

d'Antonin^o (AD 159/162) in Carthage (p. 203ff.); Felice Costabile on a *defixio* (now *AE* 2019, 438) from Sybaris/Thurii mentioning a *lamia* (a substantial commentary follows) and apparently also the otherwise unattested nomen *Rusticenus* (p. 475ff.). But there are interesting things also in other contributions, e.g. in that of Lorenzo Calvelli on the epigraphical collection once in the Palazzo Grimani in Venice at Santa Mara Formosa (p. 379ff.). To conclude, this is another impressive volume in a series that continues to publish work of great interest to the serious epigraphist.

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BENJAMIN SIPPEL: *Gottesdiener und Kamelzüchter: Das Alltags- und Sozialleben der Sobek-Priester im kaiserzeitlichen Fayum*. Philippika 144. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2020. ISBN 978-3-447-11485-1; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-447-39034-7. XII, 354 S. EUR 85.

This monograph is the published version of Benjamin Sippel's dissertation, which he defended at the University of Erfurt in 2019. The very title ("Clergymen and Camel Breeders: Daily and Social Life of the Sobek Priests in Imperial Fayum") is alluring, and the book gives a good overview of various aspects of life preserved to us from a given time and place in Roman Egypt. It leads us to the world of the people who served as functionaries in the temples dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek in Fayum under Roman rule.

In the introduction, the author informs the reader that methodologically the study owes a debt to microhistory. He admits, however, that microhistory's focus on a single person or family, for example, is lost in the choice of the corpus of sources of the work, which covers a large area and several sites and is chronologically scattered over several centuries. To anyone working with papyrological sources from Egypt, however, the fact that the source material is both scattered and filled with gaps is no surprise. Thus, the idea of putting together all possible sources, be they archaeological, written in Greek or in Demotic, is always welcome and a task in its own right.

The author has chosen to study the sources thematically rather than chronologically or topographically. Thus, the book is divided into four main chapters, 1. Endogamy and naming practices, 2. Social interactions between the functionaries of the temples and their customers (titled: Spezialisten und Klienten), 3. Secular earning possibilities and alternative career paths, and 4. Conflict situations. The book ends with conclusions that participate in discussions on the overall status of people defined as 'priests' (or better, temple functionaries) and the (somewhat ostensible) decline of the crocodile cults in Fayum. Finally, there are appendices illustrating site-specific names

(Appendix 1), and tables of horoscope notes from Narmouthis, scribes active in the *grapheia* of the Arsinoites, temple functionaries involved in the donkey trade, and temple functionaries and their families involved in the credit business (App. 2–5).

Chapter 1 of the study confirms that names run in families, and that – especially in Soknopaiou Nesos and in Tebtunis – there were also site- or even temple-specific names that are almost exclusively Egyptian. One of the few exceptions, the name Kronion in Tebtunis, provides an interesting example of an *interpretatio graeca* of the god Sobek-Geb as Kronos. Chapters 2–3, dedicated to social interactions and secular earning possibilities, examine the various responsibilities undertaken by the members of temple personnel. They took care of festivities and official sacrifices, drew horoscopes, and answered people’s various concerns with the help of oracle lots. Besides the tasks within the temple realm, the same people lived their lives and made their living in the secular sphere of village life. Sometimes they acted as scribes or local guards, but mostly they worked in the fields or in small workshops or bred animals. An interesting case is the breeding of camels in Soknopaiou Nesos, which was situated beside a caravan route to Alexandria.

Chapter 4 takes the reader to conflict situations revealed to us by complaints addressed to various authorities. The author notes that these are certainly biased as only one side of the parties involved has survived to us. Furthermore, the petitions have most likely been drawn along certain predefined lines, which is illustrated by 14 drafts concerning one petition drawn by Aurelius Ammon, for example (P. Ammon II 32–46, cf. p. 206 and note 4). This chapter also includes a delightful insight into the archive of Phratres, which is preserved in Demotic ostraca from Narmouthis. Phratres’ list of the deficiencies of both his colleagues and the authorities in office is extensive (cf. pp. 243–245). The archive also serves as an example of how close readings of the extant documents bring new insights to our understanding of a certain time and place in the past.

It is in the nature of human curiosity that one would always want more. I was somewhat puzzled with the cross-references within the book, and thus I could not help but wonder whether the material from Soknopaiou Nesos alone, for example, would have deserved a monograph of its own. The impressive bibliography, however, leads the way to deepening the picture of single sites and single archives. As a whole, the monograph is an interesting and important contribution to the social history of Roman Egypt.

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