offices in the fourth and third centuries can thus explain many features of Roman political life that might otherwise be seen as signs of a democracy.

Following Simmel, H. explains that a consensus about the rules of the game must accompany competition (118, 148). One such rule in Rome was that office-holding ancestry provided contenders for office in Rome with symbolic capital (151–61). H. also reveals a strong consensus about a steep hierarchy between the political elite and the *populus*, in which the latter was to play an obedient part, which seems ill at ease with democratic sentiments (171–82). Triumphal and funeral processions, public speaking at *contiones* and the annual election of magistrates were civic rituals performing this hierarchy, and while the elite staged these rituals, the people were always present — as audience for the display, as reference point for the achievements on display and as third party judging the display — thus arguably partaking in the performance of this order (96–101, 234–6). Power ('Herrschen'), H. concludes, depends on the 'Mitherrschen der Beherrschten', on the participation of the subjects in their own subjection (105).

H.'s vision, while by no means an orthodoxy (consider, for example, the analyses of Henrik Mouritsen, Cristina Rosillo-López or Jan Timmer), has much to recommend itself, not least its ability to explain so much of what we know about Roman political life. It can also be developed further. H. emphasises the imperial nature of the republican political order, the fact that the new elite established and legitimated its position through the successful (re)conquest of Italy in the fourth and third centuries (107). And yet, the ups and downs of Roman military success after 250 B.C. do not feature in H.'s vision. Strikingly, however, starting in the mid-second century several diagnoses of imperial crisis coincided with one of the many moments in republican history in which the balance between elite consensus and competition was tilting in favour of the latter (326–7). Crucially, the consensus broke around what H. sees as the foundational consensus of Roman political culture: the idea that the office-holding elite were best equipped to manage the *gloria* and *maiestas* of the *populus*.

Signs of this breaking consensus include the institution of standing jury courts, later with non-senatorial juries, to try Roman office-holders for misconduct in their management of the empire, as well as laws, such as the *lex de provinciis praetoriis*, that infringed on this elite's freedom to deal with Rome's allies as they saw fit. This coincidence of imperial crisis and breaking consensus confirms H.'s analysis of the legitimatory basis of the elite's position but it also suggests that the consensus on which, according to him, Roman political culture was based was not just created through its communication in various civic rituals but also depended on the historical reality to which these rituals referred. Roman political culture, as H. sees it, might have been imperial in a more substantial sense than he himself allows.

Considerations such as these testify to the great intellectual acuity of H.'s vision in fitting together high-level abstraction with the details of Roman political culture. As such, his work constitutes a productive starting point for further research on the subject, as well as a model of historical scholarship more generally.

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L. BORGIES, *LE CONFLIT PROPAGANDISTE ENTRE OCTAVIEN ET MARC ANTOINE. DE L'USAGE POLITIQUE DE LA* VITUPERATIO *ENTRE 44 ET 30 A.C.N.* (Collection Latomus 357). Brussels: Editions Latomus, 2016. Pp. 518. ISBN 9789042934597. €75.00.

The triumviral period saw extensive propagandistic struggles (15–24 on the concept of propaganda) between Octavian and Antony. Leaving to one side the analysis of triumviral coins or Augustan poetry, in order better to focus on the rhetorical dimensions of invective (*vituperatio*), L. Borgies successively deals with themes (Part I, 49–347), audiences (II, 351–400) and forms (III, 403–59) of political propaganda from 44 to 30 B.C.

B.'s close examination of the fragmentary documentation leads him to emphasise the historical authenticity of most triumviral invectives, and to go against the current historiographic trend that

considers these struggles as a (partial) invention by imperial authors. His remarks on the evidence also allow him to discuss the common idea that only the years between the Battle of Naulochus (36 B.C.) and Actium (31 B.C.) were marked by propaganda: he instead opts for a prevalence of political propaganda from 44 B.C. onwards. By measuring the varying intensity of these conflicts, B. distinguishes four chronological phases: (1) the open struggle of 44–43 and (2) its subsequent abatement as the triumvirs fought Sextus Pompey from 42 to 36, before (3) the return to an 'open fight' between 36 and 31. Then (4) followed a 'battle of memories' from Actium to the very end of antiquity. Another important conclusion of this book is to remind us that propaganda spread throughout the Roman world: its diffusion, fostered by *clientelae* and by changes in political allegiances, was permitted by a road system centred on Rome that facilitated the fanning out of rumours and of pamphlets, and also by the writing of political graffiti. B. considers invective (a literary form often dismissed as merely frivolous or insulting) as a political weapon, intended to harm an opponent, which was always characterised by a coherent set of themes and phrases. Interestingly, B. therefore thinks that propagandistic attacks were the product of some kind of coordination by each of the triumvirs' political entourages. The author finally draws our attention to the influence of the triumviral struggles on Augustan discourse, underlining that most of the themes were re-used by the first emperor to his own advantage. The nobility of the origins lost its symbolic dominance and was supplanted by the integration of provincial elites; Octavian's *crudelitas* gave way to Augustus' *severitas*, inspired by the Republic and paradoxically maximised by the *clementia Augusti*; the crucial importance of *virtus* remained, but was redirected towards barbarians; eventually, the moral superiority of the West was celebrated over a decadent East.

In this book, B. reveals the variety and omnipresence of propagandistic struggles during a period of *stasis*, and confronts the problem of political communication in the shaping of 'public opinion' in Rome. He succeeds in drawing a concrete portrait of an historical object as labile as verbal propaganda, for example when he considers the 'material realities' of *vituperatio* in Part III. B.'s capacity to jump from a general demonstration (often balanced and founded on a solid knowledge of modern bibliography) to more detailed studies is one of the strengths of this work, as is the author's ability to summarise historiographical debates and to use the discussion as a basis for his own further development (see the pages on *ignobilitas*, specifically 63–9 about Cassius Parmensis). By publishing this useful book so quickly, Latomus offered B. the opportunity to integrate, often in precise and useful ways, studies that were published as recently as 2016. This paradoxically reveals some important bibliographical gaps, such as R. Mangiameli's studies about the political communication of triumviral *imperatores* (*Tra* duces *e* milites*: Forme di comunicazione politica al tramonto della Repubblica*, 2012) or C. Courrier's book on plebeian culture (*La Plèbe de Rome et sa culture (fin du II^e siècle av. J.-C. – fin du I^er siècle ap. J.-C.)*, 2014). This last resource could sometimes have helped B. to be slightly more balanced on some specific cases, namely the *dodekatheos* (Suet., *Aug.* 70.1–2), where B. follows K. Scott's influential dating to 39–37 B.C., but ignores D. Palombi's hypothesis that the banquet possibly took place in 43 B.C. (175–7; cf. Courrier's discussion, pp. 834–5).

B.'s textual discussions and selections of examples are usually welcome, but the difference in length between the three parts of the book led me to wonder whether it would not have been better to adopt a chronological point of view, corresponding (for example) to the four above-mentioned phases. Perhaps this option might have strengthened B.'s argument for an evolution of the propagandistic phenomenon over time, even if the state of our documentation (like the endurance of certain themes of attack) does not always make it easy to distinguish clear chronological periods. A final recurrent problem is B.'s tendency to repeat in their entirety some parts of his demonstration (for example 71–3 and 251–3, on the well-known graffito of 43 B.C. where Octavian is nicknamed 'argentarius': Suet., *Aug.* 70.3) and to multiply, sometimes to excess, the introductions and conclusions of each part. This occasionally draws the reader's attention to the origins of the book in an extensive Master's Dissertation, defended in 2015 and published almost immediately thereafter. Despite these few criticisms, this study is intelligent, clear and erudite, and thus on a par with a good number of books written by more experienced scholars.

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