Acknowledgements

Introduction

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We do not know exactly when the Latin word *religio* first came to designate 'religious observance, practice'; at any rate, its earliest known use to convey this specific meaning is in Cicero.[1] The first known occurrence of *superstitio* is also in Cicero.[2] These facts alone might contribute to attractive, if facile, arguments in favour of granting him a prominent place in accounts of Roman religion in any age, not just the Republican period. There are, however, other weightier and more persuasive considerations. Cicero is central to most of what we know about the political, social, and intellectual developments of the first century BCE. Even those who hold the quality of his writings in low regard agree that he provides a wide body of important material, whether on *Realien* or on problems of philosophical interpretation and approach. He also reflects, often in creative and tendentious ways, on the development of Roman religion, and on a complex body of theological and ritual traditions. The very nature and scope of Cicero's work makes it a unique testing ground: the number of different literary genres that it encompasses also entails a whole range of approaches and problems, and different attitudes to the religious experience – the way in which a problem is explored in the epistolary genre is markedly different from how it is considered in his speeches or philosophical works. The tension between the need to discuss each work in its own literary and intellectual context, and the ambition to pursue and achieve a degree of comparability, are two of the most attractive challenges that his oeuvre presents.

There is a further overarching problem, which also presents its own distinctive set of opportunities. Precisely because Cicero's work is integral to any historical approach to the late Roman Republic, each generation produces its own constructions of, and codifications on how best to read and interpret, this author. The plural is as diachronic as it is synchronic: there are competing interpretations of Cicero within any generation of readers. The study of Ciceronian receptions is even more acutely central to the

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1   Cic. *Inv.* 2.66. See *OLD* 8.
2   Cic. *Clu.* 194. See *OLD s. u.*

exploration of his work than is the case for most classical authors.[3] Postulating straightforward connections between scholarly developments and wider intellectual debates is not always a productive operation, but it is surely significant that some of the most distinctive and heavily subscribed areas of Ciceronian studies in the early twenty-first century are his self-representation, his strategies of interaction with his peers, and his use of irony. The Cicero that emerges from the scholarship of the last thirty years or so, especially in the English-speaking world, is more ironic, more committed to scepticism, and more preoccupied with problems of status and self-representation than any of the versions of Cicero that were constructed during previous generations of modern scholarship.

The prevailing early twenty-first century conceptualization of Cicero is heavily invested in contextually understanding the religious practice and discourse of his own time, and this book aims to contribute to the exploration of that theme. The scholarly trend that posited a profound and effective integration between religious and political domains dates back to the 1960s, and more sensitive readings of what Cicero has to offer have become especially prominent and influential over the last four decades. R. J. Goar's 1972 book on Cicero and State religion was, to a large extent, redolent of the long-standing assumption that regarded Cicero primarily as both political operator, heavily invested in the running of public religion, and intellectual, engaged in serious philosophical investigation, with very little time for spiritual engagement.[4] It exemplifies the fissure between the two spheres that has long been taken for granted, and was complemented by a wider interpretations of Roman religion as barely more than a superstructure impinging on the political system. New developments came first from fresh attempts to provide innovative readings of the philosophical works. The study of François Guillaumont on Cicero as a philosopher and augur put forward new views on how best to integrate the two areas of activity that had for too long been pursued in isolation from one another.[5]

The *De Diuinatione* proved a very fruitful and equally controversial ground of investigation – not altogether unlike what had been the case in the early modern scholarly debates, which are explored in Katherine East's contribution to this volume. In the mid-1980s, the path-breaking studies of Malcolm Schofield and Mary Beard made a persuasive case that this work should be studied within its historical context and understood against the backdrop of the wider intellectual developments in late Republican Rome and the emergence of a new critical strand of thinking on religion

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3   See the recent overviews in Steel 2013 (Part III); Altman 2015; Manuwald 2017. Early Imperial reception: Keeline 2018; La Bua 2019. East 2017 provides a powerful exploration of the links between Ciceronian receptions and editorial strategies in the Early British Enlightenment.

4   Goar 1972. For a recent restatement of this approach cf. Bragova 2017.

5   Guillaumont 1984; cf. also Guillaumont 2006.

and civic tradition.[6] Their reading has since been contested on a number of grounds: others have argued for a fundamental overlap of the voices of Marcus (the character) and Cicero (the authorial voice) against the view that the dialogues present opposing views on major theological problems without conveying a clear preference. Behind this disagreement is not merely a different reading of the structure and argument of the specific text, and of the scope and reach of Cicero's academic scepticism,[7] but fundamentally differing views on the interplay between philosophical reflection and political participation in Cicero, and on the general aims of the intellectual project on which he embarked. However, even those who later took issue with Schofield and Beard's account of the argumentative structure of the dialogue and of the relative weight of the voices of the two characters, have drawn major insights from their approach. There is now clear consensus that the *De Diuinatione* is a strongly experimental work, and one in which the combination of Hellenic and Roman elements achieves original and distinctive outcomes. Moreover, Schofield and Beard made an invaluable contribution by showing how much there is to be gained by pursuing the distinctions between the voices of Quintus, Marcus, and 'Cicero the narrator', and illustrated the potential of establishing new connections with the wider understanding of Cicero's role in the Roman intellectual life.

Elizabeth Rawson's eponymous book marks the beginning of a distinguished and influential tradition of studies on the reframing of the intellectual practice and discourse in late Republican Rome, in which the diversifying and ordering of Roman culture is discussed against the backdrop of imperial expansion and an emerging rationalizing approach.[8] *Ratio* risks appearing as misleading in this debate, as it tends to conceal the difference between the emergence of new criteria of evaluation and categorization – new *rationes* – which is a tendency of undeniable strength and importance, and the advent of a rationality that questions the foundations of traditional religion and introduces new modes of secularization. This is an interpretation that should be accepted with a considerable degree of caution because it is intrinsically vulnerable to modernizing generalizations.[9] While some aspects of the Roman intellectual discourse do suggest unremitting ambition, there is no Voltaire in sight – and it would be misguided to seek one. Yet new ways of ordering and defining the world and the human experience did emerge in late Republican Rome, and their significance has been explored as part and parcel of wider revolutionary developments, which occur over the

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6   Schofield 1986; Beard 1986.
7   Timpanaro 1994; Wardle 2006, 8–28; Santangelo 2013, 10–36. Cambiano 2012, 233–238 proposes an attractive accommodation between Cicero's Academic scepticism and his enduring commitment to the primacy of Roman values and practices. On Cicero as a 'Roman sceptic' see Woolf 2015, with the riposte of Lévy 2017. For a recent reading of *Div.* as a non-prescriptive project see Wynne 2019, 182–278.
8   Rawson 1985.
9   On *ratio* and rationalization see Moatti 1997 (Engl. transl. 2015); Rüpke 2012.

long term (periodizations vary, are permeable, and are intrinsically contested).[10] The interplay between political and intellectual developments, however, is further complicated by their following different paths and chronological coordinates. Simply put, the time scale of the 'Roman revolution' on the political plain and the time scale of the 'Roman cultural revolution' do not neatly coincide.[11] The terminology itself, of course, is disputed. Some have spoken of religious change enabled by rationalization; the very concept of the fall of the Roman Republic is a vulnerable one, as it is arguably underpinned by an implied notion of decline that is largely discredited in modern debates on Roman Republican politics. On the horizon, as Greg Woolf reminds us in his contribution to this volume, there is the option of *la balkanisation des cerveaux,* of 'brain balkanization': the possibility of simultaneously holding varying degrees of assent and consent on different, and even contradictory, religious and philosophical options. That is very much a late twentieth century construction, and yet one that retains considerable explanatory value, especially if one is presented with a body of work as vast, diverse, and complex as that of Cicero.

Karl Julius Beloch posited that Cicero is the first, and nearly the last, individual in ancient history on whose character we can reach an reasonably informed view.[12] Although this is more the articulation of an ongoing problem than a statement of determined assertion, it remains valid and multiplies the scope for competing interpretations. The tension between the synchronic and diachronic levels is especially significant: with Cicero, we are afforded the unique opportunity to follow the life, the successes and failures of a prominent individual over nearly four decades, and for over twenty years we have the vantage point – albeit a heavily redacted and directed one – of his correspondence. We can therefore follow much of the development and the shifts in his intellectual trajectory and can achieve a level of detail that is otherwise unattainable. Valentina Arena's chapter explores an important instance of this aspect: the notion of commonwealth that is advanced in Book 2 of the *De Legibus* is distinctly different from the one we encounter in the roughly contemporary *De Re Publica.*

Cicero plays a major role at a time of deep political change. Varying degrees of continuity have been posited between late Republic and early Principate, yet there is little doubt that the realities of power changed sharply and new centres of religious power emerged in that new context. The story of the transition from Republic to Empire is also one in which religious knowledge is less evenly distributed, but by no means redundant, throughout the elite; more importantly, during this period, the control over the emergence of religious alternatives and over the access to distinctive ritual options falls under the control of a monopolistic power. This trajectory is especially clear in two domains: the development of the triumph and of other forms of military distinc-

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10   Cf. Flower 2010.
11   Cf. Habinek/Schiesaro 1997 and Wallace-Hadrill 2008.
12   Beloch 1912, 16. Cf. Brunt 1986, 12.

tions, and the increasingly tight policing of divinatory options and alternatives.[13] In both cases the monarch controls access to those ritual options and reframes their place in the religious landscape of the city.

Cicero proves an invaluable viewpoint in this connection too. His religious trilogy is as much a scene-setting project as it is a battleground. It speaks to Hellenistic debates and to their adaptability and adaptation to a Roman context; it engages with the problem of defining what is distinctive about the Roman historical experience; it deals with problems that have long-standing relevance – the nature of the gods, the scope and effectiveness of divination, the tension between fate and human agency – and acquires a pressing, even sinister relevance in the mid-forties, when Caesar's project redefines the problem of divine status and the place of the individual within the fabric of Roman religion.[14] The reading of the trilogy is, in turn, framed around its own sets of challenges: the tension between the reading of an individual work and its coherence with the wider project, and the various strategies through which one should make sense of the different dialogic formats that he employed in those three works.

In this context, as in so many others, one faces the problem of establishing the extent and quality of Ciceronian exceptionalism. What makes his project exceptional is the connection with an intellectual production that ranges across a broad spectrum of interests and problems, but is part of a wider stream of intellectual production on religion that took shape in late Republican Rome, and whose boundaries are known to us only in some respects: Varro's great works on *Human* and *Divine Antiquities*, Nigidius Figulus' elusive production at the intersection between theology and astrology, the even more poorly attested literature on augural matters, not to speak of Caesar's *De Astris,* which established new, and no doubt controversial, connections between calendrical knowledge and astrological lore.[15] We should never lose sight of the fundamentally tendentious nature of Cicero's work: any appreciation of its historical importance involves a close scrutiny of its situatedness and partiality. The caveat also applies – all the more aptly – to his work on religion.

To quote a specific example, partly developing a provocative exercise attempted by Peter Wiseman:[16] if less of Cicero's work survived, we would probably have a far less strong emphasis on the place of the augural college in Republican Rome. Valentina Arena's contribution focuses on the innovative laws set out in the second book of *De Legibus*, giving particular prominence to the enhanced role that Cicero assigns to the augurs. Intervening in the political and intellectual debate of the 50s and responding to

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13   General orientation: Lange-Vervaet 2014; Lange 2016 (triumph); Santangelo 2013, 235–266 (divination).

14   See Cole 2013. Linderski 1982 (= 1995, 458–484) remains a valuable reference point.

15   Varro: Rüpke 2014; Smith 2018. Nigidius: Volk 2017. Caesar's *De astris*: Plin. *Nat.* 18.237, with Green 2014, 138–140. Cf. North 2014 on the wider implications of his assessment of the religious customs of Gauls and Germans in *BG* 6.11–28.

16   Wiseman 2009, 107–129.

the conceptualization of the relation between state and religion encapsulated in Clodius' law on *obnuntiatio*, Cicero proposes an idea of the commonwealth where a pivotal role is played by the ideal of *auctoritas*. This was, in the first instance, the *auctoritas* of the augurs, which ultimately derived from Jupiter, and was then followed by the *auctoritas* of the senators, a somehow secondary *auctoritas*, based on their *consilium*. It follows that the treatment of priesthoods in the second book of the *De Legibus* is much more than the defence of the standing of the augurs' craft and their practice, or the writing in legalistic terms of traditional Roman religion. In Book 2 Cicero states that the working of the best political setup, which he outlines in Book 3 and differs from the one presented in the *De Re Publica*, ought to be based on the fundamental premises of the prominence of religious *auctoritas*. It is only when the state is firmly placed within the religious framework of the *auctoritas* of the augurs that the proper functioning and flourishing of the state could be guaranteed. As he states at the end of Book 2 (as it is preserved to us), the most important step towards the creation of a polity is the establishment of religion;[17] the same sentiment and aspiration will be voiced right at the outset of the *De Natura Deorum* (1.1).

The extent and quality of the insights into religious matters that we glean from what survives of Cicero's production is apparent in other respects. The problem of deification, for instance, does not become a focus of interest in the age of Caesar, as one might initially assume; on the contrary, it is a long-standing concern. Spencer Cole's recent book has the merit of showing that Cicero's preoccupation with *Gottmenschentum* is already firmly codified in his speech on the command of Pompey (66 BCE).[18] Indeed, Cicero's engagement with problems of religion and theology is not confined to his philosophical work; his speeches are just as strongly engaged with problems of divine agency and religious action.[19] It has been objected that the evidence of the treatises on problems of ritual is inadequate.[20] That contention is unpersuasive in several respects, but does not apply, at any rate, to the evidence of the speeches, which are often preoccupied with problems and controversies of religious practice. Ingo Gildenhard's ground-breaking project formulated a broad research question and was exemplary in demonstrating how consistently strong such interest is throughout Cicero's production: the *Third Catilinarian* emerges from his analysis as one of the most ambitious and sophisticated moments of Cicero's theological reflection.[21] In her contribution to this volume, Claudia Beltrão da Rosa turns to an often overlooked aspect of Cicero's

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17   Cic. *Leg.* 2.69: *id enim est profecto quod constituta religione rem publicam contineat maxime.*
18   Cole 2013, esp. 34–48 on *De lege Manilia* (on which see also Federico Santangelo's paper in this volume).
19   The problem is expertly and effectively explored in the recent dissertation of N. R. Wagner (Wagner 2019); see esp. 9–13, 24–25, 334–335 for a thoughtful application of the concept of 'lived religion' to the understanding of Cicero's speeches.
20   Gradel 2002, 3–4.
21   Gildenhard 2011, 246–290.

major consular speech, in which a divine statue is animated not only by the speaker's powerful oratory, but by its ritual context too – that is, the securing of *placatio deorum*, reportedly on the same day the speech was delivered.

The study of the images of gods does not only bring into focus the images *per se*, but also the practices that support their use, the discourses and intellectual debates they stimulate, and the various responses they elicit. Beltrão's paper is especially interested in the ways in which Cicero places a divine statue on the scene, materializing the presence of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Beltrão's reading turns to the religious and, to some extent, theological aspects relating to the divine statue. In a speech delivered by the consul, Cicero himself, to the Roman people, this emerges as an outstanding case study of the construction of divine presence in late Republican Rome. Jupiter's new statue (*simulacrum*), in its materiality and through its framing in the ritual context, is a human offering to the gods, but becomes a present deity, a *praesens deus*. Through the words of the speaker it becomes Jupiter himself, and this bestows identity and agency upon the divine statue. As a medium to communicate with the gods, the statue is deeply anchored into cultural patterns of figuration and religious beliefs. Cicero's speech, by giving an active role to the statue of Jupiter in Roman political life, steers the audience's perception, prompting beliefs, emotions, and expectations towards the deity.

The *Catilinarians* are a focal point of Cicero's public career, and their impact and influence are apparent in all his later works. Yet they build upon nearly two decades of rigorous training and creative reflection. The *Verrines* are arguably the earliest moment in Cicero's production in which problems of ritual action and divine agency are discussed at significant length.[22] The engagement with a provincial and peripheral context opens up valuable opportunities for Cicero and enables him to explore the problem through the tension between Romanness and foreignness. One of the great strengths of Cicero's rhetorical project in the *Verrines* is to convey a sense of historical and emotional urgency to the actions that he discusses. Patricia Horvat and Alexandre Carneiro Lima turn to one of these instances, in which divine presence plays a powerful and distinctive role. Cicero's dramatic narrative in *De Signis* 72–82 is the only known literary source on the Segestan statue of the Greek goddess Artemis, whom the speech consistently named Diana. It is widely agreed that Cicero's key aim here is to mobilize his Roman audience – or indeed readership – by prompting feelings of indignation towards the actions of Verres. Starting from the analysis of the ways in which Cicero inserts the cult statue in a broader picture (by referring to physical movements and re-signification, highlighting its religious, artistic and political values), Horvat and Lima move beyond the immediate political context, and focus instead on the Ciceronian construction of a scenario that was capable of arousing strong emotional feelings in his listeners and readers toward the goddess and her statue, re-enacting the supposed

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22   See Cole 2013, 18–26 on their role in Cicero's reflection on divine status.

ontophanic experience of the Segestans for the sake of the Roman audience of the speech.

Cicero stresses the venerable character of the statue and the affective dimension that had characterized the many movements of the sacred object during the conquests and sacks of the city, prompting emotion and fervour towards it. The references to Scipio and Carthage, and the rhetorical re-creation of the general mourning that would have affected the people of Segesta when Verres' agents overturned the statue and of the farewell procession that accompanied the departure of (the statue of) the goddess, turn the *simulacrum* into the goddess herself. Horvat and Lima discuss the usefulness and applicability of the notion of ontophany to the understanding of the religious monumentalization that Cicero's speech operates, through the contrast between the position of the statue and that of the spectator, which obliterates the notion of the statue as a constructed object. By developing insights drawn from psychoanalytical theory, they discuss the emotional tension that produces a division of the mind that identifies, assimilates, and appropriates object and goddess, eliciting emotional behaviours, as Cicero presents them. The presentification of the deity in *De Signis*, which in an ordinary ritual would be an epiphanic manifestation in which the human beings maintain the ontological difference and distance from the manifested divinity, reaches the intensity of a collective pathos and becomes a plural ontophany, that is, the completeness of the being through the lived experience of the symbolic by the group communion. In doing so, Cicero increases the emotional appeal of the statue and steers the imagination of his Roman audience. By resorting to seductive rhetorical mechanisms, Cicero opens the way to an imaginative and creative engagement with the Roman (symbolic) religious universe, and recalls the memory of a Roman *communis opinio,* enabling an accommodation between the religious pathos and the emotional adjustment of the group. Cicero creates emotional responses from a distant event for his Roman audience by constructing an ontophany of Diana at Segesta.

Comparable concerns over the tensions between Roman and foreign religious practice are apparent in a speech from nearly fifteen years later, pronounced in altogether different political circumstances: the *De Haruspicum Responso.* Cicero presents a reading of the response of the Etruscan diviners on a series of prodigies that took place near Rome in 56 BCE. The haruspices indicated that human behaviour had caused the divine anger and also issued four warnings about the near future. From Cicero's viewpoint, Clodius is mainly responsible for the gods' wrath and is the promoter of the discord among the *optimates* that the haruspices have announced. As María Emilia Cairo shows in her chapter, Cicero's argument is in essence an attack on Clodius, in which the account of his crimes and flaws contributes to his presentation as the reason why Rome is threatened with such great dangers. Cicero, while attacking his opponent, configures a Roman identity based mainly on religious tenets. With this purpose in mind, Cairo analyses the *responsum* given by the haruspices, as well as the competing interpretations of Clodius and Cicero. Secondly, the status of the *ciues deteriores,* 'the

worse citizens' that the Etruscan priests mention in their warnings is explored, since Cicero underlines a strong religious component in this concept and uses it to exclude Clodius from the group of the *boni ciues,* 'the good citizens'. The opposition between *optimates* and *deteriores* must be considered by taking seriously the remarks on *religio* and its connection to Roman identity put forward in section 19 of the speech.

De Haruspicum Responso, then, has a strong theological dimension; there is no clear dividing line between theological speculation and ongoing debates on piety. Maria Eichler reminds us of how much of Cicero's reflection on religion is infused with his thinking about law, notably on the proper framing of *ius ciuile* and *ius sacrum*.[23] The debate is not confined to the developing field of Roman jurisprudence, nor to the antiquarian constructions that are such a conspicuous part of the late Republican intellectual discourse. It also has a prominent and productive role in Lucretius' poetic project. *De Rerum Natura,* in fact, is in close dialogue with Cicero's reflection on this problem in the mid-fifties. From their pragmatic and political definitions of natural law, Cicero and Lucretius articulate competing religious semantic fields that should guide Roman authorities in the running and administration of the *res publica* and in the practice of *ius ciuile* and *ius sacrum*. Their focus also extends to questioning the place and function of auspices in the late Republican power structures.[24] Cicero and Lucretius – as well as other major intellectual figures of the first century BCE – debated and partly contested their uses, and the correct approaches to them. The outcomes of their reflections were of course deeply different. In what Eichler terms a form of 'deviant rhetoric', Lucretius goes on to question their very legitimacy and capacity of effectively contributing to the welfare of the Roman commonwealth, while Cicero credits the auspicial and augural system with a cardinal role in the establishment of the Roman polity. Even Marcus, in the second book of *De Diuinatione* (2.70, 75), has words of appreciation for a practice that, in his view, has no divinatory remit, but a valuable diagnostic value: it is about establishing the will of the gods in relation to an envisaged action and acting appropriately upon it.

The political dimension of foresight and the extent of its connection with the divinatory practice are central problems in Federico Santangelo's paper, which deals with the problem of divine and human foresight in Cicero's thought. The semantic field of foresight and prediction in Latin is chiefly conveyed by the verb *prouidere*, which could roughly be translated as 'to foresee', or 'to see ahead', by the nouns that are derived from it, *prudentia* and *prouidentia*, and the related adjective, *prudens*. Needless to say, the language of foresight in Latin is not exclusively conveyed by those terms and must be charted across a broader range of usages. As Luciano Traversa has shown in a recent book, due consideration must be given to the interplay between *prouidentia* and *teme-*

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23   For a full-scale discussion of the problem see Harries 2006.
24   Cf. Berthelet 2015 and Driediger-Murphy 2019 for two sharply differing treatments of the problem.

ritas; the semantic field of caution, *cautio,* also proves significant and rich.[25] A survey of the instances in which Cicero discusses the remit and potential of foresight proves very productive. There are a number of references to the ability to foretell the future, but there are, more to the point, several definitions of foresight in various moments of his work. The problem of divine foresight assumes special significance in this context and is related to the debate on the distinction between divine and human status, recently explored in Cole's important monograph.[26]

The last two papers of the collection move the focus of the discussion beyond Cicero, albeit in different directions: one by taking a look at a wider picture of late Republican and early Imperial religious developments (Greg Woolf), and the other by exploring an aspect of the early modern legacy of his work (K. East). Towards the end of his discussion, Woolf points out that the larger a body of information we have on those who participated in the religious life of the period, the deeper the sense of its complexity becomes. Yet some generalizations are possible, and indeed desirable. If one takes a *longue durée* approach, as Woolf proposes, then Cicero becomes an invaluable standpoint over a complex transition process. The age of conquest is matched by an inclusion of foreign deities into a Roman cultic practice. Acceptance of Greek gods and Greek philosophical views on the gods is part of the story, but by no means the end of it. Then, roughly from the early second century BCE, begins a season in which the importance of traditional practices is asserted and there appears to be a much more inward-looking approach to matters religious: not sufficiently so to warrant the use of the label of 'fundamentalism', but a phase in which notions of Roman exceptionalism seem to gain momentum. The first century CE witnesses a renewed openness to foreign cults, and imperial input plays a decisive role in that context: Woolf correlates that phase with the end of wars of conquest and the consolidation of imperial boundaries. Cicero stands at the beginning of that transition: his work is a stark reminder of the complexity and diversity of the scenario, and of the difficulty that is inherent to any attempt to establish comprehensive models and apply comprehensive labels.

The call is pertinent and timely: it also runs against the grain of much of the scholarly tradition, which has sought, and indeed felt the urge, to conclusively define Cicero and, through him, a certain idea of the Roman Republic and of Roman culture. East proposes a rigorous exploration of an important aspect of the reception of Cicero's work in the early Enlightenment: a period in which impassionate debate on these works is intertwined with philological and editorial practice in new and effective forms. The afterlife of Cicero's thought tends to be sought in the use and interpretation of his words in the studies of those later writers who engaged with his legacy, selecting and employing different aspects of Cicero's reflection to their own ends. In so doing,

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25   Traversa 2017.
26   See also Englert 2017, esp. 43–51 on Cicero's plans to build a shrine (*fanum*) for his daughter Tullia shortly after her death in February 45.

an integral facet of the interpretation of the Ciceronian text is often overlooked: the transmission of the text, and the scholarly interventions made by the editors, translators, and commentators who determined the form in which the text would be read. This is particularly true of two of Cicero's theological dialogues, *De Natura Deorum* and *De Diuinatione*, texts which were ripe for intervention for two main reasons: first, their intrinsic complexity and controversy, and second, their potential importance to later religious disputes. These dialogues were regularly invoked in Enlightenment England by both heterodox and orthodox writers seeking to appropriate Ciceronian theology to justify their arguments in the debates on the relative merits of natural and revealed religion. They employed Cicero's words as they debated questions of providence, cosmology, reason and religion, prophecies and miracles, the role of priests, and much else. This controversy illustrates how the debates among theologians and philosophers reading Cicero's dialogues were reflected in, perhaps even shaped by, the transmission of those texts.

By focussing on one particularly controversial aspect of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, East shows how different early modern editors of the work confronted an opportunity to influence how the text was interpreted. The passage of *De Natura Deorum* to be discussed is the conclusion, 3.95, at which point Cicero – as himself – appears to side with the Stoic case presented by Balbus. While among Cicero's early modern orthodox readers this was seen as confirmation that Cicero was not only a theist, but endorsed a providential god, Cicero's heterodox readers rejected this view, arguing that his personal view must be identified with the words of the Academic Sceptic Cotta. This is echoed in various editions of the work, in the form of interpretative comments and annotations used to influence the way in which the passage was read. This chapter traces this phenomenon from the extensive commentary on the text by the Jesuit Pierre Lescalopier, printed in Paris in 1660, to the English translation printed by Joseph Hindmarsh in 1683 with its heavy orthodox emphasis, to the critical edition by John Davies printed in Cambridge in 1718, and finally to the English translation printed by Richard Francklin in 1741, which put forward a Freethinker's reading of the dialogue. These editions employ a variety of tools to persuade the reader to a particular reaction to the text, from invoking parallel passages, to arguing for certain interpretations of the methodology employed by the Academic Sceptic. Through a close analysis of their different approaches, East does not just show that Ciceronian theology maintained a position of influence in early Enlightenment England: she also demonstrates that the scholars editing, interpreting, and translating that theology used the scholarly tools available to them to encourage an understanding of Cicero's religion that advanced their own causes.

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As this overview shows, this volume seeks to do justice to the sheer range of available interpretative opportunities that present themselves when reading Cicero – from focusing upon a detailed study of Roman religion to a more comprehensive survey of Roman intellectual history. It draws attention to the rewards of overcoming familiar divides and distinctions. It straddles across different literary genres and modes of writing. It establishes or posits connections between Cicero and other authors. It advocates the importance of developing the tension between 'explaining Cicero from Cicero', placing him in his own historical and literary context, and studying him in the *longue durée,* both in the history of the Roman world and through the modern engagements with his work.

The key ambition of this volume is to convey a sense of the wealth and potential of the theme by identifying and pursuing some areas in which there is scope for original work. We have sought to put into dialogue different scholarly and academic traditions, chiefly in Europe and Latin America, and to produce original work that may prompt and steer further investigation. This book sets out to be a partial interim report on a theme that is likely to keep proving as fruitful and as contested as ever.

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