
Review

Author(s): E. A. P.

Review by: E. A. P.

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REVIEWS

EUROPE

Roman Roads in Britain.— T. Codrington. Third edition. Pp. 317. *With large Chart and small Maps.* S.P.C.K. 1918. 10s. net.

THIS new edition of Mr. Codrington's 'Roman Roads in Britain' embodies in the text the further particulars obtained since the first edition was published in 1903. The arrangement of the work and the maps follow the original plan. An introductory chapter discusses the historical sources and references from which our knowledge of the subject is derived. Most important of these is the Itinerary of Antonine, the *Iter. Britanniarum* of which is given in detail. The spurious character of the itinerary attributed to Richard of Cirencester is insisted upon, and its unfortunate influence on antiquarians like Stukeley, Hoare and Bennett pointed out, an influence indeed which still makes itself felt.

The subject of the construction of the roads, one Mr. Codrington is so well qualified to deal with, gives rise to an interesting discussion. Our knowledge of the methods of constructing Roman roads does not appear to be anything like so full as is often imagined, and the paving of them, either in this country or on the Continent, was by no means a universal characteristic. "The Romans followed no hard and fast rule, but made their roads according to the situation, to the materials available, and perhaps in a different manner at different times." In Britain an embankment is a very usual feature, good examples of which may be seen in Atchling Dyke between Salisbury and Bradbury, and for a few miles between Doncaster and Pontefract. The milearies afford little information, and confusion has arisen from applying names like Watling Street, Foss Way, and Ermin Street to roads which apparently have little connection with those to which they properly belong. While the obvious straightness of the roads "has perhaps been too much insisted upon, the skill and comprehensive grasp of the features of the country displayed in laying them out has been too little noticed." Regarding the value of maps, whilst the earliest inquirers were badly served in this respect, the older Ordnance maps of the early part of the last century are more valuable than the new survey.

In the following chapters the great roads are described in detail, illustrated with small maps in the text. These maps and the large chart would have been still more valuable had all the places mentioned in the text been inserted. Watling Street as the best known and most typical is first described in chapters ii. and iii. In the two following Ermin Street is similarly dealt with. The next chapter treats of the roads of East Anglia, Icknield, and Akeman Streets. Then the Foss Way and Recknild Street each have a chapter. Lastly, in chapters ix. and x. an account is given of the interesting western routes from London to Silchester and thence south-west to Exeter, and west through Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester to South Wales. Save for a short stretch to Teignbridge no roads are given beyond Exeter. "Of a supposed road from Exeter to Stratton on the Cornish coast there seems to be no evidence at all."

The concluding chapter is by no means the least interesting, and one could wish it were longer. It refers to the evidence derived from archaeological discovery, and the inferences to be drawn from the situation of the ports of landing and the course of the Roman conquest. When it is remembered that ever since the Romans retired from Britain, more than fourteen centuries ago, the roads they constructed have been neglected and continuously subjected to injury and destruction, the wonder is not that we know so little, but that with the aid of Mr. Codrington's research and guidance, our knowledge is so

extensive, and we are able to trace their routes with so much success. The greatest destruction has taken place in quite recent times, for it was due to the making of the turnpike roads begun in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The description of each of the great roads is given with much detail in a matter-of-fact methodical way which may not be very attractive to the general reader, but as an historical and engineering record, and an aid to further investigation, its value can hardly be overestimated. Every one interested in the early history of Britain will thank the author for this more complete edition of his valuable work.

E. A. P.

Alsace-Lorraine : Past, Present and Future.— Coleman Phillipson, M.A., LL.D. London : T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 327. *Four Maps.* 25s. net.

While a voluminous literature on the Alsace-Lorraine question has, since the German occupation, accumulated on the Continent, the discussion of it in England and America has been for the most part confined to periodicals. The volume before us is the first comprehensive presentation of the case published in this country. It is well arranged and well printed, and with respect to its general equipment we have only to complain of four most inadequate maps. One good coloured map of the provinces with the usual details would have done better service. The 'ancient' history before 1870, now beyond controversy, is properly summarized in a short chapter. This is followed by the story of the conquest and annexation by Germany—the development of the German intentions, the prolonged negotiations as to the new boundary-line, the compulsory acceptance of the peace terms, closing with the last solemn vows of the provincial deputies that they would ever preserve for France, though absent from their hearths, a filial affection "*jusqu'au jour où elle viendra y reprendre sa place.*" The German arguments for the annexation are well stated. It was in fact prompted more by greed of territory—and that, as is now known, among the richest in Europe in iron, potash, and to a less extent, coal—than for the sake of the additional man-power to be obtained from a disaffected population of a million and a half. Justification was, however, sought on historical, racial and linguistic grounds; and the German historians and jurists, ever ready in support of victorious militarism, had no difficulty in presenting to an uncritical public a specious case, in which the deepset French sentiment of the population—the vital factor—was minimized or ignored.

These historical sections of Dr. Phillipson's book are praiseworthy and will be of permanent value. On the other hand, his deductions from the facts and his suggestions for the solution of the problem (now happily out of date) show lack of sound political judgment. He misapprehends the true meaning of the Alsatian movement for autonomy within the German Empire. Because more was talked of autonomy and less of restoration to France, Dr. Phillipson was led to believe in a change of heart and aspiration. The events of the last few weeks show the extent of his error, but it should not have been made in view of the existing evidences. The situation during the years preceding the war was that Germany was considerably more powerful than France, and that if peace continued there was, humanly speaking, no possibility of restoration. The only policy affording a prospect of relief from *Reichsland* conditions—always, however, *faute de mieux*—was that of greater autonomy within the Empire. In spite of the unfortunate declarations of Drs. Ricklin and Hoeffel in 1917, it may be believed that ever since the war began and France was found to be supported by powerful allies, the flame of French patriotism has been burning as steadily as was possible under the rigours of martial law.