



The Romanization of Roman Britain by F. Haverfield

Review by: Franz Cumont

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THE ROMANIZATION OF ROMAN BRITAIN. New edition, revised and enlarged. By Professor F. HAVERFIELD. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{3}{4}$, 70 pp. with frontispiece and 21 figures in the text. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912. 3s. 6d. n.

To write a good monograph on a Roman province requires qualities rarely found in conjunction: minute observation, in order to interpret correctly the details of local archaeology, and breadth of view to envisage the general conditions under which the Roman empire has developed.

The excellence of Professor Haverfield's study devoted to Roman Britain lies in the rare union of these two qualities, and the success of this association is proved by the fact that a second edition has just appeared, so much enlarged as to be in reality a new work.

It is a popular book in the best sense of the word: the text, at any rate, "can be read by anyone who is interested in the subject without any special knowledge of Latin." In point of fact, it will be read with profit not only by the general public but also by specialists; not only by Englishmen, for whom it sums up three or four centuries of their island's fortunes, but by all who are concerned with the history of the past.

As the author points out, the great work of Rome is to have won over to her civilisation the whole western world. It is particularly interesting to show how this civilisation succeeded in taking root in the very extremities of the empire, in an island which seemed to stand at the verge of the habitable world,

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.

Many of the observations made in this book on the Celts of Britain are specially applicable to northern Gaul which was at the same time both very like and very unlike its island neighbour.

Professor Haverfield has lucidly shown how, except in certain remote parts, the Celtic speech gave way to Latin, not only as a literary and official, but also as a colloquial and popular language, and how the "Celtic revival," which dates from the fifth century, was largely due to Irish immigration. On the other hand, certain native traditions and processes survived in industrial matters, notwithstanding the adoption and general imitation of Roman art-forms, products, and tastes: we may instance the plans of houses and villas, which belong to a type quite foreign to that which the climate of the south allowed. Peace and prosperity were secured to the island by an administration which in large measure respected local autonomy: the conquest was both moral and political, and when, in 407, Britain was severed from the rest of the empire by the German invasion, it was not Britain that abandoned the empire, but the empire which left Britain to its fate.

All these questions are here treated with a breadth of view and an exactness in detail which are eminently instructive. Every statement is supported by evidence gathered in the course of excavations, many of which have been superintended by Mr. Haverfield himself.

If I may hazard one observation, it is that in my opinion the part played by the army in the Romanisation has not been sufficiently emphasised. We must bear in mind that three legions were stationed in Britain, which, with the auxiliaries, formed an army of occupation of thirty to thirty-five thousand men. These troops Romanised the crowds that gathered round their fortresses, but their indirect influence spread far beyond the neighbourhood of the stations. They were fed by the province, and the *annona* involved frequent connexion with the landed proprietors. Moreover, if British corn was exported to the Rhine (p. 57), it must also have been on sale in the military regions where the cultivation was poor or where towns and villages had sprung up. The farmers of the south thus found a market for their produce in the north, and this economic factor must have encouraged assimilation.

On page 42, n. 1, Professor Haverfield remarks on the frequency of representations

of Perseus and Andromeda, and Hercules and Hesione, in northern Gaul. Probably these heroes were looked upon as prototypes of the emperors freeing the provinces from the barbarians: see my note on the monument of Yzeuses, *Revue archéol.* 1912.

FRANZ CUMONT.

ASTROLOGY AND RELIGION AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS. American Lectures on the History of Religions, series 1911-1912. By FRANZ CUMONT. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, xxiv + 208 pp. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1912.

Last winter Prof. Cumont delivered a course of lectures in America, and within little more than a month of the conclusion of the course they were presented to a wider audience in this charming little volume. The lecturer deals with a subject in which he is a leading authority, the astrology and astral religion of the East, that "learned superstition which up to modern times has exercised over Asia and Europe a wider dominion than any religion has ever achieved." It is a large subject, too large to be treated as a whole in half a dozen lectures, and the author wisely limited himself to one aspect of it, which is of the highest interest to students of ancient history. He expounds the nature and extent of the influence which these Babylonian doctrines exercised from age to age on the religious beliefs of the Graeco-Latin world until finally they transformed them into a sidereal pantheism, which became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The catholic character of this religion and its elimination of all narrower forms of belief paved the way for the acceptance of Christianity. But astrological beliefs did not die. They are not even now completely overthrown, and they have left their mark on modern languages. The exposition necessarily begins with an account of the Chaldean creed and its evolution, and it ends with a description of the theology of sidereal religion, of its mysticism and ethics, and of its doctrine of immortality. It is an entrancing subject, in which research has made rapid advance within the last twenty years, and Prof. Cumont has done a real service by summing up the present state of knowledge in a very readable and lucid narrative, marked throughout by fine sanity of judgment.

Nowhere has advance been greater than in determining the various stages of development and the strength of the various forces at work. We now see that the astral religion of Chaldea does not belong to prehistory, but was a sixth-century development, and, as a result, that the debt of Greece to Babylon has been grossly exaggerated. She borrowed the rudiments of astronomic knowledge, but rapidly outdistanced her teachers. Yet, despite the support of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle and the author of the Platonic *Epinomis*, "the first gospel preached to Hellenes of the astral religion of Asia," astronomic theology gained no hold on the Greek mind till the birth (with Alexander) of the idea of universal monarchy. It was to the interpenetration of Greece and the East in the Seleucid empire and, above all, to the constructive logic of the Stoics that the future development of sidereal pantheism was due. We should like to hear something of the earlier stages of this great intellectual movement which combined philosophy with star-worship, but the evidence is too defective to allow the evolution of ideas to be traced. We have to be content with the result as we find it in the developed system of Posidonius of Apamea, the teacher of Cicero (who reproduces his doctrines in the *Somnium Scipionis*) and the inspirer of Manilius and of the Stoics and of the astrologers of the imperial age.

A few references are given, in the form of footnotes, to ancient and modern authorities, but for the proof of many statements the reader must await the appearance of the larger work which is promised in the preface. We must add that the English version has suffered somewhat from having been too hastily printed off by the American Committee without the revision of those responsible for it. In particular the punctuation has often gone wrong, and the dotted lines intended to indicate transitions in the argument give the impression of extensive expurgation. But these and other small blemishes do not seriously impair the enjoyment of the reader.

J. G. C. ANDERSON,