

BOOK REVIEW

Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt. By JOHN BAUSCHATZ. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 415. Hardcover, \$99.00. ISBN 978-1107037-137.

Since his doctoral thesis at Duke University in 2005, John Bauschatz has published several papers on aspects of the police system in Ptolemaic Egypt. The (temporarily) culminating point is the monograph under scrutiny. Study of this subject is largely facilitated by the presence of numerous texts on papyrus, notably the many requests, which offer us a view in everyday life in Ptolemaic Egypt, emphatically including police actions, brutality, and negligence. As such, though, law enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt does not seem to differ terribly much from that in our days.

Bauschatz is, as might be expected, very familiar with the varied documentary evidence in Greek from the Ptolemaic period. In connection with pre-Ptolemaic Egypt, however, I think he misses some points (at least in this book), which becomes apparent in his discussion on the place of police in Egypt in his first chapter. By making use of *P. Rylands 9*, e.g., he might have found it easier to draw parallels between police practice in pre-Ptolemaic and Ptolemaic Egypt as discussed by Bauschatz in following chapters, like chapter 4 on petitions and chapter 5 on investigation. For the period of the New Kingdom Bauschatz regrettably mainly focuses on the well-documented grave robberies in the times of the Ramessides of the twentieth dynasty, excellently described by T.E. Peet in his 1930 book, but also overlooks some literature that might have nuanced his views.¹ I am afraid that Bauschatz has found himself here caught between a wish

¹ First of all, documentary evidence on the period between the end of the New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Period is lacking in his review. I miss, e.g., references to *P. Rylands 9*, a text in Demotic (drafted) by one Petiese or Pediese, who lived (with his family) at the end of the Saite Period and down into the Persian Period (see: *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, G. Vittmann (ed.), Demotische Textdatenbank, Akademie für Sprache und Literatur Mainz => administrative und dokumentarische Texte => Petitionen => *P. Rylands 9*). As regards New Kingdom texts, Bauschatz omits the crimes and procedures expounded in the outstanding *Vergehen und Strafe. Zur Sanktionierung abweichenden Verhaltens im alten Ägypten* by R. Müller-Wollermann (= Probleme der Ägyptologie,

to paint a comprehensive picture of *Egyptian* policing and the need to detail the tasks and duties as they are recorded for the *Ptolemaic* police.

The following chapters are much more satisfying in discussing the police officers themselves, most prominently the *phylakitēs* and the *archiphylakitēs* (chapter 2); the differences between civil and military police as well as the officials, from *epistatēs* through *stratēgos* to *dioiketēs* and other fiscal officials, who had the authority to mobilize police officers to perform several duties (chapter 3); the machinery of petitions and responses (chapter 4), showing that at least theoretically all Egyptians had equal access to justice; the process of arrest, investigation, detention, and resolution (chapter 5); and the strong arm of the law (chapter 6), describing how police officers guarded state interests by policing the river (not rivers, I think: cf. 289) and Egypt's borders.

As far as the evidence from the sources in Greek go, I think Bauschatz has produced a useful review of the evidence. There is, however, more evidence available, viz. evidence written in Demotic. I am, regrettably, unable to check that evidence because I do not read Demotic. However, I think that Bauschatz's presentation of the data obscures fact and leaves the reader uncertain. As an example I might point at Bauschatz's assertion "there is some important evidence for the Ptolemaic police system in Demotic as well" (41) and the note this phrase refers to, stating "Perhaps no more than 30 Demotic papyri from the Ptolemaic period are of great importance for their law enforcement content". Nevertheless, I only could retrieve 10 of these 30 texts in Bauschatz's book, moreover not completely transliterated and translated, as the author frequently does with his sources in Greek (cf. index on translated texts, 397–398).

Though unable to read Demotic, I am sufficiently familiar with the situation in Ptolemaic Egypt to know that the Greek writing and the Demotic writing population in Egypt represent different layers of the public, sc. the Greek speaking (and writing) upper- and upper-middle class and the great mass of Egyptians, unable to express themselves in Greek unless aided by a middleman. One might, perhaps, compare it with the situation in Belgium, up to at least the end of the nineteenth century, when French was the customary language for official affairs, while a considerable part of the Flemish-speaking population felt itself excluded (and probably were largely excluded). Therefore, by omitting documents in Demotic (of which there are large quantities awaiting publication, due to the

vol. 21. Leiden: Brill, 2004). Even the elementary lemma 'Polizei' by G. Andreu in the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (vol. 4, Wiesbaden 1982, 1068-71) is not referred to.

absence of a sufficient number of scholars able to read these texts) the author in fact only paints a Hellenocentric picture of law and enforcement in Egypt rather than a balanced view. Regrettably Bauschatz's Hellenocentrism also shows in derogatory remarks regarding Egyptians as being part of "a traditionally litigious and bureaucratic civilization" (174), materially poor and poorly educated (176), to name a few. In this vein, his concluding comments are surprising. Regarding a comparison between the police forces in pharaonic Egypt and Ptolemaic Egypt (332–333), he claims that the Ptolemaic system had no direct antecedents in pharaonic Egypt. As I indicated above, Bauschatz's knowledge of the judiciary system in pharaonic times (and texts in Demotic) seems fragmentary and, I think, therefore insufficient to warrant such statements: it is, therefore, overly speculative.

Does all this mean that Bauschatz has written a redundant book? The answer to that question must be a firm "no", as long as his audience bears in mind what to look for. Bauschatz provides us with a sound and detailed review of Greek documentary evidence of law and law enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt, a review enhanced by a very useful glossary of (legal) terms used, an extensive bibliography and 4 indexes: an index of Greek and Demotic sources, an index of translated documents, a select index of Greek terms, and a general index. His audience, graduate students and scholars, should, though, be aware of the fact that Bauschatz has not yet offered the *complete* account of the complex world of law and law enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt. Only the inclusion of all documentary evidence, both Greek and Demotic, can attempt to provide us with such an account.

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