FINDING ARCHAIC-AUGUSTAN ROME IN TIBULLUS 2.5

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Abstract. This article examines topographical imagery in Tibullus 2.5. While previous scholars have suggested that the proto-city in Tibullus’ poem is a pastoral scene that does not recall the city’s prehistory, it is argued that Tibullus’ placement of the proto-city on the Capitoline hill creates a vision of archaic Rome that resonates with memories of Rome’s early foundations and the city’s re-founding in the time of Augustus.

The mythic and unformed landscape of Tibullus 2.5 contains few topographical references and, as a result, the poem’s description of proto-Rome is often described as a pastoral and escapist vision of the legendary past.¹

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All translations are my own.

Yet this pre-Roman landscape need not be interpreted solely as an Augustan topos meant to evoke an image of rustic peasants living an unspoiled, idyllic existence. Both this lack of detail and the less urbane setting allow Tibullus’ audience to consider the few monuments that do appear in his poem—the Capitoline, Palatine, and Velabrum—as places of importance for his narrative on the early origins of the city. My discussion of early Rome in Tibullus’ poem will focus on two of the three sites that he mentions: the Capitoline and Palatine hills. The Palatine in Tibullus’ poem is a grassy slope, with no suggestion of Evander’s proto-Rome, or of Romulus as the founder who engaged in an aggressive struggle to rule Rome. It is the Capitoline that contains early Rome’s foundations. Like the Palatine, the Capitoline hill is a site that resonates with memories of Rome’s foundations and the city’s re-founding in Augustus’ time. This article will show that such use of monumental sites by Tibullus in his poem indicates that it is not only what is remembered about Rome’s foundations, but also where the foundations are recalled, that contributes to our understanding of how the community of Augustan Rome restored and reconstructed the past.

When Tibullus selects the Capitoline hill as the setting for Evander’s rustic settlement, his literary reconstruction of archaic Rome calls to mind a feature of Augustan Rome that existed during Tibullus’ own lifetime: the physical recreation of the foundations of archaic Rome on the Capitoline and Palatine hills by the emperor Augustus. Traces of the ancient city existed as reconstructed artifacts. It is this foundation landscape, superimposed upon and intermingled with the urban cityscape, that I propose Tibullus encourages his audience to recall when he describes proto-Rome in his elegy. A reading of the poem that considers the meaning and memories associated with the foundations of the city on both the Palatine and Capitoline hills in Augustan Rome strongly suggests that it was the Augustan restoration of the Capitoline that influenced Tibullus’ choice of location for proto-Rome.

Tibullus does mention several sites of mythic and historical interest in his poem, his use of topography serves not just as part of a pastoral background, but also as a significant setting for the early history of Rome.

A. Gosling, “Tibullus 2.5 and Augustan Propaganda,” EMC 31 (1987) 333-39, however, finds elements in the poem that suggest Tibullus is providing social commentary on Augustan Rome.

Virg. Aen. 8 and Tib. 2.5, along with Prop. 4.1, 4.4, 4.9, form a nexus of poems that define the city’s prehistory. Although I am confining my comments to Virgil and Tibullus, recent discussion of Propertius’ use of allusions to the Augustan city in his descriptions of proto-Rome can be found in E. Fantham, “Images of the City: Propertius’ New-Old Rome,” in T. N. Habinek and A. Schiesaro (edd.), The Roman Cultural Revolution (Cambridge 1997) 122-35; see also J. B. DeBrohun, Roman Propertius and the Reinvention of Elegy (Michigan 2003) 40-97.
Virgil’s vision of early Rome in *Aeneid* 8 also captures Tibullus’ imagination. Both poets depict Evander’s community as a rustic settlement of huts on a hill. But the changes that Tibullus makes to Virgil’s Palatine settlement, including the change in location, are significant. If the description of the proto-city in Tibullus is put into the context of the emperor Augustus’ building program and Virgil’s portrait of Rome’s earliest foundations (*Aen.* 8.314-69), then it is possible to understand Tibullus’ transfer of the foundation story from the Palatine to the Capitoline as a reshaping of the Palatine myth of Rome’s foundations. By extension, my discussion of Tibullus’ shift in the location of proto-Rome from the Palatine to the Capitoline examines how the community of Augustan Rome remembered the past in its monuments; and considers why, when recalling the memory of the early city, the Romans did not have one foundation site but instead created two traditions for the founding of the city.

**Tibullus and Virgil: A Shared Tradition?**

Although this study explores the idea that Augustus’ topographical restoration of the archaic city was a possible inspiration for Tibullus’ elegy 2.5, any discussion of the foundation tradition in Tibullus must take into consideration Virgil’s potential for influence on Tibullus’ interpretation of early Rome. Murgatroyd determines the date of composition for Tibullus’ poem from an inscription containing Messalinus’ name among a list of the *Quindecimviri Sacris Faciundis* that can be dated to 17 BC (*CIL* 6.32323.152). If Messalinus’ appointment was a recent one, then it is possible that Tibullus composed his poem in 19 or 18 BC, right before his death. Because Virgil’s *Aeneid* was a work-in-progress by that date, Murgatroyd suggests that Tibullus was able to hear recitals of the *Aeneid* while composing his poem.\(^6\) Other scholars differ: Buchheit, for example, pushes back the date of Tibullus’ death until after 19 BC, concluding that the resemblances between Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Tibullus 2.5 are so close that Tibullus must have seen a polished version of Virgil’s epic before composing his poem.\(^7\) At the opposite side of the debate, Cairns and Della Corte are both hesitant to declare the *Aeneid* as having a considerable

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influence on Tibullus’ poem because of differences between the two works. But it is likely, as Bright points out, that while both poets are writing in a time when national security and the desire for conquest are of utmost concern, differences between the two works occur because Tibullus is writing elegy not epic, and the conventions of elegy do not allow for the same treatment of these topics.

Maltby’s recent discussion of the history of early Rome in Tibullus 2.5, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and Propertius 3.9 and 4.1 also considers the question of whether or not Tibullus was aware of *Aeneid* 8 when he composed his poem; and, if so, how much inspiration he might have taken from the Evander episode in *Aeneid* 8. His investigation concludes with the possibility that while Tibullus was familiar with the *Aeneid* in some form, probably from hearing parts of the epic in a recital rather than having access to a more polished copy, the poet drew his inspiration for his elegy from a variety of sources in addition to the *Aeneid*. These include Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, and earlier historical traditions about the founding of Rome, among them Livy, Ennius, and the Hellenistic κτίσεις (poems about the founding of cities). As Maltby suggests, the *Aeneid* was a key influence on Tibullus’ poem, but Tibullus was aware of other discourses and traditions about the founding of Rome that could be used as a creative backdrop against which to define his own portrait of the proto-city.

*Augustus and the Refounding of Rome*

The vision of archaic Rome that Augustus presented to the community should not be discounted as another source of inspiration for the poets. Both Virgil and Tibullus composed their works in the midst of a city that was being transformed by construction. The visual impact of Augustus’ reordering of the city was dramatic. Themes of social behavior and models of civilized authority appeared

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everywhere for the community of Augustan Rome to consider. The restoration of the city suggests a commemoration of the triumph and renewal of Rome in a political and religious context that embraced Rome’s endurance and stability. Both the Palatine and Capitoline hills featured prominently in the restoration. Each site had long-standing historical associations with Rome’s religious and political past that could be compared to religious and political traditions that were initiated during Augustus’ reign.

The Palatine was traditionally the site of Rome’s archaic foundations and the site where Augustus, as the new founder of a renewed Rome, also resided. The Palatine’s reconstruction had begun as early as 36 BC when Augustus bought property on the hill on which to build his own house. When lightning struck the spot that Augustus had planned to use for his private residence, he built the temple of Apollo on the site instead. A residence for Augustus was then built on the Palatine at public expense (Dio. Cass. 49.15.5) and was directly linked to the Temple of Apollo by means of a ramp. The effect of the side-by-side residences was that Augustus appeared to have a close living and working relationship with his patron-deity. Thus, the Palatine hill became a focal point of the new Augustan building program.

In addition to establishing a connection between himself and Apollo, the emperor also suggested comparisons between himself and the city’s legendary founder Romulus by placing his house near the hut of Romulus. Although Augustus declined to grant the senators’ request that he accept Romulus’ name (Suet. Aug. 7.2), his decision to highlight Romulus’ role in the civil and moral affairs of the early city was apparent from his prominent placement of Romulus’ statue in the Forum Romanum, and from his restoration of the hut of Romulus, which stood on the Palatine as a symbol of Rome’s humble origins.

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12 C. Edwards, Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City (Cambridge 1996) 33 refers to Augustus as “Romulus’ heir, the new founder of Rome.” I prefer to use the phrase “the new founder of a renewed Rome,” due to Augustus’ emphasis on restoration and renewal in his building program.


In Augustus’ time, priests were required to stand guard over the hut and to restore it to pristine condition as soon as it showed any signs of damage or wear (Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 1.79.11). As a symbol of how Rome’s modest origins developed from rustic foundations to a great empire, the hut focused attention on the humble lifestyle of the city’s early inhabitants.

In contrast, the Capitoline was the focal point of religious and political activity for the emerging city during the Roman republic. The religious center of the hill was the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which was constructed in the sixth century BC. By Tibullus’ time, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus dazzled visitors with its gilded roof, which was visible from many vantage points in the city. The poet’s decision to place proto-Rome on the Capitoline highlights the role that the hill played in the city’s origins, and its continued importance as a center of urban development. Its position as the final destination for the triumphator as he ascended the hill in order to place his spoils in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus meant that the site held a special significance for the community as the guarantor of empire.

The role that the Capitoline assumed during Augustus’ reign is not easily defined. While the newer Palatine complex of buildings, which included the emperor’s residence and the Temple of Apollo, drew attention away from the former prominence of the Capitoline hill, Augustus’ building projects on the Capitoline defined Romulus as a leader who contributed to Roman religious and political development. As part of his restructuring of the hill’s architectural program, Augustus chose to build a second hut of Romulus in the vicinity of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus sometime during the years 26-20 BC.

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15 M. Jaeger, Livy’s Written Rome (Ann Arbor 1997) 5 calls the Capitoline “the center of Roman space” due to its importance for the religious and political development of the city during the Roman republic.


18 For the Capitoline’s new role in Augustan Rome, see D. Favro, The Urban Image of Augustan Rome (Cambridge 1996) 201-06. While Favro sees a decline in the Capitoline’s importance in Augustan Rome, I suggest that the Capitoline’s role is redefined by patrons and poets alike at the start of the Roman empire in order to emphasize the part the hill played in shaping the development of the community. By placing the hut of Romulus on the Capitoline, Augustus restored the memory of how the community that would evolve into the Roman empire had many of its political and religious origins on the Capitoline.

19 P. Gros, Aurea Templa: recherches sur l’architecture religieuse de Rome à l’époque d’Auguste (Rome 1976) 97. A. Balland, “La casa Romuli au Palatin et au Capitole,” REL 62 (1984) 57-80 argues that, since the first mention of the Capitoline hut is in literature from the Augustan period, it is likely that the hut was constructed in the time of Augustus. For evidence that the Capitoline hill was occupied as early as the ninth and eighth centuries BC, see Claridge [13] 229.
The Capitoline recreation of the hut stood in simple contrast to the impressive display of the golden-roofed temple of Jupiter. In the same precinct on the hill, Augustus also restored Romulus’ shrine to Jupiter Feretrius, the first temple built on the Capitoline. As the place where Romulus deposited his spoils of military victory, this temple first defined the role of the hill as central to the city’s military achievements (Livy 1.10.4-7; Mon. Anc. RG 4.1-8), and thus established an initial focal point on the site for Rome’s religious practices. Romulus was the first to celebrate the triple triumph on the hill, and later Augustus stopped his ritual of commemorating military victories on the Capitoline after he celebrated the triple triumph there in 29 BC. The ceremony of the triumph on the Capitoline suggests stability in this religious practice, and military success, from the kingship of Romulus to Augustus’ reign, with the hut of Romulus acting as a visual symbol of the continuity of a strong religious presence, and political leadership, on the hill. In this way, the emperor avoided too close a comparison between himself and Romulus on the Palatine by diverting attention to another site.

The emperor may have wished to do this because the Palatine was the site upon which Romulus stood in order to win the augury contest. When his brother Remus threatened the borders of the foundation that Romulus had established on the hill, Romulus murdered him (Livy 1.7.2f.). Thus, the Palatine was the setting for the murder, as the brothers fought over who would be king. Although many versions of the story of Romulus involved strife and civil discord as key factors in the founding of the city, by the time of Augustus’ reign there existed multiple stories of the city’s foundations and not all of them employed Remus as a murder victim. While the Romans were not notorious for conducting rites of human sacrifice, they occasionally resorted to the practice because they believed the hero-grave of a sacrificial victim protected the city (22.57.6). Wiseman points out Florus’ alternate version of the lives of Romulus and Remus (Flor. Epit. 1.1.8). It describes Remus’ death as a sacrificial offering of human blood that sanctified the city walls and ensured Rome’s safety. The death of Remus, therefore, does not have to be Romulus’ responsibility.

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While both the Palatine and Capitoline huts represent Romulus and the founding tradition of archaic Rome, this replication is never mentioned anywhere in the literary tradition. Virgil has Aeneas tour the hut of Evander, not Romulus’ hut on the Palatine (Aen. 8.359-65); and Virgil only briefly mentions the Capitoline hut of Romulus, which he refers to as regia, when it appears on the shield (8.654). Many theories have been advanced as to why Augustus had two huts of Romulus.

The most recent arguments suggest that the reconstruction that took place on both the Palatine and Capitoline may have prompted the building of a second hut. According to Balland, the impact of the Palatine restoration of the hill by Augustus, which included placing the emperor’s own residence next to the restored hut of Romulus, would have been lessened by the second hut’s appearance on the Capitoline. Balland regards Augustus’ construction of the Capitoline hut as creating a connection between Romulus and Jupiter that downplayed the effect of the Palatine restoration and Apollo’s new prominent position in Augustus’ cultural program. The newer and more important temple of Apollo on the Palatine overshadowed the Capitoline, which had been the religious center for the city during Rome’s foundation and the Roman republic.

Edwards suggests that the second hut of Romulus appeared on the Capitoline as a way to moderate the effect of the decline in the religious functions on the hill. During his reign, Augustus transferred some of the religious functions of the Capitoline to the Palatine. For example, in Tibullus’ lifetime, the Sibylline books had been kept in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline hill, but they were moved to the Temple of Apollo Palatinus before Tibullus composed his poem 2.5: Suetonius mentions the placement of the books in gilded cages under the base of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus in 12 BC (Aug. 31.1) However, I propose that the Capitoline still played an important role for recalling many of the religious and political origins of the city, because Augustus placed Romulus’ hut on the Capitoline near the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus within a precinct of buildings that represented religious piety and order. The symbolism that the hut took on as a

also contains a similar reference to Remus’ blood and the walls of Rome. See also L. Richardson (ed.), Propertius: Elegies 1-4 (Norman 1977) 418.

26 For more on the transfer of the books from the Palatine to the Capitoline, see Murgatroyd [6] 164; Zanker [13] 108.
27 M. F. Williams, “Lawgivers and the Rule of Law in the Aeneid,” Latomus 272 (2003) 218f. describes how Romulus is recognized as the inventor of laws and as a peacemaker in
result of its Capitoline placement could evoke Augustan religious initiatives at
the same time as it recalled Romulus’ leadership in the political and religious
affairs of the city.

Virgil, Aeneid 8.347-65

In Virgil’s Aeneid 8, Aeneas is taken on a tour of the ancient city by the proto-
founder Evander. The distinction between the urbane magnificence of the
Augustan city and the ancient ruins, which by contrast often appear wild and
overgrown, is evident. The tour begins with Evander’s tale of early Latium, which
includes the story of the age of Saturn:

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\begin{align*}
&\text{primus ab aetherio uenit Saturnus Olympo} \\
&\text{arma Iouis fugiens et regnis exsul ademptis.} \\
&\text{is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis} \\
&\text{composuit legesque dedit, Latiumque uocari} \\
&\text{maluit, his quoniam latuisset tutus in oris.} \\
&\text{aurea quae perhibent illo sub rege fuere} \\
&\text{saecula: sic placida populos in pace regebat,} \\
&\text{deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas} \\
&\text{et belli rabies et amor successit habendi.} \\
\end{align*}
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(Verg. Aen. 8.319-27)

Saturn first came from Olympus on high
escaping the might of Jupiter. In exile from a lost kingdom
he assembled from the lofty mount the race of untaught men.
He set the laws and called his kingdom Latium,
because safe within its boundaries he had hidden from view.
Under that king were the years which they name golden,
in this way guiding the people in gentle peace, until
little by little, a worse age, tainted, followed after,
bellique and greedy.

In Virgil’s Aeneid, Saturn transforms from an exile to a proto-founder in order
to establish the Golden Age in Latium. In addition, the description of Saturn’s
rule during the Golden Age is a positive one, with Saturn “guiding the people in
gentle peace.”²⁸ The narrative also recalls an earlier passage in which the reign
of Augustus reinvents the Golden Age and returns peace to Rome (6.791-95).
Thus, the Golden Age community that Saturn established is gone in Aeneas’

²⁸ For the contradictory accounts of the Golden Age tradition within the Virgilian corpus,
see C. Perkell, “The Golden Age and Its Contradictions in the Poetry of Vergil,” Vergilius 48
time, but will be restored in the distant future when Augustus becomes the first emperor.\textsuperscript{29} The hill in Augustus’ time will glow with the golden splendor of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, yet it appears overgrown and rough to Aeneas and Evander:

\begin{quote}
\textit{hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et Capitolia ducit
aurea nunc, olim siluestribus horrida dumis.}
\end{quote}

(Verg. \textit{Aen.} 8.347f.)

He leads him here to the Tarpeian rock and the Capitol now golden, then bristling with thorn-bushes.

The site’s future greatness is only a suggestion, barely hinted at and eclipsed by the bramble bushes. Long before the temple marks his following on the site, Jupiter establishes his attendance on the hill by thundering loudly to the Arcadians (8.351-54).\textsuperscript{30} Next, Evander points to the ruins of Saturn’s settlement on the Capitol, \textit{hanc Saturnus condidit arcem} (“Saturn founded this citadel,” 8.357), that existed even before Jupiter’s extensive reign. The visit to the Capitoline establishes the proto-urban history of Rome and demonstrates that, even before Romulus founded Rome, Saturn’s colony on the Capitol was a well-ordered community, as it had laws that the god enforced.\textsuperscript{31} The tour of the Capitoline area gives a positive representation of Saturn’s rule, but the Capitol itself is clearly uninhabited when Aeneas sees it.

Since the tour is meant to show Evander’s Rome, Romulus is not a central figure in Virgil’s description. Only a brief mention of him occurs before Aeneas sees the Capitoline, when Evander shows Aeneas the Lupercal (\textit{Aen.} 8.342-44). However, Romulus’ presence is felt as the tour ends at Evander’s Pallanteum, where Aeneas is welcomed into Evander’s humble home:

\begin{quote}
talibus inter se dictis ad tecta subibant
pauperis Euandri, passimque armenta uidebant
Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.
ut uentum ad sedes, “haec” inquit “limina uictor
Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{29} For the return of the Golden Age in the time of Augustus, see Galinsky [14] 90-121; Zanker [13] 167-238.

\textsuperscript{30} K. W. Gransden (ed.), \textit{Virgil: Aeneid 8} (Cambridge 1976) 130f. For the theme of social order as established by Romulus and reinforced by Augustus in Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid}, see Williams [27] 208-43.

\textsuperscript{31} Perkell [28] 20 notes that it is not Hesiod, but rather the Roman poets, who first envision the Golden Age as a community that acquires a sense of social responsibility.
aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
finge deo, rebusque ueni non asper egenis.”

(Verg. Aen. 8.359-65)
While they were talking, they approached humble Evander’s home,
all around they saw a herd of cattle lowing in the Roman forum and
in splendid Carinae. When they had come to the dwelling, Evander said,
“Triumphant Hercules entered this threshold; this palace received him.
Dare, friend, to scorn wealth and imitate divine worth.
Approach my poor home with kindness.”

The house of Evander is described instead of Romulus’ hut on the Palatine, but
the fact that the hut is located on the site where Romulus will later have his
settlement is suggestive of Romulus’ later attendance on the hill. For Virgil, the
permanence of a leadership tradition on the hill was continued into the time of
the principate, as Rome’s founding fathers—Evander, Romulus, and Augustus—
all resided in the same place; and, in the case of Romulus and Augustus, the
emphasis on the temporal distance between the two rulers was lessened by a
visual highlighting of the proximity of their homes. 32 Above all, for Virgil’s
audience, Rome’s ascent to greatness from the settlement on the Palatine
recalled Romulus’ rise to power on the hill in the city’s legendary past, and the
magnificence of the Palatine in Augustus’ time.

Tibullus 2.5

Tibullus is a poet whose work neither overtly flatters Augustus, nor expresses
any significant signs of dissent concerning contemporary political events. The
conventions of elegy allow Tibullus, in the majority of his poems, to distance
himself from themes of a life lived in the public-political arena, and instead to
focus on love and the joys of a rural existence. Yet Tibullus 2.5 represents a
marked departure from the elegiac theme of a quiet country life. Out of all of
the poems in Tibullus’ corpus, this poem most closely resembles the work of his
contemporaries, for whom the public affairs of the city were the subject of much
commentary. 33 But the poem also looks back to how Rome’s destiny was set in
motion, and this concept is an equally significant part of both the Augustan

32 Edwards [12] 32f. suggests that, for Virgil’s audience, this description of Evander’s hut
on the Palatine, here called regia (“palace”), recalled Augustus’ imperial residence.
33 I follow Gosling [4] 333, who regards Tibullus as commenting on the new
opportunities that he sees for Rome, with Augustus as ruler without being overly patriotic or
nationalistic. See also Gerressen [7] 66f., who argues that the poem is meant to praise
the Augustan peace. H. Merklin, “Zu Aufbau und Absicht der Messalinus-Elegie Tibulls,” in
W. Wimmel (ed.), Forschungen zur römischen Literatur: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von
Karl Büchner (Wiesbaden 1970) 301-14 sees the poem as anti-Augustan.
transformation of the Palatine and of Tibullus’ poem.\textsuperscript{34} Certainly, Augustus’
presentation of Rome as a city modified and invigorated by the end of civil
strife influenced literary and artistic presentations of the city and the values
associated with it. The Augustan values of peace and an ordered society that
appear in this poem suggest that Tibullus was, like his contemporary Virgil,
participating in a dialogue on the virtues of the new regime when he recreated
Rome’s archaic landscape as the precursor for Augustan Rome.

In his poem, Tibullus explores the events that led from Rome’s humble
origins to the destined greatness of the city in the poet’s own time. Composed to
commemorate a religious ceremony in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine
hill, the elegy celebrates Messalla’s son Messalinus’ induction into the priestly
college of the \textit{quindecimuiri sacris faciundis}. The priests, who were responsible
for preserving, editing, and interpreting the Sibylline texts, also conducted
ceremonial rites on the hill for Apollo and foreign gods (Livy 10.8.2).\textsuperscript{35} Apollo
is the deity who is central to the poem and who provides the divine impetus for
Tibullus’ composition.

Tibullus’ poem begins with a call to Apollo for inspiration, and the
opening address ends with a request for guidance as Messalinus begins his
official duty of interpreting the books (2.5.1-18). There follow descriptions of
early proto-Rome and the Sibyl’s prophecy (2.5.19-38). She prophesies the
future for Aeneas, the founder of Rome. His victory in war is the foundation for
the imperial supremacy that the Sibyl predicts for Rome with Apollo’s aid
(2.5.39-66). A mention of bad omens that identified the time of Caesar’s murder
is relayed, along with a request for Apollo to bury this information in the water
(2.5.67-80). Bountiful yield for farmers is foretold in anticipation of the
celebration of the Parilla (2.5.81-104). A prayer to Apollo to ease the burden of
Tibullus’ love for Nemesis, and further praise for Messalinus and his future
military triumphs, end the poem (2.5.105-22). According to Gosling, the themes
of Tibullus’ love for Nemesis and celebration of Messalinus’ prominent family,
rather than direct approval of Augustus and his achievements, do not detract
from the central theme of the poem: “Instead of using a myth or legend to
illustrate his personal feelings, Tibullus has used his private relationship, as also
the achievements of Messalla and Messalinus, to illustrate the larger issue of
Rome’s greatness, founded on her legendary past.”\textsuperscript{36}

While Apollo is the primary god mentioned by Tibullus in his poem,\textsuperscript{37}
I suggest that within the elegy Jupiter emerges as a key secondary figure whose

\textsuperscript{34} Gosling [4] 336f.
\textsuperscript{35} See also Murgatroyd [6] 163-69.
\textsuperscript{37} For Apollo’s importance in this elegy, see Gosling [4] 333-39.
role in establishing a new and peaceful Augustan age is central for understanding the significance of the Capitoline setting. In the poem, Tibullus’ use of the Capitoline and the reconstruction of the hut of Romulus on the Capitoline hill during Augustus’ reign are, I argue, evidence that the hill played a significant role in Augustan Rome because the hill contained the memory of how the city transformed from a modest gathering of huts into the community of Augustan Rome. An indirect reference to the Capitoline appears early in the elegy, when Apollo is asked to appear as he did when he hymned a song of Jupiter’s victory over Saturn:

Qualem te memorant Saturno rege fugato
Victori laudes concinuisse Iovi.

(Tib. 2.5.9f.)
They recall you as then, when Saturn was expelled from rule,
you sang a song of tribute for Jove as victor.

Saturn’s reign in this elegy appears to be in contrast to a previous reference in Tibullus that recognizes Saturn’s kingship as a time when humans lived in effortless peace and without wars, and characterizes Jupiter’s reign as the beginning of endless strife and bloody conflict (1.3.35-50).[^38] In Tibullus 2.5, the end of Saturn’s reign in Latium brings the age of Jupiter, and it raises the following question: since physical effort on the part of humans to secure their own existence does not occur in the age of Saturn, does the arrival of Jupiter’s age indicate that the god has rescued humans from a too passive (albeit peaceful) form of survival?[^39] I suggest that Jupiter plays a role in the development of community and civilization in Tibullus 2.5: the establishment of new laws and an ordered society follows a reign characterized by a lack of labor and direction. The decline of Saturn’s Golden Age appears to save humans from an idle life in which they accomplish nothing and do not improve as a race.

[^38]: Cf. Galinsky [14] 93 on the first Georgic: “the Golden Age that existed before Jupiter is shown not to be a desirable ideal because it represented slothful existence that required no mental or physical exertion.”

[^39]: Both Bright [7] 75f. and Merklin [33] 301-14 read this passage as a sign of Tibullus’ regret over the recent violence of the civil war. However, Cairns [8] 85 sees this as a reversal of Tibullus’ previous beliefs (1.3): “This represents a change of view and an acceptance of the present as an age of peace and reason.” Gosling [4] 336 also sees the age of Jupiter as a positive development: “But we cannot escape the fact that Tibullus in 2.5 comes as close as he ever does to a political statement: that he accepts gladly the establishment of peace, and sees in it new opportunities for Rome, which he is prepared to express in terms of the saecular ideals that were current Augustan ideals.”
(cf. Ov. *Ars Am.* 3.127f.; *Fast.* 2.289-302; Verg. *G.* 1.121-28). Thus, in Tibullus 2.5, Jupiter’s victory over Saturn is positive. The regulation of society is shown as beneficial here, even if war is the means by which order is maintained. Consequently, the Capitoline is a fitting site for the introduction of proto-Rome, as it is sacred to Jupiter, whose triumph ended the Age of Saturn. The origins of political and social development, along with a sense of community, will come from a proto-Rome gifted with labor and laws.

In place of Virgil’s Palatine settlement, Tibullus’ vision of the proto-city substitutes a scene of grazing cattle on the hill. This provides a distinct contrast to the Palatine in Tibullus’ day, which had a prominent display of temples and the *casa Augusti* (“house of Augustus”). Tibullus reminds the audience that the site has not yet been occupied by Romulus, and the scene described on both hills evokes Rome’s humble origins:

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Romulus aeternae nondum formaverat urbis
    Moenia, consorti non habitanda Remo,
Sed tunc pascebant herbosa Palatia vaccae,
    Et stabant humiles in Iovis arce casae.
    (Tib. 2.5.23-26)
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Romulus had not yet constructed the walls of the eternal city that were not meant to contain his brother Remus. Back then cows fed off the grassy Palatine and humble huts stood on Jupiter’s citadel.

Tibullus’ narrative does not tell of Remus’ murder, but instead states that Remus will not inhabit the city with Romulus. But as Virgil’s description of Evander’s humble settlement on the Palatine demonstrates, Romulus’ absence does not mean that his presence is not felt on the site or in Tibullus’ story. By mentioning the walls of the city, which can suggest the alternative tradition

40 For additional discussion of the benefits of Jupiter’s reign over Saturn’s Golden Age in Virgil, see Galinsky [14] 93-100; Perkel [28] 20-22. See also P. A. Johnston, *Vergil’s Agricultural Golden Age: A Study of the Georgics* (Leiden 1980) 66, who cites Ennius’ translation of Euhemerus’ *Sacred History* as giving a positive account of Jupiter’s overthrow of Saturn. Johnston [above, this note] points out that Jupiter’s role in Italy “is marked by his concern with improving the life of mankind. Jupiter encourages new discoveries (*ap. Lact.* 1.11.32), suppresses barbaric practices such as cannibalism (*ap. Lact.* 1.13.2) and establishes laws and customs (*ap. Lact.* 1.11.14).” For Jupiter’s legal authority in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, see Williams [27] 208-21.

41 Bright [7] 75 points out that this is the first extant mention of Apollo hymning the victory song to Jupiter. For the role of Jupiter in Augustan religious policy, see J.R. Fears, “Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology,” *ANRW* 2.17.1 (1981) 56-66.

42 Although Cairns [8] 72f. concludes that the violence associated with Romulus’s life meant that Aeneas became the more suitable founder for Tibullus’ poem.
of a human sacrifice protecting the city’s boundaries, this passage may allude to the other version of Remus’ death, and suggest another explanation of the city’s founding that did not involve the fratricide that took place on the Palatine. By suggesting an alternate location for the foundation, another image of Rome’s foundations can emerge, in addition to the familiar story of the murder of Remus.

Tibullus’ transfer of Evander’s settlement to the Capitoline highlights an aspect of Rome’s foundation that, I argue, focuses less on Remus’ death and more on the beginnings of a community that emphasized Rome’s civil and religious origins. His Capitoline community recalls the model of the hut of Romulus on the Capitoline. Markedly, Tibullus’ Capitoline is inhabited with people who exhibit a pious lifestyle with worship of agricultural gods. And an atmosphere of piety, peace and innocence characterizes the description that follows (2.5.27-38). If, as Murgatroyd and Maltby suggest, the humiles casae (“humble huts,” 2.5.26) remind Tibullus’ audience of the same phrase in Virgil (Ecl. 2.29) and of the contrast with the grander, more elaborate structures on the Capitoline in Tibullus’ day, then it is also possible to consider the hut that Augustus placed on the Capitoline as the inspiration for Tibullus’ site, since it too stood in marked contrast to the buildings around it. In particular, the description of the Capitoline in Tibullus’ poem is an allusion to the Augustan restoration that indicated how Rome’s religious and political community began with Romulus’ actions on the Capitoline. As the citadel of Jupiter, the site recalls Romulus’ religious and military activities dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius, which in turn recalls Augustus’ restoration of the temple Romulus built to Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline. Moreover, Tibullus’ choice of the phrase urbs aeterna (“eternal city,” 2.5.23) alludes to the Capitoline, and recalls the triumphs that are mentioned at the beginning and end of the poem.

This is the first recorded use of the term urbs aeterna in Latin literature; and it reminds the audience that, no matter how much Rome transforms into an

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43 Bright [7] 79 assumes that the reference to Remus is meant to indicate familial strife, but there is nothing in this passage that precludes the consideration of the other tradition of Remus as a sacrificial victim. C. Bannon, Brothers of Romulus: Fraternal Pietas in Roman Law, Literature and Society (Princeton, 1997) 169 argues that the passage is “ambiguous” and can refer either to the murder or the sacrifice.


urban center resplendent with new temples such as the one on the Palatine in which Messalinus’ ceremony took place, its lasting presence develops out of humble and rustic foundations, which are recalled by the community even in Augustus’ time. As a result, Tibullus’ vision of Augustan Rome extends beyond the immediate celebration of Messalinus’ induction on the Palatine; in Tibullus’ imagining of the mythic history of the city, his poem captures the dual nature of Rome’s character. By the start of the Roman empire, the hill had gained a religious and political significance so great that a reference to the hill could stand as a symbolic replacement for the city itself. Edwards suggests that the moment when the triumphator offered a sacrifice on the Capitoline was an extremely meaningful event for the city, as this was the time when both Roman general and Roman city became eternal and divine. Thus, Tibullus’ mention of the phrase *urbs aeterna* could recall either Rome or the Capitoline for his audience.

Tibullus uses the theme of the triumphator to begin and end his poem. Apollo is invoked at the start of the poem as a god of triumph (2.5.5f.), followed by a wish for Messalinus to be hailed as a conquering triumphator in Rome’s future military conquests (2.5.15-17). Tibullus’ use of Apollo as the central deity is reflective of Apollo’s role within the Augustan building program to signify Rome’s peace and prosperity in the emperor’s time. The mention of Apollo throughout Tibullus’ poem, and praise for Messalinus and his family, are indicative of Tibullus’ approval of the values of peace and prosperity that Augustus fostered in the new empire. Tibullus concludes his poem by expressing his wish to sing about Messalinus’ triumphal procession (2.5.115-22). Thus, the Capitoline, represented by triumphal imagery at the start and end of the poem, establishes a sense of continuity between the past and Augustan Rome.

While Tibullus’ Capitoline settlement is reminiscent of the topography of the Augustan city, many details from the proto-Roman landscape in Virgil’s *Aeneid* 8 also appear in Tibullus’ poem. Like Virgil’s Palatine settlement, it is not early Romans, but rather proto-Romans, whose simple lifestyle in Tibullus suggests a model of virtuous living. But Tibullus’ proto-Rome reverses many of Virgil’s key details: Saturn’s age is a threat to humans, the Palatine is

_Augustus* (Bristol 1992) 60 finds that the phrase *urbs aeterna* suggests an unchanging and “perfected” city, which stands in contrast to a “primitive pastoral” Rome. Hardie also notes that Livy uses a similar expression to *urbs aeterna: in aeternum urbe condita, in immensum crescente* (“in a city constructed for eternity and increasing without end”, 4.4.4.2).

unpopulated, and the Capitoline is the civilized area. Thus, Tibullus’ poem demonstrates how the dynamic nature of memory transforms the story of Rome’s origins over time, as even a well-known image from Roman literature, such as the portrait of the city’s origins, gains new meaning and memories for a community each time it is reinvented.

Tibullus, like Virgil, presents the theme of post-Actium Rome’s new and orderly saeculum for his audience’s consideration but, unlike Virgil, he does it without directly mentioning the emperor or any of his policies or accomplishments.⁴⁹ In Tibullus, the Capitoline is a humble site that celebrates the achievements of the community, while the Palatine remains underdeveloped. Instead, Tibullus recognizes the Palatine’s prominence in his own time, as it is the hill upon which individual successes, such as Messalinus’ ceremony, are celebrated. Perhaps Tibullus did not mention Romulus’ or Evander’s settlement on the Palatine, because references to the hill in this context could recall the struggle for supremacy, and could be taken as a negative comment on Augustus’ appropriation of the site for his own use. Consequently, I suggest that Tibullus’ decision to place Evander’s proto-Rome on the Capitoline instead of the Palatine signifies that the poet’s vision of archaic Rome was in fact meant to highlight less violent aspects of Rome’s origins, including the early religious and political development of the city. While both Tibullus’ and Virgil’s landscapes evoke memories of the city of Romulus,⁵⁰ Tibullus’ archaic city highlights Rome’s stability and the religious and political traditions initiated by Romulus and confirmed by Augustus on the Capitoline.

Conclusion: Multiple Associations for Rome’s Foundations

Memory played an important role in how Rome’s legendary past was created and contested by the community of Augustan Rome in both their landscape and their literature. In a study of the relationship between memory, landscape, and text, Edwards argues that it is through an event’s topographical placement that the Romans experienced multiple versions of their past.⁵¹ In particular, the transfer of a memory from one locale to another re-contextualized and

⁵¹ Edwards [12] 42f.; cf. S. E. Alcock, Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments and Memories (Cambridge 2002) 1-35, who concludes that it is through descriptions of urban spaces and physical monuments that we can determine the patterns of remembrance and forgetfulness for a culture; F. Dupont, Daily Life in Ancient Rome (Oxford 1992) 74, who recognizes that understanding the importance of the topographical landscape of Rome is the key to perceiving how the culture experienced Rome’s past.
selectively edited prior versions of the account of an event.\textsuperscript{52} For the community of Augustan Rome, the past was easily reconstructed in multiple locations. Therefore, the place where an event occurred could be just as important to the story as what happened there. This meant that the physical landscape of the city took on significance as the dramatic setting for events; descriptions of the various locales held memories of the city’s past experiences imprinted on their monuments and in their topographical features.\textsuperscript{53} And the city as described by the poets in their texts reflected the changes that took place in the physical landscape in the Augustan Age during their lifetime.\textsuperscript{54} The presence of specific topographical sites in literature created a bridge between the legendary past, before the city of Rome took on a defined urban presence, and the transformation of the physical landscape of the Augustan city to reflect Rome’s origins. Therefore, the rustic setting of the Capitoline as \textit{humiles in loris arce casae} is not merely an idyllic scene. Instead, Tibullus’ use of the landscape encourages his audience to take another look at the role that the hill played during the reign of Augustus in the concept of an \textit{urbs aeterna}.

