

BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski, *Droit impérial et traditions locales dans l'Égypte romaine* (Aldershot, Hants 1990), pp. 336 (*Variorum Collected Studies* 321)

This volume groups in photographic reproduction¹ twelve of M.'s articles, chosen for their relevance to the theme the title states concisely and that M. rephrases in his introduction: "La dynamique des rapports entre les traditions locales de la pratique hellénistique et les exigences du droit impérial de Rome". The utility of such a collection stems in the main from the difficulty of access, for many, to the original publications: only a quarter were in journals (all in *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, actually), the rest in conference proceedings (5), *Festschriften* (5), and a manual (1).² The predominance of conferences and honorific volumes is of course a pleasant reminder of M. himself, the charming, polyglot world traveller with friends everywhere,³ for whom these articles have been also part of the social dimension of scholarship. It is convenient to have these twelve papers gathered in such a fashion.

The choice, M. tells us, deliberately excludes his work on the Hellenistic period proper, particularly on Ptolemaic Egypt (which would easily fill another small book) and that on Jews and Greeks, which he plans to bring together elsewhere (one hopes with new typesetting, since the originals of some are truly wretched). He has also left aside the major synthesis published in the *Proceedings of the XII International Congress of Papyrology*, part of a longer work (based on his doctoral thesis in law) he hopes to publish eventually. Omitted also (but without explanation) are long articles on brother-sister marriage and on the law of dowries in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.⁴ The first, perhaps, would have demanded longer addenda than M. felt able to write at this time, and the second has a strong Ptolemaic element. But both would have fit very well into the thematic core of the book, better in fact than the three pieces on officials (VI-VIII in this volume).

Although the articles included span three decades (1959-1988) in publication date, as M. notes, in reality most of the volume's content was written in a narrower span, the decade from 1967-1977, during which nine of the twelve papers were either delivered or published. The past decade has been dominated by work on the Jewish topics excluded from this volume.

The volume has been produced according to the standard practices of the *Variorum* series, with the articles reproduced from the original publications and with original pagin-

¹ But minus running heads, titles and signatures with the author's name; articles up to 1979 were originally signed simply Modrzejewski. The publishers seem unable to decide whether to place a hyphen (correctly) after Méléze (not on the cover, twice, not under the portrait, not on the title page; but in CIP data and the publicity brochure they get it right).

² Two items appeared twice, each both in a volume of proceedings and in a *Festschrift*.

³ An excellent photograph by Alain Ramis-Cladera is given as a frontispiece.

⁴ "Die Geschwisterehe in der hellenistischen Praxis und nach römischem Recht", *ZSS* 81 (1964), 52-82; "Zum hellenistischen Ehegüterrecht im griechischen und römischen Ägypten", *ZSS* 87 (1970), 50-84.

nation (no continuous pagination is added). Very brief addenda give a few subsequent bibliographic or documentary references, only rarely a return to some substantive issue. There is a substantial index of literary and documentary sources cited. The introduction to the volume gives brief summaries of the individual articles and links them to the theme of the volume. Despite these elements of added value, and the convenience of the volume, it is doubtful that many readers will find \$87.95 an affordable price for 336 pages of reprints. I have a strong suspicion that the libraries that will buy this volume are mostly the same that bought the original publications in which these articles appeared.

That would be a pity. M. is one of the leading scholars of our time in his field, with a command of the languages, literatures, history, documents, and the legal systems of most of antiquity. His articles are always carefully thought-out, beautifully written, fully documented, endowed with a rich bibliographic apparatus and (not least!) full of good sense. They deserve a wide circulation. I want to single out three I have found particularly valuable over the years. The opening essay, "Entre la cité et le fisc: le statut grec dans l'Égypte romaine", is an exceptionally illuminating treatment of how and why the history of Egypt's "Greek" cities was so different, especially for the first two centuries of Roman rule, from that of Greek cities elsewhere. No. IX, "La loi des Égyptiens": le droit grec dans l'Égypte romaine", reflects a further consequence of the Roman lumping of the Greeks with the Egyptians, in the use of the term "The law of the Egyptians" to refer to Greek legal traditions. And the continued importance of pre-Roman local juridical traditions in other eastern provinces is the theme of no. XII, "Ménandre de Laodicée et l'Édit de Caracalla". These are, if I am not mistaken, the last three in order of public presentation, and they give a good synthetic view of the results to which some of the more specialized studies (themselves well worth reading) have led. We can only hope that M.'s hopes to prepare a synthetic work based on his thesis in law, which will draw on all of his work, will be realized. For the moment, however, this collection affords a good view of the work of one of the most interesting minds devoted to this field in our time.

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Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judaean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1992). pp. xvii + 305.

Happily, the contents of this very attractively produced book fully live up to its physical appearance. During the 1980's, Yizhar Hirschfeld, currently director of the Tiberias excavations for the Department of Antiquities, Israel, and visiting lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, was one of the leaders of a large-scale systematic survey of all known archaeological traces of the many monastic establishments that existed from the fifth century AD onwards in the Judaean desert and the Kidron valley to the north-east and south-east of Jerusalem. The nine seasons of survey and excavation (the latter in particular at the monasteries of Martyrius, Khirbet el-Kilya, Khirbet ed-Deir, Chariton and Euthymius) have permitted many corrections to older accounts, as well as revealing monastic sites not known before; indeed, the total number of sites identified amounts to over sixty. The systematic work of excavating, surveying, measuring and recording was made possible by the Israeli acquisition of these areas in 1967 and was carried out by five survey teams, largely consisting of younger Israeli archaeologists like the