

BOOK REVIEW

The Urbanisation of Rome and Latium Vetus. By FRANCESCA FULMINANTE. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. vii + 411. Hardcover, \$99.00. ISBN 978-1-107-03035-0.

The formation of early Rome is a contested topic, and many different theoretical approaches have been used to attempt to understand state formation in the region of Latium Vetus.¹ A significant part of the debate has concentrated on the dating of the foundation of Rome: between the second half of the seventh century and the sixth century BC versus a date in the middle of the eighth century BC, before Greek colonies were founded in southern Italy. Fulminante has taken on the daunting task of trying to shed new light on settlement patterns in middle Tyrrhenian Italy by incorporating new excavation data, applying various analytical models, and approaching the problem on both a micro- and a macro-scale. Her method, which stems from her PhD research, focuses on combining the more traditional model of 'peer polity interaction' with the 'network model' to gain new insights. Although she relies heavily on the work of Carandini,² she cites a multitude of scholars, presenting the benefits and drawbacks of their work. Her experience using spatial analysis software helps her examine and present the evidence in new ways and in an organized visual form.

An introduction, a conclusion, and seven chapters constitute the corpus of this book, and there is also one extensive appendix. The introduction lays out the general debate and expounds upon the methods that will be used. In Chapter 1 Fulminante discusses the dynamics of rivalry between competing social groups. She describes various models of social evolution, such as those proposed by the

¹ For state formation in Etruria, see Rajala, U. 2013. "The Concentration and Centralization of Late Prehistoric Settlement in Central Italy: The Evidence from the Nepi Survey." *Papers of the British School at Rome* 81, 1–38.

² Fulminante cites twenty-two of Carandini's publications, including fourteen works written with other authors, but she primarily references two of his books. The first is Carandini, A. 1997. *La nascita di Roma. Dei, Lari eroi e uomini all'alba di una civiltà*. Turin: Guilo Einaudi; and the second is Carandini, A. 2007. *Roma, il primo giorno*. Rome: La Terza.

Copenhagen Polis Centre, by the Peroni school, and by Bintliff, but ultimately simplifies the debate into two opposing views: exogenous vs. endogenous.³

The exogenists see the trend towards urbanism as routed in Greek and Near Eastern influences, while endogenists prefer a more local evolution. Another point of contention involves determining what geographical areas constitute the region of Latium Vetus, since geographical features do not fully delineate the territory, as is discussed in Chapter 2. Both the location of the so-called Populi Albensibus and the known archaeological evidence of Latin culture were used in establishing these boundaries. To simplify the data set, a representative sample area of the region was selected for analysis spanning the Middle Bronze Age to the end of the Republican Period.

Chapter 3 addresses how archaeological evidence, particularly funerary remains, can be used to assess the presence and stability of settlements in a particular zone. The nature of these settlements is also used to identify possible emerging social stratifications. For example, Fulminante suggests that fortifications on the north slope of the Capitoline Hill may signify labor coordinated by elites and dating as far back as the thirteenth century BC, although not all scholars would agree that there was such an extensive community at this time.⁴

The application of new theoretical approaches using Geographic Information Systems software, or GIS, and Thiessen polygons (a method originally developed to assign rainfall levels by the United States Weather Bureau) to define the boundaries of the *ager Romanus antiquus* is described in Chapter 4. The goal of this approach is to go beyond literary sources to demonstrate the sustainability of this territory during the Early Iron Age and the Final Bronze Age. Chapter 5 returns to the study sample, investigated as part of the Suburbium Project,

³ For more on the Copenhagen Polis Centre, see pages xii-xiii in Hansen, H.M., and T. Heine Nielsen. 2004. *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre for the Danish National Research Foundation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. For more on the Peroni school, see Peroni, R. 1994. *Introduzione alla protostoria Italiana*. Rome: Editori Laterza. See also Peroni, R. 1996. *L'Italia alle soglie della storia*. Bari: La Terza. For more on Bintliff's applicable theories, see Bintliff, J.L. 2000. "Settlement and Territory: A Socio-Ecological Approach to the Evolution of Settlement Systems," in *Human Ecodynamics*, edited by G. Bailey, R. Charles, and N. Winder, 21-30. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

⁴ For a more conservative interpretation of the results, see Cazzella, A. 2001. "Sviluppi verso l'urbanizzazione a Roma alla luce dei recenti scavi nel Giardino Romano." *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 102, 265-8. For a less conservative interpretation, see Carandini, A. 1997. *La nascita di Roma. Dei, Lari eroi e uomini all'alba di una civiltà*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi.

and it explores archaeological evidence of urban spaces. Distances between sites are plotted in histograms to analyze trends, generating new data on the relationship of settlement locations to agricultural soil types. An unexpected increase in site distances from water sources is also noted, but Fulminante cleverly discovers that this phenomenon coincides with improved water management. The larger region of Latium Vetus is again discussed in Chapter 6, examining the placement of settlements with respect to plains, hills, and mountains, and with respect to slope levels and river proximity. Spheres of territorial dominance are also evaluated using multiplicatively weighted Voronoi diagrams.

Chapter 7 reconciles evolutionary theories with multi-trajectory methods, even though these two approaches have often been seen as antithetic. The results show that by the middle of the eighth century BC, the social and economic complexity of this region had been steadily increasing. Fulminante reiterates this trend in the Conclusion, while summarizing all of the preceding chapters. She emphasizes that this type of urban study is inherently complex, but shows that by using a combination of methods and approaches, new patterns can be observed and new interpretations can be made. Her appendix presents her data in easy to access charts and graphs.

Fulminante's book is very specialized and may be difficult to follow by those scholars not thoroughly familiar with the intricacies of the debate on early Latium Vetus and its urbanization. A working knowledge of GIS is also helpful in order to understand some of the methods used. Despite this complexity, the multitude of graphs, charts, and maps (both throughout the text, and in the appendix) not only help guide the reader through the arguments, but also provide interested scholars with vast quantities of data whence they can draw their own conclusions. Fulminante's research has made a significant contribution to the field, and using her comprehensive method will continue to expand the breadth of knowledge on early urbanism.

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