



Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt

John Bauschatz

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This book examines the activities of a broad array of police officers in Ptolemaic Egypt (323–30 BC) and argues that Ptolemaic police officials enjoyed great autonomy, providing assistance to even the lowest levels of society when crimes were committed. Throughout the nearly 300 years of Ptolemaic rule, victims of crime in all areas of the Egyptian countryside called on local police officials to investigate crimes; hold trials; and arrest, question and sometimes even imprison wrongdoers. Drawing on a large body of textual evidence for the cultural, social and economic interactions between state and citizen, John Bauschatz demonstrates that the police system was efficient, effective, and largely independent of central government controls. No other law enforcement organization exhibiting such a degree of autonomy and flexibility appears in extant evidence from the rest of the Greco-Roman world.

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