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In omnibus regionibus? The fourteen regions and the city of Rome

by Penelope J. Goodman

Introduction

According to the *Historia Augusta* (*Alex. Sev.* 39.3–4),¹ the emperor Severus Alexander:

...built a public storehouse (*horrea*) in all the regions (*in omnibus regionibus*), to which anyone who had no private storage space might take his goods. He added baths (*balnea*), too in all the regions (*omnibus regionibus*) which by chance did not have any. Even today many of these are still called Alexander's.

Why might Severus Alexander have set out to do this? Or, more pertinently given the source we are dealing with, why might the author of the *Historia Augusta* have claimed that he did? What had the regions of Rome come to mean by the time it was written, and had they ever really shaped the planning decisions of the city's rulers in the way that the passage suggests?

Similar questions concerning the importance of Rome's smaller local neighbourhoods (*vici*) in the lived experience and topography of the city have been thoroughly investigated in recent decades (Tarpin, 2002; Lott, 2004; Lott, 2013; Flower, 2018), but, one spatial and administrative notch up, the larger regions (*regiones*) remain relatively neglected. Strikingly, in a 2008 volume edited by Royo, Hubert and Bérenger, entitled *Rome des Quartiers: des vici aux rioni*, they received no dedicated chapter of their own, appearing only as context within discussions of *vici* or the development of the later ecclesiastical *regiones* and medieval *rioni*. When they are addressed, two main topics predominate. One is their political significance for Augustus as a means to monopolize the loyalties of the urban *plebs*, ensure that they felt the benefits of good urban administration, create roles within that administration for individuals from freedmen to the senatorial elite, and redefine the city as unbounded without actually discarding the traditional walled circuit (Frézouls, 1987; Favro, 1996: 133–40; Haselberger,

¹ Classical authors and works are abbreviated according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition.

2007: 222–55; Lo Cascio, 2007). The other is their role in topographical reconstructions of Rome through the comparison of archaeological material, epigraphically- or textually-attested toponyms and the evidence of the Regionary Catalogues (von Gerkan 1949; Palombi 1999b; Jolivet 2007).² These are certainly important issues, but this paper argues that there is more to the regions than both. Though created as part of a top-down reorganisation, they had a real role to play in the management of Rome which kept them in active use well into late antiquity. Throughout that period they provided a particular framework for thinking about and managing the city which in turn engendered real effects on the lives and experiences of its inhabitants, not all of which Augustus necessarily intended or envisioned. This paper will first review the history of Rome's regions and then examine their impact on the Romans' understanding and experiences of their city. It will argue that, once established, the regions generated distinct community identities and administrative practices which would not have existed without them, including patterns of benefaction like those attributed to Severus Alexander.

A brief history of the regions

Our evidence for the use of regions in Rome before Augustus is limited, and since much of it post-dates his reorganization it may project characteristics of the Augustan regions backwards into the Republican era (Palombi, 1999a; Lott, 2004: 29). Nevertheless, the Republican city clearly was sub-divided, at least for some purposes. Varro's *De Lingua Latina* (5.8.45–9.56), written during the mid-40s BC, describes four parts of the city (*partes urbis*), refers to each one individually as a '*regio*', and gives them both names and numbers: I Suburana, II Esquilina, III Collina and IV Palatina (Richardson, 1992: 37–9; Coarelli, 1993; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 260–64; Spencer, 2011: 73–6). The names are topographical, relating primarily to hills,³ and Varro tells us enough about their shape and extent to support approximate maps of their

² On the Regionary Catalogues, see further below.

³ Varro's Suburana encompasses the Caelian and its outcrops as well as the valley of the Subura.

boundaries (Fig. 01). He introduces them as a framework for distributing the twenty-seven shrines of the Argei, quoting from an archaic text called the *Sacra Argeorum* (Sacrifices of the Argei) which describes their locations as encountered during religious processions. He also specifies that the names of the regions were used for the four urban tribes (Varro, *Ling.* 5.9.56), a point repeated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 4.14.1) in a passage which may likewise pre-date the Augustan regions.⁴ Despite their names, though, membership of the urban tribes was no longer related in practice to a person's place of birth or residence by the late Republic (Lott, 2004: 30–31; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 261–4). Varro's regions may thus have become religious artefacts, significant only during the rituals of the Argei and to antiquarians. They also did not constitute a comprehensive division of the Republican city, since they omitted significant areas within its walled circuit, including the Aventine, Velabrum and Capitoline.

[FIG 1. REGIONS OF ROME MAP NEAR HERE]

Another four-part division of Rome is attested in legislation on the *tabula Heracleensis* (Il. 20–28: Crawford, 1996: 355–91), probably dating from Julius Caesar's dictatorships. This text requires the aediles to decide in which part of the city (*pars urbis*) each of them will be responsible for street paving and repair. Since there were two curule and two plebeian aediles, we can deduce that their responsibilities were divided across four *partes urbis*. But although the number and the vocabulary match up with Varro, topographically these *partes* must have been far more extensive than those he describes. This is because the aediles' responsibilities are also defined as applying 'in Rome or within one mile of Rome where it is continuously inhabited', meaning that their four regions must have encompassed both the entire area within

⁴ Lott, 2004: 37, following Fraschetti, argues that Dionysius' account must date from between 30 BC (his arrival in Rome) and 7 BC (Augustus' official reform of the *vici*), since he shows no knowledge of the latter.

the Republican walls and any built-up districts beyond.⁵ We thus probably have two separate quadripartite divisions of Republican Rome: one used during religious rituals, and one to divide up administrative tasks and establish clear areas of responsibility. We cannot be sure how long either had existed before the 40s BC, or whether the *tabula Heracleensis* confirmed existing practice or proposed a new way for aediles to share out their work.

Evidence for the existence and function of *vici* in Republican Rome is stronger (Tarpin, 2002: 87–135; Lott, 2004: 28–80; Flower, 2018: 192–225). Varro derives the word *vicus* from *via*, but his rationale is that streets are lined with houses, and he goes on to say explicitly that ‘a *vicus* consists of houses’ (*Ling.* 5.23.145 and 5.33.160; Tarpin, 2002: 88–92; Lott, 2004: 13–14). Our closest equivalent is a ‘neighbourhood’, which likewise often clusters around a main street but is understood as a community of people and households. By the middle Republic, these neighbourhoods had acquired local officials known as *magistri vici* (or *vicomagistri*) who were probably already usually freedmen (Lott, 2004: 41–3; Tarpin, 2008: 59; Flower, 2018: 206–15), and led annual religious offerings to the local *lares* (guardian spirits) at *compita* (street-side altars) (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 4.14.3; Tarpin, 2002: 106–10; Lott, 2004: 30–37; Flower, 2018: 116–25). This was part of a city-wide festival in which everyone, free, freed or slave, participated, and by the late Republic also included public shows, the *ludi Compitalicii* (Lott, 2004: 30–7; Flower, 2018: 162–74). Tarpin (2008) has questioned the assumption that *vici* and *compita* mapped directly onto one another, with one *compitum* at the heart of each *vicus*, suggesting rather that they constituted overlapping but not identical religious and administrative entities. Nevertheless, the role of the *vicomagistri* in leading the compital cult makes it clear that the link was a strong one.

⁵ ‘Roma’ is regularly defined in juridical texts as the area within the Republican walls. For similar references to the *continentia aedificia* (continuous / adjoining buildings) or the area within one mile of Rome to designate the whole city, see Goodman, 2007: 13–18.

The *vicus* communities allowed the formation of social bonds and local identities within a city too vast for anyone to know intimately. In turn this means that they constituted a structure and a system of human networks which could be used to reach out into the population of the city, and sometimes this capacity was used by representatives of the state (Lott, 2004: 40–41; Tarpin, 2008: 49–58; Flower, 2018: 192–205). Livy (10.4.2; 25.2.6–10; 30.26.5–6) speaks of defensive watches called up *vicatim* (neighbourhood by neighbourhood) to guard against the Etruscans in 303 BC, and of the curule aediles distributing oil *in vicos singulos* (in the individual neighbourhoods) in 213 BC and grain *vicatim* in 203 BC, presumably assisted each time by the *vicomagistri*. Likewise, Frontinus (*Aq.* 97.8) reports that the Republican aediles charged two inhabitants or property-owners from each *vicus* with protecting its public fountains from pollution. Such local representatives could spot problems quickly and request help from the aediles. But during the late Republic, *vicus* networks also became an effective recruitment channel for political gangs, and the senate responded in 64 BC by banning the *ludi Compitalicii* (Lott, 2004: 45–59; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 267–8; Flower, 2018: 241–49). Perhaps because of this, or perhaps simply as a consequence of broader political and social changes, some neighbourhood shrines had become neglected by the time of Augustus, creating an opportunity for him to be seen to be addressing the issue (Lott, 2004: 66, 83).

From around 12 BC, Augustus began donating statues of gods to individual *vici* and paying for the restoration and rededication of neglected neighbourhood altars (Lott, 2004: 73–80 and 83; Tarpin, 2002: 137–40; Flower, 2018: 263–70). Comprehensive revival and reform followed in 7 BC, when Augustus provided new statuettes of the *lares* – now called *lares Augusti* – to each *vicus*, regularized the appointment of the *vicomagistri* and codified their rights and duties (Suet., *Aug.* 30.1; Cass. Dio, 55.8.6–7; Tarpin, 2002: 137–64; Lott, 2004: 81–98 (*vicomagistri*) and 101–17 (*lares Augusti*); Haselberger, 2007: 224–9; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 276–90; Flower, 2018: 271–98). At the same time, the whole city was reorganised into

fourteen newly-defined *regiones* (Fig. 01) overseen by senatorial magistrates. Evidently, this activity was partly designed to demonstrate Augustus' concern for the urban population, ensure that its loyalties were directed towards him and establish focal points where people could express them. Across the city, new neighbourhood altars and *lares* stood as visible symbols of his generosity towards and interest in local communities, while their magistrates enjoyed formal recognition of their status and privileges. But Augustus clearly also intended for the reorganised *vici* and *regiones* to play a major role in the administration of the city, building on and extending the functions of their Republican predecessors.

Two similar passages in Suetonius (*Iul.* 41.3; *Aug.* 40.2) describe how first Caesar and then Augustus revised the lists of the people *vicatim* in the context of the administration of the grain dole.⁶ In Caesar's case, the goal was explicitly to reduce the numbers receiving it by removing those who did not meet the eligibility criteria, which included residence in Rome. According to Suetonius he not only used the *vici* as a framework for his revision but also enlisted the help of the owners of housing blocks (*domini insularum*), presumably sending inspectors door to door to collect lists of the people living in each property. This built on the established use of *vici* for conducting grain distributions and monitoring public fountains, but with the *domini insularum* as additional nodes and repositories of information within the network. Augustus likewise revised the grain register *vicatim*, but also made use of the *vici* in other areas of the urban administration. In 7 BC he gave the *vicomagistri* control over teams of slave firefighters previously managed by the aediles (Cass. Dio 55.8.6; Sablayrolles, 1996: 24–5), presumably hoping that they would operate like the Republican *vicus*-level water representatives (Frontin. *Aq.* 97.8, citing Republican legislation). Two major fires proved this system inadequate, and the service was professionalized into the *vigiles* overseen by a new

⁶ These passages are much discussed: see Nicolet, 1976; Rickman, 1980: 175–9; Nicolet, 1987: 19–25; Nicolet, 1991: 129–30; Virlouvet, 1995: 165–95; Lo Cascio, 1997; Tarpin, 2002: 111–19; Lott, 2004: 63–5; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 290–94; Flower, 2018: 202–4; and further below.

praefectus vigilum, but its cohorts were still organized by region (Paulus, *Dig.* 1.15.1 and 3; Cass. Dio 55.26.4; Sablayrolles, 1996: 26–33). Meanwhile, other newly-established administrative officials came to make use of both regions and *vici* in their work: the *praefecti frumenti dandi*, constituted in 22 BC (Rickman, 1980: 180), and the *curator aquarum*, introduced in 11 BC after the death of Agrippa (Frontin., *Aq.* 99). An administrative hierarchy thus emerged which allowed the emperor and his magistrates to organise their work geographically and gave them access to social networks which could reach any person or place in Rome. As Wallace-Hadrill puts it (2008: 275): ‘Every corner of the city could be defined and listed in terms of *regio* and *vicus*.’⁷

Perhaps surprisingly to modern eyes, and important to bear in mind when we consider how they were used and managed, Augustus does not seem to have worked particularly hard to define regions of equal size or population. Those in the centre of Rome are in general smaller than those on the perimeter, possibly to reflect higher population density in the heart of the city. But more than in most ancient cities, the local character of Rome’s urban fabric could vary markedly from one area to another (Welch, 2006: 513–14; Dumser, 2013: 145–6). Even in Augustus’ day, the populations of Region X, enclosing the aristocratic housing of the Palatine (Royo, 1999), and Region IV, extending up the densely-populated valley of the Subura (Malmberg, 2009), must have differed considerably both numerically and demographically, despite the regions’ similar sizes. And while the boundaries of the regions were probably sometimes adjusted in response to major new buildings, they were never comprehensively redrawn (Palombi, 1999b: 202; Palombi, 2008: 314–16). The population of Region XIV Transiberim, always simply defined by the course of the Tiber, must have grown dramatically as it experienced intensive built development after the Augustan period, but it was never split into more than one region. New *vici*, by contrast, do appear to have been created as new areas

⁷ Ruciński, 2009: 197 expresses the hierarchy in diagrammatic form.

of population developed, and sometimes also to have fallen out of use (Coarelli, 1997: 92–6; Lott, 2004: 173–4). But this only underlines the extent of the differences between the regions. The late antique Regionary Catalogues record between seven and seventy-eight *vici* per region, without these numbers corresponding consistently to their size (Nordh, 1949: 73–106; Palombi, 1999b: 201).

Meanwhile, some details of the urban hierarchy changed over time. Augustus also (re)created the office of the *praefectus urbi*, charged with keeping order in city (Tac., *Ann.* 6.11 with Ruciński, 2009: 46–55). This office always remained nominally accountable to the emperor, but since emperors had many other responsibilities and were often away from Rome, the *praefectus urbi* gradually became the *de facto* head of the urban administration. By late antiquity, the *praefectus vigilum* and *praefectus annonae* both reported directly to the *praefectus urbi*, now the most prestigious position on the senatorial career-path and performing a role similar to that of provincial governors elsewhere (Barrow, 1973: 1–9; Chastagnol, 1997; Ruciński 2009). The identity and status of the regional magistrates also evolved. Augustus initially allocated responsibility for the individual regions to senatorial magistrates, but when five regions dedicated the *Basis Capitolina* to Hadrian in AD 136 they were headed by *curatores regionum* of freed status, and by the late third century consular *curatores* are attested (*CIL* VI 975; De Robertis, 1935; Palmer, 1974; Nasti, 1999; Ruciński, 2004.). Finally, where there had initially been four *vicomagistri* per *vicus*, and this remained the case at the time of the *Basis Capitolina* (*CIL* VI 975), the late antique Regionary Catalogues list forty-eight per region, regardless of the number of *vici* it contained (Nordh, 1949: 73–106). This reduced their numbers overall, while the abandonment of any proportional relationship between *vici* and vicomagistrates must have meant that the reduction was felt particularly keenly in the regions containing most *vici*. Nonetheless, the Regionary Catalogues are only one striking testimony to the continued importance of both *vici* and *regiones* in late antiquity. Between them, they

offered a way of organizing and understanding the city which its inhabitants clearly continued to find valuable for centuries.

Defining the regions

The outer edges of the fourteen regions were probably never formally defined. Any attempt to do this would have required constant revision as the city grew, besides being out of keeping with the Augustan rhetoric of Rome as an ‘open city’ (Frézouls, 1987; Guilhembet, 2006: 108–10; Haselberger, 2007: 222–31). The regions were probably simply held to extend outwards for as far as there were continuous buildings (*continentia aedificia*). Nonetheless, urban administrators must have needed to know where one ended and the next began. In this light it seems surprising that we have no direct evidence for the demarcation of their internal boundaries within the urban landscape. Favro (1996: 268–9, on *CIL* XIV 2496) reads a cylindrical *cippus* as marking the boundary between the seventh and ninth regions, but this is far from certain. The stone is inscribed with the text *reg. VII | at tres Silanos | at V* on one side, repeated upside down in smaller lettering on the other (De Rossi, 1879; Chioffi, 1999). The phrase *at tres Silanos* is widely accepted as referring to three fountains, presumably located within Region VII. This region, though, lies on the north side of Rome, whereas the *cippus* was found to the southeast, near the twelfth mile of the *via Latina* (De Rossi, 1879: 73). We must assume that it has moved from its original location, making it difficult to reconstruct its original relationship to the topography of Rome. The phrase *at V* could indicate that the fountains stood near the fifth milestone of the *via Flaminia*, but it would be surprising if the seventh region extended that far out from the city. De Rossi (1879: 74) suggested instead that this refers to the fifth shrine of the Argei in Varro’s third region, Collina, which stood on the western slope of the Quirinal in an area rich with natural springs. This happens to be where the seventh and sixth Augustan regions meet (Fig. 01), but not the seventh and ninth, and even then the text still does not present itself as a boundary marker. Rather, it seems to be a list of three descriptors which

together pinpoint a specific location: ‘Region VII, at the Three Fountains, at the Fifth [Shrine?]’.

It is also hard to see why boundary *cippi* of the type which Favro posits would be needed between the seventh and ninth regions in particular. Scholarly reconstructions of the regions have long suggested that their boundaries were pragmatic, reflecting topographical features such as hills, valleys, the courses of major roads and the Tiber, and in this case the boundary in question almost certainly ran straight along the via Lata / via Flaminia (von Gerkan, 1949: 34–45; Palombi, 1999b with fig. 84). For anyone aware of the connection between the road and the boundary, then, there would be no need for *cippi* to help identify it. More compelling is the suggestion that the Augustan-period Meta Sudans, identified in 2002-3 underneath its more famous Flavian successor, marks the meeting-point of the second, third, fourth, tenth and perhaps first regions (Pardini, 2013). But marking out major intersections is not the same as systematically marking out the full courses of the boundaries between them. Meanwhile, Palombi posits many miles of boundary which did not follow major roads, and thus *would* have needed markers to be readily traceable on the ground. Given this, the absence of any securely-confirmed regional boundary markers is striking by comparison with similar boundaries such as the *pomerium* (nineteen known markers) (Stevens, 2017: 305–11), the customs boundary (five known markers) (Palmer, 1980) or the limits of public land along the Tiber (almost 130 known markers) (Maischberger, 1999: 71). The economical conclusion must be that the regional boundaries were never marked in the urban fabric.⁸

If this was the case, knowledge of the boundaries must have rested elsewhere: most likely in records kept by the city’s administrators. Here, a recently-discovered fragment of the Severan *Forma Urbis Romae* (Fig. 02) may indicate what some such records looked like. The

⁸ Lott, 2013: 173 states simply: ‘No boundary markers for the Augustan regions have been found in the city.’

section, which shows part of the northeastern side of the Circus Maximus, preserves clear traces of red paint on the road between the Circus and the Palatine hill, which Ciancio Rossetto (2006) has suggested may identify it as the boundary between Regions X and XI. But records of which *vici*, buildings and people belonged in which region could also be kept as simple written lists. This is implicit in Caesar's revision of the grain register, which could only have been systematic if his inspectors had been able to consult lists of all the properties in each *vicus* (Tarpin, 2008: 55–7; Flower, 2018: 202–4). We know that grain lists were maintained into the late fourth century, since we have multiple references to them being revised or used to identify genuine recipients (Rickman, 1980: 188–91, 208; Virlovvet, 1995: 196–7, 282–308). Indeed, Lo Cascio has argued that later updates continued to employ Caesar's method, and that we should therefore assume the lists themselves were also organised by *vici* and *regiones* (Lo Cascio, 1997: 53–8). The case is not certain. Rickman (1980: 189–90) gives equal weight to the likelihood that they were organised by tribe, while Virlovvet (1995: 243–270) favours the tribes, though combined with geographical restrictors to identify their urban sections. But a papyrus archive attesting the existence of a monthly grain issue in third-century Oxyrhynchus certainly links grain distribution with topographical quarters (*amphoda*) (Rea, 1972; Turner, 1975: 16–24; Nicolet, 1987: 22–4; Virlovvet, 1995: 244–54, 262–3). There, applications for grain eligibility regularly included a request to take the place of a deceased person from the same quarter, recalling Suetonius' reference to lots drawn to fill the places of the deceased in Rome, while some Oxyrhynchian official memoranda group recipients by *amphoda* (Suet., *Iul.* 41.3; *POxy.* 2928, 292). Nicolet has also pointed out that the late Republican aediles must have been able to connect owners with properties, since they were able to charge people for the cost of cleaning the streets in front of their properties, again implying the existence of a property register which could have been used when revising the grain register (*Tabula Heracleensis* ll.

32–45; Crawford, 1996: 355–91; Nicolet, 1987; Nicolet, 1991: 159–61).⁹ A written Roman property-register may additionally have been associated with a cartographical representation, reflected in the personal names used to label properties on some fragmentary pre-Severan maps of the city (Meneghini, 2007; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 301–12).

[FIG 2. FORMA URBIS FRAGMENT NEAR HERE]

Meanwhile, the Regionary Catalogues are literally lists of buildings and topographical information, grouped under headings pertaining to the fourteen regions (Nordh, 1949; Hermansen, 1978; Arce, 1999; Behrwald, 2006; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 294–301). They consist of two documents known as the *Notitia* and the *Curiosum*, both of which list the distinctive landmarks of each region followed by the numbers of more generic structures such as *insulae*, *horrea* or *pistrinae*, as well as *vici*, *aediculae*, *vicomagistri* and *curatores*. Closing summaries then present the major features of Rome outside the framework of the regions, providing total numbers of the buildings from the regional lists as well as additional features not included there. Some discrepancies occur between the landmarks and numbers presented in the two catalogues, but overall they are remarkably similar. Nonetheless, they pose problems. In particular, even where their numerical totals agree, the figures often give grounds for suspicion (Hermansen, 1978: 157–9). For example, both give the total number of *insulae* for Regions III and IV alike as 2,757, and for Regions XII and XIII as 2,487, probably reflecting scribal errors. Some individual figures also cannot be accurate. For example, the *Notitia* lists 2,600 *insulae* and 89 *domus* in Region XI, while the *Curiosum* lists 2,500 and 88 respectively. But between the catalogues themselves and other sources, we know the parameters of this region with considerable accuracy (Palombi, 1999b: 200–201). Around half of it was taken up by the Circus Maximus and another portion by the Forum Boarium, so that whatever the lists

⁹ Written property registers also survive on Egyptian papyri: Arce, 1999: 20–21.

mean by either *insulae* or *domus*, it is difficult to envisage how it could have contained so many domestic properties of any kind (Hermansen, 1978: 152, 163–4; Reynolds, 1997: 20).¹⁰

As several scholars have pointed out, the explanation for these peculiarities is probably that the catalogues as we have them were not intended to function as administrative records but to convey the glory of Rome through large numbers and the display of information (Hermansen, 1978: 133–40; Arce, 1999; Behrwald, 2006: 757–64; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 294). In this context the compilers may not have troubled to achieve more than a superficial appearance of accuracy. Indeed, a similar case has been made for the *Forma Urbis Romae* (Reynolds, 1997: 16; Meneghini, 2007; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 302–8). In its original context on an internal wall in a room adjoining the Templum Pacis, this thirteen metre high map would have been difficult to consult in detail, and thus seems likely to have been intended primarily for display. Nonetheless, as we have seen, Rome's real administrators would have benefited considerably from either lists or maps detailing the locations and owners of the city's buildings. Scholars increasingly agree that even if the *Forma Urbis* and Regionary Catalogues themselves are not practical documents, they reflect the existence of, and perhaps draw some of their data from, real information compiled for use in the management of the city (Nicolet, 1987: 25; Nicolet, 1991: 196–7; Lo Cascio, 1997: 58–9; Ceparano, 1998: 925–6; Behrwald, 2006: 757; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 290–312). We should thus assume that Rome's urban administrators could consult written lists, maps or both when they needed to know which people or buildings fell within a particular region.

Living in the regions

The situation would have been different for ordinary residents without regular access to such lists or maps. In the absence of visible boundary markers, most probably did not know exactly when they crossed from one region into another. However, this does not mean people did not

¹⁰ On what the lists mean by *insulae* and *domus*: Hermansen, 1978; Coarelli, 1997.

know which region they lived in, or the broad parameters of each. An analogy might be modern postcode sectors: most of us would struggle to draw these accurately on a map, but we know which one we live in and roughly what area it covers. If the grain register was indeed organized by *vici* and *regiones*, this alone would have reminded recipients periodically of the region in which they were registered. Moreover, when *vicus* communities dedicated or restored statues and altars, their inscriptions often included not only the *vicus* name but also the region number and frequently the name of its presiding magistrate.¹¹ Indeed, from the late first century onwards several of these inscriptions use phrases such as *aediculam reg(ionis) VIII vico Vestae... restituerunt* ('they restored the altar of the eighth region in the vicus of Vesta') (*CIL* VI 30960, AD 223).¹² This wording situates the altar within its region before its *vicus*, suggesting that *vicus* officials at least were keenly aware of their context within the larger region. In both administrative and religious contexts, then, the nested relationship between a *vicus* and its region seems to have been reiterated regularly, linking an awareness of both in residents' minds. Furthermore, the pragmatic usage made of hills, valleys, major roads and the Tiber in defining the regions would have made them relatively easy to visualize, at least approximately. Indeed, by late antiquity they had acquired names drawn from well-known natural or monumental landmarks, making it easy to remember that, for example, *regio V Esquiliae* must centre on the Esquiline hill.¹³

Certainly, a working knowledge of the regions seems to have been widely assumed, since they are one of a range of topographical markers commonly used to identify locations within Rome. They occur in this capacity in literary texts, as when Suetonius (*Dom.* 1.1) specifies that Domitian was born *regione urbis sexta ad Malum Punicum* ('at The Pomegranate

¹¹ Examples include *CIL* VI 343 = 30743, 450, 451, 452, 453, 761, 766, 801, 30960; *AE* 1960, 61.

¹² Other examples: *CIL* VI 449–53 and 30961.

¹³ The Regionary Catalogues list these names: I Porta Capena, II Caelimontium, III Isis et Serapis, IV Templum Pacis, V Esquiliae, VI Alta Semita, VII Via Lata, VIII Forum Romanum Magnum, IX Circus Flaminius, X Palatium, XI Circus Maximus, XII Piscina Publica, XIII Aventinus, XIV Trans Tiberim.

in the sixth region'), as well as on a *defixio* directed against a baker *qui manet in regione nona* ('who lives in the ninth region') (*CIL* VI 33899). But they are most commonly attested on slave collars, bronze plaques or strips fastened around slaves' necks in such a way that they could not be removed (Thurmond, 1994; Hillner, 2001; Trimble, 2016). Around forty such collars are known, most dating from the fourth century.¹⁴ Twenty-four relate directly to Rome, including eight known to have been found there, twelve of which are of unknown provenance but name people or places in Rome, and another four found elsewhere in Italy which refer explicitly to Rome and its toponyms.¹⁵ A typical collar bears a text which announces the wearer's slave status, asks anyone suspecting them of escape to seize and return them, and gives the name or location of their owner. Trimble (2016: 460–3) has argued that these texts may have served as much as an expression of the owner's will and power as a functional set of instructions, so that their value was primarily preventative and deterrent. Nonetheless, when a slave did escape, the collar's face-value function in providing instructions for return could also come into play (Trimble 2016: 463–6).

In this scenario, two related challenges presented themselves: the small size of the artefact and the absence of any formal address system. Some streets in Rome had names, but they lacked street-signs or house numbers (Paoli, 1963: 138–52; Ling, 1990; Bérenger, 2008). The inscribers of the collars therefore regularly used topographic descriptors to explain where to return the slave, and in at least four cases this included naming a region. One collar proclaims, 'Seize me lest I flee and return me in Region I to Aurelius [drawing of the head of a deer]' (Fig. 03).¹⁶ Three similar examples request return to the third, fifth or twelfth regions,

¹⁴ Thurmond, 1994 catalogues thirty-seven; Hillner, 2001: 195 references thirty-eight; Trimble, 2016 speaks of 'about 45' (447) or 'more than 40' (452). The variation reflects differing views on the authenticity and relevance of certain examples (cf. Trimble, 2016: 448, n. 3).

¹⁵ Roman provenance: Thurmond, 1994: nos 3, 4, 12, 14, 28, 31, 32, 33. Unknown provenance and Roman referents: Thurmond, 1994 nos 7, 10, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37. Other provenance and Roman referents: Thurmond, 1994 nos 19, 20, 22, 26.

¹⁶ *CIL* XV 7183: *Tene me / ne fugia(m), revo/cas me in regione / pr(i)ma Aurelio / ((caput cervi))*. Suggested explanations for the deer's head include the cognomen Cervianus (Dressel in *CIL*) or a slang term for a runaway (Thurmond, 1994: 476). It could also refer to an otherwise unknown establishment such as a bar.

likewise supported by details of local landmarks or the slave-owner's name (*CIL* VI 41335; *CIL* XV 7174, 7188). Five more do not use the word 'region', but cite toponyms which had become region names by late antiquity: Caelimontium (Region II) (*CIL* XV 7190), Via Lata (Region VII, twice) (*CIL* XV 7186-87) and Aventinus (Region XIII, twice) (*CIL* XV 7181-82).¹⁷ If these do refer to regions, then nine collars out of the twenty-four which have a clear connection with Rome use regions to identify the place of return. But even if they mean the streets or hills with the same names instead, the four collars which certainly name regions confirm that these could operate alongside other kinds of toponym as a way of identifying a particular area of the city.

[FIG 3. SLAVE COLLAR *CIL* XV 7183 NEAR HERE]

Perhaps surprisingly, no surviving collar uses a *vicus* to specify the point of return. Two refer to a *poli clivus* and *clivus triarius*, which Thurmond (1994: 469, 475) suggests may equate to the *vicus Pauli* and *vicus Triarius* attested elsewhere.¹⁸ But even if so, the word *clivus* (a sloping street) specifies the main street running through the *vicus*, rather than the neighbourhood generally. Since *vici* appear fairly regularly as topographical referents on funerary inscriptions,¹⁹ their absence in this more practical context demands explanation. One reason for it may be that *vici* were paradoxically both too big and too small to be helpful. A topographical unit smaller than a *vicus*, such as a public landmark, private property or street, was needed to identify the actual place of return. We might expect that naming a *vicus* would narrow down the initial search for this smaller location more effectively than a region, but given that more than three hundred *vici* are listed in the Regionary Catalogues, this may be a false assumption. People would know their own *vicus* and its near neighbours but would they reliably know the location or name of a *vicus* on the far side of Rome? Certainly, the authors

¹⁷ Hillner, 2001: 207 and 211 considers whether or not these toponyms refer to the regions with the same names, and is inclined to believe that they do.

¹⁸ *CIL* XV 7185 (an uncertain reading); *CIL* XV 7178.

¹⁹ Meneghini, 2007: 212, n.38 and further below.

of the slave collars appear to have assumed that the larger regions were a safer bet. The expectation appears to have been that the reader could be relied upon to find the region, and would then ask its residents for the specific slave-owner or location named on the collar (Ling, 1990; Bérenger, 2008). This system implies in turn that the people living in each region typically had a working knowledge of its major local families and landmarks, allowing them to identify the place or person specified.

If we accept that people knew both their own region and the general locations of the others, we should then ask what social significance this knowledge acquired. Did people identify with their region, or treat it as a meaningful community? This kind of social meaning is certainly clear for the *vici* in their communal worship of the *lares*, the prestige afforded to *vicomagistri*, their distinctive toponyms and countless *vicus*-level offerings and benefactions (Lott, 2004: 128–71). But the people of a region could also act collectively, and sometimes chose to declare that they had done so. Two collective dedications by the *plebs* of a particular region are known: a matching pair honouring Gaius and Lucius Caesar from what was probably the thirteenth region (*CIL* VI 899, 39207, 40323; *AE* 2008, 241; Weber, 2008), and another for Geta from the eleventh (*CIL* VI 36941). The *Basis Capitolina*, similarly dedicated to Hadrian by five different regions, specifies each of these by number and names their freedman *curatores* (*CIL* VI 975). The *vici* clearly remain important here: the dedications to Gaius and Lucius specify that ten were involved, though without naming them, while the *Basis Capitolina* lists them individually for each region. But these examples also reflect an impetus towards regional-level cooperation, presumably partly because this allowed dedicators to pool their resources and commission a more impressive monument. Amongst them the dedications to Gaius and Lucius are particularly significant, since their identification as living *principes iuventutis* and consuls designate indicates a date between 2 and 1 BC, only five or six years after the regions had been defined. Before this happened, the people who made this dedication would have had

no particular reason to view their ten *vici* as connected, or to think to act together.²⁰ The fact that they appear in this inscription only a few years later making a collective dedication therefore reflects the creation of a new level of identity which had not previously existed, and which stems directly from the introduction of the regions.

A more personal level of identification can be detected in some funerary inscriptions. Here, topographical referents were sometimes used to specify the deceased's place of work or domicile, helping to identify them and setting them into a social context.²¹ Most cite public monuments, streets or *vici*, but some use the broader toponyms of hills (e.g. *CIL VI 9721, a monte Esquilino*) or areas (*CIL VI 9284, de Subura*), and a small selection refer to the Augustan regions.²² Though few in number, these inscriptions again construct the regions as social spaces. In fact, they seem to work alongside the inscriptions referring to smaller settings such as streets or *vici* to emphasize that a particular person was loved or celebrated on a wider than usual scale. One such example is the third-century midwife Valeria Berecunda, whose daughter and husband describe her as *regionis suae primae* ('first in her region') (*CIL VI 9477 = ILS 7806*). Although the region is not specified, the phrase conveys an image of Berecunda working and excelling across a whole region, which thus constituted her geographical, economic and social sphere. Another case is Sextus Vetulenus Lavicanus, whose elegiac epitaph is worth quoting in full (*AE 1971, 44*):

²⁰ We cannot be sure whether these ten *vici* represent the entirety of the thirteenth region, since there is no independent evidence of the number of *vici* per region in the Augustan era. However, it is plausible given that we know the number of *vici* in the city grew over time, and that the Hadrianic *Basis Capitolina* lists seventeen for this region while the *Reginary Catalogues* list seventeen (*Notitia*) or eighteen (*Curiosum*). Cf. Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 296; Weber, 2008: 246, n. 4.

²¹ Tarpin, 2002: 323–4, R62–76 collects artisans located by *vici*. Meneghini, 2007: 212, nn. 38–40 lists 137 examples across a range of topographical categories.

²² *CIL XIV 2213, pistor Romaniensis ex regione XIII*; *CIL VI 2342, Barneus de familia public(a) reg(ionis) VII*; *CIL VI 9477, Valeriae Berecundae iatromeae regionis suae primae*; *AE 1909, 75 = ILS 9346, delicias matris Matutae VI reg(ionis) Eucerus*; *AE 1971, 44, septima quem regio sextaqu(e) amavit idem*; *ICUR II 4835, Bitalis pistor m{u}ag(narius) hic es [sic] r(egionis) XII*; *ICUR II 6009, de regione VIII a lacu cunic<u>li*. The last two are Christian epitaphs post-dating the introduction of seven new ecclesiastical regions (discussed further below), but must refer to Augustan regions since they cite numbers higher than seven.

To the spirits of the departed. To Sextus Vetulenus Lavicanus. Darling of the people, also herald of the great circus, whom the seventh region and the sixth loved equally. For me, my *coniuvenes* placed this tablet on my grave and engraved my names in their devotion. *Di [Manes]*, watch for a long time, watch over such excellent companions (*sodales*), who remembered me and who remembered themselves. Lived 44 years.

Panciera (1970) interpreted the references to Lavicanus' *coniuvenes* and *sodales* as implying membership of a formal youth association, perhaps operating across the sixth and seventh regions where he was so dearly loved. But *coniuvenes*, a *hapax*, could simply mean 'the companions of his youth', who remained with him into adulthood as his *sodales*, without requiring the existence of any formal institution. In any case, the construction of the sixth and seventh regions as Lavicanus' social sphere is clear with or without the youth association. These regions adjoined one another on the north side of Rome, extending eastwards from the via Flaminia towards the eventual site of the Baths of Diocletian, so the suggestion here of a pair of communities, brought together or perhaps playfully competing in their love for Lavicanus, is topographically plausible. The inscription could have referred to the inhabitants of this area using a purely geographical toponym such as 'Quirinalis' or 'Collina', but the regions offered one potential framework for identifying them, and here it was taken up. Thus although the primary function of the regions was political and administrative, and the *vici* were doubtless more immediate social units, it is clear that the inhabitants of Rome generally did know which region they lived in, and in some cases derived a sense of community from that knowledge. Though created by Augustus from the top down, in some contexts at least the regions evidently acquired bottom-up meaning, projected onto them by their inhabitants and prompting the identification and articulation of new social connections.

Working with the regions

In a similar vein, we should ask how the regions came to affect the thinking and practices of Rome's administrators. Four major groups of officials worked with the regions: the regional magistrates and those responsible for the grain distribution, water supply and fire service. But although the identities of these officials and their methods of operation have been thoroughly investigated, surprisingly little space has been devoted to the role of the regions in their work, and still less to comparing approaches across the four contexts. The following discussion considers whether the regions remained simply a tool for dividing up administrative duties, or, by dint of providing a particular conceptual framework, came to have an identifiable impact on the work of urban administrators and in turn the experiences of the city's residents.

The regional magistrates and curators

The administrators most intimately connected with the regions were those assigned directly to them. Initially, these were serving elected magistrates, but freedmen *curatores* are attested under Hadrian and ex-consuls by the late third century (De Robertis, 1935; Palmer, 1974; Nasti, 1999; Ruciński, 2004). Indeed, in some periods senatorial and freed officials may have co-existed.²³ Very little is known about a separate group of slave and freed (*procuratores*) *a regionibus urbis* attested working within the imperial household in the early principate, though Boulvert (1964: 55, n.273) suggested that they served the emperor in his relations with the *vici*.²⁴ The role of the regional magistrates evolved considerably, including at various different times city maintenance, oversight of the *vicomagistri*, sacrificing to Vulcan and assisting the *praefectus urbi* with prosecutions.²⁵ But regional officials in some form persisted until late antiquity, suggesting that they met a real need. Meanwhile, two aspects of our evidence suggest

²³ Dio's comment when outlining the Augustan system that 'this is also the present arrangement' (Dio Cass. 55.8.7) suggests that senatorial magistrates still served alongside the freedman *curatores*: see De Robertis, 1935: 179 and Chastagnol, 1997: 193.

²⁴ *CIL* 6 3958, 4017–4024 and 8685; *AE* 1990, 68; Kammerer Grothaus, 1979; Macciocca, 2005.

²⁵ City maintenance: *tabula Heracleensis* ll.20–28 (Crawford, 1996: 355–91) and Papinian, *Dig.* 43.10. *Vicomagistri*: Palmer, 1974; Ruciński, 2004: 110–12; Lott, 2013: 174–5. Sacrifices: Closs, 2016. Prosecutions: Papinian, *Dig.* 43.10; De Robertis, 1935: 177–81; Palmer, 1974: 277; Ruciński, 2009: 194–5.

that their relationship with the regions either was, or was perceived as having the potential to be, an opportunity for personal advantage. These are the allocation of regions by lot and the association between named individuals and regions in the epigraphic record.

The use of lot in this context has received little comment in scholarship on either sortition or the regions. The late Republican aediles were already advised to allocate the *partes urbis* between them either by agreement or by lot (*Tabula Heracleensis* 1.25 = Crawford, 1996: 355–91). Augustus also arranged for his new regional magistrates to be assigned by lot, although he apparently dropped the option for them to agree their own distribution (Suet., *Aug.* 30.1; Cass. Dio 55.8.7). Dio names the magistrates concerned as the existing aediles, now joined by tribunes and praetors, but there were between twenty-six and twenty-eight of these magistrates under Augustus: twelve or fourteen more than the fourteen regions available.²⁶ One function of the lot, then, may have been to decide which fourteen of the possible candidates would have a region assigned, but another was probably to assign particular regions to particular magistrates. Morrell (2017: 232–4, esp. n.178), discussing late Republican provincial allocations, shows that both could be achieved in a single draw, and indeed the numbering of the regions would have made it easy to allocate Region I to the first name drawn, II to the second and so on.

The best-preserved surviving text from a series of altars to Vulcan established by Domitian in Rome states that sacrifices there are to be conducted by ‘the praetor to whom this region has come by lot, or some other magistrate’.²⁷ Besides supporting the literary evidence for sortition, this text carefully allows for a regional magistrate who is not a praetor, despite specifying one, presumably as the most prestigious available possibility. This suggests that particular regions were not routinely reserved for praetors, tribunes or aediles, and probably

²⁶ Six aediles, ten tribunes and ten or twelve praetors (Talbert, 1996: 327).

²⁷ *praetor cui haec regio sorti obvenit sacrum faciat aliusve quis magistratus* (text and translation Closs, 2016: 105–7).

means that the allocations were intended to be unpredictable. Elsewhere in Roman politics, sortition was used to forestall competition for lucrative provincial postings, which might offer amongst other things the opportunity to develop personal power-bases (Rosenstein, 1995; Stewart, 1998). By analogy, Augustus may have wished to restrain senators from using regional magistracies to boost personal patronage networks: for example, in districts where they were already well-known or where concentrations of wealthy families resided. Certainly, Lott (2004: 118–20) suggests that Augustus may have reorganised the city into *vici* and *regiones* partly to curtail the potential power-bases of figures like Egnatius Rufus, who stood illegally for a consulship in 19 BC on the back of popularity won by funding a fire brigade while aedile. Dividing the city into fourteen regions rather than four and ensuring that no-one could predetermine which they represented would make it harder for regional magistrates to behave similarly. The later apparent displacement of senatorial magistrates by freedmen *curatores regionum* may reflect the same concerns.

Further confirmation of the personal relationship between officials and regions comes from the way they are linked together in the epigraphic record. Inscriptions from the early principate authorizing the construction or renovation of *vicus* altars usually name the magistrate who had granted permission and specify their region of responsibility.²⁸ The *Basis Capitolina* presents the names of six freedman *curatores* for the regions which dedicated it: one each for Regions I, X, XIII and XIV and two for XII (*CIL* VI 975; Tarpin, 2002: 308–311, R2). And a collection of late antique senatorial career inscriptions describe their honorands using phrases such as *curator regionis VII* or *regionis II curator*, almost as though their official titles included their region numbers (Nasti, 1999). Certainly, they do not simply describe the individuals as generic regional magistrates but associate them with their particular regions permanently and

²⁸ *CIL* VI 449, 450 and 452 name tribunes of the plebs; *CIL* VI 451, 453, 760 and *AE* 1960, 64 name praetors. See also Tarpin, 2002: 312–3, R6–11; Lott, 2004: 206–7; Rucinski, 2004: 110–11, n. 5.

publicly in a way which suggests that the role carried prestige and was considered worth commemorating. Set alongside the use of sortition, this suggests a climate in which officials who put effort and wealth into looking after their regions might benefit from the appreciation of their inhabitants, both during their appointment and afterwards. For residents in a region receiving such attentions, this might be welcome, but we should ask whether all regional officials were equally attentive. If the relationship between official and region could be so personal, the way in which it was fulfilled probably also varied depending on the priorities of the person appointed, potentially leading to uneven experiences.

The distribution of food

The probable connection between the regions and the grain register has already been discussed. The distribution system for state-subsidized food also made use of the regions, though probably not until the third century. By the late Republic, distributions were monthly, but a reference in the *tabula Heracleensis* (ll.15–16) to places ‘wherever and whenever grain is given to the people’ implies no fixed distribution centre (Nicolet, 1976: 48–50). Rickman (1980: 185–6, 192) has argued that the numbers of eligible recipients would have made distribution from a single location on a single day unmanageable, suggesting that it continued to be done *vicatim*, as with the *ad hoc* mid-Republican distributions. At some point, though, everything was centralized into a structure known as the *porticus Minucia* in the Campus Martius (Nicolet, 1976: 48–51; Rickman, 1980: 77, 192–3, 250–52). Viriouvvet (1995: 131–60) has argued that this location was already used in the late Republic and extended by Augustus, while epigraphic evidence attests that it was certainly active by the mid-first century AD. The numbers of people involved were managed by assigning each recipient to a particular day of the month and a particular opening in the porticus.

Changes began with Septimius Severus, who added an allowance of olive oil and may have changed the grain to milled flour as a way of tackling fraud and preventing hoarding (Taylor, 2010), while Aurelian is credited with adding pork and having the grain given out as

bread (SHA, *Aurel.* 35.1; Rickman, 1980: 197). Certainly, the introduction of a bread dole is confirmed by late antique legislation dealing with baking and bread distribution, both of which were now of vital importance to the state. The *praefectus annonae* became responsible for inspecting bakers and bakeries (*pistrinae*), and must therefore have needed to know where they were located, perhaps explaining their inclusion in the Regionary Catalogues (Ceparano, 1998; Cassiod., *Var.* 6.18.1 with Rickman, 1980: 207). The numbers listed here, between fifteen and twenty-five per region, may also reflect attempts to secure an even spread of bakeries across the city. The bread itself was collected from *gradus* ('steps'), with individual recipients assigned to a particular set of *gradus* where their name was inscribed on a bronze tablet (*CTh.* 14.17.5). Since bread has to be given out daily for the sake of freshness, Rickman (1980: 205–8) has stressed that these needed to be close to recipients' homes so that they did not have to walk half-way across the city every day, and again this would have favoured an even spread (Lo Cascio, 1998: 373–85). Although the *gradus* are not mentioned in the Regionary Catalogues,²⁹ Prudentius' mocking response to Symmachus, who had attributed a famine to neglect of the gods, includes one line which strongly suggests they were to be found in every region (Prudent. *C. Symm.* 2.949–50 with Lo Cascio, 1998: 374): 'What *regio* of Rome is enduring the horrors of want because the *gradus* are empty?'

Registers of eligibility for food distribution, then, were probably always organized in a format which made use of the regions, while by the late third century the food itself was handed out within the same framework. Given the importance of food, these two factors probably did more than any others to make individual residents aware of their position in the city's hierarchy of properties, *vici* and *regiones*, perhaps underpinning the knowledge of the regions implied by slave collars and the identification with them encountered in inscriptions. Indeed, it is

²⁹ Behrwald, 2006: 756 suggests that this may be because the Catalogues' earliest phase, focused on information relating to urban administration, pre-dates the bread dole. Between four and seventeen *gradus* appear in all except region III of the similar *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (Ceparano, 1998: 917 and 920; Lo Cascio, 1998: 374–5).

noticeable that one of the handful of funerary inscriptions which attests this kind of identification is precisely that of a baker, Bitalis, buried in AD 401 and described as being from Region XII (*ICUR* II 4835): *Bitalis pistor m{u}ag(narius) hic es [sic] r(egioni)s XII*. As with the midwife Valeria Berecunda, Bitalis' epitaph constructs this region as his social and professional sphere. Certainly, his role in food distribution must have made him both well-known there and keenly aware of his context within the regional system.

The water supply

Frontinus' *De aquis* offers insights into the mind-set and practices of a *curator aquarum* which are not available for the heads of the other administrative services. The text is a literary piece with a political agenda rather than a raw working document, but it does appear to be based on practical administrative records and to transmit some of their content (Peachin, 2004: 14–20; Rodgers, 2004: 8–29). The regions certainly feature in Frontinus' thinking. His preface announces his intention to explain what proportion of its waters each aqueduct delivers to each region within the city, and chapters 77 to 86 consistently specify which region(s) each aqueduct supplied. Chapter 87 also reports that all regions and *lacus* (basins) are served by more than one aqueduct, allowing the supply to be maintained if one line is disrupted, while chapter 117.3 speaks of diverting water from several other regions to one experiencing an emergency. This suggests that the regions were used within the water service as one way of thinking about whether the city's supply was robust and comprehensive: this was doubtless a real concern, given that failures might prompt civil unrest (Blackman and Hodge, 2001: 129).

It is crucial to remember, though, that most of the aqueducts described by Frontinus were built before Augustus' reorganisation, so cannot have been designed with the intention of supplying particular Augustan regions.³⁰ Indeed, this may partly explain why Frontinus' information on water distribution is actually organized by aqueduct and not by region. His

³⁰ Evans, 1994 often forgets this, to the extent of attempting to reconstruct which of the ten regions served by the Anio Vetus (built 272 BC) it was 'originally intended' for (76–7).

interest in which region(s) each aqueduct supplied looks like a more recent concern grafted onto an older way of recording information: perhaps that established in Agrippa's own *commentarius* on the water supply (Frontin., *Aq.* 99.3; Peachin, 2004: 14–18). The result is that Frontinus cannot actually tell us much about water distribution across the fourteen Augustan regions. It is certainly possible to draw up tables based on his text showing which regions were supplied by which aqueducts (Evans, 1994: fig. 15; Blackman and Hodge, 2001: 126; Rodgers, 2004: 358). But the capacities of the aqueducts varied between one another and over time, and Frontinus does not provide enough information to deduce how much water was *delivered* into each region.³¹ Paradoxically, the tension between what he wants to tell us and the information he has attests the growing importance of the regions as a framework for thinking with, leading him to try to apply it to records actually organized by aqueduct. The fact that *balinea* and *lacus* are recorded by region in the Regionary Catalogues may reflect the completion after Frontinus of a shift within the water service from aqueduct-based to region-based thinking.

One point can be made from Frontinus, however. Of the aqueducts he discusses, only three post-date the introduction of the regions: the Alsietina, operational by 2 BC, and the Claudia and Anio Novus, both inaugurated in AD 52.³² The Alsietina was highly specialized, delivering water unsuitable for drinking to Augustus' *naumachia*. But it is noticeable that the Claudia and Anio Novus are the only two aqueducts which Frontinus says supply all fourteen Augustan regions (*Aq.* 86). This was possible partly because of the height of their sources, but Frontinus also notes that another three aqueducts (the Julia, Tepula and Marcia) come from sources high enough to supply all regions, but do not do so (*Aq.* 18). In other words, similar potential had not been taken up in earlier periods. We might therefore speculate that once the

³¹ Blackman and Hodge, 2001: 125–31 note that he describes a flexible system allowing water to be diverted around the city. In their view, Frontinus simply lists 'the waters which *may* contribute in each region; you might be drinking the water of any or all of those named' (126).

³² Frontin., *Aq.* 11.1 and 13.1–2. The capacity and reach of several other aqueducts were increased after 7 BC, including the Appia, Anio Vetus and Marcia (*RG* 20.2; Frontin., *Aq.* 9.9 and 12).

regions were established, their very existence began to nurture the view that the ideal aqueduct-builder should aim to supply all of them, and that Claudius (following Caligula) set out to fulfil this aspiration. Indeed, soon after the completion of Frontinus' text, Trajan likewise dedicated a new line described in the *Fasti Ostienses* as *tota urbe salientem* ('flowing in the whole city') (Bargagli and Grosso 1997: 37). This suggests a similar interest, albeit not expressed in terms of regions.

The regions may also have been used to organize information about water concessions, especially to private property-owners, but the evidence is inconclusive. Frontinus is clear that private individuals could only draw water from the city's supply with the written permission of the emperor, and speaks of these rights being recorded (*Aq.* 105–9). One obvious way to organize the records would be topographically, and four stamped lead water-pipes referring to specific numbered regions might appear to reflect such a practice.³³ But these pale into insignificance amongst the 500 stamps from Rome published in *CIL XV* and several hundred since, the vast majority of which make no mention of the regions (*CIL XV* 7235–7734; Bruun, 1991; de Kleijn, 2001: 116–46). Instead, pipe stamps are usually concerned with naming emperors, their officials, pipe manufacturers, business owners, benefactors or private individuals (Bruun, 1991; de Kleijn, 2001: 116–46). A group of around sixty examples displaying simple numbers also cannot relate to the regions since they extend well beyond the number fourteen, up to figures over 500 (Bruun, 1991: 44–58). The handful which do refer to regions, then, cannot reflect any systematic recording practice, and must arise from specific circumstances such as the desire to advertise a particular workshop, distinguish between people with similar names or specify where a pipe should be installed.

³³ *CIL XV* 7647: *ex officina Martini plumbari r(egionis) VI*; *AE* 1903, 123: *Laurenti v(iri) c(larissimi) regione VII*; *AE* 1904, 49: *r(egionis) VII ex officina Hilariani*; *AE* 1917–18, 113 and *AE* 2000, 209: *Fl.Fl. Artemiorum d(e) r(egione) VII*.

The fire service

The responsibility for fire prevention in the late Republic rested with the aediles, who may already have organised their work according to the four *partes urbis* with additional arrangements for a fifth district across the Tiber (Pailler, 1985; Sablayrolles, 1996: 13 and 16–21). Augustus granted them control of six hundred publicly-owned slaves in 22 BC, but then transferred the responsibility to the *vicomagistri* in 7 BC and finally to freedmen *vigiles* in AD 6 (Cass. Dio 53.24.6, 54.2.4, 55.8.6, 55.23.4–5; Sablayrolles, 1996: 24–5). Dio reports that there were seven cohorts of *vigiles*, and the Severan-era jurist Paulus (*Dig.* 1.15.3.pr.) links this explicitly to the fourteen regions, explaining that Augustus ‘constituted seven cohorts in suitable locations (*oportunis locis*) so that each cohort might watch over two regions of the city, with tribunes to command them and with a respectable man over all called the *praefectus vigilum*.’ Both sources may reflect the reality of the Severan-era fire service more than the Augustan, but the numerical relationship of seven cohorts to fourteen regions does suggest that their command structure and organisation made use of the regions from the beginning. There has been considerable debate over whether this included physical bases in ‘suitable locations’ as Paulus suggests, given the early sensitivities around having armed men stationed in Rome, but Sablayrolles (1996: 26–33, 245–50, 286–8) argues that having cohorts spread across the city was operationally crucial, allowing the *vigiles* to reach small fires quickly and tackle them before they spread.

Certainly, by the time of Trajan the *vigiles* were using at least some fixed bases (Rainbird, 1986: 156; Sablayrolles, 1996: 257–63). The Regional Catalogues assign each of the seven cohorts to a particular region, with some of the information confirmed by finds of inscriptions (Rainbird, 1986: 148). Their city-wide summaries also refer to *cohortes... vigilum VII quorum excubitoria XIII* (‘the seven cohorts of the *vigiles*, of which fourteen *excubitoria*’). These *excubitoria*, which may have been sleeping quarters and / or watch-houses, thus also match the number of regions, with the most likely arrangement being one *excubitorium* in each

of the two regions served by one cohort (Rainbird, 1986: 148–9; Sablayrolles, 1996: 250).³⁴ By late antiquity, then, the number and layout of the regions seem to have translated into direct choices about the number of bases to establish and where to put them. Their actual locations can be reconstructed only partially (Rainbird, 1986; Sablayrolles, 1996: 245–89), but in any case we should avoid fixating too heavily on the bases when thinking about how the *vigiles* worked. They did not function like modern fire stations where *vigiles* waited on call, but rather were places to sleep, store equipment, train, receive orders and report for duty (Rainbird, 1986: 156, 165). The *vigiles* spent most of their time on patrol, checking house-holder precautions and tackling fires before they spread, with each cohort presumably focusing its patrolling duties on the particular pair of regions for which it was responsible (Paulus, *Dig.* 1.15.3.3; Sablayrolles, 1996: 281–4, 371–83). Here too, then, there is some potential for the shapes and sizes of the regions to have affected the experiences of the people who lived there, depending on how well the patrols of the *vigiles* covered each one without leaving gaps either at their centres or around their edges.

Tacitus' account of the impact of the great fire of AD 64 (*Ann.* 15.40) is notably also presented by region: 'Rome, of course, is divided into fourteen regions, of which four remained intact, three were laid level with the ground and in the other seven a few vestiges and relics of buildings survived, dilapidated and half-burned.'³⁵ This may reflect the organization of his source material, and is certainly what we would expect if each cohort of *vigiles* were asked to file a report on the state of the region(s) under their care and the combined results read out in the senate. We can assume that Tacitus exaggerated the scale of the damage in order to strengthen his negative portrayal of Nero, while it is regrettable that he does not specify which regions fell into each of his three categories (Owen and Gildenhard, 2013: 209–10). But his

³⁴ On the nature of *excubitoria*, and whether the *vigiles* also had separate *castra* (barracks): Sablayrolles, 1996: 281–5.

³⁵ Owen and Gildenhard, 2013: 208–9 note that this passage may be in dialogue with an earlier reference at *Ann.* 14.12.2 to all fourteen regions of the city being struck by lightning.

decision to present his information in this way certainly reaffirms that the regions were meaningful topographical units. Tacitus clearly believed that his readers were capable of conceptualizing the city as a collection of regions, and envisaging the extent of the damage described with reference to them. The same passage also highlights the importance of public water sources to the work of the *vigiles*, since Tacitus notes that after the fire Nero put in place *custodes* to protect against illicit tapping and ensure that water was available ‘in greater quantities and at more locations’ (*Ann.* 15.43). We can assume that as part of their normal work the *vigiles* would need to know the locations of the public *lacus* in their regions, so that their interests as much as those of the *curatores aquarum* may explain their inclusion in the Regionary Catalogues.

New developments in late antiquity

The regions clearly remained important into late antiquity. Much of our evidence for their nature and usage actually dates from the fourth century, while some new institutions arising in this period also made use of them. A series of edicts from Valentinian I, coupled with a dispatch from Symmachus, attests the introduction of a college of publicly-funded medical practitioners known as *archiatri* in AD 368 (*Cod. Theod.* 13.3; *Symm., Relat.* 27; Nutton, 1977: 207–10, 217–8; Albana, 2006). These were to be subject to the authority of the emperor, working through the *praefectus urbi*, and Valentinian specifies that ‘as many *archiatri* should be appointed as there are regions of the city’ (*quot regiones urbis sunt, totidem constituentur archiatri, CTh* 13.3.8). He charged the college with providing care to the needy, perhaps as Nutton (1977: 209–10) suggests with a view to winning over the loyalty of the urban population from their traditional wealthy patrons. If so, Valentinian’s desire to emphasize that his service would be available in *all* regions can be compared with similar concerns reflected in the other branches of the urban administration, and likewise driven by the needs of earlier emperors to demonstrate the comprehensive and equitable scope of their provision. The relationship

between the rhetoric of these claims and the real experiences of the urban population will be discussed further below.

Finally, the early church introduced its own regions during the third century (Duchesne, 1890; Pietri, 1989; Di Carpegna Falconieri, 2008; Spera, 2013). For the first time, these were topographically distinct from the Augustan regions, with the two systems initially operating in parallel. There were seven ecclesiastical regions rather than fourteen, probably encompassing only those areas with significant Christian populations and major churches while omitting the old political and pagan centre of the city (Spera, 2013). Conceptually, though, both the number of seven regions and their direct relationship to a hierarchy of seven deacons and sub-deacons overseen by the bishop of Rome made them very much the inheritors of the Augustan system. Like the regional magistrates before them, the deacons and sub-deacons even regularly identified themselves with their regions in funerary epitaphs via formulae such as *subdiac(oni) reg(ionis) quartae* (ICUR VIII 21102).³⁶ The Augustan regions themselves fell out of use after the Gothic wars in the mid-sixth century, by which point the size and distribution of the city's population had changed so radically that they no longer bore any useful relation to the realities of urban life (Duchesne, 1890: 127–8; Pietri, 1989: 1056). But the fact that a system for subdividing the topographical space of the city, and linking those subdivisions to an institutional hierarchy, lived on in the ecclesiastical regions confirms their essential value in the life and administration of the city.

Providing for the regions

An interest in providing for all fourteen regions is readily detectable in the workings of the urban administration, emerging particularly clearly in the aims of the water service, the probable construction of one *excubitorium* per region, and the establishment of the *archiatri*.

³⁶ Others include ICUR I 116; I 3349; II 4202a; II 4186; III 8161; III 8719; VIII 20861; AE 1900, 103 = ICUR n.s. 116.

It does not seem to have taken much account of the different sizes or needs of those regions, but a desire to be able to claim consistent and comprehensive provision across the city is certainly clear, and the regions provided one way of doing it. Literary texts also reveal that political leaders might be praised for providing entertainments or built structures across all regions, and criticized for pursuing personal glory in the same manner. The partisan agendas and other issues affecting these texts make them weak evidence for actual behaviour, but the persistence of the trope suggests that it reflects real attitudes. To work through the examples chronologically, Suetonius (*Iul.* 39.1) claims that Julius Caesar put on stage-plays *regionatim urbe tota* ('region by region all over the city') while describing the extraordinary number and quality of his entertainments. Conversely, he gives Nero's grandfather, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, little credit for beast-hunts offered *in omnibus urbis regionibus* ('in all the regions of the city') within a passage clearly intended to foreshadow the excesses of Nero himself (*Ner.* 4). Here, Caesar's plays obviously pre-date the creation of the Augustan regions and Ahenobarbus' hunts probably did.³⁷ As such, the 'regions' concerned should be the four late-Republican *partes urbis*; a point which Suetonius ought to be alert to, given his coverage of the creation of the Augustan regions. It is thus unclear whether the stories reflect Suetonius' second-century context or the realities of the late first century BC.

Similar behaviour occurs in Suetonius' *Life of Domitian*, this time certainly relating to the fourteen Augustan regions and describing the distribution of built structures. We learn that Domitian built arches and passageways adorned with chariots and triumphal emblems *per regiones urbis* ('through the regions of the city') (*Dom.* 13.2). This need not mean an arch in every region, but the pejorative image of a rash of arches is clear from the reference itself, and from its context in a chapter on Domitian's arrogant aggrandizing. Other sources also portray

³⁷ Suetonius does not specify a date, but plausible contexts include his aedileship (22 BC), or either of his praetorship (date unknown) and consulship (16 BC), mentioned in the same passage.

Domitian as an avid arch-builder. Suetonius' chariots and triumphal emblems particularly recall an arch described by Martial (8.65.7–12) as adorned with twin chariots and a gold statue of Domitian,³⁸ while Dio claims (68.1.1) that Domitian was honoured by many arches later torn down by Nerva. Though Dio does not connect the arches with the regions, he follows Suetonius in constructing Domitian as a 'bad' emperor whose excesses were reversed by his successor. Meanwhile, Severus Alexander's construction of *horrea* and *balnea in omnibus regionibus* (SHA, *Alex. Sev.* 39.3–4), introduced at the beginning of this paper, provides a contrasting account of a 'good' emperor's behaviour. The *Historia Augusta* is famously unreliable, and its author may be imitating the Suetonius passages already discussed. But *horrea* and *balnea* are listed by region in the Regionary Catalogues, suggesting an interest in their distribution across the urban fabric. Indeed, Behrwald (2006: 756–7) argues that the administrative information listed for each region in these catalogues dates specifically to the Severan era, perhaps reflecting a very direct link between Severus Alexander's behaviour and their contents. In any case, whatever Severus may or may not have done, the idea of someone responsible for the city as a whole setting out to make a particular service available in every region is perfectly plausible when set alongside the distribution of the Claudian aqueducts, the *excubitoria* and the *archiatri*.

Certainly, benefactions repeated across multiple regions offered figures such as Caesar and the emperors a clearer medium than a single public building or set of games for signalling that they cared and could provide for the whole urban population. Two epigraphically-attested examples may even reflect real behaviour along these lines. One takes us back to Domitian, who dedicated a series of altars to Vulcan in fulfilment of a vow made after the great fire under Nero in AD 64 (Closs, 2016). Though the archaeological evidence is thin, at least two altar

³⁸ This arch is depicted on coins of the AD 80s and 90s, and may have constituted a rebuilding of the *Porta Triumphalis*: Blake, 1959: 112; Jones, 1992: 84; Coarelli, 1996.

sites are attested, one preserved *in situ* on the Quirinal and another described in the early seventeenth century outside the southwestern side of the Circus Maximus (Closs, 2016: 103–5). Each appears to have sat within an open precinct defined by *cippi* recording the reason for its construction and stipulating that annual sacrifices should be conducted by the praetor or other magistrate ‘to whom this region has come by lot’ (Closs, 2016: 105–12; and see also above). This requirement led Lanciani (1892: 83–4) to suggest that one altar may have been provided per region. Though Closs (2016: 112) doubts this on the grounds that ‘parallel examples of religious sites distributed according to administrative region are lacking’, it is plausible given the importance of the regions for the fire service, and becomes even more compelling if we accept that political leaders were regularly encouraged to provide facilities and services equally across all regions. If Domitian could be criticized for building arches throughout the regions, he may equally have aspired to praise for ensuring that each contained an altar protecting it from fire.

A second epigraphic example applies the very language of systematic provision found in the literary sources to work carried out by Hadrian. Two inscribed architraves, one found in the Markets of Trajan and the other immediately behind them in the church of S. Caterina close to the Torre delle Milizie, both state that Hadrian ‘restored [*objects understood*] decayed by age through the regions of the city’ (Fig. 04).³⁹ Their adjacent find-spots and near-identical appearance suggest that the architraves come from a single structure or (re-)building programme, presumably the unstated object of the verb ‘restored’. La Regina pointed out (at *CIL* VI 40519) that the feminine form of *dilapsas* (decayed) requires a feminine object, and suggested the shrines of the Argei, described as *arae* (altars, f.) by Varro (*Ling.* 5.8.52). Coarelli (2014: 28–33), following La Regina, posits that these particular architraves came from two

³⁹ *CIL* VI 981 and 40519 (two halves of one inscription), *Imp(erator) Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Aug(ustus) p(ater) p(atriciae) vetustate dilapsas per regiones urbis restituit; CIL* VI 40520.

entrances to a single shrine, with similar statements repeated on others across the city. Whether this is correct or not, the rhetoric from Hadrian (or his agents) laying claim to the restoration of neglected buildings across all regions is unmistakable, and aligns closely with the literary sources. The fact that this example relates to Hadrian may even cast some light on Suetonius' particular interest in activity spread across the regions of the city. Was Hadrian's behaviour spurred by Suetonius' *exempla*? Or were Suetonius' *exempla* inserted in response to Hadrian's (claimed) behaviour?

[FIG 4. HADRIANIC ARCHITRAVE *CIL* VI 40519B NEAR HERE]

The activities discussed here may have been spurred by the knowledge of and identification with the regions attested amongst ordinary Romans. One implication of such knowledge is that the people of Rome might notice if a building was constructed or a service provided in another region but not theirs, encouraging sensible emperors to pre-empt resentment by providing equally. It is also possible that programmes described as being pursued *regionatim*, *per regiones urbis* or *in omnibus regionibus* were not always systematically fulfilled in every single region, with these phrases instead constituting an idiomatic way of saying 'across the whole city'. Even so, the rhetorical equation between the regions and comprehensive urban provision was clearly strong, and once established probably did encourage people to fulfil it literally.

Conclusion

Augustus established the regions to meet his own immediate political and administrative needs, but once in place the ways in which people used them generated new social realities and modes of thought and behaviour which he may not have anticipated. Evidence for social identification with and collective actions by particular regions shows that they prompted people to conceive of the social space of the city in a new way, identifying communities where they had not previously existed. Indeed, the collective dedications made to Gaius and Lucius Caesar during

their lifetimes shows that this began to happen almost as soon as the regions were defined. They also seem to have reflected a culture on the part of the city's administrators and political leaders of being seen to provide services comprehensively and equitably, and may have encouraged it by providing units across which provision could be compared. The framework of the regions made it possible to notice that one part of the city had been left out of some games, was missed by an aqueduct, was suffering empty *gradus*, or lacked a fire altar, an *excubitorium*, an *archiater*, *horrea* or *balnea*. Once such omissions could be noted, urban administrators and emperors clearly felt obliged to address them. All of these behaviours must have had a direct effect on the experience of living in the city of Rome, and should therefore form part of our own analyses when we attempt to understand it. In particular, where they led to the provision of infrastructure or buildings in particular locations, they had a concrete impact on the urban fabric which may now be traceable in the archaeological record. By taking this possibility into account, we will be in a better position to interpret some of the planning decisions made within the city, and perhaps even to identify patterns of benefaction shaped by the regions which are not directly attested in the literary or epigraphic records. Certainly, we cannot fully understand Rome's people, its rulers or its physical development without reference to the regions.

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