



Un pó più di Luce sul Problema Genetico dei Nuraghes di Sardegna by Francesco Flumene
Review by: E. T. L.

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Giovannoni on 'Building and Engineering' covers some of the same ground, but is more severely technical. Even professional architects will find not a little instruction in his paper. On pp. 462 and 463 it would have been helpful if cross-references had been given to two illustrations that appear in connection with an earlier essay (fig. 23 and fig. 14). Dr. Heitland winds up with 'Agriculture,' a subject which he has made his own. His review of the facts is lucid and illuminating. But is he right in suggesting (p. 511) that 'the last stages of Roman expansion betray the failure of that power of assimilation by which Rome had consolidated her hold upon her earlier conquests'? Hardly, if (as would appear) his leading case is Britain. There is another and a far more cogent explanation of why 'Britain when abandoned did not remain a "Latin" country.' The Romanised Britons were ground to powder between the upper and the nether millstones of Saxon and Irish invasion.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Bailey's volume will have the wide circulation which it deserves. The price is most reasonable, particularly in view of the number and excellence of the illustrations, many of them novel. When a second edition is called for, perhaps the difficulties of compiling an index might be faced. The proofs have been read with quite exceptional care. But the initials of the late Sir John Sandys are wrongly given on p. 42, and on pp. 431, 469, and 470 there are trifling misprints, all in the titles of foreign books.

G. M.

AVV. FRANCESCO FLUMENE, *Un pó più di luce sul problema genetico dei Nuraghes di Sardegna*. pp. ix. + 234. Sassari, 1923.

How great a fascination centres round the problem of the Nuraghi becomes evident at once from the writer's survey of the theories about their purpose. In this survey they appear as tombs, temples, fortresses, watch-towers, smelting furnaces and dwellings, and strong arguments are advanced against any purpose but the last. The writer, however, suggests that they are dwellings of a special kind, designed like the Egyptian towers mentioned by Herodotus (ii, 95) as refuges against the scourge of the Anopheles mosquito. He contrasts the high level of culture, material, moral and social, attained by the builders of the Nuraghi with the stagnation and degeneration from which the island has suffered since those times. While Pais holds that malaria was introduced by the Carthaginians and that the presence of malaria was incompatible with the vigour necessary for the erection of the Nuraghi, Flumene argues that there is clear evidence of earlier migration from the south and that the construction of the Nuraghi goes hand in hand with the fine physical type found in the rock-tombs of Anghelu Ruju. The subsequent abandonment of the Nuraghic system of hygiene resulted in the gradual degeneration observable not only in the poor physique of the modern military levies, but even alluded to by classical writers.

The author makes out a very fair case for his thesis, but it is more than doubtful whether his arguments for direct contact with Egypt will bear minute examination. Here, as in much of the investigation of the relations between the eastern and western Mediterranean in early prehistoric times, there appears a tendency to regard 'a thousand years but as yesterday.' Nor is it clear how this eastern origin is to be reconciled with the strong links of contact westwards with the Balearic Isles and Spain, on which stress is laid.

The African origin of the system of architecture displayed in the Nuraghi has yet to be established, and in any case it will probably prove to spring from a Libyan rather than an Egyptian source.

E. T. L.