

Haake, Matthias; Harders, Ann-Cathrin (Hrsg.): *Politische Kultur und soziale Struktur der Römischen Republik. Bilanzen und Perspektiven*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2017. ISBN: 9783515115988; 567 S.

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This volume was published in memory of Friedrich Münzer (1868–1942), best known for his work on Roman prosopography and his fundamental book „Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien“ (1920).

The aim of the volume was to evaluate Münzer's influence on the historiography of the Roman Republic. The focus is on two aspects, which have recently been at the centre of the study of the Roman Republic, namely political culture and social structure. The various papers in this volume analyse how the combination of Rome's complex social structures and the wide range of performative acts that surrounded Roman politics created the unique socio-political nature of the Roman Republic. On the one hand, its flexibility ensured that the Republic functioned reasonably well for several centuries. The political culture and social structure of the Republic created social cohesion, consensus between the ruling classes and the people, and the ability to act effectively within the Roman state, as well as externally. On the other hand, unsolved tensions, which were always present within the system, in the end caused the collapse of the Republic.

The first section of the volume describes Münzer's life and work. In the first paper, Wiesehöfer gives a short biography of Münzer, focusing on his experiences during the Second World War and his death. Böckholt gives a wonderful insight into the 'Geographia,' a group of like-minded intellectuals who met regularly for walks and discussions and which formed the focus of Münzer's social life throughout his time in Münster. In the next paper, Nippel places Münzer's research in its wider context. Münzer's prosopographical contributions to the „Realencyclopädie“ led to his 1920 monograph, in which he argued that within the Roman nobility fixed groups ('factions') existed, which created long-lasting ties both privately and politically,

and systematically opposed each other's politics. His work had a great impact on scholarship, although scholars in later debates sometimes ascribed views to Münzer which he actually never held. Nevertheless, the question Münzer asked – why was the Roman Republic, led by a small nobility, successful for such a long time? – remains important. The answer to this question is nowadays sought in the political culture and social structure of the Roman Republic, rather than in the connections between the individuals who formed its ruling elite.

The second section focuses on prosopography as a scientific method. Firstly, Heil analyses the method Münzer employed in his work for the „Realencyclopädie“ and discusses how prosopography can contribute to the study of the Roman Republic. Ryan shows the continuing importance of prosopography in a concrete example, explaining how the identification of a particular censor sheds light on the history of the censorship in general. Next, Solin offers a clear and detailed overview of the Roman naming system from the early Republic to late Antiquity. Finally, Wolters analyses the use of *exempla* from particular families on coinage, in order to promote the family of the moneyer. He argues that these images were not intended to support the election campaigns of members of the family referred to, but to support the careers of the moneyers themselves, many of whom were new men.

The third section analyses social structures in Rome. Firstly, Martin discusses the *patria potestas*, arguing that the power of the *patres familias* was closely connected to the political organisation of the Roman state. He also points to the important role of women in public life, especially in religious institutions. Next, Harders elucidates the essential stabilising role of marriage relations within the Roman aristocracy. From the second century, significant changes occurred in the way marriages were arranged, which both reflected and furthered the disintegration of the elite. In the next paper, Mouritsen investigates the slave *familiae* of elite households, taking Cicero's as a case study. Since the number of slaves was large and slave labour was highly specialized, Mouritsen doubts that a 'middle class'

of freeborn citizens existed, since their labour was not required. However, Mouritsen is unable to fully prove this controversial view, so that this debate will certainly be continued. In the last paper in this section, Mignone discusses the residential patterns of the urban population in order to investigate the spatial integration between wealthy and poor Romans. Since there was no strict spatial separation between different classes, informal interaction between rich and poor was an important way in which the elite influenced the citizens.

The fourth section discusses the relations between Rome, Italy and the Mediterranean. This rather wide-ranging section starts with a paper by Le Bohec, who discusses the way in which prisoners of war were treated during the Gallic Wars. Since, he argues, Romans needed skilled slaves, most Gallic slaves were either killed or set free. Pina Polo sets forth the surprising, but well-argued thesis that, contrary to common views, Pompey did not build a *clientela* in Hispania. Rather, the provincials followed their own agenda, meaning that relationships with Romans were continually renegotiated. Prag argues that the dichotomy between East and West in scholarship is unfortunate; he pleads for a more holistic approach towards Rome's expansion in the Mediterranean. Although the East is often seen as more important for Rome than the West, in fact more military activity took place in the West, so that both areas should be seen as equally important. Jung focuses on the role of the Italians in Roman politics. On the one hand, the Italians actively participated in the civil wars between Sulla and Marius; on the other hand, Sulla 'externalized' the conflict by pointing to the Samnites as the greatest enemies.

In the fifth section the focus is on the formation of the elite and relationships between individual *nobiles*. Van der Blom points to the importance of public speeches in making or breaking an individual's career, as it was here that he engaged directly with the voters. Lundgreen asks why individual politicians hardly ever employed methods of obstructing the political process, such as the veto. He explains this through the great social and political cohesion that existed within the ruling class, which made the Republic go-

vernable, at least until the first century BC. Next, Walter discusses the willingness of politicians to take risks, e.g. in battle. Roman society as a whole aimed at consensus and cohesion, but for individual politicians it was necessary to distinguish themselves in order to build a career. In connection to this, Linke points to the structural problem that successful generals formed for the Republic. Generals aimed to win battles, take spoils and celebrate triumphs, but successful individuals were a danger to the state, because they might use their popularity to become too powerful.

The sixth section, again rather wide-ranging and thus less focused, analyses various fields in which aristocrats could compete with one another. First, Aubert investigates the sumptuary laws passed in second and first centuries BC. These, he argues, reflect the growth of the Roman economy, which made some aristocrats very rich. The laws aimed to regulate the behaviour of these wealthy men in order to achieve social cohesion, but without much success. Next, Arnold and Rüpke show how the Roman elite appropriated and shaped Roman religion in order to distinguish themselves. Thus, Roman religion was not unchangeable, but strongly influenced by Roman political and social developments. Finally, Haake discusses engagement with philosophy and literature among the Roman elites, specifically the *equites*. Using the case study of the Saufeii brothers, he argues that many *equites* engaged with philosophy, although this did not mean that they all wrote philosophical literary works.

The last section of the volume focuses on the relationship between the Senate and the *plebs* and the way in which political decisions were reached. First, Hölkeskamp's strongly theoretical paper describes the development of the study of 'political culture' in modern history. He argues that the performance of politics and its media, symbols and discursive strategies should be a central topic of investigation. It was these aspects that created a collective understanding of the political and social order of Rome and prescribed the role that each individual played in this order. Secondly, Yakobson emphasizes the importance of public speeches for established politicians. A politician must walk a fine line between gai-

ning popularity with the plebs and maintaining his standing among the elite. Flaig points to the important role of contiones as the central mechanism to influence popular opinion and to find consensus. Magistrates used contiones to test the waters before bringing a bill before the people. If the *contio* was against it, the bill was dropped. Finally, Jehne elaborates that magistrates in contiones tried to present a bill as benefiting the common good. The people were continually reminded of their importance, in order to convince them to follow the magistrate's lead.

The volume ends with an outlook by Gruen, revisiting his 1974 work „The Last Generation of the Roman Republic“ (LGRR). He argues that it is difficult to establish exactly when and how the 'crisis' of the Roman Republic started, if there was a crisis at all. Since *LGRR* was published, much more attention has been given to political culture and social structures in the Republic, as well as the performative aspects of Roman politics, which maintained the cohesion and acting power of the Roman state. All, these aspects remained in use throughout the first century BC; therefore, it was civil war that brought down the Republic, rather than any internal weaknesses. Gruen also rightly emphasizes the role of the Italian allies in this conflict – the alliance system that had been essential for the functioning of the Republic fell apart after the allies had been given citizenship, without concomitant changes in the constitution of the Roman state.

This well-edited volume – I found only a few errors – provides interesting new insights into the workings of the Roman Republic. The focus on Münzer, although his work is not explicitly addressed in all papers, usually creates sufficient coherence in the volume as a whole. Only in a few cases the connection between individual papers and the collection as a whole gets lost, mostly in sections four and six. A general concluding chapter by the editors would have been a welcome addition, which might have helped the reader to make sense of the wide range of important issues discussed in this volume, and to set the agenda for further research. I was puzzled by the editors' choice to translate some articles from English into German, while others were not

translated. Overall, however, this rich volume is a wonderful memorial to Friedrich Münzer, whose work is still fully relevant to the study of Roma history, 70 years after his death.

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