

Rhiannon Ash (ed.), *Tacitus, Histories Book II*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics), IX, 415 pp., ISBN 978-0-521-89135-6.

New commentaries on Tacitus' *Histories*, especially for the English speaking world, were long a desideratum in Tacitean studies. Fortunately things seem to be changing. Four years after Cynthia Damon's recent commentary on Book I (2003) for Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, Rhiannon Ash [= A.], another eminent Tacitean scholar, contributed to the same respectable series an elegant commentary on Book II, which will replace those of Irvine (1952) and Chilver (1979) and the German one of Heubner (1968).

The volume follows the usual structure for the "Green and Yellow" series. The introduction (pp. 1–36) contains 11 sections ("Tacitus", "Ancient historiography", "*Quo quo scelesti ruitis?* Civil war and Roman identity", "*Histories 2*", "Dramatis personae", "Style", "*Sententiae* and moralising allusions", "The sources", "The parallel tradition", "Pro-Flavian historiography", "The text"), which provide the reader with helpful and interesting information before engaging in the text. The text printed is that of Heubner's Teubner edition (1978) with some departures in spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and in some readings. The 10 most important departures, all of them persuasive, are given in p. 36. Although there is no *apparatus criticus*, as is usual in this series (A. recommends the *apparatus criticus* of Wellesley's Teubner edition (1989) in p. 35, n. 98), information on alternative readings is frequently provided in the commentary. The commentary offers both a general introduction to the individual sections and an excellent detailed analysis of the text. The volume also includes two maps (the Roman Empire and Italy), a select bibliography and two indices (a general index and an index of Latin words) which cover the commentary (but not the introduction).

In her preface, A. modestly states that "it is the aim of this commentary to enrich students' understanding of Tacitus *Histories 2* at whatever point they encounter the text" (p. VII). While this goal is fully achieved, without doubt the particular book is a valuable resource not only for undergraduate students but also for teachers and scholars.

Despite the wealth of material available, A. has succeeded in providing a commentary that is rich in information and at the same time appropriately dense and concise. The reader will find in it a wide variety of comments that help him/her understand many aspects both of Tacitus' language, style, narrative and historiographical techniques as well as of the historical events described. In particular, A. takes care to make Tacitus' work accessible to students by translating or paraphrasing difficult phrases, supplying what was omitted from the Latin text due to Tacitus' well-known brachylogy (*brevitas*), explaining grammatical and stylistic difficulties of his Latin, providing biographical details for the persons referred to and underlining the general character traits of the protagonists. There is also useful information about military matters and practices or stratagems (cf. e.g. the comments on *dilectus* in p. 120 or the various comments on the components of the ideal general) and A. appears very sensitive to matters of chronology (cf. e.g. p. 150 or p. 231). Tacitus' thought and his narrative and historiographical techniques are often presented in connection with those of his Latin predecessors (especially Sallust and Livy) and highlighted by references to the relevant parallel tradition (Josephus, Plutarch, Suetonius, Cassius Dio), of which A. is well aware. Such a comparative analysis allows her not only to indicate similarities (which are frequently attributed to a common source) and differences, but also to interpret them and thus reveal Tacitus' historiographical perception.

A. knows Tacitus well, which is evident in many cases. There are comments on the words that occur hapax in Tacitus as well as on those that recur elsewhere in his works, while his famous pursuit of *uariatio* at all levels is fully explored. Poetic usages (cf. e.g. *firmitas* for *affirmo* in p. 100 or the hexameter ending of chapter 7 in p. 95) and archaisms (cf. e.g. p. 321) are frequently pointed

out, the *sententiae* are highlighted and it is worth noting that valuable comments are given on Tacitus' treatment of 'suggestive names' (cf. e.g. p. 120 on Certus, pp. 140 and 175 on Martius Macer or p. 255 on Hilarus) or on puns, as for instance the puns on the names of Fuscus (p. 340) and Valens (p. 361). Very often an event is elucidated by comparison with similar ones, while interesting links between persons are investigated through verbal parallels; cf. e.g. the links between Berenice and Cleopatra or between Titus and Nero (p. 79). At the same time there are cases where A. adroitly highlights the way a "stylistic difference implicitly reflects the contrasted characters" of two men, as for example in the *synkrisis* between Vespasian and Mucianus in p. 88, or generally the way Tacitus' syntax mirrors the concept described, appears as a carrier of historical meaning and relates to his historical interpretation of events, as for example in her comments on "the interlaced word order" at 88, 1 (p. 345), on "the rapid-fire syntax (historic infinitives, asyndeton)" in p. 87 (cf. also p. 337) or on the emphatic word-order at 33, 1 (p. 167). This is one of the strongest aspects of this volume. Special emphasis is also given on the figures of speech and thought, the *topoi* and the motifs employed by the historian. There are many valuable comments here and A. is at her best especially when describing *peripeteia*, metaphors, or the role of alliteration. Very often she impresses the reader with her wide range of scholarship which extends not only to philological and historical, but even to archaeological (cf. e.g. the comments on Titus' visit to Cyprus and the digression on the temple of Venus in Paphos (3) in pp. 80–83) and religious questions (cf. e.g. the comments on *Ceriales ludi* (55, 1) in p. 226). Her erudition is especially evident in the great number of parallels offered, which derive not only from Latin literature but also from Homer up to the twentieth century; cf. e.g. the references to Racine and Shakespeare (p. 79), Charlotte Corday's murder of Marat in 1793 (p. 121), Japanese soldiers of the Second World War (p. 213), George Orwell (p. 219). Furthermore, I cannot help but praise A. for her fruitful attempts to scrutinise cases in which Tacitus deliberately evokes different genres (cf. e.g. pp. 279–281).

A. has a good command of the relevant bibliography and this is another merit of her book. It is skilfully exploited both in the introductory comments to individual sections (the introductions to 2, 1–7 and 2, 46–51 are characteristic examples) and in the detailed analysis of the text, which in parallel with the previous knowledge also include insightful and sometimes original material that offers valuable food for thought.

I have noted some suggestions and corrections, many of them of minor importance, which, however, do not diminish the value of this volume.

The Latin text (pp. 37–72) is slightly marred by errors. There are some further departures from Heubner's edition, apart from those mentioned in p. 36, which seem to be misprints, as for example A.'s *tradita a Cinyra* (3, 1), instead of Heubner's *tradit a Cinyra*, or A.'s *Pacarius* (16, 2) and *Pacarium* (16, 3), instead of Heubner's *Picarius* and *Picarium*. Although *Pacarius* and *Pacarium* are supported by manuscripts, A. has already printed *Picarii* a few lines earlier (16, 1) and prefers "Picarius" in the commentary (pp. 120 f.) as well as in the introduction (p. 13). A.'s *Galli* (68, 2), instead of *Gallis*, another obvious misprint, is printed correctly in the commentary (p. 264).

Furthermore, the text commented on is not always the same with the text edited. The most serious departures concern adoption of different readings. Let me give two examples in which in her edition A. has abandoned readings favoured by Heubner (further departures, which are also not mentioned in p. 36), but adopts them in her commentary: at 51 A. has printed *digressus*, but in the commentary she prints *degressus* (p. 217), the reading adopted by Heubner; similarly, at 53, 2 A. has printed *percontarentur*, while in the commentary she prints *percunctarentur* (p. 222), the reading of M, adopted by Heubner. Besides, while A. has correctly printed *diductis* at 68, 2 (also in the commentary, p. 265), in p. 264 (line 31) she prefers the reading *deductis*. I have also noted some departures in punctuation (e.g. 54, 1: *...uictores; uersam...* and 54.2: *formidinem quod* in the edition of the text, but *...uictores, uersam...* (p. 224) and *formidinem, quod* (p. 225) in the commentary), as well as some misprints (e.g. *percrebu<er>it, necat ut, Vitelii, concilarent, Lugduni, a Lugduno* and *Asicaticos* in the commentary on 26, 2 (p. 148), 48, 1 (p. 208), 52, 1 (p. 220), 58, 2 (p. 236), 59, 3 (p. 239), 65, 1 (p. 255) and 95, 3 (p. 367) respectively, which are obvious misprints

of *percrebru<er>it, nec ut, Vitellii, conciliarent, Luguduni, a Luguduno* and *Asiaticos*, printed correctly in the edition of the text; cf. also cases of inconsistent spelling, as for instance 80, 2: *affluentia*, but in p. 312: *adfluentia*).

There are cases where A.'s statements, albeit suggestive, seem speculative; cf. e.g. "Agricola's prominent position suggests that he must have sensed T.'s promise" (p. 1) or "No doubt the closer he advanced to his own era in the missing books of the *Histories*, the more pervasive such references would have become" (p. 28). The fact that Macer is wounded by a lance thrown from a distance (36, 1: "uolneratum eminus lancea") does not necessarily mean that he is brave, as A. asserts in p. 140.

Tacitus ambivalent stance on pro-Flavian accounts (pp. 32–34) is attributed exclusively to his intention for objectivity: "What is at stake for T. is no less than the credibility of his historical narrative and ultimately, his own posthumous fame" (p. 32). However, his possible intention to disassociate himself from the previous regime, by which he was honoured and which he served, as well as his likely attempt to flatter Trajan should not be excluded; cf. *Agr.* 1–3 and see e.g. M. Griffin, *Pliny and Tacitus*, SCI XXVIII 1999, pp. 139–158, esp. at pp. 152–155; more generally for this practice, cf. E.S. Ramage, *Juvenal and the Establishment: Denigration of Predecessor in the Satires*, ANRW II 33, 1 (1989), pp. 640–707; K. Strobel, *Plinius und Domitian: Der willige Helfer eines Unrechtssystems? Zur Problematik historischer Aussagen in den Werken des jüngeren Plinius*, in: L. Castagna, E. Lefèvre (eds.), *Plinius der Jüngere und seine Zeit*, München–Leipzig 2003 (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 187), pp. 303–314.

On *melioribus* at 17, 1 (p. 123) and *melioiorem...causam* at 77, 3 (p. 301) a reference to Lucan's treatment of the *causa melior* notion, also in the context of civil war, would be a welcome addition; see S. Tzounakas, *Echoes of Lucan in Tacitus: the Cohortationes of Pompey and Calgacus*, in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. XII, Bruxelles 2005 (Collection Latomus 287), pp. 395–413, at p. 400.

Commenting on 1, 3: "sin Vespasianus rem publicam susciperet, obliuiscendum offensarum de bello agitantibus", A. notes (p. 78): "T. unusually uses a gerund, *obliuiscendum*, rather than an infinitive". However, *obliuiscendum* is not a gerund here but a gerundive, which in combination with the omitted infinitive of *sum* forms here the periphrastic conjugation of the passive (impersonal syntax, for which see e.g. E.C. Woodcock, *A New Latin Syntax*, London 1959, p. 163). On the other hand, in the phrase "qui ad spectandum conuenerant" (68, 2), *spectandum* is a gerund, not a gerundive, as A. mistakenly has written (p. 264: "ad + a gerundive of purpose").

In p. 134 (on 21, 2) A. notes: "*in leui habitum*: sc. *est*. This expression, the direct object of the verb *maerebant*, only recurs at *A.* 3.54.4 in Classical Latin (WM 395)". I cannot understand how the expression *in leui habitum est* could be the direct object of the verb *maerebant*.

A.'s comment in p. 211 "T. himself delivered his [*scil.* Verginius Rufus'] funeral oration, a *memorable...spectaculum* (Plin. *Ep.* 2.1.1)" is not absolutely accurate, since it gives the impression that Pliny has characterised the particular *laudatio funebris* as a *memorable spectaculum*. Although Pliny does extol Tacitus as a *laudator eloquentissimus* (Plin. *Ep.* II 1, 6: "Laudatus est a consule Cornelio Tacito; nam hic supremus felicitati eius cumulus accessit, laudator eloquentissimus"), his phrase *memorable...spectaculum* refers not to the funeral oration delivered by Tacitus, but to the public funeral (*publicum funus*) of Verginius Rufus: "Post aliquot annos insigne atque etiam memorabile populi Romani oculis spectaculum exhibuit publicum funus Vergini Rufi, maximi et clarissimi ciuis, perinde felicitis" (Plin. *Ep.* II 1, 1).

In p. 326 the *Declamationes maiores* is attributed to Quintilian, while this work is now regarded as spurious; see e.g. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *More on Pseudo-Quintilian's Longer Declamations*, HSCPh LXXXVIII 1984, pp. 113–137.

The Greek technical term is κακέμφοτον, not κατέμφοτον (p. 376).

In p. 25 there is confusion in the references to Sallust's works; so read *Cat.* 10–11, instead of *Jug.* 10–11 (line 14), *Cat.* 6–9, instead of *Jug.* 6–9 (line 17), *Cat.* 10, 1, instead of *Jug.* 10, 1 (n. 70).

There are some inconsistencies in the *ars citandi*. Let me give some examples: while Tacitus' *Germania* is generally abbreviated *G.* (cf. p. IX), in p. 314 it appears as *Germ.*; similarly, his *Histories* are generally abbreviated *H.* (cf. e.g. p. 117), but in p. 99 we read *Hist.* References to Seneca's *Dialogues* would have been improved by better editing; cf. e.g. p. 330: "*De ira* 16.6" (instead of *De ira* I 16, 6), also in p. 375: "*Ira* 16.6", but in p. 241: "Sen. *Dial.* 3.2.1"; p. 326: "Sen. *Marc. Cons.* 6.9.3" (instead of Sen. *Marc. Cons.* 9, 3), but in p. 203: "Senecan innovation (*D.* 6.15.3)"; p. 327: "Sen. *Tranq.* 9.2.13" (instead of Sen. *Tranq.* 2, 13). In p. 308 we read "Cic. *Arch.* 4", but in p. 181 "Cic. *Arch.* 10.23", i.e. with double references (both chapter and section). While A. notes that "Journal titles are abbreviated in accordance with *L'année philologique*" (p. IX), in the case of Morgan (1993b) we read *Rh. Mus.* instead of *RhM*, which however is retained in the case of Townend (1962a). In the Bibliography (p. 385), the abbreviated first name of Connors (C. = Catherine) is omitted.

Generally speaking, A. uses modern terminology (e.g. p. 12: "internal focalisation", p. 166: "intertext", p. 185: "deconstructs", p. 231: "emblematic", p. 280: "metatheatrically", p. 294: "marginalising", p. 306: "subtext", p. 349: "metaliterary sense"), but the disparaging "Silver Latin" (p. 329) for the literature of the Imperial Age is now obsolete.

In sum, apart from these, sometimes trivial, details, A. has produced a learned, lucid and enjoyable volume with stimulating, even ingenious, interpretations and of much merit. I am sure that it will greatly promote Tacitean studies and I hope that A. finds worthy imitators.

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Jana Nechutová, *Die lateinische Literatur des Mittelalters in Böhmen*, Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2007, 371 S., ISBN 978-3-412-20070-1.

Jana Nechutová [= N.] ist klassische Philologin von Beruf, und ihr besonderes Interessengebiet ist die Literatur des Mittelalters. Während ihrer Beschäftigung mit der lateinischen Literatur übersetzte sie Prosa und Lyrik, sowohl aus der Antike (Sueton, Claudian, Lucan), als auch aus dem Mittelalter (Fortunatus, Claretus, Canis). Sie arbeitet als Professorin an der Universität Brünn, wo ihre Forschung der Geschichte des lateinischen Mittelalters und der Literatur der böhmischen Reformation gewidmet ist. Langjährige genaue Untersuchungen auf diesem Feld trugen im Jahre 2000 Früchte in der Gestalt eines Buches über die Geschichte der lateinsprachigen Literatur des böhmischen Mittelalters (*Latinská literatura českého středověku do roku 1400*, Praha 2000).

Die Literatur und Kultur der mittelalterlichen Epoche erfreut sich großen Interesses seitens vieler Wissenschaftler, vor allem aus Westeuropa; ihren reichen Niederschlag zeigt N. in der benutzten Literatur des hier besprochenen Buches. Der Nachlass von Wissenschaftlern, die auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Italien, Frankreich, der Britischen Inseln oder Deutschlands leben, ist weithin bekannt und gehört zum gemeinsamen europäischen Erbe in der weitesten Bedeutung dieses Wortes. In Ostmitteleuropa gibt es viel weniger solcher Arbeiten, vor allem wenn es darum geht, das Problem aus der Perspektive von komplexen Forschungen darzustellen. Eine ruhmreiche Ausnahme bildet das Buch von Teresa Michałowska (*Średniowiecze*, Warszawa 1995), das die Geschichte der polnischen mittelalterlichen Literatur bis zum Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts umfasst. Arbeiten von mittelalterlichen Autoren aus dem slawischen Umfeld bleiben oft in der Form einer Handschrift, so wie sie vor Jahrhunderten geschrieben worden sind. Es ist also schwer, einzuschätzen, inwieweit die