

Kent Academic Repository

Full text document (pdf)

Citation for published version

Burden-Strevens, C. W. (2020) Speeches in History: An Anthology. Review of: Anthologies of Historiographical Speeches from Antiquity to Early Modern Times: Rearranging the Tesserae by Iglesias-Zoido, J. C. and Pineda, V.. *Histos*, 14 . pp. 7-12.

DOI

Link to record in KAR

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/80051/>

Document Version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

Copyright & reuse

Content in the Kent Academic Repository is made available for research purposes. Unless otherwise stated all content is protected by copyright and in the absence of an open licence (eg Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher, author or other copyright holder.

Versions of research

The version in the Kent Academic Repository may differ from the final published version.

Users are advised to check <http://kar.kent.ac.uk> for the status of the paper. **Users should always cite the published version of record.**

Enquiries

For any further enquiries regarding the licence status of this document, please contact:

researchsupport@kent.ac.uk

If you believe this document infringes copyright then please contact the KAR admin team with the take-down information provided at <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/contact.html>

Review: J. Carlos Iglesias-Zoido & V. Pineda (eds.), *Anthologies of Historiographical Speeches from Antiquity to Early Modern Times: Rearranging the Tesserae*. Brill International Studies in the History of Rhetoric 7. Leiden & Boston 2017.

I apologise for the lateness of this review.

This collection of chapters offers a number of important surveys of anthologies of historiographical speeches: that is, mainly, collections of notable and exemplary discourses in ancient and early modern historiographical works, compiled at a later time as models for study or entertainment. The scope of the collection is certainly impressive: its nineteen chapters, organised into three parts (I: Antiquity; II: Byzantium and the Middle Ages; III: Early Modern Age), survey some of the most important evidence for the afterlife of historiographical set-pieces—especially those from antiquity—in the intellectual and courtly circles of Mediaeval and Renaissance Europe. Accordingly, Remigio Nannini's *Orationi militari* (Venice, 1547) and the *Harangues militaires* of Francois de Belleforest (Paris, 1573) are given especially detailed treatment, alongside some dozen other texts from the periods studied. The final result is an ambitious survey of considerable breadth and richness.

However, such an impressive scope poses also a trade-off for the coherency and conclusiveness of the volume. As a general rule, the individual contributions do not directly address or respond to one another, even where they deal with the same compilation or anthology. Many of the chapters are exploratory or descriptive rather than argumentative. The exploratory surveys are illuminating in themselves, but some readers may wish to arrive at compelling and distinctive conclusion to tie together the material and underline its importance. A few chapters survey the speeches in specific historiographical texts rather than discussing their afterlife in anthologies, and seem out of place in the present volume. Many provide appendices; these add to the usefulness of the volume in general, although their actual function within the work itself is unclear, and they are rarely referred to. Finally, the volume and its individual chapters might underline more clearly which readership is envisaged. The reader familiar already with the anthologies discussed will find their treatment here too broad. These are, for the most part, introductory surveys. But introductory surveys for whom? For classicists interested in the reception of antiquity, for historians of education, or for scholars of Mediaeval and Renaissance European history and culture? The former will find little detailed discussion of the later adaptation of specific Classical texts in this volume; however, the latter two audiences will undoubtedly find the surveys an important addition to their understanding of Mediaeval and Renaissance intellectual culture and its intersection with political history. The overall result, in the opinion of this reviewer, is a mixed bag.

It will not be possible in what follows to give a detailed study of each of the nineteen contributions contained within this volume. Instead, I will select those chapters which seem to me the best examples of the success of its approach, alongside some examples of the issues listed above.

Turning first to its coherency, this volume is certainly at its best when it focusses explicitly on its chosen theme: anthologies of historiographical speeches. Part II—dealing with anthologies compiled in Byzantium and the Middle Ages—and Part III—dealing with the Early Modern period—present a rich collection of such texts. In Part II, two chapters on the compilations of Juan Fernández de Heredia, a 14th-century Grand Master of the Knights of St. John and compiler and translator of two anthologies (the *Tucidides* and *Crónica Troyana*), sit

together excellently as Chapter 6 (Sanz Julián) and Chapter 7 (Iglesias-Zoido). Part III provides a coherent series of studies on individual compilers (Ch. 10: Nannini; Ch. 11: Estienne; Ch. 12: Belleforest; Ch. 13: Junius), followed by useful studies comparing the way in which two of the most important anthologies—those of Nannini and Belleforest—address their contemporary historical contexts (Ch. 14; Ch. 15). Arranged chronologically, Part II ends with studies on compilation work undertaken in the seventeenth century, for example the *Trésor des livres d'Amadis* (Ch. 18) and Italian, French, and Spanish collections of *orationes fictae* (Ch. 19). These chapters serve as an excellent introduction to the main compendia of historiographical speeches in the period under discussion.

However, certain other contributions—though compelling in themselves—sit oddly with this mix. Chapter 3 (Candau), for example, investigates the criticisms levied by Polybius in Book 12 of his *History* against the ambassador speeches of his Hellenistic predecessor, Timaeus. Candau finds that Polybius' criticisms of Timaeus may be unjust, since the latter evidently modified the speeches found in his source (Herodotus) in such a way as to emphasise the importance of his native Sicily. Polybius—naturally enough—did not account for this agenda, and simply viewed Timaeus' distortion of his original source as a perversion of history. This is a fascinating and persuasive analysis, and warns us that speeches in Classical historiography provoked a range of methods and attitudes. The word 'anthology' is notably absent here, however, since neither Polybius nor Timaeus were composing anthologies, nor saw their tasks as those of compilation. This is rather a specific study of the critical attitude of an individual ancient author. The same may be said for Chapters 16 (Mastrorosa) and 17 (Black), where very limited discussion is given to anthologies. Black provides a stimulating survey of the speeches in the *Florentine Histories* of Machiavelli, with rich analysis of his complex relationship with humanist education and his reception of Latin texts. But this is not a study of an anthology nor of a selection of speeches, as the Introduction to the volume itself concedes (p. 21); it is a detailed study of a standalone *historiographical* project, not a compilation. To that end also Mastrorosa delivers a cogent survey of some speeches in Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, with helpful summary of that historian's purposes of analysis and characterisation in drafting the speeches of Caesar, Cicero, and Antonius (esp. pp. 322–333). The afterlife of Dio's speeches in Nannini, however, gets a comparatively brief mention (pp. 333–337) and is not the main subject of the study.

Turning to the arguments of specific chapters, the most compelling discussions in this collection are those which combine analysis with description to develop an explicit and argumentative response to the volume's chosen themes. In the Introduction (p. 1), the editors pose their research questions as follows:

What makes this genre unique and different from other anthologies? What are the specific features of these works? Who are the excerptors? What kind of audience do they work for? For what purpose? Which historians are the most anthologized? How were these books disseminated? What other kinds of readings apart from the rhetorical—for example, political, ethical, or cultural—could be extracted from the collections? What was the history of transmission of some of these collections? How did the anthologies affect the way history was read?

A number of studies give robust analysis in answer to these questions. These are especially illuminating when they engage in detail with the content of the anthology under discussion and explore the relationship between that content and the historical context of its production. Pineda's chapter on Belleforest (Ch. 12) gives fine examples of the compiler's use of speeches pertaining to religious wars in order to advance a Catholic agenda (pp. 245–246: "popes, emperors, kings, princes, ambassadors, captains, nobles, gentlemen, and soldiers

parade through these pages, always with a very clear objective: to make the readers understand that reason is on the side of the Catholics and that they should not be seduced by the siren song of tolerance that at times had held the [French] Crown in its thrall, especially during the [*sic*] Catherine de' Medici's regency in the 1560s"). Here the selection of speeches is defined as a political and religious act. It is fascinating reading. Unfortunately, rather less is made of this important theme in the following chapter on Melchoir Junius (Ch. 13), where the author merely notes that the Lutheran compiler omitted examples from Spain, "whose tradition was clearly Catholic" (p. 272). It would be revealing—and work better for the volume's purposes—to see a more deliberate comparison of these two points of view, and indeed to see more cross-referencing between other chapters in this volume, which is sadly rare.

However, Tubau's chapter on the presentation of modern history in Nannini and Belleforest (Ch. 15) is a model of what a comparative, detailed, and text-focussed approach can achieve for the volume's ends. Using rich specific examples from both anthologies, Tubau demonstrates that in the aftermath of the Italian Wars, Belleforest deliberately modified and re-interpreted parts of Nannini's anthology in order to redeem the actions of the French in Italy, even where Nannini's original took a more critical tone. Carefully guiding the reader (who may be unschooled in the period) through the historical context, Tubau gives a compelling and detailed analysis of two relatively contrasting takes on a thrilling period, showing—like Pineda (Ch. 12)—that the compilation of an anthology could be *per se* a political act. Tubau's contribution demonstrates an approach that works especially well in this volume. The discussion is argumentative, beginning with a detailed introduction and clear statement of the line to be followed. The analysis is supported by revealing quoted examples from the texts, and the point is sufficiently compelling and/or noteworthy to merit a full and proper conclusion. The same must certainly be said of Pineda (Ch. 12, above), the fine study by Nicolai on Dionysius of Halicarnassus' selection from Thucydides (Ch. 2), and Iglesias-Zoido's excellent introduction to Nannini's *Orationi Militari* (Ch. 10); the latter makes for especially engaging reading.

Unfortunately, not all of the chapters adopt this approach. A few are highly descriptive and tend not to analyse the selection and content of the speeches. Teresa Jiménez Calvente's study on a manuscript of Fenando de Pulgar's anthology (Ch. 8) begins by emphasising the importance of connecting his work to the cultural and intellectual context in which he worked (p. 154), but in the end does not do so: much of the discussion gets bogged down in a description of the palaeography rather than an analysis of its context. Calvente mentions the relevance of analysing the contents of the speeches it contains (p. 160) and highlights that the discourses in direct speech deserve real literary analysis (p. 165), but does neither of these things. Promisingly, the author mentions that the chronicler "wastes no opportunity to introduce his political thought into [the speeches]" (p. 165), but Pulgar's political thought is never outlined in detail. The contribution is, in sum, a "brief review" (p. 165). This review raises promising research questions—the intellectual and historical context, literary analysis of the content, and the relationship between that content and Pulgar's politics. These are the kinds of theme broached so compellingly in many other chapters; yet by the conclusion the reader is left wondering why a similar attempt could not be made here. In the end, this detailed description of a particular manuscript tradition is something of an outlier in the collection, and the reader interested in this volume's themes might wish to trade the questions Calvente does answer for the questions she does not. The same may be said of María Sanz Julian's discussion of Heredia's *Crónica Troyana* (Ch. 6). Although it forms a fine pairing with Iglesias-Zoido's chapter on the same compiler (Ch. 7), detailed discussion of the content

and context of the anthology's selection is very limited (pp. 127–130), and there is much description of its physical form. For example (p. 119):

The binding is made of leather with four helmets on embossed circles on both covers. The circles frame a coat of arms, which is quite damaged on the front cover and completely detached at the back. The coat of arms is quarterly per saltire; in chief and base vert, a bend gules fimbriated Or, and in flanks Or, a motto sable “ave [m]aria / gratia [plena]”, which is only partially legible.

For the reader interested in this volume's research questions, a more compelling suggestion of what might be gleaned from the study of a particular manuscript is given in Immacolata Erano's analysis of *Ambrosianus* B 119 sup. (Ch. 5), where the author convincingly outlines possible agendas for the compilation of the anthology in its historical context (esp. pp. 100–103, 108–109).

Oddly this latter chapter does not come to a conclusion as such, and this fact raises a further issue: a number of the contributions end with concluding remarks that are very brief or rather more straightforward than the editors may wish. For example, David Carmona's description of Melchoir Junius' rhetorical training manuals (Ch. 13) does not open with a particular line of argument as such, and arrives at the conclusion that the anthology of exemplary speeches which Junius compiled for his students “is an example of one teacher of rhetoric's unstinting effort to provide his students with the most educational selection possible” (p. 278; cf. also 270: “both at the beginning and the end, everything was designed with his students in mind and for their benefit”). This is indeed only what we would expect from a teacher of rhetoric who compiled training manuals. The shortest conclusion in the volume is a single sentence and is not relevant to the volume's theme of anthologies (p. 355). Moreover, the high quality of some of the contributions is such that the reader is certainly left wanting more from the conclusion. Serrano's fine study of the *Trésor des livres d'Amadis* (Ch. 18) closes briefly with the note that “the texts of the *Amadis* tradition, both the complete novels and the *Trésor*, are a closed fictional universe, combining the literary utility of the work as a model of good French and its use as a manual of courtesy with an undeniable rhetorical purpose” (pp. 375–376). Since its use as a manual of courtesy and good French are already well-established, the reader is left in need of a fuller explanation of what that rhetorical purpose entails and how its discovery here is distinctive. The word “rhetorical”, indeed, is used very broadly in this chapter (p. 372: “the different labels applied to the speeches also point to different rhetorical practices; some, such as *harangue* and *concion*, have a rhetorical interpretation....; p. 373: “*varietas* and *copia* were the rhetorical key to this success”; p. 375: “with his elegant translation, the publishers added rhetorical prestige to the *Amadis* cycle”). Can one interpret a *harangue* or *contio* as anything but rhetorical? By rhetorical prestige, do we refer to the status of the translator Herberay, or his claims about what the reader may learn? Is this application of rhetoric practical and instructive? And what is a “rhetorical key”? The term “rhetorical” is so at risk of becoming meaningless that one may even—as in an earlier 2013 publication in Brill's *International Studies in the History of Rhetoric* series—speak of “rhetorical speeches” (!).

These notes notwithstanding, this is a worthwhile volume containing a number of excellent contributions: those of Tubau, Iglesias-Zoido, Pineda, Nicolai, and Eramo are particularly engaging. Its longevity will no doubt be aided by its very generous appendices. It is in general rare for the contributors to refer directly to their appendices (p. 371 is a hapax), and there is a sense in which these are rather cosmetic (the index compiled by Custodio for Ch. 11 on pp. 228–237 is impressive but unwieldy). However, the substantial index of printed anthologies of speeches (pp. 401–455) is genuinely useful, containing rich information on the

compiler, title, publication data, summaries, and further reading and bibliography on virtually every anthology or selection of historiographical speeches from the pseudo-Sallustian *Invectiva in Ciceronem* down to Keller at the end of the 17th century. This is an exceptionally valuable body of work on the part of the editors, assisted by other members of the “Arenga” Research Group (HUM-023).

The text is mostly clear and free of errors (there are typographical errors on pp. 131, 246; several on p. 287; 289n.13, among others), a particularly impressive feat in light of the length of the volume. At 546 + xi pages this is a substantial volume indeed, and its sheer breadth means that very few will read it in full. In the opinion of this reviewer, this remarkably ambitious volume casts its net a little too wide to be fully coherent. It would be more compelling if several contributions were removed, not because they are unsatisfying in themselves, but because they divert from what appears to be the core appeal of the collection: certain chapters on antiquity (esp. Ch. 3), the one or two more recondite discussions of the palaeography (Chs. 6 & 8), and the surveys of historiographical texts as such (Chs. 16 & 17). Nevertheless, this is an innovative and reasonably well-curated collection from which specific chapters or groups of chapters will be of use to specialists working on the reception of the Classics, intellectual culture from Byzantium to the Renaissance, and education in the Early Modern period.

CHRISTOPHER BURDEN-STREVENS
c.burden-stevens@kent.ac.uk