This is in many ways both an important and a frustrating book. In a specialist field where all too few studies attempt to push the boundaries by applying new approaches, H.'s book, following as it does in the footsteps of Leyerle's important study on ascetic 'marriage', further takes up the topic of asceticism and frames it, while ostensibly against Peter Brown's thesis in *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988), albeit unwittingly within the new paradigm put forward by Brown in *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, NH, 2002). In this respect it makes a significant contribution. Scholars of John Chrysostom and of late antique society alike will find the ideas it raises stimulating. On the other hand, despite the complexity of the issues with which it engages, the book is characterized by a tendency towards oversimplification, and the question remains whether the evidence which H. draws upon and the arguments she puts forward to support her thesis are convincing. While it does contribute to a number of important current debates, H.'s cannot be said to be the definitive study on the topic. If it serves to spark off more intense discussion on these issues, however, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

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PAPYRI FROM PETRA

J. Frösén, A. Arjava, M. Lehtinen (edd.): *The Petra Papyri I*. (American Center of Oriental Research Publications 4.). Pp. xx + 144, ills, pls. Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 2002. Cased, US$80. ISBN: 0-90-95654-3.

Great excitement and expectations greeted the announcement of the discovery of the 'Petra Papyri', late in 1993: some 140 carbonized papyrus rolls found in a room adjacent to a Byzantine church excavated in Petra, the old capital of the Nabataean kingdom, and later in the province of Palaestina Salutaris/Tertia (now in south Jordan). The papyri are written in Greek, date from the sixth century (537–*c.* 593), and are all documentary; most of them relate to property transactions of one Theodoros son of Obodianos, a clergyman (for most of his adult life), and his relatives. Their publication has been undertaken by two teams, one of the University of Helsinki, the other of the University of Michigan. Of the original find, only about three dozen rolls have turned out to be decipherable (in various degrees). This first volume, which offers editions of sixteen texts, is the work of the Helsinki team. Four or five other volumes are to follow (*PPetra* II will be the responsibility of the Michigan group, and will include a very extensive property agreement).

The papyri come from an otherwise poorly documented period in the history of Petra; among other things, it now becomes clear that the city was not destroyed by the earthquake of 551, as had been thought. But their interest is not limited to this. These texts are rarities. All papyrological evidence we previously had from that part of the world in that period chiefly consisted of the papyri from Nessana. There is new information on regional linguistic features, notarial practices, and generally the daily realities of a world until recently veiled by oblivion.

The editions are preceded by discussions of the historical and archaeological context of the find, the conservation of the papyri, the chronological systems attested in them, and a description of the family of Theodoros. Texts **1**–**2** are agreements concerning property, a type of document frequently exampled in this 'archive' (several

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such texts are being prepared for publication). **1**, of 537, the earliest Petra papyrus dated with certainty, refers to property that was previously (part of?) the dowry of Theodoros' deceased mother, which had passed to the control of her brother Patrophilos, who also was Theodoros' father-in-law. The property is given to Theodoros, and the document includes clauses that make it read like a mutual will among Theodoros, Patrophilos, and Stephanous (the daughter and wife). **2**, of 538, would originally have filled a roll *c.* 8.50 m long, but is now extremely fragmentary. This text too features Theodoros, but the components of the plot are lost. Unlike the other texts in this volume, it was written in Gaza. **3**–**5**, also of 538, are requests for the transfer of taxation on landed property in Petra and environs (half-a-dozen such texts will be published in future volumes). This kind of document is well attested among Egyptian papyri; the Petra texts contain much that is new, and sometimes baffling. The details of the transaction(s) behind these applications are unknown (note also that the protagonists are not known to be related to Theodoros), while certain terms are novel or not fully understood, e.g. the ὁμάς or the '*iugera* of the *patrimonium*' (πρόσωπον presumably corresponds to the fiscal *caput*, ὄνομα in Egyptian papyri). Fiscal too is the subject of **7**–**10**, receipts for payments of taxes on land by Patrophilos for thirteen years (issued in 568–78); the texts should be read with R. C. Caldwell, *ZPE* 144 (2003), 198–200, and J.-L. Fournet, *AnTard* 11 (2003), 403–4 (but problems remain). The notabilia in this group include a reference to the tax rebate of 575, to the *iugatio*, *iuga*, and (apparently) *iugera*. **6**, the only completely preserved text in the volume, contains a list of stolen items, allegedly by Hierios, Patrophilos' son, and a statement by the accuser that he is satisfied with an oath sworn by Hierios. **11**–**16** are too fragmentary, and little may be said about their content.

Some points of detail (earlier reviewers, especially Fournet, have already cleared some ground). εὐλαβεστάτην (**1**.56), used for Palladia, Patrophilos' mother, may suggest that she had become a nun (after the death of her husband?). In **2**.15–18, one of the contracting parties is described as ὁ ἀπό (?) τῶν] | ἐξοχωτ[ά]τ[ων] ἐπάρχων τῶν | ἱερῶν πραιτω[ρίω]ν Φλ(άουιος) [Δουσά]ριος υἱὸς | τοῦ τῆς μακαρ(ίας) μνήμης [Οὐ]άλε[ντος]. 'L'expression ὁ ἀπό τῶν] ἐξοχωτ[ά]τ[ων] ἐπάρχων κτλ. ne me paraît pas viable et jette le discrédit sur la reconstruction des l. 15–17' (Fournet, loc. cit., 402). It would also be odd to have Fl. Dusarios' function described first, and then his name; and the fact that he is described as a retired army-man in *PPetra inv.* 67 (see p. 59) does not square with a post on the staff of a *praefectus praetorio*. The text is dated by Fl. Ioannes cos. 538; he was a PPO, and his prefecture is mentioned in the consular formula of *POxy.* XVI 1974. Could it be that the fragments placed in 15–17 belong with the consular clause? In **2**.121, the restored πόλεως is otiose. The term δημόσιος ἔκδικος (**2**.63) for the *defensor civitatis* is new. Orthographica: read ἐπομνύμενοι (**2**.28—not the only possible supplement); (accents) κοριαίαν (**3**.6, 9, 11; sim. καβιαία, κοριαία, σατιαία in index), ἄχρις (**11**.10 and index). Add. & corr. to the list on pp. 80–1: Add *PSI Congr. XVII* 29 (to be republished with a new fragment by I. Andorlini). It is unclear why the dating of *PMichael.* 33 to the early fifth century was preferred over that to 367/8 (the latter seems likelier). *CPR* IX 79 has been redated to the fifth century; see *T&MByz* 10 (1987), 117, and *BL* IX 70. The passage cited as indicating the 'addressee' of *PLaur.* III 78 comes from the body of the document.

The Petra papyri are editorial nightmares. Besides their complicated conservation and reconstruction, their decipherment is an extraordinary task: the surface, dark and brittle, needs special lighting for the letters to come out, while it is not easy to have an overview of more than a small chunk of text at a time (digital imaging has been of some help). There are few close verbal parallels at hand, so that fragmentary passages

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(what these texts mostly consist of) are difficult to restore. Further, the meagre information on the world that produced them obstructs attempts to place them in context. Even more, these texts are not instantly rewarding; several aspects will not become clear before the laborious process of deciphering and studying the lot is concluded, and many will remain obscure; and like the first editions of difficult texts, and a fair amount of what was said about these papyri in earlier publications, much in this volume is bound to become obsolete. Few would merrily embark on such an enterprise, which makes our debt to the editors all the greater. One wishes them the best of success with their undertaking.

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HISTORY AND THEORY

N. MORLEY: *Theories, Models and Concepts in Ancient History.* Pp. viii + 162. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Paper, £14.99. ISBN: 0-415-24877-9 (0-415-24876-0 hbk).

Part of the Approaching the Ancient World series, this book aims to provide: 'future generations of ancient history students with a sort of guidebook to the world of "theory" ' (p. vii). Morley aims: to introduce some key theoretical positions alongside the scholarship they have informed in recent historiography; to use this material in a discussion of historical methodology; and to demonstrate the possibilities created for the ancient historian by a critical, inventive use of theory (pp. 5–6). M. concentrates on examples from social and economic history, both because he feels theory can be most fruitful in these areas and because herein lies his expertise and interest (p. 5).

In providing a taster to whet the appetites of students who feel unsure about what 'theory' is, and how to use it, this book must be judged a success. M. is an enthusiastic and entertaining guide, whose combination of brief abstract descriptions of theoretical positions, their application, and the debates which have resulted, is clear and welcoming. The first two chapters are the most successful, using the debate about the applicability of the 'consumer city' model as a foil to discuss theoretical approaches to the ancient economy, such as 'primitivism vs. modernism' and 'formalism vs. substantivism'. In these chapters the combination of theory, its uses, and resulting problems and benefits are skilfully held together by an interesting exemplary topic. The chapters which follow touch many more theoretical bases, employing a thematic organization: The Limits of the Possible; Class and Status; A Sense of Identity; Myth and Reason. M. succeeds in providing brief illustrations of how well-known theories have been applied, touching on, among others: Braudel and geography; Marx and class; feminism, sociobiology, and development studies. These chapters might have benefited from being arranged around other examples like the consumer city, rather than around themes, leading one to wonder whether looking outside economic history may have been beneficial. Nonetheless, in a short book M. has achieved his aim of producing a stimulating, accessible guide to theory, and a convincing call for students to embrace it rather than fearing it.

As such, it is difficult to criticize the book for omissions. Still, some may feel that a book of this type might devote more space to major areas of theoretical discussion: language, religion, and identity being three areas which might qualify. It seems

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