TEMPLES IN SPAIN

W. E. MIERSE: *Temples and Towns in Roman Iberia. The Social and Architectural Dynamics of Sanctuary Designs from the Third Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D.* Pp. xxiii + 346, figs, pls. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1999. Cased, $65. ISBN: 0-520-20377-1.

This is the first sustained synthesis of Roman temples in Iberia, and as such an important work of reference. Although its precise scope is not really discussed, it is clear that Mierse has drawn upon the work of a wide range of scholars to present an in-depth study of the architectural development of temple and sanctuary designs in the Hispaniae. In doing so, he raises a number of important issues about the distinctiveness of Roman architecture in Iberia and places them within the broader architectural currents of the Roman Empire. There is little doubt that the book will be particularly useful to those unfamiliar with the evidence from the Hispaniae. It will also raise a number of important issues for specialists working in the field. The book is well produced, with a number of specially produced line-drawings, but it also has a few misspellings (e.g. Regomis = Regomir, Castra Caecilin = Castra Caecilia, Auraso = Aurasio). It should also be noted that in some parts of the book, particularly those dealing with the broader social issues related to temple architecture, some key works of the middle and later 1990s are not cited.

The text is clearly planned and presented as a chronological narrative, running from the 'Arrival of Rome' (Chapter I), to the 'Augustan Homogenisation' (Chapter II), 'New Choices under Tiberius' (Chapter III), 'Architectural Experiments during the Mid-first Century' (Chapter IV), 'Flavian Extravagance' (Chapter V), 'The Emperors from the Peninsula' (Chapter VI), and a conclusion. Each chapter begins with a short contextual summary, is followed by meticulous site-by-site description of temples, their proportions, design, and decoration, and is rounded off with an analysis of such issues as patronage, design influences, construction techniques, etc. The central thesis of the book is to show the way in which Roman influence gradually transforms Iberian élites into agents of cultural change who negotiated architectural tastes through a growing awareness of ideas current in the broader Empire.

The first chapter is probably the least successful. M. looks at temples that have been claimed for the Roman towns of Italica, Emporiae, and Saguntum, as well as the Celtiberian sites of Azaila and Botorrita. He is surely correct in suggesting that the development of the Neapolis and Roman town of Emporion represents a reaction to Greek architectural ideas in Campania and the East, rather than direct copies of Roman monuments *per se*. However, his suggestion that the famous *capitolium* at Italica be identified as a Punic temple is unconvincing and too literal a reading of a building that is probably little more than part of a large Turdetanian storehouse of the kind that are to be found at such native sites as Tejada la Vieja (Huelva) and Plaza de Armas de Puente Tablas (Jaén). It is also curious to note the lack of any reference to the great second century B.C. sanctuaries at the south-west Iberian sites of La Encarnación de Caravaca (Murcia) and Cerro de los Santos (Albacete), both of which have Roman-style temples and, in the case of the former, exquisite architectural decoration. Similarly, mention could have been made of the temples of Atargatis and Iuppiter Stator (extramural) at Carthago Nova—although the book may have gone to press before these were published.

The next chapter deals with Augustan temples at Mérida, Barcino, Ebora,

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Saguntum (built by the Baebii, not the Babii), and Conimbriga (the dating of which has been revised to the Julio-Claudian period). M. discusses the rôle that Augustan policy might have had in the development of temple architecture, the possibility that temples such as the 'Templo de Diana' at Mérida were planned by foreign architects, and how far those at other sites may have been influenced by prestigious sites and local needs. Whatever the impetus or influence, however, he suggests that the Spartan quality of Roman temples in Hispania makes them distinctive and that they embody considerable local variation within a broader heterogeneity of form. It should be pointed out, however, that the hypothesis that the *colonia* of Barcino had a square layout cannot be sustained. Research by Oriol Granados and others has shown for some time that the distinctive late imperial plan is effectively a restatement of its earlier layout.

One of the best chapters deals with temple designs under Tiberius, where M. makes the suggestion that the Bilbilis complex was probably heavily influenced by the great sanctuary of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and skilfully synthesizes the controversies surrounding the altar and temple of Augustus at Tarraco. The following chapter deals with the great Claudian complex at Clunia. M. highlights the unusual way in which the forum breaks with the earlier pattern of fora in the peninsula by giving precedence to the temple, rather than achieving a balance between temple and basilica, and the curious way in which the basilica effectively separates two separate sanctuaries. To me at least, the suggestion that the principal temple to Jupiter somehow masks some unnamed Celtic god seems unlikely, at least on the basis of current evidence. The chapter also deals with three temples overlooking the forum at Baelo, which in terms of their layout M. interestingly links to Leptis and Pompeii. However, it should be noted that in his recent synthesis of Baelo, *Baelo. Une cité romaine de la Bétique* (Paris, 1995), Sillières has put back the construction date of all three to the Neronian period (A.D. 60–70).

There is little doubt that the last two chapters provide the climax of the book. In 'Flavian Extravagance', M. emphasizes the growing importance of élite tastes in architectural choices, as Hispani played an ever greater rôle outside the peninsula and acted as a conduit for the spread of new architectural ideas at sites like Conimbriga, Tarraco, Corduba, Mirobriga, and Munigua. The analyses are all rigorous. However, the idea that there was a pre-Flavian cult-complex in the upper town of Tarraco (p. 226) cannot now be sustained in the light of Pensabene's reanalyses (e.g. 'La decorazione architettonica dei monumenti provinciali di Tarraco', in R. Mar [ed.], *Els monuments provincials de Tàrraco* [Tarragona], pp. 22–105) of the *clipei* and other architectural fragments from the cathedral area: they suggest that they probably all belong to the great complex of Flavian date. Moreover, in the case of the temple in the Calle C. Marcello at Corduba, Salvador Jiménez's most recent work ('El templo romano de la Calle Claudio Marcello,' in P. Leon [ed.], *Colonia Patricia Corduba. Una reflexión arqueológica* [Seville, 1996], pp. 129–53) suggests that construction of the complex probably began in the Claudian period, even if it may have not been finished until the Flavian period. M.'s suggestion that Mirobriga should perhaps be understood as a pilgrimage centre (pp. 224–5), despite its urban layout, is interesting but should also surely be true for Munigua. Despite its municipal status, this site covers a similarly small area, is also dominated by a sanctuary, and has very few houses. The heart of the final chapter really concerns the Traianeum at Italica, the closest parallel to which M. finds in the great Traianeum at Pergamon. He is also surely right in seeing some kind of connection to, or involvement by, Hadrian himself in the planning process. This conclusion has been reinforced by a recent geophysical

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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.

University of Southampton SIMON KEAY

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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