Introduction

Cicero's daughter Tullia died in the middle of February 45 BCE, thirteen months before the assassination of Julius Caesar. Cicero tried to assuage his grief at the loss of his daughter by steeping himself in the consolation literature that he found in his friend Atticus' library at Astura. Cicero then turns to what he claims to be an innovative project: writing his own consolation (*Att.* 12.14, 8 March 45 BCE). In the literary composition he speaks of, the *Consolatio*, Cicero initiates another project that departs from convention: he proposes to turn his deceased daughter into a god. Although the *Consolatio* is mostly lost, Lactantius preserves a crucial portion of the text (*Inst. Div.* 1.15.19–20):

> cum vero, inquit, et mares et feminas complures ex hominibus in deorum numero esse videamus et eorum in urbibus atque agris augustissima delubra veneremur, adsentiamur eorum sapientiae quorum ingeniis et inventis omnem vitam legibus et institutis excultam constitutamque habemus. quod si ullum umquam animal consecrandum fuit, illud profecto fuit. si Cadmi progenies aut Amphitryonis aut Tyndari in caelum tollenda fama fuit, huic idem honos certe dicandus est. quod quidem faciam, teque omnium optimam, doctissimam, approbantibus diis immortalibus ipsis in eorum coetu locatam ad opinionem omnium mortalium consecrabo.
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> "Since we indeed see," he says, "that there are many people, both men and women, from the human race who are now among the number of the gods and since we revere their most venerable shrines in cities and fields, let us assent to the wisdom of those people whose talents and discoveries we consider to have adorned our entire life and established it by laws and institutions. But if ever any living creature ought to have been consecrated, surely it was she; if the offspring of Cadmus or Amphitryon or Tyndareus deserved to be raised to heaven by fame, for her the same honor ought certainly be declared. And this I will indeed do, and I shall consecrate you, the best, the most learned of women, placed with the approval of the immortal gods themselves among their company, in the estimation of all mortals."

Cicero's plans to introduce this new divinity at Rome have been characterized as an unforeseeable whim of the grief-stricken father: "What put this idea into Cicero's head there is no telling."[1] But as Lactantius himself points out in his comments on this passage, the idea that deserving mortals could become gods had been in Cicero's head for some time.[2] Cicero put the prospect of divinity for Republican elites on the agenda at Rome in speeches he made during his consulship[3] and began to examine the possibility in depth with the *Pro Sestio*, *De re publica*, and *De legibus* in the fifties. The really surprising – and of course necessary – development with the *Consolatio* is the explicit inclusion of women (*et mares et feminas complures ex hominibus in deorum numero esse videamus*).[4] Cicero's catalogue of precedents for divinization in the *Consolatio* consists of faces familiar from the *Pro Sestio*, *De re publica*, and *De legibus* such as Hercules (*progenies. . .Amphitryonis*) and the Dioscuri, but has Ino (*Cadmi progenies*), a woman, at its head. Ino reappears soon in the *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero's first overtly philosophical discussion of individual immortality and divinity to include women (1.27). Cicero also embeds the *Consolatio* into the arguments for the divinity of the soul in the *Tusculan Disputations*, a further sign that his ideas for Tullia are no isolated cul-de-sac in his thought. Such connections point toward productive relationships between Cicero's more conceptual speculations and his innovative plans to enact an apotheosis for his daughter.

Since deifying Tullia was an innovative venture, Cicero has to improvise his own steps in this process. He is quite forthright about his primary role in initiating this deification (*faciam*; *consecrabo*), which must next be

[1] Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 404. Scheid 2003: 166 cites a parallel in Rome for Tullia's deification, but it comes from a second-century CE funerary inscription (*CIL* 6.7581): *Deae sanctae meae Primillae medicae L. Vibi Melitonis f(iliae) vixit annis xxxxiiii ex eis cum L. Cocceio Apthoro xxx sine querela fecit Apthorus coniug(i) optimae castae et sibi* (To my holy goddess, Primilla the physician, daughter of L. Vibius Melito; she lived forty-four years, of them thirty with L. Cocceius Apthorus, without complaint. Apthorus made this for his outstanding and chaste wife, and for himself). See Flory 1995 on the deification of women in the early imperial period.

[2] He gives *De legibus* 2.19 (*divos et eos qui caelestes semper habiti sunt colunto et ollos quos endo caelo merita locaverint, Herculem, Liberum, Aesculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum* [They shall worship as gods those who have always been considered heavenly and those whose deeds have placed them in heaven: Hercules, Liber, Aesculapius, Castor, Pollux, Quirinus]) as a relevant Ciceronian precedent.

[3] *Agr.* 2.95; *Rab. Perd.* 29.

[4] This may account for his use of a most inclusive term for mortals (*animal consecrandum*). Cicero similarly broke new ground when he praised Tullia's *virtus* (courage/virtue) while she was still alive (*Fam.* 14.11.2; *Att.* 10.8.9). In surviving Republican Latin, *virtus* is rarely attributed to a woman. After an early example from comedy (Plautus *Amph.* 925), Cicero in 80 BCE speaks of a woman's *virtus* (Caecilia Metella at *S. Rosc.* 27). See McDonnell 2006: 161–65 for discussion.

recognized by the assent of gods (*approbantibus diis immortalibus*) and perhaps even more crucially, public opinion (*ad opinionem omnium mortalium*). To win the requisite public exposure for this new divinity, Cicero decides to erect a shrine to her.[5] When he first brings this project to Atticus' attention, he tells him that his idea for the shrine comes from the consolatory literature that he has been reading (12.18.1, 11 March 45 BCE):

> dum recordationes fugio quae quasi morsu quodam dolorem efficiunt, refugio a[d] te admonendum; quod velim mihi ignoscas, cuicuimodi est. etenim habeo non nullos ex iis quos nunc lectito auctores qui dicant fieri id oportere quod saepe tecum egi et quod a te approbari volo: de fano illo dico, de quo tantum quantum me amas velim cogites. equidem neque de genere dubito (placet enim mihi Cluati) neque de re (statutum est enim), de loco non numquam. velim igitur cogites. ego, quantum his temporibus tam eruditis fieri potuerit, profecto illam consecrabo omni genere monimentorum ab omnium ingeniis sumptorum et Graecorum et Latinorum. quae res fortisan sit refricatura vulnus meum. sed iam quasi voto quodam et promisso me teneri puto.
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> So long as I flee the memories that produce sadness as if by a kind of bite, I take recourse to sending you a reminder. So please forgive me, whatever you think of my project. For indeed I have some of those as authorities whom I am now reading over and over again, who declare that very thing ought to be done which I have often brought up with you and wish you to approve: I am talking about that shrine, concerning which I should like you to think as much as you love me. For my part, I hesitate neither about the form of the shrine (for Cluatius' design pleases me) nor the idea itself (for the matter is decided), I do sometimes debate about the place. Therefore I should like you to think it over. I, as much as can happen in these times that are so learned, will actually consecrate her with every sort of monument, taken from the talents of all, both Greek and Latin. And this matter might, perhaps, rub open my wound again. But I think myself to be held already as if by a sort of vow and promise.

The texts that prescribe this remedy for Cicero remain a mystery. He does not refer to any Roman precedent for his plans, and his recurrent pleas for Atticus' indulgence imply that Cicero was pioneering unfamiliar territory

[5] Cicero shows his concern for public reception by searching for a site with ample *celebritas* (publicity) (*Att.* 12.37.2, 4 May 45 BCE). Cf. *Att.* 12.19.1, 14 March 45 BCE; *Att.* 12.27.1, 23 March 45 BCE. His desire for maximum exposure stems from the central role that the *hominum fama* (public opinion) has in perpetuating divinizations (*Off.* 3.25; *Tusc.* 1.28; *Catil.* 3.2). For a detailed discussion of the various locations considered by Cicero see Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 404–13 (=Appendix III, Tullia's Fane).

outside the traditional *Manes* rites for the departed.[6] He expects Atticus to discourage this novel shrine (*velim mihi ignoscas*) and also hints at the skepticism that his radical plan could run up against (*quantum his temporibus tam eruditis fieri potuerit*).[7] Even in spite of this resistance, Cicero intends to make use of the finest Greek and Roman artists available to work on this project (*profecto illam consecrabo omni genere monimentorum ab omnium ingeniis sumptorum et Graecorum et Latinorum*).[8] He also places himself under an obligation to Tullia much like that one would enter upon with a god (*sed iam quasi voto quodam et promisso me teneri puto*), and yet evades a claim of full-fledged divinity.[9] His vow is analogous to and modeled on a vow to an established god, but not exactly identical to such a vow (*quasi*).

Cicero's desire for both Greek and Roman elements in Tullia's consecration fits in with the Greek precedents he named in the *Consolatio*. His use of the Greek word ἀποθέωσις also signals that cultural fusion is underway. Because there was no prepackaged Roman ritual procedure at hand for deifying his daughter, he uses a Greek term to describe the phenomenon.[10] This rare Greek noun itself seems to be a novelty; Cicero's letters transmit intriguingly early attestations of it.[11] Cicero also opts for a Greek monument type for Tullia, an ἀφίδρυμα (*Att.* 13.29.1, 27 May 45 BCE), which is usually a statue of a god or goddess or a copy of

[6] A Hellenistic precursor can be found in the shrine set up in Babylon by Alexander's minister Harpalus for his mistress Pythionice: Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 404.

[7] Cicero later refers to an unusually jarring rebuke from Atticus prompted by his fixation on this *fanum* (*Att.* 12.41.3, 11 May 45 BCE). On the following day Cicero again registers Atticus' disapproval of the project, but makes another appeal for his help (*Att.* 12.43.2, 12 May 45 BCE). Cornelius Nepos notes that Atticus' honesty had its bite (*Att.* 15.1).

[8] Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 312 understands this to refer primarily to literary inscriptions for the shrine, citing the epigrams honoring Cicero on Atticus' shrine to the nymph Amalthea (*Att.* 1.16.15, July 61 BCE). He notes, however, that *genere* may point to other media as well.

[9] Cf. the binding religious language used for his "vow" to Tullia at *Att.* 12.43.3 (12 May 45 BCE): *ego me maiore religione quam quisquam fuit ullius voti obstrictum puto* (I think that I am bound by a greater obligation than anyone ever was by the obligation of any vow).

[10] E.g. (*Att.* 12.12.1, 16 March 45 BCE): *insula Arpinas habere potest germanam* ἀποθέωσιν, *sed vereor ne minorem* τιμὴν *habere videatur* ἐκτοπι[σ]μός. *est igitur animus in hortis; quos tamen inspiciam cum venero* (The Arpinian island is able to have a genuine *apotheosis*, but I fear that the *distance* may seem to have less *honor*. My attention is therefore on the gardens, which I will nevertheless inspect when I come).

[11] Cicero's first usage is *Att.* 1.16.13 (July 61 BCE), referring to Curio calling Cicero's consulship an ἀποθέωσις. A very early attestation of the word comes from the Canopus decree of 238 BCE (*OGIS* 56, A). This trilingual inscription (Greek, Egyptian Demotic, Egyptian hieroglyphs) announces a set of resolutions passed by Egyptian priests in a meeting northeast of Alexandria. Among the resolutions are the ἀποθέωσις and divine honors of the deceased Princess Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy III and Queen Berenice).

a statue or shrine.[12] This studied cultural synthesis that Tullia's death sets in motion can trace its roots back to her father's earliest orations, which, we shall see, position Cicero as a channel for the Roman reception of Hellenistic religious developments.[13]

The letters to Atticus offer one of the least filtered records surviving of an ancient author's private deliberations. While they do not simply telegraph Cicero's "real" thoughts on the divinization of humans or any other urgent late Republican question, they still provide an effective control that we can use together with more public testimonies to assess the motives of this protean writer.[14] A letter dated 3 May 45 BCE gives an especially frank account of his intentions for Tullia to his increasingly impatient friend (*Att.* 12.36.1):

> fanum fieri volo, neque hoc mihi [dis]suaderi potest. sepulcri similitudinem effugere non tam propter poenam legis studeo quam ut maxime adsequar ἀποθέωσιν. quod poteram, si in ipsa villa facerem; sed, ut saepe locuti sumus, commutationes dominorum reformido. in agro ubicumque fecero, mihi videor adsequi posse ut posteritas habeat religionem. hae meae tibi ineptiae (fateor enim) ferendae sunt; nam habeo ne me quidem ipsum quicum tam audacter communicem quam te.
>
> I want a shrine to be made, nor is it possible to dissuade me from this. I am zealous to avoid the likeness of a tomb, not so much because of the threat of legal punishment but so that I might most greatly achieve *apotheosis*. And this aim I would be able to achieve, if I constructed the shrine in the villa itself; but, as we have often discussed, I am afraid of future changes of ownership. If I construct it anywhere in the field, it seems to me that I will be able to assure that future generations might have religious duty to the shrine. You must endure these (confessedly) silly fancies of mine; for I have no one – not even my own self – with whom I can communicate so boldly as with you.

He asks for Atticus' forbearance and claims that their intimacy allows him to write with unparalleled candor about his bold plan that surpasses

[12] Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 346. What is most likely, as Shackleton Bailey proposes, is that Cicero's architect Cluatius used a larger original as a model for Tullia's shrine. Just as Cicero appealed to precedent to make the case for Tullia's passage to divinity, so Cluatius could perhaps allude to a shrine of Hercules or Ino. Cluatius did draw up a design (*Att.* 12.18.1, 11 March 45 BCE) and Cicero sought out Greek pillars (*Att.* 12.19.1, 14 March 45 BCE) but the shrine was perhaps never built.

[13] This is not to say that debates surrounding deification in the late Republic were largely about "Hellenization." But as the Tullia case shows with Cicero's use of Hercules and Greek language and iconography, Roman presentations of deification do get patterned by Greek models. See Beard and Henderson 1998: 195 on how the "construction of Romanity" in representations of deification processes Greek models while self-consciously playing off against them.

[14] The letters are generally more candid yet not necessarily more consistent in opinion than the speeches and dialogues. As Petrarch observes, waffling abounds in Cicero's epistles (*Fam.* 24.3.1).

traditional elite commemoration (*hae meae tibi ineptiae (fateor enim) ferendae sunt; nam habeo ne me quidem ipsum quicum tam audacter communicem quam te*).[15] Cicero tells his confidant that his insistence on a *fanum* has nothing to do with legal loopholes, but stems from his desire to turn his daughter into a god.[16] His understandable uncertainty about his ability to achieve complete identification with an immortal god for Tullia (*ut maxime adsequar* ἀποθέωσιν) coincides with the intricate qualifications that often temper his soundings on the divinization of mortals to a wider audience. Cicero manifests not only his own lingering uncertainties about the immediate prospect of Tullia's divinity, he also inscribes the currents of doubt and anxiety in a society ushering in profound religious change. Not long after this letter, a human (Julius Caesar) was made a god by official decree for the first time at Rome.[17] Cicero's focus on apotheosis for Tullia represents a distinctly Roman contribution to divinization. The relative scarcity of ἀποθέωσις and its verbal forms in Hellenistic Greek sources does not seem to be due only to the vagaries of transmission. There is ample Greek evidence for mortals receiving divine honors, but this evidence shows little concern for the actual process of *making* a god.[18] Posthumous deification with the status transition of apotheosis – as opposed to earthly divine honors – becomes a characteristically Roman phenomenon.[19]

[15] See Carroll 2006: 1–58 for an overview of Roman traditions of funerary commemoration.

[16] The *lex* that Cicero refers to may be the recent *lex Iulia sumptuaria* (Julian sumptuary law) or Sulla's earlier restrictions on outlays for funerals: Shackleton Bailey 1965–70: 329.

[17] While there is an ongoing debate as to whether Julius Caesar was officially deified in his lifetime or posthumously, in all likelihood he was granted a *flamen* (priest) and other traditional elements of cult before his assassination (see below pp. 111, 173 for analysis). See Fishwick 1987: 56–72 for a succinct survey of the principal points of view on this problem and Wardle 2009: 105–7 for an overview of honors offered to Caesar in this period of religious experimentation.

[18] Fishwick 1987: 39–41 notes that Greek divinization tended to be "declarative not constitutive" in that it recognized an individual's divinity with honors but did not focus on making that individual into a god. Diodorus Siculus book 6 seems to exemplify this Greek tendency: this account of divinized mortals has them attaining immortal honors and glory, but makes no mention of an astral posthumous existence (6.25). Marking a transformation through apotheosis, the process of deification, and the concept of crossing the line to divinity seem to be Roman preoccupations. Cicero's focus in the *Consolatio* on consecration and placing Tullia among the gods betrays a Roman concern for enacting a change in status also evident in the state deification of Caesar. Cicero's attempts to deify Tullia are of course different from the senate's formal process of deification with Caesar, but slotting them into inelastic "official"/"unofficial" categories may be anachronistic. Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 165 questions the applicability of imperial "official"/"unofficial" labels to commemoration in the decentralized Republic: "Under the Republic the emphasis is the reverse. Independent assertions of glory, in the tradition of *monumenta*, were the norm, and in no sense 'unofficial.'"

[19] See Bickerman 1972: 9–12 on posthumous deification as the characteristically Roman concept that becomes prevalent after Augustus.

A subsequent letter about Cicero's venture for Tullia can also be read in relation to a larger cultural process (*Att.* 12.37a, 5 May 45 BCE): *quod me a maestitia* [*a*]*vocas, multum levaris si locum fano dederis. multa mihi* εἰς ἀποθέωσιν *in mentem veniunt, sed loco valde opus est* (As to the fact that you call me away from sadness, you will lift a great burden from me if you give a location for the shrine. Many things come to mind regarding *apotheosis*, but there is great need for a location). His words *multa mihi* εἰς ἀποθέωσιν *in mentem veniunt* of course refer to the improvisatory mindset that the Tullia project has put him in, but they also fairly characterize the myriad approaches to the divinization of humans that Cicero explores in his speeches and dialogues. These words also aptly describe the inventive process at Rome in the late Republic in which a whole range of maneuvers approximated figures such as Pompey and Caesar to gods. The young Pompey, for example, tried to ride into Rome on a chariot drawn by four elephants, a vehicle associated with the divine conquerors Hercules and Dionysus.[20] Cicero later presents Pompey as a divine savior in the *Pro lege Manilia*, a Roman rehearsal of Hellenistic religious concepts. In 63 BCE, Caesar advocates extending Pompey's privilege of assimilation with Jupiter Optimus Maximus beyond the customary bounds of the triumphal ceremony.[21] Pompey later has Hercules coins minted in his honor[22] and builds a theater complex with shrines of Hercules Invictus and also Felicitas, the superhuman quality that Cicero imbued Pompey with in the *Pro lege Manilia*. This brief montage of overtures that brought Pompey into the range of divinity illustrates two points fundamental to this study: (a) that the divinization of late Republican dynasts drew formative components from both Hellenistic Greek practice and native traditions such as triumphal ritual; and (b) that Cicero was both responding to the theological brinkmanship of others in this period of religious ferment and independently pushing existing parameters.

This study of the divinization of humans takes impetus from major reappraisals of Roman religion that have been undertaken over the past several decades. As recently as 1998, Feeney could rightly claim that we are "inheritors of a patronizing attitude to Roman religion,"[23] an attitude that, among other things, saw Roman religion as an empty (if effective) political

[20] Plut. *Pomp.* 14.1–4; Weinstock 1971: 37.
[21] Beard 2007: 233–38 stresses that triumphal ceremony in the late Republic increasingly became an arena for advancing contested ideas about deification, observing that "the divine general we can still glimpse is essentially a late Republican creation."
[22] Crawford 1974: 449–50 (426.4). [23] Feeney 1998: 2.

charade. In many forms this orthodoxy included the notion that Roman elites even shared this patronizing attitude toward their own religion with us. The traditional dismissal of Roman religion as a formalistic political tool as distinct from "real religion" has been justly criticized for judging Roman religious practices with criteria drawn from traditional conceptions of Christianity: placing a major emphasis on "belief" and "faith" and also assuming an especially stark categorical division between politics and religion.[24] While what we call "religion" and "politics" were not completely homologous at Rome, major aspects of Roman religion can be fairly characterized as "political."[25] But it is no longer clear how such a characterization of Roman religion diminishes its validity and vitality. All religions have political dimensions insofar as they create social institutions and thus impact balances of power. As Price astutely observes, interpretive frameworks that set a firewall between religion and politics overlook how much these spheres of cultural activity converge: "the imposition of the conventional distinction between religion and politics obscures the basic similarity between politics and religion: both are ways of systematically constructing power."[26]

If conventional, inherited attitudes toward Roman religion in general could be patronizing then prevailing attitudes toward the divinization of humans since the days of the Christian apologists have been downright derisive.[27] Here too reassessments of traditional orthodoxies have proved a productive way forward in the study of this subject. And again the

[24] Price 1984: 10–15 argues that the concept of "belief" and the use of individual feelings and emotional states as the gauge of authenticity for religious experience are Christian presuppositions that have traditionally misled scholars toward dismissive, purely political interpretations of the divinization of humans in Greece and Rome. It does not follow for Price that polytheistic ritualism is devoid of thought, but rather that much of this thought is embodied in ritual. Cf. Feeney 1998: 12–14. See King 2003 for an argument that finds "belief" a term "useful for describing some aspects of the Roman religious experience, particularly in regard to Roman prayer" (277). Bendlin 2000: 131 also finds the concept of "individual belief systems" applicable to Roman religious behavior but stresses that these are by nature difficult to reconstruct.

[25] Bendlin 2000 challenges scholarly models that ascertain an almost complete integration of religion and civic life at Rome by calling attention to ways in which religious and civic life operate independently in public.

[26] Price 1984: 247.

[27] As Feeney 1998: 76 notes, "majority opinion for a long time regarded with something close to scorn a category of divinity which was prominent in the late Republic and the Empire – namely, divinised humanity." See also Bendlin 2004: 181: "To early Christian apologists and the early modern period, deification was an indicator of the absurdity of the 'pagan' concept of divinity and proof of the superiority of Judeo-Christian monotheism. For a long time even modern research considered the Roman emperor cult to be no more than a purely politically motivated 'religion of loyalty' without deeper religious content . . . Only recent research has attempted to redefine its religious character and, thus, also the problem of deification."

question of appropriate interpretive frameworks has prompted discussion about the degree to which Judeo-Christian concepts of divinity have misguided scholarly analysis of the highly complex polytheistic Mediterranean cultures that developed concepts of deification and practiced them. Eschewing monotheistic concepts of divinity has advanced our understanding of the cultural phenomenon of deification and prompted scholars to take seriously the religious quality of ideas and practices that had long been dismissed as wholly political in conception.[28] One overarching aim of this study is to show that the divinization of humans was a substantial issue of contemporary concern in late Republican Rome, an issue with dimensions that were not solely political. The myriad, inventive ways that late Republican Romans grappled with the conceptual problems of deification are an index of the complexity and currency of this question. A driving force of much recent work in Roman studies has been a renewed effort to make the familiar seem properly strange by resisting the tendency to find ourselves so at home in a culture removed by millennia.[29] Tracking late Republican representations of deification ought to have a defamiliarizing effect, especially with Cicero, a figure long seen as an avatar of the modern west.[30]

Just as there have been recent revaluations of Roman religion and the divinization of humans in antiquity, there have also been salutary reassessments of the relationship between literature and religion at Rome. The relationship between literary discourses and other discourses that constitute Roman religion is no longer seen as a case of literature autonomously reflecting on and representing the more essentially religious cultural forms that comprise the core of "real religion."[31] This study takes methodological cues from seminal work by Feeney and Beard, North, and Price that examines the dynamic ways in which literary texts engage other religious

[28] Bendlin 2004: 181 stresses how productive this shift in focus has been for a culturally appropriate analysis of deification in Greece and Rome: "Decisive – and advancing the scientific debate – was the insight that the categorical dichotomy between humans and (apostasized) deity characteristic of Judeo-Christian dogma, as formulated by early Christian literature (cf. Acts 14,8–18), is not applicable in this form to the Graeco-Roman concept of god."

[29] This is especially the case with formative work on religion such as Price 1984, who critiques interpretation premised on Romans being "so like ourselves" (17) and Feeney 1998, a study that aptly closes with a quote magnifying our many removes from ancient Rome (143): "In the end, as usual, Dr Johnson was right: 'Why, sir, we know very little about the Romans.'"

[30] See Hinds 2005 and Fox 2007 on how Cicero has been particularly susceptible to constructions of close familiarity over the years, making him a figure especially ready for defamiliarizing assessments.

[31] Feeney 1998: 25 argues against the primacy of a "real religion": "In sum, there is no given 'real religion' which art is then varying or departing from, for what we label 'real religion' is itself a mobile set of discourses with varying degrees of overlap and competition."

discourses at Rome. In his *Literature and Religion at Rome*, Feeney shows how what we define as "literature" generates meaning through "ubiquitous dialogic activity" with other forms of religious expression at Rome such as coinage, statuary, and sacrifice.[32] To apply this observation to the example of Pompey: the mediations and representations of Cicero's *Pro lege Manilia*, Pompey's shrines, and contemporary coinage all variously contribute to articulate his divine status. Cicero's works had their distinctive literary qualities but were also enmeshed in contemporary cultural dialogues. A guiding principle of this study is that Cicero's speeches and writings had a normative function in these late Republican cultural and religious dialogues that could legitimize incipient ideas. Beard, North, and Price place Cicero at the vanguard of religious speculation in this phase of accelerated religious change by deeming him "the leading philosopher, theologian and theorist of his generation."[33] They also give Cicero's texts an active role in late Republican religious decision making. As they note on his *De domo sua*: "It does not reflect or record the discourse of religion; it *is* that discourse."[34]

A major religious transformation emerging from the tumult of the late Republic, and a religious change arguably among the most important at Rome before the spread of Christianity, was the deification of human beings.[35] This book tells a part of the back-story to this significant development. It proceeds chronologically, considering the dynamic interplay of Cicero's approximations of mortals and immortals with a gamut of artifacts and activities that were collectively closing the divide between humans and gods in the innovative religious atmosphere of late Republican Rome. Due attention is therefore given to examining the vital relationship between Cicero's works and the religious initiatives focused

[32] Feeney 1998: 21. Cf. 2004: 4 where Feeney observes that it was "primarily what we call literature" that did the job of exploring divinity at Rome. See Feeney 1998: 1–14 on the cultural contingency of concepts such as "literature" and "religion." The present study holds that the importance of *orthopraxis* in Roman religion does not necessarily entail that religion was something that Romans just *did* but never really thought or wrote about. Accordingly, Gradel 2002: 3 seems to be carrying a customary caveat about literary sources to excess when contending that Ciceronian texts such as *De natura deorum* and *De divinatione* "are best left out of account altogether" in our attempts to interpret Roman religion. Smith 1987: 197–98 criticizes the modern tendency to privilege ritual and espouse "the notion that ritual – and therefore religion – is somehow grounded in 'brute fact' rather than in the work and imagination and intellection of culture."

[33] Beard, North, and Price 1998: 116. [34] Ibid.: 114.

[35] See Beard 2007: 233–38 on deification as a contested concept "high on the cultural and political agenda of the late Republic" that was "constantly debated, recalibrated, negotiated, and ridiculed" and Beard, North, and Price 1998: 140–49 on the earlier Republican background to these distinctive religious developments of the first century BCE.