



Research project

Cicero's *De provinciis consularibus*: italian translation and commentary

Dottorando: Giuseppe Spinnato

Tutor: prof. Maurizio Massimo Bianco

Cotutor: prof. Carlo Martino Lucarini

1 - SUMMARY / ABSTRACT

The project has as its object of study the Ciceronian Oration *De Provinciis Consularibus*, of which it aims to provide an introduction to the main historical, stylistic, rhetorical and philological issues, a translation and a textual and exegetical analysis.

It is believed that the opportunity for this work derives in the first place from the intrinsic relevance of the oration itself and secondly from the conspicuous scarcity of commented and translated editions, especially in Italian. The work that I have chosen on the other hand is of fundamental importance as regards the orator's career and together marks a decisive stage in the process of degeneration of the *res publica*, now in fact disintegrated into poles of personalistic power: it is with the *De provinciis consularibus*, in fact, that Caesar will obtain - precisely from one of his historical enemies - another controversial extension of his mandate in Gaul.

The rhetorical analysis will be conducted on the basis of the consolidated tradition based on the classical dictation both according to the parameters of the so-called "new" Perelmanian rhetoric, and finally by resorting to a more pragmatic type of exegesis. The linguistic analysis will test the most significant or problematic *loci* and will focus on recurrences, lemmatics or forms. The commentary will therefore focus at the same time on both textual and historical, cultural and social aspects, since the oration turns out to be full of important political implications and dense references to the works that precede it. Parallel to the commentary, the translation work will proceed, which will aim to provide a complete translation of the work, in consideration of the low editorial success it seems to have enjoyed.

2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Brief description of the project

This research project proposes a work on an oration by Cicero, the *De Provinciis Consularibus in senatu oratio*, with which the speaker pleaded before the Senate, obtaining yet another extension of the mandate of Caesar in Gaul. The work I am interested in carrying out is twofold and requires working in parallel on two fronts: providing an Italian translation of the oration and, at the same time, writing an



analytical commentary. The idea of drafting a timely comment, which highlights the rhetorical and historical-cultural implications of oration, in fact collects the need to fill a conspicuous void in the bibliographic landscape in Italian. This lacuna has already been noted on several occasions by some of Milazzo's interventions (1990, 2010), and was the partial object of my three-year degree thesis work, a work in which, however, due to the pressing necessity of the intrinsic limits to a three-year thesis, I focused only on some aspects of oration, and in particular on persuasion techniques based on paradoxical and non-ordinary logic. Conceiving a broader work would therefore allow us to place ourselves in the wake of what can be considered a real cultural need. The oration in question, in fact, if subjected to careful analysis, appears to be of the greatest interest, in relation both to the oratory curriculum of Arpinate, and to his political career, and, finally, for intrinsic reasons: the strength of the proposed extension of the mandate of Caesar in Gaul rivals in intensity with the parallel invective against Gabinius and Piso, and gives this deliberative oration almost the tones of the judicial genre.

Furthermore, in the commentary, questions of textual criticism will find adequate space, especially where it will be deemed necessary to depart from the editions taken as reference and in all critical and divergent places.

At the time of writing, the main modern editions of the work (Peterson, 1911; Klotz, 1919; Cousin, 1962; Maslowski, 2007) are all in a foreign language and very dated, as are the comments, except for that of Grillo (2015), although deserving, but lacking in translation. And it is precisely for this reason that, in addition to the commentary, part of the energy will be spent in the attempt to provide a new integral translation of the work, in order to make it accessible even to a less specialized audience.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives correspond and partly overlap with the various work steps. The first objective will therefore be preliminarily to place the oration in its historical-political and cultural context, an indispensable operation to highlight its scope and singularity, since it is an oration pronounced in the decisive years that led to the ruinous collapse of the *res publica*, to which he contributed, in his own way, at least in part.

Another objective will be to highlight the theoretical lines indispensable to appreciate the argumentation strategies used by Cicero. Specifically, the spectrum of analysis will refer not only to canonical and "classical" rhetorical tools (think of the Lausberg) but also to more recent works, starting with the now well-established Treatise on argumentation by Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca finally, to try ways more linked to the pragmatics of communication, a lens that will allow us to focus on the strategies necessary to overcome the inevitable paradoxes in ordinary and Aristotelian logic, which oration must have recourse to.

The fundamental objective, which will be pursued in the central body of the work, will be precisely the analytical commentary of the various sections of the text, from the *exordium* to the final *peroratio*. The inevitable starting point will be the comparison with all the most recent annotated editions. In the commentary, particular emphasis will be placed on the peculiar and recurrent use of the logic of the necessary, the purpose of which is to identify the emotions of the speaker with the interests of the audience and of the body of the *res publica* (*ut dolor meus nihil a communi utilitate dissentiat*, Cic., De Prov. Cons., I, 1. 8-9.). Pathetism on the one hand and pragmatic reference to public utility on the other: it is the union of these two antithetical poles that is the arduous stake, the issue that the speaker aims to obtain with his speech, thus avoiding the specter of a conflict interests which in any case implies all or a good part of the oration.

At the same time as the commentary we will also proceed with the translation work, referring to the latest Italian translations (rather dated, see Bellardi, 1975) and trying to make the most of the strong



dynamism that innervates the text, always and in any case under the sign of a substantial adherence to the textual dictation.

2.3 Obtainable results

The achievable result desired in this design phase is the creation of a translated and commented edition of *De Provinciis Consularibus*, which can be offered to the Italian panorama as the original result of a careful rhetorical and textual analysis. Finally, a collateral and hoped-for consequence is that of bringing critical attention back to the Oration on the consular provinces, a much neglected piece in the mosaic of Cicero's rhetorical building, yet so full of references and points for critical reflection.