whole rather conventional patterns, although 'the role of the individual was not entirely non-existent' (p. 206). J. North as well emphasises that private enterprise and enthusiasm were deprecated in Roman religion, but is nevertheless open to the possibility that increased personal involvement in religious activities may have been a trend in the early Empire.

Reading through the essays one cannot help feeling a growing sense of bewilderment as to where 'the individual' is to be located in descriptions of ancient religion. Is it in the participation of individuals in normal religious practices, or rather in the unconventional? Are we speaking of religious rituals as mechanisms of social differentiation? Is religious 'experience' the focus of interest – either as a concept or as a reality that can be detected in the sources? Is it gauging the level of emotional involvement in religious practices we are after? The importance of religion in the daily life of individuals? Is a concern for personal salvation an essential trait of individual religion? Are we interested in historical processes of individualisation in Antiquity that point towards the 'modern' concept of the individual? Most of these questions appear in some form or another in the various contributions, but the relationships between them still need to be sorted out. It is to be hoped that greater clarity in this respect will be achieved as the project progresses.

The book could have been more carefully edited. Some of the contributions would have benefited from more attentive copy-editing so as to eliminate occasional obscurities of expression. Proofreading could have been better (e.g. p. 5 'topically'; p. 63 n. 13 error in translation from Cicero; errors in the Greek text on pp. 116, 357, 358, 359, incorrect sigma p. 395 n. 24 and frequently elsewhere in the same article; p. 406 wrong paragraph formatting; pp. 489–521 'Synechdocal' in title and running header of article).

*The University of Bergen* EINAR THOMASSEN
einar.thomassen@ahkr.uib.no

## ROMAN POLLUTION

LENNON (J.L.) *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*. Pp. x + 229. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Cased, £60, US$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-03790-8.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14002728

'Pollution mattered.' Thus L. concludes his lucid and comprehensive study of ritual impurity in Roman religion, having demonstrated the threat that all types of contamination – both bodily and moral – posed to the Roman sense of social order, and the important role that rites of purification played in reasserting it. Defilement, whether voluntary or not, transgressed the physical, ethical and religious boundaries within which Romans situated themselves in the world. Law and custom guarded the integrity of these boundaries, and whenever the lines became blurred – as, for example, when one brushed against death by coming into contact with a corpse, or simply (indeed, especially) whenever any natural bodily emissions, particularly of the sexual kind, endangered one's own corporeal integrity – then rites of purification came into play. To control such border-incidents through the proper ceremonies was to maintain cosmic order and the *pax deorum*, even though this often paradoxically required the sacrificial shedding of that most potent and dangerous of bodily fluids, blood. As so often in Roman affairs, the key concept was control.

If some of the preceding has a familiar ring, it is no accident. The first name to appear in L.'s preface, and the one that recurs most frequently throughout his book, is that of the late

Mary Douglas, whose *Purity and Danger* (1966) defined ritual pollution as fundamentally a case of boundaries violated and 'matter out of place'; she also thought that the human body, with its fragile surfaces and seeping orifices, was the oldest known metaphor for all other social structures. Her theories, it is fair to say, have influenced most subsequent debates on the question of purity and taboo. It is thus appropriate to see L.'s volume as a worthy tribute to his illustrious predecessor, whom he touchingly eulogises in his opening pages.

Douglas died in 2007, just as L., then a doctoral candidate at Nottingham, was formulating the topic of his Ph.D. dissertation, 'Carnal, Bloody and Unnatural Acts: Religious Pollution in Ancient Rome' (2011). The present book builds on that doctoral thesis, and bears some of the hallmarks of doing so, in its methodical and very useful collection of the primary sources, its self-awareness of being a preliminary study and its seeming reluctance to construct an overarching theory that would comprehend all the Roman evidence. L. leaves the theorising mostly to Douglas, though he is careful to consider the scholarly developments of the half-century since *Purity and Danger* first appeared. Special acknowledgement is given to the work of R. Parker, in particular the latter's magisterial *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (1983). It is apparent that L. wishes to do for the Roman data what Parker did for the Greek, namely integrate Douglas's anthropological theories with classical philology (p. 190). At this he has succeeded admirably: his strokes are not as bold as Parker's, but the intricacy of his detail is just as fine.

If L. shies away from building a grand theory, perhaps it is because he recognises the inherent ambiguities of the Roman evidence. The Latin terminology of pollution and purity (the subject of the first chapter) is at once more unwieldy than the Greek – for example, there is no single noun at hand that is equivalent to *miasma* – and more entrenched in the vocabulary of the profane. This is reflected in the striking polyvalence of the Latin words, usually verbs rather than nouns, that may denote either physical uncleanness, or anti-social behaviour, or ritual violation – or all at once. The same ambiguity attaches to verbs of cleansing. *Lustrare* is a good case in point, for it has meanings ranging from the quotidian (washing-up) to the agricultural (circumambulating the fields) to the political (taking a census) to the sacred (performing ritual purifications). All these activities, not just the last one, had religious repercussions. One more meaning of *lustrare* that L. does not mention derives from the demi-monde (visiting a brothel). How did that last perverse usage arise, one wonders? But, then, connotations of unchastity and promiscuity are associated with much of the vocabulary of the ritually unclean, as L. demonstrates throughout the book, just as sexual and agricultural fertility may be the desired effect of rites of purification.

The many ways, both ordinary and extreme, by which Romans might contaminate themselves, their neighbours or the gods, are the subject of the middle three chapters, along with the corresponding cathartic remedies. Here those majestic monosyllables, birth, sex, blood and death, govern the discussion, for these are the human contexts most liable to contamination. Besides offering a wealth of ancient sources on pollution (I found myself taking many notes), these chapters devote laudable attention to the cases where vulnerability to pollution was greatest: the cases of those 'interstitial beings' (Douglas's term) whose status or profession placed them squarely, sometimes perpetually, at the very boundaries under discussion. The regulations regarding pregnant or menstruating women, newborns, Vestal Virgins, hermaphrodites and prostitutes, are all given their due. L. also discusses in fascinating detail the less familiar cases of those who performed the necessary dirty work of dealing with the dead (undertakers, pall-bearers, professional mourners, etc.) or those who made a living by dealing out death itself (executioners, gladiators, soldiers, etc.).

The final chapter is a revealing case study drawn from an unlikely rhetorical source, Cicero's *De domo sua*, in which the orator undermined the legitimacy of an infamous politico-religious act, Clodius' consecration of private property (Cicero's own, as it happened) and his raising of a shrine there to the goddess Libertas, all performed under questionable partisan circumstances. Though Cicero's argument was manipulative and self-serving, a vital religious point was at stake. Did Clodius' ostensibly pious act, undertaken for impious purposes, pass muster as authentic ritual, and would Cicero now be guilty of polluting sacred space if he reappropriated his own house? In other words, did pious intention count for something, or were acts of pollution and purification alike merely automatic?

It has long been thought that pollution, at least, was a line that one could well trip over without knowing it, ignorance being no excuse. But were rites of consecration equally impersonal? In *Purity and Danger* Douglas objected that this would reduce ancient religion to mere primitive magic, a notion beloved of earlier generations of anthropologists that her book did much to dispel. L.'s examination of Cicero's speech may finally put to rest the old clichés that so annoyed Douglas. For Cicero's case against Clodius rests on the moral 'purity' of his opponent's character, or rather the egregious lack thereof, and if his argument is to be believed (and apparently it was by the College of Pontiffs), religious consecration could not, for the Romans at least, be valid simply *ex opere operato*, but must arise from right motives and a clean heart. Pollution may or may not have been automatic, but purification and the restoration of the *pax deorum* was careful, hard work.

This brings a valuable corrective to our understanding of Roman religion. The gods apparently could not be fully appeased unless a chaste heart accompanied the meticulously conducted rites. This ties Roman religion and morality more closely together than I believe we are accustomed to do. It may be the *tour de force* of L.'s book to demonstrate that such rituals, far from being so many superstitious and magical mechanisms, were integral to the web of *pietas* and all the other social and moral virtues that united Romans to the living, the dead and the deathless ones.

*University of Calgary* J.R. HUME
jhume@ucalgary.ca

## ROMAN VILLAS

DEWAR (M.) *Leisured Resistance. Villas, Literature and Politics in the Roman World*. Pp. xiv + 130. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. Cased, £45, US$80. ISBN: 978-0-7156-3489-9.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X14002248

The title of this book, *Leisured Resistance*, represents D.'s interpretative view of the life of political disengagement that Cicero describes himself as leading in the prefatory passages of *De officiis* 3. That the place of his withdrawal is a villa, we may infer from pointed contrast with the retirement of Scipio Africanus and the description of his solitary perambulations of the countryside. Allusions to *otium* (leisure) permeate Cicero's paragraphs, but without specific mention of resistance which is rather D.'s construction of his activity in writing philosophical treatises to maintain his sense of civic engagement and in reaction against the alienating climate of dictatorship Rome.

Versions of intellectual activity emerge as the dominant theme of this study which in its coverage of over six centuries characterises the villa as an invigorating alternative to public