

BOOK REVIEW

The Social War, 91 to 99 BCE: A History of the Italian Insurgency Against the Roman Republic. By CHRISTOPHER J. DART. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014. Pp. xi + 252. Hardcover, £63.00. ISBN 978-1-4724-1676-6.

The Social War has recently enjoyed great attention from scholars: after Kendall's monumental 2013 work,¹ Christopher Dart presents a more succinct history of the Social War. His aim is to reconstruct the direct antecedents of the Italian insurgency, give a short account of the war itself, and discuss the resistance that continued after the war had ended (1).

He starts out by summarizing modern views on the Social War; central to the debate is the question whether the Italian allies desired the Roman citizenship or wanted to become an independent state.² Dart very reasonably argues that the Italian demand for *libertas*, which is adduced to support the latter reconstruction, was not necessarily a call for freedom, but a demand to be granted the political liberties that Roman citizens enjoyed. Citizenship and *libertas* were therefore not mutually exclusive aims.

In chapter 3 Dart discusses the reasons for Italian dissatisfaction with the Roman state in the late second century. He offers few new insights in this section, listing briefly such issues as the lack of political influence in Rome, the confiscation of *ager publicus* by the Gracchi, and the harsh treatment of allies by Roman magistrates. He then describes the failed attempts to give the allies citizenship, and reasons why the Roman state was reluctant to grant it to them.

The central part of Dart's work starts in chapter 4, in which he discusses the direct causes of the war. He focuses welcome attention on the figure of M. Livius Drusus, tribune of the plebs in 91, and his reasons for taking up the cause of the allies. As Dart demonstrates, Drusus was eager to present himself as a champion of the Senate; when his attempt to transfer the equestrian courts to the Senate ran into trouble, he wooed new groups in order to gain a larger support base. Dart

¹ *The Struggle for Roman Citizenship. Romans, Allies, and the Wars of 91-77 BCE.* BY SETH KENDALL. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013.

² *Italian Unification. A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography.* BY HENRIK MOURITSEN. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998.

also focuses on the allied leaders, especially Poppaedi Silo. He presents a convincing reconstruction of the events of 91 BCE, which eventually led to the outbreak of the war, and their chronology, which is confused by many of the primary sources. This includes a detailed discussion of the contents of Drusus' laws, their passage and cancellation, Drusus' death, and the connection of all these events to the outbreak of the war. Throughout this chapter he shows a welcome awareness of the fact that not all allies were willing to join the revolt, and that those who did may have done so for several reasons.

Dart moves on in chapters 5–7 to a description of the war itself, from its outbreak in 91 to the collapse of the insurgency in 89–88 BCE. He gives a brief but clear overview of the main events of the period and makes some good points, e.g. about the military command structure of the Italian rebels, which was probably more flexible than many scholars assume.

Chapters 8–10 focus on the aftermath of the war and the grants of citizenship to the Italians. Dart first discusses the various laws which were passed to give the Italians citizenship; his discussion includes many useful details about these laws and the various scholarly views on them, although due to the brevity of his work he is unable to discuss all the various theories which have been proposed, especially about the *lex Plautia Papiria*. He then gives due attention to the manipulation of the Italian question by Roman politicians, with different factions trying to attract Italian support by promising them the full recognition of their rights. Dart also rightly points out that armed violence on the Italian side was not over by 88; in the civil wars of the 80s and even in Spartacus' revolt, Italians were still under arms.

Dart finishes his book with four useful appendices, listing the various laws relating to citizenship, Roman and Italian commanders in the war, cities besieged during the war, and Italian individuals enfranchised during the war—the latter two are only selections, however, so do not give comprehensive lists.

Overall, this is a very clear and well-written work. It is unfortunate that Dart was unable to consult Kendall's work; the contribution of both scholars to the academic debate would have been greater if they could have discussed each other's ideas. Dart also displays a certain lack of engagement with recent scholarship. He discusses in detail the views of a select group of scholars, most importantly Edward T. Salmon (1982), Arthur Keaveney (1987), Henrik Mouritsen (1998) and Alfred Von Domaszewski (1924), but rarely refers to more recent works which have thoroughly re-evaluated the demographic, economic and social history of the Roman Republic in the second century BCE. As Dart states (3), "criti-

cal to this study is discussion of the nexus of citizenship, political rights and land”, but he does not acknowledge most of the recent works on these subjects.

Nevertheless, Dart’s work is a very important contribution to the scholarship of a crucial episode in the Roman Republic. It is especially valuable in its recognition that the problems of the Italians were not solved after the war and that they had to fight until 70 BCE before their rights were fully recognized. As such it is essential reading for anyone interested in this period.

SASKIA T. ROSELAAR

Independent Scholar, saskiaroselaar@gmail.com