

Nor are there any examples of an accusative of price known to me from Pompeii,¹⁰ whereas there are several examples of the ablative of exact price.¹¹ I have found no good example of the genitive of price; however, one can point to *CIL* 4 1173 (add. p. 204 = *CE* 946): “bis [t]anti peria(t), quisquis amare vota(t).” Väänänen explained this as reflecting a “confusion vulgaire de *tanti* génétif de prix et *tanto* ablatif de différence (due peut-être au fait que le parler populaire employait l’accusatif pour l’un comme pour l’autre).”¹² However, this is unlikely as the same line repeated elsewhere (*CIL* 4 4091 = *CE* 945): “bis tanto periat quisquis amare vetat” shows the ablative of difference in common use. Further, Väänänen can supply no examples of either accusative of price nor accusative used for ablative of difference. Far then from showing that the genitive of price is dead in popular speech the phrase *bis tanti* shows quite the opposite, that the genitive of price seems to be flourishing and even encroaching on other idioms.¹³

Such is the power of the dead hand of the commentary. A suggestion first put forward in 1665 has been copied from book to book. It has caused subsequent generations to misread the sentence before them. It has caused them to ignore the facts that no other example of the accusative of price could be found for three hundred years and that the ablative and genitive of price were in use by other vulgar characters in the *Satyricon*. The persistent error over this little phrase serves as a reminder to read the text before the commentary.

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10. Nor are any listed in the indices to *CIL* 4, nor in V. Väänänen, *Le Latin vulgaire des inscriptions pompéiennes* (Berlin, 1966³), pp. 115–17. The abbreviations of numerals and monies naturally limits the possible evidence.

11. E.g., *CIL* 4 2193 *bene fuitit denario*; 1679 *assibus hic bibitur*; cf. 5372 *sum tua a ae(ris) a II*, with *a* plus abl.; and in the affairs of M. Jucundus, e.g., *CIL* 4, Suppl. 1, *Tabulae Ceratae* CLV.6 *sesteris*. Again the formulae used in the tablets limits the possible evidence.

12. *Latin vulgaire*, p. 118.

13. That is, the speaker knows that one says *tanti* for “as much” in the phrase *non facit tanti* “it’s not worth as much” and uses it in place of *bis tanto* to mean “twice as much.” Väänänen’s explanation requires that a speaker first mistake an ablative of difference for an accusative of price and then make a hyperurbanism by writing a genitive of price.

TACITUS *HISTORIES* 2.83–84: CONTENT AND POSITIONING

Into the second half of *Histories* 2 Tacitus incorporates a string of chapters recounting the Flavian rebellion against Vitellius. These fall into two groups: eleven cover Vespasian’s uprising proper (74–84), two more the defection of the Balkan legions at the instigation of Antonius Primus and Cornelius Fuscus (85–86). The chapters to be discussed here, rounding out the narrative of Vespasian’s activities, are neither of them as straightforward as they appear, and in neither is there an obvious answer to the question why Tacitus reports what he does in the manner and in the sequence he does. Hence, commentators have sometimes missed the interplay between his various statements, and one scholar even argues that the chapters should be reversed, having been misplaced in the manuscripts. As a careful scrutiny

will demonstrate, these difficulties have been caused by a failure to appreciate where exactly Tacitus wants to set the emphasis. And once this is recognized, we should be able to discern, not only why each chapter is laid out as it is, but also why the ordering in the manuscripts can and should be preserved.

I. THE CONTENT OF CHAPTER 83

Let us begin by quoting the text as modern editors generally print it:¹

[1] Mucianus cum expedita manu, socium magis imperii quam ministrum agens, non lento itinere, ne cunctari videretur, neque tamen properans, gliscere famam ipso spatio sinebat, gnarus modicas vires sibi et maiora credi de absentibus; sed legio sexta et tredecim vexillariorum milia ingenti agmine sequebantur. [2] classem e Ponto Byzantium adigi iusserat, ambiguus consilii, num omissa Moesia Dyrrachium pedite atque equite, simul longis navibus versum in Italiam mare clauderet, tuta pone tergum Achaia Asiaque, quas inermes exponi Vitellio, ni praesidiis firmarentur; atque ipsum Vitellium in incerto fore, quam partem Italiae protegeret, si sibi Brundisium Tarentumque et Calabriae Lucaniaeque litora infestis classibus peterentur.

Within §1, for all its nuances, there is only one major problem. At some point in the first two weeks of August,² Mucianus sets out, not from Beirut (where the Flavian forces had gathered: 81.3), but from Antioch (his own capital: 78.4).³ He travels *cum expedita manu*, an advance guard unencumbered by baggage, such as would enable him to move at high speed.⁴ But this is not the pace he adopts, and that is one reason for *socium magis imperii quam ministrum agens*. Whether or not the phrase hints at the duplicity Mucianus will exhibit throughout chapters 83–84,⁵ it indicates at the least that he has the right to choose the rate of his own advance as well as the route itself and, perhaps, comments on the manner in which he conducts himself along the way.⁶ So, then, he does not move too slowly: dilly-dallying would not arouse Vespasian's suspicions about his commitment to the cause after the rousing speech of chapters 76–77, but it might affect adversely the morale of Mucianus' own troops, especially if they remained more conscious of their leaders' earlier differences than of their recent agreement. But nor does he move too fast, because he wants the news of his advance to grow by exaggeration, and he knows that whereas there are but modest forces at his immediate disposal, their numbers will be magnified by rumor.

1. I follow the text of H. Heubner, *Taciti Historiae* (Stuttgart, 1978), and all references not further identified hereafter are to the *Historiae*, those without an indication of book being to *Historiae* 2. On the one textual problem in this particular passage see below, n. 17.

2. For the date see K. Wellesley, *The Long Year: A.D. 69* (Bristol, 1989), p. 127; J. Nicols, *Vespasian and the Partes Flavianae* (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 73–74.

3. From Tacitus we might surmise that Mucianus set out from Beirut, but Joseph. *BJ* 4.630 has Vespasian himself travel from the meeting in Beirut to Antioch, and this he will not have done except in the company of Mucianus.

4. Compare 3.61.2; *Ann.* 1.60.3, 2.7.1.

5. This use of *agere*, as the commentators observe, is drawn from the stage. The role played, however, may be "simulata o reale" (L. Valmaggia, *P. Cornelio Tacito: Il libro secondo delle Storie* [Turin, 1897], p. 157), and in this instance the phraseology is determined as much by Mucianus' own words at 77.1 as by the description of him as *arte quadam ostentator* at 80.2.

6. An associate of the emperor, obviously, could act in a more high-handed manner than a subordinate, and such is Mucianus' demeanor in chap. 84.

This brings us to the problem: who was to be impressed or intimidated by this Machiavellian procedure? At this early stage in the march it cannot have been the Vitellians. As Tacitus will remark (98.2), news came quickly from Italy to the East at this time of year, but the prevailing winds were against swift voyages in the opposite direction. Nor are his targets likely to have been the troops stationed along the land route to Italy. For one thing, the Flavians already suspected, if they did not know, that the Balkan legions would join them.⁷ For another, a letter should have been enough to reassure these dissidents, and a letter had been sent off to them (82.3). This leaves only the inhabitants of Asia Minor.⁸ These peoples, to be sure, had taken the oath to Vespasian (81.2), but that scarcely guaranteed their cooperation, and their cooperation was essential. They were about to be visited by the Legio VI Ferrata and 13,000 men drawn from the other five legions in Syria and Judaea,⁹ a visitation for which Mucianus could prepare by going ahead *cum expedita manu*. And—a prime theme of chapter 84—they were about to be soaked for monetary contributions to the Flavian war-effort, a soaking to which they would submit more peaceably when they recognized that the immediate agents of their suffering, Mucianus and his small escort, were backed up by much larger forces (*sed legio sexta . . . sequebantur*).

With §2 the situation becomes more complicated. The first six words (*classēm . . . iusserat*) we may take as an oblique way of reporting that Mucianus' destination in this part of his march was Byzantium. What we are not entitled to conclude is that he was still uncertain about his strategy during this march, let alone upon reaching Byzantium.¹⁰ Tacitus' attitude toward the tenses may be more relaxed than, say, that of Cicero, but *prima facie* the words *ambiguus consilii* and all that depends on them should refer to the time at which Mucianus ordered the Pontic fleet (some forty ships) to gather at Byzantium, and the *iusserat* sets that time prior to the start of the march.¹¹ Not only is this consonant with Mucianus' having urged so strongly that he be allowed to lead the expeditionary force to Italy (77.2), but it could account too for additional shipping's being under construction as he made his way north (84.1). And this confirms what we ought in any case to assume, that the plan had been formulated some months earlier, to be put into operation before the close of 69. Otherwise, there was no need for the Pontic fleet to concentrate—or even to be ordered to concentrate—at Byzantium by the start of August.

7. Two of the three legions in Moesia, VII Claudia and VIII Augusta, had demonstrated their favor for Otho in April (85.1); the third, III Gallica, had been transferred to Moesia—after a long sojourn in Syria—just before Nero's death (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3; cf. 1.79.1), and Vespasian counts it among his forces at 74.1. There are difficulties with this, admittedly (G. E. F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus' "Histories" I and II* [Oxford, 1979], pp. 62 and 233), but even if these legions declared for Vespasian only after his proclamation in Egypt on July 1 (2.79), Mucianus ought to have received the news in August.

8. As Wellesley, *Long Year*, p. 127, puts it: "Mucianus knew enough about orientals [*sic*] to suppose that as the dust rose over the open plains of the Anatolian plateau, rumour might acceptably magnify his strength."

9. Despite the protests of Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, pp. 244–45, the *vexillarii* must have been legionaries for the most part: see R. Syme, *Roman Papers*, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1984), pp. 1001–2.

10. These are the views respectively of P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *The Year of the Four Emperors* (New York, 1975), p. 133, and B. W. Henderson, *Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire* (London, 1908), p. 146.

11. There are no grounds for supposing, nor has any editor suggested, that Tacitus is substituting a pluperfect for a perfect form, even though the practice is found elsewhere in his works: see A. Draeger, *Ueber Syntax und Stil des Tacitus*³ (Leipzig, 1882), p. 11.

It should be emphasized that Mucianus was not especially committed to his scheme. As Wolff remarked, the use of *num* after *ambiguus consilii* shows that this was not an idea about which he was genuinely uncertain; had he been, Tacitus would have written *an*.¹² This will not warrant our dismissing the plan as fanciful.¹³ Nor, if we are to work out just how Mucianus imagined that he would be able, with forty warships, to cross from Dyrrachium to southern Italy in the face of determined opposition from the much larger Misene and Ravennate fleets,¹⁴ can we beg the question, by assuming either that the Italian fleets' devotion to Otho would have prevented their taking Vitellius' part against Vespasian, or that they were already meditating a change of allegiance.¹⁵ As Henderson observed, Mucianus could no more rely on such developments than did Antonius Primus during the council of war at Poetovio (3.2.2).¹⁶ What Mucianus believed Tacitus reports in his final sentence: "atque ipsum Vitellium in incerto fore, quam partem Italiae protegeret, si sibi Brundisium Tarentumque et Calabriae Lucaniaeque litora infestis classibus peterentur."¹⁷ On the Flavian's appreciation of the situation, that is, Vitellius would not use his fleets to blockade Dyrrachium, but would distribute them in penny-packets around the southern coast of Italy, a tactic nullifying his superior numbers. What led Mucianus to this conclusion Tacitus omits to say, but the likeliest explanation involves neither imperial doubts about the loyalty of the fleets, nor even fears about unpredictable weather in the Adriatic, although this would obviously present a more serious threat to warships maintaining a blockade than to a fleet attempting a dash across its waters.¹⁸ His reasoning appears rather to have been that executing the plan before the close of the sailing season for 69

12. E. Wolff, *P. Cornelii Taciti Historiarum Libri, Buch I und II*² (Berlin, 1914), p. 268; cf. Draeger, *Ueber Syntax und Stil*, pp. 64–65, appositely citing *Ann.* 3.52.3; R. Kühner and C. Stegmann, *Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (Hanover, 1912), p. 513.

13. Thus Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, p. 245; cf. R. Syme, *Tacitus*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1958), p. 167.

14. The size of the Pontic fleet is given by Joseph. *BJ* 2.367. How much larger the Italian fleets were remains unknown, but even on a conservative estimate they ought to have numbered eighty ships: cf. C. G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy*² (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 16–17; D. Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn, 1966), p. 61.

15. Thus Starr, *Roman Navy*, pp. 183–84; Kienast, *Untersuchungen*, p. 65; Wellesley, *Long Year*, p. 125.

16. Henderson, *Civil War*, p. 149. Since Tacitus himself stresses the inertia of Vitellius and his lieutenants (see chaps. 73 and 99), his crediting them with activity here ("tuta pone tergum . . . ni praesidiis firmarentur") and in Antonius' speech at Poetovio (3.2.1–2) demonstrates at the least his concern that the Flavian generals voice arguments appropriate to their situations. Hence I see no reason to doubt the historicity of the thinking he attributes to Mucianus. And though the two options adumbrated here are stylistically—and to that extent suspiciously—balanced, in that each side is allowed one vigorous offensive, the layout tends to substantiate his accuracy: the best way of defending Achaëa and Asia would be to move immediately, in 69, in order to preempt a Vitellian incursion into these provinces.

17. Since the *sibi* in the last clause must refer, not to Mucianus, but to Vitellius (Valmaggi, *Tacito: Libro secondo*, p. 159), nineteenth-century commentators inclined to athetize the word (suggested by Weissenborn) or to read *si simul* (proposed by Rhenanus). Modern editions print the text as it stands.

18. Although the Adriatic was notorious for its storms, there was (and still is) much seasonal variation. As it is put by the *Sailing Directions (Planning Guide) for the Mediterranean*⁵, Defense Mapping Agency Combat Support Center, Publication 130 (Washington, D.C., 1991), p. 70: "Summer (June–September) is the best season to sail the Adriatic Sea; usually the weather is warm and dry while winds are light. Winter (November–February) is the worst season as routes are plagued by cold, bora winds and unsettled weather from passing storms." Since Mucianus—as we shall see—had in mind a summer crossing, the weather alone would not have caused his opponents much greater difficulties. Nor can we adduce Bibulus' failure to prevent the Caesarians' crossing from Brundisium to Greece (*Caes. BCiv.* 3.5–28): the voyages were made in November by the Julian calendar, and the northerly winds favored the blockade runners.

would force the Vitellians onto the defensive, because they would not yet have been able to secure their hold on southern Italy.

In short, Mucianus' plan was feasible, risky but feasible, as long as all parties played their assigned roles. What destroyed any prospects of its being carried into effect, however, was Mucianus' setting out on his march only in early August. Though the Pontic fleet might even then have been able to make enough headway against the prevailing winds to take up position off Dyrrachium, the land forces could not march down the Via Egnatia and reach the town until the start of November, and Mucianus—understandably—had no wish to attempt a crossing so late in the year.¹⁹ Had the Flavians begun their campaign just one month earlier, the situation might have been very different. Then there would have been a real possibility that Mucianus, the army, and the fleet could all have reached Dyrrachium and, with luck, have crossed to Italy before the sailing season ended.²⁰ It seems reasonable to conclude that Vespasian, himself the most cautious of generals,²¹ never cared for a scheme entailing such haste and risk, and that he made his views known during the conference in Beirut (where the details must surely have been thrashed out). But he could leave the final, last-minute decision to Mucianus, in this too allowing the other to act as *socium magis imperii quam ministrum*, because he knew that the whole idea was being put out of court by the passage of time.²²

This interpretation both raises and answers the main question we must face, Tacitus' reasons for mentioning the plan. His not bringing it up in the account of the meeting in Beirut is hardly surprising: there, he is concerned with decisions actually made, not with any alternative views that may have been mooted. Its appearance here can be justified by assuming that Mucianus abandoned it once for all only as he left Antioch. Against this, however, we must set not only the plan's coming to nothing but also Tacitus' care to indicate that the commander was not so very enamored of it anyway (*ambiguus consilii num*). The solution to this conundrum lies in the way Tacitus tells his story. Witness, first, the stress placed on Mucianus' solicitude, less for Achaea and Asia, than that they not be ravaged by the Vitellians. These sentiments contrast strongly with his behavior in chapter 84: there, he shows no mercy about exacting funds for the new war from peoples who must be the inhabitants of the *inermes provinciae* between Syria and Byzantium,²³ ignoring law and equity, and selecting his victims according to their wealth. Again,

19. Mucianus' fear of a sea voyage in winter is reported by Joseph. *BJ* 4.632. Where the land forces are concerned, the shortest route from Antioch to Byzantium amounted to 765 miles (Wellesley, *Long Year*, p. 127); had Mucianus' troops advanced at 19 miles a day, this trek would have occupied forty days (Wellesley allows them fifty days, at 15 miles per day, to accommodate the more leisurely pace Mucianus actually adopted). As for the Via Egnatia, the distance between Dyrrachium and Byzantium amounted to 907 Roman miles (F. W. Walbank, "Via illa nostra militaris. Some thoughts on the Via Egnatia," in *Althistorische Studien Hermann Bengtson dargebracht*, ed. H. Heinen [Wiesbaden, 1983], pp. 131–47, at p. 139). This the troops could have traversed in 46 days at 20 Roman miles a day.

20. K. Wellesley, *Cornelius Tacitus, The Histories, Book III* (Sydney, 1972), p. 214, deduces from 3.25.1 that Mucianus could plausibly have been expected to reach Bedriacum around October 25, this after setting out from Antioch "early in August" (above, n. 2) and traveling a longer route than the Via Egnatia. It ought to follow that, had he left his capital one month earlier and taken the Via Egnatia, he would have been able to reach Dyrrachium by September 25.

21. See the convenient summary of his campaigns in Judaea by Nicols, *Vespasian*, pp. 48–52, 54–57, and 62–64.

22. This would provide one (suitably canny) reason for his accompanying Mucianus from Beirut to Antioch (above, n. 3).

23. See below, part III.

this concern for Achaea and Asia is counterbalanced by a readiness to wage war anywhere and everywhere in southern Italy (*si sibi . . . peterentur*), a strange and significant reversal of normal priorities. The historian's focus, in other words, is not so much the plan as the state of mind it evidences. Knowing that devastation would be visited upon northern Italy and that the Flavian leaders would throw the blame for it on Antonius Primus,²⁴ Tacitus refused to pass over the fact that one of those leaders was prepared to do the like in the southern half of the peninsula.

So the digression (and it is nothing else) on Mucianus' alternative strategy is narrated and positioned deliberately, in part to avoid a tedious description of the march to Byzantium, but primarily to bring out the fact that Mucianus was willing to entertain (however briefly) a scheme that would have entailed considerable fighting and no little devastation in southern Italy. Of a piece with Tacitus' always equivocal view of Mucianus,²⁵ the digression lends color to his later remark, that the situation changed hardly at all after the Flavians seized power: *magis alii homines quam alii mores* (95.2). And more immediately, as we shall see, it creates an atmosphere that becomes steadily darker as the narrative unfolds.

II. THE CONTENT OF CHAPTER 84

[1] Igitur navium militum armorum paratu strepere provinciae, sed nihil aequè fatigabat quam pecuniarum conquisitio: eos esse belli civilis nervos dictitans Mucianus non ius aut verum in cognitionibus, sed solam magnitudinem opum spectabat. passim delationes, et locupletissimus quisque in praedam correpti. [2] quae gravia atque intoleranda, sed necessitate armorum excusata etiam in pace mansere, ipso Vespasiano inter initia imperii ad obtinendas iniquitates haud perin(de) obstinante, donec indulgentia fortunae et pravis magistris (di)dicit aususque est. propriis quoque opibus Mucianus bellum iuvit, largus privatim, quo avidius de re publica sumeret. ceteri conferendarum pecunia(rum) exemplum secuti, rarissimus quisque eandem in recipiendo licentiam habuerunt.²⁶

Since the overall tone of the chapter is sardonic, it is worth wondering whether this explains the bold zeugma in the first clause. Editors usually adduce quotations from Livy (26.51.7 *urbs ipsa strepebat apparatu belli*) and Sallust (*Hist.* 1.88 M *magno usui bello Marsico paratu militum et armorum fuit*).²⁷ Soldiers can be unpleasantly noisy creatures, and to describe their uproar Tacitus employs both *strepere* (*Ann.* 1.25.2, 2.31.1) and *streptus* (*Ann.* 14.35.2). But to declare that the provinces rang with the *paratu militum* is surely not the same as saying that they echoed with the *paratu navium* or *armorum*—unless Tacitus is trying to convey the idea that these troops were manufactured alongside the ships and the weaponry. The remark, in that case, has some bite, inasmuch as the area under Vespasian's control—with the exception of Syria and the war-zone in Judaea—was composed of *inermes provinciae* (81.2). This sardonic tone certainly shows up in the next clause. Having commented earlier on the supposedly close relations between the military and the civilians in Syria (79.3), Tacitus now pictures Vespasian's provinces as distracted

24. See esp. 3.8.2–3 and 78.3, 4.11.1; also A. Briessmann, *Tacitus und das flavische Geschichtsbild* (Wiesbaden, 1955), pp. 46–68.

25. See Syme, *Roman Papers*, 3:1010–11.

26. For the one substantive disagreement on the text see below, n. 44.

27. See, e.g., Heubner, *Die Historien*, 2:284.

by the uproar, vexed even. For these preparations “plagued” them (*fatigabat*), even if they did not “plague” them as much as did the *pecuniarum conquisitio*; and *conquisitio* is a word he uses so rarely that it must draw attention to the statement being made.²⁸

The acidity increases with the appearance (or reappearance) of Mucianus. Not only did he repeat himself (*dictitans*), a tactic he seems to have favored whenever he intended to deceive;²⁹ also, and surprisingly in a man fascinated by the recon-dite, he delivered himself each time of an egregious cliché (*eos esse belli civilis nervos*).³⁰ In his hearings, moreover, he ignored law and equity (*ius aut verum*) and focused exclusively on the wealth of his targets (*solum magnitudinem opum spectabat*). The result was inevitable, informers everywhere and the victimization of the richest (*passim delationes . . . in praedam concepti*).³¹ The criticism intensifies with the observation that these procedures were *gravia atque intoleranda*,³² abates momentarily with the concession that they were *necessitate armorum excusata*, and then redoubles with the statement that they were continued after the war, this with Vespasian’s blessing (*etiam in pace . . . aususque est*).

There can be no doubt that the comments on Vespasian are sardonic. This is shown best by the expression *ad obtinendas iniquitates*, which, whether or not inspired by the Livian *pertinaces ad obtinendam iniuriam* (29.1.17), is a parody of the legalism *ius (suum) obtinere*.³³ In the same way, the *indulgentia fortunae* fails to bring out the best in the emperor,³⁴ and the reference to *pravis magistris* (of whom Mucianus is one, since the remark prepares for the switch back to his activities),³⁵ is as derogatory as the statement about Vitellius’ deterioration *inrepentibus dominationis magistris* (63.1). This being so, it does not much matter whether the comparison, so far as there is a comparison, implicit in *haud perinde* sets Vespasian’s conduct at the start of his reign against his own later behavior, or against Mucianus’ procedures, or more generally against the doings of others—though the first option is rendered likeliest by the *didicit aususque est* with which the sentence

28. The translation of *fatigabat* I owe to W. A. Spooner, *Taciti Historiarum Libri* (London, 1891), p. 264; the unexpressed object of the verb is the provinces, not (as Ruperti imagined) the *animos Muciani et Vespasiani*. For the use of *conquisitio* there is precedent in Cicero and Livy (see Heubner, *Die Historien*, 2:284), but it is more important to stress that in Tacitus it appears otherwise only at *Agr.* 6.5 (A. Gerber and A. Greef, *Lexicon Taciteum* [Leipzig, 1903], p. 207).

29. Tacitus uses *dictitans* of Mucianus again at 4.68.2, and there the intent to deceive is patent (otherwise the verb occurs in the *Histories* only at 4.72.3: Gerber and Greef, *Lexicon*, pp. 288–89). Note also the employment of *scriptitabat* at 3.52.2 (this verb is confined to the *Histories*, being applied elsewhere only to Antonius Primus at 2.86.2: Gerber and Greef, *Lexicon*, pp. 1440–41), and of *crebris epistulis monebat* at 3.8.3 (cf. 3.78.3 *ambiguus epistulis*).

30. To the passages assembled by A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 242, s.v. *nervus* 1, add *Caes. BGall.* 1.20.2 and *App. BCiv.* 4.416. For Mucianus’ tastes see R. Syme, *Roman Papers*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 744–45; G. Traina, “Il mondo di C. Licinio Muciano,” *Athenaeum* 65 (1987): 379–406.

31. Editors aptly compare 1.20.2, on Galba’s attempts to recover monies dissipated by Nero: *ubique hasta et sector, et iniqua urbs actionibus*.

32. According to Gerber and Greef, *Lexicon*, p. 676, Tacitus uses *intolerandus* only three more times: 3.26.2; *Ann.* 12.10.1, 15.42.2.

33. The observation goes back to Dübner: see Valmaggi, *Tacito: Libro secondo*, p. 160; H. Goelzer, *Oeuvres de Tacite: Histoires, Livres I–II* (Paris, 1920), p. 302.

34. So, rightly, F. Ritter, *Cornelii Taciti Historiae* (Cambridge and London, 1848), pp. 174–75. I discuss this matter in “*Indulgentia in Tacitus*” (forthcoming).

35. At 95.2 Tacitus couples Mucianus with Epirus Marcellus.

ends.³⁶ But it has been considered a major difficulty that this assessment contradicts Tacitus' earlier dictum that Vespasian *solus . . . omnium ante se principum in melius mutatus est* (1.50.4).³⁷

The contradiction is only apparent. Though it is too rarely appreciated, the dictum represents no considered verdict on the Flavian and his policies. Relative at best, it is undercut by Tacitus' low opinion of Vespasian's every predecessor and, tied intimately into a context in which the emperor's *fama* is termed *ambigua*, it allows him plenty of room not only for improvement but even for the augmentation of his existing vices.³⁸ The *sententia*, indeed, betrays the same ambivalence that Tacitus demonstrates toward Vespasian *qua* general early in *Histories* 2: *prorsus, si avaritia abesset, antiquis ducibus par* (5.1).³⁹ Given this much, it is not without significance that what Tacitus has said most recently on the subject of Vespasian and money could be read as outright praise (82.2): "donativum militi neque Mucianus prima contione nisi modice ostenderat, ne Vespasianus quidem plus civili bello obtulit quam alii in pace, egregie firmus adversus militarem largitionem eoque exercitu meliore."⁴⁰ In isolation, this remark would be enough to distinguish him from Otho or Vitellius, but not from Galba (cf. 1.5.2, 49.3). Hence the need simultaneously to redress the balance and to mark him off from Galba as well, by reminding the reader of his *avaritia* and by providing a new illustration of the way in which it affected his conduct (*ipso Vespasiano . . . aususque est*).⁴¹

Chilver, to be sure, believed that Tacitus is trying somehow to shift the blame from Vespasian to Mucianus, "the main author of policy."⁴² This is belied by the construction of the chapter. It is a clear example of ring-composition (money—Mucianus—Vespasian—Mucianus—money), and the design is signposted by the way in which the initial *pecuniarum* and *opum* are echoed chiastically in the concluding *opibus* and *pecuniarum*. The underlying idea, furthermore, is essentially the same as the Biblical contention that love of money is the root of all evil,⁴³ and Tacitus' setting Vespasian at the center of the narrative is surely intended to suggest that all else pivots on his *avaritia* and his ambition. Most important, Vespasian as emperor is responsible for his associates' conduct, and it is no credit to him if he not only fails to check their misdeeds but himself imitates them (*didicit aususque est*). In talking of Vespasian's strategy, Tacitus could find no fault with the emperor personally (cf. 3.8.2), only with an alternative plan originated by Mucianus (83.2). Where money was concerned, however, the problem could be traced back to its true

36. Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, p. 245, lists all three possibilities. The case for the first option was made by Meiser (Valmaggì, *Tacito: Libro secondo*, p. 160). However, the expression may just mean "not particularly." Compare οὐχ ὁμοίως.

37. The problem is simply ignored by M. Fuhrmann, "Das Vierkaiserjahr bei Tacitus," *Philologus* 104 (1960): 250–78, at pp. 272–73. Chilver attempts various expedients, all of them unconvincing (*Historical Commentary*, pp. 111, 161–62, 167–68, and 245–46).

38. Cf. D. C. A. Shotter, "Tacitus' View of Emperors and the Principate," *ANRW*, vol. 2, pt. 33, fasc. 5 (Berlin, 1991), pp. 3263–331, at pp. 3296–97; M. G. Morgan, "Commissura in Tacitus, *Histories* 1," *CQ* 43 (1993): 274–91, at p. 281.

39. Compare Suet. *Vesp.* 16, 19.1, and 23; Dio-Xiphilinus 66.8.2–6 and 14.3–5; also Briessmann, *Tacitus*, p. 14.

40. Cf. H. R. Graf, *Kaiser Vespasian* (Stuttgart, 1937), p. 49.

41. According to Tacitus, Galba's avarice was based on principle; Vespasian's, so all the sources say, was the result of meanness.

42. Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, p. 245 (cf. p. 168).

43. The Roman counterparts to 1 Timothy 6:10 are collected by Otto, *Sprichwörter*, p. 51, s.v. *avaritia* 5, p. 270, s.v. *pecunia* 1, and p. 374, s.v. *virtus* 3.

fons et origo, and Tacitus could display once again his ambivalent attitude toward Vespasian.

Nor is it accident that when Tacitus reverts to Mucianus, it is to record another example of sharp practice on a par with the emperor's learning to enforce *iniquitates*. Contributing money to the Flavian cause out of his own pocket (*propriis quoque opibus*), Mucianus was open-handed either in order to recover his investment the more greedily (*quo avidius . . . sumeret*) or, if we follow the Mediceus, because he knew that he could recover that outlay the more greedily (*quod avidius . . . sumeret*).⁴⁴ Whichever the case, everybody else (*ceteri*) followed Mucianus' lead—and suffered for it: few (*rarissimus quisque*) enjoyed the same license in attempts to regain their contributions. This statement, it may be emphasized, does not assert that the other members of Vespasian's entourage never got back their money. But even as it draws attention to their predatory motives, it implies that those who were successful in their quest had to employ underhanded methods. So Mucianus acted, and was allowed to act, like a favorite (cf. 83.1 *socium magis imperii quam ministrum agens*), presumably much to the annoyance of the other members of Vespasian's following; and those others, driven to surreptitious means to recover their losses, were surely "plagued" no less than the provincials by the situation in which they found themselves. A few would prosper and most would not, this amid intrigues that the imperial court continued to foster: *magis alii homines quam alii mores* (95.3).

III. THE POSITIONING OF THE CHAPTERS

As has been remarked already, our two chapters come last in the string of eleven that Tacitus spends on the Flavian uprising proper and precede the two on the rebellion by the Balkan legions. Now, of the batch of eleven, eight carry us to the council of war in Beirut (74–81). Then follows a chapter devoted to the rebels' preparations and strategy (82), one on the start of Mucianus' march (83), and one on the raising of money (84). Finding this sequence odd, Ferlet some two hundred years ago proposed that chapters 83 and 84 should be reversed: "Il seroit étonnant que Tacite, après avoir représenté Mucien en marche à la tête de son armée, le fit en quelque sorte revenir sur ses pas, pour juger des procès, prendre de l'argent de toute main, et en prêter à Vespasien."⁴⁵ Reviving this contention, Wellesley has illustrated the mechanics by which such a transposition could have taken place. In so doing, however, he has fallen even more comprehensively than Ferlet into the trap of assuming that chapter 83 describes Mucianus' march to and arrival in Byzantium. Whereas the latter inserted a saving phrase ("en quelque sorte"), Wellesley declares flatly that reversing the two chapters "produces logic and a smooth transition: strategy—logistics—Mucianus' march—Illyricum."⁴⁶

44. Most modern editions prefer *quo* (after Muretus), construing this as a final clause. But there is no difficulty with *quod*; it introduces, not a relative (so Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, p. 245), but a causal clause in which the subjunctive renders Mucianus' thinking (Ritter, *Taciti Historiae*, p. 175; cf. E. C. Woodcock, *A New Latin Syntax* [London, 1959], p. 196). The result is the same, of course, another example of Mucianus' deceitfulness and self-seeking.

45. The quotation I owe to K. Wellesley, "Tacitus, 'Histories': A Textual Survey, 1939–1989," *ANRW*, vol. 2, pt. 33, fasc. 3 (Berlin, 1991), pp. 1651–85, at p. 1668.

46. Wellesley, loc. cit.; compare his Teubner edition (Leipzig, 1989), ad loc.

No matter how reticent Tacitus may be about the details of Mucianus' itinerary, chapter 83 does not describe a progress to Byzantium, only a departure from Syria. The digression on his seaborne strategy implies, if it does not state, that his destination is Byzantium, but nothing is said about his arriving there, nothing about any retracing of steps. So the provinces whose travails open chapter 84 must be the *inermes provinciae* between Syria and Byzantium. This is why Mucianus, rather than the emperor, takes the lead in exacting monies from the area: he is the man on the spot. This is why he travels *cum expedita manu*: the troops are his escort and his bodyguard, as he holds *cognitiones* and victimizes the wealthy. This is why he moves neither too slowly nor too fast, relying meanwhile on the legions that follow in his tracks to intimidate any restive provincials. And this is why chapter 84 opens with "igitur navium militum armorum paratu." The *igitur*, far from being resumptive,⁴⁷ introduces the logical consequences of Mucianus' behavior in the previous chapter, while the *navium* picks up the thread from the *infestis classibus* to which Tacitus referred in its final sentence.⁴⁸

These are not the only effects that would be ruined by transposing our two chapters. In chapters 85–86 Tacitus turns to the rebellion among the Balkan legions, dealing first with an earlier outbreak by the Moesian troops and the *pessimus facinus* of Aponius Saturninus (85), and then introducing the two desperadoes who will play a major role in bringing down Vitellius, Antonius Primus and Cornelius Fuscus (86).⁴⁹ If we change the order of the chapters preserved by the manuscripts, we disrupt also the steady darkening of the atmosphere that the narrative seeks to convey. Chapter 82, on Vespasian's preparations and strategy, presents him and his adherents in a very favorable light. With chapter 83 cracks begin to appear in the facade, inasmuch as Mucianus is credited with plans for a gory attack on southern Italy. In chapter 84 Vespasian is coupled with Mucianus, so that they can both be criticized for their money-grubbing. In chapter 85 Tacitus moves from the discontent of the provincials and of Mucianus' associates to that of the Moesian legions, reporting first the indiscipline of the soldiery and then the feud, mixing personal and political grudges, between Aponius Saturninus and Tettius Iulianus.⁵⁰ And this, by laying out the resources to hand, sets the scene for chapter 86 and its detailed portraits of the demagogue Antonius Primus and the adventurer Cornelius Fuscus, the two men who will weld together all the Balkan legions into a force that, in *Histories* 3, preempts the Flavians' every plan, those of Vespasian for a bloodless victory and those of Mucianus for military glory.⁵¹

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47. Thus Gerber and Greef, *Lexicon*, p. 551; Goelzer, *Oeuvres de Tacite*, p. 301.

48. Morgan, "Commissura," p. 276.

49. The portrayal of Fuscus can be deemed favorable, only if we ignore the echoes of Sallust: see Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, p. 249.

50. See Heubner, *Die Historien*, 2:262.

51. I wish to thank the anonymous referee and the Editor of *CP* for their helpful comments.