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Hawley (M.C.) *Natural Law Republicanism. Cicero's Liberal Legacy*. Pp. xii + 252, fig. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £47.99, US\$74. ISBN: 978-0-19-758233-6.

The word “Republicanism” denotes a tradition of political thought which, spanning from Greek and Roman classical antiquity up to contemporary times, encompasses a heterogeneous set of philosophical doctrines on the nature of political liberty, civic virtue, and the role of active citizenship in the promotion of the common good. Over the past four decades, a significant upsurge of scholarly attempts to identify intersections and breaking points between those theories has given rise to a variety of historic-philosophical reconstructions of the political category of Republicanism – more specifically, of its origins, development across the centuries and reconfiguration in contemporary political circumstances (cf. Ch. Nadeau, *Republicanism. History, Theory, Practice*, 2004; M. van Gelderen & Q. Skinner, *The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe*, 2010). From the perspective of normative political theory, several studies on Republicanism have stressed the need to propose new definitory approaches to the idea of liberty – a need which goes hand in hand with the necessity to revitalize political participation and active citizenship in the running of political communities. Hawley’s book *Natural Law Republicanism. Cicero's Liberal Legacy*, although mainly conceivable as a work of history of political philosophy, enters the field of normative theory by critically addressing and defending an original idea of freedom as “non-domination”. His view, which engages critically and fruitfully with ideas defended by contemporary authors like Quentin Skinner, Philip Pettit and Maurizio Viroli, tries to identify supposed elements of compatibility between Republicanism and modern Liberalism. Such a project presents relevant affinities with the revisionist attempt which Skinner himself had initiated in the eighties with respect to his own theories of Republicanism – one which aims at re-framing republican liberty as a distinctive mode of negative freedom, situating it within a legal discourse (see for instance his *Liberty before Liberalism*, 1998). At the same time, Hawley endorses and preserves a positive conception of liberty in the history of Republican political thought, by stressing its aspect of freedom from restraints upon the practice of

popular participation in the political life (an idea notably defended by J.G.A. Pocock; see his *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 1985).

Hawley regards Cicero's political philosophy as a valuable intellectual lens for an understanding of Republicanism as an overall unitary phenomenon, despite evidence of content-related differences among Republican doctrines across the centuries. In his view, Republicanism allows the interaction between two different approaches: on the one hand, a focus on individual rights and negative liberties – which is a marking trait of modern and contemporary liberal theories; on the other, an interest in popular sovereignty and widespread involvement of people in political decision-making in view of the common interest.

An element of distinction between Hawley and neo-republicans like Pettit and Skinner, who noticeably adopt a neo-Roman perspective in their reading of political philosophy in the modern period, is his emphasis on Cicero's view of natural law as one of the most relevant philosophical underpinnings of Republicanism. This is identified by the author as the normative core of an idea of freedom as non-domination, which finds articulation (although in diversified shapes) from Ancient Rome to the foundation of the American Constitutional Federal Republic. One of the leading ideas of Hawley's book is that Cicero's notion of natural law represents a fertile terrain for dialogue and reciprocal integration between liberal and republican values in the modern and contemporary age. Accordingly, natural law would justify how liberal individual rights can be enjoyed within an institutional context open to ideals of responsible citizenship, equality, and collective political participation. It is therefore in this respect that Hawley's neo-republican notion of freedom as non-domination combines and transcends the featuring traits of two different forms of freedom: on the one hand, freedom as protection from arbitrary harm by individuals and rulers (the one which Isaiah Berlin names "negative liberty", and Benjamin Constant attributes to the moderns); on the other, freedom as the capacity for self-determination and collective political participation (i.e. the freedom that Berlin himself names "positive liberty", and Constant considers a prerogative of the ancients).

Against the backdrop of the above-mentioned dichotomies, Hawley contends that Cicero's doctrine of liberty not only includes elements of modernity, but also inspires modern and contemporary views of freedom (such as those advanced by Locke and by the American Founders). His view of freedom as non-domination ought to be read not only as absence of constraint and interference from others (i.e. from individuals and/or institutions), but also and especially as a form of independence from arbitrary powers which gets structured through active participation of citizens in joint deliberative and law-making agency.

The book is structured into 7 chapters. After an introduction illustrating its argumentative plan, a reconstruction of Cicero's view of the *res publica* is provided in chapter 2. As emerges by Hawley's reading of key passages of *de re publica*, *de legibus*, *de officiis*, and *de finibus*, popular sovereignty, being exercised in accordance with a law that prescribes equal reciprocal treatment and responsible civic engagement, undergirds authentic liberty for citizens not only as members of the Roman Republic, but also as virtuous and fully cooperative human beings. In chapter 3 Hawley presents Machiavelli's challenge to Cicero's Republican approach by stressing that the political flourishing of a republic cannot be compatible with security and justice for citizens – i.e. values enjoined by the law of nature. In chapter 4 Hawley traces two different philosophical routes to Republicanism inspired by Cicero's political thought: on the one hand, the cosmopolitan theories of international law proposed by Hugo Grotius and Samuel von Pufendorf between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century; on the other, the tradition of English Republicanism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first tradition, although emphasizing the threat which Republican self-government poses to the actualization of natural law principles, interiorizes Cicero's idea that a healthy Republic should incorporate the limitations of universal moral norms and supports the idea of a government ultimately run by political elites. The second tradition, represented by authors like Nedham and Milton, shares with Machiavelli a desire to enhance the political role of common people in commonwealths, but it appeals to Cicero's attempt to relate popular sovereignty (conceived as legitimate source of authority) to the private

liberty which individual citizens can enjoy through political power within the limits of the law of nature.

The conceptual continuity between Cicero, Grotius and Pufendorf seems to find its fulfilment in John Locke's theorization of legitimate popular government as "limited government". In chapter five, Hawley focuses on Locke's Republicanism, contending that, in his thought, attention to natural law is inextricably linked to political justice, respect of private property, commerce pursued by honourable means, and individual freedom. More specifically, by looking at Cicero's *de Officiis*, Locke would endorse the idea of an individual political power rooted in moral education, alongside the view of a society based on rational cooperation. In chapter 6, Hawley addresses the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the American Constitution. The American founding – as the author also contends in the conclusive chapter of his book, represents the culmination of a philosophical itinerary in which Cicero and Locke play a fundamental part. Classical Republicanism and its focus on natural law would undergird the appeals to the "unalienable" rights to life, liberty and property made by politicians and theorists like Wilson, Madison and Jefferson.

Hawley's text deserves recognition for clarity of exposition and for originality in his reconstruction of Republican freedom as a natural-law driven form of non-domination. Aspects of continuity and rupture within the itinerary he traces are accurately argued, and the author's critical engagement with primary texts allows readers to get a deep understanding of the relevant themes in an engaging manner.

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