

**Ryszard Sajkowski (ed.), *Religia i polityka w świecie antycznym [Religion and Politics in the Ancient World]*, Ostróda: Muzeum, 2005 [published 2007], 266 pp., ISBN 83-916007-0-X.**

The book is a collection of 26 articles that proceeded from a conference held at the Ostróda Museum in October 2001. The articles are published in Polish, with German, French, Italian or English summaries. The topics range from the history of the ancient Near East (mainly Israel) to the history of the ancient Greece and Rome. The editor, Dr Ryszard Sajkowski, tried to put the articles in a chronological sequence, but such grouping is not necessarily suitable. Perhaps a thematic order, taking into account religious or social issues raised in the papers, might have been more useful. The articles by K. Banek, P. Ibek, M. Münnich, Ł. Niesiołowski-Spanò, Z.I. Brzostowski and J. Ciecieląg could have been joined to create one group devoted to ancient Israel and Jews, the next two groups could have been made of the articles by S. Sharypkin, G. Malinowski, B. Burliga (Greece), M. Wolny, L. Stankiewicz, J.M. Spychała, E. Konik, L. Morawiecki, M. Puk, E. Wesołowska, R. Sajkowski, M. Żyromski, A.A. Kluczek, G. Wcisło (Rome and the Roman Empire), and the last one could have been made of the contributions on provincial and “barbarian” matters by J. Hatłas, G. Kotłowski, A. Wypustek, K.T. Witczak and M. Wilczyński. Alternatively, a group for “Christian” problems could have been created. There are some technical mistakes: the  $\zeta$  is constantly replaced by  $\varphi$  or even  $\square$ . In one case readers have to face a sequence of  $\square$ .

The collection starts with Kazimierz Banek’s article *Wyroczenie antyczne i ich wpływ na życie polityczne [Ancient Oracles and their Impact on Political Life]* (pp. 11–21). Banek opens and ends his essay with the same point: ancient oracles exerted great influence on, and were closely related to politics – wars, peace, alliances, inner-state matters. He thinks that his goal could help to “revise some common beliefs on political and military questions of antiquity, especially the actual role of political leaders and generals in making and accomplishing important decisions” (p. 21). Unfortunately his contribution does not offer such revision. Paweł Ibek in his *Idea króla w starożytnym Izraelu [The Idea of the King in Ancient Israel]* (pp. 22–28) deals with a problem of utmost importance, but one can doubt if a short essay is enough to present such wide and complex question. Ibek has based his argument only on the Bible and treats this source in an unhistorical way, as if the Bible were a product of a particular period and beliefs. Ibek’s methodological fails are more striking when compared with next articles devoted to the history of the ancient Israel. Maciej Münnich’s *Polityka religijna władców żydowskich wobec ludów podbitych [The Religious Policy of the Jewish Rulers against Conquered Peoples]* (pp. 29–37) shows that brutal rules of the *Deuteronomium* 7, 1 f. and 5; 20, 16 f. were mere ideology of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC Yahvists. None of the Jewish kings oppressed the conquered people on account of their cults. Such policy was common in the ancient Near East. The Machabees started to use force to convert their subjects (Ituraea) or destroy their temples (Gezer). But even those cases were thought to strengthen the rule over defeated nations than to express a constant religious policy. Strict religious policy was handled against those groups of Jews who were less orthodox (or were thought to be so). A practical illustration of Münnich’s conclusions can be found in Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò’s contribution *Beer-Szeba – casus biblijnej propagandy mitologizującej [Beer-Sheba: An Example of the Biblical Mythologizing Propaganda]* (pp. 38–44). The author presents how the Judaistic tradition on founding Beer-Sheba appeared to justify the Hasmonean rule over the town.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 140, n. 61. The masked quotation should read as follow: *Mify narodov mira*, vol. I, Moskva 1980, p. 665; cf. L. Morawiecki, *Monete, poesia e politica: alcune riflessioni su numismatica, ideologia e letteratura tardorepubblicana e augustea*, Viterbo 2004, p. 81, n. 133.

Sergiusz Sharypkin analyses the sources of Plato's tale about Atlantis (*W sprawie źródeł platońskiej legendy o Atlantydzie* [*On Plato's Sources of the Atlantis Legend*], pp. 45–56). According to the popular theory Plato used Egyptian or Solon's information, which was based on reminiscences of the great Theraan cataclysm. Sharypkin's view is different. Plato based his story on local tales, and those tales had nothing in common with the Thera explosion, or with the decline of Minoan civilisation. Minoan culture did not collapse immediately after the cataclysm. Sharypkin's conclusions are promising and open new research perspectives. Polish literature on the matter is scarce and it is striking that Sharypkin does not cite Tadeusz Łoposzko's works<sup>2</sup>, and omits Thor Heyerdahl's famous *Ra Expedition*<sup>3</sup> when talking about possibilities of reaching American continents in antiquity.

The community of the "Ten Thousand" is the topic of Gościwit Malinowski's "*Polis w marszu*" – *odwrót Dziesięciu Tysięcy Greków spod Kunaksy w 401 r. p.Ch.* [*Marching Polis: The Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks from Cunaxa in 401 BC*] (pp. 57–63). Xenophon's description of his comrades shows that within the community of 10 000 Greek mercenaries existed binding forces which enabled them to last as a community for two years. Malinowski sees those forces as mechanisms typical for a *polis*. The mercenaries' community was and acted as an ephemeral *polis*. That "polis" even faced inevitable changes from oligarchy and tyranny to democracy. But some doubts arise. The presence of Cyrus as a *ktistes* could exclude *synoikismos*. What is more, Malinowski does not consider a question of whether Xenophon's writing strategy and his personal opinions influenced the description. One can think that for an Athenian describing a community in the *polis* (or anti-*polis*) terms was something quite natural.

Researchers' opinions on Thracian aristocratic tombs are presented by Jerzy Hattłas in his *Kultowa interpretacja grobowców arystokracji trackiej w "złotym wieku" rozwoju budownictwa sepulkralnego* [*Cultic Interpretation of Thracian Aristocracy Tombs in the Golden Age of Sepulchral Architecture*] (pp. 64–72). The tombs built between the fifth and the third centuries BC served not only as mere graves, but they were also temples of divine heroes, who were buried inside.

Bogdan Burliga's contribution (modestly called "communique") *Demokracja, polis i religia* [*Democracy, Polis, and Religion*] (pp. 73–82) is concentrated on methodological aspects of exploring ancient religions: what is the difference between ancient Greeks' and ours views on religion. Burliga warns against misusing of a (true) notion that religion was deeply rooted in the *polis*. His article is one of the most important attempts recently undertaken to explain the problem<sup>4</sup>.

Analysing Berossos' opinions could be a difficult task. Zbigniew Ignacy Brzostowski tries to explain the Babylonian writer's views on connections between religion and power (*Związki religii i polityki w "Babyloniaka" Berossosa* [*Relationships between Religion and Politics in "Babyloniaka" of Berossos*], pp. 83–87). According to him, the Babylonian priest was well aware that religion and politics were closely related. But it is not stated if Berossos' opinions were his conscious conclusions, mere observations, or were just rewritten from royal chronicles. The author has not used a work by Gerald P. Verbrugge and John M. Wickersham<sup>5</sup>, which could have added some complements to his conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> T. Łoposzko, *Egejskie Pompeje* [*Aegean Pompeii*], Meander XXXI 1976, pp. 131–143; idem, *Największy kataklizm w dziejach ludzkości* [*The Greatest Cataclysm in the History of Mankind*], Lublin 1996.

<sup>3</sup> T. Heyerdahl, *Ekspedycja Ra* [*Ra Expedition*], trans. Z. Łanowski, Warszawa 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See also W. Lengauer, *Człowiek a bogowie: kontakty z bóstwem w wierzeniach greckich* [*Man and Gods: Contacts with Divinity in Greek Religion*], Poznań 2003.

<sup>5</sup> G.P. Verbrugge, J.M. Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt*, Ann Arbor 1996, pp. 13–91.

Jerzy Ciecieląg describes ideological and religious problems of the Hasmonean period (*Opozycja faryzeuszów wobec rządów dynastii hasmonejskiej w Judei – uwarunkowania polityczne i religijne. Główne kierunki badań* [*Opposition of the Pharisees to the Rule of the Hasmonean Dynasty in Judea: Political and Religious Conditions. Main Directions in Research*], pp. 88–98). Sketching briefly the modern views Ciecieląg shows that the crucial cause of the Pharisees' hostility towards the Hasmonean kings was holding the positions of the king and high priest simultaneously.

Contributions devoted to the Roman world form the most numerous group. It opens with Miron Wolny's well documented article *Spoleczny i religijny kontekst konfliktu Gajusza Flaminiusza z senatem w roku 217 p.n.e.* [*The Social and Religious Context of the Conflict of Gaius Flaminius with the Senate in 217 BC*] (pp. 99–108). Flaminius' "impiety" was a product of hostile historiography (especially Fabius Pictor) which tried to denigrate that plebeian consul. Not only historiography served to strengthen the position of Roman aristocracy of the period. As Lucyna Stankiewicz proves (*Pierwsze bóstwo azjatyckie w Rzymie* [*The First Asian Deity in Rome*], pp. 109–113), the introduction of Cybele's cult in Rome was thought to reinforce the *gens Claudia*. Introducing new and alien cults in Rome is also treated by Jarosław M. Spychała (*Kłopoty wyznawców Izidy na terenie Rzymu w roku 58 p.n.e.* [*The Troubles of Isis Worshippers in Rome in 58 BC*], pp. 114–121). He analyses the events of 59 and 58 BC, when the altars of Egyptian deities were removed from the Capitol. According to Spychała, consul Gabinius removed them on the senate's orders, because they had been built within the *pomerium*. He is right when asserting that there are no similarities between Gabinius' action and the famous Bacchanalia case; there were no persecutions of Isis worshippers in 58 BC. Spychała translates Tertullian's *a senatu*<sup>6</sup> as "by the senate [= by its order]". It is possible to render it as "from the senate [= from its meeting place]", and this option is reinforced by Cicero's remark on *Isis curiana*. Spychała also omits the context of the events by saying "one must state there are no clear arguments for accepting explanations advanced nowadays by scholars, indicating the political and spiritual background of the events" (p. 121)<sup>7</sup>. In 59 and 58 BC the triumvirs and the senate were in severe clash. One of the problems was Egypt. Thanks to the triumvirs Ptolemy XII earned Rome's *nilhil obstat* for his rule over Egypt. Earlier it was even planned to make Egypt a Roman province and to found colonies there<sup>8</sup>. Expansion of Egyptian deities at Rome could be a part of a growing Roman interest in that country. Spychała's contribution can be a supplement to the latest Polish book on that period in Rome<sup>9</sup> (where there is no mention about removing the altars from the Capitol).

Next articles may be regarded as practical illustrations of connections between religion and politics. Eugeniusz Konik presents the problem on the basis of Julius Caesar's career (*Religia i polityka w działalności Juliusza Cezara* [*Religion and Politics in Julius Caesar's Activities*], pp. 122–131). Lesław Morawiecki devotes his last published work to pivotal features of ideology of the late Republic and early Empire – *pax* and *concordia* (*Pax et Concordia – polityczne i religijne aspekty personifikacji w republikańskim Rzymie* [*Pax et Concordia: Political and Religious Aspects*

<sup>6</sup> Tert. *Ad nat.* I 10, 17 f.

<sup>7</sup> He also omits an important article by S. Ensoli, *I santuari isiaci a Roma e i contesti non culturali: religione pubblica, devozioni private e impiego ideologico del culto*, in: E.A. Arslan (a cura di), *Iside: il mito, il misterio, la magia*, Milano 1997, pp. 306–321.

<sup>8</sup> See recently T. Grabowski, *Ptolemeusze i Rzym: przyjaźń czy zależność? Stosunki polityczne w latach 273–43 p.n.e.* [*Ptolemies and Rome: Friendship or Dependence? Political Relations 273–43 BC*], Kraków 2005, pp. 231–273.

<sup>9</sup> N. Rogosz, *Polityczna rola senatu w republice rzymskiej w latach 59–55* [*Political Position of the Senate 59–55 BC*], Katowice 2005, pp. 72–119.

of their Personifications in Republican Rome], pp. 132–156)<sup>10</sup>. He uses various types of sources (especially literary and numismatic) to show the process of creating ideological value of *pax*. He assumes that *pax* was an imperial virtue, not acceptable to the republican mind. Such conclusion is problematic. It is not surprising that value of *pax* became highly appreciative during the period of the civil wars. The wars ended the Republic and this could be why *pax* and the loss of traditional republican *libertas* were so closely related.

Ovid's attitude toward Augustus is analysed by Magdalena Puk (*Octavianus Augustus homo politicus sive deus? Oktawian August w Tristiach Owidiusza* [*Octavianus Augustus Homo Politicus sive Deus? Octavian Augustus in Ovid's Tristia*], pp. 157–164) and Elżbieta Wesołowska (*Bogowie starego poety* [*Gods of the Old Poet*], pp. 165–173). Their conclusions are similar: Ovid tried to win Augustus' (and then Tiberius') favour by means of his poetry, but as far as Augustus was concerned the poet had given his *Tristia* an ambiguous meaning.

Ryszard Sajkowski deals with Tiberius' treatment of the Sibylline books (*Konserwatyzm religijny cesarza Tyberiusza na przykładzie ksiąg sybillińskich* [*The Religious Conservatism of Tiberius Caesar on the Example of his Approach to the Sibylline Books*], pp. 174–179). Tiberius was "conservative" which means that he continued Augustus' policy on the Sibylline books. This should not necessarily be taken as a sign of religious conservatism. Tiberius was well acquainted with the *ius divinum*<sup>11</sup> and this could be a reason for his actions. Nevertheless Sajkowski's attempt is important; the religious policy of Tiberius should become a matter of scholarly discussion and research.

Saint Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians is sometimes recognised as an indication of a clash between Christianity and Gnostic heresies. Sławomir Torbus' exploration of the sociological context of the letter (*Gnoza w Koryncie? I List do Koryntian w świetle wczesnochrześcijańskich wzmianek na temat ruchów gnostyckich* [*The First Epistle to the Corinthians in the Light of Early Christian References to Gnostic Movements*], pp. 180–185) shows that besides Gnostic activity in Rome and other places, gnosis was not a matter of Paul's concern. The Apostle had in mind pagan culture that was preferred by men like Apollos.

Carian cults are explored by Grzegorz Kotłowski (*Przenikanie się wierzeń greckich i karyjskich w inskrypcjach wybranych miast Karii* [*Interweaving of Greek and Carian Beliefs in the Light of Inscriptions of Selected Carian Cities*], pp. 186–195). Author uses the term *przenikanie* ("interweaving") which suggests a (temporary) coexistence of two different religious cultures. But he shows that Carian cults were a subject of *interpretatio Graeca*. Kotłowski could have also used another good category of evidence – coins<sup>12</sup>. Similar (Lusitanian) issues are discussed by Krzysztof T. Witczak (*Synkretyzm bóstw luzytańskich i rzymskich jako przejaw postępującego procesu romanizacji* [*Syncretism of Lusitanian and Roman Deities as a Sign of Romanization*], pp. 209–229). According to him, the Lusitanians and Gallaecians made an attempt to confront their deities with the Roman ones by depicting the local gods and goddesses as their Roman counterparts.

Relation between persecutions of magic and those of Christianity is a subject of Andrzej Wypustek's short contribution (*Uwagi na temat prześladowania magii i chrześcijan w Cesarstwie Rzymskim* [*Remarks on the Persecution of Magic and the Christians in the Roman Empire*], pp. 196–200). Marek Żyromski tries to show the prosopographical implication of priestly offices (*Stanowiska kapłańskie jako czynnik ruchliwości społecznej w starożytnym Rzymie* [*The Priestly Offices as the Factor of Vertical Social Mobility in the Roman Empire*], pp. 201–208). According to Żyromski's findings (based on the Sorokin theory) the first generation of senatorial officers

<sup>10</sup> For an Italian version see Morawiecki, *o.c.* [n. 1], pp. 25–52.

<sup>11</sup> J. Scheid, *The Expiation of Impieties Committed without Intention and the Formation of Roman Theology*, in: J. Assmann, G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, Leiden–Boston 1999, pp. 331–347.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. *RPC* I 2719–2881; for Mylasa see A. Akarca, *Les monnaies grecques de Mylasa*, Paris 1959.

founded their career on military and diplomatic abilities, while their descendants preferred to fulfil religious duties. One may wonder whether it was a general tendency; Żyromski uses only inscriptions of Moesian, Pannonian and Danube provinces as his evidence.

Agata A. Kluczek in her well (as usual) documented article discusses the dynastic policy of Maximinus Thrax (*W poszukiwaniu boskiej charyzmy w polityce dynastycznej cesarza Maksymina Traka 235–238* [*In the Search of Divine Charisma: Dynastic Policy of Maximinus Thrax*], pp. 230–246). Basing on numismatic evidence Kluczek tries to prove that Maximinus Thrax searched for his charisma to build a dynasty, but he did so when it was too late. Of course it can be one of possible explanations of Maximinus' failure (and subsequent death). His monetary programme (if there was any) could be ineffective or just useless.

Last two essays relate to Christianity. Gabriela Wcisło analyses Salvianus of Marseille's opinions on the causes of the decline of the Empire (*Bóg a upadek Cesarstwa rzymskiego w ujęciu Salviana z Marsylii* [*God and the Decline of the Roman Empire according to Salvianus of Marseille*], pp. 247–252). Salvianus thought that it was not God but human sins that was responsible for the decline. He also tried to persuade his readers not to doubt the Providence. Marek Wilczyński demonstrates (*Polityka religijna germańskich wodzów foederatii na terenach cesarstwa zachodniorzymskiego* [*Religious Policy of the German Foederatii Chiefs in the Western Roman Empire*], pp. 256–266) how barbarian kings and princes treated religion. They rarely used their power to convert conquered people and were proud of their piety. Besides Genseric, barbarian rulers sought to win support of their Catholic subjects.

The collection as a whole is an important contribution to Polish research on religion and politics in antiquity. Most of the articles are well documented and well written. The collection is also enriched by translations of Berossos (by Z.I. Brzostowski) and Ovid's *Tristia* I 2 (by E. Wesołowska). It will be useful for every scholar seeking to explore ancient history. But not every contribution deals strictly with religion and politics, a fact which makes the collection a little bit chaotic.

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**Joan P. Alcock, *Food in the Ancient World***, Westport, Connecticut–London: Greenwood Press, 2006, 276 pp.

The reviewed work was written on the rising tide of interest amongst historians, evident in the nineteen nineties, in the field of nutrition and culinary sciences<sup>1</sup>. It was penned by a researcher boasting recognised achievements<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The author has clearly noticed the trend (p. XI), and this fact finds reflection in her bibliography (*Selected bibliography*, pp. 253–262).

<sup>2</sup> Joan P. Alcock [= A.] was awarded a doctorate in archaeology. Her interest in everyday life, and in particular that of her native country, found reflection in the work entitled *Life in Roman Britain*, London 1996. The author's fascination with the history of food was initially limited to the British Isles (*Food in Roman Britain*, Stroud 2001; *Flavourings in Roman Culinary Taste with Reference to the Province of Britain*, in: H. Walker (ed.), *Spicing up the Palate: Studies of Flavourings, Ancient and Modern: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1992*, Totnes 1993, pp. 11–23).