



---

Early Rome and Latium. Economy and Society c. 1000-500 B.C. by C. J. Smith

Review by: Fay Glinister

*The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 87 (1997), pp. 271-272

Published by: [Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/301386>

Accessed: 12/11/2012 09:28

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



*Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Roman Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

*Birkbeck College, University of London*

EMMA DENCH

C. J. SMITH, *EARLY ROME AND LATIUM. ECONOMY AND SOCIETY c. 1000–500 B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 290, 8 figs, 8 maps. ISBN 0–19–815031–8. £35.00.

Smith's book, a revised version of his doctoral thesis, is divided into two parts: Rome and Latium down to 600 B.C., and during the sixth century (the latter section including a discussion of Etruria). Within each section, he outlines the current state of the archaeological evidence, and, using relevant literary material, draws cautious and reasonable conclusions. Appendices discuss archaic inscriptions and catalogue the major Latin sites, with skeleton bibliography. The maps are schematic; that of Latium in particular would have benefited from topographical details.

S.'s book valuably highlights the importance of looking at early Rome from the Bronze Age onwards, as it emerges from the end of a long period of development, by contrast with its once typical presentation (by historians) as a semi-mythic preamble to the 'real' Rome of the Republic. But its chief usefulness lies in the amount of scattered archaeological evidence marshalled together in English, which will be of benefit to those interested in early Italy (though its student readers may well have trouble with untranslated terms such as *lastra fittile* (135), *argilla figulina* (122), etc.).

The archaeological evidence is presented according to Latial phases; this, and the organizational layout as a whole, is rather frustrating in practice: chasing up specific sites or themes takes persistence. Though the literary evidence is better for the sixth century B.C. than for the preceding period, the dividing point (600 B.C.) otherwise seems rather arbitrary and means for Rome — the most important site — that the transition to an urbanized, organized state is buried, and the sense of continuity and change in archaeological terms is lost.

Moreover, S.'s organization imposes an uneasy division between archaeological and literary evidence, a division often ignored in practice. Who would look for a discussion of the Lupercalia or the Septimontium under the heading 'Rome: The Archaeological Evidence' (ch. 10)? — yet there they are (155–6). Discussions of Servius Tullius, the Equus October, and the Lapis Niger inscription appear under the same heading, even though it is the stated aim of ch. 11 to combine the archaeological, literary, and documentary evidence available for the sixth century B.C. (185). To my mind it is preferable to avoid these artificial temporal, archaeological, literary, and documentary divides, and to focus instead on themes.

The wide range of modern interpretations summarized in the discussion on the archaeological evidence (e.g. 160ff., on S. Omobono) often leaves little room for S.'s own views and analysis. However, S. gets to grips more thoroughly and interestingly with the literary evidence on early Rome, and makes useful points, for example about the *gens*.

Various typographical errors are liable to cause confusion: Magna Mater at Satricum should read Mater Matuta (138; correct elsewhere); Lucus Feroniae should read Lucus Ferentinae (220); a 'not' appears to be missing from 186, l. 4; 'as' should be 'was' at 169, l. 27.

*University College London*

FAY GLINISTER