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978-1-107-62345-3 - Ancient Italy and Modern Religion: Being the Hibbert Lectures for 1932

Robert Seymour Conway

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ANCIENT ITALY AND MODERN RELIGION

BEING THE
HIBBERT LECTURES FOR 1932

BY

ROBERT SEYMOUR CONWAY

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ANDREAE GEORGIO LITTLE

indefessae XL annorum amicitiae

memor

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PREFACE

IN accepting the invitation with which I was honoured by the Hibbert Trustees to be their lecturer for 1932, remembering that the theme of the lectures as defined by the Will of the Founder may be “any subject bearing upon the history of Christianity”, I ventured to make one assumption. It cannot, I feel sure, be desirable that each lecturer in turn should make some new attempt to set forth in his brief course his own particular conception of the more general aspects of religious history or religious philosophy. The purpose of the foundation can be better served, in the case of one whose work has run in well-marked lines, if he tries to acquaint his hearers or readers with one or two particular sides of the study that he has been pursuing which seem to him to throw light upon the history of religious ideas. He may be well content if the facts which he describes can suggest some new points of view from which to examine our modern problems.

It follows that not a little of the subject-matter of this volume will be known, if not familiar, to a certain number of my old pupils at Cardiff and Manchester, and to the audiences at the lectures I have given in what has become almost an annual visit to the John Rylands Library. Nevertheless, all these lectures were written for a place in a course of this kind, save that the fifth was re-written from this standpoint, on the basis of an interpretation of Vergil’s story of Dido which I have maintained for over thirty years, and which I believe was

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first printed in an address to the Classical Association of Scotland in 1913. The fourth and the sixth were delivered as part of a special course of lectures on Vergil given in the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, in October, 1931, and I am grateful to the liberality of the College regulations which allow me to publish them in this volume. The second and third lectures were first delivered in the John Rylands Library and I have to thank the Librarian, Dr Henry Guppy, for his kindness, which is now well-known, in permitting me to re-publish them in a form only slightly modified from that in which they were printed in the John Rylands Library Bulletin.

The text of the lectures, as here presented, has been freed from a great number of faults, both in form and in substance, by the vigilant scrutiny of my friend Mr Ernest Harrison, of Trinity College, now Registrar of the University of Cambridge, who generously found time to read through the whole proof, and to whom I owe cordial thanks. I have also to thank one or two other friends for assistance of different kinds which is acknowledged at the relevant points. For some of the illustrations I have further to thank Mr H. M. Bower, and the Folk-Lore Society; the Council of the Society for Hellenic Studies; the Clarendon Press as Publishers of Dr Randall-MacIver's *The Etruscans*, and Sir Arthur Evans, Bt., for kindly allowing me to reproduce illustrations which were their property. The pictures of the Venetic goddess Rehtia and her ritual are borrowed from my own contribution (namely the part relating to Venetic) to the *Records of the Prae-Italic Dialects of Italy*, by Professor J. Whatmough, Mrs Sarah Elizabeth Johnson and myself, which will be published in three volumes by

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the Clarendon Press, shortly before or after the appearance of these lectures.

Since the study on which these lectures are based, and which has extended over several years, has been mainly carried out in the Library of the British Museum, I may be allowed the pleasure of expressing my gratitude to Mr Arthur J. Ellis, the Superintendent of the Reading Room, and his colleagues Messrs G. F. Rendall and H. Sellers, for the untiring kindness of their friendly and always effective help.

For kind advice as to form and style of printing I have to thank Mr S. C. Roberts, Secretary to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press and Mr W. Lewis, Printer to the University. Last, but not least, the book is throughout indebted to the thoughtful skill of my secretary, Miss Ruth Walker, and the Index of Names is almost wholly her work.

R. S. C.

St Albans

June 1933

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