

Eos CVIII 2021

ISSN 0012-7825

DOI: 10.34616/e.2021.199.202

Tobias BOLL, *Ciceros Rede cum senatui gratias egit. Ein Kommentar*, Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019 (Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft. Beihefte, Neue Folge 10), 260 pp., ISBN 978-3-11-062921-7, €113.95.

Contemporary scholarship notably lacks an adequate modern commentary on Cicero's speech of 57, *cum senatui gratias egit*, which is better known under the alternative title, *post reditum in senatu* (henceforth referred to as *Red. Sen.*)¹. Thus, the recent book by Tobias BOLL (henceforth referred to as "B.") will be much appreciated by scholars of republican Rome and especially students of Cicero. The book is divided into an introduction, commentary, appendix, bibliography, and a general index of names and subjects. The appendix provides a calendar of the events of Cicero's exile in the years 58/57. The introduction begins with a brief survey of the current state of research on the *Red. Sen.* (pp. 3–5). B. raises a series of issues in need of scholarly attention, including those pertaining to the MS. tradition, the relation between *Red. Sen.* and the *post reditum ad Quirites*, the invective against Piso and Gabinius at §§ 10–18², and several disputed points regarding the historical background. These points of historical contestation include questions over Clodius' cooperation with the triumvirs, the abrogation of the *leges Aelia et Fufia*, and the presence of Caesar's army at the gates of Rome at the beginning of 58. Chapters two through seven address these issues and, while B.'s conclusions are for the most part indecisive, his discussions will certainly open up venues for further research.

The *Red. Sen.* is unique among Cicero's speeches in that it was read from a script (*de scripto*)³. B. discusses this unique feature of the speech at the beginning of his "historical introduction" (pp. 6–42). He seems to agree with the common view that Cicero read his speech *de scripto* in order to make sure he did not overlook anyone who contributed to his recall from exile (also at pp. 213–214 on § 30). There are other possible explanations for Cicero's decision to read the speech like this, for example that Cicero lacked self-confidence after a long break from public speaking⁴, but B. neglects to discuss these possibilities. He does, however, make an interesting suggestion that the *Red. Sen.* had been disseminated in written form prior to its delivery to the senate (pp. 6–7). B. then provides an account of the speech's historical background, which is split into three subchapters: "Cicero, Clodius und der *bona dea*-Skandal", "Clodius, Caesar und das Triumvirat", and a lengthy chapter in which all the main characters of the play (the *dramatis personae*) are introduced, including Pompey, Caesar, L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, Aulus Gabinius (the consuls of 58), P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos (the consuls of 57), T. Annius Milo, P. Sestius, Q. Tullius Cicero, and of course P. Clodius Pulcher. Inevitably, there are multiple

¹ Cf. A.R. DYCK, *Cicero's Devotio: The Roles of Dux and Scape-Goat in His Post Reditum Rhetoric*, HSCPh CII 2004, pp. 299–314 (not in BOLL's bibliography), at p. 307, n. 38: "One feels acutely the lack of a modern commentary on this speech [= *Red. Pop.*], as on its counterpart, *Red. sen.*". All dates in this review are BCE.

² This has been recently dealt with by A. THURN (*Rufmord in der späten römischen Republik. Charakterbezogene Diffamierungsstrategien in Ciceros Reden und Briefen*, Berlin–Boston 2018, pp. 206, 211, and passim), whose book was also published by Walter de Gruyter, but in another series (Philologus. Supplemente).

³ See Cic. *Planc.* 74 with J.N. SETTLE, *The Publication of Cicero's Orations*, diss. Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1962, pp. 170–174; Ch. HELM, *Zur Redaktion der Ciceronischen Konsulatsreden*, diss. Göttingen 1979, p. 2 with n. 5.

⁴ Cf. DYCK, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 301 with n. 11.

thematic overlaps between these sections. Yet the reader will certainly come away with a clear sense, insofar as such clarity is possible, of Cicero's relationship with and attitudes toward those mentioned or referenced in the speech.

Next, B. analyses the *Red. Sen.* and *Red. Pop.* as parallel speeches (pp. 43–57). His analysis largely relies on the findings of previous scholars⁵, yet he ends up disagreeing with their conclusions more often than not. The difference between these two speeches, surprisingly, is argued to lie in Cicero's approach rather than in their stylistic elaboration. That is, in the *Red. Sen.*, when expressing his gratitude to individual members of the senate, Cicero needed to proceed in a prosaic manner, but could nonetheless occasionally afford to disrupt the sequence of events. In the *Red. Pop.*, by contrast, he takes a more emotional tone, while simultaneously presenting the chronology in a systematic way. B. discusses four main points of divergence between the two orations. The speeches are said to diverge with respect to their "rhetorical situation", the "political situation", the "emotional dimension", and "historical dimension". The difference in rhetorical situation of the two orations means that the invective against Piso and Gabinius and the eulogies of Cicero's supporters are virtually lacking in the *Red. Pop.* Further, in the *Red. Sen.* the speaker emphasises the role of the senate in bringing about his recall, whereas the role of the people is emphasised in the *Red. Pop.* The differences in political situation result in Pompey featuring more prominently and being depicted more favourably in the *Red. Pop.*, whereas in the *Red. Sen.* Cicero had to tone down his own self-praise. By the "emotional dimension" B. means that in the *Red. Pop.* Cicero refers more freely to his family and highlights the merits of his brother Quintus. Cicero also puts greater emphasis on divine intervention and avoids legal matters when speaking in front of the people. The "historical dimension" refers to the fact that Cicero appears to invoke different historical *exempla* according to the expectations of the audience (cf. pp. 236, 241, 243). This also leads to Marius being portrayed in a better light along with Pompey in the *Red. Pop.*

This discussion of the points of divergence between the two speeches is followed by a table listing passages of the two speeches which exhibit phraseological parallels. The next chapter, "Ziele und Strategie Ciceros" (pp. 58–63), highlights Cicero's multiple aims in the *Red. Sen.* Cicero's primary aim was to assign praise and blame; thus, the speech belongs to the *genus demonstrativum*. However, B. argues that Cicero also sought to use the speech to reclaim his political position after exile⁶. It is worth bearing in mind that this speech is an early (if not the earliest) instance of what has come to be known as a *gratiarum actio*. Thus, while Cicero's efforts to deprecate the consuls of 58 may seem strange to a modern reader, the Roman audience would have expected him not only to acknowledge his allies, but also to repudiate his enemies. Further, the orator questions the legality of his exile (to which he euphemistically refers as *calamitas*, *discessus*, etc.) and, in justifying his withdrawal from Rome, he emphasises his own merits. For example, he claims that he had prevented bloodshed and saved the state a second time, etc. To equate himself with the Republic, which P. MACKENDRICK famously described as the "*L'État, c'est moi syndrome*"⁷, was likewise an important part of Cicero's rhetorical strategy. As previously noted, the invective was an integral part of epideictic as well as judicial oratory at Rome. On pp. 64–67, B. enumerates the *topoi* characteristic of the rhetorical invective that can be found in the *Red. Sen.* He counts no fewer than 15 types from among the total of 17 that were specified

⁵ Esp. D. MACK, *Senatsreden und Volksreden bei Cicero*, Würzburg 1937, and C.E. THOMPSON, *To the Senate and to the People: Adaptation to the Senatorial and Popular Audiences in the Parallel Speeches of Cicero*, diss. The Ohio State University 1978. Another, more recent book to which he refers throughout is J. NICHOLSON, *Cicero's Return from Exile. The Orations Post Reditum*, New York 1992.

⁶ On this aspect of the *post reditum* speeches, see J. KENTY, *Cicero's Political Personae*, Cambridge 2020, pp. 84–89, 132–134, 158–161 and *passim*.

⁷ P. MACKENDRICK, *The Speeches of Cicero. Context, Law, Rhetoric*, London 1995.

by C.P. CRAIG⁸. Next, B. briefly outlines the structure and contents of the speech (pp. 68–71). The *Red. Sen.* does not conform to any theoretical model in terms of its disposition, making it difficult to distinguish its formal parts, with the exception of the *exordium* and *peroratio*. B. proposes the following division: §§ 1–2 *Prooemium* / Praise of the Senate; §§ 3–5 Further praise of the Senate and of some of the supporters; §§ 6–7 Characterisation of Cicero’s enemies; §§ 8–9 Praise of the consuls Lentulus and Metellus; §§ 10–18 Invective against Piso and Gabinius; §§ 19–23 Praise of other supporters (esp. Pompey) / Cicero’s recall; §§ 32–36 Justification of his withdrawal from Rome / Self-fashioning as a martyr; §§ 37–38 historical *exempla*, § 39 *Peroratio*⁹. The last chapter before the commentary (pp. 72–90) is devoted to a detailed discussion of the MS. tradition. While B. in one place speaks of his book as an “edition” (p. 83: “in dieser Ausgabe”), he neither prints the text of previous editors nor offers a text of his own. Considering the time and effort he has clearly spent in studying the MSS., a text certainly would have been welcome, especially given that his text deviates in numerous ways from both PETERSON’S OCT and MASLOWSKI’S Teubner¹⁰.

The commentary (pp. 94–245) is rich and informative, but at the same time literally exhaustive in that it reiterates, sometimes *ad nauseam*, many points discussed at length in the historical introduction and often repeats itself where a simple cross-reference would suffice¹¹. This repetition is partly the natural result of the fact that several themes recur repeatedly throughout Cicero’s *Red. Sen.* For example, Cicero’s self-fashioning as a martyr, his self-identification with the *res publica*, and his self-praise for having twice saved the state from a disaster by suppressing the Catilinarian conspiracy in 63 and by preventing the bloodshed in 58 can all be found in multiple places across the speech. One notable exception is the section on Cicero’s invective against Piso and Gabinius at §§ 10–18 which afforded B. an opportunity to demonstrate his wide knowledge not only of the themes of the ancient invective, but also of numerous facets of Roman daily life. Beyond this, the comments on legal and institutional matters pertaining to the turbulent events of Cicero’s withdrawal from Rome are of great value (e.g. on the *leges Aelia et Fufia* at pp. 138–139)¹². Further, the many prosopographical entries on otherwise elusive figures, such as L. Ninnius Quadratus (p. 104), L. Aelius Lamia (p. 143), M. Cispus (p. 180), or Q. Fabricius (p. 182), will prove useful to students of the *post reditum* speeches. B.’s deft treatment of Cicero’s figurative language is particularly insightful. He provides interesting commentary on “the orphaned republic” (pp. 111 and 224), the military imagery at § 8 where P. Lentulus takes up the role of a *servator* (pp. 120–121),

⁸ Cf. C.P. CRAIG, *Audience Expectations, Invective, and Proof*, in: J.G.F. POWELL, J.J. PATERSON (eds.), *Cicero the Advocate*, New York 2004, pp. 187–213.

⁹ He makes it clear that it differs from those of THOMPSON, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 121, NICHOLSON, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 115–116, and MACKENDRICK, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 124–127.

¹⁰ He lists 37 deviations from the former and 25 from the latter. This has been also pointed out by another reviewer (T. RICCHIERI in *Ciceroniana On Line* V 1, 2021, pp. 199–204 [at p. 200: “un testo critico da lui costituito e annesso al suo commento [...] non sarebbe stato fuori luogo”]), who contests (pp. 201–202) some of B.’s textual choices (esp. at §§ 13, 25, and 33). Contrast, for instance, the recent edition of Cicero’s *Agrarian Speeches* by G. MANUWALD (Oxford 2018), who adopts MAREK’S version (Teubner) throughout, although she is well-aware of its shortcomings (p. LII). This drawback of the book under review is mitigated by the fact that the Latin text accompanies each entry of the following commentary.

¹¹ It is quite remarkable that it took B. 151 pages to comment on Cicero’s speech that is 39 paragraphs in length, especially when we realise that R.G. NISBET’S commentary on *De domo sua* (147 paragraphs) is only 132 pages long (a new commentary on that speech, by C. SCHEIDEGGER LÄMMLER of the University of Basel, is now under way. The completion of the project is envisaged for the late summer of 2022). The repetitions, however, may be useful for those readers who do not like to switch back and forth between different entries.

¹² More examples are listed by RICCHIERI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), p. 201.

and the “funeral of the republic” (p. 169)¹³. Unfortunately, little attention is given to the historical puzzle over Cicero’s exile concerning the presence of Caesar’s troops at the gates of Rome in 58. This puzzle is mentioned only briefly in the commentary (whenever a reference is made to the *contio* in the *Circus Flaminius* of March 58). This is perhaps because there is only one allusion to Caesar in the speeches *post reditum par excellence* (*Red. Sen.* 32: “Erat alius ad portas cum imperio in multos annos magnoque exercitu”). Commenting on this passage, B. tentatively suggests (pp. 221–222) that the words *ad portas* may allude to the proverbial phrase *Hannibal ad portas*. I would only add that nearly a decade later, in 49, Cicero made the same association by likening Caesar to the Carthaginian leader explicitly¹⁴. On the other hand, one of the most striking features of this speech with respect to rhetorical tropes is the number of occurrences of what B. DUFALLO calls “the topos *mortuos (ab inferis) excitare*”¹⁵. This topos refers to a certain figure of speech, which the Greek rhetoricians described as εἰδωλοποιία¹⁶, and which is translated into Latin by Priscian as *simulacri fictio*¹⁷. We see a variant of this topos in, for instance, Cicero’s allegation (pp. 109, 130–131, 199) that under Clodius’ proposed law he would be allowed to return “if and when the men who almost destroyed Rome came back to life” (§ 4: “si revixissent ii, qui haec paene delerunt”, tr. D.R. SHACKLETON BAILEY). A much more explicit case is in Cicero’s references to a speech by P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus (*cos.* 79) at *Red. Sen.* 25, where a textbook example of this figure of speech had been employed. In both cases, B. focuses almost exclusively on the historical events and people referred to by both speakers through the aforementioned figure of speech. While he does quote some parallel passages, B. pays no attention to rhetorical theory whatsoever.

These remarks are not meant as criticism. Rather, they show that even a commentary as extensive as this one requires its author to make choices regarding which aspects of the text to neglect in favour of those that seem either more interesting or demanding. This, obviously, will always be subjective. B.’s commentary is admirable in its thoroughness with respect to textual and grammatical difficulties, which never go unnoticed, making the book highly useful for scholars and students alike. Overall, the *Kommentar* appears carefully written and meticulously edited. The few misprints that I have noticed do not impede the reader’s comprehension¹⁸.

Damian Pierzak

Institute of Literary Studies, University of Silesia in Katowice
damian.pierzak@us.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-4140-842X

¹³ Cf. now B. WALTERS, *The Deaths of the Republic. Imagery of the Body Politic in Ciceronian Rome*, Oxford 2020, p. 85 and *passim*.

¹⁴ See Cic. *Att.* VII 11, 1 = 134 SB. It is worth noting that for Cicero’s letters B. apparently uses TYRRELL/PURSER instead of SHACKLETON BAILEY. If he consulted the latter’s editions, there is no trace of it in the text. Cf. THURN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 107–108.

¹⁵ See B. DUFALLO, *The Ghosts of the Past. Latin Literature, the Dead, and Rome’s Transition to a Principate*, Columbus 2007. Cf. IDEM, *Appius’ Indignation: Gossip, Tradition, and Performance in Republican Rome*, TAPhA CXXXI 2001, pp. 119–142 (not in B.’s bibliography). This figure of speech is the subject of my recent book: D. PIERZAK, *Ab inferis ad rostra. Przywoływanie zmarłych w retoryce rzymskiej okresu republikańskiego*, Katowice 2019 (in Polish).

¹⁶ [Hermog.] *Prog.* 9; Aphth. *Prog.* 11 (vol. X, p. 34 SPENGL).

¹⁷ Prisc. *Praeex.* 9 = RLM, p. 558 HALM.

¹⁸ On p. 25, n. 140 read “Cicero” for “Ciceros”; on p. 31, n. 174 read “Kap. 5” for “Kap. 6”; on p. 159 a quotation mark is missing; the only misprint that may cause some confusion is on pp. 160–161: when reproducing the text of *Red. Sen.* 15 in his lemma, B. prints *accidit*, but when commenting on that word he misspells it as *accedit*.