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R. Varga, V. Rusus-Bolindet (eds.), *Official Power and Local Elites in the Roman Provinces*, Routledge Publishing, 2016, ISBN:978-1-4724-5731-8.

The volume “Official Power and Local Elites in the Roman Provinces” gathers a number of 10 articles that approach the relations between the Roman official state structures and the local provincial elites in different parts of the Roman provinces. The editors wanted, and succeeded, to create a complex image of the provincial leaderships and their interactions with the official state structures. The articles contain studies of epigraphy, history, linguistic interpretations, material culture, debates a series of architectural analyses, all combined with some archaeological research.

The subject of this volume is not new, but the manner in which it is approached brings new perspectives, untouched before and creates an open point of view.

Chronologically, the time span in large, it depicts aspects from the first decades of provincial Greece up to the 5th century AD.

The Foreword is written by the editor Rada Varga, where she presents her intentions and expectations from this volume. The editors wanted to put together a volume with various articles and points of view that shows the interactions and relations between central power and the local elites in the Roman provincial world. They also wanted to reveal the important shifts in mentality that shaped the Roman ruling class.

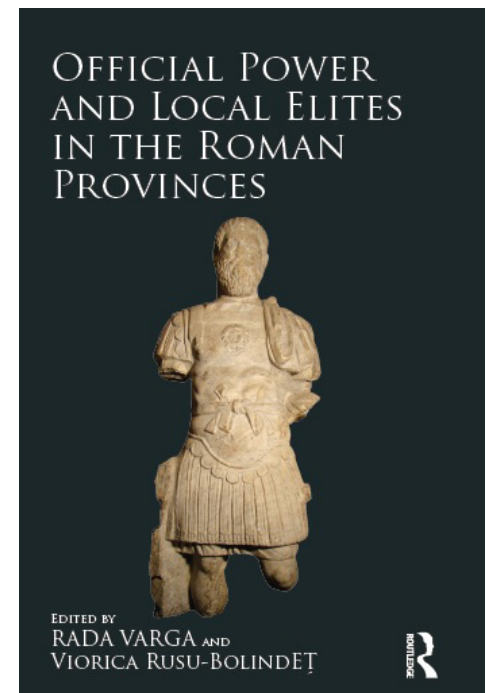
The first article is “*Local elites in West Roman Greece- The evidence from Thesprotia and Preveza*” and is written by Quarania Palli, Georgis Riginos and Vasiliki Lamprou. In this paper the authors approach the composition of local elites during the Roman period in the north-western Greece, (modern day Thesprotia and Preveza). The main objective is to reveal the transformations of the old local elites and the making of a new elite of Roman settlers by analyzing the spread of the all types of villas including some new ones recently excavated. For achieving the same objective, a series of epigraphic analysis that reflect the coexistence and the rivalry between the old aristocracy and the new one, the elite of Roman settlers, are also presented.

In the second article Francesca Zaccaro treats a very complex theme, “Collective Mentality and *Praotes* : Ruling Classes of the Eastern Provinces in Literature, Linguistics and Epigraphy”. The main objective is to outline the collective mentality of the elite from the eastern part of Roman Empire based on the spread of the term *praotes*, in literary and epigraphic sources from 1th century AD up to the end of 2nd century AD. By analyzing terms and concepts from this period of time, a transition from a “competitive aristocracy” to a new type of “service aristocracy” can be seen. This article is based on the word *praotes*, because, as the writer tries to reveal, in the past centuries it had a neutral form, a negative connotation indicating a weak nature, and it came to reflect during the Roman period, a more moderate attitude both in public and personal life.

The third article of this volume is “Roman state structures and the provincial elite in Republican Iberia” by Benedict Lowe. In this research the relations between magistrates as patrons and the community itself is

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analyzed. Epigraphic sources such as bronze inscriptions are used to observe these client-patron relationships. As expected, the relationships described in this study facilitated the incorporation of the indigenous elite into the Roman World.

“Routes of resistance to integration” by Hannah Cornwell is the fourth article of this volume. In this paper the means and manifestations of power and authority in the Italian Alps, after the pacification from 14 BC is analyzed. The main monument that it’s used to examine the authority in this area is an arch at Susa set up by a local dynast Cottius to Augustus. Using this arch as the expression of power, this research examines the relationships between the Latin inscription on both sides and the friezes depicted on all four sides. That arch is presented as a symbol of integration of the local communities into the Roman world.

The fifth article refers to “The futility of Revolt: Pausanias on local myths of freedom” by Lydia Langerwerf. In this research Pausania’s attitude towards the Greek’s loss of autonomy is explained. The article is based on Pausania’s book 4 as the author tries to answer a question: “Why is Pausanias’s depiction of the fall of the Aegean League so much more critical and judgmental of the main Greek players in the conflict than Polybius?”. Also it is discussed Pausanias’s point of view about the fall of the Achean League and the rise of the Naupactians. In conclusion it’s noticed that Pausanias is deeply concern with the lost of Greek autonomy, and he established a connection between lost of freedom and lack of Greek unity.

The next article presented is “Palmyrene elites: Aspects of self-representation and integration in Hadrian’s age” by Stefano Magnani and Paola Mior. In this paper a large number of epigraphic sources and archeological evidences to observe in a new perspective the connections and interactions between Roman central power and a part of local elite, in the 2nd century AD, is used. A good observation, after the interpretations of epigraphic sources, is that apparently few Palmyrene elites received Roman citizenship, and most of them mediated between their own local cultural forms, and the forms of the cosmopolitan Rome, that dispersed through the empire.

Rada Varga and Viorica Rusu-Bolindeț are the authors of the seventh article in this volume, with the subject “Provincial landmarks of the official power: The *praetorium consularis* of Apulum”. The main focus was the province of Dacia, especially for aspects of ancient mentalities. This idea was treated in two ways: The self- representations of power and the way society envisaged its leaders. This research it’s a combination of historic data, epigraphic sources and some new data coming from archeological excavations at the *praetorium* of Apulum. The *praetorium* is used as the expression of Roman authority in this area. The palace of the governor was the headquarters of the Roman provincial administration as the monumentality of the place reflects.

Using the epigraphic sources this research reveals a series of interesting conclusions such as the social levels existing in that past society, their religious beliefs, or how the power of higher officials was seen by common the people.

Rob Collins in “Power at the periphery: Military authority in transition in late Roman Britain” is trying to answer some questions regarding soldiers with military authority: “What do we know about these man? What are their backgrounds and how they achieve command? Can they be distinguished from other local elites? And how did this change over time?”. Using historical and epigraphical sources he’s trying to answer to those questions. The article examines commanding officers from Hadrian’s Wall, the materialities of command and the Vindolanda *praetorium*. After a close analyze of commanding officers between 2nd century AD and 5th century AD, he proved that there was a general decline in opulence but social status and dominance were maintain through other means.

In the ninth article Mariana Bodnaruk treats the theme “Administering the Empire: The Unmaking of an Equestrian Elite in the 4th century AD”. She wants to discuss about the imperial reforms during the 4th century, and the disappearance of the *ordo equitum Romanorum*. In this research are presented numerous epigraphic sources regarding the *honores*, awards and the imperial ideology of building inscriptions. From this point of view, it is proved that inscriptions are the first means of communication between the equestrian elite and the municipal leadership and by analyzing them we can surprise the changing word of the 4th century AD.

The last article about “Kinship, conflict and unity among Roman elites in post-Roman Gaul: The contrasting experiences of Caesarius and Avitus”, by Leslie Dodd. She starts with the assumption that after the collapse of the Roman Empire, roman aristocratic elites continued to survived and they found a way to preserve their social, political and economic status in the post-Roman world, choosing an ecclesiastical political career. This research is based on the experience of Caesarius of Arles, and it also shows the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum* that a local nobleman needed to follow in his attempt for a ecclesiastical post. This article also treats themes about power and kinship in the Church, in a world far away from what was the Roman empire. In conclusion, it is important to mention that analyzing these facts, the appearance during this period of time of local Episcopal dynasties is also demonstrated.

Regarding the whole volume, it’s a very useful contribution too what we know about local elites in the Roman world. The time span being so vast, we can observe the changing that occur in the development of societies from different parts of the Roman empire. Analyzing so many sources and combining methods that only adds more knowledge to this complex theme.