

shifting cultural identities' (168-94) is another case-study whose focus is not the wanderings of Timotheus *per se*, but the use of his image in the archaizing culture of imperial Sparta (specifically, the manipulation of an anecdote about his unfavourable reception by the musically-conservative ephors).

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Roger S. Bagnall, *Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Sources and Approaches (Variorum Collected Studies Series)*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006. xii + 336 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5906-8.

This volume is the second of Bagnall's (henceforth B.) collected papers in the Variorum series. The papers in the first volume<sup>1</sup> related to Egypt in Late Antiquity, B.'s main field of study. The present volume assembles works that deal with earlier periods, as well as papers that were published after the first volume had appeared. Eight of the papers (IV to XI) deal with Ptolemaic Egypt, seven (XII to XVIII) with Roman Egypt and six (XIX to XXIV) with Late Antiquity. The three chronological sections are preceded by three papers (I to III) dedicated to 'Questions of method'. As usual in the Variorum series, the papers are presented in their original format and pagination, in order to facilitate cross-reference with the original publications. A misprint is found in the table of contents (Panapolis for Panopolis, XIX). More regrettably, the bibliography of paper III has been omitted (a wide-ranging bibliographical survey!).

A Variorum volume offers an opportunity to assess a scholar's career. B. is one of the scholars who contributed mostly to bridge the gap between papyrological studies and the wider field of ancient history, and 'questions of method' definitely recur throughout the collected papers, and not only in the first section of the volume: the interplay between the provenance of the papyri and the historical conclusions which may be drawn from them is a recurrent theme. Thus while the Panopolis documentation does not allow a comprehensive study of the local economic and social life, it may allow the identification of specifically local administrative features, provided one asks the right questions (XIX). Likewise, the changing nature and context of production of the documentation from early Hellenistic times to Late Antiquity affects the proportion of private letters written by women (XXI) as well as that of legal petitions submitted by women (XXIII) in various periods. These observations about the methodological implications deriving from the provenance and context of production of the papyri complement B.'s reflective questions about the methodological implications deriving from the scholarly practice of textual restorations (II).

The collected papers illustrate the impressive range of issues that B. encompasses. This indeed is the fortune that awaits papyrologists who have to deal with one thousand years of Greek papyri. However, the need to cope with multifaceted *realia* in editing papyri, results too often in limiting comments to philological and technical issues, asking 'no [historical] questions at all', as B. laments (III.190). In contrast, the added value of B.'s method derives from his concern not only to ask historical questions, but also to draw upon theoretical literature to tackle them. At the same time, B. is a papyrologist. His historical enquiries are always conducted empirically, proceeding from the documents to theoretical literature, and back again.

Some of the studies included in the volume are either technical or deal with topics of limited scope. Their inclusion in the volume is nevertheless justified because they bear on issues of a wider range. Most of them deal with issues which B. also tackled in his books. An archaeological note (X) should be read together with B.'s broader paper on the Library of Alexandria (IX). Another, on the rebellion of 131 BCE, refines the chronology of the Ptolemaic re-conquest of

<sup>1</sup> R.S. Bagnall, *Later Roman Egypt: Society, Religion, Economy and Administration* (Variorum Collected Studies Series), Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2003.

Edfu (XI). A prosopographical note on ‘Publius Petronius, [the third] Augustan prefect of Egypt’ (XII) adds one case to the study of the families which rose from the equestrian to the senatorial order under Augustus and enjoyed an ‘increasingly close relationship to the imperial family and its inner circle’ (XII, 93). The discovery of an unpublished key document allows B. to revise the chronology of the institution of the periodic provincial census of Roman Egypt (XIII). Two papers present corrections to earlier studies: the first deals with a few clauses of the *Gnomon* of the *Idios Logos* relating to marriages between persons of different statuses (XV), and the second with the tax on prostitution (XVI). A review article (XX) corrects the dating of the Hermopolite land registers, an important source for the social and economic history of fourth-century Egypt. A case-study using literature and papyri deals with monks and property (XXII).

Even papers of apparently technical scope may yield far-reaching methodological insights. Thus a modern controversy over the origin of the Egyptian date for the foundation of Alexandria transmitted by Pseudo-Callisthenes elicits a methodological comment about the social conditions of time reckoning in Antiquity (IV). A prosopographical note about Archagathos son of Agathocles, combining an inscription, a papyrus and literary sources (VII), is primarily concerned with the history of the dynastic alliances and struggles of the years 320-270 BCE. However, B.’s discussion of Archagathos’ title, ‘*epistatēs* of Libya’, cautions about the unsystematic structure of the Ptolemaic administration. This example shows how B.’s sensitivity to the empirical material (combined with historical intuition: V, 21) allowed him to anticipate the now increasingly accepted view that rational homogenising was thoroughly alien to the administrative practices of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

B.’s skill for synthesized overviews resulted in an impressive output of manuals and introductory works in the field of papyrology and Graeco-Roman Egypt. This skill is reflected by the inclusion of three historiographical surveys in the volume. While ‘Greek papyri and Coptic studies in 1990-1995’ (XXIV) keeps to a conventional format, the survey ‘papyrology and Ptolemaic history’ (V), covering a quarter of a century (1956-1980), offers a synthesized assessment of the major fields of study and the historical issues dealt with during these years. It also offers practical and methodological paths for further research and synthesis. Finally, ‘Archaeological work on Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, 1995-2000’ (I) comments upon archaeological excavations from the vantage point of a papyrologist and an historian, evaluating how archaeological finds, despite the limitations inherent in rescue excavations can cast light on hitherto poorly documented areas and open up new fields of knowledge.

Two papers show how bare data may be brought to affect issues of wide historical scope. The common assumption that military service was the main cause of population mobility in the Hellenistic world is challenged on the basis of Fritz Uebel’s prosopographical lists of Ptolemaic cleruchs down to 145 BCE (VII). The conclusions of this paper call for a revised social history of Ptolemaic Egypt, with further implications for the Hellenistic world in general. Similarly, B. brings together two equally uninspiring sets of ostraca to produce a fascinating case-study about the ‘Army and police in Roman Upper Egypt’ (XVIII), illustrating three crucial historical issues at once: 1) The lack of continuity in administrative and social structures between Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt; 2) The ‘normal’ administrative ruling of Roman Egypt as compared to other provinces of the Roman Empire, refuting the ‘uniqueness’ paradigm; 3) Regional differences within Egypt.

As we might have expected, historical issues come to the fore most clearly in the longer papers. While B.’s protracted interest in economic issues is reflected in comments on patterns of landholding in the Panopolite nome in the fourth century (XIX) — a paper which follows up paper XII of the first *Variorum* volume — and in comments on estate management in a book review (XVII), it is above all illustrated in the important paper from 2005 assessing the former and present state of ‘Evidence and models for the economy of Roman Egypt’ (III). In reaction to

Finley's ill-founded marginalisation of Egypt in his discussion of the ancient economy,<sup>2</sup> B. reinstates Egypt as a full-fledged part of the economic life of the Roman Empire by insisting that its status has now been changed from a "unique" case to a regional case-study with its own internal regional variations. B.'s historiographical survey of both earlier and more recent studies of Egypt's economy carefully identifies the economic models underlying the descriptions. B.'s concern with historical modelling was already apparent in his 1997 'Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt' (VI). This article is a critical response to Édouard Will's programmatic paper which called for studying Hellenistic societies in the light of anthropological models originally designed to analyse the modern colonial experience. Since the primary value of comparative material consists in its capacity for 'informing the imagination' (VI, 238), B. argues, novels describing the colonial experience may be a source of inspiration as worthy as academic studies from the social sciences. The paper 'The people of the Roman Fayum' (XIV) deals with the construction of ethnicity in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. B.'s working method, based on his thorough knowledge of the papyrological evidence and his use of updated theoretical works on ethnicity, is here most rewarding. His carefully argued contention that modern categorization of "Greeks" and "Egyptians" as 'disjunctive [ethnic] categories' is inadequate (XIV, 6) offers one of the most perceptive discussions of ancient constructions of ethnicity published in recent years. Indeed, B.'s methodological insights may well prove relevant for studies of ancient ethnicity elsewhere around the Mediterranean basin, e.g. Greek and Jewish ethnicity in the Graeco-Roman world. The Ptolemaic source material used in this paper is used again in 'Les lettres privées des femmes: un choix de langue en Égypte byzantine' (XXI). Despite this title, the scope of the analysis of this paper ranges from early Ptolemaic times to the last centuries of Byzantine Egypt, as in the book which was then in preparation.<sup>3</sup> This wide range allows B. to check original and arguably pioneering hypotheses about the shift from Greek to Coptic in women's letter-writing from the mid-fourth century onwards. The discussion takes as its starting point a basic contention in sociolinguistic studies of bilingualism, namely, that 'the diverging choice of language by men and by women results from women's realisation that one language is more profitable to them than the other' (XXI, 149-50). Accordingly, women might have consciously chosen the Egyptian language in Ptolemaic times because Egyptian law allowed women much more freedom in economic activity than Greek law. This conclusion, if it is correct, has important ramifications on the issue of ethnicity. The potential attractiveness of Egyptian for women whom modern scholars would like to categorise as "Greek" may have been a major factor in the blurring of the ethnic categories which B. analyses in his study of ethnicity (XIV). B. sees women's shift in preference from Greek to Coptic in letter-writing and the dramatic decline in the submission of petitions to public officials by women as two closely related processes illustrating women's withdrawal from public transactions, starting in the late fourth century on. The issue of women's petitions is discussed in detail in XXIII. Taking argument with Joëlle Beaucamp's conclusions in her *Le Statut de la femme à Byzance*,<sup>4</sup> this paper calls for a refined periodisation of the status of women in Late-Antiquity Egypt.

The analysis of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's four novels on the Javanese experience of Dutch colonialism (VI), as well as some humorous comments (III, 188), hint that B. is also a man of letters. The most literary paper of the volume is 'Alexandria: library of dreams' (IX). The paper begins with an erudite and conclusive refutation of the few scraps of data that modern scholars wishfully hold as reliable evidence on the library of Alexandria, the date of its foundation, its size and the circumstances of its destruction. B. offers the provocative contention that the actual

<sup>2</sup> M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> R.S. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt. 300 B.C.-A.D. 800*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> J. Beaucamp, *Le Statut de la femme à Byzance (4<sup>e</sup>-7<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. II *Les pratiques sociales*, Paris: De Boccard, 1992.

demise of the library must be sought not in a sensational single event, but in a cultural and sociological shift, that is the lack of interest in cultural institutions in the Roman period. It is difficult to decide what is more depressing in B.'s exercise, whether his removing the library as an object of modern dreams or the potential similarities between the cultural and sociological shift he ascribes to Roman times and current processes. Fortunately this unsettling effect is swept away in the last two paragraphs, in which the importance of the Alexandrian library for Western intellectual history is re-affirmed in a new and truly inspiring way.

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Caroline Carlier, *La Cité de Moïse. Le peuple juif chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2008. 520 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-52426-9.

This book investigates Philo's notion of the Jewish people by studying the semantic field of 'the city of Moses' as well as its correlatives, such as *politeia*. While the place of Judaism in Philo's thought as well as his Jewish identity have recently been studied from various perspectives, Carlier (henceforth C.) presents a new and exhaustive study of the political terminology which Philo uses in the context of the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup> She stresses the complexity of the subject, which at first sight may look straightforward, but turns out to have unexpected dimensions of depth that echo a wealth of Hellenistic and Classical connotations.

Apart from the introduction the book has five chapters, which analyse political terminology as found in the sources she studied, according to their chronological order. C. begins with a general introduction to the central terms, progressing from the non-Jewish authors to the Jewish writers of Ptolemaic Alexandria, and then reaches Philo, to whom three central chapters are devoted. C. relies on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, which include, among others, studies by Israeli scholars in Hebrew. She provides a thorough analysis, quoting extensively the original Greek formulations and stressing the historical development of the meaning of words from the Classical to the Hellenistic period.

The book does not make easy reading, however, because it is written with a strong focus on philological aspects, the individual chapters being organised according to key-words, while the author also approaches larger issues. The very opening of the book may serve as an example: 'Le vocabulaire de la cité en grec concerne tous les termes formés sur le substantif πόλις. Πόλις est un nom primaire féminin dont le sens originel signifie la forteresse où se trouvent les sanctuaires au coeur de la ville et en haut de la ville.'

Does the book nevertheless make a substantial contribution to the study of Hellenistic Judaism? In my view, C. offers two conclusions of overall interest. First, she alerts the reader to the wide range of meanings attached to the central term *politeia*, which is often taken to mean 'right of citizenship'. Her analysis shows that in the Hellenistic period the term is primarily used in connection with the Jews as a reference to their way of life and ancestral constitution. This insight shifts the focus of the discussion from the question of the Jews' political status to their inner organization within Gentile society.

Secondly, C. points to a significant development from the early Jewish writers to Philo: while the former frequently refer to Jewish *politai* in the sense of fellow-citizens, Philo revives the Classical notion of the city. Philo's approach becomes visible in the very terminology he uses (various forms of *polis*) as well as in the specific connotations he implies. In this context, C. takes

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<sup>1</sup> See esp. E. Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought. Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta 1996); M.R. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen 2001); M. Hadas-Label, *Philon d'Alexandrie: Un Penseur en Diaspora* (Fayard 2003).