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Second Epilogue

Scholarly Appraisals of Cicero's Final Years

The following pages are by no means meant to give a full account of scholarly debates on Cicero's final years between the Renaissance and the 20th century. What they want to offer are specimens of evaluations of Cicero's political and moral behaviour in order to sketch a general tendency in scholarship, but even more in order to show that the final years of Cicero's life have continued to interest readers far beyond the early modern period. 2

The sixteenth century: Erasmus and Lipsius

Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, mentioned in the previous two chapters, contains a view of Cicero's character and life which is not purely hagiographical. As others had done before him, Erasmus chides Cicero's frequent self-praise, his poetry, and his frequent mistakes of facts, but he does not stop there. Bulephorus, Erasmus' spokesperson, remarks for example:

Fatebor eloquentem, qui Ciceronem feliciter expresserit: sed qui totum, exceptis uiciis: et ne sim iniquior, una cum ipsis uiciis, modo totum. Feremus illud subinane, feremus mentum leua demulceri, feremus et collum oblongum atque exilius, feremus perpetuam uocis contentionem, feremus indecoram parumque uirilem in initio dicendi trepidationem, feremus iocorum intemperantiam: et si qua sunt alia, in quibus M. Tullius uel sibi, uel aliis displicuit, modo simul et illa exprimant, quibus ista uel texit ille, uel pensauit.³

I will acknowledge him eloquent who copies Cicero successfully; but he must copy him as a whole and his very faults too. I will put up with that suggestion of emptiness, that stroking of the chin with the left hand, the long and thin neck, the continual straining of the voice, the unbecoming and unmanly nervousness as he begins to speak, the excessive number of jokes, and everything else which in Cicero is displeasing to himself or to others, provided only he copy those other traits too by which he concealed these or compensated for them.

¹ Useful overviews are still Zieliński 1929 (until the 18th century) and Weil 1962; recently published are Springer 2018 and the relevant chapters in Steel 2013 and Altman 2015a.

² Scholarship has been defined as an important field of reception studies (labelled as "transformation studies") in that "scholarship is itself transformative and triggers new *transformations*" (emphasis in the original); cf. Bergemann *et al.* 2019, 16.

³ Erasmus, *Ciceronianus* LB I 985F (ASD I-2 626.17–24). All English translations of this work in this chapter are those of Scott 1910.

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Cicero's behaviour during his final years, however, has no place in his harangue. Bulephorus even suggests that Cicero's faults became less conspicuous towards the end of his career, as he claims that Cicero's eloquence in the *Philippics* is that "of an older man, [...] less redundant and less boastful", and that during his last year he "spoke freely before the Senate and the Roman People, laying aside the fear of death". This is perhaps not unexpected given Erasmus' positive estimation of 'Cicero's' contempt for death found in the *Epistula ad Octauianum*, as mentioned by Van der Velden in this volume (cf. p. 131).

Erasmus' treatise sparked many further contributions by scholars all over Europe, some of which aimed to defend Cicero against the aspersions cast over his character.⁶ One of these was Julius Caesar Scaliger, who even reacted to the relatively minor incriminations found in the above-mentioned quotation.⁷ Justus Lipsius, although stylistically by no means a Ciceronian, also took up the task of defending Cicero's character. He did so in an *Oratio pro defendendo Cicerone in criminibus ei objectis*, held between 1564 and 1568, when he was still a student in Leuven.⁸ In this speech,⁹ he discusses the criticism of Cicero's character found in Erasmus separate from the question of the *imitatio* of Cicero: he would tackle that in a different speech, the *Oratio utrum a solo Cicerone petenda sit eloquentia*.¹⁰

In the beginning of his *oratio*, Lipsius draws a distinction between the reception of Cicero's oratorical prowess and the reception of his life and career:

⁴ Erasmus, *Ciceronianus* LB I 1004C (ASD I-2 654.27–28): *quum in his tamen senilior sit, minus redundans, minus exultans eloquentia*. Gotoff 1980, 169 remarks that this is the first scholarly remark on Cicero's alleged *Spätstil*, anticipating later contributions by Wilamowitz and von Albrecht. Cicero also describes his own pruning back of his earlier excesses (not with reference to the *Philippics*) in *Brut*. 314–316, to which Erasmus is clearly looking here. We owe this suggestion to Tom Keeline.

⁵ Erasmus, Ciceronianus LB I 1018B (ASD I-2 696.14–15): Sublato mortis metu libere dixit apud Senatum populumque Romanum.

⁶ For which see Scott 1910 and DellaNeva/Duvick 2007.

⁷ On Scaliger's two pro-Ciceronian orations, see Scott 1910, Part 1: 42-62; Hall 1950, 96-105 and 110-114, specifically 101 for Scaliger's reaction to Erasmus' abovementioned "petty personal criticisms" of Cicero; and Conley 2008 for the first oration.

⁸ This is no. 5 in the posthumous collection of his orations (Lipsius 1607). We will refer to the text by the page number in this edition. For this collection of speeches in the context of Lipsius' career, see Morford 1991, 129–130. This particular speech was also reprinted together with J.C. Scaliger's *Oratio contra Ciceronianum Erasmi Roterodami* in a 1618 Heidelberg edition (Scaliger/Lipsius 1618).

⁹ Studied extensively in Graupe 2012, 408 – 423 (see 410 n. 24 for the dating).

¹⁰ No. 6 in the collection mentioned in footnote 8.

Non laudatur ab omnibus Cicero? Fateor, sed sic, ut eloquens, ut facundus, ut disertus patronus; quae laudes ejusmodi sunt, ut uel de Catilina, uel de Clodio, perditis ciuibus, et quos ipsos ualuisse dicendo accepimus, ne inimici quidem jejunius dixerint. [...] Cujus [sc. Ciceronis] tamen, si recte consideremus, non minorem gloriam integerrima uita quam laudem eloquentia meruit.¹¹

Is Cicero not praised by everyone? Yes, I admit it, but he is praised as an eloquent, articulate and well-spoken advocate. Praise of this kind might also be bestowed on Catiline or Clodius, wretched citizens of whom we learn that they too were good at speaking. [...] But if we judged the matter rightly, we would discover that Cicero's most blameless life makes him worthy of as much renown as his eloquence makes him worthy of praise.

Lipsius then sets out to refute two points of criticism against Cicero's *integerrima uita*, which we have encountered many times over in this volume: ¹² Cicero's *leuitas* and *inconstantia* in his political career, and his *arrogantia* and a *puerilis gloriae cupiditas* in political life. To the first charge, Lipsius responds that it was only normal for Cicero's opinions and allegiances to fluctuate, given that he was living in such a tumultuous period. ¹³ To the second, he objects that Cicero's praise of his own deeds was just, and that his arrogance is similar to that displayed by Demosthenes in his speeches, or Socrates in Plato's *Apology*. ¹⁴

In his refutation of the first charge, Lipsius discusses an objection levied by many: that after the death of Pompey it would have been fitting or even proper for Cicero to end his life just as Cato had done. But if he had done so, Lipsius argues, the Republic would have to have been without Cicero to defend it during his final years, and its fall would have happened even sooner. The *Oratio* continues with an *Obiectio* from an anonymous *praeses*. He claims that Lipsius has neglected to discuss a major point of criticism which one might level at Cicero's life:

¹¹ Lipsius, *Oratio* 6, 70. All translations, except where mentioned, are our own. We have made minor changes in orthography.

¹² Lipsius calls them *duo fere crimina, et jam tum Ciceroni uiuo fuisse inusta (ibid.,* 70) . Graupe 2012, 412 n. 29 mentions the possibility that Lipsius is consciously alluding to Petrarch's famous critical letter to Cicero (cf. Mabboux and Jansen in this volume).

¹³ Ibid. 6, 77: Valde enim stultum sit et ridiculum, cum in tanta rerum et animorum uarietate uerseris, ad unam aliquam regulam ac quasi ad normam exigere sententiam.

¹⁴ Ibid., 88-89.

¹⁵ Ibid., 85: Si enim tum, cum isti uolunt, uis illata Ciceroni esset, aut illud Catonis exemplum in seipso imitatus fuisset; desiderasset profecto postea Resp. fortem illum et constantem ciuem, qui M. Antonii, Dolabellae, et aliorum effrenatam dominandi cupiditatem, si non opprimeret, ad tempus tamen reprimeret.

Est hoc crimen, quod dico, positum in iis temporibus, quae C. Caesaris Dictatoris mortem sunt consecuta, tum quod Cicero tuus, quasi suscepta causa Reip. et libertatis, si uere consideras, rem publicam ipsam Octavio adolescenti prodidit.¹⁶

The offence to which I refer happened in the times following the death of C. Caesar the dictator; because in this period your Cicero—who took up, so to speak, the cause of the Republic and of liberty—surrendered, if you think about it properly, the Republic to Octavian, only a young man.

Lipsius left out haec turpissima et Cicerone indigna nota on purpose, according to the objectio. He disagrees: Cicero's handling of Octavian was most prudent and necessary to prevent Antony from taking over control, and it would be unfair to blame Cicero for Octavian's betraval of the Republic:

Nam quod Cicero honoribus et laude, qua illius aetas maxime capitur, hunc adolescentem cum legionibus suis, Antonii et Dolabellae furori opposuit, non tantum prudenter, sed etiam rei publicae salutariter fecit, neque unquam tam diu [...] Antoniorum regnum prohibere potuisset, nisi Ciceronis consiliis hic adolescens, ad causam rei publicae esset adjunctus. Qui, si postea perditorum hominum perditae amentiae parere quam fidelissimis Ciceronis consiliis obsequi uoluit, ualde profecto in Ciceronem iniqui sunt, qui eum alienae culpae reum arguunt et cujus facti omnis reprehensio Caesaris propria sit, eam inuidiam in Ciceronis personam deriuant.17

As regards the fact that Cicero, by praising and complimenting him (something in which someone of his age delights), convinced this young man to stand in the way of the fury of Antony and Dolabella with his legions, he did this not only wisely, but also in the interest of the Republic. He could not have prevented [...] the reign of the Antonii had not this young man, won over by Cicero's counsel, joined the cause of the Republic. Even if he (sc. Octavian) subsequently preferred to obey the madness of wretched men rather than to follow the most faithful counsels of Cicero, the people who charge him with someone else's fault, and apportion to Cicero all the hatred for a fact for which only Octavian is to blame, are definitely unfair to Cicero.

The eighteenth century: Montesquieu and Middleton

Positive depictions of Cicero's final years continued until far in the 18th century. This was especially the case in England and France, where many philosophers of the Enlightenment took inspiration from Cicero's scepticism (the century can

¹⁶ Ibid., 94.

¹⁷ Ibid., 96.

truly be labeled as heyday of Ciceronianism). A prominent admirer of Cicero's philosophical works was Montesquieu, who in most of his works praised Cicero's ethical exemplarity and philosophical acumen. In 1734, he wrote a treatise entitled *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*. In the twelfth chapter of his work on Rome's greatness and its decline, however, his portrayal of Cicero is not uncritically eulogistic. Instead we read a balanced account of Cicero's role after the Ides of March. On the one hand, Cicero is still recognized as one of the most important political players; but on the other, his ethical exceptionality is somehow downplayed in comparison with Cato. According to Montesquieu, Cicero's vain wish for recognition and his lacking insight into the psychology of Octavian were two reasons for the Republic to fall—in Montesquieu's pointed formulation, it was Cicero himself who unwantedly created Antony as an enemy for the Republic:

Je crois que si Caton s'étoit reservé pour la République, il auroit donné aux choses tout un autre tour. Ciceron avec des parties admirables pour un second rôle, étoit incapable du premier: il avoit un beau genie, mais une ame souvent commune; l'accessoire chez Ciceron c'étoit la vertu; chez Caton c'étoit la gloire; Ciceron se voyoit toujours le premier; Caton s'oublioit toujours; celui-ci vouloit sauver la République pour elle-même, celui-là pour s'en vanter. [...] le Sénat qui se crut au dessus de ses affaires songea à abaisser Octave, qui de son côté cessa d'agir contre Antoine, mena son Armée à Rome, & se fit déclarer Consul. Voilà comment Ciceron qui se vantoit que sa Robe avait détruit les Armées d'Antoine, donna à la République un Ennemi plus dangereux.²⁰

I believe that if Cato had preserved himself for the Republic, he would have given a completely different turn to events. Cicero's talents admirably suited him for a secondary role, but he was not fit for the main one. His genius was superb, but his soul was often common. With Cicero, virtue was the accessory, with Cato, glory. Cicero always thought of himself first, Cato always forgot about himself. The latter wanted to save the Republic for its own sake, the former in order to boast of it. [...] The senate, believing it had things under control, considered reducing Octavius, who, for his part, stopped working against Antony, led his army to Rome, and had himself declared consul. This is how Cicero, who boasted that his robe had destroyed Antony's armies, presented the Republic with an enemy even more dangerous.

Whereas Montesquieu, the fervent Ciceronian whose earlier *Discours sur Cicéron* has been analysed as Ciceronian panegyric by Martin, allows for nuances in this

¹⁸ Cf. Sharpe 2015, 332–334; Chomarat 1984 for the influence of *De officiis* on Montesquieu's philosophy.

¹⁹ Of course, this theme goes back at least to Seneca the Younger, cf. Grimal 1984.

²⁰ Montesquieu 2000, 179–180 (our emphasis), transl. Lowenthal 1965. This passage is also quoted in Weil 1962, 204 and Sharpe 2015, 333.

quotation,²¹ another Ciceronian *pur sang*, Conyers Middleton, turns Cicero's last years into the crowning achievement of his glorious career. His *Life of Cicero*, "the authoritative eighteenth-century treatment of its subject",²² portrays Cicero's standing in Rome following Caesar's death as follows: "He was now without competition the first Citizen in Rome; the first in that credit and authority both with the Senate and the People, which illustrious merit and services will necessarily give in a free City".²³ And when Cicero meets his end, Middleton describes it as a paradigmatic event which would be impressed upon the minds of generations to come:

The deaths of the rest, says an Historian of that age, caused only a private and particular sorrow, but Cicero's an universal one; it was a triumph over the Republic itself; and seemed to confirm and establish the perpetual slavery of Rome. Antony considered it as such, and, satiated with Cicero's blood, declared the Proscription at an end. [...] The story of Cicero's death continued fresh on the minds of the Romans for many ages after it; and was delivered down to posterity with all its circumstances, as one of the most affecting and memorable events of their History: so that the spot, on which it happened, seems to have been visited by travellers with a kind of religious reverence".²⁴

Especially the last sentence is remarkable: Middleton asserts that Romans of the imperial times regularly went on a kind of religious pilgrimage to the shores of Formiae. Without making it explicit, the eighteenth-century biographer thereby subscribes to the already established image of Cicero as a martyr of the Roman Republic; as a consequence, his life and transmitted works should be approached with a similar, almost religious reverence as the tombs of Christian martyrs. Cicero was, in Middleton's view, a moral *exemplum* without any shadow, a radiant representative of the better past: "His moral character was never blemished by the stain of any habitual vice, but was a shining pattern of virtue to an

²¹ Cf. Martin 1984, esp. 218 – 227 on Cicero's political career in both the *Discours* and the *Considérations*. According to his analysis, the mixed interpretation of Cicero's role went hand in hand with Montesquieu having to admit Caesar's genius (p. 222).

²² Ingram 2015, 95. See on Middleton also also Fox 2013, 331–335; Fotheringham 2016, 206–208.

²³ Middleton 1741, vol. 3, 1.

²⁴ Ibid., vol. 3, 281–283. The "Historian" is Cremutius Cordus (in Sen. Suas. 6.19).

²⁵ Cf. Davis 1958, 175 n. 3: "A late local tradition identifies large tower-like tomb along the Via Appia near Formia as Cicero's burial place". We owe this reference to Tom Keeline.

²⁶ Cf. Burchell 2002, 93, who especially links Middleton's image to Italian humanistic constructions of Cicero.

age, above all others the most licentious and profligate".²⁷ Here, Middleton does the contrary of what Erich Gruen would do 200 years later: Cicero is not explained and understood through his interaction with other representatives of "the last generation of the Roman Republic",28 but presented as the one and only moral exception of perfectly virtuous behaviour within a degenerated world.

The nineteenth century: Drumann and Mommsen

It is only with the well-known scathing biographies of Wilhelm Drumann and Theodor Mommsen that Cicero's final years primarily become reason for criticism. Drumann published his enormous Geschichte Roms in seinem Übergange von der republikanischen zur monarchischen Verfassung oder Pompeius, Caesar, Cicero und ihre Zeitgenossen in six volumes between 1833 and 1844. Volume 6 is dedicated to Cicero. In Drumann's depiction of Cicero before Caesar's death, he is a has-been who is living a pitiable existence:29

Cicero verlor sich in der Menge. Lebend tot, vergessen wie Catilina, grollte er mit der Gegenwart, und Ärgeres bereitete sich vor. Er hatte den Verbannten geschrieben, ihr Los sei das mildere, sehen herber als hören. [...] Den blutigen Ausgang sah Cicero nicht voraus. Er kannte das Geheimnis der Meuterer nicht. Man hatte ihn nach Rom gerufen und damit angedeutet, daß er die schweigende Bedingung seiner Begnadigung erfüllen und sich wenigstens zeigen möge, wenn man öffentlich verhandelte. [...] Die Verschworenen beendigten diese Not.30

Cicero was lost in the crowd. Forgotten like Catiline yet still alive, he resented the present situation, and worse was to come. He had written to the exiled that their fate was the milder one, and that seeing was worse than hearing [...] Cicero did not foresee the grisly end,

²⁷ Middleton 1741, vol. 3, 301. Here Middleton "uncritical veneration" is not just "for the textual Cicero" (as Fox 2013, 333, puts it), but explicitly also for the ethical and political role model. See Fox 2013, 331-332, for examples of contemporary criticism and mocking of Middleton's portrayal of Cicero.

²⁸ See Gruen 1974, 2 on how Cicero's attitudes depend on and are shaped by the political circumstances. Gruen calls the decennia he discusses the "Ciceronian age" (passim), but only as a reference to our dependence on Cicero's writings as sources, not as a hint at a truly exceptional role he played.

²⁹ See Weil 1962, 303 – 309 for a characterization of Drumann's working method and aims, and Canfora 1988, 102-103 (quoted by Fuhrmann 2000, 107-110) who sees Drumann as a monarchist who was strongly averse to the Republican ideals of the French Revolution, and by consequence, averse to Cicero's Republican ideals.

³⁰ Drumann 1899 – 1929, vol. 6, 288.

which the rebels had kept from him. He had been called to Rome on an implicit understanding that, in return for his amnesty, he would appear in public life. [...] The conspirators put an end to this agony.

Cicero's re-entry into politics after the Ides of March is portrayed as a decision of a fearful and bitter man seeking recognition, but who is up against opposition to whom he is inferior.

Cicero bebte vor dem Exil, der Schlacht, den Proskriptionen und dem Meuchelmorde. Dennoch wagte er, aber alles um alles. Kaum lockte ihn je ein solcher Preis. Einst wollte er sich Ansprüche erwerben, und jetzt, im Bewußtsein unermeßlicher Verdienste, erbittert durch vieljährige Entbehrung forderte er Ansehen und Einfluß zurück. Nach Caesar, als Gegner von Männern, die nur vor Caesar sich beugten, auf einem bis zu den Tiefen aufgewühlten Meere wollte er das Staatsschiff lenken. Er verkannte sich selbst, die Befreier, durch welche er zu handeln gedachte, und Antonius, der klüger war als sie und er. 31

Cicero trembled in fear of exile, battle, proscriptions and assassination. Nevertheless he did not shun a single danger. Never had such a great reward enticed him. Once he had wanted to bind people to himself and now, fully aware of his great achievements and embittered by years of hardship, he demanded his authority and influence back. After Caesar, he wanted to steer the ship of state through this turbulent sea, as the opponent of men who had only ever bowed to Caesar. He misjudged not only himself, but also the liberators, whom he thought were his instruments, and Antony, who was more astute than both the liberators and Cicero himself.

Generally, Drumann insists that the frequent change of mind and of focus of Cicero's life between 46 and the summer of 44 is typical for his unstable character that is characterized by frequent transmutations ("Umwandlungen").³² Cicero's philosophical production of 46-44 BCE is considered an indicator for this lack of stability: instead of a genuine interest in the matter, the treatises merely served him as pastime:

Jede schriftstellerische Arbeit wurde augenblicklich zur Seite gelegt, wenn Cicero hoffen durfte, in Rom zu wirken. Bald überzeugte er sich, daß dies nicht von ihm, sondern von anderen abhing. Bis zum Ende des Jahrs, oder bis zur Eröffnung des Feldzuges von Mutina gewann er keine feste Stellung. Seine Erbitterung verriet sich durch Klagen, Anspielungen und Ausfälle. Doch mußte er in den Werken, welche er bekannt machte, sich mäßigen.³³

He immediately laid aside every literary activity and began to hope of a return to the political stage in Rome. He soon convinced himself that this did not depend on himself but on others. He did not manage to achieve security for himself until the end of the year [44], or

³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 289 – 290.

³² Cf. Weil 1962, 304-305. See also our introduction of this volume on Cicero's inconstancy.

³³ Drumann 1899 – 1929, vol. 6, 311,

perhaps [even] until the start of the military campaign at Mutina. His bitterness revealed itself in his complaints, innuendos and angry outbursts. Yet he had to restrain himself in the works which he published.

Half a century later, Theodor Mommsen, the most influential and most notorious destroyer of Cicero's renown,³⁴ would present Cicero's philosophical *Spätwerk* in much the same way:

[S]o fiel dagegen der Kompilator vollständig durch, als er in der unfreiwilligen Muße seiner letzten Lebensjahre (709, 710) sich an die eigentliche Philosophie machte und mit ebenso großer Verdrießlichkeit wie Eilfertigkeit in ein paar Monaten seine philosophische Bibliothek zusammenschrieb. Das Rezept war sehr einfach. In roher Nachahmung der populären aristotelischen Schriften [...] nähte Cicero die das gleiche Problem behandelnden epikureischen, stoischen und synkretistischen Schriften, wie sie ihm in die Hand kamen oder gegeben wurden, zu einem sogenannten Dialog zusammen. [...] Aber wer in solchen Schreibereien klassische Produktionen sucht, dem kann man nur raten sich in literarischen Dingen eines schönen Stillschweigens zu befleißigen.³⁵

The compiler on the other hand completely failed, when in the involuntary leisure of the last years of his life (709-710~[sc.~from~the~foundation~of~Rome~in~753~BCE]) he applied himself to philosophy proper, and with equal peevishness and precipitation composed in a couple of months a philosophical library. The receipt was very simple. In rude imitation of the popular writings of Aristotle [...] Cicero stitched together the Epicurean, Stoic, and Syncretist writings handling the same problem, as they came or were given to his hand, into a so-called dialogue. [...] but any one who seeks classical productions in works so written can only be advised to study in literary matters a becoming silence.

Mommsen's extremely negative image of the "Staatsmann ohne Einsicht, Ansicht und Absicht" ("statesman without insight, idea or purpose"),³⁶ of the mediocre and opportunistic lawyer without any passion is too well known to need further elaboration here—especially as he never wrote the part of his *Römische Geschichte* that would have dealt in depth with the years 44/43 BCE.³⁷

³⁴ Cf. Mommsen 2010, vol. 1, XII (the introduction by Stefan Rebenich): "Am bekanntesten ist seine hämische Abrechnung mit Cicero, die Generationen von Altphilologen erbost [...] hat". Cf. also *ibid.*, XI: "Mommsen ist parteiisch, aber es ist [...] die Parteilichkeit eines mitstreitenden Agitators".

³⁵ Mommsen 1856, vol. 3, 576 [= 2010, vol. 5, 288], transl. Dickson 1867.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 572 [= 2010, vol. 5, 284].

³⁷ See on Mommsen and Cicero Weil 1962, 310-323; Fuhrmann 1989; Fuhrmann 2000, 110-113; Cole 2013, 338-340; for many juicy quotations also Merolle 2015, 22-53. On Drumann's influence on Mommsen (especially as depicted by Wilamowitz), see Canfora 1988, 107-108.

The twentieth century: Carcopino and Gelzer

To fill this gap, one of Mommsen's most ardent followers in the twentieth century will be quoted. Just as Mommsen's portrait of Cicero is deeply rooted in nine-teenth-century Germany's nationalism with its wish for a strong leader, Jérôme Carcopino's *Les secrets de la correspondence de Cicéron*, published in 1947, still breathes the spirit of the French Vichy-regime, as Carlos Lévy has argued convincingly.³⁸ Carcopino's major aim was to prove that Cicero's correspondence had been published by Augustus in order to further destroy Cicero's name after 43.³⁹ He therefore zooms in on all possible failures and moral inconsistencies in Cicero's life. As a result, Carcopino's Cicero is as unstable and fickle as Drumann's.⁴⁰ The death of the Roman orator and politician is therefore presented as a logical and almost deserved consequence for his misconduct and complete lack of political insight:

Nous verrons [...] comment, après avoir failli s'en relever dans les mois qui ont suivi le meurtre de César, il a consommé sa perte par la répétition des *mêmes faiblesses* et par de *monstrueuses erreurs de calcul* [...]. Ainsi s'achève dans le sang de sa proscription, le 7 décembre 43 v. J.-C., la longue suite de mécomptes, de revers et d'infortunes qui, de son consulat à sa mort, pendant près de vingt années consécutives, ont gâché sa vie publique; et sa Correspondence, en étalant à chaque page les travers de son esprit et les vices

³⁸ Cf. Lévy 2015, 198–212. Carcopino surely also knew the powerful image Gaston Boissier had depicted of Cicero in his *Cicéron et ses amis* (1865), cf. the study in Narducci 2004. Harich-Schwarzbauer 2010 shows that Boissier corrected Mommsen's extremely negative image by focusing much more on the social necessities that forced the political protagonists of the time into their actions (cf. esp. *ead.* 2010, 190–191). Boissier's main interest was to rehabilitate Cicero's philosophical oeuvre and the emotional aspects of his character as part of the "condicio humana" of a passionate humane being (*ibid.*, 192: Cicero as "Typ des *leidenschaftlichen* Menschen", emphasis by the author).

³⁹ Cf. Carcopino 1947, vol. 1, 442 (the very end of part 1): "En décembre 43 av J.-C., Octave, en laissant inscrire Cicéron sur les tables de proscription, n'avait attenté qu'à sa vie. Plus tard, en faisant publier ses Lettres, il en a ruiné l'honneur". ("When in Dec. 43 he allowed Cicero's name to be inscribed on the proscription list, Octavian aimed only at murdering the man. Later, when he caused the *Letters* to be published, he dealt a death-blow at Cicero's honour."). The English translation of Carcopino in this chapter is that of Lorimer 1951.

⁴⁰ About Cicero's changing moods between April and August 44 Carcopino writes: "En quatre mois, *il a changé quinze fois d'avis*, et cette suite d'ordres et de contre-ordres, d'agitations sans objet et de repentirs sans conséquence résume l'aboulie chronique dont Cicéron était atteint". ("In four months *he changed his mind fifteen times*, and this series of orders and counter-orders, of aimless agitations and repentences that led to nothing, forms the case-history of the chronic disease of incapacity to make decisions—*abulia*, a physician would call it—from which Cicero suffered"; Carcopino 1947, vol. 1, 396, our emphasis).

de son cœur, les lacunes et les tares de sa personnalité, nous explique la banqueroute perpétuelle qui en fut la conséquence et la sanction. [...] Il n'a possédé aucune des qualités qui font l'homme d'État; il eut tous les défauts qui l'annihilent.⁴¹

[W]e shall see [...] how, after having nearly pulled himself together in the months that followed Caesar's murder, he completed his own destruction by a repetition of the *same weaknesses* and *monstrous miscalculations*. [...] Thus on Dec. 7, 43, the blood of the proscribed man sealed the long series of misreckonings, reverses and misfortunes which from the time of his consulship to his assassination, during the course of well-nigh twenty consecutive years, marred his public life. His *Letters*, every page of which reveals the eccentricities of his mind and the vices of his heart, the faults and defects of his personality, explain the perpetual bankruptcy which were their consequence and their penalty. [...] *He possessed none of the qualities which make and he had all the faults which destroy a statesman*.

This bitter résumé of Cicero's failure has nothing to do with Cicero's self-representation as analysed by Caroline Bishop in this volume. Here, failure simply overcomes him as a result of his character. To put it in a nutshell: Cicero has not been able to fulfill the role of leader the Romans after Caesar's death because of his inability to master his own weakness ("il était incapable de se conduire lui-même").

Carcopino's invective against Cicero is a late example of such negative views of his life. Generally, the twentieth century, and even more so the years after the Second World War, gave rise to a period of rehabilitation of Cicero. In 1971, Klaus Bringmann in the preface of his *Habilitationsschrift* reflected on this tendency. According to him, recent scholars have tried to defend Cicero against Mommsen's sharp criticism and thereby partly fallen into the opposite: "Dem Verdikt eines Drumann und eines Mommsen ist in neuerer Zeit, nicht zum mindesten in Deutschland, eine—vor allem von philologischer Seite getragene—Apologetik gefolgt, deren forcierter Enthusiasmus kaum zu einer sachgerechten Würdigung Ciceros geführt hat. Angesichts dieser wenig befriedigenden, wenn auch historisch verständlichen, Einstellung zu Cicero habe ich mich bemüht, sine ira et studio zu schreiben und von meinem Autor die, wie ich glaube, notwendige Distanz zu wahren". 42 One of the most influential books about Cicero written in the twentieth century, however, does not fit Bringmann's general sketch. Only two years

⁴¹ Carcopino 1947, vol. 1, 371–372 (our emphasis).

⁴² Bringmann 1971, 5–6: "The verdict of a Drumann or Mommsen has in more recent times been followed, especially in Germany, by an apologetic tone, usually from philologists. This forced enthusiasm has scarcely led to an adequate appraisal of Cicero. In light of this unsatisfactory (albeit historically understandable) attitude towards Cicero I have attempted to write *sine ira et studio* and to keep my author by necessity at a cautious distance". Cf. Harich-Schwarzbauer 2010, 185: according to her, Bringmann does not fulfil his announcement, but follows Mommsen's and Gelzer's negative attitude towards Cicero's eclectic philosophy.

earlier, in 1969, Matthias Gelzer had published his authoritative biography of Cicero (whose modest subtitle-"a biographical essay"-is a major understatement). It was largely based on his entry for Pauly and Wissowa's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft from 1939. The book of 1969 represents a wonderful example of a mediated interpretation of Cicero's life, in which the old negative judgments (which Gelzer most probably had got to know as a student at the very beginning of the 20th century) are still perceivable in some formulations: "Cicero's Beschimpfung des toten Caesar ist wohl das Unedelste, was sein unermüdlicher Griffel hinterlassen hat" ("Cicero's scolding of the dead Caesar is probably the least dignified passage which his tireless pen has left us") is one such passage (according to Gelzer, Caesar had not asked him for advice after the Civil War, as he did with the jurist Ser. Sulpicius Rufus, and this affront had offended Cicero). 43 But for the most part of his monograph, Gelzer has substituted the negative vision with sound contextualization of Cicero's actions and with a sympathetic attitude, which even allows the author to add personal evaluations that are not written sine ira et studio. About Ad Brut. 1.18 (Cicero's last letter), we read: "Der Leser, dem es verstattet ist, hinter den Zeilen dieses letzten Briefes Ciceros den Aufstieg einer neuen Geschichtsepoche zu schauen, wird Zeuge einer Schicksalstragödie, wie sie kein Dichter erschütternder erfinden möchte. Dem Helden, von dem wir wissen, daß er im nächsten Augenblick in den Abgrund stürzt, sind allein noch die Augen geblendet".44 And also when he describes Cicero's end, the 83-year-old Gelzer almost seems to identify with Cicero (the "lonely and helpless old man") and to excuse himself for having to pass a negative judgment about his lacking sense of reality during the last months: "Als sinnbildlich erscheint mir am Tod des vereinsamten hilflosen Greises der Kontrast zum Wahn seines Prinzipats, worin er noch bis in den August gelebt hatte. Wem aufgegeben ist, von Cicero als Politiker zu handeln, kann das nicht beschönigen".45

The end of Gelzer's biography is worth quoting at more length. Even if he does not say so, we still perceive a kind of wicked fascination for the ruthless

⁴³ Gelzer 1969, 363 ("[a]n dieser verletzten Eitelkeit nährte sich im Grund sein tobender Haß gegen den Tyrannen").

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 404: "The reader who is able to perceive the beginning of a new historical epoch between the lines of this last Ciceronian letter witnesses a tragedy of fate, more harrowing than any poet could invent. However, the hero, whom we know will soon fall into the abyss, is still blind". **45** *Ibid.*, 408: "The contrast between the death of the lonely and helpless old man and the fantasy of his Principate, to which he still clinged until August [43], strikes me as emblematic. *No one* writing about Cicero as a politician *can embellish this*". (our emphasis).

Caesar as the powerful representative of a new political era,⁴⁶ against whom Cicero and his old Republican ethos were helpless. Gelzer combines this with more explicit fascination for Cicero just because he represents the "memory of the bygone better time":

Dabei fehlte völlig die Einsicht, daß die herkömmliche, vom Senat in unausrottbarem Schlendrian ausgeübte Herrschaft des römischen Gemeindestaats über die Provinzen in ein neu aufzubauendes Reichsregiment mit bureaukratischen Organen umgewandelt werden müßte. Ein Staatsmann, der wie Caesar ohne philosophische Begründung zugriff, wo sich Aufgaben zudrängten, und dazu freie Hand behalten mußte, war ihm unverständlich. So ward ihm beschieden, daß er den begeisterten Jubel über Caesars Ermordung bald genug mit dem eigenen Untergang büßen mußte. Aber trotz der politischen Niederlage lebten mit seinen Werken auch seine hohen Worte von der wahren *res publica* und dem sie leitenden Staatsmann weiter und erwiesen noch in der Kaiserzeit ihre mahnende Kraft als Erinnerung an eine vergangene bessere Zeit.⁴⁷

He did not realize at all that the Roman Republic's traditional command of the provinces, executed with ineradicable nonchalance by the senate, had to be transformed into a new imperial form of governance with bureaucratic governmental bodies. He could not understand a statesman like Caesar who acted without philosophical justification whenever he met challenges and who wanted free rein as he tackled them. Therefore, he was soon fated to repay his jubilant enthusiasm about Caesar's murder with his own death. But despite his political defeat, his lofty words regarding the true *res publica* and its government lived on together with his works; they remained powerful admonitions of a better past.

Appendix: Max Brod's 'holy Cicero'

We would like to conclude this by no means exhaustive overview with fiction. In his novel *Armer Cicero* (published in 1955), Max Brod⁴⁸ sketches an uncompromisingly positive image of Cicero's final years. Brod, of Jewish origin, had survived the Second World War in Palestine, but had lost his brother in the German concentration camps. Having experienced the Holocaust he turned his interests to religious themes. He was convinced that God's creation was perfect notwithstanding the terrible tragedy he had lived through. Felix Weltsch has shown that he began to espouse the idea that "the perfect becomes more perfect through the

⁴⁶ Cf. for this aspect the excellent review of a recent reprint of Gelzer's biography by Dyck 2015. According to Dyck, the over-estimation of Caesar is one of the major limitations of Gelzer's monograph.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 410.

⁴⁸ Brod was a prolific writer of numerous novels, essays and philosophical works. He is also well-known for having been Franz Kafka's friend and biographer.

addition of something imperfect". 49 His exceedingly positive depiction of the Republican Cicero inscribes itself in such a world view. Whether he saw parallels between the rise of the Nazi regime and the rise of the Augustan regime, as famously Ronald Syme had done in his *The Roman Revolution* of 1939,⁵⁰ is difficult to tell from the novel itself. It is, however, by no means impossible, as the link was created by other writers as well. Brod could have found a positive depiction of Cicero, clearly influenced by the time of writing, in Stefan Zweig's miniature Cicero (first published as part of the English edition of his Sternstunden der Menschheit in 1940).⁵¹ According to Zweig, Cicero was "a born artist whom chance only had lured from the study into the phantasmorgia of politics",52 but who in the chaos of March and April 44 was determined to fulfill his patriotic duty as "the only man to show firmness of will". 53 His De officiis was, according to Zweig, the ideal combination of a philosophical treatise and political commentary in that Cicero "was the first among Romans to utter an eloquent protest against the misuse of authority".54 Zweig read the work as a condemnation of war and imperialism and thus as a predecessor of his own deeply rooted pacifism.

Just like Zweig's Cicero, Brod's protagonist is a shining character: he is turned into a perfect philosopher who combines Platonic and Stoic excellence. In fact, in Brod's version, Cicero's death resembles those of Socrates and Seneca, in that he finds himself in a state of complete *ataraxia* and can chat light-heartedly in his final hours. During the evening before his death, he has a dinner with friends and philosophers and discusses death and duties. His last words have a very Socratic sound to them, not only because of the several references to his knowledge of his own weakness, but even more in the light tone in which he tries to comfort his grieving friends. On the other hand, Brod almost portrays him as a Christ-like saviour:

⁴⁹ Cf. Weltsch 1965, 55 - 56.

⁵⁰ If Brod was influenced by Syme at all (which is by no means sure), his evaluation of Cicero's role in the events is diametrically opposed to Syme's, according to whom Cicero's populistic and partially unlawful actions against Mark Antony (and others enemies of the state) paved the way to the disruption of Republican order later on, cf. Syme 1939, 143–148, esp. 147: "In Cicero, the Republic possessed a fanatic and dangerous champion". Van der Blom 2003 is a defence of Cicero against Syme's charges.

⁵¹ Zweig 1940. We thank an anonymous reviewer for having brought Zweig's essay to our attention.

⁵² Ibid. 4.

⁵³ Ibid. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*. 13.

Ich weiß ja, meine Kinder, daß ich in meinem Leben der Lächerlichkeit mehr als einmal nahe gekommen bin. Widersprecht mir nicht, auch du nicht dort, mein Leonidas, der die gespreizte Rechte hochstreckt. Nein, nein, ich weiß es. Alle meine Schwächen weiß ich. So will ich also wenigstens zuletzt recht leise sein. Hättet ihr nicht das vom 'Schlaffmachen' gesagt, so hätte ich wohl überhaupt geschwiegen [...] doch nun ist es geschehen, daher laßt mich nur noch das eine entgegnen: In der Liebe ausharren und liebend den Tod aushalten -etwa Stärkeres als das gibt es nicht.55

Children, I know that in my life I have been close to being a laughing stock more than once. Do not contradict me, not even you there, my Leonidas, raising your hand. No, no, I know it. I know all my weaknesses. But at least in the end I am all for a quiet life. If you had not mentioned the topic of feebleness, I would have remained completely silent. [...] But now it did come up, and therefore let me say just this: to persevere in love and to undergo death with love-nothing is stronger than that.

The religious aura is intensified after his death, when Atticus and the fictitious philosopher Antiochus talk about the deceased. Atticus sighs "Armer Cicero!" ("Poor Cicero!"), but Antiochus does not agree:

Seliger Cicero! Sollte es vielmehr heißen-und wohl auch: menschlicher Cicero! Denn als Mensch irrte er oft, und mit einem Teil seines Selbst ragte er dabei dennoch immer in das Reich seliger Genien herein. [...] Es ist so, als hätte er all das, was er im Leben immer wieder zurückgeschoben, aus übergroßer Klugheit versäumt hat, als hätte er all das nachgeholt in seinem großen Tod. Deshalb möchte ich vorschlagen, statt vom 'armen Cicero' lieber vom 'heiligen Cicero' zu reden, wenn du, mein Atticus, damit einverstanden bist.56

'St. Cicero', we should say—and also 'mortal Cicero'! For as a human being he made many mistakes, but still a part of him always reached the realm of saintly geniuses. [...] It seems as if his sublime death made up for everything which he had postponed in his life and failed to do because of his extreme prudence. For that reason I would propose to speak of the 'holy Cicero' instead of the 'poor Cicero', if you agree, my dear Atticus.

Holy martyr or pettifogger, (Stoic) philosopher or characterless turncoat? Cicero's final years turned out to be an especially fitting moment of his life to discuss his political, philosophical and moral heritage. The discussion started almost imme-

⁵⁵ Brod 1955, 267. Zweig 1940, 22 also regarded Cicero's hour of death as the moment in which he showed himself "more heroic, more manly and more stalwart" than ever before.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 279 – 280. An anonymous reviewer has suggested that the epithet 'holy' carries heavy meaning with regard to Brod's new religious orientation after the Second World War (see above, p. 251).

diately after his death and still fascinates us today, as the contributions to this volume hope to have shown.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Thanks to Tom Keeline, Ermanno Malaspina and the anonymous referee for De Gruyter for their useful comments on this chapter and to Matthew Payne for his help with our translations of Drumann, Bringmann, Gelzer and Brod.