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The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism

Kevin D O'Gorman

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The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism

Kevin D O'Gorman

Editing Consultant: John Cousins

Never let the future disturb you.
For you will meet it, if you wish to,
with the same weapons of reason
which today, arm you against the present

Aurelius, *Meditations*, VII:viii
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (AD 121–180), Emperor of Rome from AD161

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Background to the book

During the initial reading and before undertaking the research which underpins this book, it became clear that in current hospitality and tourism literature, the history and philosophy of hospitality was an overlooked area for investigation. In particular, the portrayal of the historical evolution of the phenomenon of hospitality was prone to a great deal of rhetoric and little research; and in certain cases some of the assertions were manifestly wrong.

The research underpinning the content of this book is essentially hermeneutical; that is investigating ways of engaging with and interpreting textual data. It has to depend upon on textual data, as there are very few other practical ways of accessing Classical Antiquity. The research was also carried out within the interpretivist paradigm as it is seeking to observe the general trends and perceptions of a social phenomenon. Some of the problems of using literature and translation (compounded by the fact that this research is using texts that have been written in at least seven ancient or modern languages) and the surrounding controversies arise from four principal difficulties: differences in ancient manuscripts; obscure text and vocabulary; denominational bias; and translation philosophy.

What proved to be important, along with research skills, was familiarity with the texts and period of time under investigation albeit for previous and different purposes. Without the necessary language and translation skills, this project would not have been possible. The interdisciplinary combination of classics, theology and philosophy in tandem with the atmosphere of a business school brought together a unique set of interests, skills and abilities to underpin the research.

Preliminary findings underpinning the content of the book have been presented in a variety of publications and conference papers at various stages prior to the book being finalised. This process has been valuable not only to test the methodological processes but also to develop the findings. Opening up both the research process and the preliminary findings, in essence requiring the need to explain and justify the research and outcomes, certainly contributed to enhancing the process.

The key focus of the book is on exploring the textural evidence from and about Classical Antiquity in order to identify aspects of the origins of hospitality and tourism. In nearly all cases the prime purpose of the texts was not to do with recording the history of hospitality. The content of this book

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focuses on the analysis of the incidences of hospitality that were identified. Consequently this is not a history book, although references are made and detail provided to help the reader to locate the incidences within the historic framework.

Now, finally, standing back from the work there are key aspects of hospitality that apparently are constant: it is only when the contents of the book are examined, that the true rewarding richness of the outcomes become evident. The principal outcome is that the hospitality phenomenon in its broadest sense has been recorded since the beginning of human history and it embraces a wide range of activities beyond the commercial provision of food, drink and accommodation. In particular, the essence of the hospitality phenomenon, within Classical Antiquity, is characterised by a reciprocally beneficial two-way process that takes place within three distinct, and separate, contexts: domestic, civil and commercial, which can also be summarised and represented by dynamic visual models.

Exploring the origins of hospitality can aid the practitioner within the hospitality industry today; awareness of the past can always help to guide the future. The current increasing debate on, and research into, the origins of hospitality can enhance the future of the industry. Professionalism and greater expertise can surely come from a deeper understanding of the dimensions of hospitality, that have been evolving since antiquity, and on which the industry now relies.

Aims of the book

The key aims of this book are to:

- ◊ Consider the social, economic and geographical influences on the development of hospitality principles and practices within Classical Antiquity;
- ◊ Provide a structured approach and supporting information for those wanting to develop their knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of hospitality;
- ◊ Provide a contribution to the literature as a book about the true origins of hospitality and identify how an understanding the past can help in developing modern approaches to hospitality and tourism management, and
- ◊ Meet the needs of students and practitioners of the hospitality, tourism and leisure industries and provide a sound foundation on which to build future studies.

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Structure of the book

The text of the book can be approached as a whole or individual chapters can be considered signally. The book is presented in ten chapters:

Chapter 1 Historical Perspectives presents the focus, content and coverage of the book. The hospitality lexicon is traced including the identification of the origins of host and guest and other associated words and the chapter ends with exploring the links between oral tradition and texts.

Chapter 2 Philosophical Perspectives on Hospitality presents a critical analysis of the relationship between philosophy and hospitality through the analysis of key writers and discusses moral philosophy and the host, nation states, refugees and hospitality and language. The chapter end with a note on potential for bias and provides a summary of the key philosophical issue identified.

Chapter 3 Judaeo-Christian Origins identifies, through a review of Judaeo-Christian theological and scriptural thought, many of the presuppositions that underpin hospitality conventions and practices. The Chapter also includes a section on the potential problems of the Teleological Fallacy and provides a summary of the key issues identified from the biblical and theological literature.

Chapter 4 Classical Greece explores hospitality in early Classical Antiquity focusing on domestic hospitality: the nomad and the homestead; civic hospitality: communities and the emergent city; and commercial hospitality: the geneses of an industry.

Chapter 5 Classical Rome presents hospitality at the height of Classical Antiquity, focusing on: domestic hospitality: consolidation of power; civic hospitality: growth of an empire; and commercial hospitality: diversified industry.

Chapter 6 The Five Dimensions of Hospitality concludes the main exploration of Classical Antiquity through to the fall of the Roman Empire and summarises the identified aspects of hospitality into five dimensions of hospitality. To complete the foundation of the underpinning knowledge for the thematic chapters that follow, the emerging influences through to the dawn of the Renaissance are explored.

Chapter 7 Charitable Hospitality explores caritable perspectives of hospitality as a cross-sectional theme. A brief historical summary of hospitality, based on the Abrahamic model, is presented and the development of

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charitable hospitality is explored. It concludes by reflecting on the constantly evolving religious practice of providing hospitality to those in most need.

Chapter 8 Monastic hospitality explores the Western European monastery traditions of the Middle Ages, starting with the Rule of Benedict and identifies how, during the 1000 years of mediaeval times up to the beginning of the Renaissance, the monastic traditions were affected at the time and subsequently and emphasises their significance in laying the foundations for the later formalising of modern civic and commercial hospitality. The chapter concludes with an identification of the principles of hospitality that had been established by the traditions of western monasticism.

Chapter 9 Along the Silk Routes examines examples of hospitality practices along the Silk Road and in particular focuses on the religious/commercial caravanserais and the home (gers and yurts) in Iran and Mongolia.

Chapter 10 The Dynamic Model of Hospitality With the phenomenon of hospitality becoming recognised as a field of study, to which this book is intended to contribute, this chapter considers the implications of the publication of *Hospitality: A Social Lens* and brings into the thematic framework the aspects of hospitality identified throughout the writings of Classical Antiquity. The chapter then presents a dynamic model for hospitality and ends with an overall reflection of the origins of hospitality and tourism within Classical Antiquity.

Four appendices are provided to support the chapters:

A Glossary of names and terms – provides quick reference guide to names and terms used within the book.

B Frequently used Latin and Greek terms – provides a quick reference guide to terms used within the book.

C Methodological issues – presents a summary of the key methodological approaches that were used in the research unpinning much of the content of this book.

D Augmented bibliography – contains all references (both classical and modern) within the text and more and also provides a standalone useful resource for academics, researchers, practitioners and students.

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Further work

The content of this book raises issues that should require further consideration either because they will extend the existing work or because further investigation could refine it.

This work was restricted primarily to the Greco-Roman civilisations of Classical Antiquity, therefore other projects that explore different but contemporaneous civilisations should be possible. Further research could be developed horizontally. For example, an exploration of ancient hospitality practices outside Europe could be particularly enlightening, as it would provide a useful comparison to the hospitality practices of early Europe. This comparative study could help to answer the question posed earlier and further explore the view that hospitality is inherently a basic human trait and not born out of a particular faith and system of belief.

Another option would be to develop the research vertically into other periods of time within the same geographical region. For example, if the research were progressed into the modern age of European history it would be fascinating to see how hospitality continued to develop and evolve over a longer period of time. This could also be true if the research was to be developed horizontally in this time period.

One final question for further research: Is there really anything different in the modern notions of hospitality that is not contained within the origins identified within this book?

Kevin O'Gorman, March 2010

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Chapter extract

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