

named correctly on p. 11), inappropriate examples *pyaent*, *šart*, *karđ* illustrating mid-word clusters *nt*, *rt*, *rđ*, or a reverse sign in examples illustrating consonant assimilation, e.g. *dhormo* < *dhōmmo* instead of correct *dhormo* > *dhōmmo*, might be considered as acceptable in such an extensive work.

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LLEWELLYN-JONES, Lloyd. *King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 BCE*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. 258 p. ISBN 978 0 7486 4126 0.

Expert on Achaemenid Persian Empire L. Llewellyn-Jones wrote and compiled a new publication, which brings new aspects regarding the Achaemenid court. This publication was included in the monographic series *Debates and Documents in Ancient History*. The mentioned edition focuses on various topics of ancient history and in its individual volumes offers readers a basic insight into the subjects, analyses their diverse aspects and the scientific debate that binds them. In the second part, as in our reviewed paper, the monographs give translated documents, on which the analysis of the historian is based when examining further issues. So these are the ideal introductions to the following various topics.

Llewellyn-Jones in his edition focused on the Achaemenid royal court. This is not unique work recently. Within the last years, a number of monographs and collections have been written either on the issue of royal courts in antiquity, or even directly on the Achaemenid royal court. As so, in 2007 a collective monograph *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* was compiled by A.J. Spawforth. B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger compiled an extensive insight into the topic in a collective monograph *Der Achämenidenhof/The Achaemenid Court*, which came out in 2010. A collective work entitled *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity* is dedicated to the elements representing the royal power, including the royal court, which was compiled in 2010 by G.B. Lanfranchi and R. Rollinger. The author of the reviewed publication, Llewellyn-Jones initiated in 2013 with A. Erskin and S. Wallace the work on a monograph entitled *The Hellenistic Court*. In spite of these works many issues remain unresolved, opened or not completely reviewed. This monograph reviewed by us may offer something more in this direction, and in addition, compared to those mentioned, also offers basic source material. Of course we are not going to deal with the source materials and take a look only to the theoretical part, and we are going to look at it more specifically, and only dedicate to some of the problems.

The theoretical part is divided into an introduction and five chapters. In the introduction the author defines what he means under the term royal court. He reviews it comprehensively, recognising its political and propagandistic functions. We have to agree with the fact that the court did not only include the nobility linked to the ruling dynasty, but also the people of lower social status, who, however, were able to some extent, affect the monarch himself. As an example, I give Democedes in Darius' court,

even though his story may be just Herodotus' adventurous fiction. Democedes was originally brought to the Royal Court as a slave, but thanks to his medical services managed to push so high up in the hierarchy of the court that he became the creator of events that followed in the court. When defining the royal court the author has also covered the issue of its existence, as he creates his own idea of the functioning of the Court, and the presence of the monarch therein, whilst the very existence of it is determined by the existence of a sovereign royal residence. In doing so, the author emphasises the importance of the royal residence, which symbolises the function, and, in particular, the presence (though not physical) of the royal court. Royal palaces and parks as well without doubt, embodied the royal government even in the king's absence. Whereas the Persian Court was crucially determined by more developed royal dynasties, the author did not miss the issue of the formation of Achaemenid court and the royal traditions. From our point of view, he completely failed to recognise the alternation of the two dynasties in ancient Persian history, when the Teispids were replaced by Achaemenids. In comparison with other monarchs, the growth of the Babylonian influence on the courtly traditions can be observed mainly during the reign of Cambyses. He administered Babylon from the year 538 BC., as the official successor to the throne and after taking over the government, he made his presence in Babylon, so the local customs had to have had a large influence on him. Darius and his successors in turn reflected mainly Elamite elements; nevertheless, the author put little effort in presenting the shift of these effects in the changing of dynasties.

In the first chapter, titled *The Great King and His Men* the author mainly focused on the ideology of the king's reign. An important part of the king's legitimisation was the name of the monarch. The author points this out, but again, from our perspective, he ignores the alternation of dynasties. During the rule of Teispids, other names were used than during the Achaemenids. Therefore, none of the Achaemenid monarchs is called Cyrus or Cambyses, the author, however, is astonished over the fact that the name Cyrus appears so rarely, what is caused by the alternation of dynasties and some specific elements as well. The author further examines the determinants of the succession to the throne. Acknowledged that in choosing a new monarch his mother could have some importance, and as an example refers to Herodotus' Atossa, who had a large contribution to the onset of Xerxes, but in this example he also draws attention to W. Henkelman's well-known argument about Herodotus' version of Atossa. From our point of view, in this case, it is not possible to compare Herodotus and the Fortification tablets, because these two are different in character. In addition, Atossa is not identified with certainty in the tablets, and even if her identity as Udusana was proved, it would be difficult to guess how her position in court would have looked like, just from these two tablets. After all, Atossa did not need to manage her possessions herself, but through the court officials. Also, in these tablets the officer Parnakka is mentioned more often than king Darius, however, the position of the King was by far more significant. In this chapter the author addresses the interconnection between religious ideology and the status of the monarch, the status of various officials and their title. In this context, but also in other cases, whereas the source base is quite limited, the author, while analysing, gives a variety of examples from other periods of the ancient Near East, or well-known sources regarding other realms. The question remains, however, if this approach is

methodologically bearable, because explaining the duties of ancient Persian kings' security guard based on the Hittite document *The Instruction of the Royal Bodyguards* can create a highly skewed idea. Special divisions of Persian kings played a role of communications as well, and represented the King himself, to a great extent, but the extent, to which you can compare the features of people this close to the King at two completely different royal courts, is debatable. The author, regarding the personnel of the Royal Court, focuses on the often debated issue of eunuchs. To this day the question of whether their name in the Persian court is their title or a generic indication of the castrated remains unresolved. But we can, however, add the author's conclusion to this debate: '*It would seem odd to write the Achaemenid Eunuchs out of a world history of castraty*' (p. 39).

In the second chapter, entitled *Pomp and circumstance: the Monarchy on display*, the author discusses the royal ceremonies and etiquette. He also emphasises the important function of presenting the court outwards, since all ceremonies and court activities have played a pre-calculated game in royal communication between the court and the surrounding world. The author compares the royal court with a theatre, in which the king and his courtiers take the roles of actors, and transmit to the audience their own vision of reality. One can only agree with the author's assertion that the courtly ceremonies can be seen as the language of royal policy, articulating the king's message outwards, to the rest of the population. Then he analysed the various elements that are involved in this communication in detail. He devoted considerable space to architecture, and also the relief portrayal of kings.

In the third chapter *The Great King in his Empire: The Movable Court* we encounter important issues relating to the size of the Empire, lists of preserved countries in texts of royal inscriptions and the movement of the royal court in these areas. He perceives this movement of the court as a part of a long Iranian nomadic tradition. He follows A. Hourani's definition of tribes: '*Nomadic people were led by chiefs belonging to families around which there gathered more or less lasting groups of supporters, expressing their cohesion and loyalty in the idiom of common ancestry, such groups are usually called tribes.*' (p. 80). The Achaemenid clan, being the most important of the tribe Pasargadae in the meaning of this definition, was surrounded by a network of supporters in the court, presented by leaders of other major clans. The court in this arrangement moved like a classic Iranian nomadic tribe. So, in the spring and autumn the court left its palaces, and moved on, and by the winter and summer moved into new, climatically favourable areas. The movement of the court, likewise the nomadic tribes was motivated by several factors, not only economic, however, but also administrative and political. The problem we can see with the application of this model is the hard-to-evaluate nomadism of the monarchs. It is described by the authors of antiquity, but those, in principle, follow Xenophon's didactic novel about Cyrus the Great, and it is not clear how much this Xenophon's element corresponds with reality. For example, Herodotus in relation to the Court only mentioned Susa, and it is obvious that Cyrus II. focused on the construction of his capital city, of Pasargadae, and we can assume that Cambyses before his expedition to Egypt mainly stayed in the west of the Empire, whereas here he had to gather the army, navy, supplies for the expedition, so the nomadism of some monarchs clearly did not correspond to the defined model.

Nomadism itself is disputable, but the Persepolis tablets suggest it, so it cannot be rejected.

In the fourth chapter *Harem: Women and the Royal Court*, the author besides the various aspects of women's status and their types in the royal court, focuses on the concept of the harem. In contrast with Maria Brosius, who totally skipped the term of harem in her work *Women in Ancient Persia*, he rehabilitates it. However, he uses the term without the usual pejorative overtone: '*Scholarship needs to rise above and beyond the cliché and recognise that the harem, in the light of not having an Old Persian term which survives, the harem is the most appropriate term to use to describe the domestic make up and the gender ideology of the Persian court inner.*' (p. 102).

In the fifth chapter *The Pleasures and Perils of Court Life* the reader learns about the king's entertainment and joy, such as banquets and hunting. The author, however, did not only describe these phenomena, but also pointed out their social propagandistic importance. Finally, he pointed out the threats and dangers of court life. The King and his courtiers faced intrigues, conspiracy, and ancient Persian history often tells us of palace coups.

The work as a whole offers the reader a comprehensive package. It is an ideal introduction, while it guides the potential reader to literature, or refers directly to sources. With its composition, consisting of theoretical and source parts, mainly serves university needs, but can be recommended to the general public as well. Issues relating to the criticism of the sources are discussed in the theoretical part, so that the reader on first contact with them is not immediately forced to search for the additional literature. We must therefore reiterate that the book, as well as the entire edition, in which it is published, provides a remarkable and extremely useful resource in the advancement in expanding the latest knowledge on the various topics about the antiquity.

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