

# Kupiszewski, Henryk

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"Kiedy piaski egipskie przemówiły po grecku = When the Egyptian Sands Spoke Greek)", Anna Świderek, Warszawa 1959 : [recenzja]

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Anna Świderek, *Kiedy piaski egipskie przemówiły po grecku* (= *When the Egyptian Sands Spoke Greek*) Warszawa, Wiedza Powszechna (1959) pp. 236.

The popular papyrological literature in Poland takes pride in its distinguished tradition. It was initiated by Smolka and Manteuffel with a booklet *Papyrologia*, edited in 1933, and since then has found its continuation in a series of articles published by the latter author. Especially his pamphlet *Ze świata papirusów* (*The World of the Papyry* 1950) has enjoyed wide popularity. The first of the mentioned works has been used as a manual by the students of ancient culture (the philologists, historians, and archeologists), the second destined for the broadest circles of readers, modestly does not claim to offer a systematized outline of papyrology. Through a selection of translated papyrological texts it has for its aim to present some interesting scenes from the life of the ancients.

The work of Miss Świderek realizes in part the purposes of her precursors. In the first chapters she gives an outline of the history of papyrology. The interesting story of discoveries and excavations is interlaced with the biographies of the great scholars, the fathers of papyrology: Petrie, Grenfell, Hunt, Wilcken and others. The author leads the reader to the dried up by the sun ruins of the villages and towns of the Upper Egypt which once were full of life, to the tombs and rubbish-heaps, to all those places where papyrus fragments were found. She tells him about the production of writing-materials in the antiquity and initiates him in the mysteries of the scientific workshop of the papyrologist-editor. This part of the work as well as chapter V „The Meeting Place of the two Worlds on the Nile” which gives an outline of the political, social and economic history of Greco-Roman Egypt, is for a reader who is a stranger to the problems of papyrology. This part of the book can be used by him as an excellent introduction. It is written vividly, not infrequently presenting this venerable subject in light anecdotic form.

In the second part of her work the author gives voice to the ancients and permits them to speak to us in their own medium. She translates into Polish the original texts and skillfully intersperses with her own highly informative commentary. Before our eyes pass the teams of slaves, the peasants who by the sweat of their brows till the soil which they can never call their own, the poor

hirelings, the shepherds, the small craftsmen. Beside them there are also these less numerous, but powerful members of the moneyed classes, the proprietors of vineyards and gardens, military colonists, and officials deriving great profits from the lease of taxes.

In her book the author has presented not only the economic situation of individuals and social groups, not only the exploitation by masters, and the revolt or resignation of the oppressed, but also she has depicted their home- and family-life, daily interests and amusements, their beliefs and superstitions. From her account we come to know the people who are often so different from us, and at times very much like our selves.

With utmost ease the reader moves about in this remote world thanks to the almost novelistic presentation of the subject, the careful selection of documents and the chatting style of the author. The book has numerous well chosen illustrations which present not only the Egypt of the papyri but also these scenes and things from the contemporary Egypt which remind us of her ancient past.

It is a great merit of the author that she has written a highly readable story of ancient Egypt destined for wide circle of the readers who will follow with curiosity the uncommon problems, heretofore apparently remote and known to a small number of specialists. The fact that the book has gone into second edition testifies how excellent are its qualities. [H.K.]

Claire P r é a u x, *Reflexions sur la Misanthropie au Theatre. À propos du Dyscolos de Ménandre (Chronique d'Égypte t. 34 No. 68 (1959) pp. 327—341).*

The author endeavours to prove that the rôle of Cnemon in the *Dyscolos* of Menander corresponds to the multifarious functions assigned to the comedy. [C.K.]

Jacques S c h w a r t z, *La terre d'Égypte au temps de Trajan et d'Hadrien. Archives de Sarapion (Chronique d'Égypte t. 34 No. 68 (1959) pp. 342—356).*

This lecture delivered at the session of the „Fondation égyptologique Reine Elisabeth” on 23-rd January, 1959, concerns the life of a family of landed proprietors in the Middle Egypt and shows the process of social elevation and the Hellenisation of this family. [C.K.]