

Crisis and ambition

Tombs and burial customs in
third-century CE Rome

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PREFACE

This book originates from a long-standing interest in the third century CE as a particularly fascinating, but massively under-researched period of Roman archaeology and history. It grew out of a much larger project that aimed to draw attention to the enormous creativity and innovative impetus with which the Roman people reacted to the challenges of the age. It included a far wider range of evidence from both domestic and funerary contexts, and from different parts of the Roman Empire. With time, it became obvious that the situation was extremely varied across the empire, so that focus on a key area was advisable before any comparative work would make proper sense. Moreover, in focusing on the city of Rome and its immediate surroundings, it also turned out that there was infinitely more evidence than I had anticipated, so the present study is restricted to tombs and burial customs.

Two notes to the reader might be helpful. Originally, I had planned a chapter summarizing scholarship on second-century funerary habits as a backdrop against which the third-century situation would stand out more clearly. Yet applying the contextual approach that guides the present study has called into question many established views, which a separate book will discuss in the future. I have therefore only summarized my findings where they were crucial for the understanding of third-century changes, and need to leave the full argument for another time.

Most of the plans of early catacomb nuclei are my own. They have been re-elaborated following published plans, often combining several different ones, separating different stages of development, and omitting fourth-century and later features. In several instances, the attribution of galleries to a specific stage and age is based on written descriptions rather than graphic elaborations, and errors on my side are possible, if not likely. However, I feel confident that the drawings will reflect the situation as indicated in these publications sufficiently well to allow for further interpretation.

During the process of researching the wider field and focusing this book, I have received a wealth of support, for which I am highly indebted. The University of Exeter, and my colleagues from the Department of Classics and Ancient History, have repeatedly granted me generous research leave. The Leventis Foundation supported me with a one-year fellowship in 2007/8. A six-month scholarship at the Getty Research Institute in 2011 provided me not only with further time for research, but also with access to an excellent library, and the most stimulating environment. Two months of a Senior Onassis Fellowship at the Waterloo Institute for Hellenic Studies, Waterloo, ON, Canada, in 2012 helped

with finishing the book manuscript. On a number of occasions, I have benefited from the hospitality of the Archaeological Institute at Heidelberg and the British School at Rome, who granted me access to their outstanding libraries, and of my friends Jane Fejfer and Palle Soerensen, with whom I was able to stay during my visits to Rome. My husband Gregor never got tired visiting tombs and museums with me, and taking care of the photographic documentation. Without his unstinting love and support this project may never have been finished.

Many colleagues have contributed their ideas, criticisms, and encouragement, most notably Jane Fejfer, and the members of the Leibniz Group 'Nachleben der Antike', who read parts of draft chapters. Others include John Bodel (who generously gave me access to his important paper 'From columbaria to catacombs' before its publication), Ruth Bielfeldt, Alessandra Bravi, Maureen Carroll, Amanda Claridge, Robert Coates-Stephens, Janet DeLaine, Jaś Elsner, Janet Huskinson, Ted Lendon, Carlos Machado, Marco Maiuro, Elizabeth Meyer, Bert Smith, Andrew Wilson, and Christian Witschel.

I am hugely indebted not least to those who have helped, in various ways, to turn my manuscript into a proper book. I am grateful to Bert Smith and the editors of the Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation for accepting my book into their series. Bert Smith and anonymous readers have also contributed to turn it into a more coherent and readable format. I owe special thanks to Henry Heitmann-Gordon for substantially improving my English expression; all remaining mistakes and oddities are entirely at my charge. Andrew Thorpe and the College of Humanities at the University of Exeter have generously funded his work.

Every book on art and archaeology relies heavily on the amount and quality of images it provides. I owe great thanks to the following individuals and institutions for sourcing, providing, and granting permission for publication of the illustrations in this book: Bernard Andreae; Ida Baldassarre; Gregor Borg; Olof Brandt and the Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Sacra; Franco Bruni, École Française de Rome; Alessandro Casu, G. Bretschneider; Robert Cohon and Stacey Sherman, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; Piero Crescenzi and the Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra; Christian Feil, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Jane Fejfer; Alessia Francescangeli, L'Erma di Bretschneider; Roberto Foderaro, Edizioni Quasar; Patrizia Gioia and Rita Volpe, Soprintendenza Comunale ai Beni Culturali, Monumenti Antichi ed Aree Archeologiche del Suburbio; Michael Heinzelmann; Henner von Hesberg; Daria Lanzuolo and the German Archaeological Institute; Ute Klatt, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz; Guntram Koch; Ken Lapatin and The J. Paul Getty Museum; Paolo Liverani; Harald Mielsch; Jan Stubbe Østergaard and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek; Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums; Vera Slehofer, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung

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