

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

ZUIDERHOEK (A.) *The Ancient City*. Pp. xiv + 225, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Paper, £18.99, US\$29.99 (Cased, £59.99, US\$99.99). ISBN: 978-0-521-16601-0 (978-0-521-19835-6 hbk). doi:10.1017/S0009840X1800046X

This clearly-written, stimulating book provides a profile of Greek and Roman cities useful for a broad audience of general readers, students and specialists, both in Classics and in comparative urbanism. The author is an ancient historian; topics presented focus on social, economic and political matters, aspects of ancient urban life attested in large part in written sources. The bibliography, prefaced with a useful 'bibliographical essay', is thorough and up to date, with a focus on works in English (duly noted). Controversies in scholarly discussions are often explored in some detail, with Z. adding his own conclusions. This aspect gives the book a particular appeal: the reader is invited into lively debate and inspired to think more about these points of dispute. As an archaeologist, I was curious as to how Z. would evaluate the contributions of different types of sources, material as well as textual, to our understanding of the ancient Greco-Roman city. Even if he does not ask this particular question per se, Z. seems comfortably open to the testimony of material remains. But an exploration of archaeological evidence and urban theory is not the main intention of this book.

The first chapter, a preamble to the text proper, explores larger issues that have been important for the study of Greek and Roman cities. It starts, though, with a red herring. Quotations concerning ancient Mexican and traditional Hausa cities suggest a comparativist approach. Not true. In the next chapter, despite a nod to early cities in Mesopotamia (with a reference to V.G. Childe's seminal article of 1950) and the Bronze Age Aegean, Z. firmly places us in the cultural and chronological frame of the study: the Greek and Roman worlds from the eighth/seventh centuries BC into Late Antiquity.

After the comparativist opening, Chapter 1 examines the following questions. First, what is a city? Z. combines two strategies, one emic (focusing on settlements Greeks and Roman considered to be *poleis*, *civitates*, *municipiae* or *coloniae*), the other etic (settlements that scholars consider to be cities). Second, was there an ideal type, 'the ancient Greco-Roman city'? Z. tracks this controversy through the works of N.D. Fustel de Coulanges, M. Weber and, especially, M.I. Finley. He notes the long-standing Eurocentric interest in defining the ancient city as a foil against which the distinctive trajectory of western Europe from medieval to modern can be examined. Third, the traditional focus on the Greek *polis* as emblematic of the ancient city is criticised. Z. is interested in non-*polis* forms of organisation, too, and will explore the many types of associations that made up the participatory aspect of the ancient Greek and Roman city. The important contribution of M.H. Hansen and the Copenhagen Polis Centre is acknowledged; like Finley, Hansen reappears later in the book.

Chapter 2 explores the origins and spread of the Greco-Roman city. Z. begins with a stimulating discussion of the genesis of the 'two central defining features': the city as a community of citizens and its characteristic physical form with fortification walls, an agora or forum, temples and cemeteries (typically placed outside the habitation area). In Greece, elements of these social and material features are already present in Homer, dated here to the later eighth century BC, even if mixed with references to earlier periods. Such textual indications, when combined with archaeological research, indicate two phases

for the formation of the *polis*: ‘crystallisation’ in the ninth and eighth centuries BC, followed by ‘formalisation / integration’ in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Comparable developments are tracked in Italy. The role of population growth in these changes is queried, with no sure answer given. The early *polis* and *civitas* are seen as the result of a ‘compact’ between elites (comparatively weak) and mid-level peasant-landowners, that is, farmer-soldiers; the communal space, the agora / forum, is the symbol of this consensual society. The chapter concludes with remarks on the spread of the Greco-Roman city. Three waves are identified: c. 750–550 BC; the foundations of Alexander the Great and Hellenistic monarchs; and the foundations of the Roman Empire.

The next chapters examine various aspects of ancient city life. Chapter 3 treats the relation between the city and the countryside (villages, farms etc.). Chapter 4 surveys the urban landscape, the physical appearance of Greek and Roman cities. Among the remarks on demographic issues, I would have welcomed a paragraph on how ancient urban populations are estimated.

Politics and political institutions are the themes of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 examines how civic ritual fostered civic identity. The following chapter (7) is devoted to a discussion of social stratification and mobility. Here Z. returns to the Eurocentric question introduced in Chapter 1. The development of western European civilisation, medieval to modern, has been linked with its social structure, particularly the rise of a bourgeoisie. To what degree was ancient social structure different? Did ancient Greek and Roman cities have a middle class? Z. argues for a ‘middling’ ideology, particularly in early periods, represented by the self-sufficient farmer (landowner, hoplite/soldier, head of household, pious and responsible). In Roman times, a large ‘middling’ group (if not class) existed, people leading modest yet comfortable lives, undertaking essential tasks and services, running workshops etc. – although they never constituted a commercial bourgeoisie in the later European sense.

Chapter 8, on the urban economy, further explores issues already touched on. Agriculture vs manufacture and trade; specialisation of occupations; raising revenues, including taxation; and the costs of providing goods and services, such as new public buildings and their maintenance, and assuring food supplies are treated. In the final section, Z. speculates on the collective economic policies of Greek cities. Did the civic political institutions give a boost to the economy? He thinks yes, even if economic planning in the modern sense was lacking.

The next chapter (9) features an impassioned discussion of whether or not the *polis* (or *civitas*) is to be defined as a state. Is ‘city-state’ indeed a conceptually correct translation of the ancient terms? Z. enters into this controversy in some detail, particularly by tracking the arguments of Hansen vs M. Berent. He concludes that it is best not to call the *polis* and the *civitas* states, but self-governing communities of citizens. But Z. has painted himself into a corner by clinging to a definition of ‘state’ that includes ‘the legitimate use of violence internally’. Since ancient Greek and Roman cities did not have established police forces, Z. is compelled to reject them as states. If Z. had explored definitions of the state, with the help of cultural anthropology, say, and if he had presented an example of a bona fide city-state to compare with the *polis*, this discussion would have been more effective. Despite the intention of Z. to limit references to other cultures, in this instance a comparison with city-states in the Ancient Near East (e.g. Sumer, Middle Bronze Age central Anatolia and Ugarit) would have been fruitful.

The chapter concludes with a consideration of cities after the Classical period. Did the *polis* lose its autonomy? Did popular participation decline? No, asserts Z. Although cities were now part of a kingdom, local autonomy prospered. Relations with the ruler were

symbiotic: in exchange for this autonomy, the city supported the ruler with tax revenues to support military and larger administrative requirements.

The book finishes with a consideration of the end of the ancient city in the fourth–seventh centuries (Chapter 10). Z. views this disappearance not as a decline, but rather as a transformation. As a general pattern, cities lost their autonomy, with the authority of city councils for administrative and fiscal matters gradually supplanted by centrally appointed governors, curators and *defensores*. With Christianisation, benefactions were no longer the contributions of wealthy citizens to the general welfare of their city but, instead, charitable gifts directed to the poor – activities supported by bishops, increasingly powerful agents in urban life. Finally, the appearance of cities was changing. Traditional building types fell into disrepair as the purposes they fulfilled went out of fashion: civic buildings (council houses, theatres, gymnasia, baths) and temples. Public spaces, such as colonnaded streets and agoras / fora, were considered better utilised if filled with shops, houses and churches. Even if these medieval cities might still be vital centres, the political and physical changes they had undergone distanced them significantly from the ancient city.

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CITIZENSHIP IN ANTIQUITY

CECCHET (L.), Busetto (A.) (edd.) *Citizens in the Graeco-Roman World. Aspects of Citizenship from the Archaic Period to AD 212.* (Mnemosyne Supplements 407.) Pp. xii + 341, colour ills, colour map. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. Cased, €115, US\$133. ISBN: 978-90-04-34668-0.

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Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in citizenship, particularly in Roman history. Long assumed to be central to historical developments such as the consolidation of the Roman empire, citizenship was pushed to the margins of research in the 1990s and 2000s as historians focused on the cultural construction of identity and questioned the significance of legal and administrative structures. But the past decade has seen the pendulum of scholarly interest begin to swing back towards institutions such as citizenship, albeit with a new focus on the cultural frameworks that gave citizenship meaning. This edited volume, the fruit of a conference in Urbino in 2014, illustrates the vibrancy of recent work on citizenship in both Greek and Roman history.

C. opens with an introductory survey of regimes of citizenship from Classical Greece to the Roman empire, with particular attention to the differences between Greek *politeia* and Roman *civitas* (following the lines of an influential essay by P. Gauthier, ‘La citoyenneté en Grèce et à Rome: participation et intégration’, *Ktèma* 6 [1981], 166–79). The full and up-to-date bibliography will make this a very useful resource for those new to the subject, while its emphasis on the question of how citizenship was experienced and performed signals the central theme of the volume as a whole.