

PAPERS ON CIVIL WAR

BÖRM (H.), MATTHEIS (M.), WIENAND (J.) (edd.) *Civil War in Ancient Greece and Rome. Contexts of Disintegration and Reintegration*. (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 58.) Pp. 437, ills. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016. Paper, €68. ISBN: 978-3-515-11224-6.

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This highly valuable and important book on ancient civil war consists of thirteen papers in German and English, plus an introduction and an epilogue. Civil war has recently become a popular topic among social and political scientists, as well as historians, prompted by its increased prominence in the contemporary world (J.S. Levy & W.R. Thompson, *Causes of War* [2010], pp. 186–204), and thus in turn inspiring the study of civil war in the ancient world. The volume under review is another fine addition to the growing body of scholarship on the (new tendency of focusing on) impact of civil war in the ancient world (J.J. Price, *Thucydides and Internal War* [2001]; J. Osgood, *Caesar's Legacy* [2006]; C.H. Lange, *Triumphs in the Age of Civil War* [2016], etc.), including the difficulty of ending civil conflicts (see now *American Historical Review* 120.5 [2015], *AHR* Roundtable, including an excellent article by Osgood, 'Ending Civil War at Rome').

In the introduction B. discusses some of the issues related to a definition of civil war. While *bellum civile* has an obvious military element, *stasis* does not. One might add that civil war consists of other components than war in the traditional sense of the word, one of which is the often extreme use of violence in non-battlefield contexts. B. wisely concludes with a broad working definition that includes many *staseis* as civil wars (pp. 16–18). B. also addresses the question of whether ancient Rome was a 'state' (pp. 16–17). It does appear, to this reviewer at least, to be more important to focus on the fact that civil war is a recurring and distinct form of human behaviour that has been a regular occurrence since Antiquity. Furthermore, the question of 'Bürgerrecht' seems more relevant than that of 'state'.

Right at the outset it becomes apparent that the basic question of how/if *bellum civile* is distinct from *stasis* is key: Gehrke's paper on the Greek gymnasium and how it was used to preserve the unity of the *polis*, by controlling uncontrolled emotions that could easily cause civil war, is not about civil war *per se*. The same can be said of Gray's paper on reconciliatory rituals after civil war, concluding that such performances did not always succeed in avoiding trouble, as citizens did not follow the authorised script of political behaviour (pp. 66, 80). We should, however, bear in mind that the original conference title was *Performing Civil War*, which is perhaps a more suitable description of the collection. Dreyer then presents an interesting paper highlighting the fact that, according to Polybius, the indirect cause for the rise of Rome lay in *stasis*. Polybius (1.65–88) suggests that the Carthaginian mercenary revolt during the First Punic War was an internal problem as well as an internal war (1.65.2; 1.71.8: *emphylios polemos*) (p. 90). This clearly suggests the great flexibility of definitions in the ancient evidence.

In the following paper B. investigates Greek cities under Roman rule that were involuntary participants in Roman civil war. They were forced to take sides, leading to internal struggle since it was unclear who in the end would gain the upper hand. Fragmentation is a typical feature of civil war (rightly so p. 110). The paper superbly reveals the great local importance of civil war. This is also the subject of Santangelo's equally important paper on the impact of civil war on Italian cities not directly affected by the fighting. The impact of

civil war assuredly is about much more than battles. The cities were forced to develop ways of dealing with the issues of civil war (p. 127). Havener ends Section 1 with a paper on civil war and triumph, concluding that civil war was integrated into many Late Republican triumphs and the two were not mutually incompatible. Havener considers triumphs as two distinct processes: the granting of a triumph and the actual performance/spectacle (p. 159). This reviewer is unsure whether this separation is altogether helpful. The splitting of Sulla's triumph over two days, one over Mithridates and one over civil war opponents (pp. 162–6), would certainly not have been visible on the *Fasti Triumphales* entry (*Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.1, pp. 84–5). The evidence all suggests that the triumph was granted for the war against Mithridates only. The only civil war triumph mentioned on the *Fasti Triumphales* is the joint ovation for avoiding a civil war of Antonius and Young Caesar in 40 B.C.E. (*Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.1, pp. 86–7).

Part 2 opens with Heinemann's paper on the use of the Capitoline during the civil war following the death of Nero. The followers of Vespasian occupied the Capitoline for its symbolic, not its strategic, value. Such a move was a very public display of defending the Roman state, and thus about legitimacy, a central aspect of all civil war. The subsequent paper by Haake focuses on the civil war victories during the long third century: the ways in which Septimius Severus, Aurelianus and Constantine stage civil war victories, something that was in principle politically illegitimate (p. 250). To dismiss Constantine's 312 C.E. triumph out of hand, suggesting it was an *adventus*, however, appears somewhat rash (pp. 273–4). But Haake is right to emphasise that the arch of Constantine, with the siege of Verona and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, clearly shows Roman soldiers fighting one other (pp. 276, 282). This is not, however, the first official monument showing civil war. The Casa di Pilatos Relief shows the battle of Actium, but the soldiers fighting each other are not Egyptian, but Romans, as the uniforms are the same (Lange [2016]; T. Schäfer, 'Ciclo di rilievi Medinaceli', in E. La Rocca [ed.], *AVGVSTO* [2013], pp. 321–3).

In the next paper Icks suggests that good usurpers, such as Vespasian, Pescennius Niger and Julian, were elevated in Roman historiography. All in all it is difficult to disagree with the conclusion that Imperial legitimacy remained a fluid concept (p. 319). Kristensen investigates the severed head of Maxentius, forcefully emphasising the dismemberment of the human body as an immensely effective symbolic component of late-antique civil war. The head of Maxentius was important because it was identifiable – it demonstrated that the tyrant was dead (p. 327). It was a spectacle experienced by an audience (p. 339), much like the decapitations of enemies of the state during the Late Republic. W. considers the imperial images of Julian, after he came to power when his civil war opponent Constantius II died before battle. The civil war victor without even a proper victory (p. 348) emphasised himself as defender of Roman liberty (pp. 349–50). Following another recent trend, W. has convincingly given weight to ideological claims and their justifications (p. 347). M. suggests that rituals were used by different groups at different levels and with different aims. After proclamation portraits of the emperor were sent to cities in the Empire, who would then either accept or reject the portrait, rendering neutrality impossible. In the last paper of the volume Bell returns to the issue of preventing civil war, this time by looking at the circus and theatre factions in Constantinople. He accurately explains how the emperors sought to manipulate the factions, providing opponents in sport rather than the regime itself. The Nika riot of 532 C.E. happened because two factions united against the regime (pp. 390–1). In the epilogue W. returns to severed heads, in this case a fascinating coin showing the head of Maximinus Trax on a pole, on a modified coin. The emperor was killed by his soldiers and his head was carried in procession in Rome (p. 418).

This volume's primary importance, at least to this reviewer, is not only the subject of (impact of) civil war, but also that it gives us an opportunity to view such civil wars as part of *la longue durée*. In its entirety it gives a valuable insight into the extreme transitions of ancient society in times of civil war. Hopefully this will also allow scholars to accept that we can safely assume that some features of ancient civil wars were indeed regular features of any civil war, particularly in terms of the dynamics of factions, the impact on society and participants, the numerous levels of justifications, and violence. Despite the sparse use of contemporary material, mentioned often only in passing, this is a very impressive and highly recommended volume.

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REPUBLIC INTO EMPIRE

ALSTON (R.) *Rome's Revolution. Death of the Republic and Birth of the Empire*. Pp. xx + 385, ills, maps. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Cased, £20, US\$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-973976-9.

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A.'s new book is part of the OUP series *Ancient Warfare and Civilization* (edited by A. and R. Waterfield). It inevitably invites comparison with Syme's *The Roman Revolution* [1939]. Syme in many ways remains the elephant in the room, and one must question whether the period is best considered one of revolution. Whatever the case, A.'s book is a useful addition to the introductory books focusing on the transition from Republic to Principate. The preface emphasises cataclysmic violence and trauma, suggesting that scholars underestimate the violent transition from Republic to Empire. This is a valid contribution, even if Lintott's standard work, which takes the view that Rome was inherently violent, is curiously absent from the bibliography (*Violence in Republican Rome* [2nd ed. 1999]). A. has set out to write an essentially narrative history of the period after the death of Caesar, with focus on political developments and warfare, something that is unfortunately rather unusual in recent scholarship.

Chapter 1 focuses on the well-trodden issue of an alleged Augustan paradox: the chapter rather uncritically accepts the so-called restoration of the Republic (pp. 4, 236, Chapter 14); the alternative version(s) is never mentioned. A. suggests that Augustus muddled through the transformation (p. 2), making decisions according to political circumstances. However, for this reviewer at least, a more probable scenario proposes that the triumphal assignment became the model for Augustus' retaining of the powers required to carry out the tasks and assignments presented to him by the *SPQR*. Augustus (wisely) and his contemporaries never defined the Principate, but this hardly equates to muddling through. A. also suggests a new paradigm for understanding Roman politics: networks. This is to be highly commended, but a more thorough exposition of such networks is perhaps needed in order to establish its value for the Late Republic (pp. 10–13, etc.). The use of modern theoretical approaches is to be applauded – of course we can use modern categories to analyse ancient history – one might, however, be concerned that there is not enough payoff.

Chapter 2 centres on the death of Julius Caesar, which according to A. is the main turning point during the Late Republic. Chapter 3 offers a narrative of the period 133 to 44 B.C. E. A. rightly emphasises that Roman politics was personal (p. 42). Chapter 4 continues unfolding the crisis. A. talks of an accidental war in 49 B.C.E. (pp. 66–71). Conceivably,