noting, however, that Cicero’s Laelius values loyalty even to friends who fail in virtue (Amic. 61).

In the summer of 44, Cicero wrote a book de Gloria, which is now lost. We can only guess at the content, with the help of the full discussion of glory in de Officiis (see below). But the message was undoubtedly political; and Cicero had some hesitation about publicizing the book (Att. xvi.2.6; Att. xvi.3.1). The implicit target was presumably the supporters of Caesar whose posthumous reputation Cicero would undoubtedly have described as ‘false glory’. During this period Cicero was also planning a dialogue on the murder of Caesar, which he mentioned only guardedly to close friends (Fam. xi.16.4; Att. xv.3.2; Att. xv.4.3; Att. xv.27.2). The last reference to this (Att. xv.13.3, 25 October) suggests that secrecy is no longer needed. By now Cicero was beginning a return to open political combat; and meanwhile he had already begun writing his de Officiis.

7.2 The duties of a statesman

De Officiis was the final, and the most obviously political, work of Cicero’s philosophical cycle. It was completed by early December 44; and composed while he was beginning to engage again in public life (Att. xv.13a.2; Att. xvi.11.4; Att. xvi.14.3). He had already crossed Mark Antony by delivering the First Philippic on the 1 September; he was privately circulating the Second Philippic, in which he attacks Antony without mercy; in January he would return to the Senate-house and forum to arouse the opposition to Antony with a series of speeches that would constitute the remaining Philippics.

De Officiis addresses many of his concerns during this period of personal and political crisis: the danger to society of personally ambitious and powerful individuals; the duty of public service compared with the attraction of philosophical retirement; the proper use of public benefactions. In short the book argues that a flourishing res publica depends upon the virtues of its leading citizens and, conversely, defines those virtues in a thoroughly political manner.

Why the title: de Officiis? Cicero was following a Greek Stoic tradition of writing about to kathēkon (‘the appropriate action’ is perhaps the best English translation). However by using the word officium (and self-consciously using the plural (Att. xvi.11.4)) he gave his discussion a thoroughly Roman nuance. Unlike kathēkon, officium is intrinsically linked to a
role or relationship: one might talk of the officium of a consul, or of a friend. Moreover, an officium requires a beneficiary ('obligation' is often the most useful translation). The word is given its moral life by the complete web of personal and institutional relationships that structured Roman society. Cicero extends the common usage by talking of the officia of a specific virtue; and he gives concrete content to this idea by treating the duties of the virtues as owed to society, in particular to the society of the res publica.

Unlike the other philosophical works of the years 46–44, de Officiis is not a dialogue. Formally, it is a letter of advice addressed to his son Marcus, at the time a student in Athens. It is in three books. In the first Cicero asks the question: in what does honestas (honourableness) consist? He answers by describing in detail the four cardinal virtues. In the second book he adds: what is utile (useful)? The third book discusses and resolves a series of individual cases in which the honourable and useful courses appear at first sight to conflict.

The broad structure of the book follows that of the work on kathêkon by Panaetius, a leading Stoic of the second century. Pliny the Elder (Nat. preface, 22) compared the relation between the two works to that between Cicero's de Re Publica and Plato's Republic. Many scholars have defended (or assumed) a much closer dependence by Cicero on Panaetius' lost work; however, it is arguable that a close examination of the specific passages where he declares his debt to Panaetius does not support such an interpretation. Cicero is not intending to expound Panaetius (non interpretatus, 11.60, cf. 1.6); indeed, he specifically criticizes and modifies even the structure of his work, as well as the details (e.g. 1.10, 111.7). It is worth noting that Cicero, as a loyal Academic, refers to Plato roughly as often as he does to Panaetius. At the same time, Cicero's brand of sceptical Academic philosophy gives him the freedom to adopt a fundamentally Stoic line throughout de Officiis.

In particular, Stoicism underpins the work in one very important way. At 1.6 Cicero tells us that advice on duty can only be offered by those who believe that honourableness is to be sought for its own sake. The Stoic view is uncompromising: nothing is good except the honourable. Academic and Peripatetic opinion was a little more accommodating: honourableness is the supreme good, but other goods can contribute in a small way to happiness. Cicero assimilates the second view to the first, effectively interpreting the position of the Old Academy in Stoic vein.

49 The classic account is Pohlenz 1934. 50 Atkins 1989: ch. 1, pp. 20–6.
Thus, he concludes that nothing can be honourable unless it is beneficial, nor beneficial unless it is honourable. This conclusion is basic to the argument of the entire work, and frequent reference is made to it.

Because honourable actions are always beneficial, and therefore always useful, and vice versa, there must be a close link between the content of Books 1 and 11. The two questions, 'Is this action x honourable?' and, 'Is this action x useful?' ought always to receive the same answer. Yet Cicero needs to reach the answer by different routes. Take the example of generosity. Beneficence which exceeds one's means is not truly virtuous for two reasons: that it is unjust to one's family and close descendants who ought to be one's first concern; and that it often makes the 'generous' giver greedy for other goods so that his beneficence may continue (1.44). But cannot excessive beneficence be (politically) useful? No, Cicero argues, because the resultant greed leads to robbery which destroys the goodwill that is needed to acquire the benefit of glory (11.54).

But if all and only honourable actions are useful, what is the purpose of Book 11? How can the honourable and the useful courses of action conflict? Cicero's answer is that they cannot in fact conflict; but they often appear to do so. Book 11 offers a series of cases in which the theory is thus difficult to apply. This may be because it is genuinely unclear whether a proposed course of action is honourable; so for example, Cicero stages a debate between the Stoics Diogenes and Antipater on whether a corn-merchant must reveal the true state of the market during a famine (11.50-3). Alternatively, an obviously dishonourable course of action may appear, misleadingly, to be useful. Lulled into forgetfulness by the apparent advantages of, for example, wealth, one may be tempted to overlook the basic truth that 'nothing is good unless it is honourable'. In such cases, Cicero's response is to repeat the premise again (e.g. 11.81); the function of working through such examples is therapeutic.

The content of what is honourable is thoroughly shaped by our social duties. Justice, which Cicero describes as 'the mistress and queen of the virtues' (11.28), develops from our natural desire for company, in particular that of our children, spouse and friends (1.11-12). We are also heavily dependent on our fellow human beings for both practical sustenance and for the higher pleasures of law and civilization (11.12-17). At 11.21, Cicero lays down a 'rule of procedure' to be followed in deciding cases of apparent conflict:

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51 Annas 1989, Schofield 1999a: ch. 9
for one man to take something from another and to increase his own advantage at the cost of another's disadvantage is more contrary to nature than death, than poverty, than pain and than anything else that may happen to his body or external possessions.

This is because theft and violence destroy the natural fellowship of the human race. In fact every case in Book III is decided by referring to some aspect of justice, interpreted as the duty to preserve society.

The 'rule of procedure' applies to our dealings with all other human beings. In theory, 'nature prescribes that one man should want to consider the interests of another, whoever he may be, for the very reason that he is a man' (Off. 111.27). However, our duties are graded with our relationships: we owe more to family than to strangers. The primary focus of the ethics of de Officiis is the society of the res publica: 'parents are dear, and children, relations and acquaintances are dear, but our country alone has embraced all the affections of us all' (1.57). De Officiis rarely mentions duties to strangers, and when it does so, they are minimal (e.g. 1.51, the duty to show someone the way) or negative (e.g. extreme cruelty towards enemies and rivals, and the banishment of foreigners from a city, are forbidden (Off. 111.46–7)). By contrast, a detailed description of the ethics of public service, that is duties to the res publica, constitute the bulk of the work.

The flourishing of the res publica is the primary moral goal of de Officiis, and the analysis of the virtues is structured around it. This enables Cicero to provide an answer to the most topical political question of all: was the assassination of Julius Caesar justified? The 'rule of procedure' forbids violence or theft against fellow-members of a society, who are compared to the limbs of one body (111.22). However, 'there can be no fellowship (societas) between us and tyrants' (111.32). For tyrants are like lifeless limbs that damage the rest of the body and need to be amputated. It is not simply acceptable, but honourable and even necessary to destroy them; and this for the very same consideration that normally forbids harming a fellow-citizen: the health of the society as a whole.

Justice is the virtue that is derived directly from sociability. However, the other virtues also are shaped indirectly by it. At the end of Book 1, Cicero compares the virtues with one another. He concludes that the duties of justice conform more closely to nature than those of wisdom: no one would choose an entirely solitary life of scholarship (1.158). Thus the virtue of justice ought to modify the impulses of the philosopher. (This evaluation is confirmed by the number of paragraphs devoted to the respective virtues: two to wisdom and twenty-one to the social virtues of...
justice and liberality.) Again, greatness of spirit that lacks justice is not a true virtue; in fact it leads to socially destructive violence (1.157).

The general idea of justice is subdivided into justice proper and liberality, something for which there is no Greek philosophical precedent.\(^5^2\) At first sight this is surprising: what does the impartial virtue of justice have to do with the highly partial one of liberality and beneficence? The answer lies in the social and functional nature of Cicero’s analysis. The two virtues are described as ‘the reasoning by which the fellowship (societas) of men with one another and the communal life (communitas) are held together’ (1.20). Justice and liberality together forge the bonds of society. For Cicero they form two sides of a single coin.

Cicero’s detailed analysis of justice is also illuminated by its social function. At 1.23 he distinguishes between two types of injustice: that of actively harming others and that of failing to prevent harm to others. At 1.31 he describes two ‘foundations’ of justice, not harming another and serving the common good. Injustice, then, can take a passive as well as an active form: neglecting to defend others or deserting one’s duty (1.28). The motives that Cicero lists for such injustice include laziness, the distractions of business, absorption in philosophy and a reluctance to make enemies. This is no abstract theorizing: Cicero lived in a society in which political life depended upon wealthy volunteers driven by varying mixtures of ambition, inherited pride and public spirit.

Similarly the virtue of fides, trustworthiness or faithfulness, is described as a foundation of justice. Mutual trust is the cement of civil society, a necessary condition of the bonds formed by the exchange of favours and obligations (1.22, cf. 11.84); fides is also the virtue required of those in public office by the citizens who need to rely on their fair and efficient administration. It had long had an important place on the Roman moral map: Numa had dedicated a temple to the goddess Fides. The idealist’s standard was set by the example of Regulus, who had kept his oath to the enemy at the price of being tortured to death. Cicero examines various claims that he should have broken his oath either for the sake of his own benefit, or because the oath could be claimed invalid. ‘Regulus’ appeals to a trio of virtues to corroborate his insistence upon fides: patriotism, courage and justice in warfare. The lengthy discussion (111.99–111) both raises the moral stakes and integrates several ethical themes of de Officiis as a whole.\(^5^3\)

A final function of Cicero’s account of justice is to provide an uncompromising defence of private property, consistent with his long-standing

opposition to populist political measures. At 1.20 he argues that ‘one should treat common goods as common and private as one’s own’ and goes on to list the types of origins of private ownership of land. At 11.84 he argues against the cancellation of debt in language drawn from his wider analysis of justice: ‘for there is nothing that holds a res publica together more powerfully than fides; and that cannot exist unless the paying of debts is enforced’. Here he exploits the double sense of fides: both mutual trust and financial credit are necessary to preserve the bonds of society. 11.73 advances a similarly strong claim: the redistribution of land is to be condemned because cities were created for the purpose of safeguarding property.

De Officiis provides a full and formal account of justice outside the res publica in one area, that of war.\textsuperscript{54} Legal procedure must be followed in declaring war and in authorizing soldiers to fight (1.36–7). The purpose of war should be a just peace. The technical justification of redress must be present (1.36); the legitimacy of defensive wars is assumed. However, the glory of empire is an acceptable motive (1.38). Fair play must be preserved in the conduct of war; in particular oaths must be kept to an enemy (1.39–40, III.99–115: the example of Regulus). The defeated must be treated with generosity; indeed many of Rome’s former victims are now her citizens (1.35). Rome’s treatment of her allies is idealized here, as also, for example, in de Republica Book III. Her ‘kindness’ has made her a haven for other peoples and won her great praise (11.26). Occasionally Cicero slips into a more realistic acknowledgment of the economic motivations of imperial rule (11.85). The Roman idealization of military glory is not entirely suppressed; but Cicero does at least require some ethical limits to its prosecution.

Liberality is discussed first as a part of social virtue in Book I, and secondly as one of the means to the ‘useful’ end of power and influence in Book II. (It is so important a means, indeed, that the discussion takes up a third of the book.) Once again, Cicero’s social and political concerns shape his discussion. The virtuous benefactor must first avoid any actual or potential injustice. Cicero refers to the redistribution of their victims’ land by Sulla and Julius Caesar, as an example of contemporary rapacity driven by the desire for political popularity. (At 11.78–9 he explains why such behaviour is in fact counter-productive.) Secondly, one should give in accordance with the recipient’s ‘worth’ (dignitas). Here Cicero articu-
lates the ethics of reciprocal service: not only a man’s general character, but in particular his attitude and previous service to oneself should be considered.

The same criteria are given a pragmatic justification in Book 11. There the political reference becomes even clearer. Extravagant expenditure for the sake of political prestige is criticized (11.56–60); while agrarian legislation and the cancellation of debts are treated as examples of unjust and inexpedient liberality. Cicero firmly recommends personal service above financial gifts as a method. The reference to his own case is explicit: born in a relatively obscure family, he won his name and his friends through the talent he used on others’ behalf in the law-courts (cf. 11.67).

The virtue of courage or greatness of spirit (fortitudo, magnitudo animi) posed a delicate problem for Cicero. The man of great spirit performs great deeds (1. 66). Thus military bravery provided a customary path to glory; and glory was greatly prized in the moral tradition of the Roman elite. Yet Greek philosophers from Plato onwards warned that doxa (the Greek word means both ‘glory’ and ‘opinion’) was treacherous and valueless. Furthermore, Cicero had learned from the experience of a lifetime that able and ambitious individuals, backed by personal armies, could exploit their courage to destroy political peace and stability. Cicero’s analysis must accommodate an ambiguous inheritance.

A great spirit is revealed in two things: in disdain for things external, in the conviction that a man should admire, should choose, should pursue nothing except what is honourable and seemly, and should yield to no man, nor to agitation of the spirit, nor to fortune;

and in the performance of great and beneficial deeds (1. 66–7). Cicero underpins the popular view of courage as revealed in action (especially military and patriotic) with a philosophical account of psychology. The man whose spirit will not be swayed by emotions such as fear, greed or the desire for glory will face adversity or temptation bravely. The only goal for him is what is honourable. Accordingly, Cicero is able to argue that great statesmen (including himself) have often displayed greater spirit than the heroes of war: for the latter may have been activated by glory rather than the good of the res publica. Once again, we see how individual virtues are shaped by the needs of society: ‘if loftiness of spirit . . . is empty of justice, if it fights not for the common safety, but for its own advantages, it is a vice’ (1. 62). The observation that the greatest spirits are those most
vulnerable to the passion for glory (1.26, cf. 1.65) develops a hint in Plato (Rep. v.1.491e). However, this is no armchair philosophy: the reference to Caesar is both explicit, and acutely appropriate.

Caesar is presented as an example of injustice motivated by the desire for glory and power. Could Cicero not simply have followed his Greek philosophical mentor by insisting that glory has no value at all? He preferred to take seriously the powerful role that glory played in the Romans’ public imagination. After all, the most selfless of statesmen needed enough ambition to overcome difficulty and defeat (cf. 1.71). He acknowledged that glory really was utile, a genuinely valuable means of acquiring the personal support one needed in life (11.12–17, 11.31). He then attempted to neutralize the threat of untrammelled ambition by arguing, in familiar style, that glory-seeking must be limited by justice. Thus the three elements of glory – being loved, being trusted and being admired – could only be won (or so Cicero argues) by just behaviour. The intention is clear: to persuade the powerful that ambition must aim at patriotic rather than selfish ends.

There are traces in de Officiis and elsewhere in Cicero’s writings of a distinction, which would become a commonplace, between true glory (sometimes called laus, ‘praise’) and false glory. The latter was vitiated either by the injustice of the agent, or by the unreliability of the judgment of the masses. The glory won by the younger Gracchi was false (11.43): it was not granted by good men; and it did not last. ‘Those who seek a good reputation among good men, which alone can truly be called “glory”, ought to seek leisure and pleasures for others, and not for themselves’ (Sest. 139; cf. Rep. 1.26, v.1.21–5; Tusc. 111.3–4; Phil. v.49–50; ad Brut. 1.3.2–3).

Cicero’s fourth virtue brings together a loose group of moral qualities, including moderation, modesty, fittingness, calm emotions and external lifestyle. The lynch-pin of the group is shame: ‘the part of justice is not to harm a man, that of shame not to outrage him’ (1.99). The concern with the visible nature of ethics is thoroughly appropriate to the Roman elite, being in the public eye in a society shaped by public speaking and life out of doors. What you wear and the style of your house may cause offence as easily as whether you lose your temper. What is decorum, fitting or seemly, is judged so by the public who can see you. It is also, however, dependent on context: time, place and agent may all help to determine appropriate behaviour. Here Cicero adds a further refinement

(borrowed, most scholars believe, from Panaetius⁵⁷). Each individual wears four ‘masks’ (persona): not only that of humanity in general, but also of his specific character, of circumstances given by fortune, and of one’s career. Once again the discussion is fitted to Cicero’s own context; for example, his advice about choosing a career (1. 115–21) could hardly be more relevant to the addressee of the book, his student son. It is also politically significant; in particular, his argument that individual character may alter duty comes to a climax with the example of Cato. Constancy, that is consistency with his own previous life, required his suicide at Utica; others might be excused a less heroic response (1.112; cf. Fam. ix.5.2, and p. 503 above).⁵⁸

In de Officiis, in short, we can see Cicero using the resources of his philosophical education to articulate a conservative moral response to the revolution through which he was living. The mos maiorum is given its most intelligent restatement; and in the process, the language of honestas, dignitas, officium, beneficia and gloria is reshaped to meet present needs. The four virtues of de Officiis are borrowed from Greek philosophy; but they are analysed in sharply contemporary terms. Wisdom was not wisdom without justice: thus it was incumbent upon statesmen like Cicero himself to return to the political fray. Magnitudo animi without justice was mere savagery: the reference not only to Caesar but also to Mark Antony could hardly be missed. De Officiis was the philosophical counterpart to the Philippics.

Cicero’s final, sustained onslaught against Antony in early 43 served only to sharpen the tragic irony that had marked his career. Much of that had been spent in indecision, vacillation and disillusionment. Yet in the two crises in which he had acted with unquestioned energy and purpose his poor judgment compromised his reputation and even his own theory. Faced with Catiline twenty years before he had argued that the over-riding needs of the res publica justified extra-constitutional action. Once again with Mark Antony; so, for example, in the eleventh Philippic he appealed dramatically to the divine law to authorize Cassius’ extra-legal use of force against one of Antony’s associates (Phil. xi. 28). Meanwhile, his imprudent encouragement of war, and of the young Octavian as its instrument, was helping ensure that the demise of the res publica would be permanent. In the long run the heated rhetoric of the Philippics merely sealed the temporary alliance of Antony and the future Augustus. Cicero

⁵⁷ See Gill 1988; an alternative approach in Atkins 1989: ch. 3.
⁵⁸ But see Gill 1988 on the contrasting treatment of Regulus.
met his death on 7 December 43, the only consular victim of their proscriptions. Tradition at least relates that he died heroically (Plut. *Cic.* 48; Livy *apud* Sen. *Suas.* vi.17).

8 Conclusion

The content of Cicero's political thought was shaped in precise ways by his experience, most profoundly by his experience of repeated civil war. In the days of the Senate's primacy, as he saw it, aristocratic debate had decided both external policy and internal disputes; military glory was the reward for fighting the enemies of Rome. Now, the city's leaders had begun to turn their personal armies against one another, and therefore against Rome. Cicero's intellectual response was to analyse those elements of the traditional constitution that had given it peace and stability, and to diagnose its failure.

The resulting moral and political theory is rooted in its context in society in at least four specific ways:

(i) The analysis of political change
Cicero inherited from Greek theory a horror of political upheaval, which was confirmed by the events of his life. He learnt from Aristotle (perhaps indirectly) that stability requires the complementary balancing of different groups of interest. He shared with Plato (and with Roman historiography) a moral analysis of decline. But his moral diagnosis of the failure of the aristocratic elite is distinctive. The duty of this class is public service, and above all wise counsel; but their temptation is to seek personal glory through warmongering. Cicero's task, therefore, is to reintegrate ambition into a system of patriotic virtues.

(ii) The centrality of the *res publica*
The fundamental role of patriotism within Cicero's theory constitutes an original development in political thought. The function of justice is to preserve society, in particular that of the *res publica*. The other virtues are shaped by this. The virtues of the individual find their point in the good of society (a conclusion that would stand, I believe, even if the psychological discussion of *de Re Publica* had survived). Appeals to the overriding value of the *res publica* were commonplace in Roman legal and political oratory. The *senatus consultum ultimum* even provided a constitutional mechanism to corroborate them. Cicero appropriates this conventional sentiment and makes it central to his ethical system.
(iii) The nature of the res publica

The res publica is the foundation; but what exactly does res publica mean to Cicero? Stable government that respected law and precedent at least; but that would be widely shared. Cicero’s preoccupation with the role of the Senate gave his republicanism a specific nuance. The res publica flourished when government was arranged by free aristocratic debate. When force or bribery controlled honours and policy, the res publica was lost.

Hence Cicero’s interest in the thoroughly Roman concepts of dignitas, auctoritas and consilium, as well as his concern with oratory. At the same time, Cicero did not neglect the role of the people. They, too, had proper claims to liberty; and to ignore these was to court disaster. However, they should be integrated into the system of predominantly aristocratic government through elections to offices (and consequent entry to the Senate).

(iv) Rome as the best res publica

Plato’s ideal city was imaginary; Aristotle’s collected constitutions were less than perfect. Cicero Romanizes the Platonic tradition from within by presenting republican Rome at her peak as an incarnation of the best possible constitution. Here was the city and statesmen that theory could describe, but only experience produce. Cicero’s exaggerated patriotism encouraged him to a strikingly un-Platonic trust in historical and empirical evidence for the political enquiry.

In short, Cicero’s extended reflection upon social and political matters was thoroughly conditioned by contemporary events. Civil war teaches Cicero that he can no more embrace unqualifiedly the Roman nobility’s passion for glory than he can endorse the Greek philosopher’s disdain for it. Again, popular discontent reveals the importance of the tribunate for constitutional stability. Just as his personal letters and public speeches betray the grip of philosophy on his imagination, so his theoretical writings reveal his continuous intellectual engagement with the realities of political life. In consequence, his writing of political philosophy was a thoroughly political act (which is why it was dangerous at times to publicize). Greek philosophy equipped him with tools for his theorizing, but Rome provided the raw material.

To say this much is not to claim that Cicero’s practice was consistent with his theory. His political judgment was continuously inconsistent, and his final display of constancy served only to hasten the end of the res publica. Nor is it to argue that his theory was timely in the sense that it
could have provided a practical remedy for the ills of his age. The empire had long outgrown government by a quarrelsome and competitive group of aristocrats, and moral education, however high-minded, would not turn back the clock. However, the eventual imposition of monarchy was at the cost of brutal warfare and the ruthless extermination of opponents. It may have been naive, but it was not, surely, valueless, to suggest an alternative strategy for restoring and maintaining peace.

The ethos of the Roman Republic, to which Cicero gave personal philosophical expression, was to possess a lasting appeal, particularly through the influence of *de Officiis*. Men who knew little of the specific targets of Cicero’s theory would recognize the enduring themes of patriotism and public service, of courage and ambition, of benefaction and of friendship, the ethical themes, in short, of aristocratic politics and of war. The ruling elite of the Roman Republic were thoroughly versed in such matters. Under the pressure of contemporary crises, Cicero modified and articulated their insights for posterity to reappropriate.