

Ziolkowski, Adam. *From Roma Quadrata to La grande Roma dei Tarquini: A Study of the Literary Tradition on Rome's Territorial Growth under the Kings.* Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 70. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart: 2019. 352 pages, 17 fig. € 58 paperback; ISBN 978-3-515-12451-5.

The author apologizes for the delay in this review.

One of the major controversies regarding archaic Roman history is the nature of the written evidence: what did native Roman historians and their Greek counterparts know about the city's origins, what did they speculate about, and what did they make up entirely? Modern historians and archaeologists hold a variety of opinions about the value of this material and the degree to which it should be used to explain evidence from the ground. The nature of this debate is such that Ziolkowski's (henceforth Z.) book will probably not change the minds of established scholars in the field; it is, nonetheless, an immensely useful contribution to the field.

Z's main argument is that Rome was founded in the mid-8th century on the Palatine and covered the hills of the Septimontium by the 6th century. Thus, his broader claim is that Roman scholars (understood to include imperial-era Greek authors writing on Rome as well) did have substantial knowledge about early Roman history, and should not be "dismiss[ed] ... outright, as is too often the case" (p. 7). This argument plays out largely with reference to the Septimontium and the Servian Wall, topics on which Z. has already written (and indeed several sections of this book have been published previously).

Chapter One provides a history of several questions that will recur throughout the book: the nature of Roman historiography, the location of Romulus' settlement, the age and location of the "Servian" wall, and the reliability of the Roman king list. His position on these issues is that the literary evidence is broadly correct: the initial settlement was on the Palatine; the Servian wall surrounded the city in the 6th century; the king list is not chronological, but the Tarquins were real. Z. thus identifies himself as a "moderate" in the debate over the reliability of the tradition on early Rome (see pp. 20–24). His positions are rather more conservative than this label suggests, since Z. is explicitly engaged in defending the accuracy of Roman historians and antiquarians (Z. does not distinguish between these two groups).

Chapter Two turns to the pre-Romulean settlements of what would later become Rome, with a particular focus on the dual significance of the Septimontium as a topographical descriptor and archaic festival. Z. argues that there was a canonical list of these hills prior to late antiquity (however, see his Table II), but that accounts relating to the festival should be separated from accounts relating to the foundation. More importantly for Z's argument, this chapter argues that the existence of settlements on the Palatine and Capitoline before the 8th century (which have been archaeologically verified and are frequently used as evidence against the accuracy of accounts of early Rome) are accounted for in literary evidence and therefore contribute to the reliability of the Roman tradition.

Chapter Three addresses literary evidence for the development of Rome, which Z. terms the “direct dossier.” He argues that ancient authors recognized “three” phases (there are actually four) in the city’s growth, each coinciding with the addition of hills. The Palatine and Capitol are always associated with Romulus; the Quirinal is sometimes associated with Romulus and sometimes with Servius; the Viminal and Esquiline are always Servian additions. The Aventine and Caelian are assigned to an “intermediate” phase due to conflicting and often absent evidence. Z. also examines traditions regarding Roma Quadrata and Romulus’ pomerium in order to investigate why the Palatine, rather than the Capitol, was always chosen as the site of the city’s foundation. His conclusion is largely negative: Roma Quadrata is an expression of the antiquity of the Palatine settlement, the pomerium is a red herring, and Romans “simply knew that the hill was Rome’s cradle” (p. 146). A discussion of the familial histories of the *nobiles* would have rounded out this conclusion, given the importance of real estate on the Palatine in the eras Z’s authors were writing.

Chapter Four turns to evidence that Z. terms the “indirect dossier” for Rome’s growth. This evidence relates to buildings, rites, and institutions that may bear on the expansion of the city. Of this evidence, Z. emphasizes the importance of early gates (such as the Porta Mugonia) for defining the boundary of Rome’s initial walls. He also returns to the proposal that the development of Rome took place over three stages. Of these stages, only the first and third are visible in archaeological or textual evidence; this suggests that ancient authors were working from visible remains or otherwise trustworthy evidence: “ancient erudites as a rule did not invent, only interpreted” (p. 158).

Chapter Five picks up on the phases from Chapters Three and Four and attempts to map them onto archaeologically visible and datable remains. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given what Z. has said so far, he finds that they broadly correspond to the dates of Romulus, Titus Tatius, and Servius Tullius. In other words (although Z. does not state this quite so plainly), the Roman tradition is correct in terms of its history, but incorrect about the king list. This chapter also includes an important discussion of the term “foundation” (p. 214), which illuminates many of the arguments mentioned in the book. A brief conclusion appended to the end of Chapter Five recapitulates the main arguments of the book.

Three Appendices follow the chapters. The first Appendix offers an edition of Varro, *LL* 5.41–66. This edition was previously published by Z. and a collaborator in Polish, but appears here in English for the first time. Unfortunately, it is lacking commentary and sigla, so it must be used alongside a different edition and with reference to Z’s arguments earlier in the text. A fuller commentary in one of the standard languages would be welcome, especially since Z. at times makes major changes to the text. The second Appendix defends a pre-existing reading of a crux in Tac. *Ann.* 12.24, and the third treats the urban *pagi*.

The book closes with two tables (one a chronology of early Latial archaeology, the other a list of hills named in the Septimontium) and three indices: one of works cited (including references to the full text and translation; see below), one topographic, and a general index. Although I have not checked every reference, random checks appear to be correct.

There is much to admire in Z's presentation. His discussion of the *status quaestionis* for each topic is generally detailed, with citations reaching back to the 19th century. He supplies the full text, in both the original Latin or Greek and in translation, of every author he discusses. The main text contains numerous cross-references for readers who are interested in only a subset of the vast material Z. commands.

Z.'s book claims to examine a topic with relevance to history, archaeology, and historiography: what Roman historians knew and how accurate their knowledge was. Yet his work centers on modern archaeologists and ancient authorities; Z. rarely engages with scholarship on those ancient texts, and he has largely ignored the last several decades of scholarship in ancient historiography. It is surprising to see pages (e.g., pp. 118–123) devoted to the analysis of Plutarch without mention of scholars such as Pelling,¹ or to read that Dionysius of Halicarnassus was a much worse historian than Livy (p. 102) without a discussion of genre or of the extensive recent work on Dionysius' aims and methods (e.g., Delcourt²). Z. also does not discuss recent work on Varro's *de Lingua Latina*, despite the extensive reconstruction of the text that he offers,³ or any scholarship on Tacitus, even in the Tacitean appendix. As the notes of the book make clear, the manuscript was in the process of publication in 2018; the ample bibliography cites only 14 non-archaeological works dating to after 2008. Although I would not want to make the mistake of writing a review of the book I would have written rather than the book I received, Z's argument that Roman historians knew about the past seems to require some engagement with the questions historiographers ask: about how they conceived of the past and how they transmit their knowledge to us, for example. Z. seems to assume that evidence comes in three categories: well-informed and correct, well-intentioned and mistaken, or invented. This division is found, sometimes, in the works Z. cites as "hypercritical" (e.g., p. 8–9), but studies of ancient historiography are frequently more subtle, engaging with memory studies and living oral traditions to suggest that there are multiple, equally "correct" ways to represent the past.

¹ E.g., Pelling, C. *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (Classical Press of Wales, 2002), which includes a chapter dedicated to Plutarch's compositional techniques in the paired *Lives* of Theseus and Romulus.

² Delcourt, A. *Lecture des Antiquités romaines de Denys d'Halicarnasse: un historien entre deux mondes*. Académie Royal de Belgique, 2005.

³ Although he is aware of this work: Z. cites T. P. Wiseman's chapter from Butterfield, D. J. (ed). *Varro Varius: The Polymath of the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2015), but ignores other chapters focused on Varro's research techniques.

Z. explains in the preface (p. 9) that this book had its origins in a seminar 15 years ago. In some ways, this origin shows: Z. has a habit of making magisterial pronouncements that jar the reader, such as that the reading of παλαιοτέρων τούτων in Tzetzes *Lyc.* 1232 is “a stupid gloss” and should be eliminated (p. 90 n. 81), that “no Roman erudite ever identified the Mundus with *Roma Quadrata*; the only one who did it was Plutarch” (p. 117 n. 153, depriving Plutarch of his citizenship), or that μεγάλης ‘Ρώμης must refer to physical size (p. 115). These unargued postulates stand in contrast to the promise of a “thorough analysis supplemented with data” (p. 21), and can be contradictory and confusing. Festus’ work is sometimes treated as representative of what Verrius Flaccus wrote, and therefore classed as “Augustan” rather than “Imperial” (e.g., p. 66); at other times, Z. admits that Festus and Paul may have altered or re-emphasized the text (e.g., p. 89 n. 77). This is another area where greater engagement with scholars working on texts, rather than archaeology, would have been welcome.

Finally, a word about the book’s production. It is generally well done, with excellent indices; the maps are mostly clear, although one might wish for color over grayscale (the exceptions are figs. 1 and 12, reproductions which are missing a key). But while I am reluctant to draw attention to technical errors, the press would have better served the author by having a native English speaker read the manuscript before publication. Typographical errors and infelicities are frequent (approximately one every other page), if usually minor. But a quirk of Z’s rather old-fashioned English has him refer to “strange” evidence as “queer”, which is startling and potentially hurtful in this century (to clarify: this word has historically been used to disparage the LGBTQ+ community). I would emphasize that this is clearly not the aim of the author, but is the sort of anachronism that should have been noticed in the editorial process.

Despite the issues I have raised above, Z.’s book makes an important contribution to our understanding of the archaic period. While not everyone will agree with his assessment of the evidence, his division of the combined textual and archaeological evidence into three “visible” periods and one invisible intermediate period will require a response, and the detailed history of scholarship offers a useful introduction for newcomers to the field.

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