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Headquarters, office space, and desks in ancient Rome

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Filippo Coarelli (C.), whose scholarly merits are legion and who truly needs no introduction, has written a book which anyone interested in the topography and archaeology of Rome will do well to consult. The book is also relevant for the physical and material aspects of Roman government and administration, even though it does not quite go into detail about archival practices and the functioning of the imperial bureaucracy in the tradition of Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World*.¹ C. is focused on the spatial dimension, which surely is why the book is dedicated to the memory of Claude Nicolet. The same initial page presents quotes from two renowned scholars, one by Angelo Brelich about the disadvantages of “hypercriticism,” the other a short dictum by Nicholas Purcell: “No ancient office building and no ancient desk will ever be discovered.” This sentence was chosen, however, because it stands in such strong contrast to what C. sets out to show.²

¹ See Millar 1977 (2nd ed. 1992). More of the Millar approach is found in Mazzei 2009, a massive contribution relevant for the subject of the book but not quoted by C.

² Purcell 1986. Purcell's quote is attributed to the year 1996 by Coarelli, but the work consulted must be a reprint. That statement, which today seems fairly irrelevant, originated in the

The work, of substantial size at almost 500 large pages, is divided into nine chapters. Over 15 pages of indices conclude the volume and can be seen as a contribution to an update of the six volumes of the *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae (LTUR)*, the last pages of which appeared over 20 years ago.³ Chapter I discusses the state archives (Tabularium and Aerarium), Chapter II the Moneta, Chapter III the Atrium Libertatis, Chapter IV the Statio Annonae, and Chapter V the Statio Aquarum. The long Chapter VI (100 pages) focuses on the grain distributions, which above all involved two porticoes named Minucia. This is followed by Chapter VII on the Praefectura Urbis, Chapter VIII on the Cohortes Vigilum, and Chapter IX, which discusses the Cursus Publicus.

During the past several decades many new discoveries of architectural structures and of artifacts or inscriptions have added material to the discussion about the sites of Roman administrative headquarters, not to mention that numerous new contributions have presented a variety of interpretations of the evidence. C. knows better than most, or perhaps better than anyone, what there is to consider.⁴ He distributes praise, but he also frequently criticizes, and often his own interpretation takes him further even when he lauds previous scholars. He admits in places that he was wrong in the past, but he also holds on to views that he has long championed and that have generated strong counterarguments; the latter applies in particular to the discussion about the two Porticus Minucia structures.

Chapter I is concerned with the “State Archives,” by which C. intends the Aerarium Saturni, the Tabularium publicum, the Aerarium militare, and the Tabularium principis. The first of these buildings, the state treasury, was obviously connected to the Temple of Saturn at the foot of the Capitoline Hill on the side that faces the Forum Romanum. Why Saturn as guardian of the riches of the Roman state? The temple was a natural choice because of the chthonic and agrarian nature of his cult and that of his divine consort, Ops (24). As the number of government records increased during the Republic, they received their own storage space. This was the Tabularium, which is the name customarily given to the large building in grey tufa, with a gallery of conspicuous arches, built into the slope of the Capitoline and overlooking the Forum (the upper stories, the Palazzo Senatorio, are much more recent). The name appears in a building inscription from 78 BCE, in which a consul of that year, Lutatius Catulus, declares that he *substructionem et tabularium de senatus sententia faciundum coeravit* (CIL VI 1314). In addition, the existence of such a building later, during the 1st c. CE, is guaranteed by several so-called military diplomas, small bronze tablets found in various parts of the Roman world that were proof of completed military service (*honesta missio*). The texts of these diplomas always mention that the information which they provide is certified and derived from a *tabula aenea* exhibited in a particular public place in Rome. Six times the *tabularium publicum* is cited as that place in texts from the late 80s CE, in formulas such as *in Capitolio in latere dextro tabulari(i) publici* (AE 1993, 1788) or *in Capitolio in tabulario publico parte sinisteriore* (CIL XVI 159).⁵ But where was the Tabularium publicum located?

mid-1980s. I quoted that very same phrase, approvingly, in a work which appeared in 1991; today, I would quote other texts.

³ Steinby 1993–2000.

⁴ The bibliography is massive (435–66), although not surprisingly some items could be added, see nn. 1, 8, 10, and 38 below. Also, I find no trace of Carandini and Carafa 2012 (on which see the review by Packer 2013), nor of their updated English version, Carandini and Carafa 2017.

⁵ The left side of the Tabularium publicum is mentioned in five diplomas, the right side only once.

In C.'s view, the "Tabularium" building could not have served as the state archive, partly because the building is unsuitable for such a purpose, and therefore the real *tabularium* must be sought elsewhere on the hill. This re-evaluation of the "Tabularium" has been in progress for some time; in 1993, Nicholas Purcell opened the modern discussion, and in 2005, Pier Luigi Tucci presented a detailed review of the archaeological evidence, which C. followed with a paper in 2010, in which his ideas were already well developed.⁶

The study of Roman topography is very much like a jigsaw puzzle, and even a small change somewhere can cause a chain reaction. Among the new sources that C. focuses on is a military diploma published in 1996, which referred to a *tabula aenea* exhibited in *Capitolio in podio muri ante aedem Geni(i) p(opuli) R(omani)* (AE 1997, 1771). Previously nothing precise was known about this temple, although two Late Republican/Augustan *fasti* calendars (the *fasti fratrum Arvalium* and the *fasti Amiternini*) mention that the birthdays of three temples fell on the same day, 9 October: *Genii publici*, *Faustae Felicitatis*, and *Veneris Victricis in Capitolio*. The new military diploma made it clear that three temples not otherwise accounted for needed to be accommodated on the Capitol, and C. places all of them on top of the "Tabularium" (an identical birthday is thought to indicate a close spatial relationship), which he considers to be the *substructio* mentioned in Lutatius Catulus's inscription (cited above).

Lutatius Catulus, a follower of the dictator Sulla († 78 BCE), is already known as the restorer of the Capitoline temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus (destroyed by fire in 83 BCE), which he inaugurated in 69 BCE.⁷ The same Catulus now appears as the builder of a mighty foundation for one or more other temples, about which our sources otherwise say nothing. Born ca. 110 BCE to a consular father, his contribution to Late Republican Rome seems to me to be worth more attention overall; there is enough information from various sources that Münzer wrote 12 dense columns in the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* about him (still unsurpassed, to my knowledge).⁸ Undoubtedly, Catulus also built the (or a?) *tabularium*, and C. places the first version of the same to the southwest of the "Tabularium," on a lower level, next to the Temple of Saturn (which to be sure makes sense), in a place where today's visitors find the remains of the Porticus Deorum Consentium (of Flavian date). Via a corridor through the foundations of the "Tabularium," this *tabularium* was in contact with a series of rooms in the northeast corner. C. identifies these as the workshop (*officina*) of the Moneta (the mint) and also locates its head office there (38).

Other scholars have had time to react to C.'s scenario, first proposed in 2010, and while the idea that the "Tabularium" is not the *tabularium* is now in the mainstream, the presence and identification of the temple(s) on the *substructio* and the location of the actual *tabularium* are debated. In an article in 2014, Tucci bolstered his original idea from 2005 that only one temple stood on the "Tabularium," namely the famous temple of Iuno Moneta, which was moved there from the nearby Arx (the northern peak of the Capitoline Hill) after the fire of 83 BCE. He considered the *substructio* of Catulus to be merely a wall on the northeast

⁶ See Purcell 1993; Tucci 2005; Coarelli 2010.

⁷ Catulus was called *curator restituendi Capitolii* by Varro, according to Gell. 2.10.

⁸ See Münzer 1927. Catulus receives a good deal of attention in connection with his work on the Capitol in Davies 2017, a work not quoted by Coarelli. There may be more to explore here; cf. also a brief remark in Tucci 2013/2014, 64 n. 53.

side of the “Tabularium” and suggested that the *tabularium* too was located there.⁹ C. disagrees strongly, but Tucci’s contribution is substantial and closely argued; the matter is complicated and evaluating every detail would require an article of its own. Some scholars seem to prefer the proposal of a temple of Iuno, the new *Atlas of Ancient Rome* (the printed English version) is in favour of C.’s three temples but changes their order without explanation, while James Packer suggested that nothing but a “central peristyle framed by one or more rows of rooms” was placed on top of the “Tabularium,” since it was poorly designed as a substructure for one or more temples.¹⁰

The physical site of the *Aerarium militare*, the office that handled the retirement payment to soldiers who had served their full turn, was first mentioned in a military diploma published in 1978, which referred to a *tabula aenea* displayed in *Capitolio ante aerarium militare in basi Claudiorum Marcellorum* (AE 1978, 658). This formulation showed that we should look for an actual building, and this notion was reinforced thanks to the discovery of another diploma, which refers to a bronze plaque in *Capitolio in gradibus aerari(i) militaris parte dexteriore* (AE 2002, 1770). In a certain way, this vast collection of bronze plaques with hundreds – and over the years thousands – of names of retired soldiers can be called an open-air archive, but C. is focused on identifying where the original documentation was preserved and where the staff of the senatorial *praefecti aerarii militaris* carried out their duties. In other words, where did their desks stand? The *Aerarium militare* building is placed in the westernmost corner of the Capitoline Hill. It is identified in fragment 31 of the *Forma Urbis Romae* (of Severan date) as a building which seems to have stairs leading up to it (the *gradus* cited in the military diploma), situated next to a temple (that of Ops, in C.’s view); this type of building corresponds to that of an administrative head office (61–65).¹¹

Beginning in 90 CE, all *tabulae aeneae* recording discharged soldiers were posted in *muro post templum divi Augusti ad Minervam*.¹² This indicates an administrative reform implemented by the emperor Domitian, who moved the *tabularium* (its site was taken over by the *Porticus Deorum Consentium*) to the Palatine where the *Tabularium principis* was established (on the site of the later *Vigna Barberini*).¹³ The *Aerarium militare* was also moved by Domitian, as was the mint (65–66).¹⁴

⁹ Tucci 2013/2014, 55 on *substructio* and *tabularium*.

¹⁰ Iuno is preferred by Davies 2017, 189–90, 193. For three temples (left to right Venus Victrix, Fausta Felicitas, Genius Publicus), see Dunia Filippi in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. I, p. 166 (the reference is to Coarelli 2011, by which his 2010 article in *PBSR* is meant), vol. II, Tab. 22 (one also notes that the “Tabularium” is given one story more than what Coarelli proposed), Tab. 41. Temples on the “Tabularium” were considered unlikely by Packer 2013, 559; similarly, Gorski and Packer 2015, 197–209 (where the crucial inscription *CIL VI 1314* is incorrectly quoted and the translation is quite garbled).

¹¹ There is no trace of this hypothesis, first presented in 2006 by Mireille Corbier, in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. II, Tab. 20.

¹² The location of this temple has long puzzled scholars; see Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. II, Tabs. 40–41 for a suggestion.

¹³ The term *tabularium principis* appears once in the epigraphic sources (*CIL X 7852* from Sardinia).

¹⁴ But if the *Aerarium militare* was moved by Domitian ca. 90 CE, it is unclear why the military diploma from 88 CE can help us to identify the building of the *Aerarium militare* on the map drawn up around 200 CE (cf. the previous paragraph).

In Chapter II, C. argues that the Moneta was transferred from the Capitol to *regio III* and the site of the later basilica of San Clemente, partly relying on an inscription which preserves Trajan's name (100–1). The text was published in 1992 but is practically unknown, although it is visible on the inside face of a lintel over the church's main door. In the author's view, Trajan must have re-dedicated the mint building.¹⁵ Among the epigraphic evidence for the Moneta's location in the zone is the title of an imperial official who was [*proc*]urator *s(acrae) monet[ae] eodem temp[ore] proc[.] ludi [magni]* (CIL VI 1647). The only sensible explanation for why these two quite different tasks, the charge of the mint and of a gladiatorial institution, were held by the same man contemporaneously would indeed seem to be the close spatial connection of two buildings. Such an administrative solution is also relevant later in the book, when the joining of the *cura aquarum* and the Minucia administration is discussed.

The chapter on the Atrium Libertatis, the seat of the censors, and thus also of the census records, is short (109–33). C. wrote the corresponding entry in the *Lexicon Topographicum*, and then, as now, he stated that the location during the Republic was conclusively determined by Ferdinando Castagnoli in 1946 (although the latter's view was challenged, unsuccessfully, in the mid-90s).¹⁶ In this view, the Atrium was originally located on the so-called “sella,” the spur of land or “saddle” which united the Quirinal and the Capitoline Hill but was dug out when the emperor Trajan built his Forum. There are some recent archaeological contributions to consider that help to determine where the Atrium was located after the “sella” was removed (Castagnoli thought it was never rebuilt).¹⁷ C. strongly opposes those who wish to see the building close to the Curia and instead argues that the Atrium Libertatis is to be found in the northern part of Trajan's forum. Clarity has recently been gained there, and it is once again clear it was the location of a temple (dedicated to the *divi* Trajan and Plotina). Indeed, a fragment of the Forma Urbis, which can be joined with one showing the Basilica Ulpia, carries the text [LI] BERTA[TIS]. It cannot be a question of a cult of Libertas (as sometimes thought) but must be a reference to the Atrium L. (127).

Chapter IV, dedicated to the *Statio annonae* (137–60) begins at the beginning with grain distributions during the Archaic period. C. holds that the historicity of the *frumentationes* in Rome during the earliest Republic is now accepted by almost all historians of the period, citing A. Momigliano (a work from 1936) and T. J. Cornell as evidence, but there are probably still some doubters.¹⁸ In the literary sources, this activity is connected to the temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera in the Forum Boarium, and there is a remarkable continuity in that during the Principate, the seat of the *praefectus annonae*, today known as the *statio annonae* (an expression found only once, in an epitaph which refers to the *fiscus stationis annonae*; CIL VI 9626 = ILS 7267), was located close by. Since the late 19th c. a common view has been that the church of S. Maria in Cosmedin occupies the site of the *statio annonae*, but in the author's view the Roman remains in the church do not fit the purpose.¹⁹ He presents

¹⁵ I find no trace of the inscription, [--- *Caesar divi Nervae fil. [—]*, in the EDCS; see Lawlor 1992. Lawlor cautiously remarked that the pavonazzetto marble block, part of a cornice or architrave, might instead have come from the nearby Thermae Traiani.

¹⁶ See Coarelli 1993a. An addition to the bibliography from 1993 is Welin 1953, a now rarely cited work by a Swedish scholar with whom C. is often in agreement, here and elsewhere in the book.

¹⁷ Amici 1995–96.

¹⁸ Momigliano 1936; Cornell 1995.

¹⁹ See already Coarelli 1999, where the main idea of this chapter can be found.

evidence that the *statio annonae* was situated close by the temples of Flora and of Ceres, which both ought to have stood somewhat to the east of the *carceres* of the Circus Maximus, in an area where the archaeological remains are poorly known. In a large public building from the 2nd c. CE, excavated in 1931, a *mithraeum* was later installed on the ground floor. C. has previously suggested that this was the *Secretarium circi*, but that phase is Late Antique, and the *statio annonae* may have occupied the site at an earlier stage. If not, it must be sought in the immediate vicinity.²⁰

In Chapter V (161–93) the focus is on the administration of Rome’s aqueducts and water supply, a context in which the term *statio* is encountered six times. It seems likely that the reason for the choice of the book’s title can be found here, a suspicion that is strengthened by a substantial part of the Preface, which takes this Reviewer to task for his interpretation of the Latin word *statio* (11–20; partly continued in Chapter V). C. focuses on an article discussing the Roman concept of “*statio*” that appeared in 1989 (though it was composed a few years earlier), in which my task was to investigate what is known about the *statio aquarum*, generally considered to be the “headquarters” of the Roman aqueduct administration.²¹ It could certainly in Italian be called an “*opera giovanile*” (a youthful work), or, in other words, deconstruction is often the only path forward when a young scholar faces a solid wall of consensus. Then, to be sure, “hypercriticism” is unavoidable. In brief, besides my concerns about whether the archaeological data allowed the identification of a “head office” of the *cura aquarum* on two particular sites, my main point was that *statio* can sometimes have an abstract meaning, “administration,” instead of referring to the actual office building with its chairs and desks. C. is right that my interpretations of some of the sources are unconvincing, but I still think that *statio* sometimes has an abstract meaning, as do others.²²

Giacomo Boni’s excavation of the site of the Lacus Iuturnae next to the Forum Romanum around the year 1900 brought to light two relevant inscriptions. One is the anonymous dedication *Genio stationis aquarum* (CIL VI 36781); the other is inscribed on the side of a base for a statue of the emperor Constantine erected by the *curator aquarum et Miniciae* Flavius Lollianus Mavortius in 328 CE. The full name and title appear on the front; on the side one reads *dedicata cum statione a Fl. Lolliano v(iro) c(larissimo) cur(atore) ...* (CIL VI 36951). Two somewhat earlier inscriptions found on the site likewise mention men who held the office of *cur. aquarum et Miniciae* (CIL VI 37121, 37133).²³

It now appears overzealous to attempt to explain away the presence of a *statio aquarum* – some kind of branch office or depot or shrine – at the Lacus Iuturnae, but the site still seems ill suited for the “headquarters” (to use a “common sense” spatial argument, like C. does several times). And there are four other *statio* texts to consider here.

²⁰ This interpretation is accepted in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. I, 433 (Ch. Bariviera); cf. vol. II, Tab. 171 for the two temples.

²¹ Bruun 1989.

²² See Eck 1999, esp. 352: “*Statio* kann grundsätzlich ein Büro ... bedeuten, ebenso jedoch auch die administrative Institution selbst ohne einen lokalen Sinn.” Recently Faoro 2021 interpreted the *statio Augusta* as a physical office at Milan, but some of the other instances cited in the contribution may be worth a second look.

²³ At the time, it was common to spell *Minucia* with an *i* as “*Minicia*”.

In Frontinus's treatise on the water supply of Rome (*De aquaeductu*), he mentions that the staff is busy around the various *stationes* in town (*homines ... circa castellorum et munerum stationes opera quaeque urgebunt*; *Aq.* 117.3), but he also recommends that the *curator aquarum* not rely only on internal advice: *nec suae tantum stationis architectis uti* (*Aq.* 119.3). Is the curator's "own *statio*" meant here, Frontinus's "*mea statio*," as it were (in contrast to all the other *stationes* where his staff have their tools and desks?), or is he referring to his administration, the *cura aquarum*, more generally?

The consultation of any good Latin dictionary shows that "*statio*" has many meanings. The term usually refers to something tangible, such as a place for business or administration, a resting place, an armed post, an anchorage, and such. But *statio* does not always denote a physical space; cf. *OLD*, s.v. *statio* (7) "a station or position (in life), duty." In particular, there is the term *statio principis*, a term used by Augustus himself of his political role (*Gell.* 15.7.3), and a meaning given *statio* by several ancient authors.²⁴

The detailed entry in the *LTUR* summarizes well my criticism of Coarelli's then recent suggestion that the *statio aquarum*, as he called the headquarters of the *cura aquarum*, during the early and high Empire was located between temples A and B in the Largo Argentina (on which below) but was transferred to the Lacus Iturnae in 328 CE.²⁵

One should not only tear down but also present constructive suggestions, which I did in 2007, when I focused on a region of the Severan Forma Urbis marble map where the text AQVEDVCTIVM can be read (the word is a *hapax*). The inscription appears next to the Temple of Divus Claudius on the Caelian, where the aqueduct bringing water to the Palatine had its course. If the Tabularium is where *tabulae* are preserved, is not the Aqu(a)eductium the place where matters relating to the aqueducts are dealt with? "How do I apply for a permission to draw water from a public aqueduct through my private *fistula aquaria*?" – "Visit the Aquaeductium!" In a tiny nutshell, this was my idea, but C. is not persuaded, among other reasons because the Severan map shows no structure which might correspond to a "'sede di officio' such as the *Statio aquarum*" (166).²⁶

Chapter VI, on "The food distributions to the people of Rome," receives by far the largest space (195–314) and is probably the chapter with the largest ramifications for our understanding of Roman topography, as it focuses on a central part of the Campus Martius. The distribution of grain to free male inhabitants who had managed to be registered on the appropriate list of recipients took place in a building named Porticus Minucia, and the chapter mainly engages with the nature and location of two porticoes by this name. If one wonders how this topic belongs under the book's heading of "luogo di amministrazione" (the Porticus Minucia was mainly a place where a particular policy was executed), it should be remembered that somewhere in the Minucia complex there must have been copious records of the beneficiaries. Also, somewhere nearby, the senatorial *praefecti frumenti dandi*, who were in charge of the operation, must have had their desks and also

²⁴ See Köstermann 1932, esp. 359–60 for a series of references from the Augustan age to the late 2nd c. and beyond. No current dictionary does justice to this aspect of the word; one eagerly awaits the *Thesaurus* entry. For a recent collection of studies, see France and Nelis-Clément 2014.

²⁵ For my criticism, see n. 21 above, and Burgers 1999.

²⁶ Bruun 2007 (the argument was more substantial than what the dialogue above lets on). G. Fatucci in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. I, 347 nn. 102–3 is rather noncommittal; cf. vol. II, Tab. 135.

the facilities for their numerous staff. On this, the chapter is, however, rather silent, since the focus is on the location of temples and porticoes, and on what literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources tell us about these spaces and the activities that they saw.²⁷

Visitors to Rome today admire the remains of four temples in the Largo Argentina square. In C.'s view, first presented over 40 years ago, these temples (labelled A, B, C, and D) are Iuturna, Fortuna huiusce diei,²⁸ Feronia, and Lares Permarini, and they were surrounded by the Late Republican Porticus Minucia vetus. Immediately adjacent, to the east, stood the likewise quadrangular Porticus Minucia frumentaria of mid-1st-c. CE date, in which a single temple, dedicated to the Nymphs, can still be viewed from the Via delle Botteghe Oscure. But this interpretation has often been questioned.²⁹ Therefore, many will probably read C.'s "Answer to recent criticism about the identification of the Porticus Minucia" (254–67) with particular interest. C., who extensively answered some concerns in his 1997 monograph on the Campus Martius,³⁰ takes particular care to address the conflicting view of Zevi, and indeed scholars neglect Zevi's view on any subject at their own risk. In the view of Zevi and others, there never was a portico in the Largo Argentina, the Minucia Vetus is bisected by the Via delle Botteghe Oscure, and the single temple there is that of the Lares Permarini, which is the only one that Republican sources place in the Porticus Minucia. The more recent Minucia frumentaria stood closer to the Tiber (easier to supply with the enormous amounts of grain that were distributed daily); one section can be viewed in the Via dei Calderari.³¹ It does not seem that any kind of compromise or consensus in the matter is about to materialize.

C. then turns to the issue of administrative headquarters when focusing on a quadrangular structure between temples A and B in the Largo Argentina. Over 40 years ago, he identified the building as the headquarters of the aqueduct administration, calling it *statio aquarum* (as mentioned above), and he stands by that interpretation (259–60; see already 167–84). Temple A was dedicated to Iuturna, a water nymph, and thus the environment was ideal for an office that handled the water supply. The fact that in 328 the *curator aquarum et Minicia* dedicated a *statio* next to the Lacus Iuturnae shows the nymph's relevance. That double title is important for another reason. It can only mean that one official has been given responsibility for both the aqueducts and the Minucia, that is, the activity which took place in the (porticus) Minucia. In C.'s view this is further evidence that the Porticus Minucia was in proximity to the *statio aquarum*. The additional responsibility given the *curator aquarum* is not in doubt, but it does not follow that his headquarters stood between temples A and B. If Iuturna truly was so central to the *cura aquarum*, one wonders why Frontinus, in his treatise from ca. 100 CE, in no way emphasizes her significance for his *officium*. It would have been easy

²⁷ C. does mention the well-known fact that the records of the *plebs frumentaria* were preserved in the Temple of the Nymphs (220–21). After it was burnt down in the 50s BCE, it was rebuilt and is considered by many to be the temple in the Via delle Botteghe Oscure.

²⁸ C. dedicates much space to Fortuna huiusce diei. The goddess and her temple (Temple B) are given a large symbolic role in the provisioning of Rome (267–86).

²⁹ For a recent judicious summary of the debates, Davies 2017, 169–71; she leans towards Zevi's interpretation (below). The map in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. II, Tab. 222 largely supports C.'s view.

³⁰ Coarelli 1997, 296–345.

³¹ Among numerous contributions, the most recent may be Zevi 2007.

since he did mention Roman springs and their nymphs by name (*Aq.* 4: the Camenae and Iuturna).

Chapter VI is dedicated to the Praefectura Urbis and the premises where the Prefect of the City, the highest-ranking senator in Rome, carried out his duties (315–95). Coarelli suggests that the *praefectus urbi* (first appointed during the reign of Augustus) initially officiated in the Basilica Pauli (by others called the B. Aemilia) and that once the adjacent Flavian Templum Pacis structure had been built, this became the headquarters of the *praef. urbi*. It was no coincidence that the Severan marble plan of Rome was exhibited here; this map had (also) an administrative rationale.³²

The urban prefect's premises later expanded to cover parts of the Carinae and the Velia, topographical features no longer visible and not least therefore always challenging in a discussion about Roman topography (326–59). The Temple of Tellus (founded 265 BCE) is important, but its exact location is unfortunately unknown (though it was not too far from Maxentius's basilica). It would help to know the location, because in Late Antiquity the Secretarium tellurensis, evidently situated near the temple, was part of the urban prefecture. In addition, some of the prefect's expanded judicial functions took place in a large apsis that, at the end of the 4th c., was added to the north side of the Basilica of Maxentius; staff and archives of the *praefectura urbis* were obviously located close by. Unfortunately, the book lacks a comprehensive map that would help orient the reader, but the *Atlas of Ancient Rome* provides a good idea.³³ C. rejects an idea from some two decades ago, according to which the *praefectura urbis* was located by the Baths of Trajan, in premises where a sensational fresco of an ancient harbor town was found in the 1990s (386–87).

Two shorter chapters conclude the book, one on the seven *cohortes* of *vigiles* (the firefighters) (397–413) and one on the courier service, the *cursus publicus* (415–32). One main point in the chapter on the fire brigade concerns the headquarters where the *praefecti vigilum* officiated. C. rejects the common view that the headquarters is to be found in connection with the seat of the *cohors I* in the Campus Martius (the lavish premises of which were excavated in 1642). In his view the *vigiles* were employed in particular to guard the grain stored in the *horrea* of the city, and they were closely connected to Vulcan, a god for whom fire was central, as was, paradoxically enough, water (as C. has argued on other occasions). This setup is identified at Ostia, where *horrea* abound and the *vigiles* barracks is located not too far from the Piazzale delle Corporazioni, in which stands a temple that C. attributes to Vulcan.³⁴ Therefore, in Rome, the headquarters of the *praefectura vigilum* should be connected to the Temple of Vulcan, which C. locates near the Crypta Balbi in the Campus Martius (398–99).³⁵ The seven barracks were spaced out across the city (five have been more or less securely identified), each responsible for two of the 14 *regiones*. The traditional term for such a local branch is *statio vigilum*, but C. accepts the Reviewer's suggestion that

³² The buildings shown in Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. II, Tabs. 101, 104–5 reflect rather well C.'s view of the topography of the *praefectura Urbis*.

³³ Carandini and Carafa 2017, vol. II, Tabs. 104–5, obviously inspired by earlier works by Coarelli.

³⁴ The identification is controversial, see now Van Haepren 2019, 248–50.

³⁵ The precise site of the temple is unknown, and it is not mentioned in Carandini and Carafa 2017. See Manacorda 1999 for the zone where it might have stood.

there is no ancient foundation for this. Instead of the proposal that they were called *castra*, however, he prefers *excubitorium*.

The last chapter is dedicated to the headquarters of the *cursus publicus*, and as usual there are many aspects to consider and unconvincing interpretations to reject. C. places the building in *regio VII*, just to the east of the Via Lata (Via del Corso), in the Porticus Vipsania, and finds support in the nearby location of the Catabulum, which housed the physical side of the courier service, animals and rolling stock.³⁶

Two final comments. First, the learning and the creativity which fueled C.'s book is of the highest order, but the gain in what concerns our understanding of the actual sites of the ancient administrative headquarters is not of equal magnitude. Often, we have to be satisfied with recognizing that a particular physical office must have existed (undoubtedly a step forward), while only sometimes is it possible to point to an approximate location; even more rarely can a precise location be identified. Second, it should be remembered that there are many other administrative headquarters to consider in Rome. The book is large enough as it is, but even merely leafing through the *Lexicon Topographicum* brings up instances such as the *statio alvei Tiberis* and the *statio patrimonii*; and a (or the) *statio XX hereditatum* is attested in inscriptions (CIL VI 8445–46, 37766).³⁷ More can be said about the offices that administered imperial wealth, as shown in a recent enlightening contribution by Marco Maiuro, who situated the management of the *res* or *rationes* of the emperor in Caesar's Forum during the 1st c. CE.³⁸ Of course there, as everywhere else, we look in vain for Roman desks, but any addition to our understanding of Roman governmental practices is welcome.

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³⁶ The argument was briefly presented already by Coarelli 1993b.

³⁷ The *vicesima hereditatum*, the 5% inheritance tax, was the source of income for the Aerarium militare. One wonders if there was a topographical connection between this *statio* and the Aerarium militare building.

³⁸ Maiuro 2010.

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