

BOOK REVIEW

The Struggle for Roman Citizenship. Romans, Allies, and the Wars of 91-77 BCE. By SETH KENDALL. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013. Pp. 944 + xvi. Hardcover, \$ 150.00. ISBN 978-1-61143-487-3.

This ambitious book aims to investigate the “struggle for the Roman citizenship undertaken by the allies, how and why it came into being, and its impact on the 80s” (26). Kendall starts out with a useful discussion of the available sources and an overview of previous scholarship, which has been divided on the question of what the Italian allies wanted: Roman citizenship, as argued by most scholars, or independence from Rome, as proposed by Henrik Mouritsen, *Italian unification: a study in ancient and modern historiography* (1998). To answer this question, Kendall first investigates why the Italian peoples may have wanted to become Roman citizens. He discusses the various disadvantages the Italians suffered, such as military service, abuse by Roman officials, lack of legal protection and of influence on Roman politics, et cetera. These grievances could be solved by a grant of citizenship; in this way their demands were not a sign of internal Romanization, but an attempt to solve practical problems.

Kendall then examines the decades before 91 BCE and the attempts by Roman politicians to secure citizenship for the Italians. When these failed, Kendall argues, the Italians resorted to a well-known political weapon, the *secessio*. The Italians tried to either force the Romans to grant them citizenship, or, if this failed, to gain independence. This is an important new suggestion, pointing out that a strict dichotomy between either citizenship or independence is not necessary. Kendall then describes the military activities of the Social War in detail—perhaps too much detail, since not all of this is very relevant for the argument as a whole.

The second part of the book discusses the consequences of the Social War. Firstly, the allies were given citizenship, and had therefore achieved what they had set out to gain. Exactly which laws were passed to grant this right is unclear; Kendall argues in Appendices L and P that the *lex Julia*, *leges Calpurniae*, and other unknown law(s) were responsible (but not, as is often argued, the *lex Plautia Papiria*). The Romans, however, refused to give the Italians the full benefits of the Roman citizenship: they were entered into new voting tribes rather than the existing ones,

so that their votes carried little weight. Of course, individual rights such as the use of the *ius civile* were secured by the grant of citizenship, but would be secured only if the Italians were counted in the census. The censuses of 89 and 86 were deficient, however, so that the legal position of many Italians remained uncertain; Kendall is unfortunately rather brief on all this, focusing mostly on the political consequences of the Social War.

Since Italian citizenship was incomplete, many Roman politicians sought to enlist the dissatisfied Italians to their own cause. Cinna, for example, promised to distribute the new citizens among all the tribes, which convinced many of them to follow him when he marched on Rome. Their support led to a grant of citizenship for the last Italians, the Samnites and Lucani, by Marius and Cinna; this, Kendall argues, was the final end of the Social War. Yet many Italians were still not distributed among the voting tribes – this most likely was achieved by Carbo in 84, although this would only be of value to those who were actually registered in the census, which many were not.

However, it was not certain that the rights the allies had gained would not be abolished in the future. To ensure their loyalty, Sulla promised that he would not cancel the rights they had gained, but in fact the political rights of the allies were diminished by Sulla's curtailing of the power of the *tribuni plebis*. In the end, Kendall suggests, the Roman state was irreparably changed by Sulla's dictatorship: both the Romans and the Italians "were forced to become something different than what they had been, and what they eventually would become, they would become together" (679). Kendall ends his exposition with no fewer than 22 Appendices discussing various smaller issues, such as the *ius civitatis adipiscendae per magistratum* and various military details of the Social War.

Overall, this is a very clear and well-written work, which should certainly be considered the final work on the Social War and its consequences for quite some time. This is not to say that there are no downsides to it. Foremost is the sheer size: although a detailed overview of the subject is useful, the content could have been dealt with in much less space. Kendall's writing style is rather repetitive, stating the same points over and over again, which sometimes causes the reader to lose track of main flow of the argument; he describes the Social and civil wars in much detail, sometimes losing track of the role of the allies in all these events.

There is also a certain lack of engagement with recent scholarship. For a book of this size the bibliography, at only eight pages, is very short. Kendall discusses in detail the views of a select group of scholars, most importantly Arthur Keaveney (1987), Henrik Mouritsen (1998), Edward T. Salmon (1958) and Alfred Von

Domaszewski (1924), but very rarely refers to more recent works, which have made important modifications to these older works. The social and economic developments of the second century BC has recently been interpreted in a radically novel way, but Kendall does not acknowledge this. There are also quite a number of typographical errors—about one per page, which does add up.

Overall, however, this book is a very important contribution to the scholarship of a crucial episode in the Roman Republic, and as such should be essential reading for anyone interested in this period.

SASKIA T. ROSELAAR

University of Ghent, saskiaroselaar@gmail.com