tiberias, the opponent of Josephus, whose date is synchronized only with Josephus, ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ συνέγραφεν ὅτε καὶ Ἰώσηπος. That is, the (compilers of the) Suda had no emperors whose reigns could be

1171; Herodes η 545; Nikostratos v 404; Pausanias π 819; Polemon π 1889; Sergius σ 246; Favorinus φ 4.

45 Amat. 24 (770C11), De soll. An. 19 (973E–974A), Publicola 15.2.
46 De tuenda sanit. praec. 5 (124CD).
47 Aetia Rom. Graec. 50 (276E), De curios. 15 (522DE), Aem. 25.5–6, Publicola 15.3, 5.
48 C. P. Jones, “Towards a Chronology of Plutarch’s Works,” JRS 56 (1966) 61–74; places four works in the Flavian period, from ca. 80 (Galb., Otho, Consol uxor., and Praec. coniug.), and possibly as many more.
49 J. Scarborough, EANS 720–721.
50 Plin. HN 24.43 (cured the daughter of ‘M. Servilius’, probably Nonianus, cos. 35 CE) and 25.87; Damokrates quoting Andromachos in Galen Compos. Medic. sec. Gen. 6.12 (XIII 920 K.); S. Vogt, ÉtVS 226.
51 R. Bloch, RAJ 734.
used to describe the date of Justus. Then, there is the medical family of Philipppos and his son Archigenes, active in the late first century and early second century CE, with the Flavian portions of their careers erased. Archigenes reached the age of 63 and was active in Rome under Trajan: α 4107. The simplest interpretation is that he was not active (i.e., no longer alive) after Trajan, and so must have been born ca. 45 CE—which would very likely mean that he was active under Domitian (or even Vespasian). That seems to be confirmed by references in Juvenal to Archigenes as an exemplary physician.52 His father Philipppos is quoted by Asklepiades the pharmacist (in Galen), and thus must have been active in the Flavian period,53 and yet receives no entry in the Suda. Third, there is the sophist Nikostratos,54 said at ν 404 to be a contemporary of: (a) Aristides (who was active ca. 145–180), (b) Dio the orator, primarily Flavian (as above), and (c) the emperor “Marcus Antoninus” (as above: M. Aurelius). The inclusion of Dio seems to refer to his dating under Hadrian, displaced from his proper Flavian position.

Note that the chronological displacements in §2 above, and those here in §3, can all be understood as due to the erasure of the Flavians from the record. Six of the seven persons in §2 have either a clear terminus post before the Flavians (Apollonios of Tyana; Epaphroditos of Chaeroneia; Epictetus, whose terminus ante was evidently not well known; and perhaps Caecilius) or else a clear terminus ante after the Flavians (Ptolemaios ‘Quail’ and Philo of Byblos), and their other less-clear terminus is then displaced forward (Apollonios, Epaphroditos, Epictetus, and Caecilius) or else backward (Ptolemaios and Philo). Similarly, the persons in §3 were mostly active during the Flavian period,

53 Galen Compos.Medic.sec. Loc. 4 (XIII 88 K.); A. Touwaide, EANS 648–649. The reference in Juv. 13.124–125 is likely to this Philip, but the name Philip is far more common than Archigenes.
and hence can find no place, or only a partial place, in a chronology that erases the Flavians.

4. *An epitomator of Hesychios wielding an eraser*

There appears to be a distortion, and that can be confirmed by examining briefly the use of the emperors as chronological markers in other Greek texts.\(^{55}\) If there were no systematic distortion, we would expect the number of times a given emperor’s name was used in a chronological marker to be proportional to the length of his rule. The source of a distortion about the Flavians could be a work as early as the second century CE, and might be attested as late as the fifteenth century. A search was made through the TLG over all authors within those centuries,\(^ {56}\) for the following chronological markers, and involving all the emperors from Tiberius through Hadrian:\(^ {57}\) (1) ἐπὶ + NAME;\(^ {58}\) (2) ὑπὸ + NAME; (3) μετὰ + NAME;\(^ {59}\) and (4) μέχρι/ἕως + NAME.\(^ {60}\) Precision in these counts is not possible, given that some passages are repeated verbatim in two or more authors, and that any one of numerous particles might interrupt a phrase, not to mention the difficulty of perfectly eliminating imperial homonyms in the cases of Claudius, Gaius, Tiberius, and Titus. Nevertheless, the proportions will likely be similar even under those variations.

\(^{55}\) I am indebted to an anonymous referee for suggesting this test.

\(^{56}\) When the search was made there were 1061 such authors; including the *Suda* itself, which has been eliminated from the counts.

\(^{57}\) Note: (1) Otho does not appear in any of the phrases searched for; (2) Vitellius appears only once, as Βιτελλίως; (3) Vespasian appears both as Βεσπασιανός and as Οὐεσπασιανός; and (4) Nerva appears both as Νέρβα and as Νέρουας.

\(^{58}\) Including once ἐπὶ τῶν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ χρόνων, to which compare the ἐπὶ τῶν Τραϊανοῦ χρόνων of π 1793 and ἐπὶ τῶν Ἀδριανοῦ χρόνων of μ 668.

\(^{59}\) Including twice, in Galen, μετὰ τῶν Ἀδριανοῦ.

\(^{60}\) Including μέχρι τῶν ΝΑME χρόνων in eight cases with Trajan and in two with Hadrian.

\(^{61}\) Gaius is called Καλλιγόλας in τ 503, κ 216, and φ 448, but that name did not appear in the phrases searched.

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Table 1: Emperors as Chronological Markers, 2nd to 15th c.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emperor</th>
<th>Years Reigned</th>
<th>Total (Ratio)</th>
<th>(1) ἐπὶ +</th>
<th>(2) ὑπὸ +</th>
<th>(3) μετὰ +</th>
<th>(4) μέχρι/ἕως +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiberius</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59 (2.6)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33 (8.2)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudius</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37 (2.8)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nero</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>96 (6.9)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galba</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>9 (9)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitellius</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vespasian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46 (4.6)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 (10)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vespasian + Titus</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66 (5.6)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domitian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31 (2.1)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerva</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 (5.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51 (2.7)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadrian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15 (0.7)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the number of times a given emperor’s name was used in a chronological marker to the length of his rule varies roughly from 2 to 10, with the shorter reigns (Gaius 4 years, Titus 2, and Nerva 2) having the higher ratios. About one-third of the citations of Titus (for ἐπὶ + NAME and for ὑπὸ + NAME) append Vespasian (“… Titus and Vespasian,” 4 of
and likewise about one-third of the citations of Vespasian (for ἐπὶ + NAME and for ὑπὸ + NAME) append Titus (“… Vespasian and Titus,” 22 of 60). That suggests that they may have been considered together as a single epoch, and as the row ‘Vespasian + Titus’ in Table 1 shows, the combined reign receives mention as a chronological marker in a proportion consistent with a reign of their combined 12 years. Domitian (at a ratio of 2.1) does not greatly differ from Tiberius (at 2.6) or Trajan (at 2.7). The sole outlier appears to be Hadrian, mentioned less often than might be expected.

The Flavian distortion is real—what was its origin? Given the Suda’s evident interest in the Flavians (and even appreciation for Vespasian and Titus), as noted above, the Suda itself is not likely the source.\(^\text{62}\) We expect rather a common source for all of the literary biographies. Scholars have identified that common source as the Onomatologos of Hesychios of Miletos (ca. 510–530 CE), in epitome.\(^\text{63}\) The Suda itself records this source, ἡ 611, Ἡσύχιος Μιλήσιος, νιάς Ἡσυχίου δικηγόρου καὶ Φιλοσοφίας, γεγονός ἐπὶ Ἀνιστασίου βασιλέως. ἔγραψεν Ὀνοματολόγον ἣ Πίνακα τῶν ἐν παιδείᾳ ὀνομαστῶν, οὖ ἐπιτομῆ ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον (where the final clause was copied by the Suda from the superscription of the work used, evidently an epitome of Hesychios’ book).\(^\text{64}\) The epitome was composed


\(^{64}\) G. Wentzel, Die griechische Übersetzung der Viri Illustres des Hieronymus
in the ninth century, but there may have been multiple revisions and editions, all—like the American Webster’s Dictionary or the British Burke’s Peerage—named for the original editor. The Suda’s use of this work seems to be confirmed by the phrase συχνοὶ τῶν ὀνομαστῶν ἐν παιδείᾳ in ε 2004 (synchronizing Epaphoditos of Chaeroneia and Ptolemaios ‘Quail’); the collocation of ἐν παιδείᾳ with ὀνομαστ- is not found elsewhere. The arrangement of Hesychios’ Onomatologos appears to have been entries ordered by literary category within each letter, as seen wherever the Suda provides biographies of several homonyms: the poet, if there is one, always comes first; then the philosopher, if there is one; then the historian; then the sophist; then the grammarian; etc.

Over a century earlier, in his Bibliotheca, Photios also used this source tradition, more sparingly. He sometimes errs in his literary biographies, but there is no discernible tendency, so

Footnotes:

65 Wentzel, Die griechische Übersetzung 57 (829–857 CE); A. Adler, RE 4A (1932) 675–717, at 706–708; Treadgold, The Nature of the Bibliotheca 31–32, 36 (843–845 CE); and W. Hörandner, “Suda,” Lexikon des Mittelalters VIII (1997) 281. Wentzel shows that the epiatomator added Christian names to what was otherwise apparently a work of purely pagan content, per the Suda, which states that there were no entries on Christians; cf. Kaldellis, GRBS 45 (2005) 381–403.

66 Wentzel, Die griechische Übersetzung 57–63.


any distortion visible in Photios is likely to be due to this source. However, Photios reports on relatively few authors of the first century CE, and almost none of those from the Hesychios-epitome.\footnote{Treadgold, The Nature of the Bibliotheca 177–180, lists by century the authors treated in each codex of the Bibliotheca; and 188–189 lists codices derived from the Hesychios-epitome.} For example, cod. 76 on Josephus, and 33 on Justus of Tiberias (which mentions Vespasian), derive primarily or entirely from Josephus himself.\footnote{Schamp, Photios 242–258.} The very full codex on Ptolemaios ‘Quail’ (190) gives no biography or date at all. Also independent of the Hesychios-epitome are the codices on bishop Clement of Rome (112–113), which appear to be derived from (the Greek translation of) Jerome, On Famous Men.\footnote{Schamp, Photios 281–284.} Nevertheless, there is one codex on a Flavian-era author that appears to be derived from the Hesychios-epitome, cod. 209 on Dio of Prusa—and it indeed erases the Flavians, assigning Dio solely to the reign of Trajan.\footnote{Schamp, Photios 263–270, arguing that the literary judgments are by Photios himself.}

Other biographical sources are mere shadows to us. One such is Helikonios (ca. 395 CE; ε 851),\footnote{Fr. Tinnefeld, “Heliconius,” in BNP 6 (2005) 70.} cited twice for biography, on Apion of Oasis (α 3215) and on Arrian (α 3868). In both cases, the author is dated to the reigns of two emperors, with an omitted intermediate emperor (“Tiberius and Claudius,” omitting Caligula; “Hadrian and M. Aurelius,” omitting Antoninus Pius)—but a full explanation eludes us.\footnote{G. Wirth, “Helikonios der Sophist,” Historia 13 (1964) 506–509; in the entry on Arrian, the text is interpolated, reading “Marcus [and] Antoninus.”} In any case, omitting single intermediate emperors could not erase three sequential emperors. The entry on Apion is replete with puzzles, and if Helikonios was a major source for that entry, his
remark that Apion was a “Cretan,” sc. liar, might suggest caution about Helikonios himself. On the other hand, “Agreophon” is cited (α 3421) for an alleged Hadrianic homonym of the Flavian Apollonios of Tyana. Several other peculiar doublets might be due to Agrephon, such as that on the Trajanic doctor Soranos of Ephesos (σ 851+852), or that on the Hadrianic grammarian Diogenianus of Herakleia (δ 1139+1140), but the creation of doublets does not constitute the erasure of a dynasty. A third possibility is likely a mere ghost, but is hinted at by the extensive and long-lasting commemoration of the sack of Jerusalem in the propaganda of the Flavian dynasty: would a Jewish or Judaizing source have wished to damn the memory of the emperors who destroyed the temple? But there is no other evidence of such a source, unless the Domninus cited by Malalas actually existed and was Jewish (as was perhaps his homonym Domninus of Larissa), and it all seems a priori somewhat unlikely.

We might consider the effects of careless epitomizing, but that would not generate a systematic erasure, only random omissions and gaps. Two instructive examples provide such garbles. First is Zosimus, the programmatically pagan historian (ca. 510), whose New History is oddly oblivious to contra-

77 The MSS. have the otherwise unattested Agrephon, emended to Agreophon, a name attested from the 3rd c. BCE: H. Hauben, “Les vacances d’Agérophon (253 av. J.C.), ChrEg 60 (1985) 102–108; J. Radicke, FGrHist IV.7 1081 T 1.
79 Active ca. 430–475 CE; compare Bernard, EANS 275.

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dictions in its sources, and introduces doublets.\textsuperscript{81} Another is the
historian John Malalas (writing ca. 570), whose Books 10 and
11 are chronological by emperor (Augustus to Nerva and then
Trajan to M. Aurelius).\textsuperscript{82} Augustus is given 56 years of rule, i.e.
dating from the death of Julius Caesar; and the ephemeral
Vitellius is unaccountably given nine years of rule. Moreover,
episodes and persons are doubled, evidently when Malalas
mechanically merged his sources.\textsuperscript{83} His most important sources
are otherwise unknown, and fiction may be suspected
and ‘Timothy’.\textsuperscript{84} However, Malalas does not display any systematic
erasure—he mentions only a few, mostly religious, authors. In


\textsuperscript{83} E. Jeffreys, “Malalas’ Sources,” in \textit{Studies} 167–216, at 199.


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Books 10–11, see only: 10.28, Diktys of Crete (under Claudius); 10.32, Simon Magus (under Nero); 10.51, Apollonios of Tyana (under Domitian); 11.19, bishop Markion of Sinope (under Hadrian); and 11.30, Julian the Chaldaean (under M. Aurelius).

The erasure of the Flavians is pervasive and systematic, and thus must be due to a single cause. The simplest hypothesis is that the cause was a single source that erased the Flavians, namely some (lost) epitome of the Onomatologos of Hesychios of Miletos, used by the Suda (and Photios). Probably Hesychios did not erase the Flavians, and we have no MS. of the epitome-tradition, so we are left to wonder why (or how) some epitomator did so. Whatever was the cause or reason, scholars exploiting the Suda should be aware of this systematic erasure of the Flavians. Those sixteen authors discussed here, whose dates actually overlapped the Flavian era,85 should not be misdated on the basis of the erasure of (the source of) the Suda.86

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85 Namely, in alphabetical order: Apollonios of Tyana, the doctor Archigenes, Dio of Prusa, Epaphroditos of Chaeroneia, Epictetus, Irenais of Alexandria, Kriton of Herakleia, Musonius Rufus, Niketes the Sophist, Philo of Byblos, the elder Philostratos, Plutarch, Ptolemaios ‘Quail’, Rufus of Ephesos, Scopelianus the Sophist, and Theodoros of Gadara.

86 John Scarborough’s remark to me about the Suda’s date for Rufus of Ephesos prompted my investigation, and he commented on an earlier draft. Anthony Kaldellis generously provided very useful advice on many aspects of the paper, saving me from a number of errors. To both I am very grateful.