

Anthropological practices of the ancient city are considered on the example of one of the largest pandemics in Antiquity, called the Plague of Cyprian (the middle of the 3rd century). According to the author, it is the major social upheavals and epidemics that are the most representative for considering not only the general processes in the Roman Empire history, but for providing a lot of information about the city life and the processes associated with it. The Plague of Cyprian is a unique testimony not only to the persecution of the church, but also to its role in the life of society. The study analyzes the beginning of the epidemic and the source base, the chronological framework and scale of the epidemic, including information provided by the new archaeological data, as well as the nature of the disease. At present, there is a considerable research interest in these subjects, which is the reason for the emergence of a large amount of new historiography containing interesting hypotheses regarding the pandemic. The written tradition, which includes Cyprian's treatise "On Mortality", specially devoted to the pandemic, as well as the "Life of Cyprian" compiled by Pontius the Deacon, has been studied in detail. It is noteworthy that evidence of people's behavior during the epidemic, the features of assemblies and prayers for certain categories of believers can serve as an additional source of information about the epidemic. Special attention is paid to the impact of the epidemic on different categories of the population in the Roman Empire. In our opinion, it is with the Plague of Cyprian that the cessation of mass anti-Christian persecutions is connected, the transfer of repressive policies during the reign of Valerian to the clergy, as well as the economic exploitation of Christians, both of low birth, who were sentenced to forced labor, and representatives of the nobility, whose property was confiscated. In the context of slave economy, all this can be considered a clear evidence of the manpower shortages in the Roman Empire, whose population lived in unsanitary and overcrowded conditions. This can be viewed as additional evidence of the course of the epidemic and its spread.

Article keywords: city, urban anthropology, Roman Empire, Plague of Cyprian, epidemic, Christianity, Early Church