

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

apparently futile story which relates to himself. The transparent veil of anonymity seems to establish the identity of the narrator with the hero of this incident. The author of the second Gospel was then a contemporary of Jesus. His signature attests the truth of the facts which are the common basis of our four Gospels. Our study of the subject has resulted in the confirmation of our faith.

E. PETAVEL.

PROFESSOR RAMSAY ON THE GEOGRAPHY
OF ASIA MINOR.¹

PROFESSOR RAMSAY'S explorations in Asia Minor are among the three or four best things done by Englishmen in the field of scientific scholarship in this generation. They will take rank by the side of Bishop Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers* and Westcott and Hort's *Greek Testament*, as work really of the first order, and of European reputation. More than one public body contributed to the undertaking. Prof. Ramsay himself places at the head of the list the Rector and Fellows of Exeter College, to whom his book is dedicated. I can speak freely of this because, although I have myself the honour to belong to that body, Prof. Ramsay's election had taken place before I was admitted to it, and the arrangements by which he was to hold his fellowship as a direct subsidy to the work of exploration were already complete.

It was one of the most far-sighted acts of any college within my memory, and one which has best justified itself by the result. But I fear that I must correct Prof. Ramsay on one point. He seems to think that his own was the first of a series of "research fellowships," to be continuously maintained. I wish it were so; but unfortunately, though the wish may be there, the power is absent. Since the date of Prof. Ramsay's election the revenues of the college have fallen so seriously, that, in spite of the generosity of more than one of its members, it is now all that it can do to

¹ *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*. (Supplementary Papers of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xviii.). By Prof. W. M. Ramsay. (London, 1890.)

provide for the bare necessities of its tuition. It is right that the public should know how much some of the older foundations are crippled in their resources; and that if they fail to show the same spirit of enterprise in the present as in the past, it should be set down to its true cause.

Besides the college, special acknowledgments are made to the Asia Minor Exploration Fund—which received powerful support from the Royal Geographical Society—the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and the Ottoman Railway Company; and those who will run through the names of individuals to whom indebtedness is expressed in the preface, will easily see where the impulse came from. Let us earnestly hope, both that Prof. Ramsay may continue the work which he has so nobly begun, and that there may be others to share it with him.

It was a special piece of good fortune which led to the choice of the first explorer. It is clear that from the first Mr. Ramsay thoroughly grasped the situation. He knew what he ought to do, and he did it. It would not be easy to give a better example of the modern spirit than the volume which now crowns his researches. If any one is disposed to complain that “nearly 400 pages are spent in discussing a set of names of which nobody ever heard,” he is welcome to do so; but that is the way in which history must be written. I do not say that it is history, but it is the indispensable foundation on which history must be erected. The days of the old flowing narrative, which merely consists in paraphrasing the ancient accounts with a little balancing of one against another, are over. The true historian, whether his subject matter is civil or ecclesiastical, must sink his shafts deeper than this. He must get behind the formal histories; he must fill up their gaps, and discover what they do not tell him. He must set to work like the palæontologist, who reconstructs a vanished world from a few fragmentary fossils: so must he piece together such stray bits of information as he can recover; by a process of inference he must supply the parts that are wanting; he must first reconstruct his skeleton, and then he must let the breath of imagination breathe upon it, and not only clothe it with flesh and blood, but inspire it with life.

In order to do this systematically and scientifically, the first thing is to know the *terrain*; and never were the epithets “systematic and scientific” more deservedly applied than to the way

in which Prof. Ramsay has set about, first to understand for himself, and then to make others understand, the geographical conditions of the history of Asia Minor. He has gone straight to the heart of these conditions by grappling at once with the question of roads. What are the great lines of communication? What are the trade-routes? what the direction of military movements? what the course of the invader and of the merchant? When points like these have been determined, many a fact, and series of facts, which before had been obscure, will become clear and luminous.

If any one seeks an illustration of this, he cannot do better than make a careful study of the first part of Prof. Ramsay's book. He will see there how much may be made of a subject that seems at first sight dark and impenetrable.

We may say that there are four main instruments by means of which this may be done. In the first place, the explorer on the spot finds that the number of possible routes is often very much more limited than one who looks at the map only might imagine. Here a great mountain barrier, with a single cleft, through which traffic must inevitably pass; there a lake or a desert planted full in the way, and diverting the course to north or south; then a ford or remains of a bridge, which point to the crossing of some impetuous river. Given the objective, the two extremities of a road, and it will not be so difficult to determine by what stages those extremities must have been reached.

Next come historical documents. Maps like the so called Pevtinger Table, which is traceable to an original of the fourth century, and the Antonine Itinerary; descriptions of pilgrimages; works of geographers like Strabo and Ptolemy; guide-books like the *Synecdemus*, or "Travelling Companion" of Hierocles, if the bare lists of which it is composed deserve the name; official lists of bishoprics or cities called *Notitiæ*; histories proper, containing the record of marches and campaigns.

Where sources such as these fail, ingenious use is frequently made of hints contained in names and the like: for instance, the fact that certain red earth brought from Cappadocia bore among the Greeks the name "Sinopic earth," proving that it was shipped at Sinope, and that the natural trade-route was from Cappadocia to the Euxine; ¹ and a similar name, "Synnadic marble," proving

¹ Page 28.

that Synnada was the emporium to which marble, which came from some little distance, was carried for sale and exported.¹

Last would come the great masses of material which can only be obtained *in situ*: the few remaining traces of actual pavement, remains of bridges, milestones, cuttings; and the inscriptions which serve to identify the cities and villages through which the road is known to have passed.

Of all these helps Prof. Ramsay has made an admirable use. By means of them he has been able to map out the great arteries of communication at four distinct periods: the prehistoric, when the people who are now frequently identified with the Hittites—though Prof. Ramsay speaks of them with much caution—had a great capital at Pteria (Boghaz Keui) on the Halys, with lines of route north and south, to Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria in one direction, and the Euxine in another; then the “Royal Road,” used for governmental purposes during and before the Persian period. I may commend to the reader a telling bit of argumentation connected with this on p. 27: “What was the reason why the Persian road preferred the difficult and circuitous to the direct and easy route? The only reason can be that the Persians simply kept up a road which had developed in an older period, when the situation of the governing centre made it the natural road.” Then we have the Roman period, when the proverb was true that “all roads lead to Rome.” Of course this could only apply in a remote sense to Asia Minor. What it meant was, that trade found its way by the easiest and most natural channels to the western coast, and the art of the great road-making nation improved the lines of communication which nature indicated. Asia Minor was now covered with a net-work of roads; but chief among them was the highway from Ephesus, up the Mæander valley, across southern Phrygia and Lycaonia, to the Cilician Gates. After Constantinople was founded—or, rather, from the time that Diocletian placed his capital at Nicomedia (in 292)—the centre of attraction changed; the trend of the lines was no longer due east and west, but north-west and south-east, pointing towards the corner of Bithynia which borders on the Propontis and the Bosphorus.

“A steady and progressive change was produced over the whole of Asia Minor. Previously prosperity had been greatest in the southern half of

¹ Page 54.

the plateau; but during the two centuries that elapsed between Constantine and Justinian the northern half of the plateau grew steadily in importance, as being nearer Constantinople and in easier communication with it, and many new centres of population were formed, which gradually acquired the rank of cities and bishoprics." ¹

The system was completed in the time of Justinian, and its main artery was the military road leading to the Halys. Along this the Byzantine and Saracen armies passed and re-passed for centuries.

These changes of route naturally carried with them a considerable shifting of population. Cities rose and decayed according as the great streams of traffic passed through them or left them on one side. To all this Prof. Ramsay is keenly alive, and he is no less alive to another series of changes which went on. Besides the larger re-arrangements and varying centres of density of population, there were also smaller changes of site, as the inhabitants of a fortress on the hills came down into the plain, or some city of the plain transferred itself bodily to the hills. An interesting example of a movement of this kind is supplied by the city of Colossæ, which, between the years 692 and 787, gave place to the fortress of Khonai.² Here the reason was military. The earliest cities were perched on inaccessible crags, the chief object aimed at being security; then during the long *pax Romana* a spacious and populous commercial centre would arise upon the plain; then again, in the period of Saracen and Turkish invasion, the safety of the hills would have to be sought again. But other motives also would be at work. Facilities of watering were a great consideration. In the better days of Roman civilization difficulties were surmounted by skilful engineering; aqueducts were boldly flung across the distance which separated a city from the springs which supplied it. But in time these aqueducts fell into ruins; there was not the energy, the skill, nor the money to repair them; and the consequence was that the population had to fall back to the water, and the houses clustered round the spring, while the more commodious site was deserted.

On a subject of this kind, where the facts are capable of being grouped under some broad generalization, the reader will find no lack of interest in the volume before him. It will hardly be ex-

¹ Page 74.

² Page 80.

pected that as much should be said for that large part of the work which is taken up with the minute identification of places and the accurate demarcation of provinces and districts; but this too is work which is most indispensable for the historian. And the greatest praise is due to Prof. Ramsay for the clearness and firmness with which he has, not only fixed the site of cities and villages, but also traced the lines of territorial divisions, which were constantly changing and being superseded.

The magnitude of the task will be appreciated when we look at the maps by which the volume is accompanied. In the first place, it is a pleasure to see that these, which are really worthy of the book, are of English execution. And then when they are examined it will be seen how much has had to be done. Compare them, for instance, with the historical atlases which are most in use, Droysen or Spruner, and the face of the country will hardly be recognised. Well may Prof. Ramsay say that "a great part of the map of Asia Minor must be revolutionised."¹ "In the case of Galatia, Pontus, Lycaonia, eastern Pisidia, and Cappadocia the ancient topography is quite unsettled. Only about one in six of the ancient cities have been correctly placed on the map."² Even Kiepert, to whom a just tribute is paid, has placed one *strategia* in Cappadocia a hundred miles out of its true position, so that the whole topography of Cappadocia is vitiated.³

This is, of course, assuming that Prof. Ramsay is right, and many of the questions which he discusses are no doubt matters of opinion. I can speak with no authority on the point; but I confess that his reasoning, so far as I have followed it, seems to be extremely weighty and deserving of the fullest attention. A great deal turns upon the estimate of the historical sources. A broad line is drawn between Strabo, Hierocles, and the Byzantine *Notitiæ*, on the one hand, and the Peutinger Table and Antonine Itinerary, on the other. Most recent geographers, notably Dr. Konrad Miller, the editor of the Peutinger Table,⁴ have sided strongly with the latter. Prof. Ramsay sides as strongly with the former. The question will have to be fought out, but I do not think an Englishman would do wrong in laying a wager on his countryman. He has had the great advantage of testing his

¹ Page 101.

² Page 51.

³ Page 100.

⁴ *Die Weltkarte des Kastorius* (1888).

authorities on the spot, with the fullest help from inscriptions and remains, and with the actual country spread out before him.

Two qualities stand out conspicuously in Prof. Ramsay's book. One is what the phrenologists used to call *causality*, a remarkable faculty for putting together cause and effect, for referring facts to general laws. In some forms of theorizing Englishmen, as a rule, are weak. A German will see six reasons where an Englishman will only see one; and a German will give you a choice of two or three systems where an Englishman is groping about for any system at all. But that certainly does not apply to Prof. Ramsay, or to the class of inquiry that he has undertaken. We feel that we are in strong hands; a vigorous judgment, completely master of its data, is the impression that is made upon us.

And another quality as marked is the spirit of *veracity* by which the book is characterized. Perhaps the amount of personal explanation is rather large; but one feels that it proceeds from a man, who claims his own, but is rigorously just in giving other people what is theirs. There is a refreshing absence of literary airs and graces. If the composition of the work bears traces of the difficulties under which it was written, that is a small matter. A plain, direct, vigorous statement of facts is what the author has set before himself. He may not be infallible, but he gives all his reasons, not trying by any rhetorical arts to make them seem stronger than they are. Every page of the book is workmanlike and to the point; it is wholly free from the diletantism which is the bane of so much of our work.

I will conclude by mentioning one or two *desiderata* which have struck me in reading the volume. First and foremost, I should very much like to see a special chapter on *monasteries*. There may be some good reason why so little is said, even incidentally, about these, but I feel sure that wherever it is possible to trace the history of monasticism in a country it is of great importance. What the centres of commerce and of government or the military stations are in one aspect of things, that the monasteries are in another. For many centuries they were the points from which intellectual and spiritual influence radiated; and the connected chain of monasteries marked the line for the passage of ideas. When Prof. Ramsay sits down to write his promised "Local History" of Asia Minor, I earnestly hope that monasteries may play a prominent part in it.

Another addition which I should have been very glad to see is a map of the middle strip of Phrygia, which unfortunately just escapes inclusion in the maps which are given us. The birth-place of Montanism, the home of Avircius, the scene of so much on which Prof. Ramsay has thrown light, cannot but have a peculiar interest. It is possible that a map of this district may have been published in some of the previous articles; but I have not been able to lay my hand upon it, not even in that most valuable paper on the "Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia." Prof. Ramsay should remember that in future we shall go to his volume in preference to any other authority.

Lastly, I cannot help wishing that Prof. Ramsay had given us a full and complete bibliography of his own writings on the subject of Asia Minor. Many of them are scattered over magazines that are not easily accessible, and it would be something to know at least where to look for them. It would be wrong to use the word "disappointment" in face of a work which must have cost such close and prolonged labour, but it would indeed be a boon if Prof. Ramsay could some day do what he seems at one time to have had the intention of doing in his present book, bring together in a single volume the data at present dispersed over many volumes.

When that was done we should see by what laborious and carefully constructed steps Prof. Ramsay has built up the edifice of historical knowledge: how he has begun by laying the foundations in a vast collection of topographical observations and epigraphical material; how he has then, as in the present volume, drawn with a masterly hand the inferences from these data, both particular and general; and, finally, we should see him, as in the series of articles in *THE EXPOSITOR*,¹ making the waste places of history live and blossom for us—showing us how in the north of Phrygia Christianity crept up silently among the rustic population of the valley of the Tembrogius; while in the south it spread in broader stream over the thriving commercial cities which lined the great high-road and the valley of the Mæander; resuscitating forgotten champions of the Church, like Avircius and Artemon; painting for us a picture such as we had never had before of the higher organization of the Phrygian Church; and, more recently, drawing from

¹ Third series, vol. viii. (1888), pp. 241 ff., 401 ff.; vol. ix. (1889), pp. 141 ff., 253 ff., 392 ff. Fourth series, vol. ii. (1890), p. 1 ff.

his treasures to illustrate the rising of the mob of craftsmen at Ephesus.

The student of the New Testament owes to Prof. Ramsay and his companions, not only the more exact delimitation of the Roman provinces and other local divisions in the apostolic age, not only the more complete definition of the network of roads which St. Paul must have traversed, but the settlement of some of the sites which he visited, such as Lystra (Khatyn Serai) and Derbe (Zosta).¹ The student of ecclesiastical history owes not a few interesting pages now written for the first time, and along with these the materials for a firmer grip and a better understanding of the vicissitudes of the Church in Asia Minor throughout the successive phases of its existence.

W. SANDAY.

¹ The proof of the identification in the case of Lystra and the first suggestion in the case of Derbe was due to the American traveller Prof. J. R. S. Sterrett, who served his apprenticeship with Mr. Ramsay (see pp. 332, 336, notes).