The Historical Scholarship of John Bagnell Bury

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IT IS OBVIOUS, even to a cursory student of Irish history, that many persons of intellectual distinction were members of Trinity College, Dublin, in the nineteenth century. The most eminent of them, without doubt, was the inventor of the non-commutative algebra of quaternions, William Rowan Hamilton, who in early youth had combined a powerful facility in the study of languages with skill in rapid calculation. In the physical sciences an honoured place is also held by G. F. Fitzgerald, whose supposition that the length of a measuring apparatus is not an absolute property of it but depends upon its motion, explained the failure of experiments intended to determine the velocity of the earth relative to the other planets and led to the theory of relativity.

In the humanities, too, there were strong performers: one thinks, for example, of the rationalist historian of morals, W. E. F. Lecky; of the witty ancient historian Mahaffy, who in middle age turned successfully to papyrology; and of Robert Yelverton Tyrrell, the coeditor of Cicero's letters and an elegant composer in Latin and Greek. Lecky's writing has classic quality, but I do not hesitate to assert that the Trinity scholar whose work has the most enduring value in the annals of historiography was Bury.

John Bagnell Bury, the son of the Reverend Edward John Bury, rector of Clontibret, Co. Monaghan, was born on 16 October 1861. His mother, who had been a Miss Rogers of Monaghan, is said to have been a very clever woman and very well-read. The boy was, like Rowan Hamilton, an apt pupil, having begun Latin with his father at four; at ten, in school at Foyle College in Derry, he surprised Tyrrell, who, when examining in Greek grammar there, "was unable to puzzle John Bury."[1]

[1] N. H. Baynes, *A Bibliography of the Works of J. B. Bury compiled with a Memoir* (Cambridge 1929) 1 [hereafter, BAYNES]. R. G. Bury, the editor of Plato, was a brother of J. B. Bury, who often helped him (see R. G. Bury, *The Philebus of Plato* [Cambridge 1897] vii).

Having entered Trinity in 1878, he distinguished himself as an undergraduate by assisting Mahaffy with an edition of Euripides' *Hippolytos*; this was a genuinely cooperative undertaking, since Bury gathered matter for the book and drafted the notes.[2] At this time, 1881, it would have been reasonable to suppose that the brilliant student would develop into a traditional editor of classical Greek texts. Mahaffy's lectures, however, had already stimulated his interest in ancient history, and a further incitement towards the professional study of history came from reading Edward Augustus Freeman's *History of Federal Government*,[3] a work Bury was later to edit. This widening of interests did not cause him to abandon philology: on the contrary, Bury's earliest papers, published in Bezzenberger's *Beiträge* and elsewhere, as well as his translations into Latin and Greek, reveal the progress of his philological and linguistic studies, which bore fruit in his two editions of Pindar, the *Nemeans* of 1890 and the *Isthmians* of 1892. Bury always insisted that Latin and Greek were an excellent training for a historian, since the historian must be a critic of texts and historical reasoning based upon insecure textual foundations was flawed. The doctrine was clearly stated by him in an article published in 1906, but he had thought it out as soon as he turned to historical writing in 1885: "it is . . . a fundamental principle in historical work that philological criticism (literary and quellenkritisch) is the necessary preparation for a satisfactory use of authorities. Documents are not ready for the constructive operations of the historian till they have been submitted to the analytical operations of the philologist."[4] It was this insistence upon working outwards from the sources that led him to learn Russian in 1887 and, later on, other eastern European languages; without access to original texts he did not feel himself to be a competent investigator. No doubt the polyglot Mahaffy had encouraged him in his early determination to have a thorough grasp of academic German, a qualification which gave Bury an advantage over some of the best British classical scholars of his time.

Before 1889 the extent of Bury's historical knowledge was evident

[2] W. B. Stanford and R. B. McDowell, *Mahaffy, A Biography of an Anglo-Irishman* (London 1971) 172–73.

[3] Bury, *Scottish Review* 19 (1892) 29–30, quoted by Baynes 65. See also the Rev. R. H. Murray's "Memoir" p. xiii, prefixed to Bury's posthumously published *History of the Papacy in the 19th Century* (London 1930).

[4] "The Treatise De Administrando Imperio," *BZ* 15 (1906) 517–77, at 517.

from articles on topics as diverse as the Lombards and Venetians in Euboea[5] and the chronology of the sixth-century historian Theophylaktos Simokattes,[6] and his careful reading of early mediaeval Latin chronicles is revealed by a parody entitled *Anonymi Dublinensis Fragmentum*; published in the periodical *Kottabos* in 1888, the piece describes, with dry and wry humour, Irish politics of the time.[7] Seen through Bury's Latin, the troubles have, for us too, a contemporary aspect: "sed in Hibernia seditiones foventur, quibusdam non patientibus se ab alienigenis gubernari."

Bury, then, had been gaining a reputation both as historian and philologist. But in 1889 no one can have been quite ready for the fact that in five years Bury had made himself a leading exponent of late antiquity and the early middle ages. In that year Macmillan published a two-volume work, consisting of over one thousand pages in all, entitled *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* (A.D. *395 to* A.D. *800*). In clear and measured prose and with deep scholarship infused by critical judgement, a Fellow of Trinity, no more than twenty-eight years old, maintained the magisterial thesis, which the author continued to expound for the rest of his life, of continuity. No empire fell in 476. "Nothing can be easier than to apprehend that the Roman Empire endured, one and undivided, however changed and dismembered, from the first century B.C. to the fifteenth century A.D., and that from the year 800 forward we distinguish it as *Eastern*, on account of the foundation of a rival Empire, which also called itself Roman, in the West."[8] Not only did Bury demonstrate the continuity; he vindicated the claims of New Rome to serious study, in this following the pioneer Finlay against the prejudices of Voltaire, Gibbon, Lecky and others. "Gibbon," we are told (I p. viii), "hurried over the history of the Emperors later than the seventh century with contemptuous celerity, and his great authority has much to answer for"; indeed Bury himself did much to reverse the imbalance in *The Decline and Fall* when he came to edit Gibbon, who at least had the merit of recognising that the Roman Empire lasted—in theory at any rate—

[5] *JHS* 7 (1886) 309–52, *JHS* 8 (1887) 194–213, *JHS* 9 (1888) 91–117.

[6] *EHR* 3 (1888) 310–15.

[7] N.S. Trinity Term, p.64. Bury comments: "Latinitatis ratio indicat hoc chronicon sexto saeculo post Christum scriptum esse."

[8] *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* (A.D. *395 to* A.D. *800*) I (London 1889, repr. Amsterdam 1966) vii–viii.

until the fifteenth century. (The final year should be identified with the fall of the last Grand Komnenos in Trebizond in 1461 rather than with the capture of Constantinople in 1453.)

Bury's pages show how the Monaghan protestant had already become a rationalist, as he was to remain for the rest of his days till his death in Rome in 1927. In this wonderfully erudite pair of volumes the young freethinker displays fervour as well as detachment. The discussion of eighth-century iconoclasm, for example, shows Bury eager to present Leo III and his son Constantine V as enemies of obscurantism; Leo, indeed, is called a "knight-errant against superstition" (II 435). In the opinion of Bury, the emperor's antagonism towards the cult of the Virgin points to a connexion with the Paulicians, and Mohammedanism, "though freer from superstition and materialism than a degraded Christianity," was a less potent influence upon him, no matter what the reformer's opponents may have said about Leo 'the Saracen-minded' (II 431). Bury tries to go behind the universal hostility of the extant, iconodule, sources to discover the significance of Leo's reforms, and though much is still disputable about the origins of iconoclasm, the literary portrait of a stalwart general and capable administrator is compelling: "What gave the reforming spirit of Leo its peculiar complexion," Bury writes (II 411), "was the fact that he did not content himself with renovating each branch of the administration separately, but attempted to cut away the root of the evil. He improved the discipline and efficiency of the army, he restored the majesty of law and justice, he reformed the police control, and he attended assiduously to the financial and commercial interests of the Empire; but he did much more than this. He essayed to eradicate the prevailing superstition by the iconoclastic policy, which has made him so famous or notorious." Equally characteristic of Bury's secular rationalism is his account of the edict of the seventh-century Emperor Constans II called the *Type*. In the midst of the monothelite dispute, the emperor ordered that no one should declare Christ to have had one will or two wills. "The document," Bury comments, "certainly displays the true spirit of imperial indifference which cares more for the State than for the Church." It was, as he says (II 292–93), a Laodicean judgement implying that the one doctrine (monotheletism) was at least as good as the other, the dyotheletism approved by Pope Theodore.

But to Bury theological disputes were not of central interest. His

constant theme was the rôle of New Rome in defending and preserving the idea of the Empire. Not only was Constantinople a bulwark against danger from the Persians and Saracens—"Maurice and Heraclius, Constantine IV and Leo the Isaurian were the successors of Themistocles and Africanus"; but New Rome kept Graeco-Roman civilisation alive until the West was ready to receive it again (II 536–38). In the rôle of preserver, New Rome was more significant than the Old.

It was the later Roman Empire, whose system of autocracy had been adopted by Aurelian, Diocletian and Constantine from the Parthians and more remotely from the Persian Achaemenids and the Seleucids of the Greek East, which most steadily engaged Bury's attention. Rome's conquest of the Seleucids and Ptolemies did not attract him, and because he regarded the principate as essentially uncreative, relatively little of his scholarly effort was devoted to the period between Augustus and Diocletian.[9] "It is a persistence of Achaemenid tradition through the Parthian period rather than a persistence of Seleucid tradition through the Roman principate that accounts for the similarities which are noted between the Roman autocrats and the Macedonian autocrats."[10] Thus the continuity of New Rome could be traced back to the Hellenistic Age and thence, in part, to Greece. In fact, Bury's neglect of the Roman principate is one aspect of his Hellenism.

The passion for Hellas is strikingly evident in his work on Pindar, a poet to whom he felt a special devotion. In his two editions the interpretations are marred by oversubtle attempts, following the example of Mezger, to detect verbal assonances within the odes[11]—a system of criticism which Bury himself tacitly abandoned when he came more than thirty years later to write on Pindar in the *Cambridge Ancient History*.[12] What is of lasting value in the book is the historical vision which enabled him to picture the poet within the context of late

[9] Baynes 17.

[10] Bury in *The Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge 1923) 15.

[11] Note, however, David C. Young's insistence that "To look upon Bury's intricacies and excesses as a waste of time is an inexcusable mistake. There is much sound criticism in Bury, and it is not difficult to distinguish the sound from the unsound": *cf.* "Pindaric Criticism" in *Pindaros und Bakchylides*, edd. W. M. Calder III and J. Stern (Darmstadt 1970) 30.

[12] *CAH* IV (1926) 513.

archaic Greek society. Bury's eager imagination is aflame with the same youthful spirit which caused him to admire Swinburne for his praise of mankind, and we are some way here from his solemn asseveration in the Cambridge Inaugural Lecture of 1903 wherein the Professor of Modern History proclaimed that history was a science, "no less and no more." In much of his work, there is a poet trying to come out of the scholarly critic, but the internal conflict was relieved by verse composition in Latin and Greek; it was also released by the exercise of historical imagination. Pindar, Bury proclaims, "consorted continually with the great of the earth, he moved among the strong and the beautiful, where none was 'sick or sorry', he derived his inspiration from success, being himself too intellectually successful in realising his desire of perfection. Kingdom and victory, nobility and wealth, strength and comely limbs, *ἀγλαία* and *εὐφροσύνη*, inherit his palaces of music."[13]

A less obvious, but equally significant, feature of Bury's developing historical imagination was his sense of place; an appreciation of landscape would have developed early in a boy brought up in the Monaghan countryside, and it was that same sense which led him in maturity to edit Freeman's *Historical Geography of Europe*.[14] To show how Bury in 1892 was able to envisage Pindar in place as well as in time (as Wilamowitz also did), here is a passage from the brilliant essay on Aeginetan history prefixed to the commentary on the *Isthmian Odes*. "By that geographical necessity, which in politics is imperative, an ambitious city in Attica was doomed to collide with Aegina, just as, to compare a case on a larger scale, an ambitious city in Italy was doomed to interfere with Sicily. That homely, telling expression 'the eye-sore of the Piraeus' becomes more significant when one realises 'the conspicuous island', *διαπρεπέα νᾶσον*, as Pindar called it, perhaps not only in a figurative sense but to suggest a physical feature, the pre-eminence of its high Mountain—the *Ὄρος*—far seen in the bay and ranging above the other hills of the neighbouring coasts and islands."[15] In his later writing Bury rarely allowed his imagination the freedom he had permitted himself in writing about Pindar and Aegina. The rapture passed, and instead the power of analysis grew;

[13] *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) xxxi.
[14] 3rd ed. (London 1903).
[15] *The Isthmian Odes* (London 1892) xviii.

but the feeling for places remained, and the joy could not be forgotten. Pindar, Bury admits, had his moments of sorrow, but the note of ἀγλαΐα "distinguishes him, even among the poets of Greece. He seems to come always with the Graces, cheerfully—*σὺν Χάριτιν ἔμολον*, as he once says. And he makes us fancy him as living in a bright place—the light reasonably tempered by thoughts of death coming in rarely, at pensive moments, and only making life seem the more precious—and enjoying, as a being in full harmony with its environment, the daily transient pleasures, not spoiled for him by their brevity—*ὅ τι τερπνὸν ἐφάμερον διώκων*, a natural unconscious Cyrenaic."[16]

The sense of place strengthened a determination to travel. In preparation for his *History of Greece* he journeyed with his wife in 1895 to Athens, Euboea and Sparta, and an expedition in the company of R. C. Bosanquet, who was to become in 1900 Director of the British School at Athens, took the historian to the North. From Lamia they travelled to Thermopylae escorted by a guard of soldiers provided by the chief of police on instructions from the Minister of the Interior. Bury had refused to believe in danger from brigandage until an official shrugging his shoulders had remarked, "As you like: the latest news is that he boiled a man in oil." Bury, according to Bosanquet, "had a thought-out programme and adhered to it with placid obstinacy which made my work of piloting him easy. He knew little about travel in Greece, but faced discomfort cheerfully so long as he saw what he wanted."[17]

Considered statistically, Bury's *History of Greece* is the most successful of his books—the first edition was published by Macmillan in 1900 and the fourth, edited by Russell Meiggs, in 1975. In recognition of the groundwork of the book, Trinity had already made Bury Professor of Greek in 1898 and he was, at the same time, allowed by the College to retain his chair of Modern History, which he had occupied since 1893. The full title is a *History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*; throughout, the work is balanced and sober without being dull. I can trace my earliest interest in Greek history to Bury, and there must be many scholars who can do the same, with equal gratitude. The vast increase in our knowledge of Greek prehistory has entailed complete rewriting of the earlier chapters, but we may say of the

[16] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.15) xii.

[17] Bosanquet in Baynes 17–21. See also Bury, "The Campaign of Artemisium and Thermopylae," *BSA* 2 (1895/6) 83, for a reference to the journey to Lamia.

book what Bury wrote of *The Decline and Fall*: "That Gibbon is behind date in many details and in some departments of importance, simply signifies that we and our fathers have not lived in an absolutely incompetent world. But in the main things, he is still our master, above and beyond 'date'."[18]

Here are two examples of Bury's balance and sobriety. The Peace of Kallias between Athens and Persia and the character of the Athenian democratic politician, Kleon, are objects of continuing debate amongst historians of Greece. The main difficulty about the Peace is that Thucydides does not mention it, but Bury's account of the events of 449/8 B.C. remains as defensible now as it was in 1900. He emphasizes that "the Great King would never have consented to treat either with a Greek city or a federation of Greek cities as an equal. And he certainly did not stoop to the humiliation of formally acknowledging the independence of the Greek cities of Asia. It was enough that he should graciously promise to make certain concessions, but whatever were the diplomatic forms of the agreement, both parties meant peace, and peace was maintained."[19] Secondly, Kleon, who from Aristophanes onwards has been the butt of much abuse: Bury's fairness towards the successors of Pericles, which Grote would have approved, is plain in the following passage, and Kleon at least he would not have described as a self-made man of the people if he had been alert to the fact that Kleainetos, Kleon's father, had been rich enough to own a workshop of slave-tanners.[20] "Cleon and the other statesmen of this type," says Bury, "are especially interesting as *the politicians whom the advanced democracy produced and educated.* It would be a grievous error and injustice to suppose that their policy was determined by mere selfish ambition or party malice. Nearly all we know of them is derived from the writings of men who not only condemned their policy but personally disliked them as low-born upstarts. Yet, though they may have been vulgar and offensive in their manners, there is abundant evidence that they were able, and there is no proof that they were not generally honest, politicians. To those who regretted the dignity of Pericles, the speech of Cleon or Hyper-

[18] *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon. Ed. by J. B. Bury, I (London 1896) lxvii.

[19] I quote from the two-volume edition of 1902 (I 391). Bury's formulation of the terms of peace is modified in the 4th ed. (1975) p.222.

[20] J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) 318.

bolus may have seemed violent and coarse; but Cleon himself could hardly have outdone the coarseness and the violence of the personalities which Demosthenes heaped on Aeschines in a subsequent generation."[21]

Bury's objectivity is evident from the very beginning: in the preface to the first edition, he warns the reader about the false perspective resulting from the partial nature of our sources for the history of archaic Greece. Archaeology has, since then, done much to fill gaps, but it remains true that our knowledge of the eastern Greeks in the age of their enlightenment consists of disconnected glimpses: ". . . the false impression is produced that the history of Hellas in the seventh and sixth centuries consisted merely or mainly of the histories of Sparta and Athens and their immediate neighbours. Darkness also envelopes the growth of the young Greek communities of Italy and Sicily during the same period. The wrong," Bury continues, "unfortunately, cannot be righted by a recognition of it. Athens and Sparta and their fellows abide in possession. *Les absents ont toujours tort.*"

The preface includes, as one would expect, an acknowledgement to Mahaffy, and also, most interestingly, to Wilamowitz, whose brilliant combination of textual and historical scholarship was warmly approved by Bury, himself an analytic philologist who became a constructive historian. Baynes (23 n.1) was later to ask why Bury did not carry the history of Greece down to 220 B.C. or even later. Part of the answer to the question must be that in 1900 Bury felt himself not yet to have done the necessary spadework in the tangled records of the early Hellenistic age, but I suspect that he also considered Freeman's work on federal government, the second edition of which he had produced in 1893 with the title *History of Federal Government in Greece and Italy*, already to have covered much of the ground, in its discussion of the Achaean and Aetolian leagues.

His essay of 1923 on the Hellenistic age[22] shows how original a book on the successors of Alexander from his pen would have been, but in 1900 there were more pressing tasks, amongst them his *Life of St Patrick* and his Harvard lectures, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (1908). The latter book followed logically from the *History of Greece* and again reveals the influence of Wilamowitz. Bury asks how Greek

[21] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) I 455 (4th edition ed. R. Meiggs [London 1975] 261, except that Meiggs does not keep Bury's italics).

[22] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.10).

historical writing originated, what did the Greeks know, or think they knew, about their past, and who were the forerunners of Herodotos and Thucydides. He traces the growth of antiquarianism, and in company with Wilamowitz, emphasizes the importance of local histories. The story is taken down to Poseidonios and thence to Greek influences upon Roman historical writing, all the way from epic poetry, which for the earliest Greeks was the equivalent of history. In the eighth and last chapter Bury turns to the philosophy of history, to the idea of development and the idea of progress, the notions of Turgot and Condorcet being contrasted with ancient concepts of cyclical recurrence. Over the entire book there broods the austere figure of Thucydides, the founder of 'political' history, but some of the most attractive pages concern Herodotus, whose work "assumed the character of a study in the history of civilisation."[23] Bury is charmed by what he takes to be the quiet scepticism of the Halicarnassian about divine matters: "He says, as it were, to the gods and heroes, 'Please do not be angry with me—supposing you to exist. But at this time of day, you know, one really must draw the line somewhere'. On the other hand," Bury continues (p.49), "he says to the infidels who disbelieve in oracular prophecy, 'I know you will think me credulous. But still in this case the evidence is so remarkably clear that I do not see my way to resisting it'." Bury was far more patient than many of his contemporaries were with Herodotean anecdotes, because he appreciated their literary quality. "He had a wonderful flair for a good story; and the gracious garrulity with which he tells historical anecdotes is one of the charms which will secure him readers till the world's end." "Gibbon," Bury adds (p.57), "happily observed that Herodotus 'sometimes writes for children and sometimes for philosophers'; the anecdotes he relates often appeal to both." The Harvard audience must have been charmed too, and the quality of Bury's pioneering work was at once recognised by the young Felix Jacoby, who was to become the leading exponent of Greek historiography, in his review: "Ein gutes Buch, dessengleichen wir in Deutschland leider noch nicht haben." The book, says the reviewer, deserves to be translated; what Bury states about Thucydides is the best that Jacoby has read about him for a long time; the treatment of the Roman historians, however, is neither fish nor meat; and Jacoby thinks that Bury has

[23] *The Ancient Greek Historians* (London 1908, repr. New York 1958) 78 and 45 [hereafter, *AGH*].

misunderstood the spirit in which Herodotus wrote; but the prevailing judgement is warmly favourable.[24] The book is still, in my opinion, the clearest and most satisfying introduction to Greek historiography, even if later work, especially on the fragments of lost historians, has rendered parts of the discussion inadequate.

The more general problem of the nature of historical enquiry had often engaged Bury's attention. In his inaugural lecture at Cambridge in 1903 he had spoken about the scope of history. The exclusive idea of political history, descending from Thucydides and Ranke, had, he thought, been giving way to a larger conception of historical study, originating with Herodotos. This wider view will embrace all manifestations of human activity—institutions, law, art, economics—and historians will have to be alert to the interconnexions while pursuing their own specialisms. Bury's conclusion that "though history may supply material for literary art or philosophical speculation, she is herself a science, no less and no more"[25] left him open to misunderstanding. Some thought that he cared not for the form in which historical results were presented, though anyone who had pondered his consistently urbane prose should have been aware that he knew the writing of history, as distinct from the technique of research, to be an art. Bury was quick to correct the misconception: in a note in his book on St Patrick[26] he repeats that history is *Wissenschaft*, but denies that "the presentation of the results of historical research is not an art, requiring the tact and skill in selection and arrangement which belong to the literary faculty." A respect in which history resembles natural science is the necessity of hypotheses for the advancement of knowledge; this is especially so in ancient and mediaeval history, where the materials are so often inadequate. Bury agreed with his predecessor at Cambridge, Lord Acton, in regarding the study of modern times as "the most pressing of all," not least because some hope of progress was assured by the abundance of records. On the other hand, Bury continued to be drawn to antiquity and the middle ages because of the great intellectual challenge presented by the fragmentary testi-

[24] *BPW* 29 (1909) 419–29 (=*Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtschreibung*, ed. H. Bloch [Leiden 1956] 65–72).

[25] "The Science of History," repr. in *Selected Essays of J. B. Bury*, ed. Harold Temperley (Cambridge 1930) 22.

[26] *op.cit.* (*infra* n.31) viii n.1.

monies of mediaeval manuscripts, ancient papyri, inscriptions and archaeology.

To see how Bury sifted modern sources to take full advantage of their bounty we may turn to a little-read work of his on Vatican politics. The posthumous book on the papacy from 1864 to 1878[27] deals with theological issues far beyond my competence, but it is not necessary to be a theologian in order to appreciate the detailed narrative, which moves forward, with all the dramatic skill of a carefully wrought detective story, from Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors to the triumph, or catastrophe, of the proclamation of papal Infallibility in 1870. Bury had read all the relevant continental journalism and doctrinal literature of the time, and so was able to trace in detail—and with distaste—the diplomatic moves, the shifts of opinion, and the rôle of the Jesuits. To Bury, the historian, the traditional claims of the Church were fundamentally antihistorical because they failed to take note of the differences between the early Church, the mediaeval Church and the modern Church. He argues (p.49) that the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception proclaimed in 1854 was already an assertion of the infallibility and sovranty of the Pope, since dogma could be, and had then been, defined on the basis of tradition alone. After 1854 the definition of Infallibility became necessary, for there was always the "haunting nightmare" that Pius IX's act might subsequently be considered an "usurpation." Manning's statement that the definition of Infallibility mattered little to Pius is dismissed as "simply false" (p.53).

Even the most dedicated ultramontanist may today smile at the pawky irony in Bury's delineation of the interacting characters at the Council of 1870. Of Monsignor Pie: "The calibre of the Bishop of Poitiers may be estimated by one of his arguments. The Apostle Peter, he said, had been crucified with his head downwards, so that his head bore his body: even so the Pope is the head who bears up the Church which is the body; but evidently it is he who bears that is Infallible, and not that which is borne" (p.122). To Cardinal Schwarzenburg, who brought forward objections to Infallibility, the Pope said, "I, Giovanni Maria Mastai, believe in Infallibility. As Pope I have nothing to ask from the Council; the Holy Ghost will enlighten it" (p.83)—words which after Vatican II come as from a distant age,

[27] See n.3 *supra*. The book was edited from lectures delivered in 1908.

though in fact they were spoken just over a century ago. Cardinal Guidi, who had declared that separate Personal Infallibility of the Pope was not known till the fourteenth century and that a Pope had never condemned a heresy by his own authority, was shouted down in the Council; and when he was reproved by the Holy Father, Guidi told the Pope that his own words had been in accordance with scripture, the general teaching of the Church, and tradition; to which the Pope retorted, "La Tradizione son' Io" (pp.123–24). Bury's account of the enforced resignation of Audu, the agèd Chaldaean Patriarch of Babylon, whose punishment prompted Georges Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, to say, "It is simply a robber synod" (pp.100–01), shows how deep was the pain felt by many faithful ecclesiastics at the conduct of the Council. The Roman Curia crushed the minority by numbers, though the minority represented a population of some ninety millions (p.105), and Newman, now deeply troubled in spirit, was moved to write to Bishop Ullathorne of Birmingham that the definition would cause pain of conscience to multitudes: "What have we done to be treated as the faithful have never been treated before? When has a definition of doctrine *de fide* been a luxury of devotion and not a stern painful necessity?" On the 2nd and 3rd of July the French, German and Austrian members of the minority declared their intention of speaking no more. Too soon: for a French bishop was told by telegram from Paris, "Hold out yet a few days. Providence is sending an unexpected help." The Franco-Prussian war soon came, but the French had already lost the right to speak (p.125). As a piece of historical reporting, Bury's narrative is magnificent, and in an ecumenical age his study of ecclesiastical diplomacy is still of practical relevance.

In Bury's opinion the history of the Papacy was the reverse of the history of intellectual freedom. In his book *A History of the Freedom of Thought* (London 1914) he wrote with passion (and not always with accuracy), forgetting the Gibbonian principle of being zealous only in opposition to zeal. Bury argued that liberty of thought and discussion is a supreme condition of progress, and he expresses the opinion—astonishing in view of subsequent events—that freedom is now assured to mankind forever (p.248), though he admits that the Russian censorship is notorious (p.250), and concedes that a revolution inspired by faith in formulas would almost certainly lead to coercion—as indeed happened in Russia from 1917 onwards. Bury never lived to

see the autocracy of Stalin nor the Nazi atrocities nor the horrors of 'brainwashing', but it is difficult to believe that his serene optimism could have survived the wickednesses of the 'thirties and later decades. The book was written in haste, so that insufficient care was taken with references (like Wilamowitz, he was sometimes over-reliant on his fine memory), and there were even deficiencies in historical perspective. All this was eagerly pointed out by Hilaire Belloc,[28] who complained that Bury's academic position was being used to give his criticisms of the Catholic Church a respectability they did not deserve. The catalogue of errors is a long one and there are distortions—for example, the rather patronising dismissal of St Thomas Aquinas as the constructor of an "ingenious" system of philosophy (p.69); the book must therefore be regarded as unworthy of Bury, no matter how sincere its author was in writing it. Zeal, regrettably, also led him into false generalisations: such, for instance, was the indignant assertion that the prohibition of Galileo's works and their retention upon the Index until 1835 was, during the interval, "fatal to the study of natural science in Italy" (p.90). This brought the curt comment from Belloc: "... one might suppose that Professor Bury had never heard of Torricelli, let us say, of Volta, or of Galvani."[29] The zeal against political Catholicism shows that Bury was, in many respects, still a child of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, and the impression is not diminished when we consider his attitudes to Ireland and Irish history.

Late in life, at a luncheon party in Cambridge in 1922, Bury was talking about Ireland. With a smile he said, "The Irish—except for the descendants of the English of the Pale and of the Scotch in Ulster, the rest of them are simply Hottentots." Many a revealing word is spoken in jest: we see here the lasting impress of Bury's upbringing and perhaps also a malign consequence of tutorials with Mahaffy, who never lost an opportunity to denigrate the aspirations of Celtophiles and to deplore what he regarded as the parochialism and introversion of the Irish national movement. The notion of the Pale was attractive to the historian of the Later Roman Empire: in 1889, writing about the battle between Aetius and Attila at the Catalaunian Field, Bury declares, "We cannot forget that the only Teutons within

[28] *Anti-Catholic History. How it is written* (London, Catholic Truth Society, June 1914), adapted from an article in the *Dublin Review*, January 1914.

[29] Belloc, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.28) 23.

the Roman pale, who, though they did not take part in the conflict, not only hoped for the victory of the Hun, but had even provoked him to war, were the settlers in Africa; we can not forget that when Aetius and Theodoric did battle for the common cause of cosmos and civilisation, the Vandals alone sided with chaos and barbarism; even as the Greeks could not forget that the Thebans had chosen the side of the Persian invader and refused to fight for the freedom of all the Greeks."[30]

It is not surprising therefore that when Bury, who had been born in a province whence many able administrators and missionaries had been sent out in the heyday of another empire, came to write about the patron saint of Ireland, he was at pains to emphasize St Patrick's *Romanitas*, seeing him as the agent of imperial civilisation, who brought light to those in outer darkness at the ends of the world. Bury, relying on the seventh-century witness of Tírechán, insists that the saint visited Rome in 441/2 because Patrick needed to consult Leo the Great about the establishment of a primatial church at Armagh, and the Pope's approbation was likely to further the progress of Christianity in Ireland.[31] Thanks to Patrick's introduction of Latin, which was one of the *arcana imperii* of the Catholic Church, "the Irish were soon busily engaged in trying to work their own past into the woof of ecumenical history, to synchronise their insular memories with the annals of Rome and Greece, and find a mark for their remote land in the story of the world"[32]—in fact to bring themselves within the Roman Pale; on the other hand, Bury argues (p.214), if the western empire had not collapsed, the isolation and eccentricity of the Irish Church would not have been so marked after the saint's death. Bury's spirit was never *anima naturaliter Christiana*, but there is truth in the description of him as *anima naturaliter Romana*—his neglect of the Augustan principate notwithstanding; he thought that the pale of civilisation retreated after Patrick's death, and his verdict on the standing of early Hibernian scholarship remained unsympathetic, as it had been in 1889 when he wrote: "It is a strain on our credulity to accept the remark that in western Europe during the seventh century Greek was studied more in the remote island of Ireland than elsewhere. At Trim, indeed, there was a church called 'the church of the Greeks',

[30] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) I 178. "Hottentots": Baynes 53.

[31] *The Life of St Patrick and his Place in History* (London 1905) 367–69 [hereafter, *St Patrick*].

[32] *St Patrick* 220.

but we can only smile when we are told by a recent writer that 'the Celtic monastery of Bangor became a potent focus of Hellenism'. In other countries, certainly, we meet Greek scholars, such as they were, of more distinction than any Irish monk."[33]

A Bury-like attitude towards Ireland is even now occasionally to be encountered amongst the Anglo-Irish: there is a love of the country but also a detachment from its epichoric inhabitants. In the *Life of St Patrick* the feeling for place is again manifest. Here (p.29), for instance, is Bury writing about Slemish and its neighbourhood in a passage not less interesting because he believed the saint's captivity to have been spent in Co. Mayo, not in Co. Antrim: "Here, it was believed and recorded, Patrick served a master whose name was Miliucc. His lands and his homestead were in northern Dalaradia, and Patrick herded his droves of pigs on Mount Miss. The name of this mountain still abides unchanged, though by coalescing with *sliabh*, the Gaelic word for 'mountain', it is slightly disguised in the form Slemish. Not really lofty, and not visible at a distance of many miles, yet when you come within its range, Mount Miss dominates the whole scene and produces the impression of a massive mountain. Its curious, striking shape, like an inverted bowl, round and wide-brimmed, exercises a sort of charm on the eye, and haunts one who is walking in the valley of the Braid, somewhat as the triangular form of Pentelicus, clear-cut like the pediment of a temple, follows one about the plain of Athens." Bury freely admitted that his imperial view of Patrick was closer to the Catholic view of him than to that of anti-papal divines, but that is typical of his objectivity; after all, it is the business of the historian to ascertain facts and there is something "essentially absurd" in his wishing that any alleged fact should turn out to be true or turn out to be false.[34]

Bury kept his youthful appearance and many of his youthful enthusiasms into his old age, and his vigour helps to explain his enormous industry; there are 369 items in Baynes's bibliography, and not a few of them are substantial books. Many are the tales told of the industrious professor who was mistaken for an undergraduate. But there were other influences. He enjoyed a stable and happy home life

[33] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) II 392. Compare W. B. Stanford, "Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland," *ProcRIrAcad* 70.C.3 (Dublin 1970), at pp.22–27. M. Esposito (*Studies* 1 [Dublin 1912] 665–83) shows how little evidence there is of knowledge of Greek in mediaeval Ireland.

[34] *St Patrick* vii–viii.

before and after his marriage in 1885; his wife, Jane Bury, who was his second cousin, shared his interests and accompanied him on his travels; and her intellectual quality can be seen from the chapter on Byzantine art she contributed to the two-volume *History of the Later Roman Empire* of the *annus mirabilis* 1889. He was always helpful to serious scholars and to those undergraduates who were eager for knowledge, but he did not go out of his way to gather pupils, and by contemporary standards his lecturing duties were light, his tutorial work minimal. Above all, he avoided that bane of modern university administration, the academic committee. He regarded time spent away from scholarship as time wasted; some scholars, he said, were like the sailors in St Paul's shipwreck: they trusted to achieve their intellectual salvation on boards.[35] He was prompt and punctilious in all business matters, but his lack of administrative experience was held against him when he was considered a possible Provost of Trinity. It is doubtful, in any case, that he would have accepted the post. The Cambridge chair, which A. J. Balfour secured for him in 1902, was precisely what he needed in his pursuit of learning. Bury's own views on the purpose and function of universities are of vital significance nowadays, when bureaucratic paymasters insist upon the introduction of ephemerally 'practical', and often costly, subjects. He insisted that the uselessness of some subjects made them specially suitable for study in universities; amidst the contemporary enthusiasm for 'relevance', it is encouraging to read that it is our duty "to keep the *Zeitgeist* at a civil distance. . . . To allow him to have any voice in the regulation of academic studies—that is fatal indeed." Besides, the *Zeitgeist* may not always mean what he is said to mean. "One may be more disposed to believe that the alleged voice of the *Zeitgeist* is often nothing more significant than a *Zeitungsgeschrei.*"[36] True: but nowadays it is the administrator with an eye on the newspapers who holds the purse-strings of nearly all universities, and that is a problem to which Bury, blessèd in his generation, had to find no solution.

It was to be expected that in the course of half a century of professional scholarship Bury would change his mind, but his readiness to do so in response to further reflexion, new knowledge or the arguments of others, is a remarkable testimony to his lack of party spirit.

[35] Murray, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) xxix.

[36] Bury, quoted by Baynes 59–60.

There were days, he said, when he was a determinist and looked on history in one way, and days when he was an indeterminist and looked on it in quite another,[37] and he even asserted that he was not doing his duty unless he changed his views every two years—a deliberate jest perhaps, but one designed to emphasize the provisional character of historical knowledge. He seemed never able to make up his mind about impartiality in the historian: history should be scientific, yes; but, in the preface to *The Life of St Patrick*, he states bluntly that, in his opinion, freedom from bias is impossible and undesirable. "Whoever writes completely free from bias will produce a dull and colourless work."

No one could accuse Bury's Homeric studies of the defect he ascribed to Gladstone, that of clinging consistently to one idea from his youth up.[38] Bury modified his historical interpretation of Homer as archaeological research developed. Having once doubted that there had been a Trojan war, he came in the course of time to believe that the leading heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had been historical characters. In 1924 the editors of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, of whom Bury was one, were moved to remark, "For the last hundred years it has been so usual to treat the traditions with disrespect and scepticism that the treatment of the Achaean period by Professor Bury may seem indecently radical just because it is exceptionally conservative."[39] In the *History of Greece*[40] he had said that we need not doubt that Troy fell through "Grecian craft or valour," but a quarter of a century later he even maintained that the heroes of the tales, like the geographical scenes in which they moved, were real; the deeds of princes were sung by minstrels in the days of their sons and grandsons, and as the minstrels created the mythology, the chieftains who played eminent parts were transmuted into heroes, heroic poetry having been a characteristic feature of Greek life in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C.[41] We may note, incidentally, that in the *History*

[37] *AGH* 204. Bury returned to the problem of determinism in discussing Herder in *The Idea of Progress* (London 1932, repr. New York 1955) 240–42.

[38] Baynes 102, quoting from "The Insurrection of Women. A Criticism," *Fortnightly Review* N.S. 52 (1892) 651–66, at p.654. The criticism is not quite fair, since Gladstone was prompt to welcome Schliemann's discoveries: see for example the statesman's preface to Schliemann's *Mycenae* (London 1878). Bury alludes to Gladstone's lasting belief that the Homeric poems are evidence of God's revelation to mankind.

[39] *CAH*[1] II viii.

[40] *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*[2] I (London 1902) 43.

[41] *CAH*[1] II 478–79.

of Greece he had insisted, "No reasonable chronology can avoid the conclusion that Greeks had already begun to settle in the area of Aegean civilisation, when the Aegean civilisation of the bronze age was at its height."[42] The decipherment by M. G. F. Ventris of Linear B as Greek would have come as no surprise to Bury.

The difficulty in the historicising interpretation of Homer is, of course, *testis unus testis nullus*: the Homeric poems are, by definition, the only evidence for the Homeric age, if it existed. Bury argued, with some danger of circularity, that old Greek singers kept more closely to fact than did Teutonic bards, one reason being the accurate topography of the Troad in the *Iliad* (but may not this have been the result of Homer's autopsy rather than an inheritance from an Achaean bard?), another reason being the superiority of the Greeks in the art of poetry—in the discriminating treatment of their matter.[43] He argues that the Greek tradition of a war for Troy, added to the fact that the fortress of Hissarlik was destroyed at about the time assigned by Greek chronography to the Trojan war, entails that there had been a Trojan War. To the questions "How was Hissarlik destroyed?" and "What gave rise to the tradition?" the hypothesis of an Achaean sacking of Troy is a complete answer. While allowing that the significance of the war transcended the "personal incident" which occasioned it, he states that the abduction of a princess is in keeping with the character of a heroic age, "and there appears to be no very good reason why it should not be accepted as a historical fact."[44] Helen apart (and even in this matter, who shall prove Bury mistaken?), it is safe to say that the renewed excavations at Troy have not diminished the likelihood that a war for Troy (VII A) was a historical event.

The problem of interpreting historical tradition is part of the more general problem of source-criticism. The logical problem of the single witness greatly troubled Bury, and at the beginning of his masterly book of 1912 on the Eastern Roman Empire we find him exercising great caution.[45] If a historian can use a number of independent reports of the same events, then he can approach the truth by making comparisons. But suppose there is only one report, as often

[42] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.40) 41. [43] *CAH*[1] II. 510–13.

[44] *CAH*[1] II 492. Compare J. V. Luce, *Homer and the Heroic Age* (London 1975) 121–39, who allows "a generous measure of historicity to the celebrated tale of Troy."

[45] *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I* (A.D. *802–867*) (London 1912) ix–x.

happens in the history of the ninth century. We can eliminate obvious errors and try to make allowance for bias; but are we entitled to accept the residue as true? If we had had several contemporary reports of the tangled events leading to the murder of the Emperor Michael III, there would be serious divergencies between them, we may be sure. As it happens, we have only one report and it is not contemporary; it has been handed down, orally or in writing, from a narrator about whom we know nothing. Bury therefore asks, "Is there a serious probability that this story presents to our minds images at all resembling those which would appear to us if the scenes had been preserved by a cinematographic process?" Bury says that he follows the usual practice, since it is difficult to do otherwise; and then he again draws attention to the obstacles to an understanding of ancient and mediaeval history, many portions of which "will always remain more or less *fables convenues*"; for their accuracy, "at least, no discreet person will be able to stand security even when scientific method has done for them all it can do."

Bury's *Eastern Roman Empire* is my favourite amongst his books. Here we see his learning and critical acumen effectively deployed against a host of tough problems which yield one by one. The book has been criticised for lack of coherence, but the charge that it resembles a series of articles between covers is not just; the story hangs together well when the material allows it to do so. We follow imperial history from reign to reign, then we are given a view of ecclesiastical, economic and military affairs before turning to consider the empire's relations with its neighbours in peace and war. A concluding chapter dealing with the revival of learning in the Amorian period emphasizes the rôle of Constantinople as inheritor and interpreter of ancient civilisation. Then, as in the *Life of St Patrick*, follows a series of appendices treating specific problems; here the author enables the determined reader to dip deeply into the sources. Not the least of Bury's successes in the book is the use of hagiographic texts, many of them superficially unreliable or irrelevant, as props for historical arguments. Some of the texts he sifts were, and are, barely known in western Europe; to have hunted them out after recognising their potential was no mean undertaking.

In dealing with the second iconoclasm, the Bury of 1912 has less fervour but greater detachment than the twenty-eight year old laudator of Leo III. He sees that to tolerate images, if iconoclasts are

also tolerated, is less troublesome than to smash them. Leo V, the Armenian, would never have thought of reviving the doctrine if iconoclasm had not possessed a strong body of supporters, but "that he committed a mistake in policy can hardly be disputed in view of subsequent events." Nicephorus I had wisely allowed the iconoclasts to propagate their views but had preserved the settlement of the Council of Nicaea. Image-worship was more advantageous than iconoclasm because it did not need to lead to persecution, since the iconoclasts could not be forced to worship pictures; ". . . they had only to endure the offence of seeing them and abstain from insulting them; whereas the adoption of iconoclasm rendered persecution inevitable." Bury then shows that Leo V resolved to upset the Church and to oppose the monks, because he believed that his own name was propitious. Leo V might rival Leo III, for he reasoned that iconoclasm had been proved in the outcome to be pleasing to God.[46]

From the many delights, Arabian as well as Byzantine, in the book, I choose the story of the bluestocking who might have become the wife of the young Emperor Theophilus. "His stepmother Euphrosyne assembled the maidens, who had been gathered from all the provinces, in the Pearl-chamber in the Palace, and gave the Emperor a golden apple to bestow on her who pleased his heart. Theophilus halted before Kasia, a lady of striking beauty and literary attainments, and addressed to her a cynical remark, apparently couched in metrical form, to which she had a ready answer in the same style.

THEOPHILUS: A woman is the fount and source
Of all man's tribulation.
KASIA: And from a woman sprang the course
Of man's regeneration.

The boldness of the retort did not please the Emperor and he gave the golden apple to Theodora."[47] The point of the story, whose truth Bury is willing to accept, must have been that Theophilus, knowing Kasia's reputation as a *docta puella*, had tried to draw her.[48] In recognising the quasi-metrical form of the exchange Bury once again illustrates his alertness to the ties between history and literature.

Alongside the continuity of institutions in New Rome there was

[46] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.45) 57–58.

[47] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.45) 81–82. For the bride-show see also W. T. Treadgold, *GRBS* 16 (1975) 327.

[48] Bury, *EHR* 13 (1898) 340.

continuity of language and literature. The Greek language prevailed in the East, but not before borrowing heavily from the Latin language of administration. Some of the borrowings, words such as δούξ (*dux*) and κουαίστωρ (*quaestor*), and some of the Greek equivalents of Latin terms, αὐτοκράτωρ (*imperator*), ὕπαρχος (*praefectus*), were noted by Bury in his introduction to the fourth volume of the *Cambridge Mediaeval History* (1923),[49] an undertaking which he had planned. But there was also continuity of literature; ancient Greek literature would not have survived in quantity if the later Romans of the empire had not copied texts, and the texts would not have been copied if there had not been readers eager and willing to use them as models. In particular, Bury observes, "the continuity which links the fifteenth century A.D. with fifth B.C. is notably expressed in the long series of Greek historians, who maintained, it may be said, a continuous tradition of historiography. From Critobulus, the imitator of Thucydides, and Chalcocondyles, who told the story of the last days of the Empire, we can go back, in a line broken only by a dark interval in the seventh and eighth centuries, to the first great masters, Thucydides and Herodotus."[50] Thus there is a sense in which Bury's *Ancient Greek Historians* had ended too soon, but in that book already the indebtedness of Procopius and Critobulus to Thucydides is noted.[51]

Procopius and Critobulus were professionals, but the notion of continuity is also appropriate in the study of popular literature, as Bury pointed out in his Romanes lecture, entitled *Romances of Chivalry on Greek Soil*.[52] Here once again he exercises historical insight upon the interpretation of literature, so that we are reminded of his early work on Pindar. Bury shows that the Frankish invasion of Greece left its mark upon later Byzantine romances, but the Western touches are adventitious. The tradition of romantic chivalry can be traced back in the Greek world through Byzantium to the prose romances of the ancient world. Owing to this novelistic background of separated lovers, beautiful gardens, shipwrecks and chance encounters, we do not have to resort to the hypothesis of Western influence to explain the Byzantines' notions of knighthood and chivalrous adventure. Before the Crusades there had been a long tradition of knightliness

[49] Reprinted in *CMH*[2] IV.2 (1967) xii–xx, at xiv n.1. [50] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.49) xv.

[51] *AGH* 148–49. For Procopius' use of Thucydides see also Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian* (A.D. *395 to* A.D. *565*) II (London 1923, repr. New York 1958) 428–29.

[52] *Romances of Chivalry on Greek Soil, being the Romanes Lecture for 1911* (Oxford 1911).

among the *kavallarioi* and the *akritai* or borderers of the eastern Roman frontier in the wars with the Saracens. In Asia Minor men of independence and courage had watched the passes, defended their castles, and pursued the Mohammedan invader on horseback; they had lifted cattle and captured princesses; and they had inspired heroic poetry. The hero who symbolizes their romantic world is Digenes Akrites, the warden of the marches, whose mother was a Greek noblewoman and father a Saracen emir. The poem *Digenes*, Bury insists, "has an epic quality, which justifies us in naming it along with Homer and the *Nibelungenlied*—its comprehensiveness,"[53] and while the toughness of frontier life is not concealed, the poem presents Digenes as a true cavalier who is gentle towards women and not lacking in delicacy. It is impossible that the portrait of Digenes comes from a Western, Frankish source; he appears too early in Byzantine literature, and we must therefore recognise parallel developments amongst the Franks and amongst the Romans of the East. Accordingly, "the romantic literature of the West did not come as a new revelation to a people who possessed in their own literature motives, ideals, and a tradition which were in many respects homogeneous."[54] Bury felt strongly the significance of Hellenic continuity in Asia Minor, a continuity which survived even the upheavals of 1204 and 1453. We may imagine with what sorrow he followed the Graeco-Turkish struggles of this century and the consequent exchanges of populations, the more so since he had expressed the view that, in 1919 at least, if any one power had a claim to Constantinople, it was Greece.[55]

Continuity for Bury meant, above all, continuity of language and civilisation. He constantly opposed the partiality of nationalist historiography, and chauvinist or racial doctrines had no place in his mature thinking. Great as was his respect for Freeman, he felt bound to give warning about his mentor's use of the word Aryan. "Though 'Aryanism' was, if I may say so, one of the pillars of his reconstruction of history, I think he might have been induced to substitute the phrase 'of Aryan speech' in many cases where he committed himself to 'Aryan'. For the truth is, that in designating a people as Aryan, speech was his criterion and the inference from Aryan speech to Aryan stock is invalid. How the Indo-Germanic tongue spread is still an unsolved problem, but it is certain that all the European peoples who spoke or

[53] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.52) 18. [54] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.52) 23. [55] Baynes 166.

speak tongues of this family are not of common race, and many of them probably have little 'Aryan' blood."[56] (Freeman had called Europe pre-eminently an Aryan continent with a homogeneous population.)[57] I have quoted Bury *in extenso* here to show that there can have been no ethnic bias underlying his insistence upon the continuity of Hellenic civilisation.

Almost half a century has passed since Bury died in Rome on 1 June 1927, and the time may be supposed to have come for an assessment of his place in the history of scholarship. The evidence is there, but a fair estimate may now be beyond the capability of one man—such is the growth of specialisation and the increase in knowledge. Certainly, such an estimate is beyond my power. But it can be said with truth that, in the analysis of evidence and in the exercise of historical judgement, he has few peers and no superiors amongst the practitioners of history. In short, Bury, "besides being a very great historian, was also a masterly editor of Greek texts."[58]

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[56] Prefatory note to E. A. Freeman, *The Historical Geography of Europe*[3] (London 1912) vi–vii.

[57] *op.cit.* (*supra* n.56) 12.

[58] A. J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his Age* (London 1973) viii. I thank Professor W. B. Stanford for reading the manuscript and for advice concerning Trinity College, Dublin in Bury's time. Two referees also made helpful points.

To Mr H. W. Gillespie, Headmaster of Foyle College, I am indebted for the following information about Bury's schooling: "It seems that he came here with Mr Maurice Hime who, when he was appointed Headmaster, brought a number of boys with him from Monaghan Diocesan School, where Bury had been one of his pupils. The main bits and pieces of interest are his early writings in *Our School Times*, the magazine first of Monaghan school and later of Foyle College. The first of these, a poem entitled 'Hector' by J.B.B. a Juvenile Poet (aged 10), appears in the October 1872 number." Professor J. L. McCracken kindly lent to me a copy of the Foyle College Song Book. The school song, composed anonymously in 1878, is typical of the genre. Bury's Latin version dignifies conventional sentiments in the English; here is the first verse:

O schola quae in Foylium
Superba despicis,
Quae nobis cara facta es
Ludis et studiis,
Primo paventes venimus,
Ad aulam hanc claram;
Sed nunc illustris nominis
Amamus gloriam.

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