

LIVIOUS: Hannibals tocht over de Alpen. Fibula — Van Dishoeck, Bussum, 1972, pp. 136. With illustrations.

As one of the classical historians and as an outstanding example of the historical activities and opinions of the Annalists in relation to the task of historical writing, Titus Livius [Padua, 59 B.C. — Padua, 17 A.D.] has retained his importance to this day.

This applies also in regard to his lively descriptions of historical military occurrences of note during the Second Punic War [218 — 201 B.C.], particularly as they affect Hannibal's plan of campaign and the execution thereof.

Closely allied thereto are the political aspects of the struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea area between the emergent Roman Empire and the trading Republic of Carthage. The outcome of this political and military struggle, climaxed by the aforementioned war of 218 — 201 B.C., marked the commencement of the Roman domination of the world.

All credit is due in my opinion to the translator, Dr. W. P. Theunissen, of the description by Livius of a part of the war in question, in that he draws attention in his introduction to the merits, as well as the less satisfactory characteristics of Livius as an historian.

Where he does this in the light of modern concepts regarding historical writing, interesting divergencies are revealed. As in the case of his contemporaries, Livius employed no scientific formulae and undertook no documentary studies. On the other hand, he did employ the principle of source comparisons in certain instances, adopting a very critical attitude in this regard. In addition, one should remember that Livius wished to inspire interest in the past by means of his historical writing and in so doing, to stimulate patriotism, while aiming at his goal of laying stress on the greatness of Rome.

I am appreciative of Livius as a linguistic artist and in my opinion the author, in his translation, has succeeded in maintaining throughout, that dignified tone and mood which are particularly obvious in the oratory conjured up from the mouths of the chief characters.

The Carthaginian Hannibal, son of the familiar Hamilcar, was the military strategist and

executive of the offensive against Rome, whom we learn to know as a leader of substance who understood perfectly the art of employment of the essential elements of strength, evaluation and the combined tactical utilisation of the separate arms [infantry, artillery and naval forces].

The reader furthermore learns to know Hannibal as a born orator. He was a military leader who, in the hour of victory or on the eve of a decisive battle, could inspire and encourage his soldiers by psychological play on their mental attitudes. He was in truth the grandmaster who understood perfectly the secret of tugging at the heartstrings of the inner man.

A striking example of this mastery is revealed in his address to instil courage into his troops, preparatory to the commencement of the crossing of the Alps, when he declared to his men: "No territory reaches up to the Heavens, men are able to cross these mountains." [p. 54].

In the same context and also viewed from a psychological angle, Scipio's address prior to the crossing of the Tacinus [p. 67 **et seq**] can be adjudged as a masterpiece in oratory.

Returning to the campaign itself, we can view the following descriptions by Livius as highlights: the Battle of the Tagus, the siege and capture of Saguntum [Sagunto], the address delivered by Hanno in the Carthaginian Senate, the visit of the Roman senators to Carthage, the enunciation of Hannibal's plan of campaign, the crossing of the Rhone, and the description of the Battle at the Trebia [p. 83 **et seq**].

There remain, other than in regard to the sequence of events — the author has compiled a reliable chronology on pp. 129 — 131 — a number of questions which will presumably never be answered with certainty. The most important are undoubtedly the divergent extant opinions in regard to the route taken by Hannibal over the Alps. Did he cross via the Mont Genis, the Little St. Bernhard, the Great St. Bernhard, the Mont Genève or the Pass of Argentière? [p. 62]. In the footnote 162 [p. 112] Dr. Theunissen, after supporting his contention with facts, comes out in favour of Mont Genève.

Another problem is the duration of the crossing, namely 15 or 19 days, which is satisfac-

torily resolved by the author in footnote 172 [p. 113].

Then there are uncertainties in the text of Livius which the translator is unable to resolve. The translator has nevertheless gone to great pains to furnish footnotes [381 in all] which, particularly those of military historical content, are of especial value to the reader.

It is a matter for regret that this work of Livius does not cover the progress of the whole campaign in Italy. The map on pp. 92 — 93 [operations during 218 — 215 B.C.] partially compensates for this shortcoming.

It is known that of the 142 books which this extremely productive author Livius wrote, books 1 — 10 and 21 — 45, i.e. a total of 35 have been preserved.

The publication **Hannibal's tocht over de Alpen** is based on the twenty-first book of an author who, notwithstanding the aspects which today are seen as shortcomings, has bequeathed to posterity a priceless heritage for which students of past military events are duly thankful.

It gives me pleasure in congratulating the translator in regard to his Netherlands which, where it appertains to word usage, conveys his thoughts in such a dignified manner.

It is a shame that here and there minor printing errors mar the work to some extent.

Jan Ploeger.

WERNER MASER: Adolf Hitler. Legende, mythe, werkelijkheid. Uitgeverij De Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam, 1973, pp. 531. Met aantekeninge [pp. 429 — 506] en bibliografie [pp. 507 — 531].

In 1945 het die skrywer van hierdie studie, op grond van 'n proefskrif oor die doelbewuste aankweek van die Hitlerlegende tot 1924, **Die Organisierung der Führerlegende. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der NSDAP bis 1924** [Erlangen, 1954] sy doktorsgraad verwerf. Daarna het hy Hitler se werk **Mein Kampf** ontleed [**Hitler's Mein Kampf. An analysis** London, 1970] en vervolgens sy aandag op bogenoemde tema toegespits.

Die resultaat van laasgenoemde navorsing was **Adolf Hitler, Legende, Mythos, Wirklichkeit** wat in 1972 in München die lig gesien het. Hierdie werk is tans in Nederlands vertaal en die skrywer verklaar dat, sowel as gevolg van die bestaande literatuur oor Hitler as op grond van nuwe, deur hom opgespoorde en verwerkte gegewens, tans 'n volledige beeld van Hitler in sy doen en late gerekonstrueer kan word.

Uit die titel van Maser se werk, en dieselfde strewe kan op elke bladsy aangetref word, het die skrywer hom doelbewus beywer om die Hitlerfiguur van die bestaande en ingewortelde versinsels te ontdoen en die ware Hitler aan sy lesers voor te lê.

Deur hierdie werkwyse het Maser die geskiedskrywing 'n groot diens bewys en, op grond van die inhoud van sy werk, kan sy biografie as 'n waardevolle leidraad vir toekomstige beoordelings van die eertydse **Führer** benut word. Legendevorming lei noodwendig tot verdraaiing en bots met dié taak van die geskiedskrywer, t.w. die soek na en die rekonstruksie van hoe dit eintlik was, m.a.w. die ware beeld.

Behalwe dat Maser hom in dié rigting beywer het, het hy ook teen 'n ander ongewenste uitgroei van die geskiedskrywing, die propagandistiese, te veide getrek. In hierdie geval is die uitwerking, na gelang die skryf deur 'n vriend of 'n vyand verrig is, onnatuurlik ophemelend of geheel of gedeeltelik verwerpend.

Indien al hierdie aspekte in aanmerking geneem word, word dit duidelik dat Maser 'n reusagtige taak op sy skouers geneem het. Die leser kom nog dieper onder die indruk hiervan wanneer hy die veld betrag wat deur die outeur gedeeltelik ontgin en bewerk is. Dit blyk o.m. uit die volgende hoofstukke: 1.

Afstamming en familie, 2. Kinder- en jeugjare, 3. Kunstenaar en argitek, 4. Soldaat vir die Ryk, 5. Hitler se geesteswêreld, 8. Die siek Führer, rykskanselier en hoogste bevelvoerder van die "Wehrmacht", 9. Die veldheer en strateeg [pp. 365 — 427].

Dit is veral hierdie laaste twee hoofstukke wat vir die lesers van "Militaria" van belang is. Aan die einde van hoofstuk 8 word die ooreenkomste en verskille tussen Napoleon en Hitler, wie se persoonlikhede sterk ooreenge-