

PREFACE

Some years ago when writing a biography of Sulla I became intrigued by the figure of Lucullus, a man with whom he formed an unusual but enduring friendship. There and then I conceived the notion of writing Lucullus' life when I had done with other tasks. I have found him to be a figure of great interest in himself, but he is also of considerable importance as one of those who carried the Sullan republican ideal into the next generation. As we study him we study, too, the last days of the Roman republic. Through his eyes and by his side we watch an ideal perish. His failure is the failure of a whole class.

I was encouraged to undertake the present work by the absence of anything comparable in English. Other languages are better served. In French we have long had the work of the learned Fr. van Ooteghem, while German speakers can consult the austere but penetrating RE article by Gelzer. Even as I wrote, Antonelli gave the Italian world his entertaining but somewhat unscholarly treatment. I am aware, of course, that some, who do not themselves practise the art of ancient biography, believe that a task such as this were better left unattempted. Personally, I have never been able to understand why, when so much about the ancient world is dark, the inadequacies of the evidence in this particular department should be singled out for a special mention. Nor can I see what is wrong with being curious about the leading figures of antiquity and labouring in consequence to achieve a fuller understanding of them. Moreover, it is not perhaps altogether fanciful to suggest that if we do acquire a better understanding of a man like Lucullus then perhaps we may acquire a better understanding of his age as well.

For help in the making of this book I have but one institution to thank: my own university, Kent, which allowed me a term's study leave in Michaelmas 1990. As regards individuals I would like to thank Mr D. R. Nightingale, Dr G. Anderson, Professor E. Bad-

ian and Dr J. Madden who answered queries while the work was in progress and Mr R. Seager who kindly read through the whole manuscript when it was completed. A version of part of Chapter 8 was read to the 1991 AGM of the Classical Association at Warwick University and benefited, I believe, by some comments then.

I owe an especial debt to Dr Tracey Rihll for preparing the maps and my wife Jenny and Dr Anderson for help with the proofs. Finally, I should like to mention Rebecca Edwards and Hilary Joce of Darwin College Secretariat who braved my handwriting to produce the typescript.

For the rest, suffice to say that this book is the sole responsibility of the undersigned.

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