

Philip Egetenmeier, *Zwischen zwei Welten. Die Königsfreunde im Dialog zwischen Städten und Monarchen vom Jahr der Könige bis zum Frieden von Apameia (306–188 v. Chr.)*, (*Hamburger Studien zu Gesellschaften und Kulturen der Vormoderne* – 13), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2021, 326 pp.; ISBN 978-3-515-12996-1

An important element of the socio-political life of the Hellenistic monarchies was the royal *philoï*, a group of dignitaries forming the inner circle of the kings' advisers from whom they chose their ministers, counsellors or the people to whom they entrusted diplomatic missions. Ivana Savalli-Lestrade's<sup>1</sup> outstanding study compiling and ordering what we know about this group of dignitaries and constructing a prosopographic catalogue of them has led to increased interest and further studies. An important contribution to this collection is the work of the young scholar Philip Egetenmeier, a printed version of his PhD dissertation defended in 2020. As its title indicates, the author's subject was the role of *philoï* in the relations between Hellenistic rulers and Greek cities, the titular two worlds, in the period between 306 and 188 BCE.

The author's selected chronological framework is rather obvious, bracketed at one end by the moment when the institution of king appeared in the Greek world after the death of Alexander the Great, and at the other by the Treaty of Apamea, which concluded the period of the Hellenistic rulers' absolute formation of political relations in the world under their authority. The Treaty of Apamea, which ended the stranglehold of the Seleucid Empire, gave Greek cities the opportunity to appeal to the arbitration of Rome, whose growing position in the Greek world left the Hellenistic rulers with increasingly limited room for manoeuvre after 188 BCE.

The author's main objective is to examine the role of *philoï* in the kings' policies towards cities, attempting to answer the question of how they contributed to the development of relations between these two worlds and how they constructed, changed and continued them.

The book comprises an introduction ("Einleitung," pp. 11–27) presenting the research objectives, the state of research, the structure of the book and the methodology the author uses, and five chapters. The first ("Der Dialog zwischen Stadt und Monarch," pp. 28–68) discusses the most common forms of dialogue between kings and cities (royal letters, honorific decrees), the conventions associated with this dialogue and the communication strategies employed. We know which practices were used in this respect from numerous

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<sup>1</sup> *Les philoi royaux dans l'Asie hellénistique*, Genève 1998.

epigraphic sources, which give an idea of the course and intensiveness of this dialogue since this was how the rulers of Greek cities preserved the associated documents.

In Chapter 2 (“Königsfreunde in Quellen und Forschung,” pp. 70–103), the author discusses various issues concerning this group of dignitaries, whom he refers to as the royal *philoï*. These questions include that of the sources, especially epigraphical, in which *philoï* are mentioned, their place and functions in the rulers’ court, and their court titles. The author uses the concept of “royal friend,” but his understanding is slightly broader than the usual one, including among the *philoï* not only court dignitaries, but also high officials of the royal administration and military leaders as well as representatives of the local elites with close relations to the rulers.<sup>2</sup>

The tasks and roles played by the “royal friends” are described in Chapter 3 (“Königsfreunde als Mittler: Aufgaben, Rollen, Erwartungen,” pp. 104–175). The most common ones included diplomatic missions. As the king’s personal envoys, they personified his majesty and will. Yet the missions designated to them were not confined solely to the domain of contacts between rulers. In many cases, they also had the duty of settling local disputes, which was an important element of the king’s officials marking his influence and presence among his subjects. They acted as advocates to rulers for particular cities, of which they may have been citizens, protecting their interests in the court. The *philoï*’s activity concerned not only the public sphere, but the religious one too. Acting as the king’s agents, they gave financial support to the operation of selected temples or religious events important for the subjects. The cities showed their gratitude for auspicious resolution of their issues by rewarding *philoï* with the privilege of proxeny. Owing to the large number of problems with which cities approached the king, it was not only “royal friends” who had the opportunity to act, but also representatives of the royal administration, commanders and people from the urban elites.

Expressing gratitude for services to the city, be it to its own citizens or outsiders, had long been a widespread practice in the Greek world. It was also continued during Hellenistic times. The author presents the forms of this gratitude shown to people who merited it with their activity in the royal service in Chapter 4 (“Der Lohn der Mittler,” pp. 176–211). This gratitude was shown both by kings and individual cities, and could be either symbolic or material. It was most commonly expressed by cities in the form of honorific decrees in honour of benefactors and an array of city honours including bestowal of citizenship and award of fiscal privileges. The nature of these honours depended, however, on the individual cities’ capacities and various other circumstances, depending on the status of the person being recognised. *Philoï* who were citizens of a particular city were honoured differently from those without citizenship. Meanwhile, kings could honour deserving collaborators with court titles, various valuable gifts, and in special cases also land grants. Cases are also known of certain city honours being combined with those received from the king, which brought the recipients numerous additional benefits.

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<sup>2</sup> P. 103: “Aufgrund der verschiedenen und wechselnden Einsatzfelder am Hof und außerhalb davon, wird dieser Untersuchung ein relative breiter Begriff von ‘Königsfreund’ zugrunde gelegt. Dieser vereint unter sich das obere Stratum (1) der Hofgesellschaft, (2) der Angehörigen der territorialen Verwaltung und des Heeres sowie (3) der lokalen Eliten, welche erkennbar und deutlich in Interesse von Königen handelten.” Cf. also p. 100–101.

The final chapter (“Präsentation, Integration und Erinnerung,” pp. 212–240) examines the issue of the ways in which the memory of the *philoí*’s accomplishments was preserved. This usually took the form of honorary decrees and statues. These were supposed to present the services of those honoured, showing their context and inscribing these figures in the local history. The material from which the statue was made was important, as was its size in comparison to others in the vicinity and the place in the public space where it was erected. Equally important was the content of the inscription, since the way in which “royal friends” were honoured was tantamount to an expression of gratitude for their deeds received from the king. Such honours were not only an important element of the dialogue between cities and monarchs, but also an integral part of the cities’ histories.

The main part of the book ends with a concise conclusion (“Schlussbetrachtungen und Ergebnisse,” pp. 241–247). The author devotes a separate, comprehensive appendix to the question of the use and meaning of the expression *διατρίβων παρὰ τῶι βασιλεῖ* (“Appendix: Der ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΩΝ ΠΑΡΑ ΤΩΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ,” pp. 248–278). This first appeared in documents from the time of Antigonus Monophthalmus and Demetrius Poliorcetes, and before the time of Antiochus IV appeared several dozen more times in inscriptions from various cities of Greece, the Aegean Sea islands and Asia Minor (cf. pp. 276–278). Scholars disagree as to the rules for its use. Some argue that it characterised the collaborators of kings who had not only enjoyed this status. The source analysis conducted by the author leaves no doubt that the context of the use of the term does not provides any basis to treat it as an indicator of the duration of this function, since it undoubtedly refers to “royal friends,” as proven by the fact that both expressions were used simultaneously to refer to the same person in various contemporaneous documents.

To sum up, one can say wholeheartedly that Ph. Egetenmeier’s book provides an important contribution to knowledge on the place and role of the important group of royal dignitaries in the structures of Hellenistic states. The author gives an insight into elements that have hitherto been somewhat marginalised in scholars’ attention, but above all he demonstrates their role in the period of the history of the Hellenistic world when they were actively and very effective building and shaping relations between the rulers and Greek cities.

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