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Citation

Flohr, M. (2020). From urban space to urban history: an introduction. In *Studies in Roman Space and Urbanism* (pp. 1-16). London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780367809331-1

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3220748>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

1 From urban space to urban history—an introduction

Miko Flohr

It was around the end of the second century BCE that a set of two monumental temples was constructed in the quickly growing port settlement of Ostia. Originally founded as a small *castrum* to keep the Tiber estuary firmly under Roman control, Ostia had begun a gradual, organic expansion along the arterial roads towards the coast and the harbour. To judge from the remains of domestic architecture from this period, the urban community was becoming increasingly prosperous, and had begun to develop a local elite of some means (cf. e.g. Perrier et al. 2007). The new temples were constructed outside the original *castrum* walls immediately north of the Via della Foce, which lead to the river mouth. Against the north end of the sacred area, which had a history going back to the third century BCE, a small modest, tetrastyle temple was constructed facing the Via della Foce; closer to the road, a much larger podium temple with a hexastyle facade was constructed to face the city (Figure 1.1; Mar 1990, 147–149; Pavolini 2006, 117–121). When finished, this large temple loomed over the entire area outside the south-west gate of the *castrum*, which was otherwise still mostly empty. At the time, the construction of the two temples was the perhaps first real sign that Ostia was developing into a true city with an urban landscape full of public monuments: within a couple of decades, a range of other temples and a new wall circuit would follow. By the Augustan period, a small forum had been created inside the *castrum*, and a theatre had been constructed alongside the main road towards Rome (Pavolini 2006, 30–32).

The two late Republican temples were to have a long history. By the later second century CE, they were still standing, virtually unchanged, but their direct environment had been completely transformed (Figure 1.2; Mar 1990, 153–159). While a number of smaller structures had begun to appear around the east end of the sacred area over the course of the first century, the Trajanic period saw the construction of several large multistorey complexes between the temples and the old *castrum*. Later, one of these buildings was transformed into a bath complex, so that the smaller of the two temples was surrounded by a caldarium on one side, and a water wheel for lifting ground-water on the other. Within a few decades, the temple area became almost completely detached from the urban environment. While the large temple



Figure 1.1 Ostia, Temple of Hercules (Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia).

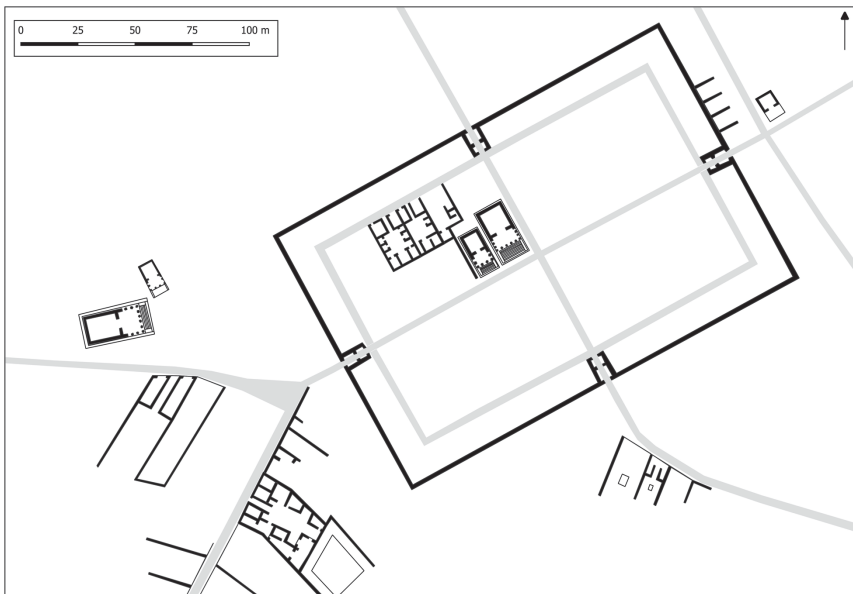


Figure 1.2 Ostia, Plan of the city in the Republican period (M. Flohr).



Figure 1.3 Ostia. Statue of Cartilius Poplicola from the area of the Temple of Hercules (Sailko / Wikimedia).

had previously dominated the extramural zone, it had now become visually marginalized, and even though the sanctuary remained accessible from the Via della Foce, the paved square in front of the temples now was situated on a significantly lower level than the street, which had been raised by about a metre in the late first century CE. Still, the temples continued to be used and maintained until the end of Ostia's ancient life cycle (cf. Boin 2013, 181–182). Upon excavation, in the 1930s, inscriptions and statuary from the first century BCE were found alongside inscriptions dating to the late third and fourth century CE, and restorations of the fifth century CE: in the large temple, the late Republican *duumvir* Cartilius Poplicola continued to be commemorated throughout the imperial period—his statue (Figure 1.3; *AE* 1941, 99) was found alongside an altar to Hercules dedicated by Hostilius Antipater, *curator rei publicae Ostiensium* under Diocletian (Figure 1.4; *AE* 1941, 65;



Figure 1.4 Ostia, Inscription on Altar for Hercules (AE 1948, 0126) (G. Alföldi / Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg, HD021714).

cf. *AE* 1971, 66). Even if the inscription referring to a restoration under Theodosius and Arcadius (*AE* 1941, 66; Boin 2010, 258), once associated with the temple, is probably unrelated to it, traces of building activity have been dated to the fifth century CE; in late antiquity, the place had basically become a monument to Ostia's long urban history (Boin 2010, 264).

The history of the sacred area along the Via della Foce is exemplary of the urban history of Ostia, and it highlights both the spontaneous, unplanned urbanization processes of the late Republic and early Empire, and the dramatic transformation that the city underwent in the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods. Yet it also alludes to some of the larger issues at stake in Roman urban history. For instance, the way in which the sacred area continued to shape the topography of the eastern Via della Foce throughout the imperial period shows how urban development always remained dependent on what was already there—indeed, the presence of the late Republican sanctuary would result in a permanent gap in Ostia's dense commercial landscape in one of the busiest locations of the city, and would restrict the development of large housing blocks in a place where they would have been more than desirable. Moreover, the fact that the temples were constructed in a relatively

open area that only later became incorporated into the city's densely built-up urban core shows how urban growth and expansion could lead to shifting urban boundaries, making urban what started off as suburban, and marginal what used to be central. Furthermore, the continued (and well-maintained) presence in the area of late Republican statuary and inscriptions shows how, over time, urban space could acquire multiple layers of meaning, which were not only defined by the functionality or connectivity of a place, but also by the particular historical narrative that the urban community came to construct around it.

Roman urban life after the spatial turn

It is in the broader questions about the built environment, everyday life, and urban history evoked by places like the late-Republican sanctuary along the Via della Foce at Ostia that the present volume is interested. The relation between urban life and the built environment has not been a marginal topic in classical studies in recent years: a substantial number of monographs, edited volumes and journal articles have seen the light of day, and there has been no lack of colloquia and conference sessions devoted partially or wholly to aspects of the ways in which the physical layout of the built environment of Roman cities both shaped and reflected the everyday social, political, cultural and economic processes that made up urban life (e.g. Laurence 1994; Kaiser 2000; 2011; Laurence and Newsome 2011; Stöger 2011; Haug and Kreuz 2016; Betts 2017; Poehler 2017). There have been several 'turns' and 'revolutions' that have added an increasing number of parameters to our analytical spectrum: from the 'spatial turn' of the 1990s (Laurence 2011; Newsome 2011, 2–4) to the 'movement turn' of the 2010s (e.g. Kaiser 2011; Laurence and Newsome 2011; Östenberg et al. 2015; Poehler 2017) and the 'sensory turn' of recent years (e.g. Toner 2014; Haug and Kreuz 2016; Betts 2017), scholars have broadened their conceptual apparatus and found new ways of looking at textual and material evidence for urbanism in the Roman world. This discourse has undeniably transformed our understanding of Roman cities: it has permanently shifted the focus of scholars away from individual buildings towards the way in which buildings worked together to create the urban environments in which everyday lives were lived, and it has resulted in a lasting emphasis on the way in which individual spatial environments were connected, giving pride of place to corridors and streets in a debate that for so long had mostly focused on buildings and rooms. In some way, Roman cities have changed, conceptually, from collections of buildings and monuments into complex networks of interconnected spaces, both reflecting and shaping everyday urban interaction. To a considerable extent, the increased emphasis on movement and sensory perception has also stimulated scholars to try to repopulate (and reanimate) urban space.

Still, there are challenges ahead. One of these clearly is that scholarship on Roman urban space has had a relatively limited impact on our understanding

of the urban *history* of the Roman world: ever since the 1990s, approaches to Roman urban space have generally been more interested in conceptual innovation than in historical contextualization. To some extent, this has been very healthy, as it facilitated the integration of valuable ideas and approaches from the social sciences into Roman archaeology. Experiments with the application of space syntax at Ostia and Pompeii have decisively altered our way of thinking about the nature and the working of Roman urban landscapes, and have made scholars ask questions that otherwise would not have been asked (Laurence 1994; Grahame 2000; Stöger 2011). The shift of emphasis towards studying movement in the last decade, and the recent work on the sensory qualities of everyday urban processes have similarly expanded the conceptual apparatus of discourse on Roman urbanism. Yet an unintended consequence of this emphasis on conceptual innovation has been that approaches to Roman urban space have often remained relatively insensitive to historical change: there remains a significant gap between the study of Roman urban space and the study of Roman urban history. This, in fact, poses a problem, as Roman urbanism shows clear signs of continuing development and, indeed, change. There is a broad consensus that ancient Mediterranean urbanism reached its absolute peak in the Roman imperial period: in virtually all regions of the Roman world the number of cities reached its highest level in the second century CE.¹ It is also clear that many cities grew in size—both demographically and spatially—and became more densely monumentalized, particularly in the first two centuries of our era, and particularly in densely urbanized regions like Italy, Asia Minor, and Africa.² At the same time, the urban architectural vocabulary saw significant innovation in the late Republican and early Imperial period (see e.g. MacDonald 1986; Gros 1996; Laurence et al. 2011). These developments are broadly recognized, but the way in which they transformed the spatial configuration of everyday life in the Roman world has not generally been part of scholarly debate: there is a substantial amount of discourse about the basic parameters of Roman urban space and their relation to everyday urban life, but very little about the ways in which these parameters developed over time.

This volume attempts to diminish the analytical gap between urban space and urban history. It does so by further expanding the conceptual framework for studying Roman urban life and by discussing three historical developments that had a direct and transformative impact on urban space in the Roman world in the first centuries of our era, and which must be seen as a direct consequence of urban growth and prosperity in, particularly, the regions of the Empire bordering on the Mediterranean. The first of these concerns the increasingly dense urban landscapes of civic memory and identity: fostered by the accumulation of architecture, statuary, and epigraphy, cities became crowded with civic, imperial, and religious symbolism; even if the epigraphic and statuary habit had firm roots in the Hellenistic world (Ma 2013), they became considerably more widespread and visible in the cities of the Roman empire (Zuiderhoek 2009; Wilson 2011), and this fundamentally changed the

character of urban landscapes. Secondly, alongside this increasingly complex spatial dialogue of memory and identity, the Roman Mediterranean saw an unprecedented commercialization of urban space: sharply increased levels of urban prosperity fostered a substantial growth in urban commerce, and in many places, particularly in Italy, this commerce also became extremely visible in the form of permanent commercial facilities, including *tabernae*, *macella*, *horrea*, and a range of other building types, as well as increasingly elaborate transport and transshipment infrastructure (cf. Rickman 1971; De Ruyt 1983; Ellis 2018; Flohr 2018). A third development was a more direct consequence of urban expansion: the increasing dimensions of urban areas led to shifting urban boundaries, and to a change in the relation between cities and their immediate environment. As cities grew, they began to develop zones of a semi-urban character around their original urban core; this encroachment of the city on the countryside became particularly visible in the early imperial period and created a new kind of semi-urban space that, arguably, played a key role in everyday urban life (Goodman 2007; Stevens 2017).

Approaching urban transformations and their impact on urban life

While in their specific spatial dynamics these three developments remain largely unrelated, they are all direct consequences of the continuing growth and the flourishing of urban communities in the late Republican and early imperial period, and in the context of this volume, they serve to explore the transformative effect of this growth on urban space and urban life. The volume has thus been divided into four parts. The three more theoretically oriented chapters immediately following this introduction focus on the ways in which individuals experienced the city. First, Amy Russell explores the changing relationship between architecture and the individual starting from Althusser's concept of 'interpellation'. Using the late Republican Forum Romanum and the Forum of Augustus as case studies, Russell argues that architecture, ideologically charged as it is, shaped the urban experience of its users, and forced them into certain patterns of behaviour, activating their social identity in the process. Thus, the mixed architectural assemblage of the late Republican Forum Romanum activated the role of most everyday visitors as citizens or as clients of the city's ruling elite, while the much more controlled and closed environment of the Forum of Augustus, with its strongly symbolic imagery, interpellated them as the subject of one ruler: the emperor. This loaded relation between the built environment and its users is also central to the argument of Annette Haug, whose contribution starts from the idea that urban space has an 'atmosphere', which is constituted in the interaction between the built environment and its user. Haug uses this concept to explore the emotional qualities of urban space. Using Pompeii as a case study, she first outlines the experiences evoked by some sections of Pompeii's urban landscape such as the busy Via dell'Abbondanza and the amphitheatre, before linking these to the perception and responses of individuals, who use these

space on the basis of their own personal ideas about home, neighbourhood, and social affiliation: individuals had their own ‘emotionally charged geography’ of the city that profoundly coloured their urban experience, and Haug emphasizes how this geography worked differently for a craftsman spending his day in a workshop than it did for a *duumvir* like Marcus Holconius Rufus. These two chapters, arguably, do more than simply further developing the conceptual apparatus for studying urban landscapes, as the approaches that they introduce are also historically sensitive: they connect the study of urban space to the particular experiences and lives of people in specific historical circumstances. The subsequent third chapter, by the present author, explores the changing relation between urban environments and their users from a slightly more practical perspective, focusing on the interaction between urban navigation and the physical urban environment. The chapter highlights the impact of intra-urban height differences on patterns of urban movement, and the impact of common meteorological conditions such as heat and rain on the way in which urban space was designed and used. The evidence from Roman Italy suggests that the Roman urban experience always remained to a considerable extent shaped by environmental factors, though developments in architecture and urban design in the late Republican and Imperial period began to mitigate some of the worst effects of intra-urban height differences and adverse weather conditions. Together, these three chapters emphasize that it is not only *possible* to give historically particular urban experiences a place in approaches to the history of Roman cities, but also *essential*, as developments in the late Republican and early Imperial period transformed both the physical environments in which individual urban experiences were shaped, and the social and political framework through which they were understood.

The second section of the volume investigates the changing role of community memory and identity in the urban landscape. Patric-Alexander Kreuz offers a detailed case study of the forum of the city of Minturnae on the Via Appia. He discusses how the consular road on which the city had been founded became the backbone of the urban environment, and how decisive it was for the way in which the urban forum and its environs developed. Kreuz emphasizes how the impact of the road is not only reflected in the ensemble of larger architecture that clustered around it, including key temples and public buildings, but also, and particularly, in many smaller-scale structures, such as the honorific monuments on the forum, and evidence for fencing systems. The chapter highlights how the forum and the Via Appia at Minturnae presented to passers-by a very rich and pronounced view of the local community and its collective memory, though the increasing monumental pressure of the imperial period reduced the permeability of urban space, both physically and visually. Minturnae was not unique, but it remained a relatively small city. In larger cities, the gradual accumulation of monuments and statuary led, in some places, to a much more complex memory landscape, with monuments from different periods coexisting together in the same space and developing new meanings over time. As the chapter by Christopher P. Dickenson highlights,

this interplay between present and past was particularly well developed in Roman Greece. Using case studies of the civic centres of Athens, Messene, and Corinth, he shows how Greek urban communities of the Roman period actively negotiated and maintained links with their Hellenistic and Classical past. At Athens, old statuary like the famous late Archaic couple of the Tyrannicides, or the early Hellenistic statue of Demosthenes—both on the Agora—acquired new meaning in a developing urban environment, and under new political circumstances. At the Artimision at Messene, sculpture of a local artist from the Hellenistic period continued to shape the narrative of the place throughout the Roman period; at Corinth, the Romans even established new sculptural links with the city's pre-Roman past, giving the city a history that it never really had. These examples show how, particularly in Roman Greece, urban history came to shape the expression of identity in urban space. Sculpture, however, was also used to articulate social discourse within the community. The chapter by Cristina Murer discusses how, in the imperial period, there is a marked emergence of honorific statuary for women in and around the fora of cities in Roman Italy and Roman North Africa. Murer shows how honorific statues for elite women emerged in Italy in the first century CE, and how they began to be erected on the fora of Italy from the second century onwards; from the late second century onwards, statues of women also began to appear in the fora of cities in Roman North Africa. While this could be taken to suggest a change in the extent to which the forum must be seen as a 'gendered space', Murer argues that, in fact, the relation between these statues and the nature of fora as a male-dominated space is considerably more complicated, as women were in many cases honoured with statuary because they belonged to the family of high provincial officials or senators—and not so much for their own merits. Nevertheless, by highlighting the increasing visibility of women in the statuary landscape of cities, this chapter reveals a marked change in the ways in which the community was represented in the symbolic heart of the city. These three chapters together illustrate the increasingly narrative qualities of urban landscapes in the imperial period; as statues accumulated, local narratives about the place of urban communities in the larger imperial whole became increasingly articulate and explicit—in larger cities as well as in smaller urban settlements. However, the same processes of urban growth and prosperity that propelled urban memory to the foreground led, in many places, to a condensation of urban space that also could marginalize certain buildings and processes. Marlis Arnhold assesses the impact of the growth and condensation of the Roman metropolis on the city's religious landscape. While the large temples of early Rome were highly visible monuments, the actual cult activities were much less part of the visual public sphere. As time progressed, and Rome expanded, the visibility of monumental religious architecture also began to diminish—old temples were surrounded by high multistorey buildings; new temples were constructed in monumentalized enclosures, detached from their urban surroundings; and at the same time, the most prominent newly introduced cults of the imperial

period were inwardly oriented, with people convening in cult places that were not visible in the public sphere. While the process of urban condensation in Rome may have reached extreme levels, increased competition for building space and for visual prominence in the urban landscape, and an increased compartmentalization of urban space have been observed in many places—indeed, the developments at Minturnae discussed by Kreuz point in a similar direction, as does the fate of the Republican sanctuary outside the castrum at Ostia.

The third set of chapters explores the impact of the increasing role of commerce in everyday urban life on public urban landscapes. Part of this impact is embedded in, or closely associated with the cultural and religious realm. Focusing on Roman North Africa, Elizabeth Fentress highlights how urban temples and sanctuaries, besides their obvious religious role, developed into key centres of economic activity: as transactions should be supervised by deities, many temples developed facilities that could host—permanently or temporarily—retail activities. Conversely, market buildings and *macella* came to include temples and shrines. Indeed, while market buildings were constructed in a way that made them resemble religious buildings, temples had courtyards that could (and did) host markets. Thus, Fentress argues, it is often hard to separate, spatially, and visually, the economic sphere from the religious sphere. To some extent, at the very heart of the city, the same is true for the economic and the civic sphere. Chapter 10, by the present author, discusses the relation between fora and commerce, and it highlights how, in the late Republic, Roman authorities constructed fora as commercial interfaces alongside major roads and in the countryside, and strengthened the commercial role of urban fora by surrounding them with rows of *tabernae*; essentially, Roman authorities used these plazas as an instrument to strengthen both local economies and Rome's economic network in the peninsula. In the imperial period, the majority of fora continued to develop along these lines, and the increased monumentalization that can be seen in some urban fora did not, actually, diminish their economic role. This continuing economic centrality of fora had a direct impact on the urban commercial landscape as a whole: it shaped the topography of investment, and thus, the commercial articulation of urban space—in the city centre and beyond: private investors adapted their strategies to the proximity (or remoteness) of the forum. The subsequent chapter by Touatia Amraoui highlights the impact of these private actors on urban space outside the city centre. Her chapter focuses on a familiar aspect of economic space—shops and workshops—but from an underexplored perspective: it offers a detailed view on the spatial contexts of manufacturing in Roman North Africa. The cities of Roman North Africa have returned significant amounts of evidence for retail and manufacturing, and these have only been part of recent discourse to a limited extent. Analysing the architectural contexts of manufacturing and retail in cities like Timgad, Cuicul, Tiddis, Tipasa, and Volubilis, Amraoui highlights the close

association of workshops to houses, and the evidence for commercial facilities that were constructed for the rental market. All in all, while the urban commercial landscapes of the Roman Maghreb at first sight look distinctly different from those of Roman Italy, it seems that similar forces applied, and that similar actors were involved. The final chapter in this section takes us to the place where Mediterranean urban economies typically interacted with the wider world: the port. Candace Rice argues that urban ports cannot be judged on their own, or as a simple product of the size of a city, but should be studied as part of hierarchically structured port networks. Taking the ports of Roman Lycia as a case study, she proposes a five-tiered hierarchy, which she then uses to analyse the archaeological evidence, exploring a model that can be used to capture the differences between individual ports in their urban scale and layout. Discussing a selection of the ports more in detail, Rice goes on to show how this port hierarchy worked at the micro-level, and how the lived environments of these port cities were to a large extent shaped by economic forces operating on a much larger geographical scale. Together, these four chapters highlight not only the centrality of trade, retail, and manufacturing in Roman urban landscapes, but also the impact of economic priorities and developments in the spatial articulation of these landscapes, and the roles played in this process by various categories of (sometimes competing) actors—including private houseowners, elite investors, civic or religious institutions, and the urban authorities: all these groups contributed to the commercialization of urban space and to the increasingly central role of commerce in the Roman urban experience.

The final section of the volume focuses on the changing nature of urban development outside the city walls. It starts with a chapter by Saskia Stevens, which introduces the idea of the ‘borderscape’—derived from the social sciences—as a tool to explore the relation between Roman cities and their environment. Using examples from Roman Italy, Stevens argues that the immediate outskirts of Roman cities integrated urban and rural forms of land use, which led to a hybrid spatial landscape that was fundamental to the identity of the urban community, and had a strong symbolic connection to the urban centre, though at the same time it had a different juridical status, and therefore was open to activities that were forbidden in the city centre, while traders were partially exempted from certain taxes. Stevens highlights how this borderscape, particularly along the main roads to and from cities, developed into an area of key social, political, and cultural interaction. The subsequent two chapters present two case studies that illustrate in more detail how the gradual encroachment of the city on the countryside transformed urban borderscapes. The chapter by Sandra Zanella analyses the historical development of the area outside Porta Ercolano at Pompeii, along the roads that connected Pompeii to its immediate hinterland and to the cities of Herculaneum and Naples. A key step in the development of this area, which traditionally had been characterized by tombs and villas, was the

construction of a long *porticus* with *tabernae* in the later first century BCE. Zanella highlights how this project was unique and had no clear parallel within the city walls, though its approach appears to have more in common with public construction projects than with private endeavours. As Zanella makes clear, its construction transformed the area from a marginal necropolis into a vibrant neighbourhood with a strongly commercial character—even if the presence of tombs and villas continued to distinguish the zone from the city itself. The subsequent chapter by Stephan Mols and Eric Moormann discusses the funerary landscape that emerged around the Via Appia outside the Roman metropolis. Focusing on a stretch of the Via Appia more than seven kilometres away from the Servian walls, the authors show how in the Imperial period, even at more than an hour of walking distance from the city gate, the character of the road gradually came to be defined by funerary monuments set up by the urban population, and how the historical development of this relatively remote area differed from the development of the suburban zone alongside the first kilometres of the Via Appia. Together, these three chapters highlight both the ways in which the immediate surroundings of cities were affected by urban growth, and the extent to which these semi-urban zones became part of everyday urban life, as people began to live and work alongside the main roads to and from the city, and visited the graves of their deceased family members.

Socializing environments for expanding urban communities

The fourteen chapters following this introduction together paint a vivid picture of urban environments that were increasingly packed with memories, full of permanent commercial facilities, and that penetrated deep into the surrounding countryside. Of course, these developments were by no means universal: even if many of the chapters in this book move beyond the cities that have thus far shaped debates on Roman urban space—Ostia, Rome, and Pompeii—the picture of increasing urban complexity that they evoke still relies heavily on evidence from the Italian Peninsula, Africa Proconsularis, Central Greece, and Coastal Asia Minor. As recent assessments of Roman urbanism have made clear, these regions all belong to the prosperous, densely urbanized core of the Roman Empire (cf. Hanson 2016, 134–141). There were other regions where urban development never reached this level: throughout Roman Europe, in parts of Roman Africa, and in inland Anatolia, cities were fewer, smaller, and farther in between, and this is to some extent even true for regions like southern Italy, Sicily, and Cisalpine Gaul. However, geographical differentiation is a normal feature of urbanization (and of empire formation), and it should not be used to minimize the historical significance of the developments in urban and suburban space that have been discussed in this volume: the increasing ‘fullness’ of urban space, the increasingly layered complexity of built environments, and the increasing vastness of cities in the first centuries of our era are key developments in the urban history of the

Greco–Roman world—even if they occurred only in some regions, and not so much in others. The late Republican sanctuary just outside the castrum at Ostia, with its long history and its lasting impact on urban development in its environment, perfectly embodies each of these points—it started life in the urban borderscape, accumulated a range of historical meanings over time, while gradually disappearing in an increasingly dense urban environment.

More importantly, however, the chapters in this volume together highlight the structural interdependence of the spatial and the historical, and the need to understand the one in relation to the other. There can be no doubt that the historical development of Greco–Roman cities in the Hellenistic and Roman periods expressed itself at least as much in the changing spatial configuration of their built environments as in the emerging bodies of literary texts and epigraphy that have dominated the study of Roman urban history in recent decades. Yet whereas it is a commonplace that one can only truly understand the built environment if one knows the historical factors underlying its development, it deserves some emphasis that the reverse is also true: one can only truly understand the history of Roman urban communities if one understands the changing spatial configuration of everyday life, and therefore, the historical development of the built environment. The fact that many urban communities operated in an urban landscape that was increasingly packed with symbolism, full of possibilities for social interaction, and stretching far beyond the city walls had a direct impact on the way in which these communities could work and interact, both internally and with people living outside the urban area: the urban environments that emerged in the late Republican and early imperial period facilitated everyday social interaction in ways their predecessors did not. It could be argued that, in a quite literal way, they helped the increasingly large and complex urban communities of the Roman Mediterranean to socialize. The growth of increasingly vast urban borderscapes fostered the integration of the countryside into the urban realm and strengthened the spatial and social ties between the inhabitants of cities, and the people living in its direct environment—in this respect, particularly the role of elite villas like those outside the city gate in Pompeii and along the Via Appia outside Rome should be seen as fundamental. At the same time, the increasing amount of space devoted partially or wholly to commercial priorities can be taken to have strengthened the position of craftsmen and traders in urban communities: it gave them a clear and permanent social platform on which to negotiate their social identity and economic fortunes (cf. Flohr 2016). The increasingly crowded landscapes of civic memory and identity, both in the city centres and in the necropolises outside the city walls, also strengthened ties within the community, by adding history and identity to the background of everyday urban processes. Arguably, this also means that concepts like ‘atmosphere’ and ‘interpellation’ do not only offer relevant perspectives on the urban environment in general, but also are concepts that, because of the ways in which urban environments developed in the Roman imperial period, became much more meaningful: urban environments became

fuller, and more explicit in their message, and this allowed users to experience a more articulated atmosphere that much more strongly interpellated them in whatever role they had within the community, or in Roman society at large.

All in all, it could be argued, the chapters of this volume together suggest that the expanding cities of the Roman Mediterranean developed urban landscapes that made it easier for their communities to remain, to some extent, cohesive, and to interact efficiently, both internally and with the outside world. Crucially, however, the chapters of this volume also show how this process was only rarely planned or directed from above: many of the chapters highlight the central role of private actors, of small-scale interventions, and of the gradual accumulation of structures and monuments. Even when the authorities got involved, they generally did so in a piecemeal fashion, through relatively modest projects, in an environment otherwise dominated by private initiatives. Only in the case of fora were the authorities responsible for constructing and maintaining a more or less planned environment, but after their initial construction, many fora came to serve as a platform for further monumentalization and urban development by private citizens. Over time, this bottom-up model of urban development transformed the urban landscapes of Roman cities, and created communicative and evocative urban environments for increasingly large and complex urban communities.

Notes

- 1 On the spread of Roman urban settlement, see Bowman and Wilson 2011; De Ligt 2012; 2016; Hanson 2016; De Ligt 2017; Houten 2018; Willet 2019. See also Zuiderhoek 2016, 33–34, identifying the increase in cities brought about by Roman republican and imperial authorities as a ‘third wave’ in Ancient Mediterranean urbanism.
- 2 See e.g. Patterson 2006, 115–160; Vermeulen 2017, 108–160 on the monumentalization of cities in Italy. The evidence discussed in Laurence et al. 2011 shows some of the dynamics of this development in Roman Europe and Africa. For Asia Minor, see e.g. Zuiderhoek 2009, 170.

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