

of the Qur'ān» (pp. 765-792), hace un nuevo reclamo de interpretación, en este caso del Corán, para adaptar el género del *tafsīr* a los nuevos tiempos.

La obra se completa con un índice de nombres propios (pp. 793-815) aparecidos en los diferentes trabajos.

La publicación de este volumen sobre la historia de la teología islámica, del que debemos destacar la labor de Sabine Schmidtke como editora, permite adentrarse no sólo en el desarrollo de la misma, sino también en sus bases doctrinales. Estamos ante una obra de referencia para el estudio de la teología islámica que será un manual tanto para los estudiantes como para los investigadores.

LOURDES BONHOME PULIDO
Universidad de Córdoba

WIPSYCKA, Ewa, *The Alexandrian Church. People and Institutions*, «Journal of Juristic Papyrology» Supplement XXV (2015), 490 pp. ISBN 978-8393842544

The present book is the outcome of a lifetime's engagement with the study of the institutional history of the Alexandrian church by an author who is considered as the leading scholar in her field. Throughout her career, Ewa Wipszycka has endeavored to familiarize her students and interested readers with the complex structures that built up one of the most important divisions of Eastern Christianity, namely the Egyptian Church and the Patriarchate in Alexandria. Wipszycka accumulates in this publication wisdom gathered in half a century of impeccable scholarly labor.

The venue hosting this latest outcome of her research constitutes also in a manner of speaking a crowning achievement for a longstanding collaboration. For "The Alexandrian Church. People and Institutions" is the 25th out of 27 volumes that have been published to date as supplements to

the prestigious Journal of Juristic Papyrology (JJP), where Wipszycka can certainly feel like home: The first supplement of JJP appeared in 2002 and it was a collection of *Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by Their Disciples*. Bravo and Wipszycka have been mentors of many of the members of this most productive group of papyrologists based at the University of Warsaw. Wipszycka has also published in 2009 one more book as supplement 11 in JJP, namely *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte, IVe-VIIIe siècles*, and she has also co-edited one more JJP supplement volume (nr. 8 in 2007). Finally, since her first article in the main series of JJP in 1965 (vol. 15), Wipszycka has contributed with at least one paper (under her authorship or co-authored with Adam Łajtar) in 20 out of the 30 volumes that have appeared since (she was absent in 1983, 1990, 1991, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2014) and she has been the chief editor between 1990 and 2001.

These links are explicated in the dedication of JJP supplement 25 (p. v): “This book is offered to all of those who met on Thursdays at the Taubenschlag Library of the University of Warsaw, joyfully and to great effect throwing themselves upon altar of scientific critique”. The careful reader will notice some instances where the author anticipates questions and addresses them herself, only to reply in a manner as if indeed she were in a casual conversation at a seminar room; for example in p. 140: “Similar demands for undergoing procedures of verification were undoubtedly made to all bishops of the patriarchate (was this done in writing? I suppose so).” One can argue that this is the writing and lecturing style of Wipszycka, and my experience from reading closely the JJP supplement 11, as well as hearing her lecturing at the Warsaw Conference of Papyrology in 2013 confirms the idea.

However, there are some points that are harder to explain, and I will list them below:

1. Precisely because the author belongs to this unique category of savant(e)s, quite often this knowledge is allowed to be presented without explicit references or argumentation. Let me give a couple of examples: p. 41 § 1, on the impression of whether the laura of Epiphanius could host a bishop with his retinue; pp. 108-109, states that “the *katholikai ekklesiai* were modeled on the autonomous churches which evidence shows were functioning in the neighborhood of Alexandria,” but does not cite the evidence; pp. 321-324, the author leaves uncommented the most intriguing passages, like the question of *oipe*-measures in pp. 321-2; p. 327, the opening phrase of the sub-chapter where she will discuss the question “what do we know and what do we not know about the liturgical service?” begins with the paradoxical statement that “almost all of what we know refers to mass, but of course mass was not the only form of cult”.

2. Another issue that I find hard to understand is the choice of which original texts (in Greek) are presented fully with transcriptions and editorial notes (like in pp. 312-313) and which are not (the vast majority of cases). Similarly, the choice of language in the translations puzzles me. A couple of times both the original text and a translation are provided (e.g. pp. 46-47 in Latin and English and pp. 226-227 in Greek and English), but more often than not only the translations are given, which again are as a rule from an era when religious texts ought to be rendered in as archaic English as possible.

3. A frustrating problem for the student of Wipszycka is that there have been left out of the indices important key words. This fact hinders the reader from retracing information that is needed for profiting from all the knowledge that has been accumulated in the more than 400 pages of text. An example is the term “reader”, which is needed in the index so as to be reminded the reasons behind Wipszycka’s suggestion in p. 332 that there could not have been more than three in a church of

an *epoikion*. Otherwise, it is impossible to remember this detail unless someone is really interested in the specific topic and makes systematic notes while reading through the whole text.

4. Another obstacle for the smooth reading of the 25th supplement of JJP is that not all the individual chapters have been structured in sub-chapters: such as can be found in Chapters 1-3, 5, 11, and 14, but are sadly absent from the rest. The reasons for this become even more perplexing when one sees that the topic of each group of pages is set as header in the top margin of these pages.

5. Last but not least, it should be stressed that although this is a study of the papyrological evidence for the institutions of the Alexandrian Church, it is wisely complemented by related evidence provided by the archaeological record. However, only one of the four moments that this happens in the book seems to me appropriate: the papyrological record of material church treasures from Coptic Egypt is nicely complemented by the hoards that are hosted at the Coptic museum in Cairo (Chapter 13). The three other sections of this book do not fit, in my opinion, with the overall goal of the monograph. I am referring to the entire Chapter 14, where Wipszycka elaborates on “The Case of Ptolemais in Cyrenaica” without really showing how the otherwise very interesting information gathered here relates to the institutional reality of the Alexandrian Church. What is more, Chapter 11 closes with two Appendices that each should have been brought together with one of the two aforementioned chapters, namely Appendix A “Chosen Examples of Churches in Egyptian Cities, Towns and Villages” with Chapter 14, and Appendix B “Lighting of the Churches’ Interior” with Chapter 13 (strangely, the latter is in fact authored by another person, namely Tomasz Górecki). The reasons behind these choices elude me.

These critical comments are, however, insignificant drops of sharp remarks in a sea of observations deriving from a deep knowledge of the sources. They are only there to confirm what Wipszycka herself admits in p. 415: "...at the end of this book, I would like to examine my conscience and tell to what extent I have managed to fulfill the initial declarations. The weak points of my discourse are more than enough visible to me. As a rule they result from the state of the sources...", about the value of which she aimed to instruct her readers. It is difficult to argument against such an attitude: one needs to read in depth all the available sources (presented with clarity and comprehensiveness in Chapter 1), in order to be able to dare attempt the reconstructions that Wipszycka elaborates in her book.

In every single chapter, there is thoroughgoing discussion of the related sources, improvements of details that clear the perception of the 'big picture', and support the author's views about topics of primal or secondary importance for the history of the Alexandrian Church, Egyptian Christianity, as well as the Early Christianity of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. A very good example of this is Chapter 3: *The Great Persecution in Egypt: New Sources, New Hypotheses*. There, Wipszycka builds upon some recent discoveries and studies (mainly by Alberto Camplani and Annick Martin), amends on specific documents (see Appendix C in pp. 99-105), and provides an updated view about the distance between the lived experience of the majority of the Christians during the time of the persecution and the collective memory, as it is documented in the sources.

The more impressive the way these details change the overall apprehension of a phenomenon for Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, like the Great Persecution, the more the reader remains at want for all that cannot be done to a comparable degree for the later centuries. It is a problem of the source

material, and we've seen Wipszycka admitting this. Is there a way out of this impasse? In my opinion, this lies with the examination of the sources in Arabic from Egypt and the rest of the Caliphate. Coincidentally, the first time that Arabic papyrology was so highly profiled in a Congress of Papyrology was in Warsaw in 2013, the proceedings of which will also be published as supplement to JJP. This is not the only manner in which JJP supplement 25 looks to the future.

It looks to the future mainly as a repository of Wipszycka's wisdom. Very few persons in the world have studied so deeply a topic of history as Wipszycka has studied the institutions of the Alexandrian church. However, since no institutional body only consists of its institutions, there has been left ample space for other sorts of approaches to the constituent elements of the Alexandrian church, like its ideology (both secular and religious), its liturgy (either as seen through the texts used or the cult practiced), its formation "on the ground" (object of an ongoing and fruitful archaeological research along the Nile, in the adjacent deserts or by the Red Sea), its relation with other Churches subordinated to the Alexandrian hierarchy (i.e. Ethiopia and Nubia) and so on. The success of the future generations of scholars will have a hard task to compete against predecessors of the importance of Ewa Wipszycka, but she has left a definite reference for all those who will attempt to contemplate and analyze early Egyptian Christianity from the height of the shoulders of such a giant of the discipline.

ALEXANDROS TSAKOS
Universitetet i Bergen

ZELYCK, Lorne R, *John among the Other Gospels. The Reception of the Fourth Gospel in the Extra-Canonical Gospels* «Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament» 2, Reihe 347,