

Roman conceptions of the world. T.'s account covers all these aspects of the topic, from theoretical approaches to the definition of disaster and an attempt at surveying the history of Rome in terms of 'landmark' disasters to the ways in which Romans of different classes — and of course the state — sought to respond to individual catastrophes and to an environment in which catastrophe was, if not actually endemic, then perceived as a constant possibility. A wide range of sources, especially literary sources, is considered, extending across the whole Roman period (and beyond; Thucydides' narrative of the Athenian plague of 430 B.C.E. is clearly too compelling to be omitted) with a particular emphasis on late antique Christian sources.

The study is strongest on the psychological and cultural response to disaster, which is clearly T.'s main interest; the discussion of the material context (demography, epidemiology, geology — to explain the prevalence of earthquakes and volcanic activity — and climate) is rather brief, though he does emphasize the crucial point that no disaster is ever purely 'natural' — it is human action, or inaction, that turns an event into a disaster. T. concludes that the Roman Empire was an especially risk-prone society, above all because of the inadequate response and frequent indifference of the state to the problems of most of its subjects, leaving them vulnerable. One might object that this was true of most pre-modern societies, so the idea that Rome was different needs further exploration. Indeed, the sociologist Ulrich Beck — listed in the bibliography but not discussed — has argued that the modern West has become a 'risk society', obsessed with possible catastrophe, precisely because of the more activist modern conception of the state and a new belief in technological mastery of nature, whereas antiquity had no such illusion of control and hence, arguably, was more likely to accept such risks as part of the natural order of things.

What is disappointing about this book is its resolutely limited, even lightweight, approach. T. states his wish at the beginning to reach as wide an audience as possible in opening up a new area of study. However, this starting-point leads nowhere. T.'s references cannot offer a guide to existing research on these topics, for the obvious reason that there is very little; but they do not attempt to offer any kind of substitute for the inquisitive reader who wants to learn more. For the most part, they simply give the reference to the ancient source discussed in the text with passing references to some relevant works in other fields like the sociology of risk (which would have little to offer the student interested in the ancient world). Those conclusions are always stimulating and often quite convincing; but T.'s chosen approach means that non-specialist readers (including specialists from other disciplines, who might be very interested in the Roman dimension of disaster and crisis) are required simply to accept T.'s interpretations on trust, while ancient historians must re-trace T.'s research. Frustratingly, T. offers us the conclusions of his wide reading in the ancient sources and contemporary social science, but without showing any of the working.

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F. SANTANGELO, *DIVINATION, PREDICTION AND THE END OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 357. ISBN 978110702684. £65.00/US\$99.00.

With this book Federico Santangelo has provided a much needed overview of the current state of research on public and private divination in the late Republic. In addition to surveying the various kinds of divination and divinatory thinking that circulated in this period, S. makes an original contribution to the study of Cicero's *De divinatione*.

A major strength of the book is the author's study of the *De divinatione* in chs 1–2. S. advances beyond the traditional debate about whether Cicero is 'really' for or against divination, arguing instead that the treatise constructs an opposition between that prophetic form of prediction which Cicero dubs *divinatio* and other forms of prediction and foresight (encapsulated by the term *prudentialia*), including the political foresight that comes from an accurate reading of one's times. This way of reading the *De divinatione* yields much food for thought, and, by avoiding the tired categories of scepticism versus credulity, leads S. to a convincingly subtle and sophisticated reading of Cicero's play with the concepts of divination and foresight in letters such as that to Caecina (*Fam.* 6.6) and speeches like the Catilinarians.

Another significant contribution is the author's insistence throughout on the amount of debate about both *divinatio* and divination among Republican Romans themselves. The survey of types of divination in chs 3–7 (including dreams and cleromancy, haruspicy, the Sibylline Books and other Greek-style prophecies, and the possible socio-religious rôles of the *vates* and *hariolus*) resists the temptation to stereotype specific practices as élite or non-élite, or to lump practitioners into interest groups with particular political leanings. S. delights in tracing the great variety of ways in which even a single writer could use words such as *divinatio* or *vates*, and whilst the reader may sometimes wish for more signposts in the discussion, the point that there was an abundance of 'diversity, creativity and experimentation' in Roman uses of and thinking about divination, and that 'Roman religious life cannot be regarded as a monolith or as a political construction dominated by manipulative elites, where no room was left for alternatives or variants to the dominant discourse' (158–9), is an important corrective to the still-prevalent view of Roman divination as an aid to élite control.

Indeed, there were places where I wished that S. had gone further in allowing this vital insight to shape his treatment of specific historical cases of divination. It was unnecessary, surely, for S. to qualify the statement that 'the senatorial elite was prepared to listen to [the *haruspices*]' with the old-fashioned concession of 'if for no other reason than to exploit their responses for the sake of the conflicting political agendas of its factions' (98). Similarly, S.'s treatment of Antony's augural objection to the election of Dolabella in 44 B.C. (3, 273–8) acknowledges only briefly that the behaviour of those involved may have included a 'religious aspect', providing instead a purely political, one might say secular, narrative. In this respect one gets the feeling that although S. has grasped the crucial point that, as he elegantly puts it, 'divination's strength and pervasiveness lay in defining a specific and meaningful relationship between divine and human' (172), nevertheless the traditional view of Roman divination as a political tool has crept back into the narrative more often than it might have done.

I wondered a little, too, about how well the structure of the book would serve its intended audience. Whilst S.'s comprehensive and admirably up-to-date bibliography will be of value to all in this field, the surveys of types of divination (chs 3–7) and attitudes to divination and prediction in first-century authors (chs 8–11) seem more suited to readers trying to get up to speed on Roman divination. However, some chapters blur the boundaries between types of divination in a way that may be confusing to the non-expert. For example, the inclusion of Greek prophecies against Roman intervention in the Mediterranean (some legendary, some historical, and not all produced within the Sibylline tradition) in ch. 6 on the Sibylline Books, and of prodigies officially *suscepta* (in 207 B.C.) in ch. 7 on the *vates*, may well be misleading for readers who are not familiar with the distinctions drawn by the Roman state between these types of material. There is also the occasional error: for example, S. has twice (2, 146–7) confused C. Cato the tribune of 56 B.C. with M. Porcius Cato the *quindecemvir*, which leaves his otherwise interesting discussion of the Sibylline Oracle of 56 in need of revision.

That said, there is more than enough here to provide both the new and the experienced student of Roman divination with plenty of food for thought, and to strengthen the current renaissance of scholarly interest in ancient divination.

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J. J. LENNON, *POLLUTION AND RELIGION IN ANCIENT ROME*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 229. ISBN 9781107037908. £60.00/US\$99.00.

The aim of this book is to prove that pollution was an important concept in Roman religion. The subject is difficult because of the slippery nature of Latin vocabulary on pollution: we have plenty of verbs and adjectives to describe processes and statuses of defilement or purification, but a surprising lack of relevant abstract nouns. In a sense, Lennon aims at producing a Roman counterpart to Robert Parker's monograph on pollution in Greek religion (*Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (1983)). L. also wants to take account of anthropological theories of pollution and to expand arguments on the connection between the body and the city developed by Holt Parker on Vestals (*AJPh* 125 (2004), 563–601).