

[BMCR 2018.12.11](#) on the BMCR blog

Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2018.12.11

---

**Lucia Cecchet, Anna Busetto (ed.), *Citizens in the Graeco-Roman World: Aspects of Citizenship from the Archaic Period to AD 212. Mnemosyne Supplements, 407.* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017. Pp. xi, 341. ISBN 9789004346680. \$133.00.**

Reviewed by **Andrea Raggi, Università di Pisa** ([andrea.raggi@unipi.it](mailto:andrea.raggi@unipi.it))

[Preview](#)

[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

Publications on grants and rights of citizenship in the classical world, on integration of foreigners, as well as on comparison between ancient and modern practices, in parallel to growing issues in modern times concerning inclusion of minorities in civic bodies and migration, have increased substantially over the past decades,<sup>1</sup> often in order to argue that ancient societies were more inclined to receive outsiders than many modern-day ones.<sup>2</sup> Along these lines, the editors of the volume under review state in the *Preface* that the original idea of the book was prompted by a conference held in Urbino, Italy, on 10-11 April 2014,<sup>3</sup> where the purpose was to investigate these issues, all very relevant to the world in which we live. As a matter of fact, the volume provides readers with an insight into the origin, expansion and transformation in time and space of citizen bodies in the Greek and Roman world, starting from the Archaic period to the major change effected by the emperor Caracalla in 212 AD; nonetheless, as it is clearly stated by the sub-title, it investigates *Aspects of Citizenship* in the ancient world, and has not the scope to cover all the questions on the issue.

The *Introduction* by Lucia Cecchet is a valuable overview of the subject matter (variety of civic organisations in the Greek world, the ‘imperial’ expansion of Roman citizenship, differences between the Greek and Roman worlds)<sup>4</sup> and of the questions which to a certain extent still remain open (the origin of the citizen bodies, the extent of participation in political life, the relations between citizens and non-citizens, the working principles of multiple citizenship), and ends with a useful summary of the essays assembled in the volume.

The book is divided into three parts. The first and second section are more consistent in terms of an analysis of the issues under discussion, while the third section is an extension which the editors perhaps should have omitted, since it contains two papers not properly relevant to classical studies: firstly an essay by Valerio Rocco Lozano on Hegel’s conception of the Roman citizenship, whereas actually the author presents the sources on Roman history used by the German philosopher and the influence exerted by the institutions of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire on Hegel’s political vision; then a discussion on the idea of cosmopolitanism from its origins to present time by Anna Busetto, where the pages dedicated to the ancient world are indeed very few and too broad in their analysis (pp. 303-305).<sup>5</sup>

The other two essays of this section might have found a more appropriate location respectively in the first and in the second sections. Jakub Filonik traces the

metaphorical expressions that refer to citizenship in Lysurgus' speech *Against Leocrates*, delivered in the trial for treason brought against an Athenian private citizen who had cowardly left the city after the battle of Chaeronea: the prosecutor and renowned politician argues that being a citizen is equivalent to being in war, to owning part of the city, to protecting it and being protected by it, and therefore citizenship is a duty, a debt and a prize for merit. The author brilliantly explains the sophisticated use of these conceptual metaphors in the speech; however the highlighted concepts on the right of citizenship are mostly commonplaces. Filippo Carlà-Uhink deals with the issue of the 'double fatherland' (rightly designated as 'surely not dual citizenship', p. 271) in Cicero's political writings: he discusses the influence of Stoic cosmopolitanism on the idea of *civitas Romana* presented by Cicero and applied only to the Italians enfranchised (therefore, not an official and authoritative notion); the author concludes that Italy was still central as a political argument after the Social war, since there was a strong need to reformulate the criteria for defining a Roman-Italic identity that could be based, according to Cicero, only on a pan-Italic elite originating from a similar cultural background and now to be integrated in the Roman civic body.<sup>6</sup>

The first section includes four contributions which focus on citizenship and civic bodies in the *poleis*, and in general in the Greek world, from the Archaic to the Roman period. Maurizio Giangiulio opens the section by surveying the modern debate on the origin of citizenship in Archaic Greece and correctly points out that this debate is based on a strong Athenocentrism which affects the research results; he concludes that it makes no sense to look for an origin point for the concept of 'citizenship', and that the Archaic period produced many different models of citizenship.<sup>7</sup> Three *poleis* (Athens, Cyrene and Camarina) located in different parts of the Greek world are taken by Lucia Cecchet as key-studies in order to outline the reforms of civic subunits in the late Archaic and early Classical periods: the scope of these reforms was similar, namely the solution of political crises and the integration of foreigners in the citizen body, and always entailed the establishment of subunits, even if the mode of their creation and composition was different.

The Greek federal states in the Hellenistic period are the focus of Chiara Lasagni's essay, moving from considerations on the terminology (*συμπολιτεία* 'was not provided with technical-juridical content', p. 84)<sup>8</sup> and methodology (theoretical models formulated by modern scholars should be abandoned, so that an 'ideal type' of federal state does not exist) in the first part, and then proposing new readings (not all of them convincing...) in a number of third century inscriptions concerning the praxis of citizenship in federal states. In contrast to the previous essays, the last one by Andreea Ștefan is rather disappointing in the treatment of its theme. Throughout the article, there is a general mix-up of the right of Roman citizenship and the different Greek *politeiai*, and this generates unsubstantiated sentences such as 'citizenship ... could also help ordinary people from abroad to ... find work' (p. 123), 'the total suppression of an important characteristic of citizenship, be it Roman or Greek, that of exclusivity, completed by the second century AD' and 'the granting of Roman citizenship, conferred more easily than citizenship in a Greek polis' (both at p. 126).

Also the second section presents four essays, moving from the Republic to the *constitutio Antoniniana*. Elena Isayev uses Plautus' comedies as sources on the change of perception of foreigners at Rome, examining different Latin keywords indicating outsiders, locals (i.e. citizens and inhabitants) and slaves, and concluding that these plays attest a fluid period in which Italy was becoming more cosmopolitan.<sup>9</sup> For many years Donato Fasolini has been collecting epigraphic evidence for a new database on *Roman Imperial Tribal Ascription* (R.I.T.A., not yet available online), and in his paper aims to offer information on the tribal ascription of children; however, the conclusions, in themselves not outstanding, are already present in previous essays published by the same author.<sup>10</sup>

Two papers find their appropriate places one after another in this section. Valerio Marotta's complex and certainly competent juridical demonstration, already present in his previous studies, deals with the issue of the access to the *civitas Romana* for the inhabitants of the Egyptian *chōra* or the *nomoi*, using as main source papyri (especially P. Giessen 40, I), the letters of Pliny the Younger and the *Tabula Banasitana*; although Egyptians were prohibited from directly obtaining the right of the Roman citizenship, there were cases in which they could access it even before 212 AD.<sup>11</sup> Starting from some remarks on P. Giessen 40 as well, Arnaud Besson surveys the ways in which it was possible to become a Roman citizen (by birth, by enfranchisement or by an individual or collective grant) and the exclusive advantages and rights in private and public domain that the bestowal of the *civitas Romana* brought on the recipient. He stresses the fact that in the decades before the *constitutio Antoniniana*<sup>12</sup> the right of Roman citizenship was highly regulated and not easy to achieve (contrast the statement by Andreea Ștefan cited above), and therefore still represented an enviable and privileged status reserved for a restricted elite group.

The volume is well edited, and minor flaws are present (e.g.: Hijf instead of Nijf at pp. 123 and 127; authors in the bibliography not in alphabetic order at p. 129; some index entries give references that do not overlap), albeit the 'General Index' is organised in an odd way: some personal names are rightly listed under their *nomina*, but others are placed under their *praenomina* (e.g. Gaius Iulius Antiochus...) or *cognomina* (Milo), others are omitted (e.g. Aulus Licinius, p. 277).

In general, this miscellaneous volume offers good reflections on important features of civic entities and the right of citizenship in the Greek and Roman world; as already noted, the worth of the essays in the book is diverse, for some are more stimulating than others, but hopefully they will be a starting point for more debate about these issues. However, the book's major weaknesses appear to be very little interaction among the authors on some basic concepts during the conference held at Urbino or afterwards (see note 3), and that the volume brings together a number of studies already published or that would have been published shortly thereafter by the authors, a feature that without doubt undermines the value of the publication.

### Authors and Titles

Preface, by Lucia Cecchet and Anna Busetto, pp. vii-viii

Introduction. Greek and Roman Citizenship: State of Research and Open Questions, by Lucia Cecchet, pp. 1-30

Part 1: Defining the Citizen Body in the Greek *Poleis*

1 Looking for Citizenship in Archaic Greece. Methodological and Historical Problems, by Maurizio Giangliulo, pp. 33-49

2 Re-shaping and Re-founding Citizen Bodies: The Case of Athens, Cyrene and Camarina, by Lucia Cecchet, pp. 50-77

3 *Politeia* in Greek Federal States, by Chiara Lasagni, pp. 78-109

4 The Case of Multiple Citizenship Holders in the Graeco-Roman East, by Andreea Ștefan, pp. 110-131

Part 2: Citizens and Non-citizens in the Roman World

5 Citizens among Outsiders in Plautus's Roman Cosmopolis. A Moment of Change, by Elena Isayev, pp. 135-155

6 Were Children Second-Class Citizens in Roman Society? Information Technology Resources for a New Vision of an Ancient Issue, by Donato Fasolini, pp. 156-171

7 Egyptians and Citizenship from the First Century AD to the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, by Valerio Marotta, pp. 172-198

8 Fifty Years before the Antonine Constitution: Access to Roman Citizenship and Exclusive Rights, by Arnaud Besson, pp. 199-220

Part 3: Ancient Citizenship in the Philosophical and Political Reflection

9 Metaphorical Appeals to Civic Ethos in Lycurgus' *Against Leocrates*, by Jakub

Filonik, pp. 223-258

10 *Alteram loci patriam, alteram iuris*: “Double Fatherlands” and the Role of Italy in Cicero’s Political Discourse, by Filippo Carlà-Uhink, pp. 259-282

11 Ancient and Modern Sources of Hegel’s Conception of the Roman Citizenship, by Valerio Rocco Lozano, pp. 283-301

12 The Idea of Cosmopolitanism from Its Origins to the 21st Century, by Anna Busetto, pp. 302-317

---

## Notes:

1. See e.g. Clifford Ando (ed.), *Citizenship and Empire in Europe, 200-1900. The Antonine Constitution after 1800 Years*, (Stuttgart 2016) (BMCR [2017.01.17](#)).

2. Altay Coşkun, Raphael Lutz (ed.), *Fremd und rechtlos? Zugehörigkeitsrechte Fremder von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Ein Handbuch*, (Köln 2014) (BMCR [2016.04.15](#)).

3. [Politês and Civis](#). It is worth noting that many of the papers included in the volume were not delivered at the conference, and the same is true for the contrary.

4. Although secondary literature is not always adequately considered: for instance, on Lycia (p. 8, note 29) see Christina Kokkinia, *Opramoas’ Citizenships: The Lycian politeuomenos-formula*, in Anna Heller, Anne Valérie Pont (ed.), *Patrie d’origine et patries électives: les citoyennetés multiples dans le monde grec d’époque romaine*, (Bordeaux 2012), pp. 327 ff.; on the spread of Roman citizenship in the second cent. BC (p. 11) see Michel Humbert, *Le status civitatis. Identité et identification du civis Romanus*, in Alessandro Corbino, Michel Humbert, Giovanni Negri (ed.), *Homo, caput, persona: la costruzione giuridica dell’identità nell’esperienza romana dall’epoca di Plauto a Ulpiano*, (Pavia 2010), pp. 139 ff.

5. On the term κοσμοπολίτης see more thoroughly Tamara Chin in Myles Lavan, Richard Payne, John Weisweiler (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Universal Rulers, Local Elites, and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, (New York 2016), part. pp. 134-147 (BMCR [2017.09.50](#)).

6. Filippo Carlà-Uhink’s vision on the history of mid-late Roman Republic is presented in his recent and brilliant volume *The ‘Birth’ of Italy. The Institutionalization of Italy as a Region, 3rd-1st Century BCE*, (Berlin 2017).

7. See now Alain Duplouy, Roger W. Brock (ed.), *Defining citizenship in archaic Greece*, (Oxford; New York 2018), particularly the essay by Josine Blok, *Retracing Steps: Finding Ways into Archaic Greek Citizenship*.

8. See already Chiara Lasagni, *La definizione di ‘stato federale’ nel mondo greco, Dike*, 12/13 (2009/2010), pp. 219-270, and now the comprehensive study of Jacek Rzepka, *Greek federal terminology*, (Oxford 2017).

9. See now chap. 6 on Plautus in Isayev’s book *Migration, Mobility and Place in Ancient Italy*, (Cambridge 2017) (BMCR [2018.07.39](#)).

10. Donato Fasolini in Javier Andreu, David Espinosa, Simone Pastor (ed.), *Mors omnibus instat*, (Madrid 2011), pp. 113-141, and in *Gerion*, 32 (2014), pp. 225-236.

11. The only warning I have on this essay is on occasional infelicities of English translation (e.g.: ‘date’ for ‘data’ at p. 186, note 60; ‘letters’? at p. 161, note 61 and p. 192, note 84; ‘as will be show below’ at p. 187, note 69, and so forth).

12. On which see now Alex Imrie, *The Antonine Constitution: an edict for the Caracallan empire*, (Leiden; Boston 2018).

**[Read comments on this review or add a comment](#) on the BMCR blog**

<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">Read Latest</a>	<a href="#">Archives</a>	<a href="#">BMCR Blog</a>	<a href="#">About BMCR</a>	<a href="#">Review for BMCR</a>	<a href="#">Commentaries</a>	<a href="#">Support BMCR</a>
----------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------