

to the north ripe for the take-over. Unfortunately, I lack the expertise necessary to judge this section, though I am sure it will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. He then provides two chapters explaining why every subsequent attempt at European empire (from Justinian to Napoleon) has failed. However, any historian or archaeologist who picks up this book expecting a detailed discussion of the reasons for the ultimate failure of Rome itself will be disappointed: since for Scheidel the existence of the Roman empire was an anomaly, its disappearance does not require in-depth analysis; and anyway, as he rightly notes, a very great deal of scholarly ink has been devoted to this topic in recent years. In reality, despite its title, this isn't really a book about the 'Escape from Rome' – a more accurate if less catchy title would have been 'Lack of Empire and the Road to European Development'.

Archaeologists in particular will also note that Scheidel, who is clearly not archaeologically inclined, gives the technological and economic developments that happened under the empire short-shrift, spending no time on the remarkable upturn in infrastructure (roads, ports and shipping), the boom of large-scale specialist industries and long-distance commerce, the remarkable spread of agriculture (particularly through complex systems of drainage and irrigation), and the clear evidence of internal economic competition (in the shifting geographical centres of oil, wine and pottery production). Nor does he even mention the economic and technological downturn that occurred in the fifth to seventh centuries: it is certainly true that the fifth century saw the emergence of European polycentrism, but it also saw the beginning of a recession that was to last at least 400 years, and which for a while took the economy of much of Europe back to pre-Iron-age levels of sophistication.

If we decide, with Scheidel, to wholly ignore the period between c. 500 and c. 900 AD, then we might agree that European polycentrism can be seen as a crucial economic, technological and intellectual force. But was this the only way that the developments that gave us the modern world could have emerged? Scheidel is very keen on counterfactuals (at one point even discussing whether China's approach to overseas trade would have been different if the world's continents and oceans were differently arranged), and I think a reasonable counterfactual to European polycentric development can be offered: a Roman empire that persisted, preserving a massive and peaceful single-currency area of commerce, where the free exchange of ideas and internal competition led to exponential scientific and technological development long

before this actually took off in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some 1200 years after the triumph of European polycentrism. Technological and economic conservatism is not innate in the DNA of imperial powers: science and technology would surely have progressed faster under Napoleon, with his enlightenment views, than under the polycentric *anciens régimes* reinstated in 1815, while modern-day China, lording it imperially over Xinjiang and Tibet, has pushed forward scientific, technological and economic development to an extraordinary degree, that we in the polycentric West can only wonder at with awe.

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Rinse Willet, *The Geography of Urbanism in Roman Asia Minor*. pp. xvii + 398, col. ills. Sheffield: Equinox, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78179-843-0, hardback £100; ISBN 978-1-78179-844-7, E-book £100.

The contrast between the classical cities of South West Turkey and the inland areas of Asia Minor has long struck visitors to the region. In 1907, Gertrude Bell recorded her visits to several Roman cities in Western Asia Minor including: Ephesus, Priene, Miletus, Halicarnassus, Aphrodisias, Hierapolis and Sagalassos before she journeyed on to the Central Anatolian plateau to work at *Binbirkilise*, The Thousand and One Churches, on the Karadağ, one of several ancient volcanos dominating the central Anatolian plateau. She wrote about the contrast between the topography of coastal Asia Minor and the interior:

'He leaves behind him a smiling country full of the sound of waters, with fertile valleys ... coasts that the Greek made his own, setting them with cities, crowning them with temples ... [here] the traveller looks round and sees that every feature of the landscape has suffered change ... It is Asia, with all its vastness, with all its brutal disregard for life and comfort and amenities of existence; it is the ancient East, returned, after so many millenniums of human endeavour, to its natural desolation'.¹

Bell was travelling to work with Sir William Ramsay, one of a long line of epigraphers who had already

¹ Ramsay and Bell 1909: 297-298.

begun to establish much of the evidence for our knowledge of the pattern of classical settlement across Asia Minor. His *Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (1890) laid a foundation for much subsequent work on the identification of Roman cities and inspired J.G.C. Anderson to create a map, which was later revised by W.M. Calder and G.E. Bean for their *Classical Map of Asia Minor*. In spite of the efforts of Ramsay and several since, the large settlement at Binbirkilise thought to be Barata is a good example of many ancient settlements from the region and beyond, to which we cannot give an ancient name with absolute confidence.

Bell's Orientalist perspective, informed by 19th century notions of culture history and environmental determinism, confronts us with ideas typical of her time. And yet, for more than a century, surveys on the central Anatolian plateau and excavations at very early settlements like Çatalhöyük, as well as Bronze Age cities such as Hattusa, have done much to reveal that the Anatolian Plateau has been an important location for Anatolian communities for millennia. The picture of Roman settlement of the central region contrasts with that of the western and southern coastal regions where Roman cities have long dominated Roman research interests.

Willet's *The Geography of Urbanism in Roman Asia Minor* challenges us to consider again the pattern of Roman cities across Asia Minor. Unlike many studies devoted to Roman urbanism which concentrate on aspects of material culture or life in Roman cities, or in particular Roman cities, Willet uses sources familiar to classical archaeologists, and takes a quantitative approach to map and understand the pattern of urbanism across Anatolia. Willet's geographical study highlights and explores the varying densities of cities and seeks to explain them.

The geographical perspective adopted focuses on the patterns of Roman cities in the second and third centuries AD. His work also compares the Imperial Roman patterns of settlement with that at other times in Asia Minor. This long-term perspective ranges beyond the period indicated by the title of the volume. Indeed the author considers in some detail the nature of urbanism during the Classical and Hellenistic periods as a prelude to discussing the Roman period; he also makes comparisons with documentary sources from the Byzantine, Ottoman and the early Turkish Republican periods in Turkey. By synthesising particular classes of evidence and mapping their distribution, Willet confronts the reader with the picture of a settlement hierarchy which stands in contrast to that presented, for example, in Ottoman times, for which documentary

sources support the interpretation that the upper levels of settlement were more evenly spread across Anatolia.

Willet's first chapter considers the physical setting of cities in Asia Minor and then seeks to understand how 'the city' has been defined both in ancient and more recent times. The discussion includes summaries of different zones of landscape in Asia Minor based on topography and climate and includes data on landscape features and elevation. Willet's main source for most of this description was Mason's *Geographical Handbook for Turkey* published by the British Naval Intelligence Division in 1942, which provides geographical zones according to which cities are examined, as well as grouping them by Roman province. While seeking to avoid environmental determinism, the chapter considers the characteristic topography of Anatolia that affords and restricts connectivity, agriculture and other important variables that had would have had potential influence on Roman urbanism. The discussion is supplemented with more recent data from sources such as the Turkish State Meteorological Service, and emphasises the contrasts in temperature and precipitation between the various zones, including the Mediterranean-climate of the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal areas and the Central Plateau with its elevation of around 1000m, where both temperature and rainfall are lower.

The second part of Chapter 1 takes the form of a literature review which discusses briefly various definitions of a 'city'. The author signals the fact that Roman cities varied enormously both across the empire and through time and while urban status was frequently enhanced by buildings and amenities, they were far from the only mark of status. Finding criteria comprehensive enough to define and compare Roman cities across a large area of the empire presents challenges. Having reviewed a range of characteristics for identifying Roman cities, Willet settles on specific definitions for ranking official status. He uses what he terms juridical status, along with settlement size and function as his three main criteria for mapping a first level of Roman cities in Asia Minor considered to have been self-governing and it is this group which forms the main focus of the study, largely because they work best with the criteria available.

The second chapter considers particularly the Hellenistic background to the Roman urban settlements of Asia Minor. In the absence of an existing study of Hellenistic sites, Willet provides a tentative reconstruction of Hellenistic settlement

patterns including both self-governing cities and towns and villages. This is presented on Figure 2.8 and then on Figure 2.12 in order to establish continuities and the largest changes between the Classical and Roman periods.

While the use of coins and other sources may be reasonably accurate for self-governing *poleis* in maps such as Figure 2.11, there are numerous small towns and villages lower in the settlement hierarchy with Hellenistic-period material that are not represented. Although the lower echelons of the settlement hierarchy are not the main focus of the volume, the impression given by the map is somewhat distorted, since it would appear to underrepresent the numbers of small Hellenistic-period settlements and villages. This is because of the kinds of data used. The incorporation, for example, of Hellenistic ceramic material gathered from intensive field surveys and excavations would modify the impression of the wider settlement pattern beyond self-governing *poleis*.

Having provided a chronological context for cities at the start of the Roman period, the study continues in the third chapter defining the juridical status of Roman cities. In seeking to establish his criteria, Willet identified cities which were self-governing *poleis* distinct from villages subject to the *poleis*. A traditional criterion for the distinction between a city and village is evidence for a *boule* or council; Willet includes also evidence from those that issued coinage, or played a part in a *conventus*. The employment of these criteria does not seek to identify all Roman settlements but aims to use them as appropriate proxies for mapping cities of higher status. Out of some 1654 settlements attributed to the Imperial Roman period in the Pleiades database, Willet classifies 446 places as cities based on these criteria; he considers this a conservative identification which could be developed with future epigraphical and numismatic discoveries. These would seem to be appropriate sources for mapping primary or official cities and makes good use of evidence and previous studies which have tended to focus on epigraphical, historical and archaeological research. A question one might raise is the extent to which certain settlements would have bought into the characteristics adopted by this study and used by scholars traditionally for identifying the Roman 'city'. It is through this analysis and the resulting distribution that the author is able to engage with the relative densities of such attributes in different regions.

Synthesising the enormous quantity of primary evidence including documentary sources, coins and

inscriptions as well as the extensive scholarship was a very ambitious task but is also assisted by the long history of scholarship to investigate the material.

A case study serves as an example. Strabo does not establish for certain whether the small settlement of Soatra or Savatra in Lycaonia on the plateau was a city or not. However an honorific inscription recorded by Michael Ballance, and published by Mitchell as part of his comprehensive two-volume study of Anatolia and now also digitised by the MAMA XI Project (MAMA XI.343) confirms that the settlement had a *boule* (council) (p.21).²

Alongside other studies, for coins Willet makes use of important collections of digitised data: *The Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* database and *The Roman Provincial Coinage Project* to establish 328 mints in the Roman imperial period.³ He draws on data from the *Pleiades database* which consists of the *Barrington Atlas*, and the *Mapping Past Societies (formerly Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilisations)*,⁴ as well as volumes from the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, Hansen and Nielsen's *Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, and the *Orbis* website.⁵

The original maps generated using QGIS, e.g. Figure 3.10 which shows self-governing cities and communities of the Roman Imperial period, reveal that there is a significant concentration of settlement in the western and southern coastal areas and associated valleys, whereas Central Anatolia apparently has a much lower concentration of self-governing cities. Table 3.5 provides the data by province to show that Asia had the greatest density of self-governing cities and communities with 198 (46%) a density of 1.51 per 1000km² compared with 52 (12.3%) a density of 0.20 per 1000km² or 0.29 per 1000km² for Bithynia and Pontus (p.103).

Willet picks up on John Bintliff's analyses of settlement systems within which hierarchical central places develop with spacing influenced by

² Mitchell 1993; *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* XI: MAMA XI 343 (Savatra) <http://mama.csad.ox.ac.uk/index.html>

³ *The Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* <http://www.syllogenummorum-graecorum.org/>; *The Roman Provincial Coinage Project* <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/>

⁴ *Pleiades database* <https://pleiades.stoa.org/>; Talbert 2000; *Mapping Past Societies Formerly, the Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations* <https://darmc.harvard.edu/>

⁵ *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/>; Hansen and Nielsen 2004; *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* – Wikisource https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Paulys_Realencyclop%C3%A4die_der_classischen_Altertumswissenschaft; *the Orbis* <https://orbis.stanford.edu/>.

distances to farmland and markets and emerge as complex systems (p.19). While the territories around many cities were far from uniform, the application of Thiessen Polygons and a notional boundary of 15km or 3 hours' walking around the self-governing centres effectively shows the scale of the distances between centres, especially in Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, where they are much greater than areas to the west and south (Map 3.14). Willet notes that in Asia Minor many people living in the country had no regular access to urban markets and the important interpretation of this pattern is that the self-governing city cannot have controlled the rural population without secondary agglomerations, due to the size of the territories in the Central and Northern Anatolian regions. The implication is that numerous secondary settlements must have existed in these regions to fulfil various central functions.

Willet attributes the pattern to two aspects: firstly the geographical setting based on climate, fertile agricultural lands, proximity to coastal areas and other natural communication routes, and secondly the political history of settlements in the region. He investigates this further in Chapter 4 where he focuses on settlements with town-like features or which acted as a central place, but which were not official Roman cities. He considers these secondary agglomerations and seeks to identify them using the same sources as those for the self-determining cities (p.118), explaining the difference in the number of secondary agglomerations between regions in part by differing intensities of epigraphic research.

The methodology applied to identifying secondary cities is less robust than when used for identifying the self-determining villages. If used as a proxy it supposes that the epigraphic habit would have been consistent across Asia Minor, when the use of epigraphy may not be as appropriate for identifying many secondary agglomerations especially. Willet acknowledges that this reliance on epigraphy is the result of necessity because many areas have not been surveyed archaeologically and yet even with the problems of using ceramics as a proxy for settlement, one might consider that archaeological field techniques would provide a more comprehensive and systematic opportunity to map the relative echelons of the settlement hierarchy. This ought to hold especially in the Roman period when ceramics used extensively in rural communities tend to be well known and provide a reasonably useful indication of occupation alongside other sources. Indeed as the Research co-ordinator of the intensive field survey of the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project Willet anticipates this issue and provides three

case studies to investigate the detailed picture at Kyaneai, Ephesos and Sagalassos.

The secondary agglomerations around Kyaneai are particularly interesting because they derive from intensive field survey and reveal dispersed rather than nucleated settlements, mostly 0.5-1ha. The three case studies demonstrate clearly that few secondary agglomerations can be identified through epigraphy alone and that archaeological survey provides a much more occupied landscape. It was unfortunate that all three case studies come from the two most occupied areas of Asia and Pisidia, Ephesos and Kyaneai both located close to the coast and Sagalassos in the mountains of Pisidia. The author's argument highlights the areas with lower densities of self-governing cities where there were also fewer secondary agglomerations, but the evidence would have been well served with information from intensive survey to back up this assertion from case study surveys on the plateau, the Pontus region or other areas where the density of the self-governing settlements was lower (p.137).

The impression given by plotting the secondary agglomerations of Roman towns was that the lands of Lycaonia and Galatia had few Roman settlements. So it would have been helpful to have had examples of case studies from intensive systematic field surveys. A recent survey of the area around the late Roman settlement Euchaita-Avkat-Beyözü employed intensive field survey collection and has made its results available online through Open Context.⁶ Use of hand-held digital recording devices and GPS in the field means that all sherds with records accessible digitally online can be plotted by their provenance in the project GIS. The use of remote sensing data and medieval and early modern sources for establishing the relationships between villages provided the discussion of the settlement in its surrounding landscape during Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and early modern periods. Epigraphic and other textual evidence were particularly important for establishing the nature of settlement in the city and its region. But one of the problems faced by the researchers was that no excavation had taken place in the region and no geological study had taken place, so while the well-known imported ceramics from major centres such as Constantinople were noted, the majority of the assemblage has yet to be published. The Avkat project serves as a useful recent example, because there certain kinds of material traded long distances enabled trade links

⁶ Haldon, Elton and Newhard 2018. Open Context. <<http://opencontext.org/projects/02b55e8c-e9b1-49e5-8edf-0af6ea10e2be>> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6078/M73J3B1J>

to be interpreted, but the majority of the ceramics from the intensive survey were locally produced. So while documentary sources help with aspects of site hierarchy and the examination of interregional contact is possible using certain kinds of pottery, local economic exchange patterns are less easy to distinguish without very detailed study of the locally produced ceramics; for this reason other sources including land records from more recent periods were employed to examine the nature of landscape use in the Ottoman period and during the early Turkish Republic. A similar strategy is used by Willet to reveal the agricultural potential of regions and to shed light on the differences between periods.

In Chapter 5 Willet explores the multidimensional aspects of urban hierarchy, since the manifestation of hierarchy was very complex. Willet explores the significance of civic status, the role of economic power, urban growth, monumentality and city size and considers patterns in their distribution. The economic comparison of cities across Asia Minor, for example, is an important complement to the earlier chapters which explored juridical status from specific sources. Willet cites the example of Parlais on Lake Eğirdir which was neither populous or large but had the status of *colonia*. He acknowledges that factors such as the carrying capacity of a city's hinterland, the nature of the water supply, the seating capacity of theatres, numbers of burials or the variation in the gene pool based on mitochondrial DNA have sometimes been used to estimate population size, but can be subject to all kinds of variables and are therefore unreliable indicators of population size.

The conclusions presented as Tables 5.3 and 5.5 reveal that self-governing cities in Asia Minor are mostly small: 60% of 169 self-governing cities are under 40ha, c.17% are over 80 ha. Of the 41 secondary cities recognised c. 85% are under 20ha and only two over 40ha (p.169). Western Anatolia and the coast of the Black Sea had the largest cities with others located mostly on the southern coast. Exceptions found inland were the cities at Ankara, Taouion and Ikonion in Central Anatolia and Samosata on the eastern *Limes* (p.164). The picture gained from the data sources for settlement hierarchy across the different parts of Asia Minor is relatively consistent with evidence used to establish settlement size and economy.

A high number of coin emissions are found in western Anatolia, the Black Sea coast and to a lesser extent in Pisidia, Pamphylia and Cilicia Pedias. This evidence can be taken to suggest that these are the areas and the cities which are most monetised.

Similarly Willet's analysis of the changing distribution of tableware as a proxy for trade seems to pattern in similar ways to other key classes of material.

Willet presents a hypothesis to explain the density of cities in western Anatolia. They are the result of a hierarchy that emerges from the self-organising and maturing of the settlement system, based in part on the impact of Roman administration and commercialisation. The gradual independence and growth of cities is influenced by the relative size of their territories, variations in population density, and connectivity related to the geographical and political fragmentation of the landscape and the varied distribution of agricultural and other natural resources. The increase in urbanisation is mirrored in the monumentality of cities. This is a compelling hypothesis which will make a considerable contribution to discussions on the nature of the city in the western and southern coastal regions especially.

The sixth chapter considers monumentality and the physical manifestation of cities and public buildings in settlements according to these categories: spectacle buildings, fortifications, religious buildings, civic and commercial buildings, and those related to water and water supply. The initial part of the chapter emphasises that the munificence of the Roman city was a cultural expectation, encouraged by emperors and financed at public or private expense.

The synthesis shows a strong correlation between public building and hierarchy, with again a particular density in the south-western region, many closely related to one another. The size of the city is linked to the number of public buildings. These increase disproportionately with size and are interpreted by Willet to reveal that south-western part of Asia Minor was more integrated economically than politically and culturally.

Willet emphasises the agency of the buildings themselves and their role in striking envy and competition in the inhabitants of other cities. 'The central-place functions of cities reified by the construction of buildings attracted people from the city's territory (and beyond)... the presence of public buildings and the multitude of amenities and services these aided in providing, contributed to the role a city had as a central place' (p.205). The active role of the buildings helps to convey how the density and scale of munificence was manifested and gained momentum through competitive *euergesism* in particular regions. The connectivity

of the cities in western Asia and Lycia, Pisidia and Pamphylia and their density helps to give weight to Willet's argument to explain the manner in which the material elements produced increasingly competitive desires in the first few centuries of Roman Asia Minor.

The Geography of Urbanism in Roman Asia Minor required the synthesis of an enormous body of information based on carefully selected criteria from ancient documentary sources, coins, inscriptions, table wares and monuments. All these classes of material are characteristic of particular kinds of Roman material culture and as the volume explains, they come from settlements which dominate particular regions especially. What emerges is that many people in western and southern Asia Minor lived in settlements that are characterised by specific attributes which in turn characterise self-determining cities. There certain aspects of Roman culture are highly developed and relevant. Willet's approach provides us with insight into those regions where such cities are concentrated and shows us that in other parts of Asia Minor the settlement pattern is very different.

The study reveals the importance of the historical legacy of settlements and the fact that there are large areas where the particular attributes used in this study are not consistent with the nature of settlement. In south Central Anatolia for example the epigraphic and numismatic record works well for the recognition of cities, including several *coloniae* connected to the pacification of the Taurus in the first century, but the methodology (deliberately) does not seek to pick up the pattern of settlements which might have been more typical of rural sites across the landscape of central Anatolia during the same period.

We have seen that documentary evidence, coins, epigraphic evidence or monumental stone remains are central to Roman settlement in particular regions and at a range of particular types of city. The disappearance of such classes of material culture or 'paucity' of these elements in certain regions during the Roman period must be interpreted with care. The question of how the other settlements benefited from, or perhaps were exploited by cities and how their characteristics might help us to understand their role in the settlement pattern is still somewhat elusive. The variety of datasets resulting from intensive interdisciplinary landscape surveys promise a more comprehensive picture than epigraphy alone and so this study helps us to see the need for such datasets for establishing the wider pattern of settlement, especially in parts of

Asia Minor where the self-governing cities are less concentrated.

Whether working in some of the densest areas of Roman urban settlement, or on the fringes of empire far from its highways, those dealing with archaeological evidence will often find themselves faced with very different relative quantities of documentary evidence, coins, inscriptions, monumentality and table wares. The concentration of these classes in the regions of Asia Minor close to the Mediterranean is especially useful for understanding the self-governing settlements and the unique relationships and environments of those areas where they are especially dense. This careful synthesis of these traditional classes of material makes a significant contribution to our understanding and will invigorate those working in the subject to develop their datasets to shed light on the other, less well understood, aspects of the Roman settlement pattern in Asia Minor.

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Medieval to Postmedieval

Charalambos Bouras, *Byzantine Athens, 10th-12th Centuries*. pp. 372, 1 col and 261 b/w ill. London: Routledge, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-472-47990-7, hardcover £96; ISBN: 978-1-315-10406-5, E-book £29.59.

Nickephoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock (eds), *A Companion to Latin Greece*. pp. xii + 529, 36 col ill., 3 maps. Leiden: Brill, 2015. ISBN: 978-90-04-28402-9, hardcover €179; ISBN: 978-90-04-28410-4, E-book €179.

Joanita Vroom (ed.), *Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramics in the Eastern Mediterranean - Fact and Fiction*. pp. 400, 84 b/w and 32 col ill., 4 tbls. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015. ISBN: 978-2-503-56512-5, paperback €95.

Joanita Vroom, Yona Waksman and Roos van Oosten (eds), *Medieval Masterchef. Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Eastern Cuisine and Western Foodways*. pp. 400, 53 b/w and 32 col ill., 18 tbls. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. ISBN: 978-2-503-57579-7, paperback €95.

Both the Bouras and Tsougarakis books are splendid introductions to their respective periods, Bouras on Middle Byzantine Athens, and the Tsougarakis-Lock edited volume on Frankish Greece. But the prices surely rule out owning a hard-copy of either book for almost all interested readers. At least Routledge offers a cheap online-version as a reasonable alternative access. Brill's policy of matching online price to hard copy is quite unfathomable.

Charalambos Bouras, who died in 2016 shortly before this volume on Athens appeared, was a giant in the field of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Architecture, and this volume bears ample witness to his mastery of the monuments, and in particular of their historical context. It was first published by the Benaki Museum in 2010, but has been revised for this new Routledge edition. It