

*Ägypten zwischen innerem Zwist und äußerem Druck. Die Zeit Ptolemaios' VI. bis VIII.* Herausgegeben von ANDREA JÖRDENS – JOACHIM FRIEDRICH QUACK. Philippika 45. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2011. ISBN 978-3-447-06504-7. 338 S. EUR 58.

This volume presents the papers of a colloquium held at Heidelberg 16–19.9.2007. It focuses on Egypt of the mostly quite turbulent second century BCE when the sons of Ptolemy V faced both internal and external political troubles either jointly or fighting over the power among themselves. The proceedings of the symposium are arranged, as Andrea Jördens states in her introduction, not in alphabetical order but in an order that starts from problems of the political history and works its way towards the everyday life of the Egyptian villages like concentric circles (Jördens, "Die Zeit Ptolemaios VI. bis VIII.: Einführende Bemerkungen", p. 3). This arrangement works very well. It is often the case that individual papers of a symposium are read separately by specialists from various fields. The arrangement of these papers, however, makes the volume interesting reading as a whole, and the chapters complement one another from different points of view, giving the reader an idea of the various approaches involved in the study of a given time and place.

The first three chapters deal with the historical perspective from the point of view of the ruling dynasty. Dorothy Thompson's "The sons of Ptolemy V in a post-secession world" gives a rough introduction to the ruling kings and their policy towards the southern parts of the country, which had tried to gain autonomy for the past twenty years before the rise to power of Ptolemy VI. The role of the queens in Egypt was particularly dominant during the second century BCE as Cleopatra II and III took an active part in the struggle for power. This is well illustrated in the articles "Die ptolemäische Königin als weiblicher Horus" by Mamdouh Mohamed Eldamaty and "Cleopatra II and III. The queens of Ptolemy VI and VIII as guarantors of kingship and rivals of power" by Martina Minas-Nerpel.

Laurent Coulon's "Les inscriptions des catacombes osiriennes d'Oxyrhynchos. 'Témoignages de culte d'Osiris sous les règnes de Ptolémée VI et Ptolémée VIII'" turns the spin of the concentric circle somewhat more towards religion. This does not mean that the article does not complement the post-secession state of the country outlined by D. Thompson, as the best-attested parallel catacombs to those at Oxyrhynchus are at Karnak in the south where the traditional Egyptian rites were mostly cherished. Anne-Emmanuelle Veïsse's "L'ennemi des dieux" Harsiesis" and Joachim Friedrich Quack's "Ist der Meder an allem schuld?" continue the themes related to religion, even though the common thread of these two articles is the identity of a potential native Egyptian rebel Harsiesis and the historical reality behind Egyptian prophecies written in Demotic. These articles show convincingly that Harsiesis was not a "Gegenkönig" and that connecting the Demotic prophecies to the historical events of the second century BCE (with the assumption of Harsiesis as a "Gegenkönig") cannot hold true.

Lucia Criscuolo's "I due testamenti di Tolemeo VIII Evergete II", Kostas Buraselis's "A lively 'Indian summer': Remarks on the Ptolemaic role in the Aegean under Philometor", and Andreas Blasius's "Antiochos IV. in Ägypten – Ptolemaios VI. in Syrien. Die späte Rache des Pharao?!" take the reader from native Egyptian perspectives to the international affairs of the Ptolemies. These articles illustrate well the rising role of Rome during the second century BCE. The last-mentioned article focuses on a single coin, which is a good example of how numismatics contributes to the study of second century BCE Egypt and its relations with its neighbours.

Literary sources and a focus on Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, form a kind of common thread to the chapters by Peter Nadig ("Zur Rolle der Juden unter Ptolemaios VI. und Ptolemaios VIII."), Marietta Horster ("Geistesleben in Alexandria im 2. Jh. v. Chr. und die sogenannte Gelehrtenvertreibung"), and Paul McKechnie ("Who were the Alexandrians? Palace and city, Aristarchus and Comanus, 170–145 BC"). Horster and McKechnie discuss the impact of the struggle for power of the rulers on the learned elite of Alexandria. Nadig's article finds a concentric spin in Thomas Kruse's "Die Festung in Herakleopolis und der Zwist im Ptolemäerhaus", where Ptolemy VI's favourable attitude towards the Jews is also touched upon, as it seems that many of the military settlers in Herakleopolis were, in fact, Jews.

Stefan Pfeiffer's "Die Politik Ptolemaios' VI. und VIII. im Kataraktgebiet: Die 'ruhigen' Jahre von 163 bis 136 v. Chr." and the above-mentioned article by Kruse have the military building activity of the second century in common. The fortresses and their administrative personnel lead the reader to Joachim Friedrich Quack's second article in the volume, "Das Diktum des Tutu über die Eingabe an Numenius". Quack's revised edition of a memorandum addressed to the well-known high ranking official called Numenius by Tutu, a scribe of the judges in Ptolemais, leads the reader to the questions related to the relations of the Greeks and the Egyptians in everyday life. The ways people got by in their daily routines and in their interactions with each other in the bi- (or multi-) cultural environment of Egypt of the second century are nicely illustrated by Damien Agut's "La ΠΑΡΑΘΗΚΗ au Serapeum: les (petites) affaires de Ptolémaïos", and Katelijin Vandorpe's "A successful, but fragile biculturalism. The hellenization process in the Upper-Egyptian town of Pathyris under Ptolemy VI and VIII". The volume is wrapped up with descriptions of the authors and useful indices.

All in all, this volume draws from sometimes very detailed and scattered sources, such as the mention of "hostile towards the gods" or a single coin and ends up as a coherent whole where different aspects of research on Hellenistic Egypt complement one another. In some cases, the articles following one another even form a small batch of their own based on the language that they were written in. If one has to find something to change in the arrangement, I might have placed Peter Nadig's article in between those of Stefan Pfeiffer and Thomas Kruse, but this may be a matter of taste in the end.

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RAY LAURENCE – SIMON ESMONDE CLEARY – GARETH SEARS: *The City in the Roman West c. 250 BC – c. AD 250*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011. ISBN 978-0-521-70140-2. XIV, 355 pp. GBP 60, USD 99 (hb), GBP 24.99, USD 40 (pb).

Roman lifestyle was essentially urban despite the respect and appreciation expressed towards old Republican rural values and ways of life. Rome was the most important city for the whole empire, but even in the furthest reaches of the provinces cities and towns were established under the Roman rule and they became important local centers. The cities and towns also have been – and are – the focus of all kinds of research from archaeological excavations to analyses of Roman literature. Individual studies are easy to find, but syntheses such as the one discussed here are more difficult to