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The essential studies of Roman public augural theory, terminology, and practice are those by Valeton, Catalano, and Linderski. To these Jyri Vaahtera (hereafter V.) has made this very valuable addition. Specialists in Roman civil and religious institutions will find it more thorough and critical than the works of Magie, Mason, and Hofmann. Students of Greek writers on Roman history will also appreciate it.

Chapter One, "Introduction," gives the book's plan and its two purposes: "to clarify where and how the Greek historians treated the augural matters in their writings" and to examine "whether it is possible to gain some new insight into the augural lore by approaching the subject through Greek sources." V.'s method is to reverse the usual practice of citing Greek writers uncritically, only to support evidence from Latin writers on religious matters. Those writers' sources, their knowledge of augural theory and practice, and the Greek terms they use is thus the first object of this work. On that basis a proper search for new information about Roman public augury might be undertaken.

Chapter Two, "Greek historiography and Roman institutions," is an introductory survey of Greek writers (not all of them historians) who seem to provide information about the augural law and discipline. It has two parts, the Hellenistic and the Roman periods. Following Dion. Hal. 1. 6. 1-2, V. gives a brief summary of Greek historians on the early Roman period, devoting most of the first part of this chapter to Timaeus and Polybius. Polybius is especially problematic because, though himself a witness to what is arguably the most fervently religious period in Roman history, he elected not to report on such matters, leaving only his famous critique at 6. 56. 6-8. But there are traces of references in the surviving Polybian corpus, and V. does readers a service by pointing out the probable Roman sources of these. A subsection, "The Late Republic," is devoted to an evaluation of evidence from Diodorus Siculus, concluding that he probably followed some antiquarian etymologist source quite carefully.

The second part of Chapter Two, "The Roman period," deals with sources in a non-chronological way. This is because, as V. rightly points out, information about the augural law and discipline became more generally available "[a]s a result of the antiquarian activities of the
last century of the Republic." Augural decrees and responses, handbooks or commentarii, archives, and systematic antiquarian treatments, especially those of Varro, gave later Greek writers, especially Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a much greater mass of more reliable information to draw on.

Chapter Three, "Greek names for Roman institutions," deals specifically with how Latin terms for Roman religious matters were represented in Greek. First there is the problem of Greek translations of official Latin documents and monuments, which is relatively straightforward. Second is Greek histories of Rome. Difficulties abound here because of style, especially Atticism, which avoids the direct use of Latin terms; this in turn requires the Greek writer to explain what is meant. V. borrows from Cicero (fin. 3. 15) four means by which technical terms may be rendered into another tongue: the calque, the cultural equivalent, the foreign word as such, and the periphrasis. This chapter becomes a critique of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose verbosity and compulsion for variation creates unusual difficulties for the student of Roman religion. 3

The rest of Chapter Three furnishes instructive examples of the three ways by which augural terms were expressed in Greek: per transcriptionem (transliteration), per comparationem (cultural equivalent), and per periphrasin et paraphrasin. Again Dionysius is deservedly taken to task for his ignorance of procedures and his carelessness with terms. V. has surely done a great service in sorting out with delicacy and finesse a number of questionable passages. And he is surely right to say that we must look at procedure whenever an ambiguous term such as μάντις confronts us (72-73).

Having established his lexical principles, V. then proceeds in Chapter Four to an examination of augural rituals and the augurs themselves. The augural contest between Romulus and Remus, though legendary, furnishes a good test case for Greek writers' knowledge of Roman augural techniques and introduces a thorough, if dense, discussion of cooption (or election) and inauguration of kings and priests. A careful comparison between the accounts of Livy and Plutarch over Numa's inauguration reveals many fine points of terminology and practice, and Dionysius' treatment of the inauguration of Romulus adds, for once, some reliable information. This leads to further commentary on methods of auspication and the curiate law. V. makes here a brilliant point by observing the similarity between Dion. Hal. 2. 6. 2-3 and Cic. leg. agr. 2. 27 and 31, from which he adduces two separate traditions on the auspices of investiture, one followed by Livy and Plutarch, the other by Cicero and Dionysius (119-122).

A clear but compact treatment of augural space and the troublesome augurium salutis then ensues. 4 There is no new information here, but it is valuable to examine existing Greek evidence for these matters on its own merits. The final part of Chapter Four deals with the augurs themselves, especially their membership in the augural college, and their duties in making formal pronouncements on augural matters (decreta et responsa). V. advances our knowledge of the augural decretal procedure by demonstrating how, in reading Dio 42. 21. 1-2, we must assume two such decisions were made regarding Caesar's second dictatorship in 48 B.C. This is a very important point, even where discussion is of other priesthoods: our sources, assuming general knowledge of procedure, often omit mention of the issuance of a decretum or a responsum.
Chapter Five concerns the ius augurale publicum. V. gives a good and careful explanation of the kinds of auspices, nuntiatio and obnuntiatio, and auspical vitium, its causes and legislative effects. This leads to an extended discussion of important cases of magistrates vitio creati. V.'s discussion of the use of obnuntiatio as political obstruction should have taken into account the recent work by Loretana De Libero. His treatment of the disturbance over Saturninus' agrarian bill in 100 B.C. mentions Linderski's 1983 essay, but it is not included in the Bibliography. V. next turns to the consulship of 59, specifically Dio's use of the term ἱερομηνία (at 38. 6. 5) to describe Bibulus' attempts to vitiate all of Caesar's acts. It is generally understood that Bibulus simply announced his intention 'de caelo servare'. V. offers an ingenious alternative: that Bibulus announced elections, thus rendering all comitial days technically 'fasti', on which comitia could not legally be held.

Chapter Five concludes with what is surely the most provocative point of the whole book: the auspices and the plebeian tribunes. Relying chiefly on Dio and Zonaras (7. 19. 1-2), V. presents the possibility that the patricians had in fact yielded to the tribunes the right to take auspices, making plebiscites 'auspicato' and thus binding on the Roman people as a whole, precisely because they could then use obnuntiation against plebeian legislation.

V. concludes with a summary evaluation of Greek writers on Roman subjects. A full bibliography and indices locorum et verborum Graecorum follow. This is a very erudite and painstaking study. Being so, it is also dense and difficult reading. There are a few printers' lapses and oddities of English style, but these are insignificant. V. has not shied away from any of the most difficult problems in the study of Roman augural religion, though readers may quarrel with his solutions. What emerges most clearly is how well (or how poorly) different Greek writers understood Roman augural terms and practices. V. has demonstrated very well how that fact allows us and requires us to use the evidence they provide much more critically than ever before.

I wish here to express to the author, the editor of BMCR, and to interested readers my sincere regrets that I have been so inexcusably long in writing this review and thank all for their forbearance with me.

Notes:


3. Cf. E. Schwartz, "Notae de Romanorum Annalibus," 1903: "nisi dis iratis accidere non
potuisse iterum iterumque mecum ipse questus, ut tam insulsi hominis intolerabilem loquacitatem non modo ferre sed etiam attente legere deberem."

