

YET MORE COMPARATIVE STUDIES

M. H. HANSEN (ed.): *A Comparative Study of Six City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre.* (Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter 27.) Pp. 144, maps, ills. Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters/C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 2002. Cased, DKr 200. ISBN: 87-7876-316-9.

As readers of *CR* will already know, the Copenhagen Polis Centre (CPC), under whose auspices this volume is published, has two main aims: first, to compile a comprehensive inventory of all known archaic and classical Greek *poleis* attested in contemporary sources; and secondly, to spot and describe all identifiable city-state cultures in world history. These unashamedly bold goals have been set out in a stream of publications from the CPC. Within this stream, a sharp focus on the Greek *polis* (see, for example, T. H. Nielsen [ed.], *Yet More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* [Copenhagen, 1997]) is complemented by the broad cultural and temporal range of the wider enquiry (see, for example, M. H. Hansen, *Polis and City-State. An Ancient Concept and its Modern Equivalent* [Copenhagen, 1998]). This breadth was most forcefully demonstrated in M. H. Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (Copenhagen, 2000), hereafter *30 CSC*. This volume outlined the aims of the comparative element of the CPC project, and gave precise definitions and methodological justifications (esp. pp. 1–34, 597–623). The volume under review here is a supplement to *30 CSC*, providing six more case-studies, working with the same definitions and justifications.

Detractions from the methodologies of the CPC project, including those of *30 CSC*, have been outlined in the reviews of its publications (*CR* 48 [1999], 465; *CR* 51 [2001], 312–14), within the contributions to *30 CSC* itself (Glassner and Collis), and in the wider literature (G. M. Feinman and J. Marcus [edd.], *Archaic States* [Santa Fe, 1998]). These criticisms are pre-empted and strongly rebuffed by H. in *30 CSC* (pp. 598–600); and the benefits and potential of comparative analysis, despite the pitfalls, are well established (for a recent overview, see C. Lorenz, *History and Theory* 38 [1999], 29 n. 10).

The first city-state culture in the supplementary volume is that of Sumeria. Westenholz shows, with an excellent section on the interpretive problems of the data, that from c. 2500–2330 B.C. each Sumerian city-state was governed by a ruler with political and administrative duties, and that these states were united in a loose confederacy.

Thuesen's study of neo-Hittite city-states adds nuance to the traditional view that disintegration and a Dark Age followed the collapse of the Hittite empire in c. 1200 B.C. Through the study of nine neo-Hittite kingdoms, by way of a very useful survey of the evidence, Thuesen argues that there was continuity of rulers in the former Hittite centres, which, in turn, became the basis for a new political structure.

The survey of the archaeological evidence for urbanization during the period between 540 and 360 B.C. in Lycia (Marksteiner) shows that early indigenous Lycian towns were not *poleis*, but were based on local Anatolian traditions; they did not become *poleis* until the Hellenization of the region.

In the region of Bènizàa, Oudijk concludes that city-states operated within a dynamic system of interdependency while maintaining political, administrative, military and 'ethnic' autonomy. At the same time, these states were part of an inter-regional network of Mesoamerican city-state cultures.

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In his examination of south-west Germany, Forsén argues that it is possible to identify ‘free and imperial’ cities in the city-state culture that develops during the fourteenth century A.D. and continues until c. 1800.

Toffin’s analysis of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal documents the division of the Malla dynasty kingdom in A.D. 1482 into three small kingdoms, each with a fortified city and associated territories.

Gat’s contribution marks a departure from the case studies by asking why city-state cultures should emerge at all. He sees the reason lying in the need for defence, as small peasant communities in areas without large-scale territorial unification coalesced to seek protection against raids from similar neighbouring groups.

Together, these contributions shift the balance of some of the conclusions reached in *30 CSC*. In terms of the evolution of the city-state, for example, the evolutionary model of cultures moving from pre-state to state societies is further challenged. In other areas, these case studies confirm the findings of *30 CSC*, for instance in identifying city states as forming clusters.

Two of the six studies here represent a return to areas already covered in *30 CSC* (Sumeria and Germany). For Sumeria, the author in *30 CSC*, Glassner, sceptical of the applicability of the concept of city-state to Sumeria, concluded that the region should rather be considered one of ‘*petits états*’. In order to ‘balance’ (p. 11) this view, H. commissioned the present contribution. For Germany, Johanek cautiously argued in *30 CSC* that no clear line could be drawn between the ‘free and imperial’ towns (city-states), and territorial towns. In this present study, Forsén side-steps this ambiguity by concentrating exclusively on the south-west German city-state culture. Though these revisitations may seem like an attempt to ‘correct’ earlier dissonant voices, the inclusion of both ‘versions’ provides interesting (historiographical) material in itself (cf. Lorenz, op. cit.); it is to the credit of the wider collection that these comparative studies remain so pluralistic.

Christ’s College, Cambridge

VEDIA IZZET

TEXTS ON DEMOCRACY

E. W. ROBINSON (ed.): *Ancient Greek Democracy. Readings and Sources*. Pp. xiv + 326, maps, ill. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Paper, £17.99/US\$34.95 (Cased, £60/US\$69.95). ISBN: 0-631-23394-6 (0-631-23393-8 hbk).

Sourcebooks for ancient Greek history have for the past 120 years made accessible to students a wide range of the ancient sources used in the reconstruction of history. Robinson’s hybrid reader and sourcebook aims also to introduce to the undergraduate critical analysis of the secondary bibliography of ancient Greek democracy. The book is divided into six chapters, each dealing with one broad aspect of democracy. The chapters each consist of R.’s paragraph-long introduction to the subject, followed by a handful of translated passages from ancient Greek authors on democracy. These are followed by two or three essays on the themes by modern scholars. R. provides a short modern bibliography at the end of each chapter.

R. opens with five pages of introduction, and whets the reader’s enthusiasm for this ‘astonishing and compelling invention of the ancient Greeks’. He sets out his ‘basic premise’ of ancient democracy, which, in his opinion, shares with modern democracy

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