

Gaius Iulius Solinus and his *Polyhistor*

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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2011

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Synopsis

The work of C. Iulius Solinus, commonly known as the *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, but which ought to be accorded the title *Polyhistor*, represents a valuable window into the ancient chorographic tradition of late antiquity. The *Polyhistor* had a lasting effect upon medieval and early modern views of the world, but is today little read and accorded scant respect. This thesis provides an in-depth critical study of Solinus' entire work (excluding the initial chapter), enabling a revisitation of questions concerning the nature of the treatise, its date of composition, the nature of its relationship with its predecessors and sources, and previous scholarship on these matters. This approach is based upon the contention that only a detailed consideration of the work in its entirety will form a satisfactory foundation for overarching conclusions in this regard. The thesis concludes that a date of composition any more precise than between A.D. 220 and A.D. 360 cannot be proven, and that previous scholarly attempts to pin down a precise line of chorographic and paradoxographical source material (pertaining, in particular, to the relationship between the *Polyhistor* and the *Historia Naturalis* of Pliny the Elder) are, useful as their speculation is, customarily too specific and exclusive in their eagerness to prove a particular hypothesis.

A second volume is appended for the convenience of Readers. It contains a text of Solinus' work, based on that of Theodor Mommsen's 1895 edition, but with those passages, including the second dedicatory letter, representing the second version of the work, re-admitted. It also contains indices and my own English translation of the entire work. These elements are not submitted for assessment.

Acknowledgements

Like Theodor Mommsen, I have found the labour involved with making an intimate acquaintance with Solinus very great. Unlike the great classicist, however, I have also found it (in a variety of ways) rather fruitful. Becoming a fly-chaser, and taking arm against the hordes of *detractores Solini* has been both instructive and stimulating.

First and foremost, I should like to thank my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Tom Hillard. My original interest in Solinus stemmed from an idea of Tom's, and he has been more than supportive during my candidature, frequently taking his supervisory responsibilities beyond the line of duty. This thesis would not have been possible without his guidance and encouragement throughout all stages of the project.

I should also like to acknowledge the contributions of my associate supervisor, Professor Alanna Nobbs, as well as those of Emeritus Professor Edwin Judge, Dr. Danijel Dzino, Dr. Trevor Evans, Dr. Andrew Gillett, and Dr. Greg Fox. I am also grateful to Kai Brodersen, of the University of Erfurt, for furnishing me with his pre-publication material.

I tender my thanks to the staff of Macquarie University Library, the University of Chicago Library, the University of Adelaide Library, Fisher Library, Badham Library, the University of Sydney Dental Library, the National Library of Australia, the Bodleian Library, the Staats-u. Universitaets-Bibliothek Hamburg, RMIT University Library, La Trobe University Library, Ipswich City Library, the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Monash University Library and the Biblioteca Nacional de España for providing me with the wide ranging material necessary to the study of Solinus.

The help and support of my fellow postgraduates at Macquarie University, particularly of Helena Bolle, Susan Loftus, Mathew Almond, Minseok Shin and Bernard Doherty, has been invaluable to me.