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Trends and Questions in New Historical Accounts of Policing
Volume 19, Number 1, June 1990

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017586ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1017586ar

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Publisher(s)
Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN
0703-0428 (print)
1918-5138 (digital)

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Cite this review

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The Greek papyri from Egypt provide an incomparable source of information about everyday life in the Greco-Roman period. Contracts, private letters and tax records can shed light on the past in a way that the work of the historical writers cannot. Regrettably few classical scholars have seen the rich possibilities of this kind of documentation as a window on the ancient world. Dorothy J. Thompson is one of a small number of ancient historians who has chosen Greco-Roman Egypt as an area of concentration, and her work stands as a model of the intelligent use of primary source material to construct historical analysis. Her first book, *Kerkeosiris: An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period* (Cambridge 1971), is unquestionably the best historical study of an Egyptian village that has been produced by a classical scholar. Her new book contains all of this. The eight chapters of this book cover a number of topics in the social and economic history of Memphis. The importance of Memphis as a religious center of the country is the subject of a number of chapters (esp. 4: Ptolemaic Egypt, 5: The Undertakers, 6: Apis and Other Cults, 7: Between Two Worlds: The Sarapeion). The role of Memphis in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds is the focus of the first (The Second City) and last (Roman Memphis: An Epilogue) chapters. The relationship between the indigenous inhabitants and the ruling minority, an inescapable issue in Egyptian history, is considered particularly in two chapters (3: Ethnic Minorities, 7: Between Two Worlds: The Sarapeion). Perhaps nowhere is the author's ingenuity at gleaning historical information from assorted scraps of evidence more amply demonstrated than in the two chapters which deal with economic life; in the one (2: Economic Life in Memphis), documentation from the Pharaonic period to present-day Egypt is pulled together to assist in developing a picture of economic activity in the country during the Ptolemaic period. A more focused approach is taken in a chapter on an interesting archive of papyri belonging to a family of undertakers (Ch. 5: The Undertakers).

*Memphis Under the Ptolemies* is an outstanding example of classical scholarship at its best, distinguished by a synthesis of documentary expertise and historical imagination. Although it is written with full attention to papyrological detail so as to be indispensable to the specialist, it does not presuppose a knowledge of Greek, and thus would be equally informative to the nonspecialist.

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There is a tradition within Geography and its systematic branches, Cultural and Historical Geography, which treats its subject matter in terms of the "evolution of landscape" or "the changing landscape." The tradition is holistic, seeing landscape as the expression of Man's values, or "ways and works," to use the Philbrickian terminology. Most working in this genre present their insights in simple descriptive prose, in the literature of the area and period and in the cartographic and photographic heritage.

The photograph is rarely central, functioning often as a sort of theatrical backdrop against which the action is played. That is what