

SIMON ESMONDE-CLEARY: *Rome in the Pyrenees. Lugdunum and the Convenae from the First Century B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.* Routledge, Abingdon – New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-415-42686-2. IX, 171 pp. GBP 75, USD 130.

This compact and incisive volume acts as an introduction of the historical archaeology and Gallo-Roman antiquities of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Haute-Garonne) to English-speaking academia. Simon Esmonde Cleary siphons a large amount of information from French archaeological reports and two particular specialists on Lugdunum Convenarum (as the town was known in antiquity), Robert Sablayrolles and Jean-Luc Schenck, who have both spent much of their careers investigating its physical remains and history. Quite as importantly, the book represents an interpretation of a provincial Gallo-Roman town in a way that takes into account the challenges posed to 'Romanisation' as a hegemonic paradigm (such as Greg Woolf's *Becoming Roman* and other landmark contributions).

In historiographical terms, provincial towns such as Lugdunum Convenarum mostly make an appearance when they are subjected to warlike depredations, or through other external reasons. Amidst such a dearth of literary references it is refreshing to see that Esmonde Cleary is able to reveal – on the basis of archaeological material – the daily life of the town during the many centuries when it had comparative anonymity within the written record. What emerges is not perhaps a historical narrative in the old-fashioned meaning of the term, but his careful readings of the physical remains uncover many indications regarding the social, economic, and urban history of Lugdunum Convenarum.

Lugdunum, possibly founded by Pompey during his Spanish campaign, emerged as a *civitas* capital for a Roman-created group of Convenae, probably comprising several groups of Aquitani (p. 21). Despite such an origin, the town seems to have resulted from organic growth, not from a rigid urban plan. Esmonde Cleary would clearly like to be able to say something about the community or the locale before the Augustan age, but in the absence of any pre-Roman fortification remains from the cathedral hill at Saint-Bertrand, and faced with the ambiguity of coin evidence, his Chapter 1 ("Setting the Scene") is limited to reviewing information on the *oppida* of the broader Middle-Pyrenees area, as well as its toponymy. The latter group of evidence also testifies to a presence of Vasconic speakers around the area of later Convenae. Archaeological evidence only begins to accrue after Gallia Aquitani(c)a was formed, not later than 13 BCE, with Convenae transferred to the new province from its original inclusion within Narbonensis, and probably being granted Latin Rights at the same time.

As Esmonde Cleary shows in Chapter 2 ("Creating the Roman City"), the physical form of provincial Roman cityscapes can be quite as fruitfully interpreted through their intended ideological significance as the more consistently monumentalised one of the Urbs itself. There is, for instance, the iconographically eloquent *tropaeum* of the Augustan period that can be compared with the more famous Pompeian trophy along *Via Domitia*, and Augustus' own trophy at La Turbie, probably constructed after that at Saint-Bertrand (pp. 31–4). The baths and a temple complex (of unknown dedication) near the forum were completed and the former then modified during the Julio-Claudian dynasty, though these two complexes do not align perfectly. Neither was the street lay out of Lugdunum composed of a rigid grid, instead partly aligning with the main road between Dax and Toulouse – a route whose importance is further emphasised by a circular monument at its *compitum*, where the road to Luchon forked off (p. 45).

The Claudian era also saw elaboration on the town theatre. Esmonde Cleary, moreover, analyses evidence for large-scale meat production activity from the earliest stages onwards in the very centre of the city – partly no doubt for purposes of export, though explanations stemming from cults and the construction of a new common identity for the Convenae are taken into account (pp. 52f.). Very soon, the town was provided with a *macellum*, the largest in Gaul. Baths, another early feature on the site, were gradually turning the 'shaggy Gauls' into Romans, and the public space of the forum with its dedications forming a *lieu de mémoire* (p. 58) helped the *civitas* elite establish itself. Esmonde Cleary is no doubt correct in attributing the public buildings of Lugdunum to the euergetism and competitive building projects of the members of the local elite. And while it may have taken a comparatively long time for the common identity as Convenae to permeate the lower orders, the impact of the local elite was probably quite strong in propagating such a perception (p. 60).

Lugdunum Convenarum as a fully developed provincial town is the subject of the somewhat grandly titled Chapter 3 ("The City in Its Splendour"). That said, it is true that sometime before Claudius Ptolemy (*geogr.* 2,7,13) Lugdunum had been promoted to the rank of *colonia*. In architectural terms, a fire during the Flavian years offered a chance to redesign many of the public buildings of the town centre. The Forum Baths emerge from these renovations as a substantially lavish establishment, but were surpassed by the still more ambitious 'North Baths' complex, which Esmonde Cleary speculates may have had some connection with a nearby temple complex (pp. 73f.). Some imperial-era remains cannot yet be definitively identified or fully interpreted, in the absence of fuller archaeological investigation. Blocs of private housing are increasingly well-known, as are the funerary areas around the town. The Roman fort (late 2nd – early 3rd century) east of the city, however, is still poorly understood (pp. 85ff.). The chapter concludes with a shortish but intriguing glimpse into the history of the town during the third and fourth centuries; Lugdunum seems to have been less affected by the structural changes taking place in more northerly Gallic *civitates*.

Chapter 4 ("The Countryside and the Creation of the Convenae") switches away from the diachronic evidence to studying the relationship between Lugdunum and its rural environs, where the majority of the Convenae would have lived. The *civitas* is particularly fascinating in its interplay of mountain economy with that of the lowland area, along an important transportation route; the evidence, however, is patchy at best, and Esmonde Cleary wisely admits that most of his conclusions are provisional. The lowlands of Convenae were famous for their thermal spas, and seem to have sported numerous local *pagi* or *vici*, as well as strings of villas along the rivers (pp. 96–101). Sanctuaries and temples are few, but funerary towers and cinerary caskets are common. The mountains, on the other hand, hosted several marble quarries which were probably set up very soon after the urban development at Saint-Bertrand begun, and made possible the great wealth of marble objects that helped to define the identity of Convenae (pp. 113ff.). The *marmorarii* set up a great number of altars, some to the local god Erriapus, whose name seems to be Vasconic (p. 103); the overall pattern seems to be that of Graeco-Roman deities being commemorated in the *civitas* capital, and the indigenous divinities receiving dedications mostly outside it.

Like the town, the outlying villas – among them the very sumptuous specimens at Montmaurin and Valentine – also show remarkable continuation during Late Antiquity. After the fifth century, though, a series of fundamental changes took place in Saint-Bertrand. Chapter 5 ("From *Lugdunum* to Convenae") focuses on this stage of developments, where much of the

old city centre was demolished and much of its material was used to fortify the hill top a little after 400 CE, converting some of the older status symbols of a provincial town to a new marker of pre-eminence (p. 131). The general turbulence of the period, including the Gothic rule over Novempopulana, would have provided another powerful incentive. Esmonde Cleary also questions (with good reasons) Gregory of Tours' description of a Frankish siege of Saint-Bertrand in 585, and judges it ahistorical.

Rome in the Pyrenees will be most useful to scholars of provincial Gaul, especially as regards urban and social development, *civitas* organisation, and landscape studies. It distils a great amount of archaeological information into a concise and accessible overall analysis. Finally, Esmonde Cleary has added one more feature which improves the book's usability: an appendix which acts as a visitor's guide to Saint-Bertrand.

Antti Lampinen

GIUSTO TRAINA: *428 AD: An Ordinary Year at the End of the Roman Empire*. Translated by ALLAN CAMERON. Princeton University Press, Princeton – Oxford 2009. ISBN 978-0-691-13669-1. XIX, 203 pp., GBP 16.95, USD 24.95.

The book in question is an English translation (by Allan Cameron) of *428 dopo Cristo. Storia di un anno* initially published in 2007. The English translation is adorned by an erudite Preface written by Averil Cameron. There are two observations in particular that she makes which echo in the reader's mind while reading the following chapters:

1. Singling out 428 as an "ordinary" year highlights its un-ordinariness.
2. The book begins with the momentous and not in the least unordinary event of the Roman withdrawal from Armenia, and the question "why?" underscores most of the book and is the underlying thread in many of the chapters, before being finally articulated in the final chapter (Chapter XI).

The book is in essence a microhistory on a macroregional level. By restricting himself to the events of the eponymous year (or those immediately preceding or following), Traina has created a rather curious effect, where major, empire-shaking events that take place even in the next decade and assume pride of place in normal historical discourse, are just beyond the horizon and therefore merely hinted at. A prime example is one of Traina's "main characters", Nestorius. Reviled or revered, he is mainly known to historians for his divisive theological doctrines and downfall at the council of Ephesus in 431; in 428 his career was ascendant, and we follow his journey from Syria to Constantinople to assume the episcopal seat. The theological controversy that would come to define his name is therefore not treated in detail (so much for hopes of a succinct explanation of the doctrinal complexities), and we see a different Nestorius.

The microhistorical approach allows us to access the stories of individuals on a personal level. Where normally their lives would be incorporated into grand analysis of trends and themes and their names recorded solely as references in footnotes, here their stories can be told because the book focuses not on grand historical schemes but on minute episodes. I suppose because so many events of historical moment are looming "just out of shot", the book could be forgiven for a certain tendency towards the teleological, especially in its chapter headings (e.g., "Waiting for the Vandals" and "Trial Runs for the Middle Ages").