Nadin BURKHARDT **– Rudolf H.W. S**TICHEL **(Hgg.) Die antike Stadt im Umbruch. Kolloquium in Darmstadt, 19. bis 20. Mai 2006. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag 2010, 288 S., 86 s/w-Abb., 13 farb. Abb.**

Since the study of Late Antiquity evolved in the last few decades into an important research topic, several publications have been dedicated to the late antique city, resulting in lively discussions on 'decline' and 'transition'[1]. In line with this evolution Late Antiquity has recently been the central theme of several conferences and workshops, dealing with specific study themes of Late Antiquity as a whole[2], focussing on a particular time period[3] and/or dedicated to well-defined geographical areas[4].

The present volume takes a place among these recent studies. *Die antike Stadt im Umbruch*, edited by Nadin Burkhardt and Rudolf H.W. Stichel, consists of a compilation of the fourteen papers (all in German) that were presented at the homonymous colloquium, organised on 19 and 20 May 2006 by the section 'Klassische Archäologie' at the Technische Universität Darmstadt. Due to practical problems (cf. *Vorwort*) the conference proceedings were only published four years later, in 2010, by Reichert Verlag Wiesbaden.

As indicated by the editors in the introduction (*Einleitung*) urban development in Late Antiquity formed the central topic of the conference and is, consequently, also the main theme of the final publication. Central research questions addressed at the colloquium and in the published volume range from the changes central spaces and streets underwent in Late Antiquity, over the way people dealt with older structures, to the new elements (e.g. newly-developed building types) that characterised the public and private realm. The focus is not only on urbanistic and architectural features, but also on ideological,

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[1] Examples include J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz (2001) The uses and abuses of the concept of 'decline' in later Roman history, or was Gibbon politically incorrect?, in L. Lavan (ed.) (2001) *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, JRA Supplement 42, Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 233-238; M. Whittow (2003) Decline and fall? Studying long-term change in the East, in L. Lavan and W. Bowden (eds.) *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology*, Late Antique Archaeology 1, Leyden, 404-418.

[2] E.g. *Regionalisation and the Integration of the Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, Heidelberg and Frankfurt, 2010; *Shifting Political Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, Penn State University, 2011; *Between Heaven and Earth: Law, Ideology, and the Social Order in Late Antiquity*, Manchester, 2012.

[3] E.g. *ROCT (Roman Craft and Trade) Conference: Production and Prosperity in the Theodosian Age*, Leuven, 2010; *Constantine and the Constantinian Dynasty: The Constantinian Innovation, Its Origins and Development*, Rome, 2013.

[4] E.g. *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Interpreting the Evidence*, Rome, 2012.

political and religious aspects as reflected by individual buildings and building programmes. In addition, the colloquium and proceedings aim at answering the question whether changes in the late antique city were local developments or rather had a regional or even supra-regional character.

The final result of the discussion of these issues is a heterogeneous volume, which lacks balance from various points of view. First of all there is a geographical inequality. Although the editors stress the incorporation of papers dealing with the late antique city in both the Western and Eastern Mediterranean (p. 10), the West, which is – except from some references to Northern Africa – actually limited to Rome and Italy (Ostea, Puteoli, Northern Italy), clearly takes a predominant position with seven contributions (on a total of fourteen) versus four dedicated to the East (Athens in Greece; Ephesos and Blaundos in *Asia Minor*; Palestine). Another discrepancy is related to the type of source material used for the study of the late antique city in the individual papers. Although several authors incorporate literary and/or epigraphical sources in their contributions next to archaeological data, material evidence clearly forms the main source category (twelve papers). As a result, the two last papers, which are discussing written sources, and especially Dietrich's paper on *christliche Festkultur*, give the impression not to be integral parts of the volume, but to form a somewhat disconnected 'appendix'. Apart from this, *Die antike Stadt im Umbruch* is also imbalanced concerning the quality and originality of the papers. Whereas several articles lack depth, others are, in contrast, too detailed. Besides, some contributions are resuming and gathering ideas and data that have previously been published elsewhere by other scholars and have in the meantime become wide-spread opinions. Consequently, more than once the reader experiences a déjà vu.

In the introduction to the volume (*Einleitung*) editors **Nadin Burkhardt** and **Rudolf H.W. Stichel** place the issue of the 'Stadt im Umbruch' within its broader chronological and geographical framework and discuss it against the background of current research on the topic. A short overview of the various contributions in the volume is sketched, summarising the general ideas presented on the colloquium.

After this the actual volume starts with a study by **Hauke Ziemssen** on the changes the city centre of Rome underwent during the reign of Maxentius (***Roma Auctrix Augusti. Die Veränderungen des römischen Stadtbilds unter Kaiser Maxentius [306-312 n. Chr.]***). This contribution, which concentrates on the Imperial interventions of a very specific and short period of Roman history, is the first of a row of seven papers in which Italy takes a central place. Two

large building projects that were realised by Maxentius in the centre of Rome form the focus of the paper: the Maxentius *Basilica* on the *Forum Romanum* and the rebuilt Temple of Venus and Roma near the *Colosseum*. By presenting architectural, numismatic-ideological and urbanistic elements related to these two buildings the author illustrates how Maxentius applied already existing forms and ideas in a new way to the city of Rome. Ziemssen states that Maxentius was in some aspects in line with the Tetrarchs (as e.g. expressed by the titulature and iconography of his coins). On the other hand, he differed from his Tetrarchic predecessors because he applied the idea of rulership and the Tetrarchic ideology on the city of Rome, and not on a newly-created capital. In particular, Maxentius used new architectural shapes (e.g. the *Basilica* of Maxentius, which functioned as imperial reception hall and was thus linked with the large Tetrarchic palace *aulae*) to display his presence in the old capital.

The city of Rome is also the starting point of **Wolfgang Messerschmidt**, who discusses in his paper ***Res publica und Res privata. Repräsentation auf spätantiken Fora im Spannungsverhältnis zwischen privaten Ansprüchen und öffentlichen Anforderungen*** the 'de-urbanisation' and decline of the late antique city by using the *forum* and *agora* as indicators for this complex development. The author combines archaeological evidence, juridical texts and epigraphical documents to point out that privatisation of the public *forum/agora* was one of the most conspicuous aspects in the late antique city and illustrates this by means of the situation at Rome, at Cyrene and in cities of Northern Africa. In late 4th and early 5th century Rome public *fora* reserved for the rulers' representation co-existed with private *fora*, which were – sometimes in previously public areas – built by members of the senatorial aristocracy and functioned as symbols of private representation. In North African cities with double-*fora* (e.g. Mactaris and Cuicul) one of the two *fora* kept its public, representative character for a long time, whereas the other one largely lost its public role by being reduced due to encroachment by private structures. Finally, the example of Ephesos in *Asia Minor* is discussed to illustrate the loss of importance of the *agora* and the shift of attention to the main streets of the late antique city. For this paper the author owes a lot to the study of F.A. Bauer on late antique *fora* in Rome and that of C. Kleinwächter on public spaces in the cities of Northern Africa.

With the paper of **Ulrich Gehn**, ***Spätantike Ehrenstatuen in Italien – Einige Beispiele aus Rom und Puteoli*** the focus is again on Italy, this time with Puteoli and Rome as case studies. The specific topic of statuary display, whose role diminished from the mid 3rd century AD onwards, forms the starting point to underscore some changes and evolutions in the late antique urban landscape. The author discusses in a very detailed way some examples of

statues from Puteoli (*Mavortius* and *Aemilianus*) and points out that in Mid 3rd century AD Puteoli three groups of city dwellers were still honoured as benefactor by the *regions* or entire city with statues and dedication inscriptions: governors, patrons from the aristocratic aristocracy and men with equestrian status from the local upper class. On the other hand, in Rome, where the number of statue attestations for the Post-Diocletian Period was clearly reduced in comparison with the Imperial Period, statues were erected for the Imperial family and for senatorial patrons. The article subsequently includes an excursion on the presence of senators in the urban landscape of Rome and on their luxurious private dwellings, which often formed the framework of senatorial statue display both towards clients and members of the same socio-political class (house of the *Valerii*; statues of the so-called '*Consules*').

The aspect of private housing, which was already touched upon in the paper of Ulrich Gehn, forms the central theme in the next contribution by **Jochen Griesbach**: **Domus** *and villae der Spätantike: veränderte 'Lebensräume' in Rom und Umgebung*. The archaeological evidence for *villae* of the urban aristocracy of Rome indicates that in Late Antiquity occupation activities on *villa* sites diminished and *villae* lost their earlier luxurious and representative character. Apart from Imperial *villae* and some exceptions in the suburbs of Rome, aristocrats seem to have had hardly any interest in maintaining older *villae*. The letters of Q. Aurelius Symmachus confirm this archaeologically attested preference for *villae* in suburbs. The author then points out that, although the late antique senatorial aristocracy in general possessed more real estate than before, only few *villae* attest large investments in the representative appearance of the buildings, since urban houses were considered more important for social representation. This is followed by a discussion of late antique urban *domus* in Rome, which were in large numbers newly built in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries AD and, moreover, started to appear in zones that were previously dominated by public buildings. The paper ends with the role of private church foundations in the context of the *domus* and *villa* from the 5th century AD onwards.

With **Annette Haug**'s paper *Städtische Zentren im spätantiken Norditalien* the focus shifts to the cities of Northern Italy. However, the title does not cover the subject, since the article actually consists of a detailed overview of Aquileia in Late Antiquity, based on archaeological, epigraphical and literary sources. The author starts with identifying Imperial Aquileia as a 'polycentric' city centre, enclosing several centres, each with its own characteristics and functions. By means of a discussion of the 4th and 5th century AD situation she illustrates how Late Antiquity saw a clear change in the meaning and role of each of

these centres, mainly as a result of the growing influence of the Church. Whereas the *forum* of Aquileia was in the 4th century AD still architecturally and functionally in line with the Imperial tradition, it was in the 5th century AD abandoned and excluded from the newly-walled city centre. Additionally, the loss of importance of official institutions (e.g. priest colleges) resulted in the gradual abandonment of the buildings related to these institutions on the *forum*. Commercial activities may subsequently have taken place on other market places, while also secondary centres existed. Apart from the pre-existing centres in Aquileia new centres were created, including a bishop's complex, a new *horreum* and a series of market places. However, as in other North Italian cities especially the construction of cathedrals changed the urban landscape of Aquileia.

In line with the previous paper, *Benjamin Streubel*'s contribution ***Ostia – Entwicklung und Visualisierung der Geländeniveaus im Stadtraum*** offers a case-study of a single Roman city in Italy. His research on Ostia during Late Antiquity integrates the study of level changes within the city and the building history of Ostia based upon published data, recent excavations and his own field work. The general development of the city and its individual complexes is outlined by means of a number of areas within the town. For the occupation phases of each building under discussion level heights, as well as a short occupation history are provided (Macellum and Insula I, x, 3: 1st half of the 3rd century BC to late 4th-early 5th centuries AD; Hercules sanctuary: 1st century BC to late 4th century AD; Magna Mater: Mid 1st century BC to 3rd century AD; Porta Marina: 1st century BC to Severan Period; Area of the theatre: late 2nd century BC to 1st half of the 5th century AD; Via del Sabazeo: Severan Period into the 7th century AD). Unfortunately, rather than pointing out elements of change and continuity in late antique Ostia, this paper gives a general overview of the occupation history of the city, without a specific focus on Late Antiquity. The very specific discussion of individual buildings and differences in the occupation levels throughout the centuries does not really contribute to answering the central research questions of the colloquium and is, consequently, a bit misplaced in this context.

In contrast, the next contribution by **Axel Gering** (***Genußkultur und Ghettobildung: Ist Ostia repräsentativ für spätantike Metropolen?***), which also deals with Ostia, does focus – in correspondence with the conference topic – on the late antique phase of the city. The central question of this paper is whether late antique Ostia can be considered representative for the late antique situation in other cities. Unfortunately, the author's attempt to place Ostia in the broader framework of other late antique cities is very limited (short comparison with Ephesos). Notebooks and photographs of old excavations (esp. 1938-1941) are used to point out the differences between 2nd century and 4th century AD

Ostia. After having listed three main characteristics of change, Gering discusses them one by one more extensively in the second, main part of the paper, which, however, contains a lot of overlap. First, in Late Antiquity the main street of the city, the *decumanus*, was transformed into a public 'showcase' by the construction of porticoes, squares and fountains. Second, whereas in the High Imperial Period various house types had co-existed in the same quarters, late antique Ostia saw the appearance of socially differentiated living quarters. Third, late antique Ostia was transformed from a trade and production centre to a regional amusement and service centre.

In her paper *Nymphäumsräume: Neue Treffpunkte in der spätantiken Stadt* **Andrea Schmölder-Veit** uses a specific, badly-known building type, the 'courtyard fountain'[5] to illustrate social changes in the late antique city. It concerns here publicly accessible roofed buildings or porticoed courtyards with varying ground plans, which were generally closable by doors. Although generally occurring on the main streets of cities, this type of building often had a rather plain facade, in contrast to its rich interior decoration that consisted of water, marble and statuary. The author links the late antique appearance of 'courtyard fountains' with changes that started to take place from the Severan Period onwards. In this time the public *nymphaeum* lost its practical function as deliverer of water for practical use and was reduced to a representative building. In association with social changes in Late Antiquity Andrea Schmölder-Veit explains the 'courtyard fountains' as meeting places for the local elite that were characterised by the same luxurious elements as the *nymphaea* in the private upper class *domus*. They thus took over the function of earlier public baths and latrines. The article ends with a description of the four 'courtyard fountains' that are known thus far, including a description of their setting in the city landscape, dimensions and decoration (so-called *Ninfeo degli Eroti* and the courtyard fontain at the *Bivio del Castro* in Ostia, the courtyard fontain at Sufetula and the one at Ephesos).

With the contribution of **Nadin Burkhardt** (*Zwischen Erhaltung und Gestaltung – Das Straßenbild Athens in der Spätantike*) the discussion entirely shifts to urban life in the Eastern Mediterranean. The author intends to point out elements of continuity and change in the late antique city on the basis of a study of the street network in Athens, considering interventions in the street landscape on private and public initiative as reflections of social developments. In a short historical overview of late antique Athens three main phases are discerned: the last quarter of the 3rd century AD with the construction of the Post-Herulian wall, the re-extension of the city in the 5th century AD and

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[5]   I am grateful to Julian Richard for the English term to identify this particular type of *nymphaeum*.

the 6th century AD with new fortification works, the transformation of pagan sanctuaries into churches and the creation of burial areas within the city. The author then discusses three types of streets: the richly developed main street ('Prachtstraße'), the procession street (Panathenaic Road) and streets within residential quarters. The course of each street is followed and the development of various areas and constructions located between its beginning and end point discussed for the 3rd to 5th centuries AD, which Burkhardt considers from the point of view of city structure still a period of continuity. In a separate section the focus is on the 6th century AD, when new processes, such as the encroachment of porticoes and streets by private buildings and church construction, led to a new urban landscape.

After Greece, *Asia Minor* forms the focus of attention in the two next papers. With **Jesko Fildhuth**'s contribution on the 'Kuretenstraße' at Ephesos (***Die Kuretenstraße in Ephesos während der Spätantike***) street infrastructure is taken once again as an indicator for the developments and evolutions the city underwent in Late Antiquity. The study is based on five case studies taken from the 'Kuretenstraße'. These include three late Hellenistic or Roman monuments that were modified during Late Antiquity: the 2nd century BC 'Heroon', the 2nd century AD Hadrian's Gate and the Hadrian's Temple, dating to the Trajanic/Hadrianic Period. These already existing buildings are confronted with two porticoes that were entirely newly built in Late Antiquity: the 'Kuretenhalle' (second half of the 5th century AD) and the 'Alytarchenstoa' (presumably early 5th century AD). A chronological overview of the late antique building phases of the 'Kuretenstraße' shows that rebuilding and new construction took place over a time period of three centuries, with the main building activity in the 5th century AD. Typical aspects of the late antique building interventions on the 'Kuretenstraße' included the preservation of the appearance and function of older buildings, the addition of extra ornamentation, the increase of the number of fountains and the construction of new porticoes, in order to increase the representative character of the street. Finally, the author touches upon the influence of Christianisation on the urban landscape.

After this contribution dealing with the capital of *Asia*, the paper of **Axel Filges** discusses the late antique and Byzantine situation in the smaller town of Blaundos in *Phrygia* (***Zum Aussagepotential ruinöser Mauern. Bevölkerung und Bebauung im spätantiken und byzantinischen Blaundos [Phrygia]***). The article intends to illustrate that the analysis of surface remains can provide information on socio-demographic and political aspects. After a short overview of Blaundos during the Hellenistic and Imperial Periods, Filges discusses the available evidence for late antique Blaundos and picks out the surface

remains of the city wall, which only included part of the earlier city, and private houses for further discussion. Filges' conclusion that the temple, theatre and aqueduct that were not included in the new city circuit must have got out of function contradicts evidence from other sites where areas outside the reduced walled urban area remained in use. Also his presumption that elite houses were deliberately included in the wall circuit at the expense of lower class dwellings seems odd, given the fact that upper houses continued to be built outside the fortified city area elsewhere. Finally, the author applies some research questions of the conference on Blaundos and confronts the city with the actual research on the late antique city. He states that late antique changes at Blaundos could be explained as the result of the retreat of the city dwellers from public-political activities to non-urban private life (together with a movement to the *chora*).

The paper by **Stefanie Hoss** (***Die spätantike Blüte römischer Thermen in Palästina***) brings the focus to *Iudaea-Palestina*, and appears in the context of the publication as an isolated contribution on the late antique Near East. As the result of cultural and religious elements, such as the ban of human and animal image representation (mosaics, paintings, statues) and the issue of nudeness, public Roman baths appeared in this area mainly only from the late 2nd-early 3rd century AD, when the increasing urbanisation and strong Romanisation of the population allowed their construction. The full development of the Roman bath in this area can thus be considered a late antique phenomenon. The author elaborates on the contemporary Jewish literature, the Talmud, in which information on baths and their decoration (e.g. ban on images) and bathing practices (e.g. *balnea mixta*, women and bathing) is found. This is followed by the presentation of the archaeological evidence for a regional bath type in Palestine that occurred from early Late Antiquity onwards but particularly flourished in the Byzantine Period. During the Byzantine Period baths also became substantial elements of monasteries. This brings Hoss to the late antique Christian literary sources and the Christian attitude towards bathing, which include the condemnation of mixed bathing, bathing for pleasure and *luxuria* in general.

Finally, the last two papers, both dedicated to late antique written attestations, stand a bit on their own in the volume. In his contribution ***Anmerkungen zum urbanen Lebensstil in der spätantiken Stadt: Die christliche Festkultur bei Maximus I. von Turin*** **Holger Dietrich** discusses the religious festivals and feasts of the late antique period. On the basis of available written documents, such as the Roman city calendar of 354 AD and the Church Fathers, the author addresses the questions to what extent late antique feasts and festivities had a

Christian character, which Christian feasts were organised and how Christian feasts related to pagan festivals. The textual sources clearly attest that many Christians kept on being attracted by pagan feasts and festivals. In a reaction to this a Christian alternative was offered by the Church, as much as possible on the same day as the pagan feast. The main part of the paper is dedicated to Maximus, a late 4th-early 5th century AD bishop of Turin, whose sermons contain much information on the feasts of the liturgical year and on Christian customs. The author ends with the general conclusion that a large part of the late antique population was still anchored in the ancient tradition and was a follower of various cults. It would have been good if the practice of – pagan and Christian – feasts and festivals would have been placed better in its urban context in order to illustrate how changes and continuities in religious practice were actually also reflected in city life and the urban fabric.

The last contribution is a – typographically confusing – article by **Matthias Kolbe** on the evidence of late antique *Tyche* sanctuaries (***Historische Quellen zu Tycheheiligtümern in der Spätantike***). The author starts with stating that, although most sanctuaries for local city *Tychai* underwent the same fate as other temples, in some cities the role of *Tyche* continued into Late Antiquity. In Constantinople a *Tyche* temple was even newly built in the 4th century AD in order to place the new city ideologically next to Rome and *Roma*. After this introduction evidence for *Tyche* sanctuaries in Late Antiquity is discussed, with the focus on literary texts (e.g. Caesarea of Cappadocia). The main attention goes to the *Tychaia* of Caesarea Marittima and Alexandria. In the case of Caesarea Marittima iconographical sources, statuary and numismatic evidence help to understand the written evidence. Data on the *Tychaion* of Alexandria are mainly found in the *Ekphraseis* of Libanios and Nikoloas of Myra (second half of the 5th century AD). This section is mainly based on the dissertation of B.D. Hebert on the *Ekphraseis*. The article ends with the question whether *Tychaia* can be identified on the basis of their architectural characteristics, an issue which turns out to be a point of discussion among scholars. In this context the author stresses that the cult of *Tyche* was not always necessarily linked with a monumental building, but could also be performed on another place within the city.

The volume ends with a useful general bibliography, a – rather limited – index, including toponyms, personal names and keywords, a list of illustrations and the actual plates (maps, photographs and drawings) with reference to the belonging contributions.

In conclusion, although the present volume offers a collection of papers that are all individually in a certain way related to the late antique city, the book generally lacks cohesion and coherence due to the heterogeneous character of the contributions. Unfortunately, the book does not entirely meet the expectations a reader has on the basis of the promising and interesting central theme of the conference *Die antike Stadt im Umbruch*.

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