



Review

J.K. WINNICKI

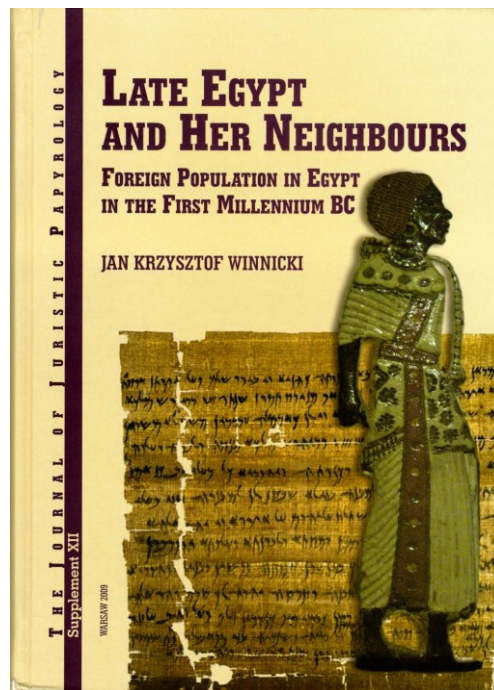
LATE EGYPT AND HER NEIGHBOURS: FOREIGN POPULATION IN EGYPT IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BC

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Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, the great Polish papyrologist, Egyptologist and historian, passed away in February, 2009. This book, the Polish version of which was completed in the summer of 2008, presents the fruits of the last two decades of Winnicki's research. It is a monumental piece of scholarship, if not a totally satisfying or polished one. Those familiar with Winnicki's work will find here gratifying proof that the author was in top form during the last two decades of his life; those unfamiliar will marvel at the extent of his expertise and the range of his interests.

In a brief introduction (pp 3–7), Winnicki outlines the basic justification for his study. As he sees it, scholars have paid scant attention to Egypt in the earlier part of the first millennium B.C. because of few sources, whereas studies on the later Ptolemaic and Roman periods are abundant because of the richness and variety of their source material. W believes that both sets of data are mutually informative, that problems in the earlier period can be explained by information from the later period, and vice-versa. His focus in *Late Egypt* will be twofold: international relations between Egypt and its close (*i.e.*, not Roman or Greek) neighbors in the first millennium B.C. and “the role, place and significance of foreigners in social and political structures” (p. 4) during the same period. Winnicki will



carry out his study via the avenue of prosopography in the first millennium, again with the intent to fill a gap in the scholarship, which has traditionally ignored the first millennium or failed to cover as wide a breadth of ethnicities as possible.

The main text is divided into two parts, which focus on the second and first millennia B.C., respectively. The rationale for Part I is made clear in the Introduction: during the second millennium, and especially during the 18th–20th dynasties, the influx of foreigners into Egypt was at its height. It was during this period that a number of the terms used to describe various classes of foreigners in the later Greek and Roman periods first came into use, so a careful examination of the admittedly limited source material from the second millennium is in order. The two chapters

that comprise Part I concern the New Kingdom. In each, W narrows his focus to concentrate on specific groups. In Chapter 1, W identifies three major groups: populations coming from Syria, from Libya and from Nubia. His concern is the circumstances under which groups from these areas found themselves in Egypt. In Chapter 2, the focus is on groups coming from the four cardinal points, as well as the Sea Peoples and foreigners living in the Nile valley. Here, Winnicki discusses all groups of foreigners living in Egypt during the period. Though

the source material is limited, he has mined it for all it is worth and presents an exhaustive list of all attestations for foreigners, plus discussion. This chapter, like all those that follow, is heavily prosopographical, and consequently not particularly easy to read straight through, especially if the reader is not in command of all the different languages employed in and around Egypt in the second millennium. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that any reader will be able to appreciate this study in all its variety: the depth and breadth of learning required virtually guarantee that any given reader will gravitate towards certain sections of the text and find others impenetrable.

The second main section of the text (Part II) concerns the first millennium B.C. The chapters that comprise it (3–7) are laid out in much the same fashion as in Part I: after a brief section (Chapter 3) devoted to a sketch of Egyptian international relations—again with Syria, Libya and Nubia—in the first millennium B.C., Winnicki turns in the final four chapters to a careful examination of the prosopography of groups migrating to Egypt from the north, east, west and south, respectively. As Part II highlights Winnicki’s main area of investigation, it should come as no surprise to the reader that the sources presented here are on the whole much richer and more abundant than those in Part I: literary and documentary materials in Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and several other languages. The discussion is also much lengthier—extending over 395 pages, compared to the 92 of Part I—and in more depth. The same problems of access to the material that most readers will face in Part I resurface here, but perhaps even more seriously: we see in first-millennium Egypt many more groups of foreigners than in the second millennium and many more languages in use.

Three pages of Final Remarks (pp 497–9) serve as a conclusion before the extensive Bibliography and four Indices (Persons, Personal Names, Toponyms and Ethonyms, Sources).

As a Greek documentary papyrologist with only a passing familiarity with Egypt in the Pharaonic and Persian periods, I was especially keen on seeing Winnicki’s analysis of his sizeable subject. Unfortunately, here I was disappointed. In 499 pages of

main text, a mere 16 are devoted to synthesis and conclusion (pp 41, 365–71, 461–3, 494–5 and 497–9), and many of these simply repeat generalizations made earlier in the text. The Final Remarks section leads off with what perhaps can be called the thesis of the book: “Foreigners appear in Egypt upon the initiative of the pharaohs and as a result of independent influx, both as individuals and in groups. This immigration took on various forms depending on the period” (497). Having accompanied Winnicki on his lengthy journey through the material, and having nearly gotten lost along the way a number of times, this conclusion was something of a let down. It is of course difficult to disagree with him, but one inevitably wonders what else he might have said had he had more time to ponder the big picture.

Throughout the quality of Winnicki’s research is top-notch, his citations abundant (the book literally has a few thousand footnotes) and his presentation generally clear. The English translation is usually good, but is not without its problems from time to time. I noticed, for example, that a few of the summaries or concluding sections to individual chapters (those for Chapters 4 and 6 in particular) seemed to have been written by someone other than the author, and someone whose command of English was not especially strong. I also caught numerous errors in the list of Abbreviations (pp xv–xx), in the neighborhood of 5–6 per page, and in fact stopped counting after four pages. Throughout the rest of the book, errors of grammar and syntax occurred roughly once every three pages.

Yet in spite of these minor blemishes, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours* will doubtless become the standard reference guide for those investigating questions of foreign population in Egypt in the last two millennia B.C. It will serve as an invaluable resource to cultural anthropologists, papyrologists, Egyptologists and ancient historians, who owe Winnicki a big debt of gratitude for writing it.