

G. J. Acheson: *The Caesarian Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, University of the Witwatersrand Press, Johannesburg, 1965. 155 pp.

This book consists of a translation of three of Cicero's speeches, the *Pro Marcello*, the *Pro Ligario*, and the *Pro Rege Deiotaro*, preceded by an introductory survey of the conflict between Caesar and the Senate and the civil war which it precipitated. Political and constitutional history is presented from a modern point of view, avoiding the technical language of our handbooks and using concepts and means of expression familiar to the general reader. The role of the 'populares' is neatly described without resorting to the term itself (p. 7), the technical names of the Roman assemblies are not given (p. 3 f.), and the first 'triumvirate' is simply referred to as a 'coalition'. The value of the introduction, informative enough, consists not so much in a contribution to our knowledge as in a literary presentation of familiar history. There is evidence of painstaking composition, and the style, condensed and intricate at times (e.g. p. 55 and 67), has a distinct 'Latin' flavour. Characters are portrayed in bold outline (e.g. Pompeius and Cleopatra, p. 13 f. and 69 f.), while liberty is taken in the arrangement of the material to suit the requirements of artistic narrative (e.g. p. 63 ff., Cicero introduced in the chapter on Pharsalus).

The translation of the orations is on the whole carefully done but aims at reproducing the modern idiom rather than a close rendering of the original. This is a technique already perfected in previous publications by the author (*Agricola—an English version of a Roman tale*, London 1938, and *Dinner at Trimalchio's*, Johannesburg 1950). Mr. Acheson, a veteran teacher of the Classics, is a keen and sensitive Latinist, and careful study of his *Caesarian Orations* will impart a feeling for good prose which cannot be acquired by formal instruction. It is a book with which the undergraduate should become familiar and which every Latin teacher or lecturer should possess.

University of South Africa

C. P. T. NAUDÉ

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