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Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space [Review]

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R. LAURENCE and D. J. NEWSOME (EDS), *ROME, OSTIA, POMPEII: MOVEMENT AND SPACE*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xx + 444. ISBN 9780199583126. £75.

Archaeologists and historians have set out to reconstruct Rome, in one way or another, from the very beginning of the profession. More recently, scholars have begun to design 3-D simulations of ancient sites and monuments; even Google Earth offers the option of 'visiting' ancient Rome as it appeared in A.D. 320. According to the editors of this stimulating volume, however, these reconstructions, with their vast empty spaces and pristine monuments, ignore an important part of ancient Rome: the people, animals, and vehicles that moved through the cityscape. And as anyone who has ever traveled knows, different cities move in different ways, subject to variations in geography, topography, climate, culture, religion, and legal codes. This volume sets out to answer the question of what it was like to move through ancient Rome, Ostia, and Pompeii.

Most of the fifteen chapters focus on Rome and Pompeii, with Ostia the subject of two papers, and Herculaneum briefly considered in another. Not surprisingly, the contributions about Pompeii are principally archaeological in focus, while those about Rome depend more heavily on written sources (including legal and epigraphical). Only the first two papers focus principally on literary sources: Diana Spencer uncovers in Varro's *De lingua latina* evidence for the close

connection between movement and Roman civic and urban identity, while Ray Laurence explores the interplay of movement and urban topography in Martial's epigrams. Other authors use literary sources to attempt comprehensive overviews of what it felt like to move through ancient Rome, emphasizing the impact of economic activity on street life (Holleran) and the potential impact of sounds, smells, and other sensations on pedestrians (Betts). At the other end of the methodological spectrum, two other contributors use space syntax theory to uncover likely patterns of movement in Pompeii (van Nes) and Ostia (Stöger).

Several authors consider not only movement through the city, but also lingering, even stopping, in specific places in Rome. Newsome points out that the addition of new imperial fora changed the character of movement through the center of the city, with these new spaces acting primarily as destinations rather than thoroughfares. Similarly, Macaulay-Lewis focuses on the way that monumental portico complexes (such as the Portico of Livia and the Templum Pacis) served as sites for leisurely walking that was a self-conscious counterpart to the more directed and purposeful movement in the city streets. Trifilò analyzes the game boards inscribed on the busier sides of basilicas and arches in the Roman forum; his attempt to connect these lounging players with the hordes moving past them is not entirely convincing, even if the material is interesting.

A number of papers focus on the ease or difficulty of pedestrian or vehicular traffic in Rome and Pompeii. Favro offers an imaginative reconstruction of the effort involved to erect the arch of Septimius Severus in an already crowded part of the city, showing how the very effort of transporting so much material to the forum was

surely part of the display. Hartnett examines the many nuisances that ancient pedestrians and vehicles would have encountered on streets and sidewalks (such as projecting shopfronts and house facades), with a number of examples from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Poehler surveys the archaeological evidence for cart ramps in Pompeii, concluding that the greatest concentration of cart-related transport occurred close to the city gates. Kaiser explores the extent to which ancient Romans facilitated cart traffic in their cities and concludes that there was little attempt to do so, at least compared to modern cities. He also argues that the famous restriction on daytime cart traffic in Rome preserved in the *Tabula Heracleensis* actually only applied to large, ox-drawn carts (*plaustra*), and that we should imagine a city teeming with carts at all hours of the day. Not all authors seem to accept his proposal, since a number of them repeat the usual claim that all cart traffic was kept out of the city until the tenth hour (with exceptions granted to carts moving supplies for government or sacred building projects).

The most successful articles in the volume are those that restrict their question to a concrete set of evidence; particularly useful are those articles which are able to chart change over time. Malmberg and Bjur team up for a fascinating paper studying the area around the *Porta Esquilina* under Augustus and the *Porta Tiburtina* after the construction of the Aurelian wall. Both areas not only funneled movement into and out of Rome but also emerged as important neighborhoods in their own right. The paper shows very well the close connection between movement through a place and urban development. In another stimulating paper, Ellis examines what the changes we can observe in Roman shopfronts over time (namely

the increasing tendency to put the doorway on the right) might tell us about Roman pedestrian activity. Ellis sees the introduction of building codes after the great fire in Rome in 64 as a key impetus here; although there is no clear evidence that Roman building codes applied in municipal towns, one can imagine a number of ways that changing practices in the city might have affected building practices in its harbor town. If Ellis is right we can see another bit of evidence for increasing centralization and regulation under the principate.

The editors frame the book with a useful introduction to the topic, along with a conclusion (all too rare in edited volumes) that suggests new avenues of research; the entire volume also helpfully incorporates a number of cross-references. As is often the case in edited books, not all chapters are equally convincing, and the quality varies; it must also be said that there are quite a few mistakes in the text, particularly in the Latin. But this is a volume that in many ways adds up to more than the sum of its parts. The editors and contributors are to be commended for pointing us in a new direction and restoring movement to our reconstructions of Rome.

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