Tacitus is universally recognised as ancient Rome’s greatest writer of history, and his account of the Roman Empire in the first century AD has been fundamental in shaping the modern perception of Rome and its emperors. This Companion provides a new, up-to-date and authoritative assessment of his work and influence that will be invaluable for students and non-specialists as well as of interest to established scholars in the field. First situating Tacitus within the tradition of Roman historical writing and his own contemporary society, it goes on to analyse each of his individual works and then discuss key topics such as his distinctive authorial voice and his views of history and freedom. It ends by tracing Tacitus’ reception, beginning with the transition from manuscript to printed editions, describing his influence on political thought in early modern Europe, and concluding with his significance in the twentieth century.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of the book
To the memory of
Ronald Martin
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Contributors</th>
<th>page x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction**

*Volume edited by A. J. Woodman*

**Part I: Contexts**

1. From the annalists to the *Annales*: Latin historiography before Tacitus
   *A. M. Gowing*  
   17

2. Tacitus and the contemporary scene
   *A. J. Woodman*  
   31

**Part II: Texts**

3. The *Agricola*  
   *A. R. Birley*  
   47

4. The *Germania* as literary text
   *Richard F. Thomas*  
   59

5. The faces of eloquence: the *Dialogus de oratoribus*
   *Sander M. Goldberg*  
   73

6. Fission and fusion: shifting Roman identities in the *Histories*
   *Rhiannon Ash*  
   85

7. The Tiberian hexad
   *Christina Shuttleworth Kraus*  
   100
CONTENTS

8 Hamlet without the prince? The Claudian Annals 116
S. J. V. Malloch

9 ‘Is dying so very terrible?’ The Neronian Annals 127
E. E. Keitel

PART III: TOPICS

10 Tacitus’ personal voice 147
CHRISTOPHER PELLING

11 Tacitus as a historian 168
MIRIAM T. GRIFFIN

12 Res olim dissociabiles: emperors, senators and liberty 184
S. P. OAKLEY

13 Style and language 195
S. P. OAKLEY

14 Speeches in the Histories 212
D. S. LEVENE

15 Warfare in the Annals 225
D. S. LEVENE

PART IV: TRANSMISSION

16 From manuscript to print 241
R. H. MARTIN

17 Tacitus and political thought in early modern Europe, c. 1550–c. 1640 253
ALEXANDRA GAJDA

18 Gibbon and Tacitus 269
PAUL CARTLEDGE

19 A dangerous book: the reception of the Germania 280
C. B. KREBS

20 Tacitus and the twentieth-century novel 300
MARTHA MALAMUD

21 Tacitus’ Syme 317
MARK TOHER
CONTENTS

Chronological table 330
Abbreviations and bibliography 332
Index locorum 357
General index 361
CONTRIBUTORS


**A. R. Birley** was Professor of Ancient History at the Universities of Manchester (1974–90) and Düsseldorf (1990–2002), and is now Honorary Professor in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Durham. His publications include biographies of the emperors Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus, several books on Roman Britain, and a new translation, with introduction and commentary, of Tacitus’ *Agricola and Germania* for the series Oxford World’s Classics (1999). He has been Chair of the Trustees of the Vindolanda Trust since 1996.

**Paul Cartledge** is A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture at the University of Cambridge, and Hellenic Parliament Global Distinguished Professor (visiting) at New York University. He is the author, co-author, editor and co-editor of over twenty books on many aspects of Greek history and historiography, with a special focus on Sparta. His engagement with Tacitus dates back to his undergraduate years at Oxford (1965–9); that with Gibbon dates particularly from the bicentenary in 1976 of the original publication of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*.

**Alexandra Gajda** is a lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Birmingham. She is preparing a monograph on Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of Essex, and political culture in late Elizabethan England.

**Sander M. Goldberg** is Professor of Classics at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research centres on Roman performative
arts, particularly drama and oratory, in their literary and social con-
text. His published work includes The Making of Menander’s Comedy
to 1995 he was editor of the Transactions of the American Philological
Association.

A. M. GOWING is Professor and Chair of Classics at the University of
Washington in Seattle, where he has been on the faculty since 1988, after
receiving his PhD from Bryn Mawr College. His chief interests lie in the
area of Roman historiography and literature, especially of the imperial
period; his most recent book is Empire and Memory: The Representation
of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture (2005).

MIRIAM T. GRIFFIN is Emeritus Fellow in Ancient History of Somerville
College, Oxford. She is the author of Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics
(1976; reissued with Postscript, 1992), Nero: The End of a Dynasty
working on a study of Seneca’s De Beneficiis.

E. E. KEITEL has taught at the University of Massachusetts since 1980. She
has written many articles on Tacitus and with Jane Crawford has edited a
school text of Cicero’s Pro Caelio (forthcoming).

CHRISTINA SHUTTLEWORTH KRAUS is Professor of Classics at Yale University;
in the past she has taught at the University of Oxford, University College
London and New York University. Her primary research interests are in
commentaries and Latin historiography. She is currently working (with
A.J. Woodman) on a commentary on Tacitus’ Agricola for the Cambridge
Greek and Latin Classics series.

C. B. KREBS is an Assistant Professor at Harvard University. He is the author
of Negotiatio Germaniae: Tacitus’ Germania und Enea Silvio Piccolomini,
Giamantonio Campano, Conrad Celtis und Heinrich Bebel (2005) and is
currently finishing a study of the reception of the Germania from the 15th
to the 20th century. He has written articles mostly on Greek and Roman
historians and the classical tradition, on which he also co-chairs a seminar
at Harvard’s Humanities Center.

D. S. LEVENE is Professor of Classics at New York University. He has pub-
lished a variety of works on Latin historiography and rhetoric, including
Religion in Livy (1993); among his current projects is a book on Livy and
the Hannibalic War.
List of Contributors

Martha Malamud is Associate Professor of Classics at the University at Buffalo (State University of New York) and co-editor of the classics journal Arethusa.

S. J. V. Malloch has recently held appointments at the Universities of Munich and Cambridge and is currently a lecturer in Roman history at the University of Nottingham. He has published on the history and historiography of early imperial Rome, and is now finishing an edition of Tacitus, Annals II.


S. P. Oakley has taught in the Universities of Cambridge and Reading and is currently Kennedy Professor of Latin at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Emmanuel College. His principal publications are The Hill-forts of the Samnites (1995) and A Commentary on Livy, Books VI–X (1997–2005). He is currently working on the manuscript traditions of several Latin prose authors. Professor Oakley is a Fellow of the British Academy.

Christopher Pelling is Regius Professor of Greek at the University of Oxford. His books include a commentary on Plutarch’s Life of Antony (1988), Literary Texts and the Greek Historian (2000) and Plutarch and History (2002); he also edited Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature (1990) and Greek Tragedy and the Historian (1997). He is currently finishing a commentary on Plutarch’s Life of Caesar, which will appear in the Clarendon Ancient History series. Professor Pelling is a Fellow of the British Academy.

Richard F. Thomas taught at Harvard, Cincinnati and Cornell before returning to Harvard in 1987, where he is Professor of Greek and Latin; he has served as Chair of the Department of the Classics and as Director of Graduate Studies and of Undergraduate Studies; presently he is co-chair of the seminar on ‘The civilizations of Greece and Rome’ at Harvard’s Humanities Center. He has served as Director of the American Philological Association and as Trustee of the Vergilian Society, of which he is currently a Director. He has published a monograph Lands and
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS


Mark Toher is the Frank Bailey Professor of Classics at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He is the author of articles and essays on topics in Greek and Roman history and historiography, and along with Kurt Raaflaub he co-edited Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate (1990). He is presently at work on an edition of the life of Augustus by Nicolaus of Damascus.

Who seeks the companionship of a *Companion*? One answer seems to be certain: such a book will be read and consulted by students, whether graduates or undergraduates or (as the time-honoured phrase has it) those in ‘the upper forms of schools’. If this is true, it appears to follow that the book will also be read by those who teach these students: that is to say, professional classicists of one sort or another. It is to be hoped that *Companions* will also have an appeal for the more general reader, and contributors to this *Companion* have certainly been asked to keep such readers in mind; but they have also been encouraged to pursue their own ideas and not necessarily to be content with a mere summary of the available scholarship. The aim of the book is to provide a practical demonstration of current work on Tacitus as written by experts.

Although the book covers a wide range of topics, the limitations of space or the prejudices of the editor or the refusals of importuned contributors mean that it cannot be completely comprehensive and some readers may be disappointed to find little or no treatment of an expected or favourite theme. If the *Annals* is thought to receive disproportionate coverage, the reason is that it is Tacitus’ greatest and most influential work. Although efforts have been made to avoid overlap between one chapter and another, in a book of this kind it is inevitable that contributors will sometimes cover the same ground or resort to the same passages of text. While readers should be prepared to make allowances in such cases, it should not be assumed that one contributor will take the same view as the next or that contributors will interpret a given passage in the same way.

I am most grateful to Michael Sharp for the suggestion that I should edit *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*. In the course of editing I have taken advice from various friends and colleagues, including Susan Brigden, Andrew Feldherr, Miriam Griffin, Chris Kraus, Quentin Skinner, Richard Williams, Peter Wiseman and Blair Worden; I owe an especial debt of gratitude to Salvador Bartera, Anna Chahoud and David Levene. Above all I am
grateful to the contributors, whose company has made the production of this Companion such a pleasurable, if protracted, experience.

Lovers of Tacitus will be sad to learn that this book contains the final contribution to Tacitean scholarship by Ronald Martin, who passed away in the summer of 2008 in his ninety-third year. His scholarly career began during the war in Newcastle upon Tyne at King’s College (as the University was then called), where G.B.A. Fletcher pointed him towards Tacitean study and in particular towards the work of Löfstedt and his followers. Ronald published his first paper on Tacitus in 1946 and for more than sixty years thereafter played a leading role in Tacitean scholarship. He was, in the words of F.R.D. Goodyear, ‘of all scholars the most deeply versed in the intricacies of Tacitus’ style’, and his Tacitus (1981) is commonly accepted as the best introduction to the author. Modest and unassuming, he was an unfailing source of advice and good judgement to generations of friends and colleagues, not least the editor of this volume. He leaves, as one of his fellow contributors has said, ‘a remarkable legacy’ and will be greatly missed.

Charlottesville

A.J.W.