

Traians Dakische Kriege. II. 'Der zweite Krieg.' Von E. PETERSEN.
(Leipzig: Teubner. 1908.)

WITH this little volume of 150 pages Dr. Petersen, the distinguished director of the German Institute in Rome, completes his critical inquiry into the historical significance of the reliefs on Trajan's Column, with especial reference to the elaborate commentary of Cichorius. As was the case in the volume dealing with the first Dacian war, published in 1899, Dr. Petersen approaches the subject primarily from the point of view of the archæologist, and sets himself to correct the blunders into which, as he conceives, neglect of archæological and artistic considerations has led historians. At the same time he frankly recognises that his own book could scarcely have been written but for Cichorius's careful reproductions of the reliefs, which have made it possible for the first time to study at leisure both the general scheme and the details of this series of pictures graven on stone. The literary record of the Dacian wars is meagre in the extreme, and it is consequently of the first importance to determine exactly the value of the reliefs as historical evidence. Unfortunately on this point authorities differ. Mommsen regarded it as impossible to recover the history of the campaigns from the reliefs, as impossible as 'to rewrite the history of the Seven Years' War from Adolf Menzel's pictures;' and Benndorf is virtually in agreement with Mommsen. On the other hand Cichorius extracts from the monument a continuous and detailed narrative, and Dr. Petersen, though he does not go so far, treats the reliefs as giving not merely conventional scenes of warfare, but representations of actual events. And in spite of the difficulties of interpretation, and the many points which remain unexplained, most students of the reliefs will, we fancy, side with Cichorius and Petersen rather than with Mommsen and Benndorf.

The great value of Dr. Petersen's book is that which he claims for it, the attempt to control what he all but calls the vagaries of the historian by the canons of archæological and artistic criticism. He is moreover essentially sober and restrained, while Cichorius is rash, over-ingenious, and bent on finding an historical meaning and intention in every detail. He points out, with much force, that some of these details are clearly conventional and due to the established rules or traditions of art; while in others the form and arrangement have been determined by the conditions of space and material under which the artist worked. Dr. Petersen also insists that it is misleading to regard each picture, if the term may be used, in the series, as separated from those that precede and follow it by an interval of time, and argues that in some cases a group of four or five 'pictures' is concerned with one and the same event.

It is naturally impossible in this review to follow minutely Dr. Petersen's critical study. To do so intelligibly, it would be necessary that the reader should have Cichorius's photographs before him. But the more important points may be briefly stated. So far as the second Dacian war is concerned the crucial problems of interpretation are almost wholly confined to its earlier stages. I may first of all express my entire agreement with Dr. Petersen's view of the meaning of Dio's words, τῆς χώρας τῆς ἐαλωκυίας ἀποστῆναι. The words can only mean the 'territory which

Decebalus had captured' (? from the Iazyges), not 'the territory captured by the Romans from Decebalus,' as Cichorius thinks. The latter's blunder is unfortunate, as on the assumption that Decebalus had abandoned Sarmizegethusa, Cichorius finds him a new capital in Eastern Dacia, and transfers to it the reliefs which, as Petersen clearly shows, represent the old Dacian stronghold.

The first twelve scenes (nos. 79-91) obviously illustrate Trajan's journey from Italy to the seat of war. Of his route on this occasion the written records tell us nothing, and the reliefs have been very variously interpreted. The starting-point represented in no. 79 is unmistakably Ancona. We have then a sea voyage of some duration; three seaports are touched at, and then begins a journey overland. Petersen dismisses the theory that Trajan sailed round the Peloponnese to Corinth and thence to the Dobrudsha and the neighbourhood of the so-called Trajan's Wall. He lays stress on the fact that the first two stages of the voyage are performed in oared galleys, the third in sailing vessels. From this he infers that Trajan coasted up the Italian shore, perhaps as far north as Ravenna, and then struck across the open Adriatic to some unidentifiable port in Istria, travelling thence overland to the Danube. The explanation is at least more plausible than any other hitherto suggested.

Dr. Petersen is at his best in dealing with the rather perplexing series of reliefs which follow (nos. 92-100). He shows conclusively, I think, that in these the direct sequence of events is for a moment broken, in order to place before the spectator an episode which had taken place before Trajan's arrival on the scene of action, and that the main thread of the narrative is resumed with no. 101. He points out that in no. 92 Trajan is represented, and also the *classiarii* belonging to the Danube flotilla. Both then disappear until we reach no. 97, when they reappear together. The intervening reliefs represent contests between Dacians—Decebalus himself being present—and Romans. The Romans are hard pressed to hold their own entrenchments until in no. 97 relief is brought by Trajan himself. Dr. Petersen suggests that the artist is here representing a fierce attack made by Decebalus, in the hope of capturing the defences of the great bridge over the Danube before Trajan could arrive. Then Trajan appears, drives back the foe, and with nos. 100-101 the story of his march is resumed. The great bridge is crossed and the advance into Dacia commenced. Dr. Petersen argues forcibly that the advance took place in the spring of A.D. 106, and that the latter half of the year 105 was taken up with the journey to the Danube and the repulse of Decebalus's attack on the Roman position.

The reliefs (nos. 106-110) clearly indicate that the advancing force was divided into two columns, one of which was led by Trajan himself; but it is impossible to be sure by which of the possible routes into Dacia they marched. If, however, we follow Petersen, as against Cichorius, and assume that Trajan's objective was the old Dacian capital, Sarmizegethusa, and not a new capital further to the eastward, we can scarcely avoid his conclusion that the western column followed the direct route from the stone bridge by *Ad Mediam* to the Iron Gate Pass, while the eastern column crossed by the Vulcan Pass. The route up the Aluta to the Rothenthurm pass lies somewhat too far to the east to suit this theory.

The two columns are represented as concentrating (no. 112 *sqq.*) in front of a large and well-fortified Dacian stronghold—clearly the capital, and, as Dr. Petersen contends, clearly Sarmizegethusa. It is impossible here to follow the elaborate argument by which he endeavours to establish this point. That his main conclusion is right will be generally granted; but he has shown, I think, almost excessive ingenuity in explaining the details of the representations of the town as refortified by Decebalus, such is his theory, during the winter of A.D. 105–106. His explanation, however, of the apparently threefold division of the place deserves careful consideration. It is fully given in the appendix (pp. 184 *sqq.*) and illustrated by woodcuts.

With the capture of the capital the difficulties of interpretation, except as regards minor details, disappear, and there is little divergence of opinion between Cichorius and his critic. Here also this notice must end, with an expression of gratitude to the author for a book full of illuminative criticism and brilliant conjecture.

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The Age of the Fathers. By the late WILLIAM BRIGHT, D.D. Two vols. (London: Longmans. 1903.)

It is not easy to give an adequate description in a short notice of Dr. Bright's last legacy to his pupils in church history. It is still more difficult to criticise. The book has been prepared for publication by Mr. C. H. Turner, who was for some time deputy lecturer to Dr. Bright; and Dr. Lock in his interesting preface could not speak too highly of the care with which Mr. Turner had executed his task. Another old pupil, the Rev. B. G. Fookes, undertook the laborious task of compiling the index. The work which has called forth such devoted service is worthy of its author's reputation. It is a history of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries, written with marvellous picturesqueness of style, giving graphic descriptions of great men and great scenes, making the past live again before our eyes, not by the exercise of imagination fancy-free, but with most careful regard to facts. We envy those to whom these chapters were delivered as lectures, who saw (as Dr. Lock says) 'the fire lighting up the eyes at the mention of the courage of witnesses for the truth,' or heard his 'voice ringing through the room as it recalled the bold denunciations of passion or of cowardice even in a Christian emperor.' Indeed, the book must be judged as a series of lectures, and from that point of view justifies its publication. It is an admirable introduction to the history of the period, but the student who wishes to consult the authorities at any point will deplore the total absence of references. In Dr. Bright's earlier *History of the Church from A.D. 813 to A.D. 451*, as in his *Lives of the Great Fathers*, every statement was supported by carefully chosen authorities. Here we look for them in vain, and this is the more tantalising because we know that they are all quoted in those sixty notebooks, his *Sylva*, as he called them, which represent the gleanings of his thirty-five years of strenuous toil.

Dr. Lock acknowledges that 'Dr. Bright was not well acquainted with German, and it is possible that some modern contributions to our knowledge even of the original materials for the history of the period may have