

## BOOK REVIEW

*Empire, Hegemony, or Anarchy? Rome and Italy, 201-31 BCE.* Edited by KARL-JOACHIM HÖLKESKAMP, SEMA KARATASH AND ROMAN ROTH. Stuttgart, DE: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019. Pp. 258. Paperback, €49.00. ISBN: 978-3-515-11524-7.

This volume, the papers of which are rooted in a 2015 conference in Cologne, seeks to define the relationship between Rome and the other cities of Italy in the Middle to Late Republic. What role did the rest Italy play? The answer? It's complicated.

Roman Roth opens the volume with an explanation of the titular question. While the second Punic war may have been a watershed moment in the history of the Republic, the scale of this may have been overstated—earlier trends continue into the post-Punic War period. Despite the titular chronological boundaries, the first two chapters serve as prequels, using the early conquests of Italy and the Punic Wars to set the stage. John Patterson's contribution examines the temples built from the spoils of the early Italian wars and ponders the longevity of their impact. Spoils and statues remained on display for centuries, long after the conquered peoples had become Roman citizens themselves. Patterson points out that despite this tradition, very few depictions of these early wars can be identified with any certainty on republican coinage and argues for a gradual limiting of public discussion of Italian wars as these Italians became more important to Rome. Clifford Ando's contribution never went where I expected, yet promotes a fascinating discussion of sovereignty, categorization and Roman conception of the world. He draws into question several matters often considered settled. Much of Italy was both unified and yet heterogenous, autonomous and yet subject. I enjoyed his complex chapter, but expect I might be in the minority.

The second section examines the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the tightening connections between Rome and Italy over four chapters. Roman Roth examines elite interest and investment in citizen settlements outside Rome, and ensuing problems. For example: were public building projects for citizen settlements outside Rome to be financed solely locally or with central aid? A small question by itself, but one with significant implications for Rome's roles as city and as state. Roth implies that the increase in hierarchical divisions is linked to Roman attempts to answer

this and similar questions. Marion Bouldier-Boos examines civic layouts in Italy, questioning whether Rome's colonies were founded and planned to look like Rome. The traditional view (which Bouldier-Boos deconstructs here) was that colonies built upon old settlements adapted Roman design where possible, while new foundations adopted the castrum style *cardo-decumanus* cross. Bouldier-Boos argues that what we see instead is variance dependent on the origin of the colonists, with "Roman" features being relegated principally to Roman sections of the towns.

Stéphane Bourdin discusses the development of the Italic leagues prior to the Social War and argues that these ethnic leagues maintained some connection and civic functions after their military-alliance function was defunct, serving also as the means of recruitment of men for obligations to Rome. Saskia Roselaar explores the growing rifts between Rome and her Italic allies. Of all the contributions, hers perhaps best addresses the titular question of "Empire, Hegemony or Anarchy?" Focusing upon land use in Italy, Roselaar breaks down the famous land crisis of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and argues that the growing proletariat was created less by the dispossession of small landowners (except in central Italy) than by their large families and excess population. Land and citizenship were restricted commodities, and Roselaar discusses existing methods in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century for non-Roman allies to acquire them. But nevertheless, the allies' exclusion from major land grants may have stoked existing troubles.

The third section dwells upon the 1<sup>st</sup> century with four chapters on the integration of Italy as Roman. Guy Bradley muses over recent research on the Social War, before turning to examine the Social War and the lack of obvious similarities between the allies who took up arms against Rome. The people of Etruria and Umbria were late in joining the conflict, and Bradley argues we are seeing a divided Etruria and Umbria in which part of the population sides with the allies and part with the Romans. Wolfgang Blösel's chapter addresses the Roman army, its relation with the allied forces and the political leanings of the new citizens in the army. It is perhaps surprising that the hotly contested citizenship was nevertheless granted and not revoked later. Initial fears of excessive Italian influence withered away. For Blösel, integration was achieved largely through the army. Just as Romans did not want to be conscripted, Italians wished the better treatment and prestige in being part of the regular legion, not the *socii*. Blösel's arguments, if correct, suggest we may have underestimated the gap in treatment of the *socii* on campaign.

Integration was not necessarily acceptance, though. Sema Karataş engages in a

case study of the municipal aristocracy emerging in the 1<sup>st</sup> century as “new men” in Rome, focusing specifically on Gnaeus Plancius. It was difficult for a municipal aristocrat to run for office in Rome, not least because their supporters would have had to travel to Rome to vote. Karataş argues that while some leveraged wealth, rhetoric and/or military expertise to manage such a political campaign (like Gnaeus Plancius), for many of these *domi nobiles*, the barriers involved in moving from local to national politics were insurmountable. Federico Santangelo also turns to the municipalities. Unlike the preceding chapter, Santangelo defends the reputation of the people of the *municipia*, suggesting that while some Roman politicians would attack them as outsiders, many others saw them as entirely respectable.

There is no epilogue to sum up the impact of all these essays, some of which work quite nicely together. Together, the last three chapters would perhaps suggest that the people (and particularly the aristocracy) of greater Italy attempted to achieve prominent positions in military affairs in particular as a path to social advancement in Rome. Likewise, Bourdin and Roselaar’s chapters invite us to rethink the development of Italy in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, while Bradley and Bourdin’s arguments for the continued role of the Italic leagues have some overlap as well (as noted by Bradley, 174). While most of the papers do not directly address the question conveyed in the title, they do all address the larger question of what the relationship between Rome and Italy was in the periods in question. Overall, the chapters do adhere to a fairly narrow scope, clarifying the active role Italians played in the growing Roman state.

This excellent volume is also valuable in providing substantive counterarguments for many traditional views of the Middle Republic, many of which were and are over-reliant on Livy. The situation is shown to be increasingly complex, resisting simple grand narratives. There is no overly clear narrative or clear answer to be found for the period here ... and that is quite a good thing.

AARON L. BEEK

*North-West University, 35215003@nwu.ac.za*