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978-0-521-76365-3 - The Aurelian Wall and the Refashioning of Imperial Rome, AD 271-855

Hendrik W. Dey

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The Aurelian Wall and the Refashioning of Imperial Rome, AD 271–855

This book explores the relationship between the city of Rome and the Aurelian Wall during the six centuries following its construction in the 270s AD, a period when the city changed and contracted almost beyond recognition, as it evolved from imperial capital into the spiritual center of Western Christendom. The Wall became the single most prominent feature in the urban landscape, a dominating presence which came bodily to incarnate the political, legal, administrative and religious boundaries of *urbs Roma*, even as it reshaped both the physical contours of the city as a whole and the mental geographies of “Rome” that prevailed at home and throughout the known world. With the passage of time, the circuit took on a life of its own as the embodiment of Rome’s past greatness, a cultural and architectural legacy that dwarfed the quotidian realities of the post-imperial city as much as it shaped them.

HENDRIK W. DEY is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art at Hunter College in the City University of New York. He is co-editor with E. Fentress of *Western Monasticism ante litteram: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (2011).

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Abbreviations

<i>Acta IRN</i>	<i>Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia</i> (Institutum Romanum Norvegiae)
<i>AE</i>	<i>Année Épigraphique</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AnalRom</i>	<i>Analecta Romana Instituti Danici</i>
<i>AnTard</i>	<i>Antiquité Tardive</i>
<i>ASRSP</i>	<i>Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria</i>
<i>BEFAR</i>	<i>Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome</i>
<i>BullCom</i>	<i>Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> (2nd edn.)
<i>CBCR</i>	<i>Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae</i> (Krautheimer <i>et al.</i> eds.)
<i>CC</i>	<i>Codex Carolinus</i> (W. Gundlach ed.)
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i>
<i>CIC</i>	<i>Corpus Iuris Civilis</i> (Mommsen, Krueger, <i>et al.</i> eds.)
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digestum</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutiones</i>
<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Novellae</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinarum</i>
<i>CTh.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> (Mommsen <i>et al.</i> eds.)
<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Novellae</i>
<i>Dura Reports</i>	<i>The Excavations at Dura Europos</i> (M. I. Rostovtzeff <i>et al.</i> eds.)
<i>EAA</i>	<i>Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica Classica e Orientale</i>
<i>EFR</i>	École française de Rome
<i>EpigAnat</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
<i>Fontes</i>	<i>Fontes ad topographiam veteris urbis Romae pertinentes</i> , I (G. Lugli ed.)
<i>FUR</i>	<i>Forma Urbis Romae</i> (R. Lanciani)
<i>GR</i>	<i>Gregorii I. Papae Registrum epistolarum</i> (Ewald and Hartmann eds.)

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List of abbreviations

HA	<i>Scriptores historiae Augustae</i> (E. Pohl ed.)
ICUR	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae</i> (G. B. De Rossi ed.)
ICUR, n.s.	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae, nova series</i> (A. Ferrua and A. Silvagni eds.)
IGR	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
ILCV	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
JRA	<i>The Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRS	<i>The Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>Le piante</i>	<i>Le piante di Roma</i> (P. Frutaz ed.)
LP	<i>Liber Pontificalis</i> (L. Duchesne ed.)
LTUR	<i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae</i> (M. Steinby ed.)
MAAR	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome</i>
MEFR	<i>Mélanges d'Archeologie e d'Histoire (École française de Rome; 1881–1970)</i>
MEFRA	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité</i> (1971–)
MEFRM	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge</i> (1971–)
<i>MemAcLinc</i>	<i>Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historiae</i>
AA	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
EP	<i>Epistulae</i>
SRG	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum</i>
SRL	<i>Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum</i>
SRM	<i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>Notizie</i>	<i>Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità</i>
<i>Pan. Lat.</i>	<i>Panegyrici Latini</i> (Nixon and Rodgers eds.)
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>P. Ital.</i>	<i>Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700</i> (O. Tjäder ed.)
PL	Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PLRE	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> (A. H. M. Jones <i>et al.</i>)
Procopius	BG: <i>Bellum Gothicum</i> BP: <i>Bellum Persicum</i> BV: <i>Bellum Vandalicum</i>
RAC	<i>Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana</i>
RE	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>RendAcLinc</i>	<i>Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti</i>
<i>RendPontAc</i>	<i>Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia (Serie III). Rendiconti</i>

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RIB	<i>The Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , vol. I (R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright eds.)
Röm. Mitth.	<i>Mitteilungen des kaiserlich deutschen archaeologischen institutes. Römische Abteilung</i>
RömQSchr.	<i>Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kunstgeschichte</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
Settimane del CISAM	<i>Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo</i>
SRIT	<i>Società Romana e Impero Tardoantico</i> (A. Giardina ed.)
VZ	<i>Codice topografico della città di Roma</i> (R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti eds.)
Walzing, Étude	<i>Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains depuis les origines jusqu'à la chute de l'Empire de l'Occident</i> (J. P. Waltzing)

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Acknowledgements

This book is the end result of a minor epiphany I had in the fall of 2002, which consisted of a series of thoughts along the lines of the following. The Aurelian Wall is the single largest and most influential structure ever erected in Rome. During the seventeen centuries that have passed since its construction, it has exercised a profound effect on the infrastructure and topography of the city as a whole, on the daily lives of Romans, and, at least until the later nineteenth century, on the political, administrative, and ideological horizons of its rulers. Yet incredibly (particularly in light of the oceans of ink spilled on undoubtedly fascinating but ultimately – in the larger scheme of things – insignificant structures in the city and its environs), the Wall has occupied the attentions of a minuscule cadre of scholars, who moreover have concentrated almost exclusively on its architectural features and the chronology of its building phases. No serious attempt has ever been made to consider the Wall as a dynamic and often decisive presence in the history of Rome over the *longue durée*. It is a story well worth telling.

My epiphany was almost immediately followed by a remarkable string of luck that carried me to Rome for most of the following five years, during the course of which I wrote this book and incurred more debts of gratitude than I can possibly acknowledge here, much less repay.

The Horace H. Rackham graduate school at the University of Michigan generously funded the first two of my years in Rome, when most of the research and writing for the doctoral-thesis-version of this project occurred. The thesis was finished and most of the revisions necessary to transform the manuscript into a book undertaken between 2005 and 2007, when I had the surely undeserved good fortune to receive a two-year Rome Prize Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome. Final tweaking occurred during the 2008–9 academic year when, thanks to the Department of Classical Archaeology at the University of Aarhus, I enjoyed a year of research time, free from any teaching responsibilities.

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It is dedicated to the memory of my father, who would have feigned interest in the Aurelian Wall for my sake, and been genuinely pleased that I managed to see a lengthy and challenging project through to completion; and to my mother, without whom none of it would have been possible.