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**Sabine Panzram (ed.), *Städte im Wandel: bauliche Inszenierung und literarische Stilisierung lokaler Eliten auf der Iberischen Halbinsel: Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums des Arbeitsbereiches für Alte Geschichte des Historischen Seminars der Universität Hamburg und des Seminars für Klassische Archäologie der Universität Trier im Warburg-Haus Hamburg, 20. - 22. Oktober 2005. Geschichte und Kultur der iberischen Welt; Bd. 5. Hamburg/Münster: Lit, 2007. Pp. vi, 400. ISBN 9783825808563. €39.90.***

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**Reviewed by Danielle Slootjes, Radboud University Nijmegen**

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Scholars are often highly specialized in one particular field and time period. The aim of the international colloquium, *Städte im Wandel. Bauliche Inszenierung und literarische Stilisierung lokaler Eliten auf der Iberischen Halbinsel*, held in 2005 in Hamburg, was to bring together different specialists for an interdisciplinary approach. A group of ancient historians, archaeologists of the Classical and Early Christian periods, engineers, medievalists, Islamic specialists and historians of the early modern period investigated the cities of the Iberian Peninsula, from early settlement in the eighth-seventh centuries B.C. through the 1700s. Literary sources, inscriptions and material culture were at the centre of their discussions, and the results of many archaeological expeditions of recent years have also allowed for much more comparative research between cities. The results of their papers are presented in fourteen articles in this volume, edited by Sabine Panzram.

For an understanding of the functioning of the cities and their *Stadtbild* (defined by Panzram as the concretion of social structures and cultural value systems in a specific era) two themes were chosen as the main threads throughout the volume. First, there is the investigation of the architectural settings of cities, which helps to understand the defensive, administrative, social and economic functions of these cities (p.3). Analysis of individual monuments furthers our understanding of these functions. Second, an examination of the positions and (self-)representation of members of the local elites is another way to perceive the functioning of cities. The ways in which local elites are presented in literary and other written sources such as inscriptions are valuable for such an examination.

The first article, by Niemeyer on the early Phoenician settlements on the Iberian peninsula can be considered as an introduction to the other articles and the two main themes. Although Niemeyer concludes that the early settlements should not be seen as exemplary or prototypical for the later cities, it does make sense to start out a survey of the cities in the region with a discussion of its earliest settlements. The other essays in the volume are then presented in three parts: nine articles on the Roman period between Republic and Late Antiquity; two articles on the period between the Conquista and the Reconquista (711-1492); finally two articles on period of the Spanish Golden Age (1492-1700).

The section on the Roman period is the most extensive and central part of the volume. Pina Polo's article opens the section by concentrating on the early involvement of the Romans on the peninsula. He shows that the ancient evidence does not allow us to go so far as to speak of a master plan by the Romans by which they alone dictated the development and urbanisation of the region. The events that led to changes in the region should also be connected to a change in mentality of the local inhabitants. The following five contributions each focus on a particular part of a region, a city or even monument for a thorough investigation. The joint article by Abascal, Almagro-Gorbea and Cebrián discusses the process of monumentalization in Segobriga, which acquired the status of *municipium* with Latin Rights in 15 B.C. The urban changes after this upgrade led to many energetic activities of the local elite and show how the city became important within its region. Haley concentrates on fiscal and administrative issues in Baetica to show how cities and individuals functioned within a province which was known for its prosperity. In an examination of the elites in the *colonia* Patricia, Ventura Villaneuva attempts to reconstruct a particular day in the lives of its inhabitants. Ventura Villaneuva follows Annaeus Seneca on the day of arrival of the proconsul Publius Petronius Turpilianus in 8 B.C. when the provincial oath of loyalty to the emperor had to be taken. After the oath the season of the *conventus* Cordubensis started off with a first court case in which the famous rhetorician Marcus Porcius Latro appeared. The experiment certainly brings to life the excitement felt on such an important day for the province.

Two articles follow that take the reader into the imperial period and the involvement of the emperors at the local level. Ahrens discusses how the *patria* of Trajan and Hadrian, Italica, after its upgrade to *colonia*, was expanded by the development of the so-called *nova urbs*, an area almost three times as large as the original city. However, despite large building projects, this part of the city turned out to be a too ambitious project as it was given up for mostly unknown reasons by the end of the second century. Ruiz de Arbulo offers an interpretation of the provincial forum in Tarraco, with a particular focus on the actual site from an archaeological point of view. The temple for Augustus, which was restored at the time of Hadrian's visit to Tarraco in 122/123 A.D., was the most significant building in the forum and functioned as a centre for several official activities at provincial level such as court cases of the governor or meetings of the provincial assembly.

After several articles with archaeological or architectural focus, the contributions by Panzram and Mateos Cruz at first sight seem not to correspond as well to the other essays, because they discuss the role and influence of Christianization in Spain in the fourth century. Panzram investigates a specific instance in the development of Christianity: the meeting of nineteen bishops in Elvira in the early fourth century for which the evidence survived as part of the so-called *Concilium Eliberritanum*. Almost half of the 81 *canones* that were decided upon at this meeting dealt with sexual morality. Mateos Cruz, on the other hand, focuses on the process of Christianization and attempts to investigate the ways in which Christianity functioned alongside paganism in the cities in the fourth century, as Mateos Cruz regards this period as one of transition in religious life. He argues for a minimal influence of Christianity on the physiognomy of cities in the fourth century, whereas in the fifth century Christian elements seem to appear in architecture, at least in Spain.

The section on the Roman period ends with Arce's contribution on cities and especially citizenship in the fourth through the seventh centuries for which he discusses the late antique city in Hispania and the ways in which citizens experienced both their city and their citizenship, with emphasis on change and continuity.

The section on the medieval period in Spain opens with an article by Ewert which presents a comparison between three Spanish Islamic cities which are different in many aspects: Córdoba (a religious and political center), Almeria (a port) and Madinat az-Zahra (an imperial residence). As Ewert unexpectedly passed away, his contribution is one that he had published before in a volume edited by Joachim Henning (2002, *Europa im 10. Jahrhundert*). The second article on medieval Spain is by Vones who shows how the kingdom of León can be analyzed as a center of ideological self-representation in the 10th and 11th centuries.

Finally, the part on the Spanish Golden Age consists first of a contribution by Pietschmann on the relation between city and rulership in the 16th century, in which he examines the role of cities, elites and the church in the three Christian empires on the Iberian peninsula (Aragón, Portugal, Castile). Particular attention is given to the revolution of the Castilian cities (*Comunidades*). The final article is by Wohlfeil who investigates in what ways coins can offer a perspective on Spain's history regarding the administration, legitimation and self-representation of rulership.

For whom is this collection of essays valuable? In principle the volume is of interest for all those who are working on the history of the Iberian Peninsula. Also, those who concentrate their work on cities and local elites in other parts of the Roman Empire, Medieval or early modern Europa might find some of the articles worthwhile for a comparison to their own findings as well. However, the uneven distribution of the articles (by far the most the largest part discussing Roman times) makes the volume much more attractive to scholars of the ancient world than those of later periods. I even wonder to what extent the contributions on Spain of the medieval period and the Golden Age are visible to other scholars of those periods as the title of the volume gives no indication of the inclusion of these periods. If, for instance, someone is interested in numismatics of the early modern Europe, how easily would he or she find the contribution in this volume on that topic? Visibility is key to scholarly work. This seems to be a point to take into consideration for anyone editing a volume with such diverse contributions.