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Cicero and His Exploration of Friendship

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the reasons Cicero had for writing on morals and friendships following the Civil Wars between Pompey and Caesar. This exploration uses a great deal of background information, detailing Cicero's relationships with Pompey and Caesar, before addressing several of his works that address friendship, and finally looking at how his philosophical musings influenced his friendship with a man named Matius. The relationships that Cicero had are the inspiration for his writings, and as such are given appropriate attention before moving on to the works that were inspired by the events in Cicero's life.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was an orator and politician in the late Roman Republic. Born in 106 BC¹ in Arpinum. Cicero was given the best education that his family could manage, including sending him to Greece, where he studied rhetoric in Athens and Rhodes for several years. He became aedile in 69BC, praetor in 66, and consul in 63. Cicero is well known today for his speeches against Catiline and Catiline's conspirators during his consulship. Exiled in 58 because of the laws passed affirming the exile of anyone who had a Roman citizen executed without a trial, Cicero was forced to leave the city for having a Roman Senator killed. However, he was recalled a year later thanks to the efforts of his supporters. Following this, the First Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar was reaffirmed at the Conference of Luca in

¹ Rawson, Beryl. *The Politics Of Friendship. Pompey And Cicero*. Sydney: Univ. of Sydney Pr., 1978. *L'Année philologique*. Web. 29 Oct. 2013. 1.

56², and civil unrest began to take hold in the republic, destabilizing politics and creating divisions between the citizens as they took sides in the conflicts.

Cicero's brother Quintus, born in 104 BC³, served under Caesar during his military exploits in Gaul. Because of this Cicero had a personal connection to the political happenings of the time, as well as those of the social circle surrounding Julius Caesar. The two wrote to each other often, and this connection influenced many of Cicero's views on the use and influence of friendship in the political world.

Cicero was operating in the political sphere at a time when personal connections were almost if not more important than a politician's actual rhetoric. In fact, "the number of one's friends was itself an indication of the quality of the candidate, especially if the friends came from all ranks of the social order"⁴. The patronage system, as well as *amicitia* (friendship), between Romans had little to do with political allegiance, although those connections would often influence political action⁵. Therefore, political and social connections were important to Cicero as someone who was active in politics during a tumultuous period. Having the correct friends could save him when the base of power in the Republic shifted, though those friends could also drag him into the conflicts that he was trying to survive.

The patronage system complicates the relationships between Romans of the time. *Amicitia* (friendship) is a relationship that would often be between equals where there was not the pressure of a patron-client relationship. Friendship was a relationship that was based

² "A Chronology of Cicero's Life (106-43 B.C.)." *The Latin Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/101/CiceroChron.pdf>> 1.

³ "A Chronology of Cicero's Life (106-43 B.C.)." *The Latin Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/101/CiceroChron.pdf>> 1.

⁴ Fiore, Benjamin S.J. "The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero." *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*. By John T. Fitzgerald. Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1997. 59-76. Print. 70.

⁵ Mitchell, Thomas N. *Cicero, the Ascending Years*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979. Print. 17.

therefore upon a similar social level, and an effort to create a relationship between the involved parties. Patronage is a system that suggests an unequal power balance between the parties involved. This is not to say that those who were patrons and clients could not be friends, though the nature of the relationship made those connections less likely to evolve into something different. During the civil wars, the nature of these relationships began to change, and the word for friendship was used to describe many different forms of these relationships, including sometimes relationships closer to those of patron and client. Because of this, the standard definitions of patron, client, and friend were strained and often changing, causing those lines to blur; the reason that Cicero spent so much time writing of the relationships and duties of Romans as he perceived them.

In his writings Cicero treats friendship and the values associated with it differently depending on the time period and situation. Indeed, because of the volatility of the time “the passage of weeks or even days can alter his perception of affairs”⁶. Because of this, the context of his writings and speeches must be considered, including the specific events surrounding and in some cases provoking them. Cicero speaks of friendship differently, depending on the time and the way that his definition of friendship would benefit him. Even between his official works, and the speeches he delivered in the Senate, there is a difference in his rhetoric on the use and benefit of friendships.

This difference between actions and rhetoric remains mostly constant. His opinions on events often change, but his basic values remain the same through the course of his writings. Indeed, the way he engages with friends seems to hold true. There are certain ways to support your friends, and reasons that you may have those friends to begin with. Cicero, however, no

⁶ Rawson 2.

matter who his friends are, will always look out for Cicero. When the protection of a friendship is removed, through death or other ill occurrences, he uses his words to excuse his actions to the victor of the conflict, and preserve his own life. Surprisingly self-serving, his writings on friendship are all easily interpreted in a myriad of ways. There is the constant theme of benefit, and security, that is tied to friendships with well-known people, which changes with the Civil Wars to a focus on loyalty to the *res publica*. These social connections are how Cicero becomes entrenched in the middle of the Civil Wars between Pompey and Caesar.

Cicero's Friendship With Pompey

Cicero also was enamored with Pompey and his endeavors. Born in the same year, 106BC, they were both part of the Roman Republic over a period of time that had them living through several rounds of civil war⁷. The friendship between the two seems often one-sided. A great number of letters from Cicero to Pompey have been discovered, along with a distinct lack of replies from the general. This suggests a strong sense of duty and connection on Cicero's side, with less of a sense of duty from Pompey. Indeed, in the previously examined writings, Cicero bases his defense of his actions on their friendship, asserting that all his actions were in the interest of his friendship with Pompey.

His letters to Pompey were either mostly unreturned, or the replies were not kept by Cicero. It is not known which is the case, although Cicero's fondness for Pompey was commonly known. Because of this, there is a limited perspective on their relationship, solely based upon Cicero's writings. In 61 BC, Cicero wrote to his friend Atticus, suggesting that he was seeking the safety and strength that a friendship with Pompey would bring⁸. However, this relationship cooled, and Pompey began to look for new places to find more renowned friends.

⁷ Rawson 1.

⁸ Rawson 5.

Still, Cicero clung to the man, even though in 54 BC Pompey had shown through actions that he did not respect Cicero as the man respected him, and “Caesar was the only man to give Cicero the regard he avowedly craved”⁹. This relationship had ups and downs, and later Pompey showed gratitude for Cicero in several instances, although those were later in their relationship and after many years of loyal pursuit by Cicero.

During his military career, Pompey used bonds of *amicitia* and friendship to strengthen his position and gain support for his endeavors. With each victory and friendship he made, Pompey ensured more supporters for his cause whom he could call upon if he had need. Indeed, he made efforts to win friends among the *nobilitas* to strengthen his position¹⁰. By 61 BC, Pompey was one of the most well known men in Rome, for money and military prowess, and had little in common with Cicero, particularly in their life styles¹¹. Cicero had a more carefree lifestyle - that of a man of words, rather than actions, and for Pompey, who had been in the military and involved in leading troops for so long, those two personalities could clash. The strong personalities and beliefs of Pompey and Caesar would culminate in Cicero having to pick a side between two men he felt he had a connection to.

When Caesar made his cause clear, Cicero was unable to align his own views with him. Because of this, Cicero reacted with a strong revival of his pursuit of Pompey’s friendship and affection, and ended up choosing Pompey’s side in the conflict due to the influences of public opinion¹². Cicero made his allegiances and opinions at the time very public, and “made quite extravagant comments about his devotion to Pompey”¹³. There was no clear division between

⁹ Rawson 9.

¹⁰ Mitchell 123.

¹¹ Rawson 1.

¹² Rawson 16.

¹³ Rawson 162.

the sides, as there was not a definite moral code that was being fought over, the fighting was more personal in nature, and so Cicero had no choice but to choose the side he felt he had the most connection and duty to.

Indeed, at the time, Pompey was having difficulties obtaining troops, and the men he did get, were of questionable loyalty¹⁴. This lack of promise from the beginning would suggest that it was not the promise of strong and loyal troops who would fight to uphold their cause that convinced Cicero to put himself on Pompey's side. It would seem that Cicero was following his belief in friendship, and following the person whom he had a connection with, and owed gratitude and loyalty.

Cicero began to doubt the reasons for his dedication to Pompey following Pompey's desertion of Domitius, who was arrested by his own troops at news of the abandonment. Those troops then surrendered the town they were holding to Caesar¹⁵, changing sides at the first chance. Indeed, he began to complain to his friend Atticus that he felt Pompey and Caesar had never truly been interested in him or his ideas, and were only after the power that could be gained from his statesmanship. He also expresses his despair that a peaceful accord can be brought about at the time, because of the disinterest and stubbornness of both Pompey and Caesar¹⁶.

This sentiment is an echo from "In Support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" in 46 BC, during which Cicero argues that he had only followed Pompey out of duty and a hope that he could help bring peace about between the two sides.

I was continually sad that peace, and even recommendations in favour of peace talks, met with rejection. Neither in this civil war

¹⁴ Rawson 162.

¹⁵ Rawson 164-165.

¹⁶ Rawson 167.

nor in any other did I myself take part. My policy was invariably directed towards peace and the arts of peace, and never towards war and violence¹⁷.

His letters to Atticus seem at this point to be backing up his story from after the wars are over. There is a change in his mindset occurring at this time, changing the way he decides upon his actions in the conflict.

Despite these misgivings over his choices in political alignment, followed Pompey to Greece and his camp at Dyrrachium. At this time he had made Pompey a large loan, confident in Pompey's imminent success¹⁸. After Pompey's defeat at Pharsalus, Cicero returned to Italy, although he did not approach Rome for some time. Cicero waited on the outskirts of Italy until he was sure of Caesar's opinion of him, and his forgiveness for siding against him¹⁹. This led to a period where Cicero wrote largely on morals and personal issues, reflecting on his years as consul and the values he believed had served him well in that time. A few short years later, the assassination of Caesar occurred, which brought with it a new host of problems for the politician.

Cicero's Friendship With Caesar

Cicero's relationship with Caesar was long and complicated. Connected through the mutual acquaintance of his brother Quintus, Cicero at first wrote to the man regularly, until his connection to Pompey began to take shape. Previously, during the rise of the First Triumvirate, Caesar wrote to Cicero in an attempt to convince him to join a political alliance with the three

¹⁷ Cicero, Marcus Tullius, and Michael Grant. *Selected Political Speeches of Cicero*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989. Print. 286.

¹⁸ Rawson 169.

¹⁹ Rawson 173.

men²⁰. Cicero's influence and oratory skills would have been valuable to the political powerhouse of the Triumvirate. However, Cicero could not bring himself to join a full alliance with the triumvirate. And instead placed himself in an unstable place between the political factions of the senatorial aristocracy and the triumvirate²¹.

Because of his obligations to Pompey, Cicero was unable to place himself on any one side. He could not take up the cause of the Senate, because that would be at odds with his connection to Pompey, and he could not fully take the side of the triumvirate²². This left him outside the main political sphere, and distanced him from Caesar in the time leading up to his conflict with Pompey and the wars that resulted from that.

After Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, Cicero was urged by his wife, daughter, son and his nephew to join with Caesar²³, at the beginning of the conflict. Under this pressure, as Pompey fled Italy, Caesar asked the opinion of Matius, one of Caesar's friends, what Caesar's intentions were. Assured that Caesar was interested in making peace, Cicero wrote to him, willing to help bring the conflict to an end²⁴. Cicero, however, was met with resistance in his attempts to keep the conflict from escalating and Caesar sending troops after Pompey to Greece. Following Caesar's reluctance to follow his advice, Cicero placed himself on the side of Pompey under the banner of supporting a friend, and resigned himself to being out of favor with Caesar²⁵.

²⁰ Fuhrmann, Manfred. *Cicero and the Roman Republic*. Trans. W. E. Yuill. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. Print. 78.

²¹ Fuhrmann 78.

²² Fuhrmann 86.

²³ Lacey, W. K. *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978. Print. 111.

²⁴ Lacey 111.

²⁵ Lacey 112.

Cicero's connection to Pompey turned problematic when Caesar's forces defeated Pompey, and Cicero was forced to defend his allegiance to the man. In Cicero's speech "In Support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" in 46 BC²⁶ Cicero attempts to patch the relationship between the two of them, smoothing over his rejection of Caesar when his demands to speak with the Senate on not sending troops to Greece were not accepted²⁷. He repeatedly compliments and praises Caesar for his clemency, and forgiveness of Cicero, who claims to owe his life to the man's kindness in allowing him to return to Rome²⁸.

The friendship between the two of them becomes strained as Caesar became a dictator, making changes and laws that Cicero did not believe were in the best interest of the Roman Republic. Cicero begins to believe that Caesar's removal from office would be to the benefit of the Republic, and would allow the old system to take over once more. Following the assassination in early 44 BC, Cicero was briefly joyous. He believed that the removal of the dictator would bring a rebirth of the Republican ideals. Unfortunately, his excitement was brief, because while Caesar was gone, his followers, and those who were possibly worse than him, had taken over the government²⁹. This take over would be the downfall of Cicero during the Proscriptions.

Cicero's Speech to Caesar After Pompey's Defeat

After Caesar's defeat of Pompey in 48 BC³⁰ Cicero removed himself from politics for a time, returning with a speech "In Support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" in 46 BC³¹. The

²⁶ Cicero. "In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" 279.

²⁷ Lacey 112.

²⁸ Cicero. "In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" 294.

²⁹ Fuhrmann 170.

³⁰ "A Chronology of Cicero's Life (106-43 B.C.)." *The Latin Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/101/CiceroChron.pdf>> 2.

³¹ Cicero. "In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus" 279.

speech is littered with frequent praise for Caesar, who is supposedly sitting in the room with him due to the frequency and fervor of his comments. Cicero emphasizes his non-participation in the civil war between Pompey and Caesar, “neither in this civil war nor in any other did I myself take part”³². Cicero frames his involvement in the context of someone whose main motivation in acting was the creation peace. He maintains that he only became involved in the civil war because of a personal connection to Pompey that would allow him no other recourse but to support his friend.

Pompey is framed as having done Cicero a great service, “the memory of what he had done for me required a grateful recompense”³³. Without this service, Cicero would have been pleased not to take a side in the conflict. Indeed, he states that his motivations in the wars were the friendship and duty he bore to Pompey, as well as the hope that peace could be reached. “The leader I followed received my support in his individual capacity, as a man to whom I possessed personal obligations, and not because of any political link”³⁴. According to his speech his continued public urge for peace threatened his life; a fact that would have given him a moral ‘boost’ for staying firm with his own values and beliefs in the face of opposition. “Before war had broken out I argued at length in favour of peace, and after hostilities had started I still maintained the same attitude – at the risk of my life”³⁵.

Cicero questions the friends that Caesar has at the time, asking the man to consider their loyalties and histories. Cicero hints at Caesar looking for villains among the population, and questions where Caesar is looking for these sources of dissent. Cicero questions Caesar’s friends, particularly those who have switched sides in the course of the war, “all the men who

³² Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 286.

³³ Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 286.

³⁴ Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 286.

³⁵ Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 286.

have been our enemies in the past have either lost their lives through their own stubbornness... of if they have survived they are now your staunchest friends”³⁶.

He praises Caesar’s actions towards himself, complementing the man on allowing him to live and return to Rome after the conflicts of the wars. He also thanks Caesar for allowing Marcus Marcellus to be allowed to return to Rome, professing that, “I owe you my preservation in every sense of the word... your numberless acts of kindness on my behalf have actually been exceeded by this latest deed of yours”³⁷. Cicero in this moment transfers the obligation that kept him with Pompey during the Civil Wars to Caesar. The obligation for his survival will keep Cicero publicly aligned with Caesar. This secures Cicero’s safety, placing his interests on the currently winning side, with the strongest player that he can see at that moment in time.

Cicero uses this passive declaration of duty and friendship to secure his own security in a political sense. If Caesar feels that he is a form of patron for Cicero, one who spared his life, there is a sense of duty owed back to Caesar. This circle of political obligation secures Cicero’s position in the new regime. He uses the speech as a way to get Marcus Marcellus’ return secured, and at the same time directly address Caesar and the debt that Cicero owes to him. Cicero politically maneuvers his way into a friendship, or patron-client like relationship that will provide him with security in his very public declaration of allegiance.

On Moral Ends, *De Finibus*

Cicero published *On Moral Ends*, or *De Finibus* in 45 BC, a time just two years after his pardon by Caesar, and very shortly before Caesar’s assassination. The work focuses on the evaluation and discussion of Roman and Greek values and what morality could be defined as, including “themes which philosophers of the highest talent and most refined learning have dealt

³⁶ Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 289.

³⁷ Cicero. “In Support Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus” 294.

with in Greek”³⁸. One of these values is friendship, and the way that having bonds of friendship impacts a person’s life, and benefits their feelings of fulfillment. Friendship is treated in various places in the book, each in relation to a different aspect of life, although mostly friendship is attributed to one way of having a complete and meaningful life.

Part of friendship is pleasure, and the way that the relationships with friends can enrich the feeling in a person’s life. Having friends “strengthens the spirit, and inevitably brings with it the hope of obtaining pleasure”³⁹. Pleasure is seen as one of the utmost ways to enjoy a life, so to have friends, is by extension, one of the best ways to live a good life. Because of this connection between a good life and friends, “the wise will feel the same way about their friends as they do about themselves. They would undertake the same effort to secure their friends’ pleasure as to secure their own”⁴⁰. Indeed, a friendship can be brought about by frequent meetings and the enjoyment of each other’s company, and eventually “friends love each other for their own sake, regardless of any utility to be derived from the friendship”⁴¹. From this it can be concluded that the assertion is that a good friend will be as dedicated to you as you are to them, and as dedicated to your interests as they would be to their own interests.

Cicero’s assertion of friendship linking two people’s interests provides a background for his own actions in the Civil Wars between Caesar and Pompey. Cicero is laying claim to the reason he followed Pompey. Because he was a good friend who supported the interests of Pompey as if they were his own, he was bound to support his friend and not desert him in such a trying time. He further links the interests of friends by writing that “the inextricable link

³⁸ Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Moral Ends*. Ed. Julia Annas. Trans. Raphael Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print. 3.

³⁹ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 24.

⁴⁰ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 24.

⁴¹ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 24.

between the virtues and pleasure is equally applicable to friendship and pleasure”⁴². If having morals is equivalent to being a good friend, Cicero is only acting in the best interest of his own morality in supporting his friends to the best of his abilities.

Cicero speaks of the benefits of friendship, and asks why gather friends if there is no benefit? He answers that a person only has the advantages of friendship if it is genuine, and “how can you be a genuine friend without feeling genuine love?”⁴³. Love is not a rational emotion, according to Cicero, and can spring up on its own, regardless of the calculated advantages in the relationship. Indeed, he seems to criticize friendships made for the sake of their connections, especially those made in haste. If you make a friendship in haste, “then your friendships will last just as long as they are expedient, and if expediency brings a friendship into existence then it will destroy it too”⁴⁴. Those friendships that are not genuine are criticized here as weak and as fleeting as the situation they were made in.

Indeed, these points all support that because of his devotion to his friends, even Pompey for whom he risked life and property to follow to Greece in support, Cicero is a true friend. He is laying the claim that his friendships are forged with love and time, rather than for shortsighted aims that would not create genuine relationships between him and his companions. He does not deny that there are advantages to be found in friendship. Yet, if the benefits are the only thing considered in maintaining the relationship, it will not last, because the effort of maintaining the relationship will outweigh any benefits you may receive⁴⁵, and the relationship will fall apart.

⁴² Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 24.

⁴³ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 52.

⁴⁴ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 52.

⁴⁵ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 54.

The work, published soon after the defeat of Pompey, establishes the public moral frame from which Cicero is operating. The book also provides excuses for his actions, and justification for following Pompey instead of Caesar during the Civil War between them. Because of the dearness of friendship, and how “in friendship the interest of one’s friend will be as precious to the wise person as one’s own”⁴⁶ Cicero is justified in following Pompey as his friend. Nothing about politics is mentioned in relation to friendship. Friendship is always an arrangement between two people who share a bond. Political interests are only hinted at in references to supporting your friends in what they do as if the interests were your own. Cicero skillfully creates an explanation for his actions in the most rational way he can, one that was very public, and created a certain degree of deniability in the way he based his work off of the writings of other writers of the time as well as famous philosophers, in addition to the apparent earnestness of the work.

De Amicitia

De Amicitia, written in 44BC examined the specifics of friendship as Cicero saw them. The interest that Cicero showed in his writings on friendship was not only a personal interest, but also a political one. During the late Republic, he was reliant upon friendships and other social connections for “his own advancement and security”⁴⁷. Cicero gained much power during his career as a lawyer. For his services, many Romans who were of a higher social standing and in possession of more political clout than he himself, were indebted to Cicero. These debts were a social tool that he was able to call upon for introductions, or political assistance. His success therefore was based upon the relationships he made, and those who

⁴⁶ Cicero. *On Moral Ends*. 87.

⁴⁷ Fiore 60.

could introduce him to the right circles in order to begin his social ascension through the ranks of the Republican government.

One of the advantages of the bonds of friendship that appealed to Roman society at the time was the enduring quality that friendship was believed to have. Friendship “neither fades through absence nor through death”⁴⁸. This, of course, only applies to “true friendship”, which holds a basis in natural love, rather than one based upon the exchange of favors or material goods⁴⁹. This is in part due to the belief at the time that if the relationship was based on mutual love, then the friends would always be in a competition to do good deeds to benefit the other. The whole concept of friendship of the time seems rather circular, with each friend feeling the other’s joys and miseries. Because of how they feel these bonds, friends would attempt to help each other bear the responsibilities that may weigh the other down⁵⁰.

However, these ideals were all based upon the older and more traditional views in Roman society. These were values that were compatible with the older form of the Republic, when the government was stable and a more self-regulatory system. When political discord begins to take root shortly before the Civil Wars, these systems of political and social connection become out-dated and almost a disadvantage in the constantly changing political climate. However, the political elite still continued to use the older form of *amicitia*, as that is the system that their ancestors used, and the form of social networking that their parents taught them to follow. The adherence to these ideals makes the turmoil more devastating for the upper classes.

⁴⁸ Fiore 62.

⁴⁹ Fiore 62.

⁵⁰ Fiore 63.

In *De Amicitia*, it is clear that Cicero's perception of these relationships is changing with the times. Instead of as part of a more sincere system, gratitude is mentioned as a tool to gain favors. It can be derived from his writings that by being grateful for one favor, you best ensure that you will receive another⁵¹. Feeling that the beneficiary is grateful for what the benefactor, or friend, did for him makes the benefactor feel valued, and as if their favors will be valued. If the beneficiary is ungrateful, benefactors or friends will feel reluctant to bestow more favors if they are looked upon so unfavorably.

In addition, as in his letter to Matius following Caesar's assassination, there is a moral conflict visible in Cicero's writings. Because of Cicero's belief in loyalty and the bonds of friendship, Cicero demonstrates in his writing a deep conflict between his values of friendship and virtue⁵². After Caesar is assassinated, he was viewed as an enemy to the Republic. Matius is criticized for his loyalty to Caesar after his death. The dichotomy of loyalty to friends, in comparison to loyalty to the state, or *res publica*⁵³ is an issue that presses upon all members of the republic who had chosen a side in the Civil War. Despite this issue, Cicero stresses the importance of the obligation to the *res publica* "over those to our parents and relative, who come before our friends"⁵⁴. This is a difficult conclusion due to the emphasis placed on friendship in his *On Moral Ends*.

Friendship has changed in its priority to Cicero. With a constantly changing political climate, friendship is no longer a guarantee of safety. When friends could be assassinated, and their protection removed at any time, there was no long lasting benefit to remaining loyal to

⁵¹ Fiore 67.

⁵² Griffin, Miriam T. "From Aristotle To Atticus: Cicero And Matius On Friendship." *Plato and Aristotle at Rome*. 86-109. n.p.: 1997. *L'Année philologique*. Web. 29 Oct. 2013. 89.

⁵³ Griffin 89.

⁵⁴ Griffin 90.

people, especially not after they are dead, whether friends or family. The only guarantee of defense was remaining loyal to the state. If loyal to the interests of the state, motives could only be questioned so far, and actions could be excused as being in the interest of defending the state itself, instead of serving self-interest.

Morality as Cicero had been defining it, had been called into question with the murder of Caesar⁵⁵. Those who should have been loyal to Caesar through gratefulness for their lives and freedom were the ones to turn on him. If a favor given could elicit further favors, and favor in return, along with dedication for the services given, then the assassination should never have happened. Men who owed their lives to Caesar were the very ones to kill him. Cicero believed this to be a good thing for the Republic⁵⁶, and in this instance placed the good of the Republic above the good of a friend.

Friends are also described as having different uses depending upon their location. For instance, influential friends provide support in elections, those in small towns secure support outside of Rome⁵⁷, and so on. Friendship is a highly politicized institution for those who are part of the elite and participate in the political sphere. *De Amicitia* and the way that it frames friendship in the ways that it is useful to have truly convey the way that Cicero himself has experienced friendship. The obligation to the *res publica* is emphasized, and at a time when those who went against the state were in danger of their lives, this was a very politicized and cautious assertion. This distinction between the state and friends was made through experience of the changing political climate and first-hand knowledge of the highly politicized and often dangerous use of friendship to secure elections and security.

⁵⁵ Griffin 90.

⁵⁶ Griffin 95.

⁵⁷ Fiore 71.

Cicero's Friendship With Matius

Gaius Matius was a supporter and friend of Caesar. Matius and Cicero had a long relationship. They met in their earlier years, and though Matius appears to have gone away for a time, the friendship quickly returned while Matius was in Gaul with Caesar, and worked to bring his two friends closer together⁵⁸. Matius is, in Cicero's letters to Atticus, a proponent for peace between Pompey and Caesar, and a source of guidance for Cicero, who turned to Matius for advice on Caesar's letters asking for his support⁵⁹. After the assassination of Caesar, there is a correspondence of two letters between Matius and Cicero that questions the place of friendship and its importance in comparison with loyalty to the state.

The pair of letters are the only preserved communication between the two men, though there are earlier references to Matius in Cicero's previous letters and works⁶⁰. These two letters deal with Matius' feelings in regards to the death of Caesar and his conflicting feelings regarding loyalty to the state and his friend. The letters appear to be an attempt to gain counsel from Cicero, to justify his actions, and to confront the ideals Cicero emphasize in regards to loyalty to the *res publica* superseding that to their friends.

Moral loyalties were changing in the time of the Civil Wars. Values of friendship were expected to be put aside if it was to the benefit of the *res publica*. This created a problematic situation for so many of the Republic who were used to defining their own identities and alliances based on their relationships with their friends. With Caesar's victory over Pompey, these morals were put to the test for many politicians of the time who had supported Pompey over Caesar. Indeed, "on the one hand, fidelity and humanity recommend loving a friend even

⁵⁸ Griffin 91.

⁵⁹ Griffin 92.

⁶⁰ Griffin 91.

after death; on the other, the freedom of one's country must be given priority over the life of a friend"⁶¹. Many were forced to forget their friends who had died in the conflict in favor of praising the man who had led the Republic's own soldiers against itself.

With the changing political leadership, those who found themselves suddenly without friends were left in difficult positions, particularly if they were close with the leader who had been overthrown. Matius found himself in such a position after the assassination of Caesar. There were few safe ways for the man to express or ask for advice on his conflicting feelings after the loss of the man he had considered a friend. Many of those who knew him at the time criticized his loyalty to a man that was seen to have been attempting to take over the Republic.

Cicero begins their correspondence with a letter referencing their history together, and the events of the Civil Wars that they had both been involved in. Cicero mentions their tentative friendship, and sums up Matius' appealing characteristics. "Your most notable characteristics attract me most: loyalty in friendship, judgment, responsibility, steadfastness on the one hand..."⁶² all of which are characteristics that Cicero, an aristocrat of the day held dear. This fondness for these virtues suggest that they were still of importance in the judging of someone's character, despite the changing values of the time.

Loyalty to one's friends was highly thought of, and yet in the aftermath of Caesar's assassination there is scorn for those who were his friends who would mourn the loss of their friend. The virtue of loyalty to one's friends had shifted and instead that loyalty was displaced to the *res publica*. Cicero makes this clear in his letter to Matius that "it can be maintained... that in caring for your friend even after he is dead you show commendable loyalty... According

⁶¹ Griffin 94.

⁶² Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Cicero: Letters to Friends*. Trans. Bailey D. R. Shackleton. Vol. III. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001. Print. Letter 348, XI.27 p. 157.

to the other view... the freedom of one's country should come before a friend's life"⁶³. This shows the conflicting morals that many Romans were plagued with, the older and more traditional loyalty to friends and family, and that of the newer necessity of loyalty to the *res publica*. The more modern view of loyalty to the State, where loyalty to family and friend is superseded by duty to the government as it is judged to be by the individual is in conflict with how many Romans of the time have founded their lives to that time.

Matius wrote to Cicero about his feelings on the loyalty he felt to his friend, and the social pressure to overlook the death of Caesar as one who had in a sense betrayed the State. His anguish is expressed in his letter to Cicero where he asks "why are they angry with me for praying that they may be sorry for what they have don? I want every man's heart to be sore for Caesar's death"⁶⁴. He is pressured by those around him to move on from his friend's murder. He is being told to move past it and embrace those who killed Caesar as the liberators and champions of the State. This goes against the principals of loyalty that he has been brought up believing. The newer morals are hard to swallow for him, as he cannot see merely the betrayer, Caesar, but also his friend whom he had known for years.

Cicero makes the assertion that Matius, as an intelligent and educated person must have seen some of the negative aspects of Caesar's power. Cicero refers to Caesar as a despot⁶⁵, while at the same time praising Matius for his loyalty to his friend. Matius responds with the assertion that he had not supported the idea of the war, instead supporting his friend. "It was not Caesar I followed in the civil conflict, but a friend whom I did not desert, even though I did

⁶³ Cicero. *Cicero: Letters to Friends*. XI 27, p 157-159.

⁶⁴ Cicero. *Cicero: Letters to Friends*. XI.28. p 163.

⁶⁵ Cicero. *Cicero: Letters to Friends*. XI 27, p 157.

not like what he was doing”⁶⁶. This loyalty to his friend and not necessarily the politics and morals of his friend is asserted in multiple instances through his letter.

With his statement that he did not “follow Caesar”, but instead refused to “desert” a friend because of his actions, Matius creates a clear divide between what others view his actions to be, and what he declares them to be. He “draws a distinction important for meeting the argument in *De amicitia* 43 ff., where it is precisely the person who ‘follows’ a friend waging war against his country who should be punished”⁶⁷. This is an important distinction, because at the time, willingly following Caesar would bring trouble to Matius. However, in true Ciceronian fashion, the man defines his actions as not following a political figure, but standing beside a friend in a stressful time.

Matius maintains that he made the only decision he could in accordance with his own morals. Matius “denies that what he did involved a choice between *amicitia* and *res publica*”⁶⁸. He speaks of the duty to his friend, even after his death, to ensure that he honors the memory of the man that he respected and cared about, regardless of the way his actions may have been judged by others during his life.

Well, but I superintended the Games for Caesar’s Victory given by his young heir. That was a matter of private service, which has nothing to do with the state of the commonwealth. It was, however, an office which I owed to the memory and distinction of a dear friend even after his death ⁶⁹.

Matius shows his loyalty to his friend even after his death by paying his last respects and presiding over the funeral games to send Caesar off into the afterlife, as is a custom among the

⁶⁶ Cicero. *Cicero: Letters to Friends*. XI 28, p 161.

⁶⁷ Griffin 100.

⁶⁸ Griffin 100.

⁶⁹ Cicero, XI 28, p 163.

Romans who can afford the celebrations. This decision is portrayed as a private matter that has nothing to do with his loyalty to the *res publica*⁷⁰.

Despite their connection, Cicero was not able to share the opinion or grief of Matius over the death of Caesar. The dedication of the man did, however, impress Cicero with its strength⁷¹. Their friendship continued, despite this difference in opinion, and it is apparent that Cicero even stayed with Matius for a time following Caesar's assassination⁷². While Matius is not always mentioned by name in Cicero's later writings, references to his actions and opinions make it clear that they both remain in contact until shortly before Cicero's death in 43 BC.

CONCLUSION

Cicero changes his definition of the obligations of friendship constantly through the Civil Wars at the end of the Republic. In the beginning of his life, friendships were a way to secure power, support, and safety. However, when the leaders of their government began to rapidly change, being connected to any one person too thoroughly could mean execution, banishment, or political ruin by association. Instead, friendship became a secondary value behind loyalty to the *res publica*.

Being a "good friend" in both loyalty and dedication could still earn a Roman praise for his virtues. Matius is praised for his virtues by Cicero in his letter to him after Caesar's death, and Cicero praises Caesar's virtues in pardoning him after the death of Pompey, referencing their previous connections. However, in the wake of Caesar's assassination, loyalty to the *res publica* became even more important, as with the violence emerging it was important to not have any close political or social ties to anyone who could be, or could make others a target

⁷⁰ Griffin 100.

⁷¹ Fuhrmann 170.

⁷² Lacey 143.

through their presence. Family connections also were set aside in favor of preserving and supporting the Republic.

Through his writings and relationships, it is clear that Cicero used friendships in the way that he needed to in order to survive a tumultuous political climate. Changing allegiances for Cicero was simple with his flexible definition of friendship, and the distinction he made between “following” someone, and “not deserting” a friend. Indeed, these definitions were enough to prolong his life and political career through multiple political leaders and factions, until he was killed in the proscriptions in 43 BC. His head and hands were displayed on the *rostra* in the Forum⁷³ on the orders of Marcus Antonius in retaliation for Cicero writing the *Philippics*, which had criticized Antonius’ actions.

⁷³ Richardson, John. *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14: The Restoration of the Republic and the Establishment of the Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012. Print. 36.

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