

This volume offers discussions of how we define and frame a ‘crisis’ (especially in the introduction of Klooster and Kuin and the contribution by Eckert) that readers will find useful. It also offers persuasive readings of well-known phenomena from a different perspective, as with Erskine on Polybian historiography as a coping mechanism and Lange on reconciliation through rehabilitation and power-sharing. Moreover, it raises issues clearly deserving further investigation. One example is the use of fire as a metaphor for war and civil war in particular (thought turns to the destruction of Perusia in 40 B.C.E. to which Hor., *Carm.* 2.1.7–8 surely alludes). Likewise, the conception of suicide as a coping mechanism that allowed the elite to avoid the indignity of execution (e.g. Ahenobarbus at Corfinium: Caes., *B Civ.* 1.22.6; Plut., *Caes.* 34.6–8) merits serious consideration and more extensive treatment. There are, it must be added, some unfortunate gaps. The obvious imbalance in the treatment of Greece and Rome is comprehensible in view of the deplorable tendency to renege on providing a publishable paper after participating in a conference. So, too, the unfortunate failure to use the work of Hannah E. Cornwell on *pax* (2017) and David Wardle on Suetonius (2014) may perhaps be explained by their recent date. Other omissions, however, are not so easily explained. When writing about the Roman family and civil war in the late Republic, the failure to utilise the abundant testimony of Cicero and the solid work of Susan M. Treggiari to discuss such phenomena as divorce or exile and separation is regrettable. We are in a unique position to be able to write in detail about the relations of Cicero, Terentia and Tullia. And what of Livia Drusilla? Memorably described as *Ulixes stolatus* by a great-grandson, she survived not only her sharing in the proscription of her first husband but also the numerous adulterous liaisons of her second husband (who had proscribed the first!) to outlive them all and supplant the latter’s own daughter, ending her days as the priestess of his cult.

Notwithstanding such problems, the volume as a whole came together well and the contributions not only interact with one another, but also individually tend to advance the discussion. As a result it is certain to stimulate further work. This volume elegantly deals with the topic of crisis and its sequel in a coherent and insightful manner that makes it extremely useful for courses and seminars at the graduate and post-graduate level. With its focus on the political and socio-cultural trauma of civil war and conquest, this volume constitutes a significant contribution to trauma and memory studies.

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ANTON POWELL and ANDREW BURNETT (EDS), *COINS OF THE ROMAN REVOLUTION, 40 BC – AD 14. EVIDENCE WITHOUT HINDSIGHT*. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2020. Pp. xviii + 238, illus. ISBN 9781910589762. £60.

The theme is so alluring, that it is quite surprising that it has not before been taken up; and it would be pleasing to report that it has here at last been successfully treated; but honesty alas forbids. The brief of the contributors, originally of papers for the Ninth Celtic Conference in Classics in 2016, was to show the importance of numismatic evidence for the period. Hence a tendency in all the papers to push the evidence to and beyond the limit.

But first some general points: many of the contributors address themselves to what the reaction of those who looked at the coins might have been; but did anyone succeed in looking at them? There is first the difficulty that many individual Republican and age-of-revolution denarii are poorly struck, with parts of the legends and even of the types off the edge of the flan, a phenomenon exemplified by many of the figures in the book. In this context, anyone familiar with the coinage of the period as a whole cannot help noticing that the series with the legends IMP.CAESAR, CAESAR DIVI F stand out for the quality of their striking: very well centred, in even relief, easy to ‘read’; it looks as if Octavian’s mint officials really cared, but was their concern rewarded? Even if one takes a less complicated view of the significance of the coin types of the period than most of the contributors to this volume, I doubt it. The general view of the level of literacy in the Roman world is that it was perhaps 5–10 per cent, spreading a bit outside the senatorial, equestrian and municipal or colonial élites, but not very far. Such people *might* have made sense of coin types,

but probably never actually handled coins at all: that was what one had slaves for; and there is an argument from silence that has to my knowledge never been deployed, which has in my view considerable weight: in the voluminous correspondence of Cicero with Atticus, covering six volumes in Shackleton Bailey's edition, full of political comment, there is not even one reference to a coin type; nor is there one in the gossipy letters of Caelius to Cicero while the latter was in Cilicia, despite the interest of the issues of the period in question. There is a further problem: I am happy to agree that if someone received a parcel of coins, all newly struck and shiny, all of the same issue, that might have had an impact; but no such parcel is attested in the numerous hoards of the period: what anyone who did handle coins would have seen would have been jumbles of denarii covering long periods, a hundred years or more. How could anyone have picked out what was supposed to be of topical interest?

Laignoux argues at length that the types of the coinages of the various contenders were similar in approach; this does not surprise me: all sought power, so of course their coin types allude to banal themes such as victory and prosperity (20); all (probably) claimed to be defenders of liberty; nor does it surprise me that the issues of a pretender produced in different places by different legates were similar (5). The claim that 'several literary texts ... support the hypothesis of discussions about monetary questions between the pretenders and their advisers' (5) involves a systematic abuse of the evidence: at Appian, *BC* 4.75.316–17 it is simply a question of an *amount* of coinage; at Dio 52.30.9 of denominational structure. Dio 47.25.3 is the well-known passage that mentions the reverse type of Brutus' EID MAR issue: one short text out of reams of writing covering two generations, that in any case does not prove that anyone noticed the type; as for the 'common-sense argument ... that a subordinate could not possibly have made decisions alone on such important issues as numismatic representations', for 'common-sense argument' read 'modern prejudice': if Arrian could decide for himself about a portrait bust of Trajan on public display, even if he reported his decision, why could subordinates not make decisions about numismatic representations? The coin allegedly minted by Lepidus in 42 B.C. (15) was in fact minted by one of the moneyers of that year. Nor did Sextus Pompeius allude explicitly to Janus (17): as Laignoux knows perfectly well, Janus was simply the immobilised obverse type of the as.

Carbone begins by discussing alleged portraits of Fulvia as Victoria on a bronze of the city of Fulvia-Eumeneia (believable, though not certain) and on a quinarius struck in Gaul and an aureus struck at Rome (the latter not by Antonius, but by a moneyer); these two heads, both also cited by Laignoux (16), do not closely resemble either each other or that on the bronze, and are in my view not portraits of Fulvia. Carbone goes on to discuss the denominational countermarks on the duoviral coinage of Corinth and the complex denominational indications on the so-called 'fleet' coinage of Antonius, as well as marks on issues of C. Proculeius and of Leptis Minor; these experiments and further developments from them were then supposedly 'codified' by Augustus; the problem is that the eastern issues in question were very small and of quite limited circulation, and that the base metal coinages of Augustus were essentially western. It also seems to me misleading to claim that Antonius developed the Caesarian practice of placing the portraits of living Roman magistrates on civic coinages, in the case of Antonius in the east; but surely the decisions were taken by local magistrates?

Devoto and Spigola discuss the coinages of the Pompeians in Africa, de Méritens de Villeneuve that of Q. Cornuficius, Wright that of Sextus Pompeius. The last curiously supposes that Picenum was a town and that it was the hometown of the *gens Pompeia*: as with the rest of the Roman nobility, their hometown was Rome. Asculum Picenum was besieged by Pompeius Strabo, his son inheriting a *clientela* in Picenum; nor is it plausible to see the type of the Catanaean brothers as representing an Italian cause, or Aeneas, the ancestor of the Roman people, as foreign; and I do not understand how south Italy being a recruiting target can be compatible with his pillaging the countryside there; all this is just irretrievably muddle-headed. Cornwell goes to town on PAXS on a tiny — and rare — quinarius of 44 B.C., as well as swallowing the absurd claim that coinage was a 'medium of communication comparable to ... mass oratory'. Suspène and Chausserie-Laprée discuss a curious hoard of aurei, found by the excavators scattered in antiquity across the floor of a room in a Roman building at Martigues in Provence; a further odd feature is that many of the coins had been hammered or bent double. The deposit had previously been disturbed by the cutting of a trench for a drain and was therefore not complete when excavated; but the Ambenay and Saumur hoards give no comfort to the suggestion that the 'hoard' was originally of 'up to 200' pieces, nor is there any reason to suppose that the 'hoard' was 'originally

distributed together' in a *congiarium*; and (contra 153) we are exactly where we were before its discovery in understanding the iconography of the pieces that happened to compose it.

Russell argues that the prominent S.C. on the base metal coinage of Augustus and his successors functioned, if not actually aimed, to show that the Senate was a central part of the Roman Imperial state; but did men really need to be told that the Roman state was the S.P.Q.R.? Rowan states that the issues of the moneyers under Augustus combined in each issue an Imperial and a family type; has anyone believed anything different? On the coinage of one of these colleges, Woods argues that a lyre is, by way of the Greek word *terpein*, 'to delight', a pun on the name Turpilianus, as also the name Tarpeia; a crab tearing apart a butterfly, by way of *dirimere*, 'to tear apart', a pun on the name Durmius: not even Varro could have invented anything so absurd. Greet considers the eagle on coins of Augustus, reminding anyone who needs reminding that the bird recalls a legionary standard, a veteran colony, and the standards recovered from Parthia; an eagle holding a wreath in its claws is supposed, by way of the story of the eagle that removed and then replaced the cap on the head of Tarquinius Priscus, to allude to the grant of the *corona civica* to Augustus; since he went to great lengths to disguise the fact that he was a despot, this is hardly credible, except as a black joke.

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PASCAL MONTLAHUC, *LE POUVOIR DES BONS MOTS: «FAIRE RIRE» ET POLITIQUE A ROME DU MILIEU DU III^e SIECLE A.C. A L'AVENEMENT DES ANTONINS*. Rome: École française de Rome, 2019. Pp. xi + 500. ISBN 9782728313662. €37.

With this book, Pascal Montlahuc provides an extensive and very insightful history of political humour and laughter in Rome from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D. Due to his broad chronological scope and carefully contextualised readings, M. significantly adds to, and sometimes usefully corrects, previous work in the field, most notably Anthony Corbeill's *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic* (1996). M. considers the socio-political mechanisms that determined the success or failure of remarks intended to provoke laughter (*risum movere*). To this end, he examines 478 passages that are mostly derived from literary sources, although ch. 4 also includes graffiti. Most of the material is from Cicero, Plutarch, Suetonius and, to a lesser extent, Quintilian. M.'s extensive use of ancient biography adds a valuable new perspective to the study of the politics of humour in Rome. Another strength of the book is its broad conception of politics. M. considers the political uses of laughter not only in what he calls 'la politique', Rome's formal political institutions, such as the law courts, senate and *contiones*, but also in 'le politique', the social practices and political rituals of civic society at large that took place in the forum, the streets and even on military campaigns.

The book is divided into three sections. The first considers the final two centuries of the Republic. In ch. 1 (23–76), M. qualifies Corbeill's argument that political humour in the republican period primarily functioned as an instrument of control and exclusion in the hands of the Roman elite. Although public laughter played an important role within the competition for status between members of the elite, M. shows that this competition was judged by a broad, civic audience whose views had to be considered in order to win the day. What is more, about a third of the passages analysed by M. display a 'bottom-up' form of mockery aimed at the elites rather than a 'top-down' use of humour that legitimated their political dominance. Corbeill's notion of controlling laughter is further challenged in ch. 2 (77–141), which shows that *risum movere* was not merely a game between the most powerful but also involved other actors, such as *pedarii*, plebeians and soldiers. The participation of the lower segments of society, moreover, was not limited to the reinforcement of existing hierarchies but could also take the form of 'humorous rebellions' that modified socio-political relations.

The second part traces the transformation of the politics of humour during the first century B.C. Ch. 3 (147–83) examines the elites' response to the rise of Caesar. Although Caesar could not be the target of open mockery like any of the other aristocrats, M. convincingly argues that Cicero's claims about Caesarean censorship should not be taken at face value. Instead, it was prudence and self-censorship that gave rise to a new, less openly aggressive form of political humour. In ch. 4 (185–213),