

Although beautifully produced and well priced, this is not a user-friendly volume. To understand room types in ch. 4, readers need to have referred to ch. 5 or at minimum table 5a. The order in which the house plans are presented has lost the logic of the original thesis presentation, and will defeat many undergraduates. The terminology associated with each room type is bombastic: 'Open-Fronted Areas off the Sides of Front Halls' and might be as confusing as the use of Latin terms such as *alae*. Moreover, there is a tacit assumption that readers will already be familiar with these houses. For teaching purposes, the website might provide a better alternative for the introduction of students to the study of artefact assemblages in Pompeii. The latter will allow students to see the contexts or *habitus* from which the data presented in this volume were drawn.

A. has made clear that there is a need to re-evaluate how the rooms within houses are represented in texts. Ch. 7 points the way for further discussion, now much aided by searchable CD-Roms of Greek and Latin authors. Her book has updated and made available a reconstructed data-set that is unique and needs to be better known by those studying Roman Houses and Domestic Space.

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Y. THEBERT, *THERMES ROMAINS D'AFRIQUE DU NORD ET LEUR CONTEXTE MEDITERRANEEN: ETUDES D'HISTOIRE ET D'ARCHEOLOGIE* (B.E.F.R.A. 315). Rome: École Française de Rome, 2003. Pp. 733, 172 figs. ISBN 2-7283-0398-3. €96.00.

Some years ago, I expressed the expectation that regional studies of Roman baths would open up profitable avenues of future investigation (G. Fagan, 'Bathing in the backwaters', *JRA* 10 (1997), 523). It is gratifying to see, therefore, that the established scholar of Roman baths Y. Thébert has produced a monumental study of North African baths that exemplifies the merits of a regional approach to the subject (see also, A. Farrington, *The Roman Baths of Lycia* (1995); V. G. Entero *Los Balnea de las villae hispanoromanas provincia Tarraconense* (2001); and A. Bouet, *Les thermes privés et publics en Gaule narbonnaise* (2003)). Th., however, does more than merely catalogue and describe the hundreds of facilities that dotted the landscape of Roman North Africa from Morocco to Tunisia (Libya, regrettably, is absent). He also sets the monuments against their wider regional and historical backdrops, analyses their architectural peculiarities, how they were used, and their function as urban monuments. A catalogue of 196 related inscriptions is also included, though none are translated. This is a thorough and impressive piece of work, and a serious contribution to the field.

After reviewing some methodological problems and surveying the historical background, Th. enters the difficult province of the origins of the Roman bath as a building type, starting his analysis in the Greek Bronze Age and ending with the mid-first century A.D. This lengthy section (45–122) treads well-worn paths as it integrates and synthesizes prior work. Naturally, for so contested a subject, there is much that is debatable, but it is balanced by some new and noteworthy information. So, on the one hand, H. Eschebach's highly dubious scheme for a protracted building history of the Stabian Baths at Pompeii is presented, yet again, as if it were not fundamentally problematic (*contra* G. Fagan, 'The genesis of the Roman bath', *AJA* 105 (2001), 403–26, esp. 408–12, uncited here). On the other, Th.'s suggestion that public baths can be identified at the Punic site of Kerkouane in the middle of the third century B.C. (57–8) is intriguing, even if scantily supported by the evidence on the ground (i.e., *opus signinum*, benches, and drains). No less tantalizing is notice of an unpublished second-century B.C. hypocaust bath at Fregellae (82–3). Any new facility of so early an era adds considerably to our meagre database of pertinent archaeological material, so it is to be hoped that this bathhouse will be fully published sooner rather than later. (Edizioni Quasar is publishing the site reports from Fregellae, with two volumes thus far in print.)

Th. concludes from all the disparate sources that public bathing formed part of the cultural *koine* of the Mediterranean basin; that Roman baths were influenced in various ways by this *koine*; that Campania played no essential role in the emergence of the building type, a view he dismisses as the 'mythe campanien'; and that the hypocaust is what really initiated the development of the Roman-style bathhouse. Given the sparsity of the evidence and the difficult and contentious issues under debate, many will no doubt contest these conclusions, but there can be no doubt that Th. advances the discussion in useful directions.

After reviewing the bathhouse's origins, Th. moves on to typology, which he categorizes not by the presence or absence of certain features (as did I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea*² (1993)) but by mode of use, as reflected in ground-plans: does the bath display a symmetrical or non-symmetrical arrangement of rooms, and is there a linear or circular itinerary through these rooms? The catalogue of buildings and their architectural analysis follows (129–284), with a chapter on the route of the bathers through the buildings and a survey of bath-related terms (287–401). Th. closes the book with a lengthy section on the history and functions of baths in Roman Africa, to which is attached a catalogue of bath-related Latin inscriptions (405–521).

Of particular interest is the section on later eras, as Roman baths gave way to the Islamic hammam, which remain popular to this day in the region. While baths and bathing habits were indeed transformed in the process, Th. argues convincingly that changes at many levels were gradual and progressive rather than rapid and catastrophic. This conclusion ratifies the value of public baths and bathing in opening windows onto the ordinary, even in periods of perceived crisis. One hopes that potential will continue to be exploited in future studies.

While ground-plans abound, there are no quality plates of the ruins so carefully described and analysed in the text. This lacuna is extremely regrettable. For so rich and massive a work, the absence of a bibliography is an even greater disappointment. The reader is forced to trawl through the detailed notes to find references, since an index of modern authors (535) is so perfunctory as to be useless. One logs with dismay many unwelcome bibliographic omissions, predominantly of non-French scholarship. My own work on baths, much of it directly pertinent to the topics Th. addresses — e.g., the origins of the building type, methodological problems, or bath-related epigraphy (on which, see G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (1999), uncited here) — attracts minimal attention, as do valuable contributions in various related areas by scholars such as C. Bruun, N. de Haan, G. Jansen, H. Manderscheid, or A. Wilson, to name only a few. Even G. Wesch-Klein's detailed study of public munificence in North Africa (*Liberalitas in Rem Publicam* (1990)), which covers many of the inscriptions catalogued by Th., merits no mention. In any scholarly project, there will always be omissions and oversights, but the merits of this generally excellent book are undermined by its reluctance to engage large swathes of non-French scholarship.

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D. P. CROUCH, *GEOLOGY AND SETTLEMENT: GRECO-ROMAN PATTERNS*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. xii + 372, 83 figs, 6 tables. ISBN 0-19-508324-5. £40.00.

In this volume, the promised accompaniment and extension to her *Water Management in Ancient Greek Cities* (1993), Dora Crouch broadens her efforts to form bridges between the geology and ancient urban history. While an appreciation of the role of the environmental surroundings to urban development in antiquity has long been acknowledged in the study of ancient cities and has seen recent expression in an increase in the study of landscape and survey work by archaeologists (e.g. Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani (1991) and The Tibur Valley Project), few authors have sought such a reflexive interrelation between geologically identified features and the particulars of history and architecture. Refreshing emphasis is placed upon the vital aspects of city infrastructure and reaction to the environment as an explanation of form and historical change. The result is a largely successful synthesis of the two disciplines that suggests an important new direction for future research into ancient urbanism.

Selecting a smaller sample from her previous survey, C. purposefully attempts to reconcile geological analysis with historical information in the urban development of ten ancient cities from Sicily and the eastern Mediterranean. Aspects of the surrounding landscape: the resources, raw materials, and advantages it affords, as well as the perils of natural disasters and difficulties created by the environment, are examined *vis-à-vis* their effects on architecture, trade, and the management of infrastructural elements as attested in the historical and archaeological record. The results will be of interest to classical archaeologists and Greco-Roman historians, adding significantly to the systemic study of urbanism and city life and helping to create a fuller picture of the underlying causes and priorities of ancient city planning and building.

The aims of the book are clearly stated: to suggest that analogous geographical conditions tend to generate similar urban environments; that divergence in urban form may be caused by particular differences in environmental setting; and that the role of the natural environment of a city is a reflexive one, both being changed by human activity and exerting its own unavoidable