

Henrietta Van der Blom, Christa Gray, and Catherine Steel (eds.). *Institutions and Ideology in Republican Rome*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2017. Hb. \$120.00 USD.

Institutions and Ideology in Republican Rome is a collection of papers first presented at a conference in 2014, which in turn arose from the Fragments of the Republican Roman Orators (FRRO) project. Perhaps ironically, few of these papers focus on oratorical fragments, although the ways in which Republican politicians communicated with each other and the voting public is a common theme across the collection. In their introduction the editors foreground the interplay between political institutions and ideology as a key point of conflict in late Republican politics, taking aim in particular at the interpretation of Republican political life as dominated by money and self-serving politicians at the top and by institutionally curated consensus at the bottom. This, they argue, is unsustainable, not least in light of the evidence presented by their contributors of politicians sharing and acting on 'ideological' motives within the constraints of Republican institutions. Sixteen papers grouped into four sections follow; the quality is consistently high, and several chapters are outstanding.

The four chapters of Part I address 'Modes of Political Communication'. Alexander Yakobson opens with an exploration of the *contio* as an institution where the elite were regularly hauled in front of the *populus* and treated less than respectfully by junior politicians they would probably have considered beneath them. He argues that the paternalism of Roman public life was undercut by the fact that 'the "parents" were constantly fighting in front of the children' (32). Claudia Tiersch then applies Reinhard Koselleck's concept of 'semantic battles' to political communication in the late Republic. She outlines how politicians contested each other not only with words but for control over the definitions of particularly important words (e.g. *libertas*, *res publica*, *virtus*). Cristina Rosillo-López looks at how politicians might become (or make themselves) recognisable to the general voting population. She argues that while the average politician might not have a great deal of face recognition, failing to recognise someone like Pompey would be a clear indication of political apathy. Lastly, Anna Clark examines invocations of Mars and Venus in Late Republican oratory, focusing in particular on the *legio Martia* in Cicero's *Philippics*, but also considering appeals to the divine in fragments of earlier oratory. She concludes that the gods were so interwoven with the myths, buildings and institutions of Rome that even glancing references could resonate clearly in all sorts of oratory.

Part II ('Political Alliances') gathers together four papers on the topic of how individual politicians interacted with each other. This is perhaps the most internally coherent section of the book: these are all well focused chapters that spotlight the activities of particular people moving around in the shadows of the big beasts of the late Republic. The first is Francisco Pino Polo's chapter on political *contiones*, which to some extent overlaps with Yakobson's chapter in Part I. Pino Polo examines examples of people (mostly, but not exclusively, politicians) being summoned to (often hostile)

contiones, individuals using *contiones* to speak directly to the people (Cicero, Octavian), and the use of *contiones* in the turbulent 50s. He reasonably concludes that the *contio* was an essential vector for the transmission of politics to the people. Federico Santangelo revisits Theophanes of Mytilene and his role within Pompey's orbit. Despite the lack of positive material about his subject, Santangelo reconstructs as much as can be said about Theophanes' life and makes a convincing case that Theophanes was a capable political operator whose longevity suggests he was 'an exceptional man at an exceptional historical time' (146). Cas Valachova brings a different set of political satellites to the fore: this time the prominent Epicureans of the late Republic, questions about whom include how they reconciled political activity with the Epicurean doctrine of political quietism (she argues they typically achieved office through non-canvassing methods, especially relying on *amicitia* with powerful figures like Caesar) and whether Caesar really was an Epicurean himself (she argues against this assumption, although she points out Caesar does seem to have appreciated Epicureanism in his supporters, possibly because political quietism was convenient to a civil war victor). Kit Morrell then looks at the activities of Cato's circle during Pompey's sole consulship in 52 BC. She argues that Cato cooperated with Pompey throughout this period, despite occasional differences of opinion, but that (as Cato himself insisted) he did so only on the basis that, and insofar as, Pompey acted (in his opinion) in the interests of the *res publica* – which was of course how Republican politics was supposed to work.

Part III looks at various 'Institutions in Theory and Practice'. Lindsay G. Driedier-Murphy's chapter examines a curious episode at the end of the Republic, when a tribune announced auspices contrary to Crassus's ill-fated departure for Parthia and was later reprimanded by a censor both for falsifying the auspices and being to blame for the disaster. She argues that allegations of falsifying the auspices would have been taken very seriously, given that the gods might retaliate not just against the liar but against the whole state. Next, Guido Clemente takes a long view of the *mos maiorum* and its use in senatorial self-definition throughout the Republic. He identifies tension between the supposedly unchanging *mores* and the actual changes to elite behaviour over time. The self-identity of the ruling class is also at stake in Ayelet Haimson Lushkov's exploration of electioneering rhetoric in Cicero's *Pro Murena*, where she shows how Sulpicius, Murena, and finally Cicero himself emerge from the speech as competing *topoi* of what a Roman consul should be. Roman M. Frolov then looks at how a political gathering might be characterised as a *contio* or a *coetus* depending on the attitude of the speaker; whereas *contio* refers to meetings that either are or share features in common with 'legitimate' *contiones*, *coetus* is a looser term that indicates a negative assessment of the meeting in question. The last chapter in this section, Harriet Flower's 'Servilia's *Consilium*', stands out as a re-evaluation of two famous domestic *consilia* held after Caesar's assassination that offers a new understanding of a familiar, rather poorly evidenced institution. One important implication of Flower's reading is that a 'typically Roman culture of debate' (263) percolated even into the homes of the Roman elite, where domestic *consilia* could have functioned as a testing-ground for arguments and rhetoric.

Finally, the ‘Memory and Reputation’ of Part IV encompasses family *exempla* in oratory, Sulla’s *felicitas* and the (arguably) tragic downfall of Gaius Verres. While Evan Jewell opens with a discussion of how the Lutatii Catuli and the Livii Drusi harked back to their forefathers, his exploration of how the Junii Bruti constructed L. Junius Brutus as a symbol of *libertas* from as early as 138 BC is particularly interesting. Alexandra Eckert looks at how Sulla’s claim to be *Felix* violated an old Roman institution, ‘the divine gift of *felicitas* and its close ties to the *salus rei publicae*’ (284), given the violence of his victory in 82 BC. The final chapter of the book is the late Martin Stone’s revisionist reading of the *Verrines*, which he argues show Cicero working to conceal the truth that Verres was a well-connected and efficient governor who energetically combated famine in Rome, piracy in the Mediterranean and the Spartacus slave uprising, but ultimately fell foul of Pompey’s ‘promotion of a more “modern” approach to the Empire’ (299). This is a punchy argument, although it might equally well have been grouped with the papers of Part II; it seems a curious choice on which to end the book.

As with many collections of conference proceedings, the papers in this volume cover a lot of ground in a rather unsystematic way. The breadth is praiseworthy, however, and often sheds fresh light on a familiar landscape. Taken as a whole, this is a strong collection that offers new insights into the interplay between Roman institutions and ideology, as well as revisiting several well-known episodes with fruitful results. The editors have compiled a valuable contribution to late Republican scholarship.

LOUISE HODGSON
(Independent Scholar)
l.l.hodgson@outlook.com

Titles and Authors

Introduction / Catherine Steel, Christa Gray and Henriette van der Blom

Part I: Modes of Political Communication

1. ‘Aristocratic Dignity and Indignity in Republican Political Life’ / Alexander Jakobson
2. ‘Political Communication in the Late Roman Republic: Semantic Battles between *Optimates* and *Populares*’ / Claudia Tiersch
3. ‘Political Participation and the Identification of Politicians in the Late Roman Republic’ / Cristina Rosillo-López
4. ‘Gods, Change and Civic Space in Late Republican Oratory’ / Anna Clark

Part II: Political Alliances

5. ‘Political Alliances and Rivalries in *Contiones* in the Late Roman Republic’ / Francisco Pino Polo
6. ‘Theophanes of Mytilene, Cicero and Pompey’s Inner Circle’ / Federico Santangelo
7. ‘The Garden and the Forum: Epicurean Adherence and Political Affiliation in the late Roman Republic’ / Cas Valachova
8. ‘Cato, Pompey’s Third Consulship and the Politics of Milo’s Trial’ / Kit Morrell

Part III: Institutions in Theory and Practice

9. 'Falsifying the Auspices in Republican Politics' / Lindsay G. Driediger-Murphy
10. 'When the Senators Became "The Best"' / Guido Clemente
11. 'Private Knowledge and Public Image in Roman Elections: The Case of the *Pro Murena*' / Ayelet Haimson Lushkov
12. 'The "Wrong" Meetings? Some Notes on the Linked Usage of the Terms *Coetus* and *Contiones* in the Roman Republic' / Roman M. Frolov
13. 'Servilia's *Consilium*: Rhetoric and Politics in a Family Setting' / Harriet Flower

Part IV: Memory and Reputation

14. 'Like Father, Like Son? The Dynamics of Family Exemplarity and Ideology in (Fragmentary) Republican Oratory' / Evan Jewell
15. 'Good Fortune and the Public Good: Disputing Sulla's Claim to Be *Felix*' / Alexandra Eckert
16. 'Gaius Verres Troubleshooter' / Martin Stone