entertain the possibility of historical explanation for (e.g.) the differing frequency in iteration of office or the very diverse patterns of tenure of the consulship and consular tribunate by different *gentes*. The latter indeed might appear an argument in favour of the broad reliability of our records, particularly given the convoluted explanation M. offers of the progressive stages of interpolation (pp. 125–31), but he never identifies (still less justifies) what would count as criteria of authenticity: continuity and discontinuity in the tenure of office, for example, appear equally suspect (e.g. pp. 238–41), and he implicitly assumes a homogeneity of practice and experience throughout the republican period that is inherently implausible.

A striking instance of this simplifying tendency is the redating of all censorships down to 92 in order to create regular quinquennial rhythms and the refusal to discuss possible explanations of the irregularities in the intervals as transmitted (pp. 143–52, 296–7). Readers may be surprised to encounter the suggestions that Metellus Numidicus was censor in 105 rather than 102 and that Scaurus was censor in 100, not 109 (both with political implications that M. ignores). They may be equally disconcerted to learn that the plebeian aedileship was created in 197 to facilitate plebeian access to the newly enlarged praetorship (pp. 189–208, 231–2, 245; itself an odd notion, given the obvious alternative of reserving a quota of praetorships to plebeians) but that no trace of this survives in our existing sources. Indeed, throughout M. offers no explanation of their complete silence about the radical disagreements that in his view were to be found in their predecessors, although elsewhere M. himself relies heavily on Dionysius' silence about variant dates for the start of the republic in Pictor and Cincius (op. cit. p. 166). In fact, given the broad uniformity in our records of the chief magistracy, at least as far as *nomina gentilicia* are concerned (K. J. Beloch, *Römische Geschichte* [Berlin and Leipzig, 1926], pp. 7–8), and in the chronology of early republican history in the extant sources, it is likely that no fundamental rewriting of that type has occurred.

Limitations of space preclude further rehearsal of the numerous bold hypotheses advanced in this book: they amply demonstrate M.'s industry, ingenuity, and control of intricate constructions, but regrettably that is not matched by the quality of argument employed or plausibility of the conclusions reached.

University of Nottingham ANDREW DRUMMOND

FAMILY AND STATE IN EARLY ROME

B. LINKE: *Von der Verwandschaft zum Staat. Die Entstehung politischer Organisationsformen in der frührömischen Geschichte*. Pp. x + 214. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995. Paper, DM 88. ISBN: 3-515-06497-4.

It is likely in general terms that most ancient states had gone through a phase in which family relationships were more important than communal ones, and L. seeks here to document the transition for Rome. There are individually sensible remarks on the *flaminica dialis* (p. 33) and on the Roman idea of property (pp. 37–8). But the work as a whole is in my view marred by an attitude to the sources that is implausible and by numerous particular errors. L. supposes (p. 10, compare pp. 45, 71), that parts

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of the literary tradition have been confirmed by archaeology; but those who hold this view have never done more than pick the cherries from both trees that they happen to find tasty. It is important to observe that neither Livy nor Dionysius distinguishes between those bits which modern historians like to find 'confirmed' and the most ludicrous claims about the content of speeches; if the former are 'right', it is only the merest accident. Similarly, the archaeological sources as a whole allow us write a quite different kind of history; and it is only by an arbitrarily selective reading of literary and archaeological evidence that the combinatory method can be sustained. At the same time, no one doubts that cattle (and sheep) were important to the economy of Italy from the earliest times till the early modern period; but to use this likelihood to link early Rome with the 'Indo-germanic peoples', whoever they may have been, and find another way into archaic Rome, is naive (pp. 17–18). Precisely because, whoever 'invented' it, the gentile name system was adopted at almost the same time by speakers of the Etruscan language and of various Indo-European languages (p. 73), comparatist approaches of this kind are built on sand. And, in order for it to be useful to discuss the 'Aufbauprinzipien von Gesellschaften ohne institutionalisierte Herrschaft' (pp. 20–3), one would have to know the unknowable, namely when the people who lived on the site of Rome acquired such a 'Herrschaft'.

In seeking to reconstruct the earliest system of family relationships in Rome, L. makes no attempt (p. 26 n. 41) to face the problems posed by the transmission of the well-known fragment of Livy, Book 20, which records a claim that it was contrary to ancient custom to marry within the seventh degree; the fragment is transmitted in a medieval Canon Law miscellany, and its significance can only be understood if one studies the manuscript as a whole; nor does L. consider the possibility that the fragment comes from a speech and thus may not provide any evidence at all for the late third century B.C.: do we really want to believe in a secession of the *plebs* on the eve of the Hannibalic War? L. also claims (p. 29) that the fact that the *glos* of a woman was both the sister of her husband and the wife of her brother provides clear proof of the existence of cross-cousin marriage in Rome (those non-existent people the Indo-germans turn up again); but we are surely not expected to believe in cross-cousin marriage in contemporary Italy because of the usage of the word *cognata*; and in any case, if L. had consulted the *TLL*, he would have discovered for *glos*: 'a) soror mariti; b) aliae notiones a grammaticis vel traditae vel fictae', which should have counselled caution. My bet is still on Bettini. The accounts of tenth and ninth century economy and society at p. 41 or of the origin of the *gens* at p. 32 are nice little stories, but nothing more.

The reference to the Twelve Tables at p. 19 n. 15 does not appear in the index of sources under Lex XII Tab (it is odd to cite from Düll, p. 166 n. 119); and it seems idiosyncratic not to make use of Plautus, who provides us with by far our largest body of early Latin. The claim that all our information about the *gens* is late (p. 27 n. 46) ignores something which actually is well attested, by both literary and archaeological sources, namely the burial practices of the patrician Cornelii; and *contra* p. 27 n. 48, the *gentiles* played a rôle in cases of intestacy in the Twelve Tables, as well as madness (both appear on p. 36). The 'Etruscan' kingship rears its head again (pp. 49, 104), despite the cautionary words of E. Bickermann, rightly followed by T. J. Cornell, unknown to L.

University College London M. H. CRAWFORD

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