

Editor's Note

A quick glance at Hannah Cotton's list of publications (below, pp. xxv–xxxii) is enough to make one realize that the thirty-four articles collected in this volume are only part of her immense scholarly work. In her four decades of research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Cotton has made invaluable contributions both to Roman history at large and to Roman provincial history, primarily that of Judaea and Arabia. Her scholarly interests led her through all the major fields of ancient studies, resulting in a rich variety of published works. A word of explanation is thus in order as to the selected content and structure of this volume.

The volume is divided into four sections, and the order of the articles in each section follows their publication date. Section A, "Government, Power, and Jurisdiction," is composed of studies that deal with the workings of the Roman government, analyzing its formal and judicial aspects, as well as its informal characteristics, which may be defined as political etiquette. Some of these studies stem directly from Cotton's doctoral thesis and thus represent her early scholarly pursuits.

The remaining three sections revolve around what became Cotton's main field of research, the Judaeen Desert Documents. Her acclaimed publication of the Greek documents from Naḥal Ḥever (*P.Hever*) along with many influential studies has rightly earned her recognition as a leading authority on the subject. In the words of a senior scholar in the field, "Professor Cotton contributed more than any other single scholar to the study of the Greek documents from the Judaeen Desert."¹

Each of these three sections deals with key aspects of the Judaeen Desert Documents. Section B, "Documents, Languages, and Law," includes studies which have a broad papyrological significance or address issues that are relevant to the entire body of documents. Section C, "Land, Army, and Administration," deals with historical geography and with the administrative history of Judaea and Arabia, as well as the Roman military presence in and around these areas. Section D, "Law, Custom, and Provincial Life," examines various legal aspects in the Judaeen Desert Documents against the backdrop of Roman law on the one hand, and Jewish law on the other.

The distinction in content between section A and sections B-D reflects Cotton's academic trajectory. Her doctoral thesis, submitted in 1977 at the University of Oxford, dealt with Roman letters of recommendation, focusing on the writings

¹ Ranon Katzoff, *On Jews in the Roman World: Collected Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 10, n. 22.

of Cicero and Pliny the Younger as primary sources. Non-literary texts, recorded on inscriptions and papyri, featured only as an addendum in her thesis. These were later augmented and published as a monograph on documentary letters of recommendation (1981). This monograph indicates, in retrospect, the way Cotton's career was about to turn.

In 1985 Cotton was invited, together with Joseph Geiger, to publish the Latin and Greek documents from Masada. With the Greek documents written by Jews and the Latin documents produced by the Roman army, the Masada material "shifted between these two conflicting worlds."² It seems almost natural, therefore, that Cotton's next papyrological project was the publication of the Greek documents, written by Jews, from Naḥal Ḥever. The final publication of these documents was carried out in collaboration with Ada Yardeni, who edited the Semitic part of the collection. It is the Naḥal Ḥever documents, together with two other corpora of Greek and Semitic documents from the Judaeen Desert – the Yadin Papyri from the 'Cave of Letters' (*P.Yadin*) and the documents from Wadi Murabba'at (*P.Mur*) – that form the basis of the studies in sections B-D of this volume.

The articles have been kept in their original form. The bibliographical references have all been edited to appear in a unified style; this has occasionally led to some minor changes of phrasing. In cases of cross-references (that is, references to articles which appear also in this volume), the corresponding pages in the volume are indicated in square brackets. A complete bibliography of all works cited is provided at the end.

The one major update made throughout the volume has to do with references to forthcoming publications. This relates both to scholarly works and to documents or epigraphical finds that were not yet formally published when cited. An effort has been made to update all these references to their published form. This accounts for the seemingly odd situation of having references which postdate the article in which they are cited. However, not all 'forthcomings' eventually came forth, and in those rare cases where it was safe to assume that future publication is not expected, the reference has been omitted.

Cotton's frequent reference to forthcoming works by her colleagues shows her profound commitment to drawing on every possible piece of evidence or scholarly opinion to strengthen her arguments. But it is also a sign of her personality, in demonstrating one of Cotton's most outstanding abilities, defined by a close friend and colleague as "a genius for creating networks of friends."³

² Hannah M. Cotton and Joseph Geiger, *Masada II: The Latin and Greek Documents* (Jerusalem: IES, 1989), vii.

³ Miriam Griffin, "The Prince and his Tutor: Candour and Affection," *SCI* 33 (2014): 67 [Special Issue in Honour of Hannah M. Cotton].

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