

## BOOK REVIEW

*Cicero's Use of Judicial Theater*. By JON HALL. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 190. Hardback, \$75; paperback, \$30. ISBN 978-0-472-07220-0 (hb); 978-0-472-05220-2 (pb).

The connections between oratory and theatre at Rome are a staple of criticism on Cicero's speeches. Roscius' work comparing oratory and acting (Macr. Sat. 3.14.12), Cicero's comparison of the *contio* to a stage (*Brut.* 290) and frequent references in his oratorical treatises to similarities of technique between the two activities are regularly cited in treatments of Ciceronian oratory, particularly delivery. Hall's fine monograph takes a slightly different tack. Despite its title, and a crisp survey of the evidence on oratory and acting in ancient Rome (27–30), it is not really about the ways in which late Republican oratory resembled what its audience might have witnessed at theatrical performances. Rather, by 'judicial theater' Hall means a range of highly emotional performance tropes which supplemented an orator's words and which can be hypothesized from references to them in Cicero's surviving speeches and from a range of anecdotes in Cicero and other writers. These included wearing dirty clothes, weeping, interacting physically with children and others in court, and adopting the physical gestures of supplication.

After a brief introduction, Hall outlines the ancient background to this kind of performance in the first chapter. This usefully emphasizes the silence of the rhetorical handbooks on this topic; we must look instead to the showmanship inherent in Roman culture to understand why some orators, at least, employed these methods. Chapter two deals with *sordes*; chapter three, with supplication and other direct appeals to the jurors, including the use of children; and chapter four, with tears. These central chapters concentrate on the Ciceronian evidence; the final chapter looks what is known about other orators, and considers occasions when performances appear to have back-fired. A brief conclusion tries to assess how unusual Cicero's practice was in this respect.

Hall's method is close reading and this volume is above all an invaluable collection of material about Cicero's oratorical performances, systematic, readable, and invariably sensible in its analysis of what might actually lie behind the

texts. Hall is also excellent at contextualizing Cicero within oratorical practice of the middle and late Republic (he takes Sulpicius Galba's escape from judicial penalty in 149 as his chronological starting point) and alert to the limitations of our evidence, particularly as a basis for drawing general conclusions about oratorical practice.

Such a rich collection inevitably raises further questions. One concerns the distinction that can be drawn between forensic and deliberative oratory, for, as Hall shows, many of the behaviors that Cicero and others used in court can also be found in deliberative oratory. Conversely, it seems to be only in certain kinds of judicial oratory, that involving senatorial clients and advocates in the *iudicia publica*, where we find the employment of these methods of emotional communication. The vast bulk of judicial activity proceeded without such extra-verbal fireworks; but elite service to the *res publica* merited, it appears, strong emotions in whatever contexts it was under discussion. To this extent, then, we may wonder how far judicial oratory in the *iudicia publica* really did involve different practices from other politically-charged public speech.

Another issue towards which Hall's work draws attention is the nature of advocacy. He notes that it was a distinctive feature of Roman judicial practice in comparison with Athens which limited the usefulness of Greek models to Roman practitioners (13); and he also observes that Cicero himself did not supplicate (93) in judicial contexts, although he drew attention to his clients' so doing in his speeches. Can these insights be pushed further? Most of the behaviors Hall analyses belonged to defendants; the orator merely orchestrated and described. But tears were the orator's, too. What model does this imply of the orator's own emotional involvement in the defendant's suffering? Would our understanding of Roman oratory look different if we had speeches delivered by defendants themselves, as we know Scaurus and Caelius did? Hall's 'theatrics' have significant potential to illuminate wider questions about experience, *auctoritas* and friendship in the political life of the late Republic.

The monograph is excellently produced; all Latin and Greek is translated; and it is eminently suited to undergraduate courses on Roman rhetoric and Cicero, as well as offering an important contribution to the ongoing research debate about the social and performance contexts of ancient oratory.

CATHERINE STEEL

University of Glasgow, catherine.steel@glasgow.ac.uk