

Editorial

FOR some years there has been talk of the need for a new journal to serve Romano-British studies and related subjects. After prolonged discussion the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies decided in 1969 to sponsor one, and the result is seen in the present volume.

The advantages of a connexion with the Roman Society are obvious. Members enjoy the use of the excellent library at Gordon Square as well as the Society's large collection of slides, and can obtain *J.R.S.* at a preferential rate. The Society has its lectures in London and in the provinces. Thus subscribers to *Britannia* enter into an existing inheritance instead of having to create their own facilities. More important, they may keep in contact with related Roman studies. Roman Britain was a remote province in an enormous Empire which embraced the classical world; its students must retain or gain an awareness of that world, its literature, inscriptions, history and civilization, if they are to make anything worthwhile of purely local research. All this will be facilitated by our membership of the Society, and is all the more important today as we see the study of the classics increasingly ignored in the world around us.

The production of a new periodical, even when sponsored by an old Society, is to a large extent an act of faith. The new journal starts with no resources of its own and is produced for a potential rather than an actual membership: only when the journal is fully subscribed shall we pay our way. Meanwhile we are grateful to the Society for advancing capital and to the Pilgrim Trust, the British Academy, the Oxford Craven Committee, the Sir Perceval Maitland Laurence Fund III of Cambridge, the Administrators of the Haverfield Bequest and the Marc Fitch Fund for generous subventions, as also to the C.B.A. and the Ministry of Public Building and Works for grants in aid of specific papers in this volume. Particular gratitude is also recorded to Mr. I. D. Margary for a timely benefaction. But the need to enrol new subscribers remains pressing, and we urge our readers to help us by making the journal known to others.

Britannia is controlled by the Society's editorial committee, which also controls the *Journal of Roman Studies*. Its membership can be seen on page 326, in the list of Officers and Council. We hope to publish both papers of general interest to students of the British province and also excavation reports of wider than local significance, together with Notes and Reviews. Our range of interest, however, will not be exclusively Roman or British, for we shall hope to publish matter of Celtic interest whether of the later part of the Iron Age or of the post-Roman period in these islands, as well as to include papers dealing with western provincial archaeology in general. The annual report on current Romano-British research, *Roman Britain in 19xx*, which has hitherto appeared in *J.R.S.*, will now be published in *Britannia*, and it is hoped to devote rather more space to this in future numbers.

In the years since the end of World War II there has undoubtedly been an 'exploration-explosion' in our subject, to adapt current jargon; for in addition to the vastly increased range of official excavations necessitated by 'development' up and down the country and largely financed by the Ministry of Public Building and Works, there are growing numbers of local groups working like beavers but not all possessing adequate media of publication. A simple way to illustrate the great growth of known activity is to work out figures from the Annual Report in *J.R.S.* The reports for the years 1939, 1950 and 1968 have been chosen for this purpose: 1939 to illustrate the culmination of pre-war activity; 1950 to illustrate the situation when the immediate stringencies of the war-years were past; and 1968 to illustrate the current position.

(i) *Total number of discoveries recorded*

	1939	1950	1968
	73	61	152

(ii) *Geographical distribution of discoveries*

1939	Wales: 4	Scotland: 14	England: 55
1950	Wales: 2	Scotland: 7	England: 52
1968	Wales: 11	Scotland: 9	England: 132

(iii) *Relative importance of discoveries*

From the totals given, those discoveries considered of sufficient general significance to have warranted full publication in *Britannia*, if it had then existed, can be calculated as follows:

1939	1950	1968
18	20	38

These analyses seem to show that there has been a 100 per cent increase and more, not merely in discoveries made but in *important* discoveries.

During the same period not only have publication costs increased astronomically, with the result that County Societies, which used to publish the bulk of the reports which *were* published, are no longer in a position to shoulder this burden; but also the standards of observation and record have been in general very considerably improved, so that the report on a site excavated in 1968 may well be appreciably longer and more thoroughly illustrated with drawings, photographs and tables than a report on the same site, if it had been excavated in the thirties, would have been.

This process can itself be illustrated in a general way from the same annual report. Thus:

1939: 35 pages, in larger type than that used for 1950 or 1968: 17 line blocks, 11 plates.

1950: 25 pages; 10 line blocks; 11 plates.

1968: 48 pages; 20 line blocks; 27 plates.

In consequence it may well be felt that a central journal devoted to Roman Britain has a part to play, not only as a medium for the publication of specific items, but also perhaps in the maintenance or improvement of standards, the dissemination of information, the encouragement of general synthesis and the wider fostering of the subject. If an example is needed, it is provided by the

coherence brought to the whole field of post-Roman studies by the journal *Medieval Archaeology* during the thirteen years of its existence.

It will be the aim of *Britannia* to review as many new books as possible which have a bearing on Romano-British studies. We also aim to draw attention to relevant reviews appearing in *J.R.S.* Here it may be worth while to refer to the new series *Epigraphische Studien* currently produced with remarkable frequency as supplementary volumes of the *Bonner Jahrbücher*. The first appeared in 1967, and eight more have been published since then. They are all essential to students of Roman military affairs. Vol. 1 is a study of the vexillations of the Roman army by R. Saxer; Vol. 2 a study of the *Cohortes Urbanae* by H. Freis; and Vol. 3 a study of the Legionary Legates of Upper and Lower Germany by Géza Alföldy. Vol. 4 contains a number of essays, of which three are of particular interest to students of Roman Britain (*a*) a full study by A. R. Birley of 'The Roman Governors of Britain', (*b*) E. Birley, 'Troops of the Two Germanies in Roman Britain', (*c*) R. W. Davies, 'A Note on a Recently Discovered Inscription from Carrawburgh', the inscription being *J.R.S.* lvi (1966), 218, no. 5. Vol. 5 is also an anthology of essays, including a long instalment of G. Alföldy's study of Rhineland inscriptions. Vol. 6 is a full study by Alföldy of the Auxiliary Troops of Lower Germany, and contains much of relevance to the Roman army in Britain. Vol. 7 is a study by D. Hoffmann of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and Vol. 8 contains essays, including an important one by E. Birley on Septimius Severus and the Roman Army, one by R. W. Davies on the *Medici* of the Roman armed forces and one by B. Dobson and D. J. Breeze on the Rome Cohorts and the Legionary Centurionate.

Apart from this series attention is drawn to two further important supplements of *B.J.* The first, *Germania Inferior* by Christoph B. Rüter, deals with the history, organization and population of that province. The second, *Lateinische Gefäßnamen* by W. Helgen contains a very full illustrated study of the Latin names of various pottery and metal vessels with full citation of the sources.

The authorities of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum at Bonn are to be congratulated upon this most impressively rapid outflow of scholarly publications. Government subsidies are of course the source of the ability to publish so frequently and this is just one more area in which we British fall short of desirable organization. The total sum available annually to the C.B.A. to assist publication all over the country is a mere £1,600, and this cannot be used for monographs. Major pieces of research have to take their chance with normal publishers, and applications for assistance to grant-making bodies tend to be regarded in the light of subsidies to commerce.