
One of the characteristic features of the civic landscape of the Roman empire, either senatorial or imperial, was the presence of *municipia*. During the course of a lengthy and thorough introduction (pp. 1-52), Bispham notes, in the course of analyzing modern and ancient definitions of *municipium*, its origins and evolution, that: “One of the tasks of municipalization was to create a public sphere in which overarching administrative structures could emerge as a common unifying factor” (39). If indeed there was a method behind the process then its success or failure may be judged by conditions in Italy as they emerged by the first Principate. The earliest period of municipal development is quite obscure hence the decision (32) to trace the process starting in the period following the defeat of Carthage in 201, but focussing on the years from the end of the Social War, the result of which saw a great surge in the process, and culminating in Octavian’s victory over Antony and Cleopatra which brought its summation.

In Chapter 1 (“Making Italy: *Terra Italia*”, 53-73) B. discusses the concept of a Roman Italy as it emerged in the early third century BC with victory over all possible threats to Rome’s supremacy, delineating the peninsula south of the Po valley and excluding overseas possessions; and that this coincided with Italy as a *provincia* and hence associated with a military administrative desideratum and not necessarily, at first, any cultural connectivity. Its difference to other possessions at this stage therefore was its requirement to feed manpower into the army not extended further afield until the Principate, and even then confined to colonial foundations for veterans from the legions. Chapter 2 (“Roman Italy: The Second Century”, 74-112) concentrates on defining ‘Italy’ in the second century BC, and whether or not it is possible to schematize the situation, however, it is a little risky to posit an “interpretation” (80) as a “fundamental” platform for an analysis of the situation. In discussing *fora* and *res publica* (87-91) some allusion to *agora* and *polis* might have been of use—there are useful references elsewhere to Greek parallels (146). There is much evidence, but not all is specific and sometimes “scrappy” (111), but clear indications are that *municipia* had the rights of a *polis* (112). Chapter 3 (“Allies: Latins and Italians in the Second Century”, 113-60) is concerned with the extent to which there was a Roman imposition of legal practices in the second century BC arising out of the Second Punic War and its outcome; and evidence for the “key institutional elements of municipalization” (142) through, for example, a close reading of the *lex Osca Bantina* (142-52). Chapter 4 (“Municipalization and the Politics of Enfranchisement of Italy”, 161-204) traces the processes by which the allies, of varying categories, were absorbed into the
voting process after the climax of the Social War, and the varying degrees of innovation in this placement which occurred or indeed any stalling that took place. The discussion not unexpectedly focuses on the tribal system of voting, especially since there was presumably a “tight connection between tribal assignments and municipalization” (191), but in terms of political life the most profound changes were surely to be witnessed in the dynamics of the voting in the *comitia centuriata* (cf. 204). This does not draw ancient comment or modern scrutiny, which is surprising since, while allies were obviously allocated into the voting tribes, these were not involved in the election of senior public offices and the influential Italians no doubt craved inclusion in the more august body. These local notables now served in the legions and must have been assigned to the senior centuries from which quite soon came magistrates of Italian origin. In Chapter 5 (“‘Leges dare’ and ‘constituere’: Municipal Charters”, 205-46) B. examines the likely complex-ion of the rules and regulations—the “charters” based on “matrix-laws” (210)—which came to govern the ways in which municipal units functioned “flexible enough to incorporate local tradition along with a significant core of Roman standards” (245).

The contents of chapters 6 to 9 (247-404) are evidently B.’s goal, and form an identifiable core to the study. The spotlight now shifts to the “chief magistrates of the new citizen communities” (246): the quattuorvirate (?) *nude dictus*, the quattuorvirī *jure dicundo*, the quattuorvirī *quinquennales* and other variants, but all “distinguished them from submunicipal entities” (378), and the duovirate—possibly a slightly later manifestation of municipal bureaucracy (404). The evidence for these magistrates is “almost entirely epigraphic” (247) material since it is on this that the information resides. For this discussion, a register of inscriptions, entitled Addendum (473-510), is provided and needs to be used, although this is a somewhat cumbersome exercise, and the various entries could probably have been incorporated in the chapters themselves. Inevitably, here the analysis, often in identifying the persons mentioned on the inscriptions, prosopographical in nature and speculative in direction, becomes a little repetitive (296-7), and the occasional typographical slip or error (e.g. 254, 300-1, 384) also becomes noticeable. Chapter 10 (“*Tota Italia*: Remaking Italy”, 405-46) concludes the study with an assessment of the extent and intensity of the process of municipalization and with it urban growth in the regions of Italy in the aftermath of the struggle for Roman citizenship or freedom by the *socii*, “in Etruria, Umbria and Latium Adiectum was high . . . In areas which had seceded . . . the picture is . . . different” (407). Nonetheless, even if the pace of change was dependent on the level of previous loyalty to Rome, inexorable that change became, and “created a Roman identity for the new citizen communities” (440), as the epigraphic voice, albeit imperfectly preserved, clearly enunciates.