Review

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L'Organisation Militaire de l'Égypte Byzantine. By JEAN MASPERO. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1912.

M. Jean Maspero has furnished in his treatise a very useful summary of the information at present available with regard to the organisation, distribution, and composition of the military forces in Egypt during the last two centuries of "Roman" rule. The details are largely drawn from the Byzantine papyri at Cairo which he himself has edited and from the collection of the British Museum, and the fresh evidence obtained from these sources has enabled him to place the Arab conquest of Egypt in a new light, so far as the numbers and character of the forces opposed to the invasion of 'Amr are concerned. According to M. Maspero, it would appear that there was no organised army available to stop the Arab advance: the so-called imperial troops were merely local bodies of military police, under leaders who were practically civilians: even in numbers they were not greatly superior to the invaders, and their fighting value was nothing. At the end of his last chapter—the whole of which is a most interesting estimate of the character of the Byzantine military system in Egypt—he ascribes the downfall of Byzantine rule there mainly to the incapacity of the army, after all allowance had been made for the exhaustion of the empire after the Persian campaign, the religious quarrels, and the hatred between Copts and Greeks. Perhaps he rates the fighting material to be found in the Egyptian peasant rather too low: the responsibility for the collapse before the Arabs, so far as contemporary accounts show, rested more with the leaders than with the rank and file, who seem to have done fairly well when decently commanded: and, after all, the Byzantine army in Egypt did not cut a much worse figure than most other Byzantine armies against the Arabs and later Muslim troops, who were only effectually checked by the Mickleward—Byzantium itself. But, though we may draw from M. Maspero's facts conclusions which differ somewhat from his own, we owe him a great debt of gratitude for his thorough and systematic presentation of these facts, which will be of value to future workers in this field of history.

J. G. MILNE.

Forged Egyptian Antiquities. By T. G. WAKELING. pp. 155, 16 plates, 14 figures in text. London, Adam and Charles Black, 1912. 5s.

This is a very entertaining and interesting little book, instructive too to those whose great desire it is to possess some supposed trophy of Ancient Egypt. The ways of the wily native forger are well described, and the rather alarming proficiency to which he has attained of late years is pointed out. The would-be buyer of *antikas* is indeed more than likely to be imposed upon if he insists, as is usually the case, on buying things from donkey-boys and dragomans and inferior dealers instead of from well-known dealers with a reputation to lose. The summer-industry of forging antiquities to sell to the winter tourist has long been well-established at Thebes, and forgeries were made even in the days of Wilkinson. The humours of the traffic are commented upon by Mr Wakeling with considerable enjoyment, and he seems to have derived considerable amusement from his hobby of collecting forgeries. One may however warn him against always pronouncing a scarab to be a forgery because it is badly cut: plenty of badly cut scarabs were made under the XVIIIth Dynasty, for instance, and, unless he positively knows them to be so, one would be inclined to doubt whether, for instance, Nos. 26 and 27 of his Plate VIII are not genuine.

Cairo of To-Day. By EUSTACE REYNOLDS-BALL, F.R.G.S. pp. i—iv+268, with maps, plan of Cairo and illustrations. London, Adam and Charles Black. 1914. 2s. 6d.

Mr Reynolds-Ball has written a concise and good, as well as a practical, guide to Cairo and the Nile. The information as regards both modern and ancient Egypt is given with point. There is a convenient summary of recent archaeological research, and a useful bibliography of recent works on Egypt. The maps are excellent.

Messrs Hutchinson and Co., 34—36, Paternoster Row, E.C., send us the first two numbers of their new serial *History of the Nations*, published in 7d. parts. It is described as a popular, concise, pictorial, and authoritative account of each nation from the earliest times to the present day; written