

aufgenommen worden sein<sup>44</sup>). Vermutlich war die divinatorische Vergil-Allegorese zur Zeit des Calpurnius bereits zu einem panegyrischen Routineverfahren geworden. Ob irgendeine historische Beziehung zu der Allegorese Konstantins besteht, ob sich gar eine Entwicklung nachzeichnen läßt, bliebe zu untersuchen<sup>45</sup>).

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44) Das dürfte mutatis mutandis auch von der Art und Weise gelten, wie man in jenen Jahren allegorische Deutungen, die die Stoa von den traditionellen Göttern des Mythos gegeben hatte, auf Nero übertrug, so daß dieser Kaiser als stoisch allegorisierte Agathodaimon, Herakles und Apollon aufgefaßt wurde. G. Rocca-Serra, *Exégèse allégorique et idéologie impériale: L'Abrégé de Cornutus*, in: J.-M. Croisille/P.-M. Fauchère (Hrsgg.), *Neronia 1977*, Clermont-Ferrand 1982, 61–72.

45) Bei der christlichen Deutung von Vergils 4. Ekloge durch Konstantin mag eine Rolle gespielt haben, daß die theologische politische Propaganda Konstantins, wie sie bei Eusebios greifbar ist, den Caesar Augustus Constantinus als Abbild des himmlischen Herrschers deutete, so daß Vergils ‚Prophezeiung‘ sich statt auf das irdische Kaisertum nunmehr auf dessen göttliches Urbild beziehen ließ. Vgl. Euseb., *Laud. Const.* (ed. Heikel, s. o. Anm. 6, 193 ff.), bes. 7, 12–13 ὁ . . . εἷς βασιλεὺς (Konstantin) εἰκὼν ἑνὸς τοῦ παμβασιλέως, . . . τὸν αὐτοῦ σωτήρα μιμούμενος, . . . οἷα μεγάλου βασιλέως ὑπαρχος. Näheres zu Eusebios' politischer Theologie bei K. Baus/E. Ewig, in: H. Jedin (Hrsg.), *Handb. d. Kirchengesch.* II 1, Freiburg 1973, 83 f. J. A. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike*, Stuttgart 1939 (*Forsch. zur Kirchen- u. Geistesgesch.* 18), 118–129.

## THE EMPEROR GALBA AND THE FOUR VIRTUES A Note on Tac. Hist. 1,49,3–4

Readers of Tacitus may be puzzled by a discrepancy between Galba's characterization as propounded in his obituary hist. 1,49, 2–4 and this emperor's depiction in the preceding narrative. In the narrative three features (or feature-complexes) of Galba's personality are stressed: *severitas/tristitia* (or *saevitia*), *parsimonia/avaritia* and dependence upon friends and advisors aggravated by the

emperor's old age and frailty<sup>1</sup>). On the other hand in the obituary, after a general and somewhat categorical assessment of Galba's moral position (*ipsi medium ingenium, magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus*) the historian describes his attitude towards fame and money and his relations with friends and freedmen<sup>2</sup>). Yet there is no mention of *severitas/tristitia*, perhaps the most significant facet of Galba's personality (represented by the historian as, in a sense, responsible for his fate<sup>3</sup>); two others characteristics of the narrative, although mentioned in the obituary, do not constitute, as we shall soon perceive, an important part of it.

We should not, however, attach too much importance to this discrepancy. Tacitean obituaries are not always in complete accordance with a person's characterization in the narrative; sometimes they introduce material not mentioned before in order to make corrections to his image<sup>4</sup>); sometimes the author himself decides not to dwell once again upon features already known to his readers<sup>5</sup>). E. Koestermann's criticism of Galba's obituary as a "Notkonstruktion" is perhaps not wholly justified<sup>6</sup>).

As it seems, in his final statement on the emperor Tacitus is concerned with new problems rather than with those already touched on; a new theme is introduced (in typically Tacitean manner) by *sed*:

*sed claritas natalium et metus temporum obtentui, ut, quod segnitia erat, sapientia vocaretur. dum vigeat aetas, militari laude apud Germanias floruit. pro consule Africam moderate, iam senior citeriorem Hispaniam pari iustitia continuit, maior privato*

1) *severitas/tristitia*: 1,5,2; 6,1 f.; 14,2; 18,3; 35,2; 37,2 ff.; 38,1; *parsimonia/avaritia*: 1,5,2; 18,3; 20,1; 25,2; 37,5; 38,1; *senium*, friends: 1,5,2; 6,1; 7,3; 12,3; 13,1; 16,3; 34,1; 37,5. See F. Krohn, Personendarstellungen bei Tacitus (Diss. Leipzig 1934), 8–32, esp. 8–12 followed by E. Koestermann, *Navicula Chiloniensis* (Leiden 1956), 195–199.

2) 1,49,3: *famae nec incuriosus nec venditator; pecuniae alienae non adpetens, suae parcus, publicae avarus; amicorum libertorumque, ubi in bonos incidisset, sine reprehensione patiens, si mali forent, usque ad culpam ignarus.*

3) Most explicitly in 1,18,3: *constat potuisse conciliari animos quantulacumque parci senis liberalitate: nocuit antiquus rigor et nimia severitas...*

4) Such is the case with Titus Vinius' obituary (hist. 1,48) for which see Koestermann, o.c., 193.

5) See hist. 2,50,1 (Otho): *pueritia ac iuventa, qualem monstravimus; ann. 6,27,4 (Marcus Lepidus): de cuius moderatione atque sapientia in prioribus libris satis conlocavi.*

6) o.c., 199. Koestermann's opinion is criticized by H. Heubner, P. Cornelius Tacitus, *Die Historien, Kommentar I* (Heidelberg 1963), 107 f.

*visus dum privatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*

The concluding epigram, perhaps the most famous words Tacitus wrote, by the very reason of its celebrity and epigrammatic structure, is usually approached for its own sake, in isolation from its context. It is the context, however, which serves as a necessary introduction to it and which gives it its full strength. Let us consider it here.

Tacitus gives a summary of Galba's career before his rise to power. His interest is however not so much in facts themselves as in the public image of the future emperor; for he was, the historian tells us, *maior privato visus*. Accordingly, Galba's sluggishness was misinterpreted by others, due to *metus temporum* enhanced by his high birth, as wisdom and it is the latter which is important, not the former<sup>7</sup>). Three other aspects of his image are mentioned: military renown won by him in Germany, the moderation of his African proconsulate, and justice displayed in Spain.

This set should not be overlooked. The four clearly correspond to the cardinal virtues of Greek philosophy (*sapientia* ~ φρόνησις, *militari laude* ~ ἀνδρεία, *moderate* ~ σωφροσύνη, *iustitia* ~ δικαιοσύνη); the correlation is too striking to be regarded as casual. The idea seems to be this: Galba, people believed, was endowed with the virtues of wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice; he was, consequently, perfect material for a ruler (for, according to an ancient opinion, possession of these virtues is the best qualification for rule)<sup>8</sup>), *capax imperii*. Unfortunately, they were fatally wrong: *nisi imperasset*.

7) This refers, most probably, to his life under Nero, see Suet. Galba 9,1: *paulatim in desidiam segnitiamque conversus est, ne quid materiae praeberet Neroni et, ut dicere solebat, quod nemo rationem otii sui reddere cogeretur* (also 8,1: *ex eo tempore prope ad medium Neronis principatum in secessu plurimum vixit*). The idea that under a bad emperor one is inclined to retire from public life or not to perform one's duties eagerly (and that there is wisdom in such conduct) is common in contemporary literature, see e.g. Tac. Agr. 6,3: *... quiete et otio transiit, gnarus sub Nerone temporum, quibus inertia pro sapientia fuit*; Plin. ep. 9,13,3: *metu temporum nomen ingens paresque virtutes secessu tegebat*; paneg. 66,4: *miseria illa ex periculis facta prudentia*, both referring to Domitian's reign. (Earlier Pliny insists that the situation changed under Trajan: *nec iam consideratus et sapiens, qui aetatem in tenebris agit*, 44,5). See also remarks on *quies* by R. Syme, *AJPh* 58 (1937) 7 f. (= *Danubian Papers*, Bucharest 1971, 73 f.).

8) This is apparent from the very beginnings of the doctrine of the four virtues (it can be noted that these were originally understood as social qualities; individual interpretation came later; see O. Kunsemüller, *Die Herkunft der platonischen Kardinaltugenden*, Diss. Erlangen 1935 and H. F. North in *The Classical*

Plutarch, too, in his final appraisal of Galba (Plut. Galba 29,1) is concerned with the emperor's public image; he says that it was τῇ δόξῃ rather than τῇ δυνάμει that he gained the imperial rank. Accordingly, both authors share the view of the importance of Galba's reputation in his rise to power but only the Roman writer points out the disastrous inaccuracy of people's opinion.

The idea of the virtues as the most important qualification for rule is to be found also in Agr. 39,2 (it is introduced to serve different purposes, however). There, it is Agricola who (in Domitian's soliloquy) is represented as *capax imperii*, although only one virtue of his is mentioned: *id sibi maxime formidolosum, privati hominis nomen supra principem adtolli: frustra studia fori et civilium artium decus in silentium acta, si militarem gloriam alius occuparet; cetera utcumque facilius dissimulari, ducis boni imperatoriam virtutem esse.*

Tacitus' desire to represent Galba's achievements under the heading of the four virtues leads him inevitably to distortions. Suetonius, who gives us the fullest record of Galba's career before A.D. 68, corroborates, to be sure, what the historian says about his military prowess and justice (Suet. Galba 6,2–3; 7; 9; cf. Plut. Galba 3,2). Yet he makes no mention of his moderation (the quality which, I believe, refers in Tacitus to his treatment of his subjects, especially in the context of punishments)<sup>9</sup>); moreover, his

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Tradition, Ithaca N.Y. 1966, 165 ff.). For the four virtues as characterizing an ideal ruler see esp. Xen. Ages. 3–6 (εὐσέβεια is added) and Isocr. Euag. 22 f. The idea was stressed by both philosophy (Musonius Rufus' treatise ὅτι φιλοσοφητέον καὶ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν – from Tacitus' lifetime – nr. 8 Hense) and rhetoric (theory and practice of βασιλικὸς λόγος, see Men. Rhet. Spengel III 373,5 ff.). – “Though the Romans paid lip-service to the Platonic canon, they had strong ideas of their own about *virtus*, and were little inclined to acknowledge that a Roman might learn much from a Greek about morality” (A. Wallace-Hadrill, Suetonius, The Scholar and his Caesars, London 1983, 153; note however Cic. Cat. 2,25 where traditionally Roman virtues such as *pudor*, *fides*, *pietas*, *constantia* coexist with those of the Greek canon; see now C. J. Classen, Gymnasium 95 [1988] 289–302). Such is the case, of course, with Tacitus as well, although he occasionally alludes to some canonical virtues (e.g. Agr. 42,3: *moderatio* and *prudentia*; ann. 6,27,4: *moderatio* and *sapientia*). However, hist. 1,49,3–4 is, I believe, his only reference to the entire canon. – As to the official ideology of the principate, the advertised virtues of an emperor had, in spite of a long-established opinion, very little in common with the Greek ones; see the thorough examination by A. Wallace-Hadrill, Historia 30 (1981) 298–323, esp. 300–307 (with special reference to the *clipeus virtutis*).

9) For this meaning in Tacitus see ann. 3,50,2; 3,56,1; 4,34,5; 14,49,2. The last passage is esp. instructive since *moderatio* there is introduced as opposite to *severitas* (*severitatem decernentium impediturus fuerit, moderationem non prohibere*).

picture of Galba's administration of Africa, with its emphasis on the *severitas* of the future emperor, is strikingly at odds with Tacitus' assessment: *Africam pro consule biennio optinuit ... ad ordinandam provinciam et intestina dissensione et barbarorum tumultu inquietam; ordinavitque magna severitatis ac iustitiae cura etiam in parvulis rebus*. Two examples follow, the first to illustrate his *severitas*, the second his *iustitia*; the former describes the fate of a soldier starved to death by Galba on account of the illegal sale of corn. This is by no means reconcilable with Tacitean *moderate*<sup>10</sup>).

It is from this perspective that we can approach once again the question of the discrepancy between hist. 1,49 and the preceding narrative, already touched on at the beginning of these remarks. Tacitus' decision to leave the theme of Galba's *severitas* out of the obituary seems now quite reasonable: stressing *severitas* would be not only needless (since it was already stressed before), it would also be harsh in this context.

The historian's treatment of the theme of the imperial virtues is marked by deep scepticism. There is a wide gap between advertised words and the real world<sup>11</sup>). Here, Tacitus is interested in people's belief rather than in propaganda, yet the gap remains: *sapientia, fortitudo, moderatio*, and *iustitia* on the one hand, *magis extra vitia quam cum virtutibus* on the other.

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10) Suet. Galba 7. See also 9,1 on Spain: *acer et vehemens et in coercendis quidem delictis vel immodicus* (three examples). *Severitas* is, of course, also stressed by Tacitus earlier in the narrative (see n.1 above; a reference to Galba's previous career is in 1,5,2).

11) See R. Syme, Tacitus (Oxford 1958), I 414–416; II 754–756.