

NOTICES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

THE EXCAVATIONS AT DURA-EUROPOS CONDUCTED BY YALE UNIVERSITY AND THE FRENCH ACADEMY OF INSCRIPTIONS AND LETTERS. Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons of Work, 1933-4 and 1934-5. Edited by M. I. ROSTOVTSSEFF, F. E. BROWN and C. B. WELLES. New Haven: Yale University Press. London: Milford, 1939. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{2}$. Pp. xxiv + 462, with 57 plates. Price \$7.50.

Ten years of exploration at Doura were completed in 1937 and the plan at the end of this report shows the extent to which the city has given up its secrets. The general layout is clear. The excavations along the foundation of the city wall, here recorded, enable this layout to be related to the history of Doura and the surrounding district. Private houses have been described in earlier reports and the general type in use, at least in the Parthian and Roman periods, is well known. The developments of the agora and the citadel and its palace have also been brought into relation with the successive rulers of the city. Finally we may note the great succession of temples with their varied cults, native and foreign, Greek and Semitic, expressed in their architecture, sculpture and painting. Six of these temples are described in the present volume.

Doura was founded in the third century B.C. by Antigonus I's general Nicanor. Situated on the west bank of the Euphrates the site was well chosen with steep gulleys defending the two sides and only the west open to attack from the desert. We do not yet know how soon the city was fortified, but the stone foundation is clearly earlier than the existing fortifications and must belong to a mud-brick wall and towers of Hellenistic date. This shows that the city of that time covered the same extent as in later days and the evidence suggests that the street plan goes back to the same origin though it would seem that the site was closely built up only at a later date. Seleucia fell into Parthian hands in 140-39 B.C. and Doura must have followed after no long interval. In the earlier years the Parthians, satisfied with the existing defences, began to erect a citadel in the centre of the town, but the Roman threat to their frontier in the period from 65 to 19 B.C. forced them to abandon this work in favour of the more urgent replacement of the Hellenistic mud-brick with the curtain and towers of masonry which are still preserved. A temporary occupation under Trajan was followed by a permanent conquest in the third quarter of the same century and Doura remained a Roman city till its capture and destruction in the Sassanian invasion of A.D. 256. A reminder of the last siege is the great rampart reinforcing the west wall within and without, a ramp which has preserved for us buildings and paintings like the Christian Church and the Synagogue described in earlier reports and the Mithraeum published in this volume.

The Mithraeum was founded in A.D. 168 on a site previously occupied by private houses. Extensive rebuildings took place *circa* 210 and again some thirty years later. Much of the painted

decoration of the last two phases has survived. The final series includes canonical scenes from the Mithraic cosmogony and from the life of Mithra. These may be compared with the similar Italian series from the mithraeum at Capua Vetere and that in the Barberini garden at Rome. A rarer element suggesting Oriental influences is reflected in the figures of the two magi, expounders of the sacred books, and the two scenes of Mithras as the hunter.

The temples of Adonis (built *circa* A.D. 160) and of Zeus Theos (built *circa* A.D. 120) were built by particular groups of worshippers whose names appear as donors in the dedicatory and other inscriptions. The temple of this type is a large complex which would include subsidiary shrines, 'chapels' and rooms for various purposes. These 'chapels' have been found in other temple complexes at Doura and on other neighbouring sites. The temple of Adonis has a long range, flanking the courtyard. They are arranged with low benches like those found in the principal chamber of a private house and it is suggested that they served for the sacred banquet, a custom well attested in Syria. The temple of the Gadde and the 'Necropolis temple' are both connected with the Palmyrene community at Doura. Both were established in the latter part of the first century B.C. and their growing size and splendour in the following centuries reflect the rise of Palmyra itself. The vicinity of the second to the necropolis grew out of an extension of the cemetery of the city after the foundation of the temple and it is suggested that it should really be connected with the New Year festival. Zeus Kurios, the last temple to be described in this volume is a small open precinct with the cult image set into a tower of the city wall and an altar beneath.

In conclusion we would offer our congratulations to the two institutions who have carried through this most fruitful exploration and to the many workers in the field and scholars who have so quickly published the more important finds. For the vast number of interested students who have not been able to visit the site during the excavations, it will be a consolation to learn that the more important paintings have been removed and are being re-erected at Yale and in the Museum at Damascus.

C. A. R. R.

THE MEDIEVAL FENLAND. By DR. H. C. DARBY. Cambridge University Press. Pp. xiii + 200, 11 plates, 25 maps. Price 12s. 6d.

THE DRAINING OF THE FENS. By DR. H. C. DARBY. Cambridge University Press. Pp. xiii + 312, 31 plates, 34 maps. Price 21s.

A marked feature of the post-1918 research in Cambridgeshire has been the revival of interest in the Fenlands. Successive publications in the technical journals, mainly the result of the co-ordinated activities of members of the Fenland Research Committee, have illuminated the geological origin and botanical structure of the fens, and the effect of variations in relative levels of land and sea, in the region. On this sure foundation the early history of man in the area is being built up, largely by the same brilliant group.

A competent study of the medieval and modern history of the Fenlands on a basis of geographical and historical knowledge is the necessary corollary to these activities. Such a study has been produced by Dr. H. C. Darby in the volumes now under review.

The *Medieval Fenland* covers the history of the Fens from Domesday down to the Dissolution, following a brief introduction dealing with earlier times. The *Draining of the Fens* carries the story down to the end of the nineteenth century, with a brief epilogue. The two volumes are concerned with two economic phases of fenland history, the pre-drainage period on the one hand, and the history of drainage, still not at an end, on the other.

The Fenland occupies portions of many counties—Huntingdon, Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge; its extreme length between Lincoln and Cambridge is about 72 miles, its greatest breadth 36 miles; the area being some 1,300 square miles.

It consists of two main types of country, peat fen in the South and (as a narrow strip) along the western border, silts and clays bordering the Wash and extending southward nearly as far as Ely. These are by nature alike in their flatness and in their slight elevation above mean sea-level. The islands form a third feature of the Fens of great importance; these are outliers of Jurassic rocks capped with boulder clay, the largest of which is Ely.

Into this vast area pour rivers and streams which drain a great part of Eastern England—the Ouse, the Nene, the Welland, the Witham, the Great Ouse and the Cam. Consequently the condition of the Fenland depended not only on the rain-water falling on it, or the tides flooding it, but also on the amount of water coming down from the uplands.

In medieval times the activities of the Fenland folk fell into three main groups. Those belonging to the marsh itself, fishing, fowling, reed-gathering and salt-making (sea-shore zone): those associated with the intermediate zone (hay production, stock-raising and turf-cutting); lastly, the arable farming of the islands.

During the middle ages, when much of the country was in the hands of great ecclesiastical corporations, tentative and localised efforts at reclamation were made; by drainage and embanking marshes were turned into good and fertile arable land, and one may envisage a continuous piecemeal encroachment on the edges of the fens. And this, though a slow process, produced in the course of centuries, as Dr. Darby tells us, a great revolution in economic geography; by it the wealth of the land was greatly increased, especially in the silt fen. As nature was transformed by art, so the damage done by flooding and neglect, e.g., the blocking of drains by silt and vegetation, became more serious. The elaborate system of rights and duties in connection with use and drainage, of the landowners of the region, is vividly set out by the author, with many quotations from original sources. In the first volume he deals also with the interesting subject of local rebellions in the Fens. Defending the Fen-men against the charge of being a stiff-necked

and intractable folk, he urges that these rebellions were all external in origin and have the same history—a group of nobles seizes and utilises the strategic opportunities offered by the marsh—ultimately the royal army arrives to invest and blockade the region. Result : widespread devastation. This cycle of events occurred four times—in the famous guerilla war between Hereward and William I ; during the anarchy of Stephen's reign ; in 1216 and again in 1265.

The modern history of the Fens, which is the history of its draining, is a remarkable story. It has two aspects ; the slow progress, with many setbacks, towards a solution of the physical problems, and the even slower progress towards the solution of the administrative difficulties. A region whose essential problem was single—that of getting unnecessary water off or through the land, and into the sea—was bound in the shackles of customary law, and the rights and duties of a hundred authorities and private owners had to be considered before any effective action on a large scale could be taken. Not until the twentieth century was effective and uniform control secured.

The cutting of straight and broad drains towards the outfalls to replace the sinuous natural channels of the rivers, and so quicken the rate of flow towards the sea was the fundamental solution of Vermuyden and his successors. This, of course, was accompanied by the embanking of large areas of the fen and leading its waters to the new drains by lesser cuts. The principle was sound, and such schemes invariably produced excellent results at first. The recurrence of flooding which always followed, was due to blocking of the outfalls in the Wash by sand, and also to a wholly unforeseen cause, the lowering of the peat—which is like a sponge—by dessication. Dr. Darby gives a remarkable photograph of Holme Post, an iron pillar sunk to its top in the Fen in 1848, now (1932) 10 ft. 8 in. out of the ground. By this shrinkage the carefully-calculated rates of fall of engineers, on which early schemes of reclamation were based, are reduced to absurdity ; and only the introduction of systems of *lifting* the water from the fen drains into the rivers has prevented the problem from becoming insoluble. Mechanical progress has in this field of invention kept apace with need ; windmills have been replaced by the more powerful steam engine, and steam engines by diesel engines, in the course of three centuries.

This brief review cannot do more than indicate the range of the author's studies ; the books must be read for adequate appreciation.

One or two criticisms, in respect of the first volume only, may be permitted.

To 'set the stage' is surely the author's first task ; the book is fully illustrated with excellent maps, and one would expect one showing the Fens in relation to the basins of the rivers which flow into the region, with a brief description of the physical geography. But one has to wait to page 92 for any mention of the river systems, and there is no map of them as a whole.

Figures 3, 4, and 5—Domesday settlement in Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire parish boundaries—would be

greatly improved and their significance made clearer if the outline of the Fens were superposed on them.

Dr. Darby gives quotations from medieval MSS. in their original Latin, as is proper in books written for scholars. But why does he limit his quotations to Latin? A strange scrap of poetry which has come down to us from the Dark Ages, yielding a glimpse of the age of the Saints, as it were, is given in a halting modern dress:—

Merry sang the monks in Ely,

As King Canute rowed thereby

The original, whatever its defects, has a music of its own, and begins,

Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely,

Tha Cnut ching reu ther-by

It is not reasonable to demand from Dr. Darby independent judgment on matters architectural. But he has been unfortunate in his choice of authorities. The caption to Fig. 9—the church of Terrington St. Clement—is misleading in two particulars: the original church is twelfth century not fourteenth, for work of that period remains *in situ*; and that the structure was ‘cased with perpendicular work’ is most improbable (see *Arch. Journal* lxxxix, p. 373). The caption to Fig. 8 describes the magnificent western tower of Walsoken All Saints Church, plain for all to see as early thirteenth century (up to the belfry) as ‘pure Norman of the late period, built in the first half of the twelfth century’!

These are superficial blemishes: the volumes will long remain the standard record of the Fens and are essential to an understanding of the history of Eastern England.

CYRIL FOX.

MORE ROCK PAINTINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA. Illustrations by J. E. M. VAN DER RIET. Introduction and Notes by D. F. BLEEK. London: Methuen, 1940. Pp. xx and 28 Plates. 42s.

This is a volume of fine collotype reproductions of South African rock paintings and engravings from the belt of country running parallel with the coast but slightly inland from Albany to Piquetberg. As Miss D. F. Bleek says in her useful Introduction, the series is crude when compared with the other regional groups in South Africa, but nevertheless it shows considerable spirit and charm, and several of these collotypes with their soft greys, browns, reds and yellows are most pleasing to the eye. There is often a good sense of movement, particularly in some of the human scenes and in the long lines of leaping buck, and a distinctive feature of the region as a whole is the occurrence of the impressions of hands and feet.

Near Graaffreinet in the east is one of the very rare districts where paintings and engravings occur close together, and their stylistic similarities are so close that they are likely both to be the work of the same people. This district also has pictures of cattle and men armed with metal-headed spears, a sure sign that these

were painted after the middle of the eighteenth century, when there had been Bantu penetration of the area.

Miss Bleek does not hesitate to recognise the artists themselves as Bushmen. There is a late eighteenth-century record of Bushmen occupying painted caves near Graaffreinet and there is historical evidence for the presence of these people in all districts where the paintings are found. Unmistakable characteristics of Bushman physique and dress are often reproduced. In the eastern part of the region painted caves have yielded stone implements of the Wilton culture which is certainly Bushman, as is also the Smithfield culture that is associated with the more northerly art group found in Eastern Province, Basutoland, Orange Free State and Natal. It seems that the Wilton and Smithfield cultures, with their differing but related artistic styles, belonged to two distinct Bushman tribes.

As in this southern coastal belt, paintings are associated with Wilton industries also in Southern Rhodesia, and Miss Bleek sees certain similarities of style between the two regions: she suggests that the Bushmen reached the south from Rhodesia by a route down the centre of the continent, whereas the tribe responsible for the Smithfield culture had either originated further east or had left the same source at an earlier date and specialised their implements and painting in isolation.

The author might perhaps have mentioned that evidence from the Bambata cave assigns the earliest Rhodesian paintings to the Stillbay culture, which is usually dated as early as the very end of the Pleistocene, and is believed to be connected with a proto-Bushman stock. The Southern series undoubtedly begins later, but it would be interesting to know if it is possible to establish any colour or style sequence from the super-positions there that could be correlated with the sequence already recognised in Rhodesia. This might provide an upper limit of date to be set against the lower limit given by the eighteenth-century Bantu contacts that preceded the detribalisation and extermination of the little hunters and artists.

This is a valuable record of a hitherto little-known art group, and can be warmly recommended as an attractive acquisition for anyone who can afford the price.

J. J. HAWKES.

EXCAVATIONS ON OLDBURY HILL, IGHTHAM, 1938. By J. B. WARD PERKINS. *Archaeologia Cantiana* li (1939), pp. 137-181.

The Iron Age Camp on Oldbury Hill, Ightham, is a notably large member of the hitherto rather obscure multiple-ramparted series of the West Kent region, and its exploration by Mr. Ward Perkins has well justified the estimate of its probable importance formed by the Kent Archaeological Society and the supporting bodies that financed the work—of which this Institute did well to be one. Mr. Ward Perkins is a skilful and intrepid excavator—the geology and forestry of the site make it none too easy to dig—and his report is a model of its kind, not only in the account and illus-

tration of his actual work and finds, but in the presentation of his conclusions from them. It will be found that while probabilities are against any continuous occupation of the hill, the local population fortified it on two occasions: in the first half of the first century B.C., for defence probably against the expanding Belgae of the lower Medway and East Kent, and in A.D. 43 against the Roman armies of Claudius. Between those dates the Belgae succeeded to the mastery of the region, as the pottery associated with the second fortification-period shows; its original inhabitants are more interesting because hitherto unrecognised, and are here assigned the very suitable label of the Wealden Culture. This represents the establishment, on a local Iron Age A substratum, of a branch of the Cissbury Culture which had been engendered on the central Sussex Downs by a group of Iron Age B invaders in the third century B.C., and its distinctive degenerate-pedestal pot-type is well named the 'foot-ring bowl.' Mr. Ward Perkins' exposition of this not unimportant group and its neighbours is the first essay in fitting the W. Kent-Surrey-Wealden region into place in the history and geography of the British Iron Age. He intends a fuller survey for publication shortly in *Archaeologia*, of which his excavation-results published here will be a corner-stone. It has been well and truly laid.

C. F. C. HAWKES.

HOLY IMAGES. By EDWYN BEVAN. George Allen & Unwin, 1940. Crown 8vo. Pp. 184; 4 plates. Price 7s. 6d.

Readers of Dr. Bevan's Gifford Lectures, *Symbolism and Belief*, will suffer no disappointment in this supplementary volume on a particular theme. Ranging from the Greeks and Hebrews to living issues between Catholics and Protestants, he has given us a masterly survey of the varying values attributed by religion to carved and painted images. Briefly, there have been three distinguishable views as to the use of pictures and images in worship: (1) That all making of pictures and images is wrong. (2) That they are permissible in order to instruct simple minds and to stimulate devotion. (3) That it is right not only to make pictures and images but to address towards them signs of religious reverence.

The first view was held by the Jews in the Christian era in the sense that the Law prohibited images of all living creatures, but of living creatures only. But the Second Commandment was a fruitful field for interpretation and it was the opinion of the later Rabbis that an image might be made of any living creature except a human being. That an ever wider relaxation of the rule was allowed in Jewish circles has been suggested by recent archaeological discoveries, in particular the third-century frescoes in the synagogue at Dura-Europos, where a whole series of Old Testament scenes has been brought to light.

The second view was favoured by the Christian Church of the first three centuries. In alluding to the catacomb paintings, Dr. Bevan emphasises the reserve or 'shyness' shown in the predominance of Old over New Testament scenes and in the invariable

avoidance of the Passion and the Cross, for which no fully satisfying explanation has yet been offered. He would detect here a feeling that by giving material visibility to an idea regarded as peculiarly holy, you have inevitably degraded or profaned it. In this context he might have made rather more than he does of the significance of the Dura paintings, where a similar vein of 'shyness' is betrayed. They revealed to the eye the episodes read and interpreted to the community in the synagogue, while deliberately avoiding any representation of Jehovah by whose holy will these incidents had happened. As Dr. Bevan has observed elsewhere, 'the Christian Church inherited the great problem of Hellenistic Judaism, how to find the right relation between Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy and culture.' Moreover, he fails to notice that the choice of Old Testament subjects in the catacombs and on sarcophagi, as Le Blant and K. Michel have long ago propounded, was controlled by 'les prières liturgiques les plus anciennes, dont les invocations trouvent dans les fresques leur commentaire perpétuel' (Dom Leclercq). Even to-day a Catholic priest attending at the bed of the dying prays that amongst other things God will deliver his soul as He delivered Noah from the deluge, Isaac from sacrifice, Daniel out of the lion's den, the three youths from the fiery furnace and Susannah from false accusation. This prayer can be traced back to its earliest roots, and is paralleled in both Greek and oriental formulas. It may well be that the Christians borrowed not only their prayers but their imagery from the Jews. This conservative tradition in early Christian art is the more surprising if we are to accept the brilliant conjecture lately advanced by Professor Arnold Toynbee (*A Study of History* vi (1939), pp. 508 ff.), that it was a common practice in the Hellenistic world for devotees of Saviours, both human and divine, to circulate sets of pictures illustrating the lives and passions of their heroes. Shrines of Mithras excavated in recent years appear to have been adorned with series of tableaux depicting in successive stages the story of the god.

With the influx of pagan society in the fourth century the Church yielded to popular demand and moved to the third of Dr. Bevan's views. Not only did the old 'shyness' disappear but images were now regarded as objects of devotion to which kissing, bowing and prostration could be offered. They were widely thought of as things from which supernatural power went forth to men. (A similar development in the cult of relics might have been noticed.) It would be impertinent to praise the charm and lucidity with which Dr. Bevan unravels the views of Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants and the fine distinctions between veneration and idolatry drawn by theological protagonists.

St. Augustine's puritan attitude to aesthetic pleasure is perhaps a little too exclusively treated. The ascetic element in the Catholic tradition has often been critical of art, as with the Cistercians—witness St. Bernard's letter to Abbot William of St. Thierry—or Savonarola.

E. P. B.

THE ROMANS IN SPAIN, 217 B.C.—A.D. 117. By C. H. V. SUTHERLAND.
 London: Methuen, 1939. 8vo. Pp. i-xii, 1-264; fig. 1, pls. i-xii,
 3 maps. Price 8s. 6d.

This excellent summary of the development of Roman relations with Spain admirably supplies the want of an English treatment of the subject which did justice not only to the literary sources but to the archaeological material which gives them a new content. It may also be added that the author is a numismatist and thus professionally qualified to deal with the complex question of the coinage, which, as he shows, has a very special bearing upon historical studies.

The introduction presents us with a balanced essay of pre-Roman influences at work in the peninsula, though its ethnographic distinctions are too sweeping, and not always correct. It emphasises the age-old cultural disunity imposed by geography and climate, and shows how the age of metals was to transform Spain from a land of distinctly limited possibilities to an Eldorado attractive not merely to its own inhabitants but to outsiders. All came: Phoenicians and Greeks, the latter winning a hold short but firmer than is often realised, and then the Carthaginians, with a firmer and more exclusive grip than all. But the earlier Punic thalassocracy was shared with the Etruscans, and while the reviewer agrees with Mr. Sutherland in rejecting Schulten's wide claims, he would suggest that a correct estimate of the Etruscan share in events has yet to be made. It may be remarked, for example, that the Lady of Elche, whose native Spanish grace is not to be denied, is nevertheless wearing jewellery of Etruscan type.

Roman interest in Spain, as in Gaul, came about through alliances, and the Roman political system made it imperative for the central power to keep its word. The equivocal position of Saguntum is, however, well brought out by the author, who demonstrates that the conquest of Punic Spain was a retaliation rather than a vindication. The operations themselves, hampered by fickle politics and treacherous physical features, were a sheer test of personality, whether Punic or Roman, and the Scipios surpassed the Barcids in tenacity and merit. When it came to organising the country, the Romans were content to temporise for eight years and only then to elaborate a provincial organisation which satisfied the Republic for nearly two centuries. The essence of the scheme was military power based upon the westward valley of Ebro, and eastward valley of Baetis, each basin forming the nucleus of a province. The taxes—how much did Rome owe here to Punic practice?—came from fixed *stipendia* agreed or assigned for different communities and soon paid in the native-minted silver, the *argentum Oscense*. But there was much scope for exaction and irregularities and the discontent thus sown was fanned by the further necessity of contributing military levies. The situation demanded discipline among the governors as well as the governed and a continuity of military policy, which was exactly what the Roman system of annual commands failed to supply. These administrative defects, inherent in a jealous oligarchy of *nobiles*, combined to make the Republican

province a heavy liability which cost Italy much blood. The first phase ended with the twenty years' war preceding the siege of Numantia; the second soon began when the civil strife of Roman army-commanders found ever-ready partisans in a province where discontent was endemic.

Among these adventurers only Julius Caesar found time for comprehensive reforms. Pompey's work is assessed by the author rather as repression of the revolutionary but highly interesting experiments of Sertorius. Yet it may be remarked that Caesar's earliest concessions in Romanisation have the air of an imitative rather than a creative programme. Only his colonial system, the outcome of one year's study, bears the stamp of originality.

It is the reviewer's conviction that in this chapter Mr. Sutherland has laid the foundations for an attractive inquiry. An archaeological study of the fortifications and town-plans on the sites which he mentions might well reveal the difference in scope between Caesar's foundations and those of Augustus. This is a line of inquiry which proves fruitful in Gaul, and a survey of Spanish conditions might well provide a comparison and understanding of the two men. Mr. Sutherland's stimulating remarks on Caesar's views of Roman citizenship (pp. 129-30) might be usefully confirmed by such an investigation.

The account of the Augustan achievement opens with a valuable summary of the heavy campaigning which ensured its success. It was doubtless during that campaigning that Augustus learnt to appreciate the physical peculiarities which induced him, the first organiser of all Spain, to create three provinces instead of two. There were modifications in the scheme—we may compare the adjustments of Aquitania and Lugdunensis—which gave wilder districts to Tarraconensis, a province whose administrative problems have much in common with Roman Britain. While owing a first start in civic development to Caesar, the province owed the structural manifestation of that advance to Augustus, and the present reviewer cannot help regretting that Mr. Sutherland did not devote a little more space to this side of the question. A useful account of Merida in the pages of this *Journal* might have been quoted, since it is the only comprehensive account of the town in English, and pays special attention to its earliest development.

Later developments need not be discussed here. They are complicated, and the author would be the first to admit that the material for reconciling archaeology with literary tradition in the matter of the local government is not yet to hand. Until it does come to light, such emendations as *Lusonibus* for *Lingonibus* in Tacitus, *Histories*, i, 78, will rank as counsels of desperation.

I. A. RICHMOND.

THE COMMON PEOPLE OF POMPEII. By HELEN H. TANZER. The Johns Hopkins University studies in archaeology, no. 29, edited by David M. Robinson. Baltimore, 1939, and Humphrey Milford. 8vo. Pp. i-xii, 1-113; figs. 1-49. Price 17s. 6d. net.

This interesting little study has all the qualities of industry and diligent compilation, and supplies a lively account of the graffiti. It may be asked, however, whether the background against which the graffiti are described is sufficiently well appreciated. To describe the permanent residents of a Roman colony as 'largely well-to-do peasants and prosperous freedmen' is surely to ignore some principal factors; just as a similar unfamiliarity with the subject is indicated by the estimate of the duties of the *duoviri iuri* (sic) *dicundo* and the *duoviri quinquennales*. Even the *Cena Trimalchionis* is a warning against the estimate of such a community as a 'true democracy.' Here and there, too, the translation evinces a misleading lack of realism. *Venatio* is not an animal-show: *pupa* in the vernacular is not a baby, unless we put it into American and inverted commas; the sense of *vinum picatum*, as naturally resinated wine, is carefully explained by the elder Pliny; nor is *cisium* a cab. The illustrations are on the whole a disappointing series of reproductions from sources long out of date and are redeemed only here and there by some of the photographs (not all are good) and the excellent facsimiles of professional poster-writers' lettering. When these strictures have been made, however, it must be said that the production is a very useful compendium of its subject, of an expurgated kind suitable for use in all libraries.

I. A. RICHMOND.

EXCAVATIONS AT ELMSWELL, EAST YORKSHIRE, 1938. By PHILIP CORDER. University College, Hull. 8vo. Pp. 1-62; figs. 1-16, pls. i-iv. Price 1s.

This valuable report is in some respects one of the most stimulating that have come from Mr. Corder's expert pen, because it shows so clearly what can be done with a site devoid of imposing structural remains. At Elmswell the rich yield of relics indicating an intensive if humble occupation, combined with the absence of tangible structures, invites comparison with such sites as Woodeaton. But there is also an altogether exceptional continuity of dated relics from pre-Roman to Saxon times, and in this respect the place compares with such a back-woods site as Irchester. It was hoped that excavation might reveal a Roman farming settlement comparable with the neighbouring villas of Langton or Rudston. The trenches and trial-pits revealed instead that an area of about two acres, bounded by streams and drainage-ditches, was crowded with huts, floors and pits. The activity centred there was indicated by a corn-drying kiln, abundant hand-querns, and cereal storage-pits of the Woodbury type, not all contemporary and sometimes developing one out of the other. The pits were gradually filled with Roman rubbish until entirely out of use by A.D. 370. Another activity is indicated by an abundance of iron-slag, though both the source of the raw material

and the method of working it remain obscure. A hut, defined by floors rather than post-holes, dated from the third until the late fourth century. The coin-list indicates, however, that circulation, never here abundant, was increasing towards the end of the fourth century, and an interesting comparative table strengthens the case for believing that economic prosperity then lay in the country rather than the administrative centres. This prepares us for a Saxon penetration which destroyed urban institutions but perforce accepted the basic elements of rural life, upon which was founded the new political unit of Deira. In this way history is skilfully won from hovels and their associated rubbish. Notable relics were almost too rare to be significant. The British coins of the Iceni and Cunobelinus were useful as denoting an early start for the occupation. The wonderful decorative panel of bronze and enamel-work gave a welcome glimpse of native aristocratic furnishings, certainly not to be directly connected with the excavated site.

I. A. RICHMOND.