

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 Numenios". Quack's revised edition of a memorandum addressed to the well-known high ranking official called Numenios 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 Ptolémaios", 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

come by. The three authors, Ray Laurence, Simon Esmonde Cleary and Gareth Sears, have all been active in the study of Roman towns and cities in Italy, the western provinces, and North Africa for long periods of time and their expertise comes together in the synthesis of the development, appearance, and functions of the cities in the Roman West.

The book starts with an introduction outlining the task and assessing debates on many aspects of Roman urbanism starting with Romanization and ending with trying to recognize the elements of a typical Roman city. The first five of the eleven main chapters discuss many of these elements in more depth starting with the creation of urban culture (Chapter 1) and the colonization and development of Roman cities (Chapter 2). One of the main points of view of the volume is considering the city not merely as a physical setting, but as consisting of both the physical setting and the people who produced and lived in it. Both were required in order to create a functioning and sustainable urban center. This theme is reflected in Chapter 3 on city foundation and government as well as in Chapter 4 on reception of urbanism in the Roman West. Chapter 5 creates a prelude to the remainder of the book by outlining the general conventions of town planning and the aesthetics of urbanism. This is followed by chapters related to specific elements common to the Roman urban landscape: walls, street network, religious, civic and entertainment buildings. The chronological scope of the book covers five centuries from the mid-third century BCE through to 250 CE and the last chapter looks at the situation at that time.

The creation of Roman urban culture is discussed in two main geographical areas, Italy and Spain. The development in Italy is represented by some fairly well-known sites: Rome, Pompeii, Fregellae and Cosa. The first two existed well before the beginning of the mid-third century BCE, and the discussion does not reflect very clearly what changes occurred at this time of establishing new colonies in old centers of this kind. The colonies featured in this chapter were built into areas conquered quite early which usually featured some kind of urban centers and, although some comparisons between *oppida* and Roman colonies are presented, the relationship between old and new could perhaps have been discussed more thoroughly. However, the topic does get a second treatment in Chapter 4 on the development of urbanism in the western provinces.

The chapters on town planning and the various elements of towns start with laying out the street grid. Here a discussion on the natural topography of the sites and how it informed the town plans would have been interesting and useful. The site selection is sometimes obvious – connections with land and water routes, strategic positions, etc. – but the lay of the land at the selected site is important when major elements such as the forum or large public buildings are designed and placed. In addition, a very important part of the infrastructure of a Roman city – water supply – receives no attention. In the following chapters (6–10), the discussion of the form and significance of the various elements of the city (forum and basilica, baths, theaters, amphitheaters) follows a geographical division into Italy, western provinces, and North Africa. Although there is some regional variation in the buildings and their use in the public life of the cities, these chapters are slightly tedious to read. A more synthetic treatment with chronological and regional comparisons might have been more to the point and this is seen, for example, in some of the tables in the chapters outlining interesting trends (such as Table 10.3 on distribution of amphitheaters or Table 8.3 on building of baths and amphitheaters in North Africa in different periods). Interregional and chronological comparisons covering all the elements would have perhaps displayed the different trends more effectively.

The volume offers a great deal of information and insight into very many aspects of cities in the Roman West. It combines old data with the authors' interpretation of the development, but sometimes the relationship to what other scholars think about the subject remains obscure. Some of the elements in the text, such as explanations and translations of commonly used Latin names of buildings (for example *curia* and *comitium* on p. 20), seem to indicate that the book is intended to be read by non-experts, but many other parts would require in-depth knowledge of the topic (such as Romanization). Despite some of its shortcomings, the book is also thought-provoking and encourages further study into Roman cities.

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HENRIK MOURITSEN: *The Freedman in the Roman World*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011. ISBN 978-0-521-85613-3. VI, 344 pp. GBP 60, USD 99

In *The Freedman in the Roman World* Henrik Mouritsen summarizes the results of his own and others' research over the last few decades on the position of freedmen in Roman society. As Mouritsen himself notes, the freedman has not been a popular subject, especially on the level of monograph-sized syntheses, and in this book, Mouritsen strives to fill this *lacuna* in the research tradition.

Mouritsen discusses the matter thematically. The thematic divisions obviously reflect the importance given to these particular themes in understanding the phenomenon within Roman society: the social position of the freedman and the stain of servitude; the relation of the freedman to his/her patron; the individual power and status of the freedman; the practice of manumission; the economic role of the freedmen; the role of the freedmen in public life, with a special emphasis on the freedmen's sons; and finally, an overview and interpretation of the identity of freedmen in society.

On the whole, the book succeeds commendably, offering a many-sided view on the cultural, social and economic practices connected with the phenomenon. In the introduction, Mouritsen downplays his own achievement by emphasizing how the chosen approach to investigate the position of freedmen from many different viewpoints has resulted in many of the themes being slightly superficial in their treatment. This might be a potential flaw with some works, but I personally found that Mouritsen's approach resulted in far more interesting results than a detailed study of a single theme might have produced. Mouritsen uses different types of evidence in constructing his interpretation, ranging from inscriptions to various types of literary evidence; the nature of the subject naturally emphasizes the importance of legal and literary sources, while archaeological evidence is rarely connectable to Roman social categories; in fact, Mouritsen heavily criticizes some of the attempts to do so, like in the case of the owners of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii. Mouritsen also draws in comparative material from other 'slave societies' in order to highlight the particularities of the Roman system. This is an excellent choice, since it is not always clear how different the other well-known slaving systems were, and especially, how the Roman system was a world of its own with very few parallels in other 'slave societies'. Even so, these comparisons offer important insights into the Roman system and are particularly useful for readers not already familiar with the Roman system.