

Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, *Late Egypt and her Neighbours. Foreign Population in Egypt in the First millennium BC*, The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplements, Warsaw, 2009.

ISBN: 978-83-925919-1-7

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Throughout the history of ancient Egypt multitudes of peoples from foreign regions inhabited the Nile Valley. In utilising a wide scope of source material, this volume discusses the significance of non-Egyptians to the social and political institutions of Egypt during the first millennium BCE, specifically the Late and Ptolemaic Periods. It comprises an examination of immigration and settlement and includes a detailed presentation of the evidence used to determine a non-Egyptian presence.

Sadly, the author of this book, Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, passed away shortly before its final publication. The volume editors, Tomasz Derda and Jakub Urbanik, explain that certain tasks such as preparation of the indices and the final proof-reading had to be completed by colleagues of Winnicki in the Department of Papyrology of the University of Warsaw, namely Tomasz Derda, Tomasz Markiewicz and Tomasz Płóciennik. The reviewed volume was translated into English by Dorota Dzierzbicka.

This text is blessed with many virtues but arguably its greatest strength is the meticulous use of references and footnotes throughout. As would be expected, the volume is rigidly organised according to the chronology and geographic origins of the specific group under discussion. Part One, which concerns activity in the Second Millennium BCE, comprises an examination of Egypt and its foreign neighbours during the New Kingdom (chapter one) and foreigners in Egypt and their later whereabouts (chapter two). The vast majority of research is contained within Part Two, which is concerned with Egypt during the First Millennium BCE. Chapter three outlines the major neighbours of Egypt from this period while Chapters four to seven document evidence pertaining to groups from the north, east, west and south, respectively.

As this is a volume dedicated to documenting evidence of non-Egyptians within Egypt, the author uses a variety of source material including, but not limited to, royal stelae, temple reliefs and tomb paintings. The onomastic data that has been gathered from materials including papyri, stelae and ostraca proves to be particularly informative because the names of individuals are often regionally and culturally distinctive. Indeed, despite the wide variety of source material and the necessity of dividing chapters into sections based on the foreign group in question, the author is able to formulate an immensely readable historical narrative.

The stated aim of this book is to ‘determine the role, place and significance of foreigners in social and political structures of late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt’ (p. 4). It is necessarily dense in documentation but it would, I believe, where possible and appropriate, benefit from greater attention given to the historicity of the sources utilised. For example the presentation of the Battle of Kadesh (p. 22) lacks an analysis of the non-Egyptian sources which provide an alternate description of the battle. Additionally, the discussion on the Tjeku, a semi-nomadic group from the Eastern Desert (pp. 69-72), utilises Egyptian written sources including stelae, statue inscriptions and papyri, as well as Pseudo-Manetho and the Old Testament’s 2 Chronicles 12, 3-4, as part of a discussion of Tjeku during the Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE). Unfortunately no mention is made of the historicity of the texts, or the lack of contemporaneous sources to validate their content. Such beneficial analysis would aid the readers’ comprehension of the historical value of the relevant primary and secondary source material.

The scope, detail and analysis displayed in this volume demonstrate knowledge Jan Krzysztof Winnicki gathered during his 20 years of research regarding foreign peoples in Egypt. There is evidence, however, that recent historical and archaeological analysis has not been included. For example, the authors’ proclamation that ‘Egyptians had no interest in the territory stretching to the west of the Nile Valley. The products they could obtain there were unimportant, the region did not supply raw materials or give access to trade routes and the population was scattered, nomadic or semi-nomadic’ (p. 461) is incorrect. The Western Desert, including the oases located therein, was of great strategic importance and Egypt was

intent on maintaining a presence from as early as the Old Kingdom. The region afforded access to Abu Ballas and Gilf Kebir, located to the southwest of Dakhleh Oasis, and Bir Kiseiba south of Kharga Oasis. Access to both regions facilitated contact with territory in modern Libya and the Sudan, respectively. The oases also enabled habitation within the harsh desert environment and provided a base from which to protect the western flank of the Nile Valley from roaming semi-nomadic tribes.

The scope and detail of this book means that it has the ability to be of benefit to a wide variety of interests. Those interested in examining a specific foreign group would find the text informative, not only for the documentation it provides but also the references which point to further research. Its readability, for which praise must be paid to the author and translator, makes it accessible to the scholar and student alike.

It must be noted that the lack of graphic information was disappointing. A single map is provided at the beginning and it is without title, date or historical context. The presence of Hellenised names, however, enables it to be assigned to the Ptolemaic Period. There is little doubt that the text would be enhanced by a greater number of images including maps, drawings and photographs. Indeed, in deciding to include evidence for Second Millennium activity, it is difficult to understand the lack of images to complement these periods, particularly considering the cultural and political changes that occurred between the New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Period.

It is extremely unfortunate that the author passed away prior to the publication of this book for it is a fitting and worthy conclusion to a career of scholarly research. The text is an exemplary source for information regarding the cosmopolitan non-Egyptian population within late Egypt and the high quality of the references, bibliography and extensive indices provide the reader with the ability to research further any topic of particular interest.