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# SAMNIUM AND THE SAMNITES

BY

E. T. SALMON

*McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario*



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## PLATES

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Photo, courtesy of Museo Nazionale, Chieti.

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Photos, courtesy of the British Museum.

## PREFACE

More than half a century has elapsed since Wilamowitz remarked that a study of the Italic peoples was badly needed. This is still true, even though such works as Syme's *Roman Revolution*, Sherwin-White's *Roman Citizenship* and Toynbee's *Hannibal's Legacy*, to mention only books in English and by no means all of them, have shed much light on many aspects of non-Roman Italy. Of the Italic peoples the Samnites are the ones who appear prominently in every account of Roman expansion in Italy. Indeed they have inspired some of Livy's finest writing and have evoked generous tribute from him, largely, I suspect, because the period of their greatness was for him *aetas qua nulla virtutum feracior fuit*, the heroic age of Rome. Yet no attempt has ever been made to describe these fiercest opponents of republican Rome from their own point of view. It is in an effort to remedy this deficiency that this book has been written. The present state of the evidence makes it a modest aspiration, but I hope that it may contribute to the growing activities in the Italic field.

The documentation, though necessarily heavy at times, is, of course, far from exhaustive. Allusion to modern writers has been severely limited, especially in chapters 5–10, where reference to the learned literature would have been overwhelming. Additional bibliographical information can be found in Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*. Dates throughout are B.C. unless otherwise stated.

My obligations for material assistance and moral encouragement are numerous. An Overseas Award from the Canadian Department of External Affairs and Grants from the Humanities Research Council of Canada, from the Nuffield Foundation and from McMaster University have aided both peregrination and publication. The long and repeated sojourns in Samnium have been invaluable.

I am deeply indebted to friends for advice and counsel. Dr Lily Ross Taylor, of Bryn Mawr, often shared her vigorous and erudite enthusiasm about things Italic. Dr Franco Bonacina, of the Centro Didattico in Rome, placed his intimate knowledge of the Italian countryside always at my disposal. Drs T. R. S. Broughton, of the University of North Carolina, H. H. Scullard, of King's College, London, and A. H. McDonald, of Clare College, Cambridge, and

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the late Professors A. D. Nock and J. Whatmough of Harvard, willingly agreed to read some of the chapters in MS: they are, of course, in no way responsible for the errors that remain, but thanks to them the errors are fewer than they would otherwise have been. Dr Franz Stoessl, of the University of Graz, Dr Paolo Sommella, of the Istituto di Topografia Antica in Rome, General Domenico Ludovico, of the Italian Air Force, and my colleague Dr J. A. S. Evans, of the McMaster Department of History, responded with alacrity, whether it was information or photographs that were being sought.

An especial debt of gratitude is owed to the Soprintendenza alle Antichità degli Abruzzi e del Molise. Its director, Dr Valerio Cianfarani, guide and master of all who study Samnium, gave generously of his time and expert knowledge amid the excavations of Saepinum and amid the Italic treasures at Chieti. Dr Adriano La Regina has been unstinting with aid of exceptional usefulness both in conversation and in correspondence. My regret that these scholars' views on Bovianum Vetus became known to me only after my own work had already reached the printer (see p. 13) is tempered by the comforting reflexion that I am in their well-informed company in assigning Pietrabbondante to the Pentri and not, with Mommsen, to the Caraceni.

The readiness with which the Museo Nazionale at Chieti made available many of the photographs for the plates is gratefully acknowledged. So is the kindness of the staffs of many other museums—at Ancona, Aquila, Capua, Naples, Paestum, Santa Maria Capua Vetere, Sulmona. I well remember the good offices of Drs Nicola del Cioppo at Baranella, Renato Brancaforte at Campobasso, Angelo Viti at Isernia, Dante Marrocco at Piedimonte d'Alife and, outside Italy, the authorities of the British Museum, the Louvre and the Bibliothèque Nationale. I owe particular gratitude to the directors and librarians of the Institute of Classical Studies in London and the British School and American Academy in Rome.

In my own university I am in the debt of many. Its librarians showed both skill and speed in procuring rare and recondite materials via inter-library loan; its photographic unit gave efficient and punctual assistance in the preparation of illustrations; and Miss Jean Montgomery patiently transmuted much-emended calligraphy into the clarity of the type-written word.

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Finally, I am grateful to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for providing very efficient and keen-eyed editorial and production teams whose vigilance has kept blemishes to a minimum.

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E. T. SALMON