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“Antient” philosophy-science in Magna Graecia: Cassiodorus and Pythagoras and 20th c. literary travellers, Gissing and Douglas

W. Johnson

62 Beach Road, Carlyon Bay, St. Austell Cornwall, PL25 3PJ, UK

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1. Magna Graecia (Great Greece): a little known colonial region

It is probably true that most engineer-scientists are familiar with major events and achievements of classical Greece and Rome, but that Magna Graecia at best is perceived simply as a “dark” area at the foot of Italy. Few of its historical cities and scientific and literary personages or scholars are known from the days of its importance. Even today the area is not well visited or toured and it remains for most of us a rather backward part of modern Italy. See Fig. 1.

The Ionian islands — perhaps surprisingly — lie between the west of Greece and south-east of southern Italy — reflecting the fact that the latter region, along with Sicily was colonised westwards from mainland Greece. (Ionia on the western edge of Turkey, as such, tends to mislead us into expecting the adjacent sea to be called after it.) Within Greater Greece we should point out that besides the cities in southern Italy — Tarentum and Locri, etc., — the Greek cities of Sicily are also



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later arose being that of Islamic expansion and Frederick II, and yet a fourth was that of Norman domination in about the 11th c. — but with these we do not concern ourselves here.)

A search for the beginnings of the institutions for the teaching of early philosophy-science and related topics is something which can be expected to rise from time-to-time in the mind of those presently engaged in the academic teaching of students. However there seems to be no real quantity of effort devoted by engineering-science teachers to precisely that exercise. A fine effort in outlining a general, *History of Western Education*, [1], was made by Boyd and those who wish to learn about, for instance, what necessarily preceded the history of mechanics might well start with it. The subjects of technical education rest on early mathematics, geometry and astronomy, etc., (subjects of the quadrivium) and need recognition in any search for discipline continuity. Our starting point is the early history of the liberal arts.

Benedictine monks played a major role in the history of historical scholarship especially in the 17th and 18th centuries and this was attested by the author in Ref. [2]. They achieved immense feats which were the result of performances resting on one portion of a rule of St. Benedict, namely, that which required that certain members of their order should employ their time and energy in study and literary production — a rule almost unique in monkish history. How the effort and tradition of doing so formally developed should make us reflect on how such a rule as we have alluded to, could have been instituted by a man with so little formal educational training as St. Benedict possessed. By dint of perusing the volume written by Sandys, [3], — and there seem to be few authors or books with the same view — I found that the activity of intellectual work which was urged, was that proposed and required by Cassiodorus Senator in the 6th c. A.D., after he had resigned from being a servant of the then Ostrogothic Emperor of Magna Graecia. This man was a contemporary of St. Benedict and they both functioned in the late 5th c. A.D. in Southern Italy. After Bellsarius had captured Ravenna for Justinian, Emperor of Byzantium, Cassiodorus retired from his “civil service” position to devote himself to writing and establishing his own two monasteries at Squillace on the Ionian coast. He expected some of his monks to use their days in the study and recording of classical scholarship. Cassiodorus and others recognised that the latter was a necessity because Roman-Greek education and learning was fast declining and in danger of being totally forgotten. We enlarge below on the work which Cassiodorus encouraged and later centuries found important, it becoming known subsequently as the seven liberal arts. The latter comprised the trivium and the quadrivium and became part of the basic diet of university students in the Middle Ages. After we have outlined the latter development in some detail and though it is somewhat tenuous, parts of it remain strongly relevant to modern European history. The point of view which is developed here is not so much what is addressed by classical scholars but what has been made the subject of writing and record by certain English amateur scholar litterateur-travellers. The introduction of the latter in this particular paper, it has to be acknowledged, owes its presence to the close contact with southern Italy which the author developed from about two years’ intimate association with the region. Reading and thought about the history and situations that had once arisen in Calabria and Lucania over many years provoked the interests described above and below. It is also pertinent to point out to the modern reader how relevant to several recent events has been the writings of authors two millennia ago.

The reason for my use above of the term philosophy-science and the point of view behind it, I believe, is similar to that justified in the few extracts from the preface and Chapter 9, (p. 125) of

G.E.R. Lloyd's book, *Early Greek Science*, [4]. I quote,

“Science is a modern category, not an ancient one: there is no one term that is exactly equivalent to our “science” in Greek. The terms *philosophia* (love of wisdom, philosophy), *episteme* (knowledge) and *peri physeos historia* (inquiry concerning nature) are each used in particular contexts ...”.

“... the theories that fall under the heading of “Greek science” are enormously diverse The people who produce them were known to their contemporaries not as “scientists” but as philosophers or *physikoe* or mathematicians or doctors or sophists”.

2. Emergence of the liberal arts and mathematics

Martianus Minneus Felix, CAPELLA

Capella, 419–440 A.D., was a Latin writer and lawyer at Carthage, known to Cassiodorus. Our interest in him relates to an encyclopaedic work he composed of nine books entitled the *Satyricon*; it is a mixture of prose and verse said to be excessively verbose, written in “chantifiable form”, and became “the intellectual pabulum of the mediaeval schools”. Boethius and Cassiodorus wrote typical books on the Arts for the needs of a teaching curriculum, though it is acknowledged that they “diverted attention somewhat from science and its attitudes”. The first two books of the *Satyricon* are a reputedly dull allegory of *The Marriage of Mercury and the Nymph Philologia*, (strictly, in Latin, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii et de Septem Artibus liberalibus libri novem*), who is attended by seven bridesmaids, personifying the seven classical liberal Arts which allow for seven expositions about themselves but in two groups. The work was an encyclopaedia for the times. The first group became known as the trivium (— the cross roads, where three roads meet, from *tres* — three and *via* — road —) and treated of *grammar*, *dialectic* and *rhetoric*, whilst the second group — the quadrivium — encompassed *arithmetic*, *geometry*, *astronomy* and *music*. These subjects are linked with the original allegory of the first two books by personifying each subject as a courtier of a married pair. The two sets of Liberal Arts constituted the essence of mediaeval education. The author, Capella, derived his descriptions principally from Roman writers such as Pliny and from Varro's *Disciplinae* and the like. This work was held in high repute especially during the later Mediaeval Age. We should stress *particularly* that what we are rendering in English above was written, originally, in early Latin so that we should always be prepared for changes of meaning or interpretation which may have been introduced unavoidably; this also applies for all foreign language translations.

It is claimed that the seven liberal Arts had, mostly, been developed early on by Plato and Aristotle. It is held that the *sciences* in the quadrivium were chiefly matters of formal definitions with a citation of the magical properties of celestial phenomena, numbers and formulae (which are encountered in the mysticism of Pythagorean followers). *Rhetoric* was associated with flowery language, with sonorous phrases and deflected attention from concrete sciences; it was aesthetic pleasure, it impressed audiences by dwelling on speed — which was important in antiquity when declaiming and seeking acclamation. Experts write of taught *Rhetoric* as “Roman — stirred with a double trochee”!. Noteworthy in Book VIII is a clear statement of the heliocentric system-of

which even Copernicus was aware. The two sets of liberal Arts are the essence of mediaeval education.

All the secular knowledge embraced in the seven Arts is given sanctity by the text, “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars”.

3. Anicius Manlius Severinus, BOETHIUS, c. 475–524 A.D.

“The First of the Scholastics, the Last of the Romans” and “The Schoolmaster of the West”

Boethius is mainly notable, (i) as a philosopher–teacher, for his learning and writings prior to his imprisonment, and (ii) for his “ageless volume”, [5], *The Consolations of Philosophy*. He was the son of an ancient distinguished family — “of fabulous descent from a race of consuls and dictators”, wrote Edward Gibbon, [6]. His parents died when he was 7 yr old and he was adopted by the wealthy, ancient, highly educated Symmachus family; he later married the daughter of his adoptive father. These two men, Boethius and Symmachus, were educated in all that was best in Roman, yet Christian, learning, and tried both to preserve and to make use of their formal education in the service of the Ostrogothic Kings, Odoacer (434–493 A.D.) and as from the later date, Theodorus. However, politics was the profession of the two scholars but it was their outspoken views and support for certain policies that brought them into fatal conflict with the King. By means of false letters used by his Orthodox enemy, Justin, Boethius was accused of conspiring against the King and imprisoned: he was then about 40 yr of age. Under sentence of death in Pavia (Ticinum, N. Italy), fettered and incarcerated in the town’s tower, yet he composed, as Gibbon judged, a “golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of Plato”, which has held the attention of men since it was written, 1500 years ago. The most recent edition of *The Consolatione*, 1998, as re-introduced by Brain Keenan, himself a hostage-prisoner (in the 1980s in Beirut) who suffered in a manner somewhat similar to Boethius, yet found great consolation according to his “introspective jail journal”. In due course Keenan was freed, but Boethius was partly strangled and then clubbed to death in 524 A.D. — as was Symmachus, slightly later. With time heavy on his hands during his confinement, Boethius had none-the-less produced this volume on the consolations of life — which time has not dimmed; “experience”, he wrote, “brings wisdom, where learning does not”. The book has been translated into many languages and has meant very much to men in similar dire circumstances. Of it, Gibbon commented, “he compared his long prosperity and his recent distress” and he came “to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of fortune” — he saw that, “reason informed him of the precarious condition of her gifts”, whilst “experience had satisfied him of their real value” and that “he had enjoyed them without guilt”. Gibbon, p. 202, takes almost a page to describe the avenues of consolation contemplated by Boethius which is written alternately in prose and verse; he is shown to have as guardian, a majestic woman who appears and guides him through the writings of philosophy, see Fig. 2, in his various books.

Scholarship

Despite the dominance of the Goths, as remarked, they did not suppress studies of Roman culture. The professors of grammar, rhetoric and jurisprudence were maintained and “their

Consolation of Philosophy **B**oethius

TRANSLATED AND INTRODUCED BY

V. E. WATTS

WITH A PREFACE BY BRIAN KEENAN



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(a) Boethius in his library



(b) The presentation of a translation of The Consolation to King Philip IV.

benefit of his Latin scholars, Gibbon writes of Boethius' genius² as being “submitted to teach the first elements of the arts and sciences of Greece, the geometry of Euclid, the music (of the spheres?) of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry — translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the latter Roman senator”. From these abstruse speculations, Boethius (also) rose to perform continuously his social public duties and led a blameless private life.

That Boethius was a man of profound learning whose writings were to have great influence in the future was foreshadowed in the opinion of the great scholar, Priscian, in his *Grammar*, (c. 526 A.D.), to the effect that he had attained “the summit of honesty and of all sciences”. “It was”, he said, “his elementary treatises on arithmetic and music which furnished manuals for the quadrivium of the schools”.

4. Flavius Magnus Aurelius CASSIODORUS Senator,³ c. 490–585 A.D.: a pivotal role

Cassiodorus was the name of a Syrian family which settled at Scyllacium (Squillace) in Bruttii, a province in southern Italy overlooking the Mediterranean, “Old Calabria”, see Fig. 1. There appear to have been at least four generations in this family of men who served Arian Gothic Emperors Odoacer and Theodoric. Their family name however, Senator, is that which was used by him in his official correspondence. Cassiodorus, was, in his time, historian, statesman and monk. The father of the man we are interested in, was some time controller of the private revenue and public exchequer of the above-named emperors; especially he was appointed by Theodoric as *corrector* (governor) of Brutii and Lucania. At an early age the son became *consiliarius* (legal assessor) to his father and in about 507 A.D., Quaestor, (Latin: to investigate, and the lowest of the great offices of state) an official who spoke for the ruler and drafted his speeches. In 514 A.D., he became an ordinary consul (a superior magistrate of a republic with quaestors as his assistants) and later was probably corrector of his native province. When Theodoric died in 526, Cassiodorus held the office of *magister officiorum* — chief of the civil service. Under the succeeding Emperor, Athalaric, he, as his father before him became *praefectus praetorio*, a position he held until about 540 A.D., when Count Belisarius, (505–565 A.D.) Emperor Justinian's Army General in Italy conquered Ravenna, retiring that same year from public life. Cassiodorus retired to his own estate, it seems to live the life of a monk, exaggerating in his monasticism the ideal of education and scholarly activity, though subordinating still the profane to the sacred. Ancient learning was transmitted by his own and later ages, trying to secure Roman and Greek knowledge against the rise of barbarism. He founded two monasteries on his own estate at Vivarium and Castellum. Sandys, [3], remarks, p. 71, that it was these monasteries at Squillace which, “set the first example of that devotion to literary labour which afterwards became one of the highest distinctions of the Benedictine order”. McCarthy, though he mentions Cassiodorus but little, observes that, “he is

² See [6], Vol. 5, p. 50 or [7], Vol. 4, p. 199.

³ *Senator* here, does not relate to any political function. Note the names Yellow(?) Great Golden CASSIODORUS Senator: praenomen (personal name), clan name and cognomen (family name), respectively.

more important than Benedict in defining the aims and direction of the Benedictines” [8]. Sandys, p. 71, also asserted, “the institutions of monastic libraries and schools, where the light of learning continued to shine in the Dark Ages ... owed much to the prescience of Cassiodorus”. The latter also collected and emended valuable manuscripts which his monks were required to copy, he himself superintending the translation of various Greek words into Latin. The opinion of the latter two authors is not at all conspicuous in the writing of English historians. Cassiodorus lived to the age of 93, the date of his last treatise. He is said to have even occupied himself by making scientific toys, such as sundials and clocks. The writings of Cassiodorus, we are told, show great erudition, ingenuity and application but are marred by inaccuracies and affectation; the experts remark that his Latin betrays the corruptions of the age. Cassiodorus finds little mention in Gibbon’s volume 4, [6]; to Gibbon, he was simply a Christian civil servant serving a non-Roman Emperor, whereas later historians regarded him as having created the notion and tradition of scriptoria and libraries where intelligent educated scholars could gather classical writings, interpret them and pass them on from generation to generation. St. Benedict essentially created a religious body, whilst the additions of Cassiodorus stood for something more worldly.

Whilst one may reflect that this area of Italy was that to which Pythagoras had transferred himself and established his school a millenium previously, yet no connections whatever between the Pythagoreans and Cassiodorus can be discerned.

There is speculation as to whether or not Cassiodorus belonged to the Benedictine order but we may ask, if he did, when and in which of Benedict’s monasteries did he spend time? There is no record of such a happening. The writing of the rule of Benedict is dated 540 A.D., though the Saint had moved to Cassino from Nursia in 529. There were 12 established monasteries at this time including one at Terracina. An interesting question which also arises is whether or not he had children and if so how this was accommodated into any new monkish code. It is not at all improbable that Cassiodorus discussed a wide range of ideas with the visitors intending to meet his Emperors, and it is well known that St. Benedict did himself visit Theodoric. It is unlikely that Cassiodorus would have missed the opportunity of engaging in discussion with him.

4.1. Cassiodorus’s writings

The most important of all Cassidorus’s writings is *The Variae* in 12 books written in 537 A.D. It is a good source of knowledge about the management of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy and especially it contains the decrees of contemporary Emperors. We may place second for our purposes *Institutiones divinarum et humanarum litterarum*, (*Principles of Divinity and Human Literature*), written 543 A.D.; it is a series of handbooks for monks, with an outline of the seven liberal arts — “the influence of which on mediaeval education was very great”. It also contains instructions for using the library and precepts for daily life. Thirdly, there is his *De Orthographia*, a compilation of the works of twelve “grammarians”, written when he was 93, being a treatise on grammar and spelling, from scholars Donatus, (mid 4th c. A.D.) — Roman grammarian, teacher of rhetoric and author of a school book very popular in the Middle Ages — to Priscian (fl. 500 A.D.), see above. There are also several original writings that could be described and many more about Gothic monarchs and Christian literature, lost.

4.2. Cassiodorus and St. Benedict: the Founding Days

Was Cassiodorus a monk? Most of our historians say he was but do not mention his “kind” or the regularised *rule* he subscribed to, such as that which was drafted and promulgated in 540 A.D., by St. Benedict, (and those he consulted?). However, there seems to be no written or reported evidence that he was a Benedictine monk, as either adult or boy, only that “he was a monk”. No period in his early manhood would seem to have been spent in monkish isolation. There was no establishment before 529 A.D., of Benedictines at Cassino and even so, Cassiodorus at that date would have been nearly 40 years of age. At an early age, Cassiodorus had indeed become Consiliarius (legal assessor) to his father and in 507 A.D., quaestor — at the age of only 17; he was sole consul in 514 A.D. Young boys were admitted to monasteries but it surely cannot be that Cassiodorus had any such training before about age 15 to qualify him for a monk and this not to be written about. Bury [6] writes that after Belisarius had captured Ravenna in 540 A.D., Cassiodorus then aged fifty, resigned his “civil service” posts. Altogether, there was surely no period of preparation for monkish discipline. Gibbon’s references to Cassiodorus are short, many in footnotes, but he mentioned him as a quaestor, a pretorian prefect, 509–539, A.D., and that “he lived as a monk about 30 yr”. Sandys [3, p. 189], makes this same remark and on p. 71 takes the view that it was Cassiodorus who, “set the first example of that devotion to literary labour which afterwards became the highest distinction of the Benedictine Order”.

The thought which arises in one’s mind, is of an interplay between the ideas of Benedict and Cassiodorus. Did Benedict follow Cassiodorus’s positive approach to the paying of more attention to profane scholarship than to the sacred? or was it as Sandys clearly believes, that the emphasis of Cassiodorus was acquired by the Benedictines as the centuries passed by? Thus, was the final development of Cassiodorus’s emphasis that of the Maurist/Benedictine? [2].

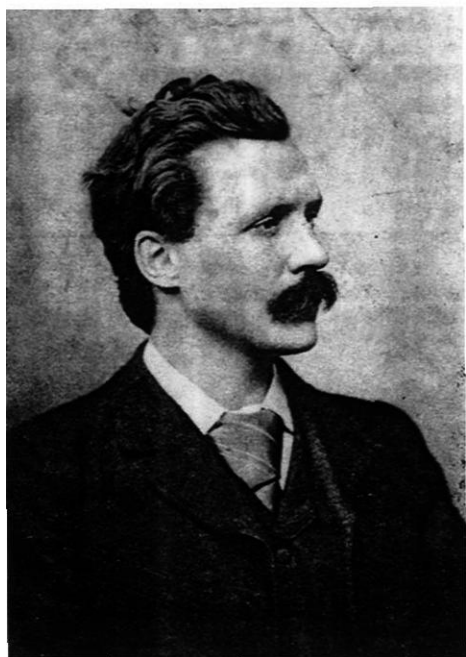
We do not know much about all the men with whom Cassiodorus had discussions but evidently in his civil service role he must have encountered many of the active thinkers of his day. Surely, Benedict and he must have known one another? Cassiodorus’s monasteries continued for some centuries after his death but seemingly there is only one man of learning from them, that we know anything at all about — Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian. However, it is alleged that some of the manuscripts of Cassiodorus’s monasteries made their way to Bobbio, Pavia, Italy.

We do not hear of Cassiodorus having a wife. Was he in fact ever married and did he have issue? If not, then his condition would indeed have been monkish. Tantilising thoughts are raised about the reason and purpose of Gothic King Totilla’s visit to St Benedict in 543 A.D., when the latter was well established in Cassino. The kind of useful information for answering these questions may be available in Cassiodorus’s *Variae* to judge from the plentiful footnotes in J.B. Bury’s *Decline and Fall*, Vol. IV, p. 183 et seq., and Gissing’s last chapters.

5. Modern regard for the ancient past: Travellers George Gissing⁴ and Norman Douglas

Traveller and novelist, George Gissing (1857–1903), see Fig. 3, wrote about his visit to Magna Graecia and of our early Christian classical scholar, Cassiodorus in his, *By the Ionian Sea*, 1901, [9].

⁴There is a *Gissing Centre* in Wakefield, open only Saturday afternoons, in summer and a *Gissing Journal*, currently Vol. XXXV, Published by the Gissing Trust.



George Gissing in 1895



NORMAN DOUGLAS

OLD CALABRIA

I first went to Calabria in 1907 and alone. Since those days I have been to the country many times partly alone and partly, on eight occasions, with friends English or Italian, my longest stay there being in 1911. The last visit was in 1936 — — — —

1907: that is ten years after the visit by Gissing, whose *Ionian Sea* is a favourite of mine. This book, with its pervading scholarly pensiveness and friendly outlook, has an aroma of its own and is one of the few which — — — — might with advantage have been lengthened to twice its size. One wishes that Gissing had been able to 'swing a wallet on his shoulder and make the whole journey on foot'; one wishes, too, that on regaining his health he had spent another day at Cotrone and made his longed-for pilgrimage to the temple-ruin; one wishes, above all, that he had not died so young or had found in youth some lusty man-friend to encourage him to laugh at happenings in Owen's College, and to elbow his way through the crowd with its droll little conventions, instead of taking them at their own valuation and being at their mercy. In that case his life might have lasted longer and shaped itself on different lines. Another Gissing, I think, would have emerged—a Gissing less sensitive and consequently less harassed. As things turned out, he was one 'whom circumstance ever menaces with dreary harassment'. That accounts for his lack of humour. Indifferent bedfellows—humour and harassment.

from the period of king Theodorus and the monastery at Cassino which Benedict established there. Virginia Woolf in her Introduction to *The Ionian Sea*, argues that Gissing's aims in early life, were essentially political — “to show the hideous injustice of our whole system of society”, but that in time they changed to become a preoccupation with artistic perfection. Her final sentence on Gissing included the judgement that he was a highly educated man.

Gissing went to Italy in 1897 and after meeting up with H.G. Wells in Rome they made a tour of the area, Wells paying the way. It is thus not surprising that, exceptionally, a useful short introduction about Cassiodorus in Southern Italy is to be found in Wells' brief section on St. Benedict and Pope Gregory in Vol. 1, p. 346, of his *The Outline of History* (1920). His inclusion of this topic is unusual and probably owes its presence to Wells' earlier meeting with Gissing in this part of the world. Many invaders of Italy have passed along this coast, the most recent of course being the Allies in the Second World War, after invading and securing Sicily. Salerno, just south of Naples, 1944, was where they landed from the sea and where fierce battles with the Germans had raged. My own involvement with this area started later when (in the Army) I was ordered to Naples (actually twice but a year apart) and required to travel in the area. For this reason it was not surprising that I should become caught-up in the region's history. Gissing's written reminiscences when on his boat trip to Paola from Naples, reminded me of reading about Emperor Tiberius's dark deeds as told by Robert Graves⁵ in *I Claudius* — they were vivid from the book — just prior to landing from the U.K. in the Naples area. Southern Italy also brought back to memory, Carlo Levi's then just-published *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. Levi was a Milanese lawyer/doctor, a liberal who was compelled to dwell — effectively exiled in 1935 — in Eboli. Pre-war, Mussolini used the area as a region for the banishment of political prisoners. Levi wrote his book describing a land then poverty-stricken in the extreme, a region “time had forgotten”; indeed, Levi's book-title implied that the region beyond Eboli was so primitive that Christianity had still not penetrated it! When I visited Eboli in 1946, the small town was physically depressing, almost beyond belief. The minds of its inhabitants, Levi has written, were full of strange magical beliefs. (Today, I am told, this region has been built-up and is to some degree typical of Mediterranean beach resorts.) I knew little of the history of this area before the British Army deposited me in it and I was therefore all the more curious to learn more about Magna Graecia, *pari passu*, the two Kings Frederick I and II, (ca. 12/13th c. A.D.), the very early Arabic medical school of Salerno and the location of Metapontum where Pythagoras had established a strange society and ended his life. I also had a faint recollection that my father had once mentioned Taranto when he had been a member of the crew of a destroyer which had called-in at the port of Taranto in W.W.I. He had described the town as repugnant, knowing little of the historical antiquities of the region.

To the previous miscellany, I should add that I recall H.G. Wells' descriptions of Gissing, especially of his death in St Jean de Luz, France, in 1903. Wells described in his, *Experiment in Autobiography*, how he had been left alone with a dying Gissing, unable to obtain any medical help, [10,11]. In later years, owing much to his novel *New Grub Street*, (and 22 other novels), Gissing became recognised as an outstanding turn-of-the-century novelist so that he came to merit a memorial plaque in Manchester University. When, in the 1960s, as a professor I had to visit Owen's College from U.M.I.S.T., to fulfil one of my duties and I had to confront a large, weary

⁵ Another of Graves' historical novels, highly relevant to the wars in this region in the 6th c. A.D. is his *Count Belisarius*.

academic committee sitting to examine recommendations for the promotion of certain members of staff. With colleagues, I would sit in the corridor outside the committee room whilst waiting and read a wall plaque memorialising our university's now distinguished traveller–novelist. Gissing even penetrated my own family with a sister-in-law, Margaret Yates, who won the Gissing Prize for an English essay during her undergraduate years in the English Department! Intersecting all the above memories, so to speak, came those which were acquired later with a growing knowledge of Douglas's writings, described briefly, below.

6. George Gissing: his “By the Ionian Sea,”⁶ (1901)

“The names of Greece and Italy draw me as no others ... In Magna Graecia the waters of two fountains mingle and flow together ...”, pp. 22/3.

George Gissing's travel volume, *By the Ionian Sea*, is only 50,000 words in length, yet it serves well to introduce us to classical Magna Graecia, the area in the very south or in the “toe” of Italy. He visited several Graeco-Roman towns mostly along the Ionian sea coast and in his mind, tried to recreate for himself the atmosphere which in ancient history once made it renowned; he particularly explored the territory in and around where Cassiodorus lived. See Fig. 1.

*From Naples*⁷ in Chapter I, Gissing tells us about his “exquisite thirst” for the “romance” this area promised him. He travelled by boat to Paola where he disembarked because it was the nearest point to Cosenza which had interest for him in abundance. He thought on his journey as he passed them by, of Santa Lucia, Capri, Torre del Greco and Torre Anunciata, and Posillipo — which to me at extremes, meant mainly Neapolitan opera, army contracts I placed and “progressed” and the well-chosen site of a W.W.II military hospital on the Sorrento peninsula in 1944–5.

In *Paola*, Chapter II, Gissing hired a coach to carry him to Cosenza but which he had perforce, to share with others. At a turn in the road to inland Calabria he saw some massive mountains and found them still named by the inhabitants, the Great Sila. Through the region flows the river Crati, or ancient Crathis, and during its passage flowed by the walls of Sybaris and then “on to the Inland Sea”. Nearing Cosenza, Gissing encountered a truly Roman road — level and straight for mile after mile. The Visigoths he recalled, had marched down it after sacking Rome, but “600 years before the Goth, so marched Hannibal (248–183 B.C.), in sullen retreat”, to embark at Croton for return to Africa, after some 15 years in Italy.

Of the *Grave of Alaric*, Chapter III, he wrote that he, “has come to think about Alaric”, the Visigothic king who invaded northern Italy in 401 A.D., and as a warrior from 391 A.D., starting in the Balkans, had suffered several reverses but, persistent, he recovered sufficiently to advance and besiege Rome, eventually entering it in 410 A.D. — the end of the West Roman Empire. Two years later he continued south, intending to leave from Sicily for Africa. But bad weather prevented him from doing so and he died in Cosentia, Calabria. Tradition has it, he was buried close to the

⁶ In *The Emancipated*, 1890, Pt. II. Ch.VI–IX, Gissing writes of his characters' visits in the Neapolitan area — Paestum — and Rome.

⁷ The italicised titles are chapter headings.

confluence of the rivers Busento and Crati in full view of the town. At the time, to ensure secrecy, the Goths slew all the prisoners who had performed the labour of burying the king along with his papal spoils, and of turning aside the river Busento, “that its flood might cover and conceal for all time the tomb of the Conqueror”. (Recently archeologists have discovered and excavated the region of the burial ground.) He remembered also viewing again, Sila, the Black Mountain, from whose sides timber was famously cut for constructing Greek ships. (It was from this region that timber was still shipped in W.W.II and “dropped” in Naples for multifarious military purposes.)

In visiting *Taranto*, Chapter IV, Gissing first went to Sybaris and observed of it, “... no stone remains above ground”; in 510 B.C. “it was destroyed by the people of Croton, who turned the course of the River Cratis so as to whelm the city’s ruins”. Frenchman Lenormant in his *La Grande Grèce* believed that a discovery greater than that of Pompeii awaited a site excavator and that there, under 15 ft of alluvial mud lay the temples and streets of Sybaris. (Francois Lenormant (1837–1883) — little known to Englishmen and some-time French Academy librarian — was the first recent distinguished student of ancient languages to visit the museum in Squillace, in 1882, (see mention in Chapter XIV below); he was the precocious product of a father (see the notes), himself an important numismatist and Egyptologist. His son’s noted work, done in Mesopotamia, benefitted from his visits to the shores of the Mediterranean. (Apparently he had an accident during his last visit to Italy which led to his death.)

Distinctive in this part of the world, was Archytas of Tarentum, (428–347 B.C.), who is reputed to have identified harmonic progression, advanced the theory of proportion, studied acoustics and music and was known for his flying machine. Known too, is Philolaos of Croton, an army commander and one-time leader of the Pythagoreans.

Gissing asserted that Saracens (8/9th c.) were responsible for the desolation in this area — though noting that the local white wine was good, *Muscato dei Saraceni!* However, Gissing, with his eyes still on classical history, recalled that Hannibal hereabouts hauled his ships across the peninsula to escape, see Notes for details. (In 203 B.C. he was recalled from Italy by “the patriot” party and in fact he left a record of his expedition engraved in Punic and Greek, upon brazened tablets in the temple of Juno, at Crotona, before sailing back to Africa, see the notes).

The *Galaesus* — a river beloved of Roman writer Horace — is praised in Chapter V, as is the name of “green” Virgil, “who wrote his *Eclogues*”, hereabouts (see the notes).

In *The Table of the Paladins*, Chapter VI, Gissing described taking the train to Metapontum and then walking till he came to an Eucalyptus grove where he lay down and thought of “the old Pythagoras” who had died there in 497 B.C., “broken-hearted at his failure ... to make mankind gentle and reasonable”. Gissing recalled that the ordinary Italians are still familiar with the latter’s name because “it is attached to the multiplication table which they call, *tavola Pitagorica*” — Pythagoras’s table. Here too Gissing was stimulated to recall some lines in Shakespeare about Pythagorean metempsychosis, see the notes.

Gissing next took a rail ticket to Crotone (Croton) where Pythagoras had ruled and a school of medicine had flourished. “Healthier than Croton” was a local proverb, for the spot was, “unsurpassed in salubriety” and Croton became heavily populated. The city reputedly acquired a great temple of Hera which was adorned with paintings by famed Zeuxis, the models being chosen from the loveliest maidens in Croton. It also boasted of the many-time Olympic male champion, Milon. A nearby river, the Sinno — the ancient Siris — carried a city of the same name on its banks and in the seventh century B.C., was lauded as the richest city in the world, out-rivalling even Sybaris. Siris

was an Ionian colony which kept its oriental style of dresses and its sumptuous costumes prior to the Persian wars — all described by Lenormant, see p. 80, [9]. *Cotrone*, Chapter VII, was a derelict resurrected port re-colonised by the Romans in about the second century B.C. and recovered to be the port of embarkation for Greece for a while. Gissing tells us that mighty blocks from a fallen *naos* (temple) were built into a sea-barrier in the 16th c., and that later a local bishop ravaged the site for some blocks for his episcopal palace. In 1783, a more legitimate pillage was committed when stones from temple basements were used to strengthen a harbour after a violent earthquake. Of an original town with 12 miles of stone circumference, Gissing writes, that “nothing is left from antiquity” and that it had become a “squalid little town”. (In the days of Herodotus, the first medical school in all Greece was here.) Gissing ends by remarking that Pythagoras may have walked there. Lenormant was again here, but attracted only by the possibility of some antique orange groves surviving!

Gissing writes in Chapter IX that he glimpsed history in Croton, especially where Hannibal, commanded from Africa to return at the end of the second Punic War, found that he had a contingent of Italian mercenaries who would not follow him. Fearful that if he left them behind they would join his enemy; he had them all slaughtered, “... on the shore ... by the strand at Croton”.

Catanzaro, Chapter XII, we are informed, has been shaken to its foundations many times over — extremely so in the 18th c., when thousands of people were killed. Only the 11th c., Norman mediaeval castle of Robert Guiscard seemed to survive, later to be pulled down to facilitate road-widening! The present town was founded in the 10th c., when S. Italy was re-invigorated by the Byzantine Nicephorus Phocas. With no ancient buildings anywhere visible, Gissing saw it as an Italian town for good health and magnificent views. Interestingly, peasants now visited it from surrounding mountain villages and were referred to, still, as, “i Greci”, Greeks, speaking corrupt Greek. However, Gissing comments, “most of the Christian anniversaries here have their origins in heathendom”.

Squillace, or Latin Scylaceum in Chapter XIV, brings us to the ancestral home of Cassiodorus and his retreat when he behaved as a monk and built upon being the “delightful pedant, liberal statesman and patriot, bidding farewell to Roman glories”. Gissing remembers himself earlier on the shore in Devon, England, having his two folio volumes of Cassiodorus’s work and reading most of them; “... it was more fruitful than a study of all the modern historians who have written about this time”! Approaching Squillace, he had decided to make a four-hour coach journey to it from Catanzaro, through a storm, and encountered Mons Moscius (Mount Moses), which ended at the sea coast in a rugged cliff sheltering a certain lower monastery once caused to be built by Cassiodorus. Continuing his journey and, “... at the entrance to the town”, he looked up and saw, “a mass of ancient ruins and high fragments of shattered walls and a crumbling tower ... , behind which Squillace lay ...” The town’s streets were un-paved and had become muddy rivers because of the storms. The latter was also the writer’s experience — seeing the main streets of many villages in the Campagnia region run with sewage.

Chapter XVI, *Cassiodorus*, opens with his crossing of the Fiume (river) di Squillace noting that in his day, it had abounded in fish and of his happy labours making fish ponds. Here, he had encountered, “Cassiodorus’s own patrimonial Estate”. Gissing then details accounts of Cassiodorus’s life, over several pages, much of which we have already hazarded at, but in a style, refreshingly new. The chapter describes the management of a Gothic kingdom (in his own *Variae*)

in the 6th c. A.D. — an era neglected if not just missed in some contemporary history books⁸ — yet good for “forming a general idea of the conditions in Italy at that time ... on points political and social ... a fund of glorious detail”. Cassiodorus, had written a history of the Goths, but the original was lost. Gissing tells too, of Cassiodorus having time for “liberal gossip” — of natural history and the history of chariot-racing for example. Surprisingly, I learned that here Cassiodorus in his retirement had declined to be the Abbot (leader) of Monasterium Vivariense; his monastery was later destroyed by Lombards. The mountain top hereabouts was *Castellcuse*, the refuge for anchorites as opposed to that for coenbites at the foot.

7. Norman Douglas: his *Old Calabria*

Norman Douglas wrote a much larger book than Gissing, which described roughly the same physical area, entitled *Old Calabria*, first published in 1915 and the product of visits to the region between 1907 and 1911, with the writing completed in London between 1911 and 1913. The last edition, 6th, 1956 is some 355 pages in length, perhaps four times as long as George Gissing’s, in 40 chapters, see Fig. 4. One notes that *By the Ionian Sea* only preceded it by one decade. However, the disparity in length between the two works prohibits proceeding with Douglas’s book as I did with Gissing’s, chapter by chapter. Rather I have remarked specifically on Douglas’s observations in relation to Gissing’s in Chapter XXXVI, *Memories of Gissing*, and concerning Pythagoras in Chapter XXXVIII, *The Sage of Croton*. For the remainder of the book and for those who have time and would wish to read further, I have simply reproduced its Contents in Fig. 4. Certainly, many chapters have enticing titles.

The authors, Gissing and Douglas, it seems could hardly have been more different in character, certainly emerging from opposite ends of the social class spectrum, Fig. 3. Douglas was of Scottish ancestry, but born in Thuringen, Germany in 1868 — nine years younger than Gissing — son of a German aristocrat. He was “three-quarters Scottish” — to the core, “an aristocrat, immensely masculine” — having German as his first language. Proving unsuited to an English public school, Uppingham, he was sent for six years to a Gymnasium in Karlsruhe. He emerged a Latinist, having some ancient Greek, with three other European languages and music. In 1888, he paid a visit to enchanting Capri, returned to London, refused to enter an English university⁸ and instead went to Paris to improve his French before joining the British Diplomatic Service, in London in 1890. Later, he came first in a competitive examination in 1893 and in May 1894 he was assigned to St. Petersburg where he stayed for nearly three years. In 1896 he bought a villa in Posilipo, near Naples but withdrew for two years from Tzarist Russia because of his involvement with a court-lady there. He never returned to the British Civil Service. At age 30 he married a cousin and they had two sons, but divorced six years later. “Just a little short of money”, he turned to writing but at this time certain of his inclinations altered to include pederasty. His German Gymnasium educated him so well as to be able to author short articles on zoology; a book of his on Darwinism in 1895, he was able to re-issue in 1951. His scientific leaning was to an unsentimental humanism, with a tone said to be, “Robust wholesomeness”. His first travel book was *Siren Land*, 1911, and he went on to write over 20 books throughout his life. John Davenport, in the Introduction to *Old Calabria*,

⁸ See; *Goths and Romans*, 332–489 AD, by P.J. Heather, Clarendon Press, 1991.

Old Calabria

By
NORMAN DOUGLAS

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says that in the 1930s Douglas's, "legend continued to grow". He travelled the world but his home was in Italy which the Fascists advised him to leave in 1938. He only got back to England (via Portugal) in 1942 having been delayed because there were certain judicial matters which had to be resolved before he could safely enter.

After W.W.II he returned to Capri but died, aged 84, in 1952. Some hailed Douglas as a modern Lucian, see Notes. Other questions easily assert themselves. Why did he choose to write in English when German culture would seem so obviously to have suited him? Was the English market so much bigger? It cannot have been easy for him to have watched W.W.I and W.W.II having associations with both Germany and England. He was in his late 40s at the time of the first and in his 70s for the second, having been ordered to move out of Germany/Austria.

Most readers hold *Siren Land* and *South Wind*, set in Capri, to be his best books, with his two volumes of autobiography, *Looking Back*, 1933, having most interest. Davenport held *Old Calabria* to be his choice of all Douglas's books. Douglas is, however, an author known only to relatively few *litterati*, one of a small coterie which was very much a product of its age and time — to which Evelyn Waugh and Anthony Powell belonged — complex, detached but commanding respect for frank independence which made them targets of criticism because of their unpopular opinions.

In *Memories of Gissing*, Chapter XXXVI, pp. 311–317, Fig. 4, Douglas wrote that he stayed at the hotel Concordia in Cotrona and in 1897, he recorded, "George Gissing haunts these chambers and passages ... he lodged here with that worthy trio, Gibbon, Lenormant and Cassiodorus". The last two, it is agreed, could really be said to have haunted this area, but not Gibbon. (Gibbon was never so far south. He went to Rome in 1763 and then on to Naples from where after six weeks, he moved, intending to travel to San Loretto. Quoting from Gibbon's autobiography, "(ii) ... Six weeks were borrowed for my tour of Naples ... (iii) In my pilgrimage from Rome to Loretto I again crossed the Appenines ... and the Alps on my way to Lyons", p. 146–147, [12].)

Douglas confirms the general opinion, for his own experience like Gissing's, showed him that, "you must not come to these parts in winter time ...", "... nor yet in the autumn ... it is highly malarial". There is very little in these seven pages about Gissing which is worth noting here. In Chapter XXXVII, *Cotrona*, there is nothing at all about classical history and he simply repeats Gissing concerning the disappearance of the ancient town — that it was possibly due to the crumbling of its bricks with age, whilst its stone was re-worked into newer structures.

8. The legacy of Pythagoras

Pythagoras, *The Sage of Croton*, Chapter XXXVIII, is dismissed by Douglas as talking "bland balderdash" about soul migration and being so attached to it, rather than involved in "calculating an eclipse of the moon ...". Douglas writes of his "metempsychoses and the reduction of everything to a system of numbers" — "sheer lunacy" he asserts. He argues that Pythagoras was, "the importer of oriental introspectiveness which culminated in the idly-splendid yearnings of Plato". Our author is a devotee-advocate of Aristotle — "the patient investigator". Douglas, says Davenport, is a "scientific humanist". But it would seem that Douglas does not appreciate the depth of Pythagoras's feeling for number lore and geometric figures — aspects of his intellectual work which seem quite apart from his religious musings. Douglas entertains us with four pages of onslaught against Pythagoras but truly it is an attack which reveals his own mathematical deficiencies.

Pythagoras was born 560 B.C. on the island of Samos to which he returned after visiting Egypt, Babylon and other places in the Eastern Mediterranean after some twenty years of travel. He was driven from Samos by the local tyrant, Polycrates and caused to migrate to Croton, the Dorian colony in S. Italy in 529 B.C. and where he established his brotherhood. Even there, he encountered political trouble and was obliged to withdraw to Metapontum, where in due course he died. His orphic-type society — an ancient Greek mystery religion — had totally vanished from Croton by the mid-5th century. Of course at this distance in time there are likely errors in these details.

Aristotle wrote that the Pythagoreans (of whom he wrote, rather than about Pythagoras), “applied themselves to the study of mathematics and were the first to advance that science ... they thought ... its principles must be the principles of all things”. Arithmetic was detached from every-day usage and, with geometry, it became part of a liberal education.

A brief notice of some of the arithmetical studies of the Pythagoreans, will suffice to indicate their scope.

1. The discovery that *musical intervals depended on certain arithmetical ratios* of the length of strings and their tensions: 2 : 1 gave the octave, 3 : 2 the 5th., and 4 : 3 the 4th. Number seemed to the Pythagoreans to be the first thing in the whole of nature ... they regarded numbers as actually constituting their essence or substance. They supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number. There are seven intervals in the musical scale and seven planets. Hence a spiritual ear discerned a wonderful, “harmony of the spheres”, which Philolaus, a later Pythagorean, and others greatly developed.
2. *Figurate numbers*, set out in the form of triangles, squares and oblongs, using pebbles (or calculi-and hence calculation — reckoning by “handling pebbles”) were a great source of study, especially concerning series. Recall too, how *magic squares* continued the tradition in later centuries; square numbers form squares and triangular numbers form triangles.
3. *Pythagoras’s theorem*, “ $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ ”, was probably first known in the Orient, India and China, but is commonly asserted to be derived from practising engineers and land-surveyors working along alluvial flood planes and deltas as in the Nile valley; our very word hypotenuse means rope — stretchers — from the Greek, *hypoteinein*, to stretch.
4. Number lore — using “humanised terms” to describe certain kinds of numbers was well developed.⁹ *Perfect numbers* were recognised — numbers which are equal to the sum of their separate factors, e.g. 6, (1 + 2 + 3) and 28, (1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14); the next numbers are, 496, 8128 and 2096128. There are two “*amicable*” numbers — each of which is equal to the sum of the factors of the other, e.g., 220, (1 + 2 + 4 + 5 + 10 + 11 + 20 + 22 + 44 + 55 + 110, total 284) and, 284, (1 + 2 + 4 + 71 + 142, total 220).
5. *The theory of Proportion* has been attributed to Pythagoras.
6. *Arithmetical and harmonic series* and ratios were also identified by him.
7. Pythagoreans identified *the five regular solids*, tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron⁹ and icosahedron. The last two were actually discovered by Theaetetus, (ca. 378 B.C.).

⁹ c. 445 B.C., Hippacos of Metapontum, a Pythagorean is alleged to have discovered *incommensurable* magnitudes as when an *irrational* diagonal appears in an isosceles unit-side right angle triangle. This man is also said to be the discoverer of the dodecahedron.

8. Pythagorean geometry comprehended most of what is in *Euclid*, Books (i), (ii) and (iv).
9. In astronomy, that *the earth and universe are spherical* was the opinion, early held by this group.
10. *The Copernican hypothesis* was early anticipated by the Pythagorean, Philolaus, though in no way working with respect to dynamics. The idea of a circulating “counter-earth” was usefully introduced to bring the then usual nine bodies up to 10 — which is the *magic tetractys* — i.e., sun, earth, moon, the five planets and an outer moving sphere of stars.

Thomas L. Heath, in his volumes I and II, *A History of Greek Mathematics*, [13], may be consulted for more detail and accuracy about the topics above. Readers will remember that the Arabic mode of calculation (integers having positional values), was not known in Europe until introduced, via Africa, by Leonardo of Pisa, ca.1100 A.D., so that calculations in themselves using Greek or Roman number systems in pre-Christian times must have been much harder to perform.

9. H.J. Forman: his Grecian Italy

I cannot fail to mention *Grecian Italy* by H.J. Forman (published in 1927 in Jonathan Cape’s Travellers’ Series) in which the author gives his reactions to moving around Calabria in the same manner as did Gissing, in his fourth essay, pp. 143–186, *Country of the Sybarites*. There are many Gissing-like allusions to the various towns — Cosenzia, Crotona, Catanzaro, Locri, Squillace — but I shall, here, only make three allusions. In the best Gissing–Douglas fashion, first,

“To any part of this Italy you may go without any particular reason. But not to Calabria. If you go to Calabria you must give some good utilitarian, plausible object or be branded an eccentric ... Only a George Gissing now and then, or a Norman Douglas, or an archaeologist like Lenormant, ever travels in the toe of the boot that is Italy”.

“But an irresistible whim drove me to Calabria. I said I wanted to see the site of ancient Sybaris, the city that gave the world a synonym for luxury. I wanted to see the old Crotona, where Pythagoras, the first of the Greek moral teachers, established almost a city of God in pagan Greece ...”

“We are going to the city of the Sybarites, where they lived solely for pleasure”.

My second extract —

“All the streets I told him were covered with silken awnings from roof to roof so no one would get sunburnt. Their motto was, if you wish to live long, never see sunset or sunrise. All blacksmiths and cooks and all noisy trades were banished outside the city so they wouldn’t wake or disturb anyone. The children were all dressed in purple silk, with gold bands upon their heads. And, there were women professors in the art of husband-winning engaged for the daughters of every house. Only one Sybarite ever won an Olympic game because it was too much like work”.

And finally,

“To this spot had come Pythagoras after his long studies in Egypt and the East, to found a religion, spiritual instead of physical. He was the definite point of departure from the remnants of the neolithic cults, with the savage elements of blood sacrifice in them, towards a religion of the spirit, based on justice, charity, peace ... he preached charity. Like the early American colonists, the Pilgrims, he went to Colonial Greece because he could not make headway in Ionian Greece”.

10. Retrospective

Edward Gibbon in his autobiography wrote,

“But at the distance of 25 years I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the eternal city”.

And despite Norman Douglas’s reluctance to show it, even if he possessed a sensitive side to his nature, he could in the end yield to writing as did Gibbon and Gissing of archeological diggings in Sybaris.

“who would not live long enough, if he could to see what comes to light”?

Perhaps Sybaris made it especially important to him?

Gissing’s last sentence in his book is,

“I looked my last towards the Ionian Sea; I wished it were mine to wander endlessly”.

11. Author’s colophon: Travellers’ qualities

At this point of termination in our paper about scholars, scientists and educated travellers, we should like to touch upon the issue of the worth of travel by recalling other papers in this journal — that on the 17th/18th C. Maurists [2], of Martin Folkes visiting the Mediterranean with his family for more than two years for improving his family’s level of education, (a very common practice among 18th c. English aristocrats), [14], and for the efforts described in [15] of John Greaves searching for ancient classical manuscripts. We leave the subject with an eloquent passage on the qualities travellers need from that pelucid author – traveller, Mr. Edward Gibbon, [12], p. 147, see Fig. 5 — though noting how much the verb *to climb* would seem to have changed since his day!



'I climbed Mount Cenis . . . on a light osier seat in the hands of the dexterous and intrepid chairmen of the Alps'

The use of foreign travel has been often debated as a general question; but the conclusion must be finally applied to the character and circumstances of each individual. With the education of boys, *where*, or *how* they may pass over some juvenile years with the least mischief to themselves or others, I have no concern. But after supposing the previous and indispensable requisites of age, judgement, a competent knowledge of men and books, and a freedom from domestic prejudices, I will briefly describe the qualifications which I deem most essential to a traveller. He should be endowed with an active, indefatigable vigour of mind and body, which can seize every mode of conveyance, and support with a careless smile every hardship of the road, the weather or the inn. I must stimulate him with a restless curiosity, impatient of ease, covetous of time and fearless of danger, which drives him forth at any hour of the day or night, to brave the flood, to climb the mountain, or to fathom the mine, on the most doubtful promise of entertainment or instruction. The arts of common life are not studied in the closet; with a copious stock of classical and historical learning, my traveller must blend the practical knowledge of husbandry and manufactures; he should be a chemist, a botanist, and a master of mechanics. A musical ear will multiply the pleasures of his Italian tour; but a correct and exquisite eye, which commands the landscape of a country, discerns the merits of a picture, and measures the proportions of a building, is more closely connected with the finer feelings of the mind; and the fleeting image should be fixed and realised by the dexterity of the pencil.

Fig. 5.

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Notes

Virgil's Eclogues (or Bucolics)

Virgil was the outstanding Roman poet, 70–19 B.C., born near Mantua, Italy. The *Eclogues* were his first published work and are ten short “Poems of the Pastures”, written 42–37 B.C. He was noted universally for sincerity and purity of life in an age of licence. His *The Georgics*, (“Precepts for Farmers”), written 50–37 B.C., are however regarded as his most perfect work, praising cultivation of the earth. The *Aeneid* is his great Roman epic, written over a period of about 10 years, describing the founding of Rome following Aeneas’s escape from Troy after its destruction in the Trojan War.

Virgil visited Greece, met Emperor Augustus in Athens but later in Megara was sun-struck. He died on the return journey before reaching Brindisium, Italy and was entombed in Naples.

Goths

In short, by the first century A.D., the Goths — a teutonic people deriving originally from Sweden, had settled around the Vistula river. Over the next few centuries they were “pushed” eastwards by Asiatic Huns. The *Visigoths* fought their way to Rome and captured it in 410 A.D.; they then continued shifting northwards, finally settling in Aquitaine and Spain, during the 5th to the 7th century and became known as the Western Goths. The *Ostrogoths* — eastern dwelling Goths — likewise, though independently, established themselves in Italy by the end of the 5th century, but by proceeding southwards. (see footnote 8 on p. 15).

Tarentum

In 212 B.C., Hannibal captured Tarentum (actually through treachery) its dominating citadel remaining in possession of the Roman garrison. The town was at the end of a spit of land between its gulf and a land-locked bay several miles across. Hannibal’s “men-of-war” (boats) were in an inner bay but after taking the city he had them drawn overland through its streets and thus made them actively useful. It is said that the vessels were cut into two or, for the longer ones, three pieces, and carried on horse-drawn carts. It is recorded that the vessels were able to be reconstructed for further use! There are not a few examples in ancient history of boats being drawn overland and it may be recollected that, in Refs. [16,17], Xerxes also had boats pulled overland.

Pythagoras: metempsychosis, timeless and worldwide

The notions of metempsychosis held by Pythagoreans are still widely embraced today, witness the recent “sacking” of England’s football (soccer) team manager (Feb. 1999), Glen Hoddle for his unfortunate remarks to the effect that people suffering physical disability today, do so because they are suffering for their misbehaviour or deeds performed in a previous existence or kama!

The currency of similar beliefs in the England of Shakespeare, about 1600, is well attested in his play *Twelfth Night or What you will* Act IV, Scene II, thus,

Olivia's clown: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning Wilde-fowle?

Malvolia: That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown: What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Malvolio: I think nobly of the soul and no way approve his opinion.

Clown: Fare thee well! Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras, ere I will allow of thy wits — and fear to kill a Woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam.

There is thought to be a transmigration of the soul of the grandam and then a fear that it might have entered a woodcock! Transmigration of souls was a central belief of the Pythagoreans — it was known throughout Europe and Asia in all the generations that came along.

There is a two-page article on *Metempsychosis* in Vol. I of *Curiosities of Literature*, 1881, by Isaac Disraeli, pp. 192–194, describing the global and historical universality of this “fanciful reverie”.

Lucian of Samosata, ca. 120–190 A.D.

An “independent scholar” who wrote 80 works in the Age (or peace), of the Antonines. One describes a trip to the moon and so was written much before Swift's *Gulliver*. For a fuller note, see I.J.M.S. 34(9), p. 751, 1992.

Cuma (or Kyme)

A measure of the antiquity of Cuma is reflected in the fact that it was through this settlement, apparently, that *alphabetic writing* first entered Italy — in three competing forms — surely as revolutionary then as is the coming of word-processors today, see Fig. 6 [18].

THE INTRODUCTION AND USE OF THE ALPHABET

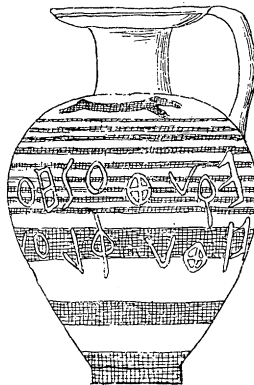
The first Greek or Phoenician sailor, who, landing in Italy, brought to the native inhabitants those few conventional signs whereby we fix the sound of the letters, was really the unconscious author of the intellectual and political systems of the various populations from the Alps to Sicily, and contributed much more to the formation of the Roman Empire than the Scipios or the Caesars.

In a process of development for two or three thousand years, the alphabet finally made it possible to establish the sound of any word by means of twenty or twenty-five phonetic symbols.

When the Chalcidian alphabet was first brought to Kyme, it had sixteen or eighteen letters.

The oldest inscriptions, those dating from the sixth century, are *retrograde*, that is, to be read from right to left. These were followed (520 to 400 B.C.) by the *bustrofedic* system, a sequence imitating the movement of an ox, which when ploughing, returns on itself without stopping work. Bustrofedic inscriptions appear in Greece in the sixth century, but in Kyme, not until a century later. The “straight away”, — the system of writing now used, — then follows.

A well known retrograde inscription is to be seen on a vase discovered by Lord Vernon and now among the treasures of the British Museum. — — — — — and reading from right to left, it represents the primitive stage of Chalcidic epigraphy before *bustrofedism* appeared at all.

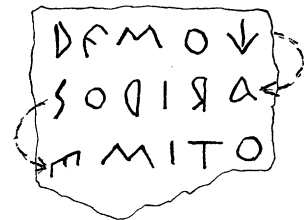


(Fig. 29)

Lekythos of Tatische, with right to left inscription: “This is Tatische's lekythos. Who steals me shall become blind!” (British Museum).

After the retrograde writing, came a period of uncertainty marked by a bustrofedic tendency.

— — — — — two inscriptions discovered in the excavations of Lord Vernon. One of them (fig. 30) reading, “Democharidós eimi tou”... may



(Fig. 30)

Bustrofedic inscription: “I am (the sepulchral memorial) of Democharidós”. be completed thus: “I am the sepulchral memorial of Democharidós”.

Fig. 6.

Lenormant

In 1852, Lenormant importantly identified sculpture on the Acropolis, Athens showing a broad-side view of a galley, about 400 B.C., probably a trireme. Forty years later, it was shown to be a valuable *scale drawing*. See *Oared Fighting Ships*, by R.C. Anderson, (Argus Books), 1st Edit., 1962.

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