

TACITUS, *GERMANIA* 36. 1

ubi manu agitur, modestia ac probitas nomine superioris sunt

THE meanings collected by Mr. Lee (*CQ* 1968, 382 f.) seem very hard to extract from the Latin, neither do they seem to reflect the author's meaning. Surely the sense of the chapter is:

The Cherusci ruined themselves with a long peace . . . when it comes to a fight, moderation and justice are . . . For example, the Cherusci were once virtuous and just, but now are called idle and foolish, and the success of the Chatti who conquered them has become prudence.

The gap should be filled by something like 'things of the past'. Could not this be *nomen e superiore* (or *superioribus*)—'moderation and justice are names from the past'? There may not be a parallel for omitting *tempore* after *superiore*, though of course *praeteritum*, *-a* are used without a noun.

For the *fortuna* and *sapientia* of 36. 2 compare *fortuna* in 30. 1 and the *ratio* and *sollertia* in the same passage, used of the Chatti.

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THE desperate straits to which commentators are driven in attempting to explain *inter impotentis et ualidos falso quiescas: ubi manu agitur, modestia ac probitas nomina* (Puteolanus: *nomine* MSS.) *superioris sunt* are illustrated by a recent contributor to this journal (1968, 382 f.). In the decent obscurity of a review¹ of Büchner's fourth volume of *Studien zur römischen Literatur* I hazarded a suggestion that has escaped notice. The crux may be removed by reading *non superioris* and supposing a confusion between N = *non* (4th century) and Ñ = *nomine* (9th century). In war legality is dumb, and amid the squabbles of competing tribes restraint and honesty are not the marks of the winner. The Chatti were proved wiser than the children of light, for they had fought and flourished: *Chattis uictoribus fortuna in sapientiam cessit*.

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¹ *Gnomon*, xxxvii (1965), 701 ff.