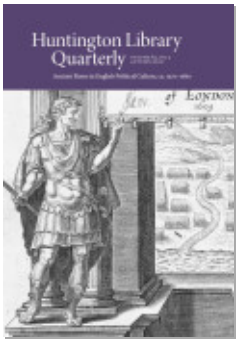
Introduction: Ancient Rome in English Political Culture, ca. 1570–1660



Paulina Kewes

Huntington Library Quarterly, Volume 83, Number 3, Autumn 2020, pp. 401-413 (Article)

Published by University of Pennsylvania Press
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/hlq.2020.0020

INTRODUCTION
Ancient Rome in English Political Culture, ca. 1570–1660

Paulina Kewes

This special issue is dedicated to the memory of
Justin Champion (1960–2020)
scholar, teacher, colleague, friend

CICERO'S *DE OFFICIIS*, that most iconic of texts in the humanist curriculum, was popularized in England in a version by the apostate Protestant cleric Nicholas Grimald, Bishop Nicholas Ridley's former chaplain. First printed in 1556, Grimald's Cicero reappeared within two years with its English and Latin texts side by side, suggesting the volume's extensive use in schools. There were five more such bilingual editions by 1605.[1] The ubiquity of *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties*, as Grimald christened his work, has been seen as prime evidence of the spread of civic republican ideas in later Tudor England.[2] Those ideas are in turn typically taken to define the outlook of Elizabethan Protestants. Queen Elizabeth's principal adviser,

This essay introduces a special issue: "Ancient Rome in English Political Culture, ca. 1570–1660," ed. Paulina Kewes, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2020). To read other essays in the issue, follow this link: https://muse.jhu.edu/resolve/114.

1. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [*ODNB*], s.v. "Grimald, Nicholas (*b*. 1519/20, *d*. in or before 1562)," by Michael G. Brennan, last modified 2004, doi.10.1093/ref:odnb/11629; *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties, to Marcus his sonne, turned oute of latine into english, by Nicolas Grimalde* (London, 1556); Gerald O'Gorman's introduction to his edition of Grimald's version, *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties* [hereafter *Of Duties*, cited in the text by page and line] (Washington, D.C., 1990), 13–29; Howard Jones, *Master Tully: Cicero in Tudor England* (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands, 1998), chap. 5; Robert Lee Harkins, "The Dilemma of Obedience: Persecution, Dissimulation, and Memory in Early Modern England, 1553–1603" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2013), chap. 3.

2. Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995).

William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, whose rich archive facilitates detailed study of his thought—and who reportedly carried a copy of Cicero's *De officiis* with him at all times—is often cited as the perfect embodiment of what Patrick Collinson has dubbed "monarchical republicanism."[3]

What, though, of the fraught confessional dimension of Grimald's Cicero as reflected in its dedication, never mind the compromised reputation of the translator himself? Until 1600, editions of the book sported an oleaginous dedication to Thomas Thirlby, the Marian Bishop of Ely, who was also a Privy Councillor and a prominent diplomat. Flatteringly compared to "so noble a Senatour of Rome," Thirlby, who had been instrumental in effecting England's reconciliation with Rome and, in February 1556, presided over the divestment of the future martyr Thomas Cranmer, is touted as the ideal patron of the English Cicero—which, says Grimald, "so rightly point[s] oute the pathwaye to all vertue: as none can be righter, onely scripture excepted."[4] Extolled by pagans and Christians alike—Augustus Caesar, Emperor Severus, Erasmus—Cicero's wholesome doctrine, Grimald vouchsafes in the preface, will guide readers, whether rulers or ruled, on how to conduct themselves in both private and public, commensurate with their station in life.[5] Meanwhile, Grimald's apostasy, and his likely betrayal of his friend and patron Ridley, came under withering attack in personal testimonials collected in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.[6]

Modern studies characteristically neglect to explore, or else dismiss or seek to explain away, the significance of Grimald's apparent conversion to Catholicism. One has argued that Grimald's Cicero represents "subversive Protestant conformity" and "a subtle critique of the Marian regime."[7] Even if we were to accept—and it is a big if—that Grimald's aim in publishing the translation was to hint at his continuing evangelical allegiance, and that it was read as such by the cognoscenti, the book must have acquired a troubling and potentially contradictory resonance following Elizabeth's accession and the ejection and imprisonment of its episcopal dedicatee, "so reverend a father in god," for refusing to embrace the royal supremacy.[8] For Grimald's

3. Patrick Collinson, "The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester* 69 (1986–87): 394–424; *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, ed. John F. McDiarmid (Aldershot, U.K., 2007); Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558–1569* (Cambridge, 1998). Cf. Norman Jones, *Governing by Virtue: Lord Burghley and the Management of Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 2015).

4. *ODNB,* s.v. "Thirlby, Thomas (c. 1500–1570)," by C. S. Knighton, last modified 2015, doi:10:1093/ref:odnb/27184; *Of Duties*, p. 39, l. 67; p. 38, l. 22.

5. *Of Duties*, p. 43, l. 142, passim.

6. Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Dayes, Touching Matters of the Church* (London, 1563), 1111, 1116. Amplified in the second edition (London, 1570) and reprinted in subsequent editions; see John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/.

7. Harkins, "The Dilemma of Obedience," 62, 75.

8. *Of Duties*, p. 39, l. 85.

edition—through which generations of schoolboys and others, both ardent Protestants and Church papists, were gaining access to Cicero's treatise lamenting the fall of the Roman republic—bore the marks of its inception during the reign of the Catholic queen and king. And that poses something of an obstacle to treating it as the Protestant catechism of quasi-republican ideology.

The case of Grimald's Cicero is symptomatic of wider scholarly reticence about how divided confessional loyalties shaped the uses of *romanitas* in post-Reformation England. This is despite early modern Catholicism's by now unassailable place in the historiographical mainstream, and the efflorescence of scholarship on various aspects of English, British, and European Reformations—including exile, conformity, recusancy, martyrdom, and their competing expressions in imaginative literature.[9] So, too, reluctance to consider this question epitomizes the dominant "republican" paradigm in modern intellectual history, whether "monarchical republican" inspired by Patrick Collinson, "civic republican" spearheaded by Markku Peltonen, or "neo-Roman" championed by Quentin Skinner, who cites Grimald's *Of Duties* in his influential account of the impact of classical translations on the ideological ferment that precipitated the Civil War.[10]

Our aim is to push back against some of these trends. A contribution to both the wider area of classical reception and energetic debate about early modern political thought, this special issue blends conceptual themes with focused case studies that expose the diverse dynamics of engagement with ancient Rome in various canonical texts (Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, for example), or at moments of political contestation (the late Elizabethan succession controversy). The essays seek to get beyond the prevalent focus on Protestant interactions with Roman models by integrating the perspectives of different sorts of Catholic into the narrative. This is seen in particular in essays by R. Malcolm Smuts, Paulina Kewes, and Patricia

9. The following is but a sample of the vast scholarly literature: Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, U.K., 1993); Thomas McCoog, SJ, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541–1588: "Our Way of Proceeding?"* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1996); *Catholics and the "Protestant Nation": Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England*, ed. Ethan H. Shagan (Manchester, 2005); Karl Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge, 2014); Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge, 1999); Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot, U.K., 2002); Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2008); Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford, 2019).

10. Collinson, "Monarchical Republic"; Peltonen, *Classical Humanism*; Skinner, "Classical Liberty, Renaissance Translation, and the English Civil War," in vol. 3 of his *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge, 2002), 308–43; and Skinner, "Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War," in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2002), 2:9–28. Compare Paulina Kewes, "Henry Savile's Tacitus and the Politics of Roman History in Late Elizabethan England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74 (2011): 515–51 at 549–51.

Osmond. Smuts investigates "Varieties of Tacitism" across the confessional spectrum. Kewes explains the utility of the Roman state in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean succession tracts by the Hispanophile Jesuit Robert Persons and his Protestant and Catholic opponents, stressing the radical implications of Persons's artful confessional and constitutional relativism. Osmond studies the revisionary assessment of Emperor Tiberius that Edmund Bolton, the Catholic loyalist and eminent historian, antiquary, and classical scholar, proffered to the Caroline Privy Council as an antidote to all manner of sedition.[11] The enmeshing of the political and the confessional in the work of Bolton offers a suggestive counterpoint to that of his admired friend and one-time coreligionist Ben Jonson. Jonson, having previously drawn on Tacitus to gesture at the plight of Elizabethan Catholics in his Roman tragedy *Sejanus his Fall* (1603), opted to reconvert to the Protestant faith following the Gunpowder Plot as a mark of his loyalism and commitment to order and stability. As Blair Worden shows, Jonson then deployed Sallust, Cicero, and others in *Catiline his Conspiracy* (1611) to uphold this sort of loyalist, prudential position.[12] Conversely, Bolton makes a case for (Catholic) loyalism and obedience by questioning Tacitus, tout court. Transcending a simple binary between Protestant and Catholic, the essays in this special issue offer a more fine-grained analysis of the inflections given to Roman history by different kinds of Protestant and Catholic.

This issue also works diversely to complicate, refine, or supplement the current "republican" turn in early modern studies. While the essays do not advance a party line and the contributors offer varying opinions, one in particular, Paulina Kewes, engages with Benjamin Straumann's important recent book, *Crisis and Constitutionalism: Roman Political Thought from the Fall of the Republic to the Age of Revolution* (2016), and the challenge it poses to the "classical republican" interpretative framework established by J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner. That framework, Straumann has compellingly argued, does not come to terms with the primacy of Rome over Greece in political thought prior to the nineteenth century or do justice to abiding concerns about constitutional design.[13] So, too, Smuts takes issue with

11. *Averrunci or The Skowrers: Ponderous and new considerations upon the first six books of the "Annals" of Cornelius Tacitus concerning Tiberius Cæsar*, ed. Patricia J. Osmond and Robert W. Ulery Jr. (Tempe, Ariz., 2017).

12. Blair Worden, "Ben Jonson among the Historians," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke, U.K., 1994), 67–89; Worden, "Ben Jonson and the Monarchy," in *Neo-Historicism: Studies in Renaissance Literature, History, and Politics*, ed. Robin Headlam Wells, Glenn Burgess, and Rowland Wymer (Cambridge, 2000), 71–90. See also Peter Lake, "From *Leicester His Commonwealth* to *Sejanus His Fall*: Ben Jonson and the Politics of Roman (Catholic) Virtue," in *Catholics and the "Protestant Nation,"* ed. Shagan; and Lake, "Ben Jonson and the Politics of 'Conversion': *Catiline* and the Relocation of Roman (Catholic) Virtue," *Ben Jonson Journal* 19 (2012): 163–89.

13. Benjamin Straumann, *Crisis and Constitutionalism: Roman Political Thought from the Fall of the Republic to the Age of Revolution* (Oxford, 2016); Kostas Vlassopoulos, "Sparta and Rome in Early Modern Thought: A Comparative Approach," in *Sparta in Modern Thought:*

the still influential view, energetically promoted by Richard Tuck, that the later sixteenth century saw a large-scale ideological transition from old to new humanism, from a Ciceronian concern about active life, civic virtue, and true nobility to a preoccupation with tyranny, courtly corruption, and decline of virtue, indebted to the stoic and skeptical ideas of Seneca and Tacitus, and expressed in a language of prudence and reason of state.[14] Rather than associating Tacitus with a radical shift in intellectual output, Smuts shows ways in which the writings of Tacitus reinforced, sharpened, and extended preexistent patterns of thought.

Classical antiquity, and signally the Roman experience, suffused the early modern Anglophone mental world, as it did that of Europe generally. It provided a frame through which politics could be understood and broader cultural judgments made. Crucially, this immersion in the study of the classical world ran deeper than justifying or rationalizing actions: it provided intelligibility, making comprehensible to contemporaries their environment, their problems, their most basic concerns, challenges, and apprehensions. It was as reflexive as the air they breathed.

Other such vocabularies and framing structures were, of course, available: common custom traditionalism, natural hierarchy and correspondence, Scripture and providentialism, among others. Political culture of this period was notably syncretic.[15] Yet classical, Rome-based frameworks proved as powerful as any, articulating civic identities as well as quite different, even conflicting politics and lines of thought. Further, even when early modern Britons criticized the Roman experience as a cautionary tale, or even discounted it altogether as lying at the heart of the human dilemma, histories of Livy, Sallust, Tacitus, and others remained relevant, indeed vital and urgent. And their influence was multidirectional. Our issue probes the significance and varied roles of the Roman experience at an axial moment, and at a moment of exceptional cultural richness in the Anglophone world.

Scholars concerned with the political thought, learned commentary, historical writing, and literary creativity of Elizabethan and Stuart England have long been

Politics, History and Culture, ed. Stephen Hodkinson and Ian Macgregor Morris (Swansea, U.K., 2012), 43–69.

14. Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993).

15. For some other strands, see Mark Goldie, "The Ancient Constitution and the Languages of Political Thought," *Historical Journal* 62 (2019): 3–34, reflecting on the *Nachleben* of J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1957; repr. 1987); *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, ed. Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad Gregory (Notre Dame, Ind., 2009); Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford, 2009); John Coffey, *Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King Jr.* (Oxford, 2013); and Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011). For a brilliant demonstration of cultural hybridity, see David A. Lupher, *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims: Classical Receptions in Early New England* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2017).

aware of the cultural debt that the period owed to classical antiquity. Generations of critics have discerned Roman sources in imaginative and historical works, and classical allusions and references in political discourse.[16] The curricula of grammar schools and universities, and the reading habits of gentry and statesmen, were thoroughly Latinate, inculcating close familiarity with Cicero, Livy, Caesar, Lucan, Tacitus, and the rest.[17] The centrality of Latin in elite culture is a given, as is the fact that translations of the classics worked not only as alternatives to Latin or Greek texts but also as resources for reading those texts even more closely. Ancient Rome shaped late-Renaissance intellectual experience in a host of disparate ways, not all of them textual, as evidenced by the impact of ruins in Italy and England.[18]

This much is well known. The essays collected here break new ground by showing in remarkable detail the complexity, sophistication, and selectivity of that cross-cultural and transhistorical traffic, without for the moment downplaying the degree to which English thinkers, writers, and activists of the early modern era also drew on Greek, biblical, and postclassical historical sources and influences. Collectively, the issue aspires to enhance our understanding of the legacy of ancient Rome—its history, its politics, its law, its military art—in English political culture from the later sixteenth

16. Classic studies include T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana, Ill., 1944); Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* (Durham, N.C., 1965); *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500–1700*, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge, 1976); and *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, ed. Paul A. Ramsey (Binghamton, N.Y., 1982).

17. Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996); *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning*, ed. Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (Cambridge, 1998); Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia, Pa., 2012); Andrew Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* (Oxford, 2010); *The Collegiate University*, ed. James McConica, and *Seventeenth-Century Oxford,* ed. Nicholas Tyacke, vols. 3 and 4 respectively of *The History of the University of Oxford*, gen. ed. T. H. Aston (Oxford, 1986 and 1997); Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2015); Salvador Bartera, "Commentary Writing on the *Annals* of Tacitus: Different Approaches for Different Audiences," in *Classical Commentaries: Explorations in a Scholarly Genre*, ed. Christina Shuttleworth Kraus and Christopher Stray (Oxford, 2016), 113–35.

18. William Stenhouse, "Imagination and the Remains of Roman Antiquity," in *The Routledge History of the Renaissance*, ed. William Caferro (London, 2017), 125–39; Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, "Roman Antiquities and Christian Archaeology," in *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492–1692*, ed. Pamela M. Jones, Barbara Wisch, and Simon Ditchfield (Leiden, Netherlands, 2019). For a study of Joachim du Bellay's poetic meditation on the Roman ruins in his *Les Antiquités de Rome* (1558) and its generative influence on English poets such as Edmund Spenser, see Hassan Melehy, *The Poetics of Literary Transfer in Early Modern France and England* (Burlington, Vt., 2013); and for the antiquarian response to traces of Roman presence in Britain by William Camden and others, see Richard Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586–1906: A Colony So Fertile* (Oxford, 2008), chap. 1; and Hingley, "Early Studies in Roman Britain: 1610 to 1906," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Britain*, ed. Martin Millett, Louise Revell, and Alison Moore (Oxford, 2016), 3–21. For a comparable discussion of France, see Margaret M. McGowan, *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance France* (New Haven, Conn., 2000).

century roughly to the mid-seventeenth. In short, it reconsiders how the Roman heritage shaped the assumptions and attitudes of rulers and ruled.

❀

There are several reasons why now is a good time to approach this question afresh. Much has happened during more than half a century since Peter Burke, F. J. Levy, J. H. M. Salmon, Quentin Skinner, and Anthony Grafton pioneered the study of the circulation, reception, and impact of Roman historians, moral philosophers, and political writers, notably Cicero, Tacitus, and Seneca, in early modern England and Europe; and since Patrick Collinson, J. G. A. Pocock, Quentin Skinner, Blair Worden, R. Malcolm Smuts, and Kevin Sharpe began variously to elucidate the importance of ancient Rome for early modern politics and political thought.[19] The 1990s saw significant new work by J. W. Binns on neo-Latin writing, by Daniel Woolf on early modern historiography, by Markku Peltonen on classical humanism, and by Anthony Pagden, David Armitage, and others on ideas of empire.[20] Developments in the history of the book and readership, too, enriched our understanding of the uses of Roman authors, beginning with Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's seminal account

19. See, among others, Peter Burke, "A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians," *History and Theory* 5 (1966): 135–52; Burke, "Tacitism, Skepticism, and Reason of State," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns with the assistance of Mark Goldie (Cambridge, 1991), 479–98; F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, Calif., 1967); Levy, "Hayward, Daniel, and the Beginnings of Politic History in England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50 (1987): 1–34; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978); J. H. M. Salmon, "Cicero and Tacitus in Sixteenth-Century France," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 307–31; Salmon, "Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge, 1991); Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1997); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1975); Skinner, "Classical Liberty"; Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998); Pocock, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge, 2008); Collinson, "Monarchical Republic"; Worden, "Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution," in *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper*, ed. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and Blair Worden (London, 1981), 182–200; Worden, "Ben Jonson among the Historians"; Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1987); Smuts, "Court-Centred Politics and the Uses of Roman Historians, *c.*1590–1630," in *Culture and Politics*, ed. Sharpe and Lake; and Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, Conn., and London, 2000).

20. J. W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds, U.K., 1990); Daniel Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology, and "The Light of Truth" from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto, 1990); Peltonen, *Classical Humanism*; Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1995); *Theories of Empire, 1450–1800*, ed. David Armitage (Aldershot, U.K., 1998); and Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

of Gabriel Harvey's engagement with Livy, published in 1990, which pointed the way for later research.[21]

The twenty-first century brought signal advances in the realms of classical translation and reception; neo-Latin studies; book history; history of education, erudition, scholarship, and rhetoric; antiquarianism; history of historiography; and imperial ideology.[22] A number of ambitious collaborative publications followed. *The Cambridge History of the Book* gathers for the first time invaluable information about the circulation of classical works both in the original and in translation.[23] In *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* and *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, the relevant volumes of each effectively map out the place of Greek and Roman writing in the literary imagination of the English Renaissance.[24]

21. Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past and Present*, no. 129 (November 1990): 30–78; Joel Davis, "Robert Sidney's Marginal Comments on Tacitus and the English Campaigns in the Low Countries," *Sidney Journal* 24 (2006): 1–21; Fred Schurink, "How Gabriel Harvey Read Anthony Cope's Livy: Translation, Humanism, and War in Tudor England," in *Tudor Translation*, ed. Schurink (Basingstoke, U.K., 2011), 58–78; John-Mark Philo, *An Ocean Untouched and Untried: The Tudor Translations of Livy* (Oxford, 2020). For a salutary reflection on the limits of studies of marginalia, see Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action' Revisited," in *For the Sake of Learning: Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton*, ed. Ann Blair and Anja-Silvia Goeing, 2 vols. (Leiden, Netherlands, 2016), 2:999–1017.

22. On education and scholarship, see Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Aldershot, U.K., 2009); on rhetoric, see Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2002); *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge, 2007); Garry Wills, *Rome and Rhetoric: Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"* (New Haven, Conn., 2011); and Markku Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Cambridge, 2012); on historiography and readership, see Daniel R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000); Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500–1730* (Oxford, 2003); Jennifer Richards and Fred Schurink, introduction to "The Textuality and Materiality of Reading in Early Modern England," special issue, ed. Richards and Schurink, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73 (2010): 345–61; and Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2012); on imperialist ideology, see David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2003); *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire*, ed. Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann (Oxford, 2010); "The Intellectual History of Early Modern Empire," ed. Andrew Fitzmaurice, special issue, *Renaissance Studies* 26 (2012): 479–604; and Russell Foster, *Mapping European Empire: Tabulae Imperii Europaei* (London, 2015); on antiquarian research, see Angus Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2010).

23. Julian Roberts, "The Latin Trade," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4, ed. John Barnard, D. F. McKenzie, and Maureen Bell (Cambridge, 2002), 141–73; and Nicolas Barker, "Editing the Past: Classical and Historical Scholarship," in *The Cambridge History of the Book*, ed. Barnard, McKenzie, and Bell, 206–27. See also James Raven, "Classical Transports: Latin and Greek Texts in North and Central America before 1800," in *Books between Europe and the Americas: Connections and Communities, 1620–1860*, ed. Leslie Howsam and James Raven (Basingstoke, U.K., 2011), 157–87.

24. *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in England*, vol. 2, *1550–1660*, ed. Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie (Oxford, 2010); *The Oxford History of Classical*

Three other projects, *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, and *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, survey the abundant Latin writings of this time.[25] These and other studies demonstrate that England's contribution to European humanist culture was fairly negligible; from about 1570 the English universities were only marginally part of the humanist project, and few Englishmen traveled or studied abroad compared to, say, Poles or Scots. The politics of Roman plays, mostly though not exclusively Shakespeare's, have continued to garner critical attention alongside literary treatments of Rome in civic pageantry, prose, and verse, a subject of intense fascination and complexity.[26] Meanwhile, the study of classical roots of early modern political thought and historiography has benefited from a distinct transnational and multilingual turn. Among its fruits have been sundry edited collections examining from a range of national perspectives the transmission of ideas such as freedom or republicanism or else charting the reception and appropriation of Latin authors such as Tacitus or Lucretius.[27]

Reception in English Literature, vol. 2, *The Renaissance: 1558–1660*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie (Oxford, 2015). See also Stuart Gillespie, *English Translation and Classical Reception: Towards a New Literary History* (Oxford, 2011).

25. *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, ed. Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi, 2 vols. (Leiden, Netherlands, 2014); *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, ed. Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (Oxford, 2015); and *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, ed. Victoria Moul (Cambridge, 2017). See also *Britannia Latina: Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Charles Burnett and Nicholas Mann (London, 2005); and Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005).

26. Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 2005); Warren Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Cambridge, 2011); Anthony Miller, *Roman Triumphs and Early Modern English Culture* (Basingstoke, U.K., 2001); Eric Nelson, "Shakespeare and the Best State of a Commonwealth," in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, ed. David Armitage, Conal Condren, and Andrew Fitzmaurice (Cambridge, 2009), 253–70; Paulina Kewes, "'A Fit Memorial for the Times to Come': Admonition and Topical Application in Mary Sidney's *Antonius* and Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra*," *Review of English Studies* 63 (2012): 243–64; Kewes, "'I ask your voices and your suffrages': The Bogus Rome of Peele and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," *Review of Politics* 78 (2016): 551–70; Kewes, "Roman History, Essex, and Late Elizabethan Political Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Oxford, 2016), 250–68; Kewes, "Romans in the Mirror," in *"Mirror for Magistrates" in Context: Literature, History and Politics before the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Harriet Archer and Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge, 2016), 126–46; Peter Lake, "Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and the Search for a Usable (Christian?) Past," in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Religion*, ed. David Loewenstein and Michael Witmore (Cambridge, 2015); Victoria Moul, *Jonson, Horace and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2009).

27. *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, ed. van Gelderen and Skinner; *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*, ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2013); *Republicas y republicanismo en la Europa moderna (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Manuel Herrero Sánchez (Madrid, 2017); *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, ed. David Norbrook, Stephen Harrison, and Philip Hardie (Oxford, 2015); *Tacite et le tacitisme en Europe à l'époque moderne*, ed. Alexandra Merle and Alicia Oiffer-Bomsel (Paris, 2017).

Consider also the role of modern electronic resources. We are all habitual users of Early English Books Online (EEBO) and the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC). But our sense of the pan-European diffusion of the Greco-Roman classics has been transformed by new tools: Worldcat (https://www.worldcat.org/) and the Consortium of European Research Libraries, or CERL (https://www.cerl.org/), which are metacatalogues of electronic catalogues worldwide; and now the Universal Short Title Catalogue (www.ustc.ac.uk), prepared by Andrew Pettegree and his team at the University of St. Andrews, builds on and develops these resources. Despite inevitable limitations—so far, its coverage does not go beyond 1650—the USTC makes possible a fairly effective reappraisal of the figures underlying previous attempts to quantify the print circulation of works about, or originating in, ancient Rome, in Latin and Greek as well as Continental vernaculars.

What, then, of the rationale for our issue? While some problems, themes, and authors have been studied in considerable depth, others have largely escaped scrutiny. Moreover, even familiar topics demand revisiting in light of new scholarship and new digital resources. Thus, Peter Burke's still universally cited account of the popularity of classical historians (1966) has not been updated until now. Drawing on the USTC and state-of-the-art studies of classical reception, publishing history, and the book trade, Freyja Cox Jensen takes up the challenge in a pair of complementary essays: the one published in 2018 in the *Historical Journal* adopts a pan-European perspective; the one included here relates the case of England to Continental trends and practices.[28] With statistical tables and graphs lending precision to her findings, Cox Jensen adjusts the traditional hierarchy of classical historians of Rome and demonstrates the extraordinary bias toward printing in the vernacular compared with the rest of Europe, and the strength of the book import trade in England.

The role of Tacitus's writings, especially in the circle of the Earl of Essex, has received ample coverage.[29] Scholars have also dwelt on the pervasive elision of classical and papal Rome in much anti-Catholic polemic.[30] By contrast, the influence of

28. Cox Jensen, "The Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450–1600," *Historical Journal* 61 (2018): 561–95; and her essay in this special issue, "Ancient Histories of Rome in Sixteenth-Century England: A Reconsideration of Their Printing and Circulation."

29. David Womersley, "Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts," *Review of English Studies* 42 (1991): 313–42; Smuts, "Court-Centred Politics"; Kewes, "Savile's Tacitus"; Kewes, "Roman History, Essex, and Late Elizabethan Political Culture"; Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 226–33.

30. John E. Curran, *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism, and the Historical Imagination in England, 1530–1660* (Newark, Del., 2002). This trend was reinforced by the foundation in 1579 of the English College at Rome and subversive activities of expatriate Catholics. See Highley, *Catholics*; and, more generally, Thomas Frank, "Elizabethan Travellers in Rome," *English Miscellany* 4 (1953): 95–132; M. L. Clarke, "British Travellers to Rome in Tudor and Stuart Times," *History Today* 28 (1978): 746–51; Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto, 1998); and John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad, 1604–1667: Their Influence in English Society and Politics* (New Haven, Conn., 1989).

Tacitus and other Roman historians upon the outlook and writings of Elizabethan and Stuart Catholics has been largely lost from view.[31] As already noted, it is being addressed here by Smuts, Kewes, Osmond, and, to a lesser extent, Worden. So too the embroilment of court politics with classical, mostly imperial, precedents has been often emphasized at the expense of the uses of Roman sources in scholarship, intellectual and legal culture, and writings on war.[32] These topics are variously tackled in this issue by Brett, Osmond, and Popper. Brett wrestles with the protean and malleable approach to law and politics in the Latin writings of Alberico Gentili, an Italian émigré jurist, Protestant convert, and Regius Professor of Civil Law at the University of Oxford. Osmond explores Bolton's formidably erudite assault on Tacitus. Popper, getting beyond the familiar pragmatic uses of Roman military tactics and discipline, brings out the intense moral unease and providentialism permeating textual encounters with Roman warfare.

Our issue also seeks to remedy other omissions in the historiography. Whereas the putative "republican" resonance of Roman themes in pre–Civil War imaginative works has been debated with some vigor by, among others, Andrew Hadfield, David Norbrook, and Edward Paleit, the question of how far indigenous literary depictions of Rome shaped the writing of contemporary history has not been given its due.[33] Here Blair Worden reveals the magnitude of the Earl of Clarendon's debt, in his *History of the Rebellion* and elsewhere, not only or even primarily to classical sources but, rather, to Ben Jonson's dramatization of the Catilinarian conspiracy in his 1611 Roman tragedy *Catiline*. Finally, in a penetrating rumination on the limits of Roman influence, Arthur Williamson illustrates the rejection of Roman ideology of empire by Scottish and English radical reformers who instead looked for inspiration to Jewish sources and examples. The prophetic books of the Bible supported a hostile view of Roman imperialism, indeed a dismissive valuation of all things Roman. The argument provides a counterpoint to the other contributions. It is well to be reminded that "not all roads led to Rome."

31. See, however, Worden's and Lake's essays on the then-Catholic Jonson's *Sejanus,* cited above, and Lake's remarks on the libelous uses of Roman parallels by Catholic polemicists in his *Bad Queen Bess?: Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016).

32. For some earlier harbingers, see *The Roman Foundations*, ed. Kingsbury and Straumann; *Alberico Gentili. The Wars of the Romans: A Critical Edition and Translation of "De armis Romanis*," ed. Benedict Kingsbury, Benjamin Straumann, and David Lupher (Oxford, 2010); Schurink, "How Gabriel Harvey Read Anthony Cope's Livy"; and Schurink, "War, What Is It Good For?: Sixteenth-Century English Translations of Ancient Roman Texts on Warfare," in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473–1640*, ed. S. K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington (Leiden, Netherlands, 2013), 121–38.

33. David Norbrook, "Lucan, Thomas May, and the Creation of a Republican Literary Culture," in *Culture and Politics*, ed. Sharpe and Lake, 45–66; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge, 1999); Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism*; Edward Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan's "Bellum Ciuile," ca. 1580–1650* (Oxford, 2013).

Although this issue focuses on England, it is not in any sense a narrowly Anglocentric or even an Anglophone work. Looking at England rather than the British Isles or Europe gives the issue depth and coherence and enables the essays to inform and speak to one another. Yet because most of the contributors relate developments at home to those abroad, we avoid the impression of national silos pervasive in some recent edited collections.[34] These assemble case studies of individual countries but offer few if any translingual, cross-cultural comparisons. The transnational aspect of Cox Jensen's study of print circulation of Roman history has already been mentioned. Smuts locates English Tacitism in a broader European perspective. Kewes unveils the affinity of late Elizabethan political thought not only with that in France but also with the writings of Spanish and Italian thinkers, as also expatriate English Catholics. Williamson connects British reformers' rejection of Rome's imperial paradigm to the evolution of apocalyptic thought on the Continent. Brett's "Roman Law and Roman Ideology in Alberico Gentili" discovers in Gentili's internationally renowned work a complex mediation between law and politics, with both absolutist and republican strands. David Harris Sacks's "Love and Fear in the Making of England's Atlantic Empire" applies Roman notions of *amicitia, imperium*, and *dominium*, and the Machiavellian question of whether it is better to be feared than loved, to Elizabethan Ireland and to the founding generation of English settlement in Virginia. Sacks finds artful echoes of Ciceronian commentary in the discourse of English expansion and underscores the currency of Roman history in the minds of leading colonists. Greek Herodotus also gets a mention. Sacks's elegant and learned treatment moves from the Mediterranean to the western Atlantic, comparing Roman and English attitudes toward indigenous and conquered populations. Far from rehearsing putative English exceptionalism, these essays, au fait with Continental, non-Anglophone scholarship, delineate what is distinctive about the English experience of ancient Rome.

Disciplinary boundaries are far more easily crossed today than they were even a decade ago. Nonetheless, classicists and literary scholars until now have stolen a march on intellectual historians—and I say this as an interloper from the discipline of English. For, while several illuminating monographs and collections elucidate Rome's enduring presence in the British imagination from the late seventeenth

34. *European Political Thought 1450–1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy*, ed. Howell Lloyd, Glenn Burgess, and Simon Hodson (New Haven, Conn., and London, 2007); *Tacite et le tacitisme*, ed. Merle and Oiffer-Bomsel. Saúl Martínez Bermejo's *Translating Tacitus: The Reception of Tacitus's Works in the Vernacular Languages of Europe, 16th–17th Centuries* (Pisa, Italy, 2010) amounts to little more than an annotated catalogue of translations. See also *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period*, ed. Karl Enenkel et al. (Leiden, Netherlands, 2001); and *Ancient Models in the Early Modern Republican Imagination*, ed. Wyger Velema and Arthur Weststeijn (Leiden, Netherlands, 2017).

century to the nineteenth and beyond, ours is the first specifically to consider Rome's political and historical legacy.[35]

This tightly focused special issue brings fresh perspectives, methodologies, and sources to bear on its themes. It presents a broad sampling of innovative historical scholarship and suggests avenues for further inquiry. We hope it gives a more rounded, if by no means comprehensive, sense of the place of ancient Rome in early modern England's political culture.

For comments, conversation, and advice, I am grateful to William St. Clair, Peter Davidson, Sue Doran, Norm Jones, Jane Stevenson, and Arthur Williamson.

PAULINA KEWES is Professor of English Literature and Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford. She is the author of *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660–1710* (1998) and numerous articles on early modern literature, history, and politics, and editor or co-editor of several volumes of essays, most recently *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (2014) and *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* (2019). She has been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship (2021–24) for "Contesting the Royal Succession in Reformation England: Latimer to Shakespeare," the first book to examine the fierce controversy over the royal succession that dominated the reigns of Henry VIII's childless children—the evangelical Edward VI, the Catholic Mary I, and the Protestant Elizabeth—and demonstrate that the convergence of religious divisions and intense dynastic insecurity in both Britain and Europe transformed not only polemic but also political thought and imaginative writing, including Shakespeare's.

35. Philip Ayers, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1997); Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination, 1789–1832* (Oxford, 2010); *Romans and Romantics*, ed. Timothy Saunders, Charles Martindale, Ralph Pite, and Mathilde Skoie (Oxford, 2012). See also *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford, 2010); S. D. Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford, 2011); and *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789–1945*, ed. Catharine Edwards (Cambridge, 1999). See also Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939* (London, 2020).