*Amoralism, Roman Republican Politics, and Historians in an Era of Disillusionment*

CAMWS, Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario 4/8/2017, Ninth Paper Session, Section D

Michael C. Alexander, emeritus, Department of History, U. of Illinois at Chicago

micalexa@uic.edu

future link to *Amoralism, the Political Culture of the Roman Republic, and Historians in*

*an Era of Disillusionment*: library.uic.edu, catalogue, author: “Alexander, Michael C.”

1. Richard Nixon (tape-recording, 06/21/1972):

I think the country doesn’t give much of a s\*\*\* about it. You see, everybody around here is all mortified by it. It’s a horrible thing to rebut. And the answer, of course, is that most people around the country probably think this is routine, that everybody’s trying to bug everybody else, it’s politics. Now, the purists probably won’t agree with that, but I don’t think they’re going to see a great uproar in the country about the Republicans’ committee trying to bug the Democratic headquarters. At least, that’s my view.

2. Cic. *Att.* 2.1.8. Nam Catonem nostrum non tu amas plus quam ego; sed tamen ille optimo animo utens et summa fide nocet interdum rei publicae; dicit enim tamquam in Platonis πολιτείᾳ, non tamquam in Romuli faece, sententiam. Quid verius quam in iudicium venire qui ob rem iudicandam pecuniam acceperit? Censuit hoc Cato et adsensit senatus: equites curiae bellum---non mihi, nam ego dissensi.

For I like our friend Cato as much as you; but although he has the best intentions and the highest loyalty, now and then he harms the state. He delivers his opinion as if in Plato’s Republic rather than in the dregs of Romulus. What could be more proper than that those people go to trial who have taken bribes as jurors? That was Cato’s opinion, and the Senate agreed: the knights declare war on the Senate, though not on me, for I disagreed. (trans. Shackleton Bailey, modified)

3. Cic. *Mur.* 61…omnia peccata esse paria; omne delictum scelus esse nefarium, nec minus delinquere eum qui gallum gallinaceum, cum opus non fuerit, quam eum qui patrem suffocaverit....

(Zeno said that) all offenses are equal, and every misdeed is a foul crime, and a person who has needlessly strangled a rooster is no less at fault than a person who has strangled his father….

4. Sal. *Cat.* 38.3: Namque, uti paucis verum absolvam, post illa tempora quicumque rem publicam agitavere honestis nominibus, alii sicuti populi iura defenderent, pars quo senatus auctoritas maxuma foret, bonum publicum simulantes pro sua quisque potentia certabant.

For, to tell the truth in a few words, after that time, whoever disturbed the state under the guise of honorable slogans---some as though defending the rights of the people, others so that the senate’s influence might be dominant--- under pretense of the public good, each in reality strove for his own influence. (trans. Rolfe/Ramsey)

5. T.P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate, 139 B.C. – A.D. 14.* (1971, p. 135):

…offend nobody, make contacts everywhere, flatter, oblige, equivocate.

6. Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (1939, p. 11):

The political life of the Roman Republic was stamped and swayed, not by parties and programmes of a modern and parliamentary character, not by the ostensible opposition between Senate and People, *Optimates* and *Populares*, *nobiles* and *novi homines*, but by the strife for power, wealth and glory.

7. *Comm. Pet.* 54: “Roma est,” civitas ex nationum conventu constituta, in qua multae insidiae, multa fallacia, multa in omni genere vitia versantur, multorum adrogantia, multorum contumacia, multorum malevolentia, multorum superbia, multorum odium ac molestia perferenda est.

“It’s Rome!”---a community established from the congress of peoples, in which much treachery, many falsehoods, many faults of all kinds are involved, the haughtiness of many, the ill will of many, the arrogance of many, the hatred and annoyances of many must be borne.

Works Cited

Alexander, Michael C. “The *Commentariolum Petitionis* as an Attack on Election Campaigns,” *Athenaeum* 97 (2009) 31-57, 369-95.

Badian, E. “Caepio and Norbanus: Notes on the Decade 100-90 B.C.” *Historia* 6 (1957) 318-46 = pp. 34-70, *Studies in Greek and Roman History* Oxford: Blackwell’s, 1964.

Brittain, Vera. *Testament of Youth; an autobiographical study of the years 1900-1925.* New York: Macmillan, 1933.

Gelzer, Matthias. *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik.* Leipzig: Teubner*,* 1912*.* Tr. Robin Seager, *The Roman Nobility*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

Gruen, Erich S. *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974. With new introduction 1994.

Münzer, Friedrich. *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien*. Stuttgart: Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920. Tr. Thérèse Ridley. *Roman Aristocratic Parties and Families.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Peirano, Irene. *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin* Pseudepigrapha *in Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Scullard, H.H. *Roman Politics, 220-150 B.C.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973.

Syme, Ronald. *The Roman Revolution.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939.

Tatum, W. Jeffrey. “*Alterum est tamen boni viri, alterum boni petitoris:* The Good Man Canvasses*.*” *Phoenix* 61 (2007) 109-35.

Taylor, Lily Ross. *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949. Vol. 22 of the Sather Classical Lectures.

Wiseman, T.P. *New Men in the Roman Senate, 139 B.C. – A.D. 14.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.