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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Prosopographia Ptolemaica, IX: Addenda et Corrigenda au Volume III* (1956), *Studia Hellenistica* 25 by W. Clarysse, W. Peremans and E. Van 't Dack

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## BOOK REVIEWS

W. Clarysse, *Prosopographia Ptolemaica*, par W. Peremans et E. Van 't Dack, IX: *Addenda et Corrigenda au Volume III (1956)*, *Studia Hellenistica* 25, Leuven, 1981.

The demurely titled Volume IX of *Pros.Ptol.* presents the accumulated and, more precisely, sought-out additions and corrections to Volume III, on the clergy, notariate, and courts, but mainly the clergy. It is almost as large as its 1956 predecessor, 285 pages vs. 311. By comparison, Volume VIII (1975) contained 110 pages supplementing the 164 of Volume I (1950: administration), plus 129 supplementing the 277 of Volume II (1952: army and police). The mass of new material is obviously remarkable by any standard. Its nature is equally striking.

The volume is mainly composed of two parts: the eponymous priests and priestesses of the royal cult--the Greek and Macedonian aristocracy--and the priests of the Egyptian native cults, which occupy most of the volume. The names in this section of over 200 pages are almost all Egyptian: a world peopled by characters named Psenminis, Marres, Nechthmonthes, and the like. Hellenists suspicious that Ptolemaic Egypt is mostly Egyptian and not of much concern to them may find their worst fears confirmed; in any case, we are certainly in a milieu with little that is Hellenic.

What is more crucial, however, is not merely that the personages of this list are Egyptian, but that their Egyptian milieu is one--perhaps the only--part of society not significantly infiltrated by the Greeks, nor, for the most part, known to us from Greek documentation. It is this last fact which gives this volume its distinctive character: the documents cited are mostly Egyptian, Demotic or hieroglyphic. Indeed, one of the major contributions of the work is, as the preface points out (p.IX), the systematic attempt to distinguish the Ptolemaic hieroglyphic texts from those of the rest of the late period. In this sense, this volume unites Egyptology and papyrology to an extraordinary degree. This is not merely a matter of collection of new evidence, but one of extensive connection and reinterpretation of diverse texts; the pages are

dotted with new readings by the author, as well as observations by De Meulenaere.

Those capable of judging how well the Egyptological work has been done are few, and I am not among them. In any case, only long use reveals the true qualities of a work such as this. The extraordinary learning which is so unobtrusively displayed, however, is unmistakable, and Willy Clarysse deserves congratulations and thanks for completing a task of the magnitude and complexity of this one with such evident success.

What will the uses of this repository be, apart from the self-reinforcing but practical one of helping to identify people appearing in yet further documents? Obviously, we, like the editors and author, want it to bring this dispersed and difficult material into shape for use by historians, who might heretofore be pardoned for avoiding such intractable stuff. What is the Hellenistic historian to do with this crowd of unfamiliar faces, now neatly arranged by post and, generally, by date? It would be naive to pretend to know what directions scholarly work will take, but I shall close with some questions (in no particular order) that seem to me worth investigating and perhaps now accessible by means of *Pros.Ptol.* III and IX: what proportion of priests were literate? To what extent did members of the priestly class marry those outside it, and when they did, whom did they marry? How rich (or poor) were various groups of priests? How many of the priests were bilingual? Did priests regularly own productive land, apart from their house property? Are significant changes in any of these characteristics to be seen over the three centuries of Ptolemaic rule? Such are some of the interesting questions we may now be able to approach, thanks to this splendid work.

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M. Chambers, W.E.H. Cockle, J.C. Shelton, E.G. Turner, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Volume XLVIII. Graeco-Roman Memoirs, no. 67, published for the British Academy by the Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1981: pp. xviii+166, 8 plates.

Beginning in 1970 with Volume XXXVI, the majority of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* volumes have presented wide assortments of texts