

FOTHERINGHAM (L.S.) *Persuasive Language in Cicero's Pro Milone: A Close Reading and Commentary*. (*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* Supplement 121.) Pp. xvi + 503. London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2013. Paper, £48. ISBN: 978-1-905670-48-2.

This book builds on F.'s 1999 Oxford doctoral thesis and on two articles from 2006 and 2007 on reading the opening of the *pro Milone* (*MD* 57, pp. 63-83) and on Cicero's combination of incompatible arguments in the speech (in J.G.F. Powell [ed.], *Logos: Rational Argument in Classical Rhetoric*, pp. 69-90). The latter piece in particular serves as prolegomenon to the present book, as the aim in both cases is to argue for the literary unity of the *pro Milone* as we have it in the face of scholarly doubt (p. xiii). This book seeks to demonstrate this by devoting exhaustive attention to the structure and argument of the speech, providing in the Commentary a section-by-section analysis of the linguistic features of each and every sentence, in varying levels of detail. This is the very specific sense in which the 'close reading and commentary' of the title are meant. Readers who pick up the book hoping for an up-to-date successor to the ripple of 1890s English commentaries may well be disappointed: in order to maintain her focus, F. deliberately (p. xi) excludes much of the material that such readers might expect to find. The book therefore demands to be taken on its own terms; and while F. does not offer the reader the systematic interpretative pay-off which needs to underpin the detailed description of the linguistic aspects if the case for unity is to be made from that description, she has nonetheless created a useful reference resource.

A brief introductory section (pp. xi-xv), aimed at orientation, is followed by an Essay on Approach (pp. 1-84) and by a re-paragraphed and re-punctuated version of A.C. Clark's OCT. The most generally useful parts of the Commentary, which follows (pp. 109-400), are probably the section introductions (typically two or so pages, and keyed to the handy tabular

breakdown of the speech's structure at pp. 22-3) where F. lays out the characteristics of the section in question according to a group of criteria mapped out as important in the Essay, especially the roles of topic-sentences, syntactical complexity, deployment of vocabulary (with a particular focus on repetitiousness), and shifts in speaker and addressee(s). All section introductions (and the introductions to the individual sentence analyses themselves) are prefaced by a quick summary of the argument or key point of the passage in question – a helpful feature given that the Latin text is not in general translated. There are stimulating comments here on such phenomena as Cicero's strategic interpretation of other individuals' mental processes, and his methods of persuasive co-option of the jurors onto his own side. These would have been enriched by comparison with other speeches, but this F. mostly omits (deliberately: pp. xi-xii). Moreover, in a good number of cases the analysis does not progress much beyond the content summary and the syntactical précis which accompanies it. This prevents F. from tying the assessment of individual passages to any overall demonstration of the speech's unity, and from using her carefully-garnered statistics to make many meaningful points about a sentence or passage's persuasive qualities. While the lemmata sometimes make up for the sentence introductions in this regard, F.'s deliberate policy (pp. xii-xiii) means that the lemmata themselves largely tail off one-third or so of the way into the Commentary.

The issue of how the unity argument is to be advanced under these conditions looms large, for example, at *Mil.* 65-71, the transition between what F. helpfully labels the 'Self-Defence Argument' (32-71) and the 'Public Good Argument' (72-91). How to read Cicero's odd treatment of Pompey here (especially at 67ff.) tends to influence how scholars talk about the unity issue, and readers familiar with the *pro Milone* (F.'s target audience: p. xi) might have expected this to be a point where F. would be particularly interested in pressing home the broader significance for the pro-unity case of the linguistic information she gathers. But, here as elsewhere, the opportunity is not taken (nor is there any kind of closing section allowing F.

to do this in a holistic way). The result is that (as far as the Commentary goes) much of the work of generating meaning from the figures and from the syntactical breakdown – and thus the work of sustaining the pro-unity argument – is left up to the reader. F. does see the processing of her book's findings as a collaborative exercise, often inviting the reader to challenge and modify her categorizations, to test and recalculate statistics, and so on (e.g. pp. 69, 408, 455). She also admits that in order for her results to realize their true value, comparative work needs to be done on other speeches (e.g. pp. 61, 74, 172-3, 335). But while these are fair and refreshing admissions of the enormity of the task F. has set herself, they do not help to make the utility credentials of the book transparent.

This is not to say that the *Essay on Approach* does not go some distance towards plotting out important routes, but, for all its exposition of the objective value of calculating Cicero's use of F.'s chosen linguistic features, it does not communicate a strong sense of why scrutinizing these will yield a reading which demonstrates the speech's unity as opposed to a reading of a particular 'unified' kind, or of how we are to distinguish meaningful statistics from non-meaningful ones if that task is largely to be left up to us (cf. p. xiii). The *Essay's* value lies elsewhere. However much (or little) the speech we have reflects what Cicero delivered on the day, F. shows thoughtful and welcome alertness to its performance aspects (especially at pp. 30-1) and offers interesting (if inconclusive) reasons to reassess the dominant place Asconius' account has in our view of the events and of the 'two speeches' issue (pp. 7-11). F.'s comments on the 'periodic' vs. the 'complex' sentence at pp. 49-52 are interesting, and the rhetorical effect of syntactic suspension is a topic well pursued in the *Commentary* itself.

The quality of the editing is uneven. Errors are irritatingly frequent in the introductory material (I saw 36 in a total of 89 pages), less so in the commentary (39 in 291 pages). Errors in the reproduction of the Latin text itself are much rarer. Referencing is sporadic, especially in the *Commentary*; the sidelining of scholarship on the speech is, again, deliberate policy as

far as much of the book goes (p. xii), but more direction than (for example) ‘the grammars tell us’ (pp. 227, 333) or ‘published analyses vary’ (with no reference; p. 21) would have been welcome. The occasionally abstruse use of technical terminology in the Essay is not relieved by the fact that the promised explanatory ‘entries in bold in the Thematic Index’ (p. 19) do not in fact appear there.

It is especially hard to give a verdict on F.’s book because the need for an up-to-date but broadly ‘traditional’ commentary on the speech is so acute; it will inevitably be judged by what it is not. A commentary which combined an avowed focus on the linguistically-informed elucidation of rhetorical argument with the attentiveness to literary and historical context characteristic of traditional commentaries would have been a long one indeed, but would have embraced the needs of a greater proportion of those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the *pro Milone*. If F.’s book is viewed as a reference work on the linguistic structure of the speech, however, its specific usefulness for students and scholars making arguments about that structure is clear. Also clear is its pedagogical potential: the Syntactic Indices (pp. 453-89) are likely to be of use to Latin teachers at all levels. F. has given this constituency a good reason to choose the *pro Milone* as a class text.

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