

fortifications; the exploitation of intervening valleys; flooding and drainage and so on — some of which is explored in G. Heiken *et al.*, *The Seven Hills of Rome* (2007). Furthermore, by meandering so freely between Republican, Imperial, Renaissance and modern material as it does and by weaving together unrelated fragments to form a sustained fabric (or ‘palimpsest’, as V. sometimes describes it), the book runs the risk of appearing totemic and ahistorical: ancient and modern interpretations of the hills are frequently set side-by-side in order to establish an argument about thematic continuity, but this exercise can sometimes seem a little artificial.

One point on which V. might have pushed herself harder is the question in ch. 3 of how and when the elusive concept of the seven hills emerged: V. rightly rejects the view that Varro was the first to extend the concept of the seven hills from the festival of the Septimontium because of its prior appearance at Cic., *Att.* 6.5.11, but then assumes (69) that it was familiar in Rome long before Cicero and Varro. However, Cicero’s use of coded Greek in this letter of 50 B.C. to evade prying spies, and his elaborate allusions, may suggest that the concept of *astu heptalophon* was established in Greek long before it was in Rome. The cult of Dea Roma was widespread in the Greek East from at least the start of the second century B.C., and although there are no extant representations of Roma with seven hills before the late first century A.D. (129–33), it is not unlikely that the iconography was familiar in Greek cult long before that: this might explain the appearance of the seven-hilled city in the Sibylline Oracles and in Revelations, and why Virgil (referring to the personified Roma at *Aen.* 6.783, quoting *verbatim* his words at *Georg.* 2.535) was the first to establish it as a poetic commonplace. V. might also have profited from exploring, as well as perspectives of and from the hills, the dynamics of moving up and down them: triumphal processions up to the Capitoline that elevated the victorious Roman general, for example, or the significance of high-profile executions that toppled tyrants, treacherous slaves, false witnesses and the like from the Tarpeian rock or down the Gemonian Steps. At least in antiquity, this symbolically charged landscape was frequently imagined as the site where heaven and hell intersected with Roman life, and the relationship between hills and valleys was pivotal to this cosmic imagery.

But the book is purposefully wide-ranging and ambitious in its scope, and it may be disingenuous to gesture towards the inevitable gaps. *The Hills of Rome* is an original, intelligent and long-overdue study of an aspect of the city of Rome which will be of interest to classicists and modernists working in a number of different areas. It sets a new benchmark for the discussion of Roman cultural history and its reception, and demonstrates the importance and potential of cross-disciplinary and trans-historical methodologies. It is a rich tapestry of ideas, sophisticated and elegantly written, and makes a persuasive and compelling case that the seven hills are indeed the signature of the eternal city.

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J. SCHEID, *PLUTARCH, RÖMISCHE FRAGEN: EIN VIRTUELLER SPAZIERGANG IM HERZEN DES ALTEN ROM* (Texte zur Forschung 103). Darmstadt: WBG, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012. Pp. 268, plans. ISBN 9783534213122 (bound); 9783534734993 (e-book). €49.90.

Of note in John Scheid’s edition, translation, commentary and analysis of Plutarch’s *Roman Questions* (*Aitia Romaiika*) is S.’s interpretative final section (Aufbau und literarische Einordnung, 175–228). There, S. details his idea that the topography of an area in the centre of the city of Rome serves as an underlying organizing principle of Plutarch’s *Roman Questions*. This section is preceded by the Greek text with facing German translation and a crisply executed and informative commentary.

S. sees a coherent topographical underpinning to Plutarch’s work. This topography corresponds to an area bounded by four stopping points: (1) by the Forum Boarium and the Circus Maximus, (2) in the Forum Romanum, (3) near the south-west foot of the Capitoline, and (4) on the Capitoline. S. reconstructs a ‘walking tour’ around these points, arguing that Plutarch’s 113 questions can be more or less divided into eight unevenly distributed sets that refer directly or indirectly to places located in, or viewable from, these points. Consequently, multiple

returns are required to all stations except (mercifully) the endpoint on the Capitoline. S. provides small map sections as figures showing the walking paths, stopping points and sight lines of the tour.

It is important to S. that this 'walking tour' be literally possible either as a walk within the stations outlined or a visual tour from the Capitoline. He has even retraced with colleagues its steps in modern Rome (180). Now, S. does not see Plutarch's text as a tourist guidebook, but as a learned game for those in the know or a primer in Roman customs for young people (228). Either way, S. views the text as inextricably tied to the layout of a discreet area of Rome and wants to show how Plutarch bids his audience to refer to or recall this topography (228).

S. admits his topographical framework for the text is neither explicit nor self-evident (207), but he succeeds, after many contortions, in making it fit. S. has his work cut out for him from the moment Plutarch directly refers to topography. The first location mentioned by the text (Question 3) is the Temple of Diana on the Vicus Patricius, not possibly locatable or viewable from S.'s first station bordering the Circus Maximus and Forum Boarium (181). How does S. arrive at this stopping point? The first nine questions encompass the themes of brides, marriage and women's relations with their husbands and male relatives. S. asserts that we must recall the underlying aetiological myth for Roman marriage, the abduction of the Sabine women, a story traditionally placed in the Circus Maximus (181). But Question 4's explicit topographical reference, the Temple of Diana on the Aventine, pinpoints the first station for S. A viewer could possibly have seen that temple from a location bordering the Forum Boarium and Circus Maximus. The cleverness of S.'s play with the text is on full display when he adds that the tour's starting point makes so much sense because it refers to, albeit ever so obliquely, a mythical starting point of the Roman people: the abduction and eventual marriages of the Sabine women (181).

The simultaneous difficulty with and beauty of S.'s idea is that it is easy to find locations important to Roman tradition in the area he has Plutarch circumscribe, the ancient ritual, political and economic centre of the city. If Plutarch is concerned with explaining Roman customs, then we are naturally to be referred to places in the very area S. marks out. Think of Book 4 of Propertius' elegies (and Tara Welch's 2005 reading of it), a project at least topographically similar to that of S.'s Plutarch, generating as it does vistas and *aitia* of things in the same area: the Ara Maxima, the Tarpeian rock, a temple of Juppiter on the Capitoline, a statue of Vertumnus on the Vicus Tuscus etc. Such parallels in Roman literature reinforce S.'s idea that this topography is culturally important.

Yet S. goes too far in showing that the topography Plutarch has in mind can be precisely plotted. Ancient readers undoubtedly will have played with Plutarch's text in similar ways, but Plutarch's text's multiplicity of answers to its questions encourages the idea that any such play, topographical or otherwise, has to be less pat than S.'s interpretation permits. Consequently, S.'s closed topographical reading often seems at odds with the spirit of Plutarch's open-ended text that answers questions with answers that are themselves questions.

S.'s work draws welcome attention to Roman topography in Plutarch's *Roman Questions*. Although many readers will not be completely convinced of the particulars of S.'s 'walking tour', he will convince many that Plutarch's *Roman Questions* take the charged topography of ancient Rome as seriously as did the Romans whose ancient customs Plutarch was interrogating. With a complete package of text, translation, commentary and literary analysis, S.'s volume will encourage its readers to reconstruct their own topographical readings of Plutarch, and those paths that S. has opened are rich with possibilities.

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J. C. ANDERSON, JR, *ROMAN ARCHITECTURE IN PROVENCE*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xv + 291, 157 figs. ISBN 9780521825207. £65.00/US \$99.00.

Regional studies of Roman architecture, especially those which cover more than a single building type, are relatively rare, particularly in Anglophone scholarship. Anderson's monograph is the first attempt to provide such a survey for Gallia Narbonensis, architecturally one of the richest of