

make essential reading not just for Latin students and first readers of the text, but for anyone with an interest in the history of rhetoric.

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S. CULPEPPER STROUP, *CATULLUS, CICERO, AND A SOCIETY OF PATRONS: THE GENERATION OF THE TEXT*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv + 308. ISBN 9780521513906. £60.00/US\$99.00.

This is a complex, rewarding book which walks the (fault) line between the literary criticism of texts and the cultural history of the ways in which those texts were thought about as they were produced, circulated and received. Stroup's focus is 'dedicated' texts: for Catullus, not only poem 1 in which the poet 'gives' the *libellus* to Cornelius, but poem 16 in which he 'threatens to rape' Furius and Aurelius, and for Cicero the technical writings, especially *de Oratore* and *Brutus*. Textual dedications are evidence for events in a social world, but they are also themselves actions within a literary one.

In the Introduction, S. explains that the 'Society of Patrons' she envisages is 'isonomic', composed of members of roughly equal social status. Members of this society were 'patronal-class' (cf. the oratorical sense of *patronus*), writing for each other in a system of reciprocal exchange of *texts*, rather than either giving or receiving texts in exchange for any non-textual, especially financial, return. This is not a book about Roman patronage.

Part I argues that three key terms are used by Catullus and Cicero with similar coded 'textual' meanings. *Otium* (ch. 1) is not just 'leisure' but specifically time dedicated to literary activity: for Cicero, permitted or even forced 'time off' from public duties. *Munus* (ch. 2) indicates a text given to a dedicatee in the expectation that further texts will be given in response (e.g. Cat. 68.149), and *libellus* (ch. 3) is identified on somewhat slimmer evidence as designating a text as it slips out of its author's control (his anxiety indicated by the diminutive) and into the wider world of 'publication' beyond the dedicatee or S.'s Society.

Part II aims to show how the 'display' of oratory in the forum is 'textualized' by Cicero in his dialogues on oratory, 'complex textual encapsulations ... of elite public performance' (145). Ch. 4 examines the Roman problem with such performance: oratorical activity enhanced an orator's high status, but simultaneously threatened it, since it risked aligning him with others whose performance offered pleasure to the watching public — actors, gladiators, prostitutes. This is not a new insight, but S.'s discussion well supports her contention that Cicero's increasing distrust of the Roman people as an audience was a central motive for his turn from delivering speeches to the masses to writing dialogues for a literate few. Ch. 5 treats his 'textualization' of specific aspects of oratorical culture: the *tirocinium fori* in *de Oratore*, with its cast of more experienced and younger orators, and the relationship with the 'live' forensic audience in *Brutus*, which transforms that audience into a reading culture of sympathetic *patroni* in a 'paper forum'.

Ch. 6 argues that the gift-exchange of oratorical services among *patroni* is textualized in Cicero's treatises, both in the give-and-take of the dialogue form, and in the way that dedicated dialogues stand in for delivered speeches, responding to obligations and implicitly requiring further textual dedications in return. S. compares the acts of dedication in Catullus 65 and 68: she needs to show what is distinctively oratorical about Cicero's use of this more widespread trope of textual exchange, and perhaps her (fascinating) discussion of a fragment of the fifth-century B.C. Dionysios 'Chalcous' puts rather disingenuous stress on the fact that Dionysios is attested to have been 'a *rhetor* as much as an *elegist*' (177). However, S. valuably emphasizes the way in which references to requests from the dedicatee become an 'excuse' for writing, convincingly linking this to similar moves in Cicero's rhetorical openings (*pro Caelio*, *pro Balbo*) in which the orator describes himself as obliged to speak, thus pre-empting accusations that he is eager to indulge in status-lowering display.

Part III identifies a third 'intersection' between the two authors' practices (207), the ways in which they imaginatively 'materialize' their texts as objects capable of doing something in the world. Ch. 7 looks at the Catullan text as fetish, here a term covering poems which 'function as' (223) various objects and actions: gifts and social contracts, but also kisses and assaults. In ch. 8, reworking an earlier article, S. focuses on *Brutus* and its personification of *Eloquentia* as a

vulnerable virgin, now residing safely in written texts while the real, extratextual forum of spoken eloquence remains unsafe (262–3). Some concluding remarks to ch. 8 (265–8) link the two chapters by making the case that both Ciceronian dialogues and Catullan poems engage in rhetorical *conformatio*, or personification. Thus the Society of Patrons becomes a Society of Books, in which texts endure to ‘speak to each other’ after their creators’ deaths. An epilogue examines the afterlife of the book’s concerns, identifying potential points of continuity across the break between Republican isonomic textual exchange and the hierarchical patronage of the Principate and Empire.

The prosopographical Appendix is thought-provoking: Furius and Aurelius appear alongside Atticus and Brutus in S.’s list of likely members of the ‘Society of Patrons’. This book about texts that enact the moment of crossing over from the ‘purely literary’ into the real, social world is otherwise very carefully positioned between the ‘literary’ and the ‘historical’, but this Appendix with its dates and attestations suggests a final leaning towards social history which will have implications for how S.’s work will be read and used by its potential scholarly audiences. (After her own personal dedication, S. never mentions for whom she is writing.)

The number of typographical errors is surprising for CUP.

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P. THIBODEAU, *PLAYING THE FARMER: REPRESENTATIONS OF RURAL LIFE IN VERGIL'S GEORGICS*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. 326. ISBN 9780520268326. £41.95.

Is the *Georgics* really about farming, and, if not, what is it trying to teach its readers? Critics have proposed a broad spectrum of answers, ranging from those which treat farming purely as a symbolic framework for underlying philosophical issues, to those which interpret the work as a versified farming manual. Most readings, however, fall somewhere in between these two poles, and Thibodeau’s book is no exception. For T., farming is the true topic of the poem, but Virgil is not interested in reflecting ‘real’ farming so much as creating a fantasy version, in which nobles farm the land themselves and earn glory in the process.

T.’s book successfully highlights how the *Georgics* manipulates agricultural reality and departs from other farming manuals and notions of agricultural life current in first-century B.C. Rome. At times, T. risks *over*-contextualizing the work and losing some of the timeless, philosophical questions raised by the farmer’s fight to control the natural world. In addition, on T.’s reading, the famed polyphony of the *Georgics* is reduced to a unitary message about the dignity and delight of the farming life. While many have found this interpretation compelling over the centuries, some will miss a more open-ended reading of the tensions raised by the conflicting voices and portraits of farming within the *Georgics*.

Ch. 1 (‘*Agricolae*’) contains an interesting analysis of how the term *agricola* (‘farmer’) was used in Virgil’s Rome and nicely demonstrates that the *Georgics* constantly shifts between addressing elite *agricolae* and peasant farmers. Ch. 2 (‘Playing the Farmer’) focuses on the ‘economic fantasies’ (39) of the text, namely that the addressee performs the manual labour himself without a bailiff (*vilicus*) and without money. T. emphasizes that it is the bailiff who is omitted from the text and not, as commonly thought, slaves themselves (45). I find less convincing T.’s assertion that Roman sources prior to Virgil never praise farming labour as virtuous but only the poverty (*paupertas*) that makes it necessary (49–54). What about Cato’s praise of farming in Cicero’s *De Senectute* (51–60) and Varro’s in the *De Re Rustica* (3.1.4)? In addition, T.’s application of this theory to Virgil’s much-debated discussion of *labor ... improbus* (1.145–6) strikes me as an oversimplification: ‘So this passage does not express a universal truth about the human condition ... Instead, it presents manual labor in an artificial context that makes it appear to be a necessary, right, and decorous thing’ (56). Similarly, T. interprets Virgil’s controversial language of ‘mastery and domination’ over the natural world as ‘lending decorum’ to manual labour (61). Ch. 3 (‘Nobility in Rustication’) argues that the *Georgics* was intended to console politically dispossessed Romans who had to retreat to their country villas by showing that country life is actually superior to city life. T. further argues that ‘Virgil’s unqualified insistence on the worthiness of country life was not a traditional stance, but would for his contemporaries have represented something new’