

BOOK REVIEW

Studies on the Text of Suetonius' De Vita Caesarum. By ROBERT A. KASTER. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xii + 338. Hardcover, \$55.00. ISBN – 78-0-198-75847-1.

This volume accompanies the *Oxford Classical Text* published by the same author, the first full edition since Maximilian Ihm's Teubner of 1907, this time based on Kaster's own collation of the eighteen manuscripts (267). The new text is welcome, given that even Ihm himself proposed changes to the text in the intervening century, and these *Studies* are also welcome, and of the high quality we have come to expect from the author of *Studies on the Text of Suetonius' De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (1992) and *Studies on the Text of Macrobius' Saturnalia* (2010).

"Part I: The Transmission of Suetonius' Caesars in the Middle Ages" sets out the manuscript tradition in a way that I found clear and helpful. This section incorporates material "lightly revised" from Kaster's previous work (*TAPA* 144 (2014):135–188), and should be preferred over that version, since there is at least one place where Kaster expresses a new opinion (16).

"Part II: Suetoniana" is professedly the "heart of this monograph" (vi), offering notes on about 300 of the places where Kaster's edition varies from Ihm's. The choices are sensibly and clearly explained, and certainly seem to be economical and methodologically sound. While most of the errors can be attributed to something in the manuscript tradition, Kaster does not mind on occasion leaving something to Suetonius' own error (e.g. page 225) while he also does not hypercorrect by changing the text to line up with what we now think is historically factual (e.g. *Sextilia*, 235). The editor expresses and exercises a preference for printing *something* rather than leaving a lacuna (e.g. pages 61, 136, 207), and a preference not to delete material unless it can be explained why it would have been added in the first place (e.g. page 80). As Kaster points out, most of the difficult readings occur in the early *Lives* (34), and it is also the case that most of Kaster's notes apply to readings in the early *Lives*. My own sample of variations in the later *Lives* found a preponderance of changes to punctuation rather than text, and naturally those need little explanation in a book such as this.

It is a minor disappointment that this volume does not offer notes on all of the variations, but one cannot have everything. In fact the very example I looked for—Ihm's *iacta alea est* is now Kaster's *iacta alea esto*, at *Iul.* 32—is the one given at Kaster's note 1 with references, where he explains that he does not annotate departures on which much ink has already been spilt. A complete list of these departures from Ihm is helpfully given at Appendix 5: *Conspectus editionum*, specifying which variations have or have not been annotated in the text. This list will be essential to researchers.

One editorial feature that appears both here and in the accompanying text confuses the reader: calling a section "Galba, Otho, Vitellius" is of course technically correct and makes sense when one is reading in sequence but, with the headword at the top of each page not being more specific than "Galba, Otho, Vitellius" when the *Lives* each have their own numbering, it is difficult for the reader looking for a reference to tell whether she is looking at Galba 10 or Vitellius 10. The same goes for *Diuus Vespasian*, *Diuus Titus*, *Domitianus*.

Notes on Suetonius' idiom, including preferences in word order, tense, mood, and common constructions, are welcome and helpful, especially to teachers or researchers of Suetonius' text. Kaster groups Suetonius with other authors of "classical Latin" for the purposes of comparison, rather than with later authors such as the authors of the *Historia Augusta* (80). The text was never an easy one, and it will still be hard-going, but these notes provide many useful suggestions both on sense in individual cases and on ways Suetonius' usage often varies from the Latin taught in textbooks. Any commentator on Suetonius' *De uita Caesarum* will have to have their Greek as well as Latin, and Kaster does not disappoint on this front.

Appendices give detail on matters concerning the manuscripts, including layout in Appendix 2 and at Appendix 4 the essential discussion of the famous "*Galba error*". It is helpful that Kaster has, where possible, provided the online sources of digitised manuscripts.

The author's style is pleasant and enjoyable, even amusing at times. The volume is pleasantly and carefully produced. I noted only a few errors and inconsistencies and none of them serious. The author and press should be proud.

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