

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Romans and Germany: Selections from Tacitus, Caesar, Suetonius, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Pomponius Mela, Frontinus.* Edited with introduction, notes, and vocabulary by HERBERT W. BENARIO. Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012. Pp. x + 71. Paper, \$13.95. ISBN 978-1-4772-4066-3.

Scholarship on Tacitus and on Roman Germany has gained much from Benario's long and careful stewardship. From his *Introduction to Tacitus to Gildersleeve*, Benario's books and articles have and shall serve scholars and students for decades past and future.<sup>1</sup> Generous contributions of time and talent have allowed Benario's legacy to extend well beyond the scope of his own classroom. Now, many years beyond his retirement from teaching, Benario equips intermediate Latin students with a reader on Romans in Germany.

This reader offers one dozen short passages in unretouched Latin from seven authors: Caesar (2), Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Pomponius Mela, Frontinus, Tacitus (3), and Suetonius (2). Passages range in length from around 40 words (Fron. *Strat.* 1.3.10) to around 400 (Tac. *Ann.* 1.60–2). The book's apparatus is very lean. Textual accuracy is typical of Benario's meticulous attention to detail. I found no typos. Source-editions are not credited; and no selection matched fully with the Teubner, PHI, or OCT I compared.

A Preface explains the book's relation to *Ecce Romani*: that series' applicable vocabulary serves as this book's glossary. The Introduction involves bare-bones statements about the authors selected: the half-page statement on Tacitus' life and works is the most detailed by far. Back matter is solely the Vocabulary. The book achieves its purpose purely: it provides the dozen right passages for introducing Roman Germania.

In the facing-page annotations vocabulary reigns, though some geographical and historical details arise. These notes deal predominantly with vocabulary,

<sup>1</sup> E.g., from among a long bibliography, H. W. Benario, *An Introduction to Tacitus* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975); W. W. Briggs and H. W. Benario, edd., *Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: an American Classicist* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); H. W. Benario, *Thusnelda: a German Princess in Ancient Rome* [historical fiction] (New York: Vantage, 1993); and now id., ed., *Caesar's Gallic War: a Commentary* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

offering principal parts and the single-choice meaning the author prefers. Almost no grammatical help intrudes: for *Caes. B. Gal. 4.1* (*non longe a mari quo Rhēnus influit*) the author offers this: “*nōn longē*: probably in the area between Vetera and Kleve. / *quō* = *in quod* / *influō*, -ere, -uxī, -uxus, flow.” Teachers who are looking to assign a book that will replace them in the students’ reading experience will not have found that in this book. Later in that passage the tantalizing grammatical gems that are typically mined in other approaches are untouched here: *atque in eam se consuetudinem adduxerunt ut locis frigidissimis neque vestitus praeter pelles haberent quicquam ... et lavantur in fluminibus*. A teacher might linger on the placement of *se* and of *quicquam*, its usage with the genitive; and here both the voice and mood of *lavantur* seem to make it too ripe to warrant instructor’s silence. None of these elements, however, receives notice above vocabulary level. An instructor will need to help answer—or, indeed, raise—such issues for students, since the book remains silent.

Much white space occurs, due to set-up of texts always on versos. Many pages are fully blank. This in itself is not a bad choice, for the text is the thing here. Yet the press might have contrived graphic replacements for the voids, e.g. more maps or even illustrations for the texts.

One miserly map scowls on p. x. Lacking legend, scale, and contrast, the map is hardly useful in this volume. Benario’s notes translate the sources’ place names, *ad loc.*, into modern anglophone terms (e.g., *ad Vell. 2.95.1, Raetos Vindelicosque* glossed with “The Raeti and Vindelici are tribes who lived in the general area of modern Bavaria, in southeastern Germany”). Patient hawkeyes will eventually find “Vindeliker.” As is, the bleary map is almost useless.<sup>2</sup>

Useful for precocious scholars who are finishing *Ecce Romani* or an intermediate course and need free-time readings, this book offers reliable texts. Ancillaria are so sparsely provided that most young students will make little headway here on their own. The teacher will be augmenting with grammatical analysis. All students below advanced undergraduates will benefit from the facing-page vocabulary. I will consider its use for sight-readings in my intermediate college classroom.

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<sup>2</sup> H. W. Benario, ed., *Tacitus Annals 11 and 12*, Classical World Special Series (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983) 105.