



M. W. FREDERIKSEN

1930–1980

The premature death of Martin Frederiksen in a road accident on 14th July, 1980, was felt as a grievous loss by numberless friends in Italy as in this country. The whole cause of Roman studies has suffered, and not least our own Society: from 1969 to 1974 he was editor of the *Journal*, and thereafter chairman of the editorial committee, which is also responsible for *Britannia*. He also rendered invaluable services to the British School at Rome, where he was a frequent visitor, especially by his work for the library and his contacts with Italian scholars. In his last years he was one of the editors of the revised *Cambridge Ancient History*.

Born in 1930 to a Danish settler in Australia and an Australian mother, who had taken a First in Greats, he was brought up on a dairy farm near Canberra. After graduating with the highest honours in classics at Sydney University, he went to Balliol College, and in 1954 obtained a First in Greats with hardly less distinction in philosophy than in ancient history. He had already won a University prize for an essay on the Delphic Amphictiony, and now proceeded to Rome with the Craven Fellowship and a Scholarship from the British School. In 1956 he became a Research Fellow at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. From 1959 to his death he was tutorial Fellow at Worcester College.

Here he was an inspiring teacher of Greek and Roman history. His University lectures covered such disparate subjects as Polybius, Italian municipal institutions and Roman art. Few British scholars knew so much of the origins and early history of Rome, on which he was to contribute to the *Cambridge Ancient History*. The range and variety of his interests, which extended to economics and sociology, is exemplified in the review of Finley's *Ancient Economy* in *JRS* 1975. His colleagues would find that on almost any subject on which they might consult him he had an astonishing command of bibliographical information and that he could often cast new light on a problem from an unexpected standpoint. His learning was, however, unobtrusive, and help and advice were given not only freely but with modesty and a certain diffidence. He liked discussion, but without acrimony: it was not his bent to convict others of error but to discern what was good in their work; and he was prone to think that sharply defined opinions did not do justice to the complexity of the material.

Martin had never followed a narrow programme of doctoral research but had practised the widest study, and in detail, not only of 'general' history in the traditional sense but of ancillary disciplines. His familiarity with Roman civil law and with highly technical problems of Latin epigraphy is displayed in what are among his most substantial contributions to learning, his articles in *JRS* 1964 and 1965 on the *lex Rubria* and on Republican municipal laws and in *JRS* 1966 ('Caesar, Cicero and the problem of debt'). But as a research student under the guidance of Dr John Ward-Perkins he had also entered the field of Italian archaeology. A joint paper in *PBSR* 1957 on ancient road-systems in part of the *ager Faliscus* yields the first fruits of this interest. The archaeological report on south Italy and Sicily in *Archaeological Reports for 1976–77* shows his comprehensive knowledge. Dr Ward-Perkins informs me that the important field surveys of southern Etruria carried out by the British School from the middle fifties owed a great deal to his collaboration in the early, formative stages of the work; he was on intimate terms with the present generation of scholars now responsible for it. No other scholar in this country had a closer connection with the work which is transforming the archaeological picture of ancient Italy, especially in pre-Roman and Republican times. His combination of expertise in archaeological, epigraphic, legal and other literary evidence, and of a concern that extended equally to art, agriculture, commerce, institutions and politics, uniquely qualified him to re-interpret the social, economic and cultural life of Republican Italy. Unfortunately his papers and reviews are a very incomplete record of this learning.

His particular objective was to replace Beloch's *Campanien* (1897). The book was to extend from prehistory to the fourth century A.D. or beyond. Articles on Republican Capua (*PBSR* 1959), on Puteoli (*RE* xxiii, 1960), on Campanian cavalry (*Dial. Arch.* 1968), and on the Etruscans in Campania (in D. and F. R. Ridgway, *Italy before the Romans*), and some minor pieces, are *prolegomena* to the great work of which only *disiecta membra* remain: it is too early to say if they are in publishable shape. Important discoveries in new excavations must continually have postponed the hope of definitive treatment. Editorial duties occupied much time, and the very breadth and depth of Martin's reading stood in the way of composition; he had more of an itch to learn than to write. His publications are thus no proper measure of his capacity, nor do they reveal the man's charm or the stimulus that his ideas gave to colleagues and pupils. Among historians of the ancient world he is one of 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown'.

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