

BOOTH, Ch.: *The Hyksos Period in Egypt*. Shire Egyptology 27. Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, 2005. 56 pp. ISBN 0-7478-0638-1.

The book under review is one of the series of popular books for the general public interested in the history of ancient Egyptian civilization and Egyptological research. Its author is Charlotte Booth, an Egyptologist and graduate of University College London. During her studies she became interested in the Hyksos period in Egypt.

The contents of the book consist of eight main numbered chapters. They are preceded by acknowledgements, a list of illustration and chronology placed immediately before the introduction (chapter 1). The book ends with an index consisting of personal and topographical names and important words.

The introductory chapter (pp. 6–8) consists of a short overview of the political evolution of the historical period between the fall of the Middle Kingdom 12th dynasty and the 17th Theban dynasty including brief characteristics of the Hyksos rulers.

Chapter 2 (pp. 9–20) is titled “The rise of the Hyksos”. The author presents here the picture of political situation at the end of the Middle Kingdom as the starting point for further description. She describes the fragile Egyptian political system in this period. The inner political situation could have enabled the invasion of the foreign Asian populations. The Hyksos took the power, occupied the Delta region and later extended their political influence to southern Egypt. Some archaeological and historical aspects and records related to the fundamental characteristics of the Hyksos are mentioned in the chapter and presented in wider historical context. The Egyptian picture of the Hyksos based on the later written records of literary and non-literary origin is presented. The principal residence of the Hyksos community was Avaris with the earliest evidence of occupation that comes from the twelfth dynasty. The Egyptian lifestyle of the Asiatics described by the author can be seen in the palace architecture at Avaris.

Chapter 3 (pp. 21–28) deals mainly with the description of Avaris (modern Tell el Dab^a), the residence of the Hyksos in the eastern Delta. The historical topography of Avaris includes the natural environment, structure of the settlement, principal buildings, archaeological findings and so on. Specific non-Egyptian features of the material culture are stressed in the chapter (for example the burial customs).

In Chapter 4 (pp. 29–35) the religion of the Hyksos is characterized. The main deities and cults of this period are mentioned. The most important god of the Hyksos was the Egyptian deity Seth. Other deities of Asian origin such as Astarte, Ba'al and Anat were worshipped too. Burials and burial customs represent the subject discussed in the rest of this chapter.

Chapter 5 (pp. 36–46) titled “Contributions by the Hyksos to Egypt” is very interesting and important part of the book. The author deals here with the key cultural features of the Hyksos and their influence on the Egyptian pharaonic civilization. They include, for example, the frequently mentioned introduction of the horse and chariot to Egypt, some Asiatic weaponry (composite bows, daggers, scimitar sword), military skills, more intensive trade contacts with the Syro-Palestinean region and so on.

In Chapter 6 (pp. 47–49) as indicated by its title “Expulsion of the Hyksos” the author describes the key events in the political evolution of the country leading to the

final years of the rule of the Hyksos in Egypt. Egyptian records relevant to this period, the main events and principal historical persons are mentioned in context.

Chapters 7 and 8 (pp. 52–54) consists of the list of bibliography and principal museums with Egyptian antiquities in the UK, Austria, Egypt and the USA. The bibliography includes the standard publications related to the subject, however, none of them was published after 1999. Some formal inaccuracies occur in the bibliography. For example, the full title of M. Bietak's book published in 1996 is "Avaris, The Capital of the Hyksos: Recent Excavation at Tell el-Dab'a" ("Avaris" is missing in the title mentioned in the bibliography). Further, the name of the author of the study *published* in the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology should be written as follows Säve-Söderbergh and not Save-Soderbergh. His study in this journal begins on page 53 and not 54 as presented in the bibliography.

The text of the book is accompanied by 35 illustrations including b&w and coloured illustrations, plans, tables, maps. Some critical remarks can be addressed to the quality of some illustrations which could be better (ills. 3, 14, 21, 33). Probably some technical problems with the special Egyptological transliteration font led to the transliteration of the term used for the Hyksos "rulers of foreign lands" being presented in the book in the incorrect form *hk3 h3swt* instead of *ḥk3 ḥ3swt* or *ḥk3w ḥ3swt* (pp. 7, 14, 17, 19, 31). Technical problems of the same kind with this transliteration font are also indicated by another word presented in the (incorrect) form *ssndm* (p. 40). Its correct form should be *ssndm*.

As a whole the book written by Charlotte Booth is readable, informative and very useful for the general public as well as students interested in the history and heritage of the great civilization of ancient Egypt.

Dušan Magdolen

LUDWIG, Frieder and ADOGAME, Afe (Eds.) in cooperation with Ulrich Berner and Christoph Bochinger. *European Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag 2004. 404 pp. ISBN 3-447-05002-0.

In recent years there have been heightened academic interest in the study of African religious history. The volume under review encompassing a survey of European descriptions and perceptions of the religions of Africa and attempting to scrutinize European traditions of the scholarly study of Africa's triple religious heritage: African traditional religions, Christianity and Islam, grew out of the International Interdisciplinary Conference, held on 4-7 October 2001 at Wissenschaftszentrum der Universität Bayreuth, Schloß Thurnau. The conference brought together forty-four researchers from Europe, Africa and North America to discuss and review historiographically European encounters with Africa and European perceptions, imaginations and theories of African religious history.

The collection of papers *European Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa* is a well-edited book. It contains an excellent comparative theoretical introductory essay by the two editors Frieder Ludwig and Afe Adogame providing a general overview of the discussions, issues and problems involved in the study of Africa's triple religious