

M. H. DETTENHOFER: *Perdita Iuventus. Zwischen den Generationen von Caesar und Augustus*. (Vestigia, 44.) Pp. xii + 359. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992. Cased. ISBN 3-406-35856-X.

In a letter to Atticus (7.7.6) Cicero described those politicians in their thirties who had joined Caesar in 49 B.C. as a *perdita iuventus*—morally ‘lost’. D. considers them and their contemporaries as ‘lost’ in a different sense. The political high-fliers of the generation born in the 80s B.C. expected in the natural course of events to take the place of Caesar and Pompey, Cicero and Crassus; instead, they were eliminated one by one, overtaken by Octavian, twenty years their junior. D. takes seven of these individuals (out of a total of eighty-five possible identifiable members of this generation: pp. 14–28) not as a sample, but because they are comparatively well documented, particularly in Cicero’s letters. The seven include the two most-studied figures of Mark Antony and Marcus Brutus, and Curio, Decimus Brutus, Caelius, Cornelius Dolabella, and Cassius, whose careers have been comparatively neglected by modern scholarship.

The political choices of these men are analysed in three distinct periods: before the outbreak of civil war in 49 B.C.; between 49 and 44; and with respect to Caesar’s assassination and its aftermath. D. emphasizes the distinction between accounts and judgements based on hindsight—even the hindsight of the 40s B.C.—and the motives behind the political decisions they took at the time, when it was by no means clear to them that the kind of pluralist competitive politics they had grown up into in the 60s and 50s would be permanently replaced. Her study is based on careful and detailed analysis of the sources, and results in some interesting insights, e.g. on the representation of Curio in Caesar’s *Bellum Africanum* (pp. 146ff.), or the suggestion that references to academics and epicureans in *Ad Fam.* 15.16–19 are ‘code’ for republicans and Caesarians (developed in *Historia* 39 [1990], 249ff.)

But the political and military narrative is only a background: D. is anxious to avoid presenting just another ‘history of events’. Following her teacher Christian Meier, it is her ambition to explain these events—the choices, ultimately mistaken, made by these figures—in terms of both political ‘mentalities’ and ‘structures’. ‘Die stärker ereignisgeschichtlich orientierte Fragestellung nach Handlungen und Motiven erweist sich als unzureichend und muss durch eine eher strukturgeschichtlich orientierte Fragestellung nach den Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten, die sich damals boten, ergänzt werden’ (p. 242). She emphasizes the central rôle of *exempla* in motivating members of the élite (the most obvious instance being M. Brutus’ assassination of Caesar). But *exempla* could be recent as well as ancient: and the figures these politicians had grown up with were Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar—and, for those who had no other option, Catiline. They wished to emulate them (‘mentalities’), but could not do so successfully because of structural changes concentrating both *clientelae* and wealth in the hands of the dynasts, and after 48 they were monopolized by Caesar. Caesar himself chose not to follow the *exemplum* some expected, that of Sulla (p. 222). These constraints explain why even before the enforced polarization of the civil war the seven individuals gave their support to Caesar or Pompey (sometimes unexpectedly, e.g. Curio in 50 because he needed Caesar’s money to pay the debts which his political career had cost him), but this did not stop them from believing that they could continue to pursue their own individual aims and build up their own personal powerbases, as e.g. Brutus did in Cilicia and Cassius in Syria to the end of their lives. The one who relied most on Caesar’s support (Antony) also survived the longest.

Do we have enough contemporary evidence to be able to link the motives of these (let alone the other) individuals to general mentalities, other than in a very few cases, largely based on Cicero’s reports (and even they may be skewed by misunderstanding or wishful thinking)? Is it helpful to see the ‘Scheitern’ of these seven men in terms of common features at all? As D. admits herself, M. Brutus and Cassius were eliminated as a result of the particular chances of war (‘An dieser Stelle tritt die Kontingenz alles Geschichtlichen nochmals deutlich hervor’, p. 324), and the same could be said of Curio, Caelius, Dolabella, etc. (and of others not included among the seven, such as Trebonius). The common features one is left with are of a high level of generality: money, as political competition became more expensive in the 50s B.C. (D. repeatedly cites Shatzman), the military command structure which Caesar had grown used to in Gaul, and the involvement of women in political activity (which, as D. notes, is an effect of political destabilitation; cf. her article in *Latomus* 51 [1992], 775, developed from a paper given at the ICS in London in 1990). There are some questions she does not deal with, e.g. the effect of Crassus’ death on the political choices of 53–49 B.C. While she refers to the ‘Berg von Sekundärliteratur’ on Caesar’s assassination, Malitz’s demonstration of the crucial importance of Caesar’s Parthian expedition

(*Historia* 33 [1984], 21ff.) has escaped her; and the repeated references to the 'adoption' of Octavian in Caesar's will irritate. One temptation of a historiography which centres on the choices made by the élite is to underemphasize the rôles that wider political groups—the urban plebs, soldiers—played (contra Nippel; and there is no reference to Vanderbroek's *Popular Leadership*). But can Roman *nobiles* really have failed to see the importance of the *clientela* Caesar had built up (p. 292: 'darüber hat [D. Brutus] vermutlich nie nachgedacht'), or of the 'increasing specialization' in élite careers which she rather dubiously postulates (p. 314)?

English readers will be grateful that D.'s German prose is remarkably easy and uncomplicated.

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S. GÉLY: *Le pouvoir et l'autorité: Avatars italiens de la notion d'auctoritas d'Auguste à Domitien (27 a.C.–96 p.C.)*. (Bibliothèque d'Études Classiques, 3.) Pp. xxvii + 191. Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 1995. Paper, Belg. frs. 1200. ISBN: 90-6831-713-X/2-87723-257-3.

This is a rather protean work, but if you can accept it on its own terms, it provides rewarding analyses of some of the central concepts of imperial ideology. G.'s aim is to provide a history of the phrase *totius Italiae auctoritas*, which surfaces first in Caesar and Cicero, but which, she claims, has a far larger significance, both in terms of its evolution and in terms of its realization under the early emperors. However, what sounds like a relatively discrete idea is transformed into a subject with infinitely extendable boundaries, as G. pursues her central topic back in time and takes in a wide range of related concepts. There are sections on the unity or regionality of Italy, on the idea of Italy's boundaries, on the evolution of the word *auctoritas*, and on the presence of Heracles in Italy. In none of these areas can the discussion possibly aspire to anything like completeness, and that is the first reason why the book needs to be taken as you find it. Another reason is that G. wavers between the grandiose generalization, attempting to uncover the history of Roman *mentalité*, and a necessary specificity in aspiring to remain true to the authors who are her sources. She is sensitive in her handling of Pliny, Varro, and Virgil, but the brevity of treatment, the insistence on the isolated phrase as a moment of clear revelation, prevents her giving much more than passing insights into their presentation of her preoccupations. That said, it is challenging and refreshing to see, to take one of many similar examples, Virgil *Ecl.* 4 side by side with Pliny, *Ep.* 9.27 (where he refers to the *numen historiae*) in a discussion of cosmic mysticism and historical consciousness. There are bold conceptions at play here, and that play is bound at times to look as though it is restrained by the traditional scholarly criteria which condition the way in which answers are sought to difficult questions. In essence, texts are being pressed to reveal discourses of an almost psycho-social character, and G.'s work is a demonstration of how troublesome traditional methods can be to this kind of ambition.

This is a book which clearly wants to engage with complex problems of method, and which raises grand and intractable questions about how mythical discourse functions, how texts record what people thought, and how the words available to the historian coincide with lived experience and political circumstance. The tabular chronology of pp. 77–9, juxtaposing dates with political events, linguistic and cultural occurrences, and visual and textual material, is the clearest proof that somehow G. believes that all these different categories can be brought together into a satisfactory unifying analysis. Not that G. ever states it as clearly as that. And somehow the rhetoric of objectivity seems to fail in the face of the mythical, while G. is herself too disposed to indulge in the appeal of the numinous, particularly with regard to the mysterious evolutions which constitute the processes of history. Pronouncements such as the following are not untypical: 'L'histoire *se fait*, pour une bonne part, à partir d'éléments et de figures du discours: nom, métaphore, allégorie. D'où son rapport au mythe' (p. 81). I like the sound of this, but as an analysis of both myth and discourse, it remains itself on the level of metaphor, and, like many of the individual points of exploration, somehow fails to yield anything concrete, especially in terms of political power. Although in the preface G. adduces support from the theories of Benveniste, she does not do this consistently enough in her analyses to forestall the impression that the theoretical work is insufficient to provide the connection that G. is striving for. She is, after all, attempting to sustain that most indemonstrable of claims, that words make history and