

second phase was that associated with Caesar's heir; examination of the foundations shows that Octavian extended the Forum another 20m to the south-east to align its façade with the side of his new Senate House, the Curia Iulia, which was inaugurated in 29 BC.

Delfino and his collaborators (there are substantial contributions by Helga Di Giuseppe, Sabrina Zampini and others) have thus identified and reconstructed a hitherto unknown residential area on the lower slopes of the Capitoline, highlighted Caesar's major impact on the landscape of this part of the city, and confirmed the role of Octavian in the extension and completion of the complex. They have made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the very centre of the city of Rome.

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LACEY M. WALLACE. *The origin of Roman London*. 2014. xv+192 pages, 76 colour and b&w illustrations, 25 tables. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-107-04757-0 hardback £75.



This book concerns the settlement, people and activities attested at London from the town's foundation following the Roman invasion of Britain, in the AD 40s, through to the early AD 60s. It

focuses on this specific—and brief—period of time so as to undertake a detailed study of the archaeological material and to address key questions about the early town including the nature of its origin, how and why it came into being, and who lived there during its earliest phases. Wallace argues that this is a crucial period for understanding the town, but it is a period that has hitherto not received sufficient attention. Questions about the origin of (Roman) London have always encountered difficulties, not least as a result of the intensity of subsequent occupation of the site through to the present. Piecing together the evidence for the earliest activity from across Roman London within a coherent spatial and chronological framework has been no easy task. Wallace, however, has successfully brought together the evidence and provides a useful discussion of the results. That this study could take place at all is tribute to the long history of archaeological work that has been undertaken in London, often in difficult conditions.

The book begins with a discussion of the history of the study of the origin and early development of London, with the objective of tackling a key question about the nature of pre-Roman activity in the vicinity of the later Roman town. Wallace effectively explores the subject by assessing the theories that have been posited and the nature of the evidence for Iron Age activity. Physical features found at so-called *oppida* sites in Iron Age Britain have not been found at London. The term *oppidum*, however, has been critiqued and it is not impossible that some kind of significance was attached to the London area during the Iron Age, which is beyond our current ability to perceive.

The discussion then turns to review military foundation theories. Wallace emphasises that there is very little evidence of any military establishment here and suggests that the argument for a civilian trading port remains the most likely explanation for the foundation of London. She suggests that land may have been designated as state-owned territory (*ager publicus*), although she acknowledges that there is little evidence to support this. The conclusion to the volume (Chapter 6) provides further discussion of this issue and argues that while there may have been military involvement in the creation of some of the key roads and the bridge across the Thames, the “new town” (p. 155) in the Cornhill area may have been founded on *ager publicus* by high-status Romano-Gallic citizens, with official permission from

the procurator. This interpretation would have major implications for the social reconstruction of the population of the early town. A potential difficulty, however, is that Wallace relies on reconstructions of the Iron Age–Roman transition, including the processes of urban development, that do not take into account more recent developments in critical analysis relating to themes such as Romanisation and its alternatives: identity and ethnicity. It also places heavy emphasis on two specific pieces of evidence: the Tabard Square inscription referring to Gallic traders and a writing tablet referring to landowners in the area of modern Kent, both of which are later in date and provide too little information to support such conclusions, especially considering what other sources may have been lost.

The reconstructions of the nature of the different areas of the town are useful, as is recognition of their different phases of development, although from the attractively produced plans and descriptions of features it is clear how fragmentary much of the surviving evidence is, and how much may be missing. The discussion of the roundhouses identified within the early town is interesting and perhaps more could have been made of how these buildings have been studied by Iron Age archaeologists more generally.

A fire-destruction horizon widely attested in excavations across London has long been associated with the Boudican destruction of *c.* AD 60/1, as described by Tacitus. Although Wallace acknowledges that the horizon could date to anywhere between AD 50 and AD 70, and that there are problems with using the historical sources to date and interpret the archaeology, some more critical analysis would have been valuable here. Recent work in Iron Age and Roman archaeology, for example, has considered whether or not Boudica actually existed in the way that the texts suggest.

Chapter 5 examines the evidence relating to the townspeople with interesting analyses of a large amount of material evidence from these early phases. It examines the potential existence of different communities within the settlement, how they may have interacted and the evidence of different crafts and other activities. It creates a vivid image of the lives of the early settlers, although in some cases greater caution was required to avoid projecting modern behavioural assumptions onto the past.

Overall, this is a useful and interesting volume, collating the archaeological evidence of the earliest phases of Roman London in order to shed new light on the origin of the town. Wallace's attention to the detail of these early structural phases strengthens the book's value, as does the analysis of the material culture from the settlement, and it demonstrates the potential of what can be achieved when the data are available. It might have been further strengthened by broadening the study through comparative consideration of some of the other towns of Roman Britain and through the integration of more recent theoretical debates on the subject matter.

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J.A. BAIRD. *The inner lives of ancient houses: an archaeology of Dura-Europos*. 2014. xix+395 pages, 105 figures, 1 table. Oxford. Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-968765-7 hardback £85.



Dura-Europos, the ancient city located on the left bank of the Euphrates River in present-day Syria is famous for many things—its paintings, synagogue, Christian baptistery, papyri and military records—but not

for its houses. This book by J.A. Baird demonstrates that this lack of fame is unjustified. The archaeological campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s excavated more than one hundred houses and thousands of associated artefacts, generating the largest corpus of urban houses in the Roman East. Baird is not only the first to publish this material as a whole (an appendix to her study lists all finds from domestic contexts recorded in the archives), but she also uses it to gain insight into the daily life of the city's inhabitants. Dura is particularly suitable for such an undertaking because it is one of the few places where it is possible to study the archaeological remains *in tandem* with written sources from the same site, notably papyri, graffiti and dipinti. For her project, Baird has combined

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