

MARIAN HELM, *KAMPF UM MITTELITALIEN: ROMS UNGERADER WEG ZUR GROßMACHT* (Hermes Einzelschrift 122). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019. Pp. 450. ISBN 9783515131131. €82.00.

Marian Helm's book, a revised version of his 2018 PhD thesis, makes a vital contribution to expanding current interest in the Roman conquest of Italy during the middle republican period. As the title suggests, H. sees Rome's early path to power as uneven and never a foregone conclusion. The book succeeds in laying out a genuinely new account of Rome's rise in the fourth century B.C.E. Its main innovation comes from the way it frames Rome's emergence within what Helm depicts as a 'multipolar' central Italian society. For H., middle republican political history was deeply embedded in and contingent upon regional geopolitics. Shifting relationships both within the Roman community and between Rome and other players profoundly shaped political development. Modern and indeed ancient historians have often treated middle republican Rome along two lines: socio-political developments at home (the so-called struggle of the orders) and military campaigning abroad. Of course, these trajectories have always been understood as related to some extent, but their connection is often rather loosely made — Rome slowly got its political community in order, and then found success in its imperial ambitions. Instead, H. suggests that Roman domestic events were always closely linked to the vicissitudes of its external actions and *vice versa*. He invokes the idea of *histoire croisée* developed by Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner (see Werner, *History and Theory* (2006), 30–50) to argue that different lines of central Italian development in this period interacted in ways that were consequential, but also often unanticipated or even surprising. An excellent theoretical introduction points out how this non-linear development was especially true of this early period of republican history, when Romans' unformed institutions permitted greater flexibility. In H.'s account, the middle republican state's inchoate nature allowed for remarkable political creativity.

These ideas encourage H. to map out a novel organisation, arranging the book synchronically around four 'sequences.' Every sequence treats a period of about twenty-five years, moving from the sack of Veii through to the Samnite wars and closely juxtaposing Roman developments with those in central Italy. H.'s decision to compress the temporal scale while widening the geographical one produces interesting results. Individual chapters are dense, but consider as illustration some highlights from the first two sequences: the conflict between Rome and Veii prompted the Etruscans to invite the Gauls into Latium to aid in their struggle against Rome. (For remarkable potential support to this idea, note the publication of Celtic or Italic armour from Veii by F. Biagi *et al.* in V. Acconcia (ed.), *L'età delle trasformazioni* (2020), 440–54). The Gallic invasion's immediate aftermath saw Rome constantly fighting to secure its periphery. This effort prompted novel political alliances with Tibur and Caere, while high military recruitment rates encouraged internal socio-political cooperation. Military activity thus explains patrician concessions made after the downfall of M. Manlius, which in turn laid the precedent for broader concessions a few years later with the Licinio-Sextian laws, and so forth. The detailed account clearly shows Rome's path of development as indirect and responsive to emergent factors. Perhaps the method is not flawless: not every connection will surprise readers, while there is also an interpretive bias towards proximate, both temporally and spatially, causes. In the above sequence, for example, a Gallic link with Etruria is preferred to one with Syracuse. However, the overall impression is positive: H. presents a narrative of unfolding Roman action in central Italy that is impressively fluid and logical, but never teleological. We see intricately how power was constructed through developing relationships within Rome and between Romans and neighbours.

While I have highlighted the book's innovative structure, and deservedly so, in some ways the work could also be seen as one of the more canonical books of ancient history in recent years to treat the Middle Republic. Much of the contents are taken up by very dense historical narrative, a feature promoted by the overall approach but also at times making this a bit of a slow read. More to the point, H.'s project is very much *histoire événementielle*. Politics take the leading role, while less agency is ascribed to longer-term socio-economic factors, not to mention culture or religion. Not unrelated, literary sources form the mainstay of analysis, as H. endorses the idea that 'structural facts' in Livy and other authors can be employed critically for historical reconstruction. In light of the rapidly expanding contribution of archaeology to this period's history, the absence of in-depth treatment of material culture is sometimes noticed. To be fair, two monumental volumes on the archaeology of middle republican Rome and Latium have only just appeared: F.M. Cifarelli *et al.* (eds), *Oltre 'Roma medio repubblicana'. Il Lazio fra i Galli e la battaglia di Zama*

(2019) and A. D'Alessio *et al.* (eds), *Roma medio repubblicana. Dalla conquista di Veio alla battaglia di Zama* (2021). However, the focus also should be seen to reflect the overall approach: the same tightly synchronic presentation that grants this book much novelty may pose challenges when held up to archaeological data whose analysis often operates along longer timescales. So, there remains work to be done in integrating the lessons here into the wider picture. But there can be no doubt, reading H.'s book, that this is an exciting moment for middle republican history, for which this volume represents a major step forward. The author's work merits close attention from all those engaged in research on the period.

University of Toronto
seth.bernard@utoronto.ca
 doi:10.1017/S0075435823000448

SETH BERNARD

© The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.

SASKIA T. ROSELAAR, *ITALY'S ECONOMIC REVOLUTION: INTEGRATION AND ECONOMY IN REPUBLICAN ITALY*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. viii + 297, illus. ISBN 9780198829447. £74.00.

'Republican Italy', 'integration' and 'economy' have been at the centre of Saskia Roselaar's research since her Leiden PhD, published as *Public Land in the Roman Republic. A Social and Economic History of Ager Publicus in Italy, 396–89 BC* (2010). This comprehensive and insightful new volume offers a synthetic treatment of these themes. Furthermore, by associating 'economic revolution' (here meaning 'economic boom') with the history of Republican Italy, without explicitly citing Rome in the title of the book, R. claims that Rome's support was necessary but perhaps not sufficient to explain Italy's economic expansion, and its social and cultural integration before the advent of the Principate. In R.'s account, the Italian economy evolved alongside Rome's for most of the Middle Republic. After the Hannibalic war, however, the increasingly interventionist policies conducted by Rome (politically, militarily and economically) inevitably led to regional conflicts and eventually to the Social War. Departing from traditional accounts that stress Italian economic decline in this period, this book attempts to understand how Italy's economic revolution operated.

The book is divided into five chapters, each neatly sub-headed, and a general conclusion. Ch. 1 gives an outline of not only the differences but also the ties between Romans and Italians from the perspective of ethnicity, culture, language, economy and the military. In her view, for most of this period the Italian economy worked as an interconnected network of local economies. Also addressed, notwithstanding the general debates surrounding such models as 'creolisation' or 'Romanisation', is the role played by Rome in allowing Italians to gain access to new legal and financial institutions, including benefits from business opportunities driven into Italy by Roman expansion. R. tackles particular issues such as the foundation of Roman colonies and their contacts with non-Romans. These were mediated by migration and mobility policies, sanctuaries and their commercial functions, regular markets and fairs, and finally social partnerships. In ch. 3, R. cogently argues that, excepting regional and legal differences among towns and peoples, Italian traders and businessmen profited from Rome's successful territorial expansion overseas and as a result, their economies grew rapidly. One clear example is the wine and olive-oil production and commercialisation which benefited Italian elites as much as wealthy Romans. In R.'s view, the 'economic Romanisation' (a term coined for the occasion) of Italians evolved much quicker than their cultural and social integration. Ch. 4 stresses the slow spread of Roman coinage in Italy, suggesting it was progressively adopted in many Italian towns for mere practical reasons (e.g. to pay for military wages) as well as facilitating their increasing involvement in Roman affairs during the second century B.C. In her opinion, the expansion of the Italian economy in this period was not entirely dependent upon monetisation. Interestingly, R. also remarks how abusive Rome became in its progressive appropriation of Italian economic networks, abandoning its traditional 'laissez-faire' policies towards the Italian economy. In ch. 5, R. examines the economic disadvantages most Italians experienced from not being Roman citizens during the Middle Republic. According to R., it was only when Roman citizenship began to have real economic