

Review

SIMONE CIAMBELLI, *I COLLEGIA E LE RELAZIONI CLIENTELARI: STUDIO SUI LEGAMI DI PATRONATO DELLE ASSOCIAZIONI PROFESSIONALI NELL'OCCIDENTE ROMANO TRA I E III SEC. D.C.* (Collana Studi di storia della Rivista storica dell'antichità 22). Bologna: Patron editore, 2022. Pp. 15 + 394, illus., maps, plans. ISBN 978885535656 (pbk.). €42.00.

Collegial patronage is where two important Roman institutions — patronage and collegia (voluntary associations) — intersected with each other. As the first book-length study on the patronage of professional associations in the Roman West in the first three centuries, this book is a welcome contribution to the socio-economic history of Rome, urban history, the institution of patronage and the steadily growing scholarship on ancient associations.

While acknowledging the usefulness of a sociological vision of patronage as a relationship of asymmetric dependence based on an exchange of goods and services that continues over time, Ciambelli applies formalism in identifying patronage in the epigraphic sources (ch. 1). All of the 214 inscriptions catalogued at the end of the book contain the explicit term *patronus*. Ch. 2 provides statistical analysis of the 290 collegial patrons known from epigraphic sources. Collegial patrons are not attested in Africa and Britain, where professional associations seem to be lacking. For the rarity of associations in North Africa, C. notes that the curiae and the wealthy *sodalitates* have almost entirely absorbed the associative phenomenon in the cities of Africa to the extent of precluding the spread of collegia in these areas.

Ch. 3 provides detailed discussions of nine collegial patronage tablets, which were bronze transcriptions of collegial decisions on co-opting patrons. C. emphasises how these tablets sanctioned the transition from an informal to a formal relationship, transferred the private relationship between the patron and the collegium onto a public level, and testify to the process of integration of the collegia into the structures of the city. Since most of these tablets date from the third century C.E., C. highlights them as tangible emblems through which the associations expressed their need for a guarantee of protection due to insecurity.

Ch. 4 investigates patronage relationship in social space by focusing on the patrons' intervention in the construction of the *aedes fabrum* at the forum of Sarmizegetusa, and the statues erected in honor of patrons in both non-public and public places. Through contextualised and nuanced analyses, C. demonstrates how the scholae and statues served as ways through which both the collegia and the patronage relationship inserted themselves into the urban landscape and collective memory.

Ch. 5 examines the economic dimension of patronage by zooming in on the case of *Lugdunum*. C. notes several features that indicate the economic aspects embedded in patronage relationships: 'foreign' origin of the patrons, the associations' activities in regions where the patrons originated, possible family interests, co-option of members as patrons, and some patrons serving as the linkage between multiple associations under their patronage.

Ch. 6 explores strategies of nurturing the bond between collegia and patrons through perpetual endowments established by the patrons as well as the co-option of patronesses and 'mothers' of collegia because of their family connections. C. does note that some female figures were co-opted because of their pecuniary capabilities and disposition to engage in munificence towards the association and/or the community.

Ch. 7 studies Ostia as a special case that lies between norm and exception. For the unusual presence of fifteen senators among patrons of associations, especially the various associations of boatmen, C. suggests that these senators used their influence and munificence to create patronage networks for overlapping reasons, especially the desire for better managing and defending their own trade at the port of Tiber, the proximity of Ostia to their properties, emulation of the emperor in showing concern about the life of Rome's port, and the desire to appear to conform to imperial ideology (229). For C., patronage bridged the city and the collegium, which exerted two opposing forces on the individual, that is, the 'centrifugal force' on the collegial members who climbed the internal hierarchies of the collegium, became patrons, and even entered the local decuria, and the 'centripetal force' that leveraged these patrons' ties with the collegial members.

The book strikes an excellent balance between global analyses and specific case studies. It succeeds in illustrating how the dynamics between family relationships, the urban social context, economic interests, euergetic practices, as well as individual and collective aspirations, played out through the multi-faceted phenomenon of collegial patronage. The inclusion of many charts, tables and plans helps visualise the rich data analysed in the volume. The book will no doubt be necessary reading on patronage and collegia for many years to come.

Towards the end of the book, C. suggests future research directions, including the extension of the chronological and geographical scopes to Egypt and Late Antiquity, comparative studies with the Greek cities of the classical or Hellenistic age and the Ancient Near East, and interdisciplinary dialogues. C. sensibly notes that these lines of pursuit would involve broadening the definition of 'patronage'. Two further directions may also be suggested.

First, C. rightly denies a rigid classification of collegia. Yet a relatively narrow definition of 'professional associations' is applied that relies on the names of the collegia. Two questions arise: What about associations not named after a trade, but composed of craftsmen/tradesmen? In what ways was the pattern of patronage similar or different across various types of associations?

Second, C. foregrounds visibility and integration of collegia as the key effects of collegial patronage. The theme of competition both between collegia and between potential patrons might warrant more attention (see P. Harland in R. Ascough (ed.), *Religious Competition and Coexistence in Sardis and Smyrna* (2003), 53–63, for example). In particular, the inscriptions tend to document the winners in the competition for prestige and resources but not the process of the competition or the losers.

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