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978-1-107-01113-7 - The Family in Roman Egypt: A Comparative Approach to Intergenerational Solidarity and Conflict

Sabine R. Huebner

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THE FAMILY IN ROMAN EGYPT

This study captures the dynamics of the everyday family life of the common people in Roman Egypt, a social stratum that constituted the vast majority of any ancient society but rarely figures in ancient sources or in modern scholarship. The private letters and the census returns that survive among the rich papyrological evidence from Graeco-Roman Egypt provide us with a wealth of information on these people not available for any other period or region of the ancient Mediterranean. The book discusses such things as family composition; the differences between urban and rural families; obligations of parents and children; choice of spouse; postmarital residence patterns; widowhood, divorce, and remarriage; the role of the daughter-in-law; adoption and fosterage; and provision for old age. The study analyses what can be ascribed to cultural patterns, economic considerations, and/or individual preferences by setting Roman Egypt into context with other traditional patriarchal societies where families adopted such strategies to deal with similar exigencies of their daily lives.

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*A Comparative Approach to Intergenerational
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SABINE R. HUEBNER

Habilitationsschrift, Freie Universität Berlin 2010



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
 Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107011137

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First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Huebner, Sabine R., 1976–

The family in Roman Egypt : a comparative approach to intergenerational solidarity and conflict /
 Sabine R. Huebner.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01113-7

1. Families – Rome. 2. Rome – Social conditions. 3. Rome – Social life and customs.
 4. Rome – Civilization. I. Title.

HQ511.H84 2013

306.8509456/32-dc23

2012040129

ISBN 978-1-107-01113-7 Hardback

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Preface

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the many individuals and institutions without whose considerable support this book would not have been written. This book was accepted as a *Habilitationschrift* at Freie Universität Berlin in November 2010. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the members of my *Habilitation* committee, Ernst Baltrusch, Roger Bagnall, and Winfried Schmitz, for their endorsements and detailed comments on the manuscript. I am especially grateful to Roger Bagnall for his continuous guidance, unwavering support, and encouragement over the years and for the inspiration that his own work has often provided. I would also like to thank Glen Bowersock, Brent Shaw, and Mireille Corbier for their generosity in carefully reading and meticulously commenting on drafts of chapters. Over the years, Ernst Baltrusch, Walter Scheidel, Raffaella Cribiore, and Walter Ameling have been invaluable sources of general advice, insight, and encouragement and I am sincerely grateful to them. Finally, I should not forget to thank the anonymous readers of Cambridge University Press for their most diligent perusal: their comments were a tremendous source of help and inspiration when redacting the final version of the manuscript.

Many thanks also go to my colleagues and friends at Columbia University, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, UC Berkeley, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for their active interest and helpful discussions. Special thanks go to David Ratzan, Anna Boozer, Graham Claytor, Jinyu Liu, and Richard Payne for their unfailing support and constructive criticism. I presented preliminary results and works-in-progress of this study at various institutions and conferences in the USA and Europe, and I am grateful to all (too many to acknowledge) who provided valuable and thoughtful comments. I am grateful to Mireille Corbier, Isabella Andorlini, Jinyu Liu, Joshua Goldstein, Roberta Mazza, Katariina Mustakallio, Hartwin Brandt, and Walter Scheidel for invitations to present aspects of this study in the form of seminars and workshops at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, the Università di Parma, DePauw

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University, the Max-Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, the University of St. Andrews, the Università di Bologna, the Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, Bamberg University, and Stanford University.

My deep thanks also go to Elizabeth Bulls, Bärbel Trettler, and Marian Zelazny for handling all of the administrative tasks on my research grants. I also would like to thank Terrie Bramley for proofreading the manuscript, and Karen Downing, Kirstie Venanzi, and Gabriella Hoskin at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton for locating various books for me.

I also wish to thank a number of institutions for their generous financial support that enabled me to undertake the present work: the European Commission for a three-year Marie-Curie Research Fellowship at Columbia University and Freie Universität Berlin, the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for a one-year research grant at Columbia University, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) at New York University for a one-year visiting fellowship, and the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, where I spent the spring semester of 2010 as a Member at the School of Historical Studies generously supported by the Herodotus Fund.

Special thanks go to my editor at Cambridge University Press, Michael Sharp, and the members of his team Joanna Breeze and Elizabeth Hanlon, who were extremely helpful, kind, and efficient at all stages of production. I am also grateful for the sharp eye and intelligent advice of my copy-editor, Merle Read. I dedicate this book on the Roman Egyptian family to my own Roman Franco-German one, my two little girls, Nina and Marla, and Stéphane.

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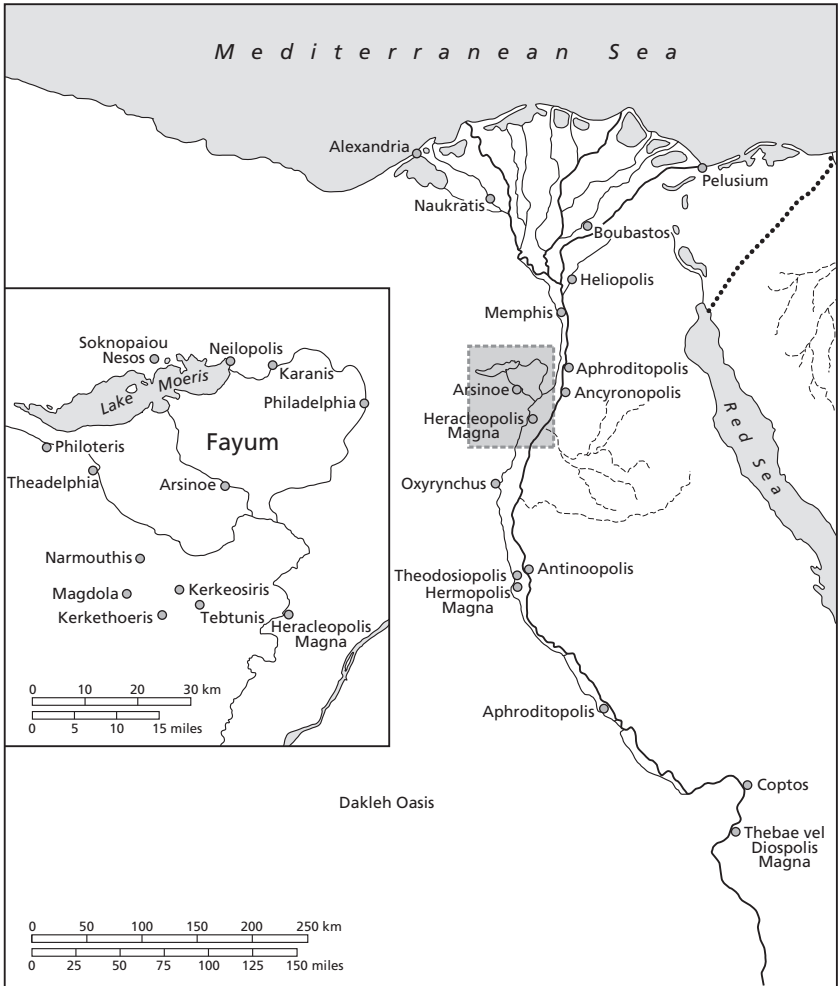
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