

The Individual as the Republic, and the Republic as a Body/Individual:

Cicero, *Pro Rabirio* and *Post reditum in senatu*

I address how Cicero referred to individual persons and bodies so that they are synonymous with the Republic in his *Pro Rabirio* and *Post reditum in senatu*.

This paper is not concerned with *prosopoeia* in Cicero's orations (Tzounakas 2006; Lausberg 1998:369-72; Austen 1960:90-1; cf. *prosopoeia* Tzounakas 2009). Rather, I examine how Cicero equates an individual with the republic and how he therefore defines a republic. There is no literature on this topic.

Cicero's interest may derive from oratory's argument from the person (*inventio*) (*De orat.* 2.47.195-6; Fantham 164, 35), or because he views the individual citizen as no less important than the republic, saying he has a duty to defend citizens "since when I was made consul, the safety of the republic, and also that of each individual citizen in it was entrusted to me" (*Rab.* 1.2-3). He also connected the body with political speeches since he desired his consular speeches to be published as a "body" (McDermott; Cape 119-20). But there seems to be more motivating him than that.

First, Cicero equates one person with the republic in *Pro Rabirio*: he says Rabirius acted legally and in concert with the republic. Thus, the prosecution of Rabirius is an attack on the republic (1.2-3), and on the Senate and liberty (Cape 133-134; Brunt 321-7; Tyrrell 1973:285). The aging, weak, and ill body of Rabirius is the same as a fragile republic (as are the infirm and ill senators who acted with him). The individual defendant (and republic) is contrasted with the individual prosecutor (i.e., tyranny, illegality, and brutality; Dunkle 165).

Second, Cicero redefines the republic as a collection of individuals—those who ever defended the republic: it is Rome’s history depicted by all Roman persons, including the dead, whom he calls as witness (*Rab.* 10.30). Prosecution of Rabirius is a prosecution of dead ancestors (9.26) and of Rome’s history and traditions; Cicero lists those who defended the republic with Rabirius though they were aged and ill (7.21). Those who supported Cicero’s return include all Italy and the dead heroes of Rome (*Red. sen.* 10.25).

Third, Cicero’s references to his actions and exile are shaped so that they emphasize his individual/republic equivalence. His own safety is couched in terms of the “life” of the republic, the honor of the Roman people, and the authority of the senate (*Red. sen.* 3.7). Cicero identifies his person/body with the republic: e.g., an attack on Cicero is an attack on the senate, knights, *boni*, and all Italy (*Har. resp.* 3.5). When he was away, the republic did not function. The republic’s former speech, tongue, and voice lost its tongue and became silent because Cicero was absent. The state was “humbled to the dust” (*Red. sen.* 3.6): it is a living creature that was nearly dead; and when the republic is revived, so is he (14.34; cf. 10.25; 11.29; 14.34; *Har. resp.* 2.3).

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