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Ralf Behrwald, Christian Witschel (ed.), *Rom in der Spätantike: Historische Erinnerung im städtischen Raum. Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien (HABES), Bd 51*. **Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012. Pp. 409. ISBN 9783515094450. €62.00 (pb).**

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The volume under review presents the proceedings of a conference held in Heidelberg in July 2006 (authors and titles are listed below). The contributions to the volume, much to the profit of the final result, have been updated with subsequent research. This is an important new contribution to the field of Late Antique studies, which follows the now standard studies of 'places of memory' published by Beck in 2006.[1] The volume highlights how the integrated study of archaeological, historical, social, epigraphical and literary aspects, which used to be encountered particularly in studies of classical Rome, has entered the field of Late Antiquity. The diffuse material that characterizes Late Antiquity– different from the centralized artistic expressions in Julio-Claudian times, and stemming from a relatively small aristocratic group – was usually interpreted according to disciplinary divides, e.g., patristic as opposed to pagan literature, or ecclesiastical to secular architecture, inevitably resulting in the conclusion that there was a marked 'transformation' in virtually all aspects of life during late pagan to early Christian times. *Rom in der Spätantike* shows that the urban landscape of fourth-century Rome is far more complex than the arrangement in simple and straightforward binary categories could explain.

The model used for the multi-disciplinary approach of this volume is the concept of historical 'memory', which subjects historical events to scrutiny not on the basis of how they happened, but how they were remembered by later generations – or how people wished to have certain events remembered by later generations. This proves to be a particularly fruitful approach to the many questions surrounding the urban developments in fourth-century Rome. In their introduction, Behrwald and Witschel discern three influences on the position of Rome as a metropolis in the empire, namely the rise of other imperial centres and the corresponding transfer of the capital, the Christianization of the empire and the role of Rome within this process and, thirdly, the social-economic framework in which these developments occur. Whilst it can hardly be expected that every contribution (ranging from thirteen to fifty-nine pages, in German, English, French and Italian) maintains strict continuity, it is regrettable that the rich material offered to the reader is not treated along the same theoretical lines as set out in the introduction.

The book is aptly divided into three parts, viz. the secular *Erinnerungsorte* ('places of memory'); the Christian *Erinnerungsorte* and the evidence of memory in inscriptions. In the part devoted to secular places of memory, Sebastian Schmidt-Hoffner's contribution treats the representation of the emperor in Rome on the occasion of official visits (Constantine AD 312, Constantius 357, Theodosius 389, Honorius in 403, Theoderic in 500; Constans II 663), for which Trajan especially appears to be the model (Augustus is conspicuously absent).

Schmidt-Hoffner considers the difference between a *civilis princeps* within the City in opposition to his role as *deus praesens* in other parts of the empire. Richard Lim's contribution is a natural follow up, focusing on signs of either *Romanitas* or *religiositas* in the Circus Maximus. Some inadequacies might be observed in his use of 'elites' against 'masses', or 'rulers' and 'ruled' (p. 61 and 71) One might ask how these groups are defined: does the *ordo senatorius* number among the 'rulers' or the 'ruled'? Lim's use of terms does not seem wholly consistent with Schmidt-Hoffner's (see e.g., the latter's description of the *adventus* on p.53). Lim aptly reconfigures the pagan-Christian binary as secular-religious in his interpretation of the use of the Circus, thereby showing that 'Christianization' is not very helpful in describing the complex processes that took place in the urban development.2 This view is more or less shared by Fauvinet- Ranson in her treatment of the sixth-century Christian author Cassiodorus, in whose *Variae* monuments of the ancient past are prominent. In the three contributions just mentioned, an appeal to *romanitas* and *antiquitas* appears to be important to all emperors, regardless of their religiosity.

Coates-Stephens treats the most visible of all Roman monuments, the Aurelian Wall, which dates from the seventies of the third century AD, from the perspective of the urban demolition works necessary to construct it, as well as the possible reasons behind its lay-out, which on many points remains unclear. Among the sources consulted by Coates-Stephens, the problematic *Historia Augusta* hardly offers help, although Paschoud's 2002 commentary on the *vita Aureliani* might have clarified certain problems. From this same source, the *vita Gordianorum* is important for Machado's fascinating reconstruction of the impact on urban development after the demolition of certain patrician houses; although I would suggest that in this particular *vita* the idea of *memoria* created urban villas rather than the other way round, as evidence for them only exists in text. Machado draws from rather fanciful textual sources as supporting evidence for archaeological data. Still, his description of how owners of villas actively created memory in their own personal museums is illuminating. Eusebius' description of Constantine's palace in Constantinople in the *vita Constantini* might serve as a textual counterpart to this.

The book's second part, about Christian places of memory, contains a combination of material (churches and streets) and textual (epigrams and legends) approaches. Franz Alto Bauer treats the foremost example of founding memory through building activity: the church of Saint Peter. Peter's memory was further propagated by the widely disseminated relics connected with his cult. A central cult in the eastern part of the empire, that of Cosmas and Damianus, benefited from the location of their church on the Forum's *via sacra*, as Beat Brenk stunningly points out, along with some other examples of early churches like San Vitale, that of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Celian Hill and S. Paolo fuori le mura. In all cases, the surrounding urban fabric is carefully taken into account.

Stefan Diefenbach is perhaps most explicit in advancing the theoretical concept of memory in his contribution about *Urbs* and *ecclesia*. One could contrast his views with Van Dam's recent argument (*Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge*, Cambridge 2011) that 'memory' might be expanded to realms of personal 'remembering'. Diefenbach, following the more established view proposed by Halbwachs in 1950, defines remembering as a social phenomenon defined by collective participation (cf. Alto Bauer p.163).3 According to Diefenbach, Damasus pro-actively advanced the Christian community, as constituted by the *ecclesia*, but did not assert the highest position for Rome's bishop. Diefenbach's main conclusion is that Rome, being *caput mundi* of old, was not 'Christianised' as the capital of the Christian world by Damasus. This would be undertaken only by later generations, as was

shown by Bauer in the example of St. Peter's basilica. Furthermore, Diefenbach maintains that there is no strict or sudden transition from a pagan past to a Christian present. Marianne Sághy's piece, centered on Damasus' epigrams and the cult of martyrs, is largely in line with Diefenbach's view, which sees the Roman past utilized for contemporary purposes. Ralf Behrwald's contribution links the saints' legends, or *Passiones*, to particular places in Rome, as prescribed by the editors' theoretical approach. These places may be either official buildings such as the *praefectura* or *palatia* of officials. Surprisingly – given the editor's aims with the volume –, Behrwald concludes that there is no firm local basis for the legends in the urban topography; the stories were not intended to establish a 'landscape of memory'. Still, the city of Rome provided the places for literary scenes, even when not always easily recognizable.

The epigraphic evidence is taken up by Silvia Orlandi (past and the present in epigraphy), John Weisweiler (imperial letters and epigraphy), Philippe Bruggisser (the restoration of the *Dei consentes*-porticus) and Christian Witschel in a general overview of epigraphy. This part shows how text in its most literal sense is integrated in the urban landscape of Rome. After a useful categorization of several ways of reusing the classical past in Late Antiquity (texts, political institutions, secular traditions, pagan cults, public monuments, names), Orlandi applies earlier conclusions about the reuse of ancient ruins (that the continuity of the original cultural context of monuments mattered more than the celebration of past times) to secular as well as Christian inscriptions on restored monuments. According to Orlandi, it appears that there is no vital difference between the two. This topic touches upon the more general debate, such as concerns Constantine's Arch, whether there is any essential 'newness' to the restoration of old monuments. Orlandi's contribution tends to a middle position, in that old messages necessarily appear in new contexts, without pretense of originality, but not without proud expectations about continuing the 'present' state of affairs, which is seen as an improvement upon the past.

A similar line of thought is encountered in John Weisweiler's study, who points out that the resurrection of Nicomachus Flavianus' statue on Trajan's Forum in 431, almost forty years after its installation, reflects contemporary politics rather than veneration of the deceased. The base was reused, for purely practical (instead of ideological) reasons. The emperors' esteem for the petitioner, Flavianus' son, was inscribed on the pedestal: the *oratio* granting the re-installation was cited verbatim. This procedure, typical to Late Antique inscriptions in Rome, reflects the emperors' physical distance from the former capital. In the case of Avianius Symmachus, two statues were raised in 376 in Rome as well as Constantinople. The monuments, as well as the imperial permission (inscribed on a reused pedestal now in the Vatican Musea), testify of the historical links between the two cities. Then, in what gives the impression of a semi-finished product, Philippe Bruggisser traces the connotations of *sacrosanctus*, a notion recorded in the inscription on the temple of the *dei consentes* on the slope of the Capitol, which Praetextatus restored in 367-68. Bruggisser concludes that an 'old' word is reused in a 'new' context, for the first time applied to *simulacra*, as far as we can tell from the extant texts. The word is used in pagan as well as Christian literature.

The final contribution treats a question posed on several occasions in the volume: are there any differences between the memory of the past in earlier times and in Late Antiquity, and does memory of the past in pagan cults on the one side and Christian on the other occur in different modes? As to the last point, Christian Witschel concludes, in line with many others, that there is no essential difference in the *Denkmaltopographie* in Christian and pagan use. On the other hand, from the fourth century onwards, Christian 'memory' shifted to the cult of

martyrs, saints and bishops, while the official state communication did hint to the conservation of the Roman past (as becomes clear in architectural inscriptions on bridges and buildings). Witschel stresses that inscriptions were read and understood as means of communication much more than they had been in earlier Roman times.

In conclusion, this volume offers a rich collection of material, approached from several angles, a design which sometimes tends to distract the reader's attention from the central topic: in this case, the relationship of place to memory. Thus, apart from the helpful introduction and its bibliography, the volume may serve as a stimulus to further studies of places of memory, rather than a clear-cut contribution to the debate itself. Individual contributions are too unequal in length and scheme to be easily accessible for many interested readers. Some contributions do have translations of the Greek and Latin quoted, while others have not. An overall image of the developments of Rome's urban landscape in Late Antiquity certainly arises, but largely depends upon the reader's own familiarity with Late Antique Rome. Some cross-references facilitate the reading, although a general conclusion, a combined bibliography and an index might have helped to create more unity. The editing is not flawless: spelling and other errors are visible, but do not distract. Beyond these objections, the contributions in general are of high quality, although many of them have been published in earlier works by the authors, or works that were forthcoming during the editing process. The book may be consulted (rather than read) with great profit, and may serve as a reference work for scholars of diverse disciplines.

Notes:

1. Stein-Hölkeskamp. E. and K.J. Hölkeskamp *Erinnerungsorte der Antike. Die Römische Welt*, München 2006; id. *Erinnerungsorte der Antike. Die griechische Welt* , München 2010.
2. Lim curiously enough skips the important evidence from Livy, 1.9.7, in his treatment of the Consus-cult in the Circus Maximus, p.61-2, and ignores Livy again when treating the institution of the chariot games on p.76.
3. Halbwachs, M. *Le Mémoire Collective*, Paris 1950 (reprint ed. G. Namer, Paris 1997), mentioned on p. 26 of the introduction (bibliography).
4. A detail about the dating of the *Cento Probae* (p.221-2n96) might be added: *proceres* does have a Virgilian flavor (see e.g. *Aeneid* 3.105: *audite, o proceres* and cf. the volume at issue p. 53 (concerning Claud. *IV Cons. Hon.* 594-6) and p.268, concerning Prudentius *Symm*.1.502), which cannot be invoked in the discussion about dependency from the *Carmen contra paganos*. Furthermore, a propos p.225, where Virgil is considered an uncompromising poet for all Romans, I would like to point at Pseudo-Paulinus of Nola's *Carmen ad Antonium* 55, where Virgil is disparagingly called *auctor eorum* (i.e. of the pagans). Virgil is often quoted by Christian authors according to their whims and the needs of the moment, and often imitated to beat the pagans in their own game, which is in fact a perfect example of how ambiguously classical heritage is adopted in Christian culture.