Q. Vibius Crispus Ende 60 ("fine anni")

auch in einer besonders günstigen Stellung befunden, um seinen Bruder in einem von den Mauren angestrengten Repetendenprozess vor schlimmeren Folgen als der Verbannung aus Italien zu bewahren (Tac. ann. 14, 28).

Eine endgültige Entscheidung über das Consulatsjahr und folglich auch das Proconsulatsjahr des Q. Vibius Crispus ist allenfalls von Neufunden aus Pompeji zu erhoffen.38 Hält man jedoch am Jahre 61 als dem wahrscheinlichsten Datum fest, ist die Statthalterschaft des Crispus in das Jahr 71/72 zu datieren.39 Die Rückkehr zu B. Borghesis ingeniösen Deduktionen40 wäre somit vollzogen.

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40. So A. Pallu de Lessert, Fastes des provinces africaines 1, 146.

VEGETIUS (3, 5) ON TRUMPETS

For George King

Vegetius in his late fourth century ‘commentaries on the art of warfare condensed from the most highly acknowledged authors’ (3, 9) presents us with a mixed blessing. While his is the only full fledged technical treatise on the Roman imperial army to have survived and while his information at times is highly revealing, at other times he is positively misleading due to the use of heterogeneous sources. Some of the apparent mistakes, however, are due to the text transmission and may be straightened out. Such is the case with his chapter on the trumpets (3, 5).

In that chapter the signals given in the Roman army are classified as vocal, semivocal, and mute. The semivocal ones are explained thus:

semivocalia sunt quae per tubam aut cornu aut bucinnam dantur; tuba quae directa est appellatur; bucina quae in semet aereo circulo flectitur; cornu quod
ex uris agrestibus, argento nexum, temperatum arte spirituque canentis flatus emittit auditum.¹

'Semivocal signals are those given by the *tuba*; by the *cornu*, or by the *bucina*. The straight trumpet is called *tuba; bucina* the one that curves in a brass circle; *cornu* the one that is made from the horns of wild buffaloes, joined with silver and emitting audible winds under the skilful breath of its blower.'²

It has long been seen that the horn here described is an archaic instrument, for the horns used by the Roman imperial army were made of brass, not of horn and silver.³ Did Vegetius commit a mistake? His description of the *bucina* provides the answer.

In the absence of reliefs showing *bucinae* it has been inferred from this passage that the military *bucina* was a curved instrument.³ By a fortunate chance the soil of Byzantium has now produced just such a relief: the gravestone of a Roman soldier from the time of Caracalla with an inscription calling the deceased a *bucinator* and with a relief showing him holding his instrument— a long, straight trumpet.⁴

One might now assume that Vegetius committed yet another error when he called the *bucina* 'curving in a brass circle'. Yet a look at the *variae lectiones* shows that our text, not Vegetius is wrong. The outstanding tenth century *Codex Palatinus 909⁵* preserves the original punctuation where it reads:

*semivocalia sunt quae per tubam aut cornu aut bucina dantur. tuba quae directa est appellatur bucina. quae in semet ipsa aereo circulo flectitur tuba cornu quod ex uris agrestibus argento nexum . . .*

'The straight trumpet is called *bucina*. The trumpet that curves in a brass circle (is called) *cornu*, because (formerly) made from the horns of wild buffaloes, joined with silver . . .

The reading of *codex Palatinus 909* not only agrees with the new gravestone

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³ See the works cited in note 1.


⁵ Lang's codex π.
in describing the *bucina* as a straight trumpet, it also explains why Vegetius here adduces an archaic *cornu*, namely to show why a brass instrument is called horn. The word *tuba* in this context does not denote a specific instrument but a brass instrument in general, a well-known usage of the word.\(^6\) It would, however, make a description of the *tuba* proper rather difficult, which may be the reason why no such description is given here.

Confirmation of this reading comes from another passage of Vegetius (2, 7) where he calls the *cornu*, but not the *bucina*, *aes curvum*:

> tubicines, cornicines et buginatores qui tuba vel aere curvo vel bucina committere proelium solent.

Similarly Ovid and Juvenal use the expression *aes directum* and *aes rectum* for straight trumpets in contrast with *aes flexum* for *cornu*\(^7\) - these were obviously standard phrases.

Vegetius thus agrees with the archeological evidence that the *bucina* is a straight trumpet and that the *cornu* of the Roman army is made of brass. It is a fine thing to see Vegetius justified on these two points, for it may increase our confidence in his *epitoma rei militaris* - if it is cautiously read.

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7. Ovid, *Met.* 1.98; Juvenal 2, 118.

I would like to record my thanks to Dr. G. Maurach for sharing with me his expertise in textual criticism.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

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