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“The Effeminate Spartacus”. The Rhetoric Description of Marc Antony in Cicero’s Philippics

The Roman historian Velleius Paterculus, a writer from Tiberius’ times, concluded the series of fourteen speeches against Marc Antony which covered the time from September 44 to April 43¹ in the style full of typical pathos:

Haec sunt tempora, quibus M. Tullius continuis actionibus aeternas Antonii memoriae inussit notas, sed hic fulgentissimo et caelesti ore... (Hist. Rom., II, 64,3),

This is the period when Cicero in a series of speeches branded the memory of Anthony for all time to come. Cicero assailed Antony with his brilliant and god-given tongue... (translation by F.W. Shipley, Velleius Paterculus, Compendium of Roman History, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, London 1924, p. 189).

It seems that the writer accurately assessed not only the talent of the orator but also the results of his performances. Text of the Philippics having been put in writing in accordance with the Arpinate’s wish, survived turmoils and wars. It became the oldest and almost complete, although not too objective, literary portrayal of Marc Antony, the consul of 44, Caesar’s *magister equitum* and a future triumvir. The splendid orator portrayed his opponent as the immoral, constantly drunken bloodthirsty tyrant. This image was successfully preserved by the propaganda of Octavian Augustus. Marc Antony had an undoubtedly complex personality which was sufficiently expressive to guarantee an interest not only of historians of antiquity but also of prominent writers like Shakespeare or even the creators of pop culture. In 1963, Joseph L. Mankiewicz and Darryl F. Zanuck directed the successful movie *Cleopatra* with the famous married couple Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor in the leading roles of Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

¹ All dates are BC.

This article is not devoted to portraying the historical Marc Antony but only to showing two elements of the literary image created by Cicero's *heavenly speech*. The term *literary* means of speech (*oratio*) as a rhetorical genre contains some amount of fiction. The overriding aim of the art of public speaking is to convince (*persuadere*) the listener to accept the speaker's beliefs. The way of achieving this goal depends on several factors the most crucial of which is the speaker's talent. Two other significant elements are the mastery of rhetoric principles and the knowledge of the listeners' psyche. As noticed by Paterculus, Cicero was the master in all those three. In each of the fourteen speeches, Arpinate tried to achieve a different goal addressing each of them to a different group of people – the Senate and the people of Rome. However, the common purpose of the orations was to arouse aversion and contempt among the Romans towards Marc Antony so as to eliminate him from public life². For many reasons, Cicero did not manage to achieve this purpose. On the contrary, as historians agree, he provoked the anger of Marc Antony and, as a consequence the death sentence by means of proscription letters.

Rhetorical theory gave the orator a weapon to fight his opponent a kind of the epideictic speech called *vituperatio*, today known as invective³. It was a popular and effective form of a verbal attack – in court as well as in the Forum⁴. Cicero's works do not contain as many pure invectives as one would wish and, what is more, the Second Philippic is the only one speech preserved in its entirety⁵. This does not mean that the element of reprimand does not appear in the Arpinate's orations when he played a role of a prosecutor or a defender during his long judicial practice. For the Romans it was obvious that one can have or not have the civic ethos. A man who had *auctoritas*, either achieved with his actions (as in the case of Cicero) or inherited from ancestors (as in patricians' case), had a moral duty to evaluate the character of the political opponents or defendants. This is why so many of the Arpinate's speeches consist mostly of the analysis of a lifestyle and personality of a defendant and not of the examination of evidence or the testimony of witnesses⁶. Analyzing

² Hall 2002, 294, writes that the primary aim of the Philippics was to convince the Senate to take firm actions against Antony and to organize a military force to fight the proconsul.

³ Ammianus Marcellinus was the first author to use this word, although Cicero used the verb *inveho* which means to *attack verbally*.

⁴ Corbeill 2002, 201, lists ten *topoi* of Roman invective: servile heritage, barbarian (non-Roman) background, having a non-elite occupation, thievery, non-standard sexual behaviour, estrangement from family and community, melancholy disposition, unusual appearance, clothing or demeanor, cowardice and bankruptcy.

⁵ Tatum 2010, 336, considers the Second Philippic to be a classic, paradigmatic invective.

⁶ May 1988, 6–7.

the entire negative description of Marc Antony preserved in the Philippics⁷ would take too much space, so our research will focus on two elements of Ciceronian *vituperatio* – the effeminacy of the consul and his *blunt masculinity* represented in the picture of Antony as a gladiator. It should be emphasized that whereas effeminacy can be classified as a non-standard sexual behaviour, calling a political opponent a gladiator or even Spartacus does not fit in the Roman convention of invectives. The clear contradiction of the two elements of description is quite typical for the invective, whose task is to denigrate the rival’s reputation by referring to the stereotypical fears of the Roman audience and not to present a real man. Constructing a rhetorical portrayal of Antony, Cicero turned to two areas of the Roman *collective memory*. The culture of the Republic, based on *mos maiorum*, was inextricably associated with masculinity. At the roots of the archetypical *agricola et miles* or the basic concept of this culture, *virtus*, formed from *vir*, ‘man’. The patriarchal culture of the Republic required citizens to display a specific kind of behaviour, involving courage, temperance, responsibility, humility, restraint and physical strength, without undue concern for one’s physical appearance, and a few other features which can be found in the characters of parenthetical writings. Any behaviour which did not match the *topos* of the ideal Roman allowed the orator to sow in the minds of his audience some doubt about the masculinity of the described person⁸. It was, however, quite different when the invective referred to a *gladiator*. It seems that it was a relatively new element, referring to the fresh memory and the recent fear of Spartacus and his army.

The first such motive appearing in the Philippics is the image of the effeminate consul. Only once, in the Third Philippic, does Cicero describe Antony by exactly this epithet:

Cum autem est servitus misera, tum vero intolerabile est servire inpuro, inpudico, effeminato, numquam ne in metu quidem sobrio (III, 5, 12),

“And while all slavery is miserable, slavery to a vile, debauched, effeminate, who is never sober even when he is terrified, is downright intolerable”⁹.

⁷ The author of Antony’s biography, Huzar 1978, 99, enumerates the epithets used by Cicero in the Second Philippic to describe the consul: *drunkard, gladiator, ruffian, debauchee, homosexual*, and even *coward*. The author is right when she writes that *even in an age of extravagant political invective and character assassination, Cicero’s charges gave evidence of his deep personal hatred, and-taken all to literally – they have blackened Antony’s reputation for later generation*.

⁸ The fact of having even a single defect was seen as a proof of moral degeneration. Cic., *Inv.*, 2, 33; *Rhet. Her.*, 2, 5.

⁹ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 189.

Describing the opponent by the epithets referring to his private life (*argumenta ex vita*), Arpinata suggests that slavery is worse than obedience to the effeminate and perverted commander. Antony's drunkenness is a separate issue, which, perhaps, had some factual basis, since Antony had to write a pamphlet *De sua ebrietate* in order to refute the allegation of immorality. The topic of demoralization and the allusions to effeminacy had already appeared in the classical invective in the Second Philippic. The orator accused the adversary of surrendering to an immoral lust (*libido non ferenda* – II, 6, 15)¹⁰, which was manifested in diverse meretricious acts (*omnis impuritates*) committed in a shameless home (*impudica in domo* – II, 3, 6). It is worth noting that Cicero does not exemplify the charges yet. He is only highlighting their erotic nature and the place in which Antony committed his sins. In the Roman culture, the house was not only the space of women's activities but also a showcase of the man. It was there that every morning the patron received his clients and met with his political friends¹¹. There was a reason why Velleius Paterculus quoted the anecdote about the famous tribune of the plebs of 91 – Livius Drusus, who had his house built in such a way that all the citizens knew that he had nothing to hide (II, 14, 2–4). Antony's house is presented in the Philippics as a place of sin (II, 21, 50; II, 28, 69; III, 14, 35; V, 4, 11), bribery (II, 37, 94; III, 4, 10) and embezzlement (VI, 14, 35). As the first proof of the consul's moral decay is given his intimate familiarity with Gaius Scribonius Curio. In fact, it was a male friendship, which was based not only on serious conversations about politics but also on common pastimes natural for young men¹². Cicero summed up their relationship in the *biographical* part of the never delivered Second Philippic¹³:

Sumpsisti virilem quam statim muliebrem togam reddidisti. Primo vulgare scortum, certa flagitii merces, nec ea parva, sed cito Curio intervenit, qui te a meretricio quaestu abduxit et, tamquam stolam dedisset in matrimonio stabili et certo collocavit. Nemo unquam puer emptus libidinis causa tam fuit in domini potestate quam tu in Curionis (II, 18, 44),

“You put on the toga of manhood and promptly turned it into the badge of a harlot. You started out as a common whore. Your shame had a fixed price, and no mean one.

¹⁰ Cicero often attacked his opponents accusing them of *libido* – Verr., 1, 77,78; Cluen., 15, Cat., 2,10; Cons., 16; Pis., 36; Mil., 76; Cael., 15. See i.e. Meril 1975, 15.

¹¹ Richlin 1981, 150.

¹² Huzar 1978, 24, writes about this friendship in the following way: *Curio and Antony became inseparable and corrupt companions, adding to their irregular attachment affairs with women, drinking bouts, and desperately heavy debts*. Plutarch, *Vita Antonii*, II, 3, claims that it was Curio who had a disruptive influence on Antony and should be held responsible for his friend's moral decay.

¹³ It was published by Atticus as a pamphlet at the end of November 44. See: Sussman 1998, 116.

But quite soon, along came Curio, who took you out of the prostitute’s trade, gave you a married lady’s robe as it were, and settled you down in steady wedlock. No slave boy bought to satisfy lust was ever so completely in his master’s power as you were in Curio’s”¹⁴.

In the quoted passage Cicero masterfully suggests the absolute effeminacy of the consul, presented here as a fallen woman¹⁵ brought back to the social life thanks to the noble Curio by means of marriage. Even the apparel described by the Arpinate corresponded to Roman reality: prostitutes wore togas, while the *stola* was a matronly apparel¹⁶. In this passage we can see a metaphorical image of the young Antony’s *settling down* under the influence of Curio’s love. To complete the picture of the opponent’s effeminacy, Cicero spoke of his *unmanly* submission to the authority of the husband¹⁷. While the allegations raised by the Arpinate match the convention of the invective (the charge of prostitution in early age, assuming the passive position in homosexual contacts), it has to be admitted that Cicero added to them some artistic touch. A couple of verses later the orator, by means of a slick *praeteritio* (a figure which involves the declaration of the omission of a specific statement made in order to make the listeners pay attention to it) brings the charge to the minds of his listeners:

Sed iam stupra et flagitia omittamus, sunt quaedam, quae honeste non possum dicere (II, 19, 47),

“But let us say no more of shame and debauchery. There are some things of which I cannot decently speak”¹⁸.

Once again, the orator mentions the *marital* relation with Curio, implying that Antony was in a relationship with a *woman*:

¹⁴ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 97. A little earlier, in the same speech, he negated Antony’s masculinity:

...*laudo, quod non indicasti, gratias ago, quod non fecisci, ignosco. Virum res illa quaerebat* (II, 14, 34–35),

I thank you for not turning informer. I forgive you for not taking action. That enterprise needed a man (Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 89).

¹⁵ A plea of engaging in prostitution in early age in order to satisfy one’s cravings is a common *topos* in the invective. See Sallust., *Cat.*, 24, 3.

¹⁶ The theme of dressing up in women’s clothes was present in the Roman invective. In Cicero’s, *In Clodium et Curionem*, 21–23, the author describes Clodius dressing up like a girl, and in II speech against Catilina, 2, 22, 2, he describes a group of conspirators wearing female dresses.

¹⁷ The majority of modern biographers of Marc Antony highlight the important role of his third wife – Fulvia – in his career. Huzar 1978, 70, writes: *Fulvia was a manager, and Antony was manageable*.

¹⁸ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 99.

...advolasti egens ad tribunatum, ut in eo magistratu, si posses, viri tui similis¹⁹ esses (II, 20, 50),

“...impoverished you swooped down on the tribunate, with the intention, if you could, of performing in that office like your husband”²⁰.

Lewis A. Sussman analyzes the fragment discussed above as a comedic scene in which Antony is portrayed as a greedy prostitute (*meretrix*) and young Curio is an *adulescens* who is in love with *her*. Curio’s anxious father, mentioned at the end of the story, is the old man from the comedy (*senex*)²¹. It should be noted that the only object of criticism in the analyzed passage is Antony: his partner – masculine, caring, and a good tribune, did not suffer any harm to his image. The reason for this was not only the friendship between Cicero and Curio’s father²² but also Roman morality, quite tolerant in such matters, which allowed young men to participate in homosexual activities (for example, with household slaves) provided they retained the masculine, active role in the relation – and this is how young Curio behaves²³. The last time when Cicero directly compares Antony to a woman is the elaborate metaphor concerning the tribunal of 49, which was the year of the beginning of the Civil War, for the outbreak of which the orator blamed Marc:

Ut Helena Troianis, sic iste huic rei publicae causa belli, causa pestis atque exiti fuit (II, 22, 55),

“As Helen was to the Trojans, so this fellow was this Republic, the cause of war, the cause of ruinous destruction”²⁴.

External attributes of femininity included, apart from the feminine outfit, the focus on one’s physical appearance expressed by the use of cosmetics. Cicero mentioned that Antony used perfume:

¹⁹ Curio was a tribune alongside Caesar in 50.

²⁰ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 103.

²¹ Sussman 1998, 116, perceives this section as similar to Cicero’s defense of the speech on Caelius, where the couple of protagonists was interpreted in a similar way: Clodia Metelli as the *meretrix*, Marc Caelius Rufus as the *adulescens*. What is more, just as *Pro Caelio* was delivered during *Ludi Megalenses* (3–4 April 56), the holidays during which comedies were staged, the *Second Philippic*, as a response to Antony’s speech from 19 September 44, referred to *Ludi Romani* (they ended on the 18th of September), when both comedies and tragedies were staged.

²² Gaius Scribonius Curio was already dead at the moment of the speech’s deliverance. He died in Africa in 49.

²³ Cristofoli 2004, 166, looks for the sources of rumours about Antony’s affair with Curio in Octavian’s surrounding. However, this is not convincing, because it is difficult to imagine that the young Octavian in the autumn of 44 had a team of helpers around him.

²⁴ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 109.

...quo enim ille die, populo Romano inspectante, nudus, unctus, ebrius est contionatus et id egit, ut collegae diadema imponeret (III, 5, 12),

“...on that day, when before the eyes of the Roman People he made a public speech naked, oiled and drunk and tried to place a diadem on his colleague”²⁵.

The rhetorical vision of the attempted *coronation* of Caesar during Lupercalia (which explains Antony’s nudity) in 44 results from Cicero’s decision to blame Antony for the incident – the effeminate Antony, devoid of reason because of his drunkenness. Creating the consistent image of the immoral (debauchery with comedians, II, 6, 15; II, 39, 102; VIII, 8, 26; X, 10, 22), eternally drunken and effeminate opponent aims at destroying the public trust in him and eliminating him from the political life. Another important thing is that the image of the effeminate leader had a strong humorous strain. This could serve as a weapon against Antony because it showed that he is not dangerous but ridiculous and not worth being regarded seriously²⁶.

When the time passed and the situation in Rome and *Gallia Cisalpina*, where Antony went on 28 November 44 as a deputy and Decimus Brutus performed his functions as a deputy, underwent some development, the Arpinate changed his attack tactic. The effeminacy of the enemy is now mentioned more and more rarely, whereas the references to his non-Roman attitude as well as such terms as *villain*, *gladiator* and *Spartacus* are frequent. While the theme of the consul’s effeminacy can be read as a joke on his masculinity, the new metaphor is not at all humorous. This motive appeared for the first time in the Second Philippic, accompanied by the typical allegations against the consul:

Tu istis faucibus, istis lateribus, ista gladiatoria totius corporis firmitate tantum vini in Hippiae²⁷ nuptis exhauseras, ut tibi necesse esset in populi Romani conspectu vomere postridie (II, 25, 63),

“With that gullet of yours, that chest, that robust physique befitting a gladiator, you engulfed such a quantity of wine at Hippias’ wedding that the following day you found it necessary to vomit in full view of the Roman people”²⁸.

The motive of Antony as a gladiator is introduced in a subtle way: by means of an analogy between the muscular and masculine body of the consul and the gladiator’s appearance. Plutarch, *Vita Antonii*, IV, 1, mentions that

²⁵ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 189.

²⁶ Hall 2002, 288.

²⁷ Plutarch, *Vita Antonii*, 9, claims that he was a mimic actor.

²⁸ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 115–117.

Antony took advantage of his masculine appearance to popularize the tradition that his family derived from Anthonos – the son of Hercules. Antony's physical appearance, the effect of military training, tested on the battlefield and well-received by the lower social stratum²⁹ is an evident proof of his military experience, but Cicero depreciated it by comparing it with the appearance of a slave with the body trained in gladiatorial schools so as to provide the crowd with amusement. The Arpinate suggests that, in spite of his physicality, Antony does not possess any competences which should characterize a good soldier, not to mention a military commander. In the Third Philippic, the epithet *gladiator* appears only once (III, 7, 18), but the context does not explain the use of this word by the orator. Some light is thrown on the mystery by the sentence from the Seventh Philippic referring to Lucius Antonius, Marc's brother, who, as Cicero says in a later passage, fought in Asia as a *myrmillo* (VII, 6, 18):

...ut interdum etiam M. Antonius gladiator appellari solet³⁰, sed ut appellant qui plane et Latine loquuntur (VII,6, 17)

“...as Marcus Antonius too is sometimes called a gladiator, but I do so like those who speak plain Latin”³¹.

The Arpinate admits that, when referring to Marc, he uses the term *gladiator* as a metaphor³². Some inspiration for such description of Antony may have been drawn from his widely criticized behaviour from 48/47 when, Antony represented Caesar in Rome as a *magister equitum*, when the latter was in Egypt. While the latter was in Egypt, Antony, to the outrage of the nobles, ostentatiously wore a commander's clothing even for the meetings of the Senate. Plutarch, *Vita Antonii*, IV, 2, writes: *For whenever he was going to be seen by many people, he always wore his tunic girt up to his thigh, a large sword hung at his side, and a heavy cloak enveloped him*. Perhaps the soldier's outfit of Marc inspired the Arpinate to associate the consul with a commander of a slave army. In addition, although the speaker does not mention it, it was Antony that used the epithet *Spartacus* for the first time in his edicts against Octavian. The Arpinate probably used the opponent's argument to attack him³³. In another speech, Cicero introduces this motive in an antithesis containing an anaphoric *gradatio* enumerating Antony's sins in gradation order:

²⁹ Plutarch, *Vita Antonii*, IV, 2, writes that Marc had good rapport with his soldiers.

³⁰ The phrase *appellari solet* used in an impersonal way suggests that the epithet was in common use.

³¹ Manuwald 2007, 19.

³² Only Cicero called Antony in this way, Manuwald 2007, 879.

³³ Manuwald 2007, 401.

Est igitur, Quirites, populo Romano, victori omnium gentium, omne certamen cum percussore, cum latrone, cum Spartaco (IV, 6, 15),

“So, Men of Rome, the whole conflict lies between the Roman people, the conqueror of all nations, and an assassin, a bandit, a Spartacus”³⁴.

This strongly *rhetorized* sentence (apart from the other figures, it contains the paranomasia *omnium, omne*) is full of pathos and captures the emotions of the speaker, but does not help in understanding the semantic context of the epithet *Spartacus*. It seems that Kazimierz Kumaniecki is not right in his claim that *Spartacus* was for Cicero a synonym for the *outlaw*³⁵. The gradation used in the preceding sentence implies that the term is considered to be stronger and more dangerous in its meaning than the *latro*. A reply is provided by the fragment of the Thirteenth Philippic, which says:

O Spartace! Quem enim te potius appellem, cuius propter nefanda scelera tolerabilis videtur fuisse Catilina? (XIII, 10, 22),

“Spartacus! What better name to call you by? Your abominable crimes make Catiline look tolerable by contrast in retrospect”³⁶.

The Arpinate once again uses the figures full of pathos, such as apostrophe and rhetorical question, to emphasize an important message to the audience, namely that Antony is a greater criminal or threat to the Republic than Catiline, who had previously been depicted as a monster, threatening the citizens with annihilation and with burning Rome³⁷. Comparing Antony to the leader of the most threatening slave uprising aims not only at arousing the fear of the politician but also at suggesting that the army which obeys such a commander is in fact a bunch of rogues (XIII, 9.20, *latrones*), ready to ravage and plunder the citizens’ estates and kill their owners³⁸. The rhetorical exaggeration obliges the Arpinate to describe the events in Gaul as the mad gladiator’s total war against his homeland³⁹, shown through the prism of the *sacrum*:

Unus furiosus gladiator cum taeterrimorum manu contra patriam, contra deos penatis, contra aras et focos, contra quattuor consules gerit bellum (XIII, 7, 16),

³⁴ Ramsey, Manuwald 2009, 237.

³⁵ Kumaniecki 1989, 106.

³⁶ Manuwald 2007, 253.

³⁷ Cicero, *Cat.*, 2, 1.

³⁸ It is possible that Cicero calls Marc Spartacus because he wants to make the audience think that Antony assembled the army illegally, out of the armed criminals, and now presents a danger to the Republic and its legal authorities, Manuwald 2007, 402.

³⁹ Antony as a mad gladiator appears also in Cic., *Phil.*, V, 12, 32; XIII, 11, 25.

“A single frantic gladiator with a band of horrible brigands makes war upon our native land, upon our household gods, upon our altars and hearths, upon four consuls”⁴⁰.

The image of Marc Antony, presented as an effeminate gladiator, fits perfectly the canon of the rhetorical invective. It should be noted that the famous speaker used in its construction two methods of description. Drawing his portrayal of the effeminate consul, Cicero referred to the element of a verbal assault. The allegation of effeminacy against a statesman often appeared in the public space⁴¹ and in the speeches of the Arpinate. Cicero accused of unmanly behaviour Verres (*In Verrem*, 2, 5, 81), Clodius (*Pro Milone*, 55, *De haruspicum responsis*, 42; *De domo sua*, 49), Catiline (*In Catilinam*, 2, 4, 8), and Aulus Gabinius (*De domo sua*, 60; *De provinciis consularibus*, 9). According to Catherine Edwards, Roman writers associated effeminacy with political, social and moral weakness⁴². Interestingly, being feminized in public opinion was mostly connected with intense sexual contacts with women. This apparent paradox is also present in the case of insults directed at Antony. The Roman audience knew the convention of verbal attack on the politicians, expected it and was entertained by it, but most likely did not believe in the claims it implied. Cicero, describing in this way Marc Antony, a famous seducer of women⁴³, was aware the plea of effeminacy had little force, and it seems that in introducing this element to his invectives he intended to complete the description of the corrupted politician⁴⁴. The case of the image of gladiator, however, is very different. As mentioned in the introduction, this image was a relatively short-functioning part of the negative rhetorical description. It seems that Cicero attached to it more importance, since all the sentences in which Antony is associated with the gladiator or Spartacus are very strongly *rhetorized*. Not only do they reveal the speaker’s emotional involvement, but also arouse in the audience fear of the self-proclaimed, (according to Cicero) governor of the province of Cisalpine Gaul, behaving in a non-Roman way. Today, it is difficult to decide how important was the Cicero’s description of Antony in convincing the audience to take military action against him as compared to the other factors. Nonetheless, the perspective of the modern reader interested in Antony’s biography,

⁴⁰ Manuwald 2007, 247

⁴¹ The oldest preserved example of such an attack is the fragment of the speech of Scipio Emilianus, a speech against Publius Sulpicius Galus, Corbeill 2002, 209. Suetonius, *Div. Iul.*, 49, quotes the texts containing similar attacks against Caesar. Cicero himself could not get away from such charges, Sall., *Cic.*, 1,2; 5,13.

⁴² Edwards 1993, 65.

⁴³ Antony was often described as a *habitual womaniser*, see: Griffin 1985, 2.

⁴⁴ Sussman 1998, 114–115, claims that Cicero described Marc as assuming a passive role in the relationship in order to show the *audacia* of Antony, who for money and power is willing to do anything, in the most vivid and dramatic way possible.

may prompt the reflection that, while no one sees in the Cleopatra's lover an effeminate Roman, it is easy to notice in him some positive qualities of wild, masculine strength, represented by the romantic vision of the gladiator. That state of things, however, was probably not anticipated by the author of the Philippics.

Streszczenie

„Zniewieściału Spartakus”. Retoryczny opis Marka Antoniusza w Filipikach Cyncerona

Marek Tuliusz Cynceron dysponował znakomicie opanowanym warsztatem retorycznym. Dla starożytnego mówcy podstawowym odniesieniem argumentacyjnym był człowiek traktowany wieloaspektowo. Oceniano więc nie tylko czyny, słowa, najbliższe otoczenie, ale i charakter. Jak podkreślają autorzy rzymskich retoryk, wystarczyła jedna pomyłka w działaniu czy rysa na charakterze, by zdyskredytować polityka, wyeliminować świadka procesu, pogrzyźć oskarżonego. Audytorium Cyncerona było świadome sztuki retorycznej i z upodobaniem słuchało mów walczących stron na różnych zgromadzeniach. Filipiki, czyli czternaście ostatnich mów Arpinaty, zwalczających Marka Antoniusza i jego politykę, są zróżnicowane zarówno merytorycznie, jak i formalnie. Najobszerniejsza niewyłoszona II Filipika stanowi przykład klasycznej inwektywy, w której Cynceron odsłania mistrzostwo retorycznego warsztatu. Spośród wielu „portretów” konsula 44 roku kreślonych zjadliwym piórem Arpinaty wybrano dwa pozornie sprzeczne. Pierwszym jest obraz zniewieściałego Antoniusza. Mówca posłużył się w tej deskrypcji topiką opisu tego typu zachowań. Zarzucił swojemu antagoniście nadmierną dbałość o wygląd fizyczny oraz pozostawanie w homoseksualnym związku ze Skryboniuszem Kurionem, pełniącym w tym układzie rolę „męża”. W ten sposób Cynceron sugerował, że Antoniusz, jako „kobieta”, nie może być ani konsulem, ani wodzem. O ile *effeminatus* to typowy zabieg deprecjonowania przeciwnika, o tyle nazwanie Antoniusza niewolnikiem i Spartakusem jest „autor-skim” pomysłem retora. Najprawdopodobniej mówcę zainspirowało zachowanie Lucjusza, brata Marka, który w Azji walczył w przebraniu myrmillona. Należy zauważyć, że tylko Cynceron nazwał Marka w ten sposób. Może to świadczyć o emocjonalnym zaangażowaniu mówcy, który starał się stworzyć względnie kompletny, ze wszech miar negatywny portret swojego antagonisty, dając jednocześnie popis mistrzowskiego opanowania warsztatu retora.

