

S. J. V. MALLOCH, *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 11* (ed., comm.). Cambridge classical texts and commentaries, 51. Cambridge / New York: CUP, 2013. xxi + 538 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-01110-6.

Malloch's excellent commentary on book 11 of Tacitus' *Annals* comes at an opportune moment. Recent years have seen a wealth of scholarly interest in Tacitus, with the publication of two companions and several monographs,<sup>1</sup> yet several books of the *Annals* still lack modern scholarly commentaries in English. The mantle of Goodyear, who intended a multi-volume commentary on the Tiberian hexad but was only able to complete his work on *Annals* 1 and 2, has been duly taken up by Woodman and Martin with their volumes on *Annals* 3, 4, and 5-6.<sup>2</sup> It is extremely heartening that the Claudian and Neronian books are now beginning to receive similar treatment.<sup>3</sup> Malloch's volume fills a noticeable gap in Tacitean scholarship: no scholarly commentary on *Annals* 11 has been written in English since that of Furneaux in 1891.<sup>4</sup> Benario's commentary on *Annals* 11-12,<sup>5</sup> aimed at students, does not provide the depth of historical and literary detail necessary for readers at the postgraduate level and beyond; and Koestermann's commentary on *Annals* 11-13<sup>6</sup> was published in 1967, before the widespread use of modern computer-assisted word searches that allow for detailed observations about word usage and verbal parallels.

The need for this volume was real, and Malloch's work does not disappoint. The book contains the elements one would expect of a commentary in this series. The book opens with an introduction discussing literary and textual matters (pp. 1-21). Malloch then provides a newly-edited Latin text of *Annals* 11 with *apparatus criticus*, collated from a facsimile and a digitized copy of the Second Medicean manuscript (henceforth M), the single MS

<sup>1</sup> D. Sailor, *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*, Cambridge, 2008; A.J. Woodman, *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, Cambridge, 2009; V.E. Pagán, *A Companion to Tacitus*, Malden, MA, 2012; R. Ash, *Oxford Readings in Tacitus*, Oxford, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> F.R.D. Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus, volume 1 (Annals 1.1-54)*, Cambridge, 1972), and *volume 2 (Annals 1.55-82 and Annals 2)*, Cambridge, 1981; A.J. Woodman and R.H. Martin, *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3*, Cambridge, 1996, and *Tacitus Annals Book IV*, Cambridge, 1989; R.H. Martin, *Tacitus, Annals V & VI*, Warminster, 2001. Woodman is currently completing a commentary on *Annals* 5-6 in the 'Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries' series.

<sup>3</sup> R. Ash is currently completing a commentary on *Annals* 15, and S. Bartera on *Annals* 16.

<sup>4</sup> H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus, vol. II: Books XI-XVI*, Oxford, 1891. A second edition appeared in 1907.

<sup>5</sup> H.W. Benario, *Tacitus Annals 11 and 12*, Lanham, MD, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> E. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus Annalen. Band III: Buch 11-13*, Heidelberg, 1967.

on which the text of *Annals* 11-16 and *Histories* depends (pp. 25-48). The majority of the volume is devoted to a lengthy and detailed commentary (pp. 51-468) incorporating notes on points of literary and historical interpretation, Tacitus' language and style, and textual issues. Next follow an extensive bibliography (pp. 472-513) and useful indices (pp. 514-538, divided into a general index [pp. 514-521], ancient names [pp. 521-528], Latin words [pp. 521-538], and passages discussed [p. 538]). Malloch also usefully includes an appendix containing a Latin text with *apparatus criticus* of *ILS* 212, the speech delivered by Claudius on the admission of Gauls to the Senate, of which Tacitus gives a version in *Annals* 11.24 (pp. 469-471).

Beginning from the introduction (two-thirds of which [pp. 9-21] is dedicated to a discussion of manuscripts), it is clear that a particular strength of Malloch's commentary is his clear and learned discussion of manuscript and textual issues. He delivers a history of M, and clearly and engagingly discusses the probable time and place of its composition (before AD 1050, likely in Germany and perhaps in Fulda), its 'liberation' from the Abbey of Monte Cassino in the 1350s, and its ultimate arrival in the Laurentian Library. Malloch also chronicles the gradual acceptance of M as the most authoritative MS for Tacitus, supported by quotations from the letters and editions of scholars who produced texts of Tacitus between the *editio princeps* of 1472/3 and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (pp. 16-20).<sup>7</sup> The *apparatus criticus* makes use of M, various *recentiores*, and the conjectures of previous scholars; textual problems and emendations are discussed more extensively in the commentary. In addition, many notes draw the reader's attention to the peculiarities of M: in justifying emendations, the commentary contains frequent references to quirks such as M's omission of syllables (p. 206) or letters (p. 373), its 'susceptibility... to phonetic confusion' (p. 258), and transpositions (p. 137, 216). Malloch does not propose his own conjectures, but excels at evaluating the conjectures of previous scholars, and his notes present the reader with measured justifications for the readings he ultimately adopts. The volume does not include a list of all the variant readings Malloch accepts, but he has since published one online as an addendum to the printed book.<sup>8</sup>

Malloch's commentary is excellent in its thoroughness, wide-ranging in the types of information it provides, and superb in its contextualization of *Annals* 11 within Roman history and Latin literature. Amongst this potentially overwhelming wealth of information, Malloch takes care to orient the reader as s/he moves through the commentary. His introduction succinctly sets up the narrative structure of *Annals* 11 and its place within the

<sup>7</sup> Malloch's forthcoming article 'Acidalius on Tacitus,' in R. Hunter and S. Oakley (edd.), *Latin Literature and Its Transmission*, Cambridge, 2016, indicates early modern editions of Tacitus as a particular area of his expertise.

<sup>8</sup> See [https://www.academia.edu/7458946/Supplement\\_to\\_The\\_Annals\\_of\\_Tacitus\\_book\\_11](https://www.academia.edu/7458946/Supplement_to_The_Annals_of_Tacitus_book_11), accessed 1 September 2015.

larger arc of the *Annals*, including a ‘table of contents’ of *Annals* 11 broken down by episode and year (pp. 2-3), and also includes a short essay (‘Tacitus and Claudius’, pp. 3-9)<sup>9</sup> highlighting salient aspects of Tacitus’ portrayal of Claudius that will recur in Malloch’s observations in the notes. The commentary itself is subdivided into sections corresponding roughly with the episodes listed on pp. 2-3,<sup>10</sup> each of which opens with a short introductory essay before the *lemmata* of the commentary proper, highlighting historical and literary issues that will be particularly relevant for that episode. Individual *lemmata* often tie back in with these introductory essays. Given that M does not contain the beginning of *Annals* 11, Malloch’s introductory material (pp. 51-55) on the first section of his commentary (‘The destruction of Valerius Asiaticus, Poppaea Sabina, and the brothers Petra’) is particularly important: Malloch fills in the gap in Tacitus’ text by drawing on Dio’s parallel account of the episode both in the introductory matter and in the notes that follow, while also bringing out what is unique about Tacitus’ presentation of the same events. Also worthy of mention is Malloch’s extensive introductory material (pp. 114-131) on the section on Armenian and Parthian affairs at *Annals* 11.8-10, in which a struggle between Vardanes and Gotarzes II for the Parthian throne provides the Romans with the opportunity to restore Mithridates I to the throne of Armenia. Malloch combines a brief summary of the events Tacitus describes (helpful for the reader, given Tacitus’ switching back and forth between Armenian affairs and the Parthian civil war within 11.8-10) with an extremely detailed discussion of Rome’s involvement in Armenian and Parthian affairs from the Third Mithridatic War to the Neronian period, which helps to contextualize *Annals* 11.8-10 within the larger story of Rome and Parthia as told elsewhere in the *Annals* and in other sources. Malloch even includes a section on Gotarzes II and his relationship with Artabanus II that draws upon Parthian coins, reliefs, and inscriptions (11.8-10n., pp. 126-131), material that probably will not be familiar to many classicists.

Throughout, Malloch is very clear in his opinion that *Annals* 11 is ‘T.’s version of the hostile portrait of Claudius that so dominates the historical

<sup>9</sup> This section is based on Malloch’s chapter ‘*Hamlet* without the Prince? The Claudian *Annals*,’ in Woodman’s *Cambridge Companion* (see n. 1), pp. 116-26.

<sup>10</sup> *Ann.* 11.1-4 ‘The destruction of Valerius Asiaticus, Poppaea Sabina, and the brothers Petra’ (pp. 51-90); *Ann.* 11.5-7 ‘The *Lex Cincia*’ (pp. 90-114); *Ann.* 11.8-10 ‘Affairs in the East: Armenia and Parthia’ (pp. 114-174); *Ann.* 11.11 ‘The *Ludi Saeculares*; Nero at the *Lusus Troiae*’ (pp. 175-196); *Ann.* 11.12 ‘The affair of Messalina and Silius’ (pp. 197-206); *Ann.* 11.13-14 ‘Claudius’ *munia censoria*’ (pp. 206-231); *Ann.* 11.15 ‘The *haruspices*’ (pp. 231-239); *Ann.* 11.16-17 ‘Italicus and the Cherusci’ (pp. 239-261); *Ann.* 11.18-20 ‘Domitius Corbulo and Curtius Rufus in Germany’ (pp. 261-301); *Ann.* 11.21 ‘Curtius Rufus: A character sketch’ (pp. 301-316); *Ann.* 11.22 ‘An assassination attempt and the quaestorship’ (pp. 316-338); *Ann.* 11.23-25.1 ‘The admission of the *primores Galliae* to the Roman senate’ (pp. 338-380); *Ann.* 11.25.2-5 ‘The end of Claudius’ censorship’ (pp. 380-392); *Ann.* 11.26-38 ‘The fall of Messalina’ (pp. 392-468, also subdivided into individual episodes).

tradition' (p. 7), even if Tacitus does allow Claudius to appear as successful and effective at certain moments. Malloch argues most clearly for Tacitus' negative characterisation of Claudius in his remarks on the fall of Messalina. He maintains that Tacitus downplays political motivations for Silius and Messalina's illicit marriage in favour of an interpretation of the episode that centres on the character of the individuals involved: 'Conspiracy is subsumed within broader interests that inform T.'s presentation of the episode...: Messalina's sexuality, which defines and destroys her; Claudius' weaknesses of character, which ease Messalina's destruction; the power of the freedmen, which allows Narcissus to exploit Claudius and bring down Messalina... Claudius' weaknesses of character are ever-present' (11.26-38n., p. 397). Elsewhere, Malloch allows glimpses of a more effective Claudius; this comes through, for example, in his material on the admission of the *primores Galliae* to the Senate, and especially in the relationship between Claudius' speech as preserved in the inscription from Lyon and Tacitus' version of the same oration. Malloch argues that Tacitus was familiar with Claudius' speech, but that he reworked the oration to 'give... the literary Claudius a strong performance' (pp. 340-341). Individual notes in the commentary that follow draw attention to similarities and differences between Claudius' speech and Tacitus' version (e.g. 11.24.1-3n., p. 358). Malloch also points out allusions to Canuleius' speech in Livy 4.3-5 (e.g. 11.24.1n., p. 359), drawing out a layer of intertextual richness that emphasizes Claudius' status as a historian in his own right and his affinity for Livy in particular, which Malloch sees as 'another hint that T. approved his promotion of the *primores Galliae*' (11.23-25.1n., p. 342). The episode is thus one of the moments when Tacitus shows the emperor in a positive light, yet even here Malloch brings us back to Claudius' failings: the canny argumentation Tacitus inserts into Claudius' speech, Malloch claims, 'demonstrates an awareness which, with regard to his domestic affairs, is either denied to him or parodied through juxtaposition with his ignorance' (11.24.2n., p. 360).

Malloch's well-conceived and clearly presented arguments about the way Tacitus depicts Claudius' character are a contribution to our understanding of the ancient historical tradition's hostility to this emperor, and will undoubtedly serve as a springboard for future discussions of this topic. In particular, Malloch is sure to spark lively debate from any readers who may take issue with his negative view of Claudius, or at least are open to the idea that Tacitus' presentation may sometimes be more nuanced than he allows. For example, Tacitus' presentation of Claudius' celebration of the Secular Games (*Ann.* 11.11) could be viewed as more neutral than Malloch would have us think. Claudius' Games are problematic because of the complex calculations that determined when they could be celebrated (which Malloch unpacks for the reader in detail in an excellent note [11.11.1n., pp. 181-185]): Claudius' *ratio* was evidently incorrect vis-à-vis both the date of Augustus' Secular Games

in 17 BC and that of Domitian's subsequent celebration in AD 88. Claudius' celebration of the Games is characteristic of his general interest in religious and antiquarian matters, interests which (as Malloch rightly notes elsewhere) seem to be shared by Tacitus himself, and indeed to be central to his persona as an historian and a *quindecimvir*.<sup>11</sup> As Malloch persuasively argues, Tacitus' authoritative position as a *quindecimvir* is part of what prevents him from explicitly criticizing Claudius' Secular Games.<sup>12</sup> Tacitus' wish to avoid compromising this *quindecimviral* authority seems a sufficient explanation for his lack of comment, but Malloch sees Tacitus' refusal to rehearse Claudius' calculations as a form of criticism: 'T.'s silence has the effect of suggesting the illegitimacy of Claudius' celebration' (11.11.1n., p. 180). Yet the opposite could equally be true: it could be a desire not to deprive Claudius of a rare moment of effectiveness in producing something so major as the Secular Games that inspires Tacitus' silence on the incorrectness of the date. So if, as Malloch rightly notes, 'crucially, T. does not explicitly praise Claudius' conduct in these [positive] moments' (p. 7), it is also worth remembering that he does not always explicitly criticize Claudius, either.

Still, this should in no way detract from the many thought-provoking observations Malloch contributes to the study of Claudius and Tacitus' presentation of him; it is characteristic of a major contribution to the field to provoke thought and debate, which this volume certainly will. Malloch's commentary is a useful and learned contribution to Tacitean studies, destined to become a standard reference for anyone studying Claudius or *Annals* 11. The book is nicely produced, and I noted few typographical errors.<sup>13</sup> This is a volume I shall return to repeatedly, as, no doubt, will other readers. Malloch has announced that he intends to produce an edition and commentary on *Annals* 12 for the same series; students of Tacitus will await this contribution eagerly.

DR. K.E. SHANNON  
University of Alabama  
keshannon@ua.edu

<sup>11</sup> See 11.14n. (p. 217), on the digression on the history of the alphabet: Tacitus 'is generally regarded as sharing Claudius' antiquarian interests. If he expected readers to interpret this digression as critical of Claudius, he risked mocking himself in the process and undermining faith in his credibility as an historian.' Cf. 11.15n. (p. 231), on Claudius' revival of the *haruspices*: Claudius' 'hostility towards foreign religious and quasi-religious practices that had not been sanctioned at Rome... presumably appealed to T. as one of the *quindecimviri*, the supervisors of adopted religious practices'; cf. p. 232 n. 137: 'Their [the *quindecimvirs*] probable supervision of the *haruspices* at Rome... may have given T. an added interest in the subject.'

<sup>12</sup> If he had criticized Claudius, 'T. would have risked undermining the authority he claimed as a *quindecimvir*' (11.11.1n., p. 180).

<sup>13</sup> p. 105 n. 19: replace 'su' with 'zu'; p. 223: 'Plut.' should be italicized (twice); p. 235: replace 'Dyke' with 'Dyck'; p. 256 and 280: replace 'Varan' with 'Varian'; p. 421, in 11.29.1n. *flagrantissimaque... gratia*, replace 'Narcissus' with 'Pallas.'

