INTRODUCTION

Paul Erdkamp

> At the time when Rome first began to rise into a position of worldwide splendour, destined to live so long as men shall exist, in order that she might grow to a towering stature, Virtue and Fortune [. . .] formed a pact of eternal peace. For if either one of them had failed her, Rome would not have attained complete supremacy. Her people, from the very cradle to the end of their childhood, a period of about 300 years, carried on wars about her walls. Then, entering upon adult life, after many toilsome wars, they crossed the Alps and the sea. Grown to youth and manhood, from every region which the vast globe includes, they brought back laurels and triumphs. And now, declining into old age, and often owing victory to its name alone, she has come to a quieter period of life. Thus the respected city, after humbling the proud necks of savage nations, and making laws, the everlasting foundations of liberty, like a careful parent, wise and wealthy, has entrusted the management of her inheritance to the Caesars, as to her children. [. . .] Throughout all regions and parts of the earth she is accepted as mistress and queen. Everywhere the white hair of the senators and their authority are honoured and the name of the Roman people is respected.
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> (*Ammianus Marcellinus* 14.6.3–6)

In the second half of the fourth century AD, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus – who was born in Syrian Antioch, but as an officer in the Roman army had seen much of the empire in east and west, including the city of Rome – compared the stages in her history to the phases in a person's life. In her young years, the settlement of farmers on the lower course of the Tiber had conquered its Italian neighbours. Rome reached adulthood, in Ammianus' view, when she began to expand her power across the Alps and overseas in the aftermath

of the Punic Wars. It is at this stage that Rome emerged as the capital of the civilized world.

In Ammianus' days, however, the capital had grown old and had wisely handed over government to younger forces – the Caesars, her children as it were. It was a diplomatic way of saying that power had shifted to cities like York, Milan, Antioch – and above all Constantinople. Already in the early third century AD, Herodian (1.6) – historian and administrator – could write that Rome was where the emperor was, a process that had been finalized when Ammianus wrote the words quoted above. Rome had become peripheral, as the political and military gravity had shifted towards the war zones in the north and east. Fewer and fewer emperors found occasion to visit Rome. When Constantine founded Constantinople, Rome had long lost its position at the heart of the empire, although its high standing is reflected in the fact that the emperor deliberately reproduced the senate, the dole and games in his new capital.

Many studies of ancient Rome focus on its physical remains and monuments: even robbed of most of their marble, the fora, baths, temples, theatres and amphitheatres, arches and columns are still able to reflect some of the splendour and majesty of the city in former days. This is the aspect of ancient Rome that is most visible nowadays. Many people know the city through its ancient monuments. Ironically, after having been a quarry for building material and a citadel of noble families during the Middle Ages, the Colosseum today draws almost as many visitors as it did during the first centuries of its existence. Of course, much of this is part of the cliché of ancient Rome: gladiators, bread and circuses – one of the things that every tourist goes to see when in Rome. The crowds at the Ara Pacis or the Baths of Caracalla are significantly smaller.

The monuments are an important part of ancient Rome, but they do not provide the focal point of this companion. Martial (*Epigr.* 7.61) presents us with the following image of Rome in his day:

> The audacious shopkeepers had appropriated to themselves
> the whole city, and a man's own threshold was not his own.
> You, Germanicus [Domitian], bade the narrow streets
> grow wide; and what but just before was a pathway became
> a highway. No column is now girt at the bottom with
> chained wine-flagons; nor is the Praetor compelled to walk
> in the midst of the mud. Nor, again, is the barber's razor
> drawn blindly in the middle of a crowd, nor does the

> smutty cookshop project over every street. The barber, the vintner, the cook, the butcher, keep their own places. The city is now Rome; recently it was a great shop.

According to modern estimates, Rome was home to roughly a million inhabitants, making it not only the largest city of Antiquity by far, but probably also the most densely populated one. The passage from Martial reveals a certain tension, as even in Antiquity the emperor Domitian wanted to free the monuments from the rabble that lived among them. His view, at least according to our hostile sources, was the same as Nero's, who welcomed the fact that the Great Fire of AD 64 created space for his new palace complex. However, Vespasian gave the area back to the populace, not least in the form of the Colosseum.

In a sense, we too want to give back Rome to its inhabitants. Rome is addressed in this volume primarily as a city in which many thousands of men and women were born, lived and died. While it may seem at first sight no more than a curious fact that Rome was the first city to have grown to such a size (reached by London only *c.* 1800), it is worthwhile to ask how such an enormous metropolis operated. A city in general is a complex phenomenon, characterized by the multifarious social relations among its inhabitants (and the people beyond), their economic functioning, the determinants governing the distribution of political influence and their cultural diversity. Ancient Rome clearly was an exceptional city in terms of size, diversity and complexity, and it is this fact that provides the focal point of this volume. The guiding principle that is intended to tie together the various approaches to the city of ancient Rome in this volume is provided by the question of how its exceptional position and status influenced and determined ancient Rome as a city, in other words as a living organism consisting of many thousands of people.

Most of the chapters will concentrate on the roughly 500 years of what Ammianus called Rome's adulthood: its years of splendour and power, when the city was still very much at the heart of the empire. The centuries up to and including the first phase of Rome's expansion overseas are dealt with in an opening chapter on the emergence of Rome as a city-state and the development of the city as its power expanded (Grandazzi, Chapter 1). Financed by the booty taken from vanquished enemies, successful generals built monuments within the urban space of Rome that expressed the link between military victory and communal identity.

Part I of the companion deals with the size, composition and formation of the city's population. One of the exceptional features of Rome was its size, and the Part begins with an analysis of the evidence on population size, which is indissolubly linked to the question of the social make-up of the city, as the few figures we possess can only be interpreted in relation to the city's social structure (Morley, Chapter 2). The size and social fabric of the city's populace are determined by various demographic forces. The physical and biological conditions of a mega-city in Mediterranean surroundings shaped the mortality regime of Rome (Scheidel, Chapter 3). In view of the high levels of mortality, Rome's growth was clearly due to immigration, which not only determined the demography of Rome, but also its ethnic and cultural diversity (Moatti, Chapter 5). Another important aspect of human mobility in the Roman world was the trade in slaves. As slaves, either imported from overseas or born in servitude, and as freedmen they became a vital part of the populace of the Roman capital (Herrmann-Otto, Chapter 4). The smallest, but at the same time most important, unit of the city's populace was the family. One's social place and identity in Rome was very much determined by which family one belonged to and which position one had in that family (Rawson, Chapter 6). Finally, an aspect of Rome that has been too much neglected is that it was not only inhabited by people, but by numerous animals as well, who were either welcomed as pets or as working animals necessary for the city's logistics, or worsened living conditions by exacerbating disease transmission in the city (MacKinnon, Chapter 7).

Part II addresses the urban fabric of Rome, starting with an outline of the developments of the city's topography from the mid-republic to late imperial times (Dumser, Chapter 8). The smallest unit within the urban fabric consists of the inhabitants' dwellings, ranging from wealthy mansions to apartments in the infamous *insulae* (Storey, Chapter 9). Evidence on the streets, districts and neighbourhoods reflects higher levels of organization and administration (Lott, Chapter 10). A significant part of the city's space was devoted to various types of monuments. The development of these monuments and the shift in types of monument in republican and imperial times mirror changes in the political structure of Rome (Miller, Chapter 11). Analysis of the urban fabric inevitably leads to the question of where Rome exactly ended. In fact, urban Rome merged with its rural surroundings, as on its borders the city gradually evolved into countryside (Witcher, Chapter 12).

Shawn Graham (Chapter 16) compares the city of Rome to a living organism, and this image is at the heart of Part III. Not only the human and non-human inhabitants of the city, but also the buildings, monuments and infrastructure required sustenance in the form of food and fodder, building material, fuel and water. In view of the city's size, in combination with a transport system that depended on human, animal and wind energy, the logistics of the city may justly be characterized as a nightmare. The main arteries of Rome's logistical system consisted of the Tiber and of the roads. The Tiber and the transportation it offered were important factors in the location and urban development of Rome (Tuck, Chapter 13). Enormous quantities of goods needed to be brought into and distributed within the city, and the nature of transportation and traffic, exacerbated by the movement of the city's numerous inhabitants, constitutes an important aspect of the workings of the city (Laurence, Chapter 14). Rome's food supply operated on the margins of the logistically possible, and its functioning depended very much on the intense involvement of the authorities. What the inhabitants of Rome ate and how they received it reflects the city's exceptional position as imperial capital (Erdkamp, Chapter 15). The same applies to the supply of non-edible goods. Estimating the volumes of building material and fuel gives us an idea of the enormous volumes involved and shows the necessity to understand the nature of the networks involved (Graham, Chapter 16). Finally, Rome is famous for its water supply. The building and maintenance of the aqueducts and the organization of the distribution of water again reflect the choices made by the city's rulers (Bruun, Chapter 17).

In contrast to a widespread misconception, most of Rome's inhabitants had to work to sustain their accustomed way of life. The economic activities and the nature of the labour employed are the subject of Part IV. Not only the rich, but also the mass of common inhabitants of Rome together constituted an enormous market for goods and services. What does the evidence tell us about the size and nature of the economic activities in Rome (Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, Chapter 18)? Economic and social factors determine the nature of the labour involved, whether servile or free, whether male or female, and whether permanent or temporary (Hawkins, Chapter 19). The professional organizations clarify the workings of the urban community, as they were not only geared to the professional requirements of their members, but also fulfilled other needs (Liu, Chapter 20). One line of work within the city was built upon the sexual needs of part of the populace. This activity may

be said to have taken place on the margins of society socially, but not topographically (McGinn, Chapter 21).

Part v discusses the various relationships between the rulers of Rome and the ruled. During the Republic the body of citizens developed civic rituals that strengthened and expressed the political community. As the nature of the rulers, but also of the political significance of the population of Rome changed, so did the nature of the civic rituals within the city (Ziolkowski, Chapter 22). Part of the process of state formation was the development of instruments to control the urban population. While the authorities expressed responsibility for maintaining order in Rome, the extent to which they actually undertook and succeeded in offering a secure environment to their citizens was fairly limited (Kelly, Chapter 23). The inhabitants of Rome were not passive subjects, even beyond the increasingly limited range of influence that the political constitution allowed them. Protests frequently turned into riots, as parts of the populace communicated their displeasure with current affairs or even tried to enforce their desires (Aldrete, Chapter 24). Apart from the food supply, the games were already denounced by contemporary observers as bribes directed by the emperors at a politically disempowered citizenry. What role did the games play in the relations between rulers and the ruled (Purcell, Chapter 25)?

Buildings and objects that testified to the various beliefs and ideas about the relationship between mortals and the gods were manifest throughout the city, as were religious activities within both the private and public domain (Bendlin, Chapter 26).The calendar, festivals and various ways in which time was structured in Rome also reveal the link between political and religious life within the city (Salzman, Chapter 27). The Romans commemorated their dead in various ways, but as the burial or cremation of the dead was prohibited within the city itself, this aspect of urban life was concentrated beyond the city's borders. The monuments and graves of the dead, including Christian catacombs, replicate their wealth and social status (Rutgers, Chapter 28). The number of Christians in Rome steadily grew, and as Rome became less and less an imperial capital, it became more and more a Christian city. The impact of Christianity on late-antique Rome is mirrored in the shift of the urban topography towards churches, the make-up and role of the urban aristocracy and the role of the bishop (Lee, Chapter 29).

The chapters in the Epilogue do not so much address Rome as a thriving community of men and women, citizens and slaves, rulers and the ruled, but rather as an idea. Edwards (Chapter 30) explores the

thinking about Rome throughout the ages by investigating the image of Rome in ruins in the works of several Greek and Roman authors, Virgil and Tacitus in particular. Rowland (Chapter 31) discusses the image and symbolic power of Rome in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and modern times. The Popes emphasized their position as heirs to Rome, but so did such revolutionaries as the fourteenth-century Roman Cola di Rienzo, who named himself Tribune, or Mussolini, whose symbols and themes were inspired by imperial Rome.

Numerous approaches to ancient Rome are possible and it would have been easier to fill two volumes under the heading 'Companion to Ancient Rome' than one. Many readers will undoubtedly prefer the book to have included chapters on topics that are now only touched upon in several chapters or, even worse, will consider them not to have been dealt with adequately at all. Such topics as politics and administration, Roman law, art history and architecture are only dealt with in relation to the perspective on the city of Rome outlined above. For example, several aspects of politics in Rome are dealt with in Chapter 22 (Ziolkowski) on civic rituals and political spaces in republican and imperial Rome, but no attempt is made to cover the entire subject of politics in ancient Rome. Hence, the debate about the nature of political decision-making and the workings of the popular assemblies in republican times has no place in this volume. Elements of Roman law may be found in Chapter 23 (Kelly) on policing Rome, of art history in Chapter 11 (Miller) on the monuments, of architecture in Chapter 9 (Storey) on housing, but these topics are not dealt with in their own right. Inevitably, some criticism of the book will be based on the feeling that this is not the companion that the reader himself or herself would have designed or desired. Fortunately, many general books on the city of Rome have been and will be published, and these may be more to his or her liking. I can only hope that the volume as it is succeeds in providing a clear and coherent outline of Rome as a city, and thus of the ways in which the lives of its inhabitants were determined by the fact that they lived in the capital of the Roman empire.

1: THE EMERGENCE OF THE CITY

Alexandre Grandazzi

AN EXCEPTIONAL SITE

Before being a town, Rome occupied an exceptional site. Recent research makes it possible to understand how the Roman territory looked at the time when human communities, still small, began to visit it regularly and even live there temporarily. This happened in the mid-Bronze Age, roughly three and a half millennia ago. The Ancients sought the secret of the city's predominance in its beginnings. Moderns, using a different temporal scale, do so with the help of earth sciences. Neither geography nor even geology explains history. Rather, they make it possible.[1] Without taking into account the natural factors at work within the space that would become that of the largest town in the ancient world, we could understand neither the emergence of Rome in this precise spot nor many of its future developments.

The site of the city was produced by the interaction between a very ancient and originally maritime sedimentary substratum and the deposits, between 600,000 and 300,000 years ago, of two neighbouring volcanic systems, the Sabatini mountains to the north-east and the Alban mountains to the south-east. Another determining factor was a river, the valley of which was the widest in the whole peninsula and which, with its 400 km-long course and its forty or so tributaries, came to form a natural axis of communications.

The famous Roman hills were grouped around the river at a point where, checked by the mass of volcanic deposits, it bent sharply towards the south-west. In the centre of its meandering course, an island, formed as early as the Pleistocene, made it easier to cross the water. Two lines of ridges came to a halt at the left bank; one ran from the Quirinal to the Capitol, the other from the Esquiline to the Palatine, while the Caelian and the Aventine stood further back. Between these lay a wide

[1] For an analysis of the geology of the site of Rome, see Funiciello et al. 2006.

depression that used to be criss-crossed by watercourses and was liable to form marshland, as also happened around the Velabrum river. Further to the north, the alluvial plain within the river's wide western curve, which was frequently flooded, presented a huge open space. The hills, many of which were linked, were divided into secondary promontories. Thus the Capitol was made up of two peaks; the Palatine joined up with the Velia; the Quirinal had several peaks. We should imagine slopes many of which were steeper than they are today, the difference of altitude between the summits and the valley floor being *c.* 40 m. After twenty-seven centuries of urban life producing earthworks and fill-ins of many kinds, that distance of 40 m has been diminished.

Another particular feature is the abundance of fresh water, due to the presence of many springs. In a climate rather colder than that of today, these springs favoured the development of dense vegetation, as is reflected in place-names such as Querquetulanus mons, the hill of oaks (formerly the name of the Caelius), the Viminal and the Fagutal, names that indicate the presence of willows and beech trees.

With its hills, springs, river and island, the site of Rome at the dawn of its human history was clearly exceptional. Elsewhere, most of the places destined to become the sites of cities constituted naturally unified structures. The Etruscan cities of Veii, Tarquinia, Volsinies and Vulci each developed on a large plateau, isolated from their surroundings by a belt of waterways. In contrast, the hills alongside the Tiber presented a much more diverse framework.

Rome was by no means positioned at the centre of the region to which it belongs, namely Latium. Situated on the banks of the river that was to mark the boundary with Etruria, it was a frontier-town, an outpost facing foreign land. It was also to be the point at which the river could be bridged: a city that offered anyone arriving from the sea their first chance to cross the river. The coast was no more than *c.* 20 km away. Set behind the numerous coastal lagoons and thus protected against surprise incursions from the sea, Rome lay close enough to the shore to benefit from the civilizing inputs of Phoenicians, Greeks and Etruscans. As the Romans of the Republic liked to declare, geography itself showed that Rome, by virtue of its situation, was a town oriented towards the sea.

Nevertheless, the geological and geographical balance sheet remained mixed, for the advantages of the site were offset by obvious disadvantages, in particular the compartmentalized nature of the various districts. A site of such a nature could only be transformed into a unified whole by dint of collective human efforts. Nor did primitive

Latium possess the metal-bearing and agricultural riches that abounded in neighbouring Etruria. On the other hand, the configuration of the site of Rome did enable it to open up to the world beyond. Two axes crossed here, the one running from north-east to south-west, along the Tiber valley, the other, thanks to the island and the natural ford downstream from it, from north-west to south-east. Where these two axes intersected, the hills close to the river provided incomparable opportunities for defence and development.

We should also note the twofold centrality of the territory in which Rome would be founded and would develop: it was situated right in the middle of a peninsula that was itself at the centre of the world then constituted by the Mediterranean Sea.

A CHALLENGE FOR RESEARCH

Recent excavations have brought to light copious data, many still unpublished. Researchers compare these archaeological finds with the ancient texts. The exploration of Rome's origins began with Giacomo Boni's excavations in the Forum at the beginning of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, among the texts, apart from poetic works such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, we have a historiographical tradition, sometimes described as annalistic, that was exemplified in the first century BC by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; and also a learned tradition sometimes called 'antiquarian': here our principal representative is Varro. The epistemological problem for researchers stems from the basic disparity, both in nature and dates, that separates the archaeological data and the literary sources.[2] The archaeological evidence, contemporary with the past of which it constitutes a direct trace, is lacunose; and the literary sources go back no further than the third century BC and mostly date from the end of the first century BC. These texts recount a partly fabulous history, passed down through centuries in the city of Rome, in which authentic information concerning, for example, place-names and religious rites is intermingled with the myths and beliefs of the various generations through which the tradition passed. Among modern specialists, there are two schools of thought as to how to solve the methodological difficulties that arise from this documentary duality. For one of those schools of thought, which we may call sceptical rather than

[2] For a general presentation of questions of methodology and historiography, see Grandazzi 1997 and Grandazzi 2007.