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THE CULTS
OF
THE GREEK STATES

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P R E F A C E

IN offering to the public two more volumes on the state-religion of the Greek world, I must express my regrets that the interval between their appearance and that of the first two has been so long. I may plead for indulgence on the grounds that multifarious official duties have borne heavily upon me, and that I have devoted what leisure I have had to preparing myself for the completion of my task. I have gained this at least from the long delay, that I have been able to profit by the many works and monographs of Continental and English scholars relating directly or indirectly to the subject, to reconsider many questions and to form more mature opinions on many important points. The results of the researches and discoveries throughout the last decade bearing on the history of religion have given us the opportunity, if we choose to avail ourselves of it, of improving the anthropological method in its application to the problems of comparative religion; and the great discoveries in Crete have thrown new light on certain questions that arise in the study of the classical polytheism. Every year also enriches the record with new material, from newly discovered inscriptions and other monuments. At the same time, therefore, the complete exposition

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and the full discussion of the facts becomes increasingly difficult; and it is in fact easier to compose an Encyclopaedia of Greek religion, than to write a continuous literary treatise on even that portion of it to which the history of the public cults of Greece, leaving the private sects and private religious speculation out of account, is properly limited. Lest I should overwhelm myself and my readers with a mass of antiquarian detail, I have tried to keep always in view the relation of the facts to the salient phenomena that interest the comparative student; but I cannot hope to have been uniformly successful in this or to have omitted nothing that may seem to others essential. These volumes will be found to contain more ethnologic discussion than the former; for I found it impossible to assign, for instance, to the cult of Poseidon its proper place in the Hellenic system without raising the ethnologic question of its source and diffusion. I have had occasionally to combat in these chapters certain anthropologic theories which appear to me to have been crudely applied to various phenomena of cult. This does not imply a depreciation of the value of wide anthropological study to the student of Hellenism; on the contrary, I appreciate its importance more highly than ever. But its application to the higher facts of our religious history might be combined with more caution and more special knowledge than has always been shown hitherto.

In spite of the hopes in which many years ago I too light-heartedly embarked on the task, the end of the fourth volume does not see its completion. A fifth volume, which the liberality of the Clarendon Press

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has allowed me, will, I trust, be issued next year and will contain an account of the worships of Hermes, Dionysos, and the minor cults. This will end the treatise; but I can scarcely hope that even the five volumes will comprise the full account of all that their title implies. The chapter on hero-worship, one of the most intricate and important in the history of Greek religion, for which I have already collected the material, will probably have to be reserved for a separate work.

LEWIS R. FARNELL.

EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

October, 1906.

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