IMMORALITY IN CICERO

H.'s book, based on his doctoral thesis submitted at Lund University, is a welcome addition to two branches of modern scholarship: that on Cicero and that on Roman concerns with morality or lack of the same. H. is well read in both branches and displays an informed view of how his study fits into scholarship. At the same time, he explicitly wants to provoke his readers to throw out their modern preconceptions about the irrationality of basing oratorical arguments on immorality and encourages us instead to take character attacks in public oratory seriously (pp. 17–22, 336). Setting out the scholarship on Ciceronian invective, H. admits to drawing the lines sharply by arguing that most scholars on Cicero's oratory have dismissed the orator's character attacks on Marcus Antonius and others. Indeed, he maps out scholarship with a certain rigidity in order to set out the purpose of his own study, namely to study Ciceronian invective of 'immorality' as a meaningful activity for both speaker and audience which gives important insights into Roman political culture and perceptions of morality and immorality (pp. 15–30).

The book is built up over the structure of Cicero's career with chapters following specific periods in Cicero's public life and the speeches he delivered in those periods. After an introduction and two introductory chapters, 'Methodology, Sources and Scope' and 'Roman Political Culture', H. divides his analysis into four chapters on the periods 80–69 B.C., 66–59 B.C., 57–52 B.C. and 44–43 B.C., before a summarising conclusion. This chronological structure allows H. to trace developments in Cicero's argumentation and to gather the threads in his analysis of Cicero's all-out character attack on Marcus Antonius in the *Philippic* speeches (Chapter 6). But this approach also means that certain points are repeated several times because they are recurring in Cicero's speeches; a more thematic approach could have alleviated the repetitiveness. Nevertheless, H.'s points are important and must be taken seriously.

H.'s main point is that Cicero's allegations of immorality in Chrysogonus, Verres, Catiline, Clodius, Gabinius, Piso and Marcus Antonius were not just intended to entertain and taint, but followed one or more of the three types of 'logic of immorality' (summed up pp. 224–5 and argued throughout): (1) that arguments in Roman oratory could win over formal proof and therefore that immorality could be argued if it followed a certain logic; (2) that a Roman belief in the constancy of character meant that past immorality could be argued to prove present guilt or future threats to society and its members; (3) that an immoral man will corrupt others. Because these three types of logic were grounded in Roman cultural beliefs, H. argues, Cicero could use them to build up his allegations of immorality as arguments which made sense with his audience. H. goes on to argue a further implication of the two last types, namely, that immorality in a person meant that he was unfit for political influence (Chapter 5 and esp. pp. 248, 254). This is a crucial line of reasoning because it shows that arguments from immorality were not simply character attacks in the courts where the *ethos* ('character' and standing) of the defendant, plaintiff and their advocates played an important part, but also relevant arguments in outright political settings such as the senate and the *contio*. As H. shows, Cicero could depict a political opponent as effeminate and unmanly because such an image would imply that the opponent was not a Roman *uir* and therefore not in a position to be involved in political decision making.

This was the real force of such arguments from immorality, but although H. makes the point repeatedly, he does not take it much further. It would have been interesting to see, for example, the manner in which Cicero's 'victims' (if that is what they were) responded to Cicero's claims. There is a brief moment, where H. sets Cicero's depiction of Clodius' alleged incest with Clodia in the context of Clodius' criticism of Cicero's boasting to be Jupiter (p. 263), but we hear nothing of Clodius' possible reaction to being described as a woman unworthy of political power. Of course, we do not have the public speeches or, for the most part, any letters of Cicero's opponents, but in some cases Cicero's speeches themselves record some of the responses to his allegations (for example, Piso's reaction to Cicero's criticism during 57–56 B.C. is recorded in Cicero's *In Pisonem* from 55 B.C.). Although such references offer only Cicero's, undoubtedly biased, selection and presentation of the responses, there is nevertheless a little material to work on.

Building on modern sociological scholarship on meaning and language, H. coins the phrase 'web of immorality' (first on p. 41) to describe the Ciceronian practice of making associations between particular places, professions, occasions, appearances and impressions to characterise his subject as 'immoral'. This is a helpful term to illustrate how associations and allusions were expected to work in the minds of the audience. Yet at times, H. also describes these associations as 'links' or 'chains' which suggest a more linear relationship than a web (e.g. city → luxury → greed → audacity → crime [p. 128]; luxury → greed → *audacia* → all vices including insanity [p. 151]). May we imagine multidirectional webs and linear links to have operated at the same time, or did Cicero exploit existing webs to make claims about links?

The detailed individual analyses of Cicero's depictions of Chrysogonus, Verres, Catiline, Clodius, Gabinius, Piso and Marcus Antonius as immoral men worthy of condemnation and exclusion from society at times reminds one of past scholarly analyses of Cicero's speeches. We know that Cicero described Chrysogonus as a wicked man perverted by his city life as opposed to the innocent rustic Roscius, and that Cicero portrayed Marcus Antonius as corrupted from his youth onwards and a drunkard parading with his mime-actress mistress. The value of H.'s study, therefore, lies not in these analyses *per se* (although they are necessary in order to build up the main argument in the study) but rather in his overall thesis about the structure and mechanisms inherent in Cicero's argumentation, both when Cicero uses it to chastise and when he uses it to excuse (e.g. Murena, P. Sulla or Caelius).

H.'s argument about the logic behind Cicero's allegations of immorality is carefully and explicitly set up to exclude questions of truth or genre and instead to focus on its relevance for understanding Roman cultural values and beliefs. This makes sense within the parameters of the book itself, but it would be interesting to see how this could be taken further. What were the cultural implications of depicting your political opponents so harshly? What were the reactions and consequences of such attacks – for the individuals involved and for the wider audience? Cicero and Clodius were famously enemies, but Cicero expressed respect for Piso later on in his career (44 B.C.). Are there any links between the verbal assaults as a means to control political situations and physical violence as a means to control political behaviour?

H.'s book is well written, well argued and engaging; more importantly, it provides a framework for analysing arguments from immorality in a political context, which is crucial for understanding Cicero's speeches. It also offers a basis for taking the political argument further into the realities of political competition, political violence and the changing political scene of the 60s and 50s B.C. in Rome.

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