

*Seneca and the Self*. Edited by SHADI BARTSCH – DAVID WRAY. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-88838-7. IX, 304 pp. GBP 55, USD 99.

Assembling the papers of a 2003 University of Chicago conference with the same title, *Seneca and the Self* is an inspired and important book that bears witness to the current cultural resonance of the Senecan corpus. As A. A. Long puts it in his essay: "... the Seneca revival is also an important part of a widespread and most welcome reappraisal of the Roman intellectual culture of which he was a most prominent member" (p. 21). This may be best seen in context with the vigorous activity in Hellenistic studies, an important domain for many of the present volume's contributors. Some of these conference articles (Gill, Inwood, Long) have already been published elsewhere.

After an introductory section by the editors and Long, the book's essays are grouped into three parts titled "Philosophical Perspectives" (Inwood, Gill, Nussbaum), "Seneca and Roman Culture" (Asmis, Edwards, Ker, Bartsch) and "Reading the Tragedies" (Schiesaro, Wray, Busch). That said, the essays by and large seem to unify rather than segregate the different roles in which Seneca made his impact. Literary-rhetorical, philosophical and cultural interpretation of both prose and poetry go smoothly together and the inclusion of Senecan humour in Nussbaum's article on the *Apocolocyntosis* completes the book's holistic scope.

The modern notion of *selfhood*, which receives historically conscious critical attention above all in Long's, Inwood's and Gill's essays and plays a somewhat minor role in the rest, seems a very successful choice in bringing about just enough unity to this diversity of articles to contribute to something larger than their sum. This also makes the book a worthy read for even those who would not choose to look for any themes of selfhood at all. The bold plurality of methods and ideas that the collection boasts with goes a good deal beyond any positivistic classicist standards but may well be something in the direction that the full appreciation of the unified, holistic nature of Seneca indeed deserves and calls for.

Teemu Huttunen

DYLAN SAILOR: *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-89747-1 (hb). XII, 359 pp. GBP 55, USD 99.

Sailor's book is about the relationship between Tacitus the author and the Empire in which he lived and worked (p. 2): "This book is the result to take seriously the reminder this inscription [CIL VI 1574] offers, that Tacitus' writing was part of a life." The discussion concentrates on the *Agricola*, and certain key passages in the *Histories* and the *Annals*. The central claim of the author is that there is an inherent (though in scholarly discussion not often pronounced) tension between Tacitus the statesman with a respectable *cursus honorum*, and Tacitus the historiographer who relentlessly accounts the deeds of *principes*, even bad ones, without falling into disfavour. The central claim is advanced in Chapters 1, 3 and 5 whereas Chapters 2 (on the *Agricola*) and 4 (on the city of Rome) appear less essential for the course of argument.

Sailor's thesis is that Tacitus, in various ways, tries to balance himself between these two, in many ways opposite, roles. His substantial career, although providing him with ac-