

Supervisor's Assessment on Bachelor Thesis

Uriel Kantor: The Populares and Clodius Publius Pulcher of the Late Roman Republic in the Context of Modern Populism

The political history of Roman Republic has become a subject of innumerable books, articles, and theses. Therefore, it seems virtually impossible to find a gap in the research and/or new approach, particularly on the level of a Bachelor thesis. Yet, Uriel Kantor managed to find one. Moreover, he found one strikingly topical. The contemporary debate about (both local and global) politics works with the term “populism” on the daily base. But how about comparing the current populism, as it has been defined by political scientists and journalists, with the “original” Roman populism, namely with the movement bearing the same name and claiming to act “on behalf of the people” (regardless of the fact, that the “populists” themselves regularly belong to the highest social elites)?

At the same time, Uriel Kantor realistically assessed the goals that can be reached in a frame of a Bachelor thesis. Having introduced his thesis by a broad methodological and terminological introduction, he selected one historical personality among Roman “Populares”. Wisely enough, it was no one from the notorious figures (Gracchi fratres, Catilina, Marius), but the slightly “understudied” Clodius Pulcher. Uriel Kantor thoroughly read and analysed the primary sources reflecting Pulcher’s life and deeds (Cassius Dio, Plutarchos, Sallustius, Appianus). Further, he tried to excerpt and describe all the meanings and nuances with which the sources used the key term “populism”. At the end, he offered a clear chart: Which are the attributes of modern populism – and which of them (and to what degree) can be found in the Roman populism, as represented by Pulcher.

I find the result simply brilliant. It was my pleasure to supervise this thesis.

Prof. Martin C. Putna
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