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### Gilli, Patrick and Jean-Pierre Guilhembet (eds.). *Le châtement des villes dans les espaces méditerranéens (Antiquité, Moyen Âge, Époque moderne)*

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Gilli, Patrick and Jean-Pierre Guilhembet (eds.).

*Le châtement des villes dans les espaces méditerranéens (Antiquité, Moyen Âge, Époque moderne).*

Studies in European Urban History (11001800) 26. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012. Pp. ix, 408. ISBN 978-2-503-54051-1 (paperback) € 81.

Even when they faced neither external attack nor civil strife, premodern and early modern cities possessed well-defined, even tenaciously defended identities, whether fashioned from within or judged from without; ancient Athens and Sparta and trecento Florence and Genoa are among many examples that come to mind. How much more pronounced such identities could become in the eyes of those who attacked and those who defended cities is ably explored in this collection of 26 essays—mostly in French, with two in Italian and one in Spanish—that analyze the motives, legislation, conditions, effects and depiction of the punishment of cities. The book has an enormous range, beginning with the ninth-century BCE Assyrian king Aššurnāṣirpal II's attack on rebellious Sûru and ending with Napoleon's campaign against Venice in 1797. Following an introductory essay in which the two co-editors persuasively defend the volume's breadth and heterogeneity, *Le châtement des villes* proceeds in three sections. The first, "Discours et représentations des châtements urbains," comprises chapters by Lionel Marti, Claudia de Oliveira Gomes, Jeannine Boëldieu-Trevet, Valérie Huet, Jean-Pierre Guilhembet, Michel Bochaca with Pierre Prétou, and André Zysberg. The second, "Outils juridiques et construction idéologique de la rébellion," includes contributions by Audrey Bertrand, Pilar Pavón, Jean-Christophe Robert, Maité Lesné-Ferret, Patrick Gilli, Armand Jamme and Leah Otis-Cour (not "Lea Othis Court" as in the table of contents). The last and longest section, "Pratiques de la répression urbaine," brings together essays by Olivier Mariaud, Frédéric Maffre, Simone Balossino, Enrica Salvatori, Marco Gentile, Letizia Arcangeli, David Sassu-Normand, Gisela Naegle, Fabien Salesse, Isabelle Gillet and Marc Boone. Having been born—as Marc Boone explains on the inside cover—of the project "City and Society in the Low Countries, 1200–1800: Space, Knowledge, Social Capital," this book extends that project's chronological and geographical scope and deploys a formidable battery of interventions upon a field defined largely by non-comparative studies.

*Le châtement des villes* avails itself of a variety of textual sources to illuminate its topics. Marti, for example, reconstructs his picture of ancient Assyrian urban sieges by means of biblical passages as well as royal inscriptions. Papal letters in addition to chronicles in Latin prose and Old French verse furnish Balossino with the means to delineate the complex and sinister motives of the early thirteenth-century Church in its offensives in the Languedoc. Bochaca and Prétou, in their work on Bordeaux and Bayonne in the 1450s and '60s, make use of municipal cartularies, Jean Chartier's *Chronique de Charles VII*, and a striking series of illuminations from a Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript of the *Vigilles de la mort du feu roy Charles septiesme*; these last are reproduced as high quality colour plates (though it should be noted that the captions for figures 10 and 11 on p. 113 have been mistakenly transposed). Black and white illustrations, maps, and/or tables embellish the chapters by Huet, Bochaca and Prétou, Zysberg, Mariaud, and Maffre.

A variety of perspectives complements the diversity of documents. Bertrand studies the expansion of pre-imperial Rome via the punishment of rebellious towns, but also considers the less obvious yet no less important need to recompense army veterans, who expected to receive appropriated land in return for past military service. Lesné-Ferret analyzes the punishment of twelfth- and thirteenth-century southern French cities in terms of the impact on nascent legal institutions; this focus on the rise of autonomous lawmaking as a characteristic of high medieval cities emerges often and rewardingly in the course of the volume. The book's theme nevertheless permits intriguing variations. Gentile and Jamme, for example, explore specific circumstances that led to the avoidance of large-scale punitive measures. The Viscontis of Lombardy, who needed to secure confirmation of their authority from the Holy Roman Emperor, were obliged to respond cautiously to Cremona's revolt in 1340 (Gentile). The Papacy, notwithstanding its belief in the prophylactic benefit of sieges, increasingly forwent these in the late fifteenth century in favour of assassinations, which eliminated troublesome individuals like the governors of Forlì and Faenza in 1488 while sparing those cities' coveted economies (Jamme). Punishment, however, was not restricted to human beings. Otis-Cour fascinatingly investigates how, following the town of Albi's rebellion against Toulouse, the latter's *parlement* ordered that the horn used to summon the Albigeois to public meetings should be hung on a stake and displayed in the main square; her study reveals that Toulouse "punished" this horn, along with the town

clock (named “Paulin”), in a deliberate strategy to treat civic symbols of Albi as persons and, in effect, humiliate them accordingly. Shrewd chastisers of cities targeted not only material signs of urban identity but also, on occasion, the very names of municipalities, as Naegel shows with regard to Louis XI’s plan for Arras, and as Gilli and Guilhembet note in their introductory discussion of the *Convention nationale*’s vengefulness against loyalist Lyon in 1793. These chapters and others confirm the chilling truth of an insight offered in Marc Boone’s concluding essay with specific, but by no means exclusive, reference to municipal archives: a would-be vanquisher of urban rebellion will wipe out embodiments of the city’s collective memory and “prendra soin d’inscrire ses propres actions dans le temps” (408).

A few observations on the book’s format may be ventured here. Bibliography is confined to the individual chapters’ footnotes rather than appearing at the end of chapters (the exception being Maffre’s) or at the back of the volume. An index doubtless would have added to the book’s final cost but would have aided readers interested in comparing punishments of the same town at different times (e.g., Marseille, discussed separately by Zysberg and Salvatori, or Toulouse in the studies by Otis-Cour and Naegle). Readers with little or no knowledge of French, Italian, or Spanish should be aware that there are no abstracts or summaries in English. Let me end this review on a positive note, however. Even if Gilli and Guilhembet had given us a mere aggregate of heterogeneous *sondages*, they still would have added greatly to our understanding of the violence inflicted upon ancient, medieval, and early modern Mediterranean cities by their not always universally acknowledged overlords. Yet *Le châtement des villes* is more than the sum of its parts, not unlike each of the cities it surveys. Its introductory essay and concluding chapter help to impart coherence to the whole; they discern common threads among the various contributions, propose further contexts for exploration, and honour the co-editors’ promise to avoid reducing the contributors’ complex findings to facile formulae.

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