

This miscellanist's miscellany deserves a far more detailed analysis than space permits — to its credit I ended up with twenty pages of notes and queries. Apart from my books on Gellius and Lucian (1973), these Baldwiniana, reprinted in *Studies on Greek and Roman History and Literature* (1985) and *Roman and Byzantine Papers* (1989), ignored by the Oxonian *Collegium Gellianum*, plug some gaps: 'Aulus Gellius and his Circle', *Acta Classica* 16 (1973), 103-107; 'Aulus Gellius on Vergil', *Vergilius* 19 (1973), 22-27 — this includes a complete conspectus of references; 'An Anonymous Latin Poem in Gellius', *Arctos* 13 (1979), 5-13; 'Biculturalism and Bilingualism in the Roman Empire', *Pacific Northwest Conference on Foreign Languages* 25 (1974), 65-68; 'A Bibliographical Survey: The Second Century from Secular Sources', *The Second Century* 1 (1981), 173-189.

Apropos Gellian *Nachleben*, there's one more thing I have always wanted to know, and am sure that Holford-Strevens is the man to ask. Namely, the import of seventeenth-century antiquarian-biographer John Aubrey's description of Ben Jonson's 'studyeing chaire, which was of strawe, such as old women used, and as Aulus Gellius is drawne in'.

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Michael B. Charles, *Vegetius in Context: Establishing the Date of the Epitoma Rei Militaris* (Historia Einzelschriften 194), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007. 205 pp. ISBN-13: 978-3-515-08989-0.

This monograph is a condensed version of a doctoral dissertation completed in 2003 and submitted to the University of Queensland at Brisbane in Australia. The title *Vegetius in Context* signifies the intention of Charles (henceforth: Ch.) to investigate 'Vegetius and his world' (15) and to study 'the epitomator and his milieu' (155). In Ch.'s opinion both the military perspective and the political and cultural aspects of the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* should be examined in comparison with other literary sources, in the hope that the cumulative evidence will be persuasive. The subtitle, *Establishing the Date of the Epitoma Rei Militaris*, points to a controversial issue in modern scholarship: the identity of the unnamed emperor to whom Vegetius dedicated his work. According to modern scholars, this must be one of the emperors who ruled between the death of Gratian in CE 383 (Veg. 1.20.3) and the date of the *subscriptio* at the end of the treatise, CE 450.

The book opens with an introduction (13-21) in which Ch. states his aim to evaluate the contribution of Vegetius to the history of the Late Empire. He provides a conspectus of modern research on the date of Vegetius' work focusing especially on the reigns of Theodosius I (CE 379-395) and Valentinian III (CE 425-455). This is followed by three main parts, containing a total of five chapters. Part One contains only one chapter ('Identity and Provenance', 23-50). Part Two consists of chapters 2 and 3 ('*In Theodosium I* — Miscellaneous References', 51-85, and 'Titulature and Praise — the Augustus in the Late Empire', 87-123). Part Three has two chapters ('Military I — Vegetius and "Barbarization"', 125-154, and 'Military II — Other Military Considerations', 155-180). The book ends with a 'Conclusion — Navigating Between the *Termini*' (181-184), a 'Bibliography' (185-198), and an 'Index nominum et rerum' (199-205).

In chapter 1.1 (23-26), Ch. tries to clarify the meager evidence for the personality of Vegetius. Accepting the scholarly view that both the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* and the *Digesta Artis Mulomedicinae* (a veterinary compendium) were written by the same author, and bearing in mind the normal use of nomenclature, Ch. concludes that his full name was Fl. Publius Vegetius Renatus.<sup>1</sup> After a survey of the evidence on the Christianity of Vegetius (chapter 1.2) and a discussion of the value of the manuscripts and their dedications, Ch. provides an interesting note

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the title of the edition of A. Önnersfors, *P. Flavii Vegeti Renati Epitoma rei militaris* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995), whose entry in the bibliography (193) should be corrected.

on the role of Fl. Eutropius in editing the treatise of Vegetius in CE 450 (chapter 1.3). Ch.'s interpretation of the expression *emendare sine exemplario* which ends the composition, i.e. the *subscription*, is far-reaching. He argues that Fl. Eutropius corrected Vegetius' treatise, combined the first book with the other three, and was even responsible for the chapter headings (34-37), ignoring the possibility that the chapter headings were a later addition.

Ch. believes that Vegetius lived and worked in the western Empire, mostly because Vegetius puts an emphasis on Rome, brings *exempla* from Roman history and shows an interest in Italy (chapter 1.4). Now, J. Coulston, who argues for a Theodosian date, suggested: 'the treatise perhaps best suited an east imperial context with its comments about Danubian enemies, camels, elephants and siege-warfare, and its great concern throughout with missiles (I.20, III.10, 23-4, 26)'.<sup>2</sup> However, as Ch. argues, Vegetius had 'considerable knowledge of the western barbarian world, and he even uses a number of possibly Celtic — and Germanic-derived words' (49). There is no certainty in either case, since Vegetius could have acquired these details through general knowledge and reading. Yet his description of the contemporary situation of the inhabitants in the West in the period of invasions and sieges by barbarians after the death of Theodosius I, as opposed to the prosperity and stability in the East, could indeed point to the fact that he lived in the western Empire.

Parts Two and Three attempt to grapple with the difficulty of dating the *Epitoma Rei Militaris*. Ch. takes up the relevant passages of the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* one by one, subjecting each — and various interpretations of each — to a detailed examination. In attempting to determine the identity of Vegetius' emperor — he sees it as a choice between Theodosius I and Valentinian III — Ch. examines the strength or the weakness of each opinion objectively. He argues that the rhetorical and exaggerated description of his emperor as a founder of *innumerabiles urbes* (Veg. 4 prol. 3) is of no use in identifying the specific emperor (chapter 2.1). So too the interpretation of the analogy between the *primiscrinus* (the head of the office of the praetorian prefects) and the *primus pilus* (Veg. 2.21.3) made by the historian W. Goffart does not, in Ch.'s view, contribute to the solution of the chronological problem and he does not accept a fifth century date for this passage (chapter 2.2).<sup>3</sup> In my view, a better approach would be to examine the military and administrative terms in Vegetius' treatise, to see what light they cast on the chronological problem. Ch. is correct in stating that neither the word *divus* attributed by Vegetius to Gratian (Veg. 1.20.3) nor the fact that the Roman imperial cavalry imitated the armour of Goths, Alans and Huns (Veg. 1.20.2) can serve as an indication for a Theodosian date (chapter 2.3-4).

Next, Ch. turns to a critique of the alleged influence of Vegetius on the *Historia Augusta* (chapter 2.5). After an examination of some passages on weapons and armour, he does not find a similarity in the content of the two works. Similar words, he argues, are not enough. Nonetheless, since the French scholar A. Chastagnol has pointed to many parallels between the two works, Ch. offers several suggestions to counteract Chastagnol's argument that the *Historia Augusta* made use of Vegetius.<sup>4</sup> His preferred solution is that Vegetius and the *Historia Augusta* both used common sources which are now lost. If Ch. were to accept the hypothesis that Vegetius used unnamed sources in addition to those he names (Veg. 1.8.10-12), the problem of the relationship between Vegetius and the *Historia Augusta* would not arise.<sup>5</sup> Ch. again argues (117-120) for a common source when he dismisses the view of Ph. Richardot that the poet Claudian used Vegetius in his *De Quarto Consulatu Honorii* 320-351 of CE 398.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> J.C.N. Coulston, 'Later Roman Armour, 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD', *JRMES* 1 (1990), 149 n.146.

<sup>3</sup> W. Goffart, 'The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' *De Re Militari*', *Traditio* 33 (1977), 71-75.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Chastagnol, 'Végèce et l'Histoire Auguste', in *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium 1971* (Bonn 1974), 59-80.

<sup>5</sup> For the conventional and dominant thesis see D. Schenk, *Flavius Vegetius Renatus. Die Quellen der Epitoma rei militaris* (Leipzig 1930).

<sup>6</sup> See Ph. Richardot, 'La datation du *De Re Militari* de Végèce', *Latomus* 57 (1998), 144-146.

Ch. well discusses the position of the emperor and the ideology of a unified empire in the literary genre of praise in the later Roman Empire when dealing with Vegetius' introductions to each of his books (chapter 3). He shows that a change occurred in the portrayal of the emperor in the first half of the fifth century CE. The new image of the emperor was that of a detached ruler, not a warrior. The official formulas and attributes used to address the emperor bore little relationship to reality and he was termed e.g. an unconquered emperor, the ruler of the world and a tamer of all barbarian nations. Vegetius also describes the emperor in this way, but adds that he was still a young man, inexperienced in military affairs, who devoted his time to perfecting his skills in training and exercise (Veg. 3.26.35-38). Ch. brings many passages to support this portrayal (chapter 3.3), but does not explain Vegetius' allusion to the emperor's 'recent deeds' (Veg. 2 prol. 2: *factis recentibus*).

There are several military reasons for accepting the first half of the fifth century CE, and especially the reign of Valentinian III, as the date of the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* (chapters 4 and 5). First, Vegetius complained about the reduction of 'our soldiers' (*militēs nostri*), i.e. Roman units with barbarian elements, while the increase of foreign allied troops (*foederati*) continued.<sup>7</sup> He interprets this passage (Veg. 1.20.3-5) as a criticism of the barbarian warriors who had no cuirass and fought with their traditional weapons for Rome with the result that the Roman army suffered many defeats. Consequently, the Empire, especially in the West, fell victim to devastation and the ruin of cities. Ch. assumes that these events occurred after the death of Gratian and the climax was the invasion of Rome by Alarich the Visigoth in CE 410 (127-130, 132). Since these calamities and disasters took place in the reign of Honorius (CE 394-425), Ch. believes that Honorius was unsuitable as Vegetius' addressee and recipient of his critique of the Roman army (21). He also (134-135) points to a passage in Vegetius on the disappearance of two Diocletianic legions (Veg. 1.17), an event that took place only after the reign of Honorius.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Ch. casts doubts on Vegetius' claims about the lack of camps and poor fortifications (Veg. 1.21), claims which contradict the evidence provided by Ammianus Marcellinus in the second half of the fourth century CE (chapter 5.1). Finally, Ch. interprets Vegetius' phrase on the pacification of the sea (*iam dudum pacato mari*, 4.31.1) as relevant only to the peaceful situation with the Vandals in North Africa, restored by the treaties of CE 437 and CE 442 (174-180, 183).<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the plausible conclusion is that Vegetius wrote in the reign of Valentinian III.

To sum up, the book is learned, informative and well-documented, and successfully finds a middle path between discussing the general world of Vegetius and the specific question of the date of his treatise. The work is a welcome addition to the study of Vegetius and his age.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On the administrative terms used by Vegetius for foreign soldiers (*alieni, socii* and *auxiliiarii*), see A. Chauvot, *Opinions romaine face aux barbares au IVe siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris 1998), 318-319, 473. The term *barbarus* is applied to adversaries and enemies.

<sup>8</sup> See M.B. Charles, 'Mattiobarbuli in Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris*: The *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani*', *AHB* 18 (2004), 109-121.

<sup>9</sup> R. Scharf, *Spätromische Studien: Prosopographische Studien und quellenkundliche Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Mannheim 1996), 94-99, esp. 99 assumes that Vegetius wrote the first book in the period of the negotiations (AD 440-442).

<sup>10</sup> A few misprints: 1) it should be n.22 on 129; 2) for 365-356 read 365-366 on 158 n.12; 3) M.D. Reeve's edition of Vegetius was published in 2004, not 2003; 4) On 164 read 'Zosimus' anti-Christian bias'.