Viceversa, come evidenzia il caso di Mileto e dei suoi contatti con Pidasa e Era-clea al Latmos negli anni del dopo Apamea, la fitta attività diplomatica che spinge le comunità a creare legami con insediamenti vicini non può non essere valutata, oltre che dal punto di vista istituzionale (199–201, 212–213) e dell’intraprendenza politica civica (221–225), dal punto di vista più complesso dei rapporti che influenzano gli interessi locali (soprattutto a livello di integrità territoriale, un elemento fondamentale per la polis di ogni epoca) e coinvolgono sovranità superiori (come a suo tempo evidenziato da Peter Herrmann e Philippe Gauthier in: Les cités d’Asie Mineure occidentale au IIe siècle a.C., Bordeaux 2001, 112–114, 122–124).

Benché l’investimento dell’autore nei confronti dei temi trattati non appaia sempre misurato (e.g. nell’accesa disamina della cosiddetta ‘aristocrazia rodia’ e della testimonianza straboniana sulla costituzione di Rodi, 316–320, 344–353), sono da sottolineare la precisione e la serietà dello studio di V.G., che costituisce una coraggiosa tappa di sintesi nel percorso, invero ancora bisognoso di studi di dettaglio, che conduce alla riscoperta delle democrazie ellenistiche.

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This is a challenging and rich work, which seeks to set on a firmer basis the relationships between the political work of the dictator Sulla and the accounts of Rome’s sixth king, Servius Tullius. Characterised by a detailed analysis of the sources and a broad knowledge of the secondary literature, although somewhat weighted towards Italian works, this volume goes far beyond previous reconstructions of how Sulla, or contemporary and subsequent historians, may have used or manipulated traditions about Servius Tullius in justifying or commenting on the dictator.

The introduction gives a brief account of various treatments of the reign of Servius Tullius, and this is competent enough, although it does relatively little to place these debates within a wider context of the problematic nature of early Roman history. Marastoni’s impetus is historiographical. This is a perfectly appropriate place from which to start, but the book would therefore have been improved by a rather clearer statement at the beginning of what the sources are and exactly what they tell us. M.’s approach delivers all the relevant material but one has to wait to see the picture as a whole.

In the first chapter, M. starts with a bold claim (11): «Servio Tullio per i Romani incarnava l’ideale della libertas.» It is several pages before it becomes clear that the only strong evidence for this is Accius’ line in Brutus, which Cicero cites (Sest. 123), Tullius qui libertatem civibus stabilixerat. The passage is important, but it is hardly straightforward. M. goes on with a detailed account of the use of the word and concept of freedom, which is useful, although lacking the philosophical approach which permeated this discourse in the later Republic, once Sto-
cism had fully entered the Roman thought world; M. is throughout rather brief on these matters, despite a section later on Stoic ideas on citizenship. Starting from this point, M. raises the difficulty of how a king could be regarded as having promoted liberty, and therefore constructs a binary opposition, which runs through the whole book, between two opposing views of Servius Tullius, one which regards him as an out and out populist, and one which claims him for the optimates, and which equate to anti-Sullan and pro-Sullan stances. The distinctions however are largely taken for granted, and that is again problematic, since it is at best difficult (and at worst inappropriate) to try to identify bundles of ideas or ideologies of this nature. Throughout M. illustrates her account with tables which are both very useful summaries of the argument, but also indications of its schematism.

So the argument of the first chapter is weak, since it starts from a premise which is doubtful (Romans thought of Servius Tullius when they thought about liberty) and then by virtue of an analysis of the disputed nature of libertas arrives at two distinct and distinguishable views of Roman politics, which are in reality less than easy to separate so clearly. Moreover, whereas the obvious place to look for a relatively conservative reading of Servius is Cicero rep. 2.37–9 or leg. 3.44, and one of these passages is briefly alluded to at p38, this is just assumed to be a Sullan position, but only on the basis of Gabba’s authority. Finally, it has to be borne in mind that we have only one piece of evidence (as opposed to – more or less legitimate – surmise) which connects Sulla and Servius Tullius, and that is the reference in Appian BC 1.59 to Sulla and Q. Pompeius in 88, who demanded that voting be by centuries and not by tribes, thus reverting to the Servian system. It is true that there are clearly divergent approaches to Servius, as a genuinely popular reformer, or as an overt or closet defender of the nobility, but that is not the only complexity within the image of Servius Tullius, and by concentrating so firmly on this aspect, M. may have done some injustice to the development of the historical account.

In the second chapter, M. turns precisely to this passage of Appian and subjects it to a detailed examination. M. intends to relate the Sullan re-ordering to the account in Livy 1.60 of the election of the first consuls ex commentariis Ser. Tulli. To make her argument work, first M. tries to show, by virtue of the fact that Appian BC 1.55 is close to a Plutarchan citation of Sulla’s memoirs (Plut. Mar. 35 = F2 Peter), that the whole of this section is Sullan in tone, and second that when Appian wrote ‘as king Tullius ordained’ he was referring to the commentaries of Tullius. In addition, M. maintains that Appian usually uses the word cheirotonia for elections, and not legislative activity. Thus Sulla removed the tribal element from the elections, and claimed to have done so on the basis of the Servian commentaries.

A great deal is made to rest on Appian’s notoriously problematic and isolated account of the actions in 88 BC. The weakest point in the argument is the connection between the reference to the obscure Servian commentaries and the change in voting. Could the commentaries simply have referred to augural and other religious and procedural issues? Did they in fact exist at the time of Sulla, or were they invented to explain a reference which was otherwise based on an existing understanding of the Servian constitution? If they already existed, or
reflected some clear understanding, what does that tell us about ways in which Servius was being considered in the second century BC, when, presumably, his timocratic constitution was rejected? And why then was Servius reinvented as a populist in the first century, against the grain of the Sullan presentation? Despite – or perhaps because of – M’s highly detailed arguments, the reader may sometimes find the broader picture hard to grasp, but the questions raised are highly interesting.

In the next chapter, M. moves on to Sulla and the senate, arguing that the pro-Sullan account relates the purging and refreshing of the senate to previous examples including Servius, Brutus and Publicola, whereas Dio for instance uses an anti-Sullan source which focuses on the unworthy nature of the new senators and the encouragement to further untrammelled power for the dictator (M. assumes Dio must have taken this approach from someone else). M.’s account of the Sullan senate continues in the next chapter, in which M. deals with Sulla’s legal reforms, indicating that there are some parallels with Servius Tullus’ claim (in a reported speech in Dionysius of Halicarnassus 4.23) to have given up to the senate some of his powers to act as a judge, thus indicating Servius’ difference from the stock picture of a tyrant. At the same time, the similarly divided views of Romulus which existed in antiquity interfere here, since he is also, and explicitly, regarded as a model for Sulla (Sallust has Lepidus call Sulla a scaevus Romulus, hist. 1.48.5 McGushin). It is not entirely clear what M. wants us to do with this interpretation. It need not of course disprove or diminish a view of the connection with Servius Tullius, but it is germane to the historiographical arguments, and the argument is left rather incomplete.

The next chapter looks at power, and fearlessly wades into arguments over the lex curiata de imperio. A great deal here is forced together that might equally well be left apart. The lex curiata does give power (in some sense) and thus permits victories which in turn might permit one to extend the pomerium, as both Servius and Sulla do, but the lex de imperio is not the same as the ius pomerii proferendi; and for both Sulla has strong Romulean precedents. There are notable parallels which can be drawn, and are well discussed here and subsequently, on luck and abdication, but M.’s invention of a lex de imperio Servi Tulli is unhelpful. It is based only on D.Hal. 4.12, and the confusion over Tullius’ real legitimacy as king. Dionysius is struggling with the internal complexities of his own model of curial behaviour.

The last substantial chapter is on the respective activities of both individuals as censors. M. shows how the accounts have borrowed from versions of Solon on the one hand, and Stoic ideas of citizenship on the other. Solon is repeatedly referred to, and a more connected account might have been valuable, since one might draw interesting conclusions for Roman knowledge and understanding of Greek history, though M. is careful enough to distinguish genuine comparisons and vaguer typological similarities. The penultimate chapter attempts to bring some biographical details together, showing ways in which themes of legitimacy, the importance of women, and fortune again, are important in the lives of both. This chapter is slightly more diffuse and M. has to acknowledge that some of these themes are simply stock. Finally, M. looks at the historians who might have transmitted or shaped the traditions, and tries to identify where they fall on ei-
ther side of the divides which have been suggested. At the end, M. returns to the Commentarii Servii Tulli and suggests that they were a sort of book of magistrates, with rules on censorial activity and on how to elect a dictator, the latter part heavily influenced by Sulla.

Overall, this is a highly learned volume, with very detailed footnotes and a complicated set of arguments, which add up to a more substantially argued case for Sulla’s use of the example of Servius Tullius, moulded to some extent to his own needs, than we have had hitherto. M. seems to believe that second and first century BC traditions dominate the historiographical account, and I struggled to be sure whether M. really has much time for a longer-standing tradition. In a sense, as with the issue of what Rome was like in the sixth century, it is not her argument, but the absence or otherwise of an older tradition does have an impact on the question of some of the topographical and ritual elements of the Servian account.

Perhaps more seriously, there is so much more still to be done on issues of how the annalistic tradition developed, and the extent to which we can read directly back from authors like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Appian, and Cassius Dio to their sources. Moreover, it is interesting that Plutarch did not write – as far as we can tell – a biography of Servius Tullius. One would have imagined that the story lent itself, but it may be, as M. indirectly demonstrates, that part of the problem was that Servius was so useful that he could look like almost everyone – a tyrant, a lawgiver, a populist, a hero, a religious reformer – yet it is still noteworthy that he paired Solon with Valerius Publicola. There is more to be said on the individual historians too; for instance, M. inclines to the belief that the communes historiae attributed to Lutatius belong to the famous Lutatius Catulus; I suspect they belong to another individual, and Lutatius Daphnis would seem the obvious person (Suet. gramm. 3).

One small correction: p6 misreads Cic. Brutus 62; Cicero is surely indicating that many people claim relationships to past patricians when there is no continuity of lineage; he presents the suggestion that he might be descended from a Tullius not as a fact but as an absurdity. The book is well-produced, but expensive and lacks both an index and an index of source references, which will make it frustrating for consultation.

The extent to which Sulla himself appealed to the example of Servius seems to me to remain difficult to demonstrate simply because of the absence of sources, but the interplay between what Roman historians knew, or thought they did, or constructed about Servius, and what they thought about Sulla, is a clear example of the value of the regal period in thinking through subsequent periods, and especially where variations on individual power were at stake. M.’s book makes a useful contribution; R. Thomsen ‘King Servius Tullius’ (Copenhagen 1980) remains the place from which to start, but M. is to be commended for a courageous and detailed attempt to move the argument forward.

Rome

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