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Jeffrey Spier, Timothy Potts, and Sara E. Cole, eds.,
Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World.

Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2018. Pp. 360. Cloth
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There may be no subject matter better at inspiring people of all ages to visit the museum than ancient Egypt. *Beyond the Nile* is the publication of the Getty's first exhibition in its "Classical World in Context" series, intended to counter-balance the predominantly Roman and Greek material in the museum's collections by presenting the Mediterranean as a wide, connected region, focusing on cultural interaction, trade, and artistic influence. Eventually, the series will produce exhibitions featuring Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Levant, the Central and Eurasian Steppes, and South Asia. Egypt is the ideal starting point—not just because of its intrinsic appeal, but because the last few decades have seen a wealth of scholarship exploring the impact of the very interconnections that the exhibition explores, not only as evidenced by material culture but as reflected in the most canonical texts of antiquity (e.g., the path-breaking work of Ian Moyer and Susan Stephens on Herodotus and Hellenistic poetry, respectively). One result is that this volume may be less well situated to shape the field than will future exhibitions in the series, for much more has been done on Egypt's relationship with Greece and Rome than has been done for other areas. Yet this volume is uniquely positioned to set the stage: it aims to convey difficult ideas to the public at large, thus establishing the value of looking beyond the capital cities of Athens and Rome to contact zones and peripheries.

The book is beautifully produced. It is broken into four sections: "The Bronze Age", "The Greeks Return to Egypt", "Ptolemaic Egypt", and "The Roman Empire." Each section includes critical essays that offer historical and political background, followed by catalogue entries for the objects in the collection. The essays are brief, but even so manage to incorporate many images of material not on display in the exhibition but of crucial importance to the topic. The essays are written by experts, and most would serve well as an introduction for undergraduate students, though it should be noted that some suffer from rather sparse footnoting of relevant sources. A few stand out because they offer fresh vantage points, or give accessible, concise overviews of material that can be difficult for students to find in English.

Although the essays are too many to acknowledge individually, Henry P. Colburn's discussion of the cities of Naukratis and Memphis, Thomas Landvatter's piece on Alexandria, Luigi Prada's treatment of multicultural language use in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, and Laurent Bricault's useful presentation of the cult of Isis will all find their way onto undergraduate syllabi.

The catalogue entries are the heart and soul of the volume. Here, readers familiar with the topic will enjoy large-scale, color images and clear discussion of many famous objects, but will also be surprised to see material that is less well-known. The catalogue rewards repeated scrutiny. The objects are chosen so that they speak both to issues of artistic influence and trade, and also to the lives of those living in Egypt and beyond in the periods covered. So, for example, there is a funerary stele carved (and originally painted) in Egyptian style, but engraved with the name of a Carian, who was living in Egypt at roughly the same time Greeks were hired there as mercenaries in the 6th c. BCE (cat. 59). There is a monument to a humble Roman soldier perhaps stationed in Luxor (cat. 146), and a gold signet ring inscribed with the name of Antoninus Pius in the hieroglyphic script, intended to be used by officials during his regime (cat. 144). Most of the material is organized by period and genre (*e.g.*, "Greek Pottery in Egypt," cats. 62-65), accompanied by short essays that interpret the material and present relevant issues. Particularly worthy of praise is the decision to present some material as whole assemblages or by findspot (*e.g.*, Abydos Tomb 416, cat. 24-37).

There is little to fault in the volume other than missed opportunities, particularly given the goals of the "Classical World in Context" series. The second section, "The Greeks Return to Egypt" (72-89), is significantly shorter than the others, with only 30 supporting catalogue entries. This is unfortunate, in part, because the period from 700-332 BCE will be of crucial importance to some of the future exhibitions planned for the series, if the goal is to view trade and interaction as a broad phenomenon that brought many regions into an expansive network. Further, the way that this section is structured means that this period is seen only through the lens of interaction in the eastern Mediterranean. The flow of Egyptian goods to places as far as Etruria and Sardinia is mentioned only in passing. Only one Etruscan object is included in the catalogue, and that example was selected for its mythic subject matter rather than its cultural context (cat. 75, a Caeretan hydria featuring the myth of Busiris). There are just two essays in this section, and an additional essay detailing the place of Egyptian goods in extended networks would have been welcome—all the more so because the place of Etruria in pan-Mediterranean networks is an area in need of more scholarly attention, and it would have been an opportunity for

the volume to break new ground. Particularly germane would have been objects that show how ‘international’ the production of luxury objects was becoming in this period, such as ostrich eggs that likely made their way to the Mediterranean along Egyptian trading routes, were painted in Cyprus, and finally interred as prized possessions in Etruscan tombs (e.g., British Museum 1850, 0227.9, from the “Isis Tomb”, Vulci).

In sum, the catalogue is a rich trove of material, presented in a way that will engage all manner of readers, from the specialist to students to those with merely a passing interest in the place and people of Egypt in the Classical period. I heartily recommend it to any university or community library.

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Jonathan L. Ready,
*The Homeric Simile in Comparative Perspectives: Oral
Traditions from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia.*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 336. Cloth
(ISBN 978-0-19-880255-6) \$90.00.

In this book, Ready examines an impressively wide range of modern oral traditions as a prelude to explore two speculative questions about Homeric performance, one concerning possible criteria for performative competence, the other concerning the artistry of Homeric similes. The modern material includes quotations from and scholarly discussion of Turkish minstrels, Chinese (prosimetric) storytellers, and Egyptian singers of epic to identify what constitutes “competence in performance” (56) and studies of epics from India, Indonesia, modern Kyrgyzstan, and Serbo-Croatia, as well as lyrics from Saudi Arabia, to consider the artistry of the Homeric simile.

For this reviewer, the first chapter is the weakest and not essential for the subsequent chapters. In it, Ready makes the claim that similes in Homer and modern oral traditions share a number of formal qualities, most notably that two or more similes may appear in a series and that the similes’ tenor may come before or after