

REVIEW-DISCUSSION

Valerie M. Warrior, *The Initiation of the Second Macedonian War: An Explication of Livy Book 31*. Pp. 118. Steiner, 1996. DM 56.

I am honoured to have been one of the first to have been invited to contribute a review to *Histos*, and particularly pleased that I have been given the incentive to revisit a concatenation of problems which occupied a lot of my time at the beginning of my academic career and that Valerie Warrior is the author of the book under review. Since the editor has been generous in his allocation of space, let me begin with some biographical and autobiographical remarks.

W. is a Mancunian by origin, educated at Manchester High School for Girls and Cambridge, but her academic career has been spent entirely in the United States. Almost all her publications have dealt with chronological problems in the period covered by the fourth and fifth decades of Livy. We met when she was visiting Manchester in, I think, 1984, and again when I visited Harvard in 1993. She told me that she was working on Livy's account of the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War, but we have never discussed these matters in detail. She refers frequently to my commentary on Livy 31-33 (hereafter *Commentary*), and though we share a readiness to accept non-Polybian evidence to a far greater extent than many others, on several occasions she has cause to disagree with what I wrote. These disagreements are always expressed with courtesy, and I have no possible reason to be offended by them. I trust that W. equally will find nothing offensive in the tone of my remarks.

W. is a historian, and this is essentially a historical work, despite her claim that other interpretations have overlooked 'Livy's narrative techniques and the overall design of his work' (9) and that she has been engaged in 'intertextual exegesis' (91). Unlike a recent commentator on book 6, she wants to establish what happened; literary theory is totally absent and Hayden White does not appear in the bibliography. W. believes that if Livy's narrative is considered as a whole, his account is fundamentally coherent and acceptable. In fact, as I shall try to show, W. is obliged to reject some of Livy's statements, on one important occasion claiming that the error is of minor significance, and to interpret others in a forced and unnatural way. The truth is that W., as much as anyone else, has to assemble the pieces of a jigsaw as best she can (a frequent occurrence in the study of ancient history). Her solution may or may not be right, but her claim to methodological superiority ('Divergences will continue to proliferate unless there is a return to the ancient sources and a re-evaluation of method' [11]) is exaggerated.

It will be best to begin by summarising my own position as set out in my commentary, modified in one important respect by my subsequent discussion of intercalation, published in the introduction to my commentary on Livy 34-37 (17-26). I argued that Livy distorted the truth by almost totally suppressing the activities of the Roman ambassadors in the Greek East in 201-200. In chapter 2 of book 31 (hereafter passages in book 31 are referred to without book number) they are sent only to Egypt, there is no mention of their presence in Athens (chs. 14-15), and while Polybius (16.34.2) says that Lepidus was sent to meet Philip V at Abydus ‘according to instructions’ (sc. of the senate), Livy (18.1) makes it a decision of the ambassadors themselves (*trium consensu*). I argued, following McDonald and Walbank (*JRS* 27 (1937) [197] 200)¹ that Livy (6.6) was wrong to imply that the second vote of the *comitia centuriata*, accepting the consul’s motion to declare war on Philip, came immediately after the initial rejection of the proposal, and that the senate’s instructions to the ambassadors anticipated the people’s vote for war; the actual *indictio belli*, which, with Walbank, I identified with Lepidus’ demarche to Philip at Abydus (I am no longer so sure about this), could not be delivered until news of the war-vote at Rome arrived. I suggested that the distortions were due not to Livy himself, but to an annalist who wanted to conceal the fact that the senate had been acting *ultra vires*.

With regard to a more specific chronology, at the time of writing I believed, with many others, that the precise degree of advance of the Roman calendar, caused by omission of intercalation, could not be quantified, but suggested, as a working hypothesis, that the consuls of 200 entered office in *December 201* (I follow W.’s practice of using italics to refer to extrapolated Julian [more correctly, Gregorian] dates). I argued that Polybius 16.24.1 did not imply that Philip remained incommunicado at Bargylia for the whole of the winter of 201-200; since the Acarnanian raid on Attica, with Macedonian assistance, preceded Philip’s return to Macedonia (14.4, 11), I placed that raid at the end of *October* at the earliest, and rejected the Athenian embassy to Rome reported at 1.10 (see further below) on the ground that there was not time for it between the Acarnanian raid and the consular elections. I proposed that Livy’s second Athenian embassy (5.6), occasioned by the invasion of Philocles, in fact came between the two votes of the assembly, and was an important factor in persuading the people to change their mind.

Let me first deal with the revision of this chronology necessitated by my subsequent study of the calendar. I argued that the Ides of March 201 were

¹ I take the opportunity to mention that only part II, section 2 of this article, consistently referred to by W. as ‘McDonald and Walbank’ is by Walbank, though each of the two authors accepted the conclusions of the other; see note 1 at the beginning of the article.

in fact 14 January 200 (W. accepts this date, but makes ‘reference, ...’, usually in the footnotes, to the possibility that the equivalent of 15 March 200 was c. 5 February 200’ [34 n. 44]). Most of the dates in my chronology are unaffected by this, since they do not depend on Roman dating. I cannot, therefore, accept W.’s repeated claims that postponement of the entry into office of the consuls of 200 ‘invalidates’ (28 n. 22), ‘supercedes’ (34 n. 42), or vitiates ‘from the outset’ (38 n. 4) my arguments.²

It is, however, true that my reason for not accepting the Athenian embassy of 1.10 is no longer valid. For W., however, there is no Athenian embassy at 1.10: she interprets *preces Atheniensium* as part of a summary of Roman reasons for resuming war with Philip, and complains (25 n. 11) that I ‘mistakenly’ take ‘sections 8-10 (*sic*) as part of the narrative’. What I argued (*Commentary*, 55) was that while *preces Atheniensium ... excitauerunt ad renouandum bellum* ‘might appear to be part of Livy’s general summary of the causes of the war ... this is excluded by *sub idem fere tempus* (2.1) and *noua Atheniensium legatio* (5.5)’. I meant, of course, that since 1.10 is the only other reference to an Athenian embassy, *noua* implies that 1.10 is talking about a specific embassy, and that if 1.10 is part of a general summary, *sub idem fere tempus* has no reference. W. does not address my arguments directly; on 26 she translates *sub idem fere tempus* ‘at approximately the same time’ and on 43 describes the phrase as an ‘autoschediasm’. The embassy of 5.5 is frequently referred to as the ‘*noua legatio*’; on 65 W. describes this as an ‘inconsistency’ which is ‘minor’ and at the end of the book (Appendix II, 98) says that Livy’s use of *noua* is incorrect. (At 98 n. 8 W. says that at *Commentary*, 55 I suggest ‘that Livy has misinterpreted his own earlier general reference to the *preces Atheniensium* in the introduction at 1.10 as a specific reference’. I did nothing of the kind; what I said was ‘it may be that L.’s source referred to the Athenians in a general way, and L. himself mistakenly took the reference to be to a specific embassy’.) I would maintain that Livy did think he was referring to a specific embassy at 1.10; it may well be an autoschediasm for a writer to use a vague phrase when he has no evidence for the specific chronological relationship between two events, but if Livy says that something happened ‘at approximately the same time’, one is entitled to ask ‘at approximately the same time as what?’

At 2.1-4 Livy reports the arrival of an embassy from Attalus and Rhodes and the despatch of C. Claudius Nero, M. Aemilius Lepidus and P. Sempronius Tuditanus as ambassadors to Egypt. W. argues (46-7) that while the ambassadors were appointed in *October 201*, they did not actually leave Rome until *March 200*, after the assembly had voted for war; their mission

² I take W.’s point (34 n. 42) that I ought to have signalled my change of mind in the addenda and corrigenda published in the paperback reprint of my commentary in 1989.

was widened after the decisions reported at 3.1-2. One sees here that W., for all her claims, is forced to be selective in her interpretation ('contrary to the implication of *interim ... missi ...*, the three Roman ambassadors evidently did not depart immediately after their appointment'). I can say only that I know of no other occasion where ambassadors are appointed five months before they leave.

Rejection of Livy's evidence can be seen in two other crucial parts of W.'s reconstruction. Although she accepts the naval mission of M. Valerius Laevinus (3.2-3), she thinks his fleet did not actually cross the Adriatic until *March 200*, although she thinks he may have crossed himself in winter to confer with M. Aurelius; but if consular 200 began on *14 January 200*, she is forced to reject the arrival of a message from Aurelius at the beginning of the consular year, reported at 5.5 (52-7). She thus avoids having Roman forces east of the Adriatic before the Roman people had voted for war; otherwise Rome, W. thinks, would have committed an act of unauthorised war. I fail to see why this should worry her; as she rightly says, the senate was using a combination of diplomacy with a military presence. Merely to send a fleet to Illyria or Epirus (we agree that *in Macedoniam* at 3.2-3 does not refer to Macedon itself) was not an act of undeclared war.³

Forcing of the evidence is particularly clear in the case of the Athenian embassy. W. believes that Philip was forced to stay at Bargylia all winter (39),⁴ and that the Acarnanians sent their request for help to Pella; thus Philip did not learn about it until *March 200*. The invasion of Attica is therefore dated to *late March 200*, against the implication of 14.4 and 11 that the invasion preceded Philip's return across the Aegean; though she does not exclude the possibility that the Acarnanians alone launched an invasion in *November 201* and that Livy has conflated two raids (41). Since the Athenian embassy of 5.5 comes at the beginning of the consular year, it cannot, on W.'s chronology, have been occasioned by the Macedonian invasion. The attack was still only imminent (5.6) and W. thinks that the Athenians 'anticipated problems at the beginning of the next campaigning season' (40). But what the Athenians said was that Philip was approaching their borders, not that he might do so in a few months time. For those happy to reject Livy's evidence, such a position may be tenable; but it is hardly consistent with claims that Livy's narrative is coherent.

³ Acceptance of Livy's evidence as it stands does indeed imply that Laevinus crossed the Adriatic in winter; but that scarcely follows from the fact that *December 201* is a *terminus ante quem* for his appointment (56).

⁴ On 75 W. is willing to think that a message concerning the Roman response to the embassy from Attalus and Rhodes could have reached him at Bargylia.

As we have seen, W. places the departure of the Roman envoys well after the war-vote, and thus removes the basis of my explanation for Livy's distortions. Her own is that it is simply a matter of narrative technique (31). Livy did not mention the widening of the mission because this 'would have meant protracting the account of the events of consular 201, thus deferring the dramatic opening of consular 200'. I would have thought that half a page would have sufficed. Later, Livy excludes the Roman envoys' presence at Athens because his focus is on Attalus (Balsdon, *JRS* 44 (1954), 40-1) had already suggested that Livy did not regard the envoys' presence as particularly important). For a Roman writer, particularly Livy, to suppress the part played by Roman envoys is, at the very least, odd. And what is the literary reason for the alteration of 'according to instructions' to *trium consensu*?

I turn to the question of the gap between the two votes of the *comitia centuriata*. Let me first say that while I previously posited a gap of some four months, I can now reduce this to two months, with the first vote coming soon after 14 January 200 (I see no reason to posit a *trinundinum* between promulgation and vote at this date), the second soon after the arrival of the Athenian embassy in March. The argument in favour of the immediate second vote implied by Livy is that the senate would not have, in Rich's words⁵ 'meekly waited several months before making a second attempt to get its way'. I reply that it might not have seemed very sensible, without new arguments and attempts to persuade a number of individual voters (it was, of course, the *equitum centuriae* and the *prima classis* that mattered) to change their minds, to re-submit the proposal more or less immediately. I admit that this is all rather subjective; I claim only that the view of Rich and W. is far from self-evidently true.

After all this disagreement, I am glad to applaud W.'s insistence that religious factors should be taken seriously, and that the dispute over the vow of *ludi magni* (9.5-10) and the expiation of prodigies and the desecration of the temple of Proserpina at Locri (12) are an important part of the explanation for the fact that Sulpicius Galba did not land in Greece until late autumn. I would add, though, that there was no urgency. It was Rome that was taking the initiative, and with Philip occupied on the other side of the Aegean, there was little danger of Macedonian military moves which would put Rome at a disadvantage at the beginning of the war.

I conclude by commenting on a number of matters of detail, several of which involve points of Latinity:

10: it may be the case that those who have rejected the non-Polybian evidence have been proponents of the theory of 'defensive imperialism', while many of those who have accepted it have seen Rome as deliberately

⁵ *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion*, 80.

aggressive. But there is no necessary connection, as my own position testifies.

15: W. states that prodigy lists derive from the *annales maximi*, with no mention of the contrary view of Rawson (*CQ* 21 (1971), 158-69).

23: W. talks of Livy devoting only two chapters (she means 2.1-4 and 3) to events of consular 201 related to the outbreak of the war. It should be said that his account of 201 as a whole, which begins at 30.40.7, is extremely brief.

25: *profundum* means 'ocean', not 'bottomless'. W. may be right to say that mention of the Aetolians is meant to foreshadow the part they play in the wars described in the fourth decade, but it should be stressed that *belli* at 1.8 refers only to the First Macedonian War.

29: it is not 47.1-2 which establishes *September* as the date of the Eleusinian mysteries; as W. knows (cf. 37), they were always held in the Attic month of Boedromion.

31: it is remarkable that both W. and Gruen⁶ think that 18.9 means that the fall of Abydus roused the Romans to war against Philip. Were they misled by the Loeb, whose mistranslation I referred to in my note on the passage, without thinking it necessary to spell out the truth?

44: *integra* means 'without any prior decisions being taken', 'with the powder dry', not 'entire'.

46: W. says that C. Claudius Nero and P. Sempronius Tuditanus had 'significant experience in Greece during the First Macedonian War'. Nero played no part whatsoever in that war.

49: is 'non-Greeks' an error for 'Greeks'? And surely Rome is demanding that Philip submit to neutral arbitration, not offering to arbitrate herself.

61: *in animo haberet* (5.4) means 'has in mind', not 'shall resolve' (here W. has copied out the Loeb translation).

69: *uellent* (13.1) means 'wanted', not 'were willing'.

83 n. 12: 'Livy's failure to mention the illness of P. Sulpicius Galba (Zonaras 9.15.3-4) is not remarkable'. Since W. then refers to my commentary, where I said that Livy's silence is odd, I wonder whether 'not' is a misprint and should be deleted.

85: since chronology is the theme of the book, it is surprising that W. does not mention that Livy places Sulpicius' campaign of 199 in consular 200.

87 n. 29: I do not understand why W. describes 46.5 as 'an apparent gloss'.

⁶ *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 396.

97: nowhere did I recognize ‘the possibility that the two references’ to Athenian embassies ‘are to one and the same embassy’, but reject this ‘on chronological grounds’.

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