

This paper will briefly consider a number of topics of significance regarding recent work in Greek institutional and political history. One obvious axis along which to proceed first is to consider the massive output between 1993 and 2003 of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, under the leadership of M.H. Hansen, especially because the scale and intensity of publication have meant that this work has barely begun to be assimilated intellectually. At issue are eight volumes of “papers” of the Centre, published as *Einzelchriften* of *Historia*, seven volumes of “acts”, put out by the Royal Danish Society of Arts and Sciences, and the massive *Inventory of Greek Poleis*, published by Oxford. My discussion will draw on a series of review articles (now appearing) that I was asked to write by *Ancient West and East* that cover most of these publications. An appraisal of the picture of the Greek *polis* that emerges from these publications can be supplemented by a consideration of methodology, which is, in this case, traditionally comparative, institutionally and legally focused, and a bit positivistic. We can then turn to juxtaposition with some other recent European work that may be exemplified by two sets of *comparanda*: first, the collective volume *Poleis e Politeiai: Esperienze politiche, tradizioni letterarie, progetti costituzionali* (Alessandria 2004), edited by S. Cataldi, and, the second, focusing on a single *polis*, that is represented by the International Sparta Seminar, whose publications have been mainly edited by A. Powell and S. Hodkinson. When we turn to American work on the structure of the *polis*, we can pause to note the contributions of scholars such as N.P. Jones and E. Robinson, but my focus will be on American work *vis-à-vis* the European scholarship just surveyed. Once the direct participation has been surveyed (for instance, in the Copenhagen *polis* Centre publications), one can explore trends in interdisciplinary research along three principal routes -- scholarship utilizing anthropological scholarship, that drawing on post-modernist theory, and exploration undertaken in conjunction with political sciences. An appraisal of recent work here reveals the importance of the social and cultural framework for research in ancient history in the contemporary university and configuration of professional organizations. There are, unfortunately, some grounds for pessimism when prospects for ancient history are viewed in this light, despite the quality publications that continue to appear.