Histos 1 (1997) 156-66

REVIEW–DISCUSSION

A. J. Woodman, R. H. Martin: *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3*. (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries.) Pp. xx + 514. Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN 0-521-55217-6. £55.

This commentary is a sequel to Frank Goodyear's volumes on *Annals* I and II, and is appropriately dedicated to his memory. The editors (here called 'WM.') are well qualified for the undertaking, W. as the commentator on Velleius (1977, 1983) and author of *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (1988), M. as an expert on Latin usage and author of *Tacitus* (1981), MW. together as editors of the commentary on *Annals* IV (1989). The present work is on an ampler scale and calls for extended discussion, particularly on the Piso affair (chs. **1-19**). As a commentary consists of details, the review will be clearest if it follows the sequence of the narrative, but some generalisations will be added at the end.

At the beginning of Book III, in the winter of A.D. 19-20, the elder Agrippina lands at Brindisi with the ashes of her husband Germanicus. WM. comment on the vividness of the scene and the involvement of the reader (**1.4** 'neque discerneres'): the action is described from the viewpoint of an onlooker. Several commonplaces suggest the *adventus* of a victorious general, the expectant crowd, the occupation of roof-tops (Plin. *Pan.* 22.4, Claud. 28.544), the presence of various sections of the community; but the rejoicing conventional on such occasions is here reversed. Tacitus makes an orator's use of 'probability' (i.e. guesswork based on the constants of human nature): we see the hesitation of the bystanders about how to react, and the unnatural solemnity of the crew. For Agrippina's tragic attitude ('duobus cum liberis') WM. cite M. Billerbeck, *ANRW* 2.33.4.2755-8, to which add Sen. *H.O.* 1762f., 1828 (Alcmena carrying the ashes of Hercules). But though the princess was no doubt manipulative, here the manipulation is done by the historian (cf. WM. p. 20).

In chapter **2** the cortège proceeds through Italy, and the heavy double-spondees suit the sombre occasion (*portabantur, praecedebant, versi fasces, testabantur*). But according to Tacitus, the emperor did not share the general grief: **2.3** 'gnaris omnibus laetam Tiberio Germanici mortem male dissimulari' (WM. cite also Dio 57.18.6). This is a crude assessment of what may have been a complex attitude, but Tiberius had reason to resent the popularity of his charismatic heir, who in his adventurous German campaigns had shown too little circumspection for a future emperor; after the *clades Variana* Tiberius had himself stabilised the situation, and he must have dreaded a repetition. For Germanicus as 'wrong but romantic' see further C. Pelling in T.

J. Luce and A. J. Woodman (edd.), *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (1993), pp. 59-85.

WM. note that Tiberius' 'dissimulation' was rooted in the historical tradition, being found in Suetonius and Dio as well as Tacitus, with a hint as early as Velleius (114.3). Such a characterisation is supported by the observed facts of his principate, from his feigned reluctance at his accession to his destruction of Sejanus. But when Tacitus adds that Tiberius stayed out of view in case his hypocrisy should be detected (**3.1**), WM. rightly reject the tortuousness of this and other insinuations. It looks as if he was showing conspicuous neutrality while the death of Germanicus was investigated (see WM. on **8.1**): it was awkward that his old friend Cn. Piso, whom he had sent to Syria to assist and probably restrain his heir, was being accused of complicity in his death, or at least of too blatant satisfaction.

When he comes to the funeral itself, Tacitus mentions complaints that the ceremonies were too low-key (**5.1**), presumably a typical inference of his own: contrasts were drawn with the honours paid in 9 B.C., when Germanicus' father Drusus had died in north Germany. WM. have already mentioned the Roman feeling that history may repeat itself within families (**2.2n**., to which add J. Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (1985), p. 190); now they point to the differences between the two situations, including Germanicus' previous funeral in Antioch. They also note a curious omission by Tacitus: while he commends Augustus' solicitude on the earlier occasion, he fails to mention that Tiberius had himself brought home his brother's body, as celebrated in the *Epicedium Drusi* and elsewhere. WM. refer to the possibility that the Sperlonga sculptures, where Ulysses recovers Achilles' body, allude to this famous journey (for more disturbing identifications see my *Collected Papers* (1995), p. 253 n. 29); if there is substance in these speculations, they would throw light on the personality of Tiberius, so it is relevant that the composition seems to have been designed to fit his grotto (to A. F. Stewart, *JRS* 67 (1977), 88-90 add now B. Andreae, *AAWM* 1994, nr. 12).

Tiberius now issued an edict urging restraint in mourning (**6**), but WM. regard its very existence as less than certain (for similar scepticism see their note on 4.8.2). They say that Tacitus 'follows the convention of ancient historiography in inventing such speech', which must be right where Roman mutineers or German chieftains are concerned; but with the official pronouncements of emperors, even though the words are changed, the content may be more or less genuine. They refer to the speech by Claudius preserved in the Lyons tablet (*ILS* 212) that was refabricated by Tacitus at *Ann.* 11.24; there the original was rambling and eccentric, and by ancient conventions needed complete redrafting, but even there much of the tenor was preserved. No doubt the edict needed compression, as well as transference from direct speech, but the robust tone coheres with other utterances attributed to

Tiberius (**6.3** 'principes mortales, rem publicam aeternam esse'). The discrepancy between such sentiments and the historian's earlier cynicism supports the essential authenticity of the précis.

In chapters **8-9** the centre of attention shifts to Piso, who first visited Illyricum to enlist the support of the emperor's son Drusus. He then proceeded by boat down the Nar and Tiber (**9.2**); his leisurely progress was perhaps meant to suggest a lack of anxiety (for that might be the point of *vitandae suspicionis*), like his previous tour 'per amoena Asiae atque Achaiae' (**7.1**). WM. comment on his supposed brazenness in arriving by day, and quote passages where people in trouble enter the city by night (also a bad sign); for circuitous and furtive journeys as a topic of invective add Cic. *Clu.* 193, *Pis.* 53. They point out that 'domus foro imminens' (**9.3**) has both a literal and symbolic implication. They cite parallels for Piso's banqueting as a prelude to disaster; for untimely festivities compare also Cicero's fabrications about an enemy of the same name (*Pis.* 22, etc.).

We come now to the trial of Piso and the ensuing senatorial inquiry (**10-19**), and here WM. have enjoyed a rare privilege. The *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* (*SCPP*), discovered some years ago in Spain, will be published by A. Caballos, W. Eck, and F. Fernández (for a summary see Eck, *Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz* 4 (1993), 189-208); adequate discussion must await the first edition, but in the meantime Professor Eck has generously allowed WM. to quote the most relevant passages, which are the only ones cited here. The decree records for the benefit of the provinces the conclusions of the senatorial inquiry, and amply supports Syme's insistence, if support was needed, that Tacitus worked from the senate's archives. It confirms his essential accuracy on matters of detail, but presents a problem about chronology: the decree is dated to 10 December A.D. 20, but Drusus' *ovatio*, which is mentioned at the end of Tacitus' account (**19.3**), is fixed by the *Fasti Ostienses* to 28 May; and the campaign against Tacfarinas, which Tacitus describes later still (see below), must belong to the summer of the year. WM. make too much of the difficulty (pp. 67-77): Tacitus is writing *annales*, not *diurna*, and the story of Piso is too absorbing to be interrupted with extraneous matter. Drusus' *ovatio* is not a chronological marker, but suggests a poignant contrast (as WM. p. 77 themselves recognise): Germanicus and Drusus, whose careers ran in parallel, were granted the honour together (2.64.1), but only Drusus lived to receive it.

In chapter **12** Tiberius refers Piso's case to the senate with an impressive speech well analysed by WM. They point out (**12.3**) how little is said of the charge that was decisive with Tiberius (**14.3**), namely that after Germanicus' death Piso tried to recover by force the province he had abandoned. They note that *SCPP* 48-9 'quam pessumo et animo et exemplo reliquerat' contradicts the alternative story that Germanicus had ordered him to leave

(2.70.2); the latter was the more damaging version, as it would have made his subsequent return more obviously illegal. If Piso withdrew to Cos voluntarily after Germanicus renounced his friendship, he might reasonably argue that he was still legate of Syria (2.77.1, R. Seager, *Tiberius* (1972), p. 107). His use of force was reckless in the extreme, as it gave Agrippina and her friends an excuse to destroy him, but he must have felt confident of his emperor's support (2.77.3).

In chapter **13** the prosecutors' case against Piso is briskly summarised: irrelevant arguments *ex ante acta vita*, charges of suborning the troops (WM. cite *SCPP* 52-7) though oddly not of his unhelpful interference in Eastern frontier policy (2.57.1, *SCPP* 37-40, Eck, op. cit. p. 196), finally his alleged *sacra et immolationes nefandas* to celebrate Germanicus' death (WM. cite *SCPP* 62-3 'nefaria sacrificia ab eo facta'). But the charge of poisoning, which was clearly absurd, was not pressed (**14.1**), and the *SCPP* 26-9 is content to say that the dying Germanicus blamed Piso for his fate (cited p. 142). The senate remained suspicious about the actual death (**14.3**); unfortunately at this point there is a lacuna in the text followed by the cryptic words 'scripsissent expostulantes, quod haud minus Tiberius quam Piso abnuere'. WM. suggest singular *scripsisset*, and tentatively posit a demand for the letter about Germanicus that Piso wrote to Tiberius after his death (2.78.1, *SCPP* 58-60 'patri optumo et indulgentissimo libellum quo eum accusaret mittere ausus sit…'). Yet these two passages imply that this letter was made available at some stage; so perhaps Tacitus is rather referring to allegations from Germanicus' entourage about the circumstances of his death.

Tacitus next describes the public demonstrations against Piso (**14.4**), and WM. call attention to *SCPP* 155-8 'plebem quoq. laudare senatum quod … regi … a principe nostro se passa sit'. Piso's wife Plancina had the support of Livia Augusta, and WM. underline the gibe at **15.1** 'ambiguum habebatur quantum Caesari in eam liceret'. Piso saw that the senate was hostile and Tiberius had a closed mind 'ne quo adfectu perrumperetur' (**15.2**): most editors refer *adfectu* to the emperor's own emotion, but WM. show that it can be used of emotional appeals by somebody else (citing Quint. 5 *praef.* 1 among other passages).

Now comes the sensational climax: Piso writes letters, prepares for bed (WM. note the normality of the routine), and is found in the morning with his throat slit and a sword by his side (**15.3**). Tacitus here adds a tale that he had heard from his elders (**16.1** 'audire me memini ex senioribus'); WM. have a note on 'fictive memory', but see that the doubt is not about the historian's veracity but about the evidence of his sources. Tacitus was told that Piso had threatened to publish Tiberius' *mandata* about Germanicus, but was persuaded not to do so by Sejanus. WM. point to the mention of *mandata* at *SCPP* 38-9 as well as in Suetonius and Dio, but they see no possibility that

Tiberius would have incriminated himself either in writing or orally; the last point is very doubtful, for if Tiberius meant Piso to keep an eye on Germanicus, he must have said something. The unnamed *seniores*also alleged that Piso was murdered, and Tacitus does not exclude this possibility (WM. provide material on a historian's use of rumours). Piso's last letter (see below) suggests suicide rather than murder (WM. p. 118), but it remains possible that he traded his death for the safety of his family.

Tiberius now addressed the reconvened senate with an air of sorrow (**16.2** 'flexo in maestitiam ore'); for the imaginative description of facial expressions cf. Cic. *Verr.* 5.161 'toto ex ore crudelitas eminebat', Goodyear on 2.57.2 with M.'s note. He selfishly complained that Piso's death was meant to bring odium on himself (since Cato such revenge was one of the purposes of a public man's suicide); but the loss of *dignitas* and the threat of extreme penalties were also explanations. He read Piso's last appeal, which begged for mercy for his two sons; WM. give a note on *novissima verba* and in particular dying *mandata* (add F. Cairns, *Generic Composition* (1972), p. 91, E. Stauffer, *RAC* 1.29-30, G. W. Most, *CQ* 43 (1993), 96 n.). Tacitus does not quote Piso's actual words (as they recognise): the tone is too artificial for somebody in his situation.

Tacitus exonerated Piso's younger son of blame for his father's invasion of Syria (**17.1**); as WM. point out, this was not a formal acquittal but only a recommendation to the senate (*SCPP* 7-8 'cui relationi adiecisset uti precum suarum pro adulescente memor is ordo esset'). When he makes a similar plea for Plancina, 'matris preces obtendens', WM. cite startling confirmation at *SCPP* 111-19 'princeps noster … pro Plancina rogatu matris suae deprecatus . ..'. Tacitus describes the proceedings against Plancina as 'the semblance of a trial' (**17.3** 'imagine cognitionis'); WM. comment that *SCPP* 109-20 contains no suggestion that Plancina was pardoned in advance, but that was a mere inference by the historian which could not appear in an official document.

The first to be asked his *sententia* was Cotta the consul (**17.4**); WM. plausibly explain that as the emperor was presiding, Cotta assumed the responsibility that normally belonged to a consul-designate. Cotta proposed severe reprisals against Piso's family with the exception of Plancina, but these were considerably modified by the emperor's intervention (**18.1**); WM. use the *SCPP* to correct and supplement Tacitus' abbreviated account (note also Syme, *Roman Papers* 2.737 for the deletion of Piso's name from an inscription in Hispania Tarraconensis). When Messalinus proposed a vote of thanks to the imperial family (**18.3**), he did not think of including Claudius, whose name was added later; and indeed he is slipped in at the end of the obsequious list at *SCPP* 123-51 (cf. Eck, op. cit. p. 201).

After the Piso affair nothing very important is recorded for the rest of the book; the death of Drusus, the turning-point of the reign, is reserved for the beginning of Book IV, the half-way mark in the Tiberian hexad. If a narrative historian has a feeling for the proportions of his work he fits some of his general material into the less eventful periods, and Tacitus uses relatively minor events to make implicit comments on larger issues. Syme pointed to the emphasis on senatorial debates, particularly concerning Africa and Asia (*Tacitus*, pp. 268f.); and WM. underline the enhancement of Drusus' role (pp. 8-11) and the part played by dominant women (p. 11-17). Even so, Tacitus gives some events more space than they are worth, and there is something to be said for Syme's view, disputed by WM. (pp. 6f.), that he is filling in time.

In chs. **20-21** Tacitus deals with the revolt of Tacfarinas in Africa, which straggles across seven years (A.D. 17-24) and three books. A commentary on annals is not the easiest place to expound military history, and to find out what is happening one must consult Syme, *Roman Papers* 1.218-30 (with a much-needed map on p. xvi), or for a shorter account now C. R. Whitaker, *CAH* X2.593-6. At 21.4 where Tacfarinas is described as 'inligatus praeda', W. sees a hint of African snakes; this notion may be supported by *deflexit* above, but hardly by *spargit bellum*, where I associate the imagery not with poison but brush-fires (note the following words 'ubi instaretur cedens ac rursum in terga remeans').

Next comes the case of Lepida (**22-3**), charged among other offences with adultery and the attempted poisoning of her former husband Quirinius; when Tiberius transferred her slaves from military custody to the consuls, this was surely meant to seem a sign of moderation (for it took them out of his direct control). Lepida's banishment is balanced by the return *e peregrinatione longinqua* of D. Silanus (**24**), who had been involved in the disgrace of the younger Julia in A.D. 8. W. seems right to believe that Augustus 'suas ipse leges egrediebatur' (**24.2**) by regarding the adulteries of the two Juliae as cases of *maiestas* (and not just by exceeding the punishments prescribed by the *lex Iulia de adulteriis*). Anything that affected the status of the imperial family could be regarded as treason; W.'s account of the *patria maiestas* of the *pater patriae* seems too indirect an approach. Some historians have suspected that both Juliae were the victims of trumped-up charges that masked their role in conspiracies; W. is right to reject this view, for the scandals were too embarrassing to be invented.

This leads naturally to Tiberius' attempt to modify the *lex Papia Poppaea*, 'quam senior Augustus post Iulias rogationes incitandis caelibum poenis et augendo aerario sanxerat' (**25.1**). WM. see a parody of *de augenda prole*; in the same way the curious *incitandis* may be deriding some phrase about incentives to marry. There follows a potted excursus in the Sallustian manner on

the development of law since the Golden Age (**26-8**); sketches of progress and degeneration follow traditional patterns (with temporal words like *postquam, primo, mox, donec*), but it is cynical to treat the history of legislation as an instance of the latter. When Tacitus calls the Twelve Tables the 'finis aequi iuris' (**27.1**), WM. think that *finis* means 'culmination'; but the laws that follow are regarded as bad, and 'end of just law' seems to be a parody of Livy 3.34.6 'fons omnis publici privatique est iuris'.

Still in A.D. 20 Tiberius asked the senate for accelerated promotion for one of Germanicus' sons (**29.1-2**); Tacitus comments 'non sine inrisu audientium', and suggests that the situation was more absurd than when Augustus made similar requests for Tiberius. WM. offer alternative explanations, neither fully satisfactory, so I paraphrase: 'It was less farcical for Augustus to ask the senate's approval than for Tiberius, for the senate still counted for something; and as the request involved a less close relative, it was not so impossible to refuse.' The year ends with an obituary on Sallustius Crispus (**30.2-3**), for whose combination of *luxus* and *vigor* cf. J. Griffin, op. cit. pp. 39f.; the *horti Sallustiani* should probably be associated with him rather than with his great-uncle the historian (Syme, *Roman Papers* 3.1088).

Early in A.D. 21 Tiberius retreated to Campania (**31.2**), where he remained for over a year. Tacitus says 'quasi firmandae valetudini', a significant comment; perhaps the Piso crisis had taken its toll, and he was already suffering from the problems that led to his extraordinary withdrawal for the second half of his principate (A.D. 26-37). Tacfarinas now caused more trouble (**32.1**), and as Africa was a senatorial province, he gave the senate something to talk about. Sex. Pompeius urged the removal of Manius Lepidus from his proconsulship; WM. record the Sallustian language (**32.2** 'ut socordem … et maioribus suis dedecorum'), which seems particularly pointed when applied to Africa and a descendant of Sulla (cf. **22.1n**. on Lepidus' sister). There follows a debate between Caecina and Messalinus on whether provincial governors could be accompanied by their wives (**33-4**); as WM. demonstrate, the two references to the *lex Oppia* invite us to recall the rival speeches in Livy 34.2-7 (on which see Briscoe's commentary), and Tacitus' *controversia* seems no less artificial. It is Drusus significantly who resolves the problem by mentioning his own happy experience in Illyricum (**34.6**); W. convincingly suggests that while the discussions must have been limited to senatorial provinces, the senate could not ignore what happened elsewhere.

Drusus continues to be prominent in the following chapters; at **37.2** *utrumque* is plausibly referred to his influence on both emperor and senate (suggested by R. J. Seager and C. S. Kraus). People contrasted his agreeable behaviour with the remoteness of Tiberius; 'neque luxus in iuvene adeo displicebat' recalls the conventional *locus de indulgentia*, as in Cicero's *Pro*

Caelio. There follow the words 'diem aedificationibus, noctem conviviis trahere', where WM. defend *aedificationibus*; yet it does not seem to suit the emphasis on Drusus' youth. No compelling conjecture is on offer: *editionibus* (Lipsius) for 'shows' is not well paralleled in literary Latin, and*equitationibus* (J. Mueller) sounds too strenuous to suit *luxus*.

There follow accounts of rebellion in Thrace and Gaul (**38-47**). For Tiberius' handling of the latter WM. p. 352 contrast **41.3** 'aluitque dubitatione bellum' with Vell. 12.9.3 'bellum … mira celeritate ac virtute compressit': Tacitus is as tendentious as Velleius. Then with what WM. call 'characteristic perversity' Tacitus records the emperor's sensible refusal to go personally to every trouble-spot (**47.2**), and his typically derisive response to the suggestion of an ovation (**47.4** 'peregrinationis suburbanae inane praemium'; cf. Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 284). The year ends on a sinister note with the execution of Clutorius Priscus, who when Drusus was ill recited an*epicedium* commemorating his death (**49-51**); the omen may genuinely have been regarded as dangerous. M. Lepidus pleaded in mitigation that the recitation was to *mulierculae*, who were assumed to be unpolitical (WM. p. 15); for emotional poetry as suitable for women cf. perhaps Hor. *Serm.* 1.10.91.

Tiberius began the following year (A.D. 22) with a judicious statement to the senate on *luxus* (**52-4**), which he both regretted and intended to ignore; for his own discriminating diet (including cucumbers and smoked grapes) see Syme, *Roman Papers* 6.411ff. Tacitus goes on to describe how the ostentatious rivalries of the Republic lasted into the early Empire (**55.2**). When he continues 'postquam caedibus saevitum est et magnitudo famae exitio erat' (**55.3**), this suits the reigns of terror up to Nero (M.) better than the year of the four emperors and Domitian (W.).

Tiberius now asks the senate to grant Drusus the *tribunicia potestas* (**56.1**); when Tacitus calls it the 'summi fastigii vocabulum', the first two words are formal, as WM. illustrate, but *vocabulum* is a gibe at the constitutional sham. When he says that Tiberius 'imaginem antiquitatis senatui praebebat' (**60.1**), W. has persuaded me that *imaginem* describes the emperor's own air; but unlike WM. I think that the word suggests falsity. When delegations come to the senate from Asia (**60-3**), their trivial concerns are elaborated with the expertise and disdain of a former proconsul; WM. acknowledge some of this at **63.1** 'quorum copia fessi patres', where 'amplitude' implies volubility. In discussing rights of asylum WM. make excellent use of inscriptions, always a mark of a commentary's seriousness, but 'Diana of the Ephesians' (**61.1**) calls for more visualisation (cf. *LIMC* 2.2.564-73).

Tacitus declares his intention of selecting only the most honourable and the most disgraceful of senatorial *sententiae* (**65.1**); he is clearly most interested in preserving the latter for posterity (WM. cite T. J. Luce, *ANRW*

2.33.4.2911-14). The trial of Silanus is described at some length (**66-9**), but as Tacitus thought him guilty his complaints seem excessive. Tiberius refused to admit charges against L. Ennius for converting his image 'to domestic purposes' (**70.1**); when the cunning old jurist Ateius Capito invites him to reconsider (**70.3**), his show of independence was a form of flattery, as W. rightly explains (cf. Goodyear on 2.35.2).

The last chapters of a book of the *Annals* tend to deal with miscellaneous subjects, and here Tacitus is tying up loose ends (WM. p. 475). Hence senatorial discussions (**71-2**) on Fortuna Equestris and the Basilica Aemilia (for *publica munificentia* see N.-H. on Hor. *Odes* 2.15.15); and Tacfarinas turns up yet again (**73-4**). The book ends as elsewhere with obituaries (**75-6**), the last on Junia, sister and wife of Brutus and Cassius, sixty-three years after the battle of Philippi; this is a thought-provoking closure, like the wedding of the younger Agrippina at the end of Book IV. When Tacitus writes 'praefulgebant Cassius atque Brutus eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visebantur', he is not just saying that their masks were 'conspicuous by their absence' (the English imitation is attributed to Lord John Russell). Rather, as W. observes, the tyrannicides themselves shone out as if they were really there.

The text and interpretation of Tacitus still leave room for hesitation, and where the expression is slightly unusual it is difficult to decide whether idiosyncrasy or corruption is the cause. Sometimes W. and M. offer differing views, where W. (as on Book IV) is the readier to try novelties; some such passages have been cited above, and I also note unconvincing explanations of **17.3** *nullo*, **20.1** *priore aestate*, **33.2** *morentur*, **65.1** *quod…reor*. As a result they seem more discursive and less decisive than Goodyear, whose particular strength lay in this area; but even when a speculation goes too far, the material is provided for its rebuttal (as with Tacitus himself). The following new proposals deserve consideration: **19.2** *ulciscendi … mortem … iactatam* M., *ulciscendo … mortem… iactatam* W. (p. 195 n. 1); **46.2** *nec fugientibus* M.; **53.4** *lapidum causa* del. W.; **70.3** *egregia* M. combined with *in publicum* W. Attractive conjectures recorded in the apparatus include **8.2** *dubitabatur* Reeve; **20.2** *exceptat* Held; **38.1** *postulaverat*, *repetundis addito* Watt; **54.6** *fugiunt* Mercerus; **59.3** *bello* Lipsius.

WM. have less on lexicography than Goodyear, but they know where to turn for relevant discussions of syntax. There is no attempt to repeat the section on 'language and expression' that they provided on Book IV; the best account remains that in Syme's *Tacitus*, where he relates style to function and a view of the world (1.340-63). There is one matter that needs further exploration: Tacitus is usually thought an unrhythmical author, except for some speeches in *oratio recta* (**12.4n**.), but in a few emotive descriptions he comes close to the manner of oratory. At **1.4** all but one of the clausulae are Ciceronian: 'postquam duobus cum liberis | feralem urnam tenens | egressa

navi | defixit oculos, | idem omnium gemitus, | neque discerneres proximos alienos, | virorum feminarumque planctus, | nisi quod comitatum Agrippinae | longo maerore fessum | obvii et recentes | in dolore anteibant' (where I am tempted to take the last two words together, perhaps deleting *in*). So at **4.1** (Germanicus' funeral) we find regular rhythms at *inferebantur, per silentium vastus, per campum Martis faces, miles cum armis, sine insignibus magistratus, concidisse rem publicam, clamitabant, apertiusque, imperitantium crederes.*

A commentary should not only explain particular passages but provide cross-references on matters of general interest. Here WM. are much richer than Goodyear: thus they illustrate such topics as **22.1** suppositious infants,**23.1** demonstrations in the theatre, **30.1** the conventions of obituary, **33.2** women and war, **45.2** generals' *hortationes*, **46.4** collective suicide, **52-5** *luxus mensae*, **55.5** cyclical movements in history, **75.1** significant names (add now J. J. O'Hara, *True Names*, 1996). Note also the copious general index, particularly under 'topoi'.

Prosopographical questions are dealt with thoroughly, with abundant references to *RE*, *PIR*, and Syme; but as with Goodyear, a little more colour would help the reader to place secondary characters. When Vitellius accuses Piso of suborning the troops in Syria (**13.2**), it could be noted that he was the uncle of a more familiar Vitellius (Suet. *Vit.* 2.2-3); there is dramatic irony here, for the nephew was to become emperor by ingratiating himself with an army (Tac. *Hist* 1.52.1-2, Suet. *Vit.* 8.1). It is of some interest that P. Sulpicius Quirinius, the former husband and intended victim of Lepida (**22-3**), the friend of Tiberius whose evil old age is stigmatised by Tacitus (**48.2** 'sordidam et praepotentem senectam'), is none other than the legate of Syria in A.D. 6 who figures in St. Luke's garbled dating of the Nativity. At **23.2** Rubellius Blandus proposes the banishment of Lepida, in which he is supported by Drusus; it is relevant that he was a rising courtier who was to marry Drusus' daughter (Syme, *Roman Papers* 4. 177ff.), whence Juv. 8.40 (of his son) 'tumes alto Drusorum stemmate'. One would also welcome more on the literary associations of Sextus Pompeius (**11.2**), Bruttedius Niger (**66.1**), and Piso the Pontifex (**68.2**).

WM. provide long notes on particular historical problems, but their verdict on Tiberius is left ambiguous, perhaps deliberately. They say truly that the *SCPP* 'invites no questions' (p. 117); its aim was not the whole truth, but reassurance and damage limitation (like the Warren Commission's report on President Kennedy's assassination). They show well how Tacitus 'converts the monument's monotonous confidence into discrepancy and doubt', but one would like more discussion of the motives of the three principal actors. By one scenario Germanicus did well enough in Germany, Tiberius had no reason to distrust him, and Piso was sent to Syria simply as his *adiutor* (thus now T. E. J. Wiedemann, *CAH* X². 210f.). Others will prefer the more tragic

version of Syme, who assumed that the ferociously independent Piso was meant to restrain Germanicus on the sensitive Eastern frontier. 'Throughout his ordeal the dour and alert Princeps kept his head, curbed his tongue, and dissembled nobly. For reasons of state he had to sacrifice his friend' (*The Augustan Aristocracy*, pp. 374f.). 'Only a construction, you will object' I remember Syme saying in another context. After a pregnant pause he added 'But all history is a construction.'

A review can deal with only a small proportion of the interesting matters discussed in this commentary. It remains to thank Professors Woodman and Martin for what will long remain a standard work.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford R. G. M. NISBET