

Saskia T. Roselaar, ed., *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. vii + 406. ISBN 978-90-04-22911-2. \$182.00.

The volume collects twenty papers that examine, from various perspectives (historical, literary, and archaeological), the cultural implications of, and responses to, Roman Republican expansion in Italy. The papers were originally presented in a conference held in Manchester in 2010, whose main focus was on issues of identity in text and material culture. This topic has in recent years attracted a great deal of scholarship, with which the authors actively engage (as demonstrated by the rich and up-to-date bibliography cited in the papers).

In the last decade or so, research in this field has been concentrating mostly on two areas, both of which are duly represented in the volume. The first one concerns the nature of Roman colonization in Italy during the Middle Republican period, and its impact on the cultural development of the peninsula. Such studies have challenged the false ideas that early colonial sites possessed, and therefore reflected, uniform Roman cultural traits, allegedly contributing to their widespread diffusion.¹ Secondly, with relation to the indigenous societies, these new works have emphasized how the success of the Roman conquest depended not just on military factors, but also on the creation of élite social networks at the inter-regional level (for instance, allowing élite mobility in colonial sites of the Latin type), and the maintenance of traditional forms of social structure and identities at the local level.² This system proved profitable for both Rome and Italian allies, a clear indication of which are the extensive building programs that refashioned most Italian cities in the late second century B.C.E.³ At the upper levels of society, this process also resulted in the creation and diffusion of a common material cultural assemblage.

Before providing a description of the contents, I will discuss some substantive points relating to this debate. These are raised by the editor in the short introduction (more of a summary than a proper position paper), but also surface in some of the papers. The underlying idea in the mission statement of both conference and volume is that the cultural processes described above reflect the high degree of “integration” of Roman Italy.⁴ Was this cultural uniformity the result of political annexation? One of the original aims was, therefore, to explore the mechanisms of cultural transmission that produced

¹ E.g., Bispham 2006.

² E.g., Colivicchi 2011; van Dommelen and Terrenato 2007; Roth and Keller 2007; Terrenato 2008.

³ See the case studies presented in Wallace-Hadrill 2008.

⁴ In terms of archaeological correlates, societies described as highly integrated in the anthropological literature normally display a lack of site hierarchies, variability in styles, and social diversity. Note the useful distinction between “integration” and “connectedness” in Haggis 2002.

this Late Republican *koine*.⁵ The task was primarily of looking to the actual contexts of “increased” interaction (pp. 3–4) not only between Roman and Italians, but also among the different Italian communities.

Lurking behind the scenes is Mouritsen’s interpretation of the Social War, and especially his views that the Italian allies did all they could to proudly preserve their ethnic identity, striving for independence rather than integration.⁶ A recurring feature in many of the papers is, in fact, the conundrum of how to make sense of the outbreak of this conflict, in light of the centuries-old links between Rome and the leading families of the Italian communities, their shared material cultural package, and the continuity in settlement patterns observed at many sites. Attempting to establish a common middle ground, the editor concludes that a real cultural change happened only after the grant of citizenship after the Social War (p. 368), as manifested for instance in the wide-spread diffusion of Latin during the first century B.C.E., while a greater cultural distance between Romans and Italians must be assumed for the previous phase. Ultimately, however, this perspective overshadows the realization that much of what we call Roman came into being precisely between the period of the Gracchi and the age of Caesar, and that the Italians played an important, active role in what by some has been referred to as the “Romanization” of Rome. Styles and building types were variously adapted from prototypes often of foreign origins (e.g., the case of the so-called Roman theater), which seem consistently to emerge outside of Rome before being imported in the capital. The strong continuity in the forms of settlement organization, as pointed out in some of the case studies presented in the volume, confirms the phenomenon had little to do with the agency of Roman colonists, as previously assumed.

Let us now turn to the individual papers. The introductory chapter and an extensive index (pp. 401–406) help readers identify some common threads in the volume. The papers can be divided into five broad thematic groups, which do not exactly correspond to the order in which the contributions have been arranged in the volume (not by chance, the papers I group together often reference one another). What follows is a brief summary, which highlights the main results and areas of debate raised by the authors.

It is perhaps best to start with the group of contributions which explore issues of integration, or rather cross-cultural interaction, taking as a point of entry specific social institutions that linked Roman and Italian aristocrats, and focusing on their political implications, as this represents the *raison d’être* of the volume. J. Patterson (“Contact, Cooperation and Conflict in Pre-Social War Italy”, 215–226) surveys the forms of contact between Italian elites throughout the second century B.C.E., leaving aside Rome. Patterson highlights among other things the impact of *connubium* (which often resulted in the acquisition of land in a different community as dowry), transhumancy

⁵ Cf. Roth 2007, who shows that the patterns of pottery production and consumption in central Italy after the Roman conquest reflect greater regional variability than often assumed, especially at the lower level of society.

⁶ Jehne and Pfeilschifter 2006; Mouritsen 1998.

(which involved long-distance movement), and military service in the Roman-led army (particularly in the elite unit of the *extraordinarii*, which included non-Romans of higher census class only). He notices that long-standing enmities between neighboring communities, usually for disputes over land or resources, played a much less important part in determining whether a community supported Rome at the time of the Social War, perhaps as a result of this interaction (although it should be emphasized that these forms of elite connections had a much longer history). In fact, Patterson also points out that allegiance to Rome depended on the socio-economic context (regions characterized by stronger urbanization patterns and higher levels of social stratification tended to maintain their allegiance to Rome). An alternative view is presented by K. Lomas (“The Weakest Link: Elite Social Networks in Republican Italy”, pp. 197–214), who analyzes the range and function of other types of social relationships (*vicinitas*, *amicitia*, *hospitium*), as inferred from Cicero’s testimonia. Following the lead of contemporary social network theorists, Lomas suggests that looser forms of networking may have linked Italian communities more effectively than stronger ties (such as those generated by intermarriage). Weak networks would offer greater possibilities for connections, while strong ties would not necessarily result in cohesion, often breeding rivalry, factionalism and friction in the networked communities, particularly at times of social stress (this “structural” model would account for the outbreak of the Social War in terms that clearly contrast with the reconstruction put forward by Mouritsen). The papers by S. Kendall (“Appian, Allied Ambassadors, and the Rejection of 91: Why the Romans Chose to Fight the *Bellum Sociale*”, pp. 105–122) and F. Tweedie (“The *Lex Licinia Mucia* and the *Bellum Italicum*”, pp. 123–140) investigate the motives of the conflict from the Roman perspective, weighing the greater costs that the massive enfranchisement of Italian allies would have determined for the Roman state (both in economic and political terms, including the risk of depleting the allied communities of their population) against the fewer benefits, and suggesting that policies which limited citizenship claims can be contextualized in part with the factional struggles of the late second century B.C.E.

Three papers look in greater detail to the organization of the Roman army, which in common reconstructions is presented as a the most obvious context in which Romans and Italians, elite and commoners alike, interacted with each other, functioning as a melting-pot. P. Kent (“Reconsidering the *socii* in Roman Armies before the Punic Wars”, pp. 71–84) traces the picture of inter-community politics in the 343–265 BCE period, and the shifting patterns of military alliance, which suggest that the use of allied soldiers was a common feature in Italy. N. Rosenstein (“Integration and Armies in the Middle Republic) provides rough estimates of the proportion of Italians serving in the army (i.e., between a quarter and over a half of men aged 17–34, depending on the length of service) in the period between the second half of the third century and the end of the second century B.C.E. He takes issues with some recent critiques of the conventional view, in which it has been argued that the different contingents of Italian allies were kept segregated, and, with the exceptions of their commanding officers, had few contacts with other Italians, and no contact at all with the legionaries (as would be

inferred, for example, from the layout of camps).⁷ According to Rosenstein, however, the “integration” of allies must be understood in the sense of a struggle for respect and admiration from rather than of identification with the Romans (pp. 100–103; the analogy is with racial integration in the US Army; but cf. Patterson’s *extraordinarii*), not in the sense of cultural assimilation. T. Naco del Hoyo and J. Principal (“Outposts of Integration? Garrisoning, Logistics and Archaeology in North-Eastern Spain) describe the finds excavated at two small forts occupied by Spanish auxiliaries during the late second and early first centuries B.C.E. Interestingly, even after a century of increased interaction in the Roman province, these sites display a predominantly local material cultural assemblage (the claim that the fort of El Camp de les Lloses features a domestic quarter of the atrium type seems unfounded).

Other contributions focus on material culture, but adopting a much larger scale of analysis, both geographically (at the level of urban sites and regional settlement patterns) and chronologically (privileging the long term). R. Roth (“Regionalism: Towards a New Perspective of Cultural Change in Central Italy, 350–100 BCE, pp. 17–34) reminds us that too often, in order to reconstruct the impact of the Roman conquest in central Italy, sites are sampled on the basis of perceived ethnic boundaries (e.g., reproducing the limits of the administrative units of Augustan Italy), which may not correspond to cultural ones. He advocates for an approach based on settlement patterns (privileging locational choice over site typology, and the rural over the urban sphere), which would take the definition of regions as the research goal, but rejecting periodization based on the *histoire evenementielle*. E. Robinson (“A Localized Approach to the Study of Integration and Identity in Southern Italy”, pp. 247–272) makes a strong case for the need to integrate these regional studies with investigations at the level of individual communities, which allow to reconstruct the process of incorporation in the Roman state with a higher degree of resolution, acknowledging that this often progressed on a case-by-case basis (her paper can indeed be read side-by-side with that by D. Hoyer, “Samnite Economy and the Competitive Environment of Italy in the Fifth to Third Centuries BC,” pp. 179–196, which outlines the broader picture). In the case of both Larinum and Perugia, the latter studied by S. Neil (“Identity Construction and Boundaries: Hellenistic Perugia”, pp. 51–70), the long term chronological approach allows us to detect the emergence of a fairly sophisticated (urban) social structure pre-dating the Roman conquest, which explains why the transition into the Roman period was not disruptive (cf. the argument by Patterson, *supra*). Epigraphic evidence from Capua, presented by O. Sacchi (“Settlement Structures and Institutional ‘Continuity’ in Capua until the *Deductio Coloniaria* of 59 BC, pp. 273–288), suggests that traditional forms of settlement organization in the countryside were maintained even in communities which the Romans stripped of their urban status.

Three papers discuss issues of identity construction and representation in text. D. Langslow (“Integration, Identity, and Language Shift: Strengths and Weaknesses of the

⁷ E.g., Pfeilschifter 2007.

'Linguistic' Evidence, pp. 289–310) outlines a useful typology of bilingual epigraphic texts, pointing out that in the second century B.C.E. the most common are single texts in single language showing some form of mixing (i.e., borrowing, code-switching or interference). These do not involve grammatical objects (and, thus, do not imply a process of Latinization), but features that suggest cultural influence (e.g., naming patterns, dating formulae, institution names, not necessarily in one direction). As to the literary sphere, F. Russo ("The Beginning of the First Punic War and the Concept of Italia", pp. 35–50) and E. Jefferson ("Problems and Audience in Cato's *Origines*", pp. 311–326) show how concepts of kinship and mythical genealogies could be manipulated for political scores, creating "imagined" communities. Because *homophylia* was invoked to justify Roman intervention in support of the Mamertines of Messana, Russo argues that the Romans promoted the idea of a cultural unity of the peninsula much earlier than commonly thought (late fourth century B.C.E.). Jefferson sees Cato's work in a similar light, suggesting that it was specifically aimed at integrating Italian elites in Rome's history, within the elevated framework of Greek mythology.

E. Bispham ("Rome and Antium: Pirates, Politics and Identity in the Middle Republic", pp. 227–246) is a healthy reminder of how this purported cultural unity was purely notional. In reality, Roman colonial settlements of the Mid-Republican period show a lack of standardization. In the case of Antium, the strong local identity and autonomy reflected the influence of an indigenous community, which coexisted and then merged with the initial colonial contingent. The paper by M. Di Fazio ("The Role of an Italic Goddess in the Process of Cultural Integration in Republican Italy", pp. 337–354) traces the development of the cult of Feronia, from its Archaic beginnings in Sabina to its diffusion during the Roman Republic, correlating its spread at colonial sites as a with the presence of colonists of non-Roman origins. Two other papers concentrate on the religious sphere. R. Hermans ("Juno Sospita: A Foreign Goddess in the Process of Cultural Integration in Republican Italy", pp. 327–326) surveys the evidence on Juno Sospita, a goddess that in the Late Republican period was often connected with a sanctuary in Lanuvium. Although the origins of the cult are unclear (some claim that it was attested in Rome already in the Archaic period), reference to its non-Roman character in the sources perhaps reflects a concern to show Rome's multiethnic composition and roots. E. Buchet ("Tibur, Albunea, Hercules Victor: The Cults of Tibur between Integration and Assertion of Local Identity", pp. 355–364) interprets the shifts in the religious landscape of Tibur *vis-à-vis* the history of its political relationships with Rome, suggesting that the Tiburtes always remained attached to their religious identity even in the face of Roman direct intervention (though reading it as a form of resistance seems too far-fetched). The take-home point is that there was a spectrum of possibilities to express local identities, which incorporation in the Roman state did not suppress.

The paper by S. Roselaar ("Mediterranean Trade as a Mechanism of Integration between Romans and Italians", pp. 141–158), paradoxically, stands almost as an outlier, as it concentrates on the (often ambiguous) textual evidence that portrays Roman

military intervention as in response to threats posed to the economic interests of the Italians (cf. the new archaeometric evidence on the corpus of the so-called Greco-Italic amphorae confirms that non-Roman elites were running the Italian long-distance trade since the fourth century B.C.E.).⁸ Her paper reopens the debate on the motives behind Roman imperialism, but it does not discuss processes of integration.

In conclusion, the diversity of themes and the multidisciplinary approaches represented in the volume attest the strong vitality of current research on the cultural history of the Roman Republic. Given the nature of the available evidence, the focus remains mostly on the upper levels of society, and touches only tangentially on the experience of the Roman rule by commoners and lower classes.⁹ Archaeological approaches will have a lot to add to this picture, investigating how the material culture of the Late Republican *koine* was used in actual practice in order to make statements about cultural identity, and defining the range of choices actors had (depending on social status and social structure). As expected from a volume of collected papers, the reader will not find a coherent argument. It is certainly commendable that the proceedings of the conference were published in such a short time, but perhaps a little more effort should have been put in producing a synthesis of the many original insights offered by the authors (in addition, perhaps, to a more thorough copy-editing of some of the papers by non-English speakers, which include awkward constructions). In light of the fast growing corpus of materials, more general syntheses are needed, engaging with new conceptual frameworks that recognize the multiple ways, at times even conflicting, which non-Romans had, at all levels of society, to articulate their response to Roman rule.¹⁰

MARCELLO MOGETTA
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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⁸ Olcese 2004.

⁹ But see the study of lower-class housing in the Mid-Republican period by Sewell 2010.

¹⁰ E.g., Mattingly 2011 ("discrepant identity").

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