

of Roman Hispania. Techniques such as rank-size analysis, least-cost path analysis and carrying capacity analysis help to explain the observed urban patterns, providing insights into the underlying principles of urban development in the Iberian peninsula. While the broad lines of interpretation of the analyses are not to be doubted, a more critical engagement with the strengths and limitations of the techniques and data would be a valuable consideration for future research, for example on the topic of carrying capacity and the use of modern climate data.

Overall, this monograph offers one of the first macro-scale, data-driven and in-depth analyses of the urbanisation of Roman Spain and Portugal. Through meticulous research and innovative approaches, it convincingly sketches a detailed reconstruction of the mechanisms and processes that characterised the Roman urban systems in the Iberian peninsula. The book clearly illustrates the need to move away from the traditional view of Roman urbanisation as a uniform, exclusively state-directed process. Instead, H. proposes a more nuanced view in which multiple urban settlement systems co-existed, at least in part conditioned by pre-existing indigenous systems. Given the extensive amount of data and the range of topics covered in the book, chapter-level conclusions would have been helpful to enhance understanding and highlight key findings. This would also have allowed the results to be placed in a broader perspective, for example through comparison with Gaul, North Africa or Italy.

In conclusion, this monograph is a significant contribution to the current state of art on Roman urbanism. It offers a new perspective on the urban development of Roman Spain and Portugal and fills an important gap in the literature on the history of the region. The book is highly recommended as a reference work for academic libraries and scholars of Roman urban studies and the Roman history of the Iberian peninsula.

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doi:10.1017/S0075435824000534

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CAROLINE BERGEN, 'WEGEN DER SCHÖNHEIT EURER HÄFEN...' HAFENANLAGEN DER FRÜHEN KAISERZEIT – SPIEGEL STÄDTISCHER SELBSTDARSTELLUNG? (Pharos. Studien zur griechisch-römischen Antike 49). Rahden/Westf.: Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH, 2022. Pp. 551, illus., maps, plans. ISBN 9783867572774. €59.80.

For many cities in the Roman Empire, their ports were much more than trading places and gateways to the surrounding world — they were also sources of local pride. The advanced infrastructure of the port facilities and the monumental architecture there demonstrated the importance and wealth of the city to which the port belonged. Portus, as the port of imperial Rome, is the grandest example of this with its imposing structures including warehouses, quays and ship sheds as well as temples and the famous *Palazzo Imperiale*. Similarly, other major ports in the Empire were embellished and monumentalised, thus reflecting the way in which the cities saw themselves. This phenomenon, monumentalisation as a tool for political communication and self-portrayal of a city, is the topic of the book by Caroline Bergen here reviewed. The quote in the title is taken from Dio Chrysostom's discourse to the people of Alexandria in which he praises the beauty of their city's harbours (32.36).

The book is a revised version of B.'s 2018 doctoral thesis, which is reflected in the bibliography since it includes only a few titles published later than that. The structure pretty much follows that of a thesis. It has two short introductory chapters (in total 19 pages), a massive central chapter containing the analysis of the case studies (400 pages), and a short final chapter (12 pages) wrapping it all up. The study is above all based on literary sources which then are discussed together with relevant inscriptions and coins. Results from archaeological excavations are referred to and the monumental architecture in or around the ports is described.

In the introduction, B. observes that, given the representations of monumentalised ports in ancient art, such as wall paintings from Stabiae, coins and the so-called Torlonia relief from the imperial palace at Portus, we can probably assume that it was common for important port cities in the

early imperial period to monumentalise their ports. Among the aims of her study is an investigation into the persons behind the monumentalisation of ports, and to what extent intervention by the emperor can perhaps be observed. Central to the discussion is whether the imperial ports served as examples for the monumentalisation of provincial ones.

In order to answer these and other questions, B. has chosen seven port cities around the Mediterranean as case studies, and these are presented in the heavy central chapter 3. Besides two very important ports in Italy, Ostia/Portus and Puteoli, five provincial capitals have been selected in order to cover both the west and the east: Tarraco, Narbo Martius, Ephesus, Caesarea Maritima and Alexandria. The ports of these cities served not only an economic function in maritime trade, but also as places where the governors, leading magistrates and other officials of the city — as well as the military — arrived and departed. B. discusses the selection of the cities chosen, and in ch. 4 suggests that in a wider study one could include several other important port cities such as Brundisium, Ravenna, Carthage, Miletus and Syracuse. Still, for her study the selected ports enable her to draw some general conclusions as well as a lot of site-specific results. In essence, the outcome of her study is that overall monumentalisation of the ports in the case studies does not seem to follow an imperial model. Nor can the harbour areas be said, at a general level, to have been central to the self-portrayal of the cities.

B. builds on a wide range of research on ancient ports, not least the hugely important projects directed by Simon Keay, the Portus Limen–Rome’s Mediterranean Ports project and the Portus Project. Naturally a book like this cannot cover everything, but in recent years there have been considerable advances in scholarship which could have been mentioned. For example, it is a pity that in the case of Ostia and Portus the work on the port infrastructures at Portus by the *École française de Rome* is not referred to. This project began in 2009, and since then much has been published by, among others, É. Bukowiecki and M. Mimmo.

For a publication dealing with the effects of monumental architecture and the self-portrayal of cities, this book has remarkably few illustrations. There are some maps and plans for each of the chosen cities, but that is all. Given that the book comes across as somewhat dense in its layout, it would have helped the reader if more illustrations had been included — in particular of the buildings, inscriptions and coins discussed. Although the author writes that this is a revised version of her thesis, structurally it very much feels like a thesis. More careful editing would have resulted in a more reader-friendly product. That said, this book will be of great value to anyone prepared to delve into the sometimes rather compact descriptions of the ports and cities studied. There is a wealth of information gathered here and the careful analysis of the sources is a useful point of departure for further research.

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doi:10.1017/S0075435824000169

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RABUN M. TAYLOR, *ANCIENT NAPLES: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY, ORIGINS TO C. 350 CE*. New York and Bristol: Italica Press, 2021. Pp. xxiii + 445, illus., maps, plans. ISBN 9781599102214 (hbk), \$55.00; 9781599102221 (pbk), \$30.00; 9781599102238 (kindle); 9781599104072 (pdf).

It is always of interest when a glimpse ‘from the outside’ rests on something that we know very well because, in this case, the glimpse is less conditioned than ours by the circumstance of ‘immersion’ in a particular, given reality. For this reason and with great interest, I read the book written by Rabun M. Taylor on Naples, the city where I was born, where I live and work as an architect. T.’s glimpse is, from my point of view, in two ways ‘external’. First, perhaps banally, because he is a citizen of a country with a completely different history, but also, in a more interesting way, because his education is not that of a practising architect, but rather that of classical studies.

The book *Ancient Naples: A Documentary History, Origins to c. 350 CE* is therefore a meticulous and detailed history of Naples in ancient times, developed through two different categories of sources: on one hand the written texts and on the other hand the material sources, the archaeological finds