

# **CICERO AND THE MORAL EDUCATION OF YOUTH**

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Terence J. Husband, M.A.L.S., M.A., Lit.

Chair: Rev. John W. O'Malley, S.J.

### **ABSTRACT**

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), one of the most influential figures of the tempestuous late Roman Republic, has been interpreted across eras, cultures and disciplines to a voluminous degree. Most Ciceronian scholarship pertains to his role in public life, his great gift of rhetoric or his philosophical writings. These important pursuits may overlook another aspect of Cicero's legacy, his great concern for the ethical and moral development of young people. This awareness reached full expression in the autumn of 44 B.C., in Cicero's last major work, the *De Officiis*. The three-book essay was written to his son, Marcus Minor, at a time when the young man was in Greece under the pretense of studying philosophy. He was not his father's equal as a thinker, lacked his father's discipline and drifted between career ambitions. Cicero wished to be in Athens to oversee his son's development but political events at Rome precluded that possibility.

The *De Officiis* is important to study as an example of an honorable classical tradition, a written communication between father and son. It has all the markings of a father's emotional hopes for his son and for the next generation. In it, as well, are Cicero's laments for what was happening at Rome and for his fading political vision.

Cicero outlines the moral duties of a young man; understands that career choices can be among the most difficult deliberations in life; states his preference for character development over proficiencies in any particular field; and maintains that ethical behavior is the only noble thing, the only thing worth striving for in this life. The essay circulated widely at Rome and became a handbook for civic responsibility and leadership.

Cicero's *De Officiis* would have been enormously effective if its reach had been confined to Rome in the final four decades before the Christian era. Instead, it was accepted, cited, taught, discussed and used as a model for ethical and moral writings across Europe from Roman antiquity until the eighteenth century. Some valued Cicero for his torrents of eloquence, others for his ethical and moral framework. He was highly regarded among the Early Church Fathers, many Renaissance humanists and leading Jesuit educators of the second and third generation. Philosophers, literary artists and political theorists looked to Cicero's *De Officiis* as a source for their views, sometimes in small segments, sometimes in large portions. Apart from the Bible, it became the authoritative moral text in the West.

Cicero and the *De Officiis* began to fade as a major intellectual, cultural and educational force at the time of the Enlightenment. His lack of original thinking, flowing prose style and commitment to community did not endear him to Enlightenment adherents who sought new insights and discoveries, language that concretely explained rather than poetically embellished, and personal autonomy over responsibilities toward others. The decline of the importance of rhetoric as a formal and necessary skill, most notably in France in the nineteenth century, further contributed to Cicero's evanescence.

The scathing attack on Cicero's character by the German historian Theodor Mommsen in the mid-nineteenth century proved devastating.

My thesis argues for a revival of the *De Officiis* for the ethical and moral instruction of young people, within the age grouping of seventeen to twenty-two. It was not intended as a school text, but served that purpose in some settings. The treatise offers many pertinent insights for young people at a crossroads in their lives. It speaks directly to them in many instances, such as with the recognition that, "Above all we must decide who and what manner of men we wish to be and what calling in life we would follow; and this is the most difficult problem in the world. For it is in the early years of youth, when our judgement is most immature, that each of us decides." (*De Officiis*, I.XXXII)

The pages that follow call together an extraordinary text, an extraordinary culture and its traditions, and the extraordinary human experiences of an individual. Tradition and experience are essential components of this thesis but the extraordinary text is its most vital element. The *De Officiis* combines sublime ideas and sound moral and ethical reasoning. It should not be undervalued, or, worse yet, obsolete. Regarding the translation of this once-revered document, I use the version produced by Walter Miller (1913) as it appears in the Loeb Classical Library. I call attention to specific excerpts by referencing the book and then the appropriate chapter. Referenced and cited parenthetically are key excerpts from Cicero's most detailed work on rhetoric, *De Oratore* (55 B.C.), as well as important passages from the four Catilinarians (63 B.C.) and the fourteen Philippics (44-43 B.C.), those collections of speeches of greatest consequence to his life and career.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nosoponus, a character in a satirical and sometimes farcical Erasmian dialogue on the best style of speaking, states that he has read nothing but Ciceronian books for the past seven years and that he has worked to eliminate every non-Ciceronian phrase from his vocabulary. I now know something of that sentiment. Cicero has been with me for a long time, in Ashburn, Virginia and Washington, D.C., in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania and Huntington, Long Island, in Kilmeaden, Co. Waterford, Ireland and Princeton, New Jersey. Wherever I've been in the past two years or so, Cicero has been on the mind.

During my seasons in the Graduate Liberal Studies/Continuing Education program, I opted for three independent reading courses, having to do with Dante's *Inferno*, the career and writings of Erasmus and the Jesuit educational ministry across Europe and then into the New World. To some degree, Cicero informed all three. The fog of my own naiveté having lifted, the recognition emerged that most every academically trained person until about the eighteenth century was familiar with Cicero.

I accept it as more than idle fact that Gutenberg, the fifteenth century German printer and engraver, produced the *De Officiis* as his first secular offering. This is one of the historical developments that led me to the *De Officiis* in an initial investigation. We all know the reading experience of entering a new text and being swept up in it, at an impressionistic level: Even if we don't understand the full landscape of the text, we sense an extraordinary landscape. Months of research into the history of the reception of this

document increased my appreciation for it. Cicero's *De Officiis* was of value not only for Dante, Erasmus and Jesuit educators but also for St. Thomas Aquinas, Kant, Montesquieu, U.S. President John Adams and many others of prominence. One would be challenged to produce an exhaustive list.

What must be said about the assistance I've received from my thesis director, Rev. John W. O'Malley, S.J., and readers, Dr. Rudolph Hock and Dr. Charles McNelis, is this: It is not surprising to become aware of their significant talents, learning and experience. What is surprising is their willingness to guide a novice in so many fields. Greatly appreciated are those discussions both central to my project and tangential to it. To be taken seriously by an accomplished scholar such as Fr. O'Malley is the capstone of my extended educational efforts. When it comes to the craft of writing, the great "O'Malleyism" remains, "Slay the darlings!" By that is meant, the idea that seems wonderful and amazing on Monday but trite and overstated by Wednesday should not see the light of Friday. When I needed support to enter the program, that came from Dr. Phyllis O'Callaghan; when I required encouragement to move ahead despite personal setbacks, that came from Dr. Francis J. Ambrosio; when I sought help in matters of style, endnotes and bibliography, Associate Director Anne Ridder made repeated efforts. The technical support of Sreenivas Divi, a neighbor and a professional in the field of computer science, was greatly appreciated.

In a modest way, I've attempted to add to the vast field of Ciceronian scholarship. I hope, if even against hope, that completion of this research and writing can act as a springboard toward personal rejuvenation on various fronts. If one is willing to allow that the *De Officiis* is the work of Cicero most worthy of retrieving, as I do, something else

becomes quite clear: He produced this exceptional essay at a time in his life when most everything had fallen apart or was in the process of doing so. That, in itself, is a message to be passed on.

## EPIGRAPH

They have exalted notions, because they have not yet been humbled by life or learnt its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things—and that means having exalted notions....All their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently....They love too much and hate too much, and the same with everything else. They think they know everything, and are always quite sure about it; this, in fact, is why they overdo everything....They are fond of fun, and therefore witty, wit being well-bred insolence.

—Aristotle, on the character of youth  
*Rhetoric*, Book II, Chapter 12

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	Anno Domini. (The Common/Current/Christian Era.)
B.C.	Before Christ. (Before the Common/Current/Christian Era.)
<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus</i> , Cicero, 46 B.C.
Catil.	Catilinarians, Cicero, 63 B.C.
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>The Confessions</i> , Saint Augustine, 397-398.
<i>De Jure</i>	<i>De Jure Belli ac Pacis</i> , Hugo Grotius, 1625.
<i>De Off.</i>	<i>De Officiis</i> , Cicero, 44 B.C.
<i>De Off.</i>	<i>De Officiis</i> , Saint Ambrose, circa 391.
<i>De Orat.</i>	<i>De Oratore</i> , Cicero, 55 B.C.
<i>De Trin.</i>	<i>On the Trinity</i> , Saint Augustine, probably published in 417.
<i>Div. Inst.</i>	<i>The Divine Institutes</i> , Lactantius, 303-311.
Phil.	Philippics, Cicero, 44 B.C.
<i>Poli.</i>	<i>Policraticus</i> , John of Salisbury, circa 1159.
U.K.	United Kingdom.

## TABLE OF WORKS

Cicero, four speeches, Catilinarians (Catil.), 63 B.C.

Cicero, three books, *De Oratore* (*De Orat.*), 55 B.C.

Cicero, three books, *De Officiis* (*De Off.*), 44 B.C.

Cicero, fourteen speeches/pamphlets, Philippics (Phil.), 44-43 B.C.

## CHAPTER I

### MORE THAN ROME'S GREATEST ORATOR

Cicero is relevant to study for the simple reason that so many of the issues he faced in the late Roman Republic are ours, this very day. Those issues have to do with political corruption, immigration policy, systems of taxation, distribution of land and wealth, threats posed by terrorists and the education of youth. Cicero's views on educating young people ethically and morally in his last major work, *De Officiis*, or, *On Duties* (44 B.C.), are at the center of these pages. If nothing else, Cicero must be interpreted as an individual who adopted an interdisciplinary approach to learning and as a person committed to supporting human values, in government, in the law, in economics and other areas. Still, as scholarship indicates, it is very difficult to form an accurate and singular perspective on Cicero because so many conflicting views have emerged in the gap between Cicero and what later developed as Ciceronianism. We need to recognize that Cicero the historical person and "Cicero" as later idealized for centuries are not the same.

As a treatise on public responsibility or the ethics of a citizen, *De Officiis* was studied prominently and with vigor for centuries. It remains a suitable text for moral instruction, even though Cicero did not intend it for use in schools. Embedded in *De Officiis* are great ideas, noble diction and a sublime vision. These elements are addressed to Cicero's son but it is clear that a much wider audience was anticipated. As a personal communication between father and son, it is an example of a nearly solemn exchange in

the Roman tradition. At the time he composed *De Officiis*, Cicero was torn by personal and political events. Overwhelming grief for a disintegrating family and true lament for what was happening in his beloved Rome merged.

An overview of Cicero's life is included in these pages, mostly in sections two and three, but the heart of the study is an analysis of *De Officiis*, regarded as a vital text through the ages until well past the Renaissance and in some settings into the nineteenth century. There is no significant amount of debate, among scholars, over the fact that the essay was for a very long time very highly regarded as an educational tool. *De Officiis* provides an accessible framework for youth regarding the process of moral reasoning. Its fundamental gradation of duties is to be respectful toward the gods; to get the advice of the most knowledgeable people in the community; to act on behalf of country and parents; and to give oneself plenty of time, if possible, before proceeding with any moral decisions.

Cicero may have been occasionally disingenuous in other aspects of his career but in *De Officiis*, as outlined in Chapter V, he offered Marcus Minor his best thoughts and beliefs. That is to say, *De Officiis* depends upon no extraneous artifice, no deception, no effort toward personal or political gain. It should be revived as a means of enriching literature, political discourse and moral reasoning. It should be revived because in it one of the leading minds of Western civilization explored the foremost and enduring question: How should human beings live their lives? That was Cicero's driving interest above all others and was a question he explored with great motivation in *De Officiis*.

In these pages, the spotlight will point in the direction of certain episodes of Cicero's life, not in an arbitrary fashion but rather to show that he was responding to real

social and political tensions. Understood is that all too frequently it is difficult, if not impossible, to come upon totally dependable “facts” or “evidence” from the classical period. As a prime example, various accounts of Cicero’s demise in 43 B.C., do not agree, even though this was regarded as one of the most important death scenes from all of Roman antiquity. The historical circumstances pertaining to the trials and the public debates prompted by Sextus Roscius, Gaius Verres and Catiline in sections two and three of this study have been selected from Cicero’s career to establish a pattern: Cicero took on cases that required great courage. He was consistently on the commendable side of the issue but he just as consistently left certain key aspects of the problem unresolved. Sometimes, with Cicero, important peripheral matters were left to stand.

The more power and influence Cicero achieved, the greater became the ramifications of those unresolved issues. After bravely defending Sextus Roscius, Cicero was regarded as a young lawyer on the rise, although he did not prevent the real culprits of the crime, Sulla and Chrysogonus, from their unsavory policies. After his determined prosecution of Gaius Verres, Cicero was accepted as Rome’s most skilled orator, and although he was able to send Verres into exile, Cicero’s friends, Sicilian transplants who had benefited from the corrupt practices of Verres, escaped scrutiny. After his emergency acts to dismantle the conspiracy of Catiline, Cicero was hailed as the savior of Rome but his methods pertaining to Catiline’s followers were attacked. Those attacks began to greatly diminish Cicero’s public standing in his year as consul, 63 B.C. He, too, eventually was exiled. These three historical instances are important because they show Cicero willing to confront various nefarious individuals, particularly Catiline, mostly because they threatened justice and civil order but also because they could have such a

negative influence on youth at Rome. As well as any prominent Roman, Cicero understood that among youth the temptation was strong to follow any of these or other misguided figures. One of the goals of *De Officiis* is to steer Roman youth from becoming entangled with adults who could and would corrupt them.

In Cicero's vast body of work, *De Officiis* was something of an afterthought that stemmed from Marcus Minor's unsettled outlook and reckless behavior at Athens and from the fact that Cicero, as a father, could not travel to Greece to head off some of that wildness. Political events at Rome demanded that Cicero remain in the capital. Nonetheless, *De Officiis* became interpreted not as an afterthought to Cicero's legacy but as an essential text for developing new leaders as part of his plan for the overall revitalization of Rome. Other Ciceronian works, most notably *De Republica* (51 B.C.) and the unfinished *De Legibus*, were aimed at reforms he felt were necessary for the structure of government and in the laws. Cicero's emphasis on the moral education of youth, as articulated in *De Officiis*, rests side-by-side with his writings on rhetoric, which are the subject of section four in this study. His conviction was that young, potential leaders needed a firm grounding in the discipline of rhetoric and, further, that an unethical or immoral person could never be considered a good orator.

In his efforts to produce *De Officiis*, in the autumn of 44 B.C., Cicero may have reached what modern psychology calls a "peak moment," according to which an individual becomes more fully in harmony with his life and his surroundings. We can read it today to gain an understanding of Cicero's engagement with philosophy and to learn of his major concerns for the political situation at Rome but mostly we should read it to see the hopes he entertained regarding his abilities to impact, ethically and morally, a

new generation of leaders for the state. *De Officiis* should not be left behind and possibly subjected to oblivion because it is regarded as trite, or stale, or merely quaint. Surely, the day in which *De Officiis* becomes branded as obsolete will be a gray one. What is being suggested here is that *De Officiis* is a classic text from the classical period, classic in the sense that it was well known and had recognized worth as well as lasting significance. In it, we are reminded of ideas as much as we are introduced to them. We come to find that Cicero was a chief purveyor of many of the same values we retain. In *De Officiis*, we can imagine Cicero as a fulcrum that reaches back to the Greeks and provides some of the impetus for the Renaissance world and for what has followed.

There are superlative ideas in it, ideas to which we should pay close and special attention. For instance, the three-book essay regards the moral life as a non-negotiable path but leaves room for a discussion of what is the exact and proper moral action required as a response to a given situation. Another enduring concept emerges when Cicero tells his son Marcus Minor that obligation to others and service within a community are more than dry and legalistic ethical norms that must be fulfilled, or checked off in a perfunctory way. Instead, Cicero suggests, they are among the chief sources of satisfaction for any human being. We must remember that at the time of the writing of *De Officiis*, Marcus Minor was a 21-year-old, and we have no reason to suspect that he varied from the general tendencies of any 21-year-old, that is to say, the general tendency to show great interest in and concern for self at the expense of community and others. To remind him of the larger community and his obligations to it were essential points.

Perhaps the most valuable message to emerge from *De Officiis* rests in the fact that a person in his or her twenties could never be expected to have accumulated the understanding, the learning and the experiences of an accomplished person in his or her sixties. And so Cicero is functioning in the role of substitute in freely offering to Marcus Minor and subsequent young readers the richness of his understanding, learning and experiences. What is implied and not to be missed in *De Officiis* is the pedagogical imperative, i.e., that the older person is obligated to offer such advice and that the younger person is obligated to try to understand and grow from it.

To one degree or another, these and other central ideas from *De Officiis* helped enliven the humanists of the Renaissance in Western Europe and the educators of the Jesuit ministry across most of the globe. That both Renaissance Europe and the Jesuit educational undertakings benefited from Cicero's ideas are concerns of section six of these pages. The task becomes one in which we discover vestiges of Cicero and *De Officiis* in our present times, or one in which we identify some of the reasons for their absence. These are features of Chapters VI and VII. Either way, to investigate this once-revered Roman text is not without its own merits. For those unfamiliar or unconcerned with Cicero and Roman antiquity, *De Officiis* can guard against living one's life apart from any ethical and moral considerations. Cicero called this essay a "gift" and we can imagine, therefore, that he most certainly would have invited any modern reader to accept it in that spirit.

It is a regrettable fact that in formal educational settings the writings and speeches of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.) mostly have fallen into a state of desuetude. This is a phenomenon that has developed over the past two centuries, or thereabouts. A

thorough study of Cicero, or at least a general educational acquaintance, once was considered essential for anyone wishing to exhibit academic progress. *De Officiis*, the Ciceronian text discussed more than any other in these pages, was the second book produced by Johannes Gutenberg's fifteenth century printing presses, preceded only by the Bible. Voltaire in the eighteenth century said of Cicero that he was the person who "taught us how to think"<sup>1</sup> and among his American devotees was John Adams, the second U.S. President (1797-1801) and an accomplished diplomat and political philosopher.

Not all students and readers of Cicero come away with favorable opinions, some finding in him nothing more than an opportunist and a basic functionary, at worst a mouthpiece, for various Roman institutions. He has been harshly criticized, too, for what some perceive as his lack of original thinking. If it is true that a wide discrepancy, across cultures, disciplines and generations, is to be found regarding attitudes toward Cicero's ideas, it is also true that for many centuries his work was not overlooked, as it is for the most part now.

In contemporary settings, attempts to rehabilitate the legacy of Cicero invariably stress his contributions as an orator, politician and statesman, lawyer, writer and philosopher. Beyond question, these are some of the professional channels through which Cicero sought to act upon his deeply-felt obligations to his country and fellow man in Roman antiquity. Anthony Everitt, for instance, is a recent biographer of Cicero who believes Cicero should be studied primarily for his role in Roman politics. "His big idea, which he tirelessly publicized, was that of a mixed or balanced constitution," Everitt writes. "He favored not monarchy nor oligarchy nor democracy, but a combination of all three."<sup>2</sup> To focus on the political figure is a common strategy, indeed the dominant

strategy, in the immensely large field of Ciceronian scholarship. To labor to rediscover Cicero via the genre of political biography is a task of value but at the same time such efforts may overlook another major contribution of Cicero: his concern for the moral education of young people. This is an element of Cicero's career that should figure prominently for those who aim at some measure of his reviviscence.

The hypothesis in these pages is that Cicero began to publicly show concerns for moral education as early as 56 B.C., in the *Pro Caelio*, the court proceeding in which he acted as an advocate for a young Roman, and that these leanings reached full expression in the penultimate year of his life, 44 B.C., with the once-famous essay *De Officiis*. Cicero also touched on the necessity of an educated citizenry under the governance of enlightened leaders in other writings, such as in the fourth book of the political work *De Republica*. There may be some common ground between the call for the moral education of youth and the call for an educated citizenry but they are not necessarily the same. It is possible to acquire an education in a particular branch of learning that has little to do with moral precepts. Cicero's view of education would argue against the specialist who may be able to circumvent moral instruction. This is one of the reasons for the importance of the *De Officiis*. It elevates ethical and moral reasoning, demanding that attempts are made to have these skills instilled in young learners and future generations. No other work of Cicero goes as far.

Part of Everitt's goal, understandably, is to depict how different the Roman Republic was from our early twenty-first century settings. He writes: "The dependence on slavery, the fact that the Romans ran a sophisticated and complex state with practically none of the public institutions we take for granted (a civil service, a police

force and so on) and the impact of religious ritual on the conduct of public affairs make ancient Rome a very strange place to modern eyes.”<sup>3</sup> Despite these and other obvious differences, human motivations and behaviors remain basically intact. We all want honor and dignity. We all are susceptible to greed and envy. Toward that end, a study of the speeches and writings of Cicero can find a resting place in the notion that Romans of antiquity can seem like our neighbors and not as distant aliens. This is acceptable if we consider that Cicero, as mentioned above, confronted injustice, political corruption and terrorist threats of his day, evil themes that tie our twenty-first century to his. Another significant connection, addressed as the direct topic of these pages, is the fact that Cicero so diligently promoted education, still viewed, in our contemporary settings, as the way forward for all.

The popular notion is that Cicero was a great orator; he was that and more. Cicero was a moral voice for his times, and they were times that needed a moral voice because vice, decadence and political corruption were rampant in the conflicts of the late Republic. To be willing to cloak Cicero with a garment of moral authority carries with it the responsibility to reflect upon his personal experiences and the manner in which he responded to crises, or failed to do so. For this reason, the accounts of Cicero’s life offered throughout these pages are justified. The argument certainly is not that Cicero is the moral paradigm *par excellence* but that in *De Officiis* are the mature reflections of a mind finely attuned to actions and consequences and the need for these dynamics to be imparted to those at the spring of their lives. In order to contribute to the meaningfulness of the text, these pages, as mentioned earlier, explore the development of Cicero’s very own ethical and moral formation in formal educational settings as well as when, as a

young lawyer, he defended the provincial farmer Sextus Roscius against false charges of parricide; when, as a fledgling public figure, he prosecuted the corrupt schemes of the Sicilian governor Gaius Verres; and when, as Roman consul, he put down the serious and extremely dangerous revolution planned by Lucius Sergius Catilina.

The issue has to do with Cicero's developing character, given that in his forensic speeches he may not have been pursuing truth so much as he was simply trying to win a case for his client or attempting to further his own career. In addition, as consul Cicero acted in a highly questionable way against Catiline's inner circle. That he was able, later in life in *De Officiis*, to discuss ethics and morality in at times a transcendent style suggests growth and maturity. Put another way, for the younger Cicero in his legal and political career the matter of ethics and morality most likely was not the preeminent concern. With *De Officiis*, it became the recognizable consideration above all others.

Cicero's devotion to his family through assorted achievements or troubles and his dealings with some of the most powerful figures in Roman history and indeed in the history of Western civilization, including Julius Caesar, Pompey and Mark Antony, are interspersed in these pages. But this material is important only insofar as it serves as a preamble to Cicero in his function as an advocate for moral reasoning intended for youth. The integrity of this study remains intact: to call attention to ways in which Cicero offered insights closely related to humanist and Jesuit educational theories and practices as adopted in later centuries. He favored ethical content and broad-based learning that could strengthen the whole person. For the most part, existing literature on the topic of Cicero and his influence on education is unsatisfactory. This theme is mentioned in countless sources and is summarized in various collections and encyclopedic works. Yet

these are not comprehensive accounts that trace Cicero's role in the history of Western schooling. This study, "Cicero and the Moral Education of Youth," outlines Cicero's influence, as it arose primarily through *De Officiis*.

Section four will elaborate upon the aspect of Cicero's career with which he is most commonly associated. Rhetoric was a discipline in which he received extensive and detailed formal training. As moderns, we may distinguish between rhetoric and oratory but for the ancients rhetoric meant oratory. Cicero was unyielding in the notion that public, oral discourse should require its speaker to be articulate, which is to say, clear and grammatically correct; eloquent, understood as fluent and persuasive; and, most importantly and perhaps most demanding of all, morally sound. These three components came together, for example, in Cicero's famous rebuff of Catiline, in which he offered the often-cited exclamation: "Shame on the age and on its principles!" (Catil. 1.2)

Cicero's insistence upon competence before an audience represented more than an attraction for skilled verbal dexterity on display. He believed that public speaking abilities, so as to defend oneself in legal argumentation or in more prosaic matters, such as in much simpler business transactions, should be a key component of an education for anyone living in a civilized society. For instruction and as a guide, Renaissance humanist educators many centuries removed called upon Cicero, the public speaker Plutarch regarded as the equal of the Greeks' Demosthenes (385?-322 B.C.).<sup>4</sup> Cicero's acceptance by Renaissance humanists as the greatest orator of Roman antiquity is a feature of section six of this study.

As cited above, one of the vital passages of *On Duties* surfaces when Cicero states that he wishes to educate the young to an understanding of virtue according to gradations

of responsibilities, following first the will of the gods and then actions in benefit of country and family. (*De Off.*, I.XLV) Although not an explicitly religious figure, Cicero sought divine inspiration when he discerned the need and produced texts on religious and theological subjects.<sup>5</sup> Through the centuries many religious thinkers unreservedly have shown appreciation for Cicero's moral framework, which is an element of chapter six in this study. The Early Church Fathers deemed Cicero a "noble pagan" and Dante considered him to be among the greatest of moral philosophers.<sup>6</sup> Especially important for Jesuits in their educational initiative, both historically and to this day, is to teach and to act upon the Ciceronian admonition that, "We are not born for ourselves alone." (*De Off.*, I.VII)

By the latter stages of his life, Cicero had been exiled and nearly lost his entire immediate family. His hopes for a rejuvenated Republic were becoming dashed and his career in public life was dissipating. His belief in Julius Caesar, like his belief in Pompey, expired, and he never befriended Mark Antony, which is made clear in the rhetorical attacks known as the Philippics.<sup>7</sup> Those speeches would become his doom. Despite setback and misfortune, what was left for Cicero to do at advanced age was to experience one of his finest moments, this coming with the issuance of *De Officiis*. This study finds that *De Officiis* is a gathering point for Cicero's ideas as they evolved through a career of public service to be left behind for the benefit of many future generations of young readers. The essential message of *De Officiis* is that Cicero tells Marcus Minor to strive to become a person who has embraced the responsibility of a soldier, the imagination of a poet and the spirit of a believer. Cicero's judgments and his arrival at these convictions

were formed not in contemplative isolation but in daily life in the midst of the chiaroscuro, the dark and the light, of the late Roman Republic.

Regarded, apart from the Bible, as the authoritative moral text in Europe in the Middle Ages, *On Duties* and other writings of Cicero profoundly influenced thinkers ranging from Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, and St. Augustine to the Renaissance humanist Erasmus and the political theorist Montesquieu. *De Officiis* has influenced and inspired many others, in Europe and America, as is indicated in Chapters VI and VII of this research project. A three-book discussion promoting moral goodness, *De Officiis* became a standard text for gentlemanly behavior in the England of Shakespeare's day and remained a vital source in schooling for at least three more centuries. Members of the Jesuit Order, especially in the second and third generations, were enamored of Cicero and taught him at the core of their curriculum.

As stated earlier, the obvious question becomes: How is it that Cicero and *De Officiis*, once ranking among the most important thinkers and books in the West, have fallen into a state of basic abandonment? Section six will address some of the reasons Cicero is no longer widely read and applied in classrooms and in public discussion. He faded gradually in the nineteenth century, especially in the aftermath of the harsh critique put forth by the German historian Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903). In a condemnatory character assessment that is without relent, Mommsen called Cicero "a tool of the monarchs"<sup>8</sup> among many other unflattering titles. Additional reasons postulated by scholars for the decline of Cicero have to do with the general Romantic revolution against reason in the history of ideas;<sup>9</sup> his lack of originality and his baroque prose style at the time of the Enlightenment, which privileged new ways of thinking and functional

language; and the diminished appreciation for the art of rhetoric. Much closer to our own times, postmodern sensibilities against moral teachings and attempts to make them universally applicable could never support a thinker such as Cicero.<sup>10</sup> *De Officiis* and Cicero are not highly visible in modern times and yet the claim in these pages is that they should be, as a means of offering ethical and moral guidance to young learners. This text and its author have something to extend today and are deserving of a wider audience.

Marcus Minor, far off in Greece ostensibly at study, was at an impressionable age. The advice he received at a crossroads in his life is more than parental suggestions for his choice of a career, although Cicero is aware that deciding on a vocation is very important for a young student like his son. Instead, *De Officiis* attempts to provide standards for ethical behavior across time and cultural boundaries. “I have set forth the moral duties of a young man,” Cicero writes. (*De Off.*, II.XV) The reader addressed in the essay alternates between an individual (Marcus Minor) and a community (youth in general). Further, the content of the books seeks to encourage as much as to caution or rebuke. Cicero tells his son that the study of Greek philosophy overall is a worthwhile endeavor, provided that a discussion of moral duties is a part of the program.

In the main, interpreters place Cicero in the camp of the Stoics. This is a tendency with which Cicero would have lived comfortably, at least to a point. He writes: “I shall...follow chiefly the Stoics, not as a translator, but, as is my custom, I shall at my own option and discretion draw from those sources in such measure and in such manner as shall suit my purpose.” (*De Off.*, I.II) Typically, Stoicism is characterized as requiring a nearly Buddhist-like attempt to attain a calmness of soul through the suppression of emotions and through various ascetic practices. Modern scholarship, at least, largely

takes this view. Yet there is another strain of Stoicism, a strain associated with Cicero and Seneca in Latin literature and Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus in Greek. “Cicero and Seneca devote themselves to the welfare of their families, friends, neighbors and nation, shunning enslavement to appetites, not to find peace, but to more effectively fulfill their obligations to their fellow men,” Ben R. Schneider, Jr., asserts.<sup>11</sup> *De Officiis* follows Stoicism to the extent that the essay prompts moral contemplation designed to produce ethical action. The document stems from Stoicism before flowing into moral probabilism, and what to do when two paths are morally reasonable and two expedients seem justifiable.<sup>12</sup>

Challenges associated with any examination of Cicero include the possibilities that he emerges as a figure solely of his time, the late Roman Republic; that his philosophy is an eclectic mix with few original contributions, as referenced above; or that his influence is limited to the discipline of rhetoric. To more fully grasp the Ciceronian legacy, one would do well to incorporate the lens of a historian, philosopher, theologian and literary artist because he is interpreted in different ways across disciplines. Cicero’s life was an extraordinary one in extraordinary times but the argument in these pages is not to place claims of greatness upon him.

Nonetheless, his life may be distilled into exceptional moments, including those devoted to composing *De Officiis* during his period away from the public spotlight. *De Officiis* and the human values at its pith represent not just an example of Cicero’s literary efforts as a writer of letters, issued late in life at a leisurely interlude. Rather, they are the culmination of a career that came to embrace service to others. Based in Stoic themes, sometimes objective and detached, the essay gains its force through its author’s

emotional concern for his son. Beyond that, in the *De Officiis* the general method followed by Cicero in regard to education and ethics attempted to understand the real conditions of human experience with a practical approach to truth, that is to say, through appearances and probability.<sup>13</sup>

This diachronic study recognizes that in the propagation of Cicero's ideas, Petrarch is highly significant. An enduring desire for ancient texts on the part of the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) was a stimulating factor in the emergence of the Renaissance. Oddly, Petrarch wrote letters to his favorite spirits of antiquity and referred to Cicero as his "father." Because of his penchant for traveling, Petrarch is sometimes referred to as Europe's first tourist. Included among the initial findings of Petrarch, no stranger to the basements of various cathedral libraries, are Ciceronian writings.

In 1345 at Verona, Petrarch discovered a manuscript containing Cicero's letters to Atticus, as referenced in Chapter VI of this study. That astonishing finding of writings that had been buried for nearly fourteen centuries is, specifically, what helped initiate the Renaissance. Petrarch's unearthed treasures, which contained examples of the eloquence of Cicero, and similar fruitful searches for ancient texts gave rise to new ways of thinking about learning and about the significance of the past. The disciplines commonly referred to today as the humanities began to develop during the Italian Renaissance in roughly the period between 1300 and 1600 and came into being through an educational movement of teachers, writers and scholars working in the early Quattrocento.

These early proponents for education based upon the *litterae humaniores* advocated the study of classical literature as the key component in the training of young

men and women, in the art of language and eloquence and perhaps even more significantly in practical wisdom and civic virtue. They were building on theories elaborated by Cicero, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (A.D. 35?-95?) and others in antiquity. At the core of this movement were the theoretical statements of humanists such as Pier Paolo Vergerio, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), Battista Guarino and Leonardo Bruni. Of these writers and their works, Bruni and his thesis *The Study of Literature* (written between 1422 and 1429) became perhaps the most influential, although it represents a rather modest position among his prolific body of work.<sup>14</sup> Bruni was an elegant Ciceronian stylist who added to humanism's appreciation for Italian poetry. He produced a biography of Cicero, *Novus Cicero*, in 1415.

During the Renaissance, scholasticism and humanism proceeded in close juxtaposition and in an atmosphere best described as one of peaceful co-existence despite occasional antagonisms; the philosophy of the ancients was studied and incorporated but led to no new philosophical systems; and pagan texts circulated widely in a Christian setting.<sup>15</sup> Under the "poetic veil" of this literature, many humanists took the view that certain pagan authors, Cicero included, expressed Christian truths and ideals. In addition, many Renaissance humanists invested heavily in the idea that Greek and Roman antiquity at its best represented humanity at its most developed and that they were responsible for reinstating at least some measure of those civilizations in the aftermath of the "darkness" of the Middle Ages. At a minimum, the study of the ancients was believed to be necessary in order to write and to speak well. Such studies were placed in a literature-based educational system designed to produce socially responsible human beings. In Cicero, they recognized a major influence. Some humanists valued Cicero's eloquence,

others his ethical and moral messages, as illustrated in Chapter VI of these pages. Some overlap can be assumed as well.

What is not so simply seen, however, is that the next step in the development of the humanities and their core educational principles was taken up by the largest Roman Catholic religious order, one with a strong belief in a firm relationship between learning and effective ministry. Founded in 1540, the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, helped further one of the great revolutions in Western education by insisting upon a curriculum of Greek and Roman authors at the center of education. Further, a connection between the educational theories of Renaissance humanists and the institutional academic enterprise of the Jesuits can be established when one considers that many of the Jesuits of the second and third generations and in some instances beyond knew their Cicero as well, or better, than they knew their Bible.<sup>16</sup> That is because they had been teaching Cicero and the classics with such regularity; the Bible, as always, remained their text of primacy due to its revealed wisdom. The point is that Renaissance humanists and Jesuit educators valued Cicero's eloquence and ethics.

At the middle of the link between Renaissance humanism and the Jesuits is Ignatius himself. The insight of Avery Dulles, S.J., regarding the Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola and the order's commitment to individual lives is this:

Ignatius stands on the cusp of modernity.... Touched by the humanism of the Renaissance, Ignatius puts the human being at center stage. *Homo*—"man"—is the first word of the inaugural [spiritual] exercise (section 23). This man is seen as being responsible for his own fate. He can either cooperate with grace or refuse it; he can save or lose his soul.<sup>17</sup>

It is not accurate to say that Ignatius personally was touched by and therefore fully embraced humanism because he did not have humanistic training at any point. He

learned through scholastic methods. But over the course of some years, Ignatius may have been somewhat sensitive to the impulse of humanism, influenced probably by Jeronimo Nadal and Juan Alfonso de Polanco, two of his earliest adherents at the University of Paris in what would become the Society of Jesus. For Ignatius, the central concern was to “help souls.” By that, he meant the whole person. In this regard, Ignatius may have been amenable to some of the claims of the Renaissance humanists who valued Cicero.

The remnants of the insistence that a humanities-based education can work to foster responsible and morally upright human beings are with us today. This is the case, even if the connections between Cicero’s *De Officiis* and other classical works with the original educational treatises of Renaissance humanists and the later Jesuit educational system have been significantly blurred or altogether forgotten. Efforts to close the gap may add contributions to all three fields of study. All three promote eloquence in speech and letters, and all three advocate sound ethical and moral learning for the common good. Accordingly, the intent in these pages is to produce a “readerly” text<sup>18</sup> that links historical eras (Roman antiquity, the Renaissance, Jesuit ministry) in an imagined triptych structure because the *De Officiis* of Cicero was vital in all three arenas.

We may have more information about Cicero than we do about any figure from Roman or Greek antiquity, and he animates these pages as a colorful individual, enigmatic and weak in some instances, unmistakably courageous and brilliant in others. Many of Cicero’s writings and speeches survive because of his acceptance by the Early Church and because of Petrarch’s admiration for ancient manuscripts at the beginning of

the Renaissance, which served to elevate Cicero above Virgil as the leading Latin author among humanists.

A summary of Cicero's works on ethics, politics, law, philosophy, rhetoric and other disciplines establishes why he is regarded as the most versatile and prolific thinker of the Rome of his day. Of Cicero's judicial and political speeches, 52 survive from among the 88 that were recorded. From his books, six on rhetoric are extant, as are parts of eight philosophical works. More than 800 letters by Cicero (many of which are written to his friend and benefactor Atticus) and in excess of 100 to him survive. Cicero's translation of Plato's *Protagoras* survives as well; preserved in part are Cicero's poetic works as well as his translations of Plato's *Timaeus* and Xenophon's *Economicus*.

The quantity of resources dedicated to Cicero is not at issue; sorting through and judging the quality, as one seeks to both understand the subject and to offer something in the way of innovative viewpoint about it, remains the key challenge. The task, therefore, becomes something not unlike the poet's, as expressed by Harold Bloom with the term "anxiety of influence."<sup>19</sup> This sentiment holds that the poet is required first to understand what has come before and then to compose lines that have never been uttered. The overall aim in these pages, it needs to be underscored, certainly is not to produce a corrective narrative or to unearth new documents traced to Cicero. The intent is not to overturn previously accepted Ciceronian scholarship, which is such an expansive arena, and it is not to cast Cicero in terms of great man theories. What is being stated is that Cicero's best thoughts for and about youth, moral behavior and education are an aspect of his legacy warranting greater attention today.

Many scholars who reflect upon Cicero's career come to appreciate him for his humanity and identify him primarily with his philosophical and political writings and views. Yet, his eloquence and convictions pertaining to ethics and the moral life, as expressed in *De Officiis*, his most enduring work, are what specifically tie Cicero to the Renaissance and to the Jesuits. In some circles, Cicero's overall influence has been deemed worthy not only of admiration but also of wonder.

John C. Rolfe has commented:

Such movements as Christianity, the Renaissance and the French Revolution drew direct inspiration from this Roman of long ago. Centuries after his death, Cicero has remained a living presence, real to members of the English Parliament, real to Thomas Jefferson, and for us he remains an immortal who, above all, demonstrates the unity of civilization and the common aspirations of the race.<sup>20</sup>

Ciceronian scholar Ralph A. Micken has made this claim: "Not only has Cicero influenced the political thought, the statesmanship, and the philosophical considerations of generations of men, he has had what at times amounted to an almost unbelievable impact upon the language of western culture."<sup>21</sup>

Statements such as those of Rolfe, Micken and many others are large ones. In spirit and tone, they belong to another age, an age more certain and more stable than ours, perhaps. Detractors emerged, most forcefully in the nineteenth century, with German historians and the aforementioned Mommsen at the vanguard. After Mommsen, Cicero was regarded by many as little more than a "mongrel" compiler of history and philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

In summarizing the views, sometimes mean in spirit, of those less fond of Cicero, Micken has written:

Cicero has been condemned on the grounds of style, called an Asian, a wordmonger, accused of being fascinated with his own verbosity, a stylistic show-off. He has been minimized and ridiculed as a thinker. His philosophical essays have been called simply the parroting of the thoughts of true philosophers, his political pronouncements meaningless because of his failure to apply them to his own life. His humor has been said to range from the crude and malicious to the merely precious and silly. Even in his writings on rhetoric and public address, he has occasionally been dismissed as a shallow eclectic. He has been assailed as a man—called a vacillating spineless weakling, a vainglorious braggart, a pusillanimous deserter from good causes, and a pseudo-intellectual.<sup>23</sup>

A more concrete charge levelled against Cicero may be that on occasion he overemphasized the idea that the philosopher-orator-statesman represented the foremost influence on the ethos of a culture. In applying great value to the role of the philosopher-orator-statesman, Cicero worked against the tide of popular dispositions. In ancient Rome, indeed in most cultures, class connections as well as economic and military might generally were, and are, more influential. Even more obvious is the fact that he worked against the tide of history in trying to save the Republic. What is beyond debate among scholars is that Cicero was a towering figure in just about every professional walk of life in Roman antiquity. His skills as an advocate, in a legal argument on behalf of an individual or for a political cause, especially were effective. They were finely-shaped talents that he used to bring down wicked and corrupt Roman politicians and citizens.

Nearly without variation, those who offer overwhelmingly negative assessments of Cicero do so because of one of his legal or political decisions or policies; because of their understanding that his rhetoric was merely an instrument of the wealthy; because of the general sense that he was a writer who lacked originality; or because of some aspect

of his occasionally odd and mostly self-promotional personal deportment. For the most part, those who attack Cicero are not attacking *De Officiis*, which, for so long, stood as a highly-regarded ethical treatise. To read it today is to see that what really stands out are Cicero's beliefs that ethics and morals can be taught and cultivated and his pronouncements that deeds, or works, on behalf of others actually matter a great deal.

## CHAPTER II

### AN OUTSIDER MAKES HIS MARK

Cicero's ascent in Roman society was not a rags-to-riches transformation but neither was it assured through privilege. When opportunities presented themselves, he took full advantage. Cicero worked diligently at his studies, made many valuable connections early in his career and assumed calculated risks in legal and political affairs. His abilities as a public speaker served him well and improved over time, helping him become one of the few outsiders of his era to penetrate the aristocratic circles that controlled the Roman state. In the midst of persistent corruption and ruthless power struggles that basically defined the waning days of the late Republic, Cicero provided an antidote with some of the most stirring and eloquent public speeches in the history of Western civilization.

He was a member of a relatively wealthy family but his rise within Roman circles was not without challenges. Cicero was not of Roman birth and did not have noble lineage. That he was a "new man," a *novus homo*, in the capital presented difficulties in his elevation to a consulship in 63 B.C. This chapter focuses on Cicero's climb, his early involvement in public life and his lifelong devotion to family and friends. All of these elements matter because they show an individual trying to make proper choices and proceed in an ethical way. In the courts, Cicero's persuasive strategies, ultimately successful, in defending the unjustly accused farmer Sextus Roscius and in prosecuting the dishonest Sicilian administrator Gaius Verres, established his credentials as an up-and-coming figure. These two cases, the most influential in Cicero's early legal career,

required ethical decision-making. They highlight the early trajectory of a professional life and serve as essential building blocks toward an appreciation of Cicero's legacy.

As part of that legacy, Cicero overcame enormous bias in his efforts to show that virtue was not an inherited trait, within reach only of those in Rome's ensconced, upper classes. He worked for and aimed to become a model for the *democratization of virtue*, i.e., the idea that any person could become a person of virtue, so long as he or she exhibited courageous, good or excellent traits. Cicero tried to apply that standard to his public as well as his private life. A brief discussion of Cicero's family life and his friendships, featured late in this section, points out just how much Cicero loved his family and valued his associates. In his *De Amicitia* (44 B.C.), Cicero attempted to show that developing and maintaining friends is a virtuous act and that a life without friends is a joyless existence.

Cicero profited in some ways as a result of having been a descendant of a family of the equestrian order with its basic level of material comfort and with its basic values in place. Yet, as mentioned, it was also the case that Cicero in his public ambitions faced obstacles. For instance, he was not Roman by birth, as stated above, but rather was born in Arpinum, a hill town about 60 miles to the southeast of the city. Cicero's father was a semi-invalid and because of physical limitations was not able to pursue public service. Despite this, or maybe because of it, he was studious and exceptionally well read and built up a number of key connections in the capital. In turn, his son would become studious and well connected, too. Cicero's motto throughout his life was derived from a childhood dream inspired by a line from the *Iliad*: "Always to be best, and to be distinguished above the rest."<sup>1</sup>

The youthful Cicero was regarded as a bright and dedicated student. He earned the opportunity to study law under the guidance of Quintus Mucius Scaevola (c. 159-88 B.C.), a leading politician and influential legal scholar. Even in advanced age, Scaevola kept up his interest in law and in the cultural affairs of Rome and educated some of the leading orators and legal minds of the Republic. Legal training was only one aspect of Cicero's broad-based and extensive education. Rhetoric and philosophy, to be discussed in chapters four and five of this study, were incorporated as well. Apart from formal education, a brief career (90-88 B.C.) in the military provided Cicero with the insight that he possessed no yearnings for extended service among the troops. His military experience was in the campaigns of Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo and Lucius Cornelius Sulla during the Social War (known also as the Italian War, the War of the Allies or the Marsic War) of 91-88 B.C., waged between the Roman Republic and several Italian cities.<sup>2</sup>

About five years after those conflicts, Cicero began a new professional episode of his life when he returned to law. At the age of 26, Cicero accepted his first major case, and it took a great deal of courage to do so. He may have been putting his life at risk in 80 B.C., when he defended a man named Sextus Roscius, who had been charged with parricide. Seemingly all of Rome took an intense interest in the case, given that the murder of a parent was viewed as a particularly heinous crime. Written accounts of the trial are extant. Cicero loathed Lucius Cornelius Chrysogonus, an individual of questionable reputation, and looked upon him as the facilitator of the execution.

Chrysogonus counted as his major benefactor Sulla, the former military leader and dictator who was feared in Rome. Near the end of 81 B.C., Sulla resigned his dictatorship, but he retained his influence by being elected consul for the following year.

Cicero's probing during the trial of Roscius could have implicated Sulla since it was so closely linked to key members of his retinue. That Cicero could have met his death by the intervention of one of Sulla's proxies was a distinct possibility in the period during and immediately following the courtroom proceedings. Intimidation was in the atmosphere. Tensions were so high that once Roscius earned acquittal, Cicero headed off to Greece, Asia Minor and Rhodes in 79 B.C., in part to escape Sulla's possible revenge and in part to relax in the aftermath of a taxing chapter of his life. He planned to continue his studies, mostly in rhetoric and philosophy, as well.

This case, the *Pro Roscio Amerino*, is one example of how Cicero's skills at rhetoric gave him an advantage as they were employed out of necessity in connection with political strategies at Rome. The victim's name had appeared on proscription lists, in order for Chrysogonus to be able to acquire the old farmer's land at a very inexpensive rate. Attention turned to his son, Sextus Roscius, who was accused by the camp of Chrysogonus of having been the murderer of his father. If convicted, along the lines of the deceptive arrangement of Chrysogonus, Roscius would have been executed, according to Roman law. His father's murder, as best surmised, took place in Rome sometime in the summer or autumn of 81 B.C. The charge versus Roscius, the son, was not based in truth, although he and his father were not on the best of terms.

Plots of land involved in the case were desirable ones. They were 13 farms in the hill town of Ameria, the name Romans designated for an ancient fort 60 miles north of the capital and for the community that developed around it.<sup>3</sup> Cicero spoke of it as a thriving region, a fertile territory extending to the Tiber, and of Roscius's father as a well-respected figure in that part of central Italy. When his property was confiscated and

publicly sold at auction, it went to Chrysogonus for a pittance: 2,000 sesterces. It had been valued at 6 million sesterces.<sup>4</sup>

This case marked Cicero's first appearance in one of the public courts, situated out of doors in the Forum, and like any advocate he had to be prepared for any weather, sun or wind, rain or cold. Such cases attracted onlookers of all ranks, from amateurs to professionals. Those who attended the trial of Sextus Roscius heard something amazing. In his defense of Roscius, Cicero in one stroke made a name for himself, so impressive was his rhetoric. His strategy was to speak highly of the regime in the way of appeasement while at the same time going after one of its most unsavory elements, Chrysogonus. This was a man Sulla purchased as a slave in the market of Delos, one of the most important Greek Islands, and then, in 82 B.C., promoted to overseer of the proscription lists. Such lists involved the public identification and official condemnation of enemies of the state and are frequently associated with violent political movements.<sup>5</sup> The list proclaimed by Sulla, as drawn up by Chrysogonus, was an extensive one. Our best understanding is that Chrysogonus not only proscribed Roscius's father retroactively but also went so far as to bring into the murder plot two neighbors, possibly relatives, of the victim.

Cicero's role was to defend Sextus Roscius, not to prosecute Chrysogonus or to solve the murder. He was caught in a political vise, and although Cicero did his job well in this instance he made only a small dent in systemic corruption. Despite the disgust Cicero no doubt felt toward the worst parts of the Sullan regime, including Chrysogonus, the proscriptions and other erratic and unpredictable policies and actions, he could not avoid praising Sulla. In effect, Cicero took up the cause of those nobles who appreciated

Sulla's actions in suppressing democratic and popular movements in Rome. The price was placing power in the hands of a single man and, as a by-product, witnessing the social rise of morally offensive characters like Chrysogonus. The defense of Sextus Roscius, it can be emphasized, first established Cicero's public resolve and credentials at law. Because it involved corruption in the dictator's entourage, famous legal names stayed away from it, but Sulla's well-known vengefulness did not deter the young lawyer with the timid appearance. The story Cicero presented to the jury called attention to the impact high events in the capital had on the lives of everyday people. Their leaders were operating outside the law. Details of the case were extraordinarily murky and yet fundamental justice, for all, clearly was the issue.

Cicero, this newcomer to a Roman courtroom, possessed a persuasive voice, but it was harsh and strained at this point in his life, and first-night nervousness was a problem throughout his legal career.<sup>6</sup> Like all of Cicero's speeches at the bar, the counter-arguments have not survived; sometimes we do not have the verdict, although in this instance we do. Sextus Roscius was cleared of the charge. Ultimately, the most plausible theories centered on the notion that the victim was murdered in a random late-night mugging or that he was assassinated by a pair of conspirators of Chrysogonus from Ameria as the culmination of a feud of long duration over possession of land. Cicero's speeches were noteworthy because of their daring structure, not for their accumulation of evidence. He first refuted the charge of parricide, then assumed the attack, taking apart the behavior of the two Amerians and pinning the murder charge on them. We can imagine the courtroom becoming surprised and shocked when Cicero turned his verbal

assault on Chrysogonus, Sulla's favorite, and the tawdriness of his lifestyle. Chrysogonus was the real villain of the episode.

At this critical turning point in his career, Cicero's style reflected the florid Asianism of the day.<sup>7</sup> "The phrases race by swift and sonorous, with a lively cadence, full of neologisms, and nearly as rich in metaphors as poetry," Gian Biagio Conte writes.<sup>8</sup> The argumentation that rescued Sextus Roscius showed Cicero's great talent at portraiture and satire. He assailed the dissolute lives of Chrysogonus and his followers, the *nouveaux riches* of their culture.<sup>9</sup> Cicero spoke of Chrysogonus with his hair pomaded, i.e., treated with a perfumed ointment, and curled in ringlets; of Chrysogonus with his appearances in the Forum always accompanied by an ostentatious staff of hangers-on; of Chrysogonus with his luxurious residence on the Palatine hill; and of Chrysogonus with his reckless parties, loud and deep into the night.<sup>10</sup> Roscius, according to Cicero, had gained the support of a woman called Caecilia, widely known as a pious and virtuous Roman.<sup>11</sup> These and similar remarks helped Cicero characterize Sextus Roscius as nearly saintly and his enemy, Chrysogonus, as degenerate. Cicero's marvelous public defense despite the uncertain facts surrounding the trial prompted passionate cheers from courtroom observers upon acquittal. The verdict showed that the courts remained independent.

Although Cicero took other cases that carried with them the potential of incurring the wrath of Sulla, he somehow was able to escape retribution. The main result of Cicero's defense of Roscius, not surprisingly, was a flood of briefs heading in the young lawyer's direction. In this case, he proved nearly oblivious to intimidation and motivated by idealism. Beginning with the Sextus Roscius case in 80 B.C., Cicero's rise within the

public circles of Rome was swift and without blemish. His own talents and his ability to form key alliances in Rome were the chief catalysts. Still, as a new man in Rome, he had to work especially hard to further his career. At or near the youngest possible age he moved quickly through the sequential order of Roman public offices, the *cursus honorum*. Successively, he became quaestor in the year 75, at the age of 31; aedile in 69, at age 37; praetor in 66, at age 40; and consul in 63, at age 43.

When he joined 19 others as one of the annually-elected quaestors in 75 B.C., Cicero found himself in what amounted to a training post, a proving ground, for serious public obligations under the direction of a more senior magistrate or provincial commander. Dispatched to the western region of Sicily, Cicero's reputation for honesty and integrity as a representative of the local population was widespread. Sicilians consequently took the brazen move of later asking Cicero to prosecute a notoriously corrupt public official by the name of Gaius Verres, who, as governor of Sicily, robbed the island of goods by force for years and amassed great riches from the practice. A state prosecution service did not exist; Sicilians believed Cicero was their best hope. They first approached him in 71 B.C., and he took an unusual step in serving as prosecutor. In most instances in his legal career, he was the defense attorney.

As was the outcome in his defense of Roscius ten years earlier, Cicero's legal maneuvering against Verres on public corruption charges proved fruitful for Cicero's public standing. By the time the Sicilian case had fully unfolded, Cicero was regarded as the leading orator in Rome. This is because he had successfully challenged not only a powerful Sicilian politician in Verres but also his lawyer, Quintus Hortensius Hortalus, considered the best in the Roman world at the time. To have been able to match his skills

against the premier figure in Roman jurisprudence may have been a factor in the decision of Cicero to enter the case in the first place. Cicero's punishing rhetoric against the wayward policies and activities of Verres carried the day. The jury was convinced after listening attentively to the straightforward approach, more direct than that on behalf of Sextus Roscius.

Cicero spoke in a particularly frank manner, for instance, in this excerpt from the first pleading of the case:

If [Verres] were as secret in acting as he is audacious in attempting, perhaps in some particular he might some time or other have escaped our notice. But it happens very fortunately that to his incredible audacity there is joined a most unexampled folly. For as he was unconcealed in committing his robberies of money, so in his hope of corrupting the judges he has made his intentions and endeavours visible to every one.<sup>12</sup>

As much as any surviving source, records of the 70 B.C., Gaius Verres trial reveal for today's scholars and historians the corruption so pervasive in the last years of the Roman Republic. The three-year governorship of Verres in Sicily in the late seventies was among the worst of Roman administrative scandals. Cicero attacked the unbridled greed and arrogance of this provincial governor in what was once the breadbasket of the Roman Republic. He also exhibited some of the talents that would make him one of Rome's most influential politicians in a case that fully exposed excesses of the senatorial oligarchy established by the Sullan constitution.<sup>13</sup> Cicero's seven trial proceedings in the case survive but we have no information of what Verres or his defense may have said. Yet there is little doubt that Verres was a public official without scruples who was hated by Sicilians. His abuses included falsifying records; presenting witnesses who were not above committing perjury; rigging the selection of priests; and transforming elective positions into appointed ones available to the highest bidders. Verres stooped so low as to

order some of the cities in Sicily to raise funds for public statues, some of which were dedicated to Verres himself. “Later, when Verres’s fortune turned, many of these same statues were torn down,” notes Douglas O. Linder, “in scenes probably not unlike those centuries later when crowds in Moscow and Baghdad would pull down statues of Stalin and Saddam Hussein.”<sup>14</sup>

The crime of Verres most infuriating to Sicilians pertained to taxes levied on farmers. The system of agricultural and land taxation in place for centuries seemed to be efficient and equitable for all until the governor revised it and informed his chief tax collector to set tithes at will, linked to a four-fold, non-compliance penalty. With that as their primary grievance, Sicilians turned to Cicero for relief. He responded with determination, devotion to duty and skill against cunning opposition. Verres was convicted and exiled to Massilia (modern day Marseille) for the last 27 years of his life. In 43 B.C., he was executed after he ran afoul of Mark Antony, who had demanded that this convicted former public official return Corinthian vases and other stolen goods. Verres symbolized an entire system based on corruption. Because of that, Cicero strove for more than the condemnation of one man. The great trial helped to sound the death knell of the power of the *optimates*, those leading conservatives asserting the supremacy of the Senate and promoting the *status quo*.

With his victories in the service of Sextus Roscius and at the request of the Sicilian people, Cicero, in effect, completed his political apprenticeship. He performed admirably in both cases, but if one chooses to look for shortcomings, they are to be found. He really was not directly concerned about the actual murder, or with the prosecution of the actual assailants, in the 80 B.C., case, since his responsibilities were

limited to preventing his client from the charge of parricide and the death penalty. In 70 B.C., Cicero saw to the conviction of Verres but some of Cicero's friends who had settled in Sicily and benefitted from the shameful policies of Verres escaped legal attention.

The gift of oratory, as Cicero used it in these and other instances, was considered to be a great art and the chief way of providing information, knowledge and truth, or at least what we may call verisimilitude, which is the appearance of truth. Cicero's rhetoric was employed for ethical purposes in the two cases cited in this section but sometimes in courtroom settings and in the political process he was less than completely forthcoming. He boasted, according to Quintilian, of spreading dust before the eyes of a jury.<sup>15</sup> The other version of this metaphor is that Cicero admitted, following the *Pro Cluentio* in 66 B.C., of throwing a mist over the eyes of the judges.<sup>16</sup> Deception would have brought admiration, not moral outrage or further legal challenges. To work creatively to change the opinions or feelings of a jury, as we know, remains a standard legal practice.

It is necessary now to turn to Cicero as a family man, a topic for which we rely substantially on Atticus and Plutarch. Much of what we know about Cicero's private thoughts and his personal life stem from his writings to and from his wealthy benefactor Atticus (112?-32? B.C.), a celebrated editor, banker and patron of the arts. Letters between the two friends from 68 to 43 B.C., sometimes were written in code to disguise political thoughts, most frequently conservative in slant. More frequently they reveal true inner motivations and sentiments. More than 800 letters by Cicero survive, as do more than 100 letters to him, as compiled and translated in a seven-volume set by British scholar of antiquities D.R. Shackleton Bailey (1917-2005). The majority of these writings are between Cicero and Atticus; others pertain to Cicero's brother Quintus or to

miscellaneous friends. The large body of Cicero-Atticus letters offers today's scholars much in the way of detail about Roman history. These letters were influential in introducing letter writing as an art form in subsequent European society. Atticus published many of Cicero's full-length works and when Cicero was exiled in 58 B.C., in a public falling out with Clodius, Atticus provided him with 250,000 sesterces.

The other major source for information about Cicero's private affairs is Plutarch (A.D. c. 46-120), the Greek historian, biographer and essayist. Plutarch's often-cited biographies of leading Greeks and Romans, *Parallel Lives*, are sketches arranged in juxtaposition in hopes of displaying moral virtues as well as possible vices that the two cultures may have in common. His survey of 23 pairs of prominent Greeks and Romans did not concern itself so much with history as with the effect of human character on the lives and fortunes of men. For Plutarch, the Greek who could serve as the counterpart to the Roman Cicero was Demosthenes, the eminent statesman and orator of ancient Athens. Cicero once stated that the best speeches of Demosthenes were the ones that were the longest.<sup>17</sup> He meant to show his admiration for Demosthenes, who, in Cicero's view, came closest to the character of the perfect orator<sup>18</sup> in that he valued simplicity and directness and refrained from elaborate rhetorical devices.

Despite some lapses, Cicero was a dependable husband, father and friend. About the time he began his legal career, Cicero ventured into domestic achievement, too. Most likely in 79 B.C., at the age of 27, he married a woman by the name of Terentia. This union, one of convenience along the lines of upper class standards, lasted for approximately 33 years before ending in divorce. Separations, apparently, were tolerated. For example, strangely and suddenly Cicero left his new wife to go abroad just after the

Roscius trial. He returned two years later to continue his career and marriage. Just as oddly, perhaps, Terentia was not there to greet her husband when he returned to Italy from exile in 57 B.C. She was a political activist who adopted Cicero's causes, especially during his consulship. Terentia was a person of strong will and conviction and was as concerned with politics as she was with family and household matters.<sup>19</sup> Some speculation is that the marriage became unhinged by the persistent strain of Cicero's participation in Roman political affairs, which so often were marked by profound disruptions. Certainly there were other personal issues which led to divorce in 46 B.C., disputes arising from financial matters probably among them. In addition, Elizabeth Rawson writes, cryptically, of a "culminating treachery of Terentia."<sup>20</sup> A year later, Cicero married again, this time to a young girl, Publilia, once his ward. He was 61; she was a teenager. That was a short-lived, very puzzling and disastrous relationship. That the teenager was a young woman of wealth who could help Cicero settle some debts was a factor. Seen from a great distance, that union would appear to be one in which folly triumphed over wisdom. It certainly did nothing to add to Cicero's status as a moral and ethical voice.

When Tullia, Cicero's daughter from his marriage with Terentia, died in 45 B.C., following complications resulting from the birth of her son, Cicero was stunned, weakened and emotionally unstable. Consumed with despair, he repaired to his villa in Astura and wrote to Atticus that he had lost the one thing that bound him to life. Cicero's letter, dated 8 March, 45 B.C., stated: "You will not be able to feel towards me as in the past. The things you liked in me are gone for good."<sup>21</sup> A visit to Atticus was part of the bereavement process. In the large library of his friend, Cicero scoured what Greek

philosophy could offer about overcoming human suffering and grief. Still, Cicero could not avoid the feeling that, “My sorrow is stronger than any consolation.”<sup>22</sup> The grieving man who penned those lines would later produce his own public expression of consolation literature. The simply-named *Consolatio* of 45 B.C., introduced the genre to Roman readers and is regarded as one of the most celebrated works of antiquity.

Most significantly for this study, the family issue that prompted the writing of *De Officiis* involved the fact that the anticipated career path for Cicero’s son was falling apart. That Marcus Minor, born in 64 B.C., might become a philosopher did not meet with the young man’s outlook, and he opted for military service, entering the army of Pompey in 49 B.C. In the following year, at Pharsalus, Julius Caesar gained his astounding military victory in central Greece, despite being outmanned by Pompey roughly 50,000 troops to 30,000. Young Cicero was among those pardoned by Caesar. Three years later, as civil war raged, Marcus was ushered off to Athens at the behest of his father. He was to take instruction under the peripatetic philosopher Cratippus, whose teachings were traced to Aristotle and his habit of walking about while giving lectures. The younger Cicero, though, rejected the course of study and distanced from his father’s scrutiny became something of a libertine in the pursuit of merriment and the sensual. Marcus Minor was a convivial person who lacked his father’s industry and genius. Making matters worse, he fell under the influence of an eccentric and adventuresome teacher for a spell.

After his father was put to death in December of 43 B.C., Marcus joined the army of the *Liberatores*. These self-styled freedom fighters represented the 60 or so Roman senators who had activated the most famous plot in the history of the era, the

assassination of the dictator Julius Caesar, led by Cassius and Brutus on the Ides of March 44 B.C. Brutus, on a trip to Athens in search of officers for the republican cause, landed Marcus as well as Horace, later one of Rome's finest poets. Marcus Minor fought on the losing side in 42 B.C., at Philippi in Macedonia, where the Second Triumvirate declared civil war to avenge the murder of Caesar. Octavian recruited and pardoned Cicero, and he saw action in the naval battle of Actium in the Ionian Sea. Octavian defeated Antony in 31 B.C., in that renowned conflict, which effectively ended the Republic and consolidated the Empire.

Although he participated at some level in some of the most famous battles in Roman history, Marcus was not a soldier of great distinction. After Actium, he returned to Rome and received consistent support from Caesar Augustus, Rome's first emperor. Augustus, or Octavian, came to regret his role in the decision to place the elder Cicero on the proscription list during the Second Triumvirate, which included Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus. Augustus declared Cicero's son an augur, a religious official who interpreted omens and helped make public decisions, and let him serve the unexpired term of a consul. In essence, Marcus thrived on his father's reputation. He reported to the senate Mark Antony's naval defeat against the forces of Octavian and his commander-in-chief Agrippa at Actium. This announcement may have offered some small palliative for Marcus, given that his father's murder had been instigated by Mark Antony and carried out by his agents. With the backing of Augustus, Marcus became proconsul over Syria and the province of Asia and saw to it that honors and statues of Antony were removed. He also decreed that no member of his family would ever again be called Marcus.

These details about the life of Cicero's son are pertinent for this study because they show a young man teetering between career paths and lifestyles, and because they outline the need for Cicero to act at the most basic level, i.e., for the good of one of his very own family members. Rather than place demands upon his son, Cicero acted with persuasion. In approximately a five-week period of October and November of 44 B.C., as personal and political tensions overlapped, Cicero composed *De Officiis*. The importance of moral responsibilities and a general concern for others at the core of the essay, he had hoped, would become a part of the adult life of Marcus. Although it is possible to state that *De Officiis* showed Cicero at his most magnanimous, evidence suggests it did not influence his son as Cicero had hoped it would.

Cicero, an outsider from the hill town of Arpinum, built his legal and political career and climbed each rung of the Roman scaffold by doing good deeds and, just as importantly, by the widespread perception that he had done good deeds. As in the two major cases cited in this chapter, Cicero was called to think and act ethically, which is to say, to place his attention on the manner in which human beings treat other human beings. He chose the admirable ethical course in defending an individual, Sextus Roscius, who was unjustly charged by a sordid regime, and he chose the admirable ethical course in condemning a corrupt government official, Gaius Verres, who had mistreated the people he was obligated to represent. The affair involving Catiline in 63 B.C., to be taken up in the next chapter, needs to be assessed separately. It involved a larger, moral decision for Cicero as the head of Roman government. Questions abound as to whether Cicero adhered to the proper moral path.

## CHAPTER III

### POLITICIAN, STATESMAN AND SAVIOR OF ROME

As head of Rome's government, Cicero received his greatest acclaim for his passionate speeches in 63 B.C., against a major threat to overthrow the city spearheaded by a figure known as Catiline, more properly Lucius Sergius Catilina. Once seen as a possible political ally of Cicero, Catiline turned to terroristic strategies after his four attempts to gain the position of consul did not get the necessary support. So serious was the situation that Cicero as consul sought to expel Catiline from the city and led a movement to declare martial law because of the emergency. Cicero gained the backing of a "Decree of the Senate on Defending the Republic," a *Senatus Consultum de Re Publica Defendenda*, against this dangerous terrorist and his army.

As this section recounts, Cicero responded to Catiline's plot to decimate Rome with the four orations that are among the most skillful examples of his rhetoric. At the height of his political power, Cicero exposed Catiline and his followers and saw to it that the serious threat they posed was defeated through military means. The ethical and moral question at the heart of Cicero's great year, 63 B.C., pertains to the manner in which he brought about the executions of Catiline's leading conspirators in the city. Although they were Roman citizens, the five were not permitted trials. In the immediate aftermath of that episode, Cicero was hailed as savior of the city. Challenges thereafter arose concerning Cicero's decision to execute the five without trials; he was exiled five years later because of this action. These are important issues for this study because they call

into question Cicero's standing as an ethical thinker and moral philosopher. In practice, he made highly debatable decisions not against Catiline but against his conspirators.

While Catiline's character attracts intellectuals, politicians and citizens alike, assessments of him are more divergent than convergent. In the words of the Roman historian Appian (A.D. c. 95-c. 165): "Catiline was a person of note, by reason of his great celebrity, and high birth, but a madman."<sup>1</sup> For the most part, Cicero had the backing of the established wealthy; Catiline counted on the hopes of the dispossessed and downtrodden. In the literary arts, the confrontation between Cicero and Catiline has been measured by some of the world's leading dramatists and philosophers, including Ben Jonson (1611), Voltaire (1750) and Henrik Ibsen (1849). Guglielmo Negri's play, first performed in Rome in 1979, is illuminating for more modern audiences. In the interpretation of Jonson, Catiline's anarchical fury was understandable, directed as it was at the crimes of the mighty. For Voltaire, Catiline was a dangerous adventurer and Cicero was simply doing his civic duty when he intervened.

When the Roman historian Sallust (86-35 B.C.) offered his seminal account, probably between 43 and 40 B.C., his narrative included an element that is in line with these pages: Understanding the developments of 63 B.C., is important for what it says about youth. Sallust's depiction of Catiline and his representation of the events cautions readers, especially young ones, that political life is never that far from corruptible material temptations and warns them that blind ambition can be lethal when it is an individual's core motivating factor. At a time when youth gangs tormented Rome, Catiline had the ability to channel scores of young men into undesirable lifestyles. We

can note the statements of Sallust and Plutarch as to the evil element in Catiline's personality.

Sallust states:

It was the young whose acquaintance [Catiline] chiefly courted; as their minds, ductile and unsettled from their age, were easily ensnared by his stratagems. For as the passions of each, according to his years, appeared excited, he furnished mistresses to some, bought horses and dogs for others, and spared, in a word, neither his purse nor his character, if he could but make them his devoted and trustworthy supporters.<sup>2</sup>

Plutarch writes: "Catiline had corrupted a large part of the young men in the city, supplying them continually with amusements, banquets and amours, and furnishing without stint the money to spend on these things."<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Rome was able to tolerate Catiline the corruptor of youth but certainly not Catiline the terrorist. It is clear that Cicero's actions against him were intended to halt the immediate threat, the planned insurrection and conflagration; it can be understood, at least secondarily, that Cicero in the same confrontations had hopes of eliminating the squalid influence of Catiline on youth.

The first speech of Cicero against Catiline, which was formal and public even though it was delivered extemporaneously at least partially, includes the famous phrases, "O what times...O what morals!"<sup>4</sup> (Catil. 1.2) It condemns no particular crime so much as it attacks a Catiline-inspired climate of intimidation and immorality. Catiline was commonly known as a politician for his ill-conceived public policies for the Roman economy; as a government administrator for his questionable tactics as praetor in Rome and governor of Africa; and as an individual for his repugnant personal behavior. He was the product of a noble family who felt he had served the Roman people and the Roman military well and should therefore one day be elected to a consular position. Despite such

expectations, Catiline was excluded from consular elections, owing to various abuses, in 66 B.C.; went on trial for extortion and may have been party to what was rumored throughout Rome to be a first conspiracy, which never materialized, in 65 B.C; was defeated in consular elections by Cicero and Antonius in 64 B.C.; and failed in consular elections against Murena and Silanus in 63 B.C. With each setback, he became increasingly dangerous to Rome and leading Romans. Cicero was the highest target on his list.

By the middle of 63 B.C., Rome was ripe for revolution. It was a gathering place for malcontents who despised the existing establishment and the chaotic political landscape. The urban powderkeg involved ruined midland farmers; Sullan veterans who had replaced those farmers and failed at agriculture; former provincials not content with the practices of their governors; fiery youth; and disgraced former politicians. Catiline offered himself as their alternative and as their leader in revolt. Most of the Roman legions were in the East with Pompey's campaigns in the Third Mithridatic War, so Catiline felt the need to act as quickly as possible. He called together his supporters and outlined his conspiracy to level Rome. Saddest of all, many who supported him had once-proud family names and careers in the Senate but had fallen on hard economic times due to their extravagant lifestyles or decadent behavior. For them, Catiline offered debt cancellation, land redistribution and a chance oncemore at overall power and wealth that was in the hands of the *optimae* clique.

Catiline informed his closest conspirators of a determined, two-pronged revolutionary assault: military rebellions in the outlying districts and a violent uprising in the city. He set the dates as October 27 and 28. Cicero long had suspected that Catiline

would act in terroristic ways and his suspicions were confirmed by the mistress of one of the conspirators. The name of this ignominious, debt-ridden politician-turned-insurgent was Quintus Curius. During what amounted to pillow talk, this man unwisely promised his mistress, Fulvia, that she would soon be able to benefit from lavish spending. Her curiosity was aroused, quite naturally, and Curius eventually gave in and revealed to Fulvia the plans of Catiline. Overcome with apparent patriotic pangs, or suddenly realizing that there were bargaining chips at her disposal, she felt the urge to inform the consul, Cicero, of the danger in the offing. Cicero was not willing to take the advice of the mistress of a seriously lapsed politician but he did convince Curius, for a substantial fee, to brief him regarding the movements of the conspirators.

On October 20, evidence of the conspiracy began to surface. The wealthiest of all Romans, the financier and politician Marcus Crassus, received letters from an anonymous deliverer, letters warning of the coming bloodshed. Dutifully made aware, Cicero convened an emergency session of the Senate the next morning. He read the letters to the assembled group. Convinced of the grave danger to the republic, the senators provided Cicero and his co-consul, Gaius Antonius Hybrida, with the ultimate means of defense, the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, or “final resolution of the senate.” The consuls could levy troops and conduct war, apply unlimited force to citizens and allies alike, and exercise unlimited jurisdiction at home and abroad. Still, Catiline, who had fashioned himself as the *dux et signifer calamitosorum* (“the general and standard-bearer of the unfortunates”), was able to assume the mantle of an unjustly maligned patrician when on October 27 and 28 there was no uprising. Cicero, the man in charge, was losing credibility. But on November 6 Catiline moved decisively, calling together his leading

conspirators once again and giving each plotter his specific task. Their hopes were high, slaves were in revolt in Capua and Apulia, and Rome was swept up in panic. Moreover, Roman leaders knew that since July, Manlius, second-in-command of Catiline's army, had been recruiting and marshalling troops in Faesulae in Etruria.

Catiline recognized that Cicero must be done away with first. Volunteers stepped forward in the persons of the senator Lucius Vargunteius and the equestrian Gaius Cornelius. Acting on information supplied by Curius and Fulvia, Cicero fortified his home and called upon various public officials for an overnight stay. He wanted the danger brought to full disclosure. On the morning of November 7, the would-be assassins Vargunteius and Cornelius appeared at Cicero's front door but were subdued. Their presence gave Cicero and the nobles who had served as his overnight guests further evidence against the strategy of Catiline. The next day, November 8, Cicero called for a Senate meeting near the Forum at a sacred site, the well-defended temple of Jupiter Stator.<sup>5</sup> The setting afforded Cicero his opportunity to provide full details of Catiline's revolutionary aims in the absence of the revolutionary leader, or so Cicero thought.

Called to order, the Senate began to discuss events of the previous days and weeks. To the absolute amazement of everyone in the temple, an imposing figure appeared. "Forsaken by all as if infected by a contagious disease, [Catiline] sat alone in a forlorn corner," according to Charles Odahl.<sup>6</sup> All attention then focused on Cicero, who was as shocked as anyone as he stood up to speak against the man who had planned to have him executed roughly 24 hours earlier.

The consul's brilliance, in the First Oration Against Catiline, was the equal of the extraordinary tenseness of the scene. He began:

When, O Catiline, do you mean to cease abusing our patience? How long is that madness of yours still to mock us? When is there to be an end of that unbridled audacity of yours, swaggering about as it does now? Do not the nightly guards placed on the Palatine Hill—do not the watches posted throughout the city—does not the alarm of the people, and the union of all good men—does not the precaution taken of assembling the senate in this most defensible place—does not the looks and countenances of this venerable body here present, have any effect upon you? Do you not feel that your plans are detected? Do you not see that your conspiracy is already arrested and rendered powerless by the knowledge which every one here possesses of it? What is there that you did last night, what the night before—where is it that you were—who was there that you summoned to meet you—what design was there which was adopted by you, with which you think that any one of us is unacquainted?

Shame on the age and on its principles! The senate is aware of these things; the consul sees them; and yet this man lives. Lives! aye, he comes even into the senate. He takes a part in the public deliberations; he is watching and marking down and checking off for slaughter every individual among us. And we, gallant men that we are, think that we are doing our duty to the republic if we keep out of the way of his frenzied attacks.

You ought, O Catiline, long ago to have been led to execution by command of the consul. That destruction which you have been long plotting against us ought to have already fallen on your own head. (Catil. 1.1-2)

Cicero charged Catiline with planning revolution, murder and conflagration. He offered a long list of Catiline's illicit activities and turned his attention to those in the Senate who were in the camp of Catiline, characterizing them as unprincipled remnants of Roman power who were merely hanging on to Catiline as their last chance of retaining some measure of influence in politics. After Cicero, in his first speech, sought to have Catiline and his collaborators barred from the capital, Catiline burst out of the temple.

Part of his plan, to be carried out by his enlivened conspirators, was to conscript to his cause a band of mercenaries, the Allobroges, powerful Celtic warriors of Gaul. The Allobroges were promised handsome rewards if they would join the side of the revolutionaries, but they chose not to do so. Instead, they exposed to their Roman patrons

letters of their proposed agreement with the conspirators. To the Allobroges, Catiline and his followers were traitors, and the odds against them were dangerously long. With the helpful information supplied by these potential soldiers-for-hire, Cicero sent troops to capture the conspirators at the Milvian Bridge, an important route over the Tiber.<sup>7</sup>

The five leading conspirators in the city were the praetor Lentulus, Cethegus, Statilius, Gabinius and Caeparius. On December 3, these five faced inquisition in the Temple of Concord and were found guilty; on December 4, the Senate heard further testimony against them; on December 5, the Senate debated their fate. To decide upon their guilt was a relatively easy task but to agree upon a just punishment was a more difficult undertaking. Although the leading conspirators were in custody and the power of martial law was in place, angst continued throughout the community. Because Catiline remained at large, house arrest or exile for his most visible followers still would not eliminate Catiline's overall threat against the state. There were reports that Catiline was planning to regroup and march on the city on December 17. Cato, especially, was concerned over that possibility. In the December 5 debates, Julius Caesar, Rome's highest priest, *Pontifex Maximus*, in 63 B.C., at first attracted many in the Senate to his suggestion that the conspirators be given sentences of life imprisonment in various towns in Italy. His idea was overridden decisively, however, when Cato spoke of the appropriateness of the death penalty.

The proposal of Cato, acting, in effect, as an assistant to Cicero, met with Senate approval. A stern moralist, Cato the Younger (95-46 B.C.) took very seriously the potential of Catiline as a revolutionary force. By this time, we should recall, Catiline had assembled an army in Etruria, in modern Tuscany of central Italy, and posed much more

than a routine threat. The reputation of Marcus Porcius Cato was not only that of a statesman of stubbornness and tenacity but also that of a person of moral integrity never opposed to taking on the ideas of Julius Caesar. Against Caesar's recommendation that the five chief conspirators be given life sentences and dispersed throughout Italy, Cato wanted to treat them as violent traitors against the state. He took the position that capital punishment would act as a preventative measure, that is to say, it would make clear and public examples of any terrorist who had the insolence to attempt to bring down Rome or any of its vital institutions. More persuasive than the argument of Julius Caesar was that of Cato, or so the Senate found. On that same day, December 5, Lentulus was forced to resign as praetor and all five leading conspirators were given sentences of death. Cicero stepped in, decisively and single-handedly.

In law, Roman government required two consuls, in a checks-and-balances arrangement. In fact, in 63 B.C., Cicero so dominated the landscape as to make his co-consul, Antonius, subordinate to the point of political impotence. In effect, Cicero had bought off the political influence of his co-consul.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence, after the Senate agreed on death as just punishment for the conspirators, the weight of the matter rested, exclusively, upon Cicero. In accordance with the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, Cicero argued, he technically held the power to do whatever he felt was necessary in this limited set of emergency circumstances. Cicero decided that the five would be sent to the Roman prison site called Tullianum,<sup>9</sup> where they met death via strangulation. Generally, the Romans of the pre-Christian era sent prisoners of high profile there and incarcerated them for a period of time before parading them through the city to symbolize Roman might. No such extended waiting period was found applicable concerning the five Catiline

conspirators; they met death that same day, December 5. Cicero went so far as to become personally involved, ushering one of the condemned, the former government official Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, to the notorious Roman jail and his awaiting death.

After the executions, Cicero made a brief speech to the crowd, then was escorted home, the scene in the streets of Rome triumphant under torchlight. “The citizens...[received him] with cries and clapping of hands as he passed along, calling him the saviour and founder of his country,” according to Plutarch.<sup>10</sup> The Republic was rescued by the power of speech of a brilliant orator. It is conceivable that the gods above helped spare Rome; it is certain that Cicero, on the ground, was indispensable in the prevention of such a disaster. Had Cicero been unsuccessful against Catiline’s conspiracy, the likelihood is that Pompey the Great, using the massive resources of the Roman military, would have returned and annihilated Catiline. Few Romans would have wished for that bloody civil war in their midst followed by a Pompeian military dictatorship.

With those suspenseful events as the backdrop, never before and never again, in the minds of most Romans, would Cicero be quite as popular. He had stopped Catiline. Keeping within his character, there was an element of hubris in Cicero’s demeanor and speech that day. In retrospect, this student and scholar of Greek should have remembered how the Greek gods regard hubristic behavior. Seneca tells us that Cicero referred to his role in defeating Catiline not without cause but without end.<sup>11</sup> The phrase indicates a surfeit of acclaim directed by Cicero toward himself: *non sine causa, sed sine fine*. In other words, Cicero’s persistent bragging over having saved the city grew wearisome and annoying for listeners.

Almost at the level of footnote, Catiline kept up the fight, despite mass desertions in his army. The end came in early January of 62 B.C., as Catiline tried to move his troops through the Apennines. The decisive battle, which took place about 30 kilometers northwest of Florence in the town called Pistoria, was especially bloody and was dominated by the Roman forces of Marcus Petreius. Antonius, the co-consul, claimed an illness to avoid the engagement. He had secretly supported Catiline. With Catiline dead and his soldiers slaughtered, the *optimates* rejoiced. Having done his job, Cicero, who was not one of them but instead represented for them nothing more than a conceited upstart, suddenly became expendable. “They were jealous of his success, resentful of the airs he assumed and bored by his constant and inopportune boasting,” writes Lester Hutchinson.<sup>12</sup> Other accounts of the death of Catiline and the end of his conspiracy indicate bewilderment on the part of both Catiline’s revolutionaries and Roman forces. Combatants on both sides came face-to-face with relatives, friends and acquaintances in the opposing camp. Survivors began to think, uneasily, about the future of Rome. Beyond a doubt, many Romans were overjoyed that Catiline was dead and no longer a threat. But their euphoria was tempered by uncertainty about what would follow. When the battle was over, according to Sallust, there was relief but no great sense of accomplishment because so many of the same conditions that had led to the hostilities remained. Sallust wrote: “Gladness and sorrow, grief and joy, were variously felt throughout.”<sup>13</sup>

In some quarters, as mentioned above, Catiline has been interpreted as a hero of the lowly, as a hopeful figure for those with no hope, as a rebel with a plausible cause. Those benevolent musings, though, meet firm resistance when it is considered that Catiline, from a separate perspective, was the scoundrel of scoundrels. As a politician, he

practiced bribery as if showing concern that it would soon go out of favor. In his personal life, he was accused of many crimes and kept the company of many known criminals. Regarding Catiline's character, the most telling anecdote comes from Sallust: Catiline wanted to marry a woman called Aurelia Orestilla, a woman who took no great delight in the fact that Catiline already had a son living with him. So, Catiline tidied up the house by killing his son, to make room for and to appease his bride-to-be.<sup>14</sup>

Cicero would rue the manner in which he dealt with those who most fervently believed in Catiline's revolution. On December 29, twenty-four days after the five executions Cicero brought about, the political backlash began. The tribunes Lucius Calpurnius Bestia, who was part of the conspiracy, and Metellus Nepos, Pompey's brother-in-law and an old enemy of Cicero, introduced threatening measures for the consul. They prevented Cicero from addressing the people on his final day in office, which was a tradition for an outgoing Roman consul. However, at the instigation of Cato Minor, so capable of delivering a rousing speech, bestowed on Cicero in January of 62 B.C., was the title *Pater Patriae* (*Father of the Fatherland*) for his actions in putting down the revolt. Cicero paid a very high price, though, to have this honorific conferred upon him by the Senate. In the short term, the alliance of Roman citizens that stopped Catiline, Cicero's "union of all good men" (Catil. 1.1), extended the lifespan of the republican constitution but only temporarily. He was branded as the Roman consul who had protected the city but also as the leader who had directed the deaths of five Roman citizens without due process. That they were dangerous terrorists mattered little to Cicero's political enemies. Imagine his dread as the issue swirled for five years before once again reaching the surface.

A man known for following popular sentiment in Roman political affairs, Publius Clodius Pulcher, was in 58 B.C., a tribune and president of the Plebian Council. Among the six laws introduced by Clodius, the *Leges Clodiae*, was one that would place into exile any person involved in the execution of a citizen of Rome in the absence of a trial. The third of these “Clodian Laws” (*Lex Clodia de Civibus Romanis Interemptis*) passed, with Cicero as its obvious and primary target. Disputes between Cicero and Clodius were on public display and the rift continued throughout their careers. To avoid exile, Cicero sought the help of influential figures, Pompey included, but found no support. Cicero’s argument was that he should have been shielded, or indemnified, according to the language of the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*. Problems arose for Cicero due to the brevity of the decree. It did not pinpoint just how far those powers could extend for consuls over and against normal protections and liberties enjoyed by citizen of Rome.

When the third of the Clodian Laws was passed and then enforced, despair overtook Cicero, understandably. He again failed to gain significant backing in Rome and was exiled, arriving at Thessalonica, a city in the northeast of Greece, on May 23 of 58 B.C. His writings to Atticus make clear his frame of mind during the sixteen-month exilic period. On November 25, 58 B.C., Cicero wrote to his friend: “I am consumed by grief together with regret for all those things that have always been dearer to me than life itself.”<sup>15</sup> He meant country, family and friendships. In early February of 57 B.C., another correspondence to Atticus read: “From your letter and from the facts themselves I see that I am utterly finished. In matters where my family needs your help I beg you not to fail us in our misery.”<sup>16</sup>

The fortunes of Cicero changed, however, after the election of Titus Annius Milo as tribune. Clodius, who sponsored the law that exiled Cicero and encouraged others to get behind his plan, and Milo were decided enemies of long duration. Milo headed a Senate effort to recall Cicero from Greece, an effort which found a single dissenting vote, that of Clodius. An enthusiastic crowd that included his beloved daughter Tullia met Cicero upon his return to Italy. On August 7, 57 B.C., he stepped ashore at Brundisium, or Brindisi, in southern Italy, effectively closing the case involving Catiline and his followers. Cicero made it back to his homeland, the place where six years earlier he was championed as one of the greatest Romans.

To speak of 63 B.C., is to speak of Cicero's great year, his year as the head of the world's most powerful government. Cicero referred to it as his *annus mirabilis*, his momentous or remarkable year. Yet Cicero's putative status as father of the country and savior of Rome needs further analysis because, as the Catiline affair shows, he sometimes valued wordly aims over vital principles. What stands out is how little moral thinking went into his decision to execute the five conspirators of Catiline. A policy of setting an example by using capital punishment was upheld but the principle of due process of the law for Roman citizens was skirted. Cicero's defining political act became more a matter of swiftness and ostentation in response to a perceived emergency. One could argue that there was no emergency once the plot was revealed, the leading conspirators were jailed and the force of Rome's military was soon to be unleashed on what remained of Catiline's army. One could argue, as well, that the oddest and most inconsistent aspect of the whole affair concerns the fact that Cicero, such an accomplished professional before the courts, is the one who prevented trials, even though the state was in possession of a

massive amount of forensic evidence. To convict in a legally-binding way could have been a formality. Something he wrote nearly two decades later in *De Officiis* captures the spirit of his attitude toward the five: “More law, less justice.” (*De Off.*, I.X)

The viewpoint here is not that the five could or should have been found innocent or that the five could or should have been given less than very harsh penalties, perhaps even death. To be clear, what is conspicuous about the entire episode is that the moral dimension was held in abeyance. In all times and in all places, of course, whenever one human being is in the position of having to decide the life or death of other human beings, sound moral reasoning must predominate. Cicero failed, from a purely moral point of view. Perhaps it would not matter quite as much if this were *any* politician. Instead, as these pages point out, this was the politician whose most enduring work has to do with ethical and moral obligation.

In *De Officiis*, taken up more extensively in section five of this study, Cicero is neither the originator of moral reasoning nor its master but he is one of its prime stewards, for the benefit of posterity. In that essay, Cicero gives us a framework for making serious moral decisions: We should seek the wisdom of the gods, we should be open to the advice of the foremost knowledgeable individuals in our surroundings and we should give ourselves ample time for reflection. On all three counts, Cicero was in violation of his own principles in his proceedings against Catiline’s conspirators. In his speeches, he thanked the gods for their protection but as such he may have been simply doing his patriotic duty; he listened to the voices in the Senate only insofar as they reflected his own wishes; he acted alone in that he had purchased the influence of his co-consul; finally, he personally directed the conspirators to their deaths just hours after

legally-problematic judgments and reactions regarding not their guilt but their punishments. Further, as purely practical considerations, Catiline's military capabilities may have been overestimated and his military planning and communications were never of the highest sort. To defeat him in battle was well within the means of Roman forces. Catiline's revolution was a legitimate, fearful operation so long as his conspiracy involved serious and determined leaders in the capital but after those leaders were captured the danger significantly diminished.

Cicero despised tyrants but in this set of circumstances he, too, performed like one. To pay attention to the legal gamesmanship in the case shows that Cicero acted beyond his means, even though this was an extremely dangerous situation at first, not a conspiracy or a plot but rather a revolution and a rebellion across the state involving many armed dissidents. He used the Senate with sleight of hand, treating it as though its pronouncements to him were absolutely binding. The Senate was in theory only the advisory council of the consuls, although its authority was vast and its decrees generally valid. Legally, Cicero worked around constitutional principles by summoning the Senate to act as a court of law in the decision to remove citizenship from the five conspirators;<sup>17</sup> by executing Roman citizens without trial by a competent court, as mentioned throughout these pages; and by failing to grant Roman citizens the right of appeal and possible voluntary exile. "What Cicero wanted and successfully maneuvered to obtain was the definite backing of the senate in order to be able to claim that he had acted because a *Senatus Consultum*, a decree of the senate, had specifically ordered the death of the arrested conspirators," according to Arthur Kaplan.<sup>18</sup> In the first Catilinarian, Cicero claimed that the October 21 S.C.U., *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, gave him the right to

summary executions but this claim is not again mentioned in the fourth Catilinarian, or by anyone in the Senate, on December 5, the day of the executions. Most significantly, an uneasy balancing act emerged, with the rights of the consul to act in an emergency on the one side and the rights of citizens on the other. Cicero advanced as if the balancing act possessed just one side.

The opening three sections of this study offer a brief overview of the life and times of Cicero. They make no assertion of being exhaustive but are representative. In his political climb and in his commitment to traditional republicanism, Cicero proved that merit still counted for something in the Roman electoral system and that barriers of aristocratic exclusiveness could be surmounted without revolutionary platforms, out-and-out corruption or demagoguery.<sup>19</sup> Still, it cannot be denied that the Catiline affair weighed heavily and eventually ended his political career. “For the next twenty years, ‘the glory of the Nones’ was to hang around his neck like a millstone dragging him further and further down,” writes David Stockton. “We may condemn Cicero or...feel affection and even admiration without shutting our eyes to his many and grave shortcomings.”<sup>20</sup>

In difficult deliberations throughout his life, we see Cicero at his best when he is to some degree respectful of divine will; to some degree able to have the recommendations of other key trusted figures, such as Atticus; and to some degree patient enough to think the matter through before becoming a man of action. In the decision against Catiline’s five conspirators those components were present only in shards, if they were authentically present at all. This does not mean that we should cast aside Cicero from further academic scrutiny. It does not mean that Cicero should be discarded as an

ethical and moral voice. It does mean that we should look, soberly, to see if, and how, he learned from some of his poor judgments in the Catiline affair.

We can surmise that Cicero may have been reflecting on his response to the Catiline conspiracy when, nineteen years later in *De Officiis*, he instructed his son on the difference between the role of the prosecutor and the role of the defender in legal cases. He wrote to Marcus Minor that a prosecutor should be relentless in protecting his country against its enemies. But then, strangely, Cicero appeared to change his tack, stating: “It requires a heartless man, it seems, or rather one who is well-nigh inhuman, to be arraigning one person after another on capital charges.” To do so, Cicero added, is “fraught with danger” and “damaging...to reputation.” (*De Off.*, II.XIV) In these passages from the *De Officiis*, he maintains that restraints should be placed on the use of capital punishment, which represents an apparent departure from the policies he relied upon during his great year of 63 B.C.

## KEY MOMENTS IN ROMAN HISTORY, 133 B.C.-14 A.D.

The following time line adapted from Charles Matson Odahl's chronology shows some of the alterations in Roman government; the persistence of wars, political strife and elements of disenchantment among the populace; and the prominent place of the defeat of the ambitious Catiline for the career of Cicero:

- 133-121 B.C. Beginning of the "Roman Revolution" with Gracchi tribunes
- 107-100. Marius creates client armies and serves seven consulships
- 106. Birth of Cicero
- 87-79. Eastern command, dictatorship of Sulla
- 80. Cicero's defense of Sextus Roscius
- 77-71. Pompey reconquers Spain; Crassus defeats Spartacus in Italy
- 70. Consulship of Pompey and Crassus; Cicero prosecutes Gaius Verres
- 68-67. Catiline praetor in Rome, governor of Africa; Pompey defeats Mediterranean pirates
- 66. Pompey begins Mithridatic campaigns; Cicero praetor; Catiline excluded from consular elections
- 65. Rumored "First Catilinarian Conspiracy"; Crassus censor; Caesar aedile; extortion trial of Catiline
- 64. Cicero and Antonius defeat Catiline for consulship
- 63. Consulship of Cicero; Catiline loses consular election to Murena and Silanus; Catilinarian Conspiracy forms in summer and fall; Cicero's *Oratio in Catilinam I* to Senate on Nov. 8; *Oratio in Catilinam II* to people on Nov. 9; *Oratio in Catilinam III* to people on Dec. 3; *Oratio in Catilinam IV* to Senate on Dec. 5
- 62. Cato's Assembly bill names Cicero *pater patriae*; Catiline killed at Battle of Pistoria; Pompey returns peacefully, celebrates triumphs
- 60. First Triumvirate of Caesar, Crassus and Pompey
- 59-50. Caesar consul in Rome, proconsul in Gaul; break with Pompey
- 58-57. Cicero in exile in Greece
- 49-44. Civil war; Caesar's dictatorship, assassination
- 44-43. Second Triumvirate of Octavian Caesar, Mark Antony, Lepidus; Cicero writes the *Philippics* and *De Officiis*; death of Cicero
- 42-31. Caesarian conflicts; Octavian defeats Mark Antony at Battle of Actium; death of the Republic
- 27. Title of Augustus conferred on Octavian
- 14 A.D. Death of Augustus

—Charles Matson Odahl, *Cicero and the Catilinarian Conspiracy*, xv-xvi.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CULTURE THAT VALUED RHETORIC

As a true artist of his craft, Cicero was obligated to learn the best of what the Greeks had to offer concerning rhetoric and yet felt the need to produce something novel for the benefit of Romans. What he contributed to the discipline, this chapter most deliberately works to establish, was the conviction that rhetoric needed to have a moral and ethical component as well as a philosophical underpinning in order to be considered of the highest order. He takes the view, most enthusiastically in *De Oratore* (55 B.C.), that the ideal orator must stand out as an example of dignity, wisdom and virtue.<sup>1</sup> Cicero declared that the orator needed to be, in the words of Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician from Spain, a good man skilled in the art of speaking (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*). Cato, too, held this view. Indispensable to this study is to understand that it was Cicero in this role as ethicist and moralist, not just as a stylist, that attracted humanists of the Renaissance as well as Jesuit educators. He wrote that the best orators are those who are able to wake up tired, degenerate people and raise them to a sense of honor. In fact, he believed oratory at its best diverted individuals from error and motivated them against evil people and influences.

Yet Cicero wondered why these ethical and moral qualities as well as general efforts toward the building up of human character were for the most part missing from classical textbooks by the masters of rhetoric. "If any one supposes that this power has...been sufficiently set forth by those who have written on the art of speaking...he is

greatly mistaken,” Crassus, generally accepted to be Cicero’s dramatic persona, claims. (*De Orat.*, I.XLVI) Antonius professes that treatises of the rhetoricians are limited because they have much to say about rules of grammar, as can be expected, but little to offer regarding “the discipline of youth, justice, patience, temperance, [and] moderation in every thing.” (*De Orat.*, I.XIX) In the same passage he states: “About the modeling of states, the composition of laws, about equity, justice, integrity, about mastering the appetites, and forming the morals of mankind, not one single syllable was to be found.”

Cicero sought to substantiate rhetoric not just as a technique but as embodying a way to live one’s life. He explained it in its connection to the morally good life, seeing in rhetoric a way to both express and inculcate principles of moral philosophy. Living life properly, for Cicero, meant being in the right relationship with the gods, serving country and family, and, above all, making decisions and acting so as not to overlook the legitimate needs of others. His overarching theme was that the true orator must be an ethical person and that his speech must follow with that pervading quality. Ethics, for Cicero, should never assume a subordinate role in civic debate. Correspondingly, he felt the study of rhetoric and literature should give young Romans a corollary advantage, a foothold in ethics and morals that instilled fortitude, justice and prudence.

This ethical dimension was operative in some circles before Cicero but it is also fair to state that he articulated it in a particularly effective way so as to help establish it at Rome, in later Western schooling and eventually as part of his legacy. He formulated a concept of the orator as embodying the “whole man,” i.e., a person educated in a wide array of disciplines, including ethics, who could emerge in a leadership role. *De Oratore* marked a watershed in his thinking: He argued that Greek technicalities should not be

overlooked but also should not be overemphasized and that the art of oratory was one of the highest expressions of human dignity. In effect, Cicero distanced himself from the textbooks of the day with his insistence that oratory was a powerful weapon to be employed only with great responsibility. He insisted that the orator, that is to say the statesman, needs both moral excellence and a wide and liberal culture to be productive. Only through a proper combination of philosophy and oratory could right conduct and expression be achieved. Some of these ideas may have been present in classical Athenian thought but no one gave them the style, energy and overall respect that Cicero did.

Cicero stressed that an orator's sphere of influence is far reaching, to include habits of life; administration of public affairs; civil society; the common sense of mankind; the laws of nature; and moral duties. (*De Orat.*, II.XVI) He underscored, in the following passage, the moral component, i.e., that rhetoric must correct or confirm and support as necessary, and that it must proceed honestly:

There is no subject susceptible of being treated with elegance and effect that may not fall under the province of the orator. It is his, in giving counsel on important affairs, to deliver his opinion with clearness and dignity; it is his to rouse a people when they are languid, and to calm them when immoderately excited. By the same power of language, the wickedness of mankind is brought to destruction, and virtue to security. Who can exhort to virtue more ardently than the orator? Who [can] reclaim from vice with greater energy? Who can reprove the bad with more asperity, or praise the good with better grace? Who can break the force of unlawful desire by more effective reprehension? Who can alleviate grief with more soothing consolation? By what other voice, too, than that of the orator, is history, the evidence of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directness of life, the herald of antiquity, committed to immortality? (*De Orat.*, II.VIII-IX)

Written as three books in dialogue form, *De Oratore* provides opinions on some of the chief characteristics of exceptional orators. It is Cicero's masterpiece on the topic, much more advanced than his *De Inventione* (84 B.C.), a textbook about the composition of arguments.<sup>2</sup> The dialogues are supposed to have been held in 91 B.C., at the Tusculan

villa of the eminent orator Lucius Licinius Crassus. Others engaged in the discussion are another outstanding orator, Marcus Antonius;<sup>3</sup> the expert on Roman civil law who served as Cicero's mentor in his youth, Quintus Mucius Scaevola; and two young students of rhetoric, Caius Aurelius Cotta and Publius Sulpicius Rufus.

It is highly significant for these pages that Cicero includes two young men, both aspiring orators, as participants. Crassus tells his two young listeners that they should pursue a broad, liberal education and that they should energetically follow the lessons taught in those classes if they wish to become great public speakers. (*De Orat.*, I.XXXI) The usual assumption is that Crassus speaks for Cicero, as stated above, and Antonius for Cicero's brother Quintus but these assumptions do not always hold true.

At a time when moral and political corruption were a part of life or at least a potential troubling factor for many Romans, Cicero's aim was to describe the ideal orator and to see him as the moral guide for the state. Moral principles, he believed, could be learned from the examples of noble men, some of whom were Greek philosophers. In *De Oratore*, Cicero provided an accessible way for readers to understand important points in the rhetorical treatises of Aristotle, Isocrates and other ancient writers. Because of the dialogue form he has chosen, various ideas emerge and clash from different voices Cicero has created, and no single doctrine dominates without being challenged.

Like Thucydides, he sometimes imagined conversation, as rules for writing ancient historiographies permitted. For example, in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, of 431-404 B.C., Thucydides included dozens of speeches by Athenian and Spartan leaders. He heard some of those speeches and relied on eyewitness accounts for others. In addition, Thucydides probably fabricated some dialogue because his narrative called for

it. Although Cicero, as well, imagined dialogue in *De Oratore*, it is clear that he wished to leave his readers with some definite and truthful statements about the best orators, especially about their character and about ethical requirements in their messages. To read these three books is to be taken up into a pendulum of thesis and anti-thesis regarding rhetoric. Cicero explains that he does not offer a series of prescriptions but does expose the best principles on the topic. His core idea, as stated throughout this chapter, was that the perfect orator should be a skilled speaker with moral principles, philosophical training and wide knowledge in law, history and ethics.

In Book I, Cicero, behind the mask of Crassus, elaborates on his major theme: the power oratory can give to an individual in his attempts to maintain personal rights, defend oneself against false charges and take action against evil forces in a culture. Effective persuasion is important not only for oneself but also for other individuals and even the state at large. Crassus argues that orators are remiss if they do not engage in the study of civil rights because laws that are properly enforced can overturn greed and other evils that loom. What is more, only by following the law, which is to say, virtue, right and honest labor, can an individual achieve a good reputation and legitimate honors. (*De Orat.*, I.XLIII) Conformity to fact, Antonius tells those involved in the discussion, is the preeminent concern: “What actor has ever given greater pleasure in imitating, than an orator gives in supporting, truth?” (*De Orat.*, II.VIII)

Further, when he asserts that the study of history should be the business of the orator, Antonius asks: “Who is ignorant that it is the first law in writing history that the historian must not dare to tell any falsehood, and the next, that he must be bold enough to tell the whole truth? Also, that there must be no partiality in his writings, or...personal

animosity? These fundamental rules are doubtless universally known.” (*De Orat.*, II.XV)

In basic agreement, Crassus acknowledges later that although the orator has at his disposal an array of artistic aids, “In every thing, without doubt, truth has the advantage over imitation.” (*De Orat.*, III.LVII)

Having stated that the orator should be excluded from no significant field of inquiry, Antonius in the dialogues goes on to affirm that the orator “must speak of good and evil, of things to be desired or avoided, honorable or dishonorable, profitable or unprofitable; of virtue, justice, temperance, prudence, magnanimity, liberality, piety, friendship, fidelity, duty, and of other virtues and their opposite vices.” (*De Orat.*, II.XVI) The passage continues by declaring that the orator should be engaged in matters relating to affairs of state, government administration, military matters, civil polity and morality in general.

In legal environments, as in any venue that involves public speaking, what counts most, according to Antonius, is that the speaker be seen as a man of complete probity:

It contributes much to success in speaking that the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes, and of those for whom they plead, should be such as to merit esteem, and that those of their adversaries should be such as to deserve censure; and also that the minds of those before whom the cause is pleaded should be moved as much as possible to a favorable feeling, as well toward the speaker as toward him for whom he speaks. The feelings of the hearers are conciliated by a person’s dignity, by his actions, by the character of his life; particulars which can more easily be adorned by eloquence if they really exist, than [can be] be invented if they have no existence. (*De Orat.*, II. XLIII)

In a puzzling passage, Cicero is possibly open to the charge that he is saying that it may not always be necessary that an orator also be a “good man.” He writes in this same section (*De Orat.*, II.XX) that a “tolerable” speaker is enough and he seems to be suggesting that some orators declaim in spite of decency. But in all other key instances,

he indicates just the opposite, taking the view that orators must be individuals of high character and high moral standing. In fact, he maintains that the most excellent orators are touched by “a sort of divinity.” (*De Orat.*, II.XX)

Elsewhere, the dialogues condemn indecency in language (*De Orat.*, II.LXII), champion the man of “good breeding” (*De Orat.*, I.XVI) and offer the opinion that the art of public speaking is in itself a kind of Stoic virtue and that he who possesses one virtue possesses all. (*De Orat.*, I.XVIII) Young people should study the best orations, not only for their stylistic approaches but also for the integrity of their messages. As for the perfect model of a complete orator, Cicero held to the view that Demosthenes among the ancients comes closest because of his noble language and sentiments.<sup>4</sup> Regarding “modern” orators, Cicero wrote, Cato was the one to try to emulate, given both his dignity in giving formal, public compliment and his severity as an accuser.<sup>5</sup>

In multiple references, the idea comes to the fore that the orator must be a thorough master of ethical philosophy, that component of the discipline regarding life and manners. Apart from this practical background, there is no way for an orator to distinguish himself. (*De Orat.*, I.XV) Moreover, the complete orator, as Crassus imagines that individual, is one “from whom every kind of fault is abstracted, and who is adorned with every kind of merit” while conversely the speaker who has no shame is worthy of rebuke and castigation. (*De Orat.*, I.XXVI) The foremost example of human excellence, in the opinion of Antonius, is to be found in no other pursuit than in the attempt to become the consummate orator. (*De Orat.*, II.VIII)

Regarding the ideal of human excellence, the dialogues even offer a discussion of the ethical way to praise ethical acts because a society should take care to commend the right individuals for the appropriate reasons. On this matter, the text reads:

The praise of those acts is heard with the greatest pleasure, which appear to have been undertaken by men of spirit, without advantage or reward; but those which have been also attended with toil and danger to themselves afford the largest scope for panegyric, because they may be set forth with the greatest ornaments of eloquence, and the account of them may be heard with the utmost satisfaction; for that appears the highest virtue in a man of eminence, which is beneficial to others, but attend with danger or toil, or at least without advantage, to himself. It is commonly regarded, too, as a great and admirable merit, to have borne adversity with wisdom, not to have been vanquished by [misfortune], and to have maintained dignity in the worst of circumstances. (*De Orat.*, II.LXXXV)

We note that the speaker, in this case Antonius in a very long passage, calls attention to exceptionally virtuous acts as those done on behalf of others, despite potential troubles, requiring great levels of effort and with no consideration for personal gain. In this instance, and indeed on many other ethical points in *De Oratore*, the echoes are clear. They can be heard to reflect Cicero's famous conviction, advanced eleven years later in *De Officiis*: "We are not born for ourselves alone." (*De Off.*, I.VII) That great rhetoric must have this ethical element is the significant insight that Cicero put forth, sometimes in a pithy way and sometimes in the midst of protracted argumentation, in the pages of *De Oratore*.

What follows are secondary aspects of this chapter, pinpointing the important relationship between primary and secondary rhetoric; the vital role of orators in civic life at Rome; the attention given to the study of rhetoric in schools of Cicero's day; Cicero's practical ability to channel a speech, such as one of the orations in the Catiline affair or one of the Philippics, to a particular audience or circumstance; and the fact that Cicero so often adeptly produced what has been called "crisis rhetoric." A discussion of these

points is required if we are to comprehend more of the full force of Cicero's influence and if we are to understand more of the extent to which he was the product of a culture that so adamantly valued rhetoric.

Rather than see them as completely separate disciplines, we should denote both the speech-act and the written text as forms of rhetoric. Primary rhetoric was developed by the Greeks as far back as the fifth century B.C., when artistic techniques initially were described. Primary rhetoric was oral, a speech-act, the performance of the art of persuasion in civic life on a specific occasion and for a specific cause. It was not a text although it later may have been treated as one. George A. Kennedy refers to "the primacy of primary rhetoric,"<sup>6</sup> calling it a fundamental fact in the classical tradition through the time of the Roman Empire. "Teachers of rhetoric...took as their nominal goal the training of persuasive public speakers," Kennedy writes.<sup>7</sup>

By contrast, secondary rhetoric refers to rhetorical techniques such as those in discourse, literature and art forms when those techniques are not being used for oral and persuasive reasons. Not the speech-act but a written text is the medium. Secondary rhetoric, which can include commonplaces, figures of speech and tropes, can help to emphasize ideas, enliven the page and demonstrate the writer's education, eloquence or skill. "It has been a persistent characteristic of classical rhetoric in almost every stage of its history to move from primary to secondary forms, occasionally then reversing the pattern," Kennedy asserts.<sup>8</sup> These shifts entail movement from persuasion to narration, from civic context to personal context, from speech to literature.

As this pertains to Cicero, it is accurate to call him a great rhetorician, meaning a great orator in the primary understanding of rhetoric. Of course, Cicero was talented at

secondary rhetoric, too, as can be discovered in many writings, including *On Friendship* and *On Old Age*, both dating from 44 B.C. When he turned to scholarly activity over the last decade or so of his life, rhetoric was his foremost topic, expressed in his writings. He produced six texts on the subject over the last 12 years of his life. *De Oratore* was the most influential by a great distance, as has been mentioned prominently in this chapter. What Cicero learned at the practical level he sought to explain at the level of theory. In a sense this follows the trajectory outlined by Kennedy in that Cicero's primary rhetoric (the speech-act) was transformed into secondary rhetoric (as expressed in written text).

The argument could be made that Cicero always was a formidable public speaker but became a distinguished writer only as a later development. However, as Kennedy describes it, fluidity between primary and secondary is nearly inevitable. Perhaps a better way to express the relationship between primary and secondary rhetoric is this: Today's college and university English departments are for the most part dedicated to reading, studying, discussing and employing secondary rhetoric. This secondary rhetoric borrows from the principles of primary rhetoric.

Cicero's rhetorical talents were a tremendous advantage because oratory in the ancient world, and especially in the later Roman Republic, was a part of life many, many times more important and sophisticated than it is now. Indeed, public speaking in this more complex and in-depth sense no longer exists. In the Republic, all of public life depended on oratory; "orator" and "statesman" essentially were synonymous terms. In a largely illiterate society, an outstanding public speaker could decide issues of enormous weight. In our times, science and technology are the dominant disciplines, and celebrity status often influences and directs the culture, sometimes to its detriment. In Cicero's

world, rhetoric held the position of prominence; stated in another way, the times were ripe for a person of his heightened skills.

The Roman historian and orator Tacitus (A.D. 55?-118?) maintained in *A Dialogue on Oratory* that great oratory is able to thrive when orators are free to express themselves in periods of widespread chaos, conditions in place during the late Republic. “We are speaking of an art,” wrote Tacitus, “which arose more easily in stormy and unquiet times.”<sup>9</sup> The Empire, by contrast, brought about a more orderly and peaceful society, and speech generally was able to be stifled at dictatorial command. Still, Tacitus claimed that great orators always are necessary because any culture is bound to have its share of evil elements. “Could a community be found in which no one did wrong, an orator would be as superfluous among its innocent people as a physician among the healthy,” he stated.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of rhetoric, as mentioned above, went back to the Athenians, whose society relied heavily on oral expression and whose government was conducted by dialogue and argumentation mostly in large gatherings. With as much significance attached to form as to content, rhetoric became one of the chief interests and powerful forces of antiquity. To Cicero, rhetoric was training for leadership, and he believed that good models, be they Greek or Roman, should be studied and imitated. Cicero did not seem to mind when critics detected in his viewpoints the original thinking of others. Beyond that, he did not even seem to mind when they reflected negatively on him for this tendency.

Cicero understood that for young Romans, rhetoric was a vocational subject, an essential for a fledgling political or legal career; many men of high birth, as can be

imagined, held aspirations for careers in those professions. A young man knew that he needed the rhetorical skills necessary to make others see the “correctness” of his view. Lasting reputations were made in this way at public meetings in the Senate and in the law courts. As we have seen in chapter two with the account of Cicero’s early career, a man in his twenties who took on the role of defender in a criminal trial could make a name for himself not just as a lawyer but also as a future politician. Of course, this is true in so many cases today, too, in American society. For Cicero, however, the study of rhetoric needed to teach more than ways to argue and persuade, with the end game the furthering of a career. Stated again, he was a leading proponent of the notion that it needed to teach ethical values and above that moral virtues for anyone destined for leadership.

Students of rhetoric such as the youthful Cicero formed their own arguments from the lines of famous poets, composed speeches based on events, actual or fictional, and took stories and fables and turned them into straightforward narrative. They learned these skills by declaiming to their own classmates. Although the exercise could seem to a young Roman like it involved nothing other than a mundane, sometimes frustrating and unnecessarily difficult system of rules, the technical study of rhetoric in Cicero’s day was at the core of the curriculum. For those most proficient, support followed. Romans packed the Forum to hear the great advocates of jurisprudence and politics in the midst of their impassioned arguments. These crowds listened attentively, then applauded loudly as they saw fit, during outdoor trials that were held in all elements of weather.

In the late Republic, the education that began to develop the mind of a young person who would go on to become an accomplished public speaker typically involved three phases. Boys and girls ages seven to twelve first learned reading, writing and basic

arithmetic by attending a *ludus litterarius*. These primary schools were founded by a magister, a teacher; the typical school day extended from early morning until about noon. Imitation and repetition were the keys to gaining knowledge. At age twelve, a boy the likes of Cicero could enter “secondary school,” where the curriculum emphasized the study of grammar and literature in both Latin and Greek. In Latin, instruction included epic tales and dramatic poets; in Greek, Homer and Euripedes were offered. Also studied were the basics of Roman law, the so-called Twelve Tables, established around 450 B.C.

The best schools of the period featured instruction in the art of public speaking, with a firm belief that a system of oratory could be established as well as taught. That system, prevalent well into the nineteenth century, was based upon *inventio*, seeking ideas and arguments; *collocatio*, structure as well as organization; *elocutio*, diction and style; *actio*, delivery; and *memoria*, or memory. Some speeches lasted for hours but still had to be memorized rather than read. They were presented in one of three styles: simple, middle or grand. The best elocution rested somewhere between ornate and simple.

Successful public speakers were seen as performers, and the best could call upon skills they acquired in the theatrical arts. Knowledge of the rules of rhetoric as codified in antiquity and the ability to put it to use in an artful way was considered essential. By the Middle Ages rhetoric joined logic and grammar as part of the *trivium*. These three, together with the *quadrivium*, or what were considered to be the more advanced mathematical sciences (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), formed the liberal arts within the context of the learning of the early Middle Ages. We should stress that Cicero would never deny the importance of the technical features of rhetoric, so long as they were connected to ethics and morals.

In his early schooling, Cicero was regarded as a prodigy and was the focus of attention. Adults showed up in the classrooms to listen to the youngster; some parents were upset over the manner in which he so dominated the learning environment. When Cicero was sixteen, in the year 90 B.C., his secondary schooling was completed. His father sent Marcus and his brother Quintus to Rome to further their training in public speaking and to study law. “Higher education” of the day most significantly involved debate and declamation, as directed by a *rhetor*, or specialist in the art.

The Cicero family, Arpinum provincials of good standing, forged key connections in Rome at a time when Roman society functioned through a network of patrons and clients in a relationship of mutual aid. One of Cicero’s uncles was able to arrange placement for both Marcus and Quintus with the greatest Roman orator of the day, Lucius Licinius Crassus. At the home of Crassus, on the Palatine Hill, an awestruck Cicero listened as scholars in residence discussed vital legal and political issues in both private and public. He heard and overheard the words of the orator and politician Marcus Antonius, for instance. Another stroke of good fortune came the young Cicero’s way when he was selected to become a pupil of the father-in-law of Crassus, Quintus Mucius Scaevola, the foremost authority on Roman law. These influential Romans Cicero met in his youth became models for his *De Oratore*.

*De Oratore* was Cicero’s first and fullest dialogue, having to do specifically with the ideal orator-statesman. It recalls a highly civilized way of life and a highly privileged education. The dialogue includes recommendations for the development of rhetoric as it applied to higher education at Rome. As scholars such as Elaine Fantham have pointed out,<sup>11</sup> because Cicero positioned this lengthy dialogue in the generation of his childhood

teachers, in 91 B.C., a study of it in its historical setting is especially valuable. This means of investigation can help illuminate how political and cultural norms from this earlier period of Cicero's life were altered in his later years. As we know, Cicero in his advanced years personally experienced various stages of the collapse of senatorial government, along with the force of the First Triumvirate to, in effect, channel him into a state of political silence in the last years of the Republic. *De Oratore* reflected upon a great society, with exceptional educational opportunities for young people, as it stressed the ethical and moral makeup of a talented and socially-conscious public speaker. *De Officiis* takes these recollections of Cicero a step beyond and explores ways to make them practical for a larger group of young learners. During those formative years, Cicero's ambitions rose. After watching some of the exciting trials at the Forum, Cicero decided he wanted to become a lawyer, such a glamorous profession in the eyes of a young man at Rome.

Even as a youngster, Cicero exhibited an exceptional interest in the study of rhetoric, and he maintained this interest throughout his life. In the year after his first major case, his defense of Sextus Roscius in 80 B.C., the young lawyer was bound for Athens. This venture was mentioned in the second section of my study. In Greece, he joined his friend from their days as law students under Scaevola, Atticus, who by this time had been accepted as an honorary citizen of Athens and therefore was able to help Cicero enter into the company of prominent Athenians. From a professional point of view, the central focus of Cicero's extended sojourn of 79-77 B.C., was two-fold: He visited the sacred sites of some of the ancient philosophers and sought out some of the period's paramount rhetoricians in hopes of improving upon his own style of public

speech. In short, Cicero attempted to make his speech less ornate and flamboyant when those elements were not requisite.

It was under the influence of Apollonius Molon of Rhodes that Cicero, still in his twenties, came upon the advice that a more direct oratorical presentation could be more effective. Some of those lessons took root, helping shape Cicero's public speech for many years. Molon, who twice visited Rome as an ambassador from Rhodes,<sup>12</sup> could count among his students two of the most talented emerging orators in the Republic, Cicero and Julius Caesar. Fond of quoting Demosthenes regarding the first three components of rhetoric as being "Delivery, delivery and delivery," Molon favored an Atticizing approach to oration that cut back on the more florid Asiatic style and was distinguished by its simplicity and focus. Cicero took in all he could learn as he lived a scholarly existence in Greece, Asia Minor and Rhodes. Molon had this to say of his pupil: "Thee, indeed, O Cicero, I admire and commend; but Greece I pity for her sad fortune, since I see that even the only glories which were left to us, culture and eloquence, are through thee to belong also to the Romans."<sup>13</sup> This is not to suggest that Cicero followed Apollonius Molon's teachings to their fullest but rather that those teachings met attentive ears.

We can question or disapprove of some of Cicero's legal or political decisions while at the same time lauding the rhetorical skills that accompanied them as extraordinary in that they were appropriate to both audience and circumstances. Cicero understood that when addressing the people, his listeners often decided more problems by emotion than by reason. He could enthrall an audience with a voice that could be heard throughout the Forum. Speeches in law courts or before the Senate often required a more

complex approach, with a message based in more logical thought and political acuity. In fact, one of the dynamics that stands out in the Catilinarians is the manner in which Cicero makes keen adjustments. The first and the last of the speeches were offered before the Senate and the middle two were directed to the people. The four orations show Cicero's themes, diction and style geared specifically to meet the situation and the crowd.<sup>14</sup>

The Catiline speeches, like the Philippics, achieve this harmony in the process of delivering their ethical and moral messages.<sup>15</sup> For example, in Catiline Orations three and four, Cicero speaks of the conspirators as lost to shame and as lovers of a life of leisure. He calls them "most abandoned men" (Catil. 3.14); "abandoned men" and "infamous" (Catil. 4.8); pursuers of unprincipled and "tranquil" lives (Catil. 4.17); and "depraved" and "enemies to their country." (Catil. 4.22) Criticisms of a harsh and pointed nature would have been most effective in front of a large gathering of Roman citizens.

All four Catilinarians were equal to their rhetorical challenges: the first forced Catiline to flee Rome; the second and third helped Romans understand the enormity of the situation and turned public opinion against the conspirators; and the fourth saw to it that the conspirators met the most severe punishments.

In addressing the Senate, with the rebel leader stunning all by his presence, the language tends toward the more refined, such as in the following passage:

O Catiline, be gone to your impious and nefarious war, to the great safety of the republic, to your own misfortune and injury, and to the destruction of those who have joined themselves to you in every wickedness and atrocity. Then do you, O Jupiter, who were consecrated by Romulus with the same auspices as this city, whom we rightly call the stay of this city and empire, repel this man and his companions from your altars and from the other temples—from the houses and walls of the city—from the lives and fortunes of all the citizens; and overwhelm all the enemies of good men, the foes of the republic, the robbers of Italy, men bound together by a treaty and infamous alliance of crimes, dead and alive, with eternal punishments. (Catil. 1.33)

Before the people, though, Catiline is portrayed minimally, and as a monster who needs to be eliminated from the city, posthaste. The vocabulary involves clichés and redundancies and overall is much simpler and non-technical. “Catiline is leading an army of enemies, and is hovering about in arms,” Cicero reports. (Catil. 2.15) He tells the assembled Romans that the conspirators wish for “the ashes of the city and blood of the citizens.” (Catil. 2.19) In these and similar excerpts, of which there are many, the moral condemnation is clear when we consider such terms as “impious,” “nefarious” and “atrocity.” The specific crime is made evident: a conspiracy to tear down the city of Rome and eliminate its leaders.

Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, in the third Catilinarian Cicero turns to self-anointing, which would contribute to his exile five years later. As he maintained in numerous episodes, this is a man who truly believed he had done more for Rome than any other individual. Many among the rest of the city’s population were not eager to accept such notions. They found serious fault when he compared himself to Rome’s founder, Romulus. Cicero argued that while it was Romulus who built the city, it was the government of Cicero himself that did just as much for Rome, by preserving it against

Catiline. The self-aggrandizement overflows in some instances; in some respects is nearly humorous to read, though it must be noted that humor does not always translate across cultures and eras.

Cicero spoke these words:

O Romans, I ask from you no reward of virtue, no badge of honor, no monument of my glory, beyond the everlasting recollection of this day. In your minds I wish all my triumphs, all my decorations of honor; the monuments of my glory, the badges of my renown, to be stored and laid up. Nothing voiceless can delight me, nothing silent—nothing, in short, such as even those who are less worthy can obtain. In your memory, O Romans, my name shall be cherished, in your discourses it shall grow, in the monuments of your letters it shall grow old and strengthen; and I feel assured that the same day which I hope [for] will be everlasting; will be remembered for ever, so as to tend both to the safety of the city and the recollection of my consulship. (Catil. 3.26)

That Cicero took the time to argue for his own immortality at a time when Rome was facing such a serious situation cannot be denied. His enemies took note. The larger fact, at least for this study, remains that at their height, the four Catilinarians bring together vocabulary, syntax and style for ready intelligibility before a specific audience and circumstance. They invest as needed in metaphor and alliteration, and an occasional challenging phrase or reference.

Nevertheless, in the final oration to the Senate, stylistic features were a secondary matter. Cicero advocated dealing with the conspirators with unequivocal action:

To me he would seem unnatural and hard-hearted who did not soothe his own pain and anguish by the pain and torture of the criminal. And so we, in the case of these men who desired to murder us, and our wives, and our children—who endeavored to destroy the houses of every individual among us, and also the republic, the home of all—who designed to place the nation of the Allobroges on the relics of this city, and on the ashes of the empire destroyed by fire; if we are very rigorous, we shall be considered merciful; if we choose to be lax, we must endure the character of the greatest cruelty, to the damage of our country and our fellow-citizens. (Catil. 4.12)

The four Catilinarians of 63 B.C., are Cicero's most famous speeches and are the ones most associated with his year as consul. These are moral orations, as suggested above, in that in so many references he expresses outrage at the wicked leaders of the entire affair. Nonetheless the Philippics, fourteen in number and coming nineteen years after the crisis prompted by Catiline, are the ones to which he devoted the most time and energy. Cicero had been engaged in considerable speculation about oratorical technique and the nature of oratory itself for eleven years before he produced them. His personality may have changed, even in his sixties, once he became involved in the conflict with Mark Antony. In speeches and in pamphlets, Cicero showed tremendous energy against his adversary all over the state. He was determined and resolute as perhaps he had never been. No longer the detached writer of philosophical works observing civic life from afar, Cicero became a highly emotionally muckraker.

The rhetorical circumstances were that Cicero believed Mark Antony must be stopped, given that Antony regarded himself as the self-appointed executor of the strategies of Julius Caesar. These speeches, it should be obvious, are ethical and moral judgments, given that the machinations of Mark Antony were self-serving, restricting personal liberties for many in Rome. The influence of Demosthenes and Cicero's own psychological makeup are key factors animating these fourteen attacks. "Like Demosthenes, [Cicero] portrayed himself as a man of destiny, struggling valiantly against evil and corruption for traditional ideals," writes Cecil W. Wooten.<sup>16</sup> Major themes, or topoi, of the fourteen speeches include the dichotomy between light and dark; the struggle for order over chaos; the refusal to compromise and the demand for absolute victory or honorable defeat; the conviction that the past is good and noble, the present

degenerate and unstable; and the certainty that former standards of morality and patriotism are in decline.<sup>17</sup> Cicero often recalled the myth of the golden age, as did Demosthenes when he invoked images of the glorious Athens of Pericles.

There is, in Cicero, a tendency to interpret each crisis in light of an earlier pattern: The threat from Antony is simply a later version of the dangers presented by Catiline or the disruptions advanced by Clodius. Through the *Catilinarians* he strove to save Rome, with the *Philippics* he hoped to defeat Mark Antony and in *De Officiis* he aspired to rejuvenate a generation of young Romans so that they could serve in leadership positions as lawyers and politicians. These efforts brought together, in Cicero, a tremendous talent matched with the instinct for survival. The issue was trying to save the system before it was too late, and in the speeches against Antony, Cicero's oratory was that of striking clarity in a rapid series of presentations.

Wooten's thesis is that the *Philippics* are examples of speeches arising from a historical situation that demanded a special type of political oratory, a "crisis rhetoric." This can occur whenever a democracy or participatory constitutional government is threatened by a totalitarian menace. In public speech the struggle is then viewed on a cosmic scale, as in the examples of Demosthenes versus Philip of Macedon, Cicero versus Antony, or, to cite an example from more recent European history, Winston Churchill versus Hitler. The speeches are presented in disjunctive mode, which is to say, good on one side and evil very clearly on the other. The obsession is with survival, struggle and, of course, victory.

In speeches styled in this manner, the major theme is that the threat can be repelled and that "our world" can be re-established. Of course, the political leader who

professes these themes may not be acting out of an altogether altruistic sentiment. The orator realizes he is defending a system without which his own role no longer would be possible. In Hitler's world, the political and rhetoric skills of Churchill would have no place. Demosthenes and Cicero, too, were battling against the possibility of personal irrelevance. "Many of their policies were...a clever politician's attempts at maintaining the status quo, for that was the system in which they themselves could function most effectively," Wooten maintains.<sup>18</sup> What he is pointing out is that only in certain political systems could they use their most powerful weapon, their oratory, to their greatest advantage.

Along with those concerns and questions we also should be cognizant that political speech when delivered by a great orator can pour forth noble ideas, lift the minds of its listeners and promote an overall sublime and humanistic vision.<sup>19</sup> Great public speech of this sort employs elevated language and dignified word arrangement to bring about great thoughts and strong emotions. It can pertain not only to what is beautiful, as is often the application, but also to what is distressing, bewildering or surprising. Cicero believed working toward greatness was a sublime idea and that it was rooted in human nature. His major speeches, the Catilinarians and the Philippics, were correctives for Roman society, hoping to persuade individuals to accept the possibility that there is something above the experiences of everyday life.

In Cicero's second Philippic, the longest of the 14 speeches, stirring emotion and respect for the Republic come together in one of those sublime moments. The ethical focus in Cicero's tirade comes when he lists Antony's "vices" and "atrocities" (Phil. 2.17), cautioning his fellow Romans against a particular political actor he views as

corrupt and harmful for the state. As stated, Cicero does this in a way similar to the manner in which Demosthenes cautioned the Greeks against Philip of Macedon three centuries earlier. Cicero, registering a personal attack, states that Mark Antony's character is no match for that of his grandfather, the noted orator and politician Marcus Antonius. (Phil. 2.17)

Certainly it is an effort fraught with difficulties to attempt to identify Cicero's "best" rhetorical utterance, the one that gives him enduring prestige in the discipline. The following excerpt, though, in which Cicero pleads to his adversary, may be worthy of pride of position:

Consider, I beg you, Marcus Antonius, do some time or other consider the republic: think of the family of which you are born, not of the men with whom you are living. Be reconciled to the republic. ...I defended the republic as a young man, I will not abandon it now that I am old. I scorned the sword of Catiline, I will not quail before yours. No, I will rather cheerfully expose my own person, if the liberty of the city can [be] restored by my death. May the indignation of the Roman people at last bring forth what it has been so long laboring with. In truth, if twenty years ago in this very temple I asserted that death could not come prematurely upon a man of consular rank, with how much more truth must I now say the same of an old man? To me, indeed, O conscript fathers, death is now even desirable, after all the honors which I have gained, and the deeds which I have done. I only pray for these two things: one, that dying I may leave the Roman people free. No greater boon than this can be granted me by the immortal gods. The other, that every one may meet with a fate suitable to his deserts and conduct toward the republic. (Phil. 2. 118)

Because of his Philippics, Cicero often has been regarded as a defender of liberty, not unprincipled personal liberation but freedom from oppressive forms of government. The second Philippic is the most famous of the 14 speeches but the first speech, although moderate and sensible in its tones, provoked a violent response by Antony when it was delivered to the Senate on September 2, 44 B.C. Cicero demanded that Antony and his co-consul act with greater respect for the welfare of the Roman people. He declared that

the greatest of all benefits Mark Antony could provide for Rome would be to abolish the title of dictator forever and to seal the memory of Julius Caesar as deserving of infamy.

“It is the part of a friend to point out evils which may be avoided,” Cicero observed.

(Phil. 1.26) He criticized Antony and co-consul Publius Cornelius Dolabella for appropriating the will of the late Caesar for their own interests. Dolabella was Cicero’s son-in-law.

All the while, there was a palpable foreboding that such public utterances may cost Cicero his life. At the close of the first Philippic, Cicero expresses this:

I have reaped, O conscript fathers, the reward of my return, since I have said enough to bear testimony of my consistency whatever event may befall me, and since I have been kindly and attentively listened to by you. And if I have such opportunities frequently without exposing both myself and you to danger, I shall avail myself of them. If not, as far as I can I shall reserve myself not for myself, but rather for the republic. I have lived long enough for the course of human life, or for my own glory. If any additional life is granted to me, it shall be bestowed no so much on myself as on you and on the republic. (Phil. 1.38)

Cicero’s rhetorical methods, as they were applied during his public career, were successful more often than not. The historical record is not a perfect one, but it shows that Cicero was involved in sixty-nine criminal cases and that he won forty-four and lost ten; the outcome of the other fifteen are unknown. Seven of Cicero’s ten civil suits met success. In forty-two pleas before the Senate, Cicero won sixteen and lost seven; the remaining nineteen have escaped historical record. He succeeded in seven of eighteen addresses to the people, while results of the other eleven are not known to us.<sup>20</sup> At the same time Cicero was becoming increasingly disenchanted with the deception that he saw filtering into the political system at Rome and so it follows that the Catilinarians and the Philippics can be read for their moral messages as well as for their stylistic brilliance.

Talent at rhetoric, more so than anything else, enabled Cicero to participate in, contribute to, and rise to the top of the Roman political scene. The list of those who say Cicero is the most persuasive and successful orator who has ever lived is extensive. It may have begun with Virgil, who quite possibly was referring to Cicero in the following passage from the epic *Aeneid*. Even if he wasn't, which is not likely, these are lines that can help to illustrate the general level of admiration most Romans gave to their finest orators:

When rioting breaks out in a great city,  
And when the rampaging goes so far  
That stones fly, and incendiary brands—  
For anger can supply that kind of weapon—  
If it so happens they look round and see  
Some dedicated public servant, a veteran  
Whose record gives him weight, they quiet down,  
Willing to stoop and listen.  
Then he prevails in speech over their fury  
By his authority and placates them.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, Cicero knew his audiences and was of the view that liveliness and vividness on the part of a speaker could be of great value and should prompt admiration in listeners. He was doing more than showing off his talents, though. Some critics would place Cicero in this camp in that they believe he allowed virtuosity to trump effective communication. However, Cicero joined that sense of liveliness and vividness to another, and greater, message, an ethical and moral one. He wanted to be the mentor for the next generation of Rome's leaders. He wanted to influence their political views as well as their philosophical learning and just as importantly their ethical and moral convictions.

## CHAPTER V

### ‘WE ARE NOT BORN FOR OURSELVES ALONE’

In this, the pivotal chapter of this study, the emphasis will be on Cicero’s *De Officiis*, the work in which he advocated that the education of youth must include a firm moral grounding. *De Officiis* joins other Ciceronian works, specifically *De Legibus* and *De Republica*, in the author’s coherent plan for the overall regeneration of the Rome of Augustus. In this chapter I will first examine Cicero’s engagement with philosophy and philosophers, both in his formative years and as an adult, because in *De Officiis* Cicero calls upon various philosophical schools. An encyclopedist of Hellenistic thought, he offers no new philosophical vision. Instead, *De Officiis* employs Greek philosophical concepts and vocabulary so that they may be used to promote practical ethical advice for Romans. Second, this chapter will recognize the major political concerns of *De Officiis* as Cicero laments what is happening to Rome and its waning republican institutions. Finally, and most significantly, selected passages from the *De Officiis* will be presented to show that Cicero believed he could impact, in a positive way, a new generation of leaders.

We can assume, as Ciceronian scholars do, that although *De Officiis* was composed directly for Cicero’s son Marcus Minor, it also had a much wider audience in mind. Cicero’s primary aim in his most influential writing was to develop moral sensibilities and moral reasoning among Roman youth. *De Officiis* sought not to discover new philosophers but new generations of principled and disciplined leaders schooled in moral philosophy. What Cicero achieved is exceptional because his *De Officiis* offered

practical ethical standards for political and civic life at Rome at a time when the future was especially uncertain.

The treatise was devoted to showing the benefits of firmly believing in moral obligation and living and behaving accordingly. Cicero argued that perfect knowledge may not be attainable but practical conduct is determined by the calculation of probability; that moderation should drive political decisions; that human beings should never be treated as a means to an end; and that the absence of political rights is what corrupts virtue. On all counts, Cicero displays a fundamental esteem for humanity. He writes: “It is our duty to respect, defend, and maintain the common bonds of union and fellowship subsisting between all members of the human race.” (*De Off.*, I.XLI)

Classical republicanism and humanist ethics were his motivating convictions. Civil society, he professed, requires an elected elite trained in rhetoric and philosophy. Such leaders should operate within the framework of constitutional government and should be able to form public opinion through elevated oratory. All of these ideas arise out of his belief in an orderly universe, the natural goodness of humanity and the power of reason to improve the human condition.

Cicero’s finest moments as a moral thinker came in the penultimate year of his life, with his essay that outlines a personal code of conduct and places great emphasis on justice, benefaction and public service. In those final months of 44 B.C., Cicero, in what amounted to an astonishing overlapping achievement, continued to level his charges against Mark Antony with his *Philippicae* and simultaneously produced his most enduring writing, *De Officiis*, as well as other relatively minor compositions. *On Duties* or *On Obligations* has been characterized as perhaps influencing the thoughts and

standards of the Western world more than any other secular work.<sup>1</sup> Another translation, perhaps less literal, refers to the document as *On Civic Responsibility*. It reads as though it is the product of Cicero's lived experiences, of 63 years, rather than as his attempts to discuss and impart abstract, even recondite, principles.

Cicero's observations about life, writes Michael Grant, are more completely reflected in this work than in any of his treatises. "Written in haste, it is almost as self-revealing as his private letters; and for all its literary sources and trappings, it is sincere and written from the heart," according to Grant.<sup>2</sup> In the estimation of John Higginbotham, *De Officiis* is "one of the great watersheds of European thought." Higginbotham adds: "It gathers together the philosophy of the post-Aristotelians, Stoics, Academics, Cyrenaics and Epicureans, selects much that is valuable and discards much that is not. This selection and transmission of ideas had an enormous influence."<sup>3</sup>

The first two books of *On Duties* were written and the third was begun between September and November of 44 B.C., when Cicero, as stated, was in the midst of his determined critique of what he felt were the self-serving policies of Antony, whose personal behavior as portrayed by Cicero was that of a forger, thief and drunkard. *On Duties* contains strong criticism of the recent dictatorship of Julius Caesar and by implication of any ruler who wields power oppressively. The work can be interpreted as an attempt to provide a moral code for the aristocracy liberated from Caesar's tyranny, as a sincere regret for what is happening to Cicero's beloved Rome, and even as Cicero's farewell to family and country. The essay was a new and concrete attempt for those trying to live up to the highest moral standards. New Zealand-born classicist Sir Ronald Syme, regarded as the twentieth century's greatest historian of ancient Rome, called it a

manual of civic virtue or “a theoretical treatment of the obligations which a citizen should render to the Commonwealth.”<sup>4</sup> Critics of Cicero see in the three books a system of applied ethics through which Cicero sought to justify his own standards of living and his own career.

For our purposes, the primary emphasis remains on what the essay has to offer concerning the moral education of youth.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent sections of this study will sketch how Cicero’s ideas were disseminated in later generations, such as through the schools of the Renaissance and in Jesuit education. The three books explore not just good versus evil, with an admonition to always follow the good, although that teaching in and of itself would be of great value. Cicero goes far beyond good versus evil with insights concerning what a person should do when faced with a situation in which more than one reputable moral path is available. The essay is concerned less with technical aspects of philosophy and less with career recommendations than it is with offering advice regarding how to make ethical and moral decisions so as to lead a good life.

Marcus Minor was, at least nominally, a student of philosophy in Greece but he was not, and never became, his father’s equal as a philosophical thinker. Nonetheless, Cicero was not condescending toward his son in the tone of this essay. Further, *De Officiis* is of some literary merit in the form of a lamentation, for in it Cicero clearly bemoans the state of affairs in Rome and what may happen to the Republic, and he clearly experiences grief over the fact that he is not able to travel to Athens to oversee the learning of his son. His son’s education was very important to Cicero.

Cicero based *De Officiis* on the three categories introduced by the philosopher Panaetius: 1) actions that are morally good and those in opposition, 2) expedient, or

advantageous, versus non-expedient, or non-advantageous, actions and 3) recognition and resolution of conflicts between goodness and expediency. The *De Officiis*, and especially Book II, insists upon the fundamental right of the individual against the demands of the state. This is among the reasons Cicero is often valued as a champion of personal liberty. Overall, significant portions of Books I and II illustrate that Cicero owed a great debt to Panaetius of Rhodes (c. 185-c. 110 B.C.), whose teachings were part of the movement to incorporate into Roman society various tenets of Stoicism. More accurately, Panaetius advanced a version of Stoicism that rejected Epicurean hedonism and showed respect for tradition and order in society and political life. Cicero and later Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65) were at the forefront of this effort.

It is important to recognize that *De Officiis* is regarded as the most influential and enduring philosophical work produced by Cicero and yet the essay is concerned with practical ethics, with how to live a good life, rather than with metaphysics, logic or epistemology. In a harsh assessment, this may be another way of suggesting that practical Romans could not grasp the higher philosophical ideas of the Greeks. Or it may be another way of saying that the Romans put into practice concepts upon which the Greeks could merely ruminate. Cicero saw himself as trying to bring philosophy down to earth, to interject it into cities and homes. In this way, he felt, philosophy could be used to study life and morals, good and evil, in an individual's experiences. "Ethics with [Cicero] always comes first, and he is as quick to condemn the philosophical study of difficult and abstruse subjects which yield little practical result as he is to praise the study of moral obligation as the richest and most fruitful field for thought," writes Higginbotham.<sup>6</sup> Centuries later, this concern for the dignity of the individual in the enormity of the

cosmos would become the focus, too, of Renaissance humanists beginning with Petrarch. Cicero informed many of them.

In terms of his worldview, Cicero understood the whole of human society as a natural unit as opposed to a mechanical, artificially constructed one. Therefore, it was not just the case for Cicero that each man by nature is dependent on others around him; rather, it was also true that he must be aware of the dependence of others on him and act appropriate to that relationship. In other words, virtue is by definition living according to nature, and all things produced by nature for man's use must be shared for the common good. Cicero writes: "A mind well-moulded by Nature is unwilling to be subject to anybody save one who gives rules of conduct or is a teacher of truth or who, for the general good, rules according to justice and law. From this attitude comes greatness of soul and a sense of superiority to worldly conditions." (*De Off.*, I.IV)

The insistence on the value of nature, which is so important to Cicero, is at the heart of Stoic thought. At the same time, it must be remembered that Marcus Minor was an Athenian student of Cratippus, a Peripatetic. Cicero, ever the eclectic and in this case the tactful writer, did not want to go so far as to offend his son's teacher. But Cicero does draw important distinctions between Stoic and Peripatetic outlooks. He writes that whereas Peripatetics find that moral goodness is the *highest* good, Stoics believe that to do what is right is the *only* good. (*De Off.*, III.III) His identification of expediency with moral good is a Stoic rather than Peripatetic judgment. In this example, what Cicero believes is opposed to what his son is learning, since Cratippus represents a different philosophical school.

Cicero moves the discussion far beyond Panaetius, who, for unexplained reasons, did not take the steps necessary to explore the third category, resolving conflicts between goodness and expediency. As Cicero explained it:

I believe Panaetius would have followed up, had not some accident or business interfered with his design. This part, therefore, which was passed over by Panaetius, I will carry to completion without any auxiliaries, by fighting my own battle, as the saying is. For, of all that has been worked out on this line since the time of Panaetius, nothing that has come into my hands is at all satisfactory to me. (*De Off.*, III.VII)

Moreover, Cicero makes the undeveloped third division of Panaetius the most significant in his entire essay. He expands the three categories of Panaetius into five: 1) the study of what is morally good and what is not, 2) a comparative study of different goods, 3) the study of what is expedient and what is not, 4) a comparative study of different expedients and 5) a resolving of the conflict between moral good and expediency by attempting to show that such conflicts do not exist.

Cicero writes:

There can be no expediency where there is immorality. But if there is nothing so repugnant to Nature as immorality (for Nature demands right and harmony and consistency and abhors their opposites), and if nothing is so thoroughly in accord with nature as expediency, then surely expediency and immorality cannot coexist in one and the same object. Again: if we are born for moral rectitude and if that is either the only thing worth seeking, as Zeno thought, or at least to be esteemed as infinitely outweighing everything else, as Aristotle holds, then it necessarily follows that the morally right is either the sole good or the supreme good. Now, that which is good is certainly expedient; consequently, that which is morally right is also expedient. (*De Off.*, III.VIII)

The fact that Cicero believed that human beings are born for moral improvement and uprightness, as this excerpt professes, certainly was and is important for later educators.

Cicero was hurried to complete this and other writings. He felt great anxiety over the threat posed by Antony and over reports about Marcus Minor's behavior in Athens. In addition, Cicero always seemed to be awaiting additional Greek sources. As a consequence, any investigation into the value of *De Officiis* must also point out that it is not without flaws. For example, Cicero is willing to accept Stoic ethics, as stated above, but not their metaphysical basis. Also, he is inconsistent in his treatment of the Peripatetics when he notes that there are not sizeable differences between their views and his. He seeks to meld two philosophical systems and the effort at times comes across as forced. "My philosophy is not very different from that of the Peripatetics (for both they and I claim to be followers of Socrates and Plato)," Cicero writes. (*De Off.*, I.I) In other places, though, he claims to be professing Stoic beliefs predominately. "I shall...in this investigation follow chiefly the Stoics, not as a translator, but, as is my custom, I shall at my own option and discretion draw from those sources in such measure and in such manner as shall suit my purpose," he maintains. (*De Off.*, I.II)

The charitable assessment is that Cicero was a discriminating adopter as well as a critic of other philosophies, because his was not a philosophical mind that produced original ideas of great depth. An exceptional artistic stylist in his speeches and writings, Cicero was able to gain attention for ideas and concepts of others; apart from his voice, those ideas may have remained unpopular or even silent. Not until the last decade or so of his life was Cicero regarded as a skilled writer.

But what he learned through his extensive studies and experiences in rhetoric earlier in life was transferred, successfully, to a written composition, *De Officiis*. As he notes to his son, Cicero is quite confident of his skills in rhetoric-oratory. He expresses

this idea in understatement and via a false sense of modesty: “There are many to whom I yield precedence in the knowledge of philosophy; but if I lay claim to the orator’s peculiar ability to speak with propriety, clearness, elegance, I think my claim is in a measure justified, for I have spent my life in that profession.” (*De Off.*, I.I)

Cicero’s personal interest in philosophy figured most heavily in the later stages of his life. An episode involving the 19-year-old Cicero is what created that initial interest, though. In 87 B.C., Philo of Larissa (c. 15-c. 84 B.C.), director of the Academy founded by Plato in Athens about 300 years earlier, came to Rome. This was during the First Mithridatic War of 89-85 B.C., a conflict between Rome and the Greek world over Roman expansion, which unfortunately included the destruction of the original Platonic Academy. Philo, therefore, is especially significant because he was the last head of the Academy, a sacred site to Athena and other pagan immortals. Cicero attended the lectures of Philo in Rome, coming upon the views of an important Academic skeptic, although a moderate one who basically maintained that knowledge of things is impossible and yet degrees of probability and belief may permit individual action.

As a result of assimilating these lectures, Cicero was “inspired by an extraordinary zeal for philosophy,” according to biographer Elizabeth Rawson.<sup>7</sup> He sat enthusiastically at the feet of Philo and learned of Plato’s philosophy, even calling Plato his god. Cicero was swept up by Plato’s moral seriousness, his political resoluteness and his wide-ranging imagination. However, one of the fundamental aspects of Platonic thought Cicero chose not to accept: Plato’s theory of Ideas, which maintains that non-material and abstract forms, rather than the material world of change known through

sensations, possess reality that is highest and most fundamental. More practical matters drove Cicero.

No firm evidence exists as to why Cicero, late in his life, chose Panaetius as his vital source for *De Officiis*. One possibility is that he saw in Panaetius an original thinker interested in ordinary people trying to progress toward virtue. For Cicero, Panaetius possibly was more than just another philosopher devoted to the insights and the development of the sage. In Cicero's abridged treatment of Panaetius, he, too, puts aside the sage and shows his concern for potential leaders among young Romans. Still, Panaetius' theory of the virtues needed some adjustments to fit the needs and the understandings of the Romans Cicero believed he could influence. He needed to speak in their "language," with anecdotes from Roman history they could recognize and from which they could learn.

Cicero was a generally conservative person "more inclined to defend institutions in danger of slipping away than to criticize them," in the estimation of Andrew R. Dyck.<sup>8</sup> Beyond that, it is possible to say that Cicero endorsed a healthy skepticism about the world around him. He stressed the importance of a "civic morality" and participation in it in a way that clearly distanced him from the Epicurean view. Epicureans believed the gods had no part or even interest in human affairs and that public life was to be engaged in only when it reached the level of emergencies.

Cicero was a lifelong student of philosophical texts but technically an amateur as he sought to apply those readings. In trying to merge philosophical theory and political realities, he sometimes faced resistance from a Roman culture that promoted duty toward state and community over development of Greek speculative and philosophical practices.

According to Dyck: “Cicero aimed at reforming the political culture at Rome, which he saw veering dangerously from the ideals of traditional patriotism toward the kind of egotistical quest for glory and self-aggrandizement that had brought ruin upon Greek city-states and could lead to the permanent establishment of tyranny.”<sup>9</sup> Cicero produced an enormous amount of work that can fall under the heading of “philosophy.” Yet, studied at depth, he is more fairly characterized as a critical thinker who held philosophical speculations of certain others in esteem and appropriated those speculations as he deemed fit.

His primary interest was in philosophical methods rather than in dogmatic statements, yet he did produce dogmatic works, *De Officiis* included. It is dogmatic in the sense that in it Cicero tells his son that he must lead a moral life, even if probability often was to guide his actions. For Cicero, Roman law and political institutions were the manifestation of the best of Greek thinking, which the Greeks themselves were unable to appropriately apply. His enduring position was that the laws of nature supplied the nearly perfect paradigm for Roman jurisprudence and institutions. As a natural law theorist, Cicero’s views are in league with anti-positivist assessments of law and morality that formed centuries later, for instance, in Aquinas, Grotius, Suarez or Locke.

The political event that formed the backdrop for *De Officiis* was the assassination of Julius Caesar. The *De Officiis* offers a framework for order in the aftermath of that moment of anarchy. Cicero tried to justify the deed of killing the tyrant and to condemn Caesar’s unlawful ambitions, demagoguery, greed and excesses. Put another way, Cicero produced a morality that accepts tyrannicide. Sometimes Caesar is mentioned directly in *De Officiis*, sometimes by implication. It is clear that Cicero reached a point at which he

believed Caesar wanted absolute control, and for that reason Cicero agreed that he must be eliminated. The great oversight, in the view of Cicero, was that the liberators of Rome didn't think the matter through regarding subsequent measures. They believed the deed was all that was necessary. Antony emerged as consul, an amnesty on the assassins was declared and the office of dictatorship was annulled. When Antony in effect chose to maintain the practices and plans of Caesar, he became the marked enemy of Cicero. The assassins of Caesar should have eliminated Antony as well, in Cicero's opinion. They would have been worthy of praise, he felt.

Cicero was uncertain and anxious about the fate of the Republic in the "present unsettled times." (*De Off.*, II.XIX) Certain passages express legitimate fear for its demise and to a lesser degree fear for the demise of eloquence and jurisprudence. "We should still have at least some sort of constitutional government, if not the best in the world, whereas, as it is, we have none," Cicero writes. (*De Off.*, I.XI) Elsewhere, in reference to Caesar, "our tyrant," Cicero asks: "Can the most horrible and hideous of all murders—that of the Fatherland—bring advantage to anybody, even though he who has committed such a crime receives from his enslaved fellow-citizens the title of 'Father of his Country?'" (*De Off.*, III.XXI) The irony, here, is that as a personal communication *De Officiis* is designed to help Marcus Minor and young Romans like him become successful in the Republican political system, through which military glory, forensic eloquence, legal expertise and the like could earn power and influence. At the same time, Cicero writes of the possible death of the Republic, with Caesar as its murderer.

These and similar contradictions were not a sign that Cicero had turned irrational or had called upon rhetorical exaggeration. Instead, they may reflect his view of the

present political situation as temporary and transitional.<sup>10</sup> He speaks, for instance, of the decadence of eloquence but not of its complete extinction (*De Off.*, II.XIX) and he says, ostensibly of the period of Caesar's dictatorship, "Freedom suppressed and again regained bites with even keener fangs than freedom never endangered." (*De Off.*, II.VII) For Cicero, the Republic was too important to give up on easily, and he was certain that Antony and his followers had become its greatest threat.

On this count, Cicero writes:

Parents are dear; dear are children, relatives, friends; one native land embraces all our loves; and who that is true would hesitate to give his life for her, if by his death he could render her a service? So much the more execrable are those monsters who have torn their fatherland to pieces with every form of outrage and who are and have been engaged in compassing her utter destruction. (*De Off.*, I.XVII)

At this point in his life, Cicero's participation in politics largely was through his pen. He never yielded in his plan to see Mark Antony supplanted, whatever the personal risk. Circumstances of instability often lend themselves to great artistic expression, and in the case of *De Officiis* we see political uncertainty for Rome and personal uncertainty for Marcus Minor producing deep ethical and moral reflection for Cicero. "It was a time of genuine political ambiguity, and the concern of [*De Officiis*] with the difficulty of moral decisions exactly suits the corresponding moral ambiguity that individuals faced," writes M.T. Griffin.<sup>11</sup>

What was ahead for Rome was neither an extension of the Republic nor the tyrannical reign of Julius Caesar or his surrogate Mark Antony but Augustus, founder of the Principate. At the individual level, too, change and uncertainty were the dominant elements of everyday life. In response, Cicero in *De Officiis* writes of honor, dignity, seriousness of purpose and other civic virtues. As stated above, he rejected the Epicurean

policy of remaining out of political life except for circumstances of emergencies, but he was not certain as to how he should retain involvement. His friend Atticus stayed cautious, less at odds with the political landscape than Cicero but very much like him in that he was not sure what he should do. Cato's decision was suicide.

In the middle of such fluctuation, Cicero gave advice, specifically practical ethical advice, according to what he understands to be "the rule." It is part of his approach to Stoic ethics. The rule says, in effect, that to make moral progress sometimes means not choosing the personally advantageous path. He writes to Marcus: "For all cases we have one rule, with which I desire you to be perfectly familiar: that which seems expedient must not be morally wrong; or, if it is morally wrong, it must not seem expedient." (*De Off.*, III.XX) In other instances, the idea is offered even more succinctly: "Nothing is worth the seeking for its own sake except what is morally right." (*De Off.*, III.VII) He means morally right for Marcus Minor as an individual as well as morally right for Rome as a civilization. The rule applies to both.

Cicero's argument is that Panaetius introduced but never resolved an apparent conflict, and only an apparent conflict, between the morally correct path and the personally advantageous path. Cicero surpassed Panaetius when he told his son that the morally right is also the expedient. They are one and the same.

Toward this end, we have this lively excerpt in reference to political life:

It is the error of men who are not strictly upright to seize upon something that seems to be expedient and [straightaway] to dissociate that from the question of moral right. To this error the assassin's dagger, the poisoned cup, the forged wills owe their origin; this gives rise to theft, embezzlement of public funds, exploitation and plundering of provincials and citizens; this engenders also the lust for excessive wealth, for despotic power, and finally for making oneself king even in the midst of a free people; and anything more atrocious or repulsive than such a passion cannot be conceived. (*De Off.*, III.VIII)

In this single passage, Cicero seems to be canvassing his entire life to recall examples of reprehensible behavior, that which veers from the morally right. The perpetrators are unnamed but by implication Cicero most certainly is recalling the activities of Sulla and Chrysogonus, Gaius Verres, Catiline, Julius Caesar, Antony and their ilk. In multiple references elsewhere in *De Officiis* Cicero defends tyrannicide against Caesar<sup>12</sup> but in this excerpt assassins and their daggers also are to be condemned. Cicero tries to resolve the inconsistency by pointing to what he calls the “exceptional circumstances” (*De Off.*, III.IV) in the case of the assassination of Julius Caesar.

The old and the new Roman political culture were at odds, and their values were seen in the personal conflict between Cicero and Caesar. It was, for some, unsavory to attack the deceased Caesar but it must be recalled that his assassination was the overwhelming issue of the day. To avoid mention of it could not be expected. Cicero assailed leaders of the older culture on moral grounds by posing this question: “What is to be thought of the man who not only does not try to prevent wrong, but actually aids and abets it?” (*De Off.*, III.XVIII) The point here is that it may be difficult to recognize moral shortcomings in those who have the reputation of being honest men. In fact, history shows us that it is very difficult. Deceptive leaders, Cicero maintains, are an evil not easy to spot. He writes to his son: “No greater curse in life can be found than knavery that wears the mask of wisdom.” (*De Off.*, III.XVII)

In one of the frequently cited passages from the *De Officiis*, Cicero recounts the story of Marcus Atilius Regulus, a Roman general in the first Punic War. Rather than break an oath that would have brought disadvantage to Rome, Regulus returned to Carthage and was tortured before facing his death. (*De Off.*, III.XXVI-XXVII) This is

among the anecdotes from Roman history that almost any Roman would have understood well. As treated by Cicero, Regulus was a prime example of the principled Roman who was willing to subordinate his personal interests for the good of the state, even in the ultimate act of self-abnegation. Cicero goes to great lengths to compare and contrast the actions of Regulus with those of Caesar, who entertained ambitions that knew no boundary. Cicero did not expect Romans to perform acts of absolute self-sacrifice but he did make reference to the contrasting behavior of Regulus and Caesar. His assertion is that future Roman leaders must be willing to do what is right for the state. That is their primary moral obligation, not to be violated.

Throughout Book I, Cicero writes of the four cardinal virtues that are the sources of moral rectitude: prudence (wisdom); an organized society (justice); a noble, invincible spirit (courage); and orderliness and moderation (temperance). Within that scheme, he singles out justice, which he calls “the crowning glory of the virtues” (*De Off.*, I.VII) and “the sovereign mistress and queen.” (*De Off.*, III.VI) Because Cicero places so much focus on justice in a society, some commentators see *De Officiis* as mainly a political narrative. “What has given this particular work of *practical ethics* an important place in the history of *political thought*...is its emphasis on social and political morality,” according to Griffin.<sup>13</sup> The italicized terms are hers. It is possible to overvalue the political content of the three books at the expense of the advice they give young people about making choices. *De Officiis* is not Cicero’s political manifesto; he offered that in 51 B.C., with *De Republica*, which corresponds to Plato’s *Republic*.

Alongside philosophical and political content rests side by side the more vital fact that Cicero wrote *De Officiis* for his very own son, then 21 years old, at a time when the

young man's life could have headed in either a positive or a negative direction as he studied philosophy at Athens. Full attention should be given to this set of circumstances. Young Marcus was learning but he was not learned. At times, the lines of *De Officiis* simply wish to involve Marcus Minor in discussion; at other times they are didactic, and the instruction is quite clear: Bad influences produce bad consequences. Cicero, it is apparent, had had enough of his own generation and had shifted his concerns to younger Romans. It is as if the aging Cicero had become an evangelist for how to live a good and moral life.

No longer assuming Roman exceptionalism, he functioned as caretaker of an idea, expressed in Plato's *Republic*, that human beings bear responsibility for others in their surroundings. If there is one passage that summarizes what Cicero chose to tell his son, it is this:

As Plato has admirably expressed it, we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country claims a share of our being, and our friends a share; and since, as the Stoics hold, everything that the earth produces is created for man's use; and as men, too, are born for the sake of men, that they may be able mutually to help one another; in this direction we ought to follow Nature as our guide, to contribute to the general good by an interchange of acts of kindness, by giving and receiving, and thus by our skill, our industry, and our talents to cement human society more closely together, man to man. (*De Off.*, I.VII)

In other works, such as *De Oratore*, Cicero chooses dialogue form but in *De Officiis* he eschews that practice for the most part. Instead of offering various sides of an issue, as demanded of a dialogue, he is more didactic, as mentioned above. Cicero instructs young Marcus to do the right thing and attempts to explain what the right thing is. His message does not call for pure altruism.

In the following excerpt, Cicero defines virtue and allows room for self-interest and self-defense:

Indeed, virtue in general may be said to consist almost wholly in three properties; the first is the ability to perceive what in any given instance is true and real, what its relations are, its consequences, and its causes; the second is, the ability to restrain the passions, which the Greeks call (*pathe*), and make the impulses (*hormas*) obedient to reason; and the third is, the skill to treat with consideration and wisdom those with whom we are associated, in order that we may through their cooperation have our natural wants supplied in full and overflowing measure, that we may ward off any impending trouble, avenge ourselves upon those who have attempted to injure us, and visit them with such retribution as justice and humanity will permit. (*De Off.*, II.V)

Cicero, earlier in his life, customarily engaged in the give-and-take involved in winning an argument with legal or political ramifications, artifice sometimes required. Now, at the end of a long career in the tempestuous late Roman Republic, he does something higher. He writes to his son regarding the best of what he has learned, experienced and imagined; the moral element is in place, as perhaps it had not been when the goal was simply to win in legal or political environments, or when the primary goal was career advancement. Cicero may never be as instructive as he is with these lines: “It can easily be seen which duty takes precedence of any other: our first duty is to the immortal gods; our second, to country; our third, to parents; and so on, in descending scale, to the rest.” (*De Off.*, I.XLV)

Another key element of *De Officiis*, mostly in Book III, is that it includes the understanding that there are instances in which ethical and moral certainty cannot be attained. “It is within my right,” Cicero states, “to defend any theory that presents itself to me as most probable.” (*De Off.*, III.IV) He is advancing a form of moral probabilism. As a philosophical doctrine, probability holds that man, despite his subjective limitations, may infer the nature of the objects of sensation from the evidence of his experience. As it

relates to ethical and moral choices, probability follows the idea that it is licit in the face of uncertainty to act upon the lesser of two options, provided both options are morally sound. “Probabilism,” as a formal ethical and moral theory, emerged in the seventeenth century, especially among many Jesuits.

In Cicero’s view, the understanding was that since prior certainty sometimes cannot be attained regarding appropriate ethical and moral action, the need to act according to probability is acceptable. For the orator-statesman, prudence was regarded as the most relevant virtue because it helped weigh probabilities so as to choose the “best,” i.e., the course of action that most likely would lead to the proper outcome. What made a statesman great, according to this way of thinking, rested in his ability to choose the most “prudent” course of action.

Off in Greece, Marcus Minor, like his father and Atticus and many others, faced a lack of clarity over his decision to pursue philosophical studies. Military service was another option, and so was a less committed existence, which is to say, one directed at leisure and the pleasures of life away from home without being yoked to parental guidance.

Cicero was never ambivalent to those ambiguous urgings in his son, as he made evident in his closing comments:

Herewith, my son Marcus, you have a present from your father—a generous one, in my humble opinion; but its value will depend upon the spirit in which you receive it. And yet you must welcome these three books as fellow-guests so to speak, along with your notes on Cratippus's lectures. But as you would sometimes give ear to me also, if I come to Athens (and I should be there now, if my country had not called me back with accents unmistakable, when I was half-way there), so you will please devote as much time as you can to these volumes, for in them my voice will travel to you; and you can devote to them as much time as you will. And when I see that you take delight in this branch of philosophy, I shall then talk further with you—at an early date...I hope face to face—but as long as you are abroad, I shall converse with you thus at a distance. Farewell, my dear Cicero, and be assured that, while you are the object of my deepest affection, you will be dearer to me still, if you find pleasure in such counsel and instruction. (*De Off.*, III. XXXIII)

Cicero, such a great writer of letters, regarded *De Officiis* as a regrettable substitute for an extended visit with his son in Athens. Political developments prevented that reunion: Cicero returned to Rome and worked toward restoration of senatorial rule. Still, expectations for Marcus were high, considering his educational opportunities and his famous parentage. The examples of encouragement Cicero provided are sometimes full of self-pride, and sometimes reminders of his lineage, such as when he stated that civic achievements are more important than military ones.

Cicero recalled this for his son:

Did not arms yield to the toga, when I was at the helm of state? For never was the republic in more serious peril, never was peace more profound. Thus, as the result of my counsels and my vigilance, their weapons slipped suddenly from the hands of the most desperate traitors—dropped to the ground of their own accord! What achievement in war, then, was ever so great? What triumph can be compared to that? For, I may boast to you, my son Marcus; for to you belong the inheritance of that glory of mine and the duty of imitating my deeds. (*De Off.*, I.XXII)

In this passage, once again, Cicero remained a braggart over his decisions against Catiline and his conspirators 19 years earlier.

As the tone and syntax of the three books suggest, sometimes the addressee of *De Officiis* was Marcus, exclusively, and sometimes the intended audience included young Romans capable of entering the highest levels of law and government. These were impressionable youth who had to decide on a way of life and who could benefit from the experiences of older men. The context here is the Roman belief in respect for age, imitation of ancestral achievement and practical apprenticeship for public life. Letters to Atticus indicated that Cicero was concerned not only for his son but also for his son-in-law Dolabella and his nephew Quintus, who was influenced politically by Caesar and later by Antony.

In producing a text of parental hope, persuasion and moral instruction for his son, Cicero followed the intentions of prominent Greek and Roman historical figures. His overall themes, concern for youth, for education and for leading a good life, find common ground with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>14</sup> Cicero cited Philip of Macedon and Cato the Elder as among his inspirations for letters between father and son. Cicero recounted a letter of Philip in which he criticized Alexander for offering gifts of money to the Macedonians in return for their cooperation and continuing good will. (*De Off.*, II.XV) He referred to a letter of the elder Marcus Cato to his son Marcus, who was serving in Macedonia in the war with Perseus. (*De Off.*, I.XI) In other instances, he noted letters of Philip to Alexander, Antipater to Cassander and Antigonus to Philip the Younger and calls these three fathers "three of the wisest men in history." (*De Off.*, II.XIV)

What Cicero taught is *how* to make moral decisions and *how* to analyze possible courses of action when they seem to be in competition. His objective is this: “To become good calculators of duty, able by adding and subtracting to strike a balance correctly and find out just how much is due to each individual.” (*De Off.*, I.XVIII) *De Officiis* does not intend to be a blueprint for moral action in all circumstances but it is a framework for moral reasoning that an individual may—and in some cases must—adopt, adapt and apply.

One of the shortcomings is that Cicero notes that we have obligations toward the lowest in society but other than that he does not elaborate regarding those in the socially inferior or disadvantaged classes. “Slaves,” he writes, “must be given their dues.” (*De Off.*, I.XIII) Further, he writes, in dealing with subjects and servants it is best to embrace a policy that aims “to banish fear and cleave to love.” (*De Off.*, II.VII) Despite these statements and despite Cicero’s concern for humanity, *De Officiis* is certainly not an example of abolitionist literature. Cicero employed a servant of note.<sup>15</sup> Tiro, first a slave and then, in 53 B.C., a freedman, performed many functions for Cicero, including managing the cooking, gardening and some financial affairs.

At first glance, an unconvincing argument has to do with Cicero’s attempt to justify private ownership of property. “There is...no such thing as private ownership established by nature,” he wrote, adding, “Each one should retain possession of that which has fallen to his lot.” (*De Off.*, I.VII). The guiding principle, then, seems to be neither nature nor nurture but simple luck. Cicero’s statement here gains more credibility when it is understood to reflect the idea that individuals have a right to private ownership of property notwithstanding tyrannical leaders, for example Sulla or Caesar, who

confiscate property before selling it for personal gain. Throughout most of his life, Cicero himself was a landowner, an investor with assorted business interests and a person of some measure of wealth. So, with what he has to say about ownership of private property, he is defending himself and his own class.

Rome was in moral decline and was becoming populated by so many newcomers. It was necessary, as recognized by Cicero and others, to provide reminders of moral and ethical behavior as well as simple social etiquette to those not exposed to them. The solution put forth was that all in Rome in their ethical conduct should return to the *mos maiorum* (“the way of our ancestors.”) “Our ancestors were of the opinion that no bond was more effective in guaranteeing good faith than an oath,” Cicero writes. (*De Off.*, III.XXXI) In this sense, *De Officiis* was a document for all, based on the assertion that oath swearing could help re-establish high standards for Rome and a sense of new health for the Republic. Many scholars recognize that the practical ethics of *De Officiis* merge with the law code suggested in *De Legibus* and the re-emphasis of the ideal Roman ancestral state in *De Republica* as Cicero’s materials for the regeneration of his country.<sup>16</sup>

Regarding leadership for the future of Rome, it is difficult to miss the very thoughtful and cautionary note for young Cicero and his generation in such passages as the following, which is one that would be especially attractive to humanist educators:

Above all we must decide who and what manner of men we wish to be and what calling in life we should follow; and this is the most difficult problem in the world. For it is in the years of early youth, when our judgment is most immature, that each of us decides that his calling in life shall be that to which he has taken a serious liking. And thus he becomes engaged in some particular calling and career in life, before he is fit to decide intelligently what is best for him. (*De Off.*, I.XXXII)

During the last three years of his life, Cicero also was concerned about his own waning influence in Rome. His was not a life with a melodramatic ending, i.e., a particularly happy one. Cicero was divorced and had been exiled, his daughter died in 45 B.C., which was the most traumatic event of his life, and his worries over his son Marcus were substantial. Atticus could watch over the young man in Athens and monitor his spending but Cicero truly felt he needed to be there. What a conflicted author Cicero must have been by 44 B.C. In that year, he continued his dangerous campaign against Mark Antony, wrote to Atticus regarding principles of friendship (*De Amicitia*) and unhappily pondered his son's behavior in Greece at a time when Marcus Minor was not devoting all of his energies to his studies. So many conflicting responsibilities were before Cicero, and so little time was at his avail. These factors largely explain why *De Officiis* is not a thoroughly hewn work.

Nonetheless, it remains a coherent work, stemming from Stoic ethics and the requirement for "appropriate action," in the Ciceronian rendering *officium*, or "duty for the performance of which an adequate reason may be given." (*De Off.*, I.III). The consistent theme of *De Officiis* rests in the belief that the intelligent moral agent sufficiently trained has at his or her disposal the virtues, the material to guide proper action. Parental guidance is responsible for reinforcing this belief.

One of Cicero's brilliant strokes is that he realizes that his son may have certain capabilities, certain aptitudes, but he is more steadfast in attempting to foster Marcus Minor's ethical and moral development. Cicero hoped to channel his son into the career best suited for him but he is even more adamant in his attempts to build his son's character, which is to say, his emotional, intellectual and moral qualities. Marcus,

unfortunately, drifted between the life of a student of philosophy at Athens and the life of a military serviceman on the losing side at Philippi. Once back in Rome, the younger Cicero benefited from the generosity of Octavian, who had misgivings over the fact that he joined in the decision to place Cicero on proscription lists, the precursor to his murder. Octavian gave Marcus Minor various administrative posts. But the son of Rome's greatest orator did not match his father's hopes. While the essay realizes the important process of making career choices, it represents something much greater: It provides direction for young people as to how they should live their lives, day in and day out, when the way forward is not a clear-cut channel. Values were shifting, and many young Romans were caught up in those shifts, often in a pejorative way.

Despite his efforts, Cicero, like so many parents through the ages, came to discover that he had limited control over the lives of his children. A sincere effort, of course, must be made, and only a parent with a heart of stone could be remiss. In point of view and tone, *De Officiis* reveals Cicero the father at least as much as Cicero the politician or philosopher. To examine its language and style, as does Dyck,<sup>17</sup> is to discover a vibrant text, skillfully crafted and dependent upon many literary devices, Greek and Latin. It is so vibrant, in fact, that the modern reader may detect the poetic equivalent of a sailor too long at sea, imagining things that are not evident. Always, though, digressions cease and the focus returns: respect the gods, respect the state, respect others, respect yourself.

Cicero tells Marcus Minor that instincts should not be oppressed by reason but rather should be corrected by it. The cardinal virtues of Stoicism (justice, wisdom, courage, and moderation) were reinterpreted to discipline the instincts but not to shackle

them. Cicero saw control of the instincts as a significant factor toward producing leaders and leadership of a kind that limits self-interest and eliminates dishonesty. “Once transformed into virtue, instinct can be placed at the service of the community and the state and can contribute actively to rendering the country still greater and more glorious; if there is no transformation, the path is open to...tyranny,” writes Gian Biagio Conte in his comments about *De Officiis*.<sup>18</sup>

The ethical concepts in *De Officiis* favor refinement and moderation, tolerance and humility, for a culture that firmly valued aggressive tendencies at the individual and national level for so long. “The more a man is endowed with these finer virtues, temperance, self-control and [justice], the more he deserves to be favoured,” Cicero wrote. (*De Off.*, I.XV). He observed: “There is nothing so characteristic of narrowness and littleness of soul as the love of riches.” (*De Off.*, I.XX) Cicero proclaims the advantages of calmness of the soul for those in leadership positions; he seeks order in all things, including civil government. With respect to leaders, Cicero asserts: “The higher we are placed, the more humbly should we walk.” (*De Off.*, I.XXVI)

Elsewhere, Cicero claims: “How right it is to live in thrift, self-denial, simplicity, and sobriety.” (*De Off.*, I.XXX) These qualities of refinement, calmness, moderation, tolerance and humility would have appeal for later Christians. It is a stretch, but not an unreasonable one, to suggest that with these statements Cicero nearly foreshadows Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 3-12), the practical ethical platform for any Christian. To incorporate the values put forth by Cicero, or the moral teachings included in the Beatitudes of Matthew’s Gospel, could never have been assumed to be an easy task.

Rawson finds that Cicero's *De Officiis* requires a "quixotic level of generosity,"<sup>19</sup> in other words, that its demands are idealistic in a romantic and impractical way. Rawson is in agreement that much of *De Officiis* is based in the classical understanding that virtues are natural to man. She maintains that this notion was to weaken in the more pessimistic centuries that followed. However, Cicero became more than another reform-minded optimist for a particular milieu. Many of his ideas about ethics and the education of youth flourished beyond Rome and antiquity. What can be verified, for instance, is that *De Officiis* became a vital instrument in Western systems of schooling and among many intellectual elites.

The growth and progress of Roman youth was a major concern for Cicero that reached full expression in *De Officiis* but had been present throughout his career, such as in the *Pro Caelio*. Cicero's speech in that 56 B.C., case was one of his most successful.<sup>20</sup> He defended a brilliant young man and personal friend, Marcus Caelius Rufus, against various charges, most notably that he attempted to poison his lover, Clodia, an elegant yet corrupt lady, not unlike so many others in aristocratic Rome. It was an opportunity for Cicero to rail against her brother Clodius, a personal enemy over many years. Furthermore, in defending Caelius, Cicero argued that archaic rigidity over ethical and moral standards should be weighed against new opportunities in an affluent society. His position was that if youth were held to norms that were too high for them to meet, they would rebel against all traditional values. In that case, Cicero sought a loosening of the reins on youth, with an attitude best captured in the phrase, "Let boys be boys!"

His message, in *De Officiis*, is quite the opposite. He suggests some of the restraints are necessary, writing: "My dear Cicero, while the whole field of philosophy is

fertile and productive and no portion of it barren and waste, still no part is richer or more fruitful than that which deals with moral duties; for from these are derived the rules for leading a consistent and moral life.” (*De Off.*, III.II) If it were possible, Cicero added, youth should hear nothing except precepts for leading an honorable life.

Cicero himself seems to have considered this treatise his spiritual testament and masterpiece.<sup>21</sup> It rises to its finest level with its understanding that there is a particular time in the life of any young person during which he or she is especially vulnerable. The reference here is to that period during which the young person is deciding upon a calling in life and even more significantly to that period during which the young person is deciding just what type of individual he or she will become. Cicero realized that most young people are not capable of making the best choices independent of the influence of a more experienced voice. (*De Off.*, I.XXXII)

More is involved in this essay than simple homespun warnings about misspent youth. Although many ideas are explored and sometimes clash in this treatise, what could not be clearer is that Cicero was a meliorist in the sense that he believed young people could develop and improve with effort and the aid of a proper education that includes sound moral and ethical instruction. Here lies his core principle. Cicero was trying to save young people from some of the dangers of life while at the same time trying to save them for some of its noble aspects and wonders.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RECEPTION OF CICERO'S IDEAS

To study Cicero's extensive influence through the centuries is to realize that many came to value him for his eloquence, others for his moral and ethical guidelines. For various reasons, some of which will be detailed in this chapter, he was adopted across cultures, disciplines, time periods and systems of belief. Those who come to an appreciation of Cicero exclusively for his exceptional rhetorical skills may do him a disservice. They possibly overlook his views on the moral life and thus possibly miss something more important. We should understand that the two Ciceronian themes above all others are that rhetoric should be a moral force, a portal toward virtue through explanation and persuasion, and that education should include moral and ethical instruction for young people on the verge of making career and lifestyle decisions. Regarding both *De Oratore* and *De Officiis*, Cicero often is brilliant in his style and forms of expression. However, that artistry can represent a mere patina for a deeper message, his concern for the moral and political decadence of Rome and his corresponding ideas to rejuvenate it. Cicero wanted principled leaders in the service of the state, and he wanted freedom for human beings so that they could do the right thing.

This chapter provides key instances of the reception of Ciceronian ideas and particularly those included in the *De Officiis* as they were adopted by the Early Church, in Medieval settings, through the humanists of the Renaissance and up to the Enlightenment. A full account of Cicero's influence is beyond the scope of this study

because of its enormity. What can be stated, in overview, is that Cicero's appeal probably was at its apex during the Renaissance. *De Officiis*, however, was highly esteemed as an ethical and moral text among Church Fathers and in the late Middle Ages and was taught for its eloquence but mostly for its ethics along with other Ciceronian texts throughout the Renaissance. In the eighteenth century the *De Officiis* reached its highest point, insofar as it helped shape modern thought, as it was interpreted by Montesquieu, Kant and others in their writings on society and ethics.<sup>1</sup> *De Officiis* was taught in humanist schools of the Italian Renaissance, and by the sixteenth century it was prominent in British schools and universities. This work of Cicero remained a vital school text until at least the nineteenth century. It became, in the phrase of Andrew R. Dyck, "part of the bloodstream of Western culture."<sup>2</sup>

My chapter, as it identifies direct and concrete instances of the influence of Cicero's *De Officiis*, stems almost exclusively from these four major sources: N.E. Nelson's essay "Cicero's *De Officiis* in Christian Thought: 300-1300" (1933); Paul MacKendrick's *The Philosophical Books of Cicero* (1989); Dyck's *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis* (1996); and P.G. Walsh's translation, introduction and explanatory notes in *Cicero On Obligations (On Duties)* from the year 2000. Occasional references to Ciceronian works other than the *De Officiis* are featured in this chapter, but they are of secondary concern. So, too, is the general influence of Cicero on individuals of great consequence to the Western tradition, although near the end of this chapter a paragraph on Cicero's general influence in America is presented because that influence is so impressive in its scope.

As stated, Cicero's speeches and writings may have reached their highest level of appreciation during the Renaissance, when they were judged and incorporated by humanist writers and thinkers like Erasmus, humanist educational theorists such as Leonardo Bruni and some Church leaders, most notably Pope Pius II, drawn to specific aspects of the humanist movement. However, momentum for this general level of acceptance began to take root in the early centuries of the Christian era when Church Fathers deemed Cicero a "noble pagan." Long before the Renaissance, the *De Officiis* helped individuals realize something of their function and purpose in social as well as civic life. The essay was studied as a skillful blending of private ambition with public good, ideally, so that it could act in accord with ecclesiastical teachings.

While there may be no way to accurately trace the exact influence of Cicero's *De Officiis* down to each detail, some important and concrete examples can be cited, as they will be in this chapter. A reasonable statement is that both in terms of its breadth across Europe and its depth of reception among some individuals of high standing, *De Officiis* was a text of gravity for many centuries as it was read, taught, discussed, cited, quoted and used as an ethical model. Until about the end of the eighteenth century, in the estimation of Walsh, "Cicero played a unique role in the formation of ethical values in the West, and the *De Officiis* became the most influential of his philosophical writings."<sup>3</sup>

My survey sets out with the acknowledgement that to suggest "influence" can be a problem-laden proposition: Just because similar ideas appear in two separate sources does not necessarily indicate an inter-textual relationship. However, with the help of reliable scholarship, this chapter can proceed by stating that the *De Officiis* circulated

widely in Rome not long after Cicero's death in 43 B.C., and by pointing out that for the most part it has always been an influential document in the West.

Cicero was unique in the sense that he was the most prominent ethical and moral speaker and writer from the culture that came to dominate the Western tradition; many Christian humanists of the Renaissance accepted large portions of his views. In this respect, his most serious Roman rival was Seneca (4 B.C.-65 A.D.) with his moral tracts and letters. Cicero, more realistic in his approach to ethics than Seneca, is influential not because subsequent thinkers fully affirmed and fully adopted what he had to say, but because subsequent thinkers so frequently feel the need to respond to his speeches and essays, especially the *De Officiis*, and to use them as primary sources in the development of their own ethical and moral precepts. As is the case even today, some followers of Cicero pick up a sentence or two from him; others are significantly impressed and accept much of Cicero's ethical and moral vision. His *De Officiis* is a prime example of classical rhetoric in the epideictic mode, in that it raises the level of appreciation for the issues at play while it also celebrates human beings and their capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first Christian apologists deeply influenced by Cicero was **Lactantius** (c. 240-c. 320). Born a pagan in Africa, Lactantius taught rhetoric in Nicomedia, an ancient city in what is now Turkey. He converted to Christianity at about age 60, and fell into poverty as a result of the Emperor Diocletian's edicts against Christians. However, Lactantius rose in status once again because of his friendship with Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor. The elderly teacher became an advisor to Constantine and tutor to Crispus, the emperor's son. Perhaps along with divine intervention, Lactantius contributed to the religious formation of Constantine, such as it was. The great Church

Fathers emerged from the schools of rhetoric, which helped them deliver their sermons, and in those educational environments they competed to be recognized as the “Christian Cicero.” Humanists referred to Lactantius with that title because of how frequently he mentioned Ciceronian treatises; he was very well acquainted with the *De Officiis*.<sup>5</sup>

The first major brush between pagan and Christian ethics, involving Cicero and Lactantius, sometimes was a rocky exchange. The work of Lactantius that most reflects the *De Officiis* is *The Divine Institutes* (c. 305-313), written for his educated contemporaries to show the truths of Christianity as a guide to the moral life. He apparently felt the testimony of a non-Christian could serve a purpose for Christians; the treatise also is an energetic riposte to pagan criticisms of Christianity and to persecutions of Christians. There are forty-two citations from *De Officiis* in this rather lengthy and by modern standards tedious work of Lactantius, many in Book Six, titled “Of True Worship.”<sup>6</sup> Lactantius notes that even the pagan Cicero recognizes in philosophy the important role of ethical teaching;<sup>7</sup> is at odds with Cicero when he states that pagan generosity is not the equal of Christian charity;<sup>8</sup> but accepts Cicero’s emphasis on the individual conscience.<sup>9</sup> The scholarly work of Nelson is particularly helpful in pinpointing these similarities and differences between Lactantius and Cicero.<sup>10</sup>

Although he is not always in agreement with Cicero, Lactantius in many instances recognizes the *De Officiis* as a seminal document for his discussion of the virtuous life. He points out, for example, that from the definitions of virtue put forth by philosophers and poets, “Marcus Tullius derived the offices of living.”<sup>11</sup> By “offices,” he meant duties and obligations from one person toward another, i.e., how to live dutifully. Like Cicero

(*De Off.*, II.I), Lactantius states that he values public service over the life of the retired philosopher seeking leisure and his own pleasures.

He writes:

Wisdom, unless it is engaged on some action on which it may exert its force, is empty and false; and Tullius rightly gives the preference, above teachers of philosophy, to those men employed in civil affairs, who govern the state, who found new cities or maintain with equity those already founded, who preserve the safety and liberty of the citizens either by good laws or wholesome counsels, or by weighty judgments. For it is right to make men good rather than to give precepts about duty to those shut up in corners.<sup>12</sup>

Ambrose and Augustine, two major figures in early Christianity, were among those who paid serious attention to Cicero in the fourth and early fifth centuries, helping him continue to gain a foothold in the Christian world. Ambrose, an eloquent political administrator before he became an exceptional homilist, had played a key role in the religious and moral conversion of Augustine. “[Ambrose] lifted the veil of mystery and disclosed the spiritual meaning of texts,” Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*.<sup>13</sup>

Of the two, **Ambrose** (c. 340-397) owes the greater debt to *De Officiis*. As bishop of Milan, Ambrose wrote his own *De Officiis*, with Cicero as his model, as a code of moral obligations for Milanese clergy. Ambrose obviously felt the Christian ethical message was better than that produced by Greece or Rome but he retained specific Ciceronian principles, most notably that duties involve, first, those to the immortal gods, then for country, family, others and self. (*De Off.*, I.XLV) The sincerest form of praise is imitation, and that is precisely what Ambrose did in his version. The two works are thoroughly intertwined. In the introduction to his relatively new (2001) translation and commentary on the *De Officiis* of Ambrose, Ivor J. Davidson stated that he was able to

“uncover an even greater density of Ciceronian evocation than has been hitherto noticed in Ambrose’s Latin.”<sup>14</sup>

Consecrated bishop with wide Milanese support, Ambrose used Scripture as the major source for his elaboration of clerical obligations but his use of Cicero’s *De Officiis* is evident as well. In terms of structure, Ambrose wrote in three books, as did Cicero in *De Officiis*. Regarding background, Ambrose, like Cicero, was the product of a traditional Roman education and went on to a career in government; he was governor of Liguria-Aemilia. As a consequence, Ambrose, once again like Cicero, was greatly concerned about ethics in political life.

Early on in his *De Officiis*, Ambrose, writing to his clergy, directly acknowledges the debt he owes Cicero. While meditating on Psalm 39, Ambrose states,<sup>15</sup> the idea of writing his version of the *De Officiis* occurred to him:

The Psalm affords instruction on the kind of patience we require to remain silent and on the importance of waiting for the right occasion to speak. In later verses, it tells us how to despise riches as well. These things are the major foundations of all virtues.... The idea came to me to write about duties. Although various devotees of philosophy have written about duties—Panaetius and his son [his pupil Posidonius] among the Greeks, for instance, and Cicero among Latin writers—it seemed to me that I would not be venturing beyond my own realm if I undertook to write about them myself as well. In the same way that Cicero wrote to instruct his son, I too am writing to mould you, my sons; for I do not feel any less love for you as children whom I have begotten in the gospel than I would if I had fathered you literally in marriage. Nature is no stronger than grace when it comes to love.<sup>16</sup>

There is much in the way of scholarly evidence to show the appreciation Ambrose held for Cicero. For example, in the appendix to his Latin translation of Cicero’s *De Officiis*, Michael Winterbottom identifies 84 parallels between Cicero and Ambrose in the first book of Ambrose, 31 in the second book and 37 in the third.<sup>17</sup>

Part of the narrative strategy of Ambrose was that he often coupled Cicero's references to honorable conduct with exceptional examples from the Bible. For instance, Ambrose recounts the story in Cicero's *De Officiis* (III.XXII) about the noble gesture of Fabricius, a generous and powerful prince, toward King Pyrrhus. Without being provoked, Pyrrhus declared war on the Roman people. A deserter from the camp of Pyrrhus visited Fabricius and said that for a reward he would return to Pyrrhus and have him poisoned. The Roman Senate commended the action of Fabricius when he rejected the offer; sent the deserter, a physician, back to Pyrrhus; and stated that he intended to win the war not by crime but by valor.

When he wrote to his clergy, Ambrose placed this account of noble behavior, which he had recognized in Cicero's *De Officiis*, next to his admonition concerning the foremost Old Testament model.

Ambrose instructed his priests in Milan:

Let us return to our own Moses, and let us go back to events which took place earlier in history: this way, we can show that the more ancient deeds are also the more outstanding ones. The king of Egypt refused to let our fathers' people go...Moses prayed, and everything was restored to its former order: the hail ceased, the sores were healed, and the rivers provided normal drinking-water once more.<sup>18</sup>

**Jerome** (c. 347-420) and **Augustine** (354-430) were not as closely aligned with Cicero's *De Officiis* as was Ambrose, but they were devoted readers of it and other Ciceronian texts. Walsh refers to them as "giants of fourth-century Christian humanism" and as "ardent Ciceronians."<sup>19</sup> Jerome was educated in the Latin classics and became devoted to them as well as associated with them. St. Jerome became an immensely popular figure in fifteenth century Italy. His image appeared in altarpieces and in paintings, and preachers often told the story of his famous dream: One night, Jerome's

dreamt that he saw himself before Christ at the Last Judgment. Jerome claimed to be a Christian, but his judge bellowed back: “You are not a Christian but a disciple of Cicero.” The judge ordered Jerome to be flogged for his lie, whereupon Jerome begged for mercy and stated that he would never again possess or read any of the classics. The anecdote indicates just how thoroughly Jerome imbibed Cicero.<sup>20</sup>

As Augustine himself attests in his *Confessions*, the prayers of his mother Monica and the dream that consoled her<sup>21</sup> together with the homilies of Ambrose<sup>22</sup> all were efficacious in his personal conversion and reformation. In addition, what Augustine as a young man learned from Cicero is that the search for wisdom is a protracted quest and that the person who sticks to the task is involved in a heroic undertaking. I stray briefly from Cicero’s *De Officiis* here in order to show the penetrating influence another work by Cicero could have, not just on another person’s way of thinking or on his or her career but on an entire life. Augustine wrote that Cicero’s *Hortensius* is the document that led him to a love of the study of philosophical speculation and beyond that to his theological convictions. Known to Augustine but now lost, the *Hortensius*, or *On Philosophy*, is a 45 B.C., dialogue by Cicero to his friend Quintus Hortensius Hortalus. Cicero praises philosophy as he writes to a great Roman lawyer, speaker and politician who had been his rival in 70 B.C., in the Gaius Verres case.

In his *Confessions*, his landmark work of introspection written in 397-398, Augustine lavished praise on this lost text when he revealed the following:

It was my ambition to be a good speaker, for the unhallowed and inane purpose of gratifying human vanity. The prescribed course of study brought me to a work by an author named Cicero, whose writing nearly everyone admires, if not the spirit of it. The title of the book is *Hortensius* and it recommends the reader to study philosophy. It altered my outlook on life. It changed my prayers to you, O Lord, and provided me with new hopes and aspirations. All my empty dreams suddenly lost their charm and my heart began to throb with a bewildering passion for the wisdom of eternal truth. I began to climb out of the depths to which I had sunk, in order to return to you. For I did not use the book as a whetstone to sharpen my tongue. It was not the style of it but the contents which won me over.<sup>23</sup>

Augustine accepted from Cicero's *Hortensius* the observation that the wise man can understand who he is and can learn his place in the universe. He can come to see how that divine part of him, which is to say, his rational soul, can help him rise above his lustful impulses and the overall illusions of day-to-day living.

In his treatise on the Trinity, Augustine seems to be alluding to the *Hortensius* when he says:

If...as ancient philosophers thought—and those, too, the greatest and far the most celebrated—we have souls eternal and divine, then must we needs think, that the more these shall have always kept in their own proper course, i.e., in reason and in the desire of inquiry, and the less they shall have mixed and entangled themselves in the vices and errors of men, the more easy ascent and return they will have to heaven.<sup>24</sup>

Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine were among those in the early Christian era who read Cicero's ideas and accepted them, or at least some of them, as they deemed suitable. But there was also some measure of reluctance toward secular texts on the part of some Christians. According to Augustine, in *The City of God*, Cicero denied that God has foreknowledge of events. Therefore, men are free to make choices and to act upon them, with the possible conclusion that people are free to give up God.<sup>25</sup> This is an instance of Christian reserve, or caution, regarding Cicero.

The issue as to whether Christians should read pagan writings prompted Basil's *Address to Young Men on Greek Literature*. **St. Basil the Great** (c. 330-c.379) wrote that pagan classics were beneficial and even necessary in Christian education so long as they were properly selected, taught and received.<sup>26</sup> This may not have been a huge or radical claim because at least in the very early patristic era, these texts were the only "literature" in existence, we should remember. Basil's views, in supporting the reading of pagan poets, helped to establish a precedent for Renaissance humanists as they tried to show that their efforts were valuable and legitimate in a Christian culture.<sup>27</sup>

After the era of the Latin Church Fathers and prior to the Carolingian age in France and Germany in the eighth through tenth centuries, only occasional echoes of Cicero's *De Officiis* can be pointed out. An example of a person who invested in small doses of Cicero's essay between these periods is **Boethius** (c. 480-524), "the schoolmaster of the West" and a model for later scholastics because of his use of logic and his acceptance of Aristotle. Some scholars of Boethius regard him as indebted to Cicero because he quotes from the *Dream of Scipio*,<sup>28</sup> which sees earthly fame and glory as trivial and provincial, and the *Hortensius*.<sup>29</sup> In his master work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius followed the *De Officiis* insofar as he included an account of Marcus Atilius Regulus (c.307-250 B.C.) in the First Punic War. Cicero applauded the Roman general for his "greatness of soul and courage." (*De Off.*, III.XXVI)

To the extent that a Christian culture was being fostered by Church Fathers, in the sense that pagan texts could be read alongside works of Christian teachings and be reciprocally influential, such tendencies suffered a setback in the fifth century with the sack of Rome and the breakdown of political order. But even in the ensuing centuries, in

the period commonly referred to as the Dark Ages, Cicero's ideas about public service, social unity and moderation were kept afloat to some degree. We know that in the Middle Ages, the monks in places such as Cluny and Citeaux were familiar with Cicero and Virgil and preserved their writings.<sup>30</sup> When a more energetic intellectual climate returned to Europe in the twelfth century, the *De Officiis* was broader in its influence and in some circles less replete with Christian attachments.<sup>31</sup> Acceptance of Cicero was based upon what he had to say regarding justice, social responsibility, restrictions on liberality and the relationship between virtue and expediency, which is at the core of his *De Officiis*.

Among Medieval figures, **John of Salisbury** (c. 1115-1176) ranks as especially important in the transmission of *De Officiis*. John studied with many of the great masters of the early twelfth century, including Peter Abelard; served as an aid to Thomas a Becket; and was a friend of Pope Hadrian IV. The Bishop of Chartres and an educational theorist, "John the Little," as he was known, was nearly unbounded in his appreciation for Cicero and took the Ciceronian view that education should be moral and not merely intellectual in nature. This position of John of Salisbury did not gain popular support in his own times but was adopted with great enthusiasm in the world of Renaissance humanism. John's appropriation of the *De Officiis* is the most comprehensive since the age of the Church Fathers;<sup>32</sup> the book that links John to this work of Cicero is his *Policraticus* (1159). Considered an authoritative text in political philosophy for centuries, it is a massive, eight-book attempt to discuss all aspects of ethics and politics.

We know John possessed and used the *De Officiis* because he bequeathed his copy to the library of Chartres.<sup>33</sup> A reader of the *Policraticus* can see the process whereby John reviews and then accepts, modifies or rejects many of Cicero's viewpoints. Among

the elements John adopts from the *De Officiis* are Cicero's definition of the first cardinal virtue, prudence or wisdom;<sup>34</sup> Cicero's emphasis on the second cardinal virtue, justice, based in truth and fidelity to oath;<sup>35</sup> Cicero's ideal concerning the value of active public service;<sup>36</sup> and perhaps most importantly Cicero's acceptance of probability as a legitimate basis for a systems of ethics.<sup>37</sup> Nelson cites all of these connections.<sup>38</sup>

In Church literature and moral writings of the thirteenth century, Seneca and Aristotle weigh most heavily, but Cicero's influence on some thinkers during this period is measurable. **St. Thomas Aquinas** (c. 1225-1274) regarded the third book of the *De Officiis* an important source on the ethics of business and commerce. When he warned against deceit in such transactions, Aquinas quoted directly from the *De Officiis*, III.XV. "Contracts should be entirely free from double-dealing," Aquinas stated. "The seller must not impose upon the bidder, nor the buyer upon one that bids against him."<sup>39</sup> St. Thomas explains in his *Summa Theologica* that "Tully" is his primary source on this issue having to do with business ethics.

There are six quotations from the *De Officiis* in the *Convito*, or, *The Banquet*, of **Dante** (1265-1321), a work in which the poet shows a growing interest in philosophy and particularly in Cicero and Boethius. In addition, Dante's *De Monarchia* cites the *De Officiis*, I.XII, twice as Dante advocates a universal monarch with temporal power along with the direction of the pope in spiritual affairs.<sup>40</sup>

Cicero's essay, according to Walsh, plays a possible role in Dante's *Inferno*, where those guilty of violence are consigned to Circle VII and those guilty of deceit must go to Circle VIII or IX, in accord with the severity of what they have done. In Dante's hell, deceit is a more evil transgression because it violates man's great gift of reason. The

*De Officiis*, I.XIII, similarly takes the view that deception is especially deplorable. It states: “While wrong may be done...by force or by fraud, both are bestial: fraud seems to belong to the cunning fox, force to the lion; both are wholly unworthy of man, but fraud is the more contemptible.”

Fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian humanists involved in the arts, in political life, in the Church and especially in education came to appreciate Cicero with great passion. Expeditions to find ancient texts emerged as a cottage industry, and when **Petrarch** and others made their Ciceronian discoveries, humanist educators dissatisfied with Medieval approaches suddenly had models of style for use in their schools.<sup>41</sup> The most important early discoveries were those of Petrarch (the oration *Pro Archia* at Liege in 1333 and *Letters to Atticus* at Verona in 1345); Boccaccio (*Pro Cluentio* in 1355); and Coluccio Salutati (*Epistulae ad Familiares*, letters to correspondents other than Atticus, at Vercelli in 1392). When Italian humanists such as Poggio Bracciolini followed the papal court to the Council of Constance (1414-1417), the next surge of Ciceronian discoveries took place. Poggio, in 1415 at the monastery of Cluny, found manuscripts that may have dated from eighth century and included the *Pro Roscio Amerino* and *Pro Murena*, both previously unknown, as well as three other orations of Cicero. During the next summer at St. Gall in the Swiss Alps, Poggio discovered Asconius’s *Commentary* on five of Cicero’s speeches. In the summer of 1417 in France and Germany, Poggio found eight additional unknown speeches of Cicero. The surge of Ciceronian findings reached its high point in 1421 when Gerardo Landriani discovered *De Oratore* and *Orator*, known only in fragments, as well as *Brutus*, which was previously unknown.

Humanist educators were reformers who worked to foster young men and women of virtue who were rooted in and identified strongly with convincing examples of classical virtue; who would proceed prudently because their human experiences were formed by an understanding of the distant past due to their studies in history; and who would be eloquent, that is, able to articulate virtue and prudence, because they were familiar with the best speakers and writers from antiquity, Greek and Roman.<sup>42</sup> In Italy, this style of humanistic education rose to prominence between 1390 and 1440, and it put in place standards that were adopted throughout Northern Europe. Down to the twentieth century, it defined one important aspect of the European educational model.

**Leonardo Bruni's** treatise *The Study of Literature*, probably dating from 1424, states the matter with precision. The reason for studying the ancients, he wrote, extends beyond an antiquarian exercise to the idea that certain classical authors and orators are the source for wisdom by which to live. Bruni (1370-1444) wrote to Lady Battista Malatesta of Montefeltro, a learned woman of the aristocracy, the following: "A woman...who enjoys secular literature will choose Cicero, a man—Good God!—so eloquent! so rich in expression! so polished! so unique in every kind of excellence!"<sup>43</sup> Cicero is "polished" in that, unlike many philosophers, he produces persuasive eloquence with a deep, emotional feeling at its core, giving vitality to its listeners or readers.

At Venice and Verona, in the years 1414-1419, the famous humanist teacher **Guarino Guarini** (1374-1460) lectured on Cicero's letters and speeches and taught such orations as the *Pro Roscio Amerino* and the *Pro Murena* for their language as well as for what they could teach young people about life.<sup>44</sup> This indicates the relationship between an appreciation for Cicero's style and an appreciation for his ethical and moral messages.

Style and moral content were seen as two aspects of the same reality. The eloquence of Cicero, as derived from his letters and speeches, became the accepted measure of comparison in Italian Renaissance Latin schools. Students worked hard to learn to write and speak like him, even if in some cases the trend became severe and rigid.<sup>45</sup>

Italian schoolmasters of the period generally afforded the *De Officiis* less focus as part of regular schooling. Other works of Cicero, they believed, should be used to teach eloquence and style. Still, we know that *De Officiis* circulated in educational settings. For instance, it was used by more Venetian teachers of the late sixteenth century than popular works such as Virgil's epic story of Aeneas, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Aristotle's *Rhetorica*.<sup>46</sup> Among humanist educational theorists, one who recommended the *De Officiis* enthusiastically was **Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini** (later Pope Pius II, 1458-1464) in his essay *The Education of Boys*.<sup>47</sup> This 1450 work, which deals with training of the body as well as that of the mind, is written to Ladislaus, the young king of Austria, Bohemia and Hungary. Piccolomini (1405-1464) is in step with his peers when he tells young Ladislaus that students should study the best rhetoricians, historians, poets and moral philosophers from antiquity. Piccolomini quotes and refers to Cicero throughout the pages of this essay, such as when he points out that Cicero, like Plato, required the best morals and conditions for his republic;<sup>48</sup> when he calls Cicero the most brilliant orator and writes that *On Duties* is necessary for the young king;<sup>49</sup> and when he tells Ladislaus to study "Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, *On Old Age*, *On Friendship*, and whatever else he has written on morals."<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the discoveries of Petrarch, Poggio and others, and in addition to the use of Cicero in humanist schools, technological developments gave Ciceroniaism a

boost as well. *De Officiis* was the first printed Latin text (together with Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*), in 1465 in the Mainz, Germany print and engraving shop of **Johannes Gutenberg**. Cicero's treatise, like the Bible, could now be placed in the hands of many individual readers.

**Erasmus of Rotterdam** (1466?-1536) brought out an annotated version in April 1501. In one of the reprints, Erasmus wrote that, "Drinking from [Cicero's *De Officiis*] gives you not just fluency of speech, but immortality."<sup>51</sup> In 1503, when Erasmus composed a guide to Christian living for a courtier-soldier, he titled the book *Enchiridion*. As a "handbook," it is a summary of ethics and doctrine or morality. The studies of Erasmus in classical and patristic rhetoric, Anne M. O'Donnell, S.N.D., has written, helped him become familiar with two great examples of the genre, Cicero's *De Officiis* and Augustine's *De Fide et Spe et Caritate*, an explication of the Apostles' Creed and Our Father.<sup>52</sup>

It is not out of the question that Cicero or another pagan writer could be skillful enough to be able to illustrate a Christian principle better than the Christian himself or herself. Erasmus, the prince of the humanists, was among those who understood this issue well.

In "The Godly Feast," a 1522 addition to his collection of colloquies, which began to appear in 1518, Erasmus has one of his speakers say:

Sacred Scripture is the basic authority in everything; yet I sometimes run across ancient sayings or pagan writings—even the poets'—so purely and reverently expressed, and so inspired, that I can't help believing their authors' hearts were moved by some divine power. And perhaps the spirit of Christ is more widespread than we understand, and the company of saints includes many not in our calendar.<sup>53</sup>

Eusebius is the relevant Erasmian speaker in this colloquy, an informal conversation or written dialogue, this one involving five characters. When the discussion between Eusebius and Chrysoglottus turns to the value of profane literature, Eusebius says he can't read *De Officiis* and various other Ciceronian texts "without sometimes kissing the book and blessing that pure heart, divinely inspired as it was."<sup>54</sup>

Eusebius goes on to declare: "I would much rather let all of Scotus and others of his sort perish, than the books of a single Cicero or Plutarch. Not that I condemn the former entirely, but I perceive I am helped by reading the others, whereas I rise from the reading of these somehow less enthusiastic about true virtue, but more disputatious."<sup>55</sup>

Chrysoglottus responds: "Tully's [Cicero's] books on philosophy seem to breathe something of divinity."<sup>56</sup>

Through **Melanchthon**, the Wittenberg professor Philip Schwarzerd (1497-1560), Cicero reached into the Protestant Reformation. In ethics and morals, Melanchthon, the most important Reformation theologian aside from Luther and Calvin, renewed the tradition of classical thought. His books on morals from classical authors were drawn from Cicero and to a lesser degree Aristotle. Known as the father of Christian humanism, Melanchthon produced declamations, often on legal matters, that were like Cicero's in that they were models of eloquence for colleagues and students.

In his university career, Melanchthon taught the *De Officiis*, and in 1534 he produced an introduction to it. His *Prolegomena to Cicero's De officiis* reads, in part:

This book of Cicero concerns moral philosophy, for it concerns the definitions of virtues, and, besides the definitions, many precepts for civic morals, and most of this in oratorical mode, in the style of popular oration, so that men endowed with common sense can understand them and imitate them in the habit of everyday life; for dry disputations, such as are found in Aristotle, contain some teaching that is not ignoble, but somewhat obscure and almost deliberately distant from the intellect and judgment of the inexperienced. Cicero's definitions can more easily be understood and adapted to everyday use in life. Moreover it is generally acknowledged that everyone needs some teaching on morals and a description of virtues, so that we understand in our manners and in judging about human business what is proper and what is not, what is done rightly and what is ill done. Accordingly, it is necessary to have forms and images of virtues, which we follow in all decisions and in our judgments on all matters. This teaching is strictly speaking to be called humanity, and it shows the way to live properly and as a citizen; those who do not know it are not very different from beasts.<sup>57</sup>

Melanchthon goes on to state that those Christians who as a matter of course shun pagan texts and philosophy in general are engaged in "error" that needs to be corrected. He writes: "Philosophy does not provide confirmation of the will of God, nor does it instruct on the fear of God and the trust in Him; that pertains properly to the Gospel. However, apart from these things, precepts for civic life are necessary, which teach how men may live peacefully with each other." Cicero's *De Officiis* is an important treatise in this context, Melanchthon maintains, because "by demonstrating the causes of the laws and of public justice, it helps much with the understanding of all discussions of civic matters."<sup>58</sup>

Further, Melanchthon observes:

It is even more useful, though, to have at the ready topics discussed and embellished by Cicero, so that we can borrow words or embellishments from there, or at least imitate them. For what does Cicero do if not collect commonplaces, that is, definitions of the virtues? All civic business of which one has to speak has to look at them. If you write a letter in which you thank a friend who has done you a favour, how many embellishments will Cicero supply in the passage that contains precepts on gratitude! There are many similies there, and many arguments which we can accommodate to our own use. If, in a decision, there is a conflict between utility and honour, as it often happens, how much can be gained from the third book!<sup>59</sup>

The Dutch jurist **Hugo Grotius** (1583-1645) made use of the *De Officiis* when he wrote about what is permissible in war according to natural law theory.<sup>60</sup> Cicero articulated that even in war physical courage must be tempered by discretion, and indiscriminate destruction must be avoided. (*De Off.*, I.XXIII-XXIV) Cicero's view of Rome's place in the world was "rosier" than facts could support, MacKendrick claims, in that Cicero saw Rome as "benign" and in some ways "hospitable" protectors of the world it had conquered, willing to do good deeds in a dark world.<sup>61</sup> The essential humanity and mildness of this concept of Rome, according to MacKendrick, is what inspired Grotius to write *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625). Dedicated to Louis XIII, *le Juste*, during the Thirty Years' War, this treatise quotes no less than a dozen Ciceronian works, by far the largest number of those quotations coming from the *De Officiis*. With the power of Church and Empire having abated, and with sovereign states in ascendancy, Grotius set out to articulate a new code of ethics and a new way to make war less unprincipled, chaotic and violent when it didn't have to be. Grotius accepted from Cicero that we must do our duty toward even those who have wronged or injured us;<sup>62</sup> that mercy must be shown to those who peacefully surrender;<sup>63</sup> and that slaves must be not be mistreated.<sup>64</sup> These and other ideas common to Cicero and Grotius are identified by MacKendrick.<sup>65</sup>

In Enlightenment France, **Montesquieu** (1689-1755), the social critic and political theorist, was informed by many of the political concepts of *De Officiis* when he wrote *De l'esprit des Lois* (1748). This work of Montesquieu “breathes the spirit” of Cicero’s *De Officiis*, Dyck has written;<sup>66</sup> Walsh claims *Esprit* is “inspired throughout” by Cicero’s *De Legibus* and *De Officiis*.<sup>67</sup> The principle shared by Cicero and Montesquieu is that ethics and politics must never be far apart. That is to say, education in republican forms of government must teach self-denial and patriotism; must show the value of the community’s interests over the interests of the individual; and, to be free, must inculcate a belief in civic virtue. “These notions were built into the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) and, thanks ultimately to Cicero, into the American Declaration of Independence,” according to MacKendrick.<sup>68</sup> Here, he makes a rather large statement about Cicero; it is one we should not miss, certainly, as we weigh Cicero’s influence.

Montesquieu’s enormously popular book states in its preface the author’s hope to give all readers new reasons to love “duties,” which is an allusion if not a direct reference to Cicero. The baron’s view that war should be engaged in only as a matter of self-defense and his view that war is justified to defend an attacked ally are components of the *De Officiis*, II.VII. That the tyrant is dependent upon an atmosphere of fear and that fear is no guarantee of lasting power is a message both of *Esprit*, III.IX, and *De Officiis* (II.VII). The Jesuit-educated Montesquieu’s examination of laws before and superior to written codes of law is in accord with the *De Officiis* (I.IV). In that passage, Cicero offers the basics of a natural law argument, that natural law assumes the brotherhood of man and is superior to civil law. With the Stoics, the concept of natural law reached its highest point; Cicero introduced it to the Latin world and made it popular so that later his

writings on natural law were incorporated by Christians.<sup>69</sup> More positive law, Cicero proclaimed, can mean less justice. He wrote of a 30-day truce between states and of a famous general who attacked at nightfall, thus sidestepping the intent, or the spirit, of the law (*De Off.*, I.X).

In Prussia, **Frederick the Great** (1712-1786) praised Cicero's three-book treatise and saw to it that it was translated into German in 1783. Frederick preferred Cicero's views on political leadership while arguing against strategies put forth by Machiavelli. Cicero's leaders, ideally, are men of virtue, Machiavelli those of opportunism and timing. *The Prince* (first distributed in 1513) maintained that it is acceptable that the aims of an aspiring leader should be glory and survival, even if those goals are achieved by immoral means. In 1739, Frederick refuted Machiavelli in an anonymous essay (known as his *Anti-Machiavel*). Published the following year, it achieved great popularity. Frederick can be counted among Ciceronians.

By the sixteenth century, *De Officiis* became a standard text at British schools, colleges and universities, including Cambridge and Oxford; the work was in the curricula in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow schools and universities as well.<sup>70</sup> Scholars have shown that the ongoing influence of the *De Officiis* in England and Scotland can be found in the works of John Milton (1608-1674), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776) and **Adam Smith** (1723-1790).<sup>71</sup> The reference to Smith is important because it indicates Cicero's reach into still another discipline, economic history and theory. In the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith draws on the treatise of Cicero (*De Off.*, II.V) with his conviction that to pursue enlightened self-interest is at the same time to make a contribution to the public welfare. The economist's ethical doctrine, expressed in *The*

*Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), focuses on the harmony between men and nature and the “propriety,” or lack thereof, in men’s actions. Smith’s understanding of “propriety” is derived from Cicero’s *De Officiis*. (I. XXVII-XL)<sup>72</sup>

The giant of philosophy, **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804), argued that ethical norms are grounded in human reason and not from natural instinct, as Cicero’s Stoic thesis maintained (*De Off.*, I.IV). However, Kant called upon Cicero’s essay for other purposes, such as an important source in two of the formulations of his categorical imperative. As Dyck’s work shows, that Kant presupposed a community of all people can be traced to *De Officiis* (III.VI), and Kant’s concept of the humanity in oneself and others points to his reading of *De Officiis*. (III.V)<sup>73</sup> These concepts are universal in application and prohibit treating any human being as a means to an end. Kant knew Cicero’s *De Officiis* as a young man, and he came to appreciate both this treatise and Cicero’s continuing effect on his German contemporaries. Kant valued Cicero’s style and recognized that true and lasting popularity in philosophy requires reading and trying to imitate Cicero in terms of his eloquence.<sup>74</sup> In matters of content, they both taught that ethics is opposed to impulse, that hedonism should be rejected and that morality has its foundation in duty. While no one could ever claim that Cicero is Kant’s equal as a philosopher, MacKendrick is able to ponder the notion that, “[Cicero] contributed a little to Kant’s vision of the starry heaven above and the moral law within.”<sup>75</sup>

For Kant, the categorical imperative, a way of evaluating motivations for any actions, is central. He introduced this notion in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), his first contribution to moral philosophy. The Kantian view is that human beings occupy a special place in creation and that morality can be reduced to one ultimate

commandment of reason, which he calls an “imperative,” from which all duties and obligations stem. If it were possible to distill Kant, and if it were possible to strip him of philosophical language, what he does is call great attention to human beings and their inherent dignity while at the same time asserting that they have unavoidable responsibilities toward others. These ideas parallel Ciceronian themes.

Dyck has written that through the eighteenth century the *De Officiis* became “part of the bloodstream of Western culture.”<sup>76</sup> This has been cited earlier in this chapter. We must, then, offer possible reasons for its departure because there are few fully-professed Ciceronians in our modern world and few readers able to speak about the history and importance of this specific text from Roman antiquity. Cicero once cut a wide swath through Europe but that corridor is now but a simple boreen. Two prominent factors that must be cited are these: a decline in attitudes toward the once-revered art form of rhetoric and the general acceptance of the severe critique of Cicero’s character that the German historian Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903) published in the mid-nineteenth century.

Rhetoric was dealt a sharp blow in the 1885 address of Ernest Renan to the French Academy. Renan, a Biblical scholar, philologist and cultural critic, called rhetoric “the only error of the Greeks.”<sup>77</sup> He objected to the idea that there could be rules for rhetoric that could be studied, and he dismissed the persuasive form of rhetoric attributed to Greek Sophists and taught by Jesuits. A decade after Renan delivered his views, the teaching of rhetoric was banned in French schools and the discipline was seen on a popular level as a manipulative tool of the former ruling class, the *ancien regime*. Even though the teaching of rhetoric as a vital and formal discipline was not prohibited elsewhere in Europe and in North American, it came to be regarded as quaint, at best.

This general decline in attitudes toward rhetoric and the study of it could not represent a boost for the influence and study of Cicero, perhaps its greatest practitioner in the Western tradition.

What is obvious is that by the time of the Enlightenment, and certainly by the nineteenth century, Cicero's eclipse had been initiated in that he was less quoted as an authority and less recommended for the young. Mommsen was responsible more than anyone else, but a single critic can rarely, if ever, be so forceful. In an age of technical advance and scientific discovery, originality was admired more than any other ability, and Cicero was found to be lacking. Progress and invention required "functional" language to explain scientific facts, and this environment and mode of expression would not appreciate Cicero as a great prose stylist. Cicero made duty and obligation sound majestic as he conveyed not scientific findings but ideas regarding the pursuit of truth; the importance of an organized society; the human urgings arising from a noble, invincible spirit; and the value of orderliness and moderation in personal deportment. Further, one of the key desires of those in the Enlightenment was for "autonomy" in their personal lives, and Cicero would have run across the current with his message about collective responsibility.

We should understand that many "sacred cows" were sacrificed by the nineteenth century, as John Higginbotham points out, including the authority once attributed to the Classics.<sup>78</sup> In that atmosphere, Cicero's decline could have been predictable, or so it seems; yet, others take it as a great shock. "In the history of philosophy," P.G. Walsh writes, "nothing is so surprising as the fall of Cicero from his high pinnacle in the Age of Enlightenment to the neglect and even contempt which befell him in the nineteenth

century.”<sup>79</sup> At that time, according to Walsh, admiration for fifth- and fourth-century Athens flourished while Hellenistic studies and interest in Roman literature and philosophy did not reach the same levels. In academic settings, Cicero typically was studied because he transmitted Greek thought; his particular philosophy or accomplishments as a statesman did not attract interest, although in universities and even grammar schools, study of Cicero’s letters and speeches continued. My point is that even those who ignore or find serious fault with Cicero’s ideas and methods must acknowledge his enormous influence on European culture, so much of which has been passed on to the United States. Chapter six of this project has been devoted to tracing the admiration once afforded Cicero.

Few scholars can question the assessment that the decline of Cicero and his work arose mostly as a result of the commentary of Mommsen. The *History of Rome*, one of the masterpieces of Western historical literature, focused on the Roman Republic and was published in three volumes between 1854 and 1856. The work made Mommsen astonishingly famous in his day and earned for him the second Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1902. Widely accepted as one of the greatest classical historians of his or any other century, Mommsen is rivaled perhaps only by English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794). In addition to his pursuits as a classical scholar and historian, Mommsen was proficient as a jurist, journalist, politician and archaeologist. As a writer, he was known for his knowledge across various fields of study and for his ability to interpret personality and character. Still read are Mommsen’s judgments of Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, the Gracchi brothers, Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Cato, Julius Caesar and others, including Cicero.

Many instances of flattery stand out in Mommsen's profile of Julius Caesar, many instances of scorn in his profile of Cicero. For instance, Mommsen calls Caesar "the sole creative genius produced by Rome, and the last produced by the ancient world."<sup>80</sup> Mommsen writes of Caesar's "marvelous serenity"<sup>81</sup> and of the notion that Caesar's rationalism reached "a point at which it came in some measure into contact with mysticism."<sup>82</sup> The word "divine" is not featured here in connection with Caesar, but for any reader its appearance must be anticipated. Mommsen continued to decorate Julius Caesar with these lines: "A Roman in the deepest essence of his nature, yet called to reconcile and combine in himself as well as in the outer world the Roman and Hellenic types of culture—Caesar was the entire and perfect man."<sup>83</sup> By contrast, when he turns to Cicero, Mommsen writes: "No serious matter was ever, either in good or evil, decided by him."<sup>84</sup> Cicero, according to Mommsen, "was in fact so thoroughly a dabbler, that it was pretty much a matter of indifference to what work he applied his hand."<sup>85</sup> Other characterizations are not so gentle.

To unravel Mommsen's possible motivations, and to understand his vitriolic criticisms concerning Cicero, we would do well to turn to the British historian Edward H. Carr. Carr's working proposition is that any historian is colored by the events of his or her own times. Mommsen is a prime example, Carr states, in that his analysis of ancient Rome is of a hue that features many connections to events in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. That is to say, in the mind of Mommsen the late Republic of Rome was crying out for a mighty leader, just as the failure of Germany's 1848-1849 Revolution showed the need for the emergence of a powerful individual to direct the state.

To Mommsen's way of thinking, for the Roman set of circumstances that powerful executive was Julius Caesar. Carr writes: "Mommsen was imbued with the sense of need for a strong man to clean up the mess left by the failure of the German people to realize [their] political aspirations."<sup>86</sup> In the view of Carr, "[Mommsen's] well-known idealization of Caesar is the product of this yearning for the strong man to save Germany from ruin."<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile, Carr continues, the lawyer and politician Cicero remains in Mommsen's work an "ineffective chatterbox" and "slippery procrastinator" not unlike those who walked out of the 1848 meetings at St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt, seat of the German Parliament.<sup>88</sup>

Julius Caesar remains a figure of debate among historians and students of ancient Rome. Mommsen clearly regarded him as a leader with a special gift for organizing and transforming the Roman city-state into one that would dominate the Mediterranean theater. My point is that in his efforts to elevate Julius Caesar, Mommsen steered subsequent understandings of many others from Roman antiquity into a negative path. Cicero was not elusive against the broadsides. For most scholars, it is the case that Cicero was not able to withstand Mommsen's vigorous assault. It is the case, chronologically, that at about the time Mommsen was writing his account of ancient Rome and proceeding to be honored with tributes of international literary excellence, Cicero was beginning to fade as a major cultural, educational and intellectual force. Mommsen's critique of Cicero is not important insofar as it sheds new light on the *De Officiis* but Mommsen's critique of Cicero is important insofar as it possibly tainted and obscured Cicero for a little over the past century and a half.

Paul MacKendrick has written that with the publication of his Roman history in 1856, Mommsen suddenly became known throughout Europe, and because of Mommsen's "notoriously harsh" judgment, the name of Cicero became "anathema."<sup>89</sup> P.G. Walsh writes of Mommsen's "withering condemnation" and "savage criticism" of Cicero.<sup>90</sup> No modern scholar takes as low a view of Cicero as did Mommsen, in whose estimation Cicero was an opportunist who alternately flirted with the democrats or with the aristocracy; was just another clever and witty pleader at court; ducked legal responsibility in the Catiline affair; and lacked not only insights and ideas but also purpose in matters of statecraft. After Mommsen, German scholars considered Cicero a "mongrel" compiler. There is more to Mommsen's less-than-complimentary review of Cicero's character, but the picture has been painted. Mommsen does offer some backhanded praise in the direction of Cicero's *De Republica* and *De Oratore* and other rhetorical writings. For our purposes, however, since Mommsen's appraisal of Cicero features scant reference to the *De Officiis*, Cicero's most influential writing, his assessment of Cicero's character is not full and fair.

While many loud forces have been at work to challenge, disrupt and dispute Cicero's legacy, **Jesuit educators**, perhaps more quietly, have been among those who have prevented Cicero from being totally muffled. This is true of Jesuits of the past but not extending into the twentieth century. Their ministry, which began in 1540, has been one of the most assiduous and far-reaching educational initiatives in the history of Western schooling, emanating from the conviction that the proper education of youth is the key to the well being of Christianity and to the whole world. Jesuits, perhaps as early as the second generation but certainly by the third, taught Cicero so frequently they

committed long passages to memory. “Both Renaissance and Jesuit humanists were particularly captivated by Cicero—his prose and the socio-cultural aspect of his rhetorical system—and thus promoted his imitation that often turned into a devotion,” according to Robert A. Maryks.<sup>91</sup> The title of Maryks’ book, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits*, reflects this high regard for Cicero within the Society of Jesus.

Initially, Cicero and Virgil were adopted for their eloquence but Cicero’s prose came to be preferred in Jesuit classrooms because of its syntactical, logical and rhetorical soundness. What Jesuit instructors came to embrace regarding Cicero, in addition to his eloquence, was his insistence that leaders in Roman society be individuals of high ethical and moral fiber who embody public service and civic responsibility. The core belief in this context, for both Cicero and Jesuit instructors, is that the great power of speech should be directed to worthy causes. This is an issue that dates to the time of Isocrates (436-388 B.C.), the most famous of the ten Attic orators, just after the reign of Pericles and the Golden Age of Athens. As he instructed emerging leaders in public responsibility, Isocrates showed the close ties between eloquent speech and virtue or morally upright causes. He taught “the art of the word” but what Isocrates was looking for was a philosophy for leading an ethical and moral life, and he taught that approaches to eloquence should never be morally neutral.

Similarly, nearly an anthem in the Jesuit Order, in the early centuries as well as today, is the expression of Cicero derived from Plato that, “We are not born for ourselves alone.” (*De Off.*, I.VII) This statement, adopted as the title of my fifth chapter, carries with it a message concerning the ordering of society as well as the Christian principle of individual sacrifice for the benefit of others. Attractive to humanists and to Jesuit

educators, earlier in their ministry as well as now, are Ciceronian expressions such as, “No phase of life, whether public or private, whether in business or in the home, whether one is working on what concerns oneself alone or dealing with another, can be without its moral duty; on the discharge of such duties depends all that is morally right, and on their neglect all that is morally wrong in life.” (*De Off.*, I.II)

As Cicero learned and advised, human society requires a close alignment, by acts of giving and receiving. He wrote: “The duties prescribed by justice must be given precedence over the pursuit of knowledge and the duties imposed by it; for the former concern the welfare of our fellow-man; and nothing ought to be more sacred in men’s eyes than that.” (*De Off.*, I.XLIII) Put another way, to serve mankind is more important than to pursue paths toward purely theoretical and speculative knowledge.

Repeatedly, Saint Ignatius of Loyola stated that the goal of the Jesuits was “to help souls,” and as a practical matter that meant training young boys so that they could enter the world ready to help others. When Juan Alfonso de Polanco, the talented and energetic secretary of Ignatius, explained the mission of Jesuit schools, his language was similar to the ideals of the *De Officiis* regarding Cicero’s aspirations for Roman youth. The goal was to help students develop so that they could eventually earn appointments to important posts to everyone’s advantage, for instance, as pastors, civic officials or lawyers.

A letter of Polanco, commissioned by Loyola on December 1, 1551, included this passage:

From among those who are at present merely students, in time some will emerge to play diverse roles—some to preach and carry on the care of souls, others to the government of the land and the administration of Justice, and others to other responsible occupations. In short since the children of today become the adults of tomorrow, their good formation in life and learning will benefit many others.<sup>92</sup>

My point in quoting the founder of the Society of Jesus and one of his top officials is to show that in their efforts to develop the whole person, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically, Jesuit educators breathe the spirit of Cicero's message in the *De Officiis* about service to others, not just concern for others but commitment to them as well. Many of Cicero's ideas have been well received, applied and taught by Jesuits in their educational ministry as it sought and seeks to contribute to the common good. Today, these principles remain as part of the goal of the more than fifty Jesuit "prep" schools and 28 Jesuit-affiliated colleges and universities in the United States. In fact, the ideal of perfect eloquence, i.e., sound rhetoric connected to good works, may be in a state of revival in some of those institutions.<sup>93</sup>

Cicero's most devoted follower in this country may have been **John Adams** (1735-1826). The second U.S. President (1797-1801) knew the *De Officiis* and other works of Cicero almost by heart, and Cicero's writings were among his favorite possessions. In 1780, Adams drafted the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which was inspired by Ciceronian elements and still is in effect.<sup>94</sup> In his appendix, MacKendrick offers a list of prominent Americans who came to appreciate some aspect or aspects of Cicero's ideas.<sup>95</sup> It covers 21 pages and is remarkable for its great diversity, including, in addition to John Adams, Presidents Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe and John Quincy Adams; religious thinkers Cotton

Mather, Jonathan Edwards and Reinhold Niebuhr; Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall; statesman, lawyer and orator Daniel Webster; essayist, lecturer and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson; philosophers Charles S. Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce and George Santayana; educational theorist John Dewey; and novelist and playwright Upton Sinclair.

A sweeping statement regarding the direct and concrete influence of Cicero's *De Officiis* is that from about the year 300 until about the year 1300 it was an important source in ecclesiastical texts and in ethical and moral treatises; from about the year 1300 until about the year 1600 it was embraced by Renaissance humanists and in their schools for its eloquence as well as for its ethical and moral guidelines; and from about the year 1600 until about the year 1900 it was appreciated and appropriated by European elites in their formulations of mostly political but also legal and economic theories, some of which trickled into the early American Republic. My contention is that Melanchthon in the sixteenth century and to this day has realized the full value of Cicero's *De Officiis* better than most, if not all. The introduction to the *De Officiis* by the theologian Melanchthon has been quoted in this chapter at some length because it is another text that helps Christians understand the function of some pagan writings and of some philosophy; because it takes the view that the *De Officiis* is accessible and practical for nearly all; because it shows that the *De Officiis* brings together exceptional literary art and enduring ethical and moral definitions and instructions; and because it holds that the *De Officiis*, in the expression of Melanchthon, includes many "treasures"<sup>96</sup> without which the task of judging and explaining in the realm of ethics and morals can become more difficult.

## CHAPTER VII

### A SECOND RENAISSANCE FOR CICERO'S *DE OFFICIIS*

My study of Cicero and analysis of the *De Officiis* impel me to favor revival of this treatise, which is both a modest and sincere proposal. Cicero did not imagine this text for use in schools but it has been applied that way, as I have shown in chapter six, and could continue to do so. No statistical analyses, sociological studies or expert testimonies have been offered to support the claim that there is a crisis in ethical and moral education or that the lack of instruction in them has led, obliquely, to large-scale problems in our culture. However, it is not a distortion of the truth to say that our culture all too often includes individuals and sometimes institutions threadbare in their ethical and moral reasoning and convictions.

Christian ethicist Alban McCoy joins many others by stating that the Judeo-Christian moral framework has been replaced by an ethics of work and success; cults of physical fitness; the allure of consumerism; New Age mysticism and related therapies; Internet-surfing as a supposed mode of global connectedness; and other inferior substitutes.<sup>1</sup> The West has lost not only its Judeo-Christian ethical and moral underpinnings, McCoy maintains, but also its ability to discuss ethical and moral issues in a reasonable and rational way. In modern cultures, he asserts, "Moral opinion is to be interpreted in terms of power-relationships and pressure groups, and politics and psychology replace ethics."<sup>2</sup> What is at stake, he argues, is the very intelligibility of ethical discussion. A reasonable claim is that in contemporary settings ethical and moral judgments are too frequently made on the basis of uncritical and entrenched evaluations

and inherited opinions, either in the direction of the traditional or the non-traditional, either rooted in the authoritarian or the libertine. All of this relates to Cicero, I believe, because his *De Officiis* wishes to engage individuals in ethical and moral reasoning at a young age, so as to be able to discourage uncritical evaluations and inherited opinions. For these reasons alone, texts such as Cicero's *De Officiis*, which combines an interdisciplinary approach and enduring human values, should retain their worth as a way to teach, discuss and implement ethics and morals.

Cicero insisted upon a natural morality and the democratization of virtue, or the idea that everyone can and should lead a virtuous life. His belief was that ethical and moral values are best put in place not via legislation but through dialogue and learning. What joins all members of the human race, he wrote, is, "that bond of connection [of] reason and speech." (*De Off.*, I.XVI) We know he preferred an interdisciplinary approach to learning because he stated his misgivings over philosophers who become so engrossed in their own areas of learning that they undervalue all others. (*De Off.*, I.I) We know of his great concern for ethical and moral progress because he wrote that it is the only thing worth striving for and the only thing deserving of admiration. (*De Off.*, I.XX) Cicero's three-book letter was original in the sense that it offered practical and profoundly Roman ways to apply virtue to day-to-day interactions. It takes courage down from the abstract level and applauds it when it is displayed realistically.

The *De Officiis* advocates self-restraint, devotion toward family and charitable acts toward others. It does not ask for what we may call "superhuman," or extraordinary, effort in any area. The treatise teaches the benefits of choosing to associate with the wise, whenever possible, suggesting for young people that peer-to-peer advice is severely

limited. It professes that the most effective speech is both temperate and dignified. The approach to ethics and morals in the *De Officiis* is a moderate one: While the essay maintains that the requirement to live an ethical and moral life is not to be circumvented, it also recognizes that absolute certainty often is not achievable and so probability must guide decisions.

The *De Officiis* is a masterful text, resting somewhere between easily accessible and in need of annotation, but that it can be “mastered” may be another matter. That all human beings need to grow in virtue is the core message. Ills affecting person or property, the essay states, are less serious than those influencing the soul. (*De Off.*, III.V). Cicero’s treatise can be interpreted on more than one level. It can be read literally, as a father-son communication, so important in Roman culture; or, it can be read as representing a grand barrier between the ethical and moral deficiencies Cicero witnessed in the late Republic and the flowering of ethical and moral goodness for which he hoped. The cruel irony is that Cicero’s son did not heed his father’s advice, and yet Europe did for many generations, as chapter six of this study indicates.

The *De Officiis* clearly suggests that human beings have some inchoate ethical and moral impulses that can be enhanced through dialogue. It does not, and in most instances cannot, help illuminate some of the larger and more complex issues pertaining to ethics and morals. Further, it cannot be held accountable for failing to be concerned with questions stemming from much later theories and findings in the field.<sup>3</sup> Cicero, as stated above, did not see this treatise as a school text. However, it did find its way into European schooling, and my contention, to once again emphasize, is that it can still be a useful resource. Cicero wanted to engender a generation of young people not so much

tied to hard and fast ethical and moral rules but rather exposed to the benefit of instruction so as to be able to reason their way through issues of significance for individual benefit and for the benefit of their community. *De Officiis* can be interpreted as an early installment of an idea that later humanities-based educational systems advocated, that the objective should be to develop well-rounded young people. “Our first duty,” according to Cicero, “is to the immortal gods; our second, to country; our third, to parents; and so on, in a descending scale, to the rest.” (*De Off.*, I.XLV) This passage is perhaps the legitimate expression of the idea that a well-rounded education is a necessity, given that it implies recognition of theology, politics and social order, albeit in rudimentary form.

Chapters II and III of this research have examined Cicero’s career in the law and in political life, and then his decisions as the head of Roman government, in an effort to assess his ability to stand as a voice for ethical and moral leadership. These chapters are necessary because they take ethics and morals out of the theoretical realm and show them at the practical level. Cicero comes “alive,” and we can “hear” some examples of his exceptional oratory. Most importantly, in these chapters we are better able to recognize his principles as well as his shortcomings. Examined are the most determinative cases of Cicero’s early public career, those pertaining to Sextus Roscius and Gaius Verres. We find an ambitious Cicero as he made his way to the top, a person lacking in humility and longing to be singled out by his peers. The young to middle-aged lawyer and politician was highly educated, talented, motivated and principled, but in some instances he took on cases and public issues not on their merit but on their ability to enhance his own career.

Furthermore, Cicero could be unnecessarily acerbic in his attacks and misleading before a jury or audience of Romans. His decision in the Catiline affair cannot be accepted as ethically and morally sound, and his willingness to bask in the public adulation that initially came his way following those events of 63 B.C., is particularly troublesome. To identify Cicero as a worthy ethical and moral thinker, we need to look past his resume-building years and past his year as consul. Up to that point, ethically and morally he was noticeably all too common as an individual and as a public representative. In his later years, after the death of the great love of his life, his daughter Tullia, in 45 B.C., a different Cicero emerged. This is the person who turned to serious thinking about human values, interactions and their consequences, and this change in outlook produced for ancient Rome and for us his most noble writing, the *De Officiis*. My study, therefore, asks that we consider two very different aspects of Cicero, namely the young lawyer and middle-aged politician of ambition versus the mature writer and sage of more contemplative texts.

Chapters IV and V belong side-by-side. This is because the paramount and defining idea associated with Cicero must remain that in order to be a great rhetorician, a great public speaker, an individual also must be ethically and morally rooted. Stated in a negative way: A bad person cannot be a good orator. Stated in a positive way: Oratory is a great talent that must be used for the good. The term *humanitas* was used by Cicero to describe the formation of an ideal speaker; he believed this orator should be educated to develop virtues suitable for an active life of public service. Learning acquired from the study of *bonae litterae* (“good letters,” or classical literature, especially poetry) should govern this individual. To further illustrate this point, we can judge two of the most

famous speeches of the late Republic, Catiline's exhortation to his rebel armies to turn and fight against Rome ("Those who are most afraid are always in most danger; but courage is equivalent to a rampart.") and Mark Antony's funeral speech for Julius Caesar ("This father, this high priest, this inviolable thing, this hero and god, is dead.").<sup>4</sup>

Based upon Cicero's dictum that a good orator must also be a good person, the speeches of Catiline and Antony should never be cited as examples of great oratory. From the point of view of Cicero, these two historical figures were solely rabble-rousers; their emotional pronouncements did not promote good ends, and Cicero condemned their demagoguery. His first speech against Catiline states: "You are not, O Catiline, one whom either shame can recall from infamy, or fear from danger, or reason from madness." (Catil. 1.22) Mark Antony spoke in favor of revenge against Caesar's assassins and saw himself as executor of Caesar's will. Cicero called Antony a public enemy and said peace with this "unnatural and savage beast" was inconceivable. (Phil. 4.12) Cicero's speech in the public assembly stated: "No sport appears more delightful to him than bloodshed, and slaughter, and the massacre of citizens before his eyes." (Phil. 4.11)

As has been pointed out in Chapters IV and V, Cicero received an extensive and formal education in rhetoric, and he excelled at this skill, such an important one in the ancient world. That Cicero invested heavily in the idea that rhetoric is vital to any just society is evident because he produced seven major texts on the subject, the most important being *De Oratore*, issued eleven years before *De Officiis*. We should acknowledge that Cicero was a very learned man at the technicalities of delivering a speech, and he was equally concerned with the ethical and moral content. A public

speech, he emphasized, must be grammatically sound, aesthetically pleasing, believable in its message, and ethically and morally grounded. All of these elements are in place in the *De Officiis*, an example of secondary rhetoric in that it is a written text, in this case father to son, which follows the principles of oral delivery. As noted in chapter one, although the letter was written from one person to another, it carried implications for a much larger readership, young Romans setting out on careers of leadership. It is as if Cicero was writing in apostrophe, that is to say, directly to his son but also for a nonexistent audience as if it were present and capable of understanding.

Chapter VI supplies direct and concrete instances in which the *De Officiis* has influenced some of the leading thinkers in the Western tradition. The sincerest form of praise is imitation, and that is precisely what Ambrose did with his own *De Officiis* for Milanese clergy. From Roman antiquity until the eighteenth century Enlightenment in Europe, a steady stream of prominent individuals from a variety of starting points gravitated toward what they felt were the best of Cicero's propositions concerning ethics, morals and civic duty. Cicero's thinking in *De Officiis* was accepted in the main and was incorporated into the writings of some of the foremost Christian apologists, systemic philosophers and political, legal and economic theorists in the Western world.

While that chain in the history of ideas is undeniably true, from our perch in the early twenty-first century we should not lose sight of something else, the original intent of the author. In his last major writing, Cicero clearly set out to illuminate and build upon the wisdom of the past as a means of enhancing ethical and moral reasoning and behavior among young people at Rome. Explaining, directly, the purpose of writing the lengthy letter to his son, Cicero stated: "I have set forth the moral duties of a young man." (*De*

*Off.*, II.XV) Just as resolutely, Cicero wanted young Marcus to accept the conviction that only moral goodness and propriety deserve to be wished for, even if such efforts require “indifference to outward circumstances.” (*De Off.*, I.XX) Cicero also tried to impart an attitude toward learning, claiming that to fail to recognize the lessons of the past is to remain forever a child. Speaking of the value of studying other cultures and bygone eras, Cicero’s Antonius says: “When I walk in the sun...I gain a deeper color.” (*De Orat.*, II.XIV) He meant, metaphorically, that we become enriched when we study other cultures and the essence of what they have come to learn. The message about learning and the message about ethical and moral behavior are coherent throughout the *De Officiis*.

My view is that the *De Officiis* is the single text by Cicero most worthy of retrieving because in it he offers not just information and theory but also eloquence of an exceptional sort that flows over into wisdom. Andrew R. Dyck has claimed of the *De Officiis*: “It has perhaps exerted as salutary an influence as can be expected of any text of the now much maligned ‘canon’; its critics should be sure they have something better to put in its place.”<sup>5</sup> To this day, young men and women encouraged to read Cicero’s *De Officiis* at an impressionable time in their education can learn the value of trying to lead a principled life from one of the most colorful figures from Roman antiquity. Young people of school and college age (the assumption being seventeen to twenty-two years old) can begin to understand that the decisions they soon will be called upon to make pertain to occupation and career as well as to the type of individuals they will become. “[Cicero’s] earnestness of purpose in our somewhat frivolous age, his thorough and careful preparation for his life work in these days of haste and short cuts, his lofty idealism when

there are so many temptations to materialism, all these may well be taken to heart,” maintained John C. Rolfe.<sup>6</sup> The fact that Rolfe offered a judgment on Cicero’s influence that dates from many years ago in American history (1923) does not eliminate the validity of his statement. My view, as suggested above, is that young people between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two are mature enough to be able to absorb and appreciate Cicero’s *De Officiis*.

However, as has been admitted throughout these pages, to seek a modern decision on Cicero requires a balancing act because we are examining a historical figure who has been eulogized and slandered, praised and censured. Two of the often-cited criticisms of Cicero are that he contradicted himself by producing violent and perhaps suicidal attacks directed at Mark Antony alongside the gentle and life-affirming *De Officiis*, and that he was off casually philosophizing while Rome was at its decisive moment of action in 44 B.C., with Caesar’s assassination. While these criticisms are partially understandable, they fail to acknowledge three things: 1) the Philippics began as relatively tame speeches that turned aggressive and led to Cicero’s death only after Mark Antony responded to them in a scurrilous way; 2) the *De Officiis* itself is not always calm and passive, such as when it defends acts of revenge (*De Off.*, III.XVIII); and 3) Cicero, far from a disinterested and contentedly passive observer in 44 B.C., made clear his views of Caesar: He wanted to be at the “banquet” that took Caesar’s life. A more justifiable criticism is that in the *De Officiis* the sentimental and nostalgic Cicero was preparing his son to function properly within the scope of Republican institutions at a time when the Republic was in a period of dissipation.

Among many scholars, the standard way to trace Cicero's influence is to highlight his prominence in his own era, among the Early Church Fathers, in the Renaissance and through the Age of Enlightenment across Europe. My survey has worked to expand that procedure in small portions, by including Cicero's influence on Boethius in the early sixth century; on John of Salisbury in Medieval France; and on Dante in the gap between Medieval Italy and the Renaissance. However, the connection between Cicero and the Jesuits is deserving of inclusion in more than small portions. In fact, this aspect of Cicero's legacy warrants more investigation than it is typically given.

Cicero's three-book treatise may retain some minor status as a school text and some minor influence on high culture but in a greatly diminished sense when compared to its use in previous generations. In today's educational environments, the notion of reviving an ancient text likely would face its share of problems. Perhaps Cicero's *De Officiis* has no place with young readers today because it invests so much in universal principles and serious thought that it would be rejected in a postmodern setting and its aftermath. Perhaps it has no place with young readers today because of a lack of interest in the classics and because of the lack of willingness toward in-depth reading in the face of advances of modern technologies that aid communications. Perhaps it has no place with young readers today simply because it shows them, possibly for the first time in their lives, the uneasiness of their own vulnerability and the alarming fact that there are life-altering decisions to be made just ahead. Of course, these issues may pertain to Cicero and to his *De Officiis* but they are unique to neither author nor text.

Although Cicero certainly is not the only major, dependable writer on ethical and moral themes, he is a rare, and perhaps unsurpassed, combination of artistic talent,

credible message and public life. He excelled with his learning, skills and experience in the discipline of rhetoric, a discipline treated by the ancients with far more attention, severity and complexity that it is today. Much can be learned within the text of Cicero's *De Officiis*, as my fifth chapter suggests, just as much can be learned from a study of the span of his career. It is possible that Cicero in his own life experienced something approximating a "theodicy" in his later years, in that, after so much had gone wrong, he began to ask larger questions about meaning, purpose and values. Cicero expressed this: "Amid all the present most awful calamities I yet flatter myself that I have won this good out of evil." (*De Off.*, II.II) In a proper and technical sense, to use the term "theodicy" in connection with Cicero is a crass anachronism because the German philosopher Leibnitz coined the term in the early eighteenth century; it is also problematic because of Cicero's religious skepticism. Nevertheless, it is accurate to suggest that over the last few years of his life, Cicero's writings became much more introspective, and more often directed to themes of grandness. Little in the *De Republica* or the unfinished *De Legibus* probes the depths of human values and meaning, and little in those two earlier works addresses questions about the nature of the universe and of man's presence in it, quite like the *De Officiis*. Grief over his daughter's death and anxiety about his son's life prompted Cicero's most intense philosophical activity. For all of his participation in and concern for public events at Rome, Cicero may have made his most vital contribution in his later, wilderness years.

Today, when Cicero is remembered, is it primarily for his speeches against Catiline and Mark Antony, or because of his application to scholarly work. For instance, *Cicero's Practical Philosophy*, edited by Walter Nicgorski (2012), stems from a late

2006 conference at the University of Notre Dame. Another recent example of Ciceronian scholarship is Bradley J. Birzer's *American Cicero: The Life of Charles Carroll* (2010), concerning perhaps the richest man in colonial America and its greatest landowner. Carroll (1737-1832) was a Marylander and the last survivor to have signed the Declaration of Independence. Birzer detects an overlap between Cicero and Carroll involving their political and economic views. The Ciceronian moderate and conservative approach is favored, along with the reminder that liberty and order are the pillars for any society.

An especially generous attitude toward Cicero once came from the University of Toronto scholar Charles Norris Cochrane, who wrote of Cicero as if he were somehow the leading protector of order, truth and decency for modern Western democracies.

Cochrane observed:

If modern liberalism, in its efforts to combat the sinister and chaotic forces with which contemporary life is menaced, holds up the ideal of a world-class society founded on justice, freedom and humanity, calling for a united effort to release mankind from the obstacles which prevent a realization of that ideal, its purpose and methods must alike be understood, if not as a direct legacy from Cicero, at least as in close affinity with his way of thought.<sup>7</sup>

My study is not equipped to go so far. Its reason for being is to recommend a second look at Cicero and specifically his *De Officiis*. Cicero once was rescued from obscurity by Petrarch, as pointed out in Chapter VI, and is in need of deliverance again. My study challenges the idea that a greater example than Cicero can be identified regarding the nexus of rhetorical brilliance and sound ethical and moral guidelines. In even simpler terms, my study stands on the conviction that Cicero's *De Officiis* should once again be a part of the known universe in educational environments, mostly because of its potential for young learners. There may be a lingering assumption on the part of

students now, as always, that any discussion of morals and ethics, of duty and responsibility, are yesterday's business. A more accurate statement is that although it was the moral philosophers of antiquity who first took up these questions, the central issues are still with us in prominent ways today, even if ethics and morals always lag behind science and technology.

In a framed narrative that began and concluded with his hopes for and admonitions to young Marcus, Cicero was noticeably the Stoic in the sense that he dealt patiently with the trials and the weaknesses of human nature, and in the sense that he remained sympathetic toward a young person caught somewhere between the excesses of passion and the defects of reason. What Cicero wanted Marcus Minor to understand more than anything else is this: "Above all, we must decide who and what manner of men we wish to be and what calling in life we would follow; and this is the most difficult problem in the world." (*De Off.*, I.XXXII) Great attention should be given this excerpt, because in it Cicero suggests that the purpose of learning is to develop character as well as proficiency in a worthy profession. To focus on this passage even more closely is to recognize that Cicero mentions character ("what manner of men we wish to be") before he mentions profession ("what calling in life we would follow"). This can be a lesson we lose at our own peril.

Cicero argued that "influence is measured not by numbers but by weight." (*De Off.*, II.XXII) Maybe the best way to recognize his impact is to recall, first, the great distance he traveled socially and politically before influencing his own culture. In the lines of the poet Juvenal (c. 55-138), Cicero is cast as, "This new man from Arpinum—low-born, just come to Rome as a new provincial burgher" who would go on to become

“his ‘fatherland’s father,’ its parent.”<sup>8</sup> The reality is that Cicero began in modest affluence but to imagine him as the “parent” of Rome, as Juvenal does, firmly and accurately positions Cicero among the half dozen or so chief decision makers of his era. Juvenal’s poetic lines would lead us to believe that Cicero’s influence would have been extensive even if it had ended with Roman antiquity. It went far beyond.

We should read his *De Officiis* as textualists who try to understand it in its original context and as an evolving, indeed “living,” document. It underscores that probability and moderation should guide decisions; that human beings should never be treated as simple means to an end; that political systems that deny human rights corrupt virtue in their populaces; and most of all that any person bears a responsibility toward others. Society and the individual, the cosmopolitan Cicero professed, should want the same thing. Cicero’s *De Officiis* deserves a wider audience, a second Renaissance of sorts, because it can be appropriate as an introductory, or propaedeutic, text for a discussion of ethical and moral reasoning. It may seem out of place, today, to want to study Cicero and what he has to say about ethics, rhetoric and the value of a humane education. An opposing view has been taken in these pages, however. Cicero’s ideas do not detract from modern commercial and technical pursuits, they add to them.

Cicero's rhetoric was of the type that aimed to move hearts to proper action. We would do well to prick up our ears or cast our eyes in the direction of this amazing excerpt:

Life and death, wealth and want affect all men powerfully. But when men, with a spirit great and exalted, can look down upon such outward circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse, and when some noble and virtuous purpose, presented to their minds, converts them wholly to itself and carries them away in its pursuit, who then could fail to admire in them the splendour and beauty of virtue? (*De Off.*, II.X)

I come away understanding Cicero according to much later wisdom, specifically that of Soren Kierkegaard (1844-1900) and the Danish philosopher's concept of personal development, which involves stages the individual may choose to pass through or disregard.<sup>9</sup> In essence, Kierkegaard asks human beings to decide if they believe truth, beauty and goodness are to be found in the aesthetic-pleasurable realm, in moral decisions and actions, or at the level of spiritual discernment and religious faith. The Cicero of *De Officiis* clearly can be positioned in Kierkegaard's second stage. In his most revealing passages, Cicero, this ancient voice still worth teaching, tells young people including his son that to strive for ethical and moral improvement is the only honorable task, the only thing worth striving for, and that if it were possible, ethics and morals would be the disciplines in which they would be given primary instruction.

In the world of ideas, cultural shifts and political leanings, those things that can historically develop can lose their historical momentum as well. It follows that Cicero came into favor in certain times and settings, and that he has fallen into disfavor in other eras and societies. This fluctuation says as much about specific historical periods as it does about Cicero's messages. In our world, Cicero's *De Officiis* once again should travel a path of ascendancy because it can help shape ethical and moral leaders. It remains a

suitable text for students because of its accessible framework for moral reasoning. No other work of Cicero is as persuasive in its call for ethical leaders skilled in the ability to deliver ethical public speech.

Our modern organizations—political, social, professional and otherwise—all too often cry out for the leadership of principled individuals, principled in their public pronouncements and in their actions. Toward that end, Cicero is relevant as a case study because the pinnacle of his career was spent in public life at the highest level, as the head of the world’s most powerful government. He did not always act as a commendable ethical or moral agent, but he was on the right side of the issue more often than not in his attempts to head off corruption, decadence, injustice and, in the case of Catiline, anarchy.

With his statement of conviction, “We are not born for ourselves alone,” Cicero required that humanity work together for the benefit of all. That message resonates even louder and more clearly today. World leaders need to put behind them selfish national interests, and individual citizens need to recognize that public order in our cities is not just the responsibility of the police and professional security forces. In these two applications, we are reminded of Cicero’s call to the common good, i.e., that our country and our family and our friends are in need of a part of us. In this, the modern world may know more about Cicero than it is aware.

## ENDNOTES

### Chapter I

1. H.J. Haskell, *This Was Cicero: Modern Politics in a Roman Toga* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 302.

2. Anthony Everitt, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician* (New York: Random House, 2001), vii.

3. *Ibid.*, xi.

4. Plutarch, "The Comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero," Massachusetts Institute of Technology Internet Classics Archive, translated by John Dryden, [http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/d\\_cicero.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/d_cicero.html) (accessed June 1, 2011).

5. Those Ciceronian texts include *On the Nature of Gods* and *On Divination*, both dating from 45 B.C. The former is concerned with the theology of philosophers and the latter refutes superstitions.

6. In his *Inferno*, Canto IV, lines 130-141, Dante raises his eyes to see the good-hearted spirits. He places three moral philosophers, Tully (Cicero), Linus (Livy) and Seneca, on line 141.

7. The Philippics, 44-43 B.C., are based on speeches of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon. Cicero wanted the Senate to designate Mark Antony an enemy of the state and to declare war against him. Of these speeches by Cicero, 14 survive but there may have been as many as 18.

8. Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, Vol. IV, translated by William P. Dickson. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 724.

9. Ben R. Schneider, Jr., "Why Cicero's *De Officiis*?" [http://www.stoics.com/why\\_stoics.html#WhyCicero](http://www.stoics.com/why_stoics.html#WhyCicero) (accessed August 1, 2011).

10. Postmodern thinkers are not comfortable with morals and certainly would not support efforts to make them universal. In Lyotard's famous phrase, postmodern is "incredulity toward metanarratives." Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), xxiv.

11. Schneider, "Why Cicero's *De Officiis*?"

12. In philosophy, probabilism is the doctrine that probability is adequate as a basis for belief and action because certainty in knowledge cannot be obtained. Probabilism, according to Roman Catholic teaching, is the moral system which holds that, when there is question solely of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of an action, it is permissible to follow a solid probable opinion in favor of liberty even though the opposing view is more probable.

13. Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, translated by Joseph B. Solodow, revised by Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 193.

14. Leonardi Bruni, *The Study of Literature, Humanist Educational Treatises*, edited and translated by Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 92-125. The twelve-book *History of the Florentine People* is recognized as Bruni's magnum opus; he started the project in 1415 and worked on it until 1442, two years before his death. It is often regarded as the first work of modern history. The statesman and historian Bruni produced a biography of Cicero, *Cicero Novus*, in 1415.

15. Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 113, 22, 72-73.

16. John W. O'Malley, "Jesuit History: A New Hot Topic," *America*, May 9, 2005, 11.

17. Avery Dulles, S.J., preface, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (New York: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 2000), xx.

18. French literary critic Roland Barthes (1915-1980) distinguished readerly from writerly texts. A readerly, or *lisible*, text places less demands on the reader.

19. This is the general thesis of Harold's Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

20. John C. Rolfe, *Cicero and His Influence* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1923), v-vi.

21. Ralph A. Micken, introduction, *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*, translated by J.S. Watson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), x.

22. Paul MacKendrick, and Karen Lee Singh, *The Philosophical Books of Cicero* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 289.

23. Micken, introduction, *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*, xi.

## Chapter II

1. This is the motto of the Trojan hero Glaucus in Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI, line 208, translated by Martin Hammond.

2. Some of those cities had been allies of Rome for centuries. The eventual Roman military victory required concessions in the way of guaranteed rights.

3. Today, that Umbrian commune is called Amelia.

4. Everitt, *Rome's Greatest Politician*, 59. A sesterce was a silver coin of the late Republic, equal to one fourth of a denarius. A property valued at 6 million sesterces would have been a substantial holding. To give some context, though, the hyper-wealthy Crassus was said by Pliny the Elder to have had estates worth 200 million sesterces.

5. Used, for example, during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution, these measures offer contrived ways to eliminate political enemies.

6. Everitt, *Rome's Greatest Politician*, 58.

7. In a technical sense, Asianism is the name given to the sometimes artificially mannered version of Greek rhetoric that developed in the period after Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.). Later in his career Cicero polished his rhetorical style, adopting a more austere approach, called Atticism, connecting him to Demosthenes.

8. Conte, *Latin Literature*, 179.

9. Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Oration for Sextus Roscius of America," University of Alabama-Huntsville, Society for Ancient Languages, <http://www.uah.edu/society/texts/latin/classical/cicero/proamerino1e.html> (accessed March 17, 2010).

10. *Ibid.*, Chapter XLVI.

11. *Ibid.*, Chapter X.

12. Marcus Tullius Cicero, "First Pleading of Cicero in the Gaius Verres Trial," *Actio Prima*, Section II, lines 8-10, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, translated by C.D. Yonge, <http://www.law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Verres/verresfirst.html> (accessed April 11, 2010).

13. Sulla's reforms (82-80 B.C.) sought to strengthen the Senate, which he increased in number from 150 to 300 members. The Sullan Constitution lasted less than a decade.

14. Douglas O. Linder, "The Trial of Gaius (or Caius) Verres: An Account (2008)," Book II, "Misuse of Judicial Prerogatives," University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, <http://www.law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Verres/verresaccount.html> (accessed April 11, 2010).

15. Haskell, *This Was Cicero*, 127.

16. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, Book 2, 17.21, translated by J.S. Watson, <http://www.rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian> (accessed January 2, 2012).

17. Plutarch, *Parallel Lives: The Life of Cicero*, 24.6, University of Chicago, Loeb Classical Library, [http://www.penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Cicero\\*.html](http://www.penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Cicero*.html) (accessed April 16, 2010).

18. *Brutus*, IX, *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*, 270-271.

19. Plutarch, *The Life of Cicero*, 20.3.

20. Elizabeth Rawson, *Cicero: A Portrait* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 225.

21. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. V, translated and edited by D.R. (David Roy) Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 87.

22. Ibid.

### Chapter III

1. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book II.2, University of Chicago, Loeb Classical Library, [http://www.penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Appian/Civil\\_Wars/2\\*.html](http://www.penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Appian/Civil_Wars/2*.html) (accessed January 6, 2010).

2. Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*, XIV, *Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum*, translated by J.S. Watson, <http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/sallust/catilinae.html> (accessed December 12, 2009).

3. Plutarch, *The Life of Cicero*, 10.4.
4. This famous phrase from Catil. 1.2 (“O tempora! O mores!”) has been expressed as “Oh what times! Oh what standards!” or “Shame on the age and on its principles!”
5. One of Rome’s sacred sites, the temple back to the eighth century B.C., and to the mythological Romulus and his war against the Sabines. The temple was destroyed by fire in 64 A.D., during the reign of Nero.
6. Charles Matson Odahl, *Cicero and the Catilinarian Conspiracy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 57.
7. Constantine’s ascendancy was helped by military victory at this bridge in 312 A.D.
8. Antonius had been a clandestine ally of Catiline. Cicero, in fact, detached Antonius from Catiline by giving him the rich province of Macedonia in exchange for more modest Hither Gaul. Each year two provinces were assigned in advance, by agreement or by lot, to the consuls in waiting. The two consuls would govern as proconsuls in these provinces when their terms ended. Antonius, eager to repair his damaged fortunes, was willing to take Macedonia, which Cicero at first had been apportioned. Cicero, in effect, won Antonius away from Catiline, then silenced him as consul.
9. Also known as the Mamertine Prison, this facility located in Rome’s Forum once held St. Peter, according to legend, before his martyrdom. Foreign leaders who opposed Rome militarily were sent there. Jugurtha, the Libyan King of Numidia, starved to death in the Tullianum in 106 B.C. Vercingetorix, the Gallic chieftain, was imprisoned there for five years before being executed in 46 B.C.
10. Plutarch, *The Life of Cicero*, 22.5.
11. Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life*, 5.1, Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum, translated by John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library, [http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/seneca\\_younger/brev\\_e.html](http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/seneca_younger/brev_e.html) (accessed December 29, 2011).
12. Lester Hutchinson, *The Conspiracy of Catiline* (London: Anthony Blond, 1966), 169.
13. Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*, LXI.
14. Ibid., XV.

15. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. II, 49. This letter was dispatched from Dyrrachium (in modern-day Albania).

16. *Ibid.*, 61. This correspondence may have been sent from Dyrrachium; its exact date is unknown.

17. The constitutional issues in this case were somewhat unclear. What cannot be brushed aside, however, is that Cicero acted rashly and with single-mindedness.

18. Arthur Kaplan, *Catiline: The Man and His Role in the Roman Revolution* (New York: Exposition Press, 1968), 118.

19. Thomas N. Mitchell, *Cicero: The Senior Statesman* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1991), 8.

20. David L. Stockton, *Cicero: A Political Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 334-335.

## Chapter IV

1. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, in *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*, 5-261. The dialogues are supposed to have been written when there was the potential for great political upheaval at Rome. The tribune Marcus Livius Drusus proposed to allow the senators in common with the equites to be judges on criminal trials.

2. Cicero later considered this text, written in 84 B.C., obsolete when weighed against his subsequent writings on the subject. He was only 21 when he wrote *De Inventione*. It offers lengthy definitions and a meticulous analysis of traditional rules and technicalities advanced by school rhetoricians.

3. Marcus Antonius was the grandfather of Mark Antony, the general and triumvir who would one day so embitter Cicero. Mark Antony's uncle, Gaius Antonius Hybrida, was Cicero's co-consul. One begins to sense a fairly small community of influential figures for Rome.

4. *Brut.*, IX.

5. *Ibid.*, XVII.

6. George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 2.

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 3.
9. Tacitus, *A Dialogue on Oratory*, XXXVII, Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum, translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb. [http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/tacitus/dialogus\\_e.html#37](http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/tacitus/dialogus_e.html#37) (accessed January 2, 2012).
10. Ibid., XLI.
11. Elaine Fantham, *The Roman World of Cicero's De Oratore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 305.
12. A man with an outstanding reputation in the law courts of Rome, Molon was granted permission to address the Roman Senate in Greek, which was something of a special privilege for an ambassador.
13. Plutarch, *The Life of Cicero*, 4.7.
14. Cicero's general tendency to modify viewpoints can be seen, for instance, in his references to the Gracchi, the second century B.C., brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchi. These two important historical figures argued for legislation aimed at land reform and more equal economic policies. Depending on one's position, such efforts made the brothers either principled socialists or rabble-rousing revolutionaries. Cicero spoke favorably of them before the people but not so approvingly of the brothers to the Senate.
15. Paul MacKendrick, and Emmett L. Bennett, Jr., *The Speeches of Cicero: Context, Law, Rhetoric* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 104-105. MacKendrick counts 10 major references to morality in both the third and the fourth Catilinarian.
16. Cecil W. Wooten, *Cicero's Philippics and Their Demosthenic Model* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 16.
17. Ibid., 169.
18. Ibid., 16.
19. What is implied here is rhetoric as described by Longinus in *On the Sublime*, introduced and translated by W. Rhys Roberts (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 57-59.
20. Haskell, *This Was Cicero*, 125.

21. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 1, lines 201-210, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 8.

## Chapter V

1. Michael Grant, *Cicero: On the Good Life* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1984), 117.

2. *Ibid.*, 119.

3. *Cicero, On Moral Obligation*, translated and introduced by John Higginbotham (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 11.

4. Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 145.

5. The version I use is *De Officiis*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Harvard University Press (1913), Loeb Classical Library, translated by Walter Miller. [http://www.constitution.org/rom/de\\_officiis.htm](http://www.constitution.org/rom/de_officiis.htm) (accessed online December 21, 2010). Another often-used translation is H.A. Holden's (1888).

6. Higginbotham, *Cicero, On Moral Obligation*, 14.

7. Rawson, *Cicero: A Portrait*, 18.

8. Andrew R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 35.

9. *Ibid.*, 31.

10. M.T. Griffin, introduction, *Cicero, On Duties*, edited by M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xiv.

11. *Ibid.*, xv.

12. *De Off.*, II.VII; III.IV, VI, XXI.

13. Griffin, introduction, *Cicero, On Duties*, xxiii.

14. *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.), understood to be based on Aristotle's lectures, is a work of ten books arranged by, or dedicated to, Nicomachus, his son.

15. Tiro apparently was a likable fellow in his role as Cicero's secretary, and Cicero often confided in him. Tiro's version of shorthand recorded Cicero's speeches during his consulship; some evidence suggests that European monks adopted the so-called Tironian method. Moreover, Tiro penned a biography of Cicero, and he published notes for some of Cicero's speeches as well as a collection of the orator's witticisms, all of which have not survived. Tiro regarded himself as the preserver and defender of Cicero's memory.

16. Griffin, introduction, *Cicero, On Duties*, xxvii-xxviii.

17. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 49-52.

18. Conte, *Latin Literature*, 197.

19. Rawson, *Cicero: A Portrait*, 247.

20. Conte, *Latin Literature*, 183-184.

21. *Cicero: Selected Works*, translated and introduced by Michael Grant (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1971), 158.

## Chapter VI

1. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 46.

2. *Ibid.*, 43.

3. *Cicero, On Obligations (De Officiis)*, translated and introduced by P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xxxv.

4. John W. O'Malley, *Four Cultures of the West* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 35-36, 176, 235-8.

5. R.M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 69.

6. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xxxv.

7. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, VI.2; *De Off.*, I.I, III.II.

8. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, VI.11; *De Off.*, II.XV.

9. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, VI.24; *De Off.*, III.X,XIX.

10. N.E. Nelson, "Cicero's *De Officiis* in Christian Thought: 300-1300," in *Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature*. Language and Literature, Vol. X (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933), 64, 66, 68.

11. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, VI.5.

12. *Ibid.*, III.16.

13. Saint Augustine, *Conf.*, VI.4.

14. Ivor J. Davidson, translation and commentary, *Ambrose, De Officiis*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), viii.

15. Psalm 39 expresses in verses 10 and 11 the idea that to be silent when it is more appropriate to speak is a "plague" that the Lord can remove. More specifically, it is a psalm the prophet David gave to Jeduthun, musical director of the Levites, to sing at temple service. The words of Psalm 39 highlight that there is a proper time for a leader to step forward with his or her message, often a message of hope in the face of uncertainty, misfortune or affliction. The leader must show discipline until the time to speak arises.

16. Ambrose, *De Off.*, I.VII.

17. *M. Tulli Ciceronis: De Officiis*, Michael Winterbotton, translation and commentary (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 170-172.

18. Ambrose, *De Off.*, III.XV.

19. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xxxvi.

20. O'Malley, *Four Cultures*, 47-48.

21. Saint Augustine, *Conf.*, III.11.

22. *Ibid.*, VI. 4.

23. *Ibid.*, III.4.

24. Saint Augustine, *De Trin.*, XIV.19.

25. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, V.9.

26. Roy J. Deferrari, "The Classics and the Greek Writers of the Early Church: St. Basil," *The Classical Journal* 13, no. 8 (May 1918): 579-591.

27. O'Malley, *Four Cultures*, 134.
28. Cicero, *De Republica*, VI.
29. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated and introduced by V.E. Watts (London: The Folio Society, 2001), 195.
30. O'Malley, *Four Cultures*, 27.
31. Nelson, "De Officiis in Christian Thought," 156.
32. Ibid., 103.
33. Ibid.
34. John of Salisbury, *Poli.*, V.IX; *De Off.*, I.XLIII.
35. John of Salisbury, *Poli.*, III.V; *De Off.*, I.VII.
36. John of Salisbury, *Poli.*, IV.XII; *De Off.*, I.XLIII.
37. John of Salisbury, *Poli.*, VII.VII; *De Off.*, II.II.
38. Nelson, "De Officiis in Christian Thought," 104-105.
39. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 77.
40. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlii.
41. Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 121-122.
42. Kallendorf, *Humanist Educational Treatises*, vii-viii.
43. Ibid., 99.
44. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 122-123.
45. In his *Ciceronianus* (1528), Erasmus satirized the pedanatic excesses of Italian Ciceronianism.
46. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 206.

47. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, Kallendorf, *Humanist Educational Treatises*, 126-259.
48. Ibid., 211.
49. Ibid., 223.
50. Ibid., 259.
51. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlv.
52. Anne M. O'Donnell, S.N.D., "Rhetoric and Style in Erasmus' *Enchiridion militis Christiani*," *Studies in Philology* 77, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 26-49.
53. "The Godly Feast," Colloquy X, *Erasmus: Ten Colloquies*, translated by Craig R. Thompson (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 155.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Philip Melanchthon, "Preface to Cicero's *On Duties* (1534)," in *Philip Melanchthon: Orations on Philosophy and Education*, edited by Sachiko Kusukawa, translated by Christine F. Salazar, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 80-81.
58. Ibid., 81.
59. Ibid., 82.
60. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 266.
61. Ibid., 255.
62. Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, 722; *De Off.*, I.X.
63. Grotius, *De Jure*, 739; *De Off.*, I.XI.
64. Grotius, *De Jure*, 765; *De Off.*, I.XIII.
65. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 266.

66. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 46.
67. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlv.
68. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 277.
69. Alban McCoy, O.F.M., Conv., *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Christian Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2004), 151.
70. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlv-xlv.
71. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlv-xlvi; MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 266-268, 274-276, 280-281.
72. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 281.
73. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 47-48.
74. Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 278-279.
75. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 285.
76. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 43.
77. Marc Fumaroli, "The Fertility and the Shortcomings of Renaissance Rhetoric: The Jesuit Case," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540-1773*, edited by John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 90-106. Fumaroli quotes Renan's address: "There is no more an art of speaking than there is one of writing. To speak well is to think well. The success of an orator or a writer has always one cause: absolute sincerity." (102, note 1).
78. Higginbotham, *Cicero, On Moral Obligation*, 29-30.
79. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlvi-xlvii.
80. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, 538.
81. *Ibid.*, 540.
82. *Ibid.*, 541.
83. *Ibid.*, 546.

84. Ibid., 725.
85. Ibid.
86. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 43.
87. Ibid., 44.
88. Ibid.
89. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 288.
90. Walsh, *Cicero, On Obligations*, xlvi.
91. Robert Aleksander Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits* (Rome: Ashgate, 2008), 3.
92. *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640*, edited and translated by John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 37.
93. John W. O'Malley, "Eloquentia: A Short History," *America Magazine*, May 16, 2011, 2.
94. MacKendrick, and Singh, *Philosophical Books of Cicero*, 295.
95. Ibid., 294-315.
96. Melanchthon, "Preface to *On Duties*," 83.

## Chapter VII

1. McCoy, *Christian Ethics*, 1-2.
2. Ibid., 4-5.
3. With this statement, I mean ideas from such works as Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887); Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930); or Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal* (1994), which is concerned with Darwinian theory and the new science of evolutionary psychology.

4. Both of these speeches are among the 198 in William Safire's *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992). These citations are from Sallust, *The Conspiracy of Catiline*, LVIII, and Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Book XLIV.

5. Dyck, *Commentary on De Officiis*, 49.

6. Rolfe, *Cicero and His Influence*, 164.

7. Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 39.

8. Juvenal, *Satire VIII*, lines 237-244.

9. Kierkegaard's stages of development are major themes in works such as *Either/Or* (1843), *Stages on Life's Way* (1845) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846).

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