Fresh Voices in Ancient History
TT 2023

Schedule

Week 1
- Tuesday, 25 April, 12pm  Giorgia Capra, Votive religion in ancient Greece: public and personal dimensions

Week 2
- Tuesday, 2 May, 12pm  Thomas Gavin, Prosecuting governors for extortion in the Roman Empire (149 BCE to 112 CE)

Week 3
- Tuesday, 9 May, 12pm  Alexander Moore, The so-called ‘veteran problem’ and the politics of ater publicus in the Late Republican and Triumviral Eras

Week 4
- Tuesday, 16 May, 12pm  William Szymanski, Sulla’s example and the fall of the Roman Republic

Abstracts

Giorgia Capra, Votive religion in ancient Greece: public and personal dimensions

What is the purpose of dedications and what was behind the action of giving offerings to the gods? How does this practice differ from sacrificing? This lecture aims to give an overview of dedicatory practice in Ancient Greece, a custom which involved both public entities and private individuals, ranging from majestic monuments to commemorate, for instance, military victories, to small objects of everyday use dedicated by common people. Some of the most beautiful and renowned monuments adorning Greek sanctuaries were expensive gifts to the gods offered by cities, states and kings, attesting the political and military context at the time, but the study of dedications also allows us also to access the lives of ordinary people and members of the society normally excluded from the political scene: women.

This lecture is aimed at a broad audience: it will interest anyone fascinated by Greek religion and society, and should be relevant for those taking Athenian Democracy in the Classical Age, Thucydides and the Greek World, 479-403 BC and Sexuality and Gender in Greece and Rome.

Thomas Gavin, Prosecuting governors for extortion in the Roman Empire (149 BCE to 112 CE)

Finals paper(s). Republic in Crisis: 146-46 BC; Rome, Italy and Empire from Caesar to Claudius: 46 BC to AD 54; Politics, Society and Culture from Nero to Hadrian.

Synopsis. The misbehaviour of Roman governors, particularly with regards to extortion (repetundae) was a key factor in the interaction between imperial centre and provincial periphery. The Late Republic saw the development of the first quaestio perpetua concerning extortion, the lex de repetundis of Gaius Gracchus (likely attested on the Tabula Bembina), and Cicero’s defence of Sicily after its rapacious treatment by C. Verres. The advent of the Principate saw important developments for the benefit of provincials (attested by the Fifth Edict of Cyrene) but also the continued abuse of power and the politicisation of repetundae.
allegations in the context of imperial court politics. Under Trajan, the letters of Pliny the Younger provide the perspective of a Roman senator who was involved in both the prosecution and defence of former governors, as well as key background to Pliny’s own governorship of Pontus-Bithynia in c. 110-112 CE.

Although this lecture has a broad chronological scope, it is intended for all students of Roman history, even if they are preparing only one of the above papers. I plan to tackle the issues concerning extortion prosecutions in a more systematic way than students might have done in other lectures and tutorials, especially those who are not studying Republic in Crisis: 146-46 BC. For those only studying Republican history, it is still important to know that the problems of prosecution raised in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE continue in the imperial period.

The key questions I plan to address are:
- How did the process of accusing and prosecuting a former governor for misbehaviour change over time?
- What was the process like for those who brought the prosecution? What potential dangers might they face?
- How did extortion prosecutions intersect with other aspects of Roman political history (composition of juries, maiestas prosecutions, court politics, etc.)?

Alexander Moore, The So-Called ‘Veteran Problem’ and the Politics of Ager Publicus in the Late Republic and Triumviral Eras.


Before undertaking his (frustratingly brief) excursus on the history of Roman colonisation and land distribution, Velleius Paterculus informs his readers:

‘statui priorem huius voluminis posterioremque partem non inutili rerum notitia in artum contracta distingue atque huic loco inserere, quae quoque tempore post Romam a Gallis captam deducta sit colonia iussu senatus; nam militarum et causae et auctores ex ipsarum praefulgent nomine.’

‘I have decided to separate the first part of this work from the second by a useful summary, and to insert in this place an account, with the date, of each colony founded by order of the senate since the capture of Rome by the Gauls; for, in the case of the military colonies, their very names reveal their origins and their founders.’

Indeed, after detailing the various colonies founded iussu senatus, starting with Sutrium in 383 and ending with Eporedia in 100, the Roman historian confirms that ‘neque facile memoriae mandaverim quae, nisi militaris, post hoc tempus deducta sit’ (it would be difficult to mention any colony founded after this date, except the military colonies). We have then what appears to be a clear division between (i) the fourth to second century colonies founded iussu senatus; and (ii) the coloniae militares established after 100, whose causae et auctores are betrayed by their names. Discerning the auctores is the less complicated task, for the

2 Vell. Pat. 1.15.5.
3 For Velleius’ colony list, see Bispham, 2011: 35-41, 46-47, Appendix 1.
colonies of the first century often adopted the names of their founders (here meaning Sulla, Caesar, the Triumvirs, Augustus, etc.). But what of their *causa*? In other words, what is the reason for this supposed definitive evolution in Roman colonising activity from 100 onwards?

As many have noted, Velleius’ distinction between colonies founded before 100 and those after as *coloniae militares* is rather ‘misleading since … Roman colonization was from the start a “military” phenomenon, with very clear strategic objectives from the fourth to the second century’. As a result, the answer often provided by scholars to resolve this confusing dichotomy is that Velleius must be alluding to a time in which the typical modes of land distribution were superseded by the personal agrarian settlement schemes of certain late republican magistrates, or even ‘military dictators’. The impetus for this change, as argued by Gabba and since espoused by most scholars, is that towards the end of the second century ‘it became necessary to reward soldiers when the traditional principles of the citizen militia weakened and when the prolonged absence of soldiers from their homes and hearths – and therefore from all civil activity – began to have severe consequences for the economic status of many families’. Thus the agrarian laws of L. Appuleius Saturninus, passed in 103 and 100, for Marius’ veterans were believed to demarcate the beginning of the so-called ‘veteran problem’, as colonies were now founded primarily or even purely with former soldiers at the behest of ambitious generals, seeking to capitalise on the land-hunger of their troops, against ‘stiff opposition from the conservative senatorial elite’ who were anxious to prevent the consolidation of power among individuals. Here, supposedly, is the *causa* for the *coloniae militares* recognised by Velleius and in turn the belief among scholars that after 100 ‘provision for veterans became the principal, as distinct from an incidental, aim of colonization’. However, as one might expect, the reality was never this simple, as the provision of land to former soldiers was only one feature of a much wider political battle involving the distribution of *ager publicus*. As Keppie wisely points out at the beginning of his monograph, ‘the terms veteran settlement and colonisation were not synonymous in the Late Republic’.

This lecture, therefore, details in the first instance the reactions to the so-called ‘veteran problem’ and other exploitative uses of *ager publicus* in the first century, covering the populist agrarian proposals and veteran settlement schemes of: Saturninus (103, 100), Sulla (82-80), Rullus (63), Flavius (60), Caesar (59, 47-44), and the Triumvirs (42-41). Secondly, by analysing the nature of these agrarian programmes and their professed recipients, it will question Gabba’s remark that ‘all the long series of colonies founded from the end of the

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7 Broadhead, 2007: 158.

8 Salmon, 1969: 128.

second century BC is based on a principle completely independent of that followed earlier and, what is more important, has in practice no connexion with the Gracchan policy'. Consequently, those likely to benefit from this lecture are any undergraduates studying the FHS paper ‘Republic in Crisis, 146 – 46 BC’, as it covers one of the largest and most vital themes of that era: the politics of *ager publicus* and the breakdown in relations between the Senate and its prominent magistrates. Likewise, though not engaging directly with the falsely labelled ‘post-Marian’ army, any discussion of the notorious ‘veteran problem’ is of significant interest to those studying the role of the military within the downfall of the Roman Republic (itself a highly relevant theme also for the beginning of the FHS paper ‘Rome, Italy and Empire from Caesar to Claudius, 46 BC – AD 54’). Finally, the topic of land distribution in the Late Republic is inherently tied to both (i) the demographic debate surrounding the population and socio-economic status of Italy; and (ii) the rise of *popularis* politics in the aftermath of the Gracchi. In summary, the proposed lecture not only provides an opportunity for undergraduates to become more familiar with the many and complex agrarian laws and proposals of the first century, but it invites them to think more critically about the so-called ‘veteran problem’ and the related evolutions in Roman agrarian policy after the Gracchi.

**Will Szymanski, Sulla’s example and the fall of the Roman Republic**

**Finals papers**: RH5 and both Cicero papers

Sulla has been described as an enigma, and he appears in our set texts as a puzzling figure. The *fortissimus vir et summus imperator* (Cic. *Leg. Man.* 8) is the same man as the ‘scaevois iste Romulus’ (Sall. *Hist.* 1.55.5).

Syme famously claimed that he ‘could not abolish his own example’, referring to Sulla’s two marches on Rome. They were unprecedented and transgressive, and leave a significant impact on our sources. In this light, scholars have argued that Sulla played a major role in the ‘fall of the Roman Republic’, or the political transformations that occurred during this period.

In this lecture, I will try to set out what Sulla’s example was. I will discuss the evidence behind his acts as dictator, which are vital to our understanding of several late Republic political institutions, such as the Senate, the tribunate, and the courts.

I will also discuss the evidence for the reaction to Sulla, considering what we can know of responses from the Roman elite, the people, the army, non-Romans, and other groups.

Finally, I will discuss how we can think about Sulla’s impact on the late Republic. I will look at the contemporary discussions of his legacy in Cicero and Sallust, and talk about how imperial authors such as Plutarch and Appian used Sulla in their narratives. I will cover the topographical and numismatic evidence on the reception of Sulla in the generation after his death. I will also consider how the memory of Sulla affected the discourse on Caesar’s civil war.

This lecture will help students consolidate their knowledge of the diverse and ambiguous evidence on Sulla and his dictatorship, a good deal of which is in the set texts. It will encourage them to think about Sulla’s impact on a number of central themes of this paper, including land distribution, Italian enfranchisement, civil war, and the concentration of political power.

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