



HONESTIORES OG HUMILIORES
KUNST OG SOCIAL IDENTITET I SENANTIKKEN

Gæsteforelæsning
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**”ANGELS AND SINNERS IN THE CITIES OF
LATE ANTIQUE GREECE”**

Up until recently, urban life in Greece was practically invisible in Late Antiquity. The texts were written far away, either by critical Christians or pagans obsessed with the past; the archaeological ruins were rubbish, suitable only for passing mention, usually of removal. Scattered references to barbarians and earthquakes and what little archaeologists did record yielded a story of decline and destruction for most cities in the third or at the latest the fourth century. But in Thessaloniki, several monuments still in use and a growing number of rescue excavations made the late antique city impossible to deny. Athens had numerous temple-to-church conversions, and a strong tradition of philosophical education. And while only a few churches have been found on the very periphery of Corinth, the sculpture, epigraphy and architecture of the city center all testify to the vigor of urban life and pagan religion there throughout Late Antiquity. Thus all three cities can contribute to a new reconstruction of active civic life in late antique Greece. Pagan religion and Christianity, local benefactors and imperial visitors, gladiator games and grand new constructions were all guided by civic elites interacting in these ancient city centers. This new picture of vigorous cities in Late Antique Greece has important implications for ancient urbanism, the development of Christianity and the transition to the Byzantine world.

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