

## The Author

Orazio Cappello received his BA from Cambridge University and has recently submitted his doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California entitled ‘Cicero’s *Academica* and the Foundation of a Roman Academy.’ He is currently working on a project re-evaluating the classical roots of the debates about Empire in France in the first half of the eighteenth century, looking in particular at the writings of the Abbé de Pradt. He has two articles forthcoming on Roman declamation, a contribution to the *Oxford Handbook to Roman Philosophy* and is co-editing a volume on new approaches to Cicero’s letters.

## The Paper

Studies on Cicero’s political philosophy have generally been limited to a series of works, among which *On the Commonwealth*, *On the Laws* and *On Duties*, which explicitly address social and political issues, and they have done so in isolation of the wider rhetorical and philosophical project that Cicero undertook in the 50s and 40s BCE. Such restrictive focus has been at best indifferent to questions of the epistemological foundations of Cicero’s political thought, despite his repeated claims to an affiliation with the Hellenistic sceptical Academy. This paper suggests a new approach to Ciceronian political philosophy grounded on a re-evaluation of his scepticism. From a re-interpretation of his treatise on Academic epistemology, *Academica*, the argument will show a greater degree of cross-pollination between the so called ‘political’ and ‘technical’ works, as well as suggest ways in which Cicero’s epistemological concerns are relevant to his social, political and cultural vision.