

## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

This book began as one chapter of a project on the Greco-Roman literature of literary criticism, history, and theory. Early on it became clear, largely at the prompting of others, that more space was needed to give the *Brutus* its due. David Quint, and then Pramit Chaudhuri and Ayelet Haimson Lushkov, dispelled my initial reluctance to devote so much time to Cicero.

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Audiences at the 2015 meeting of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric, and at the annual meetings of the Society for Classical Studies in 2016, 2018, and 2019 provided stimulating feedback. Some of the earliest work was presented at the 2014 “Cargo Culture” conference at Stanford, some of the latest at “Historiography Jam III,” 2019, also at Stanford. In addition, audiences at the American Academy in Rome, Boston University, Bucknell, Smith, Tulane, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Kansas, and Yale offered stimulating responses to several aspects of the project.

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The suggestions and improvements of scholars and friends are evident, to me at least, on nearly every page. If there are still passages in which the detail is tedious, the error unfixed, the argument muddled, or the speculation wild, the blame cannot be theirs.

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I completed final revisions to the manuscript as Italy began to face COVID-19 and the United States began to turn its back on the pandemic's reality. My cohort of fellows at the American Academy in Rome were suddenly uprooted while struggling to finish projects to which we had devoted months if not years. I am thankful to each of them for intellectual encouragement and, above all, for friendship and compassion, virtues that may, one sometimes forgets, not only exist but even flourish in academic and artistic institutions. This book, or at least the completion of it, is in so many ways theirs.

This is not to overlook nearer examples. Katie Edwards provided patience, support, and encouragement well beyond what should be expected of anyone. Several pages of this book, including this one, have been written while holed up in an apartment across the street from the house of my sister's family in Galveston, Texas. Here I typically write in the mornings and help out in the afternoons with household tasks and childcare while my sister, Patricia, faces a harrowing and protracted battle with cancer. The subject of this book is, from a certain perspective, how an individual might respond not to unexpected disaster, but to the slow and hopeful expectation that it will never fully arrive. I am impressed daily by my sister's courage, by the love of her wife, Toni Ricigliano, and by the boundless and sometimes devilish joy of their son, my nephew, Willem. This book is dedicated to them.