survey of the *nova urbs* (J. M. Rodríguez Hidalgo, 'Una nueva vision de la Itálica de Adriano', in A. Caballos and P. Leon [edd.], *Italica MMCC* [Seville, 1996]), which reveals that the characteristic round and square apses of the Traianeum are also present on the gymnasium immediately to the south of the principal baths, and also suggests that Hadrian's involvement may have extended to the concept of the *nova urbs* as a whole, rather than just the temple and its precinct. The inclusion of Ausa in the study is also important, although an alternative reading would be to see this akin to the cases of Mirobriga and Munigua—urban in name but little more than a sanctuary in reality, and a periodic focus for the surrounding population. Furthermore, the Arc de Berà, the monument its capitals most resemble, has recently been re-dated to between 15 and 5 B.C. (X. Dupré, *L'arc romà de Berà* [Barcelona]), suggesting that it should have an earlier date.

In this study, M.'s major achievement has been to link architectural developments in Iberia to those current throughout the Empire. He has also made an important contribution to our understanding of the Hispaniae by showing the way that the urban élites gradually responded to Roman influence, by playing an ever greater rôle as the driving force behind the development of temple architecture in the course of the later first and second centuries—although the sheer complexity of the influences that he describes suggest that use of the term 'Romanization' to describe them is perhaps a little simplistic. He is also surely right when he suggests that many of the architectural models that became established in provinces like Africa could have originated in Iberia. This raises the exciting prospect of seeing the cities of the Hispaniae as cultural melting pots for the development of key architectural ideas in the west during the late Republic and early Empire, rather than as merely pale and passive imitations of models that were current in Italy and the better known provinces, such as Gallia Narbonensis. Given the longevity of Hellenistic and Roman influence in Iberia, and the originality of its peoples, this is precisely what one ought to expect.

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THE ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY

R. MACLEOD (ed.): *The Library of Alexandria. Centre of Learning in the Ancient World*. Pp. xii + 196. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000. Cased, £39.50. ISBN: 1-86064-428-7.

As the editor explains in the preface, a project sponsored by UNESCO and the Egyptian government is underway to erect an 'ultra-modern library and conference centre' in Alexandria, near the presumed site of the ancient library (for its website, see www.bibalex.gov.eg/). This volume is a collection of nine essays on the ancient library and its legacy, intended as a contribution to the programme of activities organized by the Australian branch of the Friends of the Alexandrian Library. The contributors range from Assyriologist, through most persuasions of classicist, to medievalist, and nobody could say that the project has not been conceived with boldness and imagination.

What you make of the result depends on what you are looking for. If top-notch *Altertumswissenschaft* is what you are after, by no means all the essays in the collection are this—though some are. If you want a comprehensive and systematic survey of the activities of the Alexandrian scholars, you will not find it, but a hotch-potch based

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on the random competences of a group of (mostly) Sydney academics (they run to medicine and philosophy, but not philology or textual criticism). On the other hand, if you want a basic introduction to the history of Alexandria and the functioning of the library, then some of the pieces may appeal—but you are likely to be bamboozled by the more demanding material. There is good stuff here, but, even as edited collections go, this one is extremely uneven—not so much in terms of the quality of the essays but, more fundamentally, in terms of genre and the level they are pitched at.

It begins and ends very well. A splendid essay by D. T. Potts surveys the evidence for libraries in Mesopotamia, and demonstrates that Asshurbanipal's, often adduced as an ancient near-eastern precursor of the Alexandrian library, was itself very far from unique. Assembled by a monarch who understood that knowledge is power, in fact it belongs in a tradition of archives—some of which used sophisticated cataloguing systems—in which literary texts like *Gilgamesh* are very much minority items. In last place, J. O. Ward shows how the library in Eco's *Name of the Rose* is, in terms of size and holdings, more like a medieval projection of the Library at Alexandria than any actual medieval library. Prologue and epilogue befit a collection of essays on the various aspects of the library's activities, and at least some do match up to expectation. Robert Barnes's is a straightforward account of practicalities—book acquisition, arrangement, cataloguing; he endorses Canfora's view that it was only warehouses that were damaged in the fire of 48/7 B.C., the library's real ruination being a bout of civil strife in A.D. 272. The axe he grinds is the underfunding of modern libraries, and he thinks that what did for Alexandrian scholarship after its early Hellenistic heyday was cuts in the library's resources (p. 70). R. G. Tanner has an ingenious argument about the transmission of the works of Aristotle to the Library, and John Vallance an extremely interesting piece on Alexandrian medicine. He argues that doctors turned mainly to high-status textual scholarship, so that even the Empiricists were more concerned with anecdotal literary evidence than (theory-driven) practical experimentation.

However, other essays do not quite fit the bill. J. R. Green reports on the excavation of the theatre in Paphos and explores signs of Alexandrian influence: interesting but irrelevant to the Library, unless the sketch of Alexandria's liveliness and distinctiveness in theatre was actually intended to correct overemphasis on the city's bookishness. Samuel Lieu's essay is mostly anecdote about empire-wide higher education in the Second Sophistic and later: all very well, but to make it relevant it needs, say, to address Hellenistic Alexandria's influence (if any) on imperial higher education (see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* [Oxford, 1968], i.98, on teaching), or to concentrate on the schools of imperial Alexandria, or even to set the different intellectual approaches and aims of Hellenistic Alexandria and the imperial rhetorical schools head-to-head. Patricia Cannon Johnson's survey of Neoplatonism takes in everything from Orphism to John Dee and Edmund Spenser, but what has this to do with the Library, whose initial impetus was not even Platonic, but Aristotelian? And the second essay, by Wendy Brazil, belongs in a different kind of book altogether—a first-person travel narrative in the genre of 'faction', conveying through the weakly characterized 'I' of the narrator textbook stuff on topography and first-century history.

There is inevitably some reduplication in a collection like this; unfontunately, there is also some contradiction (as when Lieu, *contra* Barnes, seems to date the library's destruction to the first century B.C.). There are also signs of sloppy proof-reading throughout (whose job was this?): space precludes a list, but consider the Greek on p. 35. And the lack of classical expertise on the part of some contributors has led to

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not a few howlers: one is naturally surprised to learn that 'Eratosthenes also gave a home to Eudoxus, Euclid's brightest pupil' (p. 6). In short, an asking price of £40 is way too high, even for the quality that the book does contain, and even granted its worthy cause.

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