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BERGER Adolf

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JOURNAL ARTICLE

## ADOLF BERGER

MATTHEW M. FRYDE

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### ADOLF BERGER 1882-1962

On April 8, 1962 Adolf Berger, one of the greatest and most respected Romanists of our epoch, died in New York. He was the author of a great many important works of lasting value and his fame as an authority in his field has been firmly established for more than fifty years.

Professor Berger was born on March 1, 1882, in Lwów, in the Austrian part of partitioned Poland, where he completed both his secondary and university studies. When, in 1907, a degree of *doctor utriusque juris* was conferred on him, his graduation became an unusual and very rare event in the history of Austrian universities, having been conducted *sub summis auspiciis Imperatoris*, i.e., under the auspices of the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Emperor was represented by a special officer, who handed Dr. Berger a diamond ring as a personal gift of the Emperor. This fact is mentioned here in order to stress how successful was the start of the scholarly career of this young Doctor of Law.

In 1908-1909 Dr. Berger continued his legal studies at Berlin University under Professor Paul M. Meyer, who introduced him into the then new discipline of Papyrology, as well as under Professor Bernhard Kübler.

Berger's first work "*Dotis dictio* w prawie rzymskim" (*Dotis dictio* in Roman Law) was published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Cracovie*, Histor.-Philos. Classe, Vol. LIII, 1910, pp. 71-204. An abstract (in German) from the Polish original appeared in the *Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de Cracovie*, April 1909, pp. 75-97. This study was devoted to the description and analysis of a form of constituting a dowry through an unilateral promise in strictly prescribed words. It contains a bold revision of views of the older generation of historians of Roman Law. Although *Dotis dictio* became accessible to the Western scholars only in the condensation in German, no monograph has ever been written on the subject since, as