

## BOOK REVIEW

*Cicero and Roman Religion: Eight Studies*. Edited by CLAUDIA BELTRÃO DA ROSA AND FEDERICO SANTANGELO. Stuttgart, DE: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020. Pp. 160. Hardcover, €39,00. ISBN: 978-3-515-12644-1.

The title of this volume is straightforward but its scope is wide and its subject matter more nuanced than the title might suggest. The book contains eight studies of Cicero plus an introduction (paper titles at the end of this review). While some volumes of collected essays can be disjointed, these eight studies, though each distinct and aimed at its own target, inform one another and overlap in their references so that there is a unity to the overall project. Some works, like Cicero's *De Legibus* and *De Haruspicum Responso* appear in multiple papers, which creates cohesion among the various themes, though the papers rarely address the same works in the same way. For this, the authors and editors deserve credit.

As outlined in the Introduction, the book “seeks to do justice to the sheer range of available interpretive opportunities that present themselves when reading Cicero — from focusing upon a detailed study of Roman religion to a more comprehensive survey of Roman intellectual history” (20). The *De Legibus*, for example, is replete with religious laws yet has received less study for its religious content than some of Cicero's other philosophical texts like the *De Divinatione*. In doing this, the book joins some recent studies that approach Cicero with a similar methodology and those on the broader development of Roman religion.<sup>1</sup> With this perspective, the papers range from close word studies (Horvat & Lima, Santangelo), to studies on the political ramifications of Cicero's works (Beltrão da Rosa, Cairo, Eichler), to larger studies of Cicero within the Roman system (Arena, Woolf) and Cicero's

<sup>1</sup> For example, Cole's 2013 *The Rise of Deification at Rome* and Orlin's 2010 *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* are frequently cited.

reception in the Enlightenment period (East). Cumulatively, there is a sense that Cicero was an active participant in Roman debates on various religious matters, beyond the confines of his philosophical treatises, and as such his works could have real world consequences.

A common theme among the papers is that within Cicero's works, insofar as religious matters are concerned, there is repeated focus on what we might call Roman identity. Horvat & Lima and Cairo address the matter most directly, as does Woolf, but others, too, approach the topic in oblique ways. For Horvat and Lima, Cicero's depiction of Diana's (Artemis's) presence on Sicily appeals to his Roman audience. For Cairo, Cicero's interpretation of the *haruspices* explicitly rejects men like Clodius from the body politic. Papers from Arena, Beltrão da Rosa, and Eichler offer studies on specific components of Roman identity: the role of the *augures*, of the consuls and of *pietas* respectively. In Eichler's case, Lucretius is introduced to the study of *pietas* and Roman politics, which has typically had Cicero and Varro at the center. These studies do not claim to be all-encompassing, yet their conclusions provide useful insights for better understanding Roman religious concepts and magistrates, or at least Cicero's understanding of them.

Though often relying on somewhat lesser studied texts of Cicero, the texts chosen all work neatly to provide evidence for Cicero's place within the ever-developing religious tradition at Rome. The papers are cognizant of a larger Roman history, both past and future (from Cicero's perspective), but never fall into traps of teleology or drawing attention toward figures like Octavian. In the case of Woolf's and East's chapters, they manage to broaden the discussion even further, beyond the bounds of Rome, in the case of Woolf, and beyond antiquity, for East. The volume thus presents a clear picture of who Cicero was, the world in which he lived and wrote, and how his writing could be or has been interpreted since his death. It does this all while analyzing texts that are not Cicero's most religious yet are still full of vital and important evidence.

Finally, a few words should be given to the audience of this collection of papers. The volume brings together scholarly traditions from Europe and Latin America; the papers come from a 2017 conference in Rio de Janeiro. They tend to be on the shorter side — the longest is the first paper, which is still just over 20 pages — and they are easy to read, with

self-contained arguments. All of the papers are extensively supported, each with its own bibliography. This means that one could read these papers selectively, but as mentioned they work together exceptionally well, too. Given the title, it would be surprising if someone wanted to read this book with only a passing interest in either Cicero or Roman religion, but the authors all have patience enough in their arguments to walk the reader through the question at hand. Because of this, these papers could very well be useful to advanced undergraduate students and also advanced faculty. These authors aptly handle a topic that could be sprawling and cumbersome, instead treating it with a deft hand.

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