



Colonización romana y territorio en Hispania. El caso de Hasta Regia

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TMA readers might be surprised to come across a book review of a Spanish publication on Iberian archaeology, a research topic that is currently not taught at Dutch universities. This review of the book entitled *Colonización romana y territorio en Hispania. El caso de Hasta Regia* (Roman colonization and territory in Hispania. The case of Hasta Regia) aims to bring an important recent Spanish publication on Iberian archaeology to the attention of non-Spanish readers, especially those interested in (Roman) colonization, regional field survey, provincial archaeology, and/or agrarian history. This monograph was published in the well-known *Instrumenta Collection* series of the University of Barcelona. The book is the result of the author's PhD dissertation, completed at the University of Cádiz. The main aims of the book are to reflect on the phenomenon of Roman expansionism and colonization in both Italy and the Iberian Peninsula and to illustrate this with the case study of Hasta Regia, located in Roman Baetica (currently Mesas de Asta, near Jérez in the province of Cádiz, Andalusia). From the Bronze Age (before its foundation as a Roman colony) to the Roman Imperial period, Hasta Regia held a central position in

a dense network of trading posts, amphora kilns, and urban sites, not far from Gades (Cádiz), the Guadalquivir valley, and the former *Lacus Ligustinus*.

Contents

The book is structured into three parts of variable size and depth of content. The first part (four chapters, 121 pages), entitled *Epistemology of territory and colonization*, is devoted to an in-depth survey of diverse traditions in the study of the expansion of Roman territory throughout its history, ranging from Graeco-Roman geography to world-systems theory. These introductory chapters are written from a chronological perspective starting with pre-colonial models, i.e. the *ver sacrum*, followed by the *coloniae maritimae* and *latinae*, and, lastly, the imperial colonial policies outside the Italian Peninsula. The main purpose of this general introduction is to trace the entire corpus of written sources, both agronomic and legal texts, and to explore the historiography of recent scholarly debates. Some of the debated concepts are rather complex but relevant to the colonization process. For instance, colonization has been studied from the perspective of agrarian and social history and anthropology, particularly on the Finley-Lepore debate on the Marxist economic perspectives.

The author offers a reflection on the history of Roman colonization since its origins in the Italic Peninsula. Many of the models applied to Italy, such as the *coloniae maritimae* and the *coloniae latinae*, do not reflect the reality of Roman colonialism in the Iberian Peninsula before the Late Republic. Therefore, the author aims to investigate the historical evolution of Roman colonial expansion from the perspective of the Iberian Peninsula itself to characterize its development more precisely. The growing influence of Rome in Iberian affairs from the Second Punic War crystallizes in the second century BC with the subjugation of peoples inhabiting Southern Iberia, such as the Turdetani. This indigenous tribe was already within the sphere of influence of the Graeco-Roman urban tradition, because of their geographical vicinity to and trading connections with Punic and Greek colonies, such as Gades and Malaka.

The author's approach is to introduce explicit comparisons and case studies from the Iberian Peninsula to illustrate the general evolution of Roman colonization, which has been done almost exclusively for Italy. The thorough study of Republican colonialism in Iberia before Caesar, and from Tiberius onwards, is one of the most relevant parts of the book. In this section, the author stresses the relevance of the discussion of the earliest colonies, including Carteia, and perhaps Castulo, Corduba, and Isturgi, in the Late Republican period. Metellinum (79 BC) and the later foundation of Emerita Augusta (25 BC), for example, are some of the most interesting case studies that explain the changing political motivations of Republican and Imperial colonization. In

a separate chapter, the author engages with the debate on Republican vs. Imperial colonization programs, i.e. under Caesar and Octavian/Augustus, in depth. As a result, the particularities of their colonization programs are explored in detail and linked to the historical development of the territory of Hasta Regia.

The second part, *Hasta Regia: historic review and spatial analysis* (four chapters, 122 pages), is linked to the previous chapter on Caesar's and Augustus' respective colonization programs, while highlighting Hasta Regia as a case study. This section particularly emphasizes the impact that the Roman colony had on its territory. This is a very welcome approach, since it provides an opportunity to elaborate on the complex relationship between the rural and the urban spheres, and between the indigenous population and the colonists. Even in the case that early contacts during the Republican period were gradual, the restructuring of the territory and the social organization likely had an impact on the consolidation of the Roman administration and the urban territorial organization implemented by Augustus.

The study of the many facets of territorial organization in this book forms an original addition to the Roman colonialism debate, as it goes beyond the usual discussion of colonial foundation dates and links the evolution of the colonial polities with the Late Republican expansionism in the southern Iberian Peninsula, ranging from Pompey to Caesar. One of the main aspects discussed is the evolution of such a colonial landscape, indicated by the construction of the Via Augusta and the presence of an important indigenous community that eventually participated in Roman colony foundations in another political form, i.e. as *incolae*. The subject of colonial and indigenous identities is a hot topic that is carefully approached from many perspectives, such as epigraphy, legal texts, and settlement patterns, an approach comparable with the scholarship of J. Edmonson on the colony of Augusta Emerita.¹ Another element that might attract the attention of those interested in the literary evidence of Roman agriculture and economy is the connection made between the territory of Hasta Regia and Columella's *De Re Rustica*. Columella was born in the adjacent territory of Gades. Thus, we can assume that Columella was well aware of land exploitation, agricultural activities, and further particularities on the fringes of the ancient *Lacus Ligustinus*. Finally, Martín-Arroyo explores the possibility of the existence of *limitatio* (land division) of the territory in order to accommodate the increasing flow of Italic veterans towards the south of the Iberian Peninsula after the end of the war against the Cantabri and Astures in 19 BC. This aspect is analyzed using several maps, showing the connections with the neighbouring communities of Eborac, Turris Caepionis, and Detumo-Sisipo, or the Via Augusta. Social aspects, such as ancient demography and reconstructions of settlement patterns in the vicinity of Hasta Regia, are mentioned in the text but not ex-

plored in depth, perhaps due to the absence of intensive archaeological field surveys of the area.

The book closes with a third part, *An overall perspective* (one chapter, 18 pages), summarizing all the aspects previously discussed. This short but useful section provides a chronological overview of Roman colonization using Iberian case studies and a final conclusion about the settlement pattern evolution in the territory of Hasta Regia.

Conclusion

This book is a thorough reflection on a multitude of legal concepts, historiographic traditions, and historical processes surrounding the subject at hand and is presented thoroughly and chronologically. Moreover, the volume is complemented by a thorough index. There are few figures and maps, which overall does not help to provide a spatial understanding of the colonial phenomena discussed. However, the section about Hasta Regia improves the visualization of the territorial approach with thematic maps, for instance of the settlement pattern and road networks.

This book has the potential to expand the understanding of Roman colonialism towards the Western Mediterranean and Iberia. In recent years, several projects have reflected on the nature of early Roman colonization, through aspects like demography, settlement patterns, and impact on indigenous communities in a broad geographical area. These projects have spanned the territory of Potentia in Le Marche, the Agro Pontino in southern Lazio, the territory of Aesernia in Molise, Venusia in Basilicata, the digital re-study of legacy data from the colonies of Cosa and Alba Fucens, and the archaeological study of land divisions undertaken by the Forma Italia surveys. These studies implemented research based on methods such as field surveys or spatial analysis, which are still not common in the field of Classical Archaeology in the Iberian research tradition. However, the future for the study of early Roman colonization is to expand the comparative perspective towards colonial models outside the Italic Peninsula, and this book helps to accomplish this task. Furthermore, this book may aid in bridging the gaps in diverse research traditions on the topic of Roman colonization.

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Endnote

- 1 Edmonson, J.C. 1992, "Creating a provincial landscape: Roman imperialism and rural change in Lusitania", *Studia Historica: Historia Antigua*, vol. 10, pp. 13-30.