AUGUSTUS AND THE GOVERNORS' WIVES

Until the last century of the Roman Republic it was an established principle that officials assigned provinces outside of Italy would not be accompanied there by their wives, whose duty was to remain behind to look after their husbands' interests. The locus classicus is provided by L. Quinctius Flamininus, brother of the distinguished philhellene. When Lucius departed for Gaul in 192 BC, his wife is recorded as escorting him as far as the city gate, but then turning back. The later details of the story highlight the shortcomings of the convention, since out of his wife's sight Lucius became entangled in a particularly sordid sexual escapade in Gaul, leading to his eventual expulsion from the senate.[1] For good or ill, however, the practice of matrimonial separation was maintained until the first century BC, when, like many others, it fell victim to growing political unrest. The first on record as breaking with the old tradition was Sulla, who in 88 was joined in Athens by his wife Caecilia Metella.[2] Cornelia, the wife of Pompey, later travelled east to join her husband on what would be his final journey to Egypt.[3] By the triumviral period, officials were regularly accompanied in their provinces by their wives, and other female relatives. Fulvia, for instance, went out to join her husband Marc Antony in Athens, and Octavia subsequently joined the same husband in the same place, and even Antony's mother Julia managed at one point to find her way there.[4]

Once in control, Augustus sought, in principle at least, to revive many of the cherished traditions of the old Republic and, in this context, introduced reforms into the Roman army. One of the issues he tackled was the appropriate role for wives of provincial officials, or at least of officials stationed in the imperial provinces, where most of the military activities were concentrated. Suetonius

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1) Sen. Contr. 9,2,1; further details of the scandal: Cic. Sen. 42; Livy 39,42,5–12,43; Val. Max. 2,9,2,3.

2) Plut. Sull. 6,12; 13,1; 22,1; Sen. Matrim. Fr. 63 (Haase).

3) Plut. Pomp. 74,1–76,1.

4) Fulvia and Julia: App. BC 5,52; Dio 48,15,2; Octavia: Plut. Ant. 33,3; App. BC 5,76; Cluett (1998).

reports that he imposed very strict discipline (*disciplinam severissime rexit*) and severely limited the contact between these officials and their wives to brief winter visits – even this modest concession was made grudgingly – and imposed this restriction right up to the level of legatus:

> *Ne legatorum quidem cuiquam, nisi gravate hibernisque demum mensibus, permisit uxorem intervisere.*
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> He did not permit any even of his legates to pay a brief visit to his wife, except only in the winter months, and that concession was made grudgingly.[5]

This passage of Suetonius has not been subjected to the close scrutiny that it perhaps warrants, given that it raises questions about Augustus' attitude towards administrators from the senatorial class that go well beyond the immediate issue. Since at least the time of the authoritative Belgian scholar Lipsius in the 16th century, commentators have simply concluded from Suetonius that under Augustus wives were not allowed to take up residence with their husbands in the imperial provinces (the public provinces do not enter into the question since Suetonius' information comes in the context of strictly military reforms) and certainly there is no explicit piece of ancient evidence that would disprove this claim.[6] It is the purpose of the present article to take a closer look at Suetonius' statement, to outline the problems that it seems to raise, and to suggest fresh ways of looking at it.

It will perhaps be useful at the outset to note a detail that Tony Marshall introduced in 1975, without explaining what lay behind his suggestion, namely that while wives were indeed not allowed to accompany officials to the imperial provinces, the concession of winter visits was made to t h e m, and not to their husbands.[7] It is perhaps just possible to extract this meaning from Suetonius, on the assumption that since the section is about military personnel he might have chosen to invert a more natural mode of expression and

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5) Suet. Aug. 24,1.

6) Lipsius (1585) on 3,33; his note is reproduced by, inter alios, Oberlin (1801) on 3,33,1; Valpy (1821) 547; Orelli (1846) I 175. Marshall (Tacitus 1975) 12 rightly states that there is "no evidence that the practice [sc. of governors' wives joining their husbands] became common and unremarkable before the reign of Tiberius".

7) Marshall (Provinces 1975) 119; (Tacitus 1975) 12.

to phrase the restriction in terms of the officials and not their wives. But Suetonius' choice of words would make this already difficult interpretation very unlikely. To describe the winter visits he uses the verb *intervisere*, whose usage is rare enough that we can conveniently cite every known example down to his time. Originally, to judge from its occurrence in Plautus, where it has the greatest frequency, *interviso* always had the connotation of paying a brief visit to a place to check up or keep an eye on things.[8] This element of supervision survives into the late republic. Cicero reports to his brother Quintus in Gaul that he frequently pops into his house to see how the decoration is progressing: *ipse crebro interviso*, and the notion of inspection seems present in the words that Tacitus puts in the mouth of Tiberius (see below), when he complains, of Agrippina, that *femina manipulos intervisat*.[9] By the late republic we also find that the element of inspection can become so weakened that the word may imply little more than paying a casual visit to a close acquaintance or relative (perhaps with just a hint of checking on their well-being). So Cicero writes to a friend in Arpinum that he does not mind the distance between them and the fact that *nos minime intervisis*, because Cicero's time in Rome is totally taken up by public affairs anyhow.[10] If Suetonius was using the word in its most common application, it is clear that Augustus cannot have intended that the senators' wives were to be allowed to check on their husbands (though the case of Flamininus shows that it might not have been a bad idea!). Moreover a 'casual' visit by a wife seems hardly more likely, since in the case of some provinces such a brief visit would entail considerable travel time, in the winter, to a place where the wife would as likely as not have no other personal connections. It is more feasible to see a legatus returning to Italy to combine a conjugal visit with social, family, financial or political business. Thus the circumstances favour taking Suetonius' words

8) Plaut. Aul. 202; 363; St. 147; 154; 456; it should be noted that the two examples sometimes cited at Merc. 555; Rud. 592 are both dependent on textual emendation.

9) Cic. Quint.fr. 3,1,6; Tac. Ann. 1,69.

10) Cic. Fam. 7,1,5. The casual sense of the word seems to become relatively common after Suetonius. In Apul. Met. 1,24 it is so used in the phrase: *sat Pol diu est quod intervisimus te* ("Heavens, it's so long since I saw you!"). Fronto, Ver. 2 p. 210 (207N) uses it for visiting the sick (*aegros intervisere*) as an official duty. At Apul. Met. 6,9,2; 6,30,2, the contexts do not allow us to tell how informal the visits might have been.

simply as they stand to mean that the restrictions were placed on the legati. There seems to be no compelling reason why a much more difficult reading of his text should be adopted, and such is certainly the attitude of translators of Suetonius.[11] It is to be noted that this is in any case a peripheral issue, and Marshall is in accord with the general consensus to be discussed in this paper that, under Augustus, the wives of military officials did not reside in their husbands' provinces, and that contact was limited to brief visits during the winter.

Lipsius made a further observation, which has not been challenged, that there was one group to whom Augustus' rule did not apply, namely members of the imperial family. We learn from a chance reference by Drusus, son of Tiberius, that Livia accompanied Augustus on his provincial visits in both the eastern and western halves of the empire (*in occidentem atque orientem*).[12] Also, Agrippina (the Elder), wife of Germanicus, was certainly with her husband during the summer months towards the very end of Augustus' reign. Suetonius preserves a letter that the emperor wrote to her just before May 18, 14, a few months before his death, describing the arrangements made to send Caligula to join his father (in Gaul). It is not clear where Agrippina was when she received the missive, but Augustus certainly envisaged that she would see her husband not too long after its receipt, since he wishes her a safe journey when she goes to join Germanicus.[13] But these two instances prove very little. That Augustus was not a legatus is self-evident, and in any case his duties on his later trips were diplomatic and political rather than military, involving public as well as imperial provinces. Also Germanicus was not a conventional legatus. He enjoyed a special grant of

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11) Among translators, see, inter multos, Philemon Holland, The Histories of Twelve Caesars, Emperours of Rome (London 1606); Mr. Morgan, Lives of the Twelve Caesars. The First Emperors of Rome (London 1688); A. Stahr, Suetons Kaiserbiographien (Stuttgart 1857); and more recently J. C. Rolfe, Suetonius, with an English Translation (Cambridge, Mass. 1913); Henri Ailloud, Suétone. Vies des douze Césars (Paris 1931); J. Gavorse, The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius (New York 1931); R. Graves, The Twelve Caesars. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (London 1957); G. Gaggero, Gaio Suetonio Tranquillo. Vite dei dodici Cesari (Milan 1990); O. Wittstock, Sueton. Kaiserbiographien (Berlin 1993); H. Martinet, Kaiserviten. Berühmte Männer (Düsseldorf 1997); C. Edwards, Suetonius. Lives of the Caesars (Oxford 2000).

12) Tac. Ann. 3,34,6.

13) Suet. Cal. 8,4; see Hurley (2003) 102–4.

proconsular imperium that gave him authority (*regimen summae rei*) in Gaul Comata and over the two legati of the Rhine armies.[14] Certainty stops there. It may well be that Julia the Elder accompanied Agrippa, and Antonia accompanied Drusus, son of Livia, outside of Italy, but there is no specific evidence of their presence in their husbands' provinces.[15] A crude form of indirect evidence might be sought from the known birth dates of imperial children, on the simple principle that the mother must have been in her husband's company between nine and eight, and certainly no fewer than seven, months before the birth. In fact this approach provides little useful information. The birthdates of a number of Imperial children born in the Augustan period are known, but in most cases they point to conception outside the campaigning season.[16] In cases where the conception might have occurred in the summer period, we are often not sure that the father was on campaign at the time.[17] In fact there is no known imperial birthdate that necessitates the presence of the mother with the father during the summer months in a year when it is known that the father was in his province.

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14) Tac. Ann. 1,14,4; 1,31,2.

15) Kokkinos (1992) 13, 42 suggests that Antonia accompanied her husband Drusus in Spain and Gaul; Roddaz (1984) 448–9 notes the large number of dedications to Julia, which imply (but do not necessitate) her presence with Agrippa.

16) Tacitus has Germanicus in AD 14, probably in October, refer to the imminent birth of a child and, on the most natural reading of the text, the imminent arrival of winter (Tac. Ann. 1,44,2); the event follows the arrival of a senatorial commission despatched at the meeting held on September 17 to consecrate Augustus (Tac. Ann. 1,14,4; 39,1; 40,2; Dio 57,5,4; EJ p. 52); Drusus, son of Tiberius, was born on October 7, possibly 13 BC (ILS 108); the future emperor Claudius was born in Lugdunum on August 1, 10 BC (EJ p. 50; Dio 60,5,3); Caligula was born on August 31, AD 12 (Fast. Vall., Fast. Pigh.; Suet. Cal. 8,1; Dio 59,6,1); Agrippina the Younger's birthday fell on November 6, and m i g h t have been in 14 (Fast. Ant.; AFA lxv, lxx); for the year, see Mommsen (1878), Humphrey (1979), Barrett (1996) 230–232, Hurley (2003). All of the above must have been conceived before or after the campaigning season.

17) Lucius Caesar, son of Agrippa and Julia, is known to have been born in 17 BC. It is possible that his actual birthday was January 29 (Dio 54,18,1; Mancini [1935] 49). This would place his conception in May/June 18, probably after the beginning of the campaigning season. But we do not know if his father Agrippa was on campaign in that year, and his receipt of *imperium proconsulare* and *tribunicia potestas* argues for his presence in Rome (Dio 54,12,4). Germanicus was born on May 24 (AFA li), possibly in 15 BC (Sumner [1967] 427), thus conceived in the previous August/September, when his father Drusus was in Rome (Dio 54,19,5–6); alternatively Germanicus may have been born in 16 BC (Levick [1966] 238–40), thus conceived in 17, when Drusus' whereabouts are unknown.

The arrangements that Augustus had supposedly put in place for ordinary senatorial women must have been dramatically changed within a few years of the beginning of the reign of Tiberius. Women who accompanied their husbands to the imperial provinces had by then become a familiar feature, usually making their way into the record because, like Plancina in Syria, they created a scandal, or because they were models of decorum, like Seneca's aunt, who joined her prefect-husband, C. Galerius, in Egypt and maintained an estimable invisibility.[18] The process by which an apparent virtual ban on wives in the imperial provinces seemingly disappeared, to the extent that their presence was hardly considered worthy of note, is totally undocumented and did not elicit a single comment in any ancient literary source. There have been two basic modern scholarly explanations. Lipsius suggested that the system just gradually eroded as a result of the presence of imperial wives (*sed irrepsit*); as a slight variant to Lipsius' thesis, it has more recently been suggested that Tiberius deliberately extended to the senators the privilege enjoyed by the imperial family. Another modern school of thought seeks an explanation in Tiberius' practice of extending the provincial commands of his legati. He might have felt that to prevent these long-serving officials from being accompanied by their wives would be to impose undue hardship.[19]

The speculation that Tiberius wanted to grant the legati the benefits enjoyed by the imperial family is not in itself unreasonable, if it is the case that imperial husbands had enjoyed a general exemption under his predecessor, but the implicit comment it makes about Augustus' attitude should give us serious pause for thought. A blatant inconsistency in the treatment of wives of senators and of the women of the emperor's family seems seriously out of character for Augustus, who in his way of life and general demeanour sought to present himself essentially as a regular Roman citizen, and, besides which, was someone who lectured the senators about following his own example to learn how to deal with their wives.[20]

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18) Seneca's aunt: Sen. Helv. 19,6.

19) Extension of imperial privileges: Raepsaet-Charlier (1982) 62 n. 45; extended terms: Pflaum (1950) 302; Marshall (Provinces 1975) 119; (Tacitus 1975) 12; see also Woodman (1996) 290.

20) Dio 54,16,4–5.

Similarly, the explanation derived from the increased terms of service outside of Italy is not inherently implausible. Tacitus attests to Tiberius extending the terms of governors.[21] There were certainly some remarkable examples of lengthy service during his reign. C. Galerius, the husband of Seneca's aunt mentioned above, served for sixteen years. C. Poppaeus Sabinus served as Augustus' legatus in Moesia for two years and subsequently remained in office under Tiberius for twenty-two years until his death in 35. Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judaea for ten years.[22] But such protracted periods of service were not in fact unprecedented. Perhaps as early as AD 6, Augustus had started to extend the terms of his legati to meet the crisis posed by the serious military situation in that year, directly appointing the proconsuls of the public provinces at the same time.[23] The explanation faces another problem. The first known case of a wife (other than from the imperial family) accompanying her husband to his province after the Augustan settlement is that of Plancina, who went with Calpurnius Piso to Syria in early 18. This would be less than four years after Augustus' death, barely time for Tiberius to have introduced a new policy based on protracted terms of office. Moreover, given that Tacitus claims that Plancina was sent out to Syria with a secret agenda to work against Agrippina, it is striking that he does not strengthen his case by observing that it was a novelty at this time for a non-imperial wife to accompany her husband.[24]

It is, admittedly, not possible to attest a single instance of a wife of a legatus accompanying her husband to his province during Augustus' reign (other than in the special case of Germanicus), and this gap in the evidence might be seen as a vindication of the traditional interpretation of Suetonius.[25] But the fragmentary nature of the evidence must be acknowledged, and this is highlighted

21) Tac. Ann. 1,80.

22) Galerius: Sen. Helv. 19,6; Sabinus: Tac. Ann. 1,80,1; 6,39,3; Dio 58,25,4; Pilate: Jos. Ant. 18,89.

23) Dio 55,28,2; Suet. Aug. 23 dates the prolongations after Varus' defeat in AD 9.

24) Tac. Ann. 2,43,5.

25) Raepsaet-Charlier (1987) no. 389 (cf. [1982] no. 379–80), places the mysterious Fulvia/Paulina in Syria, but the evidence for her presence there seems to be limited to her interest in eastern religions.

by what little we know even about the provincial visits of the very high-profile Livia. As noted, Drusus alludes to her travelling with Augustus to the eastern and western parts of the empire. Despite this testimony to the breadth of her travels, there is no piece of direct evidence that explicitly places Livia with Augustus in the east, and no coherent and plausible evidence that places her in the west.[26] It should not, accordingly, be considered surprising that so little is known about the travels of ordinary upper-class wives. Moreover, there is a similar dearth of evidence for wives accompanying husbands to public provinces, not subject to Augustus' supposed ban. A Statilia, wife of the proconsul Lucius Calpurnius Piso, is attested from Pergamum as the recipient, along with her husband, of an honorific statue. She may also be honoured in an inscription from Samos, where the names have been erased. She could well be the Statilia cited by Pliny as having died during the reign of Claudius, at the age of 99.[27] There is disagreement about the identity of her husband, Lucius Calpurnius Piso, the two candidates being either Piso Pontifex (consul 15 BC) or Piso Augur (consul 1 BC). For the present purpose the precise identity is not important, since there is consensus that if either Piso served as proconsul of Asia his term would have been under Augustus. The mere existence of an honorific statue is no guarantee that this Statilia actually joined her husband in the province. Certainly, in the case of women of the imperial family, honorific statues were erected all over the Roman world in places they had never visited. But it certainly makes her presence likely.[28]

One other possible example in a public province has been adduced. An inscription (in Greek) has survived in Athens on the base of an honorific (now missing) statue honouring a]*ompon*[, presumably Pomponia, the wife of a Metilius Rufus. A fragment containing the word *anthupatos* (proconsul) has been assigned to the same inscription, thus identifying Metilius as the governor. Accordingly, as some have supposed, Pomponia could have been

26) See Barrett (2002) 34–5; the only literary evidence is Sen. Clem. 1,9,2,6, which seems to put Livia in Gaul, but Seneca's chronology is massively confused and Dio 55,14,1 places the same episode in Rome (see Barrett [2002] 318–9).

27) Pergamum: Ch. Habicht, Altertümer von Pergamon (1969) 8.3, no. 19; Samos AM 75 (1960) 130 no. 30; Pliny NH 7,158.

28) Augur (about AD 6): Syme (1986) 337, 376; Pontifex (in years following 10 BC): Habicht supra 41, Eilers (1996) 221–3.

present in Athens with her proconsul-husband.[29] This, it has been argued, may well have occurred in Augustus' reign, since in AD 15 Achaea (along with Macedonia) was taken from senatorial 'jurisdiction' and became an imperial province. Again, a statue for Pomponia does not prove her presence, and a statue seems to have been set up for Metilius' father, whose presence is similarly unproved. But there is another weakness in the argument for Pomponia's presence under Augustus. Achaea was restored to the senate by Claudius in AD 44, making possible a term of office for Metilius after that date.[30]

Given this limited epigraphic evidence, the most valuable insight into how both Augustus and Tiberius might have dealt with the issue of governors' wives, and arguably the most important evidence for how we should interpret Suetonius' statement, comes from a celebrated debate held in the Roman senate in AD 21.[31] Tiberius had asked the senators to choose a new governor of Africa, plagued by incursions under Tacfarinas, and they responded by leaving the choice to the emperor. In the course of these proceedings (*inter quae*) A. Caecina Severus introduced a supplementary motion, that the governors of provinces should not be accompanied by their wives: *censuit ne quem magistratum cui provincia obvenisset uxor comitaretur*. He argued, among other things, that wives impeded the proper conduct of military operations. He was opposed by Valerius Messalinus. Their speeches are presented in some detail by Tacitus. Neither senator was particularly inspired or convincing, and the debate was brought to an end by Drusus, son of Tiberius. Drusus opposed the motion, citing his own situation of being reluctant to be separated from his wife, as well as the precedent of Augustus and Livia. The proposal was thwarted, and may never have been put to the vote (*sic … sententia elusa est*).

One detail of the senate proceedings that has not attracted attention is that if Augustus did not allow his legates to be accompanied by their wives, Drusus' final words would surely be tanta-

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29) Graindor (1927) 69 no. 26, 73; Woloch (1973) 93; Raepsaet-Charlier (1987) no. 634.

30) IG II/III^2 4238 (Pomponia), 4152 (father); Pomponia: PIR^1 P 572; Graindor (see previous note) suggested that the lettering, brevity and use of dark Eleusinian stone seem to suit an Augustan rather than Claudian or later date, and simply assumed that Pomponia had been in Athens; Achaia assigned to emperor: Tac. Ann. 1,76,4; restored to senate: Suet. Claud. 25; Dio 60,24,1.

mount to a serious insult to his father's predecessor. As noted above, Augustus was not, of course, a legatus with operational military duties and the presence of his wife would technically not have been prohibited by his own putative ban, but for Drusus to cite him as an *exemplum* would surely have had the rhetorical effect of rubbing salt into the wound, and would carry the unmistakable message that Drusus was distancing himself from what might be seen as a blatant instance of Augustan hypocrisy. This surely can not have been his intention, which would totally contradict his father Tiberius' policy of deference to Augustus, whom Tiberius constantly paraded as a precedent. A far more natural way to take the passage (and it is surely how we would take it in the absence of Suetonius' evidence) would be to assume that what Drusus is saying is not that the company of wives was an imperial privilege, but that the custom of wives accompanying their husbands had been maintained not only in Tiberius' day but also in Augustus', and that by his own example Augustus gave respect and authority to the practice.

Tacitus notes that most of the senators were annoyed by Caecina's speech, interrupting with protests that it was off-motion, and that they also objected that Caecina was in no position to behave like a censor in issues of such weight.[32] It is important, however, to observe that they did not complain that the basic facts, as presented by Caecina, were incorrect or distorted. We surely have to assume that while Caecina may not have been convincing, he would not have made assertions on the record that were known publicly to be absurd. The factual content of his statements should accordingly be given its due weight.

Special attention should be paid to two of the points that he makes. Caecina begins his speech by establishing his qualifications for making the proposal. He states that he had by AD 21 participated in no fewer than forty campaigns, in a military career that

31) Tac. Ann. 3,32–35.

32) A Roman senator was entitled to speak during the course of a debate on any topic he might choose, provided it was in the public good: Tac. Ann. 2,33,1: *erat quippe adhuc* (sc. AD 16) *frequens quod in commune conducat … proferre*; 2,38,1; cf. 13,49; Talbert (1984) 257–60. Woodman (1996) 300 is almost certainly correct in arguing that the senators were referring to censorial powers in an informal sense only, without any suggestion of a formal or legal overstepping of constitutional authority.

must presumably have begun in the mid-twenties BC.[33] We are afforded glimpses of this career from the literary and epigraphical sources. His first recorded military exploit occurred in AD 6, when he was legatus in Moesia, and entered neighbouring Pannonia and inflicted a defeat on the Breuci, returning afterwards to Moesia to deal with the Dacians and Sarmatians.[34] The following year, AD 7, saw him again in Pannonia in a campaign against the Batones, north west of Sirmium, when five Roman legions were attacked by the enemy near the Volcaean marshes. Caecina presumably returned to Moesia afterwards, and may have played a part in the final defeat of the Pannonians in the following year.[35] In 8/9 or 9/10 he served as proconsul of Africa, in command of Legio III.[36]

We next hear of him in AD 14, as legatus of Germania Inferior, caught up in the mutiny of the German legions on the death of Augustus, although we do not know when he took up his command.[37] Late in AD 14 and in AD 15, he was involved in the campaigns east of the Rhine and his contribution was rewarded later that year by the award of the *ornamenta triumphalia*.[38] Clearly, then, Caecina had served for much of his career as legatus, the rank that is specifically mentioned as being included in Augustus' sup-

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33) Tac. Ann. 3,33,1: *quadraginta stipendia*. In an entry on Caecina's campaign in AD 15, Tac. Ann. 1,64,4 refers to *quadragesimum id stipendium,* and Caecina was to be involved in at least one further campaign, in AD 16 (Tac. Ann. 2,6,1). It may be that Caecina used a round figure in his speech in the senate. Koestermann (1963) 482 suggests that he might have been restricted to shipbuilding in AD 16, but grants that there is no mention of his being replaced as legatus for the campaign proper. Syme (1982) 70 suggests that the first reference to 40 campaigns is reckoned from the military tribunate, the second from the quaestorship; see Wiseman (1971) 168; Vell. 2,112,4 refers to Caecina as being of consular rank in AD 7 and he can be safely identified as the suffect consul A. Caecina recorded for 1 BC; see Mancini (1935) 68; AE 1937.62. Despite the wealth and social prominence of the Caecinae, he held this office as a *novus homo*: Wiseman (1971) 168 suggests that he was the second or third senator from his family; on Caecina's career in general, Caecina: PIR^2 C 106, RE 3.1 (1897) 1241–43 (E. Groag); Eck (1985) 3, 5, 107–10; DNP II 898–9.

34) Dio 55,29,3–30,5; Syme (1933) 28; (1934) 131.

35) Vell. 2,112,2–6; Dio 55,32,3–4. Caecina's Balkan campaign: Syme (1933) 26, 28; (1934) 119, 131, 135; Mrozewicz (1999).

36) AE 1887.992 (a milestone found near Sabratha).

37) Tac. Ann. 1,31; 32,1; 37.

38) Tac. Ann. 1,63–68; 72,1; Caecina's last recorded military activity belongs to the following year, AD 16, which saw him building a fleet (see also n. 31): Tac. Ann. 2,6,1.

posed ban. He was clearly well-qualified to speak on this topic from personal experience.

Caecina observed that in presenting his motion he was behaving consistently and was proposing for the state a policy that he had maintained privately (*seque quae in publicum statueret domi servavisse*). During his forty years of service his wife had stayed within the borders of Italy (bearing him six children in the meantime). She thus distinguished herself from the familiar phenomenon of recent governors' wives who interfered in the business of the province and in the activities of the troops. His boast clearly makes sense only if he had had a choice; if Augustus had enacted a ban on wives accompanying their husbands, then Caecina would be claiming as a personal achievement something that the emperor had in fact imposed.[39]

Caecina makes another telling statement. He asserts that there had been a time (*olim*) when, with good reason, it had not been policy to drag wives out to the provinces: *haud enim frustra placitum olim ne feminae in socios aut gentis externas traherentur*. What time can Caecina be thinking of? There are two possibilities. The reference could be to the system that had prevailed for most of the life of the Republic and had been brought to an end over a hundred years earlier by Sulla. Alternatively Caecina could have been thinking of the supposed policy of Augustus, which had been abandoned, at the most, only seven years ago. *Olim* better suits the former situation, but would not be impossible for the latter. What would surely be impossible would be implicit criticism of Tiberius by expressions of indignation over the abandonment of Augustus' policy. For all his exploits on the battlefield Caecina does not appear to have been a bold and independent actor on the political stage. This is shown clearly by the examples he chooses in the remainder of his speech. To illustrate the dangers posed by wives in the provinces he indirectly alludes to two recent incidents. He claims that these women paraded among the troops, with centurions at their service; not long ago, a woman had presided at the ex-

39) If Marshall's understanding of the language is correct, that wives were allowed brief winter stays, Caecina might have intended merely to say that his wife had not availed herself even of the casual visits, but in that case his argument would have had little relevance to the overall theme of his speech, which deals exclusively with the problems caused by extended female sojourns and the consequent female interference in administration.

ercises of the cohorts and the manoeuvres of the legions: *incedere inter milites, habere ad manum centuriones, praesedisse nuper feminam exercitio cohortium, decursu legionum*.[40] Clearly Caecina was making reference to Plancina, who had accompanied her husband Cn. Calpurnius Piso to Syria in AD 18, where Tacitus, in language that is clearly reminiscent of Caecina's speech, describes her as taking part in the exercises of the cavalry and the manoeuvres of the cohorts: *exercitio equitum, decursibus cohortium*.[41] In exploiting the resentment aroused by Plancina's conduct Caecina would have been supporting an official position that had widespread public support. But he also recalls a well-known incident that had occurred some years earlier. The conduct of Agrippina in preventing the destruction of the Rhine bridge at Vetera in AD 15 matches the pattern of the interfering women who aroused Caecina's anger.[42] There is in addition an interesting verbal echo. Tacitus reports that Agrippina's actions enraged Tiberius, and in words that are reminiscent of Caecina's, the emperor grumbled about a situation where a woman sought the popularity of the troops: *femina manipulos intervisat, signa adeat, largitionem temptet*. Moreover Tiberius sarcastically charged Agrippina with behaving *parum ambitiose*, just as Caecina accuses the female sex in the provinces of being *ambitiosum*.[43] The thinly veiled criticism of Agrippina would have served a very personal purpose. It would have helped salve Caecina's own possible humiliation over the rescue of his troops by a woman.[44] It would also, of course, have been intended to appeal to Tiberius, a man noted for his impatience over women interfering in public policy. While Tiberius was surely not the sinister enemy of Agrippina at this period, as implied by Tacitus, he was certainly much irritated by her conduct. Such obsequiousness can only be inferred from Caecina's speech on this occasion. But there is also on record an earlier explicit example of blatant flattery. Following Piso's trial in AD 20 Caecina proposed to the senate that an altar of Vengeance (*ara ultionis)* be set up, and at the same time

40) Tac. Ann. 3,33,3.

41) Tac. Ann. 2,55,5.

42) Tac. Ann. 1,69,1–3; Tacitus cites Pliny the Elder for the information.

43) Tac. Ann. 1,69,4; 3,33,3; it can hardly be accidental that in bringing the debate to a close Drusus avoids this famous example when he cites cases of imperial wives who accompanied their husbands to their provinces.

44) Barrett (2005) 212–213.

Caecina's sparring partner in the Africa debate, Valerius Messalinus, proposed that a golden statue be placed in the temple of Mars Ultor. They both miscalculated, since Tiberius responded that such measures should accompany the defeat only of foreign enemies.[45] But clearly both men had tried to please, and it seems unthinkable that in AD 21 Caecina would have delivered such an angry rebuke directed specifically at Tiberius' policy. He must surely have intended a global criticism of the prevailing practice for the last hundred or so years.

Clearly, it is very difficult to reconcile Caecina's arguments with the notion of a virtual prohibition by Augustus on the presence of the wives of legati. There is moreover one famous incident that speaks even more heavily against such a ban, belonging to the period of the mutinies that broke out on the Rhine after the death of Augustus in August 14. This period is, of course, post-Augustan, but it is still probative, since the situation would reflect the arrangements that Augustus had in place. At a critical point during the mutinies, Germanicus took measures to protect his wife and infant son Caligula, arranging for them to seek the protection of the Treveri. The details of what happened vary from source to source; it is the account of Tacitus that is relevant here.[46] He reports that Agrippina left the camp as part of a procession, carrying Caligula and surrounded by tearful women. Who were these women? Tacitus calls them the wives of *amici*, women torn from their husbands, just as Agrippina was being torn from hers. These were clearly ladies of rank, since the troops are said to have been moved by the weeping of the *feminae illustres*. The fact that they are the wives of *amici* precludes their being simply the wives of Romans resident in the area who might have sought refuge with Germanicus during the disturbances. Also, Tacitus' description of them as such, rather than as *amicae* or *comites* of Agrippina, seems also to preclude the possibility that they are female companions specifically selected by Agrippina to accompany her on her travels. It is not clear whether Tacitus sees the *amici* as friends of Agrippina, or of Germanicus, or of both. Now it is not impossible that they represent Germanicus' retinue of personal friends and that they and

45) Tac. Ann. 3,18,2. It may be that this Messalinus is actually the son of the speaker at the Africa debate; see Woodman (1996) 189, 300.

46) Tac. Ann. 1,40–44,1–3; see also Suet. Cal. 9; 48,1; Dio 57,5,6.

their wives formed a kind of shared entourage of Agrippina and her husband. But if so, we would have to accept the implausible notion that Germanicus was accompanied in the German military zones on the eve of military operations against the German tribes by an entourage not only of personal male friends, unlikely enough in itself, but of their wives also. It would create a grotesque situation that a regular legatus of a military province could not be accompanied by his wife, but that in the case of someone like Germanicus, the rule was waived not only for him (because of the special nature of his specific office, or his membership of the imperial family) but also even for the friends that he chose to take along with him. In any case the soldiers themselves are said to be struck not only by the absence of any sort of bodyguard, and by the absence of any of the usual accoutrements of the commander's wife, but also by the absence of the usual *comitatus*. What do they mean (or what does Tacitus mean, if he is being somewhat creative in this context) by this term? Could the word be used pleonastically of the missing bodyguards, just mentioned? Elsewhere in Tacitus, *comitatus* almost always has the sense of an entourage made up from friends, clients, hangers-on and retainers, and may occasionally include, with the above, the governor's official staff.[47] It can mean a retinue of women, and in such contexts tends to acquire a distinctly pejorative connotation: hence Plancina arrives with her husband in Rome in a showy display: *magno clientium agmine ipse, feminarum comitatu Plancina … incessere*. Caecina Severus in the Africa debate can complain that there are elements inherent in a woman's entourage (*inesse mulierum comitatui*) that have a malign effect on provincial administration. Tacitus twice uses the term rather more abstractly of the close confidants of the emperor, almost akin to the *concilium principis*, and in one instance he uses it figuratively of the retinue of birds that attend the Phoenix.[48] In only two places does he give *comitatus* a military flavour: in the *Germania* he uses it of the retinue of warriors who attach themselves to a German chief and try to emulate him in their military exploits, clearly an institution alien to Roman practice and for which Tacitus applied an approximate Roman expression. In one

47) Tac. Hist. 2,87,1; 92,1; 4,14,3; Ann. 3,1,4; 4,58,1; 11,12,3; Dial. 6,4; 11,3; 32,4; Agr. 40,4.

48) Plancina: Tac. Ann. 3,9,2; Caecina: Tac. Ann. 3,33,2; confidants: Tac. Hist. 2,65,2; Ann. 13,46,3; Phoenix: Tac. Ann. 6,28,3.

place only is the word used of Roman military practice. Otho seeks to enlist the support of Roman troops as old comrades by appealing to *memoria Neroniani comitatus*, but this is clearly a very abstract sense of *comitatus*, with the force of "shared service under". It clearly cannot be a parallel to what the soldiers had in mind on witnessing Agrippina's departure.[49] We must surely conclude that whatever the identity of the women, Agrippina did not have a retinue of *comites*, of friends who were either her own or shared with her husband.

What, then, does this tell us about the husbands, the *amici,* whose wives were departing? By a process of elimination the only reasonable explanation is that they are Germanicus' officers. It follows that these officers were accompanied by their wives into the province. We find the same word used later in the scene of Germanicus' death in Syria, when he delivered his final instructions to his *amici*.[50] This suggests, then, that at least by the end of Augustus' reign the wives of legati and even of lower-ranking officers were resident in the German zones (Caecina's wife excepted, of course!) implying, in fact, a considerable company of officers' wives much like what the evidence from Vindolanda reveals at the equestrian level almost a century later in Britain. Their presence in the camps during the campaigning season of AD 14 needs cause no surprise, since it can be explained as an emergency measure necessitated by the extraordinary circumstances of the mutinies.[51]

Thus, while there is no way to prove that Augustus did not impose a virtual ban on wives in imperial provinces, even on those of legati, the weight of the evidence indicates that wives did in fact join Roman officials during his reign. Does this suggest that Suetonius' information is incorrect? Not necessarily. It is possible that his statement has been misunderstood. Clearly Suetonius is describing restrictions that the emperor placed on his officials and their opportunities to spend time with their wives, and there is no reason why his testimony should not be taken seriously. But the nature of those restrictions is ambiguous. There are two possible explanations for the apparent contradiction between Suetonius and the other evidence. First, Suetonius does not say that their wives

49) Germans: Tac. Germ. 13,2; 14,1; Otho: Tac. Hist. 1,23,1.
50) Tac. Ann. 2,71,1. 5.
51) Bowman (1994) 56–57.

were obliged to stay in Italy, but that matrimonial reunions could happen only in the winter. He could be describing a situation where wives continued to accompany their husbands to the imperial provinces under Augustus, but were expected to remain in the administrative base while their husbands devoted their attention to their military duties without major distraction, especially during the campaigning season.[52] Interestingly, the birthplace of the future emperor Claudius, in Lugdunum, might seem to offer some vindication of that notion. At the time (August, 10 BC), Claudius' father Drusus was engaged in campaigns against the Chatti. Lugdunum, the site of a Roman colony, was the principal town of Gallia Comata and the centre of the road system. It was an obvious rear headquarters for campaigns against the Germans. The presence of Antonia, Claudius' mother, there might reinforce the notion that the wives of legati, even from the imperial family, were restricted to the administrative base. We cannot, of course, preclude the possibility that she had earlier been with Drusus in the Rhine area but had been sent to a safer location for the delivery. Another way to interpret Suetonius' statement is to accept that Augustus did indeed place a total ban on the presence of wives in the provinces, but did so only in a time, or times, of serious crisis. In this passage, as frequently elsewhere, Suetonius' style is very telescopic. It may be that a description of action taken during a specific emergency, or at best a very limited number of specific emergencies, illustrating Augustus' adherence to old-fashioned *disciplina*, has been wrongly taken as indicative of a general and continuous policy.

In conclusion, then, Suetonius' testimony relating to the wives of officials in imperial provinces under Augustus can stand, provided it is not misunderstood. The strong likelihood is that once Sulla had broken with the tradition by being joined by his wife, there was continuity down through the triumviral period into the reign of Tiberius. Augustus' successor did not find himself in

52) It is in fact just possible to discern this meaning in an overlooked source, the scholia of David Ruhnken, who notes on this passage: *nullae in castris Romanorum feminae erant, ne magistratui quidem, cui provincia obvenisset, uxorem ibi habere licuit* (see Geel [1824] 140). His *ibi* has presumably been taken to refer to the *provincia.* But it is not impossible that he meant that wives were banned specifically from the *castra* and that he was plausibly arguing that there was no restriction imposed on their residing in the actual provinces. Ruhnken's phrase *cui provincia obvenisset* echoes Caecina's identical words (Tac. Ann. 3,33,1).

the awkward position of having to distance himself from his revered predecessor's policy, since imperial officials had almost certainly, as a matter of general policy, been accompanied to their provinces by their wives in the preceding reign. Augustus may have felt obliged to adopt stern measures in times of emergency, or may have tightened discipline to the extent that once in the provinces the focus of his officers, right up to and including the rank of legatus, was expected to be on military, not domestic, duties. But his general policy was far less draconian than scholars from Lipsius on have generally supposed.

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