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TACITUS

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EDITED WITH A COMMENTARY

BY

F. R. D. GOODYEAR

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
TEXT AND CRITICAL APPARATUS	i
COMMENTARY	61
APPENDIXES	
1 Adnotationis criticae additamenta	450
2 A fragment of Albinovanus Pedo	456
3 Germanicus' speech and edicts	458
LIST OF WORKS CITED	461
INDEXES	
1 Lexical	473
2 Passages discussed	478
3 General	479
ADDENDA	489

PREFACE

Seven years have elapsed since volume 1 was completed. Its successor must no longer be delayed. As this volume leaves my hands I am tempted to excuse its deficiencies and plead that to write a full commentary on Tacitus is well nigh impossible. But *qui s'excuse s'accuse*: I offer only one apology, the tritest, that life is short.

There is an important difference between this volume and the first. More attention is here accorded to historical matters, and I suppose the commentary could now be called historical, as well as textual, linguistic, and literary. But I have not had these categories consciously in mind. My method, as far as I have one, is to comment on anything which seems to invite remark or require explanation.

The volumes also differ in minor particulars, mainly because, to save precious space, I now make greater use of short titles and other forms of abbreviation. The List of Works Cited should explain these abbreviated references. Though loth to cite publications I have not had time fully to appraise, I include certain large papers of very recent date, not yet digested, since they directly concern matters on which the commentary touches. Most of these papers appear in *ANRW*, and even a Didymus might flinch before the monster of Tübingen.

If much recent work on Tacitus passes unrecorded, it is not from any intention to damn by silence: I prefer to damn in plain words, and sometimes shall. But limits had to be set, to prevent the commentary from becoming interminable.

The preceding volume prompted perceptive and useful observations from those few reviewers who took the trouble to read it and from several of my friends. Where and when I shall be able to discuss or utilize their remarks I do not know, but assure them they have not been forgotten. I could gladly

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PREFACE

rewrite much of that volume, but at present it seems more important to press on. The next volume will, I hope, be ready after an appreciably shorter interval.

Bedford College, *rus in urbe*, is an enviable place for research, to work in it an advantage for which I am profoundly grateful. My warmest thanks are due to the Librarian and his assistants for their helpfulness and patience, and the staff of the Latin Department, particularly Barrie Hall, for more than once shouldering extra burdens and leaving me free to devote myself to Tacitus. The kindness of a number of scholars who have advised me over particular passages will be acknowledged in those places. But by far my greatest debt is to John Crook and Ronald Martin, who have both read virtually the whole of the commentary, corrected not a few errors, raised many questions which had escaped me, and offered an abundance of illuminating ideas. This book must be the better for their most generous efforts to improve it, but the faults which remain are entirely mine.

I should not be writing these words in 1979 had I not enjoyed the great benefit of Susan French's resourcefulness and skill in producing the final typescript.

Bedford College, London
September 1979

F.R.D.G.

I append most cordial thanks to Tony Woodman for invaluable help in the correction of proofs, given at a time when he was exceptionally busy, and again to Barrie Hall for sharing this laborious task. Finally, I acknowledge my deep gratitude to all those who have been involved in the work of printing and publication. To have a book published by the Cambridge University Press is always a privilege and a pleasure.

November 1980