

H. VAN DER BLOM, *ORATORY AND POLITICAL CAREER IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xiii + 377. ISBN 9781107051935. £74.99.

In the *Brutus*, Cicero discusses the difficulties that even people like him face if they want to access, understand or reconstruct Roman oratory. Speeches from the earliest period of Roman history have vanished, but even more recent oratory is difficult to assess. Cicero has Brutus ask (*Brut.* 91), if this orator was so good, why do we not see evidence of his eloquence in his speeches? The response: while some orators are not interested in keeping a record of themselves for posterity, others do not write as well as they speak, and some deliberately do not write down their speeches in order to keep the oratorical record out of the hands of their critics. In some cases, we have no evidence at all for an orator's eloquence, but we have to 'infer' (*susplicari*, *Brut.* 55: see J. Dugan, *Making a New Man* (2005), 291) his eloquence from historical circumstances. In her new study, Henriette van der Blom meditates upon the questions raised by Cicero's *Brutus* by examining the evidence for the oratorical careers of six Romans whose eloquence survives in only fragments or allusions: Gaius Gracchus, Pompey, Julius Caesar, Piso Caesoninus (cos. 58), Cato Uticensis and Mark Antony.

B.'s work comes at a time when there is an increased scholarly interest in fragments. Characterising Malcovati's old edition of the oratorical fragments as 'confusing, misleading or lacunose' (9), B. seeks to present an alternative approach towards the understanding and reconstruction of fragmentary Roman oratory. The monograph is a preview of the wealth of new research that will be facilitated by the *Fragments of the Republican Roman Orators (FRRO)* project, which B. helps to advise.

The question of what a fragment of oratory even looks like lies at the very heart of this book. Fragments of prose are more difficult to identify than fragments of verse, which are usually easier to discern because of their metre or poetic diction. In contrast, as B.'s study makes clear, there is no guarantee that style, one of the ways both ancients and moderns analyse oratorical capability, will be transmitted in the fragments of an orator. Fragments of Latin oratory are also frequently transmitted in Greek — e.g. Plutarch and Dio 'seemingly citing' (132) Pompey — which presents a significant challenge, even if B. thinks that 'the catchy nature of Pompeius' words could have secured its safe transmission in the sources, even if adapted in the translation from Latin to Greek' (133). In addition to being dislodged from their original language (and therefore their original style and diction), many of the fragments are also dislodged from their political circumstances. The fact that we cannot date many fragments of oratory (129, 156) means that we are missing information that is essential for the speech's interpretation. As a result, we are often left with what B. calls 'sound bites' (77, 91, 130, 169), i.e. not word-for-word quotations but instead a general but consistent sense of the orator as he is represented in the sources.

Inference, therefore, becomes an important technique for B. as she teases out the qualities of each orator, which is why much of her discussion is not about oratory at all, but in fact political history. A focus on oratory as primarily political marginalises its literary qualities and its many connections to other parts of Roman culture. The difficulty of the primary sources creates a slippage concerning what actually constitutes 'oratory', with a blurring of formal speech acts (contional or forensic) with private persuasion and political 'stunts' like Gaius Gracchus pulling down seats at the games (101) or Cato shouting in the street (223). I agree that Pompey's theatre complex (130–1) has a certain 'rhetoric' to it, but is this oratory? The title of the monograph does set up the expectation that oratory *and* political career will be discussed, but when she concludes (281–2) that oratory was an important and deliberate part of career building for some Roman politicians (Gaius Gracchus, Caesar, Cato) but not others (Pompey, Piso, Mark Antony), the reader questions why the latter group was included at all. Even though B. is sensitive to the different factors in oratorical success, I find myself unsatisfied in certain cases that oratorical capability rather than personal charisma or political circumstances, both discussed at length, can explain specific historical outcomes.

The study's greatest strength is its sensitivity to the different historical processes which created the image of each orator, and is a useful model for how we should proceed if we wish to get beyond that constructed image. Her discussion of Augustus' intervention into the oratorical legacy of Julius Caesar (152) is especially interesting, and her reverse engineering of Cicero's *In Pisonem* (191–4) arrives at a fresh perspective on Piso Caesoninus. B.'s interest in whether her sources actually read physical copies of the speeches results in useful discussions of ancient books *passim* (11, 88, 89

n. 85, 146, 147, 152, 154, 164, 172, 173, 175, 196, 216, 227). I admire that B. decentralises Cicero as model for oratorical success, stressing that accepting him as a normative example has skewed our view of oratory in Republican Rome. Her phrase ‘Cicero is unrepresentative’ (5) should become the refrain of all future Ciceronian scholarship. The Appendices documenting the known occasions of each orator’s public speeches are exceedingly useful.

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K.-J. HÖLKEKAMP, *LIBERA RES PUBLICA. DIE POLITISCHE KULTUR DES ANTIKEN ROM – POSITIONEN UND PERSPEKTIVEN*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017. Pp. 400, illus. ISBN 9783515117296. €59.00.

The nature of the Roman political order has been hotly debated over the past forty years. In 2004 Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp intervened polemically and programmatically in this debate, both with a monograph (*Rekonstruktionen einer Republik*, translated into English as *Reconstructing the Roman Republic* in 2010) and with a collection of earlier articles (*Senatus populusque Romanus*, also 2004). The present volume gathers together ten further pieces by H. on this subject published between 2005 and 2017, each with revisions and more recent bibliography added.

Those familiar with H.’s earlier works will recognise many themes: in-depth historiographical analyses of previous approaches (chs 1–2); H.’s own distinctive focus on political culture, with an emphasis on the fraught interplay of competition and consensus characteristic of this culture in Rome (chs 3–5 and 10); and the nature of this competition and the ways in which consensus was created (chs 6–9). These more recent articles seem less occupied with the trench warfare of scholarly debate than H.’s previous works. As they follow the inner logic of H.’s own views, they bestow upon the reader the gift of seeing a holistic vision of a historical problem unfold on the pages.

H.’s approach constitutes a ‘Kulturgeschichte des Politischen’ (88), in which culture emerges as the crucial medium for constituting and reproducing a political order (82). The classics of cultural anthropology, Geertz and Bourdieu, shape this approach, as does an ongoing German debate about the nature of politics and power in the early modern period: Landwehr, Schloegel and Stollberg-Rillinger are key. According to H., this perspective can take the place of the Muenzer/Gelzer/Syme/Badian view of politics as a zero-sum game among oligarchical factions (ch. 2), not least due to its ability to transcend the tension between law and history inherent in Mommsenian constitutional history (ch. 1).

For H. politics is not a top-down process but a discursively and symbolically constructed arena, in which actors try to enforce generally binding decisions, mostly through communication (77, 164). Formal institutions and procedures together with commonly accepted world views and expectations constitute this arena (84–5), and its construction relies on the expressive dimension of politics, where different media, from processions to monuments, constitute and reproduce the political order (86–8). Power in this arena is a communicative relationship through which certain people and norms are recognised as having legitimate authority (81). Following this approach, H. comes down firmly against Fergus Millar’s democratic vision of Rome. H.’s Rome is a place in which the political elite is in power (‘die Herrschenden’) and the people are their subjects (‘die Beherrschten’).

H.’s account of Roman political culture departs from the establishment of a new political elite after the Struggle of the Orders had disrupted the Patrician monopoly on office-holding (107). As merit replaced inheritance as the principle for allocating offices, this new elite turned to a third party, the *populus Romanus*, to adjudicate its competing claims through (s)election (119, 139–41), thus vying with each other in increasing the *gloria* and *maiestas* of the *populus Romanus*, as is evident in elite rhetoric and public rituals such as the triumphal procession (168–70, 209–18). The position of the *populus* as reference point for elite competition also explains why this elite transformed the city of Rome into a public multimedia memoryscape of their own achievements (143–7 and chs 7–9). The transition from inheritance to merit as the principle for allocating