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SENATE & PROVINCES

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*Some aspects of the foreign policy
and provincial relations of the Senate
during the closing years of the
Roman Republic*

by

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THIRLWALL PRIZE ESSAY 1935

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316613009

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First published 1935

First paperback edition 2016

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-316-61300-9 Paperback

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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS essay was conceived and partly executed during my tenure of the Sandys Studentship in the year 1932–1933: it has been completed in the leisure hours of the past eighteen months.

In dealing with such a familiar period of history as the closing years of the Roman Republic, it is difficult not to trespass on ground already covered by others. As far as possible I have endeavoured to trace my material back to original sources, but I am fully conscious of the debt I owe to previous students in the same field. The works from which I have derived especial help are distinguished in the bibliography.

It would be ungracious not to acknowledge here the many kindnesses I received at the University of Vienna, where I spent six months of research work: I shall not easily forget the helpful courtesy of Professor Wilhelm and Professor Egger. I am grateful also to the British School at Rome for its hospitality; to the University College of Southampton for the library facilities afforded me during the past year; and to my present Headmaster, Mr Clifford Harper, who willingly allowed me to postpone taking up my appointment until after the completion of my studentship. To Mr G. H. Stevenson, of University College, Oxford, I am indebted for many helpful criticisms and suggestions. Above all, I would thank Professor F. E. Adcock, of King's College, Cambridge, without whose constant

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advice and encouragement this essay would never have been written.

As one who has had little experience of preparing manuscript for publication, I would pay tribute to the work of the Cambridge University Press. The vigilance of its readers has done much to lighten the task of revision: whatever errors of omission and commission remain are mine alone.

The usual abbreviations are employed for references to classical authors. In the case of Cicero, reference is made to the work alone. Modern works listed in the bibliography which have already been cited in text or foot-note are referred to by the name of the author and the abbreviation *op. cit.*, except where this would cause ambiguity.

The initials *C.A.H.* refer to the *Cambridge Ancient History*.

J. MACDONALD COBBAN

August 1935

Scunthorpe, Lincs.

Cambridge University Press

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INTRODUCTION

THE THIRTY YEARS from 80 to 50 B.C. comprise one of the most interesting periods of Roman history. The constitutional problems which are worked out in it are of first-rate importance, while the personal drama of the triumvirs can still stir our passions. 'Public life in Rome had a man-to-man attitude':¹ and the history of the time is dominated by the rivalry and ambitions of Caesar, Pompey, Crassus and Cicero. But behind the protagonists of the drama stands the Senate, and it too had no mean part to play. All the time the Triumvirs were manœuvring for power at Rome the Senate was carrying on the government at home and abroad. The unrest at Rome could not fail to have its repercussions elsewhere, and the political changes in the capital had a far-reaching effect on the government of the provinces. The Senate, as restored by Sulla, was faced with an extraordinarily difficult task, and in the end it proved unequal to it; but it did not succumb without a struggle, and even in its fall it provided many examples of those old virtues by which it had risen to power in the first place.

The object of this essay is to discuss the position of the Senate under the Sullan régime, and the factors which influenced its policy as an imperial power. The appointment of the provincial governor raises questions of importance, while the control exerted by the Senate

¹ J. Petersson, *Cicero; a Biography*. Cf. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik*, p. 114: 'Seit dem hannibalischen Krieg wiest das politische Leben unleugbar einen starken individualistischen Zug auf.'

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over its deputies is briefly outlined. The career of Lucullus and his command in the East perhaps receives disproportionate attention: but this can be justified by the fact that he is one of the few representatives of the Senate of whom we can draw a full-length picture. He personified in himself the virtues and vices of the restored oligarchy; his relations with Pompey and the Equites throw considerable light on the political cross-currents of the day; and his downfall symbolised and foreshadowed the downfall of the Senate. Finally some attempt is made to assess the position of the provincials, and the benefits they received from Roman rule.

The history of the last half-century of the Republic has been so fully worked over by modern scholars that this essay has little claim to originality. Its aim is, not to add to the detailed knowledge of the period, but to discuss one aspect of it which has received too little attention—the position of the Senate, especially in relation to the provinces and dependencies of Rome.