SUETONIUS ON THE FLAVIANS

B. JONES, R. MILNS: *Suetonius: The Flavian Emperors. A Historical Commentary*. Pp. viii + 187. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002. Paper, £12.99. ISBN: 1-85399-613-0.

This translation and commentary on the Flavian Lives is an abridged version of Jones's separate Bristol commentaries on Suetonius' *Domitian* (1996) and *Vespasian* (2000), together with a new commentary on *Titus*. The addition of a translation of the lives by Milns, together with the use of English throughout, suggests that this is a text designed for undergraduate students of Roman history needing more detailed information on the Flavian period than is offered by the Penguin or Oxford World's Classics translations of Graves and Edwards.

Milns's rendition of Suetonius seeks to reflect his text as accurately as possible: it is far from Graves's elegant, but inaccurate version and surpasses Edwards in its reproduction of the original's (lack of) style. Following Ihm closely, with the adoption of occasional emendations to avoid lacunae, it is always serviceable and sometimes felicitous (the description of Flavius Liberalis, *Vesp*. 3, as 'nothing more than a quaestor's clerk' is more faithful to the Latin than Edwards's 'he had the rank merely of quaestor's clerk', itself following Rolfe's Loeb translation, while Graves offers a paraphrase which ignores the slur on the putative father of Vespasian's wife). At *Dom.* 23, *Tarpeio . . . culmine* is mistranslated as 'Tarpeian roof' (Tarpeian heights is correct: *OLD* s.v. *culmen* 2), but this is a rare slip. At *Titus* 8.3 a reading which differs from Ihm's has been tacitly adopted. It is unfortunate that there is no mention of such significant textual problems in the notes: students need to be made aware that the evidence that they are using is not always certain, and that there may well be misreadings and gaps in the sources.

The main attraction of this edition is, however, the explanatory material from Brian Jones. The Introduction has a slightly old-fashioned air, recognizing the importance of regarding Suetonius as a scholarly courtier and detailing his career as such, but without placing him clearly in his Roman cultural context. The account of his sources, by its focus on written narrative material, may mislead. It is not merely that evidence must be evaluated according to source and bias, but that the range of material used by Suetonius (including antiquarian sources and physical artefacts) is greater than this depiction suggests. Similarly, the comparison with other sources for the lives of the individual emperors is helpful for the historical reconstruction of their reigns, but may confuse the student as to the nature of Suetonius' biography. Jones does conclude with a paragraph indicating the reasons why material in Dio 67 might not be considered relevant by the biographer—it might also be noted that we only have Dio in epitome for this period and that even more historical material is certainly lost. The conclusion that 'credit must be given to Suetonius for producing a readable, entertaining, and mainly reliable account' is unfortunately apologetic.

To many, the commentary is likely to offer the most riches. Particularly strong on prosopographical details and constitutional history, it is solid and reliable, with the occasional erroneous references (e.g. transposition of numbers) unlikely to mislead. Social and cultural history is less well served. There is no mention of Sallares and Scheidel when discussing epidemics at Rome, nor work on Roman sexuality when dealing with the active same-sex life of Titus and the passive proclivities attributed to his brother Domitian. Bosworth's article on Vespasian's career as *mango* (*CQ* 52 [2002], 350–7) will have appeared after completion of the manuscript, but needs to be

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carefully considered for its implications for senatorial involvement in the slave trade. And while the handbooks on physiognomy are usefully cited to compare with the physical depictions of the emperors, the work of the dream interpreters might also be consulted (for instance, compare *Vesp.* 5.5 on the dream of Nero losing a tooth with Artemidorus 1.31 [p. 37 Pack]).

There is much that may be novel to the ancient historian in these notes, including references to Racine's *Bérénice* and Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*. Yet, overall, the volume will be most useful to the prosopographically minded, through its index of proper names and separate bibliography for Flavian officials. This is a pity, since there is much in the commentary which offers valuable explication of other topics as well. Often a number of notes, perhaps scattered over separate lives, will cast light on imperial strategies or particular practices. A topical index, which also included the introduction, would turn this from a useful textbook into something much more valuable. It is to be hoped that Duckworth will include such an index in a future reprint.

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TWO BOOKS OF APULEIUS (i)

D. K. VAN MAL-MAEDER: *Apuleius Madaurensis:* Metamorphoses*, Livre II*. Pp. xi + 488. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2001. Cased, €70. ISBN: 90-6980-130-2.

Most readers will be familiar with the Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius (GCA), of which this is a part, though it is unique as the only volume not in English (it is in French). The authoritative series is now well on its way to covering the entire *Metamorphoses*; of those still lacking, Book 1 and the *Tale of Cupid and Psyche* are in preparation, and there are no plans currently to to rival Griffiths's commentary on Book 11. Van Mal-Maeder's Book 2 follows the established format: an extensive introduction surveying interpretive issues, a text based on Helm's revised Teubner which relies mostly on F, an exhaustive commentary (12–13 pages per section of Apuleius) with a literal running translation, three appendices, and a large bibliography. The only commentary previously in existence for Book 2 was B. J. De Jonge's Groningen dissertation in Latin (1941), not widely available, so this volume fills an obvious gap, and will be indispensable for scholars, though too detailed (and expensive) for classroom use.

Unlike most of the GCA series, this volume is not the product of collaboration, but the augmented version of M.-M.'s Groningen doctoral thesis. Clearly, composition by a single person allows for a coherent point of view to run through the commentary, especially through the introduction and appendices. In an article in *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* (1997), M.-M. suggested that the *Met.* originally had a twelfth book with a comic ending more like that of the *Onos.* In this commentary she writes: 'Book 11 is probably just another manifestation of the naïveté and credulity of the hero which he has demonstrated all along' (p. 15), an approach akin to that of Winkler and one accepted with a different slant by Harrison in *Apuleius, a Latin Sophist* (Oxford, 2000). The implications for Book 2 are that critics who read Book 11 as a total departure from the preceding ten interpret the elements of magic and witchcraft in the early books as debased forms of the divine, and Photis (M.-M.'s orthography) as an 'anti-Isis'. M.-M. advocates a more fluid reading: Apuleius is interested in certain

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