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**eManual Alte Geschichte:
Quellenband: Dynastie, Flavier**

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Tac. Ann. I, 61f.

Leitfragen:

- 1) Welchen Zweck verfolgten die Römer mit der Expedition in den Teutoburger Wald?
- 2) Wie verliefen die Feldzüge des Germanicus?
- 3) Welches Fazit kann man für die römische Germanienpolitik ziehen?

Kommentar:

Die verheerende Niederlage der drei römischen Legionen unter Publius Quinctilius Varus im Teutoburger Wald (wahrscheinlich bei Kalkriese) im Jahre 9 n. Chr. schockierte das gesamte römische Reich. Berühmt geworden ist der von Kaiser Augustus überlieferte Ausspruch: „Varus, gib die Legionen zurück!“ (Suet. Aug. 23), als er vom Ausgang der Kämpfe erfuhr. Es war dies die größte Niederlage der Römer gegen Barbaren, die sie seit Carrhae 53 v. Chr. hatten verkraften müssen. Nicht nur waren drei Legionen und sämtliche sie begleitende Hilfstruppen verloren gegangen, auch die geheiligten Legionsstandarten und sämtliche rechtsrheinische Kastelle zählten zu den Verlusten. Somit war ein wesentliches Ziel der sechs Jahre später stattfindenden Germanienexpedition unter Augustus' Großneffen Germanicus die Bestattung der Gefallenen sowie die Wiederherstellung der römischen Waffenehre durch die Rückerlangung der Standarten. Ebenso sollten die umstrittenen Gebiete unmittelbar rechts des Rheins wieder besetzt und mit neuen Kastellen gesichert werden. Also zog Germanicus mit vier Legionen nach Germanien. Es gelang ihm zunächst, den Adler der neunzehnten Legion wiederzugewinnen und eine plündernde Streitmacht der Brukterer zu zerstreuen. Am Ort der Varusschlacht angekommen, fanden die Römer die Überbleibsel eines Lagers und der Legionäre, sowie Hinweise auf rituelle Opferungen der Offiziere. Germanicus ließ seine Männer die Toten bestatten, wobei er laut Tacitus religiöse Riten vollführte, die ihm den Zorn des Tiberius einbrachten. Denn Germanicus hielt zu diesem Zeitpunkt das Amt eines Auguren, für die sich wohl die Partizipation an Begräbnisriten nicht schickte. Ein Zusammenstoß mit dem Heer des Arminius, des germanischen Heerführers bei der Varusschlacht, ging für die Römer glimpflich aus, nachdem sie erneut fast in eine Falle getappt waren. Germanicus' Unterfeldherr Aulus Caecina Severus hatte weniger Glück: Auf dem Rückweg ins Winterlager wurden seine Truppen überfallen und konnten sich nur unter Verlusten aus dem sumpfigen Operationsgebiet zurückziehen. Auch spätere Feldzüge brachten nicht die erhoffte Befriedung des jenseitigen Germaniens, da die locker gefassten germanischen Kriegerverbände kaum zu ihrem Nachteil zu stellen waren. Auch das Fehlen größerer Ortschaften als Stützpunkte machte sich bemerkbar. Weder konnten die Römer dauerhaft Siedlungen im rechtsrheinischen Gebiet unterhalten, noch auf ihren Strafexpeditionen nennenswerten Schaden anrichten, da die germanische Wirtschaft und Besiedlung stark dezentralisiert war. Somit waren Augustus' Nachfolger gezwungen, den größten Teil der rechtsrheinischen Gebiete für immer aufzugeben, von gelegentlichen Feldzügen zur Einschüchterung abgesehen.

Tac. Ann. I, 61f.

Text Original:

61. Igitur cupido Caesarem invadit solvendi suprema militibus ducique, permoto ad miserationem omni qui aderat exercitu ob propinquos, amicos, denique ob casus bellorum et sortem hominum. praemisso Caecina ut occulta saltuum scrutaretur pontesque et aggeres umido paludum et fallacibus campis inponeret, incedunt maestos locos visuque ac memoria deformis. prima Vari castra lato ambitu et dimensis principiis trium legionum manus ostentabant; dein semiruto vallo, humili fossa accisae iam reliquiae consedissee intellegebantur: medio campi albentia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta vel aggerata. adiacebant fragmina telorum equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora. lucis propinquis barbarae arae, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant. et cladis eius superstites, pugnam aut vincula elapsi, referebant hic cecidisse legatos, illic raptas aquilas; primum ubi vulnus Varo adactum, ubi infelici dextera et suo ictu mortem invenerit; quo tribunali contionatus Arminius, quot patibula captivis, quae scrobes, utque signis et aquilis per superbiam inluserit.

62. Igitur Romanus qui aderat exercitus sextum post cladis annum trium legionum ossa, nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegetet, omnis ut coniunctos, ut consanguineos, aucta in hostem ira, maesti simul et infensi condebant. primum extruendo tumulo caespitem Caesar posuit, gratissimo munere in defunctos et praesentibus doloris socius. quod Tiberio haud probatum, seu cuncta Germanici in deterius trahenti, sive exercitum imagine caesorum insepultorumque tardatum ad proelia et formidolosiore hostium credebat; neque imperatorem auguratu et vetustissimis caerimoniis praeditum adtrectare feralia debuisse.

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Tac. Ann. I, 61f.

Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb)

Germanicus upon this was seized with an eager longing to pay the last honour to those soldiers and their general, while the whole army present was moved to compassion by the thought of their kinsfolk and friends, and, indeed, of the calamities of wars and the lot of mankind. Having sent on Cæcina in advance to reconnoitre the obscure forest-passes, and to raise bridges and causeways over watery swamps and treacherous plains, they visited the mournful scenes, with their horrible sights and associations. Varus's first camp with its wide circumference and the measurements of its central space clearly indicated the handiwork of three legions. Further on, the partially fallen rampart and the shallow fosse suggested the inference that it was a shattered remnant of the army which had there taken up a position. In the centre of the field were the whitening bones of men, as they had fled, or stood their ground, strewn everywhere or piled in heaps. Near, lay fragments of weapons and limbs of horses, and also human heads, prominently nailed to trunks of trees. In the adjacent groves were the barbarous altars, on which they had immolated tribunes and first-rank centurions. Some survivors of the disaster who had escaped from the battle or from captivity, described how this was the spot where the officers fell, how yonder the eagles were captured, where Varus was pierced by his first wound, where too by the stroke of his own ill-starred hand he found for himself death. They pointed out too the raised ground from which Arminius had harangued his army, the number of gibbets for the captives, the pits for the living, and how in his exultation he insulted the standards and eagles. And so the Roman army now on the spot, six years after the disaster, in grief and anger, began to bury the bones of the three legions, not a soldier knowing whether he was interring the relics of a relative or a stranger, but looking on all as kinsfolk and of their own blood, while their wrath rose higher than ever against the foe. In raising the barrow Cæsar laid the first sod, rendering thus a most welcome honour to the dead, and sharing also in the sorrow of those present. This Tiberius did not approve, either interpreting unfavourably every act of Germanicus, or because he thought that the spectacle of the slain and unburied made the army slow to fight and more afraid of the enemy, and that a general invested with the augurate and its very ancient ceremonies ought not to have polluted himself with funeral rites.

Tac. Ann. I,16-23

Leitfragen:

- 1) Welche Ereignisse führten zu der Meuterei?
- 2) Welche Rückschlüsse auf den Alltag der Soldaten lassen die Schilderungen zu?
- 3) Wie gelang es, den Aufstand zu beenden und welche Folgen hatte er?

Kommentar:

Nach dem pannonischen Aufstand im Jahre 6 n. Chr., in dem die nichtrömischen Bewohner der Provinzen Dalmatien und Pannonien rebellierte hatten, hatte sich die Lage in der Region zunächst wieder beruhigt. Jedoch zeigte sich die militärische Schwäche des Imperiums gegen Ende der Herrschaft des Augustus. Im Jahre 9 n. Chr. folgte die verheerende Niederlage im Teutoburger Wald. Der Regierungswechsel von Augustus zu Tiberius sorgte bei Teilen der in Dalmatien stationierten Legionen für Unmut. Zukunftsängste, materielle Sorgen und die strenge Disziplin gaben Anlass zu ersten Auseinandersetzungen zwischen einfachen Soldaten und ihren Vorgesetzten. Erschwerend wirkte dabei angeblich die Freistellung durch den Legaten Blaesus anlässlich des Todes des Kaisers. Häufiger finden sich in den Quellen Kommentare, dass sich Nichtstun und zu viel Freizeit negativ auf die Disziplin der Legionäre auswirke. So kam es zu offener Befehlsverweigerung und Insubordination ganzer Einheiten. Plündernd zogen die Soldaten durch die Region und verwüsteten Gehöfte. Gegen die Bestrafung der Übeltäter durch den Kommandanten Blaesus wehrten sich die Legionen, befreiten die Gefangenen, sodass sich schließlich loyale und aufständische Soldaten in Waffen gegenüberstanden. Schlimmer noch, der Aufstand weitete sich auf die Rheinlegionen aus, die stärkste Streitmacht im römischen Militär. Hauptbeschwerdepunkt der Soldaten war die als zu lang empfundene Dienstzeit, die geringe Bezahlung und die brutale Durchsetzung der Disziplin. Im Vergleich zu den wesentlich besser gestellten Prätorianern fühlten sich die gemeinen Soldaten herabgesetzt, obwohl sie doch die wichtigsten Verteidiger des Imperiums waren. Kaiser Tiberius entsandte seinen Sohn Drusus mit zwei Prätorianerkohorten und ausgewählten anderen Truppen, um den Aufstand zu unterdrücken, bevor er in offene Rebellion mündete. Recht schnell gelang es Drusus, unter Androhung von Gewalt die Soldaten zu überzeugen, die Rädelsführer auszuliefern. Einige töteten die Männer selbst, eifrig um Wiedergutmachung bemüht, andere ließ Drusus öffentlich hinrichten. Ähnlich lief es in Germanien, wohin Germanicus mit ähnlichen Anweisungen entsandt worden war. So kam der bedrohliche Aufstand zu einem Ende. Die Geschehnisse verdeutlichen, wie fragil die Ordnung des römischen Reiches war, wenn die Hauptstütze seiner Macht, das Militär, aus seinem Handlungsrahmen trat. Allein die Angst vor offener Rebellion und der damit einhergehenden Todesgefahr hatte die Aufständischen überzeugen können, von ihren Taten abzulassen. Rein mit militärischer Macht wäre der Aufruhr in Anbetracht der Stärke der pannonischen und Rheinlegionen kaum zu unterdrücken gewesen. Erst die Sondergesandten in Person von Angehörigen der kaiserlichen Familie bewirkten ein Umdenken bei den Legionären. Indes ist dies eines von wenigen Ereignissen, bei denen es zu Widerstand gegen Bestrafungsmaßnahmen innerhalb der Armee kam.

Tac. Ann. I,16-23

Text Original:

16. Hic rerum urbanarum status erat, cum Pannonicas legiones seditio incessit, nullis novis causis nisi quod mutatus princeps licentiam turbarum et ex civili bello spem praemiorum ostendebat. castris aestivis tres simul legiones habebantur, praesidente Iunio Blaeso, qui fine Augusti et initiis Tiberii auditis ob iustitium aut gaudium intermiserat solita munia. eo principio lascivire miles, discordare, pessimi cuiusque sermonibus praebere auris, denique luxum et otium cupere, disciplinam et laborem aspernari.

[...]

20. Interea manipuli ante coeptam seditionem Nauportum missi ob itinera et pontes et alios usus, postquam turbatum in castris acceperere, vexilla convellunt direptisque proximis vicis ipsoque Nauporto, quod municipii instar erat, retinentis centuriones inrisu et contumeliis, postremo verberibus insectantur, praecipua in Aufidienum Rufum praefectum castrorum ira, quem dereptum vehiculo sarcinis gravant aguntque primo in agmine per ludibrium rogantes an tam immensa onera, tam longa itinera libenter ferret. quippe Rufus diu manipularis, dein centurio, mox castris praefectus, antiquam duramque militiam revocabat, vetus operis ac laboris et eo inmitior quia toleraverat.

21. Horum adventu redintegratur seditio et vagi circumiecta populabantur. Blaesus paucos, maxime praeda onustos, ad terrorem ceterorum adfici verberibus, claudi carcere iubet; nam etiam tum legato a centurionibus et optimo quoque manipularium parebatur. illi obniti trahentibus, prensare circumstantium genua, ciere modo nomina singulorum, modo centuriam quisque cuius manipularis erat, cohortem, legionem, eadem omnibus imminere clamitantes. simul probra in legatum cumulant, caelum ac deos obtestantur, nihil reliqui faciunt quo minus invidiam misericordiam metum et iras permoverent. adcurritur ab universis, et carcere effracto solvunt vincula desertoresque ac rerum capitalium damnatos sibi iam miscent.

22. Flagrantior inde vis, plures seditioni duces. et Vibulenus quidam gregarius miles, ante tribunal Blaesi adlevatus circumstantium umeris, apud turbatos et quid pararet intentos 'vos quidem' inquit 'his innocentibus et miserrimis lucem et spiritum reddidistis: sed quis fratri meo vitam, quis fratrem mihi reddit? quem missum ad vos a Germanico exercitu de communibus

commodis nocte proxima iugulavit per gladiatores suos, quos in exitium militum habet atque armat. responde, Blaese, ubi cadaver abieceris: ne hostes quidem sepultura invident. cum osculis, cum lacrimis dolorem meum implevero, me quoque trucidari iube, dum interfectos nullum ob scelus sed quia utilitati legionum consulebamus hi sepeliant.'

Incendebat haec fletu et pectus atque os manibus verberans. mox disiectis quorum per umeros sustinebatur, praeceps et singulorum pedibus advolutus tantum consternationis invidiaeque concivit, ut pars militum gladiatores, qui e servitio Blaesi erant, pars ceteram eiusdem familiam vincirent, alii ad quaerendum corpus effunderentur. ac ni propere neque corpus ullum reperiri, et servos adhibitis cruciatibus abnuere caedem, neque illi fuisse umquam fratrem pernotuisset, haud multum ab exitio legati aberant. tribunos tamen ac praefectum castrorum extrudere, sarcinae fugientium direptae, et centurio Lucilius interficitur cui militaribus facetiis vocabulum 'cedo alteram' indiderant, quia fracta vite in tergo militis alteram clara voce ac rursus aliam poscebat. ceteros latebrae texere, uno retento Clemente Iulio qui perferendis militum mandatis habebatur idoneus ob promptum ingenium. quin ipsae inter se legiones octava et quinta decuma ferrum parabant, dum centurionem cognomento Sirpicum illa morti deposcit, quintadecumani tuentur, ni miles nonanus preces et adversum aspernantis minas interiecisset.

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Tac. Ann. I,16-23

Text Übersetzung:

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This was the state of affairs at Rome when a mutiny broke out in the legions of Pannonia, which could be traced to no fresh cause except the change of emperors and the prospect it held out of license in tumult and of profit from a civil war. In the summer camp three legions were quartered, under the command of Junius Blæsus, who on hearing of the death of Augustus and the accession of Tiberius, had allowed his men a rest from military duties, either for mourning or rejoicing. This was the beginning of demoralization among the troops, of quarreling, of listening to the talk of every pestilent fellow, in short, of craving for luxury and idleness and loathing discipline and toil.

[...]

Meanwhile the companies which previous to the mutiny had been sent to Nauportus to make roads and bridges and for other purposes, when they heard of the tumult in the camp, tore up the standards, and having plundered the neighbouring villages and Nauportus itself, which was like a town, assailed the centurions who restrained them with jeers and insults, last of all, with blows. Their chief rage was against Aufidienus Rufus, the camp-prefect, whom they dragged from a waggon, loaded with baggage, and drove on at the head of the column, asking him in ridicule whether he liked to bear such huge burdens and such long marches. Rufus, who had long been a common soldier, then a centurion, and subsequently camp-prefect, tried to revive the old severe discipline, inured as he was to work and toil, and all the sterner because he had endured.

On the arrival of these troops the mutiny broke out afresh, and straggling from the camp they plundered the neighbourhood. Blæsus ordered a few who had conspicuously loaded themselves with spoil to be scourged and imprisoned as a terror to the rest; for, ever as it then was, the commander was still obeyed by the centurions and by all the best men among the soldiers. As the men were dragged off, they struggled violently, clasped the knees of the bystanders, called to their comrades by name, or to the company, cohort, or legion to which they respectively belonged, exclaiming that all were threatened with the same fate. At the same time they heaped abuse on the commander; they appealed to heaven and to the gods, and left nothing undone by

which they might excite resentment and pity, alarm and rage. They all rushed to the spot, broke open the guard-house, unbound the prisoners, and were in a moment fraternising with deserters and men convicted on capital charges.

Thence arose a more furious outbreak, with more leaders of the mutiny. Vibulenus, a common soldier, was hoisted in front of the general's tribunal on the shoulders of the bystanders and addressed the excited throng, who eagerly awaited his intentions. "You have indeed," he said, "restored/light and air to these innocent and most unhappy men, but who restores to my brother his life, or my brother to myself? Sent to you by the German army in our common cause, he was last night butchered by the gladiators whom the general keeps and arms for the destruction of his soldiers. Answer, Blæsus, where you have flung aside the corpse? Even an enemy grudges not burial. When, with embraces and tears, I have sated my grief, order me also to be slain, provided only that when we have been destroyed for no crime, but only because we consulted the good of the legions, we may be buried by these men around me."

He inflamed their excitement by weeping and smiting his breast and face with his hands. Then, hurling aside those who bore him on their shoulders, and impetuously flinging himself at the feet of one man after another, he roused such dismay and indignation that some of the soldiers put fetters on the gladiators who were among the number of Blæsus's slaves, others did the like to the rest of his household, while a third party hurried out to look for the corpse. And had it not quickly been known that no corpse was found, that the slaves, when tortures were applied, denied the murder, and that the man never had a brother, they would have been on the point of destroying the general. As it was, they thrust out the tribunes and the camp-prefect; they plundered the baggage of the fugitives, and they killed a centurion, Lucilius, to whom, with soldiers' humour, they had given the name "Bring another," because when he had broken one vine-stick on a man's back, he would call in a loud voice for another and another. The rest sheltered themselves in concealment, and one only was detained, Clemens Julius, whom the soldiers considered a fit person to carry messages, from his ready wit. Two legions, the eighth and the fifteenth, were actually drawing swords against each other, the former demanding the death of a centurion, whom they nicknamed Sirpicus, while the men of the fifteenth defended him, but the soldiers of the ninth interposed their entreaties, and when these were disregarded, their menaces.

Suet. Cal. 46-49

Leitfragen:

- 1) Wie stellen die Quellen Caligulas Herrschaft dar?
- 2) Warum fiel der Herrscher der *damnatio memoriae* anheim?
- 3) Ermöglichen die Quellen ein abschließendes Urteil über Kaiser Caligula?

Kommentar:

Caligula ist unzweifelhaft einer der am häufigsten rezipierten römischen Kaiser. Neben Nero und Commodus gilt er als Musterbeispiel des „schlechten“ Kaisers, gegenüber den „guten“ wie beispielsweise Augustus und Mark Aurel. Besonders stechen die Charaktereigenschaften Grausamkeit, Ungerechtigkeit und Respektlosigkeit gegenüber Göttern und Menschen hervor. In antiken Biografien, die allesamt deutlich nach seinem Tod verfasst wurden, wurde er als der erste Herrscher beschrieben, der dem so genannten „Cäsarenwahn“ anheim fiel. Ebenso wenig wie der moderne Terminus geben hingegen die Originalbeschreibungen Aufschluss darüber, ob damit tatsächliche Geisteskrankheit oder schlicht despotisches Gehabe gemeint war. Bei all dem muss beachtet werden, dass die Rezipienten wie Autoren der uns überlieferten Quellen überwiegend der stadtrömischen Oberschicht entstammten und deren Ansichten vertraten. Deshalb hilft ein Vergleich, um die Herrschaft Caligulas besser einordnen zu können. Der wichtigste Vorwurf an den Herrscher war der der Grausamkeit, wobei fast ausschließlich Grausamkeit gegenüber der Senatorenschicht gemeint war. Fraglos ließ Caligula unliebsame Nebenbuhler und mächtige Senatoren, die seiner Herrschaft potentiell gefährlich waren, aus dem Weg räumen. Soweit ist dies jedoch weitverbreitete Praxis zur Machtsicherung in Monarchien. Die Zahl der unter Caligula wegen Hochverrats Hingerichteten und Exilierten liegt im mittleren zweistelligen Bereich und damit nicht besonders hoch. Wesentlich drastischer fielen dagegen die Proskriptionen während der ersten Jahre unter Augustus aus. Was Caligula jedoch besonders übel genommen wurde, war der Umstand, dass er einige Senatoren im Zuge des Prozesses foltern ließ. Römische Bürger durften allerdings nach althergebrachten Gesetzen anders als Sklaven keiner peinlichen Befragung unterzogen werden. Ähnlich lauteten die Vorwürfe hinsichtlich der Willkür, z. B. gegenüber den Soldaten der Rheinlegionen, die er für ihren Aufstand gegen seinen Vater Germanicus (er selbst war damals auch anwesend gewesen) dezimieren lassen wollte. Nur mit einiger Überredung habe er sich von diesem Plan abbringen lassen.

Schwer wog auch der fehlende Respekt Caligulas vor den Göttern. So zeigte er sich angeblich öffentlich mit göttlichen Insignien und ließ sich als Gott verehren, was aber vor dem Hintergrund der ebenfalls mit göttlichen Ehren ausgestatteten Vorgänger Caesar und Augustus, deren Linie er entstammte, in der Nachbetrachtung etwas fragwürdig wirkt. Der Unterschied war lediglich, dass Caligula zu Lebzeiten die Divination für sich selbst beanspruchte, wobei Caesar auch von sich behauptete, Nachfahre der Venus zu sein.

Nach seiner Ermordung, wiederum durch einige Prätorianer und Senatoren, fand man große Mengen Gift und persönliche Papiere in seinem Schlafgemach. In diesen war von Plänen die Rede, die Residenz von Rom nach Alexandria zu verlegen. Ein solch großer Umbruch in der Geschichte der Stadt, wie er dann tatsächlich einige Jahrhunderte später vorgenommen wurde, konnte nicht dazu beitragen, den Ruf des Kaisers wiederherzustellen. Laut den Quellen wurde

sein Andenken getilgt, jedoch finden sich lediglich in der Osthälfte des Reiches archäologische Hinweise darauf. Ebenso erwähnt unter anderem Sueton, dass der *princeps* bis zuletzt beim einfachen Volk recht beliebt war, gleiches galt zumindest für Teile des Heeres, die nach seinem Ableben revoltierten. Seine in allen Biografien hervorgehobene Beliebtheit in jungen Jahren, seine rationale Bautätigkeit mit vielen öffentlichen Gebäuden, Aquädukten, Straßen und Häfen und sein Bemühen um die Gunst des Volkes mit aufwendigen Spielen und einem zusätzlichen Feiertag widersprechen dem Tyrannenbild der Quellen. Da die senatorische Geschichtsschreibung (die große Mehrzahl der Quellen, über die wir heute verfügen) starke Tendenzen zur Negativdarstellung bestimmter Kaiser hatte, denen ein Ausbau ihrer Macht auf Kosten des Senats zugeschrieben werden kann, ist der Quellenwert bezüglich der Biografien über diese „schlechten“ Kaiser begrenzt. Es ist schwerlich möglich, auf dieser Basis ein abschließendes Urteil über dieses Kapitel römischer Geschichte zu fällen.

Suet. Cal. 46-49

Text Original:

postremo quasi perpetraturus bellum, directa acie in litore Oceani ac ballistis machinisque dispositis, nemine gnaro aut opinante quidnam coepturus esset, repente ut conchas legerent galeasque et sinus replerent imperauit, 'spolia Oceani' uocans 'Capitolio Palatioque debita,' et in indicium uictoriae altissimam turrem excitauit, ex qua ut Pharo noctibus ad regendos nauium cursus ignes emicarent; pronuntiatoque militi donatiuo centenis uiritim denariis, quasi omne exemplum liberalitatis supergressus: 'abite,' inquit, 'laeti, abite locupletes.'

[...]

Prius quam prouincia decederet, consilium iniit nefandae atrocitatis legiones, quae post excessum Augusti seditionem olim mouerant, contrucidandi, quod et patrem suum Germanicum ducem et se infantem tunc obsedissent, uixque a tam praecipiti cogitatione reuocatus, inhiberi nullo modo potuit quin decimare uelle perseueraret. uocatas itaque ad contionem inermes, atque etiam gladiis depositis, equitatu armato circumdedit. [2] sed cum uideret suspecta re plerosque dilabi ad resumenda si qua uis fieret arma, profugit contionem confestimque urbem omnem petit, deflexa omni acerbitate in senatum, cui ad auertendos tantorum dedecorum rumores palam minabatur, querens inter cetera fraudatum se iusto triumpho, cum ipse paulo ante, ne quid de honoribus suis ageretur, etiam sub mortis poena denuntiasset.

aditus ergo in itinere a legatis amplissimi ordinis ut maturaret orantibus, quam maxima uoce: 'ueniam,' inquit, 'ueniam, et hic mecum,' capulum gladii crebro uerberans, quo cinctus erat. edixit et reuerti se, sed iis tantum qui optarent, equestri ordini et populo; nam se neque ciuem neque principem senatui amplius fore. [2] uetuit etiam quemquam senatorum sibi occurrere. atque omisso uel dilato triumpho ouans urbem natali suo ingressus est; intraque quartum mensem periit, ingentia facinora ausus et aliquanto maiora moliens, siquidem proposuerat Antium, deinde Alexandream commigrare interempto prius utriusque ordinis electissimo quoque. [3] quod ne cui dubium uideatur, in secretis eius reperti sunt duo libelli diuerso titulo, alteri 'gladius,' alteri 'pugio' index erat; ambo nomina et notas continebant morti destinatorum. inuenta et arca ingens uariorum uenenorum plena, quibus mox a Claudio demersis infecta maria traduntur non sine piscium exitio, quos enectos aestus in proxima litora eiecit.

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Autor_in: Alexander Thomson
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Suet. Cal. 46-49

Text Übersetzung:
(Alexander Thomson)

At last, as if resolved to make war in earnest, he drew up his army on the shore of the ocean, with his balistk and other engines of war, and while no one could imagine what he intended to do, on a sudden commanded them to gather up the sea shells, and fill their helmets and the folds of their dress with them, calling them " the spoils of the ocean due to the Capitol and the Palatium." As a monument of his success, he raised a lofty tower, upon which, as at Pharos, he ordered lights to be burned in the night-time for the direction of ships at sea; and then promising the soldiers a donative of a hundred denarii a man, as if he had surpassed the most eminent examples of generosity, "Go your ways," said he, "and be merry; go, ye are rich."

[...]

Before he left the province he formed a design of the most horrid cruelty-to massacre the legions which had mutinied upon the death of Augustus, for seizing and detaining his father, Germanicus, their commander, and himself, then an infant, in the camp. Though he was with great difficulty dissuaded from this rash attempt, yet neither the most urgent entreaties nor representations could prevent him from persisting in the design of decimating these legions. Accordingly, he ordered them to assemble unarmed, without so much as their swords, and then surrounded them with armed horse. But finding that many of them, suspecting that violence was intended, were making off to arm in their own defence, he quitted the assembly as fast as he could, and immediately marched for Rome, bending now all his fury against the senate, whom he publicly threatened, to divert the general attention from the clamour excited by his disgraceful conduct. Amongst other pretexts of offence, he complained that he was defrauded of a triumph which was justly his due, though he had just before forbidden, upon pain of death, any honour to be decreed him.

In his march he was waited upon by deputies from the senatorian order, entreating him to hasten his return. He replied to them, "I will come, I will come, and this with me," striking at the same time the hilt of his sword. He issued likewise this proclamation: "I am coming, but for those only who wish for me, the equestrian order and the people; for I shall no longer treat the senate as their fellow-citizen or prince." He forbad any of the senators to come to meet him; and either

abandoning or deferring his triumph, he entered the city in ovation on his birth-day. Within four months from this period he was slain, after he had perpetrated enormous crimes, and while he was meditating the execution, if possible, of still greater. He had entertained a design of removing to Antium, and afterwards to Alexandria, having first cut off the flower of the equestrian and senatorian orders. This is placed beyond all question by two books which were found in his cabinet under different titles, one being called the sword, and the other the dagger. They both contained private marks, and the names of those who were devoted to death. There was also found a large chest, filled with a variety of poisons, which being afterwards thrown into the sea by order of Claudius, are said to have so infected the waters that the fish were poisoned and cast dead by the tide upon the neighbouring shores.

Tac. Ann. IV, 57-60

Leitfragen:

- 1) Wie kam es zur Gründung der Garde?
- 2) Welchen Einfluss hatten die Prätorianer auf das Machtzentrum?
- 3) Welche Entwicklung nahm die Prätorianergarde?

Kommentar:

Zum ersten Mal traten die Prätorianer bereits während der Republik in Erscheinung. Der jüngere Scipio stellte während seiner Belagerung Numantias eine Kohorte als Leibwache für sich auf. Sie wurde nach dem *praetorium*, dem Bereich im Zentrum des Heerlagers mit dem Feldherrnzelt, benannt und löste die alte Garde der *pedites extraordinarii* ab. Diese Praxis setzte sich schließlich durch, sodass am Ende der Republik alle Feldherren über eigene Prätorianerkohorten verfügten. Augustus als einzig übrig gebliebener Machthaber fasste diese Truppen dann als stehende Prätorianergarde zusammen. Sie verfügte über zehn Kohorten und verstand sich als Eliteeinheit, die dem Schutz des Kaisers verpflichtet war. Sie erhielten eigene Kasernen in Rom, das *castrum praetorium* (auch pl. *castra praetoria*), dessen Mauern noch heute zu sehen sind. In der Stadt trugen die Prätorianer besonders verzierte Brustpanzer, die an alte republikanische Ausrüstung erinnerten.

Wegen ihrer Wurzeln als Feldtruppe war ihre Ausrüstung ansonsten identisch mit der normaler Legionäre, nur erhielten die Gardisten den eineinhalbfachen Sold. Mit jedem Kaiser stiegen jedoch sowohl der Sold als auch die Sonderzuwendungen (*donativa*), mit denen sich die Herrscher der Treue ihrer Garde versichern wollten. Genau diese Loyalität auf monetärer Basis wurde jedoch bald zum Problem. Schon unter dem zweiten Kaiser Tiberius erlangte dessen Befehlshaber der Prätorianergarde, der Präfekt Lucius Aelius Seianus, fast so viel Macht wie der Kaiser selbst. Erst mehrere Jahre nachdem Tiberius sich aus Rom auf die Insel Capri zurückgezogen hatte, entschloss er sich, den Präfekten zu stürzen. Die Gründe hierfür sind nicht gänzlich nachzuvollziehen, denn sämtliche Quellen sind parteiisch. Tacitus und Cassius Dio sprechen aber von politischen Morden, Intrigen am Hof bis hinein in die kaiserliche Familie und Streitigkeiten zwischen Seianus und verschiedenen Senatoren. Nach der Hinrichtung des Seianus und der Neubesetzung des Amtes des Prätorianerpräfekten kehrte zunächst Ruhe ein. Das grundlegende Problem der mangelhaften Treue blieb jedoch bestehen. Mehrere Kaiser fielen der eigenen Leibgarde zum Opfer, darunter unter anderem Caligula und Nero. Galba, der im Vierkaiserjahr den Prätorianern für die Ermordung Neros Geld versprochen hatte, blieb die Zahlung schuldig, so wurde auch er wenig später getötet. Nicht nur bei der Beseitigung der Kaiser, auch bei ihrer Ernennung spielte die Garde eine große Rolle. Mehrfach ermordeten Angehörige der Prätorianer einen *princeps*, um anschließend einen anderen Mann auf den Thron zu setzen. Diese Verhältnisse änderten sich im Laufe der Zeit nicht wesentlich, bis sich die Prätorianer im Bürgerkrieg von 311/2 auf die Seite des Maxentius stellten, der an der Milvischen Brücke Konstantin unterlag. Der Sieger löste die Prätorianergarde auf.

Tac. Ann. IV, 57-60

Text Original:

57. Inter quae diu meditato prolatoque saepius consilio tandem Caesar in Campaniam, specie dedicandi templa apud Capuam Iovi, apud Nolam Augusto, sed certus procul urbe degere. causam abscessus quamquam secutus plurimos auctorum ad Seiani artes rettuli, quia tamen caede eius patrata sex postea annos pari secreto coniunxit, plerumque permoveor num ad ipsum referri verius sit, saevitiam ac libidinem cum factis promeret, locis occultantem.

[...]

59. Ac forte illis diebus oblatum Caesari anceps periculum auxit vana rumoris praebuitque ipsi materiem cur amicitiae constantiaeque Seiani magis fideret. vescebantur in villa cui vocabulum Speluncae mare Amunclanum inter et Fundanos montis nativo in specu. eius os lapsis repente saxis obruit quosdam ministros: hinc metus in omnis et fuga eorum qui convivium celebrabant. Seianus genu vultuque et manibus super Caesarem suspensus opposuit sese incidentibus atque habitu tali repertus est a militibus qui subsidio venerant. maior ex eo et quamquam exitiosa suaderet ut non sui anxius cum fide audiebatur. adsimulabatque iudicis partis adversum Germanici stirpem, subditis qui accusatorum nomina sustinerent maximeque insectarentur Neronem proximum successioni et, quamquam modesta iuventa, plerumque tamen quid in praesentiarum conduceret oblitum, dum a libertis et clientibus, apiscendae potentiae properis, extimulatur ut erectum et fidentem animi ostenderet: velle id populum Romanum, cupere exercitus, neque ausurum contra Seianum qui nunc patientiam senis et segnitiam iuvenis iuxta insultet.

60. Haec atque talia audienti nihil quidem pravae cogitationis, sed interdum voces procedebant contumaces et inconsultae, quas adpositi custodes exceptas auctasque cum deferrent neque Neroni defendere daretur, diversae insuper sollicitudinum formae oriebantur. nam alius occursum eius vitare, quidam salutatione reddita statim averti, plerique inceptum sermonem abrumpere, insistentibus contra inidentibusque qui Seiano fautores aderant. enimvero Tiberius torvus aut falsum renidens vultu: seu loqueretur seu taceret iuvenis, crimen ex silentio, ex voce. ne nox quidem segura, cum uxor vigilias somnos suspiria matri Liviae atque illa Seiano patefaceret; qui fratrem quoque Neronis Drusum traxit in partis, spe obiecta principis loci si

priorem aetate et iam labefactum demovisset. atrox Drusi ingenium super cupidinem potentiae et solita fratribus odia accendebatur invidia quod mater Agrippina promptior Neroni erat. neque tamen Seianus ita Drusum fovebat ut non in eum quoque semina futuri exitii meditaretur, gnarus praeferozem et insidiis magis opportunum.

Projekttitel: eManual Alte Geschichte
Modul [optional]:
Autor_in: Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb
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Tac. Ann. IV, 57-60

Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb)

Meanwhile, after long reflection on his purpose and frequent deferment of it, the emperor retired into Campania to dedicate, as he pretended, a temple to Jupiter at Capua and another to Augustus at Nola, but really resolved to live at a distance from Rome. Although I have followed most historians in attributing the cause of his retirement to the arts of Sejanus, still, as he passed six consecutive years in the same solitude after that minister's destruction, I am often in doubt whether it is not to be more truly ascribed to himself, and his wish to hide by the place of his retreat the cruelty and licentiousness which he betrayed by his actions.

[...]

It happened at this time that a perilous accident which occurred to the emperor strengthened vague rumours and gave him grounds for trusting more fully in the friendship and fidelity of Sejanus. They were dining in a country house called "The Cave," between the gulf of Amuclæ and the hills of Fundi, in a natural grotto. The rocks at its entrance suddenly fell in and crushed some of the attendants; thereupon panic seized the whole company and there was a general flight of the guests. Sejanus hung over the emperor, and with knee, face, and hand encountered the falling stones; and was found in this attitude by the soldiers who came to their rescue. After this he was greater than ever, and though his counsels were ruinous, he was listened to with confidence, as a man who had no care for himself. He pretended to act as a judge towards the children of Germanicus, after having suborned persons to assume the part of prosecutors and to inveigh specially against Nero, next in succession to the throne, who, though he had proper youthful modesty, often forgot present expediency, while freedmen and clients, eager to get power, incited him to display vigour and self-confidence. "This," they said, "was what the Roman people wished, what the armies desired, and Sejanus would not dare to oppose it, though now he insulted alike the tame spirit of the old emperor and the timidity of the young prince."

Nero, while he listened to this and like talk, was not indeed inspired with any guilty ambition, but still occasionally there would break from him wilful and thoughtless expressions which spies about his person caught up and reported with exaggeration, and this he had no opportunity of rebutting. Then again alarms under various forms were continually arising. One man would

avoid meeting him; another after returning his salutation would instantly turn away; many after beginning a conversation would instantly break it off, while Sejanus's friends would stand their ground and laugh at him. Tiberius indeed wore an angry frown or a treacherous smile. Whether the young prince spoke or held his tongue, silence and speech were alike criminal. Every night had its anxieties, for his sleepless hours, his dreams and sighs were all made known by his wife to her mother Livia and by Livia to Sejanus. Nero's brother Drusus Sejanus actually drew into his scheme by holding out to him the prospect of becoming emperor through the removal of an elder brother, already all but fallen. The savage temper of Drusus, to say nothing of lust of power and the usual feuds between brothers, was inflamed with envy by the partiality of the mother Agrippina towards Nero. And yet Sejanus, while he favoured Drusus, was not without thoughts of sowing the seeds of his future ruin, well knowing how very impetuous he was and therefore the more exposed to treachery.

Tac. Ann. XV, 38-42

Leitfragen:

- 1) War Nero in den Brand verwickelt?
- 2) Was verrät die Stelle über die Sicht auf den römischen Kaiser?
- 3) Welche Folgen hatte die Katastrophe?

Kommentar:

Der gewaltige Brand, der Rom in der Jahresmitte 64 v. Chr. heimsuchte, verwüstete große Teile der Metropole und machte die meisten seiner Bewohner obdachlos. Verheerende Brände waren bis in die Neuzeit nichts Ungewöhnliches, einen Feuersturm dieses Ausmaßes hatte die Stadt jedoch noch nicht erlebt. Nach einer Woche stand in drei Distrikten kein Stein mehr auf dem anderen, in weiteren sieben war die Mehrzahl der Gebäude zerstört, nur vier Bezirke blieben gänzlich verschont. Es ist unklar, ob Nero Feuer legen ließ, um die Stadt zu zerstören und an ihrer Stelle eine neue, nach ihm benannte Kapitale zu erbauen. Viele, vor allem spätere Quellen behaupten dies. In der Forschung ist jedoch nicht unumstritten, ob der „schlechte“ Kaiser Nero tatsächlich für den Ausbruch des Brandes verantwortlich war. Er war währenddessen nicht in Rom, könnte sich also präventiv in Sicherheit begeben haben. Auf den Trümmern ließ er einen prächtigen neuen Palast errichten, die Domus Aurea, deren Überreste noch heute zu sehen sind. Im dicht bebauten Rom war Baugrund Mangelware, ein Großfeuer konnte den Platz für ein solches Projekt schaffen. Selbst wenn Nero jedoch den Auftrag zur Brandstiftung gegeben haben sollte, hat er sicherlich nicht mit dem gewaltigen Ausmaß der Zerstörung gerechnet. Das heiße, trockene Wetter und der kräftig Wind heizten das Feuer stark an. Neros Palast mit seiner unersetzlichen Sammlung an Kunstschätzen und viele öffentliche Gebäude, für deren Wiederaufbau letztlich Neros Staatskasse aufkommen musste, gingen in den Flammen zugrunde. In aller Eile ließ der Kaiser für die obdachlose Bevölkerung Notunterkünfte bereitstellen, der Getreidepreis wurde gesenkt. Das Feuer war die perfekte Katastrophe für diejenigen, die den ungeliebten Kaiser loswerden wollten. Ein einfaches Gerücht verbreitete sich in Windeseile. Tacitus als der ausführlichste Berichterstatter derweil teilt den Bericht über den Brand in zwei Teile. Für den ersten stellt er die Unschuld des Kaisers fest, der Ursprung des Feuers habe in einem Unglück im Circus Maximus gelegen. Nach fünf Tagen habe der Kaiser jedoch in einem bereits niedergebrannten Stadtteil am Fuß des Esquilin erneut Feuer legen lassen, um auch noch die dort befindlichen bisher unbeschädigten Tempel zu beseitigen. Nero habe also das ohnehin wütende Feuer genutzt und es in einem bestimmten Teil der Stadt weiter angeheizt, um seine Vision eines neuen Rom wahr werden zu lassen. In diesem Vorwurf kommt ein Aspekt der negativen Sicht auf den letzten Vertreter des julisch-claudischen Geschlechts zum Ausdruck. Größenwahn und Rücksichtslosigkeit, vermischt mit einem krankhaften unrömischen Geist, der sich an Kunst und Kultur erfreute. Tacitus und andere überliefern das Gerücht, der Kaiser habe während des Feuers die Vernichtung Trojas besungen und damit die gegenwärtige Katastrophe mit dem vermeintlich historischen Brand der legendären Stadt gleichgesetzt. Solcherart Gerüchte, ob wahr oder erfunden, machten den Kaiser zusätzlich verhasst. Als Entgegnung auf die Vorwürfe der Brandstiftung erklärte Nero die Christen zu Schuldigen und ließ sie verfolgen. In einem Edikt verbot er ihnen zudem die Religionsausübung. Von allen Maßnahmen Neros war dies laut Tertullian die einzige, die nicht von seinen Nachfolgern

rückgängig gemacht wurde. Auch Sueton zählte die Verfolgung der Christen zu den wenigen guten Taten Neros. Übereinstimmend berichten die Quellen, dass Nero das Zeitalter der Unterdrückung der Christen einläutete, wobei mehrere (neben Cassius Dio interessanterweise auch frühchristliche Quellen) die neronische Christenverfolgung nicht erwähnen.

Tac. Ann. XV, 38-42

Text Original:

38. Sequitur clades, forte an dolo principis incertum (nam utrumque auctores prodidere), sed omnibus quae huic urbi per violentiam ignium acciderunt gravior atque atrocior. initium in ea parte circi ortum quae Palatino Caelioque montibus contigua est, ubi per tabernas, quibus id mercimonium inerat quo flamma alitur, simul coeptus ignis et statim validus ac vento citus longitudinem circi corripuit. neque enim domus munimentis saeptae vel templa muris cincta aut quid aliud morae interiacebat. impetu pervagatum incendium plana primum, deinde in edita adsurgens et rursus inferiora populando, antiit remedia velocitate mali et obnoxia urbe artis itineribus hucque et illuc flexis atque enormibus vicis, qualis vetus Roma fuit. ad hoc lamenta paventium feminarum, fessa aetate aut rudis pueritiae aetas, quique sibi quique aliis consulebant, dum trahunt invalidos aut opperiuntur, pars mora, pars festinans, cuncta impediabant. et saepe dum in tergum respectant lateribus aut fronte circumveniebantur, vel si in proxima evaserant, illis quoque igni correptis, etiam quae longinqua crediderant in eodem casu reperiebant. postremo, quid vitarent quid peterent ambigui, complere vias, sterni per agros; quidam amissis omnibus fortunis, diurni quoque victus, alii caritate suorum, quos eripere nequiverant, quamvis patente effugio interiere. nec quisquam defendere audebat, crebris multorum minis restinguere prohibentium, et quia alii palam faces iaciebant atque esse sibi auctorem vociferabantur, sive ut raptus licentius exercerent seu iussu.

39. Eo in tempore Nero Antii agens non ante in urbem regressus est quam domui eius, qua Palatium et Maecenatis hortos continuaverat, ignis propinquaret. neque tamen sisti potuit quin et Palatium et domus et cuncta circum haurirentur. sed solacium populo exturbato ac profugo campum Martis ac monumenta Agrippae, hortos quin etiam suos patefecit et subitaria aedificia extruxit quae multitudinem inopem acciperent; subvectaque utensilia ab Ostia et propinquis municipiis pretiumque frumenti minutum usque ad ternos nummos. quae quamquam popularia in inritum cadebant, quia pervaserat rumor ipso tempore flagrantis urbis inisse eum domesticam scaenam et cecinisse Troianum excidium, praesentia mala vetustis cladibus adsimulantem.

40. Sexto demum die apud imas Esquilias finis incendio factus, prorutis per immensum aedificiis ut continuae violentiae campus et velut vacuum caelum occurreret. necdum positus metus aut redierat plebi spes: rursus grassatus ignis patulis magis urbis locis; eoque strages hominum minor, delubra deum et porticus amoenitati dicatae latius procidere. plusque infamiae id incendium habuit quia praediis Tigellini Aemilianis proruperat videbaturque Nero condendae urbis novae et cognomento suo appellandae gloriam quaerere. quippe in regiones quattuordecim Roma dividitur, quarum quattuor integrae manebant, tres solo tenus deiectae: septem reliquis pauca tectorum vestigia supererant, lacera et semusta.

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Tac. Ann. XV, 38-42

Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb)

A disaster followed, whether accidental or treacherously contrived by the emperor, is uncertain, as authors have given both accounts, worse, however, and more dreadful than any which have ever happened to this city by the violence of fire. It had its beginning in that part of the circus which adjoins the Palatine and Cælian hills, where, amid the shops containing inflammable wares, the conflagration both broke out and instantly became so fierce and so rapid from the wind that it seized in its grasp the entire length of the circus. For here there were no houses fenced in by solid masonry, or temples surrounded by walls, or any other obstacle to interpose delay. The blaze in its fury ran first through the level portions of the city, then rising to the hills, while it again devastated every place below them, it outstripped all preventive measures; so rapid was the mischief and so completely at its mercy the city, with those narrow winding passages and irregular streets, which characterised old Rome. Added to this were the wailings of terror-stricken women, the feebleness of age, the helpless inexperience of childhood, the crowds who sought to save themselves or others, dragging out the infirm or waiting for them, and by their hurry in the one case, by their delay in the other, aggravating the confusion. Often, while they looked behind them, they were intercepted by flames on their side or in their face. Or if they reached a refuge close at hand, when this too was seized by the fire, they found that, even places, which they had imagined to be remote, were involved in the same calamity. At last, doubting what they should avoid or whither betake themselves, they crowded the streets or flung themselves down in the fields, while some who had lost their all, even their very daily bread, and others out of love for their kinsfolk, whom they had been unable to rescue, perished, though escape was open to them. And no one dared to stop the mischief, because of incessant menaces from a number of persons who forbade the extinguishing of the flames, because again others openly hurled brands, and kept shouting that there was one who gave them authority, either seeking to plunder more freely, or obeying orders.

Nero at this time was at Antium, and did not return to Rome until the fire approached his house, which he had built to connect the palace with the gardens of Mæcenas. It could not, however, be stopped from devouring the palace, the house, and everything around it. However, to relieve the

people, driven out homeless as they were, he threw open to them the Campus Martius and the public buildings of Agrippa, and even his own gardens, and raised temporary structures to receive the destitute multitude. Supplies of food were brought up from Ostia and the neighbouring towns, and the price of corn was reduced to three sesterces a peck. These acts, though popular, produced no effect, since a rumour had gone forth everywhere that, at the very time when the city was in flames, the emperor appeared on a private stage and sang of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity.

At last, after five days, an end was put to the conflagration at the foot of the Esquiline hill, by the destruction of all buildings on a vast space, so that the violence of the fire was met by clear ground and an open sky. But before people had laid aside their fears, the flames returned, with no less fury this second time, and especially in the spacious districts of the city. Consequently, though there was less loss of life, the temples of the gods, and the porticoes which were devoted to enjoyment, fell in a yet more widespread ruin. And to this conflagration there attached the greater infamy because it broke out on the Æmilian property of Tigellinus, and it seemed that Nero was aiming at the glory of founding a new city and calling it by his name. Rome, indeed, is divided into fourteen districts, four of which remained uninjured, three were levelled to the ground, while in the other seven were left only a few shattered, half-burnt relics of houses.

Tac. Hist. III, 27-33

Leitfragen:

- 1) Welche Ereignisse führten zur Einnahme Cremonas?
- 2) Welche Gründe hatten gab es für das Massaker?
- 3) Wie verlief der Rest des Bürgerkrieges?

Kommentar:

Nach dem Freitod Neros und der Übernahme der kaiserlichen Amtsgeschäfte durch den ehemaligen Statthalter der Provinz Hispania Tarraconensis, Galba, im Jahre 68 n. Chr. hatten sich die Rheinlegionen erhoben und ihrerseits ihren Befehlshaber Vitellius zum Kaiser ausgerufen. Mit Otho, einem unzufriedenen Gefolgsmann Galbas, hatte sich daraufhin ein dritter Konkurrent um die Macht im Reich aufgeschwungen. Mit der Anerkennung des Senates und Volkes hatte er seinen Vorgänger den Massen übergeben, die ihn töteten. Jedoch hatte er die erste Schlacht bei Bedriacum gegen die überlegenen Truppen des Vitellius verloren und tötete sich anschließend selbst. Unterdessen war jedoch der Feldherr Vespasian von seinen Truppen in Alexandria zum Kaiser ausgerufen worden und marschierte wenig später Richtung Italien. In einer vorausgehenden Schlacht bezwungen, suchten die Vitellianer Zuflucht in Cremona. In der Stadt drängten sich zudem viele Flüchtlinge aus der Region. Mit leichter Verzögerung gingen die von Vespasians Heerführer Marcus Antonius Primus kommandierten Truppen zum Sturmangriff über. Nach einigen Verlusten gelang es ihnen, die Befestigungen zu überwinden und in die Stadt zu gelangen. Daraufhin ließ Antonius Feuer an einige Gebäude legen. Die sich nun abspielenden Szenen des Grauens beruhten laut Tacitus zum einen auf der vorangegangenen Unterstützung der Vitellianer durch die Bewohner und ihre offen geäußerte Verachtung gegenüber den Angreifern, zum anderen auf dem Reichtum der Stadt. Dazu kam, dass der Befehlshaber Antonius nicht nur keine Anstalten machte, seine Soldaten zurückzuhalten, sondern im Gegenteil Befehl gab, auch den Rest der Stadt anzuzünden. Angeblich fielen die plündernden Legionäre und Trossangehörigen sogar übereinander her, während sie sich über die Beute stritten. Vier Tage lang dauerte die Mordbrennerei, bis schließlich nur noch der außerhalb der Stadtmauer befindliche Tempel der italischen Göttin Mephitis stand. Mit der Zerschlagung des Feldheers des Vitellius und der grausamen Machtdemonstration in Cremona hatte der noch im Osten weilende Vespasian nun leichtes Spiel. Der letzte Widerstand des Konkurrenten in Rom konnte gebrochen werden, und Vespasian sicherte sich die Alleinherrschaft. Mit dem Vierkaiserjahr wurde neben der Gefahr der illoyalen Prätorianer ein weiteres Problem der Kaiserzeit offenbar: das ständige Risiko einer Usurpation. Letztlich waren ausschließlich treue (und das heißt vor allem gut bezahlte) Legionen die Herrschaftsgarantie der *principes*.

Tac. Hist. III, 27-33

Text Original:

27. Huc inclinavit Antonius cingique vallum corona iussit. primo sagittis saxisque eminus certabant, maiore Flavianorum pernicie, in quos tela desuper librabantur; mox vallum portasque legionibus attribuit, ut discretus labor fortis ignavosque distingueret atque ipsa contentione decoris accenderentur. proxima Bedriacensi viae tertiani septimanique sumpsere, dexteriora valli octava ac septima Claudiana; tertiadecimanos ad Brixianam portam impetus tulit. paulum inde morae, dum ex proximis agris ligones dolabras et alii falcis scalasque convectant: tum elatis super capita scutis densa testudine succedunt. Romanae utrimque artes: pondera saxorum Vitelliani provolvunt, disiectam fluitantemque testudinem lanceis contisque scrutantur, donec soluta compage scutorum exanguis aut laceros prosternerent multa cum strage. incesserat cunctatio, ni duces fesso militi et velut inritas exhortationes abnienti Cremonam monstrassent.

[...]

29. Acerrimum tertiae septimaeque legionum certamen; et dux Antonius cum delectis auxiliaribus eodem incuberat. obstinatos inter se cum sustinere Vitelliani nequirent et superiacta tela testudine laberentur, ipsam postremo ballistam in subeuntis propulere, quae ut ad praesens disiecit obruitque quos inciderat, ita pinnas ac summa valli ruina sua traxit; simul iuncta turris ictibus saxorum cessit, qua septimani dum nituntur cuneis, tertianus securibus gladiisque portam perfregit. primum inrupisse C. Volusium tertiae legionis militem inter omnis auctores constat. is in vallum egressus, deturbatis qui restiterant, conspicuus manu ac voce capta castra conclamavit; ceteri trepidis iam Vitellianis seque e vallo praecipitantibus perrupere. completur caede quantum inter castra murosque vacui fuit.

30. Ac rursus nova laborum facies: ardua urbis moenia, saxae turres, ferrati portarum obices, vibrans tela miles, frequens obstrictusque Vitellianis partibus Cremonensis populus, magna pars Italiae stato in eosdem dies mercatu congregata, quod defensoribus auxilium ob multitudinem, obpugnantibus incitamentum ob praedam erat. rapi ignis Antonius inferrique amoenissimis extra urbem aedificiis iubet, si damno rerum suarum Cremonenses ad mutandam fidem traherentur. propinqua muris tecta et altitudinem moenium egressa fortissimo quoque militum complet; illi trabibus tegulisque et facibus propugnatores deturbant.

[...]

32.

Plebs interim Cremonensium inter armatos conflictabatur; nec procul caede aberant, cum precibus ducum mitigatus est miles. et vocatos ad contionem Antonius adloquitur, magnifice victores, victos clementer, de Cremona in neutrum. exercitus praeter insitam praedandi cupidinem vetere odio ad excidium Cremonensium incubuit. iuisse partis Vitellianas Othonis quoque bello credebantur; mox tertiadecimanos ad extruendum amphitheatrum relictos, ut sunt procacia urbanae plebis ingenia, petulantibus iurgiis inluserant. auxit invidiam editum illic a Caecina gladiatorum spectaculum eademque rursus belli sedes et praebiti in acie Vitellianis cibi, caesae quaedam feminae studio partium ad proelium progressae; tempus quoque mercatus ditem alioqui coloniam maiore opum specie complebat. ceteri duces in obscuro: Antonium fortuna famaue omnium oculis exposuerat. is balineas abluendo cruori propere petit. excepta vox est, cum teporem incusaret, statim futurum ut incalescerent: vernile dictum omnem invidiam in eum vertit, tamquam signum incendendae Cremonae dedisset, quae iam flagrabat.

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Tac. Hist. III, 27-33

Text Übersetzung:

(Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb)

Antonius himself was this way inclined, and he ordered the entrenched camp to be invested. At first they fought from a distance with arrows and stones, the Flavianists suffering most, as the enemy's missiles were aimed at them from a superior height. Antonius then assigned to each legion the attack on some portion of the entrenchments, and on one particular gate, seeking by this division of labour to distinguish the cowardly from the brave, and to stimulate his men by an honourable rivalry. The 3rd and 7th legions took up a position close to the road from Bedriacum; more to the right of the entrenchments were stationed the 8th and the 7th (Claudius'). The 13th were carried by the impetuosity of their attack as far as the gate looking towards Brixia. There ensued a little delay, while from the neighbouring fields some were collecting spades and pick-axes, others hooks and ladders. Then raising their shields over their heads, they advanced to the rampart in a dense "testudo." Both used the arts of Roman warfare; the Vitellianists rolled down ponderous stones, and drove spears and long poles into the broken and tottering "testudo," till the dense array of shields was loosened, and the ground was strewn with a vast number of lifeless and mangled bodies.

[...]

The fiercest struggle was maintained by the 3rd and 7th legions, and Antonius in person with some chosen auxiliaries concentrated his efforts on the same point. The Vitellianists, unable to resist the combined and resolute attack, and finding that their missiles glided off the "testudo," at last threw the engine itself on the assailants; for a moment it broke and overwhelmed those on whom it fell, but it drew after it in its fall the battlements and upper part of the rampart. At the same time an adjoining tower yielded to the volleys of stones, and, while the 7th legion in wedge-like array was endeavouring to force an entrance, the 3rd broke down the gate with axes and swords. All authors are agreed that Caius Volusius, a soldier of the 3rd legion, entered first. Beating down all who opposed him, he mounted the rampart, waved his hand, and shouted aloud that the camp was taken. The rest of the legion burst in, while the troops of Vitellius were seized with panic, and threw themselves from the rampart. The entire space between the camp and the walls of Cremona was filled with slain.

Difficulties of another kind presented themselves in the lofty walls of the town, its stone towers, its iron-barred gates, in the garrison who stood brandishing their weapons, in its numerous population devoted to the interests of Vitellius, and in the vast conflux from all parts of Italy which had assembled at the fair regularly held at that time. The besieged found a source of strength in these large numbers; the assailants an incentive in the prospect of booty. Antonius gave orders that fire should instantly be set to the finest buildings without the city, to see whether the inhabitants of Cremona might not be induced by the loss of their property to transfer their allegiance. Some houses near the walls, which overtopped the fortifications, he filled with the bravest of his soldiers, who, by hurling beams, tiles, and flaming missiles, dislodged the defenders from the ramparts.

[...]

Meanwhile the population of Cremona was roughly handled by the soldiers, who were just beginning a massacre, when their fury was mitigated by the entreaties of the generals. Antonius summoned them to an assembly, extolled the conquerors, spoke kindly to the conquered, but said nothing either way of Cremona. Over and above the innate love of plunder, there was an old feud which made the army bent on the destruction of the inhabitants. It was generally believed that in the war with Otho, as well as in the present, they had supported the cause of Vitellius. Afterwards, when the 13th legion had been left to build an amphitheatre, with the characteristic insolence of a city population, they had wantonly provoked and insulted them. The ill-feeling had been aggravated by the gladiatorial show exhibited there by Cæcina, by the circumstance that their city was now for the second time the seat of war, and by the fact that they had supplied the Vitellianists with provisions in the field, and that some of their women, taken by party-zeal into the battle, had there been slain. The occurrence of the fair filled the colony, rich as it always was, with an appearance of still greater wealth. The other generals were unnoticed; Antonius from his success and high reputation was observed of all. He had hastened to the baths to wash off the blood; and when he found fault with the temperature of the water, an answer was heard, "that it would soon be warm enough." Thus the words of a slave brought on him the whole odium of having given the signal for firing the town, which was indeed already in flames.

Forty thousand armed men burst into Cremona, and with them a body of sutlers and camp-followers, yet more numerous and yet more abandoned to lust and cruelty. Neither age nor rank were any protection from indiscriminate slaughter and violation. Aged men and women past their prime, worthless as booty, were dragged about in wanton insult. Did a grown up maiden or youth of marked beauty fall in their way, they were torn in pieces by the violent hands of ravishers; and in the end the destroyers themselves were provoked into mutual slaughter. Men,

as they carried off for themselves coin or temple-offerings of massive gold, were cut down by others of superior strength. Some, scorning what met the eye, searched for hidden wealth, and dug up buried treasures, applying the scourge and the torture to the owners. In their hands were flaming torches, which, as soon as they had carried out the spoil, they wantonly hurled into the gutted houses and plundered temples. In an army which included such varieties of language and character, an army comprising Roman citizens, allies, and foreigners, there was every kind of lust, each man had a law of his own, and nothing was forbidden. For four days Cremona satisfied the plunderers. When all things else, sacred and profane, were settling down into the flames, the temple of Mephitis outside the walls alone remained standing, saved by its situation or by divine interposition.