

Sir Paul Vinogradoff

Henri Pirenne, F. G. Kenyon, J. H. Baxter

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Pirenne Henri, Kenyon F. G., J. H. Baxter. Sir Paul Vinogradoff. In: Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi, tome 2, 1925. pp. 53-56;

https://www.persee.fr/doc/alma_0994-8090_1925_num_2_1_2001;

Ressources associées :

Paul Vinogradoff

Fichier pdf généré le 20/02/2024

NÉCROLOGIE

Le *Bulletin Du Cange* (*ALMA*) s'associe au deuil de l'Union Académique Internationale frappée inopinément, et à quelques mois de distance, dans la personne de son Président en exercice, M. Théophile Homolle, et dans celle de son Vice-Président, Sir Paul Vinogradoff. Ce que fut M. Homolle pour l'Union, M. Bidez l'a rappelé éloquemment sur sa tombe : nous nous bornerons à dire que son esprit ferme et vigoureux, joint à une extrême courtoisie, a permis de surmonter les difficultés qu'a rencontrées à ses débuts notre *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, comme toute entreprise internationale d'ailleurs. Quant à Sir Paul Vinogradoff, son rôle a été de premier plan dans l'œuvre que nous poursuivons ; aussi est-il naturel que nous consacrons à sa mémoire les articles nécrologiques qui vont suivre.

N. D. L. R.

SIR PAUL VINOGRADOFF

Sir Paul Vinogradoff est, on le sait, le promoteur du Dictionnaire du latin médiéval. Avené par ses belles études sur l'organisation judiciaire et sociale de l'Angleterre à recourir constamment aux textes du haut moyen âge, il s'était convaincu de bonne heure de la nécessité de remanier et de mettre au point le *Glossarium* de Du Cange. C'est cette conviction qui l'avait poussé à proposer en 1913, de commun accord avec quelques amis et collègues, au Congrès historique international de Londres, la refonte complète d'un instrument de travail qui, admirablement adapté aux connaissances et aux besoins scientifiques de son temps, ne répondait plus à ceux du nôtre. Il est à peine besoin de dire que, dans sa pensée, il ne s'agissait pas de procéder comme l'avaient fait, après la mort de Du Cange, les derniers éditeurs du *Glossarium*, qui, sans rien changer au plan de celui-ci, s'étaient bornés à y introduire, au hasard de leurs lectures, des additions dont on peut dire qu'elles ont plutôt alourdi le texte original qu'elles ne l'ont enrichi. Ce qu'il demandait, c'était une refec-tion d'ensemble, qui, faisant appel à la collaboration internationale, devait être le résultat d'un dépouillement méthodique et « exhaustif » des sources. Au reste, il conservait en ceci le plan de Du Cange, que ce dé-

pouillement n'eût porté que sur les termes techniques du latin médiéval depuis la fin de l'antiquité jusqu'aux débuts de la Renaissance.

Favorablement accueillie par le Congrès, qui chargea une commission d'en étudier la réalisation, l'initiative de Vinogradoff n'était encore qu'un projet quand éclata la guerre mondiale. Son auteur ne manqua pas d'y revenir après la paix. A peine établie, l'Union Académique Internationale était de nouveau saisie de la question, grâce à ses démarches, dans la session qu'elle tint à Bruxelles au mois de mai 1920.

Vinogradoff avait sa place marquée dans la commission spéciale à laquelle l'Union confia la tâche de mener à bien l'œuvre envisagée. Il la présida plusieurs fois avec son autorité et sa courtoisie coutumières et prit la plus grande part aux discussions qui aboutirent finalement à la résolution de publier un dictionnaire du latin médiéval comprenant tous les mots de la langue et ne devant pas dépasser le *xi*^e siècle. Si cette résolution modifiait considérablement le plan qu'il avait conçu tout d'abord, il n'hésita pas à s'y rallier. Encore qu'il ne fût pas lexicographe dans le sens philologique de ce terme, nul ne connaissait mieux que lui le vocabulaire juridique et administratif du moyen âge, qui constituera, pour les historiens, la partie la plus précieuse de notre Dictionnaire. Aussi collaborait-il de tout cœur à l'entreprise qu'il avait eu l'honneur de provoquer, animant de son activité et aidant de ses conseils les érudits qu'il avait groupés sous sa direction. Pour ses collègues de la Commission, l'intérêt qu'il prenait au travail commun était un inestimable entraînement. Sa mort inopinée les prive d'un maître dont ils conserveront pieusement la mémoire et à l'esprit de qui ils resteront fidèles.

H. PIRENNE.

By the death of Sir Paul Vinogradoff the Union Académique Internationale has lost one of its Vice-Presidents, the British Academy has lost a distinguished member by whom it was frequently represented at the sessions of the Union, and the *Dictionary of Mediaeval Latin* has lost one of its most efficient supporters. He was a member of the first Commission nominated by the Union, in 1921, to study the subject, and he served in each of the following years. When the national committees were appointed, he became President of the British Committee to deal with the Dictionary down to the year 1066, that is to say for the Dictionary directly contemplated by the U. A. I. And Sir Paul's membership or presidency of a committee was never merely a matter of form. Whatever work he undertook, he gave his mind to it, and was not backward in impressing on his colleagues his views, which were invariably sensible and practical. As the numerous volumes and series for which he was responsible show, he was one of those people who get things done;

and the *Dictionary* loses in him a driving force of inestimable value. Those who served with him on the British Committee can speak with fuller knowledge of his actual share in their work and of his directing power in its organisation : but as his colleague at Brussels on several occasions, and as having held many conversations and much correspondence with him in the earlier stages of the work, I should like to testify to the value of his services in bringing this great project up to the stage of practical realisation, and to express my regret at the loss of so distinguished a colleague and friend.

F. G. KENYON.

By the death of Sir Paul Vinogradoff the British committee on Medieval Latin has suffered a grievous and irreparable loss. From the time the project of compiling the new medieval Latin Dictionary was mooted, his interest in the scheme and his active endeavours to get it under way were untiring, and it was fitting and fortunate for the British committee that he consented to spare the time from his many other activities to preside over that committee and himself to undertake the supervision and direction of the *depouillement* of Anglo-Latin charters. He was soon able to gather a group of competent and enthusiastic workers, by whom, at the time of his death, considerable progress had been made in covering the field assigned to them, and it is expected that the work begun under his masterly guidance will, within a reasonably short time, be brought to completion. His own unrivalled knowledge of the eleventh century made him a particularly valuable authority in the settlement of the difficult questions which arose in discussing the boundaries between the work of this committee and that of the other committee appointed by the British Academy for the later medieval period, and his suggestions when the two committees met to confer on these problems and had to settle the treatment of the Domesday Book were of incalculable service. His tact and efficiency as Chairman of Committee A were largely responsible for the concord and the thoroughness with which that body went to work, while its members looked up to him for his unique learning, his sympathy and cordiality towards all their suggestions, and the unaffected kindliness with which his personal relations with themselves were always conducted.

This is not the place to speak of his wide and accurate learning, much of which lay in directions outwith the scope of his colleagues and friends. What the British Committee misses is the expert guidance in the field committed to its care, and the rare competence in details of administration and policy, which in Sir Paul Vinogradoff were joined in such

happy combination. The loss to scholarship sustained by his death is widely and generally felt, but nowhere more than in this Committee whose creation was so largely his own work and whose successful activity was so much his close concern. If he has not been spared to see the happy conclusion of an enterprise which he fostered and pursued with such zeal and competence, it has, at least, counted for much that in its formative days the British Committee received his unimpaired and masterly counsel, and that those to whom it falls to carry on the task received something of his vision of the end to be aimed at and the means and methods by which it remains to be attained.

J. H. BAXTER.

Univ. S. Andr.
