

# 1 | Introduction

## A Middle in the Making

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The word “making” in this book’s title embraces two meanings. On the one hand, the essays in this volume hold to the conviction that many of the characteristic structures and institutions of later Roman Republican society emerged in some form during the fourth and third centuries BCE. This was a consequential period for Rome’s imperial relationship to Italy, as well as for its own internal political structures: as the “struggle of the orders,” which dominates our record of Roman politics in the previous century, began to resolve, the newly emergent patricio-plebeian leadership would direct its energies to the conquest of Latium, Campania, and then other regions further afield.<sup>1</sup> In turn, these transformations in some cases sparked, and in other cases accelerated, developments of great importance to the subsequent construction of later Republican society and the formation of its wider Mediterranean Empire. Yet our title also flags the fact that the tripartite terminology frequently employed to frame this period as “Middle” Republican Roman history – following the end of the monarchy and the Early Republic, and preceding the overseas expansion and civil war of the Late Republic – is an entirely modern convention. The retrospective nature of this division is true both in the specific sense that a “Middle” Republican period never appears as such in ancient sources and in the more generic sense that periodization is always to some extent “intrinsically and inevitably anachronistic.”<sup>2</sup> As a means of organizing and informing the study of the Roman past, the Middle Republic is quite literally what we make (of) it.

How does this volume understand the Middle Republican period? In current scholarly parlance, the epoch appears commonly enough as a sort of objectively bounded (if not always uniformly defined) chronological period, normally comprising the fourth and third centuries BCE.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The contributions in Raaflaub 2005 [1986] on the Archaic social struggles that have come to be known in modern scholarship as the Struggle of the Orders remain essential.

<sup>2</sup> Flower 2010: 6.

<sup>3</sup> The next few paragraphs condense an argument for conceiving of the period as an internal unity that is set out in greater length in Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022.

From ceramic typologies to lists of magisterial colleges, various classes of evidence are anchored in time with shorthand reference to the “Middle Republic.” Like all epistemological systems, however, this periodization has its own history, and we start by considering some dimensions of its modern use.

Though already making the rounds in the nineteenth century, the idea of a distinct “Middle Republican” Rome took off following its appearance in the title of an epoch-making 1973 exhibition, “Roma medio repubblicana.” In the preface to the exhibition’s catalog, reprinted for wider circulation in 1977, Coarelli argued that Roman developments between the Late Archaic period and the Late Republic formed a discrete unit of inquiry. For him, the key to distinguishing this period lay in the acknowledgment of considerable originality, visible above all in the period’s material culture, which the exhibition sought to assemble and present. This insight stood in contrast to previous opinion, which had tended to see Roman art and culture in this period as underdeveloped in contrast to the contemporary world of Greece. Indeed, the move to promote a “Middle Republican” period at that time may be connected to coeval debates about whether concepts of Hellenization in particular could be appropriately applied to the Italian situation. Just one year before the appearance of the catalog to *Roma medio repubblicana*, Zanker’s *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien* (1976) initiated vigorous debate over the relevance to Rome and Italy of the concept of “Hellenism” and the cognate periodization of “Hellenistic” with its own complex and ambiguous history. The conclusions of a recent edited volume on the “Hellenistic West” seem relevant here: While the Western and Central Mediterranean in the fourth and third centuries BCE proffer a seemingly unified appearance to historical inquiry, any uniformity is not because these regions had much to do in a direct manner with the exploits of Alexander and his successors; something distinct was taking place within them. It is not heuristically helpful simply to invoke “Hellenization.”<sup>4</sup>

The contributors to the 1977 exhibition catalog were very much interested in using the “Middle Republic” to bracket a turn in Central Italy’s material culture. In the wake of the volume, however, its more general sense that the “Middle Republic” was a dynamic period came to inform other lines of inquiry into Middle Republican history, from internal politics and external relations to the parameters of central Italian urbanism and beyond.<sup>5</sup> We strongly agree with Coarelli’s insistence that the Roman

<sup>4</sup> Prag and Crawley Quinn eds. 2013: 13.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Eckstein 1987 on foreign relations (the title of which drops the “Middle Republic” that appeared in the dissertation on which the book is based); the essays in *Roma tra*

Middle Republic was not simply a period of time, but a discrete epoch in the development of Roman Italy that deserves study as such. The question that follows is one of definition: How do we delineate the limits, and specify the contents, of this period of inquiry?

One promising path forward is to rely on chronological boundaries for Roman political and military events. Contrary to the belief in some circles that this path yields “unobjectionable” periods that are organized around “apparently simple criteria,”<sup>6</sup> matters are by no means so straightforward. Coarelli staked the beginning of his Middle Republic to the capture of Veii in 396 BCE, or perhaps the Licinio-Sextian Laws of 367 BCE. But already in antiquity, attempts to divide Republican history according to major turning points proliferated; as start-points for the Middle Republic, the Decemvirate or the Gallic Sack come readily to mind, and many more could be added. At the other end, Polybius’ idea that the First Punic war marked a sea change (literally) in the nature of Roman imperialism has anchored the use of 264 BCE as the end of “the beginning of Rome” in modern scholarship from Beloch to Cornell and Leigh.<sup>7</sup> The tools of modern historical research only complicate and blur these dividing lines. Take the Gallic Sack as one example: According to the annalists, the sudden incursion of Gauls over the Apennines overwhelmed the Romans at the Allia and subsequently resulted in the city itself being set ablaze. These were epochal events in the eyes of our historical sources.<sup>8</sup> Yet recent genetic work on Celtic burial sites in the Po Valley suggests that the arrival of transalpine Gauls into Italy was continuous, with Gallic populations arriving for different reasons at different times, and even sometimes intermarrying or otherwise adopting local Italian cultural practices.<sup>9</sup> It is not impossible to reconcile this slower spread with the sudden invasion of Latium reported by our sources, but their history of events conceals (if it does not actively distort) a considerably more complex and multifaceted process.

*oligarchia e democrazia* 1988; Ziolkowski 1992; Feig Vishnia 1996; the essays in Bruun ed. 2000; Valentini 2012.

<sup>6</sup> We quote Toohey 2005: 15, in a discussion of literary periodization.

<sup>7</sup> Polyb. 1.6.1; Beloch 1926; Cornell 1995 and Leigh 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Livy 6.1.2 calls Rome’s rebuilding after the Gallic Sack Rome’s second origin. The original display of the *Fasti Capitolini* may have centered the two tablets that encompass the years 390 to 154: see the discussion of Elisabeth Nedergaard’s reconstruction in Russell 2019: 169–70. For the event and its archaeology, see already Williams 2001; archaeological work at the oppidum of Monte Bibele and nearby sites (see next note) has revealed considerable detail about the Gauls in Italy over the two decades since that book’s publication.

<sup>9</sup> Scheeres et al. 2013; Sorrentino et al. 2018. This process had implications for, inter alia, shifts in Roman weaponry: see now Taylor 2020a. For Celtic-Etruscan interactions note also Lejars 2020.

Armed with information of this sort, we may critique particular turning points as only imperfectly registering trajectories of historical change; and we may pivot to the many other possibilities for marking the boundaries of our Middle Republic. Instead, however, we wish to make the broader point that the very multiplicity and blurriness of plausible divisions and periodizations hold meaning in themselves. The inconsistencies that accompany efforts to mark the temporal, political, and social edges of the Roman Middle Republic arise ultimately from the sorts of history (or histories) that scholarship has tended to exemplify and showcase. It is a testament to the period's generativity of boundary markers that this volume's chapters employ a variety of temporal rubrics, in some cases reaching back as far as the Twelve Tables, in other instances encompassing events or evidence up to the outbreak of the Second Punic War against Hannibal. This variety in and of itself should be seen as intentional.<sup>10</sup> Although this volume as a whole argues for a Middle Republican period that forms a coherent unit of historical inquiry, this unit is not necessarily one that can be neatly encapsulated between two major political or military events, much less tidy dates. What we envision instead is a rich and complex period whose most important developments ranged across various timescales and time spans, and throughout all precincts of Roman and Italian life.

In this regard, a primary motivation for the initial 2019 conference at which this volume began to take shape was the identification of those multiple axes along which the changes of the Middle Republican period could be best tracked. Taking the rubric of the "long fourth century" as one of our organizing principles,<sup>11</sup> we had observed at the time that research in a host of different fields, not all necessarily concerned with the Middle Republic per se, was prompting scholars to engage with the period, with the result that they were pointing out a startling variety of significant and arguably convergent processes. At the regional and peninsular level, it is becoming increasingly clear that the stabilization of Rome's *nobilitas* in the aftermath of the Licinio-Sextian Laws moved in tandem both with changes

<sup>10</sup> Not in the sense of Foxhall, Gehrke, and Luraghi eds. 2010, although Purcell 2003b's sketch – an inspiration for the chapters of both Bernard and Smith in this volume (Chapters 11 and 12) – of the coming-together of political self-consciousness and temporal conceptualization during our period has suggestive affinities with the "intentional history" paradigm.

<sup>11</sup> The notion of a "long fourth century" has gained momentum in the years since the conference: one panel of the 2021 annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists applied the notion to South Italy (with its call for papers crediting Purcell 1994 for inspiration); now Helm 2021 unrolls its account of the Roman expansion "im langen 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr." The "long" century as a historiographical building block: Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022: 7–8; on polemics for and against centuries and decades as rubrics note Schulman 2021.

to other Italian aristocratic groups and with the role that Italy's elites played at Rome itself.<sup>12</sup> Shifts in settlement patterns in Central Italy become all the more compelling when set against trends in regional ecology and the bioarchaeological data; the vicissitudes of urban development in Latium and Tyrrhenian Italy help illuminate the growth of Rome itself as an urban center; the rising demand for enslaved persons in Roman society interacts with and amplifies structural alterations in the nature and complexion of war-making over the course of the period; and so forth. By placing our Middle Republican period at the intersection of these and other various axes, we seek to promote a big-tent approach to Middle Republican history. Attention to that intersection's properties will, it is hoped, lead to new avenues of inquiry even beyond those collected in this volume. Therefore, one of our core aims is to encourage further work that moves from recognition of the Middle Republic's importance to growing confidence in the application of wide-ranging tools to its study.

Since this volume is committed to exploring the value of innovative methodologies to Middle Republican Rome and Italy, it is worth reflecting briefly on what work has so far been done and what material exists to support the application of new approaches. In both directions, our sounding of current scholarship returns encouraging results. As signaled above, the use of "Middle Republic" in the study of Roman antiquity was popularized by the 1973 Italian exhibition on "Roma medio repubblicana" and the subsequent 1977 catalog, which advanced a new assessment of the period's material culture. This focus on material culture has sharpened considerably in recent years with a number of important new publications of archaeological finds from fourth- and third-century Central Italy. To mark the fortieth anniversary of the exhibition catalog, a conference was held in Rome in 2017. The two resulting volumes offer an enormous amount of new material for subsequent study.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, there has been a proliferation of interest within Italian archaeology in regional studies, accompanied by a burgeoning bibliography.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This synchronized movement is coming to the forefront in studies of Italic political structures: see Lanfranchi 2021 on magistracies.

<sup>13</sup> Cifarelli, Gatti, and Palombi eds. 2019; D'Alessio, Smith and Volpe eds. 2021; see also Acconcia ed. 2020.

<sup>14</sup> For example Bradley 2001 and Sisani 2007 on Umbria; Isayev 2007 on Lucania; Colivicchi ed. 2011 and Neudecker ed. 2011 on Southern Italy; Carpenter, Lynch, and Robinson eds. 2014 on Apulia; Scopacasa 2015 on Samnium; Govi ed. 2014 and Pulcinelli 2016 on North and South Etruria, respectively; Vermeulen 2017 on Picenum; Roncaglia 2018 on the Po Valley; Di Fazio 2020 on the Volsci.

With respect to more traditionally historical approaches, the lion's share of work on Middle Republican Rome continues to focus on political history and the idea of political culture.<sup>15</sup> This is understandable enough, as the Licinio-Sextian Laws have long been conceived of as ushering in a period of major political transformation at Rome, in which the previous "struggle of the orders" yielded to new patricio-plebeian leadership over successive generations down through the time of Appius Claudius Caecus.<sup>16</sup> Research into the structures of this Middle Republican ruling class continues with great energy, including both empirical work on magistracies such as the praetorship, consulship, the plebeian tribuneship, and quaestorship,<sup>17</sup> and more theoretical work that situates the Roman *nobilitas* within research on the typologies and attributes of sociopolitical elites.<sup>18</sup> As this latter research (under the guidance of Hölkeskamp and others) now starts to focus on the symbolic systems by which the *nobilitas* constructed their political power, material culture has moved to the forefront.<sup>19</sup> Thus, we find efforts underway to align some of the long-standing historical approaches within the field with the outpouring of new archaeological evidence. If previous collections of volumes on Middle Republican history might be criticized for giving only a passing glance to the material record, in more recent work this is less and less true.<sup>20</sup>

The turn to material culture is especially welcome because the field of Middle Republican political history has traditionally relied on a charitable assessment of the ancient literary sources. This reliance, often trailed by serious anxieties about the non-contemporary literary record's authenticity, has opened up both specific events and the arena of Middle

<sup>15</sup> Hölkeskamp 2011 [1987]; 2010; and now 2020. Hölkeskamp 2019's review essay is a first-rate orientation to the field's most recent trends. For trenchant discussion of the limitations of Hölkeskamp's approach, see Richlin 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Accessible and well-resourced introduction: Cornell 1995; for Appius Claudius' role, see Humm 2005. Here we note too that the ancient historical record itself prioritizes these political themes, alongside military ones, and thus has framed and privileged this sort of inquiry.

<sup>17</sup> Praetorship: Brennan 2000. Consulship: Pina Polo 2011; Beck et al. 2011. Plebeian tribuneship: Smith 2012; Meunier 2011 and 2014; Russell 2015; Lanfranchi 2015 and 2021; for other components of plebeian political organization note Taylor 2018 on centurions. Quaestorship: Pina Polo and Díaz Fernández 2019. But a "soveräne Gesamtdarstellung" of the political-institutional order has yet to be written: Hölkeskamp 2019: 25.

<sup>18</sup> Beck 2005; Fisher and van Wees eds. 2015; Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2018; Hölkeskamp 2020. For comparatively premised research into the emergence of Rome's patrician-plebeian elite, note for example Rosenstein 2010a.

<sup>19</sup> Hölkeskamp 2010 and 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Thus, archaeology plays only a minimal role in Raaflaub 2005 [1986], Eder 1990, or Mineo and Piel eds. 2014, but starts to find more room in Bruun 2000. Most recently, Cifarelli, Gatti, and Palombi eds. 2019 and D'Alessio, Smith, and Volpe eds. 2021 reverse course entirely by incorporating select historical contributions into otherwise archaeological discussions.

Republican politics as a whole to source-critical attacks.<sup>21</sup> At times, debates about the veracity of the tradition, or about its literary qualities, have dominated discussion and inhibited thinking about historical structures and processes. The authors in this volume make no claim to unravel this Gordian knot. Perhaps we might note optimistically that the Middle Republic was closer to the living memory of Fabius Pictor and his contemporaries, and that recent efforts have shed considerable light on those mechanisms by which Romans transmitted their past outside of historiographical channels.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the issue often continues to resemble one of faith: The contributors to this volume approach the record of Middle Republican Rome with varying degrees of fidelity.

Long-standing dilemmas about the sources for this period and their interpretation are unlikely ever to be definitively resolved by new material. Instead, what the situation calls for is expansion and inclusion, both in terms of the evidence and methods we employ and in terms of the questions we ask. When applied to source narratives, theoretical or comparative frameworks help refine our expectations and identify the limits of the possible. We are encouraged, following Gabba's advice, not to use the increasingly copious archaeological data simply to verify or falsify the narrative of the sources, since a more rigorous application of this material to our histories of the period will require adopting archaeology's own intrinsic methodologies.<sup>23</sup> There is no question that continuing engagement with these methodologies will force the refinement and, in some cases perhaps, even the overhaul of some of this volume's conclusions. But as new approaches open up novel and unexpected directions, we remain convinced that these contributions will stand up as demonstrations of the Middle Republic's broad-ranging import and of its merits as a standalone unit of historical analysis.

This volume maps out this expansion in our making of the Middle Republic with ten contributions divided into three sections. The first suite of chapters concentrates on approaches employing, and in some cases rereading, the **Historical Sources (Part I)**. The aim of these chapters is to reinvigorate traditional subjects of historical inquiry, such as the composition of the Middle Republican ruling elite and their social and economic foundations, with the aid of fresh approaches.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Millar 1989; Forsythe 2005: ch. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Thus, the situation with regard to the sources seems different from Early Rome, as see Wiseman 2008: 15; otherwise, note the important exposition of the sources of annalist history in the opening volume of Oakley 1997–2005; Sandberg and Smith eds. 2018; there is much valuable thinking on this theme in Purcell 2003b.

<sup>23</sup> Gabba 1993: 22; see now Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022: 9–11 and *passim*.

In the first chapter in this Part (Chapter 2), Parrish Wright and Nicola Terrenato argue for a greater presence of Italian elites among the Roman *nobilitas* than previously assumed. Although elite horizontal mobility has long been considered a defining feature of Archaic Central Italian society, their study suggests it continued into the Middle Republic, as prominent Italian families strove to obtain Rome's highest political office. In Chapter 3, James Tan then turns from the identities of office-holders to the nature of state power, and in particular to the topic of Republican fiscality, largely overlooked since Nicolet's work a half-century ago.<sup>24</sup> As Tan notes, one of the most regular actions taken by Roman citizens in this early period was likely to have been that of paying taxes. It is possible, however, that the arch importance of early fiscal institutions like *tributum* and *stipendium* has been obscured by their unfamiliarity to later sources that were better versed in an entirely different fiscal system. The narrative that Tan reconstructs thus reads against the familiar, Livian grain and offers a hypothetical, if plausible and necessary, reconstruction of Middle Republican fiscality. Tan draws inspiration from theories of fiscal sociology in rereading our sources and restores taxation to its central place in Middle Republican history. Next, Nathan Rosenstein's chapter (Chapter 4) continues this exploration of fiscal history with particular regard to war-making, a fixture of the period. The transformation of Roman fighting technologies around this time was enormously consequential, even if many of the finer details of such changes are ultimately irrecoverable. Instead of tackling old and probably insoluble questions about the timing of manipular warfare's emergence,<sup>25</sup> Rosenstein focuses on logistics, beginning with the Roman army's ever-expanding theater of operations in Central Italy. The longer and more distant campaigning upon which Rome embarked starting in the late 340s BCE posed all sorts of new problems in terms of resource provision. The old system by which the army largely paid for its own activities through raiding no longer sufficed, and transformations were needed across the entire supply chain.

It seems reasonable to connect the pressures of changing warfare to changes in those systems of *tributum* and *stipendium* – those state-level institutions of income and expenditure that sustained Rome's early drive to empire – at the core of Chapter 3. Another theme related to this cluster of changes in the period was slavery. The human spoils of war, combined with the increasing need to ramp up production to feed the army, shaped both the supply and demand for enslaved labor. Walter Scheidel's chapter

<sup>24</sup> Nicolet 1976. <sup>25</sup> The newest entrant in the conversation: Taylor 2020b.



(Chapter 5) takes up this topic, which still remains undervalued in assessments of the period's historical importance. This underappreciation stems partly from the nature of the evidence, which gestures to the numbers of enslaved persons in Roman hands by our period's end but inhibits any sort of quantified or otherwise detailed understanding of how this came to be. Much of the archaeological evidence, and particularly those signs of large slave-staffed villas in Tyrrhenian Italy that correspond directly to Rome's slave economy, are later in date.<sup>26</sup> Scheidel probes this disconnect between signs of an enormous, if unquantifiable, ramping up of slaveholding and a somewhat delayed increase in the evidence of agricultural estates. From where did all of these slaves come and, most importantly, where did they go? To answer these questions, he pursues a comparison between the emergence of the Middle Republican Roman state and the rise of the Sokoto Caliphate in sub-Saharan Africa in the early years of the nineteenth century, building on a proposal first floated in 2012.<sup>27</sup> While mass enslavement through war played a fundamental part in the political economy of this West African state, whose rapid rise went hand in hand with the capture and trafficking of hundreds of thousands of individuals, it is the nature of their exploitation that invites comparison to Middle Republican Central Italy: large numbers of enslaved people were sold domestically and, in due course, came to form an important social class.

The implications of this group of papers for the period's history do not always run in the same direction – and that is to be welcomed. It is the aim of this volume to present a plurality of approaches and considerations rather than to write a single, systematized historical narrative. Thus none of the papers pretends to be the final word. For Tan and Rosenstein (Chapters 3 and 4), taxation becomes a driver of socioeconomic transformation, first helping to integrate the Roman political community and then serving to spur development; the need to pay for ever more costly warfare will have motivated the intensification of agricultural production, sometimes with the very persons enslaved through Roman war-making, producing a sort of positive feedback loop. By contrast, Scheidel suggests that taxation rates in this period were low, at least in a broad historical perspective, and that demand for domestic slaves initially drove Roman slave-taking. Only at a later date, after the slave supply had increased

<sup>26</sup> The evidence for the late development of villas in Italy is set out in Terrenato 2012 and 2019; but there is at least indirect evidence from our period for intensification of the production of wine and oil in bulk, associated with later slave villas, as see Panella 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Scheidel 2012. See Roth 2013a for application of a model first developed for the study of sub-Saharan Africa (Igor Kopytoff's "internal frontier") to Hellenistic South Central Italy.

significantly, did enslaved labor become a factor in the intensification of agricultural production. As he notes, the state of the evidence means that we suffer from “profound ignorance” in assessing the Roman tax on income rate in this period in any direct manner, and for us this is a more important point than choosing between these different scenarios. In any case, faced with the evidence in its current form, we are unlikely to reach a point of consensus by operating in an empirical or positivistic way. Instead, the problem is best approached as all of these authors do, by thinking about the wider implications of various scenarios and testing different models for their interpretation. In this respect, this cluster of chapters represents a start and (we hope) an invitation.

The second suite of chapters turns to **Material Sources (Part II)**. Here, three contributions treat evidence that has so far played less of a role in mainstream historical reconstructions. Contributors also draw from fields that are not necessarily concerned with the Middle Republican period but whose findings bear on transformations to facets of Roman society during that time. This is not to say that this group of chapters discloses few connections with those of the previous section – quite the contrary. As Liv Yarrow’s chapter on Roman heavy bronze coinage (Chapter 6) stresses, the creation of coined money at Rome stands as one of the greater novelties of the Middle Republican period. The shifting use of currency for various state needs is of vital relevance to preceding discussions of fiscal institutions like *stipendium* or *tributum*. As she points out, the heavy bronze issues of the early third century remain far more difficult to understand from an economic standpoint than the better-studied contemporary precious metal coinage. She looks in detail at aspects of these heavy bronze issues’ production and weight, wielding a number of statistical methods not previously applied to these coins. Grounded in technical discussion of the material at hand, the results have wide-reaching implications. Yarrow emphasizes the irregularity and “strangeness” of this cast coinage, at least insofar as it imperfectly matches our expectations of what coined money does, or the complexities such irregularity implies in terms of the standardization of economic exchange. On her reading, Rome’s early coins were more fluid conveyors of value than has traditionally been supposed. This conclusion significantly complicates modern ideas of standardized exchange or Middle Republican notions of value and wealth.<sup>28</sup>

Tymon de Haas’ chapter (Chapter 7) turns to landscape archaeology, which has made enormous gains over the last decade on account of recent

<sup>28</sup> The tension between the two has sharpened of late: see Rosenstein 2017’s review of Coffee 2017.

publications as well as the ongoing work of integrating various datasets in order to build up a larger picture of changing Italian settlement. The question is not only how to read the results, which in de Haas' view suggest a highly dynamic Middle Republican period for the human landscape of Central Tyrrhenian Italy, but how to endow this reading with historical meaning. How do we interpret period-specific trends such as the rural infilling of diversified settlements in ways that remain alert to our sources without being beholden to them? De Haas suggests one path forward: reflection on the investments of human labor that are implied by those changes to the landscape visible in the record of survey archaeology. Employing the tools of recent energetics work in both archaeology and anthropology, he forms quantitative estimates of the fourth- and third-century efforts to reclaim marginal land in the Pontine region for human settlement and use. The results serve to repopulate, so to speak, the countryside of Latium, by bringing to light (through a cross-cultural methodology) the human labor expenditures entailed by those changes in landscape that are observable in the period's archaeology.

In the last chapter in this Part (Chapter 8) Angela Trentacoste and Lisa Lodwick synthesize recent results from bioarchaeology, a field that has so far made precious few inroads into Middle Republican history. As they suggest, the considerable quantity of data now available from Iron Age sites around the peninsula offers exciting opportunities for understanding developments in farming and animal husbandry over time. Integrating this material with standard historical accounts will require work, especially as this field tends to operate on temporal rhythms of wider amplitude than traditional historiographical or agronomic literature. Nonetheless, the evidence brought forward by Trentacoste and Lodwick is sufficient to draw attention to the Middle Republic in Central Italy as a turning point in crop and animal-husbandry strategies. Their chapter suggests a significant acceleration of animal-husbandry practices in place since the Bronze Age, both in terms of the types of animals raised for food (more pigs and chickens; larger cows) and in the mobility of pastured animals. This pattern of change contrasts with stability in crop selection and in the variability of agricultural practices, trends which again start to appear much earlier and, in this case, endure until the very Late Republic. Taken together, these insights represent a powerful empirical contribution to future historical work. Previous discussions of Roman Republican farming and pasturage, reliant as they have been on archaeological and literary evidence for villa-agriculture, have tended to focus upon the singular if perhaps exceptional question of the emergence of large estates geared

toward export production of oil and wine. The lift-off of this phenomenon is sometimes dated to later periods of Republican history.<sup>29</sup> In the aggregate, changes detectable in the record for arable cultivation are much less pronounced; it is instead in livestock practices that we perhaps see more dramatic shifts. As economic historians increasingly point to a “revolution” of productivity in Rome and Italy during the Republic, the pace and timing of these dynamics and their relationship to longer-term factors, ecological as much as sociopolitical in nature, will only grow in salience.<sup>30</sup>

Each in their own way, Chapters 6–8 employ material culture to draw new groups of Romans and Italians into our conversation of the period. The small value represented by cast bronze coin indicates that these coins must in part have pertained to the world of daily economic transactions as much as to state payments; but Yarrow’s discussion in Chapter 6 also destabilizes this sort of thinking, by raising the idea that cast bronze fulfilled a wider array of social and cultural (and not merely economic) functions relevant to the lives of elites and nonelites alike. Meanwhile, the application of landscape or bioarchaeological data allows us to capture historical trends among smallholders or peasants that are simply not visible in our traditional sources of evidence. All three chapters share a commitment to the application of methods that, originally developed or refined in disciplinary communities beyond classics and ancient history, yield remarkable rewards when brought into conversation with the heterogeneity of the Middle Republic’s material culture. Through these methods, which enable us to mine available evidence for new information or to expand the range and interpretive affordances of the evidence already at our disposal, we arrive at a far richer and more inclusive picture of cultural dynamics during the Middle Republic.

The third and final suite of chapters concentrates on **Architecture and Art (Part III)**, extending the previous Part’s conclusions about material culture’s usefulness to historical inquiry by prioritizing other sets of evidence and approaches. In its fresh appraisal of categories of material evidence that are frequently interpreted as political in nature, this group of chapters identifies and builds bridges between the preceding two. Domenico Palombi’s chapter (Chapter 9) starts off this discussion by looking at urban planning in Latium. There has been much discussion lately about the urban types or models generated by Rome in this period and then propagated through colonization and other imperialist processes

<sup>29</sup> See above n. 26. <sup>30</sup> Economic “revolution” as described by Kay 2014; Roselaar 2019.

around the peninsula. That cities and their physical organization could be read so directly to reflect Roman political power is an old idea, traceable as far back as Haverfield's development of the concept of "Romanization."<sup>31</sup> More recently, however, this idea has been challenged from two directions, first by the archaeological discovery that town planning, often associated with Roman Middle Republican colonial settlements, was in fact highly diffuse in Italy in both Roman and non-Roman settlements;<sup>32</sup> and second, in the closer look at the layouts of colonies and Roman-influenced towns in the later Republic, which reveal their considerable variability of form, especially as they seem everywhere to reflect local contingencies.<sup>33</sup> Palombi's innovative discussion sits at the intersection of these two lines of scholarship in that it juxtaposes trends at urban sites in Latium, including Rome. As he notes, the last few decades of archaeological research have demonstrated that the fourth and third centuries comprise one of the more important moments in the urban design of the region, with a variety of Archaic settlements undergoing considerable monumentalization and transformation.<sup>34</sup> From what we can tell of these trends (and our perspective is everywhere limited), a common kit of infrastructure and monument types seems to be emerging in the Latin cities, but one which was everywhere deployed within its specific historical and topographical contexts. In light of these changes, Palombi proposes a radical rethinking of the diffusion of urban forms in Italy in this period, not as Romanization in the Haverfieldian sense, or as Hellenization as sometimes held, but as Latinization. After the political integration of Latium under Rome, it was these trends in Latin urbanization, broadly coherent but locally deployed, which established templates for urban developments elsewhere in the peninsula in the wake of Rome's subsequent expansion.

In Chapter 10, Penelope E. J. Davies moves from the cities of Latium to Rome itself. The capital saw intense architectural expansion in this period, starting with the construction of massive new circuit walls in Grotta Oscura tuff following the Gallic Sack, and followed by the building of a large number of temples and other public monuments. This wave of Middle Republican architecture has attracted significant recent scholarly attention for various aspects, from the religious importance of temple-building to the

<sup>31</sup> Haverfield 1906 and 1913, with Dench 2018: ch. 1 for a fresh critical reassessment.

<sup>32</sup> Mogetta 2014; Johnston and Mogetta 2020. <sup>33</sup> Bolder-Boos 2019.

<sup>34</sup> For a recent presentation of this work, see, along with the multiple volumes of *Lazio e Sabina*, Cifarelli, Gatti, and Palombi eds. 2019, including Palombi's contribution there on similar themes.

political and economic impact on urban society.<sup>35</sup> In general, these studies tend to employ Rome's architecture as a path to accessing various aspects of Roman society, but the city remains in this case a mostly passive backdrop of various historical trends, which (on the standard interpretation) it does not directly create or mold. Davies inverts this line of reasoning by drawing from current theoretical discussions of entanglements between object and humans in art history and archaeology to grant greater agency to the Middle Republican city's "object-scape." With this phrase, Davies innovatively applies posthumanist theory to architecture, treating Middle Republican Rome's buildings both individually and in their ensemble as objects, which, once produced, took on lives of their own and drove consequent material choices. In this provocative view, temples and other monuments were not merely indices of social and political change but helped stabilize and at times spur them.

Moving out to the peninsula, Seth Bernard's paper (Chapter 11) explores the idea that material culture forms an important conveyor of sociopolitical meaning with a case study on visual narratives for Campanian history. A number of painted tombs from Oscan Campania in the fourth and third centuries BCE display features that justify understanding them as historical in nature, even if we are rarely able to identify the specific episodes or events that they intend to describe. Bernard investigates how these paintings speak to commemorative practices among these Oscan communities, locating in their recourse to past events a potent source of legitimacy for new elite groups in this period. Far from being another reflective byproduct, historical painting is central to those expansive territorial state-formation processes that Terrenato has characterized as unfolding across the length of the peninsula.<sup>36</sup> This argument is not dissimilar to what others, especially Flower and Purcell, have proposed for Rome, where nonwritten forms of historical information, including painting, supported elite self-fashioning well before the advent of written history around the time of the Second Punic War.<sup>37</sup> As Bernard points out, whereas the Roman process of "becoming historical" is well studied for this period, the Italian version garners much less attention. Accordingly, his chapter closes with an appeal to restore to mainstream study Italians' own intellectual history, as it interacted with Roman practice, but most importantly on its own terms.

<sup>35</sup> In the first category, see now Padilla Peralta 2020a; earlier scholarship includes Ziolkowski 1992; Orlin 1997; for politics, Davies 2017a; economics, Bernard 2018a. Several new discoveries from Rome's Middle Republican phases are presented in D'Alessio, Smith, and Volpe eds. 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Terrenato 2019. <sup>37</sup> Flower 1996; Purcell 2003a.

These three chapters all insist that material culture forms a vital way of understanding the history of elite behavior both in Rome and in the various Italian communities with which it interacted in the Middle Republic. As we reach the limits of what can be extracted dependably from traditional historiographical sources, there is encouraging material in these chapters for extending our awareness beyond this interpretive threshold, both at Rome and elsewhere in Italy.

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As we have already stressed, this volume's collective chapters seek not so much to offer an authoritative account of Middle Republican Rome as to chart some of the different and exciting roads to such an account's realization. At the same time, our volume does not shy away from tallying the tangencies and gains of our contributions. Smith's concluding chapter (Chapter 12) rounds off the discussion by proposing one way of weaving all of these chapters together into a coherent narrative, one that centers the Middle Republic as a time when the Roman community "becomes political" and that underlines the degree to which the radical changes of our period built upon developments of the preceding centuries. The major through-line for Smith is legal history, and specifically the evolving relationship of conceptions of property to state formation. It is here, his envoi suggests, that we can see a political community attaining self-consciousness in the Middle Republican period; the signs of that surging awareness are apparent in all of the domains of interest to our contributors.

Awareness of this kind will inevitably return us to where we began: chronological horizons and contestable habits of periodization. Having opened this introduction by flagging the Middle Republic as a crucial period from the vantage point of what follows – the full-throated articulation of a "Roman dialect of empire"<sup>38</sup> – we want to stress, in the spirit of Smith and other contributors, that changes unfolding at this time were grounded in the earlier Roman and Italian past. Especially as historians engage increasingly with fields such as landscape survey or bioarchaeology, which operate at far different scales of chronological resolution than the annual rhythms of the consular *fasti*, we will need to reckon with the various temporalities of those forces at play in making Middle Republican society. In this sense, as Smith's conclusion also ably reminds us, the Middle Republic was and remains an era in which the collision of multiple developmental processes in Italy, not all of them necessarily or strictly connected at first, produced new and enduring social forms.

<sup>38</sup> Dench 2018.

Ultimately, then, this volume makes the Middle Republic into a period of significantly widened horizons. The individual chapters work both as expositions of particular topics and as invitations to expand inquiry. Of course, the breadth of historical inquiry to which we aspire should not only be understood as topical or empirical in form or aspiration. It is our expectation that our volume will stimulate research into the Middle Republic that is more robustly egalitarian, attentive to the identities and practices of nonelites or non-Romans while not losing sight of Rome's ruling classes and their application of the hegemonic arts. This egalitarian emphasis is already, and will in the long run remain, inseparable from a commitment to diversity and equity in the representation of scholarly voices. To mention only one gauge of this commitment, five of our twelve chapters are authored or coauthored by women scholars, a move toward gender parity in scholarship that is without precedent in previous collected volumes on the period. Our commitment to diversity is what underwrites this volume's methodological versatility and historical rigor. We strive with this collection to model the kind of expansiveness and inclusion that will make the Middle Republic into an ever-more-welcoming space for social-scientific, statistical, archaeological, and art-historical practitioners of all backgrounds, interests, and tastes.