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Autor: Morgan, M. Gwyn

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Rogues March: Caecina and Valens in Tacitus, *Histories* 1.61–70

By M. Gwyn Morgan, Austin

After ten chapters on the *initia causasque motus Vitelliani* (*Hist.* 1.51–60), Tacitus spends another ten on the preparations made to bring the Othonians to battle. Of these, one is devoted to the plan of action that Vitellius' forces will follow (61). One sets up a contrast between the emperor and his troops (62.1–2), not only to emphasise Vitellius' torpor, but also to accentuate the energy and drive his soldiers will display throughout these chapters[1]. And eight or so are given over to the two expeditions, that of Fabius Valens (62.3–66.3), and that of A. Caecina (67–70). The account of Valens' march is relatively straightforward, posing few problems beside the need to explain why Tacitus abandons this force in the territory of the Vocontii, several hundred miles and some three weeks short of the Alps[2]. The story of Caecina's march, however, Tacitus tells in such a way that there has been argument, both about the nature and scope of its commander's operations and the strategy he had in mind, and – what is more important for our purposes – about Tacitus' skill in handling this material and his very understanding of it[3].

As I hope to demonstrate, the difficulties created by Tacitus' account of Caecina's expedition will resist solution, so long as they are considered in

1 This is the first extended characterisation of Vitellius and, as is remarked by U. Rademacher, *Die Bildkunst des Tacitus* (Hildesheim/New York 1975) 173f., it establishes the treatment he will receive all through *Histories* 1–3. But the antithetical portrayal of the soldiery is not designed solely to explain their response to the omen of 62.3. It is fundamental to the two campaigns, as is shown by the repeated references to their attitude: see 63.1; 64.1; 66.1; 67.1 (below n. 25); and 69 (below n. 38). Tacitus adds to the effect by bringing in Caecina's *turbidum ingenium* (67.1), the opposite of Vitellius' *segne ingenium* (52.4). For the text I have used the Teubner edition by H. Heubner (Stuttgart 1978), and all references not otherwise identified are to the *Histories*.

2 According to the calculations of F. Köster, *Der Marsch der Invasionsarmee des Fabius Valens vom Niederrhein nach Italien Anfang 69 n.Chr.* (Diss., Münster 1927), the army reached Lucus Augusti around February 28, and Brigetio (just short of the Alps) around March 20.

3 For brevity's sake, the following works are cited hereafter by author's or editor's name and page number only: G. E. F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus' Histories I and II* (Oxford 1979); H. Heubner, *P. Cornelius Tacitus, Die Historien, Band I: Erstes Buch* (Heidelberg 1963); Ed. Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus Germania* (Berlin ^{3}1923); F. Stähelin, *Die Schweiz in römischer Zeit* (Basel ^{3}1948); R. Syme, "Helvetian Aristocrats", *Roman Papers* 3 (Oxford 1984) 986–997 (originally published in *MusHelv* 34, 1977, 129–140); G. Walser, "Das Strafgericht über die Helvetier im Jahre 69 n.Chr.", *Schweiz. Zeitschr. f. Gesch.* 4 (1954) 260–270; K. Wellesley, *The Long Year, A.D. 69* (Bristol ^{2}1989).

isolation and exclusively from a historical point of view. As has been observed by Hellegouarc'h, the two campaigns are recounted "dans des récits colorés et dramatiques d'égale longueur"[4]. In fact, they form a diptych, exhibiting sometimes similar characteristics, sometimes marked oppositions. Then there is the tone in which the two campaigns are reported. It is overtly sardonic, a point which seems more obviously to condition the presentation of Valens' march than of Caecina's. But there are hints enough to show that one essential contribution to this sardonic tone is made by an attempt to recall Caesar's *Commentarii*; and while this too helps to explain the subject matter of Valens' expedition, it makes much more understandable the way in which Caecina's actions are depicted. And when we give full weight to these two aspects, the balance and the tone, it is possible, first, to reach conclusions about the source or sources behind Tacitus' account different to those currently favoured, and second, to form a clearer idea of the strategies pursued by Caecina and Tacitus alike, and a better appreciation of the skills with which they each achieved their objectives.

I. *The Balance*

It is not surprising that Tacitus, faced with the prospect of narrating in sequence two marches which took place more or less simultaneously, opted to describe first Fabius Valens' expedition, then Caecina's. For one thing, Valens' column began its march from Cologne after the meeting held there to settle the division of forces and the strategy each commander would follow[5]. Caecina, with no need (and probably no desire) to accompany his associate, could go on ahead to Vindonissa and pick up there the troops assigned to him – a move which became essential when the Legio XXI Rapax, already in place, failed to await his arrival and began the war with the Helvetii (67.1)[6]. Again, the one truly remarkable event in Valens' expedition was the omen of the eagle, a

4 P. Wuilleumier/H. Le Bonniec/J. Hellegouarc'h, *Tacite, Histoires Livre I* ("Budé", Paris 1987) 204 n. 3; cf. P. Ammann, *Der künstlerische Aufbau von Tacitus, Historien I 12–II 51 (Kaiser Otho)* (Diss., Zürich 1931) 59f. A similar line of argument is used by Norden 254, to try to establish the source behind the account of Caecina's expedition (see below part II).

5 Heubner 133; Chilver 123f.

6 That XXI Rapax acted before Caecina's arrival is shown by the tense of *rapuerant* at 67.1 (cf. Heubner 141; Chilver 129). Since this legion was the core of Caecina's force (61.2), there is no reason to suppose that he marched with Valens and his troops from Cologne (thus F. Paschoud, *MusHelv* 39, 1982, 251, seeking to place the start of the campaign against the Helvetii in the first week of February: see below part III). As for the two other legions from which Caecina took detachments, IV Macedonica and XXII Primigenia, both stationed at Mogontiacum some 350 km from Vindonissa, one could suppose that he picked them up at Mogontiacum and then marched to Vindonissa (Walser 261), but he could just as easily have instructed them to join him at Vindonissa. For they need not have reached him until he was preparing to cross the Alps (cf. Stähelin 196 and n. 3; Wellesley 40).

laetum augurium vouchsafed to him and his men *ipso profectionis die* (63.3). For Caecina the most notable event was not so much the crossing into Italy *hibernis adhuc Alpibus* (70.3) as the news which precipitated it, a *laetum ex Italia nuntium* (70.1) that four key towns in the Transpadane region had been won over to the Vitellian side[7]. And finally, it was to Caecina's entering Italy that Otho had above all to respond (cf. 2.11.2), and the description of those countermeasures will be Tacitus' next topic (1.71–90). To have reversed the order of the marches, therefore, would have played havoc with the flow of the narrative.

For an author wishing nonetheless to remind his readers that the two campaigns were contemporaneous, the simplest expedient would have been to develop a string of verbal echoes. This tactic Tacitus employs only to a limited extent. Each march, predictably, closes with a reference to the Alps, in Valens' case *sic ad Alpes perventum* (66.3) and *hibernis adhuc Alpibus* (70.3) in Caecina's. Also, as we have seen, there is the effect created by setting a *laetum augurium* (62.3) against the *laetum ex Italia nuntium* (70.1). But it would be unwise to stress the parallelism between *ab excidio civitatis* (63.1) and *civitatis excidium* (69), or that between *salutem incolumitatemque Viennensium* (66.1) and *impunitatem salutemque civitati* (69), since one may ask in each case how else Tacitus was to phrase what needed to be said[8]. And this leaves only the two different uses of *temperare*: Valens' men *ab excidio civitatis temperavere* (63.1), whereas *ne Vitellius quidem verbis ac minis temperabat* (69)[9]. For Tacitus' purposes, it may be argued, these echoes were enough, because neither blatant nor mechanical. Besides, there were other means of achieving the desired balance, for example, narrating the two operations at similar length. Some scholars have been persuaded that Valens' march receives a more generous exposition[10], but this is to be misled by the number of incidents on which Tacitus dilates, five in Valens' march as against three in Caecina's[11]. If we reckon by the space they take up in a standard text, Tacitus allots 79 Teubner lines to Valens, 71 to Caecina. Since he is seldom exact in such matters, the

7 Though *laetum nuntium* seems unremarkable, the collocation is found only twice elsewhere in Tacitus (2.54.1: *laetiore nuntio*; *Ann.* 1.5.4: *laeti nuntii*). The significance of Caecina's crossing of the Alps is discussed below, at the conclusion to part III.

8 In the light of what has been said already (above n. 1), there is even less significance in the supposed parallel between *flexere militum animos* (66.1) and *militis animum mitigavit* (69), according to Norden 255 n. 2 expressions taken from the Elder Pliny.

9 The parallel has attracted less attention than it merits, because of argument over the syntax involved: see W. Heraeus, *Cornelii Taciti Historiarum Libri, Buch I und II* (Leipzig/Berlin [6]1929) 99; L. Valmaggi, *Cornelio Tacito, Il libro primo delle Storie* (Turin 1891) 108.

10 Cf. Syme 986.

11 In Fabius' march there are four incidents in addition to the omen, itself given considerable space. Caecina's march can be limited to one incident, the attack on the Helvetii, only by ignoring the content of chapter 70, containing the *ala Siliana*'s winning over the four Transpadane cities and Caecina's crossing the Alps.

figures are close enough to warrant the conclusion that he saw these campaigns as a diptych[12].

If this is correct, we are entitled to see as a wish to keep the two accounts to a similar length both Tacitus' breaking off the narrative of Valens' march when he does and, perhaps, his providing a lengthy excursus on the *ala Siliana* (70.1)[13]. More important than this, however, we can discern one more example of parallelism in – and so offer one explanation for – the way in which names are deployed through the two accounts. Valens' march reads like an itinerary: we hear of Treviri, Divodurum and the Mediomatrici, the Leuci, the Lingones, the Aedui, the inhabitants of Lugdunum and Vienna, the Allobroges, and the Vocontii and Lucus Augusti, but the only person to be named is Manlius Valens, the legionary legate traduced by Fabius Valens (64.4)[14]. In Caecina's march, by contrast, geographical names are at a premium until Tacitus begins talking of the lands beyond Helvetian territory. Then we come upon the *ala Siliana*, now in the area of the Po after a stay in Africa and a planned trip to Egypt (70.1), the four cities won over to the Vitellian side, Mediolanum, Novaria, Eporedia and Vercellae (70.1), the activities of the governor of Noricum (70.2), and finally, Caecina's advance through the Alps *Poenino itinere* (70.3). Before all this, however, there is the vague mention of a *castellum* (67.1), which has been identified with any number of sites[15]; there is "an elegant periphrasis" to cloak Aquae Helveticae, the modern Baden (67.2), a periphrasis designed probably to lend more weight to the destruction of a settlement which, as Tacitus says, was but a *vicus* at the time[16]; and the two locations deemed worthy of specific mention are the Mons Vocetius, usually taken to be the Bözberg, and Aventicum, the modern Avenches (68.2)[17]. Yet this lack of topographical precision is counterbalanced by a supply of personal names. There is Claudius Severus, the Helvetians' *dux* (68.1), Iulius Alpinus *e principibus*, executed by Caecina as *concitor belli* (68.2), and Claudius Cossus *notae facundiae*, an orator sent to Vitellius (69). All three men are otherwise unknown[18], but to the average Roman reader, no doubt, so too were many of the place

12 In the triptych Tacitus fashions out of 1.12–20 (see "The Unity of Tacitus, *Histories* 1.12–20", *Athenaeum* 81, 1993, 567–586), chapters 12–14 occupy 58 lines, chapters 15–16 take up 64 lines, and chapters 17–20 run to 68 lines.

13 It is not a problem that Tacitus omits one more episode from Valens' march to the Alps, his having to detach some of his auxiliary forces to deal with Otho's seaborne assault on Narbonensis (2.14–15). That cannot come up until Tacitus has described the opening moves of Otho's reign (1.71–90).

14 Cf. Syme 988. On Manlius Valens see *PIR*^{2} M 163.

15 Heubner 141 provides a useful conspectus; see also below n. 88.

16 The quotation is taken from Syme 987.

17 See, e.g., Stähelin 194f.

18 See *PIR*^{2} C 1021, I 144, and C 844 respectively; also Syme 988ff. It is possible that Tacitus was induced to name Alpinus also because of the piquancy of his *cognomen* which, although genuine, is nonetheless unusual. Witness the remarkable success that attended the forgery of an inscription supposedly commemorating a daughter, Julia Alpinula (Stähelin 191 n. 3).

names which dot these chapters[19]. It is far from fanciful, therefore, to maintain that these Helvetian magnates (like the Thracian, German and Raetian contingents of 67.2) were brought into the story in order to compensate for the absence of topographical detail. Perhaps there were not the sites to list, because Caecina's operations were conducted in a smaller area and on a smaller scale than the narrative appears to suggest; or perhaps the sites were too obscure to be worth mentioning; or perhaps Tacitus, for *variatio*, selected personal names over topographical details[20]. Whatever the case, a circumstantial air is imparted to an account which, on close examination, proves to be more impressionistic than precise[21].

As with any Tacitean composition, nonetheless, balance is secured as much by antithesis as by matching like with like. Hence, of the Helvetians, Tacitus declares that *multa hominum milia caesa, multa sub corona venundata* (68.2). Regularly taken as an exaggeration[22], this is meant to contrast with the incident amid the Mediomatrici, when Valens restrained his men only after *caesa ... ad quattuor milia hominum* (63.1). The number of the Helvetian victims must be made to appear larger, to validate the statement that *plus praedae ac sanguinis Caecina hausit* (67.1), a remark which, in itself, serves both to articulate the contrast with Fabius Valens' behaviour and to prepare for the campaign which follows[23]. This, in turn, points to a larger antithesis. Though it has been claimed that Tacitus likens the two expeditions to barbarian invasions of Italy[24], this is to obscure an important difference between them. In his account of Valens' march Tacitus describes a situation in which the commander loses control, first over his men, then over himself – another reason for the narrative to break off when it does. Once general and troops abandon all restraint, further detail is superfluous: *sic ad Alpes perventum* (66.3). With Caecina things work the other way around.

The indiscipline of Legio XXI Rapax precipitates the war with the Helvetii, according to Tacitus, out of *avaritia ac festinatio* (67.1)[25]. Then Caecina arrives, *belli avidus* (67.2), and attacks the tribesmen with all the forces at his disposal. That the attack is unnecessary, if not unjustified, Tacitus makes clear (67.2: *proximam quamque culpam, antequam paeniteret, ultum ibat*), but he

19 Cf. Syme 987.

20 For the ancients' reluctance to mention obscure sites see below n. 90.

21 See below part III.

22 Cf. Walser 264ff.

23 So far as concerns the contrast between the two generals, *praeda* is booty taken in war as opposed to the *pecunia* Valens extorted (66.3), while *sanguis* is blood shed in battle as distinct from the *stupra et adulteria* with which Valens gratified himself.

24 Thus Hellegouarc'h (above n. 4) 204 n. 3. C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule* 4 (Paris 1913) 188 and H. Goelzer, *Oeuvres de Tacite: Histoires, Livres I–II* (Paris 1920) 124 made similar comments, but only of Valens' march.

25 The legion's *festinatio* is mentioned, in part, to contrast with Valens' *lento agmine* (66.3), but the combination with *avaritia* shows that the primary purpose is to remind the reader of the troops' initial enthusiasm (62.1–2).

makes it clearer still that it was highly efficient, undertaken in a coordinated manner bound to produce a result like the one he describes: *multa hominum milia caesa, multa sub corona venundata* (68.2). This efficiency can then be thrown into high relief by the account of Vitellius' mishandling of the envoys sent to plead for mercy, in that the emperor is outmanoeuvred, even outwitted, by a local orator (69)[26]. And finally, we have Caecina's response to the news that the four towns in the Transpadane region had been brought over to the Vitellian side. After a brief pause, he dismisses any thoughts of making a foray into Noricum (70.2), and albeit motivated more by a wish for personal glory than by the best interests of his faction, he concentrates on his primary objective and leads his troops into Italy while it is still winter, an achievement emphasised by the phraseology (70.3): *Poenino itinere subsignanum militem et grave legionum agmen hibernis adhuc Alpibus transduxit*[27]. With Valens' expedition, in short, we go from discipline to anarchy, from indiscipline to masterful generalship with Caecina.

The balance between the accounts, therefore, gives us not only two good reasons for Tacitus' deciding to abridge the narrative of Valens' march as he does, but a coherent scheme with which to explain the nuances in the story of Caecina's activities. The two episodes on which one would expect more detail, the planned incursion into Noricum and the actual crossing of the Alps, are recorded with a brevity appropriate to Caecina's no-nonsense generalship, itself meant to contrast with Valens' incompetence. Another contribution to this effect is made by the account of Vitellius' mishandling of Claudius Cossus, an event developed at some length because, like the excursus on the *ala Siliana*, it serves to body out the narrative and to counterbalance the space devoted to Valens' march. And the individual Helvetians are introduced to lend colour to a campaign which lacks the geographical minutiae of Valens' progress through Gaul.

II. *The Tone*

The most obvious characteristic in Tacitus' account of the two marches is the persistently sardonic twist he gives to the narrative. Where Valens' expedition is concerned, the commander is himself a prime target since, as we have seen, the march becomes an exercise in the loss of control. It starts with a *laetum augurium*, construed by Valens and his men as a *magnae et prosperae rei omen* (62.3). Yet this is a civil war, and success for either side must entail the destruction of fellow citizens[28]. Moreover, the omen is belied by a string of disasters, each worse than its predecessor. First, there is the troops' sudden

26 See below n. 38.

27 See Heubner 149f. and below part III. Note too that Tacitus was aware of the height of the pass through which Caecina had to travel. That, rather than *variatio*, explains his use of *degredi* at 61.1: cf. A. Gerber/A. Greef, *Lexicon Taciteum* (Leipzig 1903) 268b.

28 See Heubner 132f.

panic, which leads to the slaughter of 4,000 Mediomatrici before the men are *precibus ducis mitigati* (63.1). Quite apart from the fact that the soldiery are calmed by the entreaties, not the orders, of their general, the massacre of their own allies – no matter how accidental – hardly qualifies as a success: and that is why Tacitus adds immediately that this slaughter deterred all the other Gallic communities from offering resistance (63.2). It is perhaps a logical consequence of this that next, in the territory of the Lingones, the troops fight among themselves, the legionaries against the Batavians, and there would have been a full-scale battle, *ni Valens animadversione paucorum oblitos iam Batavos imperii admonuisset* (64.2)[29]. The punishment *paucorum* may be another subtle hit at Valens, but when we pass from feuding within the army to feuding between the communities of Lugdunum and Vienna, we are told specifically that Valens is powerless to check the former's agitation against the latter. The Viennenses save themselves by donning all the accoutrements of Roman suppliants (66.1): *tum vetustas dignitasque coloniae valuit.* True, Valens reinforces the effect by promising his men HS 300 apiece, but this undertaking – as Chilver said – means finding some twelve million sesterces, and scarcely reflects well on the general[30]. It is not clear whether Tacitus believed that Valens raised this sum from the Viennenses, preferring to give space to the rumour (which turned out to be baseless) that the commander had been bought off by the inhabitants *magna pecunia* (66.2)[31]. For the mention of money leads naturally to the disappearance of the last vestiges of control. From now on, says Tacitus, Valens trafficked in march routes and camp sites, even threatening to burn down Lucus Augusti, *donec pecunia mitigaretur*; and as if this were not enough, *quotiens pecuniae materia deesset, stupris et adulteriis exorabatur* (66.3). To say more would only detract from the effect, and so the account concludes with the sardonic *sic ad Alpes perventum.*

In the description of Caecina's expedition, the mordant tone is aimed less at the general than at the other figures in the narrative. Tacitus opens the account with a reference to his bloodthirstiness (67.1: *plus praedae ac sanguinis Caecina hausit*), and states explicitly that he had no real excuse for the actions he took against the Helvetii: *belli avidus proximam quamque culpam, antequam paeniteret, ultum ibat* (67.2). Likewise, he put to death Iulius Alpinus, but the other survivors *veniae vel saevitiae Vitellii reliquit* (68.2), an alliterative hit at the emperor[32]. And finally, he pondered a sortie into Noricum, but

29 There is no need to assume that anything but rivalry triggered the outbreak (despite M. St. A. Woodside, *TAPhA* 68, 1937, 277ff.). Compare what Tacitus says at 2.27.2 and, of another outburst, at 2.66.1–2.

30 Chilver 127.

31 Tacitus is not malicious in stressing the rumour, since it was later to cause a mutiny within Valens' army (2.29.1). And the commander must have acquired some funds in Vienna, if he was remarkable thereafter for his open-handedness (66.2: *senex prodigus*).

32 The alliteration was remarked by E. Wolff, *P. Cornelii Taciti Historiarum Libri, Buch I und II* (Berlin 1914) 146, and by Valmaggi (above n. 9) 108.

reputans plus gloriae retenta Italia, et ubicumque certatum foret, Noricos in certa victoriae praemia cessuros (70.3), he went ahead with the original plan and crossed into Italy. So Caecina's motives are in no way praiseworthy but, unlike Valens, he is neither contemptible nor corruptible.

The other dramatis personae fare a lot worse. The behaviour of the Legio XXI Rapax in precipitating the war with the Helvetii is marked by a pun on their name, in the verb *rapuerant* (67.1)[33], and in attributing their action to *avaritia ac festinatio* Tacitus obscures the fact that they had excellent reason for their conduct: having taken little or no part in the elevation of Vitellius, they seized this, the first opportunity to display their zeal in his behalf[34]. The Helvetii themselves are subjected to three criticisms. First, we are told that their glory days are past (67.1: *Gallica gens olim armis virisque, mox memoria nominis clara*). Next comes the contrast between their bellicosity beforehand and their panic once the fighting breaks out (68.1: *ante discrimen feroces, in periculo pavidi*). And lastly, Tacitus brings out their inability to make a fight of it, *quamquam primo tumultu Claudium Severum ducem legerant* (68.1). Of this Claudius Severus Syme observed that "he is only a name, not a person or an agent", and opined that the historian said no more, not from inadvertence, but because he was familiar with the man's history[35]. Neither assumption is necessary. The name alone serves Tacitus' purpose, since it is a *Roman* name. Under the leadership of a Roman citizen, the Helvetii ought never to have ended up in a situation where *non arma noscere, non ordines sequi, non in unum consulere* (68.1). That they did so is proof that they handled themselves no better than had the Legio XXI Rapax. And this is why Tacitus gives us the details of their sufferings, but nowhere indicates that he considered the tribesmen pathetic, let alone innocent, victims of Caecina's attack. They bring the suffering upon themselves, along with the blame that Caecina, *antequam paeniteret, ultum ibat*[36].

Tacitus can still relish the Helvetians' final victory over Rome. Caecina leaves the decision on the tribe's fate *veniae vel saevitiae Vitellii.* Why the emperor hears their envoys in the presence of his troops we are not told, but it proves to be a mistake[37]. For the oratory of a local aristocrat, Claudius Cossus, wins over the men and they, *effusis lacrimis et meliora constantius postulando,* swing Vitellius from *saevitia* to *venia.* From this episode the emperor cannot

33 Cf. 2.43.1 and Norden 252 n. 1. That Tacitus enjoyed this kind of word play is shown by the pun on Caecina's *cognomen*, Alienus, at 2.22.3.

34 The legion's minimal role in the events of early January was brought out by the careful discussion of P. Fabia, *Klio* 4 (1904) 42–44.

35 Syme 991.

36 This matter is discussed in more detail at the conclusion to this section.

37 Since there is no justification for assuming that Vitellius "made a show of verbal severity" (Wellesley 41), it seems most likely that he expected the troops to mirror his own mood throughout.

emerge creditably, inasmuch as his demonstration of *misericordia* springs from the power that mere rankers can exercise over their commander-in-chief[38]. And this leaves, it may be, one more target for Tacitus' sarcasm, Petronius Urbicus, the procurator of Noricum, *qui concitis auxiliis et interruptis fluminum pontibus fidus Othoni putabatur* (70.2). Whatever the purposes for which he concentrated his auxiliaries, Petronius' breaking down the bridges over the various rivers (the Inn above all) meant that he could neither attack nor be attacked[39]. In the circumstances, it was by no means certain that he was *fidus Othoni*, but he could be thought so (*putabatur*) – and ignored[40].

That most scholars have found nothing more to say about the tone of these chapters is due, in good measure, to the belief that they are pedestrian compilations drawn from a pedestrian source, the Elder Pliny, this having been demonstrated for Valens' march (supposedly) by Münzer and argued for Caecina's march by Norden[41]. To take the latter first, it is essential to recognise that the entire case rests on two very dubious assumptions: that the balance between the two accounts (on this view, be it noted, chapters 61–66 and 67–69) points to Tacitus' using a single source, hardly a necessary conclusion in light of the arguments which have been advanced already; and that if the source of Valens' march is Pliny, he must be the writer behind the story of Caecina's expedition, although this requires us to derive a relatively impressionistic and imprecise narrative from an author "ferociously addicted to facts"[42]. In support, Norden

38 As has been emphasised by Etienne Aubrion, *Latomus* 48 (1989) 383ff., *misericordia* shown for the wrong reasons is not praiseworthy, and this applies especially to the unthinking *misericordia* of the *vulgus* (here the *milites*, since they are the subject of *effusis lacrimis*: cf. Wolff, op. cit. 147; Goelzer, n. 24, 135). As for Cossus' oratory, Tacitus may have taken a keen interest in provincial practitioners of rhetoric (Syme 988f.), but Roman senators were at once surprised and gratified, when such a person rivalled or outshone the talent to be found in Rome (cf. Pliny, *Epist.* 4.22.2).

39 Though it has never been doubted that *fluminum* includes the Inn, we cannot dismiss the plural and hold it to be the only river meant (so B. W. Henderson, *Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire*, London 1908, 68 n. 1). Nor is it likely to be a reference to "possibly the Danube above Lorch" (Chilver 134, repeated by Hellegouarc'h, above n. 4, 215 n. 22), i.e., above Enns-Lorch (Lauriacum) – unless the procurator thought Caecina planned to move eastwards from Aquae Helveticae. Tacitus probably had in mind various tributaries of the Inn or, if Petronius was concerned above all to hold his headquarters (at this time Virunum: G. Alföldy, *Noricum*, London 1974, 87–99), the rivers between the Inn and his own position: cf. A. Deman, *Hommages à Max Niedermann* (Brussels 1956) 100 n. 4.

40 There are no grounds for declaring the procurator an Othonian, still less for supposing that he was replaced by Sextilius Felix (Alföldy, op. cit. 242). Since this is one of only two cases where Tacitus employs passive forms of *putare* (the other is 3.2.3), the verb should be given its full force: Petronius did what the Helvetii ought to have done, by refusing to become involved in the struggle for power.

41 The argument that Pliny was the source for Caecina's march was developed by Norden 253ff.; cf. also Stähelin 188; Walser 260; Syme 987f. (with some modification); Wellesley 38f. That Münzer made the case for Valens' march is asserted by Norden 254.

42 The quotation comes from Syme 987.

could adduce only an echo which is not an echo[43], a phrase which allegedly repeats Pliny's own wording, since it turns up in another passage for which he may well be the source[44], and Pliny's predilection in the *Natural History* for mentioning spas like Aquae Helveticae, even though Aquae Helveticae is not a spa he names in that work[45]. It is prima facie likely enough that Tacitus would not have switched authorities between the two expeditions, and that the source for the goose was the source for the gander. However, the widespread belief that Tacitus drew on Pliny for his narrative of Valens' march also lacks foundation. Let us grant that Tacitus is not given to mundane details about itineraries, whereas the Elder Pliny, stationed at different times in his career on the Rhine, in Narbonensis and in Belgica, can well be imagined to have collected and recorded assiduously in the seventies every outrage which Gallic magnates had suffered at Vitellian hands[46]. Nonetheless, Münzer never argued that Tacitus took the material for Valens' march from Pliny; in this connexion he observed only that the source for the Batavians' conduct at 1.64.2 was not the work from which Tacitus derived the facts he records in Book 4[47]. And Norden, to back up a case Münzer supposedly had made already, offered but one unconvincing remark: that Tacitus is the sole writer besides Pliny to mention Lucus Augusti by name[48]. The entire construct, it turns out, is but a house of cards, with still less to recommend it than the view that Tacitus, here as elsewhere, is following the common source[49].

43 See above n. 8.

44 At 4.22.1 Tacitus again uses the phrase *in modum municipii exstructa*, and Norden 255 n. 3 declares this "anscheinend wörtlich dem Plinius entnommen". The logic seems questionable, the expression itself no more significant than the *municipii instar* at *Ann.* 1.20.1.

45 Norden 255.

46 Tacitus' distaste for pedestrian detail is remarked by E. Courbaud, *Les procédés d'art de Tacite dans les 'Histoires'* (Paris 1918) 98ff., and by Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford 1958) 1,170 and 193. Pliny's movements were traced by F. Münzer, "Die Quelle des Tacitus für die Germanenkriege", *BJ* 104 (1899) 67–111, especially 103–111. That Pliny wrote up such an account is "imagined" by Wellesley 38, and may underlie Syme's reference to "an official report" (op. cit. 171).

47 Münzer, op. cit. 91 and 96. I have no quarrel with the idea that Pliny could have been a source, though not the source, for Tacitus' account of Valens and Caecina, but Münzer neither made an explicit statement to this effect nor advanced a detailed argument.

48 Norden 255, citing Pliny, *NH* 3.37. For what else is known of the town see Cramer, *RE* 13 (1927) 1709.

49 Since Plutarch and Suetonius were writing the biographies of emperors, they had no reason to expatiate on lesser figures like Caecina and Valens, save when their actions impinged directly on the main subject. So their silence about these marches proves nothing (Plut. *Otho* 6.7 records the criticism of Valens which Tacitus reports at 2.30.1). Dio's account has been abridged to the point where picturesque details alone are preserved about our two commanders, and yet the one surviving anecdote relevant to the period (64.10.1) is comparable, in tendency at least, to Tacitus' narrative at 1.66.2–3. Hence, there is no real objection to the view that Tacitus was following, primarily, the common source: cf. R. H. Martin, *Tacitus* (London 1981) 197f.

For our present purposes, it must be emphasised, the important consideration is not to identify the source from which Tacitus drew his material, but to bring out the reasoning which has led scholars to suppose that Tacitus would have repeated from Pliny details he found uninteresting and unattractive. The answer, it seems clear, lies in two assumptions: first, that our chapters contain matter – Valens' itinerary, for example – that is uncharacteristic; and second, that Tacitus' writing up the two campaigns as he does results, not from deliberate choice, but from his finding the material intractable, a conclusion which ill becomes a writer deemed otherwise to possess "bold independence in the selection of material and the construction of a narrative"[50]. Talking of Valens' march, Ammann put it more positively: "Ein kunstvoller Aufbau dieses Berichts ist naturgemäss nicht zu erwarten. In der Form ist er dem Typus des stetig fortschreitenden Marschberichts angepasst. ... Ähnlich verhält es sich mit dem Marschbericht des Caecina"[51]. But Ammann's going on to argue that any elaboration of the subject would have produced, not art, but artificiality ("Die Ereignisse wirken an sich") is another way of saying that such narratives should be *nudi ..., recti et venusti, omni ornatu orationis tamquam veste detracta*[52]. And that raises the possibility that Tacitus set out to produce 'Marschberichte', not just to give the effect of *commentarii*, as he does – most obviously – with Valens' itinerary[53], but to play off the model for such accounts, Caesar's *Commentarii*, and by so doing to add a further dimension to the sardonic tone which permeates these chapters.

That there is one overt reference to Caesar every editor has recognised: when the Helvetii are termed a *Gallica gens olim armis virisque, mox memoria nominis clara* (67.1), the *memoria nominis* is designed to recall the *Bellum Gallicum*[54]. What has attracted less attention is the fact that these very words occur in the Lugdunenses' charges against the people of Vienna. To Valens' troops they address *publicae preces*: *irent ultores, exscinderent sedem Gallici belli* (65.2). The terminology is appropriate, inasmuch as the Lugdunenses are trying to picture their rivals as both un-Roman and anti-Roman (*cuncta illic externa et hostilia*). But whether the *Gallici belli* refers back to the revolt of Vindex, or forward to the prospect of another war in Gaul if the Viennenses

50 The quotation comes from Syme, op. cit. 190.

51 Ammann (above n. 4) 59.

52 Ammann, loc. cit. The second quotation, of course, is Cicero's assessment of Caesar's *Commentarii* (*Brut.* 262). That Caesar's narrative style was in fact more sophisticated than this judgement implies (see H. C. Gotoff, *ICS* 9, 1984, 1–18) is a help rather than a hindrance to my case.

53 Compare Priscian 6.13: *Traianus in I Dacicorum: inde Berzobim, deinde Aizi processimus* (Keil, *GL* 2,205,6). That Tacitus was capable of the kind of procedure I am positing is shown best, perhaps, by the Ciceronianisms of Curtius Montanus' speech (4.42): see R. H. Martin, *JRS* 57 (1967) 109–114.

54 Cf. Heraeus (above n. 9) 97; Goelzer (above n. 24) 131; contra Norden 256.

are left unpunished[55], what needs remark is that this is the one time in any of his works that Tacitus pairs *Gallicus* with *bellum*[56]. Given the way *rapuerant* plays on the title of Legio XXI (67.1), we are entitled to see this collocation as another, similar play, on the title by which Caesar's work was known[57]. And since this gives us a reference to Caesar's *Commentarii* within the narrative of each campaign, there is justification for believing that Tacitus has the earlier writer in mind throughout these chapters.

There is little support for this hypothesis in pure stylistics, but nor is this surprising in an author as self-willed as Tacitus. Not one of his phrases can be reckoned a debt to Caesar, without regard for Sallust, Livy or Curtius[58]. Similarly, among the ablative absolutes Tacitus deploys, two at the start of his account of Valens' march are so bold as to seem contrived to draw attention to the construction[59], but none matches the type especially beloved of Caesar[60]. And the brief sentences with which Tacitus sprinkles his narrative, though they too could be thought Caesarian in tendency[61], are designed usually to produce special effects demanded by his own literary aims. Thus, of Valens and his troops, *sic ad Alpes perventum* (66.3) gains enormously in bite from its brevity. And when Tacitus reports Caecina's receiving the news that the four cities in Transpadane Gaul had declared for Vitellius, the terseness of *id Caecinae per ipsos compertum* (70.2), all the more necessary after the lengthy disquisition on how the *ala Siliana* happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right attitude, is clearly intended to mirror the terseness of the message itself[62]. But as Norma Miller observed of the differences between Claudius' speech on the Gauls and the Tacitean rendering of it, style is not confined to words: "it is

55 Goelzer 128 takes the reference to be to Vindex' rebellion (cf. Chilver 127). This must be so for *irent ultores*, but it need not apply to *exscinderent sedem Gallici belli*, especially since Valens found it expedient to disarm the Viennenses (66.1); cf. also 2.66.3.

56 Elsewhere Tacitus uses *Gallicus* with *civitas* (*Ann.* 6.7.4), *cohortes* (*Ann.* 2.17.4), *foedus* (*Hist.* 4.77.3), *gens* (*Germ.* 28.3; *Hist.* 1.67.1), *incendium* (*Ann.* 15.43.1), *iuventus* (*Hist.* 5.26.3), *lingua* (*Germ.* 43.1), *mare* (*Agr.* 24.1), *ora* (*Hist.* 4.12.2), and *ripa* (*Ann.* 1.57.2; 2.6.4). The war with Vindex is normally *adversus Vindicem* (1.53.2) or *Vindicis* (1.70.1; 89.1); otherwise, *proximum bellum* (1.65.1).

57 As is observed by J. Rüpke, *Gymnasium* 99 (1992) 202, Priscian 7.75 is the first author to refer to the *Bellum Gallicum* as such (Keil, *GL* 2.352.6), earlier writers using expressions like *commentarii belli Gallici* (e.g., Suet. *Iul.* 56.1). This is not decisive, since the poets at least had used abbreviated titles even in Caesar's day for their own works (e.g., Varro Atacinus and his *Bellum Sequanicum*).

58 The expressions which come closest are *copiis iuvere* (66.1) and *manus ... intentant* (69), to be compared with *Bell. Afr.* 98.2 and *Bell. Hisp.* 22.4 respectively; but see Heubner 139 and 146.

59 See the commentaries on *raptis repente armis* and *eoque difficilioribus remediis*, both in 63.1.

60 See J.-P. Chausserie-Laprée, *L'expression narrative chez les historiens latins* (Paris 1969) 61ff. But note also Gotoff, op. cit. 9ff.

61 For this aspect of Caesar's style see E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa* 1 (Leipzig/Berlin ^{3}1915) 210.

62 This terseness has led editors to disagree about the identity of the *ipsos* (cf. Heubner 148).

an expression of a habit of thought"[63]. And at this level Caesarian characteristics are discernible.

On Valens' expedition we need not dwell. The catalogue of tribes through whose territory he marched would, in and of itself, recall Caesar's reports of his campaigns. Behind the catalogue, moreover, there is the same kind of linear thinking as underlies Caesar's narratives[64], even if Tacitus could scarcely have presented in any other way a march from Cologne to the Alps, made along the valleys of the Moselle, the Saône and the Rhône, before the column broke away eastwards toward Lucus Augusti and, eventually, the Mont Genèvre Pass. But it is no obstacle that Valens' actions during the course of his march are not the sort of thing Caesar would have done or, had he done them, would have reported, since Valens cannot but be a degenerate version of Caesar. And this Tacitus underlines, it may be, when he draws attention to Valens' slow progress in the final stages of his trek (66.3: *lento deinde agmine*); Caesar had ever prided himself on his *celeritas*[65].

It is when we look at the account of Caecina's march as an attempt to recall Caesarian narrative that we find an immediate explanation for two of its most puzzling features. First, there is the bald way in which Tacitus introduces the Helvetian aristocrats. This matches exactly the manner in which Caesar describes the first embassy he received from the Helvetii: *legatos ad eum mittunt nobilissimos civitatis, cuius legationis Nammeius et Verucloetius principem locum obtinebant* (*BG* 1.7.3). This represents the sum total of our information on Nammeius and Verucloetius; they are never mentioned again. Similarly, when Caesar has to travel through the Alps, whatever the time of year, he makes nothing of the crossing itself[66]. To this we can liken Tacitus' not putting more emphasis on Caecina's advance through the mountains. It is not that such details fail to interest him, or that he underrates the achievement. This much is guaranteed by his references to the difficulties faced by the Flavians in their passage of the Apennines (3.52.1; 56.3; 59.2). To have said more than he does would have taken away from the Caesarian tone he wishes to create[67].

63 Norma Miller, *RhM* 99 (1956) 306. This seems to me infinitely preferable to theories that Tacitus did not know the speech (F. Vittinghoff, *Hermes* 82, 1954, 304–315), or that the Lyons tablet is not an accurate rendering of the original (P. Sage, *REL* 58, 1980, 274–312).

64 M. Rambaud, "L'espace dans le récit césarien", in R. Chevallier (ed.), *Littérature gréco-romaine et géographie historique: Mélanges offerts à Roger Dion* ('Caesarodunum' IXbis, Paris 1974) 111–129, esp. 116ff.

65 On Caesar's *celeritas* see M. Rambaud, *L'art de la déformation historique dans les Commentaires de César* (Paris ²1966) 251–254.

66 Caesar, *BG* 1.7.1–2 and 10.3; *BC* 1.33.4 (in what survives of the corpus there is no reference to the crossing of the Alps by two legions in December 50 [Julian October 50] on which Petronius, *Sat.* 122.145ff. dwells). Caesar gives more detail only when a campaign is involved (*BG* 3.1–2).

67 Tacitus' silence may be attributed also, in part, to distaste for a theme by now hackneyed in the extreme: crossing the Alps had been exploited not just by historians (Livy 21.30–37) and epic poets (Sil. Ital. 3.477–556), but even by declaimers (Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.166–167).

In Caesar, of course, procedures like these spring from the most pervasive feature of his style, its straightforward, businesslike character. While he gives space to the rhetoric of others, for instance, the claims made for and by Ariovistus (*BG* 1.31–36), he tends to write of himself "kühl und sachlich"[68]. If we compare Tacitus' account of Caecina's expedition, the one manifestly purple passage is built around the rhetoric of another, Claudius Cossus' oratory at the expense of Vitellius (69)[69]. The description of the Helvetians' destruction, on the other hand, may be impressionistic, but it makes no overt attempt to enlist the reader's sympathy (68.1–2): *undique populatio et caedes: ipsi medio vagi, abiectis armis, magna pars saucii aut palantes, in montem Vocetium perfugere. ac statim immissa cohorte Thracum depulsi et consectantibus Germanis Raetisque per silvas atque in ipsis latebris trucidati; multa hominum milia caesa, multa sub corona venundata. cumque dirutis omnibus Aventicum gentis caput in⟨fe⟩sto agmine peteretur, missi qui dederent civitatem, et deditio accepta.* The suffering of the Helvetii is not minimised, but nor is it stressed any more than, say, the fate of the Roxolani after their defeat by Aurelius Fulvus (1.79.4)[70]. The number of casualties is exaggerated perhaps, but there is nothing to match the dramatic tableaux in the narrative of Valens' march, no women and children prostrated *per vias* (63.2), no references to *velamenta et infulas praeferentes* (66.1). The Helvetians surrender outright, and the surrender is accepted[71].

The important consideration, nonetheless, is the oddity of the cool, detached tone in which Tacitus reports the campaign. Here too one would expect sarcastic remarks at somebody's expense, one after another. Instead, the story of the campaign proper contrasts strongly with its surroundings. Tacitus after all has introduced Caecina with the observation that *plus praedae ac sanguinis Caecina hausit* (67.1), and he has made no bones about the man's determination to force a war on the Helvetii and to be satisfied with nothing less than their defeat in battle (67.2). Similarly, when he reintroduces Caecina in Book 2, it is with another contrast resting upon his savagery toward the Helvetii: *Caecina velut relicta post Alpes saevitia ac licentia, modesto agmine per Italiam incessit* (2.20.1). Yet there is nothing like this in the body of the narrative, the

68 Thus Norden, loc. cit. (above n. 61).

69 Cf. Walser 266f., pointing out how, in the account of Valens' march, Tacitus builds up the Lugdunenses' rhetoric against the people of Vienna in the same way (65.2–66.1).

70 For a very different assessment see Norden 252f.; Syme, *Tacitus* 1.170.

71 With the text as given above the one 'loaded' word is *infesto*, Andresen's correction for the Mediceus' *insto* (*In Taciti Historias studia critica et palaeographica* 1, Berlin 1899, 17). Though this has been accepted by subsequent editors, I agree with K. Wellesley, *Taciti Historiae* (Leipzig 1989) ad loc., that *iusto* – found in the inferior manuscripts – fits better. By the time the march on Aventicum began, the auxiliaries would have rejoined Caecina's main force and the result could aptly be termed a *iustum agmen*. Besides, *iusto agmine* creates an antithesis both with the guerrilla-style operations just concluded and with the civilian settlement which is the general's next target.

sardonic tone reappears only after the fighting is over, and its target this time is more Vitellius than Caecina (68.2: *ceteros veniae vel saevitiae Vitellii reliquit*).

Part of the explanation for this can be found, no doubt, in Tacitus' desire to score off the emperor, a desire fulfilled by letting Caecina's vices fade for the moment into the background. Another part, in all likelihood, lies in a wish to distinguish between the cruelty Caecina demonstrated in forcing the war on the tribesmen and the spirit in which he conducted and concluded the fighting. And yet another part, it may be, can be attributed to the fact that the Helvetii were culpable, albeit not deserving of such harsh treatment. But the only thesis capable of subsuming all these possibilities is the proposition that we have here a deliberate attempt to recall Caesar's narrative style, an attempt which – underlined by the contrast between the sardonic and the detached – makes of Caecina's every act a perversion of the original as notable as the parody constituted by Valens' march.

In other words, just as there is no need (let alone justification) to assume Tacitus the helpless captive of the Elder Pliny's pedantry, in order to account for the form taken by the 'Marschbericht' he fashions out of Valens' progress through Gaul, so the baldness with which the Helvetian aristocrats are introduced into the narrative of Caecina's activities, the dispassionate manner in which the campaign against the Helvetii is reported, and the understated description of Caecina's trek through the Alps (each and every one of these items emphasised by the suspension of Tacitus' normally mordant tone) are the indications that Caecina was no less a latter-day Caesar than was Valens. Both had dealings with tribes whom Caesar had battled, and both did untold harm to Rome's subjects where Caesar had fought only the enemies of the state. Nevertheless, the two men represented the opposite sides of this one coin. Valens was so thoroughly incompetent that his expedition could be recorded in an overtly sardonic manner. Caecina's motives were no more laudable, but his efficiency required different treatment: by emphasising that efficiency "kühl und sachlich", and by recalling subtly this aspect of Caesar's style, Tacitus could demonstrate that Caecina was Caesar carried to the opposite extreme, as deadly as Valens was inept, and in his way just as far removed from Roman ideals as Valens was in his.

III. *The Content*

If the arguments advanced so far are valid, it emerges that Tacitus has exercised much greater control over the literary presentation of his material than scholars have been willing to concede. It does not follow automatically that he had as firm a grip on the substance of his narrative, but it becomes significantly more difficult to swallow assertions that he does not know what he is doing. This, to be sure, will not affect the description of Valens' march, since there has been little dispute about its substance. The one aspect to merit

comment is the speed of his advance. Though Tacitus asserts that in the final stages of the expedition Valens proceeded *lento agmine* (66.3), an assertion substantiated to a degree by the criticism the general encountered when he arrived barely in time for the first battle of Bedriacum[72], there is one hint earlier in the narrative that progress was leisurely. As Tacitus puts it (64.3), *adversus Aeduos quaesita belli causa.* Had this quest proved successful, there must surely have been some delay. But we need to remember that Valens had been instructed to ensure Vitellian control of Gaul, by confirming the loyalty of the tribes already favourable to his cause, and by neutralising those that were hostile (61.1). This could be held to explain the column's continuing to push south beyond Vienna, before turning eastwards along the valley of the Drôme[73]. What is more, these precautions made sense. In this same period Otho made his attempt to win over the Lingones with the grant of Roman citizenship (78.1)[74]. On the other hand, when Otho a little later mounted his seaborne attack on Narbonensis, Valens refused to halt, merely detaching some of his auxiliary forces to deal with the threat as best they could (2.11–15). It seems, therefore, that any diminution in the speed of Valens' march was caused, not by negligence, but by a readiness to await the opening of the various passes through the Cottian Alps. If he arrived late for the battle of Bedriacum, that was due less to the tardiness of which he was accused by his own troops, than to the haste with which Caecina forced his way through the Great Saint Bernard. And if Tacitus refused to make more of Valens' slowness, it was because he appreciated the realities of the situation.

Be that as it may, detail after detail of Caecina's expedition has been called into question, either to prove Tacitus a bungler, or because he has already been adjudged one such. Witness, first, the reluctance to accept his account of how the war started. As Tacitus tells the story, the Helvetii were provoked by the *avaritia ac festinatio* of Legio XXI Rapax, in seizing pay the tribe was sending to the guard they maintained in a *castellum*, and *de caede Galbae ignari et Vitellii imperium abnuentes ... interceptis epistulis, quae nomine Germanici exercitus ad Pannonicas legiones ferebantur, centurionem et quosdam militum in custodia retinebant* (67.1–2)[75]. In a highly ingenious discussion of this affray Walser, noting the continued resistance of the Helvetii even when they can have been no longer *de caede Galbae ignari*, argued that the legion attacked the tribe because the latter had supported Vindex, that this was likewise the basis for the tribesmen's loyalty to Galba, and that Tacitus omitted all such detail

72 See 2.31.2 and Plut. *Otho* 6.7.

73 Chilver 128 remarks that at this time no military road ran eastwards from Vienna or Lugdunum, but rightly discounts the significance of this detail.

74 There is no reason to suppose, as does Woodside (above n. 29) 281, that this move betokens "the existence of some relationship or other" between Otho and the Lingones.

75 For a discussion of the routes the centurion and his escort could have taken see Deman (above n. 39) 98–101.

because he wanted to depict "ein roher Willkürakt. Diese Darstellung entspringt der taciteischen Verachtung des Vitellius und seiner Bürgerkriegsarmee"[76]. There are, unfortunately, three weaknesses in this interpretation. First, there is no evidence that the Helvetii had backed Vindex (a point Walser conceded), while Tacitus' unflattering portrait of their behaviour suggests that he would have mentioned their supporting the rebel, if such they had done, as yet another of their miscalculations[77]. Second, Tacitus has good reason to stress the legion's *avaritia ac festinatio*, to underline the fact that they were as eager for action as were the rest of Vitellius' troops; but though he does indeed represent their conduct as the merest hooliganism, what he is obscuring is that this was their first opportunity to display zeal in behalf of their new emperor[78]. Third, we may regard *de caede Galbae ignari et Vitellii imperium abnuentes* as two distinct actions or as two aspects of a single action, but in either eventuality we cannot build on the Helvetians' continuing to resist. Tacitus' saying that *Caecina belli avidus proximam quamque culpam, antequam paeniteret, ultum ibat* (67.2) must mean that Caecina pressed his attack, either before the Helvetii had time to learn of Galba's assassination, or – less probably – before he was willing to accept their offer to make amends. Whatever the case, the Helvetii had no choice in the matter. Resistance was forced upon them[79].

The same objection is fatal also to Paschoud's variation on the argument. Placing the initial clash between the tribesmen and the legion at the very start of January and Caecina's arrival in the area a full month later, he creates a sizeable time-lag between the original outburst and the final campaign. Then, attributing the Helvetians' first acts to straightforward loyalty to the reigning emperor, he too maintains that their resistance to Caecina cannot have arisen from ignorance of Galba's murder but was still voluntary, seizes upon the fact that Vespasian's father had been a banker *apud Helvetios* during Claudius' reign[80], and suggests that they fought out of advance knowledge about the son's ambitions and from "une fidélité flavienne"[81]. Now, it could be that the Helvetii made claims like these after the war was over, and that Vespasian chose not only to believe them but to raise the status of Aventicum as a reward[82]. But

76 Walser 267–270 (the quotation is taken from p. 269); cf. Stähelin 187; Heubner 143; Chilver 129. Contrast the caution of Syme 990f.

77 Cf. Syme 991.

78 See above notes 1, 25 and 34. Yet Walser 264 n. 12 has a point, when he observes that none of the legions had yet received the donative promised by Galba.

79 It does not signify that, at the start of Vitellius' uprising, *nec in Raeticis copiis mora, quo minus statim adiungerentur* (59.2). This was clearly prearranged (Chilver 121), and these troops will not have informed the Helvetii of their intentions.

80 See D. van Berchem, *Ktema* 3 (1978) 267–274.

81 F. Paschoud, *MusHelv* 39 (1982) 252–253 (the quotation comes from p. 253).

82 On Aventicum's status see R. Frei-Stolba, *ANRW* II 5 (Berlin 1976) 384–403; D. van Berchem, *Chiron* 11 (1981) 221–228.

beyond this we cannot go. Quite apart from the fact that the Helvetians' resistance to Caecina was not of their own choosing, the general almost certainly arrived in their territory a week or so earlier than Paschoud is willing to allow, and so before the news of Galba's assassination could reach them[83]. And, just as important, we are not entitled to use Fabius Valens' hearing about the murder around January 28 as grounds for believing that the Helvetii, unimportant tribesmen, learnt of it at that same time[84]. They may very well have had to wait until the information was passed to them by somebody in authority, somebody to whom the news must be sent, Caecina. In short, Tacitus' account should be accepted as it stands. In responding to the provocation offered by Legio XXI Rapax and in resisting Caecina, the Helvetii were intent on demonstrating their loyalty to Galba as the emperor they believed still to be in control in Rome[85], and an emperor to be placated precisely because they had not supported Vindex[86].

Nonetheless, Tacitus' account of Caecina's offensive against the Helvetii leaves something to be desired. The general's first move was undoubtedly the attack on Aquae Helveticae, the modern Baden (67.2). It is by no means as certain that he even bothered with the *castellum* the pay for whose soldiers Legio XXI had abstracted[87], since he is not likely to have felt any trepidation about leaving a tiny fort to hold out in his rear. And if it lay at Tenedo (Zurzach), Caecina would have had to march northwards, albeit for only a few miles, whereas the axis of his advance on Aventicum ran southwest, along the valley of the Aare[88]. It seems clear, however, that Caecina's victims were not killed or enslaved in a single engagement: *undique populatio et caedes* (68.1). So, wherever we set the Mons Vocetius, Caecina probably fought several skirmishes as he marched alongside the river, and he could have inflicted the casualties Tacitus reports (68.2: *multa hominum milia caesa, multa sub corona*

83 See above, note 6. Paschoud, op. cit. 252 contends that they heard the news on January 24, the earliest possible date.

84 Fabius Valens was *in civitate Leucorum,* i.e., Toul, when he learnt of the murder (64.1), and Köster sets him there around January 28 (cf. Chilver 125). Wellesley 38 gives the date as January 23, this being presumably a misprint, even though C. L. Murison, *Galba, Otho and Vitellius: Careers and Controversies* (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1993) 86–89 favours a similar estimate.

85 Cf. Stähelin 189; Walser 263; Wellesley 40.

86 Galba had not hesitated to reward the Gallic tribes favourable to his cause (1.51.3–4).

87 The idea that Caecina attacked the *castellum* depends on applying to it the Tacitean reference to *dilapsis vetustate moenibus* (68.1): thus Norden 252; Stähelin 192 n. 2; Walser 265; Deman, op. cit. (above n. 39) 92ff.; cf. Wellesley 40. But the comment would apply more fitly, and more plausibly, to Aventicum, the *gentis caput* (Heubner 144; Chilver 130); and Caecina could have ignored the *castellum* as readily as he disregarded Noricum (70.3).

88 Despite the other possibilities that have been advanced (cf. Heubner 141), siting the *castellum* at Tenedo seems reasonable. The arguments over the various places Tacitus mentions are so interdependent, however, that to question one (see n. 87) is to throw everything out of kilter (see n. 89).

venundata)[89]. Our main concern, however, must be the historian's vagueness about all this, and two reasons may be offered: first, a disinclination to give another itinerary and so to reduce the contrast between Vitellius' generals; and second, a reluctance to mention unfamiliar towns and rivers such as would confuse or annoy his readers[90]. When the settlements near the Aare (Salodurum, for example, or Petinesca) were yet more obscure than the Gallic towns on which Valens had imposed[91], it was better by far to bandy about the names of the auxiliary detachments which Caecina commanded. To his audience mention of Raetians, Germans and Thracians would appear just as remote, and not nearly as tedious, even as it accentuated the general's skill in coordinating these disparate units.

With that we can turn to Caecina's interest in Noricum (70.2–3): *ipse paulum cunctatus est, num Raeticis iugis in Noricum flecteret adversus Petronium Urbi⟨cum⟩ procuratorem qui, concitis auxiliis et interruptis fluminum pontibus fidus Othoni putabatur. sed metu, ne amitteret praemissas iam cohortes alasque, simul reputans plus gloriae retenta Italia, et ubicumque certatum foret, Noricos in certa victoriae praemia cessuros, Poenino itinere subsignanum militem et grave legionum agmen hibernis adhuc Alpibus transduxit.* Years ago Henderson suggested that Caecina's dallying with Noricum stemmed from a strategical plan to march through the province, to turn south into Transpadane Gaul by the Brenner Pass (1,362 m), to drive a wedge between Otho's forces in Italy and any support he could draw from the Balkans, and to catch the Othonians in Italy between his own army and that of Fabius Valens, when the latter emerged from the Alps[92]. Many scholars have dismissed this hypothesis out of hand, on the ground that nothing in Tacitus substantiates it[93]. This is true enough: as the historian puts it, Caecina's plan was entertained briefly (*paulum*) and none too seriously (hence the *num* after *cunctatus est*), it required him to diverge from his appointed path (*flecteret*), and it risked losing him not only that part of Italy his auxiliary forces had secured but also those forces (*sed metu ... retenta Italia*)[94]. Against such argumentation, however,

89 Since an attack on one *castellum* cannot have produced the casualties Tacitus specifies, it is regularly supposed that he has conflated several encounters (Stähelin 194f.; Walser 264f.; Syme 987; Wellesley 40; Murison, above n. 84, 90–91). Heubner 144f. objects that there is nothing in the text to support this interpretation, but it is surely implied by *non in unum consulere* (68.1). And if this is correct, there is no knowing where the Mons Vocetius was situated, although it was presumably in the Aare valley.

90 Compare Polybius 3.36.1; Strabo 3.3.7 (155 C); see also Syme 987; N. Horsfall, *G & R* 32 (1985) 197ff.

91 Even the egregious Pliny fails to mention these sites: see Linckenheld, *RE* 19 (1938) 1152; Keune, *RE* 1A (1920) 1993f.

92 Henderson (above n. 39) 66ff.; see also Wolff (above n. 32) 148; Deman (above n. 39) 98; P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *The Year of the Four Emperors* (London 1975) 84.

93 Cf. E. G. Hardy, *JPh* 31 (1910) 125f.; Chilver 133.

94 The *paulum* was emphasised by Goelzer (above n. 24) 136, the *retenta Italia* by Hardy, op. cit.

Henderson fortified himself with the conclusion that Tacitus merely displayed his "strategical blindness" by presenting the situation in this way[95].

Since we cannot make a plausible case for Noricum's possessing any real importance at this stage[96], we must dispose of Henderson's theory once for all by considering the two difficulties he himself descried in the plan. The one on which he chose to dwell was geographical, that Caecina would have had to march into Noricum "by way of the Arlberg Pass ... nearly 6000 feet in height"[97]. It has been pointed out since that there was no military road through the pass in 69[98], but this need not signify. Since Petronius Urbicus broke down the bridges over the rivers along his western frontier, he obviously thought the incursion possible, and on a matter like this he will not have been wrong[99]. There remains the difficulty over which Henderson glided all too quickly. For the plan to work, Caecina had to secure the prompt, full cooperation of Fabius Valens, if he was not himself to be the one caught between converging forces. "Even if Caecina sent him an urgent message to hurry", as Henderson put it, "he would not improbably disregard it entirely"[100]. This is a decisive objection. Although Tacitus has not yet brought out the bitter rivalry between the two men[101], he has indicated that each was operating under a cloud, Caecina for embezzlement (1.53.1–2), and Valens for his role in the death of Fonteius Capito (1.7.1–2 and 52.3), and that each was determined to compensate for past mishaps, Valens by enriching himself (66.2–3) and Caecina by winning fresh glory (70.3; cf. 2.20.2)[102]. So it is every bit as improbable that Caecina would have conceived, let alone implemented, a plan requiring assistance from Valens as it is that Valens, if asked, would have furnished that aid.

This does not end the matter, however. To dispose of Henderson's theory, as Momigliano recognised, is not to explain Caecina's interest in Noricum[103]. Momigliano's solution, unfortunately, was likewise to charge Tacitus or his source with the blindness of an amateur. On his view, the whole idea of an incursion into Noricum arose from the writer's inability to understand why

126. For Tacitus' use of *flectere* compare 2.70.1, and for the employment of *num*, rather than *an*, after *cunctatus est* see 2.83.2 with Wolff, op. cit. 268.

95 Henderson, op. cit. 69.

96 See Chilver 133.

97 Henderson, op. cit. 67 (cf. 69).

98 W. Cartellieri, *Die römischen Alpenstrassen über den Brenner, Reschen-Scheideck und Plöckenpass mit ihren Nebenlinien* (*Philologus*, Suppl. 18:1, Leipzig 1926) 81 and 140; Stähelin 367 n. 7; cf. Chilver 133.

99 Though they do not make this particular argument, see Cartellieri, op. cit. 15; Deman, op. cit. 97–98.

100 Henderson, op. cit. 67.

101 The first such reference occurs at 2.24.1. However, Tacitus has already drawn attention to Valens' undermining of another potential rival, Manlius Valens (64.4).

102 Chilver 133 misses the point when he dismisses the comment on glory as "a characteristically Tacitean addition to his source".

103 A. Momigliano, *SIFC* 9 (1931/32) 130f.; cf. Chilver 133f.

Caecina would have sent his auxiliary forces to seize Transpadane Gaul, while he himself remained north of the Alps with his legionary troops; so, assuming that Caecina must have had two objectives in view, the writer took the delay caused by Caecina's preparations to get his legionaries through the mountains as a pause during which he contemplated an attack on Noricum. This theory is as adventurous as Henderson's, inasmuch as it requires a confusion between preparations for crossing the Alps and contemplation of an invasion of Noricum, which would be plausible only if Tacitus had not referred already to the preparations (70.1: *simul transitum Alpium parans*). It is just as suspect, in attributing blindness to Tacitus without adequate cause. But it has the merit of highlighting the geographical difficulties involved. In his advance from Aquae Helveticae to Aventicum, Caecina had been travelling from north-east to south-west. Even to enter the western fringes of Noricum, he would have had to face about, to march due east across the width of Raetia and, having achieved whatever he had in mind, to march all the way back again, in the manner of the brave old Duke of York[104]. This would have required a trek of some 300 miles, reason enough to give the plan only brief consideration (*paulum*). But what of his grounds for conceiving the idea in the first place? The answer lies, surely, in Tacitus' saying that Caecina saw more glory (*plus gloriae*) in hanging onto northern Italy. The attack on Noricum, in other words, was envisaged as a means of winning *some* glory for the commander and, no doubt, some plunder for his troops, as a quick, cheap victory like that gained already over the Helvetii. And it was abandoned promptly, in the face of Petronius Urbicus' countermeasures, the physical difficulties involved, and the prospect of greater glory in Italy.

This brings us to Caecina's final achievement in these chapters, his crossing into Italy, by way of the Great Saint Bernard (2472 m), *hibernis adhuc Alpibus.* Tacitus' description, so Chilver averred, represents "one of the greatest understatements in military history"[105]. This is itself hyperbole, taking no account of Tacitus' carefully chosen vocabulary. But even if we discount the possibility that he is imitating Caesar as well, we may legitimately wonder whether the crossing, made at the latest in the middle of March, was quite as arduous as it is imagined to have been. It is not really helpful to adduce Napoleon's leading an army through this pass in May 1800[106]. For one thing, Bonaparte's force was about twice as large, some 50,000 men, and was encumbered with "a full complement of artillery, caissons and forges"[107]. For another,

104 According to the jingle, "Oh, the brave old Duke of York,/ he had ten thousand men;/ he marched them up to the top of the hill,/ and he marched them down again". See I. and P. Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford 1951) 442.

105 Chilver 134 (cf. 123); also Stähelin 196 and n. 7; Walser 261.

106 Thus Stähelin 196; F. Paschoud, *Argos* 3 (1979) 15; G. Walser, *Summus Poeninus: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Grossen St. Bernhard-Passes in römischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden 1984) 43f.

107 D. G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York 1966) 270ff., the quotation coming

modern awareness of this feat probably owes more to the romantic exaggerations of David than – save only in the case of Walser – to a detailed knowledge of the actual conditions[108]. Without the painter to prompt us, we might be readier to mention the crossing of the Mount Cenis pass (2083 m) made by the Hohenstaufen Henry IV with his family and a few personal attendants in January 1077, this during one of the most severe winters on record[109], or – more striking still, in that the march was made from south to north – Majorian's leading an army, by whatever pass, into Gaul in the winter of 458/459[110]. Most important of all, it seems to have gone unnoticed that this is the *third* crossing of the mountains recorded by Tacitus in this one chapter[111]. The first trip is made by the messengers who report the winning over of the four Transpadane towns (70.2). Then comes the transit by the *praemissis Gallorum Lusitanorumque et Britannorum cohortibus et Germanorum vexillis cum ala Petriana* (70.2). And finally Caecina leads across the legionaries[112]. Granted that it would be easier for a few messengers to make the journey than it would be for auxiliaries, and easier for auxiliaries than for legionaries, Tacitus' account points to the conclusion that Caecina's making his way through the Alps, even if it was facilitated by unusually clement weather, was less noteworthy in itself than it was for the surprise it caused, to Fabius Valens as much as to Otho and his supporters.

Where content is concerned, therefore, Tacitus' account proves to be not nearly as inadequate as has sometimes been claimed. The literary constraints under which he chooses to work obviously affect the narrative, the needs of balance and tone determining how much he can say and how he is to say it. For all that, the emphases fall where they ought in any case to fall. So both the plan to attack Noricum and the crossing of the Alps are recorded briefly, whereas considerable space is devoted to the activities of the *ala Siliana*, justifiably, when they won over the four Transpadane towns and gave Caecina reason and

from page 276; cf. H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde* 1 (Berlin 1883) 155 n. 1; Henderson, op. cit. 67 n. 1; Walser, op. cit. 44. Caecina had a baggage train, to be sure (hence *grave legionum agmen*), but nothing to compare with Napoleon's impedimenta; and he commanded probably less than 30,000 men (cf. 61.2), possibly a lot less (Murison, above n. 84, 85–86).

108 A. Schnapper, *David* (New York 1982) 206–208; cf. A. Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism 1800–1815* (Chicago/London 1990) 39ff. There are excellent discussions of the physical situation by Walser, in his *Itinera Romana*, 1: *Die römischen Strassen in der Schweiz* (Berne 1967) 44, and in *Summus Poeninus* (n. 106) 23–25 and 59–63.

109 Z. N. Brooke, *The Cambridge Mediaeval History* 5 (1948) 69; cf. Nissen, op. cit. 1.154 n. 3.

110 Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.510–552; cf. E. Barker, *The Cambridge Mediaeval History* 1 (1924) 423; O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* 6 (Stuttgart 1920) 344f. For the greater difficulty of such a march see Nissen, op. cit. 1.142f. Mediaeval crossings of the Great Saint Bernard itself are detailed by Walser, *Summus Poeninus* 53–54.

111 This, let it be noted, is in addition to the crossing made by the messenger from Pompeius Propinquus to Galba (1.12.1); cf. Paschoud, op. cit. 14.

112 As is observed by Walser, *Summus Poeninus* 44,74–76,100 and 105, there are two military dedications which should be attributed probably to these crossings.

incentive to press on. As for the Helvetii, the narrative of the campaign against them is indeed cursory, but if this was merely a string of inglorious skirmishes along the Aare valley, more detail and more precision would have added little, in the eyes of a Roman audience anyway. Against this, moreover, we must set the care with which Tacitus records all else. He explains how Legio XXI Rapax began the trouble, and how Caecina seized his opportunity to win a quick, cheap victory. He describes the suffering of the Helvetii, but this he can scarcely overstress when – as he recognises – they were both ill-advised to respond to the original provocation and ill-equipped to fight a Roman army. And yet he still gives them the final word, and the ultimate victory, when the rhetoric of Claudius Cossus prevails over the emperor and his troops.

Mitteilungen

Bei der Redaktion eingegangene Rezensionsexemplare

Die Redaktion kann sich nicht verpflichten, alle eingehenden Schriften besprechen zu lassen

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