underlying assumption itself, moreover, is in the highest degree insecure (see *Roman Statutes*, p. 111).

At pp. 316 and 401, B. deals with the tribe of Larinum, certainly the Clustumina after the Social War. The problem is that a third-century inscription from Carrawburgh (*RIB* 1545) reveals a man who describes himself as *domo Vltina col. Sept. Aur. L[arino]*. (Why soldiers should describe themselves in this curious way is not obvious.) Few will want to follow Birley and hold that the Clustumina was not after all the tribe of Larinum; but B.'s suggestion that Larinum changed its tribe when it became a Severan colony is not obviously preferable: the case of Canusium which he cites is not a parallel, since it did indeed become a colony, but did not change its tribe. I should not want to exclude the possibility that the man had come from an area of the Voltinia tribe and become a citizen of Larinum, or indeed that his years of military service had caused him to forget the tribe of his home town, by now in any case pretty meaningless. B. should also have considered the suggestion of Taylor ('Voting Districts', pp. 321–2), that this and other cases of intrusive members of the Voltinia tribe are the result of Caesarian settlements.

Finally, some *nugae*: on the mosaic inscription from Castel di Ieri, B.'s first thoughts were much better than his second, induced by Olli Salomies, namely that we have three times a *praenomen* + *nomen* + filiation, not a *praenomen* + *nomen* + tribe (!) + *cognomen* and a *praenomen* + *nomen* + filiation (pp. 41 and 45); the best correction of the MS of Varro *RR* II, 9, 6, gives us not an *emporium* at Heraclea, but an *ora maritima* (pp. 71 + 116 + 797); there is in my view no good evidence for a Caesarian municipal reform of 49 B.C. (p. 196: see in *Modus Operandi. Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Rickman* [London, 1998], pp. 31–46, 'How to create a *municipium*'), the life of Vincenzo Balzano is rather spectacularly prolonged at p. 556; Geza Alföldy is mis-spelt at p. 886. Otherwise, these are volumes of astonishing accuracy, with nearly 150 pages of meticulous indexes. Are we entitled to believe that *CIL* IX^2 is imminent? I fervently hope so.

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THE METROPOLIS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

C. Nicolet, R. Ilbert, J. C. Depaule (edd.): *Mégapoles méditerranéennes. Géographie urbaine rétrospective*. Pp. 1071, ills, photos. Rome: Ecole française, 2000. Paper, frs. 245. ISBN: 2-7068-1377-6.

This massive book publishes the findings of the five year *projet Mégapoles*, an investigation into the larger cities prior to the nineteenth century with a view to demonstrating that: the mega-city was a phenomenon of greater antiquity than previously assumed within the history of urbanism. The approach in the fifty-three chapters ranges from aspects of demography and subsistence to modes of *mentalité* in literature. These are grand themes of investigation, the parts of which are quite briefly treated—for example, six pages of text and two of references to cover the discussion of the vision of the mega-city from Herodotus to Strabo, which results in a summary as opposed to a totally new treatment. This brevity and generality is carried over in the discussion of the development of the mega-city by Pierre Gros, who provides an interesting review of the difference of the metropolis from that of

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.2.460 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the city—which he sees defined by the monumental vision we find of Rome in Strabo (5.3.8). The diffuseness of the population of migrants from a variety of regions or we might say a different rhythm from that of the smaller city is at heart of Gros's distinction. Equally, the metropolis as seen in this book is a place that concentrates and extends mythological concepts and religious ideas via its monuments and into its very topographical or cosmological heart, as Coarelli shows us here. A fundamental difference of the mega-city in antiquity was its basis in the performance of religious celebrations and ritual in a stark contrast to metropolis of the modern age. This allows Nicolet to set out a model of transition in antiquity: from large city to capital city and then finally into a *métropole oecuménique* (p. 895).

The individual essays on aspects of the metropolis are by leading authors and provide us with a snap-shot of key themes. On population, Lo Cascio reviews our demographic knowledge of the metropoleis of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople with a stronger focus on Rome itself, and is followed by a discussion of the evaluation of population in the medieval period by Hubert. What is clear though is that we may be able to recreate a population, but we still do not have the means to explain its decline or increase beyond general trends. This reviewer was uncertain from reading the volume as a whole whether Rome ceased to be a metropolis in late antiquity or around 1000 A.D. to become one again in the later medieval period. The question remains to what extent did population define the metropolis or is the metropolis defend by other factors as well—e.g. government. It may be no coincidence that the move of the papacy from Rome to Avignon coincided with the city's lowest population. The relation between population and government is seen here as important, but should we find a decline in population at Rome directly caused by the creation of Constantinople as a centre of government of the East, as Nicolet suggests (p. 280). There is a suspicion that the transfer of government reflected Constantinople's growth in importance as a metropolis earlier to that event. It remains unclear how urban history of a metropolis intersects with the history of government of regions and empires—we might remember that many contemporary metropoleis are not at the centre of empires.

The qualification to be a *mégapole* in this book would seem to in part be defined by population, hence we find Antioch and Alexandria included. However, it is in the inclusion or exclusion of places that we find one of the emphases of the book—information derived from texts as opposed to archaeology (the exceptions to this are the chapters on Carthage by Lancel and Gros). The excavations in London have revealed a vast third century A.D. city with grand monuments and a very large forum; one wonders whether third century London was making the transition towards a status of mega-city (i.e. with rather more than the characteristics of an ancient city). Other cities, such as Milan, might have similar trajectories of growth, but were without the literary evidence of a Libanius to support their case as a *mégapole*. Can this category be applied within archaeology or does it in fact depend on a notion of demography and textual representation of the *mentalité* of its cosmology? The editors at the end of the volume review their work and are aware of the gaps—notably a developed sociology of the population of these places, or a clear understanding of their economies and the rôle of the trade in luxury items or curiosities.

There are substantial bibliographical essays in the volume on the 'Islamic', medieval, modern, and ancient mega-city, filling over ninety pages (at the end of the book there is also a seventy-four-page bibliography of works cited). The listing reflects the position of earlier distinctions between ancient, medieval, modern, and oriental city types, but with considerable updating. The need for brevity causes much to be

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missed: Nicolet, for example, on antiquity includes only two references to Punic and Carthaginian urbanism, and even for Rome there are a mere seventeen references. The bibliography as a whole favours the descriptive works over key theoretical studies that have become dominant in contemporary Anglo-American geography—for example, Henri Lefebvre's *La production d'espace* does not receive a mention.

The book as a whole is difficult to keep within one's vision, and hard to define or pin down. Its object—the mega-city—shares these properties and is notoriously slippery or even fluid. Here lies a problem: we have difficulty today understanding contemporary urbanism or representing it through the medium of the written word, let alone that of the past, with its absence of evidence for some of the things we wish to know. The authors in this volume focus on the tangible—particularly demography, and allude to the realm of the cosmopolis that can extend across regions and blurs the distinction between *urbis* and *orbis.* The individual essays may prove stronger than the book as a whole.

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ROMAN TOMB DECORATIONS

F. Feraudi-Gruénais: *Ubi diutius nobis habitandum est. Die Innendekoration der kaiserzeitlichen Gräber Roms.* (Palilia 9.) Pp. 248, ills. Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2001. Paper, €39.90. ISBN: 3-89500-076-0.

The basis of this book is a catalogue of eighty-four tombs from Rome which contain fixed internal decorations: wall-paintings (by far the most frequent type), decorated plaster, and mosaic floors. They range from the first century B.C. to the early fourth century A.D.; catacombs are excluded. Each entry contains a general description of the tomb, details of the decorations, illustrations, bibliography, and sometimes plans. The types of decoration are marked in the text in bold and the themes of the decoration are in italics, making them very easy to pick out. Other important information, such as dating and use for cremation or inhumation burials, is also presented in a clear and consistent way, and the texts of significant inscriptions are given in footnotes.

The catalogue is followed by an analytical section, also summarized in Italian. The tombs are discussed by type, by date (the second half of the second century A.D. is the best represented period), and by theme. Most of the decorative figures are mythological ones, usually shown in isolation rather than in scenes, and allusions to real life or the afterlife are rare. A final section looks at the internal decorations in the context of other recent research on tombs. F.-G. emphasizes the links with domestic art and, later, with sarcophagi; she also finds some correlation between the quality of external and internal decoration of tombs.

The book should become the first point of reference for the tombs it discusses, since the information which it makes available so easily would otherwise have to be extracted painstakingly from many different sources; even someone with little German could make good use of it. As F.-G. states, internal decorations have rarely been studied even for well-known tombs like the Vigna Codini columbaria and the Vatican mausolea. The 'painted rooms' of the Jewish catacomb of Vigna Randanini (not included in the

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