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Germanische Urgeschichte *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania*. By Edward Norden. One volume. Large 8vo. Pp. x + 505. Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1921.

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GERMANISCHE URGESCHICHTE.

Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania. By EDWARD NORDEN. One volume. Large 8vo. Pp. x+505. Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1921.

THE famous crux in the second chapter of the *Germania* has vexed commentators from the fifteenth century onwards, and, as is computed, has given rise to at least twenty-five different interpretations or conjectures; but Norden is dissatisfied with the purely philological discussion of the passage, and has devoted a volume of more than 500 pages to a new method of attacking the problem. His guiding motive is the view that Tacitus' mode of expression conforms to the fixed type of ancient ethnographical writing, and he therefore finds it necessary to survey this field of literature, beginning with Hippocrates' *περὶ ἀέρων ὑδάτων τόπων*. It is not difficult to show that the concepts with which ancient ethnography operates are of Greek origin; nor is it to be disputed that Posidonius applied the method in describing the peoples of the West, and that amongst these he named the Germans, a fact which, in view of Athenaeus' perfectly definite statement, should never have been doubted. But this is not enough to satisfy Norden. We are asked to accept two further propositions: firstly, that wherever Tacitus (or for that matter Caesar) betrays an acquaintance with ideas first expressed by Greek writers, Posidonius may be assumed as the ultimate source; secondly, that Tacitus would never have read Posidonius' work for himself, since 'there is no great Roman writer who holds himself so aloof from everything Greek as Tacitus' (p. 143). These propositions need far more proof than is given in Norden's book. That Caesar consulted Posidonius' *History* is likely enough; but some of the arguments adduced by Norden give slender support to the conclusion. Caesar, in introducing his famous digression on the manners and customs of Gaul and Germany, remarks (as he could hardly help doing) that it will be pertinent to set forth *quo differant hae nationes inter sese*; and a few chapters later he uses the expres-

sion *Germani multum ab hac consuetudine differant*. This, says Norden, is a 'remarkable agreement' with a passage in the Hippocratic *περὶ ἀέρων*, where the author sets out to treat of Asia and Europe, *ὁκόσον διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων*, and adds that he will speak only *περὶ τῶν πλείστον διαφερόντων* (not *πλείστων*, as Norden prints it). 'Evidently,' says Norden (p. 100), 'it is a traditional commonplace of ethnographical literature, this portrayal of the *διαφέροντα* of countries and peoples, which we meet with again in Caesar. For Caesar, Posidonius alone can be considered as the transmitter.' Surely Caesar had no occasion to dredge Posidonius for commonplaces! But this is not all. Posidonius had 'the distinction (no mean one) of appearing, though unnamed, on the threshold of the most famous memoirs of antiquity.' How was this? Because Caesar's famous opening sentence, *Gallia omnis . . .*, 'betrays his knowledge of the technical language of Greek ethnography: we have just read Posidonius' words, *ἡ σύμπασα Γαλατία*.' Tacitus, it will be remembered, begins his work with the words *Germania omnis . . .*; and many critics have seen in this an imitation of Caesar: but this will not satisfy Norden. For Tacitus mentions rivers and mountains in the context, which Caesar does not; therefore the source is rather to be sought in a similar phrase in Pliny's *Natural History*!

That Tacitus could not or would not read Posidonius for himself there is no real attempt to prove; nor will Norden allow that he consulted Timagenes, whom he regards as an intermediary between Posidonius-Caesar and Livy. Yet he quotes Quintilian in order to show that Timagenes' reputation was at its height in the Flavian period (p. 153). It must be confessed that, in spite of many ingenious *rapprochements*, the whole series of arguments by which Norden seeks to trace the course of the Posidonian stream in all its branches is lacking in cumulative effect.

The chapters which deal with the elder Pliny's *Bella Germaniae* as a source

of Tacitus are of greater value. Here Norden corrects the extravagances of the view that the *Germania* is 'a collection of excerpts from the *Bella*,' pointing out very truly that between the reign of Claudius and that of Trajan there had been a considerable increase in the material available, for example in the writings of civil officials, officers, and merchants. 'From this wealth of material,' says Norden, 'Tacitus, in pursuance of his habitual method, which may be observed in the historical works also, selects a small portion and works it up into a new whole' (p. 263). This is true enough; but the effect is somewhat neutralised by the assertion on the next page that statements of historical fact (other than those which concern events later than Pliny's period, such as the Chatti wars of Domitian) 'must have been drawn immediately from the *Bella* of Pliny, since this was the only source which enters into consideration.' Surely this is going too far: Norden himself allows (p. 211) that the *Bella* were not the principal source used by Tacitus in the First Book of the *Annals*, where they are only casually quoted in cap. 69. Nor can it be allowed that the use of phrases such as 'manet adhuc,' 'hodieque,' and the like, is an indication that Pliny is the source. Such turns of expression are common in Tacitus—a collection of instances will be found on p. 273, note 1; and unless it can be shown that the statements involve anachronisms, there is no reason to assume that they are borrowed. In the *Annals* (II. 88) Tacitus tells us that Arminius *canitur adhuc barbaras apud gentes*, and this is claimed by Münzer (whose view is accepted by Norden) as a proof that Pliny, who wrote within a generation of Arminius' death, is the authority.

But this highly rhetorical passage is surely Tacitus' own composition; and it is hard to say that there are anachronisms in the *Germania*, though Norden suggests that the preference shown by the barbarians for *serrati* and *bigati* points to Pliny's time rather than to that of Tacitus. It is, of course, true that Pliny's career of service took him to the Rhine frontier; Münzer has made it very probable that in 47 A.D. he served under Corbulo in Lower Germany, and in 50-51 A.D. under Pomponius Secundus in the Upper Province; and it is very possible that Tacitus was indebted to him for information in several cases. But we should surely bear in mind that Tacitus' father was *procurator Belgicae*, and that it is not at all unlikely that the historian himself held a command in the same region in 89-93 A.D.—facts which would suffice to account for the knowledge displayed in the *Germania*, and, indeed, may have inspired the composition of the treatise.

Although Norden falls into the common error of *Quellenkritiker*, and seeks to prove too much (in spite of his protest that is not a *Namenjäger* on p. 58), his very discursive book is full of matter of which no summary can be given here, and is well worth reading. We are especially glad to note that he has not ignored the work of at least one English scholar. Of Mr. Rice Holmes' *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul* he thrice uses the epithet *genau* (pp. 357, note 2; 377, note 3; 399, note 4), and this is not a word which he uses lightly. His interpretation of the vexed passage which forms his text (*Germ.* 2. 5) is based on the assumption that Greek modes of expression are implied: the first *a*, he thinks, represents *ἀπό*, the second *ὑπό*.

H. STUART JONES.

A GREAT INHERITANCE.

New Studies of a Great Inheritance. By Professor R. S. CONWAY, Litt.D. One volume. Pp. viii+241. 8"×5".

London: John Murray, 1921. 7s. 6d.

THIS collection of essays is mainly a republication of lectures delivered at various times during the last twenty years, the development of some of

which is traced in footnotes. Though in the last essay on 'Education and Freedom' the inheritance is extended so as to cover Classical Literature as a whole, it is the Latin writers of the Great Age, and more especially Virgil, who are the theme of Dr. Conway. Few Latinists have done more than