

Tacitus: the annals

[History](#)



Harris Kamran History Critical Analysis 14 September Tacitus: The Annals In the book, *The Annals*¹, Tacitus recounts the history of Rome and the different emperors and rulers who reigned over the empire². He plays special attention to the lives and personal feuds and dealings of these rulers, especially tracing the lineage and blood lines in order to better present the picture of the Roman history³. In Book V, he writes of Tiberius and the cold manner in which he acted after the death of his mother, whose blood line through marriages has been traced in his book with quite a lot of detail, including the interactions between Caesar and her, and Caesar's impatient desire to bring her home⁴. He writes about Augustus and Fufius, and also narrates anecdotes from the life of Sejanus⁵. However, some of the text from this part of the book seems to be missing, and is catered to in the later editions of the book⁶.

Tacitus maintains a very detached and distant style of writing, and remains emotionally aloof of the various incidents that he is narrating. His style of writing is very succinct and precise, and he does not dwell into unnecessary details or emotional dramatics and theatrical phrases. It can be said that his syntax and diction gives his writing a sense of authenticity and grace, and so he manages to remain unbiased. He merely states facts as are known to him, and does not strive to make judgments about the personalities that he is writing about⁷. By keeping his manner brief, he manages to make the windy and long history that he is dealing with quite interesting to read, yet developing a sense of command over the subject. However, it might seem that his style is perhaps a little too economical; there are places in the narrative⁸ where more detail and explanation would have provided more substance to the stance that Tacitus has adopted in his book.

Endnotes

1. Daniel C. Stevenson, “ The Annals: Book V,” MIT: The Internet Classics Archive, 1994, <http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.5.v.html>

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

Bibliography

Stevenson, Daniel C. “ The Annals: Book V.” MIT: The Internet Classics Archive.

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