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# Opuscula

Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome

14  
2021

STOCKHOLM

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Published with the aid of a grant from The Swedish Research Council (2020-01217)  
The English text was revised by Rebecca Montague, Hindon, Salisbury, UK

*Opuscula* is a peer reviewed journal. Contributions to *Opuscula* should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee before 1 November every year. Contributors are requested to include an abstract summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their article. For style of references to be adopted, see <http://ecsi.se>. Books for review should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee.

ISSN 2000-0898

ISBN 978-91-977799-3-7

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Printed by PrintBest (Viljandi, Estonia) via Italgraf Media AB (Stockholm, Sweden) 2021

Cover illustrations from Leander Touati *et al.* in this volume, p. 191

reasonable to expect that posthuman scholarship also avoids the reification of essentialism or at least discusses the shortcomings of dualistic thinking. Both Ferrando and the editors are well aware that the questioning of the foundations of normative science constitutes an important part of posthuman theory. The critical tenet of posthumanism is mentioned in the foreword and in the introduction, but it is shirked in the case studies.

In Selsvold and Webb's, in many ways, intriguing contribution on the Anthropocene in the Roman world it is consistently the impact of human practices on the environment which are highlighted. This enforces conceptual dualism. One side, the humans, are dynamic and change the other side, the environment. Little is however said about the impact of the changed environment on the humans. The entanglement between the humans and the environment is mentioned in passing at the end, but I cannot see that this notion has influenced their analysis. Enforcing asymmetrical power relations is at odds with foundational philosophical tenets of posthuman theory. It is one thing to claim to be posthuman and another thing to practise posthumanism. It is hard to detect any significant differences between 'The Romans and the Anthropocene. Posthuman provocations' and processual archaeology, save for the posthuman terminology.

This is remarkable since the editors give a comprehensive overview of posthuman theory in the introduction of *Beyond the Romans*. This overview is rewarding reading. However, they have omitted significant posthuman studies of Greek antiquity (e.g. G. Anderson, *The realness of things past*, 2018; R. Taylor & K. Vlassopoulos, eds., *Communities and networks in the ancient Greek world*, 2015; I. Malkin, *A small Greek world*, 2011), which is surprising considering that posthuman studies from other archaeological branches are mentioned. Does this perhaps indicate that the divide between Roman and Greek archaeology is larger than we often assume? More serious is however that they have shirked the cultural turn and fail to address the significant conceptual connections between these two theoretical perspectives. This is further mirrored in several of the case studies which claim icons of the cultural turn, such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and others, as posthumanists. The inadequate elaboration of the cultural turn facilitates the mediation of posthumanism as yet another predefined, finished, and clear-cut toolbox at our disposal: a new theoretical turn. This stands in opposition to the fundamental posthuman notion that posthuman theory is anything but a new theoretical turn.

In sum, *Beyond the Romans* succeeds to introduce posthuman topics in Roman archaeology. The posthuman perspective is, however, all too often reduced to a practice of labelling, and attaching new labels to ancient evidence is not necessarily the same thing as introducing a new theoretical perspective. In other words, the posthumanism mediated in

*Beyond the Romans* is at odds with the foundations of posthuman theory. Let us hope that we can avoid mainstreaming posthuman theory in our future efforts.

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K.-J. Hölkeskamp, *Roman Republican reflections. Studies in politics, power, and pageantry*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2020. 274 pp. ISBN 978-3-515-12703-5.

<https://doi.org/10.30549/opathrom-14-26>

Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp (henceforth H) is a leading scholar and proponent of the field that studies the political culture of the Roman Republic. Since 2004, H has published several collections of papers, translated into different languages, that concern Roman Republican political culture and its methods, theories, approaches, concepts, controversies, and results. It is in this series of collections that *Roman Republican reflections* (henceforth *RRR*) belongs.

*RRR* comprises eight papers: the first is new, while the following seven have been published elsewhere (and one in German, here translated into English) between 2001 and 2020. The chapters have been corrected, updated, and rewritten. The chapters share one bibliography, and there is one *index nominum* and one *index rerum*. The audience for the volume includes specialists in Roman political culture. At the same time, the convenience of having the papers collected and the quality of the two first introductory chapters makes the book attractive for students and non-specialists.

With *RRR*, H leaves the well-known debate behind whether the Republic was formally democratic: Chapters I–II provide the scholarly background and the theoretical underpinnings to the study of the political culture of the Roman Republic. In the following chapters, H engages with specific aspects of Republican political culture and interpretations of particular themes, events, and objects: Chapters III–IV discuss the politics of spectacles, performativity, and self-fashioning, while Chapters V–VIII deal with memory; how it was (re)created, furthered, used, and adapted by both the élite in general and individual *gentes*.

The volume's overarching theoretical concept is political culture, which refers to studying both the formalistic and "technical" institutional aspects of a political system, and informal institutional aspects (in a broad sense), including values, symbols, performances, communication, sentiments, and memory. The kernel of the approach is that the formal-

istic and informal sides of politics cannot be separated from each other in practice, but rather they reinforce each other: an electoral assembly is formalistic and legalistic while it is also a performative ritual that communicates and thus reinforces values, statuses, memories, emotions, and importantly, a worldview legitimizing the hierarchical political order. Among the theorists H draws on in the chapters, Clifford Geertz (cultural anthropology) and Pierre Nora and Jan Assman (both memory studies) stand out. The result is a coherent volume, the chapters of which build on each other, much due to the theoretical apparatus. Seeing that the chapters have (all but one) been published before, it is difficult to speak of novelty. However, the theoretically grounded reading of historical details in different media provides a convincing interpretation of performativity, the political use of memory, and the self-fashioning of *gentes* over centuries.

‘Chapter I. The politics of elitism. The Roman Republic—then and now’ provides an overview of the debate of the nature of the Roman Republic, starting with the early 20th-century scholars Matthias Gelzer and Friedrich Münzer and “the old orthodoxy”, who thought in terms of parties, clans, families, clients, and factions. Scholars like Ronald Syme, Ernst Badian, and Erich Gruen continued that school. Then follows “the new radicalism” of Fergus Millar, who argued for the people’s role in the political system and considered the Republic as formally democratic. Finally, we end up with “political culture as a paradigm”; H here pays homage to the importance of Christian Meier’s *Res publica amissa* (1966), a seminal work often underappreciated in the anglophone world. The chapter then offers a generous overview of current research topics and references to works. I note that emotions and gender are not represented as topics *per se*. For a newcomer to this field, Chapter I is an excellent starting point.

‘Chapter II. Fact(ions) or fiction? Friedrich Münzer and the aristocracy of the Roman Republic—then and now’ is a review article of Thérèse Ridley’s English translation of Münzer’s *Roman aristocratic parties and families/Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* (1999/1920). H is critical of the edition: he claims that Münzer’s understanding of Roman politics is dated and has not been relevant for quite some time. In the context of the book, the discussion and contextualization of Münzer’s work serve to restate the theoretical underpinnings for the following chapters. However, as a review in the context of the volume, it seems to this reviewer to be a somewhat harsh critique of a now 21-year-old translation that tried to make an (admittedly dated) classic more available to non-German readers. I note that H himself has had a range of his works translated into different languages and that *RRR* itself contains an article translated from German.

‘Chapter III. The Roman Republic as theatre of power. The consuls as leading actors’ offers a dramaturgical reading of Republican politics: everything a consul did was theatrical

as he performed his power and status on the public stage in Rome. Performances followed scripts with co-actors and audiences. The consuls used props and paraphernalia, like the curule chair, the purple toga, and the *fasces* (H discusses the latter in some detail). Underlined is the role of the Roman people, *populus Romanus*, not only as spectators but also as actors—H uses the term “(spect)a(c)tors”—complicit in the performances of power, thus granting legitimacy to the political order and its élite.

The performative theme continues in ‘Chapter IV. Self-serving sermons’. H here discusses the relationship between the élite orators’ superlative self-praise, the competitive nature of Roman politics, and the presence of the public as an addressee. The *contio* is read as both a place for discourse and a discourse in itself between the élite and the *populus Romanus*, both of which reproduced and legitimized the asymmetrical political order.

‘Chapter V. The self-fashioning of the new elite’ deals with the Middle Republic and the self-fashioning of the new patricio-plebeian élite. H demonstrates how this new élite expressed their status in competitive and superlative terms in inscriptions, temples, rituals, statues, coins, and paintings. H emphasizes how these expressions were related to military victories, which in themselves were a critical meritocratic basis for office-holding and status (and further military commands and victories). Even if these expressions belonged to different genres, there was interplay and allusion between them, following a common “grammar”.

‘Chapter VI. History and collective memory in the Middle Republic’ applies the well-known concepts of Jan Assman (collective and cultural memory) and Pierre Nora (*milieu de mémoire* and *lieu de mémoire*) to Rome during the Middle Republic. That the monumental centre in Rome functioned as a *lieu de mémoire* and the Roman people and its senatorial élite constituted a *milieu de mémoire* seems unsurprising. More interesting is the observation regarding the distinction between “communicative memory” and “cultural/collective memory”. The former is everyday, recent memory that circulates in society. The latter is selective and stylized and concerns a more remote past, at least in modern societies. In Rome, H argues, all memory was “present within the present”, including the memory of the heroes of early Rome. That which in modern societies would be cultural memory was circulating and “alive” like communicative memory, which is why the distinction between communicative and cultural memory is invalid regarding Republican Rome.

Memory is the topic also in ‘Chapter VII. In the web of (hi-)stories’, in which H uses Cicero’s mention of the equestrian statue *equus Tremuli* to trace the memory of Tremulus and the use of his statue. Tremulus had been a hero of the wars against the Hernici in the late 4th century BC. H impressively situates the statue and its subject in its genre and traces

its memory and use(s) in different media by different actors, showcasing the dense interconnectedness of the Roman memory culture, which always was in a state of flux.

‘Chapter VIII. Memoria by multiplication. The Corneli Scipiones in monumental memory’ builds on Matthew Roller’s concept of “intersignification”. It discusses the self-fashioning and the related (re)creation, curation, and use of memory by the Corneli Scipiones. The starting point is Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio Nasica (consul 52 BC) and his monument on the Capitol to his Scipionic ancestors. Again, the monument is situated in its physical place, genre, and in relation to its subjects. H thus discusses the *gens*’ activities in the memory sphere going back to the early 3rd century BC.

The arguments are detailed and persuasive—H’s conception of the Republic is coherent across the chapters, as noted above. References in each chapter are rich. This reviewer would have appreciated if more of other scholars’ viewpoints and interpretations were made explicit in the interpretations and discussions regarding specific subjects, rather than only noting who has written earlier on the subject. Such an articulation would be helpful for a reader lacking expertise in this highly specialized scholarship.

*RRR* contains useful indices of names/persons and subjects. The internal cross-references in footnotes, however, are between different chapters, not pages. This imprecision is unfortunate given that similar arguments and subjects are covered in multiple chapters. A reader is often left to recognize discussions and topics from other chapters and wonder about

the difference. The editing is otherwise good; the reviewer only found some misplaced punctuation marks and missing spaces in the notes.

H likes to play with words and sentences, allowing for multiple meanings of sentences. This aligns well with H’s argument in the book; Republican rituals, performances, statues, coins, structures, places, and historiographical narratives also should be read from different perspectives, such that the medium is part of the message. That is, the complexity of the text suggests a method for approaching the ancient evidence. However, at times H’s ingenious writing style comes at the cost of readability and clarity.

It is not easy to assess the impact of a collection of papers that have been published elsewhere. Further, considering the collection as a product, the question must be asked, is the sum greater than its parts? There is overlap between the chapters; however, they are in dialogue and build on each other to the collection’s credit. And as expected from a collection, the chapters stand well on their own, and it is convenient to have them collected in one volume. The first two chapters provide the reader with an accessible primer, while the remaining chapters offer the reader a rich and complex taste of the banquet that is the Roman Republic and its scholarship.

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