



## P R E F A C E

The third and fourth books of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* present the reader with a self-contained treatise on the nature and management of human emotion. Cicero sets himself the task of presenting, first for grief, then for emotions in general, the insights that had been gained in Greece over many years through philosophical debate and also through practical experience in the ancient equivalent of psychotherapy. His own support is given for the most part to the Stoic position, which he admires for its thoroughness and close reasoning; indeed, his work now stands as the oldest complete text documenting Stoic views on this subject. But he also pays considerable attention to the views of other Hellenistic thinkers, notably the Peripatetics and the Epicureans, setting their arguments in dialogue with those of the Stoics. Recommendations from all the schools are combined in the advice he offers to counselors on the means of allaying grief and other strong emotions.

Scholars in the field of ancient philosophy have over the last decade become increasingly interested in the analyses of emotion that were posited by various thinkers during the Hellenistic period, that is, the two and a half centuries following the death of Aristotle in 322 B.C.E. The majority of scholarly attention has rightly been devoted to reconstructing and interpreting the positions of the primary Greek thinkers of the period, figures like Zeno of Citium, Chrysippus of Soli, Epicurus, and later Posidonius of Rhodes. But progress in this area is frequently uncertain and always methodologically difficult because of the nature of our evidence, much of

which is fragmentary and heavily mediated by the opinions of later writers. Cicero, by contrast, provides us with a continuous account which, though it comes from a slightly later time period and from a different culture, can still serve as an invaluable point of reference for the Hellenistic thought which preceded it. For Cicero is well informed about his subject through many sources, oral and written, that are now lost to us, and his treatment is both intelligent and relatively impartial. By following his argument on its own terms, working out its motivations, and then comparing it with other available sources, we learn much about Stoicism in particular which could not be gained from any other source.

But for many readers, this work will have an appeal in and of itself. The topic has a perennial interest, and the position Cicero takes, though unlikely to win wide adherence, will nonetheless command respect, challenging its opponents to construct equally thoughtful and rigorous responses. The manner of presentation is lively and accessible, for Cicero's intention is not to enter the debates of professional philosophers but to engage a wider public in disciplined reflection upon a matter of importance. It is my hope that both scholars in ancient philosophy and others new to the subject will find in his work material for many fruitful discussions.

This project has benefited from research funds supplied by the Walter and Constance Burke Research Initiation Awards for Junior Faculty at Dartmouth College, as well as from leave time provided under Dartmouth's Junior Faculty Fellowship program. Among the many individuals who have assisted me in various ways, I would like to thank Martha Nussbaum, Charles Fornara, and Victor Caston, who guided my graduate studies in Hellenistic ethics and epistemology; Christopher Gill, who provided the initial inspiration for this project and waded patiently through my first efforts; and David Konstan, who did much to clarify my understanding of the Epicurean material in book 3. Brad Inwood and two anonymous scholars read complete drafts for the University of Chicago Press; their comments have not only saved me from numerous errors but also materially improved nearly every page of this book. Bruce Graver has been my technical support and for many years my source of strength and model of exacting scholarship. I wish to dedicate this volume to my parents, Harry Robson and Roberta Steffe Robson, without whose love of learning and deep commitment to truth I could not be what I am today.