

## Preface

The papers collected in this volume have their origin, with one exception, in a British Academy Symposium entitled 'Land, Settlement and Agriculture in Egypt from Pharaonic to Modern Times', which took place at Christ Church and St Antony's College, Oxford in March 1996. The present editors were also the organisers of the Symposium and are particularly grateful to Michael Sharp for his assistance with the many administrative tasks involved. To the papers presented at the symposium we have added the chapter by Dorothy Thompson on Irrigation and Drainage in the Early Ptolemaic Fayyum. There are two reasons for doing this. First, it fills an important gap in the range of subjects presented at the symposium and adds much of direct value and interest to the collection. Second, it offers a good opportunity to make available to a wider audience a revised and augmented version of a paper to which relatively few scholars working in the field of Egyptian history would have easy access. We are grateful to Fahlbusch and to the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage for permission to republish.

Thanks are due, first and foremost, to the British Academy for meeting most of the costs involved and for the efficient and friendly organisational skills of Rosemary Lambeth, without whom the event would never have taken place. The Governing Body of Christ Church and the Director of the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Dr Derek Hopwood generously supported us by making their facilities available at reduced or non-existent cost and the Middle East Centre offered a subvention in addition. We are also extremely grateful for generous grants to the Boards of the Faculties of Literae Humaniores and Oriental Studies, the Craven Committee, the Inter-Faculty Committee for Modern Middle Eastern Studies and the Management Committee of the Griffith Institute, all within the University of Oxford.

The symposium was attended by approximately thirty scholars from universities in the UK and elsewhere. Their contribution to the discussions, both formal and informal, cannot be acknowledged individually but was invaluable and is much appreciated by the editors of this volume. For comments on drafts of Chapter I we are grateful to several of the contributors and to Professor R. S. Bagnall, Dr W. Clarysse, and Dr D. W. Rathbone. Professor J. R. Baines and Dr Jaromir Malek have also responded generously to various enquiries on points of detail.

Finally we are grateful to James Rivington, the Publications Officer of the

British Academy, for his patience and assistance in helping to bring this publication into existence. We hope that it reflects the enjoyment and the profit which many of the participants gratifyingly claim to have derived from the symposium.

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April 1997