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0521609356 - Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative (2.94-131)

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VELLEIUS PATERCULUS

THE TIBERIAN NARRATIVE
(2.94-131)

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND
COMMENTARY

BY

A. J. WOODMAN

University of Newcastle upon Tyne



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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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PREFACE

This preposterous volume is the first instalment of a commentary on Velleius Paterculus which I hope in due course to complete. Although Velleius is the only historian of Roman affairs to have survived from the period which separates Livy and Tacitus, no commentary of comparable scale or scope has been published since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The neglect of Velleius by commentators has extended to scholars in most other branches of classical learning and is due almost entirely to his treatment of the man who occupies what is marginally the largest single portion of his work – Tiberius. A historian who describes Tiberius in such enthusiastic terms, it is argued, cannot be trusted on any other matter and his work may be safely dismissed. The Tiberian narrative, which forms the last thirty-eight chapters of Velleius' work and covers the years 23 B.C.–A.D. 29, is thus of primary importance for any consideration of his history as a whole. It is for this reason that I am publishing the present volume here and now.

Although it is principally Velleius' value as a historian that has been called into question, the emphasis of this book is upon textual and literary, rather than historical, matters. Since we cannot assess an author's historical value unless we first know as accurately as possible what he wrote, and since Velleius' text is not only notoriously corrupt but has also suffered at the hands of most nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors through their misplaced confidence in MS A, the need for a detailed reappraisal of the text will, I hope, be understood. There has after all been no such thorough treatment since Krititz's outstanding commentary of 1840, which, apart from certain introductory sections, is concerned with textual criticism to the exclusion of all else. Whether the literary emphasis of this book will be equally welcome, I am not sure. But if one believes that in the ancient world the writing of history was primarily a literary activity and that historians were concerned rather with the

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structured and dramatic presentation of their narrative than with the more 'scientific' aspects of their craft, there is every reason why works of ancient history should require a literary treatment. Indeed it is the persistent refusal of scholars to see Velleius' Tiberian narrative in terms of the literary tradition that has largely contributed to the general disparagement of his history. Naturally my discussions of textual and literary matters have regularly led me into areas which more properly belong to experts in early imperial history; but I have often been able to limit my historical incursions by referring to such works as the latest comprehensive treatment of Tiberius available to me, the exemplary biography by Robin Seager, where a fuller account and bibliography may invariably be found. I nevertheless hope that by providing an improved text and by explaining the nature and meaning of the narrative I shall have done some service to those who wish to use Velleius as a historical source.

I have not thought it useful to provide either an account of Velleius' family background and career or an outline of modern Velleian scholarship, tasks which have recently and admirably been taken up by G. V. Sumner and J. Hellegouarc'h respectively. Nor have I said anything in this volume about the dates of Velleius' composition or the genre of historiography to which he belongs, since these are subjects which I have already discussed elsewhere.

I have several acknowledgements to make. Mr and Mrs E. H. Prater, through the kind offices of Dr B. R. Rees, passed to me the notes on Velleius which had been collected by their late son, John Prater, formerly Temporary Lecturer in Classics at Cardiff and Sheffield, and Assistant Classics Master at Bristol Grammar School at the time of his death. His bibliographical material was particularly helpful, on one notable occasion disclosing a brilliant emendation of 99.2 by Withof which had escaped successive editors of Velleius and which otherwise would certainly have escaped me. I am extremely grateful to Mr and Mrs Prater for their thoughtfulness and generosity.

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PREFACE

Dr A. H. McDonald started me off on my research in Cambridge more than ten years ago: although he has not seen this book, I would like to believe that it contains evidence of his wise teaching. Miss Dorothy Monk kindly read the whole of the book in typescript and made a number of corrections and observations for which I am most grateful. In grappling with many of the historical, literary and textual problems which arose during the book's preparation I was greatly helped by Mr J. J. Paterson and Professor D. A. West, whose kindness, patience and scholarship I have shamelessly exploited.

Professor G. B. A. Fletcher, who first suggested Velleius to me as a topic for research, has read the whole of this book in typescript and generously furnished me with numerous valuable lexical notes which I have acknowledged throughout by the letter 'F.'. In addition he placed at my disposal his personal copies of the *editio princeps* and Kritz's now unobtainable commentary, the latter of which I have had on loan for five years. Professor F. R. D. Goodyear, who supervised my work for a year in Cambridge, has also read this book in typescript and given me the benefit of his penetrating criticism and expert knowledge of early imperial historiography. In addition he was of particular assistance when the book was approaching readiness for publication. To these two friends above all I am indebted for their many suggestions and corrections: without the aid of their scholarship and erudition the book would have been greatly impoverished.

The book would not have been published at all if my University had not provided financial assistance of an order which would have been most generous under ordinary economic circumstances but which in the present crisis places me all the more in its debt. Finally I owe my thanks to Mr I. M. Le M. DuQuesnay for nobly agreeing to read the proofs, and to the staff of the Cambridge University Press for their kind and expert attention.

University of Newcastle upon Tyne
June 1976

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References to Book 1 and to chapters 1–18 of Book 2 of Velleius are always given in full; other references to Book 2 omit the book number. In the commentary I often omit also the chapter number when reference is being made to a different section of the same chapter.

A. ABBREVIATIONS

Note. This list includes neither current periodical abbreviations, for which I generally follow the system used in *L'Année philologique*, nor the familiar abbreviations of certain standard works.

- ALL* *Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik*
- BMC Emp.* Mattingly, H.–Carson, R. A. G. (1923–62). *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*. Vols. 1–6. London
- CAH* Cook, S. A.–Adcock, F. E.–Charlesworth, M. P. (1923–39). *Cambridge Ancient History*. 1st edn. Cambridge [references are invariably to Vol. 10]
- EJ* Ehrenberg, V.–Jones, A. H. M. (1955). *Documents illustrating the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*. 2nd edn. Oxford [references are to entries unless otherwise stated]
- F.* Fletcher, G. B. A. [notes privately communicated: see p. xi]
- H–W* Hainsselin, P.–Watelet, H. (1932). *Velleius Paterculus et Florus. Texte revu et traduit*. Paris
- K–S* Kühner, R.–Stegmann, C. (1971). *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache*. Vol. 2 *Satzlehre*. Parts 1 and 2. 4th edn. Repr. Hanover
- L–H–S* Leumann, M.–Hofmann, J. B.–Szantyr, A. (1972). *Lateinische Grammatik*. Vol. 2 *Syntax und Stilistik*. Revised edn. Munich
- L&S* Lewis, C. T. & Short, C. (1879). *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford
- OLD* *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968–). Oxford
- PIR²* Groag, E.–Stein, A.–Petersen, L. (1933–). *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*. Vols. 1– . 2nd edn. Berlin
- RG* *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*
- RIC* Mattingly, H.–Sydenham, E. A. et al. (1923–67). *Roman Imperial Coinage*. Vols. 1–9. London
- S–H* Schanz, M.–Hosius, C. (1959). *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*. Vol. 2⁴. Repr. Munich

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B. CRITICAL EDITIONS AND COMMENTARIES

Note. I always refer to critical editions etc. of Velleius by the name of the editor or commentator. This list includes only those works to which I refer in this volume: more complete inventories will be found in Krause 61–104, Kritz cxxviii–cxxxvi, Stegmann viii–xii.

- Acidalius, V. (1590). Padua
 Aldus [see Manutius, A.]
 editio Bipontina (1780). Zweibrücken
 Boeclerus, J. H. (1642). Strasbourg
 Bolaffi, E. (1930). Turin
 Bothe, F. H. (1837). Zürich
 Burman, P. (1719). Leyden [the elder Burman]
 Cellarius, C. (1707). Leipzig
 Cludius, A. H. (1815). Hanover
 Ellis, R. (1898). Oxford
 Gelenius, S. (1546). Basel
 Gruner, J. F. (1762). Coburg
 Gruter, J. (1607). Frankfurt
 Haase, F. (1884). Leipzig [the first edn appeared in 1851]
 Halm, C. (1909). Leipzig [a reprint of the first edn of 1876]
 Heinsius, N. (1678). Amsterdam
 Krause, J. C. H. (1800). Leipzig
 Kreyssig, J. T. (1836). Meissen
 Kritz, F. (1840). Leipzig
 Lipsius, J. (1591). Leyden
 Manutius, A. (1571). Venice [grandson of the ‘great’ Aldus Manutius, hence often called Aldus Nepos]
 Miller, J. P. (1756). Berlin
 Orelli, J. C. (1835). Leipzig
 Popma, A. (1620). Franeker
 Puteanus, C. (1608). Paris
 Rhenanus, B. (1520). Basel [the *editio princeps*]
 Ruhnken, D. (1779). Leyden
 Schegk, J. (1589). Frankfurt
 Stegmann de Pritzwald, C. (1965). Stuttgart [a reprint of the first edn (1933), with some recent bibliographical material added by H.-D. Blume]
 Vascosanus, M. (1538). Paris
 Vossius, G. (1703). Frankfurt [this edn, by the third son of G. F. Vossius, first appeared in 1639]

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C. OTHER WORKS

Note. This list includes only those works of which I do not give full details elsewhere or to which I refer by author's name: where an author is responsible for several works, these are distinguished either by a date or by an abbreviation, as indicated below. This list is not a bibliography of all the works cited in this volume; nor is it a bibliography of modern work on Velleius, for which see Hellegouarc'h, *ANRW*.

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Note on emendations. Almost every emendation recorded in this volume may be traced to its original source by using the works listed under B and C above. However, some early emendations were originally proposed in works which are now almost inaccessible and for which reference should be made to the editions of Krause and Kritz: in the main such emendations have long since been assimilated into the common stock of Velleian scholarship.