

Sophia Aneziri, *Greek Endowments in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods*, (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge 69), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2025, 559 pp.; ISBN 978-3-515-13916-8

Various types of foundations and donations commonly appeared in the Greek and Roman world. This is evidenced by references in written sources and, above all, by the constantly growing number of epigraphic testimonies. For obvious reasons, royal foundations are far more often the subject of scholarly attention than private foundations. The only work devoted to them, by B. Laum, was published over a century ago.¹ This state of affairs changed only with the publication of S. Aneziri's work, which is the fruit of her many years of study, during which she collected evidence of private foundations from various epochs of Greek history. The recently published volume covers only documents from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Documents from Roman times will be the subject of a separate publication in the future (p. 17).

The work consists of two parts. The first is analytical in nature (pp. 21–197), while the second is a catalogue containing 101 documents with data concerning foundations, plus 9 classified as *dubia* (*Catalogue of Epigraphic and Literary Sources*, pp. 199–482).

In the first chapter of the analytical section (*Redefining the Endowments*, pp. 21–39), the author defines the concept of endowments *sub modo* used in her work—that is, those intended to serve a purpose specified by the founder and under conditions established by them (p. 21)²—presents the state of research, the nature of the source base, and establishes the chronological (to 31/30 BCE) and geographical boundaries of the collection of documents she analyzes. Geographically, her area of interest encompasses mainland Greece, the islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas, Asia Minor, Commagene, Syria, and Egypt. She also defines the methodological assumptions of her research and the legal, administrative, and financial aspects of the functioning of foundations. Issues related to the administration of foundations are presented in detail in the second chapter (*Setting up an Endowment: Principles of Administration*, pp. 41–71). The donors of the overwhelming majority of foundations were private individuals or groups thereof, who usually entrusted

¹ *Stiftungen in der griechischer und römischen Antike. Ein Beitrag zur antike Kulturgeschichte*, Leipzig-Berlin 1914.

² P. 28: “[...] we find that a better term for transfer of property to institution or collectivities in order to provide them with a permanent fund or perpetual source of income is ‘endowment,’ which includes the sense of a grant and applies equally whether the gift is made by donation during the donor's lifetime or by testament after his/her death. What this term does not necessarily explain, however, is the regular and exclusive channeling of the income from the transferred property to the funding of a specific purpose, as desired by the donor. In order to make that dimension clear, our term should be extended to the more explicit ‘endowment *sub modo*.’”

the funds designated for the purposes of the foundation to the management of cities, associations, or political structures such as the Achaean or Ionian League. The recipients managed the foundation's resources with the help of special officials. Foundation funds were subject to protection and various types of safeguards. However, the administration of foundations in the Greek world did not follow an established pattern but was varied.

Issues concerning the financial aspects of the functioning of foundations are discussed by the author in the third chapter (*Running an Endowment: Financial Aspects*, pp. 73–99). These issues lead to many crucial questions on matters such as the size of donations, their form, the amount and nature of the profit they generated. Analysis of the documents indicates that most donations took monetary form, as this allowed greater freedom in investing the received funds. Sometimes donations also took the form of real estate, whose exploitation was meant to generate profits and provide security for the foundation (pp. 77–81). Monetary donations were offered in currencies accepted in particular regions (pp. 81–85). At the same time, it is difficult to determine unequivocally what benefits the recipients gained, as these depended on local conditions. Typically, the funds they received and could dispose of allowed them to cover a certain portion of current expenses related, for example, to religious ceremonies or expenditures for educational purposes (pp. 86–89).

The author presents the answer to the question of who the founders were and what purposes their donations served in the fourth chapter (*Why Endowments? The Socio-Political Context*, pp. 101–125). The donors constituted a socially diverse group; they were usually members of local elites and held public offices and priestly functions. However, their social position is not always clearly mentioned in the documents. A separate, though small, group of donors comprised women (pp. 101–108). The purposes of donations were either individual or public in character. The former were generally connected with the sphere of religious life and served to commemorate a particular individual or family, while the latter served the public good (pp. 116–121). According to the author, regardless of the purpose of specific foundations, their donors desired above all to gain personal prestige and immortalize their name in the public space.³ Such motivation determined the allocation of donations to public purposes, with most of them serving to finance those manifestations of religious life in which the local community participated, or public education (p. 125).

A separate category of foundations consisted of donations by Hellenistic rulers. We know of 27 such foundations, and the fifth chapter discusses their characteristics (*The Royal Endowments*, pp. 127–145). Royal donations mostly came in cash, while very rarely did they entail land donations. Generally, they were received by cities boasting of temples or important sanctuaries well known in the Greek world, not only those located within the borders of the donors' own states, but frequently also those beyond them. The donations were intended to defray expenses connected with religious festivals

³ P. 109: "While this distinction [private or public endowments] allows us to isolate and assess differences in the objects of and motives for the various endowments, we must bear in mind that it is a matter of convention and that in each category there are elements of the other: endowments designated to perpetuate the memory of the donor also benefit the community which receives and manages them, while the enhancement of the endower's prestige and therefore the satisfaction of his interests is an inseparable effect of endowments in the public interest."

or for the needs of a particular cult. A significant number of royal donations were also intended for educational purposes. The author discussed several examples of such donations by various rulers in detail (pp. 129–145).

S. Aneziri presents a summary of her research in the *Conclusions* (pp. 147–155), which set forth the most important results in a concise and comprehensible manner.

The first part of the work is concluded by two appendices. The first (*Erroneously Classified Cases – falsa*, pp. 157–168) contains a compilation of documents classifying foundations as seemingly belonging to the type of interest to the author but nevertheless not meeting her adopted criteria. In the second (*The Limitations of the Sources: Uncertainties and Probabilities*, pp. 169–180), she discusses difficulties in interpreting contextual information in foundation documents. Five tables and five graphs provide valuable assistance in using the author's data, excerpted from the analyzed documents and collected in the catalogue. The tables present: the names of founders (Tab. 1: *The Endowners*, pp. 180–183); the addressees of foundations or their administrators (Tab. 2: *Recipients /Administrators of Endowments*, pp. 184–186); the nature and size of foundations (Tab. 3: *Nature and Size of the Endowments*, pp. 187–189); the purposes of foundations (Tab. 4: *Purposes of the Endowments*, p. 190); and their chronological distribution (Tab. 5: *Endowments in Chronological Order*, pp. 191–193). The graphs, in turn, illustrate: attestations of endowners; attestations of recipients and administrators; attestations of donated property; and attestations of purposes/categories of endowments (pp. 195–197).

In the catalogue, which constitutes the second part, each document is presented in full. The text of the document is accompanied by relevant bibliography, a translation, and a concise commentary.

S. Aneziri's work is a noteworthy achievement that provides scholars of the social, economic, and religious history of the Greek world with a wealth of valuable data for their studies. Although the attached catalogue contains long-known and studied documents, repeatedly analyzed and interpreted by scholars, the completeness of this collection provides scholars with considerably more data, offering greater possibilities for understanding various kinds of social phenomena in the Greek world, their evolution, and the general picture of social and religious practices and behaviors over time. Thanks to them, it is possible to establish which of these persisted over a longer period, how their evolution proceeded, and to identify the circumstances in which they coalesced. Many scholars will certainly be grateful to the author for the effort of collecting these documents and for the conclusions arising from their analysis. I am convinced that scholars interested in ancient foundations will eagerly await the next volume of her authorship, containing a much larger collection (over 500) of documents from the Roman period.

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