In the post-war period, a group of French scholars of Roman religion dedicated themselves to the production of a line of monographic studies of individual Roman deities, which were often published by the École Française de Rome. The quality of these books varied, but they tended to offer the same basic formula: a history of the deity concerned (whether Apollo or Mercury or Ops) from Archaic origins through waves of Republican temple building and Hellenization to an Early Imperial ‘settlement’. As Daniele Miano observes in the introduction of his own monograph on an individual deity (p. 12), this habit died out in the 1990s and 2000s. The problem with the French books on Roman deities, though, had been clear already for some time. As Mary Beard put it in 1983 in a JRS review of two examples, ‘our understanding of Roman religion will not advance far, so long as specialists concentrate on monographs of ill-documented, individual gods and goddesses . . . we ought to think in broader terms about its characteristics as a system, not about its individual symbolic figures’ (p. 216). The central failing was essentialism: the authors tried to pin down the basic character or function of a deity, not infrequently on grounds of Latin etymology, and then explained the often-slim evidence in light of that alleged essence.

But the field might be witnessing a reemergence of the single-deity monograph. Alongside the book under review on Fortuna, Harriet Flower published a monumental study of the Lares in 2017 (The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden, Princeton) and it is easy to imagine that we will see more of them in the coming years. Miano himself has published several article-length studies of other deities. This renaissance of the genre can be related to a general ‘theological turn’ in the study of Roman religion, as scholars have become increasingly aware of ancient discourses on the nature and identity of the recipients of cult as fully part of Roman religious life. In other words, the gods mattered to the Romans. In this light, it is certainly justified to return our attention to the deities themselves. Significantly, however, both Flower and Miano avoid the mistakes of their predecessors by avoiding essentialism and focus instead on the variety of social and historical contexts in which the Lares or Fortuna were present and meaningful. This picks up a second trend in the study of Roman religious life: an interest, pursued recently particularly by the research group led by Jörg Rüpke at Erfurt, on the discrepant experiences of historical actors in relation to the divine.

At the outset of the book, Miano signals this focus: ‘the aim of this book is to study the ways in which individuals, groups, and communities interacted with Fortuna and ascribed different meanings to her during the Roman Republican period’ (p. 2). In the compact seven chapters that follow, he traces the evidence for Fortuna at Praeneste, elsewhere in Italy, and at Rome, while also taking into account change over time in the various geographic contexts. The later chapters treat the translation of Fortuna into Greek as Tychē, and Tychē as Fortuna, with particular attention to the southern Italian ‘contact zone’, and discussion of literary passages, from both dramatic and philosophical texts in the second and first centuries, where the status of Fortuna as a deity is depreciated. The author concedes that this organization may look excessively fragmented (p. 14), but this is, of course the point: it is this fragmentation that he has set out to map.

In practice, the chapters are composed of discussions that concentrate on the individual pieces of evidence and their interpretation. To pick some personal favourites, Miano’s discussion of the fourth- or third-century inscribed lot that is kept in the museum at Fiesole and might allude to the story of Servius Tullius is an excellent exposition of the problems raised by the text and object, without lapsing into complete aporia (pp. 70-73); similarly, I found the section on the topographical problems raised by the two temples of Fors Fortuna (one Servian, one mid-Republican) to be exemplary in the exposition of the evidence and of previous scholarly opinion and in the persuasive conclusion that both were located at the sixth mile on the Via Portuense (pp. 91-94). In these passages and throughout the book, Miano concisely presents the primary materials, whether literary, epigraphic or archaeological, and gives fair-minded

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treatment of other scholarly solutions to the problems that the evidence raises. The approach is largely empirical and traditional, but the reader is left with a clear picture of how the author has come to his judgements.

The sweep of his book means that Miano provides many interpretations of varied pieces of evidence and solutions to tough problems (often made so by the limitations of the evidence). Inevitably, this also means that there are places where readers might not choose to follow him. For instance, I found it hard to accept that the Tychē of Polybius's historical preface, the agent behind Roman imperial success, was understood in Rome specifically as Fortuna Publica Populi Romani, who was worshipped on the Quirinal (pp. 115-19 and 200). Likewise, I found the discussion of Fortuna in the speeches of Balbus and Cotta in Cicero’s De Natura Deorum to be a little unbalanced (pp. 191-93), where Miano claims that Cotta's denial of Fortuna's deity reflects Cicero's personal emotional state and appears to think that the author endorses the character's position. Cotta's speech, however, is framed in the context of the entire dialogue and it is perhaps notable that Cicero himself at the end of the work claims that he sides with Balbus, not Cotta. Room for disagreement over these individual points is not a flaw in the book, but rather testimony to Miano's willingness to commit to his positions and provoke debate.

Multiplicity, variety and diversity are all watchwords in this study; the stated goal to discover the differing meanings of Fortuna is well fulfilled. Nevertheless, Miano convincingly identifies certain consistent patterns in how historical actors responded to Fortuna: she often appears in liminal places in urban territories; at Rome, she seems to have had a strong connection to the plebeian families; she is found in association with other conceptual deities, both in worship and in theological reflection. Miano also does his share of myth busting, particularly in his demonstrations that there is no consistent connection between Fortuna and particular gender or age classes and that the Late Republican dynasts did not take Fortuna as a 'personal deity' (pp. 123-55).

One element of the book works less well. Alongside the aim quoted above, Miano promises that his book will approach 'broader questions about Greek and Roman deities, and about polytheism in general' (pp. 12-13). His main proposal for this broader contribution is to borrow the methods of conceptual history associated with the German historian Reinhart Koselleck. The idea is that because Fortuna is both a concept and a deity and because polytheistic deities have semantics (not just names, but fields of association), Koselleck's Begriffsgeschichte can be helpful for understanding the changes and variety of meanings of an ancient deity.3 In practice, Miano does not directly make use of conceptual history as a method of religious history in the book – even admitting at one point that the evidence from outside Rome is too fragmentary to draw on the method (p. 76) – and Koselleck only appears in the introduction and conclusion. I would suggest that part of the reason for this is that Begriffsgeschichte as practiced by the authors of the Koselleckian Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, focuses on diachronic accounts of how concepts emerge in the first place or change from having one central meaning in one period to quite another in a later one. Often, these developments are associated with the so-called Sattelzeit (roughly 1750-1850). Miano’s study of Fortuna, on the other hand, shows no clear chronology of this kind, but rather synchronic variety in what Fortuna could mean, with little real contestation. Another reason for the lack of utility of conceptual history for the study

of polytheism is, in my view, the fact that ancient deities, even conceptual deities, were not just understood in antiquity as recipients of cult or as symbols, but as powers and as agents (as Miano himself shows in his reading of *fortuna* in Caesar's *Commentarii*, pp. 141-46). Unlike the social categories studied by Koselleck and others, ancient gods had minds of their own, and perhaps none was quite as fickle as Fortuna.

In sum, Miano has produced an extremely learned and generally convincing empirical study of the cult of this goddess; we should hope that his book sets the standards for the reinvigorated genre of studies on Roman deities. *Begriffsgeschichte*, however, might not be a productive tool for these studies to come.

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