wurde dies wichtiger. Eine wichtige Rolle spielten gleichfalls die Freilassungen in der Kirche, wobei auch hier dadurch keineswegs Abhängigkeiten verschwanden.


Zeugnisse für Sklaven und Sklaverei sind vor 425 zahlreich, und sie bleiben es danach. Ob diese Evidenz es nötig macht, die Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der Spätantike so stark von der Sklaverei her zu beschreiben, darf man bezweifeln. Die Phänomene sind vielfältiger und komplexer, auch was die Sklaverei selbst und die Formen der Unfreiheit und der Wirtschaft angeht. Doch eine Darstellung der spätromischen Sklaverei ist hochwillkommen. Die Aufladung des Buches mit den Suggestionskraften emphatischer Bilder, so einer als modern geschilderten globalisierter heitlichen Spätantike mit dem Wein als Psychopharmakon par excellence, einer aggressiv ausgelebten Sexualität und einer blühenden Wirtschaft, die dann zusammen mit dem Imperium im Kollaps endete und einer Vielzahl von Gesellschaften mit Sklaven Platz machte (508f), ist zumindest anregend. Wirklich beachtlich sind die meisterhaften argumentativen Durchgestaltung des Buches (die aber nicht leicht wiederzugeben ist und m. E. letztlich verfehlt ist), der Sinn für abstrahierende Generalisierungen (in Auseinandersetzung immer wieder mit Moses Finley, dem Verfasser des bekanntesten Buches zum Thema der Sklaverei) und die Beherrschung des umfangreichen Quellenmaterials.

Zürich

Beat Näf


M. Rahim Shayegan (= S.), Assistant Professor of Iranian at the University of California (Los Angeles), has recently published a book on political ideology in Arsacid and Sasanian Iran. S. here offers a new and provocative look at ancient Iran – an engaging and vibrant piece of historical writing. What is novel is his sustained application of arguments on political ideology based on a variety of sources. S. is concerned to contest widely-held views about the nature and sources of Iranian political concepts. The first sentence of the ‘Preface’ specifies
the topic: «The present study proposes to examine the political ideology of the early Sasanian empire.» The author promises to «look not only at Sasanian and Roman relations, but also at Arsacid precedents» (p. XII). However, a browse through the book shows that despite this announcement, it is not the ideology of the Sasanians, which is treated as a marginal issue, but selected aspects of the history and ideology of the Arsacids, Achaemenids, and the Pontic Kingdom that make up the book’s main subject. In his ‘Conclusions’ S. admits that, as regards Sasanian political ideology, «we have not indicated what it was» (p. 371). In the light of these remarks S. seems to have had difficulties with the precise definition of the scope of his study, and this uncertainty is patent in the book’s arrangement and content.

S. maintains that the Arsacids became «aware of their ancestors mainly through the intermediary of their Babylonian subjects (…), but also through interactions with the Pontic kingdom of Mithridates VI Eupator» (p. XII–XIII). In other words: «The Arsacid political ideology was given shape by two cultures,» i.e. by Babylonians and Pontos (p. XIII). This hypothesis is reiterated throughout the book. Similarly the Sasanians owed their remembrance of «Achaemenid grandeur» to «their interplay with the Roman nemesis» (p. XVI).

Emphatically, S. is a highly qualified researcher, characterised by a high level of erudition; to give a taste of its flavour, I might mention the chapters like ‘Sasanian epigraphy’ (p. 5–29) and ‘Classical sources’ (p. 30–38: the testimonies of Cassius Dio, Herodian and Ammianus Marcellinus on the expansionist policy of the Sasanians), giving a detailed discussion of the sources. S. makes an apposite observation that «the Achaemenid boundaries claimed by Ardaxšîr and Šabûhr II in Ammianus Marcellinus’ narrative» are merely «literary topoi» and that the aim the Sasanians pursued was to gain control of Armenia and occupy Mesopotamia (p. 38).

These two brief chapters are followed by a disproportionately large Chapter 3, entitled ‘Arsacids and Sasanians’ (p. 39–307). It contains a collection of analyses, most of which are insightful and stimulating but scattered over a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from ‘Titles of Achaemenid rulers in Babylonian documents’ to ‘The Alexander image in the Šahrāne.’

S. rightly points out that the Babylonian cuneiform tradition preserved the Achaemenid heritage, but his claim that Babylonian scholars «alone in the ancient Orient possessed an uninterrupted link to the Achaemenid past» (p. 292) is an exaggeration. There was also a strong tradition of Aramaic writings which gave rise to the Parthian script known from the archive in Old Nisa. Another flourishing tradition was the Greek legacy; after all, some Parthian kings, including Orodes II or Vardanes, may have read Herodotus and similar works in the original.

The main part of S.’s book is a ‘Survey of Seleucid and Arsacid history,’ embracing the period 141–76/75 BC (p. 60–306). S. makes use of his earlier, very good publication on the Seleucid Demetrios II (2007). His account of this stretch of the history of Parthia is highly proficient and accurate, but it is immediately obvious that for some unknown reason he has omitted the period of the early
Arsacids, ca. 247–141 BC. Was what happened before 141 irrelevant for Arsacid political ideology? It was the period in which Arsaces I (247–217 BC) and Mithradates I (ca. 165–132) reigned – two outstanding monarchs whose achievements are testified to by their coinage and written sources (see M.J. Olbrycht, *Parthia et ulteriores gentes*, München, 1998, 51–85; idem, ‘Mithradates I of Parthia and His Conquests up to 141 B.C.,’ in: Hortus Historiae. Studies in Honour of Professor Józef Wolski on the 100th Anniversary of His Birthday, ed. by M. Dzielska et al., Kraków 2010, 229–243).

In his discussion of the passage by Poseidonios of Apameia on Seleukos invading Media, and later kept in captivity by Arsaces (Edelstein, Kidd, Posidonius, F. 64, p. 146–148), S. does not mention the important hypothesis that this may refer to Seleukos II and his expedition of ca. 230 BC., as J.D. Lerner has written (The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau. The Foundations of Arsacid Parthia and Graeco-Bactria [Historia. Einzelschriften, Heft 123] Stuttgart, 1999, 33–43). Very insightful is the subchapter on Elymais and Characene (p. 77–120).

S. treats Mithradates II of Parthia and his predecessors as rulers with no far-reaching political ambitions. According to him the title ‘King of Kings’ known to have appeared on Babylonian documents as of 111/110 BC, «was re-introduced by Babylonian scholars» after a series of conquests, including Armenia (p. 244). Why should such a ground-breaking reform have been carried out by Babylonian scribes, and not the Arsacids themselves? S. gives free rein to his imagination claiming that Babylonian scribes enjoyed «literary freedom», and hence their initiative (p. 291). There are no grounds for such a hypothesis. S. has problems when he tries to determine the sources which the Babylonian scribes used for their hypothetical reform. He soundly observes that the title ‘King of Kings’ never occurred in the economic and legal documents of Achaemenid Babylonia (p. 47). Hence he suggests a Babylonian literary tradition, basing his argument on a not very lucid passage from *Chronicle 8*, which is a singular and controversial case (p. 46–49).

Here in his main discussion S. passes over a key issue – the introduction of the title ‘King of Kings’ on coins minted in Iran under Mithradates II (details in Olbrycht, *Parthia*, 103–104). He glosses over the appearance of this title on the coins (p. XIII), but draws no conclusions from this fact. In Parthia, coinage was the official medium for the propagation of the royal ideology. The use of the title ‘King of Kings’ on coins issued in Iranian mints including Ecbatana (from ca. 110–100 BC), and Mithradates II’s introduction of a new high tiara were carefully planned measures (for details, see Olbrycht, ‘Parthian King’s Tiara – Numismatic Evidence and Some Aspects of Arsacid Political Ideology,’ *Notae Numismaticae* 2, 1997, 27–65, not cited in the book under review), and these facts demolish S.’s hypothesis on the special role of the ‘Babylonian scribes’ and the claim that the title ‘King of Kings’ was not consciously used by Mithradates II himself. Changes as paramount as these in the ambient titles manifest both in the Babylonian texts and on the coinage could not have occurred unless they came about on the monarch’s initiative and under the supervision of his ministers.
The next controversial issue is the hypothesis that Mithradates VI Eupator (120–63 BC), king of Pontos, was «the first Iranian prince who (...) consciously emulated the Achaemenids» (p. 244). The tenuousness of this hypothesis, for which there are no grounds, rests in the fact that S. has ignored the history of Parthia prior to 141 BC. Arsaces I’s use of the title ‘karanos’ (*kârana*) on his coins was a glaring reference to the Achaemenid tradition. In the post-Achaemenid era ‘karanos’ became a symbol of the continuance of the tradition of Achaemenid glory. Characteristically, apart from Arsaces I, the title was used by a ruler of Persis. By then it must have evolved to mean an independent ruler not subject to any superior authority. Arsaces was deliberately placing himself above the office of satrap. But at the same time he refrained from using a royal title on coinage, as this would have put him within the Seleucid tradition, which he firmly rejected in many aspects. Neither does S. demonstrate how Eupator, king of Pontos in Anatolia, could have ‘galvanized’ the Achaemenid tradition in Arsacid Iran. This is one of the most vulnerable points of S.’s argument. Facts of paramount importance contradict such a hypothesis. S. claims that Eupator assumed the title ‘King of Kings’ in 88 BC (p. 244). But the title appears only sporadically for Eupator, as S.’s own analysis shows (note 767 on p. 228). Significantly, the title does not occur on his coinage, although it was present on the coins of Mithradates II of Parthia long before 88 BC. So who influenced whom? Finally S. completely ignores the mechanisms governing relations between Parthia under Mithradates II and Pontos under Mithradates VI Eupator. Close relations between Pontos and Parthia were initiated prior to 102/101 BC. In that year, a heroon dedicated to Mithradates Eupator was erected on Delos. Inscriptions in the heroon name several individuals including two Parthian officials – envoys of the great Mithradates II, here called ‘Great King of Kings’ (*IDélos* 1581–1582. Cf. *SEG* 36, 1986, 741 – S. does not mention this inscription). Thus we have evidence that at a time when Eupator did not use the title ‘King of Kings’ the epithet was being attributed to the king of Parthia. The Delos inscription is a clear sign of the direction of ideological influence – from Parthian Iran to Pontos, and not vice versa. Hence S.’s ‘Pontic’ hypothesis proves to be groundless.

Achaemenid tradition, which the Parthians indeed used on many occasions. However, it should be observed that alongside the Persians Tacitus also enumerates Alexander and the Macedonians. Perhaps this double declaration may be attributed especially to the political tradition of Media Atropatene, which Artabanos II (ca. 10–40 AD) had ruled before he won the throne of Parthia. He was a relative, or at least a kinsman, of the Atropatids, the reigning dynasty in Atropatene for three centuries until the times of Phraates IV. This house owed its origin to Atropates, a loyal satrap of Darius III (336–330 BC), later Alexander’s faithful governor and general. Atropates’ daughter married Perdikkas (Arr. anab. 7.4.1), who became regent on Alexander’s death. Thus already Atropates, the founder of the dynasty, combined both the Iranian and Macedonian political and cultural traditions. We can find the same pattern in Tacitus’ account of Artabanos II. This episode shows that Alexander’s image in Parthian Iran was not simply negative, but that there were also groups who saw him as one of the great rulers of Iran who could be referred to in situations of conflict with Rome – a foreign power.

S. thinks that «the Achaemenid revival» under the early Sasanians was «the byproduct of the imitatio Alexandri» used by the Severi in Rome (p. 361). Here yet again the Iranians are presented as passive imitators of foreign ideas. S. is surely right to stress Iran’s capacity to assimilate foreign inspirations but Iran’s genuine contribution is something that he tends to sideline rather than incorporate into his picture. S. emphasises «the unexpected strength of the Sasanian war machine» (p. 368). But Ardashir I’s victories against Rome were meagre compared to those won by Artabanos IV (AD 213–224) of Parthia. Shapur I won spectacular triumphs, but they were associated with Rome’s exceptional weakness after 235 AD. At no point in their history did the early Sasanians try to capture and hold new territories west of the Euphrates, not even Syria, on a permanent basis. In this sense the objectives of the early Sasanians were the same as those of the late (western) Arsacids such as Artabanos IV.

The volume is a stimulating read, but occasionally themes could be developed at more length. For example, «The large-scale invasion of Asia Minor under Urūd II» (p. 292–293) misses the fundamental point that the invasion was also directed against Syria and Palestine, and during it the Parthians took Jerusalem, an event of great importance for the history of Iran and the Jews.

To conclude, we have to say that on the one hand Shayegan’s book is remarkable for its erudition and the detail into which its deliberations go; but on the other hand it is disappointing for its contradictions and defects in methodology and partly the way the sources are analysed. His fundamental hypotheses regarding the role of Babylonian scribes and Pontic ideology turn out to be insupportable in the light of the available sources. His treatment of Iran as such a passive entity comes as a surprise – as if Iran could never have been the place of origin for new political impulses and programmes. It is hard to understand why he omitted important developments and entire periods in the growth of the Iranian ideology, especially the early Arsacid period, 247–141 BC, but also the period of Vologases I (AD 50/51–80). It is here that one of the most serious weaknesses of the book lies. Some of S.’s sub-chapters are preliminary outlines that give the impression of being unfinished. By and large, M. Rahim Shayegan proved better as a master of the short study than of the comprehensive monograph. But I do not wish to end on a negative note. This learned book marks a significant contribution to the study of ancient Iran offering a multitude of insights into source evidence and intercultural links in the history of Western Asia. It is a genuine hope that Shayegan will return to the problems treated in his book to be extended and refined.

Rzeszów

Marek Jan Olbrycht


Konventionell betrachtet erscheint das Thema gewaltig: das Mäandertal war jahrtausendelang dicht besiedeltes kulturelles Kerngebiet und ist seit über einem Jahrhundert außerdem ein Zentrum archäologischer Feldforschung; das hat zu einer unübersehbaren Vielzahl von Veröffentlichungen geführt, deren Bibliographie allein wohl kaum zwischen zwei Buchdeckel passen würde. Allerdings zeigt sich der kulturelle Reichtum der Region nicht zuletzt auch darin, daß es noch immer viele Orte gibt, die archäologisch bislang nicht erschlossen sind.

Hier setzt T. an und nutzt die weißen Flecken auf der archäologischen Landkarte, um die Region noch einmal so zu erfassen wie zuletzt im 19. Jh., mit antiken und byzantinischen Autoren an Stelle von archäologischen Führern, sowie mit Münzen und Inschriften als wichtigsten Zeugnissen der materiellen Kultur. So ist es T. möglich, neben den Münzen vor allem romantische