

THE RECEPTION OF CICERO IN THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Cicero was one of the most important political, intellectual, and literary figures of the late Roman Republic, rising to the consulship as a “new man” and leading a complex and contradictory life. After his murder in 43 BC, he was indeed remembered for his life and his works – but not for all of them. This book explores Cicero’s reception in the early Roman Empire, showing what was remembered and why. It argues that early imperial politics and Cicero’s schoolroom canonization had pervasive effects on his reception, with declamation and the schoolroom mediating and even creating his memory in subsequent generations. The way he was deployed in the schools was foundational to the version of Cicero found in literature and the educated imagination in the early Roman Empire, yielding a man stripped of the complex contradictions of his own lifetime and polarized into a literary and political symbol.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42623-7 — The Reception of Cicero in the Early Roman Empire
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THE RECEPTION OF CICERO IN THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

*The Rhetorical Schoolroom and the Creation
of a Cultural Legend*

THOMAS J. KEELINE

Washington University in St. Louis



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
 It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
 education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108426237
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108590594

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First published 2018

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Keeline, Thomas J., author.

TITLE: The reception of Cicero in the early Roman empire : the rhetorical schoolroom
 and the creation of a cultural legend / Thomas J. Keeline.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2018. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2018022102 | ISBN 9781108426237 (alk. paper)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Cicero, Marcus Tullius – Appreciation. | Rhetoric, Ancient.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PA6346 .K445 2018 | DDC 875/.01–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018022102>

ISBN 978-1-108-42623-7 Hardback

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	page ix
<i>Note on Texts and Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction	I
An Orientation	4
Scope and Structure	8
1 <i>Pro Milone</i> : Reading Cicero in the Schoolroom	13
The <i>Miloniana</i> Commentary Tradition: Sources	16
<i>Pro Milone</i> : Background to the Speech and Outline	18
Quintilian on How to Read a Speech	22
Themes and Methods of Instruction	28
The Introductory <i>praelectio</i>	30
<i>Exordium</i>	43
Dispelling <i>praeiudicia</i>	46
<i>Narratio</i>	56
<i>Argumentatio</i>	59
<i>Peroratio</i>	68
Conclusion	71
2 Eloquence (Dis)embodied: The Textualization of Cicero	73
A Modern Syncrisis	73
The Declamatory Classroom	75
Cicero as Model of Eloquence	78
Cicero and the Decline of Eloquence	90
The Ancient Syncrisis: Cicero and Demosthenes	93
Conclusion	101
3 Remaking Cicero in the Schoolroom: Cicero’s Death	102
Popillius the Parricide	102
Propaganda and Declamation	105
The Death of Cicero: Declaimers Writing History	111
The Death of Cicero: Historians Writing Declamation	118

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 978-1-108-42623-7 — The Reception of Cicero in the Early Roman Empire
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 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

	The Death of Cicero: Livy <i>et al.</i>	130
	Greek Historians on Cicero's Death	140
4	<i>Pro Cicerone/In Ciceronem</i> : How to Criticize Cicero	147
	Pseudepigraphic Sources	148
	Consul and <i>nouus homo</i>	152
	Exile	164
	The “ <i>Philippics</i> ” of Appian and Dio	177
	Coda: The Intertextual Declamatory Aesthetic	188
5	Seneca the Younger and Cicero	196
	Declamatory Ciceronian Presences	197
	Philosophical Ciceronian Absences	203
	Senecan Form and Function	207
	Senecan Educational Theory	216
	Conclusion	221
6	Tacitus: <i>Dialogus de Cicerone</i> ?	223
	Quintilian	225
	<i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i> : Authorship, Date, and Lacuna	232
	<i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i> : Structure and Characters	236
	Cicero in the <i>Dialogus</i> : Formal Elements	238
	Cicero as Leitmotif	247
	Conclusion	273
7	<i>Est . . . mihi cum Cicerone aemulatio</i> : Pliny's Cicero	277
	Genre and Plinian Artistry	285
	Cicero in the <i>Epistulae</i>	291
	Echoes of Ciceronian Letters in the <i>Epistulae</i>	317
	Conclusion	334
	Epilogue: The Early Empire and Beyond	336
	<i>Works Cited</i>	343
	<i>General Index</i>	364
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	372

Preface

Feeling certain that I would write a dissertation on Latin poetry, in my third year of graduate studies at Harvard I thought I should choose a Latin prose author for my Special Examinations. To give myself a bit of breadth, I reasoned, before settling down in my narrow corner to dissertate. Thus began a fateful year of fortnightly meetings in Kathy Coleman's study in the Widener Library, reading and discussing Cicero. After my special exams were over, as I was casting (read: flailing) about for a suitable dissertation topic, Kathy suggested that I might consider the reception of Cicero in Tacitus and Pliny. I remember the moment quite distinctly: I was walking out of the back of the library, somewhat frustrated after an afternoon spent with Varro, and Kathy was walking in – unsurprisingly, she was getting ready to get back to work as I was getting ready to flop on the couch. I turned the idea over in my head as I headed home; I had taken her Pliny seminar the year before, and it all seemed to make good sense. Well, one thing led to another, and the scope of the dissertation soon broadened into a more general study of Cicero's reception in the early Empire. This book is a revised version of that dissertation. I should say that I still really like poetry.

The debts that I've accumulated along the way are larger than I'll ever be able to repay, but I can at least put some of them on public record. Emma Dench and Richard Tarrant were the other members of my dissertation committee and exemplary readers; both have also read parts of the present book. I have benefited greatly from discussions with and help in various forms from William Altman, Christopher Burden-Stevens, Sean Dolan, Alain Gowing, Brandon Jones, Tim Moore, Victoria Pagán, Carl Springer, Morris Tichenor, Chris van den Berg, Matthijs Wibier, and Andrew Wright. The Department of Classics at Washington University in St. Louis has provided the ideal environment for me to work in and the ideal colleagues for me to work with, and the members of the Ancient Mediterranean Studies Writing Group here also read and discussed the

book's fifth chapter. The two anonymous readers for the Press deserve particular thanks for improving every page of the book with their detailed and constructive comments. Michael Sharp has throughout been the ideal editor, nurturing this project from an unfinished dissertation into its final form. Iveta Adams is a copy-editor nonpareil: she has removed more authorial idiosyncrasies, inconsistencies, infelicities, and outright errors than I'd care to admit. Finally, Chris Whitton, in a feat of extraordinary generosity and chalcenic endurance, read through the whole of my manuscript in less than 48 hours and offered countless insightful comments – all this without ever having met me in person. I am profoundly grateful to all of the above, and it goes without saying that after so much good help, whatever nonsense remains is entirely my fault.

It would take a Cicero to try to put into words what I owe to Kathy Coleman, and I don't think even he could manage. From the day she encouraged me to enroll in her Pliny seminar, she has taken me under her wing. She read every word of the original dissertation more times than I can count, and improved it immeasurably in style and substance. As if that were not enough, she did the same thing again with the present book, prompting me at a critical moment to get to work and reading and commenting on each chapter as I completed it. But this is typical: Kathy reads and comments on everything I send her, and so I end up sending her everything. I shudder to think of what she has not done over the past few years because she's been too busy licking my ill-formed ideas into shape, but I cannot imagine a better mentor.

My first son was born as I was finishing the dissertation; my second son as I was starting the book; and my daughter entered the world as the book went into production. Somehow my wife has found the time for all of us and for a more than full-time job besides. This book is dedicated to her.

Note on Texts and Abbreviations

Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own, although I have borrowed the occasional felicitous phrase from Loeb versions. Abbreviations for Latin authors follow the *TLL* but eschew the consonantal *v* (except schol. Bob. = scholia Bobiensia); Greek authors LSJ (except Cass. Dio = Cassius Dio); modern periodicals *L'Année philologique*. All other abbreviations are explained at the beginning of the bibliography. Asconius is cited by page number from Clark (1907) and the scholia Bobiensia by page and line number from Stangl (1964).

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