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**Richard Evans, *Mass and Elite in the Greek and Roman Worlds. From Sparta to Late Antiquity.* London; New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. 216. ISBN 9781472462077. \$140.00.**

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With Josiah Ober's *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*, which appeared in 1989, modern scholarship gained new insights into the political decision-making process in Classical Athens. Ober demonstrated how the interaction between the elites with their political plans and the masses as the voting audience should be regarded as the core of Athenian government. Furthermore, he claimed a much more important role for the masses in the political decision-making process than previously had been acknowledged. Ober's work proved to be seminal for those working on Athenian politics and society. Now that it is getting close to three decades since Ober's publication, is time for a fresh look at the relationship between masses and elites in the ancient world. In October of 2013 a group of scholars, including Ober, came together in South Africa to discuss new ideas. The results of this meeting are published in the volume under review, edited by Richard Evans. The volume is set up chronologically, with twelve contributions covering the period from Classical Athens through Late Antiquity. Moreover, even though the volume is characterized by a great diversity and range of topics, several themes clearly emerge that validate the universality of both the dichotomy and close connection between masses and elites.

Quite appropriately, the first chapter is written by Ober himself in which he offers some insights into the origins of his own study in the 80s as well some general ideas on the duality of masses and elites applicable to all the contributions in the volume. At the core of Ober's work and of the other contributions in this volume is the assumption that the masses 'had the capacity and tendency to act as a reasonably coherent and consistent collective agent' (p. 5). This notion has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the political, social and economic role of the masses, as it leads to a more nuanced balance of power and perhaps to a different level of equality between masses and elites than has often been accepted by modern scholars. An example of this more nuanced balance of power is

visible in the contribution by Matthew Trundle, who examines the idea that the redistribution of economic resources in ancient Athens stimulated a general cohesion of the citizen body, which in turn facilitated the development of democracy. Whereas access to economic resources had in earlier times been primarily a privilege of the elite, once a part of that wealth was redistributed by the Athenian government to a larger group of people, for instance by payments to citizens for state service, then opportunities arose for a more democratic system to emerge.

Several contributions depart from, or start to develop, a model or theoretical framework for analyzing the relationship between masses and elites. In a contribution that focuses on concepts of communication, Loonis Logghe positions himself within the scholarly discussions that deal with the role of the people in Late Roman politics. He further develops the ideas of Fergus Millar and Robert Morstein-Marx that the role of the people was much more prominent and perhaps also more independent from the elites than has long been acknowledged. According to Logghe, plebeians were certainly knowledgeable about politics, had plenty of opportunity to develop some type of independent plebeian political discourse, and had their own channels for communicating their wishes to the members of the elite. Lisa Marie Mignone continues our quest for understanding the relationship between the upper and lower classes in Republican Rome by applying several concepts from the so-called 'spatial turn' to examine social differentiation and the residential patterns of the elite and non-elite. Her initial findings indicate that though the elite residences were concentrated on the Palatine, they were also spread throughout the city, and thus mixed with the housing areas of the lower classes. Future research into these residential patterns could develop a refined understanding of the mingling of social classes on a daily basis.

Another way of using models is offered by Clifford Ando and Harmut Ziche. Ando calls our attention to a different perspective as he considers the mass and elite dichotomy as the contrast between cities and the villages that were part of their hinterland. So far, modern scholarship has often taken the nature of village dependency for granted. However, as Ando demonstrates in his contribution, we need to reassess that view, because the ancient evidence also contains clear examples of villages that contested the dominance and demands of cities, and achieved a more balanced relationship based on negotiation. Ziche offers us a stimulating experiment in his attempt to set up a coherent model for determining possible social mobility in the middle classes for which we have so little ancient evidence in the Later Roman Empire. The basic assumption for this model is that the numbers of the elite increased in the fifth century. Ziche argues that under the right socio-economic conditions, people from various groups, such as soldiers, farmers or urban professionals, might be able to rise. Although the ancient evidence to support this model is for the most part lacking, the experiment forces us to consider whether the makeup of the elite might have been much more fluid than we have so far understood.

Several contributions in the volume concentrate on masses and elites by

way of in-depth source analyses. In his examination of the speech of the Spartan general Brasidas in Thucydides (4.126.5), Sansone di Campobianco connects physical characteristics and cultural mentality by demonstrating convincingly how military discipline, cohesion, and efficiency were reflected in the Spartan collective state of mind. Richard Evans discusses the way in which ancient authors catered to their audience, and to their audience's understanding of the relationship between the masses and the elite, as manifested in the way these authors described historical events that had occurred in a distant past. In his historical and philological analysis of Livy's Book 24, which explained the events around the fall of the dynasty of Hieronymus in Syracuse in 214 B.C., Evans argues that Livy's use of terminology, and his portrayal of the actions of the masses and of the royal wives as dangerous to the community should be regarded as a message to his contemporary audience.

Two more examples of ancient Roman source analysis are presented by Suzanne Sharland and John Hilton. Sharland's chapter offers an examination of Satire 1.6 of Horace, in which she shows how the author, though of humble background, while taking on an elitist perspective on life in Rome, reveals in his use of the many names in this Satire an extensive network of men who were connected with each other as an elite based on education, wealth and/or status (which matches Ober's categories of elites as well). In his contribution, John Hilton focuses on the fourth century AD and takes up the theme of the relationship between crowds and their leaders for which he confronts Julian's *Misopogon* with the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus. Though on the one hand this contribution is illustrative of the difficulties of comparing two different genres of literature, on the other hand the analyses also show notable similarities in the presentations of the dynamics of the relationship between rulers and their subjects.

While masses and elites are broad terms that we use to make a general division within the ancient world, within these two categories there were various sub-groups. Two contributions in the volume deal with such sub-groups. Philip Bosman attempts to position ancient cynicism within a larger discussion on the contrast between masses and the elite. Whereas the traditional scholarly view regards the social criticism expressed by ancient cynics as part of a pro-mass philosophy, Bosman argues for a slightly different interpretation in that he understands the ideas of the cynics as representing a socially marginalized perspective that was closer to popular taste than other philosophical movements. Consequently, cynicism was more strongly embedded within Greek philosophical traditions than scholars have previously acknowledged. Nicholas Baker-Brian takes a closer look at the Late Antique religious community of the Manichaeans in which there was a clear internal structure that divided the community into an elite of so-called Elects and an undifferentiated mass of so-called Hearers. Although Manicheism was not always understood by outsiders, Baker-Brian shows how the collaboration between Elects and Hearers was based on clearly defined communal structures in which the Elects appreciated the work of the Hearers, who facilitated the Elects in providing

them with the practical necessities of life.

The variety and broad range of topics that are being covered in this stimulating and interesting volume demonstrate the enormous diversity of research on masses and elites. On the one hand, the volume brings out the opportunities for multi-disciplinary approaches while on the other hand the classical philological approach via the ancient sources shows its vitality and continues to be necessary. On the whole, the volume presents various initial steps towards new interpretations and points to new avenues for future research, for which it deserves our close scholarly attention.

### **Authors and titles**

1. Mass and Elite Revisited, Josiah Ober
2. Coinage and Democracy: Economic Redistribution as the Basis of Democratic Athens, Matthew Trundle
3. The frame of mind of εὐταξία, Luca Sansone di Campobianco
4. Ancient Cynicism: For the Elite or for the Masses?, Philip Bosman
5. Livy on Mass and Elite Interaction in Syracuse in 214 BC: *Libertas, Multitudo, Uxores*, Richard Evans
6. Plebeian Agency in the Later Roman Republic, Loonis Logghe
7. Mass and Elite in the poetry of Horace: Populating Satire 1.6, Suzanne Sharland
8. Living in Republican Rome: Shanty Metropolis, Lisa Marie Mignone
9. City, village, sacrifice: The political economy of religion in the early Roman Empire, Clifford Ando
10. Crowds and Power: The *Misopogon* of the Emperor Julian and *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus, John Hilton
11. From Mass to Elite in the Later Roman Empire, Hartmut Ziche
12. Mass and Elite in Late Antique Religion: The Case of Manichaeism, Nicholas Baker-Brian

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