JOHN BRISCOE, *A Commentary on Livy Books 41-45*, Oxflord: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 844 ISBN13: 978-0-19-921664-2.

This is the last of a series of commentaries on the later books of Livy, starting with 31-33 in 1973, followed by 34-7 in 1981 and 38-40 in 2008. Though B[riscoe] has published on and edited other Latin authors—notably the Teubner edition of Valerius Maximus—he is to a considerable extent a one-author scholar. That shows in the depth of expertise and familiarity which he brings to his Livy.

Because this is the fourth in B.'s series of commentaries on Livy, and because (as will become clear) it is inextricably entwined with his career of research on the Paduan historian, in this review I will treat matters not historical but historiographical, asking three primary questions: (1) does this Livian text—books 41-45, covering the years 178/7 through 167/6—demand a particular kind of commentary? (2) What kind of text does B. give us and what kind of questions does he ask of and about it? (3) What kind of audience does B. write for, and what kind of text/author does he present?

First, does Livy demand a particular kind of commentary? B.'s commentaries are not titled or even subtitled "historical", and he has consistently concerned himself as much with textual as with historical questions. There are special problems entailed in dealing with an ancient historical text, of course: in establishing (or agreeing on) a text to be commented upon, one has not only to produce a "good" Latin text, but one that reproduces in some degree what an editor thinks the historian thought happened in the external reality to which that text claims to refer. How do you do that? There is an uneasy triangulation between (1) what "really" happened (often reconstructed with the very text one is editing, especially when—as with some years of Livy—that work is the only textual evidence), (2) what the ancinet historian believed to have happened (which may or may not be identical with [1]), and (3) the pressures put on reader and historian alike by the norms and code of the genre—which may not affect (1) but certainly determines how the ancient writer expounds (2), and must affect how the modern commentator understands both (1) and (2). B. is especially interested in restoring the sense of what Livy wrote, and so must also try to understand what really happened to measure that narrative against it. Some examples: "[T]his must mean that the tabula was in the shape of Sardinia and that it contained pictures of battles…. One wonders, though, whether this correctly represents the facts" (149 on 41.28.10). "[N]either *parere* nor *adparere*…. is used in the sense of 'report for duty': in any case, it is

much more likely that Perseus told his army to get ready to march than to report for it" (340 on 42.52.14). "Hippias and Pantauchus are described as *principes amicorum* and *princeps amicorum* also … though … L. [also] writes *primos amicos*. L. probably did not realize that προῶτοι φίλοι were a particular class of Hellenistic courtiers" (538 on 44.23.2). Anyone who has read a lot of historical/textual commentary on Livy will immediate recognize how charitable this is to the ancient author. B. really does take Livy as he finds him: confused where he may well have been so (e.g. 43.12.5, "A puzzlingly expressed passage"), but generally thoughtful and deserving of attention. Not infrequently (e.g. 610) he notes in response to earlier textual critics that Livy "could have written thus, but he did not do so." That said, even considering books of Livy that cover non-legendary periods, there is room for other kinds of commentary. B. fits neatly into the OUP Livy writ large (Ogilvie – Oakley – Briscoe); it is unfortunate, in my view, that there are no other options with which to engage B. (My own work on Livy 6 is too far afield from B. in both Livian and scholarly areas, but it might suggest a parallel track of interpretation and analysis.)

That B. himself edited these books of Livy (for Teubner in 1986) means that he is often editing a Livy of his own making, especially given the dreadful state of the text of this pentad. Commentators may come to believe that they come upon questions in the text that need answering, but in fact they themselves ask those questions. What kind of questions does B. pose to this/his Livy? Some things he is *not* interested in (and this reader, at any rate, rejoiced): the evolution of Livy's style (though B. does give some examples of word distribution across the *History*, e.g. 125 on 41.23.18 *immaturus,* 569 on 44.32.5 *aduentare*); its relationship to the styles of Cicero or Sallust as an index of Livy's political or moral stance on anything; mocking Livy's translation of Polybius (problems are noted at e.g. 104-5, 128, but the solution is not always to blame Livy's Greek); condemning Livy as a historian or overpracticing *Quellenforschung*. B. takes it for granted that one will "naturally" prefer Polybius (615)—though he does not say why—but that is pretty mild given the kind of pejorative rhetoric about Livy the Historian that is still easily found in the literature.

Apart from the history of the period and reconstructing the text, the areas in which B. is interested include figures of repetition, rhetorical devices, synchronism (invariably referred to as *autoschediasm,* which he defines as a "false chronological link," p10), sentence structure, prosopography, adversative asyndeton, chronology, and types of scribal error. The last is particularly impressive: taking a relatively random set of pages, B. has useful notes suggesting the cause of MS corruption on pp631, 632, 633, 636, 638, 639, 640, 642, 644, 647, 648. The commentary is worth close attention for these notes alone, espcially for a student or scholar seeking to understand how good texts go bad.

What kind of reader, finally, is envisioned for this commentary? First of all, a discerning one: not only will he naturally prefer Polybius, he understands that "no one could imagine" that a particular adjective went with the (grammatically possible but wrong) noun in a sentence; he accepts that some repetitions "are of no significance" (584), some assonances "unmotivated" (91). Secondly, it will be a reader who is not bothered by finding the ancient author of this text a little elusive. B.'s Livy is definitely Augustan (comparisons with *Res Gestae* 34 recur), and he has certain linguistic and historiographical habits—though these are apparently more usefully explicated by being noted than via the more overtly interpretative methods of metahistory and other unpersuasive approaches. B. often, in fact, gives us lists without much interpretation. L's frequent use of *spectaculum* is noted but the idea or implications of "spectacle" in Livy's or other historiographical texts is not explored; the frequent autoschediasms are not interpreted, nor is the often-flagged "ecphrastic idiom." The famous *antiquus animus* (43.13.2) is explicated by a reference to an earlier note (42.50.7) that explicitly says that 43.13.2 is different from itself, but does not say how—nor is this, unfortunately, the only such instance of a note chasing its own tail. I do understand that a commentary, especially one as crowded as this one, cannot do everything: but B. sees so many things in L., on both the micro and the macro levels, that it is frustrating not to know why we should look closely at them, too.

The chief trouble here is that it is often hard to tell who we are in fact reading. For B. tells us far more about scholars of Livy—their working methods, their frailties, their anxieties—than he does about the historian. And the writer about whom we learn the most is, in fact, the commentator. The problem is exacerbated by three things: no text of Livy is included (this is OUP's style for these large commentaries); the text the commentary is keyed to is B.'s; and this commentary explicitly and repeatedly regards itself as a continuation of the earlier B. volumes—to the extent that we may be told that a given discussion continues the discussion from earlier volumes (e.g. 29 n.29), and the book ends with *addenda and corrigenda* both to itself (777-8) and to the previous volume (775-7). By necessity we are reading Livy through B., but often, it seems, we are reading—or, better, our attention is being directed toward—not Livy but B. himself.

B., and the readers of this commentary even more than of his earlier ones, are caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it is impossible not to make mistakes; on the other, scholarly discourse demands that mistakes be pointed out. B. tells you if you are wrong, and it does not matter whether you are dead or not (so we learn a lot of useful tips about understanding Madvig, e.g., and his "excess[es] of logicality," 272, 626 etc.). He remains his own favorite target, however, whether he is trying to rectify his errors in transcription, mistakes in judgment, failures to see things, inadvertences

(e.g. 373 n.2 "In my apparatus I wrongly, and perhaps not deliberately…"), or even his failures in generosity to fellow scholars. There are glimpses of an almost physical struggle: "if forced," he says more than once, he might—obelize. Ultimately his abundant self-criticism threatens to swamp the voice of the guide. But it also balances out the abundant rhetoric of "clearly"s and "but in fact"s and "should not be seen"s, "no justification"s, "obvious"s, and "quite unnecessary"s that populate this commentary landscape – the kind of rhetoric of clarity that this reader, at least, often suspects of marking gaps in the argument or possible fudge.

B. does not knowingly fudge. But he does shy away from many kinds of reading that threaten to take one too far away from the (always absent, always desired) text of Livy. And though he tries to nail this text down, he knows that others may—will—take the roads he clears in different directions from his own, just as he knows that Livy "could have written this way" but need not have. To a certain extent, his relentless self abuse reminds us of that: there will always be another question to answer about Livy, however much one thinks one's first, or second, or third analysis marks the end. B. ends this *magnum opus* with a very Livian, forward looking gesture: "For the resumption of the war, which resulted in a Pergamene victory, see Walbank 454 (it is uncertain whether it belongs to 167 or 166); there is no mention of it in the *periocha* of book 46" (765). Despite the differences between my Livy and this one, I hope that these last words are not B.'s last word on the matter.

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