



1994

## Review of Das Amt des Apaitetes in Aegypten

James G. Keenan

Loyola University Chicago, [jkeenan@luc.edu](mailto:jkeenan@luc.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.luc.edu/classicalstudies\\_facpubs](https://ecommons.luc.edu/classicalstudies_facpubs)



Part of the [Classics Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Keenan, JG. Review of Das Amt des Apaitetes in Aegypten by Bernhard Palme. *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 1994.

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Classical Studies: Faculty Publications and Other Works by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact [ecommons@luc.edu](mailto:ecommons@luc.edu).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).  
© NINO Leiden, 1994.

remain unconvinced by D.'s arguments on this point. Enrolment as an ephebe may well have become voluntary by this time in other Greek poleis in the empire as D. says. Yet the intense interest taken by the Roman authorities, including the prefect, in every stage of the induction process for Alexandrian ephebes ("surprising" to D. since she regards *eiskrisis* as "a purely local matter": n. 37, p. 80) must argue for a much closer connection between *ephēbeia* and the acquisition of full citizen rights than D. seems prepared to accept. So too must the argument which is put forward by the writer of the so-called *Boule* Papyrus (PSI X 1160.1-6, discussed by D. in Chapter V and quoted in her n. 38, p. 123). The point made there, that if the Alexandrians got their council back they would be able to safeguard the standard of the Alexandrian citizen body by exercising close control over the physical and moral standards of those admitted to the ephebate, becomes meaningless if some or even any youths were able to get into the citizen body without passing through the ephebate. Nor do I believe that when Claudius wrote in his Letter to the Alexandrians "I confirm the Alexandrian franchise along with all the city's privileges and honours for all those who are ex-ephebes at the start of my principate, except for those who have deceived us by entering the ephebate though they are born of slaves" (P. Lond. VI 1912.53-57, quoted in D.'s n. 11, p. 74; my trans.), he was making no more than a chronological association between *ephēbeia* and citizen status. Why should those "born of slaves" ever have gone to all the trouble of attempting to infiltrate the ephebate had it not offered an illicit means of entry into the Alexandrian citizenship? Was it only for the pleasure of working out in the gymnasium or listening to the occasional lecture by a visiting rhetorician?

In her last two Chapters D. deals with the Civil Magistracies and The Problem of the Alexandrian Council. She gives a good summary of what little is known of the duties undertaken by the various Alexandrian magistrates and a sensible discussion of the Alexandrian municipal *cursus honorum*. D.'s variation upon Jouguet's classification of the Alexandrian magistracies into three ranks, thus allowing a permutation of several different career paths rather than a single straight-line *cursus*, obviously has much to recommend it, particularly for a city with as large, diverse and multi-skilled a citizen body as Alexandria's. I feel however that her treatment of the problem of the Alexandrian *boulē* in Chapter V could well have offered more discussion both about when and why the council was first abolished and more explanation of why the Alexandrians were always so persistent in petitioning the emperor for its restoration.

After the series of extremely useful Appendices already referred to the book is rounded off with a Bibliography, a two-part Subject Index and an Index Locorum. The standard of proofreading is very high and the only errors I noted were quite minor. Although it will not be the last word on the subject by any means, *Alexandrian Citizenship* is a well researched and up-to-date account of our knowledge of this important topic and also a welcome contribution to the scholarly literature on ancient citizenship in general.

The University of Queensland, July 1993

JOHN WHITEHORNE

\* \*  
\*

PALME, Bernhard, *Das Amt des ἀπατητήης in Ägypten*. Wien, in Kommission bei der Verlag Brüder Hollinek, 1989 (30 cm, 280 pp., 15 pls.) = Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer) N.S., Folge, 20. ISBN 3 85119 234 6.

Although high-level Roman and, to a lesser extent, Byzantine officials in Egypt have been the subjects of monographs, local tax collectors like the *apaitētēs* have till now been largely ignored. The stimulus for the present study was the author's work on the seventh-century Arsinoite archive of John the *apaitētēs*, published with extensive editorial introduction as *CPR* X, 1-16. An Einleitung, Part I, pp. 13-30, sets forth the author's working principles and describes Roman taxation in Egypt before the introduction of the *apaitētēs*. Part II, pp. 31-112, is a diachronic discussion of the activities of the *apaitētēs* over his 600-year history, based on the assumption of the office's essential continuity over the centuries. Part III, pp. 113-177, is a synchronic discussion of internal matters touching upon the office—nomination procedures, qualifications for office, length of service, etc. There are frequent internal summaries, consistently at ends of chapter sections, and a final "Ergebnis" on pp. 177-184.

In the historical discussion that occupies the later pages (21-30) of Part I, P. paints a traditional, grim picture of the abuses to which the tax-contract system, taken over by the Romans from the Ptolemies, was liable and the vicious cycle that cranked up in times of agricultural shortfall or failure. The tax-contractor still had to meet his obligations to the government, but the taxpayers could not pay. The tax-contractor pressed all the harder; in Roman times, some taxpayers ran away, not temporarily as under the Ptolemies, but for good. Their responsibilities were apportioned to those who remained. Imperial assessments never changed; local pressures continually increased. Ultimately, tax-contracting became so risky or unprofitable that bidders could not be found. Compulsion was applied.

That a system so rigid and inexorable was finally dismantled comes as no surprise; the surprise comes in how it could have lasted so long. Its replacement, according to P. (pp. 31-34), came not as an evolutionary transition from tax-contracting to tax collection through liturgists, but as a specific reform enacted by Trajan, invisible in the literary sources, but perceptible in the papyri and ostraka. An important component was the introduction of the *apaitētēs*.

The second-century evidence for the *apaitētēs* consists mainly of tax receipts on Theban ostraka from the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (pp. 35-39). Wilcken had used this evidence to argue that *apaitētai* were by definition collectors of "arrears"; P. proposes that they were not so much concerned with "arrears" (*Rückstände*) as with *merismoi* for "outstanding dues" (*Aussenstände*) of various kinds (pp. 40-44), which tax-contractors had failed to collect. The *apaitētai* did not so much replace as back up the tax-contractors; but they were also concerned with compulsory dues for the construction and repair of canals, public buildings, statues and the like (pp. 45-54). In sum, the *apaitētai* were at first responsible for collecting *per capita* taxes in cash, especially tax-contract shortfalls (pp. 54-55).

The situation changes in the next period, ca. 160-190 (pp. 55-59). The evidence, no longer restricted to the Theban region, begins to show *apaitētai* concerned with the

collection of taxes in kind. P. sees this as part of a general trend: the shift in the responsibilities of the *apaitêtai* was necessitated by the government's own increasing reliance on taxes in kind. At the same time, the last vestiges of the tax-contract system disappeared.

The next period, ca. 190-297 (pp. 59-67), brings even more changes, or at least a different perspective. This is because the evidence of the ostraka (especially from Thebes and Syene) tends to fade away; in its place comes the evidence of the Oxyrhynchus papyri, and with it a link between the activities of the *apaitêtai* and the municipal *boulê*. The evidence has now less to do with the actual collection of taxes, more with the internal operations of the *apaitêtês*' office. Although the *apaitêtês* remained a liturgist and was not strictly a city official, he collected both state taxes and executed commissions for the *boulê*; where formerly he was only occasionally concerned with collection of taxes in kind, he was, because of the third century's inflation, now regularly charged with that task, and increasingly concerned with collection of dues for the army (especially those that fell into the category of *annona militaris*).

Still further changes lay ahead, beginning with the administrative reforms of Diocletian. P. (pp. 67-74) describes these and subsequent changes in familiar detail: the Egyptian provincial reorganization, the conformity of Egypt more generally to empire-wide standards, the municipalization of the local administration, the division of nomes into pagi, the introduction of the 15-year indiction cycle, and other fourth-century developments (the growth of *latifundia* and the colonate). Finally, the law of 415 that recognized *patrocinium*'s legality also granted *patroni* the right to collect their *coloni*'s taxes.

The evidence (pp. 74-77) for the period of the Diocletianic-Constantinian reforms is excellent, thanks to the survival of papyrus-documents in archives (especially the Isidorus archive from Karanis) and to the presence of tax-receipts in extensive rolls rather than merely in single receipts. A special importance attaches to P. Beatty Panop. This evidence suggests to P. that there was a uniform tax system throughout Egypt, but one allowing for local initiatives in special circumstances.

By the fourth century (pp. 78-79) the *apaitêtai* were more than ever concerned with collections for the army, specifically for the *annona militaris* and the *vestis militaris*, and for additional transport charges, by land and by water — and for a variety of much more poorly evidenced, and correspondingly controversial, collections. Although the *apaitêtai*'s efforts went mostly toward the military, these liturgists did not for that become part of the military administration or obtain military rank. In the cities, they continued to be appointed and authorized by the *boulê*, but the actual work of collection was carried out by their own designated "assistants" (*boêthoi*). A few documents from the Isidorus archive permit a sketch of the day-to-day village-level activities of the *apaitêtês* and a sense of the documentation these generated (pp. 88-92). The *apaitêtês*' liability for what he collected only lapsed upon formal delivery of goods (*paradosis*), sometimes beyond the places of original collection; in cases of long-distance transport by river, the ship's captain or owner transferred to himself the *apaitêtês*' responsibility and liability for taxes represented by the goods taken on board (pp. 92-96).

Arrangements of the later period, A.D. 415-641, were shaped by two important developments (pp. 96-109, summary, pp. 108-109): the simplification of the tax system after

Constantine and the extension of patronage and large estates pursuant to the legalization of *patrocinium* by the famous law of 415 (CTh 11.24.6). P. endorses the views of J. Gasco who sees the imperial government and the great landlords as now working, not in opposition, but in cooperation. Since the great landlords, because of their estates' right of self-collection (*autopragia*), now guaranteed payment of imperial taxes owed by their *coloni*, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish in the documents between payments made to landlords as taxes and those made as rents — the distinction has effectively disappeared. It becomes equally difficult to tell when *apaitêtai* are working as public liturgists or as private designates, but P. holds that they always remained state officials and were not agents of the great landlords who nominated them. The *apaitêtai* continue to be concerned with the standard "military taxes" — *annona* and *vestis militaris*; but they also had in the late period wider responsibility for regular land taxes in general, whether paid in cash or in kind. They worked mostly as officials under the control of the pagarchs, regional officials who supervised tax-collecting in those parts of a city's *territorium* that were not classified as "autopract" ("self-collecting") estates or villages; but they also received taxes from the autopract *oikoi* (private and ecclesiastical) of great landlords and from the headmen of autopract villages. By the seventh century they retained some tax payments from private and ecclesiastical *oikoi* on account and with them often functioned as agents of exchange, not only taking in tax payments, but making disbursements on order from their various accounts.

Evidence for the Arab period beginning 641 (pp. 109-110) is slim. P. agrees that there was administrative continuity between the Byzantine and Arab periods. The *apaitêtês* continued to receive taxes, especially the "poll-tax" (*diagrammon*). He may have continued to exist in Egypt till the Abbasid take-over in 750.

Chapter III (pp. 113-177) concerns the internal history and mechanics of the office. Though different in arrangement, it perforce goes over much of the same ground as Chapter II. Discussions within Chapter III's assorted sub-headings are chronologically arranged; there is a tendency toward text-by-text analysis in chronological order. Where the evidence is (as often, e.g. in the case of remuneration, pp. 141-143) skimpy and scattered, generalizations are impossible, but P. leaves no stone unturned in an effort to reach them. The chapter starts with a discussion of the qualifications of the *apaitêtês* as a liturgist. P. reasonably assumes that *apaitêtai* had qualifications similar to those of other liturgists — an age between 18 and 70 and sufficient "wealth" (*πόρος*) (amount uncertain). They were normally appointed to serve in their *idiai* — metropolitans in their metropolitan *amphoda*, *chôra*-dwellers in their villages of origin. This arrangement holds for the third and fourth century, but later on *apaitêtai* are also found appointed for the *oikoi* of the great landlords. Even though nominated by landlords (*possessores*) for their respective autopract *oikoi*, the *apaitêtai* remained, P. insists, not employees of these landlords, but state officials (see esp. pp. 143-149). As such, *apaitêtai* tend to appear in *collegia*, with two member-*collegia* prevailing in the second to fifth centuries. Before ca. 300 they seem to have served for three years (*contra* N. Lewis), afterwards for one. A theoretical break of three years, and then one year, between terms of liturgical service came in practice to be ignored. The government throughout assured itself of collection of dues

by spreading full liability around and by insisting that liturgists' personal property be security against their service. This came to be backed by oaths. Two of the longer sections of Chapter III concern the social condition of those who served as *apaitêtai* and the office's rank in the liturgical hierarchy (pp. 159-167, 167-174). P. sees *apaitêtai* as emanating mainly from an "enchoric elite", with some higher-status office-holders of the bouletic class in the third century. The office itself was an "Unteramt" in the middle range of the liturgical roster of offices.

P.'s book is extraordinarily thorough, and extensively annotated. P. at regular intervals describes the nature of the evidence as this changes over time. There is a commendable effort to include *all* the evidence both in the search for regularities and in setting out all the exceptions. This at times causes the reader to lose sight of the forest for all its many trees. The study's data, a complete listing of *apaitêtai* (633 in all) covering the full range of attestations from A.D. 118 to the seventh century, are presented in tables and with extensive textual notes at the back of the book, followed by detailed indices, pp. 185-279, and a set of excellent plates (mostly Theban ostraka). P.'s book is therefore both a reference work and a monograph on a neglected institution. In both respects, it is an outstanding addition to the papyrological literature.

Loyola University of Chicago, July 1993

JAMES G. KEENAN

#### KORTE AANKONDIGING

DARIS, Sergio, *Il lessico latino nel greco d'Egitto*. Barcelona, Seminari de Papirologia, 2. edizione, 1991 (23,5 cm, 117 S.) = *Estudis de papirologia i filologia biblica*, 2. ISBN 84-87843-01-8.

Das vorliegende Büchlein stellt eine sehr verdienstvolle Neugestaltung der ersten Auflage von 1971 (*BiOr* 31 [1974], S. 81) dar, eine Arbeit, die angesichts der zahlreichen, inzwischen veröffentlichten Papyrustexte notwendig geworden war. Neben den ägyptischen Quellen werden auch diejenigen, welche in Palästina und Dura Europos ans Licht gekommen sind, herangezogen. Bei den einzelnen Vokabeln werden alle erreichbaren Belege aufgeführt, wobei gleichzeitig die Ungenauigkeiten der ersten Auflage verbessert und die Lücken gefüllt werden. Die breite Basis, auf der der Verfasser sein Inventar aufbaut, und der Reichtum an Vergleichsmaterial erhöhen den Wert des Büchleins für die Einzelerklärung von manchem Text. Es dürfte deutlich sein, dass es einen wichtigen Beitrag zur sachgemässen Auswertung der griechisch-römischen Papyri liefert, so dass man ihm eine ähnliche Verbreitung, wie sie sein Vorgänger hatte, nicht nur wünschen, sondern voraussagen kann.

#### CHRISTELIJK EGYPTE

GODLEWSKI, Włodzimierz (ed.), *Coptic Studies. Acts of the 3rd International Congress of Coptic Studies*. Warsaw, 20-25 August, 1984. *Studia Koptijskie. Prace na Trzeci Międzynarodowy Kongres Studiów Koptijskich*. Warszawa,

20-25 sierpnia 1984 roku. Varsovie, PWN-Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1990 (30 cm, 506 pp.) = Zakład Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej Polskiej Akademii Nauk. ISBN 83 01 07663 1.

Les *Actes* d'un congrès sont comme une tranche de vie découpée en synchronie dans l'évolution d'une discipline scientifique. Ils suscitent l'intérêt non seulement par la valeur des contributions qui s'y trouvent réunies, mais aussi par l'orientation des sujets qu'ils abordent. Publiés avec un retard compréhensible et ici recensés en un délai moins excusable, les *Actes* du congrès de Varsovie seront salués, davantage peut-être que pour leur contenu, comme un jalon important dans l'histoire de la coptologie.

Certains parmi les 63 exposés recueillis dans les *Actes* ont fait entre-temps l'objet de publications plus complètes, notamment les travaux de Browne, den Heijer, Grossmann et Kriss. Quant aux rapports de fouilles, on sait combien vite ils peuvent vieillir, au hasard heureux de nouvelles découvertes. L'archéologie et l'histoire de l'art se taillent d'ailleurs une belle part du volume et quelques articles (cf. Martinez ou Török, ce dernier de 48 pages) constituent de véritables dossiers.

Mais l'intérêt majeur de ces *Actes*, je pense, est celui de montrer «the complementary character of Coptological and Nubiological studies», comme le soulignent W. Godlewski et K. Myśliwiec dans la préface. Cette complémentarité est mise en évidence pour l'étude aussi bien de la littérature (cf. Browne) que de l'histoire (Milburn), de l'architecture (e.g. Grossmann, p. 156a), de la peinture (Martens-Czarnecka), de la sculpture (Ryl-Preibisz), de la poterie (Pluskota, p. 316b), de la symbolique (Barbaj). La courte note de Mieneke van der Helm mérite d'être résumée, car elle illustre à merveille les liens entre les deux domaines. Une peinture de Sonqi Tino, aujourd'hui à Khartoum, représente l'archange Michel protégeant un haut personnage. Il est accompagné des quatre Vivants (le Taureau ne se voit plus). Que font-ils avec l'archange? Un fragment homilétique copte trouvé à Qasr Ibrim vient l'expliquer, où il est justement décrit comment l'archange reçoit des Vivants les insignes de la victoire après son combat triomphal contre Lucifer!

Mis à part le message d'ouverture de Bentley Layton, alors président de l'International Association of Coptic Studies, qui appela de ses vœux la création d'une revue — le premier numéro du JCS parut en 1990 —, toutes les autres contributions sont publiées dans l'ordre alphabétique du nom des auteurs. Pour faciliter la consultation du volume, je proposerai ici l'ordre d'entrée selon les subdivisions du *Corpus dei manoscritti copti letterari*, Unione Academica Nazionale, bulletin 5, octobre 1987, pp. 24-26. Malgré l'arbitraire de certains choix, j'espère rendre service au lecteur des *Actes* en les classant par sujets. Je ne reprendrai pas le titre entier de la contribution, mais je donnerai seulement quelques mots pour la caractériser. Les noms entre parenthèses servent de renvoi.

#### GENERALIA

Layton (sur l'IACS et ses projets).

Brunsch (appel pour les bibliographies de l'AEB et du PEB).

#### MANUSCRITS

Brown (sur le microfilmage des mss. en possession de l'Église Copte Orthodoxe en Égypte).