CHAPTER 2

Politics and Power in the Roman Republic – Then and Now, in Old Europe and the Brave New Anglophone World

A Documented Survey

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> An idea not conceived in English is probably not worth thinking at all.
> (Anon. Classics Faculty, Cambridge, *c.* 1987)[1]

The exchange of ideas, readings and results, the discussion of methodological approaches and communication in general between German (and other continental) European scholars on the one hand and English and American classicists on the other has for a long time been particularly intensive in the international scholarly community working in the field of politics in the Roman Republic. In particular, this continuous exchange has gone on and on ever since Matthias Gelzer and Friedrich Münzer published their classic books on the Roman nobility and on the aristocratic parties and families in 1912 and 1920 respectively – in the decades before and after the Second World War, language barriers were not (yet) a serious obstacle. It is by no means accidental, however, that both books were among the few works translated into English – if only rather belatedly, namely in 1969 and in 1999,[2] when a reading knowledge of German was no longer a matter of course among a younger generation of anglophone scholars. It was as late as 1986, more than half a century after its publication, that a prominent anglophone scholar, namely Ronald Ridley, hailed Gelzer's *Nobilität* as a decisive 'turning-point'. However, for him it was Münzer's 'masterwork', the *Adelsfamilien und Adelsparteien*, which was 'the

[1] Hölkeskamp 2010, ix.

[2] Gelzer (1912) 1969; Münzer (1920) 1999; on their long-term influence (not only) on English-language historians of the Republic, see Hölkeskamp (2012) 2017a, with detailed documentation. Cf. also Christ 1982: 113–16; 120–8; 130–1; 164–5, etc., and on the particular importance of Gelzer's work already Meier 1977 and now Strauss 2017: ch. 6; on Münzer's contribution Kneppe and Wiesehöfer 1983: 260–78; Hölkeskamp (2001) 2020; Nippel 2017; Heil 2017.

most important book ever written on Roman politics' – and then, at long last, 'English-language students of Roman history' had 'the opportunity to go much more profoundly into the making of one of the great modes of historical analysis' of the twentieth century.[3]

The long history of the aforementioned intensive communication, with an 'elitist' concept of politics as focus, indeed continues to be of prime importance to the present day, because it has implicitly and even explicitly been referred to in the modern debate on the 'political culture' of the Republic which began in the 1980s and is still going on[4] – in spite of the deplorable 'tendency to ignore much of what is written in Italian and German' (as well as in French, to be fair) 'which appears to be on the increase once again' and makes a certain part of the anglophone research (not only) on Rome and the Republic look, as this 'tendency' was once aptly described, 'curiously insular'.[5] There are few scholars on both sides – that is, anglophone ancient historians on either side of the Pond on the one hand and the European (or, in English common parlance, the 'Continental') community of researchers in the field on the other – who would not agree that this is a problem and a serious obstacle to mutual understanding and exchange of, and engagement with, ideas, impulses, and innovative approaches.[6]

[3] Ridley 1986: 475, and E. A. Judge, in his foreword to Münzer 1999: xvii. Cf. also Ridley 1996: 43 and passim, and the admiring introduction to Ridley 1999, which is devoid of any critical distance.

[4] Comprehensive surveys of the debate (in English, French, German, and Italian) include Jehne 1995 and 2006: 14–23; Yakobson 2006a, 2010, and 2022a; Zecchini 2006; Morstein-Marx 2009: 108–10; Hölkeskamp 2010, 2017a, and 2017b, 2019a, and 2019b, 2020b, and 2022b; Hurlet 2012a; Harders 2017; Clemente 2017 and 2018; Jehne 2020; David and Hurlet 2020.

[5] Harris 1990: 291 (quotations). More recently, however, he also has ' – regretfully – privileged works in English', because 'one has to recognize that many anglophone students are monolingual' (Harris 2016: xiii). Cf. the alarming diagnosis of the present state of language skills among native speakers of English who 'no longer consider it necessary to read in other languages and they thus run the risk of reinventing the wheel' – a way to become 'world famous only in England': Rubel 2019: 193, 220 (quoting a position paper of the British Academy, published in 2009) and passim. See also J.-M. David's trenchant remark: 'L'ignorance volontaire atteint son point culminant dans ces manuels dits Companions conçus de telle sorte que toute la recherche scientifique qui n'est pas produite en anglais est écartée de la bibliographie et considérée comme nulle': (1992) 2019: xv n. 24. I translate for the anglophone monoglots: 'Deliberate ignorance culminates in the series of so-called *Companions* designed in such a way that all scholarly research that is not produced in English is discarded from the bibliography and considered irrelevant.' To a certain extent, this verdict is also true for edited volumes such as Fisher and Van Wees 2011 and Fisher and Van Wees 2015: in particular, the introductory essays, which claim to give an overview of the state of the debates on 'aristocracy' and 'competition' in the ancient world, ignore practically all research published in languages other than English. On the other hand, the intensity of the (not only) Franco-German exchange, which is now documented in David, Hurlet, and Jehne 2020, is a counter-example.

[6] See, however, John Briscoe's closing remark in his review of Hölkeskamp 2010. In the preface, I had not only quoted the motto, but also described the book as an offering to 'basically open-minded and well-meaning people who consider themselves serious scholars in a field that has traditionally

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Be this as it may, let us return to serious business. It was in an article published in 1990 that the concept of 'political culture', as far as I know, appeared for the first time in the context of Republican studies. It was a partly polemical rejoinder to John North's critical review of the 'frozen-waste theory' of politics[7] in Republican Rome in the style of Gelzer's concept of 'factions', 'friendships' and mutual obligations, *clientelae* and patronage, and of Münzer's 'aristocratic parties' and their thinly veiled '*arcana imperii*'.[8] Moreover, this label was also meant to denounce Sir Ronald Syme's concept of politics as a never-ending 'strife for power, wealth and glory' (in Syme's own inimitable style of writing) within the exclusive circles of 'an aristocracy unique in duration and predominance'. This sombre vision of the decline and fall of the *libera res publica* was elegantly expounded in Syme's influential masterpiece *The Roman Revolution*, published in September 1939 – just four days after Great Britain had declared war on the Third Reich.[9]

Syme not only acknowledged his debt to 'Gelzer's lucid explanation of the character of Roman society and Roman politics, namely a nexus of personal obligations' in a footnote, but in his introduction also made clear that his 'conception of the nature of Roman politics' owed much 'to the supreme example and guidance of Münzer'[10] – the recognized and (rightly) revered doyen of Republican prosopography, author of no fewer than 5,000 valuable prosopographical articles (needless to say, in German) in the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, who was to perish

been . . . international and multilingual', but would not (and possibly cannot) read publications in languages 'as exotic as French, Italian, and even German' (Hölkeskamp 2010: ix). Briscoe's answer was somewhat surprising: 'I know of no such ancient historians in either the United Kingdom or the United States' and described my alleged 'sweeping generalisation' as, 'to put it mildly, bizarre' (*Latomus* 71, 2012: 884). I leave it to the reader to judge which position is 'bizarre'.

[7] Harris 1990; North 1990 and (1990) 2004.

[8] Münzer 1920: 133; 317, cf. 427–8 = Münzer 1999: 127; 291, cf. 362–3.

[9] Syme 1939: 11; 405 and passim. Cf. on Syme, the 'man' and his 'method' not only in Syme 1939, but also in his later publications and his (critical) reception not only by German historians, Alföldy (1979) 2018, 1983, and 1993; Millar (1981) 2004; Galsterer 1990: passim; Yavetz 1990: 21–9; Linderski 1990; Yakobson 2022b.

[10] Syme 1939: 10 n. 2, viii. Cf. Millar (1981) 2004: 403, on Münzer's decisive influence on Syme and his 'emerging mastery of the techniques of prosopography' in his earliest publications; Morstein-Marx 2009: 105–6; Santangelo 2016a: 4–5. Münzer's great book as well as a considerable number of his *RE* articles figure prominently in Syme's early, but only posthumously published, papers on important families and figures of the late Republic: Syme 2016, e.g. on the 'aristocratic and patrician coalition of Aemilii, Scipiones, Fabii, and Servilii' (24), and on 'the dynastic houses of the plebeian nobility' (26) such as the Fulvii and their 'predominance' (26–43) and the Marcii and their 'politics' (44–55).

in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt in 1942.[11] Others were luckier, such as young Ernst Badian. In 1938, the latter emigrated with his family to New Zealand – he was to become the pupil of the other New Zealander at Oxford, namely Syme. Badian went on to become, as John Moors Cabot Professor of History at Harvard, one of the most influential historians of Republican Rome in the twentieth century. In a similar vein as his teacher, Badian explicitly singled out Syme as well as Gelzer and Münzer, 'who revolutionised the approach to the study' of the (late) Republic, in the preface to his first great book, *Foreign Clientelae*, published in 1958[12] – and occasionally he even dedicated an article *Fr. Muenzeri amicitia*. Badian claimed that Münzer's method had been 'applied, with masterly skill and important results, to various periods of Roman history' – alas, not only by 'the pioneers and masters of prosopographic method' Münzer and Syme: in the very next sentence, he warned that 'some recent work reveals the dangers and inadequacies of the method, where it is used with excessive confidence and insufficient safeguards'.[13] Unfortunately, Badian did not bother to name names.[14]

As a consequence of the predominance of the 'factionalist' orthodoxy, during the 1950s and much of the 1960s, the underlying concept of Republican politics was still based on the very same concomitant set of interdependent assumptions. Political life was not characterised, once again in Syme's words, 'by the ostensible opposition between Senate and People, *optimates* and *populares*, *nobiles* and *homines novi*', let alone 'by parties and programmes of a modern and parliamentary character'. Rather, politics was conceived as a zero-sum game among a small number of dominant families striving for power in the form of the consulship – that is, 'the supreme magistracy', regarded by 'the narrow ring' of *nobiles*, an oligarchy within the senatorial oligarchy, 'as the prerogative of birth and the prize of ambition'. In order to achieve this one and only objective, the leading figures – 'in any age of Republican history', never more than 'twenty or thirty men' – formed alliances on the basis of purely personal relations, kinship, dynastic marriages and 'friendships': 'Roman political factions were welded together, less by unity of principle than by mutual interest and by mutual services (*amicitia*),

[11] Cf. Kneppe and Wiesehöfer 1983 for Münzer's career and tragic fate, with an appendix by H.-J. Drexhage: a bibliography of M.'s publications and a (not quite) complete list of his prosopographical articles in *RE*; cf. the review by E. Badian, *Gnomon* 61, 1989: 600–5. See also T. Ridley 1999 and Wiesehöfer 2017.

[12] Badian 1958: vii; cf. the detailed criticism of B.'s approach by C. Meier, *BJ* 161, 1961: 503–14.

[13] Cf. also Badian (1957) 1964: 34 (quotations) and passim; 1962: 197–8; (1962) 1964: 208; 232 n. 1 and passim.

[14] I have tried to identify them: Hölkeskamp (2012) 2017a: 59–61.

either between social equals as an alliance, or from superior to inferior, in a traditional and almost feudal form of clientship: on a favourable estimate the bond was called *amicitia*, otherwise *factio*.' Therefore, it has to be the 'composition' of this 'oligarchy of government', the 'alliances and feuds of their families' and their 'rise and fall' which emerges 'as the dominant theme of political history'.[15] Until the last decades of the Republic – according to Lily Ross Taylor's book on 'party politics in the age of Caesar', originally published in 1949 and reprinted as recently as 2019 – the basic pattern of political manoeuvring revolving around 'personalities' and the 'members of the hereditary noble or consular houses' as 'dominant figures in Roman party politics and party organization' did not change radically. Although the author developed a kind of 'binary model' along the *optimates*/*populares* dichotomy, she also explicitly admits to the influence of Gelzer, Münzer and Syme: It was still *amicitia* which 'was the good old word for party relationships' – 'described by *factio* and *pars*'.[16]

Already by the mid-Republic, according to Howard Scullard's similarly influential *Roman Politics 220–150 BC*, first published in 1951 and republished in 1973, these alliances or even this downright 'elaborate system of groupings and counter-groupings' indeed 'formed the real, if unadvertised and unofficial, basis of Roman public life'. They were taken to be stable over generations. They rose to take over the 'government' when others fell from 'power' only to rise again – a never-ending wheel of fortune: the titles of chapters like 'domination' and 'predominance', 'decline', 'recovery', or 'revival' are programmatic.[17] In his peculiarly defensive answer to his critics in the foreword to the republication, Scullard conceded that such 'unofficial coteries' around 'nobles and their friends' are not to be conceived as 'self-conscious corporate personalities', but insisted that 'Roman factions

[15] Syme 1939: 10–11; 18; 8 and vii.

[16] Taylor (1949) 2019: vii; 8; 25 (quotations); 186 n. 6; 194 n. 1; chs. 1 and 2 passim; cf. Mouritsen 2017: 175 (quotation). This 'binary model' – sometimes somewhat combined with Fergus Millar's '"Roman democracy" paradigm', on which see below – has re-emerged in new guise: Wiseman (2002) 2009 and 2009: 1–3, and chapters 3 on Licinius Macer, historian, tribune of the *plebs*, and disgraced former governor, as 'a determined *popularis*' (60), and 2 on the family tradition of the Licinii as champions of the plebeians 'fighting back' against a 'triumphantly arrogant aristocracy' (57 and 55). This view – forcefully argued and elegantly expounded though it is – is not likely to prevail over the broadly accepted interpretation of the *popularis ratio*: Martin (1965) 2009 (not mentioned by Wiseman) and Meier 1965.

[17] Scullard (1951) 1973: xx and passim, and Scullard (1935) 1980: 333 (quotation). A detailed critique of Scullard's application of Münzer's method (including some reservations concerning the method as such) was clearly formulated by a very influential German contemporary of Scullard: Heuss (1956) 1995; cf. also Brunt 1988: 444–8. Another adherent of the 'factionalist' approach was D. C. Earl – cf. Earl 1960a and 1960b; Earl 1963, severely criticized by P. A. Brunt, *Gnomon* 37, 1965: 189–92, especially 190–1.

were private groupings around an individual', 'personal and unofficial and remote from the possibility of exact institutional definition', which might 'on occasion unite to form coalitions' – and he goes on to argue that the 'unavoidable fact' of their existence is indirectly corroborated by another 'fact', namely that there are no traces of their 'back-stage manoeuvres' in the annalistic tradition. In fact, this reaffirmation of Münzer's *arcana imperii* obviously ties in with 'the general picture of political life of the Republic', as 'it is envisaged' by Ronald Syme.[18]

Syme, in papers published as late as 1986 and posthumously in 1991, and in spite of a wave of criticism, still imperturbably defended his radically elitist view as a metahistorical, indeed eternal truth: 'In all ages, whatever the form and name of government' or 'whatever may be the name and theory of the constitution', 'be it monarchy, republic, or democracy, an oligarchy lurks behind the façade'.[19] It had also been Syme who formulated the most important underlying axiom of the 'factionalist' approach to politics with an almost cynical clarity – obviously alluding to the famous dictum attributed to Caesar: 'the *res publica* is nothing, a mere name without body or form'. Syme ruled that the 'Roman Commonwealth', the *res publica populi Romani*, was not only just a 'name', but the 'constitution' of the Republic was indeed nothing but a 'façade', 'a screen and a sham'.[20] In his typically magisterial – or should I say: 'imperious' – tone, Syme declared the whole of Roman history, 'Republican or Imperial', to be 'the history of the governing class'. It was this 'oligarchy of government' and its 'composition', the machinations of the 'parties' or 'factions' in their midst, and the typical 'weapons' which their noble leaders wielded in their 'lust for power' and 'domination' which remained the 'dominant theme of political history, as the binding link between the Republic and the Empire'. On the receiving end, as it were, the amorphous and anonymous 'other classes' were at best 'susceptible to *auctoritas*, taking their tone and their tastes from above'. Ronald Syme – himself an aristocrat in style and *habitus* – had gone even further and ruled that the 'lower classes' of the people not only 'had no voice in government', but even had no 'place in history'.[21]

In spite of this unabashed and unreformed 'top-down' view of history, which was rapidly becoming old-fashioned, Syme's *Roman Revolution*

[18] Scullard (1951) 1973: xix; xxiii; xxv; 6 (quotations).

[19] Syme 1939: 7, criticized by Brunt 1988: 4. See also e.g. Syme 1986: v; 13; cf. also Syme (1986) 1991 and (1988) 1991; cf. Santangelo 2016a and his invaluable 'addenda' to the individual unpublished papers (Santangelo 2016b), which document Syme's influence on research as well as critical reactions to his work.

[20] Syme 1939: 15; 340. [21] Syme 1939: vii; 7; 459; 476.

continued to be widely read – and not only by an anglophone educated public, but also in Germany. Interestingly, a revised and (for the first time) complete translation was published as late as 2003.[22] It has been (and still is) welcomed as 'a work of art unmatched among major historical works, and one', as Syme's star pupil Fergus Millar rightly predicted in 1981, 'which would still be read as such even if the day were to come when our knowledge of Roman history has been transformed by new evidence, or when we have found wholly new means of interpreting it'.[23]

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And this day had (long) come. Already by the late 1960s, the winds of change had gained momentum – not least thanks to a young German ancient historian, who in 1966 published – in the wake of the aforementioned work of his teacher Matthias Gelzer – his first major book and went on to become one of the leading historians of his generation. In his detailed analysis of the decline and fall of the Republic (titled Res publica amissa: *Eine Studie zu Verfassung und Geschichte der späten römischen Republik*[24]), Christian Meier on the one hand systematically and radically deconstructed the received 'factionalist' orthodoxy once and for all – and not only, in the vein of earlier critics, by examining concrete instances of 'factionalism' and empirically proving them patently false, but also by dissecting the underlying explicit and (more often than not) implicit assumptions concerning the character of Republican politics and policies. On the other hand, he offered a much more complex concept of mutual obligations (*necessitudines*), which he described and analysed as a dense and multidimensional web of obligations, and suggested a radically new and innovative reading of the volatile and permanently changing constellations within the ruling class due to what he termed the 'conspicuous division' and 'divisibility' of politics and policies on a broad spectrum between continuous traditional routine politics as a rule and major challenges as exception.

The influence of this book immediately began to make itself felt, if only slowly and gradually – in spite of a spate of reviews in English, French and German.[25] Eventually, even Scullard acknowledged its importance,

[22] Syme 2003, with a detailed 'editorial notice': 710–12.
[23] Millar (1981) 2004: 404; cf. also Walter 2002 and 2003; Dahlheim 2003.
[24] Meier (1966) 2017, which is the fourth edition; it was previously re-issued in 1980 and 1997.
[25] Detailed reviews of Meier 1966 in English include P. A. Brunt, *JRS* 58, 1968: 229–32; C. Starr, *AJPh* 87, 1968: 480–3; E. W. Gray, *CR* 19, 1969: 325–30. Cf. also J. Béranger, *REL* 45, 1967: 590–94; J. Bleicken, *ZRG* 85, 1968: 451–61.

however without fully understanding the far-reaching consequences of Meier's approach.[26] In his *opus magnum* on the 'last generation of the Roman Republic', Erich Gruen – who had been, and in 1974 still professed himself to be, an adherent of the prosopographical method in the vein of Münzer, Gelzer, and Syme – still remained convinced that 'its use as a tool remains indispensable for any understanding of the Roman Republic', because political 'coalitions relied largely on family ties, marriage alliances, and unofficial pacts for mutual cooperation', including 'adoptions, *amicitiae*, and *clientelae*', 'aristocratic lineage', and even '*necessitudines*, hereditary bonds and obligations created by *beneficia*', which 'furnished the most substantial determinants in the *comitia*'. And in the election to the 'supreme magistracy' until the very demise of the Republic, this meant, in Erich Gruen's words, that '[t]ies of patronage, which bound the voting populace to the dominant clans of the aristocracy, remained unbroken' and therefore 'continued to be a principal element in determining the behavior of the electorate'.[27] However, Gruen had nevertheless formulated precautionary provisos as early as 1968 in his book on politics and the criminal courts: he warned against the 'abuse' of the method, the assumption of 'a consistency and a pattern' or the one-sided concentration 'on evidence from electoral results', as neither 'consular collegiality' nor 'succession in office' could be 'used to argue political cooperation', and 'the decisive influence of magistrates over succeeding elections' had 'never been satisfactorily demonstrated'.[28] In fact, these reservations already amounted to a radical questioning of indispensable basic assumptions of the Münzerian approach, which were laid to rest for good by a German representative of the so-called 'Meier school'.[29] In his book on the complex politics, political constellations, and controversial issues in the 'last generation' of the Republic, Gruen began to dissociate himself further from the traditional picture of factions – even more than before did he emphasize the volatility, fluidity, and fragility of groupings and the fragmentation of the political

[26] Scullard (1951) 1973: xxvi–xxvii.

[27] Gruen (1974) 1995: 47; 127–8; 159, and Gruen 1968: 2, 3 and 18–9 (quotations); cf. Gruen (1974) 1995: 48, with n. 3 on 'the subtle manipulations of senatorial factions' in the late Republic, 'brilliantly researched and formulated by Münzer' and 'followed by Syme'; cf. Gruen 1968: 1–7, and e.g. 106–35 on the 'emergence of Metellan supremacy', in the course of which 'families like the Mucii Scaevolae, the Licinii Crassi, the Lutatii Catuli, Rutilii Rufi, Calpurnii Pisones, and perhaps Livii Drusi, Scribonii Curiones, and Porcii Catones' were all brought 'into the orbit of the Metelli' (134), and the 'Metellan *factio* remained conspicuous and powerful' (157).

[28] Gruen 1968: 4–5 (quotations).

[29] Rilinger 1976. The author had indeed been a PhD student supervised by Meier. Cf. also Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: 41–61; 310–11, with further references.

scenery after Sulla[30] (and in a way, he thus came closer to Christian Meier's position than either he or Meier would probably be prepared to admit). The same is true, at least to a certain extent, for Alan Astin's attempt to identify Scipio Aemilianus' 'friends and enemies' around the mid-second century: although convinced that 'the consideration of "family-group" factions and of motivation by factional rivalry is indispensable to the understanding of Roman politics' and referring to Gelzer, Münzer, and Scullard, he time and again in his detailed 'discussion of the political groupings of the period' has to recognize the 'limitations and hazards involved'. He emphasizes that the 'multiplicity of ties of old allegiance, of obligation, of kinship, and of marriage … must often have led to cross-ties and cross-obligations, to rival claims for support, to, so to speak, *factiones* being rather ill-defined at the edges' – and he ends his empirical search for these 'factions' by the less-than-surprising conclusion that 'there was always some fluidity in the situation, a fluidity increased' not least 'by the complex nexus of kinship, traditional ties, and *beneficia*, which not infrequently must have made men feel obligations in more than one direction'[31] – which comes pretty near to Meier's concept of multidimensional *necessitudines*, mentioned above.

The catalogue of reservations just mentioned was repeated like a prayer wheel by less circumspect adherents of the model – naturally in order to immunize the model itself and thereby save it. After paying lip service to one or another of the aforementioned provisos, they would insist that a *combination* of individual criteria, such as succession, collegiality in office, and other factors indicating a 'close connection' between 'members of different *gentes*' in 'a number of times', was to be taken as 'evidence for association between the two families'[32] – and then return to business as usual and reconstruct such groupings.[33]

[30] Gruen 1968 and (1974) 1995. His 'Introduction to the Paperback Edition' (vii–xxi) is a contribution to the debate in its own right; cf. also Gruen 2017. Cf. also Astin 1978: 69 (on the old-style 'factionalist' model as 'an insufficiently flexible interpretation of Roman politics' in the early second century BC).

[31] Astin 1967: 80 with n. 1; 96 (quotations) and 80–96 passim. See also Morstein-Marx 2009: 106–7, who rightly emphasizes that 'prosopography constitutes a powerful method of making the raw evidence speak' (107); Hölkeskamp (2012) 2017a: 44–50.

[32] Briscoe 1989: 68 (quotation) and 1992: 82–3; cf., e.g., Badian (1957) 1964: 36; Briscoe 1964: 77; 1968: 152; 1969: 61; 67–8; 1972: 36–7; 1974: 133 (however, he insists that 'political marriages are still a valuable tool of analysis': ibid.); Briscoe 1982: 1075–8; Phillips 1972: 337. The thoughtful and comprehensive survey of the main representatives of the 'prosopographical approach' as well as their critics by Broughton 1972: passim (with extensive bibliography) ends with a somewhat ambivalent conclusion (260–1).

[33] Cf., e.g., Phillips 1972: 338–40 and passim on the 'Fabian group' etc. around 300, with the fundamental critique in Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: 46–60; 310–11, and Humm 2005: 104–13, both with further references; Briscoe 1964: 73–7; 1968: passim; 1969: 60–70; 1972: 36–53; 1982, passim, on

However, at about the same time, Peter Brunt not only criticized Erich Gruen for his continued 'belief in aristocratic factions' and the resulting 'tissue of speculative explanations' of electoral results,[34] in spite of his professed caution, but also, in a series of meticulous empirical studies Brunt revised the all-too-one-sided notion of *amicitia* and insisted on a much broader understanding of the concept and the complexity of personal relationship – and he radically deconstructed the fundamental assumption that there were any cohesive, stable, and durable 'factions' at any time and that *clientela*-like relationships were the only decisive factor for the outcome of elections.[35] About ten years later, in his survey of 'recent work' on the Republic, Allen Ward could already look back on Chester Starr's previous tour de force through the 'past and future' of ancient history as a discipline and approvingly quote his witty remark on 'recent treatments of the internal politics of Rome', which had 'cast far too much in terms of factions which are analysed by prosopographical methods; but the popularity of chasing down who was whose uncle may at last be waning' – and Ward admitted with appealing honesty that he himself had been 'one of those who sometimes too zealously tracked down uncles – and aunts and cousins too!' – in his previous work.[36] And although a few people who still believed in old-school prosopography were fighting a sort of rearguard action, Ward quite rightly characterized a 'new direction' of Republican studies as a promising attempt 'to de-emphasize the oligarchic control of Republican politics and put more emphasis on the role of the *comitia*, . . ., on whom the aristocratic leaders depended for election and the passage of legislation' and even to claim 'an admixture of democracy' in the Republican political order.[37]

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By the 1990s, the winds of change had become somewhat stormy. It was none other than the aforementioned Fergus Millar who went even further than Peter Brunt. He not only rejected the apparently well-established 'factionalist' orthodoxy but eventually admitted, if only years later, that it

the construction of a 'Scipionic' and 'Fulvian group', their respective '(pre)dominance', and their differing over 'Eastern policy'; Briscoe 1992: 73–82, and 1974 on 'supporters and opponents of Tiberius Gracchus'. Cf. Hölkeskamp (2012) 2017a: 62–65, with further references.

[34] Brunt 1988: 426 with n. 116 (quotation).

[35] Brunt 1988: 351–81, cf. 39–40 (on *amicitia* – an earlier version had been published in *PCPhS* n.s. 11, 1965: 1–20); ibid.: 382–442, cf. 30–2 (on *clientela*) and 443–502; cf. 32; 36–9 (on 'factions').

[36] Starr 1987: 41, and Ward 1997: 66 (quotations), obviously referring to Ward 1977: 9–11, n. 15 (with some reservations); 20–34; 169–92. By the way, Marshall 1976 reached completely different and indeed opposite results by applying the very same 'prosopographical method'.

[37] Ward 1997: 68 and 66.

was his own teacher Syme who had been its most influential representative.[38] Millar also offered a new, indeed iconoclastic, reading of the 'political character' of the Republic as a whole in a series of articles and a monograph with the programmatic title *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (1998), although he never systematically explained his analytical categories. Millar claimed that the *libera res publica* was to be conceived as a variant of ancient democracy, which was much more akin to the direct democracy of classical Athens than modern (once again, especially German) scholarship had been prepared to admit. In obvious contrast to Syme, Millar not only held that it was the *populus Romanus*, 'as represented by the various forms of assembly', which was 'in a formal sense the sovereign body in the Republican constitution'. He even suggested that it was therefore only fit and proper, and indeed high time, that the Roman people be restored 'to their proper place in the history of democratic values' and the Republic be counted among the 'relatively small group of historical examples of political systems' that 'might deserve the label "democracy"'.[39]

Millar even explicitly questioned whether there ever was 'a "governing class", an "aristocracy", or an "élite"'. Candidates for public office – even if they were of *nobilis* status – had to run as individuals. The term *nobilis* was only 'social or political, not constitutional', and a man called *nobilis* did not enjoy anything like the hereditary constitutional rights of an English peer. In fact, however, nobody – not even Theodor Mommsen, Gelzer, and Münzer – had ever dreamt of claiming as much. As a consequence, Millar flatly denied the existence of any homogeneous ruling class. To put it in a nutshell, for Millar neither an aristocracy nor an oligarchy ever existed in the Republic.[40]

Paradoxically enough, the new elitist scapegoat was now Christian Meier, even though the latter had not only offered the first comprehensive deconstruction of the received 'factionalist' wisdom, but also – in the important introduction on his theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches in the 1980 edition – developed innovative perspectives such as a general theory of political group formation in pre-modern societies.[41] Moreover, he had suggested a completely new concept of the Republican 'political grammar', in order to describe and analyse the

[38] Millar 2002b: 12–13; cf. Yakobson 2022b: 98–103.
[39] Millar (1984) 2002: 112; (1986) 2002: 158; (1989) 2002; (1995a) 2002; (1995b) 2002: 165; 1998: 4; 11; 208 (quotations); cf. also Millar 2002a: 6.
[40] Millar (1984) 2002: 126–7; (1989) 2002: 87; 90–2; 104–6; 2002a: 4–6.
[41] Meier (1966) 2017: *32–*43 (= xiv–lvii in the 1980 edition); cf. Meier 1976: 39–47 (in German) and 1984: 45–62 (in French).

complex interdependence – or rather: interplay – of the particular Republican framework of institutions and formal procedures, practical everyday political routines, long-term policies, fundamental issues and extraordinary challenges as well as the underlying social conditions and omnipresent hierarchies.[42] Finally, he had put this new view to the test by following the decisive stages of the acute crisis from the late 90s onwards: the causes and results of the Italian civil wars and of Sulla's reform project to the complex, ephemeral, and rapidly shifting political constellations of the late 60s and 50s.[43]

This important contribution in general and Meier's analysis of the fundamental conditions of the constitutional reality and political practices in particular have not received the attention which they deserve – at least partly due to the language barrier. In contrast to Meier's famous biography of Caesar,[44] *Res publica amissa* has never been translated into English. Moreover, in spite of its obvious influence on much of modern research in any language, interestingly enough, the book has quite often not even been quoted itself, but, as it were, indirectly: quite a few serious anglophone scholars just refer to reviews in English, above all to the detailed discussion in the influential review by Peter Brunt (who did in fact acknowledge the importance of Meier's innovative approach – as did, by the way, Erich Gruen).[45]

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Back to the late 1980s and 1990s. Millar's conception of the Republic as a 'direct democracy', in his words, on the 'strictly and purely formal' basis of a 'constitution' in the narrow sense of the concept, namely a 'structure', 'system', or even 'complex machinery' of institutions and procedures,[46] soon met with criticism – not least from German scholars like Martin Jehne, who not only took issue with Millar's concept of a Roman 'constitution', which seemed to owe too much to Mommsen's *Römisches Staatsrecht*.[47] Above all, Millar's continental critics regretted his refusal to

[42] Meier (1966) 2017: ch. 4; cf. also Meier 1984: 63–81 (in French), and the important recent restatement of his views on the 'political order' of the Republic: Meier 2015. Cf. also the contributions discussing specific aspects of his work in Bernett, Nippel, and Winterling 2008.

[43] Meier (1966) 2017: chs. 6 and 7; cf. now for a radically different approach Morstein-Marx 2021. See Santangelo 2021 on the 'archaeology' of the concept of 'crisis'.

[44] Meier 1982 = 1995 (and several reprints).

[45] *JRS* 58, 1968: 229–32; cf. Brunt 1988: 39; 444; 448, and Gruen (1974) 1995: 49 and pp. xii and xx in the introduction to the paperback edition (ix–xxi), which is a balanced survey of relevant publications (in French, German, and Italian, as well as in English).

[46] Millar (1995b) 2002: 165; 172; 2002a: 15; 99; 208.

[47] Jehne 1995: 8; Hölkeskamp 2010: ch. 2, with further references.

engage with Meier's *Res publica amissa* (or, for that matter, with Erich Gruen's *Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, also mentioned above) and Millar's outright dismissal as 'entirely circular' of Meier's trenchant dictum: 'Wer Politik trieb, gehörte zum Adel, und wer zum Adel gehörte, trieb Politik' – once again for the anglophone public, I quote Millar's translation (whose command of German was perfect, by the way, as was his knowledge of scholarly literature in German and other languages): 'whoever played a political role belonged to the aristocracy and . . . whoever belonged to the aristocracy played a political role'.[48] Millar's critics insisted on the continued importance of a basically oligarchic political class – a ruling class or rather status group with a remarkable rate of reproduction, given the fact that in the middle Republic it had never become a completely closed caste: from the mid-third century onwards, the number of consuls with consular ancestors never dropped below 70 per cent and eventually rose to more than 80 per cent in the last generation of the Republic.[49]

However, Millar was certainly right in emphasizing the simple, but fundamentally important, fact that even 'a person who was both a *patricius* and a *nobilis* had to compete for office'[50] – and his critics took that up. The reformed 'elitist' concept of the Republican political culture is based on the view that the role of popular assemblies and of Syme's 'other classes' needs to be taken seriously – namely as a crucial factor in the constitution and reproduction of a particular variant of a ruling class. If reputation, relative rank, and indeed membership in this elite as such was regularly and exclusively based on election to certain offices, the institutionalized participation of popular assemblies cannot be dismissed as merely formal, passive, powerless, or nominal or as a charade or façade.[51]

Moreover, Millar had raised important issues, which went far beyond his narrow and formalistic conception of the political system – and by no means only the 'continental' representatives of the new 'elitist' model acknowledge these innovative impulses. Above all, Millar had insisted on the overwhelming importance of mass oratory, the central role and function of the orator before the people assembled in the Comitium or Forum, and the particular kind of publicity of politics in general and of decision-making processes in particular. Interestingly enough, it was

[48] Millar 1998: ix and 4–5; Meier (1966) 2017: 47 (quotations.)
[49] Badian 1990: 411–12 and passim; cf. also Hopkins and Burton 1983: 32; 112; 117, with table 2.4 (p. 58) and Gruen (1974) 1995: 522 (54 of the 61 consuls in the years 78 to 49 = 88.5%).
[50] Millar 2002b: 4.
[51] Hölkeskamp (2006) 2017a and 2010: chs. 6–8, with further references; Jehne 2013a.

this specific form of direct communication and interaction which became an important theme of the debate on the political culture, which got off the ground with the exchange between John North and his critic, mentioned above.[52]

In recent research, public performance, publicity and the role of the 'public' have been taken seriously in a new way: the (not at all rare) cases in which the people showed resistance to the 'cultural hegemony' of the elite and asserted their will and interests in one concrete way or another – by voicing discontent and even by passing laws against the will of a majority in the senate – call for detailed exploration and explanation.[53] This aspect ties in well with recent research on the 'public opinion' of *plebs* and people, and its influence on politics.[54] These different perspectives converge, as it were, in a demand for a supplementary or complementary 'bottom-up' view of the Republican political culture and therefore need to be taken into account in a modern modified elitist concept.

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The debate on the specific character of Roman Republican political culture continues to the present day – and at least in this field, the stormy winds of change seem to rock the aforementioned language barrier. The debate is still a truly international discussion, which has long gone far beyond the less than fruitful question whether or not we should conceptualize the Republic as (a sort of) democracy. German participants in this debate such as Hans Beck, Egon Flaig, Martin Jehne, Uwe Walter and the author[55] – who are said by some scholars in other countries to form a kind of 'new school of Roman

[52] Brilliant contributions include Morstein-Marx 2004; van der Blom 2010 and 2016; Rosillo-Lopez 2017b. Cf. also Brunt 1988: 45–47, the surveys Steel 2006 and now 2022, and the contributions in a series of important edited volumes: Smith and Covino 2011; Rosillo-Lopez 2017a; Steel and van der Blom 2013, as well as recently Gray, Balbo, Marshall, and Steel 2018; van der Blom, Gray, and Steel 2018 (cf. my review of these two titles: *Gnomon* 92, 2020: 430–5, with bibliography); cf. now Hölkeskamp 2022a. Some interesting contributions from German scholars should have received more attention: Laser 1997 and Döbler 1999.

[53] Morstein-Marx 2013, 2015, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

[54] Cf. Courrier 2014: part III, and recently Rosillo-López 2016, 2017b and her contributions in Gray, Balbo, Marshall, and Steel 2018 and in van der Blom, Gray, and Steel 2018, as well as in her own edited volumes Rosillo-López 2017a and 2019, which contain several relevant case studies; Angius 2018; Yakobson 2022c; Toner 2022.

[55] Flaig 1994 and 2003 [one chapter translated as Chapter 10 in the present volume]; Jehne 2003 [translated as Chapter 7 of the present volume], 2006, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2014 and 2017 and the collection of his most important contributions, with commentaries by the editors: Jehne 2022; Beck 2005 and 2008 [translated as Chapter 11 in the present volume]; Walter 2014b and 2017; cf. now the masterly survey by Jehne 2020; Hölkeskamp 2010, 2019a and 2019b, and the relevant chapters in Hölkeskamp 2017a and 2020b.

Republican studies' or even 'Meier school', in spite of considerable differences in theoretical and methodological approaches – owe much to the ongoing intensive and fruitful exchange of new questions, ideas, and results with the international community of 'Republicans' (in a specific sense).[56] This particularly active group includes – naturally without claim to completeness – scholars of three generations such as Jean-Michel David, Michel Humm, and Frédéric Hurlet from France,[57] Francisco Pina Polo and Cristina Rosillo-López from Spain,[58] and Guido Clemente, Giuseppe Zecchini, and Andrea Angius from Italy,[59] on the one hand, and America-based colleagues such as Erich Gruen, Harriet Flower, Robert Morstein-Marx, Nathan Rosenstein, and Amy Russell,[60] as well as Henrik Mouritsen, Henriette van der Blom, and Alexander Yakobson, teaching at universities in Britain and Israel,[61] on the other. It is the vibrant liveliness and truly international character of this permanent exchange which has given the study of the Roman republic a new lease of life – and which has also triggered a remarkable production of original and stimulating contributions to concrete aspects and particular problems as well as to theoretical models and methodological approaches. The bibliography at the end of this contribution – admittedly extravagantly extensive, but again without any claim to completeness – may give an impression of this output. Moreover, well-informed and detailed surveys of modern research[62] make clear that the enormous gain in insights has been generated precisely by the exchange between representatives of different intellectual, academic, and classical traditions.

[56] This term does not refer to 'their political preferences, and certainly not the rather unpleasant associations with groups and parties that have claimed this sublime name for themselves. No, "republican" here should mean that the researchers have all participated and are still participating in the debate on the nature of the Roman Republic, which has been rekindled in recent decades': J. Schloemann, 'Konsensfassade', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 July, 2018, on an event with Hans Beck, Harriet Flower, Amy Russell, Greg Woolf, and the author in Cologne.

[57] David 2000; Humm 2018a and 2018b; Hurlet 2012a and 2012b, and the masterly surveys by David 2017, Hurlet and Montlahuc 2018 and David and Hurlet 2020.

[58] Pina Polo 1996 and 2011a; Rosillo-López 2017b and her contributions to the edited volumes mentioned above (nn. 52 and 54).

[59] Zecchini 2006; Clemente 2017 and 2018; Angius 2018.

[60] Gruen 1991, 1992, 1996, and 2017 (this contribution is a nostalgic, but also critical, review of his 'Münzerian' approach in Gruen 1968 and [1974] 1995); Flower 1996 and 2010; Rosenstein 2012, ch. 1; Morstein-Marx 2004; Russell 2016.

[61] Mouritsen 2001 and 2017; van der Blom 2010 and 2016; Yakobson 1999, 2004, 2006a and 2006b, 2010, 2017, 2022a, 2022b, and 2022c.

[62] Walter 2017, part II: 99–238, on problems, positions, and tendencies, with bibliography: 239–92.

In concrete terms, the aforementioned new 'elitist' view has focused in recent years on the so-called informal, seemingly purely ornamental aspects of 'political culture', namely on the communicative as well as symbolic, performative, and ritual dimensions of politics, and on the strategies and media of self-representation, self-legitimization, and indeed self-construction of the political class as a kind of 'meritocracy'.[63] Recent research has shed new light not only on the particularly spectacular rituals such as the triumph, the *pompa circensis*, and the *pompa funebris*, which have sparked considerable interest in the last twenty years.[64] Moreover, scholars have described and analysed in detailed studies the informal 'processions, passages and promenades' of senators, magistrates, and other prominent figures as well as the culture-specific pomp and circumstance which characterize any appearance in public, in the Forum Romanum, the Capitol, the Campus Martius, and the streets which link these particularly central spaces.[65] Scholars have looked afresh at the rituals of symbolic affirmation and reproduction of the citizen community and its religious integrity and civic identity – such as the census and the *lustrum*, military *dilectus* and oath.[66] They have explored in detail the spectrum of different dimensions of public, informal, and indeed everyday interaction and communication between high and low, informal rules and norms of behaviour in public – such as, for example, the ritualized *salutatio* and the social and cultural functions of the Roman aristocratic house[67] as well as particular practices such as ostentatious lamentation and other forms of demonstratively public gestures.[68]

[63] Cf. Nicolet (1976) 1980: ch. 9, for a survey of concrete dimensions and Hopkins (1991) 2018, for a theoretical approach. See also Bell 1997 and 2004; Pfeilschifter 2002; Flaig 2003 [one chapter translated as Chapter 10 in the present volume]; Sumi 2005; Beck 2006; Flower 2011 and 2014b; Hölkeskamp (2008) 2017 and 2010: 108–9; 121–2; 134–5, and now the detailed synthesis Hölkeskamp 2023. Cf. on the state of the debate on elites in the ancient world in a comparative perspective the contributions in Beck, Scholz, and Walter 2008, and Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2018, with further references.

[64] Cf. on the triumph Itgenshorst 2005; Bastien 2007; Beard 2007 (cf. my review in *Gnomon* 82, 2010: 130–6); Östenberg 2009 and the contributions in Lange and Vervaet 2014; on the *pompa circensis* Latham 2016; and on the *pompa funebris* Flaig 1995; Flower 1996 and 2006; Flaig 2015; Beck 2018, all with further references.

[65] Östenberg, Malmberg and Bjørnebye 2015; Hölkeskamp (2001) 2004, with further references [translated as Chapter 5 of the present volume]. Cf. Hölkeskamp 2014b and 2015 on processions and other rituals in modern research, and 2022a on 'public space'.

[66] Cf. on the census and the *lustrum* Nicolet (1976) 1980: ch. 2; Pfeilschifter 2002; Marco Simón 2006; Clemente 2022; on *dilectus* etc. Nicolet (1976) 1980: ch. 3.

[67] Cf. Goldbeck 2010 on *salutatio*; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2006 and Beck 2009.

[68] Cf. Flaig 2003: chs. 5 and 6, and now Degelmann 2018.

In particular, the international debate continues to revolve around the *contio* as *oratoris maxima scaena* and the forum of public debate before (not with) the people in attendance as addressees – the presiding magistrate or tribune of the *plebs* on the one hand and the orators whom he invited (or coerced) to take the floor on the other were (almost) invariably members of the ruling class. The renewed interest in this specifically Roman Republican form of a popular assembly is inseparably connected with empirical explorations of the technical and ritual functions of oratory, rhetorical strategies, key concepts, and their meanings and messages.[69] Moreover, with respect to assemblies in general, recent research has highlighted ritual dimensions beyond the formal procedures and their symbolic functions of representing the identity and integration of the Roman citizenry on the one hand and the steep internal hierarchies of the citizen body on the other. The complementarity of these functions turns out to be only seemingly paradoxical.[70]

This aspect is closely connected with the problem of the complex complementary relation of the omnipresent, permanent and stiff competition for rank and reputation through honour and *honores* in the shape of positions of power and authority on the one hand and the construction and permanent renegotiation of a consensus about rules and norms containing and channelling this competition on the other, which was of vital interest for the ruling class and for the extraordinary stability and durability of its collective regime under rapidly changing conditions of the emerging 'imperial republic'[71] – to name but the most important concrete issues: the complex process of the emergence of the *cursus honorum*; the *leges annales* on minimum age, intervals between offices and qualifications of candidates; the rules regulating prorogation of *imperium* and iteration of the consulship.[72] The sensitive issue of curbing certain practices of self-advertising – such as

[69] Pina Polo 1989, 1996, 2011a and 2011b; Hölkeskamp (1995) 2004; Mouritsen 2001: ch. 3; Morstein-Marx 2004: 7–12, 34–59, 93–104 and passim; Tiersch 2009 [translated as Chapter 13 in the present volume]; Hiebel 2009 and 2012; Flaig 2017; Angius 2018: 255–311. Cf. David 2006 and the short but succinct survey by David (1992) 2019: ix–xvii. See now also the contributions on 'semantic struggles' over key concepts etc. in Nebelin and Tiersch 2019.

[70] Jehne 2003 [translated as Chapter 7 of the present volume] and 2013a; cf. also Pfeilschifter 2002 and Hölkeskamp 2022b.

[71] Cf. on the ruling class in general Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: chs. 5 and 6 with addenda 318–29 and 329–31; (1993) 2004; (2006) 2017 and 2010: 91–4; 103–6; 121–4; 133–5; etc.; David 2000, 19–39; Bleckmann 2002: ch. 7 and passim, who emphasizes the competitive dimension; Rosenstein 2012: ch. 1; Walter 2014b; Humm 2018a: 55–70. Cf. also Linke 2017, who discusses the complex and indeed ambivalent attitude of the class as such to victory and individual winners of military glory.

[72] Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: 126–40, 313–14, etc.; cf. Beck 2005: parts I, II, and IV passim; Beck 2008 [translated as Chapter 11 in the present volume].

lavish spending on games or *ambitus* in the run-up to the annual elections – and the re-negotiation of the changing borderlines between legal and illegal practices as well as the closely related intricate problem of regulating and solving conflicts over norms and rules have attracted increasing attention in recent years.[73] They concern controversies over the strict application of traditional rules of sacral law and the allotment of provinces, dissent regarding or even denial of a triumph, as well as the particularly sensitive issue of admission and repudiation of (consular) candidates in the fiercely competitive atmosphere in the run-up to the annual elections regularly demanded pacifying strategies.[74]

Another field of lively debate, which is inseparably connected with the competition/consensus complex, concerns the character, contents, and dynamics of the collective (or 'cultural') memory of the *populus Romanus* and its elite in general.[75] In concrete terms, the ongoing discussion revolves around the discourse figure of the *exemplum* and, more generally, around the status and functions of 'exemplarity' for the construction of memory and memories, remembrance and the 'cultural memory' as such. In this case the influence of German scholarship on 'memory studies', the development of its theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and empirical application was even explicitly acknowledged in a recent monograph on the Roman 'world of *exempla*'.[76] Moreover, a close look at – or 'close reading' of – the particular 'monumental *memoria*' in the shape of equestrian statues and *togati*, dedications of booty, representative buildings, and images of all kinds designed to immortalize the achievements, honours, and 'triumphs' – in the metaphorical as well as literal meaning – of individual *nobiles* and their families helps us to understand the complex repertoire of their strategies of self-fashioning and self-construction by means of visual media.[77] These monuments,

[73] Cf., e.g., Rosillo-López 2010 on corruption, and the contributions in Beck, Jehne, and Serrati 2016; cf. on *ambitus* Beck 2016 and 2019; Karataş 2019.

[74] Cf. Lundgreen 2011.

[75] Cf. the fundamental monograph by Walter 2004; see also Walter 2001 [translated as Chapter 8 of the present volume]; Pina Polo 2004; Hölkeskamp (2006) 2020a and 2014a; Mayorgas Rodríguez 2007 and the relevant contributions in Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2006, Galinsky 2014 and 2016, as well as those in Dally, Hölscher, Muth, and Schneider 2014 and in Dinter and Guérin 2023.

[76] Roller 2018: vii.

[77] The contributions of Tonio Hölscher remain fundamental: Hölscher 1978, 1980, 1984, (1987) 2004, 1990, 2000 and 2001 [translated as Chapter 6 of the present volume] and recently the magisterial comparative surveys Hölscher 2018 and 2019. Cf. also Holliday 2002 (discussed in detail by Hölkeskamp 2005); Hölkeskamp (2006) 2020b, and on individual families Hölkeskamp (2016) 2017a (on the Caecilii Metelli), (2016) 2020b (on the Marcii), 2018 (on the *gens Fabia*), and (2018) 2020b (on the Cornelii Scipiones).

their presence and visibility in public spaces like the Forum Romanum and the Comitium, the Capitol, the Campus Martius, and their implicit interaction or 'intersignification' created[78] – by their implicit and explicit cross-referencing with performative strategies such as the *pompae* mentioned above – a particular, culture-specific kind of 'publicity' and indeed defined the character of an increasingly dense political-sacral topography.[79]

This apparently sweeping 'cultural turn'[80] in modern views on the Roman republic does not mean that the political-social order in general and its institutional framework in particular has been neglected or at least marginalized in the last three decades – on the contrary: Mommsen's magisterial *Staatsrecht* remains an 'continual challenge',[81] especially, but certainly not exclusively, for German scholars. A modern 'cultural history of politics' must not only avoid the 'constitutional-law trap' but also go far beyond the orthodox 'constitutionalist' paradigm in the *Staatsrecht* tradition[82] – and even consider the vexed question whether or not the Republic and its political-social structure can adequately be described in terms of 'state', 'stateness' or 'statehood' (*Staatlichkeit*), which indeed seems to be a typically German debate.[83] On the other hand, by the way, the debate about the character of Rome as a 'city-state' is again very international.[84]

The 'culturalist' approach should also include a systems-theoretical model of 'institutionality' which conceives 'institutions' not as units or organs *sui*

[78] Cf. Roller 2013 on this concept; Hölkeskamp (2018) 2020b: 167–9.

[79] Hölkeskamp (2001) 2004 [translated as Chapter 5 of the present volume], Popkin 2016: Introduction, chs. 1–2, and now the brilliant syntheses by Russell 2016, Davies 2017, and Hölscher 2018: ch. 1 and passim. Cf. also the contributions on 'lieux' in Borlenghi, Chillet, Hollard, Lopez-Rabatel, and Moretti 2019 and Lange 2019 on Rome as a 'culture of presence'.

[80] Cf. the survey by Roller 2010 and Hölkeskamp 2010.

[81] Cf. the title of Nippel and Seidensticker 2005, and the introductory survey Nippel 2005; Morstein-Marx 2009: 104–5.

[82] Finley 1983, 56; cf. for a fundamental critique of Mommsen's 'system' Bleicken 1975: 16–51. Cf. on Mommsen's concepts of magistracy, senate and assemblies as a continuing challenge to research Lintott 2005, Jehne 2005, and Hölkeskamp (2005) 2017a. Cf. also the critique of the treatment of the magistracy in Mommsenian fashion by Kunkel and Wittmann 1995: Bleicken (1996) 1998. See now the interesting search for excursions into social history in the *Staatsrecht*: Strauss 2017: ch. 5.

[83] Cf. the survey by Walter 1998. See, e.g., on the one hand, the traditional handbooks, the very titles of which are telling: von Lübtow 1955; Meyer 1964; Kunkel and Wittmann 1995; and on the other the modern approaches, which begin with Bleicken (1978) 1998; see also Martin (1990) 2009; Eder 1990a: 17–21 and passim, and other relevant contributions in Eder 1990b; Hölkeskamp 2010: 14–16; 67–70, with bibliography, and the contributions in Lundgreen 2014. It is noteworthy that, e.g., Lintott 1999 and Mouritsen 2017 do not have a lemma 'state' *vel sim.* in the Index – as opposed to Walter 2017.

[84] Cf. Hölkeskamp 2010: 71–5; 129–30, with bibliography. See, e.g., Cornell 1991 and 2000; Parker 2004: 57–77. The concept as such, as a descriptive and/or analytical category, was discussed in detail by Hansen 2000a and 2000b.

generis and *sui iuris*, established once and for all, but in terms of diachronic processes of acting out functions and their change as well as in terms of 'habitualization' and 'structuration', ritualization, formalization, and, ultimately, 'institutionalization'.[85] Such a model should be able not only to describe the 'technical' framework of institutions and formal procedures of deliberation and decision-making, that is, the functions and offices of the political system in question and its particular degree of 'institutionalization' or institutional consolidation, but also to explain the negotiation, emergence (or demise), and implementation of rules and norms, written and unwritten,[86] and also of procedures and practices, formalized or informal, which determine the complex interaction among 'institutions'. This model includes not only the magistracies and their support personnel,[87] their *potestates*, *imperium*, and *auspicia*,[88] the tribunate of the *plebs* and its particular functions[89] as well as the senate[90] and the assemblies,[91] but also the formal procedures of deliberation, making and implementation of decisions,[92] and of voting in general, elections and legislation.[93] Last but not least, a modern view on institutions

[85] Hölkeskamp 2010: 67–70, with references.

[86] Cf. the contributions in Itgenshorst and Le Doze 2017.

[87] Recent analyses of the Republican magistracies include Lintott 1999: chs. 7 and 8; Walter 2017: 25–50, 154–83, with references. Cf. Beck 2005 on the *cursus honorum*; Pina Polo 2011a, 2022 and the contributions in Beck, Duplá, Jehne, and Pina Polo 2011 on the consulship; Brennan 2000 on the praetorship; Becker 2017 on the aediles; Bleicken (1955) 1968 and (1981) 1998; Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: chs. 3 and 4; (1988) 2004 and (1990) 2004; Clemente 2016 on the censorship; Pina Polo and Díaz Fernández 2019 on the quaestorship. Cf. on the lictors, *apparitores*, *scribae* etc. and their functions David 2019; Hartmann 2020; Kondratieff 2022.

[88] Cf., e.g., Vervaet 2014 and Drogula 2015.

[89] Cf. e.g. Thommen 1989 and recently Russell 2013, 2015, and 2022; Lanfranchi 2015; Drogula 2017, all with further references.

[90] Cf. Bonnefond Coudry 1989 and (the rather extravagant) Ryan 1998 (cf. the review by E. Flaig in *Gnomon* 76, 2004: 331–41); Kunkel 1972; Lintott 1999: ch. 6; Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011: ch. 4.3 and pp. 247–8, 317; (1993) 2004: 36–41, and (2005) 2017a: 37–41; Jehne 2013b; Walter 2017: 183–88, 50–54, and now Timmer 2020 and Coudry 2022, all with references.

[91] Nicolet (1976) 1980: ch. 7; Lintott 1999: ch. 5; Mouritsen 2001: chs. 4 and 5, and Mouritsen 2017, chs. 1 and 2; Jehne 2013a, 2014, and 2017; Walter 2017: 58–69, 188–207; Cornell 2022.

[92] Cf. on the 'balance of the constitution' Lintott 1999, ch. 11; see also Brunt 1988: 12–23; Walter 2017: chs. 1.4 and 2.4; Meier (1966) 2017: 49–50; 123, following Heuss (1960) 1971, 37–8, on the 'institutional and formal imperfection' or 'imbalance'. See also the relevant chapters in Hammer 2015 and now the brilliant description of the republican political order as a 'non-formalized system of negotiation' by Timmer 2017: ch. 2.1, and Timmer 2020. Cf. on 'leadership and initiative' the contributions in Frolov and Burden-Strevens 2022.

[93] The important comprehensive treatment of legislation by Bleicken 1975 was discussed in detail by Christian Meier (*ZRG* 95, 1978: 378–90) as well as by quite a few anglophone scholars: B. W. Frier, *CW* 70, 1977: 489–90; J. Crook, *CR* 27, 1977: 49–51; M. Crawford, *JRS* 68, 1978: 188–9. Cf. recently on legislation and political culture the contributions in Walter 2014, and on voting the relevant contributions in Borlenghi, Chillet, Hollard, Lopez-Rabatel, and Moretti 2019.

and procedures necessarily includes a close look at the ritual and symbolic dimensions of these institutions and procedures.[94]

Even the early Republic – in particular, the development of these institutions, procedures, and practices on the one hand and the complex formative process of a new patrician-plebeian elite, its value system focused on politics and war, and its specific strategies of self-representation mentioned above on the other[95] – has found new interest, not least due to the integrated innovative interpretation of new archaeological data and the desperately scanty literary evidence. However, there is still no consensus about how to deal with the latter, whether or not there is a methodologically acceptable way of identifying authentic 'structural facts' in a 'narrative superstructure' which is the result of a continuous process of 'modernization' and adaptation to changing attempts to make sense of a glorious history for contemporary needs.[96] According to sceptical scholars, however, the so-called 'annalistic tradition' is generally judged to be fraught with literary topoi, retrospective constructions, speculation, and downright invention. But there is the ever-fascinating question of the origins, preconditions, impulses, and contingent factors which made the dynamic rise of the small city on the Tiber to power in Italy and then in the whole Mediterranean possible[97] – however, this is another field where something like a unanimous consensus is not to be expected (and perhaps not even desirable, as there is probably not one single 'true' explanation).

Last, but not least, there is yet another old debate – closely related to the new interest in early Rome – which has recently gained new momentum, namely a discussion on the character of 'power', internal as well as external, on expansion and 'imperialism', and on the structure and organization of the 'republican empire'.[98] This topic has never lost its fascination for scholars ever since Theodor Mommsen ruled that the Republican empire

[94] Jehne 2003 [translated as Chapter 7 of the present volume], 2010, 2013a, 2014; Hollard 2010; Hiebel 2019.

[95] Cf. the contributions in several edited volumes: Raaflaub (1986) 2005, Eder 1990b; Bruun 2000; and recently Armstrong and Richardson 2017. See also, e.g., Hölkeskamp (1987) 2011 and (1993) 2004; Linke 1995 and 2014; Stewart 1998; Smith 2006; Humm 2005 and 2018b; Helm 2022, chs. 5 and 6, all with further references. The best detailed surveys of the institutional, political, and social developments until the First Punic War are Cornell 1995 and Forsythe 2005, both with ample bibliographies. See now the magisterial survey by Beck 2022.

[96] These concepts were coined by Cornell (1986) 2005, and 1995: 16–18 and ch. 1 passim, referring to his earlier work, criticized by Ungern-Sternberg (1986) 2005.

[97] Cf. recently Armstrong 2016, Humm 2018a: chs. 6–10 (with bibliography, pp. 301–5), Terrenato 2019, and recently Helm 2022.

[98] Important German contributions include Dahlheim 1977 and Schulz 1997. See above all Gruen 1984; Ferrary 1988; Kallet-Marx 1995.

was the result of a specific 'defensive imperialism'.[99] The complex interdependence of 'fear, greed, and glory', of strategic precaution, economic motives, and the value system of a fiercely competitive aristocracy focused on success in war as driving forces of expansion and its particular dynamic is still, and will remain, a matter for hot debate.[100] That is certainly true of the suggestion that the true secret of the 'unification of central and southern Italy', the emergence of Roman Italy and its 'longevity and stability' was the 'key role played by landed elites', 'non-Roman extended lineages', and their successful 'fluid factional networks', which were involved in a 'grand bargain' based on a 'negotiated compromise with an administrative center' and 'broad negotiated consensus at the elite level'. This purportedly original and radical approach even aims 'to challenge specialists of later periods and other regions to engage with the new concepts, mechanisms and causalities' and, moreover, 'has the potential to expand and enrich the comparative debate on premodern empires'.[101] The key concepts here are 'competition' and 'consensus', 'negotiation' and 'integration', 'networks' and even 'factions' in a new guise – or rather, here and there, it is a matter of old wine in new skins, when the author searches for 'long-standing factions' and (in spite of their 'under-the-table nature') their 'wheeling and dealing' on the one hand, and dismisses 'votive assemblies' as 'stacked and controlled by wide-ranging factional networks' (sic!) on the other.[102] Surprisingly (and regrettably), this ambitious programme completely fails to engage with the aforementioned international debate on the social, institutional, and discursive construction and legitimization of 'power' and hierarchies and on the character of the political culture of the Republic in general. At least in this respect, it is a serious setback, which should not form a precedent.[103]

[99] Cf. Harris 1984: 20–1; Gruen 1984: 5–7; Linderski 1984; Terrenato 2019: 19–22.

[100] Rich 1993 (quotation) and now Harris 2016: ch. 1 and pp. 36–7; 41–2, referring to Harris (1979) 1985: ch. 5 and passim, discussed by North 1981; cf. also the important contributions Badian 1968 (German translation Badian 1980); Gruen 1984: 288–315 and passim; Hölkeskamp (1993) 2004; Raaflaub 1996. Cf. the surveys of this debate Bleicken 2004: 168–74; Pfeilschifter 2005: 15–23; and Terrenato 2019: 24–30, including thorough discussions of Badian's, Harris's, and Gruen's approaches. Cf. also Eckstein 2006 and 2008, whose attempts empirically to apply 'a particular brand of American political science doctrine known as "realism"' (obviously designed 'to provide coverage for the foreign policy of the contemporary United States') has been severely criticized: Harris 2016: 42–3 (quotations) and my review in *CR* 59, 2009: 211–14.

[101] Terrenato 2019: 272 (quotations); 249–72, and passim.

[102] Quotations: Terrenato 2019: 168–9, with n. 44, referring to Münzer 1920(!); 174; 259; 240 with n. 120; cf. 163 with nn. 27 and 29, quoting Taylor's book on 'party politics', originally published in 1949(!).

[103] Interestingly enough, whereas Terrenato 2019 has received positive reactions in the anglophone world (cf., e.g., the review by F. Drogula, in *BMCR* 2019.12.05; T. de Haas, in *Antiquity* 93 (2019), 1684–5), it was severely criticized by European scholars (see, e.g., S. Lentzsch, in *H-Soz-Kult*, 06.04.2020; M. Helm, in *AHB Online Reviews* 10 (2020), 61–4), among them prominent

Moreover, in recent research inspired by post-colonial studies and global history, the debate on the degree – and indeed the very concept – of 'Romanization',[104] the (limited) degree of political, social, and cultural 'unification', homogenization, and/or even 'institutionalization' of Italy have long been under discussion.[105] Now this is also true of the role of patronage and *clientelae* in Italy and beyond.[106] More recently, the character of the Empire between 'hegemonial' or even 'world power' and 'world state' as the result of expansion[107] and the very form, contents, and construction of 'power' as such is also certain to continue and produce new views on a topical theme.[108]

Research on the interesting and fascinating topics mentioned above, which have been continuously under (controversial) discussion, as well as on other fields, which would need detailed documented surveys in their own right, such as religion, rituals and cult practice,[109] and public, private, criminal, and procedural law,[110] has made considerable progress and offered a lot of results in recent decades.[111] To reconstruct these developments is a fascinating challenge in itself – not least, because progress in

participants in the international debate (U. Walter, in *HZ* 310 (2020), 456–62; R. Roth, in *AClass* 65 (2022), 1–15).

[104] Cf. on the debate on the concept and its validity Roth 2007: 9–39 and passim; Terrenato 2013: 43–8; Lomas 2014: 233–4, 257; Carlà-Uhink 2017: 3–10, 400–1, with further bibliography.

[105] Mouritsen 1998 and the contributions (in English, German and French) in Jehne and Pfeilschifter 2006 and in Jehne, Linke, and Rüpke 2013. Cf. also Lomas 2014; Carlà-Uhink 2017; and recently the contributions in Hölkeskamp, Karataş, and Roth 2019, all with further references.

[106] Cf. the critical assessment of Badian 1958 and new approaches to the problem in Jehne and Pina Polo 2015; Eilers 2002.

[107] Dahlheim 1977: 298–300 and passim; Gruen 1984: 5–7, 288–9, etc.; Kallet-Marx 1995; Hingley 2005; Osgood 2018: chs. 1–2 (quotation), with references. Woolf 2012 is a brilliant survey of all aspects of 'empire' – the German translation was well-received: Woolf 2015. Dench 2018 offers a spate of impressionistic views on most of the aforementioned aspects – 'Romanization', defensive and other imperialisms, the Roman and other empires, modern concepts and categories – with one exception: in spite of the title of her book, she has very little to say about 'political culture'.

[108] Harris 2016: 11–14 and passim, with my review in *Gnomon* 90, 2018: 436–44.

[109] Cf. on Roman (republican) religion, its character, status, and social, political, and cultural functions the important work of Jörg Rüpke, most of which has also been published in English: (2001) 2007; 2012 (first published in English; German edition 2014); 2013; (2016) 2018; 2018 and the edited volume Rüpke 2007; and the innovative contributions by John Scheid, a few of which have also been translated into English: (1998) 2003 and (2013) 2016, and now Padilla Peralta 2020; Rüpke 2022; and Marco Simón 2022. Cf. also Berthelet 2015 (on the *auspicia*) and Flower 2017 (on the *Lares*). See the detailed surveys of research ed. by A. Bendlin, J. Rüpke and M. Haase in the *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* (e.g. 2, 2000: 283–345; 5, 2003: 297–371; 9, 2007: 297–404; 11, 2009: 299–411; 14, 2013: 239–363).

[110] Cf. on the development of Roman law the magisterial survey Wieacker 1988, reviewed, e.g. by B. W. Frier, *JRS* 82, 1992: 231–2; see the survey by Liebs 2014, and also Bablitz 2018; Karataş 2019 and now David 2022, all with bibliography.

[111] Cf. for surveys of modern approaches to the social, political, and cultural history of the Republic the relevant contributions in Rosenstein and Morstein-Marx 2006; Erskine 2009; Barchiesi and

many fields did go well beyond what was and could be expected, say, in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Roman Republic (at least the early and middle Republic) was widely considered a well-tilled field, if not hopelessly over-researched in the anglophone community of ancient historians (as opposed to the French and Italian classical communities). Now we know that the Republic was not at any stage of its development an inert, self-contained and self-sustaining system, but a socio-political order characterized by a dynamic capacity for adaptation to changing conditions and challenges, which was deeply inscribed in its structure.[112] It was this capacity that made the development and stabilization of the 'imperial republic' possible. However, this is only a partial and provisional as well as rather general and abstract diagnosis. I have tried to map out the broad spectrum of old problems, new questions, and innovative empirical approaches for future research in recent publications.[113] Against this backdrop, it seems fit, then, to end on a mildly optimistic note and quote Winston Churchill's famous speech on 10 November 1942 one last time: 'This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'

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Scheidel 2010; Erdkamp 2013; Flower 2014a; Haake and Harders 2017; Arena and Prag 2022; David 2000; Rosenstein 2012; Steel 2013; Walter 2017: part II; Mouritsen 2017: 173–5; Humm 2018a; Hölkeskamp 2019a and 2019b, 2020a and 2022b, all with further references. Cf. on comparative approaches to the Greek city-states and the Roman republic the contributions in Molho, Raaflaub and Emlen 1991 and Hammer 2015.

[112] Cf. now for a more differentiated and nuanced chronology of the Republic Flower 2010; cf. also Beck 2005 and recently Smith 2020 and 2023, Padilla Peralta and Bernard 2022, and Bernard, Mignone, and Padilla Peralta 2023, with my review, *Gnomon* 96, 2024 (forthcoming).

[113] Hölkeskamp 2020b: 22–8, and 2022b.

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