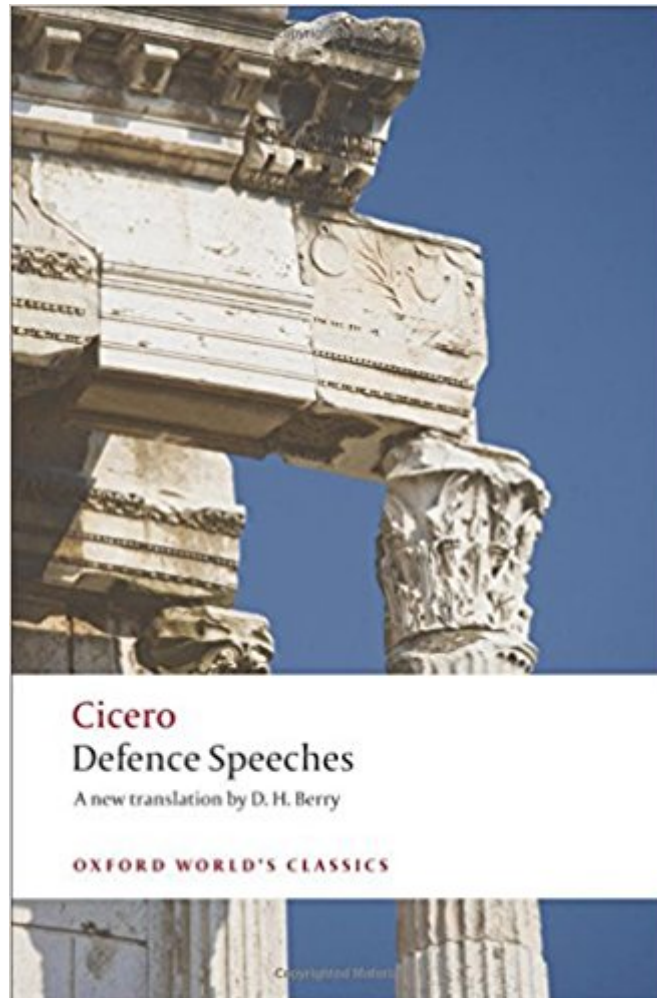


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Defence Speeches (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

Cicero (106-43 BC) was the greatest orator of the ancient world. He dominated the Roman courts, usually appearing for the defense. His speeches are masterpieces of persuasion. They are compellingly written, emotionally powerful, and sometimes hilariously funny. This book presents five of his most famous defenses: of Roscius, falsely accused of murdering his father; of the consul-elect Murena, accused of electoral bribery; of the poet Archias, on a citizenship charge; of Caelius, ex-lover of Clodia Metelli, on charges of violence; and of Milo, for murdering Cicero's hated enemy Clodius. Cicero's clients were rarely innocent; but so seductive is his oratory that the reader cannot help taking his side. In these speeches we are plunged into some of the most exciting courtroom dramas of all time. These new translations preserve Cicero's literary artistry and emotional force, while achieving new standards of accuracy. Each speech has its own introduction, and a general introduction discusses Cicero's public career and the criminal courts. The substantial explanatory notes smoothly guide the reader through the speeches, allowing a clearer understanding of the text.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Latin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lecturer in Classics at the University of Leeds.

Personally, I didn't enjoy this collection as much as I did the "Political Speeches". Nevertheless, "Defence Speeches" is very readable and I'd recommend it to any student of American history and politics. Cicero lived in a republic dominated by partisan politics, where contenders for leadership positions flouted laws in the name of national security, and where the threat of populist demagogues led Cicero to take extra-legal action to save the country. This is ironic, because he defended Caesar's killing as a blow against tyranny in his amazing Philippics, only to be killed as Rome came under the sway of Emperors instead of elected officials. Not to say he was a huge believer in universal suffrage: "There's nothing more fickle than the masses, nothing more unfathomable than people's intentions, nothing more misleading than the entire process of an election." (p. 83) Here he is on literature, crime, democracy, self-defense, and glory, the only guaranteed afterlife a person can achieve. This volume's translator and editor, D. H. Berry, presents him as a shrewd and canny politically-motivated public speaker, not above manipulating the truth in an attempt to win a trial.

A great lawyer. Maybe equaled but never eclipsed. The translation is excellent. A stimulating read for any trial attorney. Much to learn.

A must read for anyone studying Roman history. A fair bit of hard to find details contained in the footnotes.

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