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Review by: P. M. Fraser

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HELLENISTIC CULTURE

MOSES HADAS: *Hellenistic Culture, Fusion and Diffusion*. Pp. vi+324. New York: Columbia University Press (London: Oxford University Press), 1959. Cloth, 35s. net.

THIS book offers both more and less than its title indicates. It is very much less than a description of the cultural life of the Hellenistic world, and at the same time it is very much concerned with certain aspects of the survival of ideas which the author believes to have been prevalent in the Hellenistic world (cf. p. 1).

The work is in effect a study of Judaic influence on Greek thought and writing, and eventually on Roman thought, and (to a less extent) of Greek thought on intertestamentary Hebrew writing. A few preliminary remarks regarding the choice and treatment of the theme as a whole are necessary.

1. Hadas is not concerned to any great extent with the status of individuals, with the common man, his environment and particular aspects of his daily existence; for instance, the frequency or rarity of mixed marriages. However, any process which removes cultural, no less than racial, barriers between persons of different nationalities must form the foundation of the study of intellectual interaction, unless this interaction, as expressed in literature, is not typical of its environment; and if it is not, it loses interest in a general context.

2. The essential restriction of the field to Hebrew influences is historically paradoxical, for Palestinian Jewry is very far from being a characteristic region of the non-Greek part of the Hellenistic world—not least because it was a population with a developed literature and with international contacts through the Diaspora. A picture of the fusion of the Hellenistic world and of the power of Greek modes of thought and living to invade other cultures, must include other aspects of the problem, both geographical and cultural (for instance, the hellenization of the Italian merchants resident in the East, and of the native populations of Asia Minor and Egypt).

3. Hadas regards the culture of the age as typified by, and reflected in, a process of fusion. However, the history of any society consists not only of its absorption of foreign bodies and ideas, but also of static or traditional elements. A picture of a culture which portrays only one aspect of these two opposed phenomena is more than biased: it is very incomplete. This is especially true of the Hellenistic world: in the first half of the third century B.C., when the eastern Mediterranean had assumed the main cultural and political outlines which it was to maintain for over two hundred years, the traditional elements in Greek life (even in the new cities) were extremely strong, particularly in cult and civic life, the two main aspects of Greek existence; and it does not seem likely that the outlook was much changed at this time in either respect. Gradually the picture altered, intermarriage increased, restrictions on citizenship were slightly relaxed, non-civic settlements with looser ties developed, and in certain respects the purely Greek picture took on foreign colours—though not universally, for within the cities the old forms of civic life retained their vigour for centuries. But, by and large, the survival of Greek life in its traditional forms, slightly ossified, it may be, but still with blood in its veins, remains the dominant feature of the Hellenistic world. On the frontiers, and wherever

special circumstances encouraged it, racial fusion occurred, and gradually spread throughout the Greek world, though, even so, the homelands of the Greek cities were little if at all affected by this process, which was much more marked under the Roman Empire than earlier.

4. The value of any study of the Hellenistic world must, on account of the last consideration, depend very largely on the ability of the author to consider his material chronologically in the first place. The width of the Hellenistic horizon, and the depth of its landscape, demand, for their effective mastery, a chronological approach, and the impossibility of acquiring this at more than a few isolated points is the reason why no wholly satisfying history of this world can be written in the present state of our knowledge. Nevertheless, there can be no justification for the method followed by Hadas, who, taking as his province the whole of later Antiquity in both the eastern and western Mediterranean, at times invokes material separated by half a millennium to support a single argument. This procedure may on occasions be harmless or even justified when treating those static elements in post-classical civilization already discussed, but it is unjustifiable in the field chosen by Hadas.

5. Hadas makes almost no allowance for the contemporary existence of similar but unconnected phenomena, even though the field in which he is working is very large and composed of many different units, foreign in many ways to each other. The notion that similarity of expression or of outlook necessarily implies a causal relationship, though easy to apply, is surely the reverse of historical.

These introductory comments are an attempt to focus the picture of the Hellenistic world and the picture given by Hadas. We see that he has given us a very much smaller picture than might at first sight have been supposed. We may now consider the general drift of his argument.

Hadas writes sensibly (chs. i–iv) on the Greek–Barbarian polarity before the Hellenistic period and its gradually diminishing significance in the face both of external developments (Alexander’s conquests) and of theoretical teaching (Isocrates, the Cynics), and emphasizes how this paved the way for the ecumenical element in Hellenistic civilization. With this part of the book there is not much need to quarrel: Hadas gives a lively and reasonably unconventional picture of the various forces operating in the Greek world in favour of the demolition of barriers: some chronological vagueness and a few inaccuracies are less significant here than in other sections.

It is with the next section that Hadas reaches his main thesis, and it is from this point onward that one’s scepticism increases. Chapter vii, ‘Plato the Hellenizer’, seeks to establish that ‘he was the most important single intellectual factor in the process of Hellenization and that his is the major responsibility for shaping the east’s eventual contribution to the west’. As Platonic works in Jewish literature he cites, among those written in Greek, Philo, the Wisdom of Solomon (but though the elements of Greek philosophy in Wisdom are undoubted, there are some Stoic elements which argue against accepting Plato as an immediate source), and 4 Maccabees, which he regards as modelled on the *Gorgias*. On the Hebrew side he finds Platonic influence in the Talmudic method of argument, and even in the whole principle of Talmudic legislation. Here, as throughout, possibilities, faint or strong, are elevated to the rank of established facts.

The next chapter discusses ‘Barbarian Apologetics’, i.e. claims of kinship

with Greeks (e.g. in the letter of Jonathan Maccabaeus to Sparta), and, in more general terms, the need felt by non-Greeks to maintain the antiquity of their own civilization in the face of the new conquerors—as exemplified, for instance, in the works of Manetho and Berossus. In this connexion Hadas notices the Judaeo-Hellenistic historians and poets, Demetrius, Eupolemus, Artapanus and Philo the Elder, and Theodotus and Ezekiel, and emphasizes that the legend of Moses, with its strange mixture of Biblical tradition and romantic legend, owes much to the same Hellenistic environment as the Alexander Romance. In all this section (as elsewhere) he is heavily dependent on M. Braun's *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (Oxford, 1938).

Chapter ix discusses 'Exotics in the main stream'—hellenized orientals who wrote and taught in Greek, Zeno of Citium, the Tarsan Stoics, Posidonius and the Gadarene group. In each instance Hadas stresses possible oriental elements in their surviving work, not convincingly in all cases. Thus in his treatment of Menippus, he claims that the interweaving of prose and verse, a characteristic feature of his work, is 'a well-established Semitic form', and concludes: 'If it [the Arabic *maqama*] in which the same intermingling is found was as old as Menippus, we should have an example of a hellenised easterner contributing a native property to the general literary tradition.' But how orientalized was Menippus? And how likely to be influenced by such a tradition even if it did exist? In Chapter xi on 'Drama and Diatribe' we see the reverse process at work. Hadas considers the influence of Greek tragedy on Hebrew literature and in particular on Job, and decides (*post alios*) that in form, and still more in substance, that work derives from the world of Greek tragedy, and probably from the *Prometheus Vincetus*. Similarly Ecclesiastes shows awareness of a Cynic *diatribe*. In none of these three instances—Menippus, Job, and Ecclesiastes—is the penetration of Greek by Hebrew and vice versa more than a hypothesis. In the chapter on 'Love, Triangular and Pure' Hadas accepts the opinion of Braun, *op. cit.*, that the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, as recounted in the Testament of Joseph, derives indirectly from the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, and claims that the author of The Song of Songs, with its pastoral erotic songs 'learned directly from the Theocritean tradition', and that the famous description of the body of the beloved derives, as a literary device, from the Greek. More grotesque, however, is the claim that the story of Judith and Holophernes, with its theme of a beleaguered city, deprived of its water-supply, is derived directly from the account of Datis' siege of Lindos in the *Lindian Chronicle*: 'It is hard not to believe that the stories are somehow connected, and if that is the case then even without the chronological factor, i.e. that the Greek story is older than the Hebrew, Judith is clearly a barbarization, ethically and artistically, of the Greek story, not the other way round.' I find this almost incredible.

The chapter of 'Aretologies and Martyrdom' contains a further example of the same type of rash association of similar motives: Lucian's story in the *Vera Historia* about the adventures of the ship in the belly of the whale is said to be closely allied to the story of Jonah—'whether or not the stories of a man inside a big fish stem from a common source, it seems that the literary modes do have a more than accidental affinity'. The next chapter, on 'Cult and Mystery', though for the most part concerned with the familiar aspects of syncretism and mystery-religions, also shows the same preoccupation; here the view is expressed that Neopythagoreanism 'touched not merely individual

thinkers in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but substantially affected the main stream of that tradition'. This section is based on I. Levy's work, *La Légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine*, the thesis of which, that Alexandrian Judaism, Pharisaism, and Essenism were all penetrated by neo-Pythagorean notions about the after-life etc., Hadas attempts to revive (following Dupont-Sommer) in the light of *The Manual of Discipline* and the organization of the community at Qumran as revealed by the excavations ('The communal organization and the strict rules for its administration can hardly be explained otherwise than as direct influences of Pythagoreanism' (p. 195)), and he does not doubt that this in turn acted on early Christianity.

The final chapters attempt to demonstrate the existence of the same Judaeo-Greek amalgam in Roman literature and the Roman view of the elect status of the Roman people and of the divine mission of the Roman Emperor. The first task, the demonstration of a Judaeo element in Roman literature, is launched with the aid of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*. Virgil, Horace, and Tibullus are all regarded as familiar with the *Sibylline Oracles*, while concerning Horace Hadas accepts the view of Dornseiff that he was well read in the Septuagint, and claims him as an agent, like Virgil, for the 'assimilation of eastern modes in the west'. Moreover, not only is Virgil's conception of Aeneas based on a Scriptural pattern; Seneca is involved in the same Judaeo tradition: after listing the parallels between his writings and the New Testament, Hadas concludes: 'No one can assert that Seneca and men of similar intellectual interests did not know the Septuagint directly. . . . Of all the classical Roman authors Seneca gives amplest expression to the world of Hellenistic thought which was the product of three centuries of fusion between east and west . . . it is hard to love Seneca the man . . . but it is harder to think of an individual who exemplifies more fully the process with which this book is concerned.' In the chapter on 'An Elect' Hadas discusses the similarity between the Roman and Hebrew notions of membership of an elect communion: 'The doctrine of election as it appears in Augustan Rome is in fact a precise parallel to that in the Old Testament, and we shall see presently that the similarity may not have been entirely accidental.' Finally in 'Authority and Law' Hadas discusses the Jewish conception of authority vested in the post-exilic temple and the Maccabean deviation from this in the direction of Hellenistic practice, derived from Spartan precedent, itself based on the authority of Delphi, and from Platonic doctrine representing the Spartan ideal. He then analyses the positions of Pharisee and Sadducee in the new Hasmonaean kingdom, and concludes: 'If the church learned from its Pharisee opposition and the Pharisees from their Maccabee opposition, as it is altogether probable that they did, and if the Maccabees learned from Sparta, as the character of their polity and the letters of Jonathan would suggest, then we might see the influence of Sparta enormously expanded over centuries of European history. It is neither from ancient Athens nor from ancient Israel but from Sparta that a regime which claims control of every detail of the life of individuals or an autocrat who rules by the grace of God derives.'

Hadas has written a readable book, and it is a great pity that it does not contain more substance and less elaboration of suggestions culled from the periphery of learning. The fruits of his wide reading do not appear to have been subjected to a critical process: he seems to have adopted whatever suggestions, however improbable, have been made for Greek and Hebrew

interaction in literature. The result is a very thin tissue of hypotheses. Add to this the fact that the ultimate roots of Hellenistic (or any other) culture—the history of the individual, in so far as this is recoverable—are ignored, and it will be apparent that we have not been given that work on Hellenistic culture which the title might lead one to anticipate.

All Souls College, Oxford

P. M. FRASER

ETRUSCAN MAGISTRACIES

ROGER LAMBRECHTS: *Essai sur les magistratures des républiques étrusques*. (Études de Philologie, d'Archéologie et d'Histoire Anciennes, Tome vii.) Pp. 218; 45 plates. Brussels: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, Palais des Académies, 1959. Paper, 200 B. fr.

SINCE the evidence for the Etruscan magistracy, though diverse in nature, is comparatively limited in quantity, it is surprising that no previous attempt has been made to bring it all together within the covers of a single monograph. This valuable task has now been carried out most efficiently by a pupil of Professor F. De Ruyt, Dr. R. Lambrechts, who has divided his work into three parts: the literary, epigraphic, and iconographic sources. He deals relatively briefly with the little that Livy and others have to say about the *principes Etruscorum* and their functions in their own cities and in directing the affairs of the federal assemblies, and with the attributes of power which ancient writers assert were inherited by Roman magistrates from the Etruscans. Next comes a corpus of those Etruscan inscriptions which contain references to any Etruscan magistracy. These are classified on a geographical basis, and after discussion of each inscription a bibliography is appended; Lambrechts has added a new inscription (his no. 34, from Tarquinii) to the forty-two already known. These inscriptions, which are obviously of fundamental importance and difficult to interpret, range from the fourth to the first century B.C. and come from ten centres, chiefly in southern Etruria. Then follows a fully illustrated corpus of forty iconographic items which depict 'les cortèges de magistrates', some of them hitherto unedited and many only summarily described before. They fall into two main groups: sarcophagi and urns, each with two themes, depicting a magistrate either in a chariot (seven of the sarcophagi with this theme carry inscriptions) or else on foot. The composition of the triumphal procession naturally varies in detail (e.g. the order and number of *apparitores*), but consists of lictors (with *fascēs*, but without axe), musicians (*cornicines*, *citharistae*, *tubicines*, *tubicines*), and servants carrying curule chairs, *volumina*, *pugillares* or baggage (*mantica*); a horseman ('avant-coureur') or a winged Fury sometimes appears. The theme clearly became conventional, with a religious and funerary significance, so that the man whose remains filled the sarcophagus or urn, need not necessarily himself have been a high magistrate, but since the seven sarcophagi with inscriptions refer to the man as a *zilath*, it can hardly be doubted that these monuments allow us to *see* Etruscan magistrates in office and that the *zilath* was the chief magistrate. This is of great interest, but the paucity of inscriptions unfortunately renders the detailed interpretation of the sculptural material hazardous. Thus one would like to be able to equate the varying number of lictors with the rank of the magistrate, but Lambrechts is rightly