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Introduction

Caesar's death: a new beginning of history?

The Ides of March 44 BCE marked a definite break in Cicero's perception of contemporary history. After more than fifteen years in which Caesar had considerably dominated Roman politics and five years after the outbreak of the Civil War had brought the Republican constitution to its near collapse,¹ the chance of a fresh start of Republican politics and of his own career seemed within his grasp. It was time to reconsider his public role and to enter the stage of politics again. At least, this is the story² he wanted to convey in public already in spring 44, when he was finalizing his *De diuinatione*. The preface of Book 2 might be one of his first public utterances after Caesar's death, if for a moment we disregard his lost amnesty speech, which he held on 17 March.³ Cicero frames the preface as an end to his years of political inactivity, for which his frenzied philosophical output of the years 46–44 is defined as a substitution.⁴ First, Cicero gives a chronological and thematic overview of his works so far, thus trying to canonize their reception as a coherent philosophical corpus (*Diu.* 2.1–4). In a second step, he again defends his philosophical activities of the past and announces his return to active political life:

Ac mihi quidem explicandae philosophiae causam attulit *casus grauis ciuitatis*, cum in *armis ciuilibus* nec *tuere* meo more *rem* publicam nec nihil agere poteram, nec quid potius,

1 Cf. Cicero's first published text after the Civil War, the preface to his *Brutus*, esp. *Brut.* 4–6, where he famously stages a kind of funeral oration for the lost Republican constitution by referring to the mourning for the state (*lugere [...] rem publicam*, 4) and the forum which is deprived of its best public speakers, Hortensius and himself (*forum populi Romani [...] spoliatum atque orbatum*, 6). Cf. Dugan 2005, 218–219 and 234–237.

2 Cf. Steel 2005, 140 about how Cicero wanted his *Philippics* to be seen: “It is tempting to see these speeches as the glorious culmination of Cicero's public career [...]. This is an excellent *story*”. (emphasis ours).

3 On this speech in Cassius Dio's version, see La Bua in this volume and recently Burden-Strevens 2015, 150–156; on the reception of the speech in early modern commentaries of the *Philippics*, see Pieper in this volume. Cf. *Eph. Tull. s.v. De pace in senatu* for further secondary literature on this speech.

4 Butler 2002, 110–111 argues that Cicero might have worked on finalizing *De diuinatione* in the weeks immediately following Caesar's assassination. Cf. also the treatment of the preface by Baraz 2012, 188–194, and Steel 2005, 138: “it is possible that Cicero wanted to dramatise the breaking news of Caesar's death and his hopes that it would transform life at Rome”.

quod quidem me dignum esset, agerem reperiebam. Dabunt igitur mihi ueniam *mei ciues*, uel gratiam potius habebunt, quod, cum esset *in unius potestate res publica*, neque ego me abdididi neque deserui neque adflixii neque ita gessi quasi homini aut temporibus iratus, neque porro ita aut adlatus aut admiratus fortunam sum alterius, ut me meae paeniteret.

Id enim ipsum a Platone philosophiaque didiceram, naturales esse quasdam conuersiones rerum publicarum, ut eae tum a principibus tenerentur, tum a populis, aliquando a singulis. Quod cum accidisset nostrae rei publicae, tum pristinis orati muneribus haec studia renouare coepimus, ut et animus molestiis hac potissimum re leuaretur et *prodessemus ciuibus nostris* qua re cumque possemus. In libris enim *sententiam dicebamus, contionabamur*, philosophiam nobis *pro rei publicae procuratione substitutam* putabamus. *Nunc* quoniam de re publica consuli coepti sumus, *tribuenda est opera rei publicae*, uel omnis potius in ea cogitatio et cura ponenda; tantum huic studio relinquendum, *quantum uacabit a publico officio et munere*.⁵

The cause of my becoming an expounder of philosophy sprang from the grave condition of the State during the period of the Civil War, when, being unable to protect the Republic, as had been my custom, and finding it impossible to remain inactive, I could find nothing else that I preferred to do that was worthy of me. Therefore my countrymen will pardon me—rather they will thank me—because, when the State was in the power of one man, I refused to hide myself, to quit my place, or to be cast down; I did not bear myself like one enraged at the man or at the times; and, further, I neither so fawned upon nor admired another's fortune as to repent me of my own.

For one thing in particular I had learned from Plato and from philosophy, that certain revolutions in government are to be expected; so that states are now under a monarchy, now under a democracy, and now under a tyranny. When the last-named fate had befallen my country, and I had been debarred from my former activities, I began to cultivate anew these present studies that by their means, rather than by any other, I might relieve my mind of its worries and at the same time serve my fellow-countrymen as best I could under the circumstances. Accordingly, it was in my books that I made my senatorial speeches and my forensic harangues; for I thought that I had permanently exchanged politics for philosophy. Now, however, since I have begun to be consulted again about public affairs, my time must be devoted to the State, or, rather, my undivided thought and care must be fixed upon it; and only so much time can be given to philosophy as will not be needed in the discharge of my duty to the commonwealth.

The passage clearly marks the historical break with the sharp 'then/now'-dichotomy (*attulit* as perfect tense vs. *nunc* with present tense *tribuenda est* towards the end of the quotation). The period of the Civil War (*in armis ciuilibus*), which according to this passage lasted until Caesar's death and thus until the end of his sole reign (*in unius potestate res publica*), has finally been replaced by a new phase of public engagement (*publicum officium et munus*) for Cicero. It is obvi-

5 Cic. *Diu.* 2.6–7. Transl. Falconer 1923.

ously of another quality than the time devoted to his previous philosophical studies.

These, however, Cicero frames by political connotations as well:⁶ his fellow *citizens* are presented as the judges of Cicero's philosophical engagement (*dabunt [...] ueniam mei ciues*), which they should condone because it has been useful for them (*prodessemus ciuibus nostris*). So even if he expresses a turning point in his biography as politician and philosopher in April 44, his former treatises are nonetheless described as an (albeit alternative) way of giving his political vote (*sententiam dicebamus*) and of speaking in front of the assembly of the people (*contionabamur*)—in short: he “considered philosophy as a substitute for administering the state” (*pro rei publicae procuratione substitutam*). The political change in Rome means no ontological change of character for Cicero, but one of gradation or better, of intensification: the new political circumstances give rise to a more immediate political engagement, which relegates philosophy to the realms of dignified *otium* again.⁷ In the words of Jonathan Zarecki, philosophical works after Caesar's death “provide insight into Cicero's decision to *cast off the guise* of retired elder statesman”.⁸

It is telling, however, that Cicero probably did not write this preface in Rome, the place where according to his own conviction Roman politics should be conducted,⁹ but in one of his villas where he had been living most of the time since mid-April 44. The situation in Rome was not as glorious as the preface to *De diuinatione* 2 suggests. Caesar was dead, but many Romans, instead of rejoicing and taking the chance to throw off the yoke of his *dominatus*, wanted him back and gladly welcomed Antony's attempts to continue Caesar's politics. Caesar was not only present in everyone's mind, but in a certain way still exercised his power.¹⁰

⁶ Cf. Butler 2002, 110–111 on the political language used in this passage.

⁷ Cf. Baraz 2012, 194: Cicero again is a political *persona* with philosophical interests, whereas before Caesar's death, he has been a philosophical *persona* with political interests (cf. *ibid.*, 191). On Cicero's manipulative use of *otium* in his rhetorical and philosophical works in the late 50s, see Steel 2005, 63–82. Fox 2007, 231–232 argues differently: according to him, the multiplicity of Ciceronian *personae*, which could be condensed in the philosophical works, is what really interested Cicero.

⁸ Zarecki 2014, 136 (emphasis ours).

⁹ Cf. Cicero's famous anecdote in *Planc.* 66 about the Romans not taking notice of his Sicilian quaestorship, which he concludes with the remark *feci ut postea cotidie praesentem me uiderent, habitauit in oculis, pressi forum* (“I saw to it that afterwards they saw me personally on a daily basis; I lived in front of their eyes, I was glued to the forum.”); cf. also Q. Cicero (?), *Comment. pet.* 2 (the invitation to repeat as a mantra: *nouus sum, consulatum peto, Roma est*).

¹⁰ The letters to Atticus from 7 and 8 April (*Att.* 14.1 and 2) show the fixation of parts of the Roman upper class on Caesar, who, although dead, still serves as a kind of political legitimation.

It seemed to Cicero that while the Romans had killed a dictator, the tyranny (exercised by Antony in tandem with the decrees of the deceased Caesar) was still powerfully present.¹¹ This led to a huge restlessness on Cicero's part, who not only seems to have changed his location almost daily (*Att.* 14.2.4), but also to have swung violently from excitement and hope to depression and resignation.¹² One example of this is his floating attitude towards Antony: until summer 44 he wished to maintain his *amicitia* with Antony (at least on the surface) in order to be able to negotiate with him (e. g., *Att.* 14.13B, *Fam.* 16.23), while at the same his disquiet because of Antony's tyrannical behaviour grew into fear even for his own life (*Fam.* 12.2; 12.3; 12.22).¹³

It would take another four months before he finally returned to Rome and intervened in the public debate in the senate, at first almost unwillingly and only because his presence was required at a meeting, during which he held his first *Philippic Oration*. According to Stephen Usher, this first, not the (fictitious) second *Philippic* was ultimately the point of no return for Cicero's enmity with Antony,¹⁴ and thus defined the role Cicero would play in public from this moment onwards: that of the arch-enemy of Mark Antony and fierce defender of the Republican case. Interestingly, exactly at the same time, in autumn 44, he was also working on his last philosophical work, *De officiis*. Here he set out his ideal of political virtues and distanced himself definitively from both Caesar and Pompey by accusing them both of political actions that were driven by egoistic power ambitions, thus including the work explicitly into his old/new activity as first-rank politician (see below pp. 9–10).¹⁵

The influence of Caesar's decrees on the political debate of the time is mentioned several times, e. g. *Att.* 14.6.2, 14.10.1 (*ut omnia facta, scripta, dicta, promissa, cogitata Caesaris plus ualerent quam si ipse uiueret*, "that all deeds, writings, sayings, promises and thoughts of Caesar have more influence now than if he was still living"), 14.13.6; see Bellincioni 1974, 123–128.

¹¹ Cf. *Att.* 14.14.2 (*sublato enim tyranno tyrannida manere uideo*) and also, e. g., *Att.* 14.4.1 (*equidem doleo [...] non una cum libertate rem publicam recuperatam* ("I myself lament [...] that the state has not been rescued together with freedom")).

¹² Cf. Van der Blom 2003, 290–295.

¹³ Cf. Usher 2010 and Van der Blom 2003, 295–299, who stresses the impossibility of any lasting appeasement between the two very different characters with completely opposing political interest. Another example are the Ides of March which are first defined as Cicero's only pleasure (*Att.* 14.6.1; 14.13.3), but soon have the flaw of not having had the result Cicero wanted (*Att.* 14.22.2); cf. Butler 2002, 108.

¹⁴ Cf. Usher 2010.

¹⁵ Cf. *Off.* 3.82–84; Dyck 1996, 602–603 *ad loc.* draws attention to the embeddedness of the passage in the political situation of late 44 and refers to Strasburger 1990, 90–91 for the "riskiness of the passage, which, once published, would remove any chance of compromise with the Caesar-

The first *Philippic* was met with approval by Cassius (*Fam.* 12.2), the second by Atticus (*Att.* 16.11), and in November 44 young Octavian unceasingly urged Cicero to return to active politics.¹⁶ Some months later, in February 43, he wrote to his close friend Lucius Papinius Paetus that he was continuously attempting to protect the safety and freedom of his fellow citizens (*sic tibi, mi Paete, persuade, me dies et noctes nihil aliud agere, nihil curare, nisi ut mei ciues salui liberique sint, Fam.* 9.24.4). This last quotation refers to Cicero's definitive fight against Mark Antony in what we now know as *Philippics* 3–14, speeches delivered between 20 December 44 and 21 April 43, a time during which Antony was declared a public enemy and was finally besieged and defeated at Mutina by the two consuls Hirtius and Pansa, who both lost their lives during the expedition. Cicero's *Philippics* represent the most powerful anti-Antonian propaganda of the time. But his fight had the failure—or at least the potential to fail—already written into it from its beginning. As Bishop in this volume argues, Cicero explicitly reflected on the concept of potential failure on a meta-textual level in these speeches in order to shape his own *persona* as a kind of *Demosthenes rediuuus*. On the other hand, there was also unwanted and real failure resulting from his fatal tendencies to wrongly interpret the political climate in Rome. Especially dangerous was his over-estimating his own role and his under-estimating some of his fellow politicians, most of all young Octavian.¹⁷ In incredibly patronizing terms he guaranteed the senators that the “youngster”¹⁸ would always remain faithful to Cicero's senatorial faction—implying that it would always be possible for him to lead Octavian with his advice.¹⁹ Octavian, however, turned out not to be a naive *puer*, but a ruthless politician. Thus, at the end, Cicero's hope that his engagement in politics after the Ides of March could change the course of history turned out to be wrong. The price he had to pay for his error

ian party”; cf. also Van der Blom 2003, 304, who speaks of Cicero advocating a “surgical” solution with regard to Caesar's murder.

16 Cf. *Att.* 15.11.6: *deinde ab Octauiano cotidie litterae ut negotium susciperem, Capuam uenirem, ut iterum rem publicam saluarem* (“Furthermore, daily letters from Octavian: I should take up office again, I should come to Capua, I should again save the state.”).

17 Cf. e.g. Gelzer 1969, 409: “Sein Fehler war [...], daß er seinen wirklichen Einfluß auf den Gang der großen Politik überschätzte”. Cf. also below p. 7.

18 Cf. *Phil.* 3.3 (*paene potius puer*), *Ep. Brut.* 1.18.3. See Manuwald 2007, vol. 1, 94 with further literature in n. 243.

19 Cf. *Phil.* 5.51 (*promitto, recipio, spondeo, patres conscripti, C. Caesarem talem semper fore ciuem, qualis hodie sit, qualemque eum maxime uelle esse et optare debemus*) with Manuwald 2007, vol. 2, 723–724.

was enormous: the conciliation of Antony and Octavian and the ensuing proscription led to his death and silenced Cicero's voice forever.²⁰

Reading Cicero's last years

“The manner of his death brought Cicero praise and sympathy from the writers of Antiquity. His life and character have evoked more varied reactions”.²¹ It is indeed a common strategy to begin a description of Cicero's life with the end—see for example the biographies by Kathryn Tempest and Emanuele Narducci.²² It was not very difficult to read his death as a moment that sealed a life in the service of the state, passionately engaged with liberty and Republican constitution and against tyranny and the undermining of the political *mos maiorum*.²³ If one interprets his last moments in such a way, one very much follows the paths of reception which Cicero himself had tried to set out in his final years—generally, it has been shown in recent years how important Cicero's project of self-fashioning has been for his later reception.²⁴

After Caesar's death, he was keen on stressing the consistency of his career, especially (as the quotation from *De diuinatione* has shown) on harmonizing his absence from politics with his renewed active role. He therefore re-invented his role as *homo consularis* and linked the events of 44 and 43 closely with his consular fight against Catiline in 63 and with his opposition to Clodius in the 50s.²⁵ The message was simple: Cicero was fighting for the good cause of the free Re-

20 Butler 2002, 123 is a very suggestive reading of Plut. *Ant.* 20.3–4 arguing for Antony's major responsibility for Cicero's death; see Keeline in this volume for an important modification of this traditional view. Bellincioni 1974 is a very detailed treatment (closely following the Ciceronian sources) of the last two years of Cicero's life.

21 Mitchell 1991, 324.

22 Cf. Narducci 2009, Tempest 2011. “Cicero's death came at the end of the most intense period of personal and political activity of his life”, as Zarecki 2014, 159 puts it, heavily leaning on the image Cicero wanted to convey of the last one and a half years of his life.

23 For the almost exclusive focus on his death in early imperial literature, see Gowing 2013, 238.

24 See Bishop 2019; La Bua 2019, 16–54; Keeline 2018, 2–3. Cf. also Zarecki 2014, 149: “Cicero was successful in assassinating Antony's character” (with the *Philippics*).

25 Cf. esp. the famous beginning of the second *Philippic* (2.1): *Quonam meo fato, patres conscripti, fieri dicam, ut nemo his annis uiginti rei publicae fuerit hostis, qui non bellum eodem tempore mihi quoque indixerit? [...] Tu ne uerbo quidem uiolatus, ut audacior quam Catilina, furiosior quam Clodius uiderere, ultro me maledictis lacessisti.*

public and against the enemies of the state.²⁶ This is at least how Cicero wanted to frame his actions, and this is how especially his death was indeed perceived by many later readers: as a symbolic act, as the end of a political era, as the silencing of a voice that represented the Roman state under Republican constitution. The fascination with Cicero's death and the act of resistance which it represented elicited a variety of responses throughout history, all the way from early imperial declaimers who debated whether Cicero should have burnt the *Philippics* in exchange for Antony's pardon (as discussed by Keeline and Bishop in this volume), to (early) modern playwrights for whom Cicero's death served as a symbol of political steadfastness (as studied by Manuwald in this volume).

But it was not merely Cicero's death which captured the imagination of later authors. Many important themes in Cicero's life and work from this period, all neatly encapsulated in the quotation from *De diuinatione* at the start of this chapter, would have a wide-ranging reception in later periods.

1. One of these themes is that of Cicero's work from this period as his swan song, the crowning achievement of his life's literary work. As mentioned previously, Cicero's preface appears to suggest that his philosophical oeuvre would soon be coming to a close, and that *De diuinatione* will be the *Spätwerk* in that oeuvre.²⁷ The *Philippics* similarly have an air of finality to them, as Bishop shows in Chapter 2.²⁸ In these speeches the possibility is embedded that Cicero's resistance will *not* be successful, just as Demosthenes' *Philippics* were ultimately doomed to fail, and would eventually lead to his death. Consequently, even more than in other political speeches, Cicero appears to be actively involved in shaping his post-mortem reception, with his 'noble failure' of the *Philippics* as an important role in that reception. As Cédric Scheidegger Lämmle notes, Cicero takes

²⁶ As an example from literature almost chosen at random, cf. Manuwald 2007, vol. 1, 91–92: “Cicero's proclaimed aim was to defend the *res publica* and the liberty of the Roman people against those who strove for sole rulership and violated basic Republican principles”.

²⁷ Cf. Bringmann 1971, 191 (our emphasis): “Allein die Tatsache, daß er hier eine Übersicht über das bisher Geleistete gibt, spiegelt die Überzeugung des Verfassers wider, daß *sein philosophisches Werk zu einem gewissen Abschluß gekommen sei*” (namely through Caesar's death, not because the thematic range has been fully treated). On the concept of *Spätwerk*, see Scheidegger Lämmle 2016 (for Cicero, *ibid.*, 75–109).

²⁸ On Cicero's failure see also Steel 2005, 115–146, who shows that “Cicero used writing to impose a form of success upon a situation which was, actually or potentially, one of failure” (115); cf. also Steel 2002, 226–233 on the failure of Cicero's emphatic concept of oratory as such: Cicero's oratory was not the most important aspect of Rome's politics in the 60s, 50s and 40s, his speeches hardly ever were decisive for political decisions (Pompey's command, Caesar's command in Gaul etc.).

pains to portray himself as an old man who values his dignity higher than his life, and the *Philippics* as a testament to that conviction.²⁹

In his depiction of the work of this period as his *Spätwerk*, Cicero appears to have been successful. In an influential article Kaster has shown that the early imperial declaimers almost exclusively focused on Cicero's final years and the eventual failure of his political battle.³⁰ Declamation then shaped other imperial genres, as Keeline's recent book has argued convincingly.³¹ We might find a reflection of the declamatory tradition in Cassius Dio's version of the *Philippics*. Famously he condenses the 14 speeches into one long speech by Cicero (Dio Cass. 45.18–47) and has Q. Fufius Calenus react to them in one of the harshest anti-Ciceronian texts that have been preserved from Antiquity (Dio Cass. 46.1–28).³² Within Dio's narrative, the reason for Cicero to deliver his speech are several omens and portents that seem to predict the fall of the state. Among them

καὶ πνεῦμα μέγα ἐπιγενόμενον τὰς τε στήλας τὰς περὶ τὸ Κρόνιον καὶ περὶ τὸν τῆς Πίστεως νεῶν προσπεπηγυῖας ἀπέρρηξε καὶ διεσκέδασε, καὶ τὸ ἀγαλμα τὸ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς τῆς Φυλακίδος, ὃ πρὸ τῆς φυγῆς ὁ Κικέρων ἐς τὸ Καπιτώλιον ἀνετεθείκει, κατέβαλε καὶ κατέθραυσε. Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ Κικέρωνι τὸν ὄλεθρον προεδήλωσε.³³

also a mighty windstorm occurred which snapped off and scattered the tablets erected about the temple of Saturn and the shrine of Fides and also overturned and shattered the statue of Minerva the Protectress, which Cicero had set up on the Capitol before his exile. This, now, portended death to Cicero himself.

In Dio's version, then, Cicero seems to be aware that the speech he is going to deliver will lead more or less directly to his death. We find the idea all the way up to the early modern period. When Muret in 1573/1574 introduces *De officiis*—another work that is part of Cicero's philosophical *Spätwerk*—to his students, he highlights the fact that it was written by *Cicero iam senex* and thereby constitutes the *prope ultimus illius praestantis ingenii fetus* (see Del Giovane in this volume). In this, he was following a long tradition. Bruni, for instance, could call the first *Philippic* the *Ciceronis uelut optimi poete extremus actus* (see Jansen in this volume). Pieper in this volume generalizes this observation

²⁹ Cf. Scheidegger Lämmle 2016, 106–109.

³⁰ Cf. Kaster 1998, 262–263; He suggests that the declaimers felt similar as Cicero: as “brilliant, yet utterly impotent orators” they were “unable to work [their] will[s] upon a political world in which speech had been shoved to the margins” (262).

³¹ Keeline 2018.

³² In Zieliński 1929, 280–288 the speech is part of what he calls “Cicerokarikatur”; see also La Bua in this volume with further references.

³³ Dio Cass. 45.17.3–4, transl. Cary 1916.

by analysing the reception of the works of 44 and 43 as a form of condensed reception of Cicero's oeuvre as a whole.

2. From the very beginning of his oeuvre as we know it, we see Cicero taking great interest in defining the interaction between philosophical and rhetorical study on the one hand and the practical discipline of politics on the other. Already in the preface of *De inuentione* he writes: *Saepe et multum hoc mecum cogitavi, bonine an mali plus attulerit hominibus et ciuitatibus copia dicendi ac summum eloquentiae studium* ("I have often seriously debated with myself whether men and communities have received more good or evil from oratory and a consuming devotion to eloquence").³⁴ As Steel remarks, "[Cicero] made being an intellectual and a writer into part of what it meant to be a public figure".³⁵

Especially with *De officiis* and the second *Philippic*, the connection between intellectual and public figure appears close knit. Butler captures this concisely, with a nod to Cicero's self-fashioning in his *Spätwerk*:

The simultaneous composition of the Second Philippic and the *De officiis* left a profound mark on both, and the two works should be [...] read together. [...] It is scarcely coincidental that Cicero was writing a treatise on civic duty even as he set forth, in the Second Philippic, the terms of his own final struggle for the Republic. [...] It might instead be more accurate to say that, both in the treatise and in the speech, Cicero drafted a reflection of a man he had not yet quite become. So compelling was what he saw that soon there would be no turning point.³⁶

On the other hand, the preface of *De diuinatione* 2 draws out a tension between the roles of writer and active politician. Even though he is writing a philosophical treatise, Cicero states that philosophy should not be one's main occupation when the state calls one to duty (*Diu. 2.7: nunc quoniam de re publica consuli coepti sumus, tribuenda est opera rei publicae [...]; tantum huic studio relinquendum, quantum uacabit a publico officio et munere*). The oscillation between his presentation of philosophy and politics as either overlapping or distinct fields is mirrored in his reception, which has conceptualized the relationship between Cicero/philosopher and Cicero/politician in very different ways. According to Bishop, the scholarly reception of the two diverged rather quickly in Antiquity.³⁷ But this does not mean that this division could no longer be questioned or turned back. Indeed, through the ages we find radically varying responses to

³⁴ *Inu. rhet.* 1.1, transl. Hubbell 1949.

³⁵ Steel 2005, 146.

³⁶ Butler 2002, 116–117.

³⁷ Cf. Bishop 2015, and Altman 2015b, 4–5 on Zieliński 1929 and his treatment of Cicero's integrity.

the question of unity of Cicero's oeuvre. On one end of the spectrum we find Florentine humanists of the early fifteenth century, for whom, as Jansen in this volume concludes, Cicero the political theorist and Cicero the politician go hand in hand. On the other we encounter medieval authors who seem unaware that the senator Cicero and the philosopher Tullius were, in fact, the very same historical person.³⁸ As Van der Velden in this volume suggests, an even more complex picture emerges when we broaden our scope to include other Ciceros whom posterity has known: the universal stylistic model, the letter-writer, the poet. Under this lens, Ciceronian reception can be seen as a never-ending process of fragmentation and re-assembling of earlier versions of Cicero.

3. When in the preface to *De diuinatione* 2 Cicero speaks of a period “when the State was in the power of one man”, he refers to a figure who even after his death would continue to exercise his major influence—not only on politics, but also on Cicero's writings of this last period of his life. It is Caesar who gives Cicero's fight for Republican values and against a potential dictatorship of Antony an immediate poignancy. Even when not mentioned explicitly, Caesar is a continuous presence in the *Philippics*, in *De amicitia*, *De fato* and *De officiis*, and Cicero's correspondence from his final years to a large degree seems to be concerned with the question of negotiating one's role in a post-Caesarian world.

Already in April 44, Cicero hints at the parallel between his situation now and during the civil war of 49–48: *neque enim iam licebit quod Caesaris bello licuit* (“but I will no longer be allowed to do what was still allowed during Caesar's war”, *Att.* 14.13.2). This tendency to frame the situation after the Ides of March in comparison with or even analogy to one of the moments of biggest despair in his life and in Rome's recent history would gladly be picked up by later authors. As shown by Bishop in this volume, Cicero realized early on that his own opposition to Caesar took on an almost archetypal nature, known to him from a very familiar sphere: that of the stock-orator against the stock-tyrant in declamation. La Bua in this volume argues that in order to understand the ancient historians' evaluations of Cicero's final years, one must also consider how they portrayed him during the civil war. Also in late medieval and early humanistic texts, Cicero often seems to be linked to Caesar in that one cannot understand the one without taking into account the dichotomy with the other. Mabboux in this volume treats the (admittedly restricted) influence of Cicero opposing Caesar in late medieval discussions about how to deal with tyranny. Most clearly, this dichotomy becomes visible in the context of Florence, where Leonardo Bruni dates the be-

³⁸ Cf. Mabboux 2016, 45, who shows that within the 13th and early 14th centuries there was no clear-cut take on the influence of Cicero's philosophical works on actual politics.

ginning of Rome's cultural and political decline to the rule of Caesar, Augustus and the other Julio-Claudian emperors. As Jansen in this volume notes, Bruni for one analyses the conflict between Caesar and Cicero not just as a clash between historical individuals, but as a strife between tyranny and the abuse of political rights and civic freedom and self-determination.

4. This automatically leads to another important focus of this volume. For Cicero, the opposite of “a State in the power of one man”, as mentioned in the preface of *Diu.* 2, would be a state whose citizens live in a condition of *libertas*. Zarecki has shown that Cicero adds to the weight of the already heavily laden term even further in his speeches against Mark Antony: “In the *Philippics*, Cicero uses *libertas* to designate the proper state of the constitution. He presents two possible alternative statuses for the State: freedom or tyranny. [...] In the ideological battle against Antony, *libertas* becomes the key to preserving all of the traditional Republican virtues, including *otium*, *pax*, and *concordia*”.³⁹ A passage which beautifully shows how Cicero wants to connect himself with terms of political stability and peace in the free state after Caesar's murder is the preface to *De fato*: the former Caesarian Hirtius, whom Cicero hopes to convince of the Republican case, visits Cicero; the two immediately begin a discussion, and the theme almost naturally are two of Cicero's political slogans of the past, peace and political stability (*otium*). In order to underline the close link between himself and these concepts, Cicero adds that in the months after the Ides of March, this is their “daily and regular topic” (*cum ad me ille uenisset, primo ea, quae erant cotidiana et quasi legitima nobis, de pace et de otio, Fat. 2*).⁴⁰

In his synthesis of philosophy and politics during this period, one cannot help noticing Cicero's emphasis on the core concept of his political life throughout the genres in which he is writing. *Libertas* takes pride of place: as mentioned by Sillett in this volume, the notion occurs in all of the *Philippics* but the ninth, and a staggering 102 times in the corpus of the *Philippics* as a whole. Paulson in this volume furthermore observes that the concept is also of great importance in *De fato*, where it takes on more philosophical connotations connected with individuals being the master of their own destiny.⁴¹ Consequently, reception sees the

³⁹ Zarecki 2014, 151. Cf. also Bellincioni 1974, 28–32 (*libertas*) and 32–45 (*concordia*).

⁴⁰ Hirtius is a rather exceptional interlocutor in the dialogue (since the *Academici libri*, Cicero had restricted living speakers to his most inner circle, Atticus, his brother and himself): cf. Bringmann 1971, 194–195; Steel 2005, 108.

⁴¹ In a similar vein, Arena has argued that Cicero's concept of *libertas* also in *De officiis* gets a new, Stoic interpretation which “alters” the traditional juridical Roman view of previous times. A truly free man is he “who acts according to virtue”: cf. Arena 2007, 51–53. She then shows how this new concept also feeds the *Philippics* (61–67), where Cicero goes so far to elevate everyone's

term laden with Ciceronian connotations. As Sillett in this volume suggests, Drances' insistence on *libertas fandi* in *Aeneid* 11.346 may well be a nod to Cicero's use of the term, especially since Drances is also painted in Ciceronian colours elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. Later on in the tradition, Augustine's use of *libertas* in conjunction with his views on free will may well be indebted to the aforementioned *De fato*, as suggested by Paulson in this volume. The apotheosis of a highly emphatic Ciceronian *libertas* can be detected in Florentine politics around 1400, when the city tried to shape her image as keeper of (ancient) Republican ideals against other non-Republican city states in Italy (especially Milan) with whom they were waging war (see Jansen in this volume).⁴²

5. In the passage from *De diuinatione*, we finally see Cicero pre-empting criticism of his behaviour of the past few years: why is he now re-entering politics after such a long period of inactivity? Ancient readers must have connected this criticism of Cicero's inadequate *constantia* with similar negative assessments of earlier moments in his political career. Why, for instance, did he make a U-turn in shifting his allegiances to the First Triumvirate in the mid-50s? Why did he waver so much after it became clear that Caesar was attempting a full-blown *coup* in early 49? Why the effusive praise in his three Caesarian speeches? In this preface to *Diu.* 2, we see Cicero offering a re-definition of what it means to be *constans*.⁴³ Since the best way of serving one's countrymen is highly dependent on the exigencies of the political situation, he submits, it should come as no surprise that he will now change his course after the recent political upheaval.⁴⁴ In other words: a person's *constantia* should not be judged in relation to every single action, but rather with regard to the general political programme he is following. In Cicero's own case, the general love for the Republic and the attempt to save it meant for him that he had to remain on speaking terms

inner feelings and judgments above the "objectivity of law" (67) — a dangerous path which at the end enables Octavian to claim supreme power: "by removing obedience to the laws from its central position, he himself created the ideological basis for such a defeat" [sc. his succumbing to the triumvirs] (72).

⁴² The theme of *libertas* connected to Cicero emerges in Florence e.g. from the epigrams that Coluccio Salutati composed for the frescoed cycle of *uiri illustres* in a chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio and in which Cicero is hailed as embodiment of freedom: *at ipsum / Antonii gladius libertatemque peremit* ("but Antony's sword killed him and liberty", cf. Hankey 1959).

⁴³ Cf. for the philosophical take on *constantia* in his oeuvre e.g. Fulkerson 2013 (esp. 248: "*Constantia* is assuredly a virtue, and an aristocratic one, associated with *fides*, *integritas*, *gravitas*") and Tracy 2012, 105, who marks the tension between the *constantia*-claim in his political career and his being a sceptic in the philosophical works.

⁴⁴ The vexed question whether or not one should "serve the time" is discussed, among others, in Jossa 1964, Manenti 2007 and Hall 2009b.

with all of the major players of his time, which automatically led to some utterances that could be criticized as inconsistent.⁴⁵

This can also be seen in the year 44, when he tried to keep the outward appearance of *amicitia* between himself and Mark Antony until autumn, even though in his letters to Atticus Antony is criticized for tyrannical behaviour as early as April 44. A fascinating case are the letters exchanged between the two that have been preserved in the fourteenth book of the Atticus letters. In *Att.* 14.13A, Mark Antony writes to Cicero with hardly hidden menace. Hall has analysed the letter and Cicero's answer (*Att.* 14.13B) and recognizes the threat, but remarks that it is embedded in "an outer façade of politeness", which is "scrupulously retained".⁴⁶ As Hall argues further, Cicero acknowledged Antony's attempt to write politely, but also read the letter as malevolent (*dissolute, turpiter, perniciose*, *Att.* 14.13.6) and hypocritical.⁴⁷ In his answer to Antony, however, he kept his tone so polite that Antony in his turn, when he was no longer interested in publicly stressing their bonds of friendship, read parts of the letter in the senate in September 44 to prove Cicero's fickleness. Hall's comment is to the point: "Polite fictions do not survive well when removed from the social pressures that produce them".⁴⁸

The rapid political decontextualization after Cicero's death might be the most important reason why Cicero was not successful in moulding this part of his legacy.⁴⁹ As Sillett and La Bua elucidate in this volume, there was a very early tradition of invective against Ciceronian fickleness, traces of which may be found in Virgil, Asinius Pollio, Lucan, the pseudo-Sallustian *Invective against Cicero* and in the imperial Greek historians. Having subsided for a long time, this criticism pops up again in the nineteenth century, as this book's second epilogue will show.

In studying the afterlife of these various themes, one notices that Cicero himself was actively trying to influence his own reception. He was not always successful in doing so, perhaps because others were also actively involved in directing Ciceronian reception towards a particular course, or in claiming it for their own purposes. One such actor may have been Octavian. As expounded by Keeline and Sillett in this volume, it may well be that the later Augustus consciously

⁴⁵ Cf. Malaspina 2013 for an engaged defence of Cicero against the charge of inconsistency through a comparison of his public discourses and philosophical treatises during Caesar's dictatorship.

⁴⁶ Hall 2009a, 93–98; cf. also Bellincioni 1974, 170–171.

⁴⁷ Hall 2009a, 94–95.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁹ Cf. Kaster 1998.

attempted to re-write the history of the end of the Republic, not only by downplaying his own role in Cicero's death, but also by restraining overtly positive depictions of Cicero, or indeed any kind of tribute to his legacy. The famous absence of Cicero's name from most parts of Augustan literature is probably the result of this. It is possible that later in his life, once he was sure that Cicero's name no longer served as a watchword of the 'Republicans'⁵⁰ and thus no longer constituted a danger to his regime, Augustus tried to rehabilitate Cicero (in so doing also blackmailing the memory of Mark Antony). At least this is what the famous anecdote towards the end of Plutarch's *Life of Cicero* wants to convey:

Πυνθάνομαι δὲ Καίσαρα χρόνοις πολλοῖς ὕστερον εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς ἓνα τῶν θυγατριδῶν· τὸν δὲ βιβλίον ἔχοντα Κικέρωνος ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν ἐκπλαγέντα τῷ ἱματίῳ περικαλύπτειν· ἰδόντα δὲ Καίσαρα λαβεῖν καὶ διελεθεῖν ἐστῶτα μέρος πολὺ τοῦ βιβλίου, πάλιν δ' ἀποδιδόντα τῷ μειρακίῳ φάναί· “Λόγιος ἀνὴρ, ὦ παῖ, λόγιος καὶ φιλόπατρις”.⁵¹

I learn that Caesar, a long time after this, paid a visit to one of his daughter's sons; and the boy, since he had in his hands a book of Cicero's, was terrified and sought to hide it in his gown; but Caesar saw it, and took the book, and read a great part of it as he stood, and then gave it back to the youth, saying: “A learned man, my child, a learned man and a lover of his country”.

According to Plutarch, Augustus re-discovered the patriot behind the proscribed Cicero;⁵² if it was not him, Tiberian culture most surely did, as testify the *Histories* of Velleius Paterculus or the *exempla* by Valerius Maximus, in which Cicero plays a rather positive part.⁵³ But this did not wipe out the previous negative image. Both—the hyperbolically heroic and the caricaturally negative—continued to exist. Every new generation had to come to terms with Cicero's legacy, and the final years of his life were always a crucial part of these negotiations, as this volume hopes to show.⁵⁴

50 As it had been after Caesar's assassination, when (according to Cicero's own testimony in *Phil.* 2.28) Brutus triumphantly showed the bystanders the bloody dagger that had killed Caesar and cried out the name Cicero.

51 Plut. *Cic.* 49.3; transl. Perrin 1919.

52 Cf. Moles 1988, 200 *ad loc.*: “[T]here is finally a kind of posthumous reconciliation between Republicanism and Caesarism”; Lintott 2013, 210 *ad loc.* only comments that “[t]he anecdote shows that republican values might be a source of suspicion in the period when the boys were growing up (c.10 BC onwards)”. Cf. also Pelling 2002, 368–369 on the passage as a summarizing and at the same time “modifying vignette”.

53 Cf. Wiegand 2013, 130–131 on “Cicero als Symbol” of the *res publica* in Velleius, 166–167 on Cicero and other late-Republican heroes as positive figures in Valerius.

54 Many thanks to Thomas Keeline and Ermanno Malaspina for helpful comments on this introduction.