

version (it apparently refers to G. Alföldi, *Die römische Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart 1986) and that fig. 2 mentioned in 403 is nowhere to be found. It is curious that S. does not use B. Niese's division of the works of Flavius Josephus into paragraphs (e.g., 30 n. 48; 521 n. 28) and that the appendix to 'Geld und Macht' is written partly in English and partly in German, but this presumably has to do with the original publication of this article. However, these are quibbles. All the articles are valuable and instructive contributions to the understanding of the role of the Roman army as an essential instrument of the imperial regime. Although I have expressed reservations concerning some of S.' interpretations of the evidence, his main thesis about the multi-functionality of the Roman army as a successful ruling instrument is amply demonstrated in this book. The two appended indexes, of sources (literary, epigraphic and numismatic) and persons and subjects, are very helpful.

Israel Shatzman

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Greek Culture in the Roman World), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 204 pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-51930-4.

Paul Veyne's 1976 magisterial study of euergetism, which covered the history of private munificence for public benefit from the classical Greek period to the high Roman Empire, not only established the centrality of this theme to our understanding of the functionality of ancient societies but also strongly influenced all later studies of this subject.¹ The monograph by Arjan Zuiderhoek (henceforth Z.), which is based on his PhD thesis and focuses on the well-documented region of Asia Minor, sets out to provide a fresh re-assessment of the subject. His study, which he describes as a 'long interpretative essay' (p. 5), focuses on the imperial period — an age which Veyne had succinctly characterized as 'the golden era of euergetism'. Asia Minor is used here as a model testing ground for the study of euergetism, which, as Z. postulates, may also provide basic insights into the motives and practices of munificence in other parts of the Roman Empire.

In the Introduction and in Chapter 1 ('Introducing Euergetism: Questions, Definitions and Data'), the author sets the scene for his analysis by defining key terms, introducing the set of data on which his investigation is based (a sample of c. 500 epigraphically recorded benefactions) and discussing the methodological and heuristic problems of the source material. The central question on which Z.'s study focuses concerns the causes behind a most striking socio-political phenomenon: 'Why was there such an unprecedented proliferation of elite public giving in the provincial cities of the Roman Empire during the late first, second and early third centuries AD?' (p. 5). 'My answer', Z. immediately continues, 'is that the extreme popularity of civic euergetism during the early and high Empire resulted from the fact that the phenomenon was indispensable for the maintenance of social harmony and political stability in the Empire's provincial cities at a time when these communities experienced a growing accumulation of wealth and political power at the top of the social hierarchy' (p. 5). As Z. argues in this concise summary, euergetism was (and must be recognized as) essentially a socio-political instrument in the running of civic affairs

¹ P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*, Paris, 1976 (*Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, abridged with an introduction by O. Murray; trans. B. Pearce, London, 1990); P. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs (IV^e – I^{er} siècle avant J.-C.): contribution à l'histoire des institutions*, Paris, 1985; K. Lomas – T. Cornell (eds.), *'Bread and Circuses': Euergetism and Municipal Patronage in Roman Italy*, London, 2003.

in the *poleis*; it must be approached and evaluated from a social and political rather than economic perspective — a view which is expounded in the following chapters with implicit and explicit suggestions and which leads him to state that the explanations put forward in modern scholarship so far are ‘mostly unsatisfactory’ (p. 6). In Chapter 2 (‘The Size and Nature of Gifts’), Z. sets out to refute an economic explanation for the extent of euergetism in the early and high Empire, according to which public munificence was indispensable for the economic survival and functioning of the Greek cities due to the cities’ lack of financial resources. Z. provides a quantitative assessment of the munificence of the urban elite and argues that its expenditure was actually rather modest and did not affect the civic economy to any great degree. In Chapter 3 (‘The Icing on the Cake?’), Z. attempts to further corroborate this line of argument by investigating whether or not the *poleis* were basically dependent on the aid of benefactors. He constructs a ‘hypothetical model of civic income and expenditure in the absence of public munificence of any kind’ (p. 38) for an average, medium-sized Greek city in Asia Minor and argues against the underestimation of civic public revenues with reference to the studies by Werner Eck, Hertha Schwartz and Mireille Corbier.² Unfortunately, Z. does not take into consideration the work of Stefan Cramme dealing with this issue.³ His overall conclusion is that ‘cities could have managed without the benefactors;’ what benefactors actually provided was no more than ‘the icing of the richly decorated cake of civic life’ (p. 51). In Chapter 4 (‘The Concentration of Wealth and Power’), Z. elaborates on several long-term developments and trends in the society of the Graeco-Roman East in the first and second centuries AD which, in his view, may primarily account for the great extent of euergetic activity of the period. He particularly draws attention to the rise in elite income and the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the landowning elite, the increasing political and social hierarchisation and oligarchisation, and the growing social tensions between the elite and the non-elite in the cities of the Greek East. It is against the background of these developments that Chapter 5 (‘The Politics of Public Generosity’) analyses the motivations for the giving done by benefactors. Z. argues that public munificence was a political instrument for the urban elite to highlight the ideal of citizen community and the civic way of life at a time when these ideals could no longer be taken for granted. Euergetism, moreover, helped the notables to legitimize and maintain the increasingly oligarchic and hierarchical structures of society in the Greek East. Z. speaks of a social ‘pact’ (p. 74) and a reciprocal ‘exchange of gifts’ (p. 94) between benefactors and the *dēmos*: through its euergetic activities the elite made it possible for non-elite citizens to participate in the amenities of civic life, while the non-elite in return acknowledged the rule of the elite. In this context Z. presents a valuable overview of the different categories of public gifts (public buildings, festivals, public distributions etc.), the particular preferences of benefactors in their choice of munificent activities, the diverse functions these gifts may have served in civic life and the mechanisms underlying the negotiation of benefactions in the political institutions of the Greek cities. For Z., the ‘politics of munificence’ was employed by the urban elite as a ‘strategy of conflict-avoidance’ (p. 106); it was first and foremost ‘a social, political and ideological palliative designed to avert social conflict within the citizen body’ (p. 109). Chapter 6 (‘Giving for a Return: Generosity and Legitimation’), which is certainly the most original chapter in this book, deals with the issue of what benefactors

² W. Eck, ‘Der Euergetismus im Funktionszusammenhang der kaiserzeitlichen Städte’, in: M. Christol – O. Masson (eds.), *Actes du X^e congrès international d’épigraphie grecque et latine*, Paris, 1997, 305-331; H. Schwarz, *Soll oder Haben? Die Finanzwirtschaft kleinasiatischer Städte in der römischen Kaiserzeit am Beispiel von Bithynien, Lykien und Ephesos (29 v. Chr. - 284 n. Chr.)*, Bonn, 2001; M. Corbier, ‘City, Territory and Taxation’, in: J. Rich – A. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *City and Country in the Ancient World*, London, 1991, 211-239.

³ S. Cramme, *Die Bedeutung des Euergetismus für die Finanzierung städtischer Aufgaben in der Provinz Asia*, PhD thesis, University of Cologne, 2001 (published online: <http://deposit.ddb.de/cgi-bin/dokserv?idn=96238805X>).

actually received in return for their gifts. Criticizing Veyne's concept of euergetism, which stresses the disinterested nature of public munificence, Z. advocates a shift in focus in modern scholarship towards a closer consideration of the non-material gains of honour, prestige and status. For this reason he focuses on honours (inscriptions, statues, acclamations etc.) awarded to benefactors in return for their public gifts and explores how the rhetoric and discourse underlying the epigraphic texts strengthened the position of the elite. Drawing on the model of political legitimacy developed by the social theorist David Beetham,⁴ Z. shows that the honorific discourse centred on the notion of the moral excellence and superiority of the elite and thus played a key role in the legitimation and preservation of its social and political dominance. These honours awarded by the *polis* provided effective ways and means to present elite members as natural born leaders of society; at the same time, they were manifestations of the consent of the *dēmos* to the rule of the urban elite. Z. rightly emphasizes that the rhetoric of moral superiority centred on the *individual* elite member and his/her family rather than on the collective of the urban nobility since it was the position of the individual within the hierarchical system — and not the oligarchic power system itself — that was 'vulnerable, contested and thus in need of legitimation' (p. 138) due to the extreme demographic volatility of the urban social hierarchy (high mortality rate, social mobility etc.). Special attention should be paid to the author's useful analysis of the so-called "ancestor clauses" in inscriptions, which list the achievements of an honorand's ancestors. According to Z., the (rhetorical) claim of 'social continuity in power' (p. 140) implied in these clauses was, in addition to the discourse of moral excellence, another powerful strategy for lending legitimation to the position of the top echelons of society. Z. finally postulates that the *dēmos* accepted the rule of the urban elite because there was no direct economic exploitation of the urban lower classes: the greater part of the income of the urban elites came from their landed possessions (by means of the direct exploitation of the rural lower classes). The monograph is rounded off with an Epilogue ('The Decline of Civic Munificence'), in which Z. provides a very brief overview of euergetism in the third century AD, pointing to the significant decline in the number of recorded benefactions from the 220s AD onwards and speculating about possible explanations for this trend such as the weakening of the 'civic model' of society.

The "argumentative" and "essayist" style adopted by Z. to present his investigations and conclusions enables him to argue his case with great clarity, to outline long-term socio-political developments and to give a fresh impetus to the ongoing debate on the subject. With great fervour, persuasiveness and the constant reiteration of his conclusions, however, he tries to convey the impression of an inherently consistent explanation of the phenomenon, irrespective of the fact that he must repeatedly acknowledge the highly hypothetical nature of several of his propositions. His rhetorical style sometimes leads him to make sweeping generalizations concerning his overall thesis with too few references to concrete examples. The study would certainly have profited from a better contextualization of the documents, a more flexible explanatory model and a more differentiating consideration of the multifarious causes and specific aims of euergetic activities. This, however, is not to say that one could not agree with the overall results and conclusions of his analysis. There is no doubt that the book will provide an important and necessary stimulus to the on-going discussion of euergetism during the early and high Empire. It will be the task of further research to corroborate, refine or modify Z.'s conclusions with the help of micro-historical case studies for well-documented cities in the Greek East and the wider Roman Empire.

Christina T. Kuhn

University of Oxford

⁴ D. Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*, Basingstoke, 1991.