



Livy on the Hannibalic War

By D. S. Levene

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Livy's account of the Hannibalic War in his Third Decade (Books 21-30) is our fullest source for one of the most crucial wars of all time; it is also a narrative history of unparalleled richness, drama, and depth. D. S. Levene's book, the first large-scale general study of Livy's Third Decade, explores the things that make it distinctive not only within Livy's writing, but also within all ancient historiography. Levene examines such topics as Livy's construction of his narrative, his source-material and use of literary allusion, his battle scenes, his sophisticated but ambivalent attitudes towards non-Romans, and above all his challenging and revolutionary treatment of such things as chronology, causation, and indeed human character. Livy portrays a world in which military calculation and human reason constantly fail, a world in which events occur beyond normal human comprehension, but where everything is governed by a hidden moral structure. Livy's unique and original approach to history has often been misunderstood; Levene demonstrates the powerful and independent vision underlying the work, and compels readers to rethink many of our standard presuppositions about the nature of history-writing in the ancient world.

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Review

"A long, dense, challenging, intriguing, and rewarding study of Livy's third decade."--Michael P. Fonda,
Bryn Mawr Classical Review

About the Author

D. S. Levene is Professor of Classics at New York University.

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