The myth. Romulus and Remus were twin brothers. Their mother, Rhea Silvia was the daughter of Numitor, king of Alba Longa, an ancient city of Latium. Before the twins are conceived, Rhea Silvia’s uncle Amulius takes power, kills Numitor’s male heirs and forces Rhea Silvia to become a Vestal Virgin. Vestal Virgins were charged with keeping a sacred fire that was never to be extinguished and were sworn to chastity. In later versions of the myths, Romulus ascended to heaven, and is associated with the divine incarnation of the Roman people. Truth vs. fiction. It seems little of this tale has any historical basis. The legend as a whole encapsulates Rome’s ideas of itself, its origins and moral values. According to Roman mythology, the story of these twin brothers tells of the origins of Rome. They were the children of Mars and Rhea Silvia and according to Virgil and many other writers, their adventures were inextricably linked to the foundation of Rome. But no matter how far they had come from their original birth parents and home, their roots did not leave them and their inbuilt leadership skills helped them gather many supporters. As they grew into adulthood, they became involved in an argument between the supporters of Amulius and Numitor. As a consequence, Remus was imprisoned in Alba Longa, the very place where he was born. The king and Remus’s grandfather suspected his real identity. Meanwhile, Romulus was busy looking for ways to free his brother. This is an account of the foundation legend of Rome, how the twins Remus and Romulus were miraculously suckled by a she-wolf, and how Romulus founded Rome and Remus was killed at the moment of the foundation. What does the story mean? Why have a twin, if he has to be killed off? This is the first historical analysis of the origins and development of the myth, and it offers important insights into the nature of pre-imperial Rome and the ways in which myths could be created and elaborated in a nonliterate society. Year: 1995.