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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Gaio Sallustio Crispo, *La congiura di Catilina* by Giovanni Garbugino

Review by: Vincent Hunink

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*Gaio Sallustio Crispo, La congiura di Catilina: introduzione, traduzione e commento a cura di GIOVANNI GARBUGINO (Studi Latini 32). Napoli, Loffredo Ed., 1998. 250 pp. Pr. L. 29.000.*

For Sallust's *Coniuratio Catilinae* several good commentaries are available, the most important ones being those of Vretska (1976), McGushin (1977), and Ramsay (1984). There is, of course, always room for new commentaries, providing they

bring fresh insights to the student or the scholar. The recent Italian edition by Garbugino aims to serve advanced students and scholars, but its aspirations are comparatively modest. The 'premesse' duly registers the existing commentaries, indicating the lack of a comprehensive commentary in Italian. Garbugino (G) intends to fill this gap, while incorporating recent scholarly literature on the *Cat.*, particularly concerning its general interpretation. Thus the edition offers few new insights.

G.'s introduction provides a good, if somewhat lengthy survey of studies on Sallust. Particular attention is paid to issues of genre (the fusion of historiography and rhetoric), structure, the influence of Thucydides, and style. A biographical and a textual paragraph conclude the introduction, which has a total of sixty pages (with no fewer than 187 notes). The Latin text with facing Italian translation is followed by a bibliography and 10 pages of commentary.

The notes too rely rather heavily on the existing scholarly work, which is abundantly referred to on every page. The main focus in the notes is on matters of style and grammar, including textual criticism, while historical realia are dealt with where necessary. Interpretative comments are not absent, but they are mostly not very helpful or stimulating.

For example, the notes on the portrait of Sempronia (c. 25), apart from dealing with matters of grammar and style, mainly summarize scholarly views on a possibly political or structural significance of the sketch, only to end with the remark that the negative portrait leaves readers with an ambiguous image that is not without fascination. And after this noncommittal remark the reader is referred to Vretska. Surely some further observations might have been added on the complexity of Sempronia's portrait (and on that of Catiline), if G. had used the provocative study of Ann Wilkins (*Villain or hero*, 1994) or the excellent survey of Kraus and Woodman (*Latin historians*, 1997), two titles that are conspicuously absent in the bibliography (the former omission is quite inexcusable given G.'s aim to use modern studies).

This edition conveniently presents much of 20th century scholarship on Sallust to an Italian audience. For a wider readership the book may also be a useful tool but it can hardly be called indispensable.

University of Nijmegen

VINCENT HUNINK