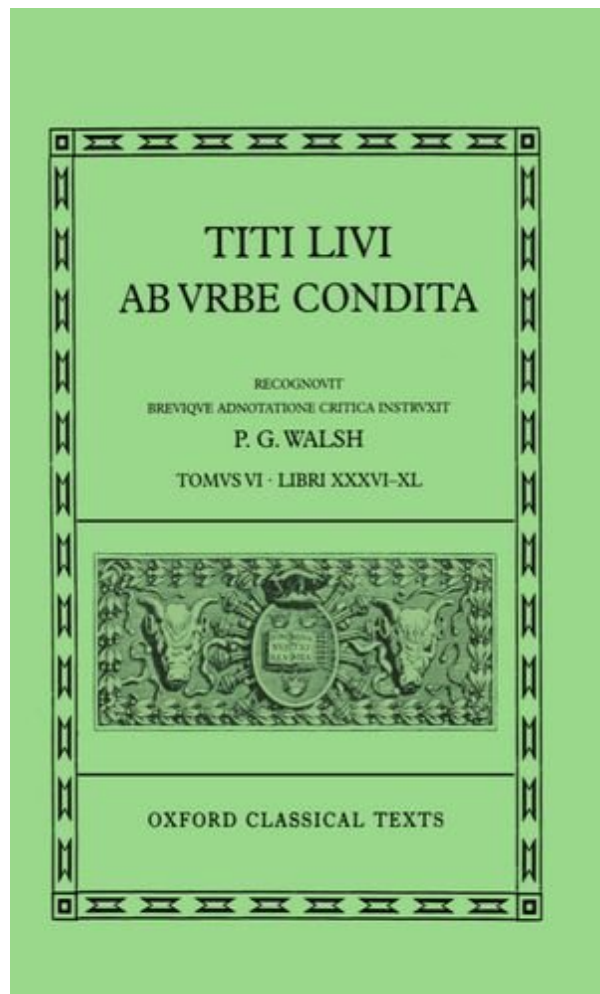
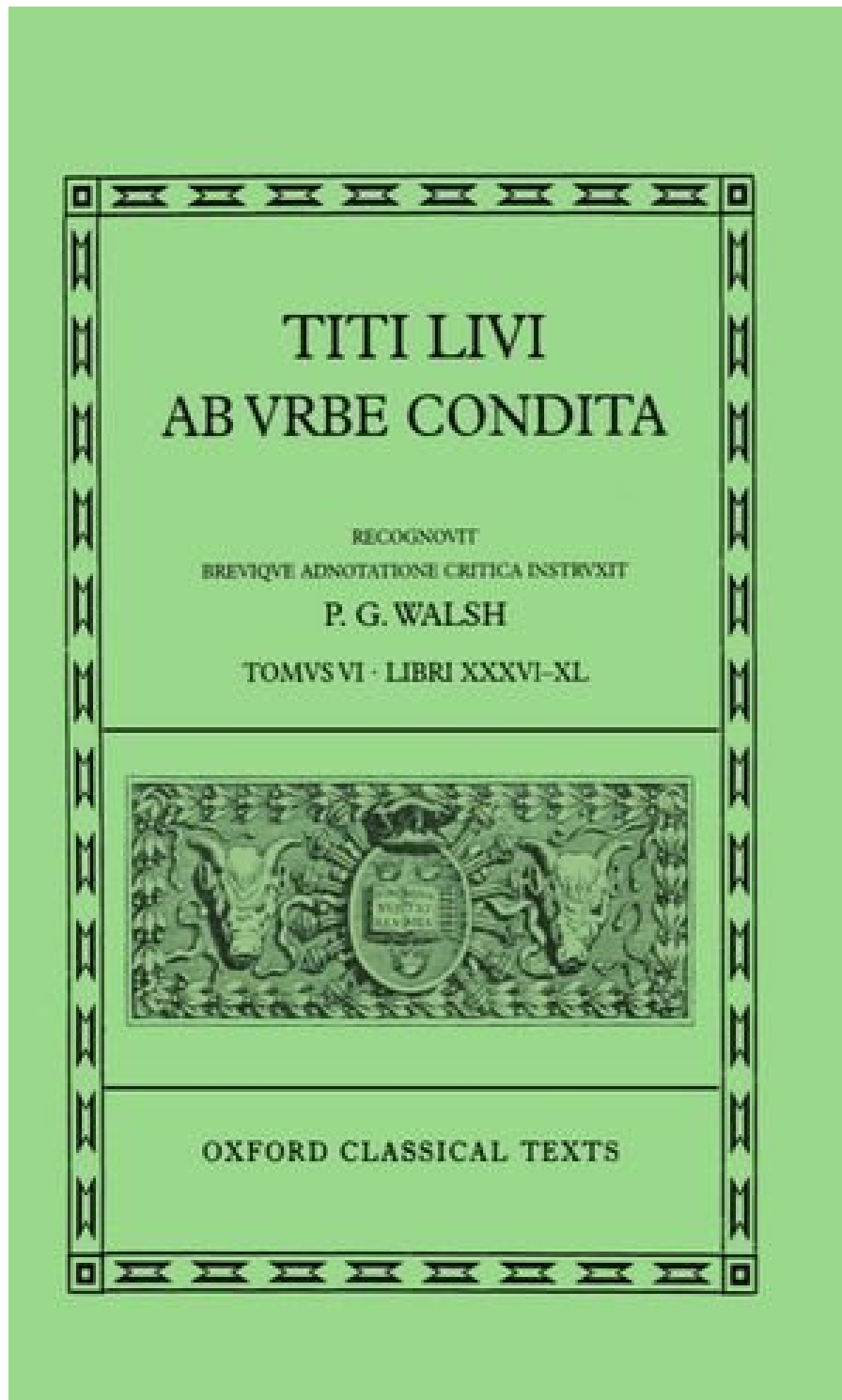


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By K. Green

...What Elvis had done for rock'n'roll. This book is proof of the truth of that statement.

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a solid new edition, poorly printed

By close-reader

First of all, this review is for Walsh's edition of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*: Volume VI: Books XXXVI-XL in Latin (not Kraus' wonderful commentary or Oakley's massive tome, should this for some reason be oddly re-directed elsewhere). The low rating here has nothing to do with the merits of the editing done by Prof. Walsh which frankly my Latin is not good enough to assess. The text served me well and I enjoyed using the apparatus criticus to see how scholars have wrangled with the manuscripts.

The low rating has to do with what you actually receive when you pay \$50 for this book. You do not receive an Oxford University Press book, well-bound and with the usual dust jacket. Instead, you will receive print-on-demand trash. The cover is a printed plastic cover with cheap photocopied text poorly bound in a rather bright stock of paper. Should you actually need to use the book, you will be poorly served.

I sent back the book two times and called many times to sort out the issue...to no avail. This is simply what Oxford is doing these days.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Christina Kraus's commentary on Book 6 of Livy

By Eustathios

This is a review of Christina Kraus's commentary on Book 6 of Livy's History, published in the Cambridge green and yellow series. This edition consists of a 30 page introduction, just under 50 pages of Latin text, 250 pages of notes, an extensive 10 page bibliography (current through 1993; this commentary predates and does not take account of Stephen Oakley's major commentary on Books 6-10), and an index. Book 6 covers the end of the year 390 BC through 367 BC, picking up after the sack of Rome by the Gauls and the Roman dictator Camillus's eventual defeat of the invaders in Book 5. Book 6 represents a new beginning, both in the sense that Rome must be rebuilt and in the sense that Books 6-10 constitute a distinct unit in Livy's history. The preface to Book 6 thus bears comparison with the Preface to the History as a whole and to the preface of Book 21 introducing the Second Punic War. Other highlights of Book 6 include the conspiracy of Marcus Manlius to secure tyrannical power and new military exploits by Camillus. Mostly, however, Book 6 consists of fairly forgettable military campaigns by Rome against various neighboring Italian cities and infighting at Rome between the Patricians and Plebeians.

This commentary seems to be aimed more at graduate students and scholars of Livy than undergraduates in their first few years of Latin who might be reading Livy for the first time. The introduction is very dense and sophisticated, and only a small proportion of the notes in the commentary are dedicated to providing grammatical help. The layout of the notes is also difficult to navigate. It is organized into large, often unwieldy paragraphs that each contain a fair number of notes on different words and phrases, and I always had to take a little time to hunt down the word or phrase I was looking for even through I knew the line and paragraph number it was listed under. I suspect a third or fourth year Latin student would find it very frustrating to wade through this dense commentary to try to find what little grammatical help there is. For such a student reader, the commentaries on Livy published by the Bristol Classical Press (Goold and Whiteley's on Book 1, Ross's on Book 5, and Walsh's on Book 21) are much more accessible than this commentary, and would probably be much preferred.

For a more advanced reader of Livy, this commentary has a number of interesting things to offer. While the commentator devotes some attention to evaluating the historicity of the events Livy describes, the main focus of both the introduction and the notes is the analysis of Livy's prose style. Indeed, I know of no other commentary that undertakes such a comprehensive and interesting exploration of the structure of Livy's Latin. In addition to the usual prefatory matter on Livy's life, career, political leanings, the publication history of his work, the place of Book 6 in Livy's larger narrative, and his unique approach to historiography

(all of which is very detailed and buttressed by extensive bibliographical references), the introduction also has incisive discussions of Livy's diction and his customary way of structuring periodic sentences and grouping words. This preoccupation with the stylistic features of Livy's Latin is a prominent aspect of the notes as well. The commentator regularly points out how Livy deploys marked diction, sentence structure, and rhetorical figures to enhance the depth and artistry of his historical narrative. The commentator also frequently draws comparisons between Livy's Latin and that of Sallust and Tacitus. Generally, the emphasis in drawing these parallels is to highlight similarities in style rather than differences, with the result that there are a large number of notes (particularly in the first half of the commentary) that just state that Livy's Latin usage in a particular phrase or sentence is "typical", "commonplace", "standard", "a cliché", "conventional", "characteristic", or "old-fashioned". These and other stylistic notes can become somewhat distracting and overwhelming, and there is perhaps a slight danger that a reader might walk away from this commentary with the impression that Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus are exactly the same stylistically or that they are very different from other extant Latin prose authors. In any case, this commentary's stylistic analysis prompts one to wonder whether features that are allegedly typical in Livy and Latin historiography in general are also typical in historians such as Velleius Paterculus, Curtius Rufus, and Ammianus Marcellinus and atypical in non-historians like Cicero. One is also prompted to wonder whether these similarities and differences are a function of genre or of individual prose style, or some combination of both.

I should also mention that the notes also very usefully illuminate obscure cultural practices, military terminology, and the political/judicial institutions and developments that are featured throughout Book 6. Overall, while Book 6 is far from being the most engaging and interesting Book in Livy's History, I found that it more than held my attention. This was due in no small part to the incisiveness and provocativeness of this commentary, which, in addition to its other virtues, is a top-notch resource for learning how to appreciate and understand Livy's prose style.

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