

English if say, Gomer Pyle (to choose a figure of fun from my own adopted state), were to express some apt words of praise over a Susan Sontag essay in his own idiolect: "Golly, Sarge, that "Notes on Camp" shore was purty."

Finally, we may ask if there is anything more to this anecdote. Does the poem fit in any larger cultural panorama on our interpretation? Here again Cicero's *Brutus* supplies the answer. In polemicizing against the so-called Atticists Cicero says (*Brut.* 289): *At cum isti Attici dicunt, non modo a corona, quod est ipsum miserabile, sed etiam ab advocatis relinquuntur.* It is clear from the context that Cicero has Calvus particularly in mind and elsewhere he expresses nearly the same opinion explicitly about Calvus (*Brut.* 283): *Itaque eius oratio nimia religione attenuata doctis et attente audientibus erat inlustris, a multitudine autem et a foro, cui nata eloquentia est, devorabatur.*

It was Cicero's view, expressed in writing in 46 B.C.E., but no doubt formulated much earlier at the height of the Atticist controversy and before Calvus' death, that Calvus' style was not suited for the delectation of the masses. The rhetorical gourmands of the *corona* simply gobbled up (*devorabatur*) what Calvus had to offer without tasting its subtleties. In this light, Catullus' anecdote can now be seen as a stylistic defense of Calvus' work against the carping of an older generation. Far from being unsuitable for the common palate, Calvus' oration against Vatinius was fully savored, not only by the Roman man on the street, but even by the yokel in the *corona* whose speech was still tinged with an Oscan drawl.

The interpretation of *salaputium* offered here, unlike previous attempts, suffers from no formal defects, places Catullus 53 in a well-established genre of humor, the ethnic/dialect joke, and restores the poem to its proper place in the polemics of the "culture wars" of late republican Rome.²⁹

MICHAEL WEISS
University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill

29. Cf. Seneca the Elder's comment (*Controv.* 7.4.6) about the *iniquissimam litem de principatu eloquentiae* that Calvus and Cicero were said to have had.

RECRIMINATIONS AFTER AD CASTORES: TACITUS, *HISTORIES* 2.30

In spring 69 at Ad Castores Aulus Caecina tried to ambush the Othonian forces under Suetonius Paulinus and Marius Celsus. Since his plan backfired, he was very nearly the one caught in a trap. The result was an indecisive battle with which neither side was happy. Recriminations were widespread among the Othonians, their principal target being Suetonius Paulinus.¹ But there was also finger-pointing among the Vitellians. For this Tacitus is our only source, and his account does not make it altogether clear for what reasons or at whom fingers were pointed.

In his initial comments on the subject Tacitus downplays the effect of the setback on the Vitellians. Their losses, he asserts, did not so much induce in them fear of the

1. The battle itself and the dispute over Paulinus' actions I plan to discuss elsewhere. Here I would like to thank Andrew Riggsby and the anonymous referee of *CP* for their advice and criticism.

enemy as teach them the need for discipline (2.27.1: *haud proinde id damnum Vitellianos in metum compulit quam ad modestiam composuit*). The statement is suspect, inasmuch as its main function is not to refer back to the battle, even though the very next clause has Caecina placing the blame on his own troops for their indiscipline (*nec solum apud Caecinam, qui culpam in militem conferebat*). Caecina had reason enough to find fault with his men: his cavalry had sprung the ambush prematurely (25.1), the forces left behind in the camp at Cremona had mutinied because they were not called up to the battle (26.1), and those who were summoned to his aid, cohort by cohort, had not been able to make a stand (26.2). Nonetheless, Tacitus' principal concern is to set up the transition into his account of a serious mutiny to which Fabius Valens fell victim as he made his way across North Italy to Ticinum (2.27.2–29.3). He returns to the battle and its effects only three chapters later, when it is time to report the union of the two Vitellian commanders, and for our purposes it will be best to quote the relevant passage in full (2.30):

[1] Munientibus castra apud Ticinum de adversa Caecinae pugna adlatum, et prope renovata seditio, tamquam fraude et cunctationibus Valentis proelio defuissent: nolle requiem, non exspectare ducem, anteire signa, urgere signiferos; rapido agmine Caecinae iunguntur. [2] improspera Valentis fama apud exercitum Caecinae erat: expositos se tanto pauciores integris hostium viribus querebantur, simul in suam excusationem et adventantium robor per adulationem attollentes, ne ut victi et ignavi despectarentur. et quamquam plus virium, prope duplicatus legionum auxiliorumque numerus erat Valentis, studia tamen militum in Caecinam inclinabant, super benignitatem animi, qua promptior habebatur, etiam vigore aetatis, proceritate corporis et quodam inani favore. [3] hinc aemulatio ducibus: Caecina ut foedum ac maculosum, ille ut tumidum ac vanum inridebant. sed condito odio eandem utilitatem fovere, crebris epistulis sine respectu veniae probra Othoni obiectantes, cum duces partium Othonis quamvis uberrima conviciorum in Vitellium materia abstinerent.

On §1 there is relatively little to say. One can argue that the behavior of Valens' troops, as Tacitus describes it, hardly suggests that the news of Ad Castores taught them the value of discipline (*ad modestiam composuit*), but their taking the initiative was not quite a mutiny (hence *prope renovata seditio*), and in this sense it was an improvement on their conduct beforehand.² They were not so much defying Valens, after all, as carrying out the functions that he had been putting off (allegedly *fraude et cunctationibus*), and compelling him to follow in their wake. The problems begin when we reach §2.

The first sentence (*improspera . . . erat*) is more important than seems generally to have been recognized. As we have seen already, Caecina blamed his own men for the defeat (27.1: *culpam in militem conferebat*). From the sentence with which we are concerned it follows that they did not simply turn the blame back on him. Still less does it justify the assumption that he diverted their anger against Fabius Valens.³ We

2. See H. Heubner, *P. Cornelius Tacitus: Die "Historien," Band II—Zweites Buch* (Heidelberg, 1968), 109–10, followed by G. E. F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus' "Histories" I and II* (Oxford, 1979), 195; H. Le Bonniec and J. Hellegouarc'h, *Tacite, "Histoires," Livres II et III* (Paris, 1989), p. 177, n. 2. This is one detail reported also by Plutarch (*Otho* 7.8–9), though he may have confused the mutiny before Ticinum with the near-mutiny there (cf. P. Fabia, *Les Sources de Tacite dans les "Histoires" et les "Annales"* [Paris, 1893], 60).

3. As is claimed by K. Wellesley, *The Long Year, A.D. 69* (London, 1975), 69, in a highly speculative reconstruction of Caecina's thinking at this stage. Since Valens' men were angry with their commander (above, n. 2), there is no reason to doubt that Caecina's troops took the same line spontaneously.

cannot establish from this whether they—like Tacitus and many modern scholars—believed that Caecina's plan had been too rash (24.1: *avidius quam consultius properabat*). Rash or not, his plan was bound to meet with their approval, when they were themselves so eager to close with the enemy (cf. 26.1). But we would undoubtedly have heard about their finding fault with his conduct during the battle, had he given them grounds for that. So since we know that he took part in the fighting (26.1), it seems certain that he actually led the auxiliary forces nearly caught in the trap and did so with considerable bravery. And this may well have given his men additional incentive to make Fabius Valens the scapegoat for their own shortcomings. His dilatory conduct could be construed as cowardice no less easily than as treachery (*fraude*),⁴ and such a charge would reflect on him alone, not at all on his men.

With the next sentence, the grounds on which they complained, we come to the crux of the matter. In the words *expositos se tanto pauciores integris hostium viribus querebantur*, Caecina's men are obviously asserting that they had been left in the lurch by Valens (*expositos*) to fight an enemy whose strength was unimpaired (*integris hostium viribus*), whereas their own had been reduced by a string of setbacks, chief among them the unsuccessful assault on Placentia (cf. 24.1). But should we take *tanto pauciores* as a reference to their own numbers vis-à-vis those of the Othonians, or vis-à-vis those of Valens? The older editions seem uniformly to prefer the latter view, although Ritter alone defends it at any length, glossing *tanto pauciores*: "h. e. se tanto pauciores quam qui cum Valente advenerant. Haec non respiciunt *integras hostium vires* sed exercitum a Valente adductum. Nam haec ipsa erant, quibus se simul excusarent et adventantium robur attollerent. Et sane Valens quadraginta milia et insuper legionem Italicam, Caecina triginta ducebat."⁵ In a discussion of the number of troops available to the different generals in the war, however, Passerini declared this interpretation absurd on two grounds. First, the excuse of numerical inferiority would have been considered honorable only if it was the enemy who enjoyed superiority; and second, Valens could later claim to have been Caecina's savior only if the danger from which he rescued his rival was defeat by a larger enemy force on this occasion.⁶ It followed, so said Passerini, that Caecina's men were *tanto pauciores* in relation to the Othonians. And since this view has been endorsed by Heubner, Chilver, and Hellegouarc'h, it bids fair to become the *communis opinio*.⁷

4. Tacitus makes explicit the link between delay and fear at *Ann.* 2.66.1 and 15.51.1.

5. F. Ritter, *Cornelii Taciti "Historiae"* (Cambridge and London, 1848), 128. The passage is paraphrased in this same sense by L. Valmaggì, *P. Cornelio Tacito, Il libro secondo delle «Storie»* (Turin, 1897), 55. Other editors limit themselves to flat statements: see W. Heraeus, *Cornelii Taciti "Historiae,"* Buch I und II⁶ (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929), 161; A. D. Godley, *The "Histories" of Tacitus, Books I and II* (London, 1887), 211; W. A. Spooner, *Cornelii Taciti "Historiae"* (London, 1891), 219; F. G. Moore, *The "Histories" of Tacitus, Books I and II* (New York, 1910), 199; H. Goelzer, *Oeuvres de Tacite, "Histoires," Livres I–II* (Paris, 1920), 223; cf. also B. W. Henderson, *Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire* (London, 1908), 90; P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *The Year of the Four Emperors* (London and New York, 1975), 91.

6. A. Passerini, "Le due battaglie presso Betraicum," in *Studi di antichità classica offerti a Emanuele Ciaceri* (Genoa, Rome, Naples, 1940), 210–11. For the claim see 2.93.2: "plus in eo dilectu Valens audebat, tamquam ipsum Caecinam periculo emisisset. sane adventu eius partes convaluerant, et sinistrum lenti itineris rumore prospero proelio verterat omnisque inferioris Germaniae miles Valentem adsectabatur."

7. Heubner, *Historien*, 2:116; Chilver, *Historical Commentary*, 190 (cf. also his "The War between Otho and Vitellius and the North Italian Towns," *CSDIR* 3 [1970]: 108); Le Bonniec and Hellegouarc'h, *Tacite*, p. 177, n. 3. Only the last-named work adds to Passerini's arguments, but see below, n. 9.

Although the proponents of both views make much of troop numbers, this is surely a broken reed, whether or not we engage in lengthy disputations about the effectives at the disposal of the various generals. The simple fact is that Caecina had not committed his entire force to the battle at Ad Castores (26.1). So the troops who actually took part in the engagement (at most, probably, five or six thousand men) and their comrades who had not participated could all claim with equal justice that their troops at Ad Castores had been outnumbered by the Othonians and by Valens' forces too.⁸ There is little more to support the other claims made on both sides. The fact that Caecina's men wanted supposedly to extol the strength of Valens' force (*adventantium robur per adulationem attollentes*) does not make *tanto pauciores* into a comparison with that army rather than with the enemy. Since the essence of the complaint against Valens lies in *expositos*, a word set at the head of its clause for additional emphasis, Caecina's men could praise the strength of his force just as easily by minimizing their own vis-à-vis the Othonians. Conversely, Passerini's claims are unconvincing, because—too much concerned with overall totals—he never allows for the possibility that Caecina's forces could be (let alone could represent themselves as) smaller in number than both Valens' force and that of the Othonians. Once we concede that this was the case, however, we can argue that it would have been as "honorable" for Caecina's men to make much of Valens' strength as it was for them to exaggerate the Othonians'. As for Valens' contention that he had snatched Caecina from the jaws of defeat, that tells us nothing more about the realities of the situation. It is only the mirror-image of the complaint with which we are concerned. If we are to resolve this problem, the argument must rest on different grounds.

The key lies obviously in the antithesis between *tanto pauciores* and *integris hostium viribus*. But it is not enough to note its existence, for all that Caecina's men are *pauciores* because of casualties, the enemy *integri* because they have suffered no such losses.⁹ Rather, this is an example of what G. D. Kellogg long ago termed cross-suggestion, a form of brachylogy much favored by Tacitus, in which two different adjectives in a contrast imply their opposites.¹⁰ Caecina's men, that is, complained that they, inferior in numbers to the enemy (and not *integri*), had been exposed to

8. Though Tacitus nowhere states how many Vitellians took part in the battle, Caecina would not have used an unwieldy number for the ambush itself, a point confirmed by Tacitus' saying that originally he called only on his cavalry and the *ferocissimos auxiliarium* (24.2). And since Tacitus reports too that, when he needed reinforcements, *non simul cohortes, sed singulas acciverat* (26.1), we can probably conclude that Caecina's legionaries had no part in the fighting. Hence the estimate of five or six thousand, a figure not to be set aside because Plutarch talks vaguely of πολλοὺς ὀπίτας (*Otho* 7.2). On the other hand, this figure is not based on Chilver's claim ("The War," 108), that Caecina had to take precautions against Spurrina's force in Placentia (cf. 23.1) and Macer's gladiators south of the Po (cf. 23.3); neither had troops enough to pose a serious threat.

9. Thus Le Bonniec and Hellegouarc'h, *Tacite*, p. 177, n. 3: "la structure même de la phrase semble indiquer que l'antithèse est entre *pauciores* et *integri*." For the meaning of *integer* in such contexts see Heubner, "Historien," 2.116.

10. G. D. Kellogg, "Cross-suggestion: a form of Tacitean brachylogy," *AJP* 30 (1909): 310–21. Kellogg limits himself to the *Agricola* and *Germania*, and many of his examples are more straightforward than both our passage and the Horatian example with which he begins (*Odes* 3.13.6). Yet he explains *Agr.* 44.4, *opibus nimis non gaudebat, speciosae contigerant* in what is surely the best way (p. 317): "i.e., opibus nimis (quae ei non contigerant) non gaudebat; speciosae (sed non nimiae opes, quibus revera gaudebat) contigerant." For this rules out the *non* that some manuscripts set before *speciosae* and some editors still hesitate to excise (e.g., R. M. Ogilvie and I. A. Richmond, *Cornelii Taciti "De vita Agricolae"* [Oxford, 1967], 304).

an enemy (superior in numbers and) *integri*. For if this is correct, everything else falls into place. The troops' fear *ne ut victi et ignavi despectarentur* is dependent logically on *in suam excusationem* alone, not at all on *et adventantium robur per adulationem attollentes*.¹¹ But their fear was not whether the Othonians thought them *victi et ignavi*, but whether their peers in Valens' army reached this conclusion. Hence the words *et adventantium robur per adulationem attollentes*, triggered by the *tanto pauciores* (since they were inferior in numbers to Valens' force also), prepare the way for the perspective required to understand that fear, and themselves demand the explanation provided by the opening of the next sentence (*et quamquam plus virium*, etc.). But here again Tacitus shuns a balanced construction, making that clause in turn part of a new contrast, between Valens' numbers and Caecina's popularity (*studia tamen militum*, etc.). And so it turns out that *tanto pauciores* refers to Valens' forces after all. Though the enemy are more important for the comparison itself, the wording leads into a train of thought based on a contrast with Valens' forces as well.

The very fact that Valens led a larger as well as an undefeated army, of course, ought to have entitled him to the greater respect, but things worked out contrary to expectation. As Tacitus makes clear, the troops in both armies found Caecina a striking, attractive, even charismatic figure (*super benignitatem . . . inani favore*),¹² one reason—no doubt—why the historian refers so often to details of his appearance (cf. 1.53.1; 2.20.1; 3.31.4). Nonetheless, the abuse the two commanders heaped on one another (*Caecina ut foedum ac maculosum, ille ut tumidum ac vanum inridebant*) adds nothing to the tale. Tacitus has already recorded Valens' exploits as a "dirty old man" in the account of his march to Italy (1.66.2–3), while Caecina himself supposedly tried to avoid looking *inrisus ac vanus* after his unsuccessful assault on Placentia (22.3). What may seem odd, however, is the statement that opens §3, *hinc aemulatio ducibus*, inasmuch as the historian has stressed more than once Caecina's wish not just to shine but specifically to outshine Valens.¹³ Yet it would be a mistake to consider the comment pleonastic. The point is surely that while Caecina has been animated by ambition from the start, this was the first time Valens recognized the existence of the rivalry and responded in kind. Hitherto, he had had every reason to be complacent. Quite apart from his greater age, Valens had taken the lead in inciting Vitellius to seek the purple (1.52.3–4) and, expecting to sit on the emperor's right hand, he had made the leisurely progress through Gaul that his troops now accused him of protracting *fraude et cunctationibus*. Caecina, if not exactly a fresh convert to the cause (1.53.1), was a very ambitious, very opportunistic young

11. See Valmaggi, *Tacito*, 55, after Acidalius.

12. It seems not to have been remarked that *benignitas* is unusual: elsewhere Tacitus applies it only to the gods (*Hist.* 4.85.2; *Ann.* 11.15.2; 12.43.2; 14.6.2) and to *fortuna* (*Ann.* 13.41.4). On the other hand, it seems doubtful that the *et* before *inani favore* means "in short," making of *inani favore* a summation of what precedes (so E. Wolff, *Taciti "Historiae," Buch I und II* [Berlin, 1914], 218; Heubner, "*Historien*," 2:117). Tacitus is listing the imponderables that give Caecina his edge over Valens, and these imponderables become progressively more tenuous. There is his generosity, his youthful vigor, his physique, and his popularity defying rational explanation (*et quodam inani favore*). What is more, the use of *favor* is probably ironic: only one chapter earlier Valens is forced into hiding by his mutinous troops, and when order is restored, emerges to *gaudium miseratio favor* (29.3).

13. See, e.g., 1.67.2 and 70.3; 2.20.2, 22.3, 24.1.

man who, in search of advancement by any means, hoped to usurp Valens' place by performing the most conspicuous services for Vitellius. Hence the speed with which he crossed the Alps, the daring with which he undertook the assault on Placentia, and the concerns that led him to stage the ambush at Ad Castores.

That Tacitus does not explain this more clearly is readily explicable. He has already brought out the effect of the rivalry on Caecina. Valens' countermeasures will become truly important only after Vitellius has won the war (cf. 2.92–93). What needs emphasis here is that the two men, Caecina no less than Valens, were able to lay down their differences (*sed condito odio*),¹⁴ because in so doing they behaved very differently than did the Othonian generals. This is why Tacitus brings up the abuse Caecina and Valens heaped on Otho *sine respectu veniae*, whereas the enemy *quamvis uberrima conviciorum in Vitellium materia abstinerent*. Nor is it by accident that Tacitus, having contrasted the two emperors (31.1), recurs to this difference by reporting the Vitellians' determination to give battle, and then launching into the Othonian council of war that preceded Bedriacum (2.31.2–33.2). Caecina and Valens, one might say, knew that their first task was to place their candidate on the throne. The Othonians were more willing to bicker among themselves, in part—it may be—because their candidate already occupied the throne.

To come back to our starting point, it emerges that the recriminations aired in the Vitellian camp were both short-lived and inconsequential. Caecina could be accused of vainglory, to the extent that he had bitten off more than he could chew. But at Ad Castores this resulted from his plan's miscarrying, and this the troops considered no vice. Further, they recognized the justice of his claim that they had failed him, and attempted to offload the blame by placing it on Valens' shoulders. For he could be accused of having left Caecina and his men to face the enemy alone, this without criticizing his troops too. The charge was unfair, of course. The evidence suggests that Valens had no idea how much progress Caecina had made, and Caecina had probably taken every precaution not to inform him. Hence the slanging match in which the two generals engaged when they met. But as Tacitus emphasizes, Caecina and Valens—unlike the enemy generals—had sense enough to put aside their feuding until the war was won. The problem in our passage lies, not in any difficulty about understanding the motivation of the actors, but in coping with Tacitus' relentless determination never to say anything in a straightforward manner if he can find a more demanding and more tortuous way of expressing himself.¹⁵

M. GWYN MORGAN
University of Texas,
Austin

14. Though *condere odium* occurs here only (Heubner, "*Historien*," 2:117), the imagery (like that of *iram condiderat*, of Tiberius at *Ann.* 2.28.1) is surely taken from the laying down of wine. Once the enmity has matured, it will reappear (2.92–93).

15. It might seem tempting to argue that the confusing nature of the sentence is designed to suggest the confused thinking of the troops. But the asymmetry is more probably intended to offset the highly structured arrangement of chapter 31, for which see P. Ammann, *Der künstlerische Aufbau von Tacitus, Historien I 12–II 51 (Kaiser Otho)* (Zürich, 1931), p. 95, n. 27.