

REVIEW-DISCUSSION

C. S. Kraus and A. J. Woodman, *Latin Historians (Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics 27)*. Oxford University Press, pp. 132. Paperback (1997).

The very title of the series to which C. S. K(raus) and A. J. W(oodman)'s pamphlet belongs, 'Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics' signals the contradictory possibilities the authors of these valuable works must negotiate. 'Survey' suggests an overview of directions in scholarship, a narrative bibliography designed to familiarize students and scholars with current trends and to tell them where to go to get more of them. 'New', while designed only to differentiate this series from its predecessor, seems to promise something more, a fresh approach, a different way of looking at an old issue. Over against the Charybdis of bland utility leers the unbalanced Scylla of idiosyncrasy. While they provide a full bibliography and an appendix directing the reader to the standard texts and commentaries, K. and W. declare in their preface which way they intend to steer: 'we have not been concerned primarily with introducing readers to 'the state of the question'' In a field like Roman Historiography, where, thanks in great measure to the work of the authors themselves, the last decade has seen a remarkable shift in the way basic texts are read, this seems an inevitable choice. The volume that they have produced succeeds both as a 'survey' of a critical landscape that is genuinely new and as a road map suggesting where we can go from here. Indeed its attractiveness as an overview of the field derives from the very fact that K. and W. are always engaged in making new arguments. Even when the authors present basic introductory information, nothing seems pat, or beyond the range of critical re-evaluation. In terms of the stimulation it will offer for new work, page for page, this is the richest book I have read in some time.

The shift in approach this book reflects is the one that has turned the texts of the Roman historians from 'literary sources' to literature. This means something beyond the recognition, which K and W. take as the starting point of their introduction, that 'the form of a text can contribute as much to its meaning as does its content,' and therefore historians who neglect to ask literary questions about their 'sources' risk misinterpreting them. It suggests at a more fundamental level that questions of factual accuracy and reliability are not the inevitable ones to ask about these works; that historiography need not justify itself as the handmaiden of history. The preface gives a brief resume of the controversy, citing Woodman's own *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* and T. P. Wiseman's *Clio's Cosmetics* as the works that instigated this re-evaluation by breaking the determinative nexus that bound

the historians' texts to the 'facts' they report. But rather than re-arguing the case here, the authors simply acknowledge their adherence to the Woodman/Wiseman position and move on to apply its conclusions, producing analyses that presume for each author treated an unprecedented autonomy and control over the shape of his text. Again this is a wise decision: the richness and novelty of K and W's discussions, the sheer interest of the questions they ask, goes farther toward demonstrating the validity and importance of this approach than any continued tusslings with *De Oratore* 2.62-4 could have.

In addition to an economical position statement, the short introduction contains 'as a sort of post script' an extremely brief and somewhat pessimistic overview of 'what, if anything can be said about the now fragmentary work of the Early Historians.' The meat of the book comes in the chapters devoted to the works of the three major surviving historians of the Late Republic and Early Empire: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus. Each of these essays presents an evaluation of the author that is at once coherent and wide-ranging and can take its place among the best available introductions to its subject. Each is richly annotated, and, taken together, the notes provide as full, diverse, and current a survey of recent work as could be desired. In between Livy and Tacitus comes a brief chapter on historiography in the first century A.D. It is refreshing to see this period treated outside the shadow of Tacitus. W offers a spirited defence of Velleius Paterculus, and his interesting, if admittedly provisional, treatment of Curtius Rufus is important above all for demonstrating the stylistic impact Livy's work had on the subsequent generation(s) of historians. The book's tight focus on substantially surviving texts results inevitably from both its small scale and the priority that the authors give to works whose scope allows for the kind of broad literary characterizations at which they excel. Still, the treatment of Sallust's *Historiae* shows what they can do with fragments and make one regret that a little more space couldn't have been found for, say, the *Origines*. One characteristic of the 'source'-based approach to Roman historiography has been a tendency to pit the works of surviving historians like Livy against those of their lost predecessors. If only we had the chaste records of the republican writers, to overstate the argument, we would not be so dependent on a suspect Augustan for our information. It would be unfortunate if the rejection of this view were seen to entail a reverse prejudice, underestimating the literary complexity of fragmentary writers in order to play up the sophistication of surviving narratives. Later historians receive even less notice than earlier ones, and here the omission is the more unfortunate for not being acknowledged. Ammianus Marcellinus does not even appear in the index (though he is mentioned briefly on p. 54), and no one reading this book would know that there was such a thing as a Latin historian after Tacitus.

My complaints that the book is not longer should be taken as a tribute to the quality and interest of the three major chapters. To the extent that Sallust has received less critical attention than Livy or Tacitus in recent years-- or perhaps simply because he is an author I had always undervalued-- the essay devoted to him seemed to me both the most innovative and potentially the most influential. After a brief introduction to the more striking general features of Sallust's thought and language (interest in *virtus*, construction of an abrupt, difficult style to mirror the civil discord he describes, and tendency to use antithesis as a structuring principle on a large and small scale), the authors consider each of the major works in turn. W. undertakes a minute close reading of the *BC*'s opening, illuminating above all because of the author's willingness to treat the preface itself as something more than a hodgepodge of topoi and Sallust's thought as something more than an oxymoron. The wide range of parallels W. adduces, from Plato's *Seventh Letter* to Thucydides 'Archaeology' to Cicero's letter to Lucceius form an entirely new assemblage of contexts against which to read the work and reveal Sallust's continual procedure of raising expectations only to frustrate them. Most strikingly, W. points out the disjuncture between the kind of laudatory history the preface promises and the sordid realities that form the work's actual subject matter. Yet rather than treat this inconsistency as yet another proof of the irrelevance of the *BC*'s preface, W. presents it as a deliberate and effective challenge to the reader's preconceptions. Even if W. doesn't quite have the scope to forge his observations into a complete re-interpretation of the monograph, readers at every level will return to the text with a new and exciting set of questions to ask. K.'s treatment of the *BJ* and the *Histories* well complements what W. has done for the *BC*; where W. works small, K. works big, starting with broad and striking formulations about Sallust's aims and then applying them to particular passages. This difference in treatment befits K.'s general thesis that the *BJ* itself is conceived on a broader scale than its predecessor and anticipates the more spacious canvas of the *Histories* in its organization and range of themes. Most interesting here is her analysis of how the figure of Jugurtha opens out the work's temporal and thematic parameters. As an epigone of Hannibal who at the same time emblemizes many of the moral qualities that will so destabilize the Republic, Jugurtha provides a link to the heroic struggles of an earlier age and an anticipation of the troubles to come. Thematically, Jugurtha, like the images of Carthage in the work, functions as a figure for boundlessness, a fluidity of borders and ends inherently opposed to the ordered hierarchy of Rome but one which, appropriately, cannot be effectively 'defined' as non-Roman. The discussion of the metaphorical uses of Carthage here provides perhaps the book's most stimulating pages; the subject cries out for further exploration, and in relation to Livy as well as Sallust. K.'s stimulating but

cautious introduction to the *Histories* is a revelation, exposing themes and techniques that will change our impression of Sallust's range of interests and the place he occupies in the history of the genre.

It is to Livy, long the overdressed and too copious wallflower among Roman historians, that critics over the last decade have addressed their tenderest attentions. K.'s chapter here, the second general essay on this author she has published, provides a compelling introduction to the new Livy. She takes as her organizing theme the historian's double gaze, into the Roman past his narrative records, and the Roman future he hopes it will provide for. As K. repeatedly stresses, Livy frames his narrative in ways that constantly insist upon its instrumentality in the present; it is a *documentum*, a 'teaching tool' that makes available all patterns of behaviour for imitation and avoidance, and a *monumentum*, an image drawn from the mnemonic training of the rhetoricians, fixing the memory of the past in the mental landscape of its readers. The text itself, whose seemingly boundless expansion is made possible by and articulated through the regularity of the annalistic structure, offers an image of the growth of the city itself over space and time (an idea familiar to readers of Kraus' 1994 *TAPA* article). The complex interaction between the historian and his contemporary audience sketched here provides a welcome contrast to the old depictions of Livy as an escapist, or as a mere propagandist promoting an agenda taken over from Rome's political leaders. The past for Livy provides more than a happy alternative to present corruption, and the kind of civic renewal it promises depends on more than doing as the old Romans did. Livy challenges his reader to become more like the active political figures his work describes, all of whom adapted to changing circumstances by selectively appropriating past behaviors. A corresponding stress on adaptation and variation also shapes K.'s discussion of Livy's style which takes the form of an extended close reading of a passage from the fourth decade (36.10-11, though the book number curiously only appears in the notes).

The Tacitus chapter reveals the authors' collective talent at integrating wide ranging introductions to basic aspects of a historian's work with focused and challenging arguments for revising long standard views. The treatment is divided into four subsections: 'Beginnings and Endings', 'Intertextuality', 'Tiberius' and 'Variation'. What the scholar can read as an intriguing, provocative, and by no means self-evident array of topics will simultaneously serve the less specialized reader as high-tech and far more engaging substitutes for the old handbook rubrics of 'organization of material', 'use of sources', 'techniques of characterization', and 'style'. The first section brings out the ambiguities that surround the historian's choices about where to start and stop his narrative: despite the clear boundaries Tacitus seems to establish between the periods of decline he takes as his subjects and both the

Trajanic present and the pre-imperial past, in fact these periods betray an unsettling propensity to leak into one another. The section on intertextuality brings into focus one of the central methodological issues in the book. Rather than posit the relationship between the historian's text and the public documents that record the same events in terms of the historian's use of evidence, W. proposes to treat 'sources' as 'intertexts' and to assume that the historian alludes to and varies the materials at his disposal in much the same way, and for the same ends, as Latin poets shaped their own works as recognizable variations of texts known to their readers. To take the most obvious example, when Tacitus recalls the opening of the *Res Gestae* at the beginning of an anonymous critic's venomous review of the Augustan principate (*Ann.* 1.10.1), he is not using the inscription as a 'source' but rather as a known interpretation of events with which to contrast this very different reading of the past. Our opportunities for comparing Tacitus' narrative with such official documents are unfortunately very limited, and the *Res Gestae*, inscribed on the imperial mausoleum, were doubtless much more conspicuous, and accessible, than, say, the record of Claudius' speech preserved at Lyons; nevertheless the suggestion is an important one not only for Tacitus, but all other Roman historians as well. In the case of Tacitus, the text of the *Annales* appears as a response, or alternative, to the public memorials of the city itself, an idea that offers an attractive complement to the many other ways in which Tacitus sets his narrative against official proclamations of events-- above all his manipulation and inversion of the very annalistic form that, according to the Roman popular imagination, derives from the publicly exposed 'official' records of the chief pontiffs. Nor is there any reason to assume this procedure was unique to Tacitus; Livy's transformations of the works of earlier writers could be profitably analyzed along the same lines.

After intertextuality, we move to the character of Tiberius and what is clearly designed as one of the chapter's showstopper arguments. In place of the familiar image of a cunning dissimulator, using deception and concealment (*simulatio* and *dissimulatio*) to consolidate his grip on power and mask his crimes, W., working backwards from the historian's final anatomy of the emperor's character (6.51), offers Tiberius as dependent personality, too easily dominated by others and wanting above all to find partners with whom to share the burden of empire. Though strongly argued, this section seemed to me the weakest element in W.'s revisionist agenda, not only because it leaves out of account too many important aspects of the portrait of the emperor (*dissimulatio*, for a start), but also because the close readings on which it is based risk oversimplifying the historian's text, removing the murky ambiguity, which makes it impossible to see with certainty what exactly the emperor is designing. A case in point is the treatment of the 'first crime of the new principate,' the murder of Agrippa Postumus, an event which for W.

provides a crucial first instance of how the emperor to-be even from the beginning is enmeshed in the plots of others: 'In a programmatic series of brilliant manoeuvres, Tacitus at first seems to imply that Tiberius had instigated the murder but was allowing the dead Augustus to take the blame (1.6.1), but then, having demonstrated the unlikelihood of Augustus' involvement, Tacitus records the contemporary belief that Tiberius and Livia were jointly responsible (1.6.2). This belief seems borne out by the executioner himself, who reported to Tiberius that his command had been carried out; yet Tiberius not only denied having issued a command but said that an account of the matter should be given in the Senate (1.6.3), whereupon Sallustius Crispus, a friend of Augustus, appealed to Livia to prevent Tiberius from publicizing the scandal in the senate. It is not until the last stages of the episode that it becomes clear that Sallustius and Livia between them have arranged Postumus' death without Tiberius' knowledge: not only was the ruler of the world ignorant of the first act carried out in his name by his mother and an assistant of his father's but he is dependent on the experienced Sallustius both for extricating him from the crisis and for his first lesson in how to be an *imperator* or *princeps*.' (p. 105) As I read the passage though, nothing becomes quite so clear at the end. Tiberius' alarmed comment to the executioner seems of a piece with his earlier pretence that Augustus had ordered the execution (and if he were genuinely ignorant of who had given the order, why should Tiberius concoct the story about Augustus in the first place?). Sallustius' warning to Livia neither proves her own involvement in the conspiracy (why should Sallustius hedge about with general reflections on the *vis principatus* or even use obscure phrases like *arcana domus*, if addressing a co-conspirator equally endangered by Tiberius' actions?) nor the ignorance of the emperor. Sallustius is afraid of being made into a scapegoat for the crime and being put in a position where he could neither implicate Tiberius (if that is indeed the 'truth' mentioned at 1.6.6) nor assume full responsibility himself; Sallustius' fears are fully compatible with Tiberius' complicity in the plot. Nowhere of course does Tacitus explicitly accuse Tiberius of masterminding Postumus' death, but neither does his narrative allow him to be exonerated. While I agree with W. that the passage serves as a programmatic introduction to the account of Tiberius' principate, I see it as designed less to introduce us to the character of the *princeps* than the complexities involved in constructing and interpreting a narrative describing a period whose distinguishing characteristic is the disjunction between public appearances and secret reality. As the motives and desires of the emperor can be only darkly divined through his actions, correspondingly the historian's own authority, his willingness to establish what actually happened, submerges itself in innuendo and misdirection.

Where then has all this left us? How is the picture of Latin historiography that emerges from these essays different from what one might have encountered a decade before? What I might call the ‘utilitarian’ approach tended, broadly speaking, to simplify, to solve problems and to make sense of what seemed not to fit our expectations; K. and W. always aim in the opposite direction, to point out complexities and contradictions that make the reader think at least as much about the historian’s narrative as about the ‘facts’ to be mined from it. Indeed the historians portrayed here look a lot like their poetic contemporaries, practitioners of a sophisticated ‘*arte allusiva*’ that places their texts in dialogue with one another to an extent that no study has emphasized so fully as this. Correspondingly the works of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus emerge as crucial documents for investigating issues that have become central to our readings of other classical texts, from the deployment of the image of the barbarian, to the uses of memory, to the writer’s construction of his text’s authority within his society. At the same time, readers approaching the work from within the traditional bounds of historiographic research will find much to engage and to challenge them. It is a book that I will recommend with equal urgency to colleagues and to students and that, as often as I return to it, will have something new to teach me.

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