'queens' in Homeric epics and Greek tragedy, discussed here by Heinrichs and Roisman. A third, especially for readers of this journal, is the importance of women for the creation of a quasi-hereditary principle in the Roman empire, perhaps the most unusual monarchical construct discussed in this volume. Readers would really need a bit more editorial handholding to make the most of these and other prompts within the amount of material offered, but the volume will doubtlessly become an indispensable starting point for new, and much needed, research on ancient monarchy.

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doi:10.1017/S0075435823000837

VALENTINA LIMINA, *POTERI E STRATEGIE FAMILIARI DI VOLTERRA: IL CASO DI UNA COMUNITÀ ETRUSCA NEL MONDO ROMANO*. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2021. Pp. xiii + 194, illus. ISBN 9781407357881. £48.00.

In this book — a revised version of her doctoral thesis — Valentina Limina offers an intimate and intricate study of the community of Roman-era Volterra through a focus on the long-term strategies for success of its elite families. Deftly drawing together a dense web of literary, archaeological and epigraphic material (both published and unpublished), she presents a robust account of people and landscape from the first century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. L.'s Volterra and its leading lights are resilient and versatile, adapting to changing circumstances to retain, and sharpen, their competitive edge. Volterra has sometimes been characterised as a conservative society, clinging on to its Etruscan past, but L. shows how its elites strategically leveraged conservatism and tradition to keep themselves and their community relevant in turbulent historical circumstances. These, therefore, are not the immobile or rigid elites of some earlier scholarship, but more creative and dynamic agents. They are simultaneously masters of small town and big city; indeed, L. argues that it is precisely local elites' grip on Volterra that provides the platform for their influence in the city of Rome and the wider empire. She depicts the relationship between Volterra and Rome as one of constant dialogue and negotiation, making this a textured and nuanced case-study of '*romanizzazione*' (L. does not shy from the word, though uses it only intermittently).

L. is committed to a chronologically and thematically wide-ranging approach. The book takes us from the Volterran elites' struggles in the Social and civil wars of the first century B.C. to their eventual replacement by new powerbrokers in the changed and Christianised world of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. It explores social, political, economic and cultural strategies in turn. And it is firmly a history of both people and place: L. throughout emphasises the significance of physical landscape and devotes attention to geography and hydrology.

After a brief introduction to Volterra and to L.'s project, most of the book comprises four main chapters, each summarised in workmanlike abstracts in Italian and English and supplemented by illuminating maps, figures and photographs that display the impressive range of material that L. is drawing upon. Ch. 1 examines society and administration, analysing Volterra's demography, franchise, civic and political structures and offices. It devotes attention to the historiographical problems of reconstructing these, to prosopography, and to Volterra's relationship to structures and figures of Roman politics. L. argues for Etruscan elites' successful leverage of local family and client networks as a powerbase for long-term success. Ch. 2 turns to economic strategies, examining elites' management of resources and private property. L. considers elite commercial activities both in Volterran territory and abroad, and compares the lasting success of the Cecina family with the more fleeting success of the Venulei family. Local kinship and family networks, and effective negotiation of the wider political currents of the Roman Republic and Principate, emerge as central to economic success just as to political success.

Ch. 3 traces the archaeological visibility of different phases of Volterra's history. It uses field surveys to explore changing landscape and settlement patterns, both in the urban centre and rural hinterlands. L. also considers 'marginal landscapes', which she depicts as especially

vulnerable to outside political forces, being the site both of imperial and early ecclesiastical properties. The discussion of the choices and agents behind these archaeological patterns is unavoidably speculative and L. is honest about the limitations of the evidence; but this is one place where it would have been helpful to signpost links between findings in this chapter and those in other chapters more explicitly. Ch. 4 concentrates on cultural strategies. It argues forcefully for elites' instrumentalisation of their Etruscan identity and the marketisation of their religious and philosophical assets to gain respect and influence at Rome. L. is sharp here on identity and/as power, and it is in this chapter that the Etruscan/Roman negotiation that she argues for throughout becomes clearest and most pointed. The book concludes with an epilogue on Volterra as 'paradox', traditional but innovative, geographically isolated but politically plugged in.

This book is unashamedly a story of the elite. It embraces Mattingly's 'trickle-down' model of Romanisation and Syme's emphasis on oligarchy. L. references elite negotiation with those below them, but these people barely get a look in themselves. This is an elite that is local but not parochial, with one eye on Volterra and one eye on Rome and the wider Mediterranean. L. does well to avoid long theoretical discussions of Romanisation and instead to get on with showing negotiations and strategies on the ground, to direct our attention to people and processes rather than terminology.

Above all, this book is the story of one family — the Cecina. Just as for Ovid, 'Caesar is the state', so for L. the Cecina are Volterra. They are uniquely and enduringly successful, pulling the strings in economy, culture and politics and coming to represent and enact Etruscan influence amongst the Roman elite. In her conclusion, L. boldly compares them to both the Florentine Medici and early medieval feudal lords.

This is a meticulously researched and rich book of interest to both historians and archaeologists. On the back cover, Nicola Terrenato describes it as a 'fascinating fresco' of Volterran life. It is undoubtedly that, offering both a portrait and landscape view of an elite and their region.

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doi:10.1017/S0075435824000443

MATTIA BALBO and FEDERICO SANTANGELO (EDS), *A COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION: ROME BETWEEN HANNIBAL AND THE GRACCHI*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. x + 378. ISBN 9780197655245 (hbk), £71.00. 9780197655269 (eBook).

This volume takes both its title and inspiration from the chapter of the same name in Harriet Flower's 2010 work, *Roman Republics*. However, where Flower focuses mainly on changes in government and political practices, the topics the chapters in this volume address range much more widely. So, following the editors' introduction and justification for the project, Tan examines the possible effects of a warming climate in the second century on the assumption that the Roman Climate Optimum began *c.* 300 B.C.E. The increased agricultural production this facilitated could help account for the lack of demand for land redistribution as well as supporting the growth of Rome and an increasing Italian population. The latter, along with a longer sailing season, would have enabled Rome to mobilise and deploy its power abroad more effectively. However, as Tan acknowledges, there is no consensus on when the RCO began; *c.* 100 B.C.E. is just as likely, so all these earlier developments will have occurred without the support of a warming climate. Baldo suggests that conflict over land arose out of competition for access to *ager publicus* between slave and free labour, between small and large farmers, and owing to the latter's competitive advantage in a market economy. The senate's contradictory policies only exacerbated the conflict as it adopted a *laissez-faire* stance towards access to public land while at the same time sending out colonies and asserting public ownership in various ways.

Temeer surveys the development of Roman coinage from the later third century through to the later second. She notes that the quadrigatus coinage begins to feature symbols associated with