

BOOK REVIEW

Cicero's De Provinciis Consularibus Oratio. Edited by LUCA GRILLO. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xv + 345. Paper, \$29.95. ISBN 978-0-19-022459-2.

For many years, Cicero's *post reditum* speeches—those delivered following his recall from exile in 57 and until (at the latest) the *Pro Milone* in 52—were read mainly either as self-serving, humiliating in their flattery to Caesar, or part of a personal agenda. The *De Provinciis Consularibus*, which followed the Conference at Luca by about two months, was read as a public embarrassment, whereby Cicero was compelled to defend his support of the renewal of Caesar's Gallic command in defiance of his principles and of his previous public positions, where he had the "choice of doing the Triumvirs' will or taking the consequence of his disobedience" (MacDonald xiv [1]). Some of Cicero's contemporaries clearly felt the same way. Newer approaches, however, have examined the ways in which Cicero attempted to re-establish his political presence and to recapture his *dignitas*.

Recently, John Dugan has explained the healing effect for Cicero of his constant rhetorical return to and repetition of his year as consul. (*CJ* 110.1 2014, 9—22). Private anxieties aside, Cicero's public posture would entail a form of his coming to grips with the new situation without abandoning the stated convictions from his prime. It is clear that the *Prov. Cons.* was not the much debated *palinodia*, but it would be no surprise if the gist of what he said or wrote has found its way into his (possibly planned) response to the third interruption of his presentation (at 17.40: *quo minus saepe aut interpeller a non nullis aut tacitorum existimatione reprehendar*) and his detailed explanation of his revised relationship with Caesar (18–35).

Grillo's commentary locates itself comfortably within this approach, trying to understand what Cicero himself may have had in mind when deciding to take on a case or when prodded to support the Triumvirate. His introductory matter frames these ideas in convincing detail. In his comments to lemma after lemma, Grillo highlights Cicero's strategy of creating a *post reditum* persona that is consistent with his stature and his patriotism ("Cicero aligns his personal interest

with the state's, insisting on the identity between himself and the republic," 75: see also, for example, pages 97, 108, 197, 283–84, and 286). He is highly alert to Cicero's recasting and re-imagining events, either to reinforce his revised view of Caesar or to bring credit upon himself (232–233).

In terms of Cicero's actual proposal before the senate, Grillo follows Giovannini, decisively clearing out the thicket of constitutional confusion in previous editions (17: *itaque ego idem, qui nunc consulibus iis qui designati erunt, Syriam Macedoniamque decerno, decernam easdem praetorias*: "to make Macedonia and Syria both praetorian, in order to recall Piso and Gabinius at the end of 56, and consular, in order to avoid a possible veto from a tribune [and prevent the consuls of 55 from taking the two Gauls away from Caesar]. ... Cicero is not suggesting making Syria and Macedonia praetorian for 55 and consular for 54; rather he proposes that "a praetor {of 56} be sent there first, at the beginning of the year {55}, to carry out military and administrative duties until the arrival of the consul, kept in Rome by his obligations'" 165–169, esp.168).

A particular strength of Grillo's commentary is the consistent reference to the ancient rhetorical handbooks, whereby he compares Cicero's practice to the recommendations in some detail; in addition, where rhetorical tropes are identified, he suggests ways the trope strengthens and conveys meaning. (One example, characteristic of all at 227: "alliteration...and homoioteleuton... create a sense of enclosed unity.") Interestingly, we apparently need a full glossary of these tropes, but no information on text criticism: so *lectio difficilior* is invoked (5.15, 108: *vix ut*, his preferred text, but no mention of it in the *apparatus criticus*) without warning or further explanation. In addition, Grillo maps the various prose rhythms used by Cicero with similarly helpful comments about their effects in context. Metaphor is not neglected, and nuances between various similar (or technical) verbs are fully explained (for example, *decernere* v. *obtinere*, *adficere* v. *conficere*).

A few curious slips or errors: *caedo* mistakes *cedo* on 5; twice, Grillo's text has *ilia* for *illa* (4. 9, 57; 11.27, 64); *redere* instead of *redire* on 179; there is "becaming" on 190; Caesar is misspelled on 216. Grillo has a detailed Works Cited rather than a full bibliography; but for those using the speech in a classroom, MacDonald's 1971 school text¹ could have helpfully been included, especially because of MacDonald's decision to include important Ciceronian letters that help frame the context and purport of this speech (*Att.* 4.5, *Fam.* 1.9, in particular).

¹ C. MacDonald, *De Provinciis Consularibus in Senatu Oratio et Epistulae Selectae*. Macmillan 1971.

As Cicero seeks to reconstitute himself as *pater patriae*, Grillo notes (as all doubtless realized) that approval of the proposal on the consular provinces will cede the role for *arma* to Caesar. And yet, he also deftly extracts those places where Cicero here lays claim, in passages that appear to “instruct” Caesar, to moral and civic leadership on behalf of the *toga*, (e.g. 28.28, 219).

In short, this is a splendid work. Politics, history, the range of *amicitia*, constitutional complexity, philology, linguistics, rhetoric, and nuanced language are examined thoroughly and persuasively.

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