

S. P. OAKLEY, *A Commentary on Livy, Books VI-X*. Volume III, Book IX, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005, xiv + 758 pp., ISBN 0-10-927143-7.

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The late-lamented Robert Ogilvie's *Commentary on Livy I-V* (Oxford 1965) was justifiably greeted with universal acclaim as a landmark in the recent revival of Livian studies, with its synthesis of textual, historical, and literary approaches. Ogilvie's knowledge of the textual tradition and his familiarity with Livy's language and style enabled him to follow the commentary with a revised edition of the *OCT* of Books I-V (1974), replacing the 1914 edition of Conway and Walters. Colleagues hopefully assumed that he would next turn his attention to the second pentad, at that time the most neglected area of Livy. But when in informal discussion I raised this possibility with him, he informed me that a young Cambridge scholar, then working on a commentary on Book IX as a doctoral dissertation, would in due course take up the mantle. That young scholar was Stephen Oakley, who has amply fulfilled the hopes which Ogilvie reposed in him.

The two volumes under review are the culminating contributions to a commentary on the entire pentad VI-X, embraced in four massive volumes. They cannot be studied without the presence of volume I at one's elbow, for the commentary on Book VI is there preceded by a general Introduction of 379 pages on the historical, literary, and textual aspects of the whole pentad, back to which Oakley frequently refers. Volume IV contains a further lengthy entry of *Addenda et Corrigenda*, which appends further observations to these topics of the Introduction. This quartet of volumes represents

an outstanding achievement, a major event in the modern history of Livian scholarship.

Undoubtedly the most notable feature of these volumes is Oakley's careful attention to Livy's text. He intends eventually to emulate Ogilvie's example by publishing a revised *OCT* to replace Walters' edition of 1919. The volume will certainly create a stir when it appears, for there is virtually no chapter of Livy in which Oakley does not challenge at least one reading in Walters' text. The suggested changes rest to a minor degree on Oakley's careful reassessment of the transmission of the manuscripts; compare his more complex stemma (in vol. I, 325) of the first decade with that in Ogilvie (xv) or with that in L. D. Reynolds, *Text and Transmission*, Oxford 1983, 206. Oakley argues that no fewer than 29 MSS are to be taken into account in determining the text. But much more influential in his advocacy of sweeping changes are the emendations proposed by Gronovius (1645) and Drakenborch (1739) down to present-day scholars like W.S. Watt and Holford-Strevens. Oakley is not the type of adventurous editor who peppers an *apparatus criticus* with his own suggested changes. He sifts carefully through earlier editions, and argues at (frequently excessive) length for his choices of readings. In preparing his revised text, he will doubtless note the stark contrast between the wordy *apparatus criticus* of Conway-Walters, reflecting the relaxed standards of that earlier era, with Ogilvie's economical presentation of alternative readings.

A second signal merit of these volumes is Oakley's close familiarity with the terrain over which Rome's struggles with the Samnites and Etruscans were fought. From time to time reports would percolate of sightings of Oakley with camera at the ready, journeying up and down the peninsula. The photographs in these volumes offer pictorial evidence of some of the sites described. All were taken by the editor himself.

Books IX and X document the years 321-293, during which the Romans were engaged in a lengthy struggle to subdue the Samnites and the resurgent Etruscans. The starting point is the disastrous humiliation of the Romans at the Caudine Forks, and the climax is the comprehensive Roman victory over the combined army of Samnites, Etruscans, and Umbrians at Sentinum. Livy's

account of the struggles of these years poses enormous problems for the historian, not least because of the late development of historiography at Rome, and the consequential inventive tendencies of the sources on which Livy depended. Oakley tends to give short shrift to attempts by earlier scholars to identify single sources for individual episodes, since the uncertainties are legion. For the military history of these years, many of us have relied predominantly on E.T. Salmon's *Samnium and the Samnites* (Cambridge 1967). Oakley's courteous appreciation of the book does not prevent him from challenging some of its interpretations, especially as he has had access to sundry later studies by Italian and British scholars.

The scale of Oakley's meticulous discussions of the history of these years can be measured by the fact that 180 pages are devoted to the sixteen chapters of the débacle at the Caudine Forks, and again, the eight chapters on the battle of Sentinum are allotted 77 pages of commentary. Where other scholars would be content to provide references to parallel accounts in Polybius, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, and others, Oakley cites the passages *in extenso*; particularly valuable are the comparisons with the *Fasti triumphales*, and with accounts of the same events in Diodorus Siculus and Frontinus.

Livy's account of the disaster at the Caudine Forks is followed by the celebrated excursus on Alexander the Great *vis-à-vis* the Roman generals of the age. No digression of such extensive length appears elsewhere in Livy, and W.B. Anderson, in his fine edition of Book IX (Cambridge 1928), argued that it was a youthful composition incorporated into the history from an earlier rhetorical exercise. The thesis attracted some support, but Oakley is sceptical of this explanation, preferring the suggestion that Livy is reacting against the polemic of an anti-Roman Greek historian like Timagenes.

The detailed account of the military operations in these books is complemented with equally informative discussion of domestic affairs, in which the tradition is more secure. In discussing the census-figures for 318 BC at 9.19.2, Oakley helpfully tabulates the (unreliable) figures provided by Livy and other sources from the Regal period to 230 BC, based on Brunt's researches. There are

careful and enlightening discussions on the development of the various magistracies of dictators, consuls, praetors, and censors. The censorship of Appius Claudius Caecus in 312 BC, and his subsequent political activities, play a prominent role throughout these two books. His practical achievements in building the *via Appia* to Capua and the first Roman aqueduct are beyond question. More controversial is his political stance in on the one hand advancing the interests of the lower classes politically, but later (see 10.6-9) opposing the Ogulnian plebiscite which would have advanced them to the pontificate and augurate.

Oakley exploits this discussion of Appius Claudius Caecus to take aboard a discussion of the portrayal of the Claudii generally in the annalistic tradition; see especially Appendixes 8-9 in volume III. This raises the interesting question of the limits of the ideal commentary, on which there has recently been useful discussion in volumes edited by G.W. Most, *Aporemata* Bd. 4 (1999), and by Gibson-Kraus, *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 232 (2002). The length of the two massive volumes under review is a sufficient indication of Oakley's philosophy of total inclusion. He has been aided in this by the awesome generosity of his editors at the Clarendon Press, who appear to have given him *carte blanche* to write at relentless length, doubtless much to the wonderment of earlier editors of Classical texts who did not merit such indulgence. The readership which Oakley envisages is not always clear; for the most part the volumes engage the attentions of the professional scholar rather than the struggling undergraduate, but in places there are basic translations and elementary observations which such readers would find superfluous.

On the other hand, the observations on Livy's Latinity are admirably detailed and informative. The industry with which Oakley has investigated the usage of individual words and combinations of words is impressive. He has not been content to establish authentic usage with parallels from Livy elsewhere; he repeatedly scours the *ThLL* for evidence from other authors, and occasionally supplements the citations there and in *OLD*. Clearly the primary purpose of such linguistic investigations is to justify textual readings, and a secondary aim is to cast light on such issues as the evolution of Latin artistic prose from that of the late

Republic, and the degree to which usages hitherto poetic have been introduced. It has to be said that the parallels from remoter authors do not always serve either purpose.

It might have been expected that the numerous and extensive citations of both Greek and Latin authors would have left in their wake a plethora of misprints, but the editor's careful professionalism has reduced them to a minimum (at 9.6.6 *sua insignia* should read *insignia sua*; on p. 143 of volume III, the citation of 36.15.2 should include *vatem*, not *vatum*; at 9.38.15 read *curiatam* for *curiata*; at 10.11.4 *erat* should read *fuera*.)

These are pedantic qualifications. No review of these volumes can do full justice to this splendid achievement. Each of the two volumes contains detailed bibliographies and carefully constructed indexes. In sum, the quartet of commentary reflects enormous credit on editor and Press alike. No self-respecting university library can afford to be without these volumes, for one cannot envisage the need for further commentary on Books VI-X for the foreseeable future. Scholars with a professional interest in Livy will await with impatience the revision of the *OCT* of these books.

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