

R. provides an important update to arguments about the Indo-European origins of chariot technology or larger horses (pp. 98–9), which will be of use to everyone concerned with the Indo-European question. Acknowledging that some words in Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to horses and chariots have an Indo-European etymology, R. argues that ‘none of the developments that occur in equids and types of vehicles and harness are so extreme or unfamiliar as to necessarily merit outside influence’ (p. 99).

Chapter 6 moves from chariots to equids as mounts. Riding equids is especially associated with messengers and dignitaries (p. 108). There is ample evidence for mounted messengers in the Late Bronze Age from the Amarna Letters and other diplomatic correspondence. R. speaks of a ‘generally hostile attitude to messengers’ (p. 113) in the Ancient Near East, but I find this description to be inconsistent with the evidence. In the Amarna Letters, kings are often asking for their messengers to be returned and not to be detained, but that does not mean that continuing to host a messenger, always a high-ranking person in his kingdom of origin, is an act of hostility towards the messenger.

Some of the most important material in the book is presented in Chapter 8. We see equids regarded as persons and as the honoured dead in the Ancient Near East, with special treatment and placement in tombs similar to the treatment of humans. Many equids are found in human burials, and some equids are buried in tombs without human remains present. Some equid burials seem to be part of foundation deposits, located under city walls or the thresholds of houses – a phenomenon limited to the Levant and western Syria.

There are donkey sacrifices in the Ancient Near East, including the specialised sacrifice of equids associated with treaties. This is a crux in ancient studies, since both ancient Greek and Semitic languages have treaty-making formulas that involve a verb for cutting, for example τέμνειν in ancient Greek or כרת in Hebrew. R. suggests that the practice of sacrificing donkeys in association with treaty-making may be an Amorite practice, since it first appears in Mari.

Chapter 9 and the conclusion return to the theme that unites the book – the agency of equids and their personhood. R. shows the high status of equids in the Ancient Near East by adducing evidence, for example that an Ugaritic god wanted to marry a mare, that equids are cared for in old age and that King Shulgi considered a hemione a worthy rival in the hunt (p. 179). Bringing us back to Shulgi produces a pleasing ring-composition to the book. This book is the only one of its kind, and it updates our understanding of many important issues in Ancient Near Eastern Studies and in Classics.

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

KEVIN SOLEZ
kevin_solez@hotmail.com

GYMNASIA IN EGYPT

PAGANINI (M.C.D.) *Gymnasia and Greek Identity in Ptolemaic Egypt*. Pp. xviii + 317, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$115. ISBN: 978-0-19-284580-1.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23000069

Research on social and cultural history, and, in particular, on questions of cultural and ethnic identity, has long been a topic of interest in ancient studies. In this context the

gymnasium as a stronghold of Greek identity has received attention for some time. For example, there have been conferences and subsequently published conference volumes on gymnasia in Hellenistic and Roman times (D. Kah and P. Scholz [edd.], *Das hellenistische Gymnasion* [2007]; P. Scholz and D. Wiegandt [edd.], *Das kaiserzeitliche Gymnasion* [2015]). However, only individual aspects, in particular the social implications associated with the gymnasium, have been examined, focusing on the gymnasium as a *polis* institution, as is the case in P. Fröhlich and C. Schuler's 'GymnAsia' project on agonistic and gymnasial culture in the Greek cities of Asia Minor (<https://gymnasia.huma-num.fr/project.html>). It should be noted, however, that until the second century this institution also existed, at least in Macedonia, outside the context of the *polis*: as shown in the Gymnasiarchic Law of Beroia, published in the 1990s (I. Beroia 1) and in the Ephebearchic Law of Amphipolis published in 2015 (SEG 65.420).

However, a change of perspective that focuses more on rural gymnasia outside a civic urban context has so far been largely limited to Macedonia. This is remarkable insofar as these seem to have been the norm in Ptolemaic Egypt. Yet Egypt, as is often the case, has received only scant attention. P. wishes to address this shortcoming with the present monograph: he presents a comprehensive analysis of the documentation on gymnasia and gymnasial life in Ptolemaic Egypt (pp. 2–3), on which little has been written to date apart from W. Habermann's 'Gymnasien im ptolemäischen Ägypten' (in: D. Kah and P. Scholz [edd.], *Das hellenistische Gymnasion* [2007], pp. 335–48).

The book comprises nine chapters: the introduction places the subject in the larger context of the Hellenistic world. Chapter 2 is devoted to the institution itself. Chapter 3 focuses on the gymnasium or gymnasia of Alexandria. Chapter 4 deals with the legal status of the various gymnasia in Egypt, the outlying possessions and the Seleucid Empire. Chapter 5 analyses the various officials. This is followed by two chapters on different groups of people: Chapter 6 deals with the members of the gymnasium and the basis for membership, while Chapter 7 discusses how non-Greeks such as Egyptians could also be admitted, as how one behaved was ultimately more important than one's origins. What exactly constituted this 'Greek way of life' is elaborated on in Chapter 8. The last chapter on Greek identity can be seen as a kind of synthesis. This is followed by three appendices, a 'Chronology of Ptolemaic Sovereigns (Simplified)' and a glossary. The book concludes with a bibliography and indices.

The approach and many of the results are not new in detail; the value of the study lies mainly in its synthetic approach. Here, too, a double caveat is called for: it is often unclear to readers who are not familiar with the Hellenistic gymnasium and Egypt what the results are based on in detail. This is attributable, among other things, to the structure of the book, but also to the fact that P. cites literature only sparsely and often without using page numbers. He does not engage with other research positions in sufficient detail. In addition, the abundant Egyptian evidence often proves to be selective, and larger coherent sources are lacking. P. attempts to counter this problem by consulting sources from Ptolemaic possessions outside Egypt and the other Hellenistic empires. He notes that he uses this approach to destroy 'a constructed and unnatural idea of purported uniformity' (p. 3). As a result, large parts of the study, such as the gymnasia outside Egypt (pp. 15–29), remain purely descriptive, while other chapters, such as that on the officials, would probably have been very brief if he had not referred to evidence outside Egypt.

In contrast, the derivation of the so-called rural gymnasia, that is, gymnasia outside the context of the *polis*, which represented 'the most common and the characteristic feature of the gymnasial environment' in the Egyptian Chora until early Roman times (p. 105) and which will be discussed in more detail here for this reason (pp. 114–22), is especially

innovative. Rural gymnasia are found all over Egypt (see Map 1 and 2). They are most evident in the Fayum and in areas with a strong military presence whereas in Upper Egypt they tend to be found primarily in the more Greek-populated *metropoleis* of the nomes (p. 49). Unlike urban gymnasia, village gymnasia, which were akin to private associations, constituted an ‘independent body’ with a general assembly and decrees; they were simultaneously private and public, although their public importance increased over time: they served as meeting places for the elite (both in the case of clubs and associations and for the Greek community as a whole), but they were also points of contact for central and local government authorities during their visits to the site; they functioned as central places for the ruler cult and hosted various festivals and agones etc. (pp. 114–19). Nevertheless, throughout the Ptolemaic period they remained purely private institutions without any direct state influence or control; their ‘constitutional nature’ as ‘private leisure centres’ always remained the same (p. 121).

This convincing thesis is supported by other observations made by P., which, however, deserved a more detailed treatment in the context of the present study: of particular importance, for example, is the close connection between the military and gymnasia or their foundation, which P. repeatedly mentions in connection with village gymnasia within Egypt and also with gymnasia outside Egypt (see e.g. pp. 56–70 on the foundation, pp. 70–1 on the connection to the military as well as P.’s remarks on the gymnasia in Cyrene [p. 130], Thera [p. 131] and Cyprus [p. 135]). Thus, the above-mentioned geographical distribution of the gymnasia is indeed probably not only due to the papyri and inscription finds, but is also causally related to the military milieu. Moreover, P. claims that the later introduction of the rural gymnasiarch, who despite his title was not a public magistrate, and the ‘gymnasial governing body’ (pp. 122, 145 n. 8) was influenced by the *polis* gymnasia of Egypt, because the existence of gymnasiarchs appointed by the *polis* as ‘civic magistrates’ can be proved only towards the end of the third or beginning of the second century BCE (p. 120) in Macedonia. Finally, the financing of the institution by contributions from members (pp. 127–9), which is also attested for the gymnasium at Beroia in Macedonia, can be used as support for P.’s thesis (even if control by the magistrates of the *polis* was in place there).

At first glance, the village gymnasia may seem like mere ‘leisure centres’ that did not have much influence on Ptolemaic society and politics, but they were an important instrument for the integration of different ethnic groups under the umbrella of the Ptolemaic administration and military, and thus contributed in no small measure to the stability and continued existence of the empire: although the members of the gymnasium were nominally all *Hellenes*, they were not ethnic *Hellenes*. Just as the Ptolemies did not apply purely ethnic ‘policies’ but ‘rather cultural and linguistic attitudes’, the gymnasium offered ‘room for inclusion for those from Egyptian and other backgrounds’. The group of *Hellenes* was open to anyone who belonged to the Ptolemaic administration, police or army (pp. 227–8). It was not closed, but open in principle to all such men, and was dynamic and thus open to integration. The gymnasial community therefore represented a coherent, but nonetheless ethnically, socially and certainly to some extent culturally heterogeneous group, which was nevertheless ideally suited to generate a sense of community without the individual having to give up their individual identity for this purpose. In this respect, hardly any scholar of antiquity who deals with Ptolemaic Egypt will be able to ignore gymnasia and gymnasial life.

Ministerium für Bildung und Kultur Saarland SANDRA SCHEUBLE-REITER
scheublereiter@gmail.com