

Social clustering in 5th-c. Constantinople: the evidence of the *Notitia*

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Clustering of residents of similar social status, ethnic or religious identity, or geographical origin into distinct areas of a city is a “common, but by no means universal, attribute of urban neighborhoods”. Different cities within a single culture and era exhibit diversity in the occurrence and nature of clustering: “there is no such thing as a ‘typical’ pattern of clustering within, say, Medieval cities or Islamic cities”.¹

The existence and nature of clustering in Roman cities have rarely been the object of systematic study, and most contributions have focused on textual evidence for clustering in the city of Rome.² A recent consideration of Rome under the Principate finds

no evidence for strong clustering along social lines. The evidence points rather to the reverse: social mixing, at all levels.³

Similarly, a study of the neighborhoods of Augustan Rome observes that,

although areas of the city might develop reputations as more or less desirable, ancient Rome was not generally segregated by class. Apartment buildings for poorer residents existed alongside the houses of more affluent residents in almost every quarter of the city.⁴

The late-antique “Regionaries” for the city of Rome present a similar picture.⁵ While different quarters naturally possessed distinct characters, and late-antique élites exhibited a growing preference for dwellings on the city’s periphery, élite residences (*domus*) remained present in all regions of the city, following a spatial pattern similar to that of the *insulae*.⁶

By contrast, recent synthetic accounts of the development of late-antique cities across the empire assume a growing contrast between monumental splendor and residential squalor:

monumental armature ... screened from view all the squalor and filth that may have prevailed elsewhere, hidden behind the turreted facades of circuit-walls and the porticoes lining main thoroughfares;

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- 1 A. M. York *et al.*, “Ethnic and class clustering through the ages: a transdisciplinary approach to urban neighbourhood social patterns,” *Urban Studies* 48 (2011) 2409.
 - 2 L. E. Tacoma, “Migrant quarters at Rome?,” in G. de Kleijn and S. Benoist (edd.), *Integration in Rome and the Roman world* (Leiden 2014) 145: “it is surprising how little has been written on Roman residential clustering”.
 - 3 *Ibid.* 139.
 - 4 J. B. Lott, *The neighborhoods of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge 2004) 22.
 - 5 While the two extant Regionaries for the city of Rome have traditionally been dated to the late 3rd or early 4th c., R. Behrwald (“Les régionnaires de Rome: stratigraphies d’un texte,” *CRAI* 150 [2006] 743-64, and *Die Stadt als Museum? Die Wahrnehmung der Monumente Roms in der Spätantike* [Klio Beih. N.F. 12, 2009] 185-211) argues for a much deeper and more complicated textual “stratigraphy”.
 - 6 J.-P. Guilhembet, “La densité des *domus* et des *insulae* dans les XIV régions de Rome selon les *régionnaires*: représentations cartographiques,” *MÉFRA* 108 (1996) 15-16 with Cartes 4 and 6; similarly, G. R. Storey, “Regionaries-type insulae 2: architectural/residential units at Rome,” *AJA* 106 (2002), e.g., at 420; and J. Griesbach, “*Domus* und villae der Spätantike: veränderte ‘Lebensräume’ in Rom und Umgebung,” in N. Burkhardt and R. H. W. Stichel (edd.), *Die antike Stadt im Umbruch* (Wiesbaden 2010) 63-64. The abandonment of the urban *domus* began in the late 4th c.: C. Machado, “Between memory and oblivion: the end of the Roman *domus*,” in R. Behrwald and C. Witschel (edd.), *Rom in der Spätantike: historische Erinnerung im städtischen Raum* (HABES 51; 2012) 111-38.