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Carsten Hjort Lange, *From Hannibal to Sulla. The Birth of Civil War in Republican Rome* (Studies in Ancient Civil War, 1), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2024, pp. XII + 217.

The volume under review inaugurates a new book series at De Gruyter, dedicated to ancient civil wars. It builds upon the booming research on the nature and the multifaceted expressions of internal strife and conflicts, the activities of international research networks[1], and draws heavily on the author's previous contributions, as evidenced by copious citations of his own works. In time, two further volumes by Lange are expected to join this book, charting the development of (Roman) *stasis* and civil war from Early Rome until the end of the Republican age.

Lange's main contention here is that the origins of the *antebellum* period of Roman civil wars – *i.e.*, to put it simply, the phase in which military, political, cultural and intellectual premises leading to, and precipitating, (civil) war are to be found – should be traced back to the Second Punic War. In his analysis, Lange draws on the concept of *antebellum* as well as cultural and methodological stimuli stemming from American history, especially that of the Civil War or of the recent so-called Capitol riot of January 2021(chapter 1). Lange sets out to prove his point by finding evidence that the defection of many *socii* to Hannibal, which had transformed the conflict against the Carthaginians into an "internal" war as well, triggered fear of new defections on Italic soil and debates among the Roman elite about history, origins, and consequences of *staseis* and internal wars (esp. chapter 2). Events of the second century BCE – notably the Bacchanalian affair, the *seditio Patauinorum*, and the rebellion of *Fregellae* (chapters 3, 4, 6) – are analysed to demonstrate how the political tensions in the Italian peninsula and the Roman security complex led to drastic political countermeasures, to a growing familiarity with the reality of internal strife or conflict, and to their conceptualisation. According to Lange, traces of Roman debates are evident not only in Polybius' extant work (chapter 5), but also in later sources – especially in Appian, the most informative and continuous narrative of Republican civil wars from their beginning until their end available to us (chapter 7). The final chapter (8) deals with the culmination of this long gestation: the purported coining of the term *bellum ciuile* by L. Cornelius Sulla.

On an intellectual level, the book offers some stimuli. The first fifty pages, which focus on broader questions surrounding the definition and nature of internal and civil conflicts, raise especially interesting methodological and conceptualisation problems. In the second part, the treatment of the figure of L. Opimius stands out, as his key-role, both as a Roman magistrate in his own time and as an *exemplum* in the (self-)legitimation strategies of later

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[1] For major outcomes of these synergies, cf. *e.g.* the conference proceedings in H. Börm - M. Mattheis - J. Wienand (eds.), *Civil War in Ancient Greece and Rome: Contexts of Disintegration and Reintegration*, Stuttgart 2016; H. Börm - U. Gotter - W. Havener (eds.), *A Culture of Civil War? Bellum civile and Political Communication in Late Republican Rome*, Stuttgart 2023.

decades, is made clearer[2]. The assertion that Opimius «was the outstanding transitional character between the Middle and the Late Republic» (p. 148) is, however, too far-fetched and hinges on Lange's exclusive focus on the origins and nature of "civil war". My opinion on the remaining parts and the conclusions of this book is, alas, far more sceptical.

A few general remarks are in order. Methodologically, Lange's choice to begin his exploration of the origins and history of Roman internal strife and civil wars with the middle volume of what is intended to be a three-book series is problematic, although the full consequences of this decision remain unclear. How can Lange be certain, indeed, that the Romans did not start to reflect on nature and developments of internal division, unrest, and violence at the time of the struggles of Early Rome? Lange maintains that those events were «less important than the last "great war" before the civil war» (p. 8), but the argument is not developed further and remains unproven. As he concedes when writing on Q. Fabius Pictor (see below): «there is no reason to believe that the debate is *not* much older» (p. 50). The reader is left waiting for the forthcoming book on Early Rome. A greater impact of events of earlier centuries on intellectual and cultural developments would inevitably diminish the significance of the second century BCE – at least in terms of its decisive contribution to conceptual structures –, regardless of the accuracy of Lange's analyses.

The issue of the period prior to the Second Punic War also affects the question of the supposed trauma and security-complex generated by the defections during the Hannibalic war. In the last years of the third century, the subjugation of most of Italy was still a quite recent achievement, which also had involved defections of allies and setbacks in its long trajectory. Even though scale and urgency of the peril must have been, at the time, quite different than during the Hannibalic conflict, the Romans had likely become familiar with the challenge represented by "defections" long before the Second Punic War. Such incidents may thus have sparked discussions and reflections well before the period Lange investigates.

Finally, since Lange is «looking at the dark side, the cracks in the alleged consensus» (p. 4, note 3), I am quite surprised by the absence of engagement with B. Bleckmann's view on the *Konsens/Konkurrenz*-balance in the Roman Republican political system, on the *ethos* of the nobility, and his own interpretation of the First Punic War (which heavily relies on Cassius Dio and Zonaras)[3]. His stance, albeit controversial, directly affects our understanding of *longue durée* processes that contributed to the onset of Roman civil wars as well as of their inevitability and "abnormality" within the political system[4]. And – most relevantly for this review – it calls into question the inherent connection between the deep-seated "origins" of Roman civil wars and the relationships with the allies, instead highlighting the internal imbalances of the Roman political structure. A closer examination of the issues raised by Bleckmann would have benefitted Lange's discussion.

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[2] I am not at all persuaded that the absolute ablative in Sall. *Iug.* 16, 2 (*L. Opimius, homo clarus et tum in senatu potens, quia consul C. Graccho et M. Fuluio Flacco interfectis acerrume uictoriam nobilitatis in plebem exercuerat*) is meant to subvert («pervert», p. 147), in a non-annalistic fashion, the traditional consular dating, using an alternative dating system. That simply means «after Gracchus and Flaccus had been killed», not «at the time of the killings of Gracchus and Flaccus»; furthermore, the reference to Opimius' consulship (*consul* – «as consul», «when he was consul») is there for all to see.

[3] B. Bleckmann, *Die römische Nobilität im Ersten Punischen Krieg. Untersuchungen zur aristokratischen Konkurrenz in der römischen Republik*, Berlin 2002.

[4] Cf. H. Beck, *Die Rollen des Adligen und die Krise der Republik*, in K.-J. Hölkeskamp - E. Müller-Luckner (Hrsg.), *Eine politische Kultur (in) der Krise? Die „letzte Generation" der römischen Republik*, München 2009, pp. 53-71.

Now, turning to specifics: throughout the book, one encounters numerous apodictical assertions and debatable interpretations of ancient sources. Alternative and more realistic solutions remain unchecked or, at best, are dismissed without substantial critique. Such an approach is apparent from the very beginning of Lange's search for Roman debates on *stasis*-phenomena and internal wars from the Second Punic War onwards.

Lange makes the most of the *Faustregel* that one prepares for and fights new wars by looking at the last significant one. Since, according to him, the Second Punic War was the last strategically significant (great) conflict of the Romans before the *bellum Italicum*, Lange syllogistically argues that the Romans continued to base their reflections on war and the empire's security on that experience, which had presented them «with an acute fear of losing its [sic] empire as well as a fear of the allies: a fear of defection and rebellion» (p. 51). Much of the volume relies on the «totemic status of the Hannibalic conflict» (p. 135) and this syllogism. But is it actually possible to trace this fear in our sources? Despite Lange's statement on p. 57 that «we have seen in the above that Rome's geopolitical fears from the time of the Second Punic War towards the early first century BCE were often centered around its allies», I cannot find a single clue or demonstration of such a claim in the previous pages. His assumption remains speculative. On the basis of theoretical and strategic reasonings, one may perhaps consider it a plausible scenario, but nothing more. Throughout the book, one encounters similarly rhetorical formulations and leaps in logic. On the same page, for instance, Lange argues that Flor. *epit*. I 6, 11 (*hoc tunc Vei fuere. nunc fuisse quis meminit? quae reliquiae? quod uestigium?*) and I 47, 4-6 (*ita eodem tempore dimicasse domi cum ciuibus, sociis*, eqs.) testify the enduring fear of the Romans of having to fight against both their great enemies and their own allies. The logical connection escapes me.

The first Roman historian, Q. Fabius Pictor, plays a major role in this volume. According to Lange, the historiographical focus on the rebellion of the *socii* can, indeed, be traced back to him. In the book, I cannot find, unfortunately, a single piece of evidence that Pictor had actually raised such an issue, on the basis of his own experience or contemporary debates. Why should the fragment on the revolt of the Latins vanquished at the Lake Regillus (τὰς ἀποστάσας Λατίνων πόλεις – Dion. Hal. VII 71, 2 = Fab. Pict. *hist*. 15)[5] be seen as reflecting the defections after Cannae, rather than simply recounting earlier events (whether accurate or not is irrelevant here)?[6] (p. 60). Why should Polybius' digression on the Mercenary War of 241 BCE and the term ἀπόστασις (I 70, 9, but cf. also I 72, 4; 6; I 88,5) reflect the reception of Roman debates and the effort to «explain the Latin language of *bellum intestinum*» (p. 62)? Both ἀπόστασις and the notion of "defection", "treason", "rebellion" etc. are not at all uncommon in Polybius (to him I shall return later)[7]. Such and further claims, as they remain unproven, are unable to buttress Lange's subsequent assumptions about the origins and leitmotifs of the alleged Roman debate on rebellions and defections during or after the Second Punic War.

Of course, it is reasonable to think that the events of the Hannibalic conflict exerted some impact, not least given the need to deal with the defectors both military and politically. Likewise, it can be surmised that the Romans continued to look suspiciously at the former "traitors". What represents a step further and hence requires concrete evidence is Lange's

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[5] The fragments of Roman historical works are cited according to T.J. Cornell (ed.), *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* I-III, vol. I, Oxford 2013.

[6] On p. 103, there is no longer a distinction made: «Fabius Pictor, describing the allied rebellions of that period, used the same term (ἀπόστασις)».

[7] Cf. A. Mauersberger - Chr.-Fr. Collatz - H. Helms - M. Schäfer, *Polybios-Lexikon*, vol. I 1, Berlin² 2002, pp. 195-196 (*s.v.* ἀπόστασις, ἀποστάτης); 212-213 (*s.v.* ἀφίστημι).

assertion that these rebellions and challenges to Rome's hegemony provoked a trauma[8], that they were perceived as a war internal "to the Roman polity", or that they triggered a complex and new (at least in its extension and significance) debate, ultimately leading to the development of coordinates and taxonomies for internal/civil war. The fact that terms like "rebellions", "defections" or "internal wars" (for which the distinction, albeit ambiguous and pliable, is quite intuitive) were used does not necessarily imply that Pictor, other historians or members of the elite were engaged in a deeper reflection on their taxonomy or political significance.

Apropos of "polity"[9]: the loose use of this term[10] is pivotal to the evaluation of the political, intellectual, and linguistic developments charted by Lange. He frequently refers to the "polity" and the "empire" of the Romans without distinguishing between the two, in fact conflating them. This results in the Italian allies being considered members of the Roman "polity" (*e.g.* pp. 4-5, 52-54, 66, 74, 96 [«internal wars within the same polity, that is, within the Roman empire or commonwealth (*res publica*) more widely»], etc.). At p. 70 and 98, even the *Cisalpini omnes Galli – qua* seceding allies – and the Paduans of the second century BCE end up being parts of the Roman polity (on the *seditio Patauinorum* cf. also p. 109: «an internal war within the wider polity»); at pp. 120-121 the rebellion of Spartacus becomes a «breaking away from the polity of the Romans». Similar assertions dot the book. This framing allows Lange to argue for the crucial relevance of the 'Italian problem' for the development of a language, a taxonomy, and a conceptual framework for *stasis*, rebellion, and civil war in Rome from the beginning of the second century BCE.

This is questionable.[11] The Italian allies were part of the Roman empire as members of the multifarious and stratified set of alliances and dependencies that secured Roman control over Italy and fuelled the expansion of the Republic. However, to use Appian's words (*BC* I 34, 152), they were ὑπήκοοι not κοινωνοὶ τῆς ἡγεμονίας. They were not part of the "Roman polity", as demonstrated not only by the *foedera* themselves, but also by the outburst of the so-called Italian question at the end of the second century and by the refusal to enfranchise the Italian *socii* until the alarming reversals brought about by the Social War. Quite tellingly, in the *lex repetundarum*, the *socii* – either of the *nomen Latinum* or of the *exterae*

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[8] Cf. esp. p. 51 with note 10. Not to mention that the category of "trauma" itself is not without problems; cf. *e.g.* U. Walter, *Die Dictatur Sullas – Ein Wendepunkt für die römische Historiographie?*, in M.T. Schettino - G. Zecchini (a cura di), *L'età di Silla*, Roma 2018, pp. 239-254, esp. p. 242.

[9] Which I understand here as referring to «an organized society; the state as a political entity», «a particular form of government or political organization» – *Oxford English Dictionary* (https://www.oed.com/ – last checked: 11.09.2024), *s.v.* polity (1). In his discussion of the *SC de Bacchanalibus*, Lange correctly states that this was «a Roman interference throughout Italy and its allied affairs, as indicated by the categories of Roman citizen, Latin, and allies» (p. 82). Had the *socii* been members of the Roman polity (and not just (subjects) of the empire), there would be no need to speak of an interference.

[10] P. 95 is quite emblematic: «The total war between Athens and Sparta and their allies was in itself a war within the "polity" of Greece; an internal or even civil war, if only in cultural terms».

[11] Lange's swiftly attempt to prove the contrary (pp. 52-53) relies on a biased interpretation of Plb. I 6, 6. Here, Polybius simply maintained that, before the Pyrrhic war, the Romans attacked the remaining *parts* of Italy (τὰ λοιπὰ μέρη τῆς Ἰταλίας), considering them not as foreign land, but rather already as their rightful *dominion*: οὐχ ὡς ὑπὲρ ὀθνείων, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸ πλεῖον ὡς ὑπὲρ ἰδίων ἤδη καὶ καθηκόντων σφίσι πολεμήσοντες. Of the same view: A. Mauersberger - H. Helms, *Polybios-Lexikon*, vol. I 3, Berlin² 2006, col. 1179, *s.v.* ἴδιος: «Eigenbesitz, pers. Besitz»; col. 1213, *s.v.* καθήκω: «'j-m rechtmäßig Zustehendes». This passage cannot be used to claim that the allies and other Italians had ceased to be considered foreigners.

nationes – and those *in arbitratu, dicione, potestate amicitiaue populi Romani* account for all the segments of Roman foreign dominion and area of influence (not "polity") to which the law granted suit and right of prosecution[12]. Lange's conception of the political system(s) of second-century Italy is oversimplified and, as a consequence, fundamentally flawed. The defections of, and the relations with, the Italian *socii* may well have contributed to reflections on the security of the Roman community and the Italian peninsula, or on how to deal with treacherous initiatives. But, since the *socii* were not members of the Roman "polity", one can legitimately doubt their relevance to debates about "internal", nearly "civil" war – at least until the Gracchan years and the Social War, when the issue of their integration into the "polity" played a key role in the first internal violent struggles and in the escalation towards the civil war.

The risk of oversimplification extends to issues of broader historical appraisal as well. For example, by comparing the first two struggles against Carthage to World War I and II, Lange maintains that one could also «be tempted to see» the Punic conflicts «as one continuous war» (p. 48; cf. pp. 112, 134) and to speak of just one long civil war in the first century stretching from Sulla to the annexation of Ptolemaic Egypt. Even though World War I and the First Punic War undoubtedly set the stage for the following conflicts, neither the Hannibalic War nor World War II were inevitable outcomes (at least, as far as the twentieth century is concerned, the hope for peace was nurtured by many a politician; and I would not downplay the efforts of, say, a Gustav Stresemann as a tilt against windmills). All the more, the Caesarian civil war did not have to happen because of the Sullan one, nor should the slave revolt and Catilina's conjuration be understood as episodes of one persisting civil war. Such a framework oversimplifies the historical complexity; the reality is read and interpreted exclusively through the lenses of the (civil) war problem; and a monolithic, deterministic view, reminiscent of the Realist paradigm (cf. pp. 40, 88), imposes itself on the fundamentally probabilistic, often erratic course of history.

Logical leaps or unsubstantiated assumptions can be detected also elsewhere. For instance, it remains unclear by what criteria one may argue that Livy, in his account of the *seditio Patauinorum*, «attempted to contribute to a conceptual debate about the nature of civil war in Rome or – perhaps better and more accurately – was reflecting debates that were ongoing in the second century BCE» (p. 104). Livy (XLI 27, 1-4) clearly situated the episode within a treatment of Roman interventions in Cisalpine (the second consulship of M. Aemilius Lepidus) and Roman diplomatic activities before the war against Perseus, which also involved addressing the "similar" Aetolian *stasis*. There is no hint at a Rome-centred debate on internal or civil war. Livy's narrative of the conflict with Alba (I 23, 1) provides no clue to detect second-century debates in the account of Patavium: the war between Albans and Romans is presented as *ciuili simillimum bello* because of the genealogical relationship between the two communities, as Livy explicitly states (*prope inter parentes natosque, Troianam utramque prolem, cum Lauinium ab Troia, ab Lauinio Alba, ab Albanorum stirpe*

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[12] (A.W. Lintott - H.B. Mattingly -) M.H. Crawford, *1 – Lex repetundarum*, in M.H. Crawford (ed.), *Roman Statutes*, I-II, London 1996, pp. 65-112, esp. p. 65, line 1. See A.W. Lintott, *Judicial Reform and Land Reform in the Roman Republic*, Cambridge 1992, p. 111, who is almost certainly right in arguing that «*socii nominisque Latini* has been adapted (... *nominisve Latini exterarumve nationum*) so that it clearly includes any ally of Rome, while the rest of the phrase (*quoive in arbitratu...*) covers any other foreigner with an established relationship to the *populus Romanus*» (cf. M.H. Crawford, *Lex repetundarum*, cit., p. 95). Another interpretation, that distinguishes between the *socii nominisque Latini* and the *exterae nationes quoiue in arbitratu eqs.*, would not change much, as the *socii* are clearly conceived as a group external to the Roman polity.

regum oriundi Romani essent)[13]. The conflict is thus construed, *in a literary fashion*, as a struggle between fathers and sons – but a struggle that, unlike the civil wars of the first century, results in the unification of the two peoples: *duo populi in unum confusi sunt* (I 23, 2). It is not possible to argue, by contrast, that the absence of an innuendo to the recent civil conflicts in the Patavium episode reveals Livy's reflection of second-century debates on terminology and concepts of rebellion and internal war.

In Lange's book, Polybius himself (pp. 111-129) seems no longer to be an intellectually autonomous Greek and sophisticated historian reflecting on wars and events marking the expansion of Roman hegemony on the basis of his own experience and political-historiographical agenda[14]. He makes his appearance as a recipient and interpreter in Greek-Thucydidean language of contemporary Roman debates (yet to be demonstrated, as we have seen) – especially as far as his digression on the rebellion of Falerii and the internal war between the Carthaginians and their mercenaries (I 65-88) is concerned. Interestingly enough, in the surviving books and fragments, Polybius never reveals to be aware of Roman reflections on internal strife and wars from the third or second century BCE. Why should one ignore or reject the Ockhamian solution that Polybius was providing accounts of historical events in his own language and embedding them in his own historical narrative and view, without drawing on Roman debates? Despite the comparison between both events, the mention of the πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος between Rome and Falerii covers just a handful of words (I 65, 1-2) and no reflection is developed here. Polybius' attention was instead on the mercenary revolt (I 65, 2-88, 12). Another digression shows that, on this topic, the Achaean historian was going his own way, against appraisals circulating in Rome. Polybius (III 8-9) lengthy commented and openly challenged Fabius Pictor's opinion that Hasdrubal's greed for power and gain as well as Hannibal's similar conduct were the causes of the Second Punic War (Fab. Pict. *hist*. 22). It was Polybius who stressed the connection with the mercenary war (τὸ περὶ τοὺς ξένους κίνημα; αἱ ἐμφύλιαι ταραχαί – III 9, 8-9), *contra* Pictor (see also I 65, 9). All this remains unmentioned by Lange. The distinction made by Pictor between the Barcids' conduct and that of the Carthaginians hints at debates on the responsibilities for the Second Punic War and on contrasts within the political elites. However, this is not a symptom of reflections on "internal" wars, nor does it support the idea that the Romans elaborated on the relevance of the mercenary war (or of the rebellion of Falerii) at that time – quite the contrary. Polybius treated the ἄσπονδος πόλεμος, the problem of the mercenaries, the "barbarian ways" (ἤθη σύμμικτα καὶ βάρβαρα) and the causes of the Hannibalic war (I 65, 6-9), and other similar topics from his own biographical, political, and cultural perspective. This is demonstrated also by the elaborate and vivid discussions on the "traitors" of their own communities (XVIII 13-15), on the internal tensions and divisions spreading before and during the Third Macedonian War (XXVII 1-2, 9-10, 15; cf. also Liv. XLII 30, 5-7, from Polybius), on the masses' behaviour and responsibilities, and on the politics of the Achaean league at the time of its struggle with Rome (XXXVIII 10-13, 17-18). There is no proof (nor need to suppose) that Polybius was conscious of (purported) Roman debates on *staseis* and internal wars, or even that he purposely reflected them in his language. The burden of proof remains on Lange.

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[13] The passage is quoted in full on p. 139, note 26, but Lange refers to it, quite oddly, as a description «of the struggle between Romulus and Remus».

[14] See now J. Thornton, *Polibio. Il politico e lo storico*, Roma 2020 along with J. Thornton, *Polibio e Callicrate. Sull'articolazione della classe dirigente achea*, «Hormos» 15 (2023), pp. 196-226.

One needs not to dwell further on the remaining sections. The final chapter, which posits that Sulla was the coiner of the term *bellum civile*, deserves comment because of its relevance. This hypothesis had already been put forward in a previous contribution by F.J. Vervaet and Lange[15]. What was presented there as a conjecture (p. 26: «At any rate, the combined evidence discussed in the above *suggests* that Sulla *may well have been* the first to coin the very concept of *bellum ciuile* in his *Memoirs*») becomes a fact in Lange's book. The assertion that Sulla invented the term appears also in the first sections of the book and is repeated several times as proven without further ado. Vervaet's and Lange's opinion is a stimulating hypothesis, based, however, on a biased reading of fragments from Sulla's *Res gestae*. In Plut. *mor*. 786D-E = Sulla *hist*. 26 (ὁ δὲ Σύλλας, ὅτε τῶν ἐμφυλίων πολέμων τὴν Ἰταλίαν καθήρας κτλ.), ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι might translate (or indirectly derive from) the original Latin text, but this is no proof that Sulla had used *bella ciuilia* rather than, for instance, *bella intestina*[16]. In fact, the latter term would have allowed him to subsume the Social War under the series of conflicts from which he had "befreed" Italy – especially since the Samnites, who had built the segment of the Italic coalition most hostile to the Romans and whose enfranchisement had ultimately not been acknowledged by Sulla, could be presented as the last remnants of the insurgency, finally vanquished upon his return[17].

But even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that Sulla had employed this crucial expression in his *Res gestae*, we could not be certain that he had coined it. If one believes, like Lange, in debates developing across the second century, or rather (and far more likely) traces their existence back to the post-Gracchan years, then the concept of *bellum ciuile* may have been used slightly earlier, during the 80s, for example by Sulla's enemies after their victorious return in 87. A suitable context would also be the political debates and the oratory of the years before Sulla's return, which instantly faced the consequences of the first *bellum ciuile* (cf. Cic. *Brut*. 90, 308). As far as Val. Max. II 8, 7 (*Sulla, qui plurima bella ciuilia confecit eqs.*) is concerned, Lange und Vervaet comment: «Since Augustus was credited with victory in no less than five civil wars (Suet. *Aug*. 9), the boastful claim that Sulla "won more civil wars than any man" may well derive from the latter's own *Memoirs*»[18]. This is neither a proof nor a cogent argument. Furthermore, and more importantly, if we want to follow the idea that Sulla himself boasted that he had won more civil wars than anyone and, hence, compared his achievements with those of others, then both his bravado and the plural would imply that *bellum ciuile* was already familiar to the political discourse. But this is just playing with conjectures: that remark should be considered as a gloss by Valerius Maximus. Speculations about the «plain and forceful language» of Sulla's work (esp. about Prisc. *gramm*. IX 39 (*GL* p. 476) = Sulla *hist*. 5; Plut. *Sull*. 28, 15 = Sulla *hist*. 25) are irrelevant to prove that Sulla coined the term *bellum ciuile*.

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[15] C.H. Lange - F.J. Vervaet, *Sulla and the Origins of the Concept of* Bellum civile, in C.H. Lange - F.J. Vervaet (eds.), *The Historiography of Late Republican Civil War*, Leiden-Boston 2019, pp. 17-28.

[16] Even though Lange maintains that ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι surely had to be the translation of *bella ciuilia* (p. 187), he suggests elsewhere that this was not necessarily the case (*e.g.* p. 110).

[17] Cf. M. Jung, *Die Ethnisierung des Bürgerkrieges. Zur Dynamisierung der Gewalt nach Sullas Rückkehr aus dem Osten*, in M. Haake - A.-C. Harders (Hrsg.), *Politische Kultur und Soziale Struktur der Römischen Republik. Bilanzen und Perspektiven*, Stuttgart 2017, pp. 309-321 (esp. p. 319: «der Bürgerkriegskonflikt [war] zur Entscheidungsschlacht gegen die Samniten umgestaltet und uminterpretiert worden»); E.H. Bispham, *Sulla and the Populi Italici*, in M.T. Schettino - G. Zecchini (a cura di), *L'età di Silla*, cit., pp. 1-43, esp. pp. 27, 29.

[18] C.H. Lange - F.J. Vervaet, *Sulla*, cit., p. 24.

Various typographical oversights (*e.g.* p. 60: Hasdrugal, note 24: the<re>; p. 64: Marszalet; p. 122: *adversaries* instead of *adversarius*; pp. 138 and 183: Cracchum) and occasional blunders (p. 103: Cinna is said to have courted *municipia* «to defect from the polity and to join his side in the struggle against Gaius Marius the Younger» [!]) also detract from the book's scholarly polish. Taken together with the structural and argumentative limitations, these elements suggest that the work would have benefitted from a more thorough revision and a clearer, more rigorously constructed argumentative framework. The book's central thesis remains insufficiently supported. Even when grappling with the challenges inherent in studying the distant past and the constraints of fragmentary evidence, scholars should remain mindful that, «if the answer is […] not dependent on evidence, then it becomes speculation, where any man's opinion is as good as another's»[19]. The repetitions of apodictic assertions do not help to enhance clarity or encourage debate.

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[19] E. Kedourie, *On Not Getting a PhD - The Manuscript that Failed*, «Encounter» 71/1 (June 1988), pp. 58-64, esp. p. 60.