

CICERO AND ROMAN CIVIC EDUCATION

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Introduction

This thesis will examine three of Cicero's works that discuss the topic of civic education¹: his dialogue *De Oratore*,² his legal speech "Pro Archia Poeta,"³ and his philosophical treatise *De Officiis*,⁴ each of which responds to particular political events in Cicero's day. In each of these works, Cicero describes the characteristics of great Roman statesmen and how their education shaped them into men who pursue glory through defending the safety and security of the Republic. Cicero also wrote with an understanding of different epochs of the Roman Republic that were defined by the quality of the statesmen in power at the time.

Cicero equates civic education for Roman public statesmen with a moral education in Roman virtue, where the statesman learns the virtues of courage, prudence, and total dedication to his city, that lead to both proper and effective governance. Civic education, for Cicero, has two main components: learning by imitating *exempla*⁵ of Roman virtue, and acquiring universal knowledge by studying academic disciplines from philosophy and civil law to poetry, history, and music. However, Cicero never compiles his philosophy on education clearly or schematically into a single philosophical work, but rather he provides pieces of his philosophy of education over the course of several distinct works, each of which were written to address distinct Roman political climates.

¹ *Civic education*: literally education for Roman citizens, or political men who pursued glory through service to the Republic.

² Translation from Latin to English: *On the Ideal Orator*. Cicero wrote *De Oratore* in 55 BCE but set the dialogue's dramatic date in 91 BCE, immediately prior to the impending Civil Wars of the eighties BCE.

³ Translation: "In Defense of Archias the Poet." Cicero delivered "Pro Archia Poeta" in 62 BCE, a year after his extraordinarily successful Consulship in 63 BCE during which he exposed Catiline's Conspiracy to overthrow the Consulate.

⁴ Translation: *On Duties*. Cicero wrote *De Officiis* in 44 BCE, a few months after Caesar's assassination.

⁵ *Exempla* is a Latin word that loosely translates to 'the foremost examples of something', which I use in this context to refer to the foremost examples of Roman virtue.

For this reason, this thesis contextualizes Cicero's philosophy of education in the respective political climates in which he wrote each of these works to understand how Cicero's conception of education addresses enduring political problems in Roman politics, especially regarding the disruption of the traditional Roman political order. I will also note a shift in Cicero's philosophy of education from *De Oratore* to *De Officiis*, as the former nowhere indicates that philosophy teaches virtue and the latter begins with the premise that philosophy teaches virtue.

As I will show in my section on Historical Context, Rome's expansiveness as an empire was most widespread between 148 and 146 BCE, during which some of the most virtuous and duty-driven Roman statesmen lived and governed. When Cicero thought of the particular values that characterized the Roman Republic, he thought of the righteous, self-sacrificial statesmen who lived in this period. Statesmen continued to exemplify this conception of Roman virtue through the nineties BCE during Cicero's youth, but it began to dissolve in the sixties and fifties BCE with Catiline's conspiracy and the rise of the First Triumvirate, as well as through the forties BCE with the rise and fall of Julius Caesar. In the following chapters, I will address each of these three texts not in the order in which Cicero wrote them, but according to the different epochs of Roman statesmen each text depicts.

Section 1 will examine Cicero's *De Oratore*, which he wrote in the fifties BCE but set in the nineties BCE during the epoch of the great Roman men who mentored Cicero and exemplified Cicero's conception of what it means to be a good Roman statesman. The fifties BCE were a tumultuous period because of the rise of Pompey and

Crassus, two political figures who eventually formed the First Triumvirate with Caesar. Cicero set this dialogue in the nineties to nostalgically look back to a previous generation of Roman statesmen uncorrupted by self-serving ambition as examples for the men of his day. Cicero saw the statesmen of the nineties not only as effective leaders, but also as morally upright. In *De Oratore*, Cicero advocates for an education in two parts: learning by imitating great statesmen of 91 BCE, and by acquiring universal knowledge, especially highlighting the benefits of learning philosophy and civil law. The statesman's education teaches the orator to adopt Roman virtues like prudence, and to protect Roman values like freedom and collegiality. The statesman's education is also dedicated towards nurturing the statesman's soul, which outlives his body.

Section 2 will discuss Cicero's "Pro Archia Poeta," a legal speech he gave in defense of the poet Archias in 62 BCE, one year after Cicero served a very successful term as Consul. Around this time, many Romans became disillusioned with the character of Rome's leaders, a problem which was exacerbated after Catiline's conspiracy against the Republic. Since Cicero was a popular leader who exemplified the qualities of great Roman statesmen, he wrote and delivered "Pro Archia" to explain that his education, especially the study of poetry, shaped him to become a virtuous, eloquent orator like the great Roman men of previous eras. Through his speech, Cicero articulated the qualities needed to improve the state of the Republic, stressing especially the need for courage and total dedication to one's state. After Cicero gave this speech, however, the state of the Republic continued to crumble instead of improving, which culminated into the rise of

the First Triumvirate, Pompey's defeat by Caesar, and eventually the fall of the Republic under Caesar's dictatorial rule.

Section 3 will discuss Cicero's *De Officiis*, his treatise on a statesman's duties which he wrote in 44 BCE and published only a year before his death. At this point, the Republic had already fallen with the rise and fall of Caesar. Cicero writes this treatise as a collection of letters to his son and to future Roman statesmen, through which he argues that the statesman may serve his city in ways that do not involve speaking before the public as a legal or political figure. Cicero views his decision to study philosophy as a service to the Republic, since Caesar's political dominance prevented him from serving the Republic as a political or legal orator in the forum, and because he dedicated his much of philosophic studies to considering ways to reestablish the Republic. In *De Officiis*, Cicero is no longer looking back to what Rome once was, but he is rather concerned for Rome's future. By writing on the duties of a statesman, Cicero wanted to preserve Republican values for future generations of Romans. His philosophy of education in *De Officiis* reflects emphasizes the study of philosophy as a teacher of duties and virtues.

My Conclusion will discuss how this thesis contributes to scholarship on Cicero and education, noting especially how Cicero's understanding of education is remarkably coherent, even though he described it in pieces over the course of many works and to address distinct political problems. I also note how this thesis suggests a change in Cicero's thinking from *De Oratore* to *De Officiis*, as he suggests in the former that philosophy is not a teacher of virtue, yet he spends much of the latter suggesting that

philosophy does in fact teach virtue. This shift comes about precisely because Cicero wrote each of these works in response to a specific political context. My Postscript will also briefly examine the rise of Caesar Augustus in the years following Cicero's death led to the formulation of imperial values that pretended to be a return to Republican values.

Each of these three works inform us about a Ciceronian theory of education based on learning by imitating *exempla* of Roman virtue and by acquiring universal knowledge of all things that teach the statesman about the cosmos and his role within it. Cicero's education, as he presents it in each of these three works, is an education to nurture the statesman's soul, which requires him to act virtuously and promote the safety and security of his fatherland.

Historical Context

Rome ascended to world-wide dominance as an imperial world power with its annexation of Macedonia between 148 and 146 BCE,⁶ its conquest of Greece between 147 and 146 BCE,⁷ and its conquest of Carthage along the coast of Africa around September 146 BCE.⁸ These imperial expeditions marked the beginning of widespread Roman influence on Europe and Asia. Rome's ascension to imperial dominance was personified especially by Scipio Aemilianus, who served as Consul in 148 despite being under the required age.⁹ The statesmen who led this unprecedentedly large scale Roman conquest were seen by many, especially by Cicero, as *exempla* of Roman virtue.

Rome's imperial dominance of most of Europe and Asia seemed to come out of nowhere for many, especially for the Greeks. After the Roman conquest of Greece, the Greek general Polybius, who was well-respected both amongst his own people and by the Romans, was cordially invited to the House of Scipio Aemilianus at Rome. In an effort to describe to his fellow Greeks how the Roman Empire emerged as a dominant world power so quickly, Polybius wrote a history of the rise of the Roman Empire from 264 to 146 BCE, which he wrote in Greek and for a Greek audience. In Book VI of the *Histories*, Polybius discusses the values of Republican Rome, focusing especially on the mixed structure of government and the courage of the Roman people. The Roman values that Polybius describes carried over onto the environment in which Cicero (born 106 BCE) developed as a youth growing up in the nineties BCE. When Cicero wrote of the

⁶ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 90.

⁷ Glay et al., 92.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

great *exempla* of Republican values, he referred to men like Scipio who lived in the period of great Roman conquest from 148 to 146 BCE, as well as the men who mentored Cicero during his adolescence.

In Book VI of his *Histories*, Polybius says that “the best and most valuable result I aim at is that readers of my work may gain a knowledge how it was and by virtue of what peculiar political institutions that in less than in fifty-three years nearly the whole world was overcome and fell under the single dominion of Rome, a thing the like of which had never happened before.”¹⁰ Polybius praises three main characteristics that make the Roman Republic greater than any world power before them: their mixed government, their valour in war, and their love of family and country which allowed them to prevail in war. When comparing Rome with other great city-states like Athens or Carthage, Polybius notes that the government of the Romans is superior because it encompasses the best aspects of a kingship, an aristocracy, and a democracy. In his understanding of the Roman government, Polybius suggests that the Roman Consul plays a role similar to a king, particularly with regard to public affairs; the Roman Senate is similar to an aristocracy; and the many also have a role in government, much like in a democracy. Moreover, Polybius notes that each power of government in Rome interacts with the others in some way, thus providing checks for each power of government.

Aside from the structure of their government, Polybius also praises the Romans for their prudence and valour in war, as well as their dedication to family and the city instead of personal gain. Polybius compared the Roman military to that of the

¹⁰ Polybius, *Histories*, trans. Bill Thayer (Chicago: Loeb Classical Library, 1922-1927), Book VI.i.2-3, pg. 271, accessed online at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Polybius/6*.html.

Carthaginians by declaring that Carthage has the superior navy and Rome the superior infantry. He notes how the Carthaginians nearly neglected their infantry and continues “to depend for the maintenance of their freedom on the courage of a mercenary force but the Romans [depended] on their own valour and on the aid of their allies.”¹¹ Moreover, Polybius ascribes the emergence of Roman valour in war to their love for their families and their country, stating that “For the Romans, fighting as they are for their country and their children, never can abate their fury but continue to throw their whole hearts into the struggle until they get the better of their enemies. It follows that though the Romans are, as I said, much less skilled in naval matters, they are on the whole successful at sea owing to the gallantry of their men.”¹² Thus, Polybius tells us here that the Romans’ dedication to their families and city allowed them to surpass in power and influence all other empires in history.

Polybius also notes in his *Histories* that when an illustrious Roman dies, it affects not only those who knew the man personally, but also “the whole people.”¹³ He describes how Roman funeral rituals display the sentiments of the public to any statesman who exemplified Roman virtues and how the Romans encourage aspiring Roman statesmen to also exemplify these virtues:

[At funerals] [t]hese representatives wear togas, with a purple border if the deceased was a consul or praetor, whole purple if he was a censor, and embroidered with gold if he had celebrated a triumph or achieved anything similar. They all ride in chariots preceded by the fasces, axes, and other insignia by which the different magistrates are wont to be accompanied according to the respective dignity of the offices of state held by each during his life; and when they arrive at the rostra they all seat themselves in a

¹¹ Polybius, *Histories*, Book VI.vii.52.5.

¹² *Ibid.*, Book VI.vii.52.7-8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Book VI.vii.53.3.

row on ivory chairs. There could not easily be a more ennobling spectacle for a young man who aspires to fame and virtue... But the most important result is that young men are thus inspired to endure every suffering for public welfare in the hope of winning the glory that attends on brave men. What I say is confirmed by the facts. For many Romans have voluntarily engaged in single combat in order to decide a battle, not a few have faced certain death, some in war to save the lives of the rest, and others in peace to save the [R]epublic.¹⁴

Polybius' characterization of the Roman Republic, in which it was common to praise the city's great public statesmen, also characterized the environment of the nineties BCE when Cicero grew up. This is important because Cicero wrote several of his mentors from the nineties BCE as the interlocutors of his dialogue *De Oratore*. In the decades following the Roman world described by Polybius, however, internal political conflicts arose within the Roman government.

After the Roman conquest of most of Europe and Asia between 148 and 146 BCE, internal political problems manifested concerning how the Romans would distribute this land. Between 133 and 121 BCE, two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, attempted to address economic and social problems that emerged as a result of two factors: "the ruinous effects of military service on the peasant class; and an enormous influx of wealth and slaves into Italy as a consequence of Rome's many wars of conquest."¹⁵ Tiberius was elected Tribune in 133 BCE and administered a populist law that "made it illegal for any one person to possess more than 500 *iugera* (roughly 300 acres) of public land, or for any family to have more than 1000," and any leftover land would be distributed to the landless in small parcels.¹⁶ After the Gracchi, the political

¹⁴ Polybius, *Histories*, Book VI.vii.53.3-54.4.

¹⁵ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 111.

¹⁶ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 112.

class was divided into two: the *populares*, who claimed to represent the interests of the common people; and the *optimates*, who represented Conservative political order and tradition.¹⁷

Later on between 110 and 100 BCE, another member of the *populares*, Gaius Marius, ascended to political prominence and altered the traditional Roman political order, serving an unprecedented seven terms as Consul over the course of his life¹⁸ and appointing many of his fellow *populares* to the Senate. Many of Marius' Conservative opponents thought that he was corrupting the highest office by not following strict rules regarding ascension to political offices. After Marius came several years of relative peace for Rome, until 95 BCE when two of Cicero's mentors Lucius Licinius Crassus and Quintus Mucius Scaevola passed the *Lex Licinia Mucia*, which expelled non-Roman citizens from the city. This law and others like it contributed to the outbreak of the Social War in 91 BCE, which began because Rome's Italian allies (*socii*), whose men composed most of the Roman army, were tired of being considered second-class citizens and fought to acquire the status of Roman citizens to participate in politics.¹⁹ Boatwright notes that events of the Social War foreshadowed the bloody Roman civil wars that came in the eighties BCE:

[The Social War] was Italy's first sudden exposure to the traumas of a full-scale civil conflict, a prelude (as it turned out) to successive, more prolonged bouts of similar horror over the next sixty years.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., 113-114.

¹⁸ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 124-125.

¹⁹ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 116.

²⁰ Mary T. Boatwright et al., *The Romans: From Village to Empire*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 174-175.

In the eighties BCE, the two most prominent political statesmen were Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla, the latter was a traditional Conservative who favored the *optimates*, shrunk the size of the Senate and filled it with his own men, and implemented reforms to the Roman political process.²¹ Sulla made the Senate more Conservative by implementing strict age and career requirements for each major position in Roman politics.²² A brutal civil war arose in the eighties BCE due to the conflict between the *optimates* and the *populares* and resulted in a decade of Romans killing Romans. Cicero became a *novus homo* in Sulla's Rome, which was extraordinary because he came from a local aristocracy with minimal connections to Roman politics and he followed all of Sulla's strict qualifications for political office. Cicero even managed to serve each political position at the minimum age required to be considered.

This thesis treats Cicero's *De Oratore* (written 55 BCE) before "Pro Archia Poeta" (delivered 62 BCE) because Cicero set the dramatic date of *De Oratore* in 91 BCE. He does this to showcase statesmen who were *exempla* of Roman virtue in a Rome that was not yet corrupted by Civil War. Total corruption began in the eighties BCE with the outbreak of the Sullan Civil Wars. In *De Oratore*, Cicero looks to his mentors from the nineties BCE to show how great Roman men, each of whom demonstrate the virtues of Republican Rome, handled a smaller political crisis that happened immediately preceding the major crisis of the Sullan Civil Wars of the eighties BCE.

Cicero also sets *De Oratore* in the nineties BCE to fix the morally corrupt statesmen of the fifties BCE. In Cicero's view, the men of the nineties were driven by

²¹ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 129.

²² Boatwright et al., *The Romans*, 195.

duty to the state and still lived according to traditional order and morals. To contrast this with the fifties BCE, the Triumvirate ascended to political prominence by usurping all the rules established by Sulla. We see this especially in 70 BCE, when Marcus Licinius Crassus and Pompey formed a pact to rule together as co-Consuls, a move which went against the order established by Sulla.²³ In *De Oratore*, Cicero advocates a return to the virtue of men in the nineties BCE because he is pessimistic about the statesmen of the fifties BCE who completely ignore traditional Roman order and morals.

Understanding the political context of the dramatic setting of *De Oratore* is also crucial to understanding Cicero's arguments. For instance, the three main speakers of *De Oratore*—two of the leading rhetoricians at the time, Crassus and Antonius, and the leading legal scholar, Scaevola—were likely met with the same sense of urgency and uncertainty as to how they should act that Cicero felt during the rise of the Triumvirate and the resultant fall of the Republic. Moreover, Cicero wrote *De Oratore* for an audience who largely viewed Greek philosophy as “theoretical, impractical, and arrogant,” and yet for years his works fixated upon the integration of philosophy and rhetoric into politics.²⁴ With this sense of urgency, Cicero's friends and allies likely found his fixation on the ideal orator to be profound but impractical in terms of determining a solution to the issue at hand. Furthermore, in response to his Grecophobic audience, it is likely that Cicero framed his mentor Crassus, who lived in the midst of the Social War, as his stand-in for the dialogue and as a defender of philosophy's utility when combined with the practice of oratory.

²³ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 131.

²⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. James M. May & Jakob Wisse (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013) 6.

As an aspiring young statesman, Cicero saw himself as unready to govern, so he spent much of his twenties studying philosophy in Athens, which was still the center for philosophical discourse at the time. Cicero grew up in a small, local aristocracy outside of Rome, which meant that he had no direct connections to the Roman aristocracy. Cicero shadowed the great Roman legal scholar, Scaevola, and became known in Rome both as a legal orator and a *novus homo* (new man), an informal title that refers to Cicero as a self-made man who ascended to prominence without coming from a well-known Roman aristocratic family. In 63 BCE, the already-popular Cicero gained enough support from the Roman Senate to be elected Consul, for which he served a very successful year-long term. During his term as Consul, Cicero publicly spoke out against a conspiracy to overthrow the Republic, led by Lucius Sergius Catilina (also known as Catiline), and sent the conspirators to be executed without a formal trial. Exposing Catiline's conspiracy contributed immensely to Cicero's popularity.

In 62 BCE, Cicero gave his speech "Pro Archia Poeta," in legal defense of the poet Archias, who was accused of not qualifying as Roman citizen. When giving this speech, Cicero is well aware that he has become a model statesman who exemplifies Republican values. While Cicero spends the first half of the speech delivering a typical legal defense, he uses the second half to describe how he became a virtuous statesman, which he ascribes largely to his time dedicated to the study of poetry and the humanities more broadly. Cicero frames the second half of his speech in this way because he rose to prominence in Sulla's Rome, with its strict requirements for holding political positions.

Cicero saw himself as a model statesman not out of vanity but because he did everything according to the rules and the way one was supposed to do it.

In spite of Cicero's efforts to maintain the values that strengthened the Republic, the fifties BCE continued to be a time of great political turmoil due to juxtaposition of Cicero's being a model statesman with Crassus and Pompey usurping the traditional Roman political order established by Sulla. Crassus and Pompey later joined together with Julius Caesar to form the First Triumvirate.²⁵ Factions soon developed between Pompey and Caesar, forcing many prominent political figures to choose sides. Cicero sided with Pompey. Once Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey formed the First Triumvirate and seized control of most of political power,²⁶ Cicero declined allegiance toward them, the three abandoned support of Cicero, and Cicero's political adversaries forced him into exile in 58 BCE. Although Cicero was welcomed back from exile in 57 BCE, his efforts to reestablish the Republic from his position on the Senate proved futile. Crassus died in 53 BCE, Caesar and Pompey started a civil war to fight for leadership over Rome, which culminated in Pompey's defeat and Caesar's emergence as sole dictator of Rome. Once Caesar became the sole dictator of Rome, the Republic had permanently fallen. Later on, Cicero argued before the Senate²⁷ that they should not assassinate Caesar, since Cicero saw Caesar as the only one with the political power and capacity to reinstate the Republic.

In March of 44 BCE, a group of conspirators succeeded in assassinating Caesar, leaving Cicero and Mark Antony as the two leading political figures in Rome.

²⁵ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 133.

²⁶ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 133.

²⁷ Cicero argues against the Senate's plot to assassinate Caesar in 46 BCE in his speech "Pro Marcello".

Disagreements between the two led to the development of factions within the city, which forced many to choose between following either Cicero or Antony. Antony secured his political influence over Cicero by joining with two others, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Octavian (Caesar's nephew and adopted son), to form the Second Triumvirate of Rome. Between October and November 44 BCE, Cicero wrote *De Officiis*, his treatise on the duties of a statesman. Since Cicero's last hope for reestablishing the Republic had fallen with the death of Caesar, Cicero was at this point considering the future of Rome rather than looking nostalgically upon what Rome once was. In *De Officiis*, Cicero writes a series of letters to his son on how to live and act virtuously. At the time of writing *De Officiis*, Cicero was an old man nearing death. *De Officiis* is Cicero's attempt to preserve Republican values even after his death, and it is meant not only as advice to his son but to future Roman statesmen more generally.

After Cicero's assassination, Mark Antony gained control of Rome for about a decade until he was defeated by Octavian in 31 BCE.²⁸ Rome under Octavian (who adopted the name Caesar Augustus) was characterized by contrasting values to those which characterized great Roman men in the Republic. Despite Octavian's decision to allow Cicero's execution by the Second Triumvirate, he sought to associate with pre-Civil War values and education, so much so that Roman youths during the reign of Augustus still studied Cicero's rhetorical works.

Roman civic education, as Cicero presents it, remains a form of moral education in Roman virtue, even as he reformulates it with different *exempla* of Roman virtue and

²⁸ Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 165.

with an emphasis placed on different humanist studies depending on the political climate in which he wrote each work. My first chapter will discuss Cicero's views on education as he presents it in his dialogue *De Oratore*, and I will demonstrate how the political climate of 55 BCE with the rise of the Triumvirate influence Cicero's conception of the model statesman in this dialogue.

Section 1: Education in *De Oratore*: Learning by Imitating Virtuous Statesmen of 91 BCE

Cicero wrote *De Oratore* in 55 BCE but set the dialogue in 91 BCE with a cast composed of his mentors from his youth, whom he considered to be among the greatest orators in Roman history. Cicero begins *De Oratore* by discussing Roman political corruption caused by the degradation of morals, and he suggests that this corruption can be solved by educating aspiring Roman statesmen to model themselves on Cicero's understanding of the ideal orator, which for Cicero represents the perfect statesman. Cicero argues that the ideal orator is a master of eloquence, a set of characteristics of personality which he claims is founded on the "refinements of education."²⁹

Part of civic education in *De Oratore* involves learning by imitating the interlocutors, who protect the Roman principles of collegiality and freedom, and demonstrate the virtues of prudence (practical wisdom) and total dedication to one's city. Through the voice of his character Crassus, Cicero also suggests that statesmen should study a wide range of subjects, including philosophy and civil law, because they, respectively, teach the statesman to understand human nature to effectively sway the emotions of his audience and to avoid vices like shamelessness and laziness that are detrimental to delivering effective legal or political speeches. Civic education in *De Oratore* is synonymous with an education in virtue because serving one's city requires that a statesman learn moral righteousness and virtues, by means of which he can dedicate himself totally to the state.

²⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), I.5.

The Need for Virtue in Politics

In his first of three prologues to Book I, Cicero traces the roots of political corruption in Rome to the loss of virtue in Roman statesmen. Cicero frames *De Oratore* with a letter to his brother Quintus where he looks nostalgically upon his mentors from 91 BCE, and he connects the political problems of his day—namely Catiline's Conspiracy to overthrow Cicero's Consulship in 63 BCE and the rise of the Triumvirate in 60 BCE³⁰—to “the very disruption of traditional order and morals”³¹ that he witnessed at the dawn of the Social War in 91 BCE during his youth. These particular events were characterized by threats from various Roman statesmen to overthrow or alter the Roman Republic's mixed government, which happened either because the statesmen who led these events lacked clearly defined moral principles; or, at the very least, because they lived according to corrupt moral principles that led them to pursue selfish interests over the well-being of the Republic. Referencing Rome's political crises around 55 BCE suggests that *De Oratore* is a criticism of the statesmen of that period, especially the First Triumvirate, whose self-serving principles led them to form political factions that threatened the existence of the Republic. This idea is further supported by the cast of the dialogue: the character of Crassus was an ancestor to Crassus of the First Triumvirate. By framing the cast in this way, Cicero hints that the self-serving characteristics and haughtiness of statesmen like Crassus are also symptomatic of the disruption of order and morals.

Cicero implies that the key to restoring traditional order and morals in politics is found in urging statesmen to model their actions on the ideal orator, which, for Cicero, is

³⁰ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse, 58, footnote 3.

³¹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.3.

the perfect statesman. Becoming the perfect orator requires statesmen to receive an education in proper conduct. Cicero suggests as much when he abruptly moves from discussing the disruption of traditional order and morals to discussing the qualities of eloquent speech, which Cicero argues is founded on the “intellectual accomplishments of the most learned”³² and the “refinements of education.”³³ He then describes the characteristics of the eloquent orator, which I separate into six qualities:

1. Knowledge of a great number of things³⁴
2. Shaping the language of the speech through choice and arrangement of words³⁵
3. Understanding human emotions and how to sooth or excite the feelings of one’s audience³⁶
4. Possession of “a certain esprit and humor,” a culture befitting of a gentleman, and ability to be quick and concise in both rebuttal and attack³⁷
5. Knowledge of the past, examples and legal precedents, and mastery of statutes and civil law³⁸
6. Delivery must be regulated by movement of the body, gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflection and variation³⁹

Cicero’s reference to eloquence is partly about the content of the speech (*logos*) but is largely about the character of the speaker (*ethos*), and this education gives the statesmen the qualities befitting a gentleman, or literally a “free man,”⁴⁰ which refers at once to one’s status as a Roman citizen and to the ability to exercise control over one’s emotions and those of his audience (*pathos*). There are two main aspects of Cicero’s education of Roman men into free men: acquiring universal knowledge⁴¹ and imitating the virtuous

³² Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.5.

³³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.5.

³⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I.17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I.17.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I.17.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I.17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, I.17-18.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. May and Wisse, 61, footnote 14.

⁴¹ May and Wisse, Introduction to *De Oratore*, 11.

statesmen of a bygone era. The former gives the orator knowledge that can be useful for winning speeches and an understanding of his position as part of cosmos,⁴² and the latter gives the orator examples how to act virtuously and defend Republican values as a statesman. The members of the cast—especially Crassus—are professional orators who dedicate their lives to preserving Republican values like freedom for Roman citizens.

Learning by Imitating the Interlocutors

Crassus first mentions imitation as a method of learning in the middle of Book I, where he argues that one can learn to think like the greatest Greek orators by studying their speeches, reformulating them into one's own words and context, and attempting to give the speech with the same effect.⁴³ Cicero mentions reformulation as a learning tool that is especially useful for translating Greek speeches into the Latin language, since many Greek words did not translate literally into Latin. Learning by reformulating Greek speeches into Latin teaches the aspiring orator to understand how the greatest Greek orators ordered their thoughts in their speeches, in addition to introducing Greek vocabulary into the Latin language. Moreover, modeling one's behavior on other orators teaches the aspiring orator the most appropriate words, vocal variations, breath, and movements of the body⁴⁴ to address any particular audience in any given situation and to avoid habits that audiences might find "tasteless."⁴⁵ Since Cicero constructed *De Oratore* as a dialogue with a cast of famed Roman orators giving speeches throughout the text, it makes sense that Cicero would expect his audience of readers to imitate his interlocutors

⁴² See Robert E. Proctor, *Defining the Humanities: How Rediscovering a Tradition Can Improve Our Schools*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 17.

⁴³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.155.

⁴⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.156.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, I.156.

to learn how they think, how they deliver effective speeches, and the goals they have in mind while giving speeches. I would go so far to say that Cicero also implies that aspiring statesmen should model their actions and principles after those of the interlocutors by examining how they address the Social War in 91 BCE, which precedes the much greater political crisis of the Sullan Civil War in the eighties BCE. The need for imitating great orators of the past is part of the reason Cicero writes *De Oratore* as a dialogue rather than a philosophical treatise; the attributes of the interlocutors and the setting in 91 BCE at the beginning of the Social War matter to reading the text just as much as what the interlocutors explicitly say.

Cicero's decision to set Book I at the rise of the Social War establishes that aspiring statesmen should learn the Republican principle of collegiality by examining how the interlocutors peacefully address the impending political crisis.⁴⁶ Cicero shows this through characterizing the discussion in Book I as an attempt by Crassus, Scaevola, and Antonius—all three of whom were aristocratic Conservatives *optimates* who favored Senatorial supremacy over the popular will—and Sulpicius and Cotta—who were of the plebeians—to peacefully resolve the existing political crisis. Their willingness to have a civil discussion with men on different ideological spectrums reflects the Roman government's constitution, where the aristocracy composed the advisory body of the Senate that counseled members of the Tribune of the Plebeians (the people), only the latter of whom possessed authority to assent to laws and vote on elected offices. Cicero's first call for education by imitation is that statesmen should work together to preserve the

⁴⁶ Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. May and Wisse, 63, footnote 20.

existing Republican constitution rather than develop factions that threaten to dissolve the Republic.

Cicero's education by imitation also suggests that aspiring statesmen should learn to exemplify a uniquely Republican conception of moral righteousness that views the freedom of citizens as synonymous with the good of political society. Crassus, who represents the *optimates*, begins his first speech by praising Sulpicius and Cotta, who represent the *populares*, for developing oratorical skill that is comparable to some of the greatest Roman orators of his day, and he then extols the power of eloquence in speech because he sees nothing more admirable than "being able, through speech, to have a hold on human minds, to win over inclinations, to drive them at will in one direction, and to draw them at will from another."⁴⁷ Crassus is not praising eloquence because it gives the statesman tyrannical power over other human beings, but rather because eloquence gives orators the capacity to sway people toward establishing a free nation and peaceful communities,⁴⁸ or to put it differently, toward establishing political society. Crassus implies that the orator has the power to sway people toward any end he pleases, yet out of his moral goodness, he liberates them by leading them to a free society that establishes political and legal institutions to preserve freedom for Roman citizens. Crassus supports this notion when he asks if there is anything more powerful than when a single man's speech "reverses popular upheavals, the scruples of jurors, or the authority of the Senate,"⁴⁹ and if there is anything so magnanimous as "lending aid to those in distress, raising up the afflicted, offering people safety, freeing them from dangers, [and] saving them from

⁴⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.30.

⁴⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.30-31.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, I.31-32.

exile?”⁵⁰ The Republican principle implicit in Crassus’ first speech is that glory and magnaminty comes to the statesman who dedicates his career to serving his country and to preserving freedom for his fellow citizens. Such an aim is indeed reachable, as Crassus himself had preserved freedom for citizens through practicing legal oratory and serving as Consul in 95 BCE. One of the lessons for students of *De Oratore* is that aspiring statesmen should imitate Crassus by defending the political freedom bestowed upon citizens of the Republic.

Cicero also stresses the need for prudence in the statesman’s oratorical career, which one can learn especially by imitating his character Crassus in Book I. Crassus emphasizes that he studies philosophy with a pragmatic end in mind, and like a good Roman Republican he even mocks the Greek philosophers for being “idle and jabbering,”⁵¹ insofar as they are interested in questions pertaining to what an art is rather than those pertaining to the best way to practice that art.⁵² On the surface, this seems like a contradiction on Cicero’s part, since he later argues in Book III that statesmen should acquire universal knowledge, which includes even the aspects of philosophical learning for which Crassus mocks the Greeks. However, this is not a contradiction but is rather a tactic⁵³ by Cicero to get his other interlocutors to understand the practical application of knowledge on the statesman’s career, and after making them understand this he gradually works his way to the need for universal knowledge for the statesman.

⁵⁰ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.32.

⁵¹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.102.

⁵² *Ibid.*, I.107-108.

⁵³ See May and Wisse’ Introductory essay to *De Oratore*, 19.

Acquiring Universal Knowledge, especially of Philosophy and Civil Law

Through Crassus' first speech, Cicero argues that the orator should be capable of showing himself a "stranger to no subject."⁵⁴ In their introduction to *De Oratore*, May and Wisse suggest that the Cicero thinks an orator should have "universal knowledge,"⁵⁵ and they include philosophical topics like dialectic and ethics, along with the study of civil law. Proctor adds the study of math, literature, music and poetry⁵⁶ because he considers *De Oratore* in light of Cicero's religious worldview, which Cicero lays out in many of his other philosophical works, where he conceives of individuals as part of a greater cosmos (*mundus*) and suggests that they should discover more about it and participate in it by studying subjects that allow them to use every faculty of their reason. One of the implications of Proctor's analysis is that Cicero wants practical political statesmen to acquire as much knowledge about the world around them as they can, a notion which would have seemed ridiculous to Cicero's practical Roman contemporaries. But as May and Wisse note, Cicero gradually reveals this concept of universal knowledge for the statesman over the course of the dialogue. Cicero's character Crassus spends much of Book I trying to convince the other interlocutors of the importance of knowledge to the orator's career, so he initially promotes specific subjects like philosophy and civil law, both of which offer a clear practical utility for legal and political orators.

Crassus claims that expertise in speaking with fullness in civil procedure before a praetor, a jury, the people or the Senate is "impossible without having thoroughly examined public affairs of all sorts, without knowledge of statutes, tradition and law, and

⁵⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.32.

⁵⁵ May and Wisse, Introduction to *De Oratore*, 11.

⁵⁶ Proctor, *Defining the Humanities*, 16.

without an understanding of human character and behavior.”⁵⁷ He also notes how the power of the orator is made manifest by swaying the emotions of his audience, which can be accomplished only by someone “who has gained a thorough understanding of human character and the whole range of human nature, and of the causes by which feelings are stirred or calmed—otherwise his speech will not achieve its purpose.”⁵⁸ But knowledge of human nature was, both in Crassus’ time and in Cicero’s, ascribed to philosophers rather than orators, a notion to which Crassus concedes when he says that he “will never support an orator who challenges [this] claim.”⁵⁹ Even though the philosophers investigate human nature, the orator is the only one who deals with human nature in speech, a task “which is totally impossible without [philosophical] knowledge.”⁶⁰ In saying this, Crassus suggests that there are aspects of speaking that are not derived simply from one’s experience in the law courts or before the Senate or the people, but from an outside branch of knowledge like philosophy. He confirms this by asking if it is possible for the orator to apply his speech “to kindle emotions or to quench them again—precisely the thing most essential to the orator—without having investigated with utmost care all the theories that the philosophers have developed about human character and behavior?”⁶¹ Crassus’ comment suggests not only that the orator understands aspects of human nature from studying philosophy, but also that the orator should himself be an authoritative figure regarding philosophical knowledge of human nature, especially

⁵⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.48.

⁵⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.54.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I.54.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I.54.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, I.60.

regarding aspects of human emotions that the orator should know how to sway through speech.

A fierce contention among Cicero scholars is whether or not Cicero suggests in *De Oratore* that philosophy can teach the statesman virtue. May and Wisse argue that the text itself offers no support for the notion that “the demand that the orator master philosophy must have a moral component, in that philosophy is meant as a moral factor, which will guarantee that the orator will not abuse his rhetorical skills.”⁶² They further explain their argument in this way:

Cicero had no illusions that philosophical knowledge could turn bad people into good ones... His ideal orator, of course, is a good man, in the sense that he will use his eloquence for good purposes... His high moral qualities, however... are part of the *prerequisites* for becoming a speaker worthy of the high name of ‘orator’. The moral issue, then, is not connected with the knowledge theme, and plays a very minor part in *De Oratore*.⁶³

In other words, May and Wisse’s reading of *De Oratore* suggests that moral virtue precedes the study of philosophy, which informs the orator’s rhetoric with its ends or aims. I agree with May and Wisse that Cicero does not in *De Oratore* clearly link the study of philosophy with the acquisition of virtue. However, Cicero does link other types of knowledge—namely, knowledge of civil law—to the acquisition of virtue.

Crassus pushes for the orator to learn civil law because it teaches the orator to avoid shamelessness, a vice that is detrimental to successfully delivering a speech in someone’s defense. An orator who neglects knowledge of civil law acquires shameless because he does not care about presenting the most effective speech to secure his client’s

⁶² May and Wisse, Introduction to *De Oratore*, 11-12.

⁶³ May and Wisse, Introduction to *De Oratore*, 12.

freedom, which he can reasonably secure by knowing the precedents and technical points of the law. Such an orator will therefore resort to shameless pleading in a legal trial because he lacks knowledge of the law conducive to winning his case. The vice of shamelessness is especially harmful in cases that involve “authoritative legal opinions, precedents, [and] testamentary formulas”⁶⁴ where knowledge of civil law can be essential to winning a case. Many of the examples Crassus cites are legal cases that threaten to take away civic status from a Roman citizen who serves the city as a public statesman. One such example Crassus cites is the case of Gaius Mancius, a former Consul who was ordered to be removed by one of the tribunes of the plebs for not being a Roman citizen, “since it was established tradition that someone who had been sold by his father or by the people or had been surrendered by the *pater patratus*, had no right to a resumption of civic status.”⁶⁵ In Crassus’ mind, “no trial can be more serious than one about a man’s freedom,”⁶⁶ precisely because the statesman cannot serve the state without first possessing the freedom to do so.

Crassus continues to defend knowledge of civil law because it teaches the orator to avoid the vice of laziness. Crassus says that it is easy for many orators to avoid studying civil law due to laziness because the discipline itself is too disorganized, which is detrimental to the case if the orator does not know a precedent on account of his laziness. He then laments that rigorous disciplines, especially civil law, contains a vast number of historical precedents and examples that very few people know about because

⁶⁴ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.181.

⁶⁵ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.182.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I.183.

they are “disjointed and kept apart.”⁶⁷ To remedy this, Crassus suggests that categorizing all past cases and precedents makes the task of studying the law much more practically manageable for the orator.⁶⁸ The implication here is that organizing knowledge is a requirement of oratory, without which the orator would not be able to organize his thoughts into an effective, evidence-based speech that wins the case. Organizing knowledge is, however, difficult and tedious because, as Crassus notes, much of the information concerning the discipline of law is too disorganized. Thus, he suggests that the orator should take on the task of organizing the discipline for his own use, the rigor of which requires him to avoid laziness so that he might complete it and help himself become victorious in future cases.

As previously mentioned, Cicero gradually moves from discussing the statesman’s need to know civil law to suggesting that the statesman acquire universal knowledge, yet this move makes more sense when we contextualize it with Cicero’s discussion of the laws in *De Legibus*, which he wrote only a few years after writing *De Oratore*. In *De Legibus*, Cicero suggests that discussion of the laws must begin with discussion of the natural law. To know the natural law, the statesman must use his reason to determine what nature commands and prohibits.⁶⁹ He also suggests that particular statutes of civil law are subordinate to the natural law because “distorted habits and false opinions”⁷⁰ can influence them to write down erroneous regulations to aspects of the civil

⁶⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.188.

⁶⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.191.

⁶⁹ Cicero, *De Legibus*, edited by James E.G. Zetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), I.42.

⁷⁰ Cicero, *De Legibus*, I.30.

law, whereas the natural law is a necessary, unchanging characteristic of external reality that can be discovered by any human being with the proper use of reason alone.

Understanding the nature of things is important because, as Proctor notes, Cicero sees the cosmos as unchanging and perfect, and human beings, who are imperfect and constantly in flux, can share in the universe's perfection by contemplating and pondering the perfect reason that governs the whole of reality⁷¹. Proctor continues, saying that “[c]ontemplating and imitating the universe, moreover, brings one peace, for it frees the soul from the turbulent fears and desires, the sorrows and unrestrained joys, of contingent human existence.”⁷² To tie this back with education of statesmen in *De oratore*, Proctor's argument suggests that knowing civil law, for Cicero, goes beyond its utility in winning legal cases by calming the perturbations of the orator's soul.

Cicero further describes the need for calming the perturbations of the soul in *De Re Publica*, written after *De Oratore* and around the same time as *De Legibus* between 55 and 50 BCE. In Cicero's “Somnium Scipionis” (“The Dream of Scipio”), which is perhaps the most famous excerpt from *De Re Publica* and all of Cicero, the great Roman general Scipio Africanus appears in a dream to his adopted grandson Scipio Aemilianus to advise his grandson to “not give yourself to the words of the mob”⁷³ and to “not place your hopes in human rewards,”⁷⁴ for “virtue itself by its own allurements should draw you towards true honor.”⁷⁵ The elder Scipio also tells his grandson that “it is not you that is

⁷¹ Proctor, *Defining the Humanities*, 18.

⁷² Proctor, *Defining the Humanities*, 18-19.

⁷³ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, trans. James E.G. Zetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), VI.25.

⁷⁴ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, VI.25.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, VI.25.

mortal but your body” because the soul, which is immortal, animates the body.⁷⁶

Reflecting Cicero’s *De Legibus*, where he discusses how to calm the perturbations of the soul, the elder Scipio concludes his grandson’s dream by cautioning his grandson to “[u]se your soul in the best activities! And the best concerns are those that involve the safety of the fatherland” and “by contemplating those things that are outside [the soul] draws itself as much as possible from the body.”⁷⁷ Cicero concludes that the human being can calm the immortal part of his being (i.e., the soul) by pursuing eternal things like pursuing glory through service to the city and contemplating the cosmos rather than seeking temporal pleasures.

Cicero contends that statesmen should acquire universal knowledge because it teaches statesmen to fully become free men, by which they can know the defining characteristics of the natural law, and through which they can understand their obligations to the state, their friends, and themselves. In Book III of *De Oratore*, Cicero moves from knowing specific subjects to possessing universal knowledge, because he suggests that statesman should also possess knowledge in fields like “mathematics, music, the study of literature and poetry,”⁷⁸ as well as “the doctrines on the nature of the universe, human behavior, and the affairs of the state.”⁷⁹ These courses of study are at once useful for the statesman in helping him govern effectively, and it also helps him further understand the characteristics of the cosmos and his role within it. Knowing this prepares the statesman to perform his duty to the state with resolve.

⁷⁶ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, VI.26.

⁷⁷ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, VI.29.

⁷⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, III.127.

⁷⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, III.127.

Cicero's *De Oratore* details the two parts of an education that shapes statesmen into free men: learning by imitating other free men and acquiring universal knowledge. He especially stresses the importance of knowing philosophy and civil law.

Even though the interlocutors of *De Oratore* from the nineties BCE were among the most eloquent orators in Roman history, they still did not successfully resolve the crisis of the Social War. Crassus died only a few days after the dialogue's dramatic date, and Antonius served as a general during the Social War and fought on Sulla's side in the Civil War between Marius and Sulla in the eighties BCE. He was later put to death by Marius and Lucius Cornelius Cinna. Even though Cicero's model Roman statesmen, who emphasize the practice of oratory rather than military generalship, are exceptional Roman rulers, they were nonetheless defeated by Roman generals. This ironic fact of history may suggest that Cicero's ideal orator was not what Rome thought it needed at this time, and that the Romans preferred the deliberate actions of non-virtuous military generals to the nobility and virtue of Cicero's eloquent orators.

My next chapter will move from the nineties BCE to the sixties BCE to cover Cicero's speech "Pro Archia Poeta," which is still about reflecting upon historical *exempla* of Republican virtue as a way of learning virtue oneself, but it is also about Cicero as the living example of an eloquent orator who protects Roman values and promotes the study of the humanities (especially poetry) for public statesmen.

Section 2: Education in “Pro Archia Poeta”: Cicero as the model Statesman in 62 BCE

The sixties BCE were a tumultuous period for politics in Rome, most notably because of Catiline’s Conspiracy in 63 BCE to assassinate Cicero and overthrow Rome’s Republican government. There was a distinct contrast between the characters of men like Catiline, who are willing to overthrow the Republic to achieve their own goals, and the virtuous Roman public servants of the nineties and before who dedicate their lives to serving the Republic. Cicero was consciously aware that he was himself one of the few *exempla* of Republican virtue left in Rome during the sixties BCE. Fully aware of his role as an *exempla* of Republican virtue, Cicero promoted a return to Republican values in 62 BCE in an unusual legal speech given in defense of his friend and mentor, Archias the poet.

In “Pro Archia Poeta,” Cicero implies that Archias’ practice of poetry sufficiently qualifies him for citizenship because it constitutes a legitimate service to the city. The first half of Cicero’s speech presents itself as a fairly typical legal defense of the poet Archias’ Roman citizenship. Cicero provides evidence of documentation that confirmed Archias’ residence in Rome, which at the time amply qualified him for citizenship. Yet in an unusual move for a legal defense, Cicero dedicates the second half of his speech to explain that he admires Archias for his trade as a poet, and he believes that the art of poetry, in addition to other humanistic fields like philosophy and history, complements a statesman’s education. We must realize that Cicero gave this speech a year after his Consulship, so he had no underlying political motives for defending Archias and the art

of poetry. Tying both halves of the speeches together, the speech's second half reveals a subtlety in Cicero's argument, asserting that not only is Archias legally a citizen, but also that Archias deserves to be a Roman because of the invaluable benefit that his art of poetry provides for the city's public statesmen. Moreover, Cicero uses the second half of the speech to describe the type of man he is and how his study of poetry and the humanities more broadly helped him become that way.

Poetry as a Service to the City

The second half of Cicero's speech implies a connection between studying the humanities and what it means to be a Roman citizen who pursues glory through serving the Republic.⁸⁰ Such a claim was potentially scandalous, as the Romans understood citizenship as an elite political and legal status given to the people of Rome and members of the Roman Senate who participate in public affairs, in contrast with the modern conception of citizenship as a status of residency that can theoretically be granted to anyone. Not only is Cicero suggesting that Archias possesses the elite status of a public servant of Rome as a poet, but he goes so far to claim that Archias deserves to be Roman for promoting the humanistic studies. In defense of this proposition, Cicero asserts that the humanities provide statesmen with content for their speeches,⁸¹ entertainment that enriches one's soul,⁸² and the ability to study great men of the past.⁸³

⁸⁰ Dustin A. Gish, Introduction to "In Defense of Aulus Licinius Archias the Poet," Unpublished typescript, University of Houston, 2013.

⁸¹ Cicero, "In Defense of Aulus Licinius Archias the Poet," trans. Robert E. Proctor, Unpublished typescript, Connecticut College, 2013, VI.12.

⁸² Cicero, "In Defense of Archias the Poet," VI.12.

⁸³ Cicero, "In Defense of Archias the Poet," VI.14.

The most important of these three benefits to Cicero's argument is the third mentioned: that poets record the history of great Roman public servants.⁸⁴ After all, one cannot learn from the great Romans of the past or enjoy intellectually stimulating entertainment without reading about these great men from some sort of documentation. Regarding this third benefit, Cicero believes that it is important for the poet to transcribe the actions of great public servants so that young men may later study and imitate the righteous actions of their forefathers.⁸⁵ As an aspiring young statesman in the eighties BCE, Cicero educated himself in the art of statesmanship by studying Greek philosophy, military history, and Homeric literature. Having no family connections to the Roman aristocracy himself, Cicero learned much of his military strategy from Thucydides, and he derives his political philosophy from agreements and clashes with the works of Plato and Aristotle. Cicero noted that studying heroes in poetic fiction can also be supplementary for a statesman's education because these heroes are depicted as great men worthy of being imitated. He gives the example of Alexander the Great, who strove to imitate the strength and courage of his hero Achilles, originally from Homer's *Iliad*.⁸⁶

Even though Cicero largely developed his own character by reading Greek poetry and philosophy, he especially prizes Greek and Latin poetry for preserving through time the quintessential Roman virtues, especially courage and seeking honorable things regardless of harm to oneself. Cicero notes that not only did his boyhood investment in the studies of humanity improve his faculty as an orator,⁸⁷ but they also taught him "that

⁸⁴ Cicero, "In Defense of Archias the Poet," VI.14.

⁸⁵ Cicero, "In Defense of Aulus Licinius Archias the Poet," VI.14.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, X.24.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, VI.13.

in this life there is no greater work than to seek praise and what deserves honour; and that, in pursuing these all tortures of the body, all risks of death and of exile are to be deemed insignificant.”⁸⁸ One such example of honorable action in Cicero’s own past was his tireless work “in defence of your safety,”⁸⁹ an allusion to his defense of the Romans as a legal orator and Consul. Moreover, Cicero praises Greek and Latin poets for giving statesmen “images of the most courageous men”⁹⁰ to serve as models “not only for contemplation, but for imitation!”⁹¹ This suggests that he values courage as one of the virtues that made Roman statesmen among the most illustrious in history, and that one can learn courage by studying the actions of courageous men, whom the poets record in their literature.

Of course, Cicero understood that reading poetry is not absolutely necessary to develop just statesmen. Cicero notes that many great rulers—for example, Scipio Africanus from Rome in the 200s BCE—did not require poetry to develop into estimable Roman public servants.⁹² Nonetheless, Cicero understood poetry and other humanistic studies as invaluable supplements to a statesman’s educational development, as he learned from his own upbringing. Moreover, Cicero did not rise to prominence in the public sphere without first consulting the public men who preceded him. Since he had no family members of the Roman aristocracy whom he could consult, he closely shadowed a mentor, namely Scaevola, whose position he sought to hold one day.

⁸⁸ Cicero, “In Defense of Archias the Poet,” VI.14.

⁸⁹ Cicero, “In Defense of Archias the Poet,” VI.14.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, VI.14

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, VI.14.

⁹² *Ibid.*, VII.16.

Even though the poet encapsulates Roman virtue in his poetry, a critic of Cicero might reply that this still seems like an insufficient reason to justify the view that the poet has an inherent connection with a public statesman pursuing glory through service to the Republic. This argument especially does not hold if it suggests that the poet ought to be welcomed into the city simply because he provides the city with some tangible benefits. After all, poets and other humanists are certainly not the only artisans who provide some benefit to the city and its rulers. For example, the merchant, who brings and sells goods from other cities, provides physical nourishment to the city and those who govern it. Likewise, the charioteer, who represents Rome in races overseen by nobility from a variety of cities, demonstrates all three Roman virtues by practicing his trade. In other words, why should Cicero not also accept these artisans into the city with the same open arms that he extends to Archias the poet? I answer that while, indeed, the merchant and the charioteer exhibit Roman virtues and provide benefits to the city through the practice of their craft, they do not fall into the same category as the poets because they benefit Rome with physical goods, which are perishable; the poet, however, provides an intangible service to the city that emphasizes and strengthens the virtues that bestow upon the Romans their own unique identity and distinguishes Romans from men in other cities. Cicero demonstrates a remarkable use of rhetoric in saying that Rome should invite Archias the poet into the city as a citizen because, in knowing the manners, customs, and virtues of the city, Archias documents the actions of great men so that future generations might follow in their footsteps when pursuing glory through public service.

The poet's craft of recording the deeds and speeches of great Roman men is something Cicero often cites as the source of his success as a rhetorician and a man of the city, especially in his dialogue *De Re Publica*⁹³ (the sections of it that which are not lost to history), which he wrote about a decade after delivering "Pro Archia" and only a few years after writing *De Oratore*. In *De Re Publica*, Cicero looks to Scipio Aemilianus's suggestions that the best regime can only exist in history if the leaders of the city are educated in virtue. Cicero gets most of his materials for his speeches from the poets, meaning that he reads the men of old through studying literature and philosophy written by the poets. Cicero goes so far to claim that "by these studies my faculty as an orator is improved, a faculty that, as far as it exists in me, has never failed my friends when they have been in peril."⁹⁴ Cicero's view of poetry as the finest form of entertainment falls into this category as well, as it is an intellectually stimulating form of entertainment that can aid any public official in any time.

Cicero's defense of the benefits of poetry for the city can be extended to a defense of the poets in the city to aid the aspiring and practicing statesman in their dedication to defend the safety and security of their city. Cicero seems to be modeling a statesman's education in the humanities on his own educational upbringing. This suggests that Cicero ideally would have aspiring statesmen begin studying Greek and Latin poetry, history, and philosophy (however limited) during their youth, and continue studying the humanities in their adulthood for the express purpose of strengthening their own characters through imitating men of old. Cicero also establishes his own life as the new

⁹³ Exact publication date is unknown.

⁹⁴ Cicero, "In Defense of Aulus Licinius Archias the Poet," VI.13.

path for new men, which implies that statesmen should look to him as a living *exempla* of virtue because he studied the humanistic arts in his youth and early adulthood, which provided him with the virtues that allowed him to accomplish his finest hour when he exposed Catiline's Conspiracy.

Comparison with Education in *De Oratore*

Cicero's presentation of education in "Pro Archia" differs slightly from how he portrayed it in *De Oratore*, mainly because Cicero in "Pro Archia" grounds the prospect of becoming a virtuous, eloquent orator in the present reality, since Cicero was himself living proof that exemplifying the Republican spirit was indeed achievable no matter how incredibly difficult. Moreover, in "Pro Archia," the content of the education focuses mainly on how learning poetry teaches the statesman the Republican values of frugality, self-sacrifice, and total dedication to one's city, a notion which conflicts with *De Oratore* where Cicero suggests that philosophy—which, like poetry, is among the studies of humanity—cannot teach the statesman virtue.

These two works differ mainly in that Cicero wrote "Pro Archia" in 62 BCE with an optimistic attitude about the future of Roman public statesmen after he ascended the ranks of political power as a *novus homo* according to the strict order established by Sulla and led an extraordinarily successful Consulship, whereas he wrote *De Oratore* with a pessimistic attitude after Crassus and Pompey disrupted the established Sullan political order most notably by becoming elected co-Consuls in 70 BCE. *De Oratore* focuses on the ideal orator to address the disruption of traditional order and morals that culminated in more kinds of political crises like Catiline's Conspiracy in 63 BCE, the effects of

which Cicero was still dealing with in 55 BCE. For this reason, much of the statesman's education presented in *De Oratore* (especially in Book I) is about the practical benefits of learning civil law to win a legal or political argument, and the implications behind acquiring virtues by studying civil law comes towards the end of discussing the practical benefits. The same is true with the study of philosophy in *De Oratore*: it gives the statesman the practical benefit of understanding human nature to move the emotions of his audience, and it comes with the additional benefit of teaching the statesman to know himself. Moreover, the study of other subjects like poetry and history comes at the end of Crassus' speech on civil law in Book I, not in a way that demeans these disciplines, but in a manner that suggests that philosophy and civil law take priority.

In both "Pro Archia" and *De Oratore*, Cicero emphasizes learning by imitating historical *exempla* of Roman values and virtues that made the Republic strong in its beginning. "Pro Archia" is unique because it especially emphasizes that the study of poetry is a service to the city because it teaches statesmen the Republican values and virtues essential to effective and principled performance of his responsibilities as a statesman.

"Pro Archia" suggests that acquiring virtue requires an education in poetry and other humanistic studies that record the virtues of Rome's most illustrious statesmen that contributed to their accomplishments as Roman statesmen. It also shows Cicero changing adding himself as an *exempla* of Roman virtue, in addition to the greatest statesmen in Rome's history, and it suggests that aspiring statesmen should learn how to act virtuously

to become a political figure worthy of great glory and of being remembered by future Romans for their virtues and political accomplishments.

After the sixties BCE, Cicero's model Republican statesman became obsolete once Pompey and Crassus broke from the established order by becoming co-Consuls in 70 BCE, later adding Julius Caesar to form the Triumvirate. Factions later developed around Pompey and Caesar, which resulted in another set of Roman Civil Wars in 49 BCE, culminating in Pompey's defeat in 48 BCE and the end of the Republic with Caesar's ascension as sole dictator of Rome in 46 BCE. In this same year, Cicero received Caesar's permission to return to the forum after several years of exile to deliver his speech "Pro Marcello," in which he argues that Caesar is the only one who can restore the Republican Constitution.⁹⁵ Cicero wrote *De Officiis*, the subject of my next chapter, as his last chance to influence and to preserve Republican values for future Roman statesmen.

⁹⁵ Cicero, "In Support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus," *Selected Speeches*, trans. Michael Grant (Penguin Books Ltd, 1989), viii.23.

Section 3: Education in *De Officiis*: Preserving Republican Values for Future Generations

Cicero wrote his treatise *De Officiis* between October and November of 44 B.C, only a few months after Caesar's assassination and only a few months before he was himself assassinated. In 45 BCE came the death of Cicero's daughter Tullia, which brought him into mourning for about a year. To get his mind off of his daughter's death, Cicero returned to his villa at Tusculum to write about difficult philosophical topics about human life, producing works such as *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum (On the Ends of Good and Evil)* and *Disputationes Tusculanae (Tusculan Disputations)* in 45 BCE, and *De Senectute (On Old Age)* in 44 BCE. Once Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March in 44 BCE, Cicero and Mark Antony remained as the two most influential men in Rome, but they formed opposing factions. Antony viewed Cicero as an enemy and eventually plotted his assassination in 43 BCE.

Unlike with *De Oratore*, Cicero writes *De Officiis* as a treatise rather than a dialogue. Cicero's main focus in *De Officiis* is to use philosophical inquiry to understand which courses of action are honorable,⁹⁶ which courses of action are advantageous,⁹⁷ and what to do when they arrive at an apparent conflict "when something apparently beneficial appears to conflict with what is honourable"⁹⁸.⁹⁹ Moreover, instead of looking back upon the virtuous Romans who mentored him and putting them in dialogue with one another, Cicero at the time of writing *De Officiis* understands that the Republic

⁹⁶ Cicero, *De Officiis*, edited by M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I.9.

⁹⁷ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.9.

⁹⁸ Sic.

⁹⁹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.9.

effectively fell with the death of Caesar, so he writes *De Officiis* as a handbook for future statesmen to exemplify Republican values and possibly restore the Republic in the future.

It makes sense that Cicero would think such an education to be necessary for his son and his son's contemporaries, since his son was born in 65 BCE,¹⁰⁰ lived his youth in the fifties BCE during the political rule-breaking of Crassus and Pompey, and matured in the forties BCE in the midst of Caesar's Civil War. Cicero's son and other members of his son's generation likely knew nothing of duties or noble action, which prompted Cicero to transcribe the statesman's duties for his son and other aspiring Roman statesmen.

In *De Officiis*, Cicero describes particular virtues that the statesman ought to express as a public official, both in the public eye and in private. Written as letters of advice to his son Marcus, *De Officiis* demonstrates Cicero's merging together of politics and philosophy, or the use of practical wisdom as a guide for prudent action. Such a treatise is quite timely, as Cicero's son was studying philosophy and rhetoric in Athens at the time. These letters are meant to be an education in the positive duties of a statesman, and they also teach Cicero's son to think independently.

Integrating Philosophy into Political Action

De Officiis offers a set of instructions for future Roman statesmen on how to act virtuously, as well as being a lesson in intellectual debate for his son. Cicero acknowledges this fact in the opening lines of Book I, where he notes that the virtues

¹⁰⁰ Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, I.ii, accessed online at <http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=PerseusLatinTexts&getid=1&query=Cic.%20Att.%201.2>.

considered in the treatise come from the Stoics, while his son is studying in Athens with Crattipus, a leading Peripatetic.

[Y]ou ought to be filled to overflowing philosophical advice and instruction, through the great authority of both teacher and city: the former can improve you with his knowledge, the latter through her examples.¹⁰¹

This message reflects Cicero's promotion of two elements of education in *De Oratore*, as he suggests that the statesman should receive a theoretical education through the study of philosophy and a practical education through imitating other statesmen.

This passage also highlights what will become the central defense of humanistic education in this treatise: the integration of philosophy and politics. Even in Cicero's time, statesmen often viewed philosophy as incompatible with politics, largely because philosophy questioned the city's authority. Cicero is telling his son that he should consider both philosophy and the city as authorities for him as an aspiring statesman. This description frames philosophy as a collection of theoretical knowledge that shapes one's beliefs and subsequently guides him toward prudent action as a man of the city. In *De Officiis* Cicero focuses on teaching the philosophy of the Stoics, Peripatetics, Aristotelians,¹⁰² and even Plato,¹⁰³ Cicero's personal views which typically consist of slight amendments to the doctrines of these thinkers. This change in focus shifts the tone away from that of "Pro Archia," in which Cicero defends the humanities as an invaluable supplement to statesman's education as a public servant and as the highest form of entertainment. Instead, the treatise is a philosophical discussion of practical matters.

¹⁰¹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.1.

¹⁰² Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.6.

¹⁰³ Cicero repeatedly alludes to the works of Plato throughout *De Officiis*. One such example can be found at *De Officiis* I.22.

Cicero notes how the benefits of a humanistic education can lead one to distinguish virtuous action from its opposite and to act virtuously in both personal and public life.

Philosophy as a Teacher of Duties and Virtues

Cicero introduces his first letter to his son by praising the pragmatic use of philosophy as a teacher of duties:

Many weighty and beneficial matters in philosophy have been discussed accurately and expansively by philosophers. However, it is their teachings and their advice on the question of duties that seem to have the widest application. For no part of life, neither public affairs nor private... can be free from duty. Everything that is honourable in a life depends upon its cultivation, and everything dishonourable upon its neglect.¹⁰⁴

The above passage suggests that the study of philosophy is applicable to the statesman because it teaches him about three types of duties: 1) duties in public affairs that are concerned with practical and immediate responsibilities as a statesman, 2) duties in private affairs like one's responsibility to his friends and family, and 3) one's theoretical conception of duties that fulfill the end of life. This third type of duty reflects Cicero's earlier work, the "Somnium Scipionis" from *De Re Publica*, where Scipio Africanus appears in a dream to his grandson Scipio Aemilianus to advise him to dedicate himself to defending the safety of the state and nourishing his soul.¹⁰⁵

Philosophy also advises the statesman on proper courses of action to fulfill those duties. In Book II of *De Officiis*, Cicero also suggests that one of the appeals of studying philosophy is that it helps one acquire constancy and virtue, noting that "if any discipline can attain those for us, it is this one."¹⁰⁶ Cicero's understanding of philosophy as a teacher

¹⁰⁴ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.4

¹⁰⁵ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, trans. James E.G. Zetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), VI.29.

¹⁰⁶ Cicero, *De Officiis*, II.6.

of virtue contrasts with his understanding of philosophy in *De Oratore*, where, as May and Wisse argue,¹⁰⁷ Cicero describes morality as a prerequisite and nowhere suggests that philosophy teaches the statesman morals.

Cicero points specifically to the Stoic and Peripatetic schools of philosophy as teachers of duties because they share a theoretical understanding of virtue as an end of life. Atkins notes the importance of the Stoic school of philosophy on Cicero's understanding of virtue as he presents it to his son in *De Officiis*, as she reminds us that the Stoics held that "the end of life was virtue; virtue was the only thing that was good, and to live well was to live virtuously."¹⁰⁸ The Stoics also understood vice to be the only evil and thought that external advantages like health and wealth were not good but 'preferable', and that disadvantages like sickness, poverty, and death were not bad but 'unpreferable'.¹⁰⁹ The Stoics also thought that wisdom was essential to virtue, for they thought that one lived virtuously by choosing wisely and steadily 'the things in accordance with nature', and what matters is that one chooses well in the pursuit of preferable things¹¹⁰. Cicero, therefore, stresses the importance of philosophy because it gives the statesman the capacity to choose well.

Even though Cicero preferred the Stoic school of philosophy, he sent his son to study in Athens with Cratippus,¹¹¹ a leading philosopher of the Peripatetic school. While the Peripatetics did promote a slightly different view of virtue—they understood virtue as the highest good whereas the Stoics saw it as the only good—the decision to let his son

¹⁰⁷ James M. May & Jakob Wisse, Introduction to *De Oratore*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 12.

¹⁰⁸ E.M. Atkins, "Summary of the Doctrines of the Hellenistic Schools," *De Officiis*, xxxv.

¹⁰⁹ Atkins, "Summary of Doctrines," xxxv.

¹¹⁰ Atkins, "Summary of Doctrines," xxxv.

¹¹¹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.1.

study with a Peripatetic is not a contradiction in Cicero's philosophical worldview because the Stoics and the Peripatetics both understood virtue to be a good and beneficial end. However, both Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines are incompatible with those of the Epicureans, to whose doctrines Cicero repeatedly objects because they conceive of pleasure as the end of life and value virtues only insofar as they provide one with pleasure.¹¹² One can reasonably conclude that Cicero values the study of any of the popular philosophical schools—whether they be the Stoics, Peripatetics, or even original texts by Plato and Aristotle—provided that those schools promote virtue as a good in itself rather than as beneficial only as a means to pleasure.

When deciding on a course of action, Cicero notes that human beings deliberate on the philosophical question of whether that action is honorable or dishonorable—i.e., good or bad, virtue or vice, right or wrong. Cicero's answer to this question comes from his understanding of human nature and the natural law, which, again, are philosophical topics. He notes that men distinguish themselves from animals by naturally possessing the capacity for rational speech and desiring to pursue truth¹¹³. Cicero also notes that human beings perceive “the beauty, the loveliness, and the congruence of the parts” of nature, and shaping one's reason in accordance with the order of nature leads one to conclude that “constancy and order should be preserved... in one's decisions and in one's deeds.”¹¹⁴ He concludes that nature defines what is honorable and dishonorable; and even if no one praises a particular action as honorable, the action is nonetheless honorable according to nature.

¹¹² Atkins, “Summary of Doctrines,” xxxvi.

¹¹³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.13.

¹¹⁴ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.14

Cicero defines the honorable as equivalent to the beneficial, and he adds that anything dishonorable that is pursued for the sake of benefit can neither be beneficial nor honorable. Reflecting Plato's *Phaedrus*,¹¹⁵ Cicero argues that the pursuit of honor arises from one of four parts¹¹⁶: (1) truth seeking, (2) fellowship, (3) constancy and loftiness of spirit, and (4) modesty conducted with order and limit.¹¹⁷ Of these four parts, truth seeking requires wisdom and good sense,¹¹⁸ whereas the other three aim at acquiring necessities.¹¹⁹ Fellowship, constancy, and moderation are similar qualities insofar as each seeks at preserving healthy relations among individuals and within oneself. These three traits require not only particular states of mind, but also action guided by principle, as Cicero confirms that "[a]ll the praise that belongs to virtue lies in action."¹²⁰

Reflecting the Stoic understanding of living virtuously as choosing the things that accord with nature, Cicero conceives of virtue in *De Officiis* as the proper modes of conduct that assist in one's decision making. The four virtues—wisdom, justice, liberality (kindness), and seemliness—are each directed towards the acquisition of honour. The first of these virtues, wisdom, leads to the possibility of the other three,¹²¹ as wisdom leads to the "discovery of what is true, and that is the peculiar function of that virtue."¹²² The next three virtues, particularly justice, seek to instill fellowship among men and punishment for those who harm others. Liberality within one's own means—or charitable

¹¹⁵ Griffin suggests that Cicero is referring to *Phaedrus* 250d. See Cicero, *De Officiis*, edited by M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I.15, footnote 1.

¹¹⁶ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.15.

¹¹⁷ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I.15.

¹¹⁹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.17.

¹²⁰ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.195.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, I.15.

¹²² *Ibid.*, I.15.

works, as we call it today—leads to good relations among men. Moreover, Cicero stresses that a man must appear just to others while also being just. The benefits of justice do not appear unless others believe a man to be just, and that the actions of a just man would likely appear just to those around him anyhow.

Justice, according to Cicero, is essential for good relations among men because it is the underlying foundation for fellowship and is the bond that holds companions together. He bases this on two principles of action: a negative principle (a) that no man should harm another unless he has himself been harmed by injustice;¹²³ and a positive principle (b) that one should treat common goods as common and private goods as private.¹²⁴ In defense of this, Cicero argues that we are not born for ourselves alone, but rather our country claims one part of our birth and our friends another.¹²⁵ He notes two types of injustices: when men inflict an injury upon another, or when one man fails to deflect an injury when he sees it being inflicted upon another.¹²⁶ These principles of injustice refer to positive political action that injures another, and political inaction that injures someone not deserving of injury. Furthermore, he notes that a just man is also prudent, which involves acting according to the guidance of wisdom. But his conception of wisdom here is quite practical, as he provides an example that it is imprudent to return a borrowed weapon to an insane man.

¹²³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.20.

¹²⁴ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.20.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, I.22.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, I.23.

In addition to justice, Cicero looks to beneficence and liberality,¹²⁷ greatness of spirit,¹²⁸ and seemliness¹²⁹ as character traits worthy of honor. He regards beneficence and liberality as qualities that hold together fellowship among men. One's kindness, Cicero argues, must not harm anyone. He also holds that one must give to each what he deserves, and he must not give to others that which lies outside of his means.¹³⁰ Moreover, Cicero emphasizes that duty and anything worthy of praise must be practiced within the public eye and in one's private life. Cicero also values greatness of spirit, which is performing deeds, which are worthy of praise in themselves, with courage. He gives two examples: (a) disdain for external things and love for the honorable and seemly; and (b) performing deeds that are both great and beneficial.¹³¹ Fourthly, Cicero speaks highly of seemliness, which involves acting with a sense of shame, living an orderly life, exercising restraint and modesty against all agitations of spirit. To put it differently, adopting beneficence and liberality, greatness of spirit, and seemliness helps the statesman rebuild the statesman's political integrity, which Rome lacked ever since Crassus and Pompey disrupted the traditional Roman political order by becoming co-Consuls in 70 BCE. Gaining political integrity enriches the statesman's life both personally by healing his soul and publically by helping him achieve successfully pursue glory through service to the city.

Because of his sympathies with the Stoic school of philosophy, Cicero believes that one must quell his passions so that reason can guide his actions. To place reason as

¹²⁷ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.42.

¹²⁸ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.61.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, I.93.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, I.42.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, I.66.

his guide one must harness knowledge of philosophy to first understand what the good and the virtuous are, which then enables him to understand how he should act so that he simultaneously promotes the good and the virtuous.¹³² In so doing, he also fulfills the Stoic belief of participating in reason, which is the highest and unchanging part of the cosmos.

Comparison with Education in *De Oratore* and “Pro Archia Poeta”

One will notice that, remarkably, Cicero’s *De Oratore*, “Pro Archia Poeta,” and *De Officiis*, despite ranging widely in composition history and audience, share more consistencies than differences in their presentation of civic education. All three of these works defend a dualistic education based on learning by imitating emplers of Republican virtue and learning by acquiring knowledge of many things. This suggests that Cicero’s philosophical worldview was fairly consistent over the course of his career as a public statesman. Both *De Officiis* and *De Oratore* emphasize the importance of acquiring prudence through philosophical learning, and both look back upon past virtuous statesmen as models for how present statesmen should conduct themselves in public and in private. They also share in their dualistic approach to education through imitating great statesmen and through studying the humanities.

“Pro Archia,” however, differs widely from *De Oratore* and *De Officiis* because of Cicero’s optimistic attitude towards the future of Rome, which is almost absent in *De Oratore* and *De Officiis*. “Pro Archia” views Cicero as the sole living *exempla* of Roman values for the present age, and he was able to become this way by following all the rules

¹³² Atkins, “Summary of Doctrines,” xxxvi.

and requirements of the traditional Roman political order prescribed by Sulla. *De Oratore*, in contrast, understands that the Roman statesmen in 55 BCE—especially Crassus and Pompey—directly opposed traditional order when they declared themselves co-Consuls, and in response to this disruption of traditional order and morals it presents an alternative way of life for men of the fifties BCE based in the nineties BCE. *De Officiis* also presents a pessimistic view of Roman politics, as Cicero wrote it after the traditional Roman political order completely dissolved with the assassination of Caesar.

De Oratore differs from *De Officiis* insofar as they both represent different approaches to describing proper conduct for the statesman, and they were written in different genres with different purposes in mind. Even though *De Oratore* is a Socratic dialogue, it is also quite literally a collection of speeches by some of the greatest Roman orators in history. For this reason, its genre as a dialogue encourages readers to imitate the interlocutors, both in speech and in virtue. *De Officiis* is a philosophical treatise that is much closer to the style of a statesman's 'how-to' manual because it simply lists the aims and virtues of a statesmen instead of placing several virtuous men in conversation with one another and forcing the reader to deduce their virtues and beliefs.

Secondly, Cicero wrote each of these in Cicero partly set *De Oratore* in 91 BCE to suggest an alternative way of living for statesmen in 55 BCE, many of whom like Crassus and Pompey pursue personal ambition that threatens to destroy the city instead of protecting it. *De Oratore* looked back to Cicero's mentors from the nineties to suggest that the virtues that made the Republic great were absent from statesmen in the fifties, and that they should look back to statesmen from the nineties as models of virtuous

action. Cicero wrote *De Officiis* as an old man after the Republic permanently fell, and he writes *De Officiis* to transcribe the virtues of a Republican statesman for future generations of statesmen. He does this to preserve the possibility of reestablishing the Republic sometime in the future.

Thirdly, and perhaps most remarkably, in *De Officiis* Cicero suggests clearly that if any discipline can teach virtue, it is philosophy; whereas May and Wisse note that nowhere in *De Oratore* does Cicero state that philosophy is a teacher of virtue. From this, one may conclude one of two possibilities: either Cicero changed his mind about philosophy as a teacher of virtues in the time between writing *De Oratore* and *De Officiis*, or he stated in *De Officiis* a clearer and more definitive version of his discussion of philosophy in *De Oratore*.

Cicero's presentation of education in *De Officiis* describes an education for statesmen that is based on the study of philosophy. The study of philosophy is necessary for the statesman because deciphering the statesman's duties begins with a philosophical question regarding what Nature prescribes of the statesman, particularly with regards to cultivating virtue and dedicating oneself totally to serving the state.

Conclusion

Cicero wrote about civic education as a solution to the enduring political corruption that arose in the Roman Republic due to the disruption of traditional Roman political order and morals initiated by self-serving public statesmen. This thesis contextualizes his understanding of education within the broader political context surrounding the date in which Cicero wrote each respective work. Amongst all three of the main works discussed in this thesis, Cicero's understanding of education possesses more unifying factors than noticeable differences.

Cicero promotes an education with two main components: learning by imitating virtuous, illustrious Roman men from history, whether they be Cicero's mentors of 91 BCE or Cicero himself; and acquiring universal knowledge, especially through studying philosophy, civil law, and poetry, and even subjects like music that teach the statesman about the characteristics of the surrounding world.

Cicero defends learning by imitating because he conceives of virtue as a set of habits or, reflecting the Stoics, as the proper method of approaching decision making. Especially his dialogue *De Oratore*, Cicero addresses an audience of statesmen who know little about virtue or duties, as they lived through what Cicero calls the disruption of traditional order and morals due to the rise of men like Crassus and Pompey, who, against the strict political order established by Sulla, declared themselves co-Consuls. Cicero wants to solve the disruption of traditional order and morals by looking nostalgically upon the virtuous statesmen who mentored him in his youth. By imitating the virtuous statesmen of the past, Cicero suggests that one can learn prudence, courage,

and total dedication to one's city, all of which are ways of approaching decisions that are at once practically useful and nourishing for one's soul.

Cicero also urges statesmen to acquire universal knowledge of all the studies of humanity—subjects including philosophy, civil law, poetry, history, and even music. In *De Oratore* especially, Cicero introduces the prospect of further education for ever-busy statesmen by showing the practical benefit that learning a discipline like civil law brings to the legal orator who wants to win his case. He then gradually moves to suggest that statesmen should acquire knowledge of anything that gives them an understanding of the cosmos and their place in it, which includes subjects like philosophy that can inform the statesman about the world around him. Cicero occupies himself with the pursuit of universal knowledge because he is fundamentally concerned with calming the perturbations of the statesman's soul, in addition to making the statesman an effective political actor. His emphasis on the state of the human soul reflects his religious beliefs regarding the human person as a rational being who must escape from the corrupt world of bodily pleasures, which is always in flux, by contemplating the cosmos, which is rational, unchanging, orderly, and perfect.

De Officiis promotes the two types of learning that we also saw in *De Oratore* and in "Pro Archia": learning by imitating virtuous statesmen and learning by studying the humanities. But Cicero's main focus in this treatise is to develop a philosophical explanation and defense of the statesman's duties, their roots in nature, and how they point to the statesman's pursuit of honorableness. The statesman's education in philosophy—especially the Stoic and Peripatetic understandings of virtue as one of life's

ends—is perhaps the most important aspect of education in *De Officiis* because the statesman discovers his duties and the courses of action he ought to take to fulfill them by means of philosophical discourse. These courses of action require the statesman to dedicate himself totally to living virtuously and fulfilling his duties to the city.

This thesis contributes to Cicero scholarship because it notes a change in Cicero's educational philosophy from *De Oratore* to *De Officiis*, the former of which is silent on philosophy as a teacher of virtue and the latter of which begins with the premise that philosophy teaches virtue. I suggest that the reason for this is primarily political, since Cicero wrote each of these works as different genres to different audiences and with different political purposes. This change in Cicero's understanding of education should not be understood as an inconsistency in Cicero's thought (like many of his critics are so eager to point out) so much as Cicero saying what was appropriate for his audience at the time he wrote each work. Cicero was both a philosopher and a practical political man, and his works are of interest today precisely because they inform us about political principles to guide a modern society obsessed with practical application.

Postscript: Post-Republican Values in the Age of Augustus

Cicero was assassinated in December 43 BCE, only a few months after Caesar's assassination and a year after writing *De Officiis*. After Cicero's death, Mark Antony held power in Rome for a time until he was defeated by Octavian, who later adopted the name Augustus. Through the studies of humanity, Cicero wanted to record the virtues that contributed to making the Republic among the greatest systems of government in history. The studies of humanity, especially poetry and history, were still around during the age of Augustus,¹³³ and Augustus' age presented imperial values through the studies of humanity as though they represented a return to Republican values.

The Roman historian Livy wrote *The History of Rome* with the same purpose for which Cicero praises poetry in "Pro Archia": to "behold object lessons of every kind of model"¹³⁴ to become capable of "choos[ing] for yourself and for your state what to imitate and what to avoid as abominable in its origin or abominable in its outcome."¹³⁵ Cicero set *De Oratore* in the nineties BCE with this same purpose in mind: he wanted to inform his contemporaries about the history of Rome and the statesmen that contributed to her brilliance and magnanimity. The fundamental difference is that Cicero set *De Oratore* in the Roman Republic with a cast of noble Republican statesmen, whereas Livy (similarly to Polybius) wrote his *History* to show how Rome developed into a dominant military Empire with such extensive power that it can claim its founder to be Mars, the god of war, without any hearing objections.¹³⁶

¹³³ Marcel Le Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 167.

¹³⁴ Livy, *The History of Rome*, Books 1-5, trans. Valerie M. Warrior (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006, Preface, I.10.

¹³⁵ Livy, *History of Rome*, Preface, I.10.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, Preface, I.7.

Like Livy, the poet Vergil sought to explain Rome's origins by developing an epic poem about the city's founding, which resulted in Vergil's *Aeneid*. In Book IV, for example, Aeneas leaves his lover Queen Dido to go to Italy out of pious obligation to Jupiter's command, famously telling Dido "[n]ot of my will do I follow Italy."¹³⁷ This strays away from Republican values insofar as Aeneas' duty to Rome is not based on an inherent altruistic love of country, but on a sense of divine duty commanded by Jupiter, the king of the gods. Granted, Cicero also traces his understanding of duty to the gods, but his conception of the ideal Republican statesman still exemplifies the Republican principle of collegiality, which is absent from this almost-kingly depiction of divine command in the *Aeneid*. Not only does Aeneas leave the place he loves, but he does so in a reckless manner that a prudent Republican statesman could have avoided because he tries to leave Dido secretly yet she catches him in his attempt to do so. Moreover, Aeneas also lacks the virtues of frugality and self-sacrifice that Cicero promoted in "Pro Archia Poeta," since he spends part of Book IV giving into what Cicero would have called 'lower desires' by sleeping with a lonely widowed queen.

Even though Augustus' empire promoted imperial values as though they were a return to Republican values, young Romans living under Augustus nonetheless read Cicero's speeches as part of their education. Part of the reason for this was likely because Cicero would have been considered a historical figure of a distant past with few connections to the Roman politics of Augustus' day—akin to someone like President Eisenhower in the contemporary American context. Another reason behind this was

¹³⁷ Vergil, *Aeneid*, trans. J.W. Mackail (2018), Bk IV, 29.

likely because Augustus felt guilty for allowing Antony to execute Cicero. This is further supported by Augustus' motion to have Cicero's son (who shared in his father's likeness both in name and in appearance) serve as Consul in 30 BCE, which signified an attempt by Augustus to make amends with his former mentor.

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