

membrum, silua, notus, uestigia, primus, fragmentum). I shall be setting this book for my students in future so that they can consider its overall argument and methodology, so they can apply the many paths it offers for exploring the poem, and so I can re-read it and discuss it with them. Anyone interested in Lucan should read *Thunder and Lament*; it also has a great deal to teach those interested in Latin literature more generally: it is highly recommended.

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TRANSLATING PLINY

TURNER (B.), TALBERT (R. J. A.) (trans.) *Pliny the Elder's World. Natural History, Books 2–6*. Pp. xii + 317, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £79.99, US\$105. ISBN: 978-1-108-48175-5. doi:10.1017/S0009840X23001142

This book is a long-needed, welcome arrival. H. Rackham's aged translation no longer suits; other modern scholarly languages provide better Pliny translations (pp. 5–6). Turner and Talbert (T&T) offer a new translation into English. Moreover, Pliny generously cites his sources, and his Books 2–6 provide a (somewhat kaleidoscopic) window into earlier Latin and Greek geography, of which we now have a modern English translation.

Any translation opens the original to new audiences; thus, evaluation requires technical details. Translators will vary in their choices, and there is no perfect or final translation – so examining multiple versions helps. T&T explain that they only translate (p. ix; cf. p. 6), whereas D. Roller composes the commentary, *A Guide to the Geography of Pliny the Elder* (2022). But every translation amounts to commentary, seen in its choices. Which sort is this one? T&T aim to provide 'freshness and accuracy' and to 'prompt closer attention' (p. ix) – in functional translation theory, a 'documentary' (content-oriented) translation.

T&T include five maps, by the Ancient World Mapping Center (p. xi), and two associated websites indexing ancient sites to modern names (pp. 8, 308). Geography and ethnography continue to play a role in Pliny's later books (p. 3), from which T&T translate and properly index, 'Notable Geographical Passages'. These come from Books 7–10 (humans and animals); 12, 14, 16, 18–19 (plants); 27 (medicines from plants); 31–2 (medicines from watery creatures); and 37 (gemstones).

Latin editions of Pliny's books vary (pp. 4–5). In Appendix 3 T&T indicate their choices for Books 2–6: the Budé edition used for Books 2–4, and some parts of 5–6; however, the Tusculum edition for other parts of 5–6. Their discussion implies that for Book 1 and for the selections they used the Budé.

T&T rarely write out numbers larger than ten (p. 9) – over-regularising Pliny's inconsistency or intention. Some Latin terms (pp. 8–9), mainly political (e.g. *gens*; *oppidum*; *urbs*) and geographical (e.g. *litus*; *ora*; *sinus*), are consistently and distinctly translated, but terms without corresponding distinctive English terms are translated alike ('river' covers both *amnis* and the *flu-* terms). However, T&T sometimes inconsistently translate terms where consistency would be helpful.

For example, translators struggle to render *ratio* (Rackham's often-chosen 'reason' is not bad, after all). Using the same term throughout, where sensible, would more clearly reveal the links in Pliny's thought. T&T variously render it as 'concept'; 'course'; 'pattern'; 'principles'; 'scheme'; or 'theory' – where 'account' would serve well, or even better. Nevertheless, *ratio*'s wide semantic range may sometimes require another word.

Another case of technical terminology concerns 'thunder(bolts)'. Latin usually distinguishes the flash (*fulgetrum*), the boom (*tonitrus*) and the strike (*fulmen*); the word *fulgur*, however, is used both for flash and strike (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. 1.a,b). Pliny adheres to this trichotomy (2.112–13, 2.142 and 35.96). Rackham muddles this network of distinctions four times (2.112, 113, 142, 145), but T&T almost always render the words correctly, both in the index (pp. 12–13) and in the relevant passages of Book 2 (82, 112–13, 135–45: pp. 43–4, 54, 60–3). Only once do T&T elide a distinction (pp. 13 and 54), where the index for Book 2 (ch. 43) has *de tonitribus* ('thunder') *et fulgetris*: they render 'thunderbolts', instead of 'lightnings' (as Rackham). The content of 2.112–13 (ch. 43), which also treats 'thunderbolts' (*fulmen* and *fulgur*), might explain their translation of the index heading.

Such choices aid or impede the conveyance of meaning. It is, however, merely unnecessary that the translation retain the subjunctive in about a third of those headings in Pliny's 'table of contents' that contain a relative clause of characteristic or an indirect question.

In the best case, an intertext in the source text should be audible in the target text (translated text): again, one cannot escape commentary. Plato's *Timaeus* is latent in Pliny's text, and two passages show how that should affect the translation. First, Pliny addresses the universe (p. 25, 2.1), in the translation of T&T, as: 'world [i.e. universe] and this – whatever other name be preferred to call the sky' (*mundum et hoc quodcumque nomine alio caelum appellare libuit*). Latent here is *Tim.* 28b: 'The whole heaven – or cosmos or whatever else it would most prefer to be called' (ὁ δὴ πᾶς οὐρανὸς – ἢ κόσμος ἢ καὶ ἄλλο ὅτι ποτὲ ὀνομαζόμενος μάλιστα ἄν δέχοιτο). That having been said, render Pliny (without gloss): 'cosmos – or whatever other name you want to call the sky'.

Likewise (p. 26, 2.5), a sphere, in the translation of T&T, has the property that 'from wherever it be viewed it is an arc centered [on the viewer], an impossibility with any other shape' (*conuexus mediusque quacumque cernatur, cum id accidere in alia non possit figura*). Latent here is *Tim.* 33b: 'spherical, from the centre in every direction to its limits equidistant' (σφαιροειδές, ἐκ μέσου πάντη πρὸς τὰς τελευταίας ἴσον ἀπέχον). Therefore, render Pliny thus: 'it seems rounded and equidistant wherever observed, which cannot happen with any other shape'. The rounded and equidistant nature of the sphere is a property of the figure, and is not relative to the observer, so there is no warrant to gloss 'centered' with '[on the viewer]'.

Seven briefer points:

- pp. 12, 34 (index 2, ch. 7, and 2.47), rendering *nox* as 'darkness' is valid, but more apropos in both passages would be the more literal 'night'. Render 2.47 (*neque aliud esse noctem quam terrae umbram*) as: 'and night is merely earth's shadow'.
- p. 34 (2.48), Rackham's rendering of *ut reliqua lumina e tenebris*, 'in the same way as other lights in shadows' catches the correct sense and syntax of *reliqua*; T&T's rendering 'just as lights remaining are in darkness', produces greater obscurity. Return to 'other lights' (cf. 2.13), and perhaps gloss 'are' with '[visible]'.
- p. 35 (2.49), preceding *ex utroque uastitas solis aperietur*, Beda and Rackham read *certior*, nearly indistinguishable in minuscules from the Budé's *tertia*. The *crux* should be noted: is the 'vastness of the sun revealed as third' or '... as more certain'?

- pp. 12, 37–8 (index 2, ch. 12), ‘patterns of [planetary] radiance’ (*luminum canonica*) clearly excels Rackham’s ‘theory of their light’.
- pp. 12, 44–5 (index 2, ch. 21, and 2.85–8), rendering *geometrica* as ‘geometry’ (consistent with the content of 2.85–8) clearly excels Rackham’s ‘dimensions’.
- pp. 14, 77 (index 2, ch. 79, and 2.188), ‘How days may be defined’ (for *quomodo dies obseruentur*) describes the issue addressed in 2.188, but the verb has a sense hinted at in Rackham’s ‘How days are observed’. Render: ‘What is regarded as a day’ (cf. Lewis & Short, s.v. II.B; *OLD*, s.v. 4).
- pp. 14, 81 (index 2, ch. 88–9, and 2.202–3), ‘The creation of new islands explained; which ones have been created and when’ clearly excels Rackham’s ‘Emergence of islands – reason for; instances and dates of’, for *insularum enascentium ratio; quae et quibus temporibus enatae sint*. However, retain the metaphor, and render: ‘An account of islands born from [the sea]; which ones have been born and when’.

Such technical passages of Book 2 provide narrower scope for translators to find fresh alternatives, because many technical terms admit fewer alternative translations, and they are more stable through decades of English linguistic evolution. Pliny’s frequent moralising outbursts convey the meaning that cosmology and geography have for him – and best display the greater freshness of T&T’s rendering, because Rackham’s style is rather crabbed and tired (compare, e.g., 2.43, 2.87, 2.157–9, 2.174–5, 4.89, 6.89–91). Passages recording *mirabilia* also provide good examples of translational freshness (compare, e.g., 2.101, 2.137–41, 2.193–5, 4.95, 5.45–6, 5.73, 6.35).

Greater legibility, up-to-date site identification and improved accuracy should merit a warm welcome and wide use. T&T have benefited scholars (2.18).

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ANOTHER COMMENTARY ON SILIUS ITALICUS

BERNSTEIN (N. W.) (ed., trans.) *Silius Italicus: Punica, Book 9. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Pp. x + 305. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £120, US\$155. ISBN: 978-0-19-883816-6.

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This is B.’s second foray into Silius Italicus’ *Punica*. His previous commentary on Book 2 of the *Punica*, also with the OUP commentary series (cf. *CR* 68 [2018], 426–8), focused on the first pivotal moment of Hannibal’s epic war on Rome, the fall of Saguntum. This new commentary centres on the episode upon which the entire epic hinges, the most iconic battle and crushing defeat Rome ever suffered, the battle of Cannae. It is also the first commentary in English to cover *Punica* Book 9 in its entirety, joining R.J. Littlewood’s 2017 on *Punica* 10, which looks at the second half of the battle and its aftermath. Of all the Cannae books, *Punica* 8–10, only Book 8 now lacks a commentary in English. There is always, of course, E.M. Ariemma’s 2000 volume *Alla Vigilia di Canne. Commentario al Libro VIII dei Punica di Silio Italico* – though more accessible to the doctoral than the undergraduate student.