

Editorial

It is my pleasure to introduce the 18th edition of the Rosetta Journal. This issue covers a very broad range of subject matters. The articles themselves cover festivals in Hellenised Egypt, the “lament beside a door” poetry of Tibullus, and the blending of the historical and the fantastical in miracles under Marcus Aurelius, while the reviews give perceptive considerations of conference proceedings and monographs, showing the positives and negatives in the author’s analysis and the necessities in composition that make a good publication.

Abdelwahed looks at two festivals of the god Serapis: the Khoiak festival, mainly celebrated by the non-Hellenised Egyptians, and the Serapia of the Pharmuthi-Pachon, which was ‘mainly celebrated by a small Graeco-Egyptian bourgeoisie and wealthy land owners’ (12). The article combines Greek, Latin, and Hieroglyphic text sources with discussion of archaeological finds, demonstrating the strong presence of Egyptian and Hellenistic cults. Showing that the Khoiak festival was a continuation of a Pharaonic and Ptolemaic festival of Osiris – which Abdelwahed demonstrates through imagery from reliefs – helps us to understand the Hellenisation of Egypt.

Aitken-Burt’s article deals with the blending of fact and fiction in contrasting the historical accounts of the saviour of Roman legionaries under Marcus Aurelius on the German frontier with the more miraculous depictions that followed. Aside from the incident itself, this article demonstrates how we must not merely gloss over “miracles”. Aitken-Burt raises awareness of the way history was recorded and the importance of images ‘not only to perpetuate the memory and achievements of an emperor but also to publicize events that occurred on the frontiers back to the people in Rome’ (33). This process – often seen through a Christian lens, conflated with other miracles, and attempting to reconcile pagan beliefs – can be unravelled, and Aitken-Burt deftly shows, through a wide range of literary sources, how the true event can be discerned.

Pappas deals with more in-depth linguistic analysis, considering the *paraclausithyron* theme in Tibullus 1.2. The thematic similarities and differences show ‘a poem characterised by variety’ (56), and the article demonstrates through a close reading of the text in question – and a detailed knowledge of both Tibullus’ other work and the wider genre – that ‘the poet harmoniously combines in one poem divergent

genres to produce two *paraclausithyra* in a symposiac context' (59). Pappas' work, therefore, not only aids our understanding of Tibullus 1.2, but also provides useful considerations for the wider elegiac corpus.

The book reviews that we are fortunate enough to publish split roughly into monographs and conference proceedings. Considering the collections from conferences to begin with, these can prove invaluable to all academics, giving the speaker the chance to develop the arguments – potentially responding to comments and questions after their paper – as well giving the paper access to the wider academic community that may not have been in attendance.

Bamford discusses the proceedings and additional studies from the conference on *European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, giving a useful review that also highlights some of the downfalls of the collection – downfalls that many conference proceedings are prone to. The omission of five conference papers is regrettable, while the difficulty in collating the papers, with two departing significantly from the theme, has led to a lack of conversation where different authors 'talk past each other so disagreements remain unacknowledged' (67). Bamford not only assesses the collection itself, but raises some important things for any convenors to keep in mind as they publish proceedings.

Young looks at the proceedings from the 52nd *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*. The review considers a sample of papers with the intent of providing 'insight into the diversity and variety of this volume' (101). The review highlights some misgivings, such as the alphabetical organisation leads to a confused and disordered collection, which requires a certain amount of prior knowledge – though with a field like Assyriology that can be expected. Nevertheless, the edition certainly yields some useful and enlightening discourse.

Samuels considers the 12th *International Conference for Nubian Studies*. This review not only provides a very detailed overview of what is in the edition, listing all the papers in each section, but also gives insightful comments on some papers. The review raises some methodological problems by authors – as well as the odd factual error – and highlights the need for more research. Samuels not only suggests "issues in the Nubian studies reflected in the collection" (98), but also provides references to critical works. In demonstrating the positives and negatives of the

conference papers as a whole and providing footnotes with further publications to either support or contradict the arguments put forward, Samuels shows how a book review need not be merely descriptive of the edition but actually contribute to its subject matter and wider academic discourse.

The other reviews consider monographs, critiquing works with greater freedom for analysis, though also held to a higher standard. Booth considers *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, which is an offshoot of an online database of women's letters of varying levels of literacy. The chapter-by-chapter critique proves useful in showing the benefits of the edition, though the review points out how a lack of thematic sub-headings makes particular inquiry difficult. Considerations like this are vital to publishers and compilers of editions, and the utility of effective indexing can be overlooked. Nevertheless, the edition provides clear translations, useful notes, and an analysis of handwriting – and therefore literacy level of author – giving a vital publication with aspects often overlooked.

Booth also reviews *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology 1*. Despite being a good introduction for students as it shows the development of the Egyptian language, the review notes that a lack of illustrations requires further editions, preventing this from being a standalone work, yet it leaves the author with curiosity for the next in the series – a successful outcome from a publication standpoint, though perhaps frustrating in isolation.

Kostantopoulos details *Cosmogony, Theogony, and Anthropogony in Sumerian Texts*, developed from the doctoral dissertation of the author. The review gives a detailed analysis of the meticulously structured work, which is an exhaustive and valuable collection. As the first monograph in their academic career it 'shows analysis of the author and serves as a point for future work on the topic' (83). Kostantopoulos raises some areas that require greater research – though the potential for future work seems evident in the author – as well as stating that a lack of abbreviations hinders the edition from being fully accessible to those outside of the field.

Lemos discusses *What did the Poor Take with Them?*, an adaptation of the author's MPhil thesis that looks at Ancient Egyptian grave assemblages in the 18th and 19th Dynasties. It proves a promising work and Lemos treats the review with great

respect, recognising the potential so early in an academic's career, highlighting several fruitful avenues that are still to be explored.

Finally, Mushett Cole reviews *The Double Kingdom under Taharqo*. Straightaway the reviewer demonstrates the effectiveness of the book and how much the author has achieved his aims, before a more detailed chapter-by-chapter description and analysis. There are certainly shortcomings in the work: the lack of translations of French, German, Spanish, and Italian quotations create a perhaps unnecessary hurdle for scholars to overcome; more seriously, the conclusion is too short to develop the author's own structure for Kushite rule. Despite these, the edition adds 'significantly to the debate over how the Kushites maintained their rule' (92), while giving plenty of scope for elaboration in future publications.

I would like to extend my thanks to the editorial team, in particular Charlotte Booth, who not only continued her exceptional work as Articles Editor but also provided two reviews for the current issue. As always, Frank Simons has contributed great work in his role as Book Reviews Editor, while we are fortunate to welcome Amy Porter onto the committee as IT Officer. My thanks also to Ruth Léger for her continued work as Copy Editor.

Guy Kirkham-Smith

General Editor