

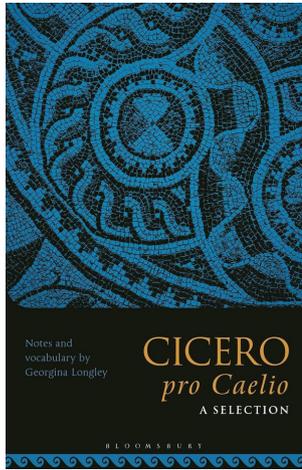
Book Review

Cicero: Pro Caelio. A Selection

Longley (G.), Pp. viii + 175. London:
Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. Paper, £16.99.
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As with all other titles in this Bloomsbury series, this textbook has been very carefully edited and is a great starting point for teachers and students delving into *pro Caelio* for the first time. The book consists of the following sections: a well-written and comprehensive introduction; the endorsed set text for the OCR specification from June 2024 to June 2026; thorough notes pitched at A level students; and an easy-to-use handy glossary at the back. In addition, the accompanying materials in the Bloomsbury online resources website include extra notes,

students' activities and multiple-choice quizzes.

Longley's introduction to the text immerses the reader in the context of the speech without overwhelming them with unnecessary details or an excessive number of interpretations. By the end of the introduction, both the characters and the literary genre are sufficiently clear to facilitate understanding of the text.

This is indeed not easy to achieve, as in addition to the conventions of defence speeches and the differences between modern and Roman law, an understanding of the political mood and unfolding of events needs to be considered. Teachers will be very happy with the way Longley approaches the exploration of Comedy and its conventions in relation to this speech. For those who are interested in further study, the well-curated and succinct bibliography suggested by the author is a welcome addition.

In line with other titles in the same collection, the author chooses points of language and style that A-Level students may find most challenging. However, the commentary notes often move into interpreting the use of language in particular passages. Teachers who prefer to work through the text by exploring it individually first may want to reserve this section for revision time. Still, the book does not engage in a full commentary of all style points in the text, and it can be used without detriment to the developing analytical skills of the students. Regarding rhetorical devices, the introduction also provides a list of some of the most relevant ones, with examples from the text itself, which is, again, very useful specifically for revision purposes. Finally, there is a healthy component of scholarship that the author engages with throughout the text which A-Level students will be able to start incorporating into their readings of the text. More broadly, reference to different translations, other works by the author – most notably his letters – and direct reference to the socio-historical context (see, for example, the online glossary) will help the students form their own opinions and establish good habits for synoptic study and research.

Even though this book is aimed at AS and A-Level students preparing for the set text exam, it will also be very useful for learners and teachers who are looking for passages to improve ongoing language development, for example, those preparing for the IB Diploma or at the beginning of their university studies. While it does not attempt to be a comprehensive companion to Cicero, and other books will do that more specifically, it is nonetheless an excellent introduction to the author through one of his works. Overall, because of the quality and efficiency in making the text approachable, this book is excellent for anyone getting started with Cicero's speeches.

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