III. HISTORY AND CULTURE

J. E. LENDON, *THAT TYRANT, PERSUASION: HOW RHETORIC SHAPED THE ROMAN WORLD*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2022. Pp. xviii + 302, illus. ISBN 9780691221007. £25.00.

How did the intensive rhetorical training that constituted the final stage of Roman elite education influence real-life actions? Moving beyond familiar studies of rhetorical influence on Hellenistic and Roman literature, J. E. Lendon's most recent book seeks to pin down the specific ways in which rhetorical training spilled over into and shaped real-life actions and patterns of thought and behaviour.

The book is organised into four sections, ringed by a brief Preface and Conclusion. The first section, 'The Strange World of Roman Education', offers a helpful synthesis of the emergence in the Roman imperial period of a distinctive pattern of elite male education that culminated in declamation (ch. 1). While there was some attention to theory, practice and performance were emphasised above all, so that the training had more in common with a modern conservatory or other performing arts institute than with the modern university. L. emphasises ancient perceptions of the value of declamation, its competitiveness highlighted by metaphors of the arena, and virtuoso qualities suggested by the lore and lure of sophists. He argues against modernising evaluations of Roman education that would find it lacking in technical and intellectual content, foregrounding the prime importance of training in public speaking for success in the Roman Empire (ch. 2).

The second section, 'Killing Julius Caesar as the Tyrant of Rhetoric', opens with a gripping retelling of the murder of Caesar and its immediate aftermath, highlighting the haphazard planning of the conspirators and the attendant confusion (ch. 3). L. then focuses on aspects of the conspiracy and its aftermath that have puzzled modern scholars and, to some extent, Cicero, such as the failure to kill Antony as well as Caesar. He argues that the conspirators' odd behaviour was conditioned by the prominence of the individual tyrant in the declamatory exercises in which they had been trained, with tyrannicide as the natural response, and a stirring speech as the grand conclusion (ch. 4). Other historical figures, such as Domitian and Caesar himself, found the rhetorical tyrant exceptionally good to think with, as they developed their distinctive political personae by both trying on and avoiding autocratic tropes (ch. 5).

In Section Three, 'Rhetoric's Curious Children: Building in the Cities of the Roman Empire', L. explores the ways in which rhetorical training influenced the shape of cities in the Greek East. While stock features of the rhetoric of praise favoured the building of nymphaea and colonnades, city walls were discouraged by the biases of deliberative rhetoric (chs 6–7). The final section, 'Lizarding, and other Adventures in Declamation and Roman Law', opens with an ancient interpretation of the enigmatic term 'lizarding', referring to a variety of crime that had not been written into law but that could still be pursued by legal action (107–9). This discussion introduces the compelling topic of the relationship between contemporary Roman law and the legal universe of the rhetorical curriculum, a heady mixture of ancient Roman, Greek and pure invention (ch. 8). The preoccupations of the rhetorical repertoire occasionally got translated into actual laws enacted by Roman emperors, tending towards the lurid: adultery and poisoning, the rights of 'ravished' women, and 'eye for an eye' justice (ch. 9). As L. argues, the semi-fictional hotchpotch that passed for law in rhetorical training was likely to have had a broader influence on actual legal practice, given that Roman governors adjudicating local situations in the Empire tended to be non-specialists, relying on their general education (140–1).

L.'s approach is for the most part staunchly empirical, which can be a strength of the book. The organisation by discrete themes lends precision, even if it does not particularly encourage the emergence of broader questions. L. meticulously dismisses conflicting arguments, and generally avoids theory. He is impatient with 1980s and 1990s tendencies to insist that rhetoric reinforces the socio-political status quo, or, alternatively, subverts it, in L.'s eyes a restrictive and modish 'accident of life in the modern university' (20). He avoids comparative approaches that might have helped to pinpoint the peculiar conditions of Imperial Rome. This is surprising, given that his title, *That Tyrant, Persuasion*, tags a line of a speech given by 'Agamemnon' in Euripides' *Hecuba* (816), hinting at contemporary Athenian debates about access to rhetorical education and its use and abuse.

L. sometimes allows himself to fly. This can be exciting to watch, as when he muses on the different resonances that all those practised meditations on tyranny and tyrannicide might have

had for subjects making sense of and navigating the constraints imposed by Roman monarchy and, at the same time, the real possibilities of local government, while putting faith in legal proceedings (148–53). This is a particularly interesting spin on Mary Beard's earlier questions about how to understand Roman declamation's preoccupations ('Looking (Harder) for Roman Myth', in F. Graf (ed.), *Mythos in mythenloser Gesellschaft. Das Paradigma Roms* (1993), 44–64). When L. thinks big like this, one can imagine *That Tyrant, Persuasion* in productive conversation with, for example, studies of modes of organisation and categorisation peculiar to the Roman imperial world, such as the configuration of space or the arrangement of lists. There is much to inspire future work here.

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CHRISTOPH F. KONRAD, *THE CHALLENGE TO THE AUSPICES: STUDIES ON MAGISTERIAL POWER IN THE MIDDLE ROMAN REPUBLIC.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xx + 342, map. ISBN 9780192855527. £90.00.

This timely monograph explores the actions of Roman magistrates in the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. in relation to the fundamental concept of the auspices, which granted divine approval or disapproval for public action. As the title suggests, Christoph Konrad focuses on examples of commanders challenging the role of the auspices in Roman society, proposing that these are not isolated incidents, as usually interpreted, but 'expressions of a larger sense of dissatisfaction among elements of the Roman political class' (ix). The book is filled with stimulating analysis of thorny historical problems, and offers new insights on the tenets of Roman magisterial power — *imperium* and *auspicium* — and the constitutional positions of the dictator and *magister equitum*. It speaks to recent scholarship on augury and religious belief (Driediger-Murphy, *Roman Republican Augury* (2019); Champion, *The Peace of the Gods* (2017)) as much as it does to literature on complex constitutional questions (Drogula, *Commanders and Command* (2015); Vervaet, *The High Command* (2014)) and Roman magistracies (although, notably, Wilson's *Dictator* (2021) is incorporated in a limited way due to its recent publication). The focal point of the work is an attempt to explain the Fasti Capitolini entry for Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucossus' dictatorship in 217.

After starting from the conflict between the dictator, L. Papirius Cursor, and his *magister equitum*, Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus, in 324 (ch. 1), chs 2–4 outline the concepts of *imperium* and *auspicium* as they applied to the offices of dictator and *magister equitum*. K. persuasively argues that the initial 'auspices of investiture' covered both military and civil action. From close analysis of the Greek sources, K. concludes that the dictator derived his superiority from the inability of the regular magistrates to exercise their powers without his instruction. As K. rightly observes, the powers of the *magister equitum* were conferred via appointment by the dictator, and the pair held linked auspices — vitiation implicated them both. However, for his overall argument, K. asserts that the consulship could not be held simultaneously with the office of *magister equitum*. K. does not explain how this aligns with the naming of the *magister equitum* — the dictator's first action — that immediately bestowed the magisterial powers of *imperium* and *auspicium* (115–16, 134).

In ch. 5, K. develops his position that there was an underlying challenge to the auspices across this period through analysis of three third-century incidents involving consuls who ignored or tried to subvert the signs, including P. Claudius Pulcher drowning the sacred chickens in 249.

At ch. 6, we reach the main puzzle that K. seeks to solve: why Fabius was appointed dictator *interregni caussa*, according to the Fasti Capitolini. K. argues that this notice belongs to Fabius' first dictatorship, which he places in 223: the consuls C. Flaminius and P. Furius Philus were declared vitiated, but Flaminius refused to abdicate. K. suggests that by naming Flaminius as his *magister equitum*, Fabius compelled Flaminius to resign, while offering a solution that left his *dignitas* intact. In turn, the squeak of a mouse at the moment of the appointment betrayed the