

Suetonius, *The Flavian Emperors*. A Historical Commentary, with Translation and Introduction by BRIAN JONES & ROBERT MILNS. Bristol, Bristol Classical Press, 2002. 187 pp. Pr. £12,99 (UK).

To the ever increasing number of useful tools for the study of Suetonius, a new volume has been added that provides easy help on the biographies of the three Flavian emperors. This edition by Brian Jones and Robert Milns is intended for the non-Latin reader, since it does not contain a Latin text but a (literal) English translation. The explicit aim of the commentary is 'to assist students with little or no Latin to appreciate Suetonius as a source for the reigns of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian.' (p. viii).

Given the small dimensions of the book, the commentary may still be called relatively extensive: Suetonius' Vespasian and Domitian receive 48 pages each, whereas 31 pages are devoted to the life of Titus, which is much shorter. The text focuses on historical topics, and provides adequate but brief explanations. The book also has a general introduction (10 pages, half of them about Suetonius in general), a bibliography and an index.

There is no lack of material on Suetonius' Vespasian and Domitian. As a matter of fact, the same publishing house recently published longer commentaries by the same Brian Jones on these two lives: Vespasian (2000) and Domitian (1996). Inevitably those volumes provide much more material (about three times as much commentary); they mainly serve the Latin reader, having a Latin text and entries in the commentary referring to Latin words.

Some confusion may easily arise. Therefore it should be pointed out that the present edition serves a different audience and follows a different model. It is not a succinct version of the previous volumes (everything seems to have been written anew for this book), although the important insights are obviously the same.

The volume conveniently combines material on the three lives, including the life of Titus, on which there is no other recent commentary

in English. It is well suited for students and historians, and it may profitably be used even in combination with the longer books mentioned above. Libraries that already possess the longer volumes should not automatically refrain from purchasing this helpful little book too.

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