

## ***Editor's and Guest Editor's Preface***

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One of the charges that have most frequently been levelled at Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.) by contemporary readers is a supposed inability to work out an authentically original set of philosophical views<sup>1</sup>. In the opinion of many commentators, the exquisiteness of his oratorical style and the shrewdness he displayed in his political and forensic activity are not matched by equally remarkable achievements in the domain of theoretical reflection, especially when it comes to matters of political thought. Such a conviction might be fostered by a number of factors. In the first place, Cicero himself declared that there are many to whom he yields precedence in knowledge of philosophy, and that he could rather lay claim to the orator's peculiar set of abilities (*De Officiis* I, 1.2). Also, his frequent and explicit reminders to the doctrines of thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, the Skeptics and the Stoics in his written works have often led scholars to charge him of mindless eclecticism. Most notably, his political views have often been judged in terms of a simple projection of his life and active commitments in the turbulent period of factional strife preceding the death of the Roman Republic, and not as stances substantiated by an authentic philosophical outlook.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance V. Pöschl, *Römischer Staat und griechisches Staatsdenken bei Cicero*, Berlin, Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1936: 173, who sees Cicero's political works (the *Republic* in particular) as depending heavily on the work of Plato. See also M.I. Finley (*Politics in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983: 128) who deems Cicero's work as lacking innovative aspects, both in the philosophical and in the historical sphere. More to the point, with regard to the *Republic*, he takes (in agreement with the German historian Mommsen) the central idea of the *De Republica* to be "as unphilosophical as unhistorical". Cf. J.G. Powell (ed.), *Cicero. The Philosopher*, Oxford, Clarendon Paperbacks, 1999: 2-3. Powell, however, explains that the fact that Cicero was not a particularly original thinker makes him interesting in different respects. In particular, Cicero presents himself as "an attentive student of philosophy with a mind of his own, who could additionally bring to bear a wide experience of Roman life, politics and law, which was outside the normal purview of many contemporary Greek philosophers".

This special issue of *Ethics&Politics* aims to shed a new light on Cicero as political thinker and to foster an appreciation of his thought by bringing into focus some of its main theoretical underpinnings. The general idea that inspires the collection of paper here collected is that Cicero's voluminous corpus of writings allows the reader to trace the seeds of an authentically pioneering political theory, one that might give us insights into a network of key philosophical questions to which he seems to give pride of place: justice (*iustitia*), equity (*equitas*), the nature of the *res publica* and its most desirable internal arrangement (the best regime), the role of natural law and individual virtues in shaping the moral texture of the members of the *societas humana*.

Cicero's philosophical examination of the nature and purpose of politics is the result of a complex personal and professional path, which combines his dedication to literary and philosophical studies with his military, legal and political engagements. Cicero was born in 106 BC in Arpino in a rich family who belonged to the equestrian order; since his childhood he studied rhetoric, law and philosophy in Rome and then went on to study in Athens, Rhodi and Smyrna between 79 and 77 BC. Between 90 BC and 88 BC he is with the legati Gneus Pompeius Strabo and Lucius Cornelius Silla engaged in the "social war" fought by Rome and the Italic people who asked for Roman citizenship (which entitled them to many rights, such as access to public positions and the possibility to become a subject of *ius civile*). Some years afterwards he starts his activity as a lawyer and orator<sup>2</sup>. His official entrance in the legal arena is in 81 BC, when he delivers his first oration *Pro Quintio*, although he becomes a famous orator only with the *Pro Roscio Amerino*<sup>3</sup>, delivered in defence of a citizen of Ameria accused of parricide. Cicero's apprenticeship as a lawyer and orator in those days enables him to understand the functioning of Roman political institutions and to notice the incipient contrasts between *optimates* (who supported senatorial *auctoritas* and its hegemonic role in ancient Rome's political life) and *populares* (who supported the sovereignty of people and the necessity to implement policies which favoured the people). These contrasts issue in a phase of civil wars raging from 86 BC (when the conflict between Lucius Cornelius Sulla and Gaius Marius deflagrates) up to the beginning of Augustus' principality<sup>4</sup>.

It is in such a historical context, characterized by a profound political and social instability, that Cicero's *cursus honorum* develops starting from the year 75 BC (when he became quaestor; he was then senator in 74, aedile curule in 69, praetor in 66 and consul in 63). In 60 BC Julius Caesar, Pompey and Crassus formed the First Triumvirate and took control of Roman politics. They tried to

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<sup>2</sup> For a study of Cicero forensic speeches as examples of practical advocacy see J. Powell and J. Paterson (eds.), *Cicero the Advocate*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> See Plutarch, *Cicero* 3,5. Cf. E. Rawson, *Cicero. A Portrait*, London, Allen Lane, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> For the historical context see G. Brizzi, *Roma. Potere e Identità. Dalle origini alla nascita dell'impero cristiano*, Bologna, Pàtron, 2012.

enrol Cicero on their side but he refused, stating that he preferred to remain loyal to the Senate and the Republic. This fact angered the triumviri and in 58 BC a satellite of Caesar, the tribune Clodius, proposed a retroactive law which sentenced to exile and to the loss of citizenship anyone who killed a Roman citizen without due trial. The law was devised against Cicero, who had Lucius Catilina killed without trial after denouncing his conspiracy in 63 BC. Cicero spent one and a half years away from Rome, mostly studying philosophy; after his return, being still forbidden to take part in politics, he wrote some of his major works. In 49 BC Caesar crossed the Rubicon and Cicero sided with Pompey, after whose defeat he was pardoned by Caesar, remained in Rome and wrote more works. After Caesar's murder Cicero sided with Octavian against Mark Antony, but the two politicians found an agreement which included getting rid of their respective enemies. Cicero had attacked vehemently Antony, who had him killed in 43 BC.

Beside his active political engagement, Cicero devoted his energy to the project of devising new ethical and political foundations to the Roman *res publica*, which in his days was waning to the point of disappearing. Cicero considered his reflections on politics an instrument to change the contemporary practical reality, the institutions of Rome and the mores of the Romans. He took the opportunity to write when he found himself excluded from active participation in politics and exiled from Rome. Works such as the *De republica*, the *De legibus* and the *De officiis* were written when Cicero was not institutionally engaged in politics and wanted to contribute to the regeneration of the republic. One of his main insights is the idea that, by identifying the theoretical reasons of the crisis of the republic, it is also possible to begin the process of renovating it through virtue. A comprehensive reflection on the entire institutional history of Rome enables him to identify the causes of the current situation and to meditate on the original link between knowledge of human nature and practical ends of human beings as well as the relation between human beings, god and final ends.

By critically engaging with the reasons of the decline of the Roman republic, Cicero does not intend to confine himself to a theoretical work on politics but rather wants to contribute to a genuinely philosophical re-founding of Rome. He strives to find an ideal balance between conserving the traditional ethical and political traditions and modernizing the institutions of the Roman republic. He also pioneers a redefinition of the concept of *optimus vir*, who does not simply possess a generic ethical and intellectual virtue but can also face the new situation with a capacity for analysis and initiative<sup>5</sup>. Cicero ardently believes in the principle of *Concordia ordinum*, which he conceives as agreement and coordination between the senatorial and the equestrian orders; in a subsequent stage of his thought he thinks of a *Concordia omnium bonorum*, that is an agreement between

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<sup>5</sup> See E. Lepore, *Il pensiero politico romano del I secolo*, in A. Momigliano-A. Schiavone (ed.), *Storia di Roma*, Vol. II/1, Torino, Einaudi, 1990: 858.

all virtuous citizens in the name of a justice that enforces a real *res populi* (Cf. *De republica* 1.39): this is an agreement on the law which all citizens must respect (*iuris consensu*) in the name of the search for a common interest (*utilitatis communio*).

This *special issue* is divided in two parts. The first part (titled “Anatomy of the Virtuous *Res Publica*: Law, Human Nature and Political Institutions in Cicero”), aims at identifying some central aspects of Cicero’s political thought by investigating such ethical issues as natural law, the *mos maiorum* and the virtue of the *vir bonus*. The second part (titled “The Modern and Contemporary Reception of Cicero”) explores Cicero’s legacy in the thought of some modern and contemporary authors.

Notably, most studies on Cicero’s thought aim at reconstructing his vision of man and the *res publica* by investigating the philosophical sources of his main ideas. One of the most studied topics is Cicero’s vision of natural law, its origin and its implications on governing a republic. The notion of *lex naturae* has a central place in Cicero’s political thought, especially in the political projects of the *De re publica* and the *De legibus*. The first essay proposed in this collection of papers, *La noción de ley natural en Cicerón* by Francisco Lisi, opts for a different approach to this question from most interpreters, who trace the notion of natural law to a direct influence of Stoic philosophy Cicero<sup>6</sup>; Lisi, on the contrary, explores the possibility that the decisive influence on Cicero be Plato’s doctrines in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*. Lisi emphasises how Plato searches for a superior, transcendent grounding for his political constructions. The true universal law, or “reason in the universe”, is identified with the mind of the divine legislator. Cicero, according to Lisi, takes his bearings from Plato and maintains that the universal intrinsic in nature is converted into human law inside the man’s mind. Considering natural law as a set of rules founded on the equality of all human beings and valid everywhere, Lisi makes a fundamental conceptual distinction between the *lex naturalis* or *naturae* and the *lex secundum naturam*. The former is a law directly deriving from nature whereas the latter conforms to nature. This distinction between natural law and law according to nature is already present in Plato’s thought and Cicero tries to revive it and to adapt the Platonic model to historical circumstances of the Roman republic.

The issues of the fundamentals of “natural law” and the role played by such a concept in the *De republica* and in the *De legibus* are also addressed in the second essay proposed here, David Fott’s *Skepticism about Natural Right in Cicero’s De republica*, which moves from an accurate analysis of the characters in these dialogues and their respective positions. The very dialogical structure of these works is not just a homage to a literary convention but means to emphasise the

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<sup>6</sup> Some interpreters maintain that Cicero assimilated ideas from Antiochus of Ascalon, while others find in Philo of Alexandria, Antiochus’ former teacher, his main source of inspiration.

importance of dialectics and dialogue in searching for the truth about justice. In the *De republica* Cicero seems to enter an ideal dialogue with Philo, Laelius and Scipio, leaving the reader to wonder what is the position he embraces on the matter.

Fott maintains that Cicero is actually quite sceptic both concerning the role of natural law and the question of who benefits from political activity (the rulers or the ruled?). Fott examines Cicero's treatment of natural law in books I-III of the *De republica* and the three different positions maintained by the characters in the dialogue. The first speaker, Philo, denies the existence of a natural law inborn in men which can benefit all human beings. In his opinion, the real unwritten law prompts wise men to increase their wealth, to enjoy pleasures and to rule over other people even to their detriment. The second speaker, Laelius, has a positive view of natural law. He subscribes to the typical Stoic position and maintains that natural law, which is the "true law", is according to nature, inborn in all human beings, eternal and based on God's will. Against such notion is the third speaker, Scipio, who believes in the existence of a natural law but denies its divine origin. He focuses, rather, on its use and argues that virtue consists in the contemplation of what is eternal.

Cicero's positions concerning such fundamental topics as natural law, the destiny of man's soul and the importance of political engagement are elaborated in a critical comparison to the doctrines of the most important Greek philosophers. In his *Epicurean Philosophy in Cicero's De Republica: Serious Threat or Convenient Foil?*, Walter Englert explores the contribution of Epicurean philosophy in moulding Cicero's view of nature and the ends of the virtuous man. Englert emphasises that Cicero's approach to Epicurean philosophy was not hostile<sup>7</sup>, since in his childhood he befriended people like the Epicurean Phaedrus, who remained a lifetime friend. Nevertheless, in his writings (both philosophical and rhetorical and also in the letters) Cicero shows his disagreement with certain aspects of Epicurean philosophy. For instance, in the *Somnium Scipionis* he attacks the Epicureans for their criticism of Plato's Myth of Er. More specifically, Englert contends, it seems that Cicero is arguing against a specific Epicurean, Colotes, who maintained the mortality of the soul. From a practical point of view, Cicero seems to believe that the members of the Roman political *élites* find a reason for not engaging in political activity in the Epicurean view of happiness as *otium* and *ataraxia*<sup>8</sup>.

Cicero's insistence on the risks entailed by a political life lacking the support of moral virtue may prompt the reader to inquire into the qualifying traits of the

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<sup>7</sup> For a different view see J.C.B Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982: 382-388.

<sup>8</sup> This idea was maintained both by Epicurus and by Lucretius, a philosopher by whom Cicero was fascinated, as he told his brother Quintus in a letter dated February 55 BC.

excellent man. In his essay *Un dittico esemplare nel primo pensiero politico di Cicerone: Il comandante militare nella De Imperio Cn. Pompei (66 a.C.) e il governatore provinciale nella prima lettera al fratello quinto (59 a.C.)*, François Prost examines two Ciceronian texts (an oration and a letter) which disclose an *in fieri* view of the virtuous man. Prost finds an early view on the nature of the virtuous man in the oration *De imperio Cn. Pompei*<sup>9</sup>, in which it is possible to see Cicero's early political thought. His points of reference for the image of the good man in this work is Pompey himself; subsequently Cicero refined his ideas and included the experience of his own brother Quintus, who had important positions in the administration of Asia minor between 62 and 59 BC.

Generally speaking, according to Prost, the portrait of the *vir bonus* has a double function: (i) a practical-strategic function, which consists in identifying a viable solution to the crisis at hand; (ii) an 'exemplary' function, namely that of suggesting a model for ruling in the interest of the State, respecting traditional institutions. The fundamental point for a virtuous man resides in a balance between the (ordinary and extraordinary) powers implicit in the ruler's *imperium* and the moral virtues of the exceptional man, whose actions aim at the well-being of the State. More specifically, as it is testified by the *Virtutes Pompei*, military competence (*scientia rei militaris*) is less important than moral virtues, among which wisdom in decision (*consilium in providendo*), ingenuity (*ingenium*), temperance (*temperantia*) and *humanitas* stand out; this last virtue has a pre-eminent role in Cicero's ideal portrait of Pompey. The importance of *humanitas*, which is similar to the Greek ideal of *philanthrôpia*, is finally elaborated in Cicero's first letter to his brother Quintus. By incorporating ideas of benevolence, justice and other-regardingness, *humanitas* represents a core value within a vast array of human excellences championed by authoritative men of old, i.e. men whose main concern was to convey a paradigm of justice and to encourage attitudes of respect for the common interest. Such excellences, which contribute to mould the kernel of the traditional morality of ancient Rome, generally come under the heading of *mos maiorum*.

The notion of *mos maiorum* and its political significance are examined in Anna Iacoboni's essay, titled *Il significato politico del mos maiorum in Cicerone*. Iacoboni shows how this notion is actually multifaceted, ranging from the moral to the legal sphere: it originates in a religious realm and then expands to the political sphere. In the ancient literary tradition *mos maiorum* is considered as a set of judgements and principles which issue in *consuetudo*. *Mos* originates from the principles which guide the actions of the *maiores* and – as certain writers (such as Varro) maintain – it becomes common consensus for all members of the political community. The custom of the forefathers has the same dignity as the *leges*, it has

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<sup>9</sup> This oration was delivered in support of Manilius' proposal to replace Lucullus with Pompey in the war against Mitridates.

real legal validity, although it is founded only on orality and memory<sup>10</sup> and is legitimized by its repeated application in time so that it becomes a constitutive part of *ius*. Iacoboni shows the resilience and flexibility of this notion, which evolves in time, and owes its political significance exactly to this characteristic. She finds the reason for its crisis in the social and economic transformations which followed the second Punic war, which brought great wealth into Rome and corrupted Roman mores, especially by generating a form of individualism which was unknown in the past. Cicero advocated the importance of philosophy in order to give new ethical content to the *mos maiorum* and in order to find a solution to the political crisis. He associates the *mos maiorum* to the notion of *antiquum*, which is not to be identified with a specific time in the past but rather with a proximity to divine perfection, which becomes the criterion of ethics. The appeal to the *mos maiorum* is used by the *optimates* to find in the tradition of their eminent *maiores* the legitimate foundation of their power in their struggle against the *populares*.

The characteristic flexibility of the *mos maiorum* might prompt questions on the issue of the legitimacy of innovation in matters of morals. Lex Paulson's essay, titled *Conservative or Radical? The Constitutional Innovations of Cicero's De legibus*, critically engages with the key aspects of the constitutional agenda set up by Cicero in his *De legibus* and proposes to answer the following questions: what are the theoretical and practical boundaries between innovation and attachment to traditional values in Cicero? Is there a theoretical framework in the light of which the innovations made in the constitutional project outlined in the *De legibus* may result compatible with the attachment frequently displayed by Cicero to the long-established institutional setting of the Roman republic? Paulson suggests that the compound of prescriptive ideals that inform the contents of the *De legibus*, by persisting against the backdrop of a declining *res publica*, provides the seeds for the development of a constitutional vision in which the inner tensions between innovation and preservation can be recomposed in compliance with the principle "to refresh the colours of the republican canvas" expounded in *De republica* 5.1.2 (and taken in its turn by a passage of Plato's *Laws*, 769c). Like a painter being asked to reinvigorate the pale colors of a beautiful painting, the political man should renovate the original colors of the constitution while preserving its initial configuration.

Cicero supplies a portrait of the virtuous constitution that, being inspired by the attempt to reconcile political realism and the search for an ideal perfection, turns out to be widely divergent not only from his own moral absolutism, but also from the Gracchi's reformist solutions and the military *realpolitik* staged by leaders like Marius, Sylla, Pompeus and Caesar. Among the constitutional

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed study of the *mos maiorum* see H. Rech, *Mos maiorum; la tradizione a Roma*, a cura di V. Vernole, Settimo Sigillo, Roma, 2006: 20.

innovations proposed by Cicero we find the introduction of new and enforced powers for the censors, of a senate with straightforwardly eligible members and of new sanctions against political violence. In the last analysis, Cicero's political project appears to be grounded on the Senate's authority and on the principle of the *concordia ordinum*<sup>11</sup>. The search for a balance between the various social and institutional components of the *res publica* finds its ground in strategic political measures designed to promote cooperation between the tribunate and the *boni*.

By resting on the consensus of the good people, the *concordia ordinum* requires that political leaders be equipped with a distinctive set of interrelated virtues (both intellectual and ethical) and values able to mould a vision of the decent man and leader. As suggested in Colotte's essay (*Le De officiis: un manuel de vertu pratique?*), such propensions and values are extensively illustrated in the *De officiis*. Written in the second half of the year 44 BC., the *De Officiis* – inspired by Panethius' philosophy – may be considered Cicero's philosophical testament, since it is written for his son Marcus, who was about to start his studies in Athens. The word *officia*, which is usually translated as “duties”, refers to the Stoic notion of καθήκοντα, what is appropriate, what one has to do, in other words to the duties of the honest man. Colotte's essay aims at examining not only the moral and political perspectives of the *honestum* in Cicero – considered with respect to the Stoic morality – but also at investigating the relation between these theories and Cicero's own political action. The central question of the *De officiis* is: how, in a “real” situation, i.e. one necessarily complex and impossible to be fully controlled, can one make a decision that proves not only useful and practical, but also moral and universally paradigmatic? Colotte's contention is that, on Cicero's view, there is a specific, ideal that succeeds in reconciling claims for universal moral validity with the idea of an appropriateness grounded in the contingency of situations: the *honestum*.

The *honestum*, as it is described in the first book of the *De officiis*, has four parts: in order to quench our thirst for knowledge (*veri cognitio*), there is wisdom; to orient our social activity there is justice (*justitia*); to appease our desire of independence and domination there is courage (*fortis animus et magnus*) and to satisfy our love for order and harmony there is temperance (*decorum = temperantia, verecundia, modestia*). To these four domains of morality correspond four cardinal virtues, which are critically examined by Cicero.

By grounding his view on a philosophy of action and on a concept of practical virtue, Cicero explores the conditions for a “just action”, considered in the usual situations of the life of a man who wishes to hold a high responsibility in the administration of the State. In Cicero's thought, the search for “the right thing to do” finds expression not only in an investigation of strategies of political conduct

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<sup>11</sup> For a study on the principle of the *concordia ordinum* see H. Strasburger, *Concordia ordinum, Eine Untersuchung zur Politik Ciceros*, Bern, 1931, repr. Amsterdam, Hackert, 1956.



suitable to specific circumstances, but – at a more general level – also in the attempt to answer the question of the best life to live. An exploration of the issue of the most preferable life conducted in the light of the Ciceronian notion of *officium* is provided by Arianna Fermani in her essay *Tra vita contemplativa e vita attiva: Il De officiis di Cicerone e le sue radici aristoteliche*. As Fermani maintains, the concept of *officium* seems to retain the semantic potentialities of the Greek *ergon*, and evokes the idea of a human “function” that can be exercised according to *sapientia* and *prudencia*. Such virtues, in Cicero as well as in Aristotle, prove capable to bring the distinctive potentialities of human beings to a full-fledged realization, either in the direction of a life of contemplation or towards a practical and political life. On Fermani’s view, Cicero attempts to develop exquisitely Aristotelian insights<sup>12</sup> so as to convey the idea that nature itself constitutes a prescriptive principle for human beings, one that encourages them to root their natural inclination in a well-thought path of human perfection.

So conceived, nature reveals itself as a source of assessment of human agency and, most importantly, as an inspiring principle for the life-choices of individuals. At any rate, Cicero does not establish a full axiological equivalence between theoretical and practical interests in human life. On his view, primacy ought to be accorded to political life over an existence purely (or mostly) devoted to the pursuit of philosophical speculation. Above all, theoretical activity should not be understood as an alternative to the political, but as one able to shape virtuous and efficient plans of action. An analysis of the interactions between the two and the corresponding kinds of life is offered by Gastaldi in her *Vita politica e vita filosofica nei proemi del De republica di Cicerone*. Gastaldi makes use of the three proems of the *De republica* as a privileged observation point with respect to a variety of issues, such as the relationships between theoretical and practical life (ranging from difference up to complementarity), the axiological primacy held by practical life with respect to the contemplative one, and the most suitable strategy to identify concrete political problems and engage with them<sup>13</sup>. As Gastaldi points out, Cicero addresses a fierce criticism against those (like Epicureans and the Stoics) who held a departure from political life to be the precondition for a happy life. Cicero invites his readers not to follow such philosophers as paradigmatic role-models, and suggests them to express devotion to the city, which ought to be regarded as a nurturing mother. On his view, the opposition between the philosophical and the practical life staged by other theorists should be overcome by the ideal of theoretically wise men committed to political science. Also,

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<sup>12</sup> On the topic of Aristotle’s influence on Cicero see for instance W.W. Fortenbaugh and P. Steinmetz (eds.), *Cicero’s Knowledge of the Peripatos*, New Brunswick and London, Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities, 1989. See also O. Gigon, ‘Cicero und Aristoteles’, *Hermes* 87 (1959): 143-162.

<sup>13</sup> For a study of the issue of the relationships between practical and contemplative activity in the proems cf. A. Grilli, *I proemi del De republica di Cicerone*, Brescia, Paideia, 1970.

Gastaldi holds, Cicero shows special appreciation towards those philosophers who, although never straightforwardly engaging with political activity, handle the issue of political science from a purely theoretical point of view. In this respect, Cicero seems to follow the path of Panetius, who endorses the importance of a commitment to political activity informed by the philosophical knowledge of human nature. When understood in this way, the figure of the wise man stops being detached from the social and political dimension.

A different stance on the relationships between contemplative and practical life is offered by Schütrumpf in his *Cicero's View on the Merits of a Practical Life in De republica 1 - What is Missing? A Comparison with Plato and Aristotle*. Schütrumpf suggests that Cicero seems to endorse a “strong” view of engagement in political life, that is, one according to which those intellectuals who devote themselves to a theoretical study of politics cannot be regarded themselves as actively involved in the field. As Schütrumpf argues, Cicero criticizes Plato for failing to show the risks entailed by a political reflection unable to end up in concrete agency. Schütrumpf's approach emphasizes aspects of divergence between Cicero and Plato, especially with reference to the model of practical philosophy avenged by Plato's Socrates in the *Gorgias*. Being charged by Callicles with avoiding the public arena, Socrates replies by presenting himself as a true politician in virtue of his dialogical activity with young people interested in apprehending virtue (*Gorg.* 485d3-e2). Cicero critically confronts with the paradigm of relationship between philosophy and politics exemplified by the Platonic Socrates, that is, the one in which politics finds an expression in pedagogical action, and opts for a more vigorous model of practical life: one that exhalts the virtue and the specific identity of individual beings and their excellence, the latter encompassing their military skills and *gestae*. By so doing, Cicero rejects the idea that philosophy can be a form of politics, and his *De republica*, in this respect, can be read as philosophical counterpart of Plato's *Republic*.

A more reconciling perspective between Cicero and the ancients is instead suggested by Havlíček, whose essay sheds light on the positive role that Greek philosophy has played on the shaping of Cicero's thought. Havlicek holds that there are two different ways of understanding the relationship between politics and philosophy: on the one hand, to consider politics as an activity able to exert a true monopoly over an intrinsically valuable philosophic speculation; on the other, to suppose that a relationship of reciprocal collaboration can subsist between politics and philosophy, being exemplified in its most complete form in the nature of the *optimus civis*. Although in *De republica* 3.6 Cicero has expressed the axiological priority of politics over philosophy, his works (in particular the *Tusculanae Disputationes*) present some significative passages in which philosophy is praised for its capacity to invite individuals to the pursuit of self-knowledge, and not necessarily for its practico-political implications. Plato and Aristotle's

influence would be predominant here. In particular Cicero would acquire the meaning of “common good” and the image of a city in which politicians do not prioritize their own interest. The criticism addressed to Plato would not lead Cicero to totally deny the role that philosophy can have in practical life, even though the latter has primacy over speculation. In the last analysis, Havlíček maintains that a correct understanding of Cicero's thought ought not identify a rupture between philosophy and politics, but rather trace a fundamental interdependence between the two aspects, so suggesting a philosophic-dialectical foundation of politics itself.

The second part of this *special issue* focuses on Cicero's intellectual legacy and on the intersections between his thought and that of modern and contemporary thinkers. The contributions in this section deal with the relation between ancient and modern in two different ways: firstly, by showing how Cicero's thought had a seminal role in modern and contemporary authors; secondly, by suggesting how contemporary philosophy can improve our understanding of Cicero's thought and of his philosophical premises. In his essay Giovanni Giorgini (*Cicero and Machiavelli: Two Visions of Statesmanship and Two Educational Projects Compared*) moves from the consideration that it is impossible to overestimate the importance of Cicero's writings or his historical significance as an example in politics and in rhetoric for Italian Humanist and Renaissance culture. Machiavelli, well-educated in the classics, drew from Cicero the inspiration for embarking on a project of education of a new ruling class: Machiavelli's “principe nuovo” is new when compared to his contemporary counterparts, imbued with Christian and Humanist notions of virtue; however, the “principe nuovo” has an old soul, since the new notion of prudence elaborated by Machiavelli has its roots in classical images of ethical and political virtue, in Plato, Aristotle and Cicero. Machiavelli, just like Cicero, felt that what he had not been able to do in deeds with his political action at the service of the Florentine republic, he could do through his writings: putting his knowledge of men and politics, his expertise gained through practical experience and constant reading of ancient authors at the service of his fellow-countrymen and of his *patria*. The novelty of Machiavelli's teaching consists in advocating a new kind of prudence, which consists in the capacity to do evil in view of a good and elevated purpose: to save, preserve and aggrandize the State. In a similar vein, Fausto Pagnotta (in his *Cicerone nell'opera e nel pensiero politico di Machiavelli: alcune considerazioni introduttive*) compares and contrasts Cicero and Machiavelli in order to show similarities and dissimilarities between the two authors. The influence of Cicero in Machiavelli's works is most clear in the *Prince* and in the *Discourses*. Both authors are considered *homines novi*, since their political success was not due to their belonging to the aristocratic class but rather to their ability to have connections with many diverse people in power. Pagnotta maintains that for Cicero the

distinctive trait of human beings is their capacity to realize their rational nature in a path which emancipates them from their original animal origins. Cicero's own writings have a pedagogical and educational purpose, since they aim at promoting a renewal of Roman society and of its ruling class starting with the young generations. For Cicero sentiments such as liberality, love for the country, piety "have their source in the fact that we are by nature inclined to love human beings" (*Leg.* 1, 43); Machiavelli seems to adopt a completely different approach, for he maintains that by nature men are "more prone to evil than to good" (*Disc.* I, IX, 8). His realism and his anthropological pessimism prompt him to find efficient and durable for the conservation and stability of political power, without the ambition to create a virtuous character in the "classical" sense.

Besides general analogies between ancient and modern thinkers, there are some key concepts of modern European political thought whose development is influenced by Cicero's political doctrines. One of these concepts is the "sovereignty of the people", upon which Neschke focuses her attention (in her essay *Il contributo di Cicerone alla nascita della dottrina moderna della "sovranità del popolo"*). The author emphasises that the modern idea of sovereignty of the people, founded on the idea that a people is composed of rational individuals, is not medieval and is rather the result of the secularization of the political realm of the XVII century. This concept, which originated in Catholic political theory before and after the Council of Trento, is forcefully defended by the neo-scholastic author Francisco Suarez against the king of England, James I, who defended the idea that the king represents God's power on earth without intermediaries. Neschke shows that Suarez's notion of the sovereignty of the people is not derived from Catholic doctrines but rather from Cicero's republicanism. Against James' idea that the people is unable to get together by itself, and it is the king's duty to unify it thanks to his individual will, Suarez advances a revolutionary doctrine for his times: the political community is autonomous in its decisions already before the creation of a sovereign power, for it is not a physical body without head, as James thought, nor a shapeless entity which needs to be moulded by regal power, as Vitoria maintained. According to Suarez the people is a moral person capable of making decisions through a will which is already *unified* even before electing a government, to which the original power is transferred in order to reach the highest good. Neschke maintains that Suarez adopts the Stoic doctrine used by Cicero according to which all human beings are equal, endowed with reason and capable of living in harmony. Suarez takes very seriously Cicero's view that the "populus" is composed of rational individuals who want political justice and who reason in order to attain the common good; as such the people is created through *consensus*, without the intervention of a unifying external element – as Vitoria and Bellarmino had argued.

Cicero's contribution to shaping the intellectual development of modern thinkers and active politicians is also explored by Martelli and Tossani in *La*

*Retorica del tradimento. Pensiero e technē ciceroniano nell'orazione di Saint-Just il 13 Novembre 1792.* More to the point, the two authors explore the role Cicero's works had in of Saint-Just. They maintain that there is a direct influence which emerges at two different levels: the first level is that of the conceptual framework, both concerning the legal and the political aspects of institutions; the second is that of the literary style. The discourses delivered at the Convention on November 13th and on December 22, 1792, are the most explicit examples of this re-elaboration and adaptation of Cicero's thought to the revolutionary context. France had legally and in point of fact become a republic but it still had a king, who was not trusted by the nation. During the trial for high treason held by the National Convention against the king, Saint-Just offered a revolutionary justification against the idea that a sovereign power could not be tried in court. In his opinion, Louis XVI was guilty not according to the *loi civile*, i.e. the Constitution of 1791, which provided immunity to the king, but only in front of a higher form of right, namely the *Droit des gens*. St Just observes that there formally is a sort of political contract between king and nation, as the republic itself reiterated, but this contract is voided by the fact that it does not prescribe any duty to the king. Instead, the relation between rulers and ruled must be founded on mutual acknowledgment of moral and political authority; in emphasising this fact, St Just appeals to Cicero's republicanism, from whom he gets the idea that absolute monarchy degenerates in a tyrannical power legally unaccountable. Saint-Just even uses rhetorical devices and compares Louis to Catilina, and underplays the notion of regicide through the example of Caesar.

A coexistence of rhetorical and philosophical influences of Cicero's works can also be traced in American modern political thought. In her essay *Americanus sum nec quidquam Americani a me alienum esse puto. I classici latini e la nuova identità statunitense in John Adams*, Elena Tosi examines the role that Cicero had at the end of the Eighteenth century in the intellectual formation of one of the founding fathers of American democracy, John Adams, second president of the United States of America. Cicero's influence can be traced at three different levels. There is first an influence on Adams' literary style, which can be noticed in his letters and political discourses. Cicero's letters *Ad Familiares* and his rhetorical techniques inspired Adams in his activity as a lawyer. Secondly, Cicero affected profoundly Adams' political thought to the point that he believed that the Roman *res publica* was an example to replicate in the US. Adams is particularly interested in Cicero's notion of natural law, in his view of decency and honour and in his ideal of civil concord to be achieved through the pursuit of a common good by all citizens. Indeed, Adams finds in Cicero's ideal of *iustitia* the criterion for distinguishing between a good government and a tyranny. Finally, Adams himself can be considered a *homo novus*, since he is foreign to any "inherited greatness" received from the ancestors. These two elements of "individual initiative" and refusal to appeal to ancestral nobility are the distinctive traits of the modern

concept of “self-made man”. In the last phase of his life Adams, just like Cicero, wrote letters that showed his disillusion towards his political experience: here Adams’ philosophical model seems to be the *Cato Maior de Senectute*.

The last contribution of this section is by Elena Irrera, who uses contemporary philosophical concepts in order to shed light on a rather unexplored aspect of Cicero’s thought: the nature of respect. Irrera investigates the question using the conceptual framework developed by Stephen Darwall in his studies on respect. Darwall identifies four kinds of respect: (1) a form of respect as appreciation of the moral excellence of a specific individual; (2) respect as acknowledgement of specific forms of technical knowledge which make his owner an authority in his field; 3) respect as reverence for individuals or entities considered socially or ontologically superior as compared to the respecting subject; 4) a form of equal respect for people who mutually recognize as moral agents. Through an analysis of passages in the *De republica*, the *De legibus* and the *De officiis*, the author shows that the forms of respect conceptualized by Darwall are already present in Cicero’s text, where together they substantiate new forms of respectful attitude. The first type of respect that can be found in Cicero’s texts is a form of emulative esteem for the moral and intellectual excellence of someone. Of particular interest is the concept of asymmetrical respect conceived as “honour”, which has its foundation in the ideal of *aequabilitas* – an attitude of respect proportionate to the social standing of each individual– and in the activity of “cultivating” the object of respect – expressed by the Latin verb *colere*. Finally, Irrera maintains that some of Cicero’s arguments concerning justice and the common good disclose an early notion of equal respect which neglects the social and professional standing of individuals. Cicero illustrates this form of respect through the originally asymmetric concept of reverence, which becomes then part of the notion of reciprocity.

In conclusion, the two editors hope that the essays here published give a sense of the rich debate which occurred during the two days of conference in Bologna and of the current lines of research concerning the thought of Cicero.

This monographic issue of *Ethics & Politics* contains papers delivered on the occasion of an international conference entitled *Rethinking Cicero as Political Philosopher*, which took place at the University of Bologna on May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The conference, the 13<sup>th</sup> general meeting, was part of the activities organized by the *Collegium Politicum*, a thematic network composed by different universities and research centers, whose main objectives are the study of classical political theory and its reception in the history of the political thought, especially its repercussions in Modern Europe. By bringing together a wide range of competences and approaches, the meeting provided scholars and students from different countries with an opportunity for a stimulating exchange of ideas on Cicero’s political thought, with particular reference to his understanding of the

idea of political commitment and its philosophical underpinnings. The variety of interpretive strategies displayed by the speakers articulated the steps of an intellectual itinerary that attempted, on the one hand, to supply a reconstruction of Cicero's original ideas and of the cultural background in which these found a chance to flourish, and, on the other, to test the theoretical import of such ideas in modern and contemporary political philosophy. In this issue we shall endeavor to outline some of the key passages of such an itinerary, touching upon questions like the origin and implications of natural law, the nature of the best constitution and Cicero's critical engagement with ancient Greek philosophers. As the reader will notice, the collection of essays proposed here does not pretend to offer conclusive answers to some questions raised by Cicero scholars, but rather sets the stage for further explorations, in the full spirit of a critical enquiry constantly open to theoretical challenges and contaminations with present times.

In line with the tradition of events organized by the *Collegium Politicum*, we have decided to accord contributors the freedom to write their papers in the language of their choice. Also, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by an on-line publication, we left the authors free to develop their arguments with no restraints in terms of length of their essays. Sadly, among the papers presented in this issue, one has not been revised by its author: Professor Ada Neschke-Hentschke, one of the founding members of the *Collegium Politicum*, passed away just a few weeks after the conference. Professor Neschke-Hentschke gave us the text of her communication in Italian, written in a provisional form. We have decided to publish it and to make corrections only to the Italian form and not to the content. Professor Neschke-Hentschke did not only have the original idea of creating a network of scholars interested in classical political thought and its revival in the modern and contemporary age but also greatly contributed to the establishment, enlargement and institutionalization of the *Collegium Politicum*. Ada will be greatly missed by all members of the *Collegium Politicum* both as a great scholar and as an extremely kind person. It is to her loving memory and to her commitment to the philosophical life that we dedicate this collection of papers on Cicero.

Many are the debts of gratitude we have incurred both during the organization of the conference and in the preparation of this issue. We would like to thank Professor Ermanno Malaspina for his invaluable help in the scientific organization of the colloquium. Our gratitude also goes to the Comune di Bologna and the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio for granting us the use of the Stabat Mater room for the inaugural day of the colloquium, which provided us with a beautiful and congenial location for a discussion of Cicero's imperishable political works. Many thanks also to the chancellor of the University of Bologna, Professor Ivano Dionigi, for his support and for his rich and erudite inaugural address. Many thanks to the School of Political Science, and its President Professor Daniela Giannetti, for hosting us during the second day of the colloquium in its beautiful

lecture rooms. Many thanks also to the Director of the Department of Political and Social Sciences, Professor Fabio Giusberti, for his support in all phases of the conference. We would like to thank all the participants to the colloquium for their contribution to the success of this event and for allowing us to publish their papers.