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of Roman exceptionalism is thus a compelling and a welcome addition to current discussions about the character of Rome and its rise to power.

Given her audience and the scope of the book, Lomas sacrifices some depth for the sake of her overall narrative, but offers plenty of additional bibliography and source material to explore. The accessibility of the narrative is complemented by the volume's supplementary material, including images, footnotes, additional sections on ancient sources and Roman chronology, and a guide to relevant museums and sites. While this is an excellent resource for a general audience, this book (or selections from it) would also be a welcome supplement to a survey course in Roman history or archaeology.

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Catalina Balmaceda,
Virtus Romana: Politics and Morality in the Roman Historians.

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. Pp. 312. Cloth
(ISBN 978-1-4696-3512-5) \$45.00.

In this thoughtful and engaging study, Catalina Balmaceda traces the relationship between *virtus*, Roman historical developments, and historical writing from Sallust to Tacitus. Although *virtus* is not understudied, Balmaceda's contribution stands out from others, for example Sarsila (*Being a Man* [Frankfurt 2006]) and McDonnell (*Roman Manliness* [Cambridge 2006]), in that it is distinctly a concept study rather than a word study. Reflecting on *virtus* as a category of good qualities, Balmaceda illustrates how it developed as a moral and political principle in historical texts. Her strategy is on the whole successful, and the work provides valuable insights into changing conceptions of a man's central virtues in Roman social and political life.

After a brief introduction, Balmaceda devotes Chapter 1 to the definitions and historical development of *virtus*. Her tight analysis demonstrates effectively that *virtus* is a native Roman concept whose development owed relatively little to Greek

and philosophical influences. This chapter also introduces the important principle, persistent throughout Balmaceda's analysis, that proper Roman *virtus* can only be present when an individual is motivated by the good of the community rather than selfish desires.

Slightly troubling is Balmaceda's distinction between two kinds of *virtus*: *virilis-virtus*, narrowly defined as physical and battlefield courage, and *humana-virtus*, a broader form encompassing nearly all good qualities. This distinction seems unnecessarily sharp; Balmaceda herself acknowledges that the word often resists attempts to distinguish its meanings, and even some cases she treats as clear-cut admit shades of interpretation. The more essential point is that from the beginning, physical courage was only one manifestation of the rather broad moral quality of *virtus*.

In Sallust's monographs, the subject of Chapter 2, Balmaceda argues for the beginning of a redefinition of *virtus* not as an ancestral quality of the *nobiles* but as a personal quality that any citizen could claim through his actions. This *virtus*, however, turns out to be partial and defective in Sallust's view. In the *Catiline*, *virtus* is nowhere found complete: it appears only in fragments and "turns against itself" (61) in its inability to preserve Rome. The quality's "dangerous closeness to vice" (60) is apparent again in the *Jugurtha*, where a succession of figures demonstrate how easily *virtus* is corrupted by *ambitio*, *superbia*, or *avaritia* when an individual begins to serve himself rather than the *res publica*. Balmaceda's exposition is intricate and persuasive, though it oddly lacks consideration of Sallust's *Histories*, where we also see public figures claiming *virtus* in contradictory ways.

Chapter 3, on Livy, focuses on the exemplarity of *virtus* and its role in defining identity and protecting the Roman people. Balmaceda argues that for Livy, *virtus* was linked to *libertas*, and that the *Ab Urbe Condita* chronicles "the gradual acquisition of *libertas* for the Roman people through acts of *virtus*" (84). The idea of true *virtus* arising only from selfless acts on behalf of Rome is especially important here. As wars became matters of conquest rather than survival, Livy's attribution of *virtus* to Roman armies declines dramatically. *Virtus* is also absent in civil conflict except in clear cases of courage in freeing the broader *res publica* from oppression, as in the expulsion of the decemvirs. Although we cannot know how Livy dealt with the more recent events that made Sallust despair of *virtus* as a cure for moral decay, Balmaceda builds a strong case that Livy saw a renewed commitment to *virtus* throughout Roman society as the key to reclaiming Roman identity.

Balmaceda's treatment of Velleius Paterculus in Chapter 4 is striking and showcases the benefits of analyzing different manifestations of *virtus* on their own terms rather than trying to standardize the concept across time and text. Balmaceda takes

Velleius seriously as a “valid testimony of his time” (131) and sees in Velleius’ work a genuine attempt to negotiate a new age in which the entire polity was bound up in the character and *virtus* of a single individual. In this context, even Velleius’ extreme enthusiasm for the new system is understandable. Not hampered by a pedigree an emperor might find threatening, Velleius saw the moderate rule of Tiberius not as a curtailment of *libertas* but as an expansion of the freedom of all Romans to serve through acts of *virtus*. This is not so different from Sallust’s idea that *virtus* available to all regardless of background is, at least in principle, a good thing.

Balmaceda’s final chapter, on Tacitus, is her longest and most complex, and it shows the limits of her conceptual approach to *virtus* while remaining both useful and insightful. Throughout her analysis, Balmaceda has shown *virtus* changing to accommodate changed realities, expanding its social range and fluctuating in its meaning until in the principate it encompassed all good qualities, contained (or not) in the emperor and reflected (or not) in his people. Balmaceda argues that in Tacitus’ view, this reality made it impossible for Romans at the highest level to compete in old-fashioned *virtus* to benefit the commonwealth, since the winner must be predetermined and egregious *virtus* in others was dangerous, both to the individual displaying it and to the stability of the empire. Thus, the principate needed a new *virtus* that represented “the proper characteristic of a man” (16). This replacement consisted of political flexibility and moral resolution, and the men Tacitus singles out for praise are described in terms of *moderatio* and *constantia*, preserving their own freedom of moral action in service of Rome.

Here, however, is the problem. *Moderatio* and *constantia* have been part of *virtus* all along, and it is in some sense natural that Balmaceda treats them as facets of *virtus* that have increased in prominence and honor. These virtues in Tacitus, however, seem to be almost completely untethered from the word *virtus* itself. Roman characters use it to describe themselves, but Tacitus withholds authorial consent to this characterization and rarely uses *virtus* to describe even good Romans; further, the two Romans to whom Tacitus mainly ascribes *virtus* in the *Annals* share a curious quality of “being to some degree out of their times” (214). At the same time, the old quality of competing to preserve freedom from oppression still exists in Rome’s barbarian enemies, and Tacitus uses the word *virtus* to describe it. This leads me to question whether, when the word is no longer applicable or applied to Romans, we can still talk about *virtus* as the essential Roman quality in Tacitus. It seems that perhaps the core of Roman *virtus* has rotted out and that *moderatio* and *constantia*, once subsumed within *virtus*, have now replaced it as the chief Roman political virtues.

Of course no book is perfect, and I would like more direct comparison between conceptions of *virtus* in the different texts, a task made more difficult by the book's strict organization by author. In the end, though, despite any flaws, Balmaceda's work succeeds in its main goal. It shows compellingly how the forms of virtue, courage, and public service required by a Roman man changed as Rome moved from republic to principate and that Roman historians took an active role in negotiating that change.

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Catalina Balmaceda,
Virtus Romana: Politics and Morality in the Roman Historians.

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(ISBN 978-1-46963-212-5) \$45.00.

Catalina Balmaceda's book serves as an introductory *vade mecum* to the major extant Roman historians (Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus and Tacitus), arriving after a number of companion volumes of the past few years including the *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians* (A. Feldherr, ed., Cambridge 2009), the *Blackwell Companion to the Greek and Roman Historiography* (J. Marincola, ed., Malden, MA 2010) and *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development* (A. Mehl, Malden, MA 2009). Balmaceda uses *virtus* as a way to focus her studies of each of the historians around a core Roman cultural concept — what it means to be a Roman *vir* — and this focus on intellectual history makes it a welcome volume for graduate school reading lists and for advanced undergraduates.

In the introduction, Balmaceda sets out her main ambit, to “show how a group of Roman historians not only wrote history but also helped to shape it” specifically with an “investigation into a culture’s conceptual categories of self-definition and goodness in action” (2). In short, she aims to investigate how the Roman historians shaped Roman culture and history by constructing ideals and rules for how to be a man (for *virtus* is, as all the studies note, derived from *vir*, “man”). In a sense, this makes her book a complement to Myles McDonnell’s *Roman Manliness* (Cambridge