

Alexandra Dardenay and Emmanuelle Rosso (editors), **Dialogues entre sphère publique et sphère privée dans l'espace de la cité romaine. Vecteurs, acteurs, significations.** Scripta Antiqua, volume 56. Ausonius Éditions, Paris 2013. 323 pages with 120 black and white illustrations.

This book addresses the delicate issue of how the ›public‹ and ›private‹ spheres interact and interfere in the Roman city, and aims to connect to the many ongoing debates on this issue, with a particular focus on what have traditionally been seen as the boundary lines between the two spheres. It includes a rich variety of iconographic, historical and philological approaches and highlights several key fields of urban activity, including religion, social life, and economic life. With the exception of two chapters in Spanish, French is the main language of the book, and the two Spanish chapters apart, the focus is strongly on Roman Italy. The book has a useful index and includes many illustrations, most of which are both relevant and of decent quality, though some appear a bit on the small side.

After a brief introduction by the editors, the volume is divided in three parts. The first five chapters are brought together under the header ›The ambiguity of spaces‹, and start with a very interesting piece by Gilles Sauron which tentatively connects mid first century B. C. domestic paintings from the Bay of Naples area to the monumental public complex constructed by Pompey in that very period in Rome. The subsequent chapter by Valérie Huet investigates the extent to which it is possible to distinguish iconographic depictions of public banquets to those of private ones; while basically answering her central question negatively, Huet offers several interesting observations on a number of examples, which are discussed to great detail. Then follows a chapter by Sylvia Estienne that discusses, on the basis of juridical texts, the extent to which *res sacrae* were considered ›public‹ or ›private‹, highlighting that the very narrow definition of what was a ›res sacra‹ makes it hard to define the juridical status of the patrimony of sanctuaries, which in turn made it difficult to assess whether or not a case of theft constituted a sacrilegium. Next is a long chapter by Emmanuelle Rosso which focuses on the honorific statues and herms found in buildings belonging to associations, such as the sacellum of the Augustales at Misenum, the schola of the physicians at Velia and the building of the Augustales at Ostia. Rosso makes a well-documented argument that highlights how these buildings, though technically private in nature, in the way they were embellished with statuary at least partially belonged to the public realm. The first part of the book is concluded by a chapter by Francisco Marco Simón on the iconography on coins and vases in the interior part of Hispania Tarraconensis in the republican period – independent of the quality of its argument, this is a rather oddly placed chapter that, though technically dealing with the theme of public

and private, operates in a different discourse than the rest of the book.

The second part of the book is supposed to centre around interactions and exchange. It starts with a chapter by Nicolas Tran, who takes up the theme of the professional and religious associations and discusses, based on a very subtle and refined analysis of a large body of epigraphic evidence, how these associations operated on the boundary between public and private. Then, Nicolas Monteix discusses the role of the public authorities in commerce, focusing primarily on Pompeii. Monteix discusses both the role of aediles in matters of commerce, and the public ownership of commercial establishments, aptly highlighting important role of the shops belonging to Pompeii's macellum and bath complexes in bringing in money for the local government. Next is a chapter by Trinidad Bassarate on Augusta Emerita specifically focusing on the way in which metropolitan models in art and architecture were taken up in public and private spheres in Lusitania, highlighting how these models were transformed and adapted to fit in with local practice. The next chapter, by Gaëlle Herbert de la Portbarré-Viard, discusses late antique Nola through a detailed analysis of the *munus aquarum* by Paulinus of Nola, which involved the construction, with private money, of an eight kilometers long aqueduct from the city of Abella to a Christian sanctuary just outside the city of Nola.

The final four chapters look at the way in which public practices were transferred and appropriated in private contexts. First, here is a chapter by Renaud Robert on the moral tensions surrounding private (as opposed to public) decoration. Robert highlights the negative moral discourse regarding people (like Verres) collecting public and even sacred art for private pleasure, and uses this as a starting point for exploiting the ambiguity visible in many scenes of pleasure and eroticism in Roman domestic art. The subsequent chapter by Héléne Eristov discusses echoes of the public sphere in Campanian (basically Pompeian) wall decoration, identifying a number of elements typical of the public urban landscape, such as tholoi and statues, included in the decorative system of third and fourth style painting. Next, a chapter by Jean-Charles Balty analyzes how, in the historical development of late Republican and early imperial Roman sculpture, elements from the private realm begin to find their way to the public realm, and vice versa. Finally, a chapter by Alexandra Dardenay looks at how official iconography was used in funerary context to represent the *virtus* and *pietas* of the deceased, discussing, for instance, the role of scenes depicting Romulus, Remus and the Roman wolf, or Aeneas carrying Anchises, and the changes to the iconography of *virtus* in the second century A. D.

The book includes several outstanding chapters, and some of these also connect rather well with each other, but the reader will observe that, as a whole, the volume is organized quite loosely, and includes some

chapters that appear a bit isolated, particularly those by Simón and Basarrate. The book does not present a straightforward read from start to finish, and some readers will be interested in a subset of chapters rather than in the volume as a whole. While this may be an inevitable by-product of the process that leads to edited volumes like this, the editors could have done more to organize the papers in a way that emphasizes their links. I have failed to see a clear internal cohesion within the three main parts of the volume, and the most obvious links that can be drawn between chapters often transcend the boundaries of the parts. For instance, the chapters by Tran and Rosso on associations clearly should have been placed alongside each other, as is true for those by Sauron and Eristov on paintings, and perhaps for those by Herbert de la Portbarré-Viard and Estienne as well. Unfortunately, few chapters include a discussion connecting the particular argument made with the larger whole, and some even lack a clear conclusion. One cannot help but feeling that at points, more dialogue could have been fostered between them. It is to be hoped that some of the chapters that are less central to the overall theme of the book find the audience they deserve.

Still, through the sum of its chapters, this book contributes massively to our understanding of the interference between ›public‹ and ›private‹ in the Roman world, and of the boundaries – moral, legal and spatial – that were hard in certain circumstances, but could be transgressed in others. A clear strength of the book is that it offers readers thorough readings of a varied body of evidence that has played only a limited role in past debates about the issue of ›public‹ and ›private‹, which, as the editors' note, have mostly centred on domestic architecture. Clearly, the profoundly ambiguous position of religious and professional associations, both in their relation to the authorities and in the nature of their meeting places (and funerary plots), deserves a central role in future debates. The same is true for more official religious institutions, such as temples and sanctuaries, which even if they were recognized or supported by the authorities were ›public‹ only to a limited extent. The chapter by Monteix highlights that in economic life, which one may be inclined to see as part of the private realm, things also were more complicated, and while there is little evidence that the authorities actually were very active in prohibiting certain economic activities, they had influence through the need for official permissions, and, much more directly, through ownership of commercial property, which is both epigraphically and economically attested. Essentially, the volume highlights that in all areas of urban life, throughout Roman Italy, there were continuous dialogues – direct as well as indirect – between the ›official‹ authorities and the private individuals and groups who were building, maintaining or decorating something. The implicit message, obviously, is that from now on, any approach to issues

of public and private in the Roman world should do more than simply looking at domestic space, and the volume offers some powerful examples of approaches that can easily be further explored.

Finally, the question remains what the arguments collected in this volume change to our thinking about ›public‹ and ›private‹ in the Roman world at the more abstract level. The editors note, in their introduction, how already in 1995, Zaccaria Ruggiù identified ›private‹ as a kind of residual category, and how, since the Nineties, scholars from the Anglo-Saxon world have distinguished between the strict juridical definition of what counted as ›public‹ and ›private‹, and the lived experience which rather should be defined in levels of ›intimacy‹ or ›seclusion‹. What the contributions to this volume illustrate is the logical consequence following from this, namely that issues of public and private are a matter of a continuous dialogue that takes place in urban space and within urban communities, of which the archaeological and written records are partial (and imperfect) residues. In doing this, the issue that implicitly arises is that the vocabulary scholars have come to use is too much based on the modern notion of ›privacy‹, which makes that we may be inclined to define places ›between‹ public and private by what they were not: they were not commonly visible to and visited by all, but neither intimate and secluded. In other words: the volume clearly implies that a better, more neutral terminology is needed, and one that does more justice to the many places in Roman cities that served groups smaller than the entire community, and different in composition from households and families. A good start may be to acknowledge that, fundamentally, in Roman cities, there were – at least – three spheres of social interaction: that centering around the household, in which words like ›private‹ and ›privacy‹ may have a meaningful place, the sphere centering around social groups (whatever their nature), and the sphere of the urban community as a whole. Unfortunately, the question necessarily following from this is whether this does not mean that, in the end, the catchy, but essentially modernizing opposition between ›public‹ and ›private‹ has only limited interpretative power in making sense of urban life in the Roman world.

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