

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



Latin Onomastics (E.) Caffarelli, (P.) Poccetti (edd.)
L'onomastica di Roma. Ventotto secoli di nomi. Atti del Convegno, Roma, 19–21 aprile 2007. (Quaderni Italiani di RION 2.) Pp. x + 527, figs, ills, maps.
Rome: Società Editrice Romana, 2009. Paper, €35.
No ISBN.

Benet Salway

The Classical Review / Volume 60 / Issue 02 / October 2010, pp 421 - 424
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X10000429, Published online: 28 September 2010

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X10000429

How to cite this article:

Benet Salway (2010). The Classical Review,60, pp 421-424 doi:10.1017/S0009840X10000429

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

LATIN ONOMASTICS

CAFFARELLI (E.), POCCHETTI (P.) (edd.) *L'onomastica di Roma. Ventotto secoli di nomi. Atti del Convegno, Roma, 19–21 aprile 2007.* (Quaderni Italiani di RION 2.) Pp. x + 527, figs, ills, maps. Rome: Società Editrice Romana, 2009. Paper, €35. No ISBN.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X10000429

The thirty-three papers in this volume are the product of a conference held over three days and in as many different locations across Rome: two central (the Palazzo Senatorio on the Campidoglio and the Palazzo Venezia), and one suburban (the Teatro di Tor Bella Monaca). The programme aimed to cover a chronologically, methodologically and thematically ambitious range of onomastic studies bound together by their focus on the one city, thus complementing the proceedings of a conference of 2002, also edited by P., and recently published in the Collection de l'École française de Rome (*L'onomastica dell'Italia antica: aspetti linguistici, storici, culturali, tipologici e classificatori* [Rome, 2009]). The volume under review also represents the second instalment of Quaderni Italiani (QuI), a series of occasional supplements to the periodical *Rivista Italiana di Onomastica* – in this case to vol. 14.2 (2008) – and not to be confused with its sister supplementary series, the Quaderni Internazionali (QuadIRION). The main periodical specialises primarily in linguistic, literary and philological approaches to a wide spectrum of name-giving practices across the full chronological range of Italian history. The contents of QuIRION 2 reflect the same approach, ranging from the familiar ground of the anthroponymy and toponymy of ancient Rome to studies of

the names given to contemporary dogs, cinemas and commercial enterprises. The papers are organised into seven sections, reproducing the original structure of the conference, whose focus shifted, in accordance with the changing venues, from the ancient centre to the modern periphery. Papers of interest to classicists, and especially those interested in the classical tradition, are by no means restricted to the first section (devoted to the names of ancient Rome), though without an index they take some searching out.

The first three papers focus in particular on Rome and Romulus. The opening pair rework and expand arguments already aired elsewhere; C. De Simone's 'Ancora sul nome di Romolo: etrusco **rumele* > latino *Romulus*' is followed by A.L. Prosdociami on the onomastics of 'Palatine' Rome, arguing amongst other things, by contrast, for a purely Latin derivation for the name of Rome's founder. These two highly self-referential pieces are followed by G. Ferri on 'Il nome segreto di Roma', outlining the legends of the jealously guarded 'real' names of the city and its tutelary deity, of which latter secret he imagines the *pontifex maximus* to have been the guardian. After this trio of more speculative contributions comes the solidly empirical 'Nomi greci nel mondo romano' by H. Solin. His analysis explores in particular the extent of consciousness among Rome's ancient inhabitants of the etymology and exotic origin of Greek names. Drawing statistics from his *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch*² (Berlin, 2003), Solin highlights the peculiar profile of the Greek onomastics of the city compared with that of the Greek East itself, a distortion plausibly accounted for by a slave population for whom the Romans favoured Hellenised monikers. Notable in this regard is the fact that the regular use of the theonyms Hermes and Eros as personal names appears to be a phenomenon originating in Rome. P. then analyses Rome's typicality in terms of the naming of roads and localities in both an Italian and a broader Mediterranean context, though the paucity of comparative material leads to limited conclusions. P. De Santis traces the ways in which the names of saints and martyrs became embedded in the local toponymy between the fourth and seventh centuries. A. Pasqualini rounds off the section with what is in fact a study of the reception of one aspect of Rome's antiquity reflected in its modern road names. Besides the commemoration of individuals because of surviving monuments associated with them, the urbanisation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw repeated celebration of historical characters in the naming of new roads. As well as documenting several amusing examples of garbled names, she points out that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the women of ancient Rome fare badly by comparison with its men. This is complemented by a paper in Section 4 by M.S. Rati, treating women's presence generally in road naming in Rome in the last sixty years.

Section 2, on the medieval period, comprises only two papers, both of which focus on the later middle ages through to the renaissance (J.M. Martin on personal names from the tenth to the thirteenth century and A. Esposito on Jewish personal names in Rome from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century). A third medieval paper (T. di Carpegna Falconieri on women's names), to be found in Section 4, has the same chronological range.

The third section, on the names of modern and contemporary Rome, offers some interesting comparisons and diverting material (e.g. musings from an online discussion forum as to whether to call a pair of dogs 'Diana & Camilla' [p. 221]) but little of immediate significance for the classicist. A study of the names of cinemas by S. Raffaelli demonstrates that ancient Rome is not considered sufficiently exotic or aspirational to provide many names. The apparent examples (e.g. Appio, Aurelio,

Clodio, Diocleziano, Giulio Cesare) actually function as geographical markers, usually relating to homonymous roads. P. Cantoni's analysis of the contemporary 'onomastica canina' reveals that ancient Rome features strongest in the category of names inspired by historical characters; Cesare, Augusto, Tiberio, Caio and Nerone comprise a whole quarter of the attested canon – from which Claudius is notable by his absence.

Section 4 (women's names in Rome) offers more obviously relevant material. F. Stok provides a useful survey of the names of actresses, dancers and courtesans found in the literature of the late republican and Augustan periods but might have given greater consideration to the proportion of given names as opposed to assumed or stage names in his sample. P. Marpicati examines the etymology and connotations of the variety of euphemistic and offensive pseudonyms and nicknames given to their lovers by Latin poets. After the papers on medieval women and road names already mentioned, the section concludes with F. Sestito's analysis of the names given to girls born in Rome in 2004 in comparison with both the cohort of 1994 and their peers elsewhere in Italy; Caesarians can take heart from the consistent placement of Giulia in pole position in all the frequency tables but one (Naples, 2004).

After two contributions of interest to students of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian literature, the fifth section (names in Roman literature and popular tradition) continues with a study of the onomastics of criminals by M. Abbate that offers another opportunity to trace the legacy of ancient Rome. It seems that classical allusion is sadly lacking in the repertoire of the contemporary Magliana Gang or amongst the inmates of the Regina Coeli prison compared with its heyday in the nineteenth century, when one thug (*bullo*) went by the nickname *Ciceruacchioto* ('Little Mrs Cicero', after his mother's powers of persuasion) and another by *er Tinea* (from 'sanguè d'Enea').

Three of the four papers in Section 6, on 'Rome' in Italian dialects and other western European languages, are marginal to classicists. The exception is R. Randaccio on the use of Caesar/Cesare as a name and acronym, which ought to become essential reading for students of reception. F. Dragotto's corpus of words formed from the names of footballers of Associazione Sportiva Roma may interest comparative philologists.

The last section comprises eight studies relating to Rome's Municipio Ottavo 'delle Torri' and its sub-district Tor Bella Monaca, where the sponsor of the conference, the Università di Roma 2 "Tor Vergata", is situated. This borough represents the east to east-south-east section of Rome's still rapidly urbanising outer ring, beneath and beyond the Grande Raccordo Anulare (Circonvallazione orientale), and would, if autonomous, rank thirteenth among Italian cities. Its territory, bounded to the north by the Autostrada Roma-L'Aquila (A24) and the river Anio and to the south by the Autostrada del Sole (A1: Roma-Napoli), takes in the ancient sites of Collatia and the Osteria dell'Osa necropolis and is traversed west-east by the axes of the Via Prenestina (ancient Gabina), the Aqua Alexandrina and the Via Casilina (ancient Labicana). Of primary interest to ancient historians is I. Aliquò's paper on Tor Bella Monaca (*Turris Pauli Monachi*) from antiquity to the present day, which draws on the archaeological work of Father Jean Coste, illustrating (but not clearly identifying) some of his finds, including a fragmentary republican-period regulation (p. 412), in fact *CIL* I² 2994, and an early imperial epitaph (p. 411), which is *AE* 1967, 46.

Inevitably, given the range and depth of documentation offered by Rome, this collection could only ever be an exercise in sampling. Nevertheless it certainly demonstrates that exploring the onomastic repertoire of a single community over such an extended period is a fertile approach. Although the Editors hope that it might provide a model to be applied to other cities, it is hard to imagine that many would prove such profitable subjects.

University College London

BENET SALWAY
ucarws@ucl.ac.uk