

ORANGE FOUR, GREEN AND YELLOW FIFTEEN:
TWO COMMENTARIES ON TACITUS' *ANNALS* FROM CAMBRIDGE

The Annals of Tacitus, Book 4. Edited with a Commentary by A.J. WOODMAN, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018 (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 58), XXII + 349 pp., ISBN 978-1-108-41963-1, £84.99.

Tacitus, Annals, Book XV. Edited by Rhiannon ASH, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018 (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics), XVI + 368 pp., ISBN 978-1-107-00978-3, £77.00 (hb.) / ISBN 978-0-521-26939-1, £24.99 (pb.).

The Cambridge “orange” series, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries (= CCTC), was inaugurated in 1965, and seven years later the first Tacitus volume was published, namely F.R.D. GOODYEAR's *Annals 1.1–54* (as CCTC 15)¹. So far, up to October 2021, out of the 63 volumes which appeared in this series, as many as six are on Tacitus, including three which are either authored or co-authored by Anthony John WOODMAN (henceforth AJW), a scholar whose contribution to Tacitean studies over the past five decades is unquestionably enormous². Thus Tacitus fares here much better than, say, Sophocles and Euripides (three volumes each, including the spurious *Rhesus*), or, on the Roman side, Ovid and Seneca (one and two volumes respectively, including the *Octavia*) – not to mention his fellow historians Sallust and Livy, who have not found their way to the series at all. Only Cicero, who has twelve volumes, is better represented than Tacitus, but this is mainly due to the multi-volume edition of Cicero's letters to Atticus by D.R. SHACKLETON BAILEY.

CCTC's younger and – at least in principle – less ambitious sister, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (= CGLC), commonly referred to as the “green and yellow series”, has so far produced some 130 commentaries, six of which are on Tacitus, including two by Rhiannon ASH (henceforth RA)³. Interestingly, the first Tacitus volume published in CGLC was *Annals, Book IV* by

¹ For an illuminating discussion of the series, see R. GIBSON, *Fifty Shades of Orange. Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries*, in: C.S. KRAUS, C. STRAY (eds.), *Classical Commentaries: Explorations in a Scholarly Genre*, Oxford 2015, pp. 346–375. GOODYEAR was a pupil of C.O. BRINK, the founder of the series; his first contribution to it was the *Aetna* (CCTC 2, 1965).

² His first publication on Tacitus appeared almost 50 years ago (*Remarks on the Structure and Content of Tacitus, Annals 4.57–67*, CQ XXII 1972, pp. 150–158) – thus in the same year as (his Cambridge teacher) GOODYEAR's *Annals 1.1–54*. For AJW's contribution to Tacitean scholarship, see esp. (apart from five commentary volumes) *Tacitus Reviewed*, Oxford 1998, and *From Poetry to History: Selected Papers*, Oxford 2012; cf. C.S. KRAUS, J. MARINCOLA, C. PELLING (eds.), *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts: Studies in Honour of A.J. Woodman*, Oxford 2011. The Tacitus volumes in the “orange” series include, apart from AJW's three volumes (on which more below), GOODYEAR's *Annals 1.1–54* as well as *Annals 1.55–81 and Annals 2* (1981) and Simon MALLOCH's *Annals 11* (2013). Salvador BARTERA's *Annals 16* (originally a PhD dissertation supervised by AJW) has recently been submitted for the “orange” series. Also AJW's two Velleius volumes in CCTC should be mentioned (1977 and 1983); on the sad fortune of the former one, see GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), p. 358, n. 48.

³ This series has also been discussed by R. GIBSON: *Fifty Years of Green and Yellow: The Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics Series 1970–2020*, in: S. HARRISON, C. PELLING (eds.), *Classical Scholarship and Its History. From the Renaissance to the Present. Essays in Honour of Christopher Stray*, Berlin–Boston 2021, pp. 175–217.

R.H. MARTIN and AJW (1989)⁴. The latter returned after almost thirty years (and MARTIN's death in 2008) to the same book and wrote a new commentary for the "orange" series, thus establishing a precedent of the same ancient text being edited and commented *both* in CCTC and CGLC by the same scholar⁵. Of course, as AJW says in the preface to the "orange" edition, "[t]he present book should be read on the assumption that its contents are more or less entirely new" (p. X; we shall come back to this issue later).

GOODYEAR's original plan was to publish a commentary on *Annals* I–VI in four volumes, which he hoped "to complete within about ten years"⁶; his two "orange" volumes were in fact published as the first two instalments of the project. His premature death in 1987 (he was fifty-one) shattered this plan⁷, but the project as such has been taken over by AJW and R.H. MARTIN, who published in 1996 *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3*, as volume 32 of the CCTC series, and dedicated it "To the memory of Frank Goodyear"⁸. More than two decades later, AJW added his commentary on what remains from Book V and on Book VI (2017, CCTC 55); with the publication of the volume under review the first hexad of the *Annals* has finally been covered and the project initiated by GOODYEAR more than forty-five years earlier has come to its successful conclusion.

The year 1972 saw the publication of GOODYEAR's first volume, but also that of another full-scale Tacitus commentary, Kenneth WELLESLEY's *The Histories, Book III*. Until then, the English-speaking readership had at their disposal only shorter commentaries to individual books of Tacitus' major works, such as Norma P. MILLER's *Annals I* (1959)⁹. They might be useful and reliable, but they were mainly addressed to less advanced audience – sixth-formers and undergraduates. Now the situation has changed completely. There are only a few books of both the *Histories* and the *Annals* that still lack a major commentary – and even these gaps are likely to be filled in a few years (for *Ann.* XIV and XVI, see above, notes 4 and 2 respectively)¹⁰.

⁴ Others are, in chronological order, the *Dialogus* by Ronald MAYER (2001), *Histories, Book I* by Cynthia DAMON (2003; see my review in *Gnomon* LXXVII 2005, pp. 418–421), *Histories, Book II* by RA (2007; see my review in *Gnomon* LXXXII 2010, pp. 324–329), the *Agricola* by AJW, with contributions from C.S. KRAUS (2014), as well as RA's volume under review. Christopher WHITTON's *Annals, Book XIV* is forthcoming. Since the publication of *Ordering Anarchy: Armies and Leaders in Tacitus' Histories*, London 1999, RA has established herself as an expert in Tacitean historiography; see also R. ASH (ed.), *Tacitus*, Oxford 2012 (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies).

⁵ Cf. GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), p. 348, n. 8: "Whether through accident or design, actual reduplication of coverage between the two CUP commentary series is rare" (adducing Sophocles' *Electra* by J.H. KELLS [CGLC] and by P.J. FINGLASS [CCTC] as the only example).

⁶ The quotation is from his preface to the 1972 volume (p. VII).

⁷ "Alcoholism ravaged his last years", says H.D. JOCELYN, *Gnomon* LX 1988, p. 763. He was one of the most brilliant Latin scholars of his generation; his commentary on *Annals* I–II will remain indispensable to students of Tacitus for many years to come.

⁸ It was the first commentary on Tacitus that took into account the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (the inscription, with an extensive commentary, was published by W. ECK, A. CABALLOS and F. FERNÁNDEZ in the same year).

⁹ The situation with the *opera minora* was better (Alfred GUDEMAN's *Dialogus* of 1894; J.G.C. ANDERSON's *Germania* of 1938; R.M. OGILVIE's and I. RICHMOND's *Agricola* of 1967).

¹⁰ I do not count here the historical commentaries on *Hist.* I and II (1979) and *Hist.* IV and V (1985) by G.E.F. CHILVER. For an important distinction between historical and historiographical commentaries on ancient historians (Tacitus in particular), see R. ASH, *Between Scylla and Charybdis? Historiographical Commentaries on Latin Historians*, in: R.K. GIBSON, C. SHUTTLEWORTH (eds.), *The Classical Commentary. Histories, Practices, Theory*, Leiden 2002, pp. 269–294.

The two commentaries under review here, that by AJW on *Ann.* IV and that by RA on *Ann.* XV, share many similarities, but they also (inevitably) differ in a number of ways. Perhaps the most important difference lies in their respective treatment of textual matters¹¹. AJW has produced his own text with critical apparatus, including a number of significant departures from HEUBNER's Teubner (which may be viewed as today's standard text) – and a number of his own emendations. Moreover, textual problems are given ample treatment in the commentary. RA, too, occasionally departs from the vulgate, but she does not propose conjectures of her own and her text lacks an apparatus¹². Textual issues are raised in her commentary, but they do not play as important a role as they do in AJW¹³.

AJW's textual choices include putting a lacuna after *favoris* at **12, 1** (his own proposal; cf. p. 116: "There is a seemingly unnoticed problem of logic here"); reading *ferax scelerum* instead of *ferox* at **12, 2** (HARTMAN; cf. S.J. HARRISON, CQ XLIV 1994, pp. 557–559); emending *actitando* to *factitando* at **21, 3** (AJW, comparing *Hist.* II 10, 1: "delationes factitaverat", etc.); supplying <*pater*> before *praeparatur* at **28, 1** (MARTIN & AJW); adopting KIESSLING's¹⁴ *conflata* and excising [*haud*] (MADVIG) at **33, 1** (cf. p. 179 for a thorough discussion of this difficult passage); reading "sic, converso statu neque alia <*fiducia*> rerum quam si unus imperitet" at **33, 2** (AJW; a much debated passage, cf. LIPSIUS' "neque alia re Rom<ana>" and BRINGMANN's "neque alia rerum <salute>"); inserting <*adnotatum*> between *tum* and *quod* at **33, 4** (AJW; cf. p. 184: "there seems to be no parallel for *tum quod* in the sense of *adde quod* or *accedit quod*"); deleting [*externi reges aut*] at **35, 5** (AJW; cf. p. 204: "There are three reasons for believing that T. did not write this concluding sentence as it is found in M"; the trouble with this proposal is, however, that there is no explanation of how this insertion could have occurred); supplying <*ad*> before *te* in the words "illi magistratus et primores qui te invitum perrumpunt" at **40, 5** (AJW; cf. pp. 222–223 where he frankly admits that "this intransitive use + *ad* is not found elsewhere in T." – which is why I am rather sceptical about this emendation: Tacitus uses *perrumpere* elsewhere 23x, always transitively); reading *inculti* instead of the transmitted *incultu* at **46, 1** (BEROALDUS); adopting COURTNEY's *angusto* instead of *angustum* at **47, 2** (so that now the adjective qualifies *dorso*, not *montem*); inserting *proficiscitur* after *Caesar* in "tandem Caesar in Campaniam" at **57, 1** (AJW, *alii alia*), a controversial passage frequently adduced (as transmitted) to illustrate Tacitus' *breviloquentia*;

¹¹ This is, of course, mainly (but not exclusively) due to the fact that the "orange" series, in contrast to the "green and yellow" one, puts much emphasis on the constitution and elucidation of a text – although in the last decades textual criticism has ceased to be as important an issue as it was in the early volumes (J.B. HALL's *De Raptu Proserpinae* from 1970 did not discuss any other matter than the text). On this, see GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), pp. 361–364 (and pp. 349–350 for a comparison between CCTC and CGLC in this respect); see also n. 13 below.

¹² The only "green and yellow" Tacitus volumes which do provide an apparatus are those (co-) authored by AJW (*Ann.* IV of 1989 and *Agr.* of 2014). Thus an emphasis on textual issues in his "orange" *Ann.* IV is, obviously, also his own choice. Cf. his *Textual Notes on Tacitus' Annals*, PLLS XII 2005, pp. 321–329.

¹³ Cf. clause 6b of the 1971 guidelines for contributors to the CGLC series, which I quote after GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), p. 350: "Textual criticism is a vital part of literary criticism, but must be kept in perspective. [...] textual problems should be discussed only where they are of real critical interest: i.e. when they have implications for style and content". In his CGLC chapter (*Fifty Years...* [n. 3], p. 185), GIBSON observes in this context that "[t]here is an obvious contrast here with the contemporary CUP 'orange' series, which regarded the establishment of a fresh critical text as fundamental, in the tradition of Housman".

¹⁴ In the "orange" edition this conjecture is rightly attributed to Gottlieb KIESSLING (1829). Cf. the "green and yellow" volume where it is ascribed to E. HARRISON (1923). KOESTERMANN, too, names HARRISON instead of KIESSLING in his apparatus.

emending *vultuque* to *utroque* at **59, 2** (AJW); following SHACKLETON BAILEY in reading *vindicis* instead of *iudicis* at **59, 3**; separating *nominibus et molibus* with *cruces* at **67, 3** (MARTIN & AJW; cf. p. 308: “Modern editors print the transmitted text without any indication that there may be something amiss with it, yet this is one of the most challenging cruces in Book 4”); and reading *<cautissime> agens* where M has *egens* at **69, 3** (MARTIN)¹⁵.

The examples given above (and I have been selective) palpably show the extent of AJW’s editorial involvement; some emendations are his own, but he also makes ample use of textual proposals put forward by other scholars, with the time span ranging from BEROALDUS to COURTNEY. Two other areas in which he makes textual decisions should be mentioned. Firstly, he occasionally goes back to the *paradosis*, rejecting some old emendations that have been adopted in many modern editions and have thus almost acquired the status of *textus receptus*; a good example is **44, 1**, where LIPSIUS replaced the transmitted *paratae* (“magnae opes innocenter paratae et modeste habitae”) with *paratae*; “there seems no justification for the change” (p. 235). At **67, 3**, AJW retains *occultior* against the *occultior<es>* of WEISSENBORN, discussing the matter fully in the commentary (pp. 309–310); this is most probably right, but, on the other hand, adopting WEISSENBORN’s conjecture would produce a fine chiasmic arrangement “quanto intentus olim publicas ad curas, tanto occultior<es> in luxus et malum otium resolutus”, with a stark contrast between *publicas* and *occultiores*¹⁶. Secondly, AJW makes some important changes in punctuation, and these are sometimes combined with textual changes; see e.g. **3, 1** (a colon after *domus* and a comma after *adferebant*, coupled with the transposition of *et* after *intutum*); **7, 2** (an exclamation mark after *dicatur* and a question mark after *esset*); **8, 2** (a semicolon after *ostentaret*); **19, 3** (a full stop after *patres* and a comma after *premeretur*)¹⁷, and so on; needless to say, these alterations result from a different understanding of the text (and in particular the syntax) than that of previous editors. A subcategory in this group deserves a separate mention: several statements in Tacitus have been recognised as “mini-digressions” or “footnotes within the main text” (these designations are my own) and put in parentheses; thus **16, 2** (“a very difficult section”, admirably discussed on pp. 128–129); **19, 2** (“proprium id Tiberio fuit scelera nuper reperta priscis verbis obtegere”); **33, 1** (about the mixed constitution); **35, 1** (Cremutius Cordus on the Greeks’ *libertas/libido*); **71, 1** (“ni mihi destinatum foret...”: future fates of Titius Sabinus’ accusers). Most of these passages have already been thus separated in the CGLC volume of 1989¹⁸.

RA’s departures from the “vulgate” text¹⁹ are less numerous. To give only some examples, at **13, 2**, she regards *Italico populo* (which follows *Samnitibus*) as a gloss (but did *Samnitibus* really

¹⁵ Some of AJW’s textual decisions presented above have already been made in the “green and yellow” volume (21, 3; 28, 1; 46, 1; 59, 2; 67, 3; 69, 3). At 57, 1, the editors read “in Campaniam <concessit>”, following OTTO.

¹⁶ Other examples: 41, 1 (MURETUS); 43, 4 (RITTER); 45, 3 (BEZZENBERGER); 73, 3 (LIPSIUS). Here and in the two examples adduced in the main text the scholars’ emendations are adopted by FISHER, KOESTERMANN and HEUBNER, the three editors whom I have consulted for this purpose (the only exception is 43, 4, where FISHER retains the *paradosis*). In three instances here AJW follows the decisions already made in the “green and yellow” edition (43, 4; 67, 3; 73, 3).

¹⁷ As a result, “silente reo vel, si defensionem coeptaret, non occultante cuius ira premeretur” becomes a “regular” ablative absolute placed at the beginning of a sentence and not – as so often in Tacitus – appended at the end. No discussion of this changed punctuation is offered in the commentary.

¹⁸ RA uses parentheses more sparingly, e.g. at 44, 3 (a famous statement about the *auctor nominis* of the Christian religion) or 51, 1 (a short aside on Epicharis’ attitudes). By AJW’s standards, parentheses should have been added at 34, 2 (on Vatinius) or at 42, 2 (Nero’s extravagant civil engineering project).

¹⁹ “The text printed here is based on Heubner’s 1994 Teubner text, but some spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing are different” (p. 28).

demand such an explanation? Maybe Tacitus added these two words in order to strengthen the contrast with the Parthians, who are described as “Romani imperii aemulis”); at **21, 2**, she adds <ius> after *provincialibus* to syntactically explain *ostentandi* (W.A. SCHMIDT), cf. p. 127: “The absence from the transmitted text of any ‘hook’ for the genitive gerund verges on the obscure (even for T.)”; at **41, 1**, she reads *Lu<ci>nae* on the grounds that Servius Tullius is not credited with founding Luna’s temple in Rome, whereas he is recorded as having founded that of Diana (p. 190; RA does not say who proposed this alteration; KOESTERMANN – who also has *Lucinae* and discusses the matter fully in his commentary *ad loc.* – specifies that this is the reading of the *Leidensis*); at **44, 4**, she follows GETTY in reading “correpti qui<dam> fatebantur”²⁰; at **58, 3**, she adopts WOODMAN’s “<non meri>ta ta<n>tum erga coniuratos” against FUCHS’ (followed by HEUBNER) “<non stud>ia t. e. c.”; at **63, 3**, she prints, adopting COURTNEY’s conjecture, “quae in vulgus edita eius verbis in <mea> vertere supersedeo”²¹; at **74, 1**, she puts a lacuna after *eo loci* (NIPPERDEY) and deletes [*ex*]; at **74, 2**, she retains the *paradosis*, assuming that “in praesens haud animadversum” immediately follows “inscripsitque Iovi Vindici” (ACIDALIUS: <id>; FUCHS: <quod>; the latter addendum seems a better reading in view of such passages as *Hist.* II 70, 2: “quae laeta in praesens mox perniciem ipsis fecere” or *Ann.* IV 31, 3: “quod aspere acceptum ad praesens mox in laudem vertit”). Some departures from HEUBNER’s text are not discussed in the commentary; this is usually the case in those passages where RA reverts to the manuscript reading (47, 1: *Neroni*; 51, 3: *senatui*; 55, 3), but cf. **49, 3** where M has “Plautiusque Lateranus consul designatus” and RA simply omits the last two words without marking this (obvious) deletion in her text or mentioning it in her commentary²².

Present-day commentators usually pay as much attention to details (textual, lexical, syntactical, historical, literary, etc.) as they do to the overall appreciation of a given text as a work of literature²³ – its purpose and message, its generic identity, its main themes or its structure. This is a highly desirable approach, because what should be expected from commentaries – especially when we are approaching them with a view to reading major portions of them, not just consulting a specific passage – is that they strike a welcome balance between analysis and synthesis. The reader should not get lost in the tangle of details, which may be totally unconnected to each other.

The volumes here under review have achieved this balance in a number of ways. Firstly, in the introductions to their respective books (RA’s more extensive introductory chapter, pp. 1–28, is wider in compass, discussing in its subchapters such issues as “*Annals* 15: Structure and Artistry”, “Parthia and Armenia”, “The Perils of *Gloria*: Corbulo and Seneca”, “Speeches, Style,

²⁰ And later in the same section she has “aut crucibus adfixi ac flammandi, ubi...” where M reads “a. c. a. aut flammandi atque ubi...” and HEUBNER follows ANDRESEN in deleting “aut flammandi atque”. Her comment *ad loc.* (p. 208), “Since M’s text is problematic [...], editors emend variously”, epitomises the difference in the approach to textual matters between the “green and yellow” and “orange” series (see nn. 11 and 13 above); in a commentary published as a CCTC volume, there would have been a full discussion of the text.

²¹ I have serious doubts about this emendation, proposed by E. COURTNEY in *Seven Passages of the Annals (and One of Manilius)*, in: KRAUS, MARINCOLA, PELLING, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 271–274. In my opinion, the problem of the transmitted text does not lie in *invertere* (despite COURTNEY), but in *eius verbis* – which seems redundant after “quae in vulgus edita” (referring to the dying Seneca’s last words). In view of this, I find J.J. HARTMAN’s conjecture, discussed and discarded by COURTNEY, highly attractive: “mihi ne umbra quidem restat dubitationis quin legendum sit: ‘meis verbis invertere supersedeo’” (*Analecta Tacitea*, Lugduni Batavorum 1905, p. 259).

²² At 13, 2 not only *pacis* but also *neque* should be put in angle brackets (cf. p. 100). Conversely, at 19, 2, since M reads *adeuntibus*, there is no need to use these brackets in *adeunt*, <ius>.

²³ Cf. the 1971 instructions to prospective contributors to the “green and yellow” series which stipulated that “the emphasis in both introduction and commentary should be on the book concerned as a work of literature”; I quote after GIBSON, *Fifty Years...* (n. 3), p. 185.

and Language”; AJW’s shorter chapter, pp. 3–12, is focused on what he identifies as a particularly important interpretive key to Book IV, namely its intertextual involvement with Sallust). Secondly, both AJW and RA provide a “bird’s eye view” on larger sections of their respective books in general introductions to these sections; their titles give an instant clue to their main purport (e.g. RA’s “Shadow-Boxing in the East: A Diplomatic Solution in Parthia” on XV 24–31, alluding to her paper of 2015; “Deviant Reconstruction” on XV 42–45, Nero’s rebuilding of Rome – or, rather, his building of the Golden House; AJW’s titles are more descriptive). Importantly, these introductions signalise themes that will be dealt with in commentaries to individual passages; thus AJW says on p. 303, characterising in general terms the section on Tiberius’ withdrawal to Capri with its remarkable description of the island, that “[t]he description can be compared point by point with the rhetorical guidelines for the *laus locorum* found in Menander”; the reader is thus alerted to numerous references to Menander Rhetor that follow (pp. 305–308). Similarly, in her introduction to “Bloodbath: Seneca’s Suicide and Other Deaths” (on XV 60–70), RA observes: “Striking too is how often in narrating the suicide [of Seneca] T. paraphrases Seneca’s writings” (p. 274); here too, more specific comments that follow provide details. Moreover, both AJW and RA pay considerable attention to the structure of Tacitean narrative, especially to its annalistic format (AJW has short but highly instructive introductions to the years covered in Book IV, namely AD 23–28: pp. 59, 132, 188, 239, 287, 312–313), but also to links between individual sections, cross-references and ring composition (e.g. AJW’s illuminating observation on p. 332: “Just as Book 4 began with Sejanus and a seduction (1–3), so it ends with Sejanus and a wedding”)²⁴. And even the carefully drawn up indexes help to get a larger view of (e.g.) literary issues raised in the commentary; AJW’s entry on “metaphors” (one of his main focuses) as well as RA’s on “metaphorical language” are particularly welcome²⁵.

Roy GIBSON in his chapter on the “orange” series makes an instructive comparison between MARTIN’s and AJW’s note on a single passage in their CGLC edition of *Annals* IV (“adeundo, appellando” at 2, 2) and their comment on a similar passage in their CCTC edition of *Annals* III (“suprema...munera fungerentur” at 2, 1)²⁶. This comparison, in fact, may be viewed as a *pars pro toto* of the fundamental difference between the two series. When we now take AJW’s new note on “adeundo, appellando” and compare it with its 1989 counterpart²⁷, we can observe the following: (1) the

²⁴ For this and other examples of ring composition in Book IV, see also pp. 9–10. Cf. AJW’s and MARTIN’s remark on the framing of *Ann.* III with two women, Agrippina and Junia (p. 11 of the 1996 commentary). Since Book III ends memorably with statues (“sed praeifulgebant Cassius atque Brutus, eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visebantur”, *Ann.* III 76, 2), it is a pity that AJW does not stress in his new commentary how important a role they play in *Ann.* IV (see 2, 3; 7, 2; 15, 2; 23, 1; 35, 2; 37, 3; 38, 2; 52, 2; 64, 3; 67, 4; 74, 2). As for links between individual sections, it would have been advisable to comment on IV 16, 4 (“utque glisceret dignatio sacerdotum”) in combination with 17, 1 (*sacerdotes* and other high-ranking magistrates rebuked by Tiberius)

²⁵ Since RA, as a contributor to CGLC, is writing (also) for an audience which is less advanced in scholarly terms, she explains in her “General Index”, under individual entries, the meaning of such concepts as anacoluthon, litotes or syllepsis; this is very helpful.

²⁶ GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), pp. 350–353. Since his chapter appeared before the publication of AJW’s *Annals, Book 4*, GIBSON could not compare two notes on the same passage from Book IV. But see his general assessment in the 2021 chapter (*Fifty Years...* [n. 3], p. 197): “Woodman’s recent edition of Tacitus, *Annals* IV (2018) for the latter [orange] series gives some idea of what an audience composed entirely of fellow scholars may be supposed to demand from a commentary, when compared with Woodman’s and R.H. Martin’s edition of the same Tacitean book published nearly three decades before in the green and yellow series (1989)”.

²⁷ Admittedly, not an exact counterpart, since in his “orange” volume AJW has “adeundo, appellando; simul...ipse deligere”; there is a separate note in the “green and yellow” commentary on “ipse deligere”, but it deals with a question not discussed by AJW in his 2018 edition.

2018 note consists of two paragraphs; while the first one deals with (roughly) the same issues as the 1989 note, the second much longer paragraph introduces entirely new subject matter, Tacitus' predilection for two-element asyndeton (asyndeton is mentioned in the earlier commentary, e.g. *ad* 8, 4 and 8, 5, but it is not discussed at length, as here); (2) the first paragraph of the 2018 note is organised in another way, places its accents differently (1989: "Sejanus' are the standard activities of a general immediately before a battle"; 2018: "Each of these activities is characteristic of the ideal leader"), introduces new aspects ("the sentence illustrates T.'s 'familiar trick of making something normal sound something sinister' (as Mr Seager aptly puts it)"), and cites other evidence; (3) the 1989 note presents its agenda "with admirable economy"²⁸ – which is, however, beaten in the 2018 note. The "Each of these" sentence, quoted above, continues as follows: "(see respectively 3.45.2n., Oakley on Liv. 8.39.4, and *Agr.* 19.2n.)". Since "each of these" refers to *adeundo*, *appellando* and *ipse deligere*, the reader is thus instructed to consult AJW's and MARTIN's commentary on *Ann.* III for the first idea, OAKLEY's on Livy for the second, and AJW's on the *Agricola* for the third; there is no need – it should be assumed – to discuss the matter here, since this has been done elsewhere²⁹; (4) the 2018 note's second paragraph (on two-element asyndeton) refers not only to Latin sources other than Tacitus, but also to modern authorities, namely to S. MALLOCH's commentary on *Ann.* XI, two works by J.N. ADAMS³⁰ and a German paper by E. WÖLLFLIN; while MARTIN's and AJW's commentary from 1989 does not shrink from citing scholarly literature (and, for that matter, references to it appear frequently in RA's edition; witness her vast bibliography on pp. 326–350), the extent to which literature is not only referred to but also quoted – whether in English or in other languages – and discussed in the "orange" volume is beyond comparison.

It would be still more instructive to compare "orange" and "green and yellow" notes on controversial passages – even in those instances when there has been no revision of the editor's views between 1989 and 2018³¹. Such is the case with "pluresque eius rei causas adferebat..." at 16, 2: both commentaries propose the same interpretation of this "very difficult section" (2018, p. 128), but what in the "green and yellow" volume has been dealt with relatively briefly (11 lines), now requires no less than 47 lines (plus three footnotes) to be elucidated in every detail. Needless to say, such full, elaborate discussions of difficult passages (e.g. pp. 65, 72–73, 140–141, 200, 272–273, 304–305) constitute a particularly valuable element of the "orange" volume and should be regarded as important contributions to Tacitean scholarship (even if some of the solutions proposed by AJW are perhaps open to debate).

Among many fine observations which are contained in RA's commentary, I find her subtle treatment of Tacitus' style, especially as viewed as a means to convey his message, particularly valuable. Thus, discussing Vatinius' characterisation at 34, 2, she notes: "T. combines lofty (*alumnus*) and everyday (*sutrinae tabernae*) language, aptly reflecting Vatinius' peculiar mix of power

²⁸ Thus GIBSON, *Fifty Shades...* (n. 1), p. 351.

²⁹ Cf. the last sentence of his note on 25, 3 ("infensus miles..."): "*infensus memoria* recurs only at 2.3.2 (for *infensus* see 3.15.2n.); for sing. *miles* see above, 2.1n.; for *eludentes* and 'foreign trickery' see 3.74.1n.; for the form *aduersum* see 3.14.1n." (p. 157). In his note on 17, 2 (p. 133), AJW makes no mention of *senecta* (*senecta* vs *senectus*: *Hist.*: 5/3, *Ann.* I–VI: 10/7, *Ann.* XI–XVI: 12/3); only *ad* 50, 2 (p. 250) we read: "[f]or *senecta* see 3.23.1n., Oakley on Liv. 6.8.2". Economy is, indubitably, important, but referring the reader again and again to information provided elsewhere does not make consulting this commentary an easy task.

³⁰ To which we may add now J.N. ADAMS, *Asyndeton and its Interpretation in Latin Literature. History, Patterns, Textual Criticism*, Cambridge 2021. There is a long chapter dealing with historians (pp. 544–643) in which Tacitus receives ample treatment.

³¹ For an example of such a revision, see p. 94 (and cf. 1989, p. 110). AJW, as a rule, does not acknowledge that he has revised his views (cf. p. X), but see p. 200: "In 1989 I proposed a different interpretation...".

and vulgarity” (p. 163). On the historian’s unusual opening of the narrative of AD 65 (48, 1) she says: “T., by abandoning the ablative absolute formula to open the year [...], highlights the conspiracy’s exceptional nature [...] in a typical appendix sentence: the complex subordinate clause relying the controversial material dwarfs³² the simple main clause” (p. 220). Or, commenting on Tacitus’ syntax at 55, 1, she observes: “although remarkably simple syntax conveyed the journey to the residence (*Milichus...pergit*), the elaborate procedure for gaining access to Nero (despite the urgent news) involves complex syntax, full of subordinate clauses. The main verbs *pergit* and *docet* occupying the same final position in their respective clauses sharpens this contrast” (p. 253). Similarly, she draws attention to such stylistic devices as alliteration³³, asyndeton, chiasmus or (peculiarly Tacitean) *variatio*, showing how they are employed by the historian to suit his own narrative or interpretive ends³⁴. Moreover, she gives helpful statistics about Tacitus’ word usage, also often taking into account a given word’s frequency in other authors, including those postdating the historian; the reader is thus informed about how carefully Tacitus’ lexical choices were made. Unfortunately, her data are not always completely reliable. RA usually bases her statistics on the PHI Latin database (<https://latin.packhum.org>) which, for texts later than Fronto and Gellius, is very selective. Thus, when she says that a given word is attested a certain number of times in “extant Latin”, her figures may not be accurate. Apart from Christian authors, she misses e.g. Ammianus, a historian whose debt to Tacitus, also on the lexical level, seems highly probable³⁵.

It may be supposed that an “orange” volume, because it is more “scholarly” than a “green and yellow” one, must also be relatively longer, that is to say must exhibit a higher ratio between commentary and text. This is certainly true about AJW’s 2018 edition on the one hand and his and MARTIN’s 1989 volume on the other (6.8: 1 and 4.7: 1 respectively). But RA’s “green and yellow” Tacitus beats AJW’s “orange” one in this respect (11.3: 1, one of the highest counts in the CGLC series)³⁶. Although certainly high, 6.8: 1 does not look particularly impressive for the “orange” series or, for that matter, for AJW’s other commentaries. His and MARTIN’s *Annals, Book 3* shows the commentary to text ratio as 10.5: 1 and his “green and yellow” *Agricola* comes very close to RA’s figure for her *Annals, Book XV* (11.1: 1). One of the reasons is AJW’s “admirable economy” in presenting his material (see above). Another is the “green and yellow” series’ focus on providing information, especially relating to linguistic matters, which may be helpful to less advanced classicists coping with their author; RA dutifully responds to these expectations. There

³² RA likes using this verb in such a context; cf. pp. 79, 88, 184, 191.

³³ In her note on “ceterisque [...] Cervario [...] convincendum [...] conisis” at 66, 2, she writes: “This alliterative ablative absolute captures the conspirators’ collective efforts to pursue Faenius Rufus” (p. 295, my emphases). This is most probably intentional; cf. p. 324 (“publica pecunia poneretur” translated as “should be put up by public payment”).

³⁴ AJW is less concerned with this. However, in his lemmata, using an elaborate system of underlining and italicising, he marks instances of *Lautinstrumentierung* that occur in *Ann. IV* (he does not discuss them). To his numerous examples add 10, 1 (“eorundem temporum rumorem”); 49, 1 (“fossam [...] passuum ambitu amplexus”); 51, 2 (“insignitius flagitium”); 69, 1 (“metus visus, sonitus aut forte ortae suspitionis erat”).

³⁵ A few examples: *lentitudo* appears “11x in extant Latin” (p. 234; there are more examples, e.g. *Amm. XVIII 5, 6* or *Oros. III 6, 1*); *delenimentum* is found “22x in extant Latin” (p. 286; many more examples are listed in *ThLL V 1*, col. 432, 20–62, even though the entry is selective); “twenty-seven of thirty-six attestations [of *conservator*] are in Cic.” (p. 310; here, apart from a number of instances from Christian writers, we have many examples of this word appearing in inscriptions and referring to deities or emperors. This is relevant to the Tacitus passage [71, 1] and RA herself cites one epigraphic example in her note).

³⁶ For more statistics of this kind, see GIBSON, *Forty Years...* (n. 3), pp. 213–214. The record seems to belong to S.J. HARRISON’s commentary on Horace, *Odes III* (2017): 11.8: 1.

is no need for such information in an “orange” volume. Yet a third reason may be advanced: AJW is somewhat selective in discussing his Tacitus; in some respects he is very detailed, while other points are either only briefly indicated or not mentioned at all. It is of course a matter of dispute regarding what deserves a mention in a scholarly commentary and what should be left to readers to discover for themselves. A commentary that provides a “full service” may be counter-productive in that it is likely to deprive readers of the joy of interacting with the text on their own. This being said, I still regard some of AJW’s omissions as regrettable; a few examples may be found below (see also n. 23 above).

In order not to make this review unbearably long, I shall now give a highly selective list of comments on individual passages from the two commentaries. I shall begin with AJW.

1, 2 (p. 62): perhaps it would have been apposite to note that Sejanus’ CV begins, quite fittingly, with *genitus* and ends with *ceciditque*.

11, 2 (p. 112): commenting on “facinorum omnium repertor”, AJW refers to Verg. *Aen.* II 164 and Cic. *Vat.* 22. Cf. also *Ann.* II 30, 3: “callidus et novi iuris repertor Tiberius”, which alludes to Sall. *Hist.* IV 69, 7: “callidi et repertoires perfidiae”.

15, 1 (pp. 125–126): this narrative segment begins with Tiberius’ sorrow (“luctu Caesarem adfecit”) and ends with the senators’ joy (“laetas inter audientium adfectiones”).

19, 1 (p. 138): there is no note on “immissusque Varro consul”. A military metaphor; Varro is dispatched as though he were a squad of soldiers sent to assault the enemy (cf. *Hist.* I 68, 2; *Ann.* IV 73, 2; XIII 54, 4). Also in reference to accusers at XI 1, 1.

31, 3 (p. 170): P. Suillius condemned for having taken money *ob rem iudicandam*. A reference to XI 5–7 is strangely missing.

52, 4 (p. 260): no mention, in the context of Domitius Afer’s first recorded appearance as an orator, of his obituary in XIV 19. There is a link between these two passages: compare “divulgato ingenio” and “prosperiore eloquentiae quam *morum* fama fuit” with “ut par ingenio ita *morum* diversus”. Afer’s life, as reported in the *Annals*, is flanked on either side by *ingenium* and *mores*.

53, 1 (p. 261): “the verb [*implicari*] occurs nowhere else in T.”. But see *Germ.* 45, 6; *Hist.* III 77, 2; V 15, 1; *Ann.* I 11, 2; XI 8, 3; XII 4, 1; 47, 2.

59, 3 (p. 283): Tiberius is described as “torvus ac falsum renidens vultu”. This portrayal combines characteristics mentioned in the depiction of two notorious informers, Epirus Marcellus (*minacibus oculis*) and Vibius Crispus (*renidens*), at *Hist.* IV 43, 2. Cf. Epirus’ another appearance, at *Ann.* XVI 29, 1: “ut erat torvus ac minax”. Incidentally, “vultu diverso [...] renidens” from the *Histories* passage would be enough to reject RITTER’s proposal to delete *vultu* here (cf. p. 284). (On *renidens*, see also RA, p. 295.)

64, 1 (p. 297): according to AJW, the fire on the Mons Caelius in AD 27 “is absent from Suetonius”. But see Suet. *Tib.* 48, 1.

64, 1 (p. 297): “ni Caesar obviam isset” (in reference to Tiberius aiding the people of Rome after the fire) contrasts with his *absentia*, mentioned a line earlier. The emperor “went to meet” his subjects in the capital, but only on the level of metaphorical language.

66, 1 (p. 302): commenting on “accusatorum maior in dies et infestior vis sine levamento grasabatur”, AJW pays attention to the imagery of disease. But perhaps even more important here is the imagery of fire (the real fire on the Mons Caelius looms in the background); for *vis*, see IV 64, 3, for *grassari*, XV 40, 1; and cf. I 73, 1 where the *gravissimum exitium* of political trials and accusations is described in metaphorical terms as a fire which finally “cunctaque corripuerit”. Note that Tacitus’ next sentence at IV 66, 1 begins with *corripueratque*; for this verb used in reference to flames, see XV 38, 2 and 4. Of course, as RA reminds us, fire and disease are often combined (p. 181).

And now Book XV and RA’s commentary.

20, 3 (p. 124): Thræsea’s use of the verb *emendari* deserved a comment. Cf. *emendatio*, also in reference to Thræsea, at XIII 49, 3. Neither the verb nor the noun is used elsewhere in the *Annals*.

22, 1 (p. 129): “The unusual consensus [of the senators who approved of Thrasea’s motion] is striking after an earlier meeting of the senate where Thrasea’s *libertas* is contrasted with others’ *seruitium* (14.49.1)”. Yes, but even on that earlier occasion Thrasea’s proposal met with universal approval (“pedibus in sententiam eius iere”).

23, 2 (p. 133): “Nero’s delight is exceptional, but T. elaborates much more expansively the excessive joy stage-managed by the senate”. Additionally, note the chiasmic arrangement of material in this section: Nero’s joy (described briefly) – the senate’s joy (described at length) – the senate’s grief (at length) – Nero’s grief (briefly).

34, 2 (p. 163): RA’s comment on the presentation of Vatinius as “inter foedissima eius aulae ostenta” (*foedus* as a term of abuse in late-republican invective; “[t]here is neat inversion: Vatinius produces the show, but is himself a ‘phenomenon’ at display”) misses the quasi-religious connotations of this phrase. The adjective was regularly applied to portents, cf. Liv. XXVII 37, 6 (“foedum ac turpe prodigium”); XL 19, 1; Tac. *Hist.* III 56, 1 – and Vatinius is such a portent. The chapter began with the collapse of the Neapolitan theatre, which many people interpreted as a prodigy; it has now moved to another *ostentum*, the jester Vatinius.

50, 2 (p. 229): in RA’s comment on “speciem amicitiae” one crucial reference is missing. *Ann.* XVI 32, 3. Cf. also R. Seager, *Amicitia in Tacitus and Juvenal*, AJAH II 1977, pp. 40–50.

55, 1 (p. 254): *iussit* referring to Milichus, not to Nero. We may compare XI 35, 1 and 3 on Narcissus (of course, Nero is no Claudius). Note that in this and the next chapter Nero does not appear as an active figure; everything proceeds, as it were, behind his back. He returns to the narrative only at 57, 1.

59, 1 (p. 267): *militum* picks up *castra*, *populi* picks up *rostra*.

59, 4 (p. 270): *immotus his* may be compared to *commotus/permotus his* at I 74, 6; XI 36, 2; XII 20, 2; 41, 3; XIII 56, 1; XIV 22, 3; XV 2, 1. At XI 24, 1, Claudius is *haud permotus his*. For a similar context, see XIV 59, 1: Rubellius Plautus is encouraged by his father-in-law to bravely oppose his impending doom, “sed Plautum ea non movere”.

59, 5 (pp. 271–272): the emperor in Piso’s will. Strangely, there is no reference to *Agr.* 43, 4.

63, 2 (p. 285): commenting on “contemplatione vitae per virtutem actae” (Seneca to Paulina), RA cites Sen. *Cons. ad Marc.* 24, 4 and Tac. *Agr.* 46, 1, but she omits the crucial point that *contemplatio* is mentioned alongside *virtus* in only these three texts. In the consulatory part of his *Agricola* Tacitus referred to Seneca’s consolation; now he refers both to the *Agricola* and to the Senecan passage. He uses *contemplatio* (a philosophical term frequently found in Seneca) only here and at *Agr.* 46, 1.

69, 1 (p. 303): *conatus consulis*, i.e. Vestinus’ alleged conspiracy against Nero. “Alliteration conveys Nero’s vehemence and underscores the travesty of attacking an incumbent consul”. Cf. Catiline’s *conatus* which were thwarted by Cicero the *consul* (Cic. *Cat.* 1, 11; 2, 27; *Sull.* 51).

73, 3 (p. 320): Junius Gallio as proconsul of Achaia; strangely, there is no reference to *Ac. Ap.* 18, 12–15.

74, 3 (p. 325): “agere inter homines desierit”; cf. Nero’s pun on Claudius, “morari eum *desisse inter homines* producta prima syllaba vocabatur” (Suet. *Nero* 33, 1). Claudius was deified.

Both commentaries have been finely produced and carefully proof-read (especially the “orange” volume). With a view to future revised editions, I append a list of *corrigenda*.

AJW: p. 60: “**Fortuna**” in the lemma, but “fortuna” in the text (p. 15); p. 207: for “*memoriam sequentis aevi*” read “*sequentis aevi memoriam*”; p. 249: “**ut mos barbaris**” is separated in the lemma with commas, but in the text with brackets (p. 41); p. 253: “See also next n.” should be changed to “...next n. but one”; p. 254: “**salus**” followed by a comma in the lemma, but not in the text (p. 42); the punctuation is important here, because it affects the understanding of the sentence; p. 266: for “**diuissise**” read “**diuississe**”. On p. 247 there is a reference to “Minicioni 166–7” and on p. 313 to “Heinz 58–62”; neither is mentioned in the bibliography.

RA: p. 89: a reference to “HA 10.3” should be corrected; p. 105: for “*ignominiae*” read “*ignominiae*”; p. 135: for “Suet. *Cl.* 24.2” read “Suet. *Cal.* 24.2”; p. 161: for “climatic” read “climactic”;

p. 165: for “**libertas**” read “**libertos**”; p. 189: for “*Transiberina*” read “*Transtiberina*”; p. 197: a reference to Stautius should be corrected to “*Silv.* 4.3.7–8”; p. 200: “*essent*” should be inserted after “*custodes*”; p. 202: for “**decorum**” read “**decorem**”; p. 222: for “*sermo comes*” read “*...comis*”; p. 224: for “*lenitudinis*” read “*lentitudinis*”; p. 236: a reference to Vergil should be corrected to “*Virg. G.* 3.46–7”; p. 276: something has gone wrong with “T. previously signalled stresses Piso’s affability”; p. 285: for “**ne aeternum**” read “**ne<u> aeternum**”; p. 292: “*varie prodidere*” should be added to the quotation from *Hist.* I (the sentence lacks a predicate); p. 296: a reference to Cicero should be corrected to “*Cic. Mil.* 89”; p. 313: for “contruct” read “construct”. On p. 252 there is a reference to “Fletcher 1945”; what we find in the bibliography is “Fletcher 1964”. “Batomsky” should be corrected to “Bastomsky” (pp. 274, 291, 328).

AJW closes his introduction by quoting SYME’s verdict on *Annals*, Book IV as “the best that Tacitus ever wrote” (p. 12). But even if we award the palm of priority to this book, we should regard *Ann.* XV as coming quite close to the winner. Intriguingly, despite obvious differences between the Tiberian and the Neronian Rome as depicted in the *Annals*, these two books have a lot in common: a conspiracy (Sejanus / Piso *et consortes*), a fire (Mons Caelius / Rome), a building catastrophe (Fidenae / Naples), a brave death of a tortured prisoner who does not reveal his/her accomplices (an anonymous Spaniard / Epicharis), a righteous senator’s intervention in the senate (Lepidus / Thrasea), the subservience of Roman elite, strongly emphasised towards the end of the book (IV 74 / XV 74), and allusions to future events, concentrated in the last chapter(s) (IV 74, 5 and 75 / XV 74, 2 and 3). Obviously, Sejanus dominates the narrative in *Ann.* IV to a far greater degree than Corbulo or Seneca do in *Ann.* XV (not to mention the miserable Piso) – but the latter book also contains many memorable portraits and scenes. These are splendid books, and they certainly deserved detailed, accurate, learned and insightful commentaries. Such as those discussed in this review.

Jakub Pigoń
 Institute of Classical, Mediterranean and Oriental Studies
 University of Wrocław
 jakub.pigon@uwr.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-9272-7490