DIGRESSIONS IN SALLUST

SHAW (E.H.) *Sallust and the Fall of the Republic. Historiography and Intellectual Life at Rome*. (Historiography of Rome and Its Empire 13.) Pp. xii + 506. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Cased, €132, US$159. ISBN: 978-90-04-50171-3.

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Despite being regularly read and taught, Sallust has not received much scholarly attention for some years, until recently. R. Funari's volume (*Lectissimus pensator verborum: tre studi su Sallustio* [2019]), J. Gerrish's monograph on the *Histories* (*Sallust's* Histories *and Triumviral Historiography* [2019]) and the *Oxford Readings on Sallust* (edited by W. Batstone and A. Feldherr [2020]) were followed by Feldherr's monograph on Sallust's conceptions of history and historiography (*After the Past* [2021]). A new edition and commentary of the *Historiae* began appearing in 2015 (vol. 1, edited by A. La Penna and Funari); finally, a *Cambridge Companion to Sallust* is in preparation (edited by C. Krebs). The monograph under review makes an important contribution to this welcome comeback. Like other recent work, it acknowledges that Sallust was an original thinker, who partook in the intellectual debate of his times and shaped the development of Roman historiography. This approach, then, flourishes at the crossroads between recent Sallustian contributions and scholarship on the intellectual history of Rome (e.g. E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* [1985] and C. Moatti, *La Raison de Rome* [1997]).

S. argues that Sallust's digressions 'represent a particular opportunity' for engagement with the political and intellectual *milieux* of the end of the Republic and that they provide a coherent theory concerning the contemporary political decline (p. 40). The first chapter sets the stage: S. discusses the meaning and the function of Sallust's digressions by establishing a productive conversation between ancient definitions of *digressio* and modern classical narratology. Far from being irrelevant asides, digressions should be read as '*loci* of interpretative activity' (p. 116), in which Sallust develops his argument about the political crisis of the end of the Republic. The rest of the volume comprises a series of case studies that illustrate and exemplify S.'s approach. The *archaeologia* of the *Bellum Catilinae* and the African digression of the *Bellum Jugurthinum* are considered in Chapter 2, where S. argues that Sallust stretches the boundaries of Roman historiography, which typically focuses on individuals. Thanks to their length and position, these two digressions deeply affect the readers' response to each monograph: the *archaeologia* inserts the conspiracy of Catiline into a broader historical perspective, thus implying that Rome is not immune to the laws of universal history; and the African digression emphasises the absence of Carthage and paves the way for the disastrous removal of the *metus hostilis*. In Chapter 3 S. turns to the influence of Thucydides on Sallust's political digressions, which deal with the state of Roman society at the time of Catiline (*Bellum Catilinae* 36.4–39.5) and of Jugurtha (*Bellum Jugurthinum* 41–2). Rather than focusing on the deeds of the great men who magnified Rome, Sallust frames contemporary politics in Thucydidean terms, hence dwelling on cycles of strife, which is prompted by human interest and expediency and which shapes a pessimistic reading of contemporary and of past Roman history. This chapter would have benefited from engagement with studies by D. Engels, which are not in the bibliography, although these contributions consider many of the same passages discussed by S. and similarly link notions of historical determinism and depictions of decadence in Roman historians (e.g. 'Déterminisme

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historique et perceptions de déchéance sous la république tardive et le principat', *Latomus* 68 [2009]). The analysis of Sallust's Thucydidean understanding of expediency is further developed in Chapter 4, where S. sets close readings of some portrayals (e.g. Catiline, Sempronia, Jugurtha, Caesar and Cato) against a discussion regarding conflicting understandings of *gloria* in the late Republic. This chapter's emphasis on individuals nicely complements and tempers some conclusions from Chapter 2. S. credits Sallust's characters with personal agency that affects history, but he also allows for individuals to be shaped by their historical context. The last chapter is the most original and the most speculative. It analyses the geographical descriptions in the *Historiae*, arguing that these digressions are cohesively integrated with the rest of the work and affect its interpretation, while also cohering with the digressions found in Sallust's *bella*.

This is clearly more than a monograph about digressions in Sallust, and S. must be commended for this contribution. He pays due attention to the crucial role and meaning of digressions, and one can only applaud his bold decision to discuss both the *bella* and the *Historiae*. I have two minor qualms, which are not meant to stain the positive reception that this book deserves. On occasion, S. seems to overemphasise the originality of his approach or conclusions, at the expense of previous scholars. For example, R. Syme already noted that digressions constitute the surest *loci* to appreciate Sallust's ideological stances (*Sallust* [1964], p. 68). Similarly, I am not convinced that, in portraying Sallust as a propagandist or as an apolitical artist, E. Schwartz and K. Büchner saw him as out of touch with the intellectual and political changes of his times (cf. pp. 3 and 441). Lastly, at times the book reads like a (long) dissertation, and I, for one, was often left with the impression that less would have been more. One may disagree with specific sections or readings, but the overall picture remains convincing. The vast bibliography will also be an important resource for further works.

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