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Roman Cursive Writing *Roman Cursive Writing, a Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.* By Henry Bartlett van Hoesen. Med. 8vo. Pp. 268 (with numerous facsimiles of cursive alphabets). University Press, Princeton (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press), 1915. 8s. 6d. net.

J. E. Sandys

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From the wording 'he allowed the envoys of the Germans to sit in the orchestra, led by their naïve self-confidence,' II. p. 53, who could be certain that 'led' means 'as he was influenced' (*commotus*)? Again, we read 'when one of these had been handed over for execution, just as he was paying his morning call, and at once recalled, as all were praising the Emperor's mercy, Vitellius gave orders to have him killed,' II. p. 269: fortunately the Latin is on the opposite page. Is it too much to call slipshod the syntax of the note in II. p. 238, 'According to Suetonius the arms were sent from the praetorian camp to Ostia to fit out the cohort, and that the riot started in the praetorian camp'? I trust it is not hypercritical to object to the extension of the meaning of 'regalia' to include ornaments connected with triumphs or consuls; e.g. I. p. 407; II. p. 49, p. 203, p. 287. It is, of course, notorious that the decorations or insignia of various orders and corporations have been styled by this resounding term, but if its employment

was pronounced improper as long ago as in Edmondson's *Complete Body of Heraldry* in 1780, then in a work of Roman associations the word might reasonably be restricted to emblems of royalty.

At II. p. 239 'a great storm arose and he had a bad fall' is irresistibly suggestive of Humpty-Dumpty, and at II. p. 103 it is comically alarming to take literally the sentence 'all kinds of presents were *thrown* to the people; these included a thousand birds . . . finally ships, blocks of houses and farms.' Lastly, we owe it entirely to the translator and not to Suetonius, if we find humour in 'Now in Nero's last year the whole grove died from the root up, as well as the hens.' This odd zeugma implying that the hens also 'died from the root up' is not suggested by the Latin, which has two quite solemn verbs, *silva omnis exaruit radicitus et quidquid ibi gallinarum erat interiiit*.

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ROMAN CURSIVE WRITING.

Roman Cursive Writing, a Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. By HENRY BARTLETT VAN HOESSEN. Med. 8vo. Pp. 268 (with numerous facsimiles of cursive alphabets). University Press, Princeton (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press), 1915. 8s. 6d. net.

THIS dissertation supplies a consecutive history of Roman cursive writing from its earliest extant examples down to the time of its development into the 'national hands' and the Italian notarial scripts. The work was undertaken at the suggestion of Dr. E. C. Richardson of Princeton; it has been continued under the influence of professorial teaching in Munich; and it has been completed with the aid of photographs and other facsimiles of the numerous documents which form a necessary part of the evidence here submitted to a most minute and elaborate examination.

After a brief survey of the passages in early Latin literature which refer to 'the use of wax tablets, and, probably, of cursive writing,' the author passes in review the successive specimens of that kind of script. The first century of our era is represented by the *graffiti* on the walls of Pompeii, and by the wax tablets of the Pompeian banker, Jucundus, while the second includes the Dacian tablets, and a few similar documents discovered in Egypt. Some eighty *papyri* of comparatively recent discovery, dating from the first five centuries, serve to fill the gap between the early *graffiti* and tablets above-mentioned, and the late Ravenna *papyri* of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries.

A brief history of the early study of Roman cursive writing by Mabillon and Maffei, by Toussaint and Tassin, and by C. T. G. Schönemann, is here followed by special mention of the publication of the Ravenna documents by Gaetano Marini in 1805; of the Dacian tablets

by Massmann in 1840 and by Mommsen in 1873; of the Pompeian *graffiti* by Chr. Wordsworth in 1837, by Garrucci in 1854, and Zangemeister in 1871; and, lastly, of the banking tablets of Jucundus, by De Petra in 1876, and Zangemeister in 1898. The earliest of the above publications, that of Marini, refers to the documents of the most recent date, which were preceded in order of time by the recently discovered Egyptian *papyri*. The author sets forth the forms of all the letters of the alphabet which are found in the Pompeian *graffiti*, in early leaden tablets, in Pompeian, Dacian, and Egyptian wax tablets, and in more than 120 *papyri* ranging in date from 14 B.C. to the middle of the seventh century.

He subsequently recapitulates the history of each letter in these dated documents, with a view to determining how far the evidence thus collected may be applied to determining the age of documents which bear no actual date. The dissertation closes with (1) a list of Greek *papyri*, which have Latin letters in their *subscriptions* alone; (2) a bibliography; and (3) a list of abbreviations in Latin *papyri*, considered in connexion with the formation of abbreviations by 'suspension' or by 'contraction,' showing that the first of these methods was characteristic of the first four centuries. At the end of the volume we have ten plates of facsimiles of cursive alphabets, which are supplementary to the numerous alphabets reproduced in the body of the work; but we should have been glad to see a few specimens of complete documents, such as those that are given on pp. 314 to 329 of Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's *Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (1912).

The dissertation, as a whole, may be regarded as an elaborate supplement to a subordinate portion of the important work just mentioned. The treatment of the subject is of the most minute and laborious character, and the study of

the original documents has, in some cases, been obviously attended with exceptional difficulties. This may be partly inferred from two suggestive notes on pp. 136 and 172:

'Very unfortunately my study of the original documents in Vienna was limited to a brief visit to the collections on a snowy, dark day;' while, in Venice, the study of a deed of gift at the church of S. Giorgio de' Greci 'was cut short by the discovery of the monk in charge that, for access to it, a special *permesso* was required, for the obtaining of which time failed.'

In the bibliography a welcome proof of scholarly candour may be observed in the use of an asterisk to distinguish titles of works which the author has not actually seen. These are generally either of very early or of very recent date, the main outlines of the work having been completed in 1910, though the date of publication is 1915. Among works which have not been seen is Chr. Wordsworth's *Inscriptiones Pompeianae* of 1837; but it may be pointed out that this is reprinted on pp. 49-81 of the same author's 'Conjectural Emendations . . . with other papers' of 1883. Only the second edition of Cagnat's *Cours d'épigraphie latine* (1890) is here recorded, whereas a fourth edition, with no less than twenty-eight photographic plates, including seventy-five inscriptions, appeared in the first half of 1914. Lastly, there is no mention of E. Diehl's *Inscriptiones Latinae* of 1912, which includes fourteen pages of cursive facsimiles, as well as a photograph of an epitaph in the Vatican Museum in cursive characters.

The only misprints, which have been observed, are in the notes to the first few pages: *Palägraphie* for *Paläographie* on p. 1; *austae* for *auctae* on p. 7; and three words printed as one, *quoscripturae-genera* on p. 6. The work, as a whole, is undoubtedly one on which infinite pains have been successfully spent.

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