



Ludwig Boltzmann Institut
Neulateinische Studien

cordially invites you to a talk by

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**CICERO THE PANTHEIST: A NEO-LATIN READING OF CICERONIAN
SCEPTICISM IN JOHN TOLAND'S *PANTHEISTICON* (1720)**

Monday, 12.05.2014, 18:00

Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“, Langer Weg 11, SR 3)

In 1720 the notorious radical intellectual John Toland (1670-1722) produced a Neo-Latin work entitled *Pantheisticon*; in this work Toland described an imagined Pantheistic society, explaining the philosophy which governed them, fundamental to which was the idea that God and the Universe were one, and delineating the practices through which the members of this society would both worship and conduct their own lives. An ideal rational religion emerged from this work, which provoked the wrath of the Anglican Church and its clergymen, drawing forth accusations of heresy and

atheism. Assuming a central, pseudo-priestly role in this work was Cicero. Toland drew heavily upon Cicero's philosophical dialogues to provide his imagined society with a liturgy expounding the rules and lessons of the Pantheists. Toland's conscription of Cicero into the service of this rational, radical religion confronted a point of emphatic dispute within Ciceronian scholarship in Early Modern England: in these philosophical dialogues, where might Cicero's 'true' voice be located? The answer to this question influenced how these dialogues were understood, and consequently how Cicero's own philosophy could be characterised. This paper will determine how Toland read this problematic Ciceronian evidence, and how he consequently created Cicero the Pantheist from these works.

