

## ENCYCLOPEDIA TACITUS

PAGÁN (V.E.) (ed.) *The Tacitus Encyclopedia*. In two volumes. Pp. xxxvi + xxviii + 1245, ills, map. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2023. Cased, £319, US\$420. ISBN: 978-1-394-19300-4 (vol. 1), 978-1-394-19299-1 (vol. 2), 978-1-444-35025-8 (set).

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Ranging from ‘Abdagaeses’ to ‘Zorsines’, *The Tacitus Encyclopedia (TE)* contains 1892 entries (1046 full entries and 846 blind entries) written by an international cohort of 179 contributors and organised alphabetically across 1245 pages. It exhibits a similar rationale to previous author-based reference works published by Wiley Blackwell (M. Finkelberg [ed.], *The Homer Encyclopedia* [2011]; R.F. Thomas and J.M. Ziolkowski [edd.], *The Virgil Encyclopedia* [2013]) in that it is envisioned as a ‘starting point for further inquiry, designed to set the reader on a path toward more in-depth research’ (p. ix). In the preface and reader guide Pagán delineates the principles that underpin the *TE* and differentiate it from the two major reference works available to Tacitus’ readers. The *TE* diverges from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (edd. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow [4<sup>th</sup> edition 2012]) in that it adheres to a principle of general inclusion, promising to contain every person and place found in Tacitus or topics related to the study of his works. It also departs from the *Onomasticon Taciteum* (P. Fabia [1900]) in that the *TE* follows a principle of contextualisation, whereby entries intend to provide background information and to show the relationship of people, places and topics within Tacitus’ writings. More than ten years in the making, the *TE* is a reliable and handsomely produced reference work, which will appeal to Tacitean scholars and scholars of Roman history and its historiography alike.

The greatest strength of the *TE* is the uniformity and quality of its entries, which are not meant to showcase original scholarship but to orientate readers as they navigate Tacitus’ texts. Most entries correspond to individuals, followed by those of places, regions and cities – all consistently emphasising the relevance of the entry within the Tacitean corpus. It also features 165 thematic entries covering concepts in ancient historiography, literary criticism, social history and material culture. Only a smaller number of entries address aspects of reception, which nevertheless are conveniently clustered on pp. 875–905 (note other entries such as ‘Robert Graves’ by A.J. Pomeroy and ‘Tacitism’ by D. Kapust, which further explore specific avenues of reception in literature and political commentary, respectively). Within each entry, the cross-referencing is impeccable. Small capital letters direct readers to full entries and boldface letters to blind entries within the *TE*. The latter correspond to entries with no content, which redirect readers to other entries where the subject is treated in more detail and in context. All entries are accompanied by references and up-to-date bibliographical guides for further reading – including most relevant scholarship in English, German, Italian, French and Spanish.

The comprehensiveness of the *TE* is remarkable, and I did not notice significant omissions. As a scholar interested in the law in Tacitus, I was immediately attracted to entries such as ‘Leges, laws’ by B. Frier, ‘Res Gestae Divi Augusti’ by G. Rowe, ‘Tabula Lugdunensis’ by L. Spielberg, ‘SC de Pisone Patre’ by G. Rowe and ‘SC Silanianum’ by F. Duarte Joly, which were all informative (though a general entry on *Senatus consulta* would have been useful). The entries on the few experts in law that feature in the extant *Annals* include ‘Ateius Capito, Gaius’ by M. Konieczny, ‘Antistius Labeo, Marcus’, ‘Cocceius Nerva’ and ‘Cassius Longinus, Gaius (2)’ by B. Frier. Caninius Rebilus, the

ill-reputed jurist mentioned in *Ann.* 13.30.2, and identified as a jurist only in Tacitus, does not earn an entry. The omission is minor, but it does raise questions regarding the promise of comprehensiveness and contextualisation in an author-based encyclopedia. Caninius Rebilus the jurist features in Fabia's *Onomasticon* (p. 170), but not in the *TE*, which makes one wonder whether Fabia's work was used to create a preliminary headword list for individuals. If this was the case and the omission is just a slip, it should have been corrected by the operation of the principle of contextualisation given that Caninius Rebilus is one of two men mentioned in the obituary at the end of year 56 CE, alongside 'Volusius Saturninus, Lucius (2)'. The entry by E. Dąbrowa does not mention Caninius Rebilus, even though Tacitus comments on his lifestyle and questionable wealth as a way of stressing Volusius Saturninus' exemplarity. Since death notices are relevant in Tacitus' works for thematic and structural reasons (see 'Death' by A. Corbeill and 'Obituary' by A.J. Pomeroy), one would expect that all individuals named in these sections would be included. Finally, there is the matter of intertextuality and intratextuality, for the jurist's reputation is confirmed by Seneca in *Ben.* 2.21.5–6, reporting that the righteous Julius Graecinus, a Roman senator condemned to death under Caligula, refused a gift of money from Caninius Rebilus because of his vices. Since Julius Graecinus was Agricola's father (blind entry redirecting to 'Agricola [Julius Agricola, Gnaeus]' by D. Sailor), who in turn was Tacitus' father-in-law, a dedicated entry for Caninius Rebilus (2) would have been desirable – even necessary, to further differentiate him from his namesake 'Caninius Rebilus' by M. Larsen, the Republican figure who served as suffect consul for one day in 45 BCE and is mentioned in *Hist.* 3.37.

Entries on places exhibit salutary awareness of the textual nature of Tacitean descriptions of landscapes and the peoples inhabiting them. I learnt that the 'Rhenus' (by A. Damtoft Poulsen) is the most frequently mentioned river in Tacitus' writings, and this entry directs readers to other equally instructive entries on the 'Danuvius' by S. Chappell, 'Euphrates' by Y. Benferhat and 'Nile' by K. Arampapalis. Again, cross-references prove helpful when reading the entry on 'Civil Wars of 69 CE' by J. Master, which takes readers on a tour through the most relevant regions and places where the events narrated in the *Histories* unfold, and then back to the centre to the entry on 'Rome, topography' by F. Santangelo. Entries I found most interesting are those covering aspects related to the study of Tacitus' works in their literary dimension. In particular, scholars teaching survey courses on Tacitus or Latin historical writing might consider incorporating into their syllabi entries such as 'Commentaries' by S. Bartera, 'Historiography' by G. Baroud, 'Roman Historians' and 'Speeches' by D. Levene, 'Metahistory' by H. Haynes, 'Inventio', 'Style' and 'Syntax' by A.J. Woodman, 'Prefaces' by L. Spielberg, and 'Battle Narratives' and 'Enargeia' by E. Keitel. Likewise, some might want to read through entries on authoritative Tacitean scholars such as 'Ronald Syme' and 'Arnaldo Momigliano' by F. Santangelo, or topics of interest to contemporary trends in scholarship such as 'Gender' by C. Gillespie, 'Emotions' by J. Knight, 'Ethnicity' by N. Andrade and 'Disability' by A. Smart. As should be evident from the variety of entries listed above, another strength of the *TE* is its breadth in attempting to encompass all things Tacitus.

For various reasons (e.g. the pricing of the two-volume set) most readers will consult the *TE* in their university libraries occasionally and in pursuit of specific bits of information. Alternatively, those with institutional access can consult the *TE* on the publisher's website. Currently, the online version lacks search tools and directs readers to digitised versions of entire chapters, requiring users to scroll through a PDF in search of specific entries. This presents an obstacle as it stands, but it also shows the way forward to do full justice to the immense landmark the *TE* represents in Tacitean scholarship. An online version that is not bound to the printed format offers an opportunity to correct, update and expand the *TE*.

At the very least, providing the *TE* with an online environment like that of the Homer and Virgil encyclopedias, equipped with proper search tools and embedded cross-reference options, will make the experience of browsing through the encyclopedia even more enjoyable.

*University of Edinburgh*

PABLO ROJAS  
[pablo.rojas@ed.ac.uk](mailto:pablo.rojas@ed.ac.uk)