

*Israelite and Judaeon History*. Edited by J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller. The Old Testament Library. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1977. XXXI, 736 p. \$ 25.00.

The purpose of this composite work is to review the currently available sources of information on Israelite and Judaeon history and to assess the present status of scholarly discussion. J. H. Hayes' brief survey of the history of the study of Israelite and Judaeon history is followed by articles on the different periods in chronological order: W. G. Dever and W. M. Clark on patriarchal traditions, Th. L. Thompson and D. Irvin on Joseph and Moses, J. M. Miller on the Israelite occupation of Canaan, A. D. H. Mayes on the period of the Judges, J. A. Soggin on the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom, H. Donner on the separate States of Israel and Judah, B. Oded on Judah and the Exile, G. Widengren on the Persian, P. Schäfer on the Hellenistic and Maccabean periods, and A. R. C. Leaney and J. Neusner on the Roman Era. This disposition may be a successful one, and certainly is so for the discussion of the earlier periods; the whole creates the impression of a well-balanced manual. Indeed, one reads most of the contributions with interest and profit. As a classical scholar, I would like to comment only upon the last two.

Schäfer's analysis of the period between the mid-fourth century and Pompey's conquest is mostly a compilation, and one not free from contradictions. He first deals with the sources (but does not treat the inscriptions as a separate group) leaving the surprisingly long treatment of the coins to the following paragraph. The reader would have appreciated a more thorough assessment of the reliability of the individual authors; it is, for example, of great importance to emphasize the passionately subjective attitude of the Second Maccabees to the events under Antiochus IV, which indeed diminishes the value of the work as a reliable source. (The bibliographical references are not uniformly up-to-date; did Habicht's remarkable edition of the Second Maccabees appear too late to be used by the author?). Then we are given, in rather confused manner, some "important problems of the period", such as the causes of the religious persecution and certain chronological problems. One does not always know what precisely the author's intention is. The main part consists of a chronological description of the events set against the general background of the complex political situation in Syria. Like Bickermann, Hengel and others, Schäfer exaggerates the degree of Jewish Hellenization, which was quite superficial in the time of Antiochus IV. On the contrary, the evidence shows how un-Greek the Jewish community had remained down to the earlier second century. And one should not underestimate the violence and extent of direct Seleucid administrative and military intervention; the crisis of the 160's was sparked off by Antiochus' attempt to abolish Judaism. The very important treaties with Rome provide us with a large number of highly interesting problems which have strangely escaped the author's attention.

Far more balanced is the chapter concerning the Roman Era. We get a good

up-to-date description of Jewish history. But why is there no reference to the Diaspora, whose cultural and economic significance to Palestine is inestimable?

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*Roman Frontier Studies 1979*. Papers presented to the 12th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, edited by *W. S. Hanson* and *L. J. F. Kepple*. B. A. R. International Series 71, 1—3. Oxford 1980. 1111 p. £ 28.—.

1,900 years had passed from the time when the Romans embarked on the conquest of Britain north of the Tyne-Solway line to the 12th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies which appropriately opened on the campus of the University of Stirling in September, 1979. About 80 papers were read, of which 77 were published last year in three substantial volumes comprising more than 1,100 pages in the B(ritish) A(rchaeological) R(eports) International Series (i—iii). BAR is a unique tool of research which merits serious attention among those interested in ancient history, archaeology, the history of art, classical philology and related subjects.

Archaeological (excavation) reports are notoriously laborious; consequently, even basic data are extremely slow in reaching the scholarly world. The Roman Frontier Studies 1979 illustrate the usefulness of these *limes* congresses in persuading responsible officials to account for the work of past years.

The congress section on Oriens and Africa (in Vol. iii, Nos. 56—67) and particularly the contributions dealing with the *limes Palaestinae* and the *limes Arabicus* is a case in point. For a century the intercontinental trade between the Mediterranean and Asia ('Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers') has attracted attention. The Silk Route has been employed by way of a general explanation for political behaviour in the region between Iran and the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire regardless of the fact that positive evidence for the character and duration of commercial exchange on any one of the many branches of the network of caravan routes in the Middle East is entirely absent. If anything, Manfred Raschke's massive documentation in ANRW ('New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East' in Vol. II 9, pp. 605—1361) should teach us to be cautious. B. Isaac's ('Trade routes to Arabia and the Roman army', iii, pp. 889—902) assertion that, in the light of archaeological findings, the Petra-Gaza road went out of use after the establishment of the Arabian province is highly significant in this context. In other contributions the pattern and development of frontier defence is discussed; here the strategic thinking of the Romans, recently expertly analyzed by E. N. Luttwak (*The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, Baltimore-London, 1976), is lucidly exposed.

Both the time and the location of the congress made Scotland one of the focal points of the proceedings. For this reason I would like to single out W. S. Hanson's highly rewarding summing up of our knowledge of 'The first Roman