

ongoing debates of the entire scientific community and, in this sense, represents a collective advance that succeeds in respecting national nuances in an increasingly globalised world.

Has the last word been said about the Roman Republic, or at least about its politics? The notion of political culture has the great advantage of integrating all aspects of politics into an overall scheme that does not leave out any actor or any of the traditional tools of analysis, while at the same time raising new questions (about political communication, civic rituals, gestures, theatricality and images of power). Although there are no longer any obvious blind spots, a few (small) grey areas still remain on which further research might shed new light. The most important concerns the strata of the civic body that did not belong to the Roman aristocracy in a broad sense and for which there are fewer sources. The popular elements of Roman political culture are analysed in this *Companion* in both their institutional (the people's assemblies) and social (the urban plebs) dimensions, but the most sensitive point is their articulation within a political system in which the aristocracy was prevalent. In other words, we must ask ourselves whether there was only one political culture in Rome, that of the Roman aristocracy, which was accepted, assimilated and even internalised to a certain extent by the lower strata. Or should we assume, on the contrary, the existence of another political culture, popular, which should be defined not as a counter-culture, but rather as a parallel culture — or parallel language, if we use an expression coined by Nicolet? The *Companion* as a whole tends to favour the first solution, but Robert Morstein-Marx introduces a welcome nuance in this respect by stressing that while the two cultures, aristocratic and popular, were different and could be in opposition to each other, they were also interdependent and far from being incompatible; otherwise, the Republic would have been ungovernable (395–7). As Alexander Yakobson elegantly states, the question of whether the people's acceptance of the political and social *status quo* is a manifestation of its stake in the political system or evidence for its subordination to the hegemony exercised by the aristocracy cannot be definitively decided one way or the other, because it is not exempt from ideological presuppositions (103). In sum, while it has been pointed out in the past that the people did not always obey, we should not forget to ask why they obeyed most of the time, in line with Weberian sociology.

The editors of this *Companion* are to be congratulated for having coordinated so well a volume on such a complex subject by taking care to make manifest the linkages across the forty contributions by means of multiple, very welcome internal cross-references. These linkages ensure that the whole adds up to more than a sum of its parts.

Université Paris Nanterre
fhurlet@parisnanterre.fr

FRÉDÉRIC HURLET

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STÉPHANE BENOIST (ED.), *UNE RÉPUBLIQUE IMPÉRIALE EN QUESTION?* (Dialogues d'histoire ancienne. Supplément 24). Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2021. Pp. 276, illus. ISBN 9782848678993. €28.00.

Scholars have long debated the periodisation of Roman history. Attention once focused on Late Antiquity, but has recently been extended to the republican period, after Harriet Flower's stimulating essay on *Roman Republics* (2010). This volume now turns to the 'imperial Republic'. The concept is not new. In the early 1970s, it gave the title to an essay by Raymond Aron on the United States after World War II (*République impériale. Les États-Unis dans le monde* (1973), discussed here at 20 and 71), but it has also been used to refer to other geo-historical contexts: from the United States of the eighteenth century (Michael A. Blaakman et al., eds, *The Early Imperial Republic. From the American Revolution to the U.S.-Mexican War* (forthcoming)) to the French Third Republic (Le Cour Grandmaison, *La République impériale* (2009)). It has been used for ancient Rome, too. *La repubblica imperiale* is the title of volume II.1 of Einaudi's *Storia di Roma* (1990) and, more recently, of Flower's chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (2010). In both cases the period considered is that of Rome's passage from city-state to capital of the Mediterranean, i.e. from the Samnite Wars to the end of Civil Wars. Nathan Rosenstein

referred the expression to the middle Republic (*Rome and the Mediterranean 290 to 146 BC: The Imperial Republic* (2012)), while Allan M. Gowing employed it for the period of Augustus and Tiberius (*A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (2007): II, 411–18). This volume aims to apply the label to the first century B.C. and first century A.D. combined, a timespan which ancient sources and modern historians usually divide between Republic and Empire, and to study them as a unitary period.

At first glance, this proposal might seem perplexing. As Frédéric Hurlet clearly states (204–6), an ‘imperial *res publica*’ is one thing (the concept of *res publica* remains widely used long after Augustus, although it had different meanings for Scipio Africanus, Trajan or Justinian), an ‘imperial Republic’ quite another. This formula could hint at an institutional continuity between ‘Republic’ and ‘Empire’, implying that the Augustan regime was an ‘extension’ of the Republic with no real break with the past; but it can also imply that the new imperial reality created by conquest deeply transformed the functioning of the Republic. So, the authors’ proposition is perfectly justified. The ‘imperial Republic’ is precisely this period in which politics was being transformed: a transformation involving not just power structures, but also the very notion of *imperium*, from a ‘power’ to a ‘territory’ (see Richardson, *The Language of Empire* (2008)). From this point of view, a key factor is the emergence of a sense of the Empire as a territory, a long-term process which ends only under Claudius, as is revealed by Hurlet’s analysis of the senatorial *cursus* inscriptions. Here we enter the heart of the matter: the ‘imperial Republic’ was a period of evolution in institutions, as they adapted themselves to the new regime; but also in the way the Romans looked at their Empire, in their collective and individual mentality. The case of Messala Corvinus (studied here by Cyrielle Landrea) clearly shows the need to reconcile republican ideals with the Augustan Principate.

The concept of *res publica*, widely discussed throughout the book, is the particular focus of Philippe Le Doze’s chapter, which shows that the use, if not the creation (see Moatti, *Res Publica* (2018)) of the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* formula enabled Augustus to distinguish between the Principate and ‘tyranny’. It would be an error to refer to Augustus’ regime as a ‘monarchy with a republican façade’. The restoration of the *res publica* was not an illusion: the institutions of the *res publica* (Senate, *comitia*, magistracies) continued to function, without thereby concealing the monarchic nature of the new power (which Augustus’ mausoleum hinted at ever since Actium). As Le Doze points out (128), the Roman state was becoming ‘imperial’ but it was still a *res publica*, which could influence the action of the *princeps*. The passage from ‘prince mandataire’ to ‘prince souverain’ took place later, through successive stages.

If in many respects the development of new power structures and a new mentality was a gradual process, which started before Augustus and continued after him, there are certain areas where we can see Augustus’ attempt to impose a radical change — as well as the difficulties he faced. An example is that of triumphal parades, which are the topic of Flower’s excellent chapter (a French translation of a paper already published in *CIAnt*, 2020). Augustus’ effort to eliminate them can be related to the limits he placed on further imperial expansion after his death. Tiberius’ and the Senate’s unwillingness to conform to this new order represents a different vision of the role that triumphal celebration should take in a *res publica restituta*. Such examples justify the long-term perspective adopted in this book.

Some may argue that the definition of ‘imperial Republic’ is not always consistent. If we consider the first centuries B.C. and A.D. as a period of ‘modélisation du pouvoir personnel dans le cadre du fonctionnement traditionnel de la *res publica*’ (71), one may wonder if this picture was not profoundly altered already in A.D. 5 by the *lex Valeria Cornelia*, or anyway in A.D. 19 by the attribution to the Senate of the candidates’ *destinatio*: a measure which put an end once and for all to the electoral function of the centuriate assembly. If we admit that the ‘imperial Republic’ covers both centuries, stating that the *comitia* regained their full functions in 28 B.C. (124), which is of course perfectly true, may appear to be misleading, because they lost them again and forever twenty-three years later. Or placing ‘the embryo of an imperial Republic’ in the 208 B.C. (146) may seem to contradict the very periodisation here adopted. But such perplexities are perhaps unavoidable and do not undermine the importance of this interesting book, which will surely pave the way for new research.

Università degli Studi di Salerno
gurso@unisa.it

GIANPAOLO URSO

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