

# MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

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## PREFACE

MUCH has been written on various aspects and problems of municipal administration, and some brief general outlines have also appeared ; but nothing has thus far been published which can claim to be more than a partial or an elementary treatment, as indeed the authors would be the first to admit. This stage of fragmentary writing has been a necessary and an important one in developing the discussion and literary treatment of a new subject of large and growing significance. It would seem, however, that the time has now come for a more comprehensive and more systematic treatise, and it is as an attempt in this direction that the writer makes bold to present this work.

The title, "Municipal Administration," probably conveys a general idea of the subject to the minds of readers. Yet such is the vagueness and uncertainty with which words are used that it will be worth while to make the conception more exact by some definition of terms. Administration is a general term with the widest range of meaning, applying to the management of any kind of business. In reference to public affairs, administration is the detailed execution of general policies, the application of laws. It is to be contrasted and distinguished from legislation, and is indeed the work of public officials, established and set in operation by legislative measures. Municipal administration is that branch of public administration intrusted to municipal officials. The duties of such officials are almost exclusively of an administrative rather than a legislative character ; and for that reason the title given is preferred to the less definite term "municipal government."

It is necessary, further, to note more carefully the scope of the word "municipal." In English and American law a

municipality is any subordinate public authority created by the central government and vested with the legal rights of a corporation. The term applies to the local authorities in cities, villages, counties, special authorities such as school and park boards, and even to incorporated townships as in Massachusetts. In this sense, municipal administration would include the whole field of local government. But the local administration of public affairs in cities or urban districts is so strongly differentiated from that in rural districts, and is, moreover, so much the more important, that, by common usage, municipal is often confined to urban or city communities, and is so used in this work. There is indeed a further restriction by which, where there are several local incorporated authorities in a city, only one (usually the most important) is called the municipal corporation; but it is impossible to recognize local variations of this kind, and municipal will be held to include all of the local public authorities in a city.

These definitions show that the book deals primarily with the cities of the world. But what constitutes a city? Legal definitions vary widely in different countries and in the different American states; and the word is often applied to petty villages as well as to metropolitan communities. Moreover, the dictionaries in their attempts to express the general meaning of the word have used phrases so vague that they fail to convey any definite idea. There are, in fact, three essential elements which must exist to form a city, and all of these must be represented in the definition: (1) the geographical fact of a definite local area on which buildings are for the most part compactly erected; (2) the sociological fact of a large community of people densely settled on the given area; and (3) the political fact of an organized local authority or authorities controlling the public affairs of the community. Combining these elements, a city may be defined as "A populous community, inhabiting a definite, compactly built locality, and having an organized public authority." This statement includes all the necessary features which go to make up a city, while omitting

the exact details of legal definition which vary so widely. Where necessary to establish a statistical standard, the writer believes a minimum limit of twenty thousand population is about the figure at which real urban conditions come into existence; while urban communities of over one hundred thousand population may be classed as great cities.

It will be noticed that the form of definition given emphasizes the fact of population, which is the most important element and the factor most often meant when the word "city" is used. But the order of phrases can be readily rearranged to represent the secondary meanings of the word.

Cities are the mark of civilization advancing beyond the stage of self-sufficing agricultural villages. The urban community is both product and sign of the division of labor into agriculture, commerce, and industry, since an essential element of the city as here defined is the absence of agriculture in the city proper; and hence the need of trade in agricultural supplies to the city, which cannot long exist without a return trade of city products to the country.

The prime factors, too, in the development of cities are the development of commerce and industry. It is true some cities have been deliberately planted for military, administrative, or political reasons; but these cities have no stable basis or permanence as a community, and can have none until they become commercial or industrial centres. A purely political or military city, supported by contributions either from the surrounding country or from outlying provinces, may be maintained only so long as the army holds its power or the government continues at that place.

The commercial and industrial city has a much more permanent position. It obtains the sustenance for its inhabitants not by forced contributions, but indirectly from its own resources and activities. It thus has a vitality of its own, and may maintain itself for centuries, as have Damascus, Marseilles, and Cadiz. The economic bases of city life are not, however, altogether immutable. The Otto-

man conquest, which closed the commercial routes from Europe to the East, caused the decline of Aleppo and seriously affected the prosperity of Venice. But such cases are rare; and the economic city usually persists from age to age.

It is due to the irresistible tendency of modern industrial development to mass population at trade and manufacturing centres that the nineteenth century, and especially the latter part of it, has seen the constant enlargements in the area and population of former cities and the appearance and rapid growth of new cities. In all the important countries of the world the rural district has become a town; the town a small city; the small city a large one; the large one a metropolis.

At each stage of growth the need or the opportunity for exercising new public activities in order to satisfy local wants has been felt, while at the same time progress in technical efficiency has opened the way for further additions to the functions of government. Add to this the spread of democratic ideas, which has raised the concepts of human rights and human dignity, and has thus induced public bodies to extend their activities so as to elevate the social condition and the culture plane of the lower classes. From all of these causes the scope of all forms of public activity has been broadened and deepened; and especially within the cities has the work of the municipal authorities expanded with stupendous increments far beyond even the startling development of cities and city population.

It is this recent and significant development of municipal activities which has made the question of municipal administration one of vital importance, and the study of it a subject worthy of the attention of students of political science.

The present work begins with a historical survey of cities and municipal government, treating briefly of ancient and mediæval cities and more at length of the development during the nineteenth century. From the time of the Greek city-state, when the city was the sum and centre of political

life, the movement until the end of the eighteenth century is, on the whole, one of the growth of larger political units, which absorb many functions of the early city and subordinate the city to the state. But with the recent development of urban communities and municipal activities, the direction of the current has changed, and cities have again become important factors in the life of the times.

In the second part there is a general survey of the active functions of municipal administration. In this discussion two aspects of municipal activity need to be borne in mind. In the first place, the municipal authorities in many lines are acting as agents of the central government, performing what may be called state functions of local administration. In the second place, the municipality acts as a distinctly local corporation in serving the special local needs of the community. It is not possible to draw hard and fast lines in classifying the various functions into these groups. But in the main the municipality acts as agent of the state in reference to public health and safety, the work of charity and education; while the various undertakings described in the two chapters on municipal improvements belong for the most part to the domain of special local functions.

The third part deals with the problems of municipal finance; and different chapters consider questions of expenditure, debt, income, and finance administration. In the fourth part the various methods and problems of municipal organization are discussed, with special reference to recent tendencies and proposed reforms in American cities.

No attempt is made to deal with the local politics of any particular city; nor in the discussion of municipal functions can technical details of the various departments be given. The book aims rather to give a general knowledge of the whole field of municipal administration for those interested in public affairs, and at the same time to form the groundwork for more detailed investigation to those who make this a special field either for academic study or for practical work.

It is necessary to make clear the relation of some parts of the book to other published writings. Part II is to some extent a development from certain chapters which I prepared for a monograph on Municipal Functions, published in *Municipal Affairs* for December, 1898; and considerable data then used have been incorporated into the present work. A few other portions have appeared in much their present form. Chapter V, on American Municipal Development, is revised from an article in "A Municipal Program"; the section of Chapter VIII on Police Administration appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly* for March, 1901; and Chapter XVI, on Finance Administration, contains large excerpts from a paper on that subject read at the meeting of the National Municipal League at Rochester, N.Y., in May, 1901, and published in the proceedings of that meeting.

The sources used in the preparation of the book are too numerous for mention here. They are indicated freely in the bibliographical references at the beginnings of the chapters and in the footnotes. Personal observation and investigation have also been made in a number of American and European cities; and for aid in these researches my sincere thanks are due to many kind friends and public officials.

HARVARD CLUB, NEW YORK,  
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**PART I**  
**MUNICIPAL HISTORY**



# MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

## PART I—MUNICIPAL HISTORY

### CHAPTER I

#### THE CITIES OF ANTIQUITY

**Authorities.**—MASPERO: *The Dawn of Civilization*. — CURTIUS: *History of Greece*. — GROTE: *History of Greece*. — SCHÖMANN: *Antiquities of Greece*. — MANN: *Ancient and Mediæval Republics*. — MOMMSEN: *The History of Rome; Roman Provinces*. — FOWLER: *The City-State of the Greeks and Romans*. — LANCIANI: *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*. — LANCIANI: *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*. — GIBBON: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. — W. LIEBKNECHT: *Städteverwaltung in römischen Kaiserreiche*. \*

ALTHOUGH a striking characteristic of the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of great cities is by no means confined to this period, and such cities are to be found from the very beginning of recorded history. In the river valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, where both fertile soil and easy transportation were at hand, the earliest civilizations developed the well-known cities of Thebes, Memphis, Babylon, and Nineveh, with other important places, whose names are perhaps not so familiar.

In her early history, Egypt was a self-sustaining and commercially isolated country; and there seem to have been no important cities other than the two political centres just named—Memphis and Thebes. But when in later times foreign commerce and intercourse developed through the influence of the Phœnicians and Greeks, new cities arose: Kopton on the trade route from the Sinaitic peninsula to Libya, with Cosseir on the Red Sea as its shipping port;

Sais and Naucratis on the Delta of the Nile, in connection with the trade of the Mediterranean.

Almost nothing, however, is known of what we would call municipal conditions in these cities. The centre of interest in Egyptian history is the monuments, which were not in the cities and were not municipal works.

The great Oriental cities of Assyria and Babylonia were for the most part palace cities, where the royal residence was the centre of the whole. Maspero names fifteen cities of ancient Chaldea, in two groups, southern and northern. The most important of these were Lagash and Uru, near the mouth of the Euphrates, and Babylon farther north. To the east of Chaldea, Susa, the capital of the Elamites, is said to have vied with the richest cities of the Euphrates, Uru and Babylon, in antiquity and magnificence. As the lines of commerce from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean developed, Damascus began its important career, which has continued for so many centuries. Later, as the Phœnicians carried trade still farther west, their home ports of Tyre and Sidon grew to be considerable cities; while the trading posts established along the Black Sea, on the Mediterranean, and even on the coasts of Spain and Britain, laid the foundation for future cities such as Paphos in Cyprus, Rhodes, Gades (Tarshish, Cadiz), and Carthage.

Little more can be said of the municipal conditions in these cities than of the early Egyptian cities. It is known that in ancient Tyre the water supply was furnished by an aqueduct from the springs in the mountains, — probably one of the earliest instances of the kind. It may be assumed that in cities almost exclusively commercial in character, where political institutions were undeveloped, the range of public activity even for the local needs of the urban populations was extremely limited.

It was Greece that first showed the possibilities of the city in the political sphere. The city here was not merely a trading post, or the residence of the ruler of a large area, but the centre and sum of political life. The physical con-

ditions of the country prevented for a long time the formation of large empires ; and each city was thus independent and self-ruled. Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, Calchis, Phœcea, each combined both the economic and political features of city life. Our word "politics," indeed, comes from the Greek word for city, and means literally the public affairs of the city.

But the Greek cities were not alone those in Greece proper. Probably influenced by the Phœnicians, the Greeks early took to maritime employments, and more certainly imitated them in founding trade cities. By the eighth century B.C. the founding of Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor and the neighboring islands (Miletus, Ephesus) had gone so far that the Ægean might be regarded as a Greek sea ; and as the stream of emigration and commerce progressed further, still more new cities arose. Greeks founded the cities of Abydus, Cyzicus, and Synope, on the Dardanelles and Sea of Marmora ; and thence along the coast of the Black Sea appeared Trapezus, Phasis, Tanais, and Obia, trade centres for the products of Armenia and the traffic from the great northern rivers, now in Russia. Other lines of trade led to Thrace ; up the Adriatic to Corcyra ; to the Italian mainland at Cumæ, Rhegium on the Straits, and other points on the Gulf of Tarentum ; to Sicily at Naxos and Syracuse ; and finally to Marseilles (600 B.C.).

These Greek colonies were not, like the Phœnician ports, simply trading posts with temporary settlements ; but, like the city-state in the home country, were permanent cities, political as well as economic centres. The cities of Sicily and Southern Italy became a Greater Greece (*Magna Græcia*) beyond the seas. And although all the Greek cities were related by trading lines, and still more by their common civilization and common religion, yet each was an independent community, with a vigorous political life and a large sphere of public activity.

Of the Greek cities, Athens is undoubtedly not only the most important, but also the most studied and the best known. We can therefore take that city as exemplifying



the highest development of municipal conditions at this period.

Like all the other Greek cities, Athens was not a municipality, but a city-state, and there was no distinction in public activity between these functions which we would now call municipal and those which we would call state or national. For our purposes, however, the distinction needs to be remembered; and it is not necessary to consider here the Athenian system of judicial, military, and naval administration, or the regulation of economic activities. Of the functions now considered as properly municipal, police and sanitary regulation, if it existed at all, was extremely unimportant, but public works were undertaken to a large extent, and both charity and education were subjects of public action.

A public water supply existed at Athens from an early date, subterranean aqueducts having been built by the Pisistratidæ (527-510 B.C.). Roads from Athens to the surrounding country were also built by the Pisistratidæ with artistic monuments for milestones, bearing inscriptions in hexameter and pentameter. The port of Piræus was systematically laid out with two main streets and a large central square for business, the most celebrated example of the kind in ancient times; the work was done by Hippodamus of Miletus, who later laid out the cities of Thurii and Rhodes. The harbors and warehouses at the Piræus were also owned by the government, and dues or tolls charged for their use by the merchants. There was also a large amount of public lands regularly cultivated, while the silver mines at Laurium formed one of the main resources of the government, until they were exhausted by the reckless system of mining employed.

Although so many of the sources of production were under public control, they were not operated by public officials, but were regularly let out on stated payments for longer or shorter periods to private capitalists who worked them for their own advantage, — early examples of the modern system of municipal franchises. There was indeed almost no public administration. Not only were the industrial enterprises of