

## **Urban Scaling and the Growth of Rome**

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In a recent critique on the correlation between urbanization and economic development in the Roman world, it was stressed that ‘we need a theory of (ancient) urbanization and of the nature of the processes that supported the development of urban centres before we can attempt to delineate and quantify the parameters of this development, let alone begin to discuss the implications of this for the economy’ (Morley 2011: 153). Yet this is no easy task, as urban planners, economists, geographers, sociologists, and land use analysts still struggle to quantitatively and qualitatively understand the growth and sustainability of modern cities and urban systems. That said, progressive work in the field of urban scaling (see Bettencourt 2013) has finally allowed for a more scientific approach to the evolution of cities by identifying a set of basic principles by which urban systems abide. While these confirmed scaling relations have been observed in thousands of modern cities worldwide, recent archaeological work in Pre-Hispanic Mexico suggests that ‘the fundamental processes behind contemporary urban scaling operated in the ancient world just as they do today’ (Ortman *et al.* 2014). This paper will then examine how the theoretical framework and principles of urban scaling may be applied to assess the growth and evolution of ancient Rome. By taking a diachronic approach, and examining specific phases of Rome’s urban growth (and the sustainability of such growth) we may achieve a better understanding of the underlying motivating factors behind the City’s expansion and ultimate decline. These conclusions may then be extrapolated in ways that arguably push us closer to a more acceptable theory on ancient urbanization and how it relates to the Roman economy.

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