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***TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRANSGURATIONS:
BRITISHNESS AND ROMANNESS ACROSS THE EPOCHS
IN EVELYN WAUGH AND DAVID JONES***

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Abstract: For British twentieth-century Catholic-convert writers Evelyn Waugh and David Jones coming to terms with their place in a British identity was problematic, given the way that concepts of Britishness had been shaped with reference to Protestantism, and with an anti-Catholic slant, since the Reformation. Like other British Catholic writers they approached this difficulty creatively by looking into history and reintegrating older understandings of the culture of the island of Britain into their own sense of Britishness, understandings in which Catholicism was a formative element. In both cases their interest in early British times brought them to engage imaginatively with the phenomenon of the Roman Empire, and ideas of parallels between the Roman and British Empires, and between the Roman Empire and the Church, become important to them. Through consideration of Waugh's novel *Helena* and his *Sword of Honour* trilogy, and David Jones's volumes of poetic work *In Parenthesis*, *The Anathemata* and *The Sleeping Lord and Other Fragments* I shall discuss and compare the elements of durability and of transience in Britishness and Romanness as these writers understand them, and suggest that especially in the case of Romanness the transformation they show is also a transfiguration.