

**CORNELLI TACITI
ANNALIUM.
LIBRI XIII-XVI**

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Cornelli Taciti Annalium. Libri XIII-XVI by H. Pitman & Henry Furneaux

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H. PITMAN & HENRY FURNEAUX

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WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES
ABRIDGED FROM THE LARGER WORK
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PREFACE

THIS abridgement has been made under the belief that the interest of Tacitus' history of the reign of Nero makes it a suitable subject for school reading, and in the hope that such a book may serve the needs of students desiring a less copious and advanced commentary than Mr. Furneaux' large edition of the *Annals*.

The text is that contained in the second volume of the larger work, and is mainly that of Halm (ed. 4, Leipzig, 1883), from which it varies in places in the direction of retaining or approaching more closely to the readings of the Medicæan MS.

In the Introductions and Notes Mr. Furneaux' conclusions are carefully followed, though occasionally slight verbal alterations are made in his renderings, and of some passages, left without comment in the large edition, I have inserted explanations or translations where these seemed appropriate to a less advanced work. In the Introduction on Syntax I have followed the lines of that given in the abridged edition of *Annals* i-iv, supplying illustrations from Books xiii-xvi: sections in which I have ventured on certain extensions or modifications of the original treatment are §§ 3 b, 16, 20, 22, and the last two paragraphs of § 41.

My best thanks are due to my friend and colleague, Professor F. Brooks, of University College, Bristol, for his kind help in the work of scrutinizing the proof-sheets for misprints or mis-statements.

H. PITMAN.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, BRISTOL,
Feb., 1904.

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INTRODUCTION

I

LIFE OF TACITUS

§ 1. OUR knowledge of the chief facts and dates in the life of Tacitus rests mainly on allusions in his own writings and those of his friend the younger Pliny, who addresses several letters to him and often speaks of him in others.

His praenomen is not mentioned in this correspondence, and is differently given by later authorities as Gaius or Publius. His family connexions are unknown; but he would appear to have been the first of his name to attain senatorial rank, though of sufficient position to have begun his 'cursus honorum' at the earliest, or almost the earliest, legal age; as he can hardly have been born earlier than 32-54 A. D., and must have been quaestor not later than 79 A. D., by which time he had also received in marriage the daughter of Agricola, who was already a consular, and one of the first men in the State.

His boyhood falls thus under the time of Nero; his assumption of the 'toga virilis' would coincide, or nearly so, with the terrible year of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius; his early manhood was spent under Vespasian and Titus; the prime of his life under Domitian; the memory of whose tyranny is seen in all his historical writings, which were composed at various dates in the great time of Trajan.

Most of his life may be supposed to have been spent in Rome, where he became one of the leaders of the Bar, and one of the best known literary names of Rome; so that a stranger sitting next to him at the games, and finding him to be a man of letters, asked whether he was speaking to Tacitus or to Pliny¹. He is further known² as having been consul suffectus and in that capacity colleague with Nerva in 97 A. D., and as associated with Pliny in the prosecution of Marius Priscus, proconsul of Africa, in

¹ Plin. *Epst.* ix. 23, 4.

² *Ib.* ii. 1, 6.

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100 A. D.¹ This is the last fact in his life definitely known, and there is no evidence that he outlived Trajan.

§ 2. The *Annales*, more properly entitled 'Libri ab excessu divi Augusti,' comprising in sixteen Books the history of fifty-four years from the death of Augustus to that of Nero, are the latest in date of his writings, and are shown by an allusion to the Eastern conquests of Trajan (ii 61, 2), to have been published at some date not earlier than 115 A. D., and probably before the retrocession of the Eastern frontier under Hadrian in 117 A. D. The first six Books, comprising the principate of Tiberius, rest on a single manuscript, called the First Medicean, written probably in the tenth or eleventh century, and now preserved at Florence. The text of Books xiii-xvi, given in this volume, is based on a MS. known as the Second Medicean, which contains all that we have of Books xi-xvi, besides all the extant part of the Histories, with the exception of i 63-75 and i 86-ii 2. It is known to have been sent from Florence to Rome in 1487 A. D., but it was shortly afterwards returned to Florence, where it passed to the Convent of St. Mark, and thence to the Laurentian Library, where it still remains. Other existing MSS. cannot be proved to be of earlier date, and are generally regarded as based, if not on the Medicean MS. itself, at any rate on the same source as that from which it was taken, their variations being either attempted emendations or preserving the right text in places where the original letters of Med. have become illegible and been reproduced by a later hand.

Materials available to Tacitus.

§ 3. In xiii 17, 3 Tacitus refers to 'plerique eorum temporum scriptores.' Among those whose writings he consulted was C. Plinius Secundus (Pliny the Elder), who continued the history of Aufidius Bassus from the point where it ended, probably the reign of Claudius, to the fall of Jerusalem, and also wrote a separate history of Germany. His authority is definitely quoted, xiii 20, 3; xv 53, 4; and perhaps xlii 31, 1 contains a reference to him, but with the exception of the Natural History his works are lost to us. Other historians definitely quoted are M. Cluvius Rufus and Fabius Rusticus. The former (xiii 20, 3; xiv 2, 1), who

¹ Plin. *Ep.* 3 11, 2.

LIFE OF TACITUS

was consul some time before the death of Gaius, a companion of Nero in Greece, legatus of Spain under Galba, and one of Vitellius' courtiers, is thought to have written a history covering the period from Gaius to Vitellius, which was perhaps used by Josephus in his account of Gaius' death, and consulted by Plutarch as well as Tacitus. Fabius Rusticus (quoted in the same passages as Cluvius) is described as too partial to Seneca, but as being in eloquence and brilliancy the Livy of his age (*Ag.* 10, 3): he described Britain, so perhaps his history began with Claudius' reign, and there are no allusions to it with reference to events later than Nero's time. Tacitus also refers to Corbulo's memoirs (*xv* 16, 1) in his account of affairs in the East, and may also have consulted those of Suetonius Paulinus (used by Pliny, *N. H.*) for events in Britain.

Other available materials would be biographies, such as those of Thrasea and Helvidius by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio, funeral orations on famous men, and letters of public men collected and published like those of the younger Pliny. There were also the public records: 'acta' or 'commentarii senatus' had been kept since the first consulship of Julius Caesar, who at the same time also started the 'acta diurna urbis,' the daily gazette chronicling proceedings in the courts and chief events of public importance; and Tacitus made use of both; e.g. *xv* 74, 3; *iii* 3, 2. The events of which he wrote, too, were sufficiently near to his own day for a considerable amount of tradition about them to be still existing and worth recording, as the frequency of 'ferunt,' 'traditur,' &c., before stories cited by him indicates.

Historical value of the Annals.

§ 4. As Dio complains, it was more difficult for historians to get at the truth under the Empire than under the Republic. Politics were no longer for the general public; in jurisdiction, in the administration of the provinces, and in the conduct of war, much was done by the princeps and his private advisers that could only become known from official versions issued at the time, or from such reminiscences as generals or imperial officials cared to publish subsequently. Persons outside government circles remained at the mercy of the official version: reminiscences of a general might be mere self-glorification. Tacitus believed himself to be writing