
In this reworking of a PhD dissertation Maridien Schneider argues that the increasing frequency of prophetic vocabulary in Cicero’s correspondence from 49 BC until his death in 43 BC is suggestive of an awareness in Cicero of his own prognostic ability (p. 205). At the heart of the dissertation is the claim that the concept of *haruspex* can be used metaphorically ‘to epitomise Cicero’s role as a close examiner of the vicissitudes of the *res publica*’ (p. 9). Almost half of this work is devoted to introductory material. Here are the standard features one would expect of a dissertation: the scope of the work (chapter 1, ‘Introduction’, pp. 3-16); an overview of scholarship (chapter 2, pp. 17-30); the nature of the evidence (chapter 4, pp. 37-44); the general philosophical and historical background of the first century BC (chapter 3, ‘Historical Overview’, pp. 31-36; chapter 5, ‘Philosophy and Politics’, pp. 45-58), and relevant historiographical and philosophical concepts (chapter 6, ‘The Roman Concept of Decline’, pp. 59-72; chapter 7, ‘Theory and Practice Vs Practice and Theory’, pp. 73-82). In these sections Schneider argues that Cicero attempts to bridge a traditional divide between philosophy and Roman politics in his philosophical works, especially the *De Respublica*. This theoretical standpoint is the springboard for the central discussion and the examination of Cicero’s theories through his correspondence from 51 BC onwards.

The central discussion (chapters 8 to 10, pp. 83-170) contains much of merit. Here the dissertation is at its strongest. The discussion is thorough, at times engaging and lively, with some sharp insights. The section begins with Cicero’s governorship in Cilicia (chapter 8, pp. 85-104). The particular focus here is on Cicero’s correspondence with Caelius, which enables Cicero to keep abreast of events in Rome. During this period, it is argued, Cicero stops speculating about the political situation at Rome and begins to analyse affairs objectively—indeed to predict, much as Caelius already had, the forthcoming civil war. Chapter 9 (‘Close Encounters’, pp. 105-50) examines Cicero’s disintegrating relationship with Pompey (pp. 105-25) and his adaptation to Caesar’s regime (pp. 126-50). Schneider argues that Cicero with philosophical detachment draws connections between the past and present political situation and it is this which allows him with clarity to present himself in his final years as ‘a moralist with a political agenda’ (p. 150). Finally, with the death of Caesar, (chapter 10, ‘And So the End Draws Near’, pp. 151-70), Schneider sees Cicero predicting civil war anew and being unable to reconcile his theorising about politics with the practical direction that politics at Rome was taking in 44-43 BC.

Section 3 (‘Exitus’, pp. 171-209) is in essence a lengthy conclusion. Schneider argues that Cicero’s ability to interpret the present political circumstances in the light of the past has enabled the statesman to interpret the future. In 43 BC Cicero stops resisting the inevitable political changes and increasingly refers to the destruction of the *res publica*. His late period is imbued with words that denote sickness, death and
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decay. Ultimately, Schneider suggests, Cicero himself is a haruspical victim, with his head, hands and tongue evidence of his own prophetic ability (p. 209).

So much then for the basic outline and premises of the work. It is unfortunate that the underlying metaphor, ‘Cicero haruspex’, first introduced on pp. 9-14, is flawed. There appears to be precious little evidence that Cicero views the res publica in the manner of a haruspex inspecting the entrails. He rarely (despite the author’s claim on p. 11 n. 17) refers to the haruspices in a political context and, as the author herself notes, ‘Cicero never refers directly to himself as haruspex’ (p. 14). It is not clear how the image of burnt corpses in Cicero (p. 13) is relevant even to a metaphorical analysis of the carcass of the republic. Nor is it obvious how the comparison of Cicero to the legendary Greek prophet Amphiaras is germane to the metaphor (pp. 163f.). When Cicero makes a ‘true’ prophecy he does so in the style of the Pythia (p. 182). The extent to which the metaphor is stretched is evident in the final paragraph when the author offers the image of Cicero’s head, hands and tongue as evidence of the ‘eviscerated res publica’ (p. 209). There are further confusions in Schneider’s introductory treatment of the haruspices. She posits a Roman counterpart to the Etruscan haruspices and suggests ‘a renown for their expertise in the interpretation of prodigies’ (p. 9). Just three pages later she maintains the ‘traditional haruspex’ (is he Etruscan or Roman?) consults entrails in times of crisis (p. 12). As is evident from Cicero himself the ars haruspicina encompassed extispicy, portents and fulgural lore. Etruscan haruspices were invariably summoned to Rome for the purpose of interpreting dire prodigies. What the Roman haruspices did, who they were, or what their relationship was to the Etruscan diviners, is a matter for conjecture. Elsewhere the translation of ‘haruspex’ with the cover-all ‘diviner’ is misleading (p. 9), as it is to contrast the Roman practice of augury with the ‘Greek equivalent μαντική’ (p. 10). The possibility that the terms vates and haruspex might be and often were synonymous is dismissed. The reader is first introduced to Cicero’s prophetic ability on p. 104 in a passage that is discussed again on p. 157. The terms προφετική, coniectura and prospeciens are not only uncharacteristic of haruspical activity but might be read alternatively as the tentative guesswork of the backstreet diviner (or coniector) whom Cicero denigrated (Cic. De Div. 1.132). A more secure grounding in the modern scholarly literature on divination might have placed the dissertation on a stronger footing. It is noticeable that secondary works as prominent as Bouché-Lecerq’s Histoire de la Divination or Thulin’s seminal

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2 See, e.g., Livy 1.55.6, the passages concerning the praetor Aelius Tubero in Val. Max. 5.6.4 (haruspex), Plin. HN 10.40f. (vates), Frontin. Str. 4.5.14 (haruspex), Luc. 1.584 of the haruspex Arruns. See also M. Hano, ‘Haruspex et Vates chez Tite-Live’, Caesarodunum Suplementum 56.3 (1986) 101-21.

thesis on the Etruscan haruspices are absent from the bibliography. An analysis of the haruspical and other divinatory terminology that Cicero uses in the correspondence would have been helpful. The dissertation ends with a quotation from Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares 6.6.12: Habes augurium meum (p. 209), ‘Cicero augur’, a priesthood he actually occupied, might have offered a more auspicious title and methodology. There are some other minor problems. Limitations of genre (pp. 126, 191 on De Consulatu Suo) are not addressed. Schneider’s brief references to De Divinatione (pp. 11, 190f.) do not acknowledge the difficulties of interpreting either book as the word of Cicero. The alleged connections between Epistulae ad Atticum 15.11, Plato, and the winged seer Calchas on an Etruscan mirror (p. 168) are overworked. Sections 2.6 (‘Manner and Style’) and 2.7 (‘On the Correspondence’) are not sufficiently delineated. In Section 3, a meandering historical overview, can Appian and Plutarch prove Cicero right in regarding the Gracchan period as the beginning of the Roman revolution (p. 31)? Or are they simply following his lead? The political significance and implications of Caelius’ trial are overlooked (p. 86). At times the detailed discussion of the correspondence loses sight of the metaphor.

Finally, Schneider is too honest when she acknowledges her failure to include the ‘more extensive suggestions’ (p. xii) of Kathryn Welch. What possible excuse can there be for rushing a work, any work, but particularly that of a young scholar, to the press? It is unhelpful to the writer who must suffer the stings and barbs of the reviewer, and unhelpful for the Classics community, which is already afflicted with ever more books and an ever-declining market even for the very best. All of this is regrettable given the sensitivity that Schneider has for Cicero’s correspondence and the thoroughness with which she handles this complex material. If they can ignore the awkward and strained haruspical metaphor, Ciceronian scholars should find some of the central discussion useful. But like the majority of dissertations, this is a resource to be consulted rather than read in its entirety.

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