

Review

MARIA L. CALDELLI and CECILIA RICCI (EDS), *CITY OF ENCOUNTERS: PUBLIC SPACES AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN ANCIENT ROME* (RomeScapes: Social and Cultural Topographies of the City of Rome). Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2020. Pp. 279. ISBN 9788854910577. £22.80/€25.

City of Encounters is the first instalment of the 'RomeScapes: Social and Cultural Topographies of the City of Rome' series, which aims to show how Rome's population interacted with the city's spaces, with particular foci on sensorial experiences, places of creativity and knowledge and of darkness and fear. *City of Encounters* begins by establishing a topographical framework of Rome's spaces and buildings in the first three centuries A.D., and by examining the relationships between these spaces and the people who used them (9, 12). Alongside an introduction by Caldelli and Ricci, the volume comprises six chapters, each focusing on a different type of urban space, delineated by spatial purposes and uses, thus providing the volume's intended topographical framework. This successful approach differs from the movement-focused perspectives of thematically similar volumes (R. Laurence and D.J. Newsome (eds), *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space* (2011) and I. Östenberg *et al.* (eds), *The Moving City* (2015)) by appreciating spaces primarily as destinations within which certain people were present and specific activities occurred.

C. and R. introduce the volume by presenting it as a contribution to socio-spatial scholarship, situating it in relation to similar projects, e.g. Nicolet, Illbert and Depaule *Mégapoles méditerranéennes* (2000) and the *Topoi* research network (10). They state that the volume accepts the Augustan age as a turning-point in Rome's topography and rightly emphasise the necessity of a diachronic approach to socio-spatial study, before summarising each contribution.

Andrea Angius examines spaces of socio-political interactions in the late Republic and charts the repurposing of these spaces throughout and beyond the Augustan age. Angius' salient and convincing hypothesis consists of two parts: first, that Augustus successfully disarmed locations previously facilitative of political confrontation by recontextualising them in proximity to spaces of leisure; and second, that Augustus did this while retaining the socio-spatial infrastructure necessary for public opinion to exist at Rome. Particularly successful are the discussions of *porticus* spaces from the mid Republic onward, the permanence of *circuli* within them and the transformation of conversational topics enjoyed there, and the introduction of new spaces of communication between populace and emperor (e.g. the theatre of Marcellus). Readers with questions concerning individuals' participation in and resulting experiences of politics, which arise naturally from this discussion of experiencing public political spaces, will find answers in Angius, *La Repubblica delle opinioni* (2018).

Through *fora*, *macella* and *tabernae*, Margaret Andrews and Seth Bernard track the development of Rome's commercial spaces. The authors propose a strong connection between the diversification of goods available and the spatial and social developments occurring in Rome from the mid Republic onwards. This connection appears clearly in the examination of social interactions at *macella*. From Republic through Principate, these spaces, despite tending to offer exclusively luxury items (e.g. fish) and commonly consisting of exclusivity-promoting architecture, facilitated sociability across Rome's demographic spectrum, as lowly workers (e.g. M. Terentius Varro's father) mixed with society's elite. The value of a diachronic approach to socio-spatial studies is evident here, as Rome's commercial landscape and opportunities for inter-status sociability are shown to have declined simultaneously from the fifth century A.D. as a result of 'outmigration' and external influences.

Christer Bruun builds on the conclusions of G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (1999) by re-examining social interactions in bathhouses (especially *balnea*) in the wider context of spaces of personal care, including *palaestra*, gymnasia and *horti*. Bruun's main argument — that bathhouses stood apart from all other public spaces at Rome for their capacity to accommodate social levelling — is well made, using sections of the *Colloquium Harleianum* and

Colloquia Monacensia-Einsidlensia (trans. Dickey 2017) to evince and compare certain social practices. Like Angius, Bruun shows how bathhouses, and to an extent *gymnasia*, as spaces of leisure, helped reshape and recontextualise Roman *mores* and socio-political practices from the Republic through the Principate, thus providing a continuity to the volume.

Jonathan Edmondson lucidly surveys the evolution of locations and constructions for spectacles from the late Republic to the early third century A.D. Edmondson's discussion of the *Lex Iulia Theatralis* and changes to socio-spatial experiences at the theatre is largely a reproduction of an earlier piece (J. Edmondson in T. N. Basarrate (ed.), *Ludi Romani: Espectáculos en Hispania Romana* (2002), 10–15). However, between the chapter's thorough preliminary survey and subsequent analysis of developments in communication between populace and *princeps* from Augustus onwards, which reaches, *mutatis mutandis*, the same conclusion as Angius and Bruun, it is still a worthwhile read. Until this series' second instalment, *City of Senses*, arrives, readers interested in scale and lines of sight in spectacle spaces would do well to supplement this chapter with P. W. Jacobs and D. A. Conlin, *Campus Martius* (2015).

Nicolas Tran's chapter on the meeting places of associations begins by proposing an effective spatial taxonomy (association-owned venues; spaces accessed in private agreement with individuals; large architectural, sometimes public, spaces), around which the rest of the chapter is structured. Tran's prompt to understand the *schola* less as a building or complex than a specific meeting room within, and *ordo collegii* as a synthesis of a collegium and its general assembly, encourages new spatial and social contexts for sociability at associations. Unlike Bruun's socially levelling bathhouses, Tran shows that by providing access to luxury (e.g. through decorations), space for socialising and convivial celebrations and respectable collective action (e.g. worship), meeting places of *collegia* facilitated *otium* and ameliorated members' social experiences.

Although Françoise Van Haepere's chapter on spaces of worship rightly begins by attempting to delineate public and private spaces — an endeavour that perhaps should have received more attention from other contributors, too — I cannot help but think that incorporating Amy Russell's work on understanding sacred space relative to public and private space (*The Politics of Public Space in Republican Rome* (2016), 25–42, 98–126) would have provided a useful, ready-made methodological structure. Accessibility and attendance — key aspects of socio-spatial analysis — are treated here most explicitly, giving the book a well-rounded finish. The use of epigraphic evidence, primarily relating to the sacred grove of Furrina and the Aventine Dolichenum, to determine the potential for common geographic and ethnic identities to come into contact through spaces in which they have elected to worship is commendably thorough.

This is a useful collection, offering a topographical framework that could reasonably be considered to correspond to a Roman public sphere. The focus on the Augustan era is sensible, though limiting the scope to the first three centuries A.D. seems unnecessary and out of keeping with the volume's successful diachronic approach, since several contributions (as acknowledged at 12), particularly those of Angius, Andrews and Bernard and Edmondson, assess socio-spatial developments from the mid Republic onwards.

The book is well produced and the small number of errors ('Augustus neutral the *vici*', 49; 'selling are is held', 82; 'the period' (unspecified), 84; dating of the *Comment. Pet.* (A.D. specified rather than B.C.), 120; 'by explained', 184) and typos (full stop missing, line 1, 154; 'hear', 174; 'and the drink', 237; 'the suggest that', 252), besides one unfortunately timed incomplete sentence in Caldelli's section on methodology (9), at no point stunt the arguments presented.

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