

Spin-doctoring in ancient Rome.

A political public relations analysis of Cicero's election campaign strategy in 64 BC

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Abstract

This paper studies the public relations strategy of Quintus Cicero in the *Commentariolum petitionis*, that was written for the consular election campaign of Marcus Cicero in 64 BC, through the framework of political public relations. The author adopts a relational focus by putting relationships at the core of public relations. Using a set of six dimensions (honesty, trust, dependency, reciprocity, intimacy, common interests), the author qualifies the relationships in Quintus' strategy and links them to a threefold relationship typology (personal, professional, community). Quintus' strategy consists of two parts: enlisting the support of friends and gaining the goodwill of the people. The author argues that the relations with friends are of a professional nature, characterized by dependency and the reciprocal exchange of services, which confirms that *amicitia* was to a large extent a political alliance. At the same time, the relations with voters are of a community type, characterized by the promotion of common interests, which means that, while Roman elections were indeed centered around the personality of the candidate, they were not entirely apolitical. The author furthermore concludes that Quintus' deployment of PR techniques is of a populist manner.

Keywords: Marcus Tullius Cicero, Quintus Tullius Cicero, *Commentariolum petitionis*, Roman elections, election campaign, political public relations, spin-doctoring, *amicitia*, populism.

Introduction

'The effective strategies in politics are ones that are so clear and obvious that people can grasp it.'

-Karl Rove on *Fox News Sunday* (July 5, 2009).¹

Karl Rove is one of the political masterminds of our age. He was the architect of George W. Bush's two presidential campaigns and served as senior political adviser to the president from 2001 to 2007. Though his methods are not without controversy, his success as a political strategist has undeniably made him an eminent figure in the field.² In the quote above, Rove puts forward a basic requirement for achieving goals in politics, namely having an adequate strategy, which in his opinion should be 'clear' and 'obvious'. The rising attention to the influence of current political consultants may give the impression that we are dealing with a new phenomenon that is changing the nature of politics.³ Without giving any qualifications to the influence of modern spin-doctors, I contend that the work of political strategists is not new or modern. In fact, its roots can be traced back to Antiquity.

In 64 BC, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) ran for the consulship of 63 BC, the highest office in the Roman Republic. He was a *homo novus* from Arpinum, a newcomer whose family was not part of the nobility or the political elite. As such, he was not automatically among the favorites to win. However, due to his oratorical skills and his ambition, Cicero had climbed the ranks of the *cursus honorum*, the fixed sequence of public offices. He did this with great success: he acquired every magistracy in *anno suo* (literally in 'his year'), the first year that a candidate was, based on age rules and previously held offices, legally permitted to run for a certain office.⁴ Cicero faced serious competitors in the election from established, patrician families, such as Lucius Sergius Catilina and Gaius Antonius Hybrida.⁵ Nevertheless, Cicero managed to beat the odds by coming out on top and winning the election.

During the campaign, Cicero's brother Quintus (102-43 BC) acted as an adviser and confidant. Quintus wrote his brother a letter, probably early in the year 64 BC, in which he advised him on how to run for office. This essay is known by the name *Commentariolum petitionis* ('Handbook on electioneering').⁶ Quintus gives a practical outline of how a successful campaign should be run and advocates a pragmatic view of what is politically expedient. It splits canvassing in two parts: enlisting the efforts of friends and gaining the goodwill of the people. The *Commentariolum* is probably the first tract ever written on electioneering and it is a unique and valuable source that provides us with an insider account of the campaign trail in the Late Republican period.⁷

In this thesis, I want to analyze the public relations strategy that is laid out in the *Commentariolum petitionis* by Quintus Cicero for Marcus Cicero's consular election campaign.⁸ In short, my question is: what new insights can modern research tools of political public relations give us in the public relations strategy of Quintus Cicero for the consular election campaign of 64 BC? The concept of public relations is a modern one, but I firmly believe it is a study object that can be

¹ Fox News Sunday, 'Lt. Gov. Parnell, Leaders Hoyer and Boehner on "Fox News Sunday"' (version July 5, 2009), https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/07/05/parnell_palin_boehner_hoyer_transcript_97310.html (accessed February 12, 2019).

² Cf. Moore & Slater (2003).

³ Cf. Francia & Herrnson (2007); Johnson (2007); Plasser (2009).

⁴ Van der Wal (2017), 12-13.

⁵ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 396; Van der Wal (2017), 14.

⁶ Quintus gives it this name in *Comm.* 58: '*volo enim hoc commentariolum petitionis haberi omni ratione perfectum*'.

⁷ Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2013), 1.

⁸ As a general rule, throughout this thesis Quintus Tullius Cicero will be referred to as 'Quintus', while Marcus Tullius Cicero will be referred to as 'Cicero'.

transposed to other time periods. Operating with a modern framework and toolset, we can identify patterns that we might otherwise not see. My theoretical framework is the interdisciplinary, relatively recent concept of political public relations, which I take to be the relations between a political entity and its key publics.⁹ Proceeding from the most recent debates and developments in the field, I contend that relationships – and not, for instance, communication – should be the main paradigm in public relations research. The research tools that I employ consist of six dimensions, which I use to measure and qualify relationships: honesty, trust, dependency, reciprocity, intimacy, and common interests. These dimensions can be linked to three types of relationships: personal, professional, and community. In my analysis of the political public relations strategy of Quintus, I qualify Cicero's relationships with the public along the lines of the dimensions listed above and make inferences regarding the type of these relationships. While doing so, I judge whether we see modern PR techniques reflected in Quintus strategy, and I make estimations about the effectivity of Quintus' methods.

The ultimate goal of Quintus' strategy is to get people to support his brother. In analytical terms, he aims to use relations to influence the public's perception of the candidate and the public's satisfaction with its relationship with the candidate. In this thesis, I contend that the relations with friends are of a professional nature, satisfying them through the reciprocal exchange of services, while the relations with voters are of a community type, who are satisfied through the advocacy of common interests.

The title of this work, 'Spin-doctoring in ancient Rome', is inspired by the notion that Quintus, as political advisor, was the spin-doctor of Cicero's campaign. Quintus fulfilled a role similar to that of a modern campaign manager and political strategist. He oversaw the campaign organization, devised the campaign strategy, and provided the candidate with tips and tricks. In my opinion, the comparability of these responsibilities with present-day activities makes the case of Cicero a relevant parallel to modern political practices. That is why I have chosen to analyze Quintus' election campaign strategy from a modern political perspective, specifically through the concept of political public relations. The initial plan of this thesis was to discern from the *Commentariolum* a campaign strategy in full feather, ranging from message and branding to voter turnout. However, on closer examination it became clear that such a grand, fully-fledged strategy is absent from Quintus' advice. What his essay really is about, is instructing Cicero on how to deal with people. Quintus divides this in two parts: enlisting the support of friends and winning over the voting public. Therefore, I have chosen to shift and narrow my focus to relations.

I treat the *Commentariolum* as an internal campaign document as it was written by a leading insider of the campaign to the main protagonist of the campaign, which can reveal to us the way in which the campaign was run. A critical note of caution is fitting here: we cannot be certain that the strategy proposed by Quintus in the *Commentariolum* was (fully) implemented in the actual campaign. Whereas I do think it is likely that his advice was incorporated in the campaign, given Quintus' practical involvement in the campaign as Marcus' brother and confidant, his notions at least had to be realistic, believable and sensible. That is why we can study them, not only from a practical, but also from an intellectual historical point of view.

There has been some controversy on authenticity of the *Commentariolum*. Therefore, I will address the question whether or not we can regard the *Commentariolum* as an authentic source in the first chapter of this thesis. But before that, I give an overview of the historiography on the subject of Roman elections and public relations. Then, I turn to the theoretical framework of political public relations and explain how it can help us comprehend the public relations strategy put forward by

⁹ Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011a), vii-viii; Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011b), 1-23; Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2013), 1-6; Kiouisis & Strömbäck (2014), 252.

Quintus Cicero. Subsequently, I go into the relevance and justification of my research. Finally, I lay out the structure of this thesis.

Historiography

The *Commentariolum petitionis* is not one of the most prominent texts from Antiquity. In fact, in discussions of Roman elections it often plays no more than a marginal role.¹⁰ That is because the *Commentariolum* got stuck in the authenticity vs. inauthenticity debate: it has not often been examined beyond this vexed question. That is why the text hardly ever features as a major source on electioneering in the Roman Republic. I, on the other hand, will put it at the center of my enquiry. I deem Quintus' authorship of the *Commentariolum* very plausible, for he had good reason and purpose to write a campaign strategy for his brother. Viewed individually, all of the doubts surrounding the work's authenticity are relatively minor issues that can be resolved, as we will see in chapter 1. Moreover, there is some consensus among scholars nowadays that the *Commentariolum* is probably written by Quintus, or at least by a contemporary who was very well informed.¹¹ I hope that my research may offer a glimpse of the potential that the *Commentariolum* has to offer to historians.

Some of the best descriptive, technical studies on Roman elections remain Taylor (1966) and Staveley (1972), as well as more recent ones by Yakobson (1999) and Feig Vishnia (2012). Taylor, in her classic study, used archaeological and epigraphical evidence to reconstruct Roman voting procedures. Staveley studied the election process more broadly and in more detail, paying attention to canvassing, voting, counting, and corruption. Yakobson focused on the electioneering and campaigning side of Roman elections, while Feig Vishnia looked at elections in their broader constitutional and social context. These four studies are essential in understanding the fundamentals of Roman elections.

Elections in ancient Rome are not one of the most discussed topics. The scholarly discourse on the subject has been steered, since the 1980s, by the British scholar Millar. Although elections were not the sole or even main focus of his work, his ideas have had major implications for the study of elections. Millar turned the focus of scholars to the position of elections in the wider constitutional framework of the Roman Republic. The point of departure for this analysis are Polybius' observations in book VI of his *Histories*. Polybius wrote that Rome had a mixed constitution, in which it combined monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. The consuls represented the monarchical element, the Senate brought an oligarchic component, while the people's assemblies were the democratic part of the political system.¹² In the popular assemblies, the people had two main responsibilities: passing laws and electing officials. With the question how these elements related to each other having been debated for a long time, Millar boldly asserted that democratic forces were the chief element in the political system of the Republic.¹³ He did not go as far as to call Rome a democracy, yet he wrote that it was more similar to 'the classical Athenian democracy than we have allowed ourselves to think'.¹⁴

The democratic revision by Millar has altered the debate on Roman politics. Guided by him, many scholars have put more stress on popular influence in the political system of Rome.¹⁵ This is especially true of studies in Roman elections.¹⁶ In the last few years, however, there has been a renewed focus on oligarchical power in the political system at large.¹⁷ Morstein-Marx has transferred

¹⁰ An exception is Morstein-Marx (1998).

¹¹ Tatum (2018), 67-68.

¹² Polyb. 6.12-14.

¹³ Millar (1984); Millar (1986); Millar (1998); Millar (2002a); Millar (2002b). Some of the most important voices prior to Millar were: Münzer (1920); Syme (1939); Scullard (1951).

¹⁴ Millar (1984), 2.

¹⁵ North (1990); Lintott (1999).

¹⁶ Yakobson (1999); Feig Vishnia (2012).

¹⁷ Mouritsen (2001); Mouritsen (2017); Hölkeskamp (2010).

this focus to the study of elections by investigating oligarchic patronage in the *Commentariolum*.¹⁸ Thus, research on Roman elections has for the last few decades concentrated on the matter of the constitutional power balance in ancient Rome.

My research brings an entirely new focus to the field of Roman elections by approaching it from a modern perspective. A comparable approach has been employed by Grupe (2013), who studied the mass media communication of Augustus with the help of modern communication theory. Doing this, she has been able to structure and identify the ancient media through which Augustus reached people from across the empire.¹⁹ By studying the effects of Augustus' mass media communication on the spheres of agitation, representation, and integration, she manages to present a systematic, coherent, and comprehensive interpretation of the imperial communication.²⁰ Much like Grupe, I want to comprehend the past better from a modern angle. In the case of Roman election strategies, the concept of political public relations gives us the framework to identify and investigate patterns in canvassing and give them coherence. Since such a structural frame for looking at electioneering did not exist in ancient Rome, I think this is a vital step toward understanding the nature and effectivity Quintus' advice.

Moreover, I think that my research can contribute to the current academic discourse on elections and public relations. I am of the opinion there is a deficiency in the scholarship of the last decades on election campaigns. The predominant focus has been on the campaign's communication, particularly the candidate's message on issues.²¹ The element of relations has often been left out of the picture. What my criticism comes down to is that current scholarship presumes too much rationality and is too much focused on content. It would seem that this is too narrow a way of studying canvasses. Moreover, this way of looking at elections is fundamentally unsuitable to ancient Roman society, which was heavily determined by patronage and personal bonds.

In recent years, there has been a debate among PR researchers on the direction that their field should take. Scholars like Ferguson (2018) and Ledingham (2001, 2003, 2011) have turned against the 'communication paradigm' and have advocated the primacy of relationships within PR.²² That is precisely the direction I want to take. Simply put, I see public relations as relations with key publics. If we want to understand ancient election campaigns, we will have to move away from what is said and how it is said, and embrace relations as a vital element of election campaigns. To be sure, research on communication in election campaigns is definitely not without merit and should be continued, but we do need a shift in focus to appreciate the role of relations in elections.

Theoretical framework: political public relations

In this section, I explain the concept of political public relations, I justify why I have chosen it as my theoretical framework, I clarify why I put relationships at the center of public relations, and I account for the six analytical dimensions that I use to qualify the candidate-public relationships. The concept of political public relations is a fairly new one.²³ It has been developed out of the already existing

¹⁸ Morstein-Marx (1998).

¹⁹ Grupe (2013), 11-40.

²⁰ Grupe (2013), 53-90.

²¹ See Simon (2002), esp. 27-42, which includes an overview of earlier publications.

²² Ferguson's article was originally a speech given at a conference in 1984 to the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, in Gainesville (FL), USA. It is telling that such an old speech is published now, revealing that there still is a fundamental debate on which course public relations research should take, while also suggesting that old paradigms have not shifted since the 1980s.

²³ Zipfel (2008), 678; Strömbäck & Kioussis (2011b), 1-2. The profession of public relations originated in the late 19th century. Public relations research has since mainly focused on corporate settings. The concept of political public relations has only really emerged in the current century. On the history of PR, see Miller (2007).

concept of public relations, and is positioned at a crossroads of political science, political communication, and political marketing. Whereas public relations is often strongly tied to corporate contexts, political public relations aims to transpose the concept to the political sphere.²⁴ Sadly, these related though different disciplines have for a long time remained rather separate from each other. Great work has been done by Strömbäck and Kiousis, who have put political PR on the map in recent years, publishing an edited volume (2011) and a special issue (2013) on the matter. Both are scholars in journalism and communication. Strömbäck and Kiousis give the following definition of political public relations:

‘Political public relations is the management process by which an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals.’²⁵

I want to highlight three aspects of this definition. First of all, public relations is a management process. That means that PR practitioners do not just take care of slick, good-looking advertisements, but that they are (should be?) involved in leading an organization by creating and executing strategies. I define ‘strategy’ as the plans and decisions that are made to purposefully use resources in order to achieve a goal.²⁶ In the case of Cicero, there was not such an extensive campaign organization as we know it today, as his ‘campaign staff’ rather consisted of networks of friends.²⁷ Nevertheless, we can identify Quintus as his chief strategist and PR manager, as Quintus himself accounts of his role in the campaign in the *Commentariolum*.²⁸

Second, the strategies that result from the PR management are geared towards influencing, building, and maintaining relationships with key publics. My definition of ‘relationship’ that I adapt and simplify from Bruning & Ledingham (1999), is the state that exists between a political actor or organization and its key publics.²⁹ Relationships are at the heart of PR, an idea which I will explain below. Important to note is that these relations are produced by both communication and action. Examples of PR techniques and tactics for this include framing (suggestive use of language), dethematization (avoiding an issue of substance), agenda setting (raising an issue of substance), personalization (putting personality central), event management (staging events to get positive attention), advertisement (visual, verbal or textual messaging for promotion and publicity), the use of surrogates (having other people speak on the candidate’s behalf on TV or at events), marketing (finding out and supplying what the public demands), and opposition research (finding negative information about the opponent).³⁰ In my analysis of the *Commentariolum*, I want to see whether modern techniques like these are reflected in the PR strategy of Quintus.

Third, the relationships are supposed to be mutually beneficial. The political actor or organization aims to get the public on its side in order to achieve its goals with the help of the public. The public, on the other hand, should also be satisfied and content with the relationship, for it would otherwise not keep participating in the relationship and contribute to the organization’s goals.

The concept of political public relations is useful as theoretical framework because I think that, at least in Antiquity, relations form the core of election campaigns. This becomes clear throughout the

²⁴ For relevant differences between public relations in corporate and political settings, see Strömbäck & Kiousis (2013), 2-6.

²⁵ Strömbäck & Kiousis (2011b), 8.

²⁶ Cf. Strömbäck & Kiousis (2011b), 14-15.

²⁷ This will be further discussed in chapter 4.

²⁸ *Comm.* 19.

²⁹ Cf. Bruning & Ledingham (1999), 160.

³⁰ Strömbäck & Kiousis (2013), 1; Zipfel (2008), 679; Kiousis & Strömbäck (2014), 254-261; Lieber & Golan (2011).

Commentariolum, where it is emphasized that Roman electioneering is essentially about interacting with people, and not about messaging, which is what many modern electoral research focuses on. Political public relations explicitly allows for a relational focus and provides therefore an adequate vehicle to analyze Quintus' advice. To make matters concrete, I derive from political public relations the toolset I use to study the *Commentariolum*.

This toolset consists of the six dimensions that I use to qualify the relationships between the candidate and his key publics in the *Commentariolum*. As there is no consensus among scholars on what set of criteria to employ, I partly select them from the existing literature and partly propose them myself on the basis of the reading of the source.³¹ I think these are timeless criteria that comprehensively conceptualize the state that exists between a political actor and his public, for they take into account the status, behavior, influence, and expectations of the parties involved. I believe these are etic or neutral categories through which we can view reality, which I use to organize emic or culturally specific data. This terminology I borrow from the social sciences, where 'etic' is used for an outsider perspective with the pretense of objectivity, and 'emic' for a subjective insider perspective.³²

Modern PR research usually puts these criteria to work in statistical surveys, asking consumers selected questions about their perception of the relationship with a company.³³ Such surveys are used to indicate the state of the relationship between an organization and its public, the type and nature of the relationship, as well as its effectivity in achieving the organization's goals. According to the communication scholars Ledingham and Bruning, any organization-public relationship can be classified as a personal, professional, or community relationship. A personal relationship is characterized by emotional closeness and human investment, a professional relationship revolves around the exchange of goods and services, and a community relationship is about involvement in improving community life.³⁴ I have chosen these parameters because they are adequate to cover personal, professional and community elements of a relationship. I hypothesize that honesty and intimacy indicate a personal relationship, dependency and reciprocity a professional one, common interests a community type, while trust can belong to either of the three types. Working with these dimensions, I assess to which of the three relationship types Quintus' strategy was geared.

I operationalize honesty as being truthful, trust as being assured that someone does what he says he will do, dependency as being bound by or less powerful than the other party, reciprocity as having mutual engagements that work as a two-way street, intimacy as being on close and familiar terms, and common interests as agreeing on issues or having the same goals. Whereas modern research can employ statistical surveys among members of the public to fill in the relationship dimensions, the job of the historian is harder as he has to analyze the variables for himself on the basis of the available source material. Based on the qualification that I offer, I infer by what strategy Quintus aimed to reach his goal (getting Cicero elected) and satisfy the public, in other words, how he intended to achieve an effective and successful public relations outcome.

Relevance and justification

Political history, being the oldest and most traditional member of the historical science family, is not the most trendy discipline. New avenues of historical research, from gender to post-colonialism, have become more prominent and looked to push political history to the margins. However, political history has never left and is as alive as ever. Especially in recent years, influenced by striking electoral developments, there seems to have been a realization among citizens and scholars that politics

³¹ For an overview of some of the options that have been suggested, cf. Ledingham (2003), 184-189; Bruning & Ledingham (1999), 158-162.

³² The terms 'emic' and 'etic' were first introduced by the American linguist and anthropologist Pike (1967).

³³ Cf. Bruning & Ledingham (1999), 162; Bruning & Ledingham (2000).

³⁴ Bruning & Ledingham (1999), 163-166.

matters. In my opinion, political historical research will always be essential, because politics, whether one likes it or not, has a defining influence on society. Politics is seldom pretty and it does not exist for its own sake, yet it is the basis of human communities and civilizations. Therefore, it is of the highest importance to study political systems, institutions, and events in past and present.

While the revival of political history is to be applauded, no one discipline has universal explanatory power. That is why we need interdisciplinary research, working across academic boundaries to grasp the complexities of life. In this research, by studying the Cicero's election campaign through the lens of political public relations, I combine political history with several non-historical disciplines, such as political science, communication, rhetoric, and, most notably, public relations. I am hopeful that this interdisciplinary approach will allow me to do research in a comprehensive way. These different disciplines, though being connected to one another thematically, have lived largely separate lives.³⁵ It is my aim that this research will bring them together in a cogent way.

If we look at the world around us today, we see that elections matter and have major consequences. This should merit some attention to the phenomenon of electioneering. Recent studies have shown that campaigns and the strategies behind them have great influence on the outcome of elections, for example by affecting turnout, disseminating information and setting the agenda.³⁶ For this reason, it is imperative to have a thorough understanding of election strategies. To this end, I want to study the advice in the *Commentariolum*.

Furthermore, this thesis is a test case for the concept of political public relations. I want to see whether it can prove its worth in a historical context, in this case the election of 64 BC. Strömbäck and Kiouisis, two leading pioneers in the field of political public relations, have called for it to be applied to various political contexts, such as comparisons between different countries, political parties, and media systems.³⁷ Yet, they limit their focus to the exploration of the present, passing over the possibilities that history offers. I want to step into this lacuna by transposing the concept of political public relations to Antiquity. The election of 64 BC is therefore a test case for the usability of the modern concept of political PR to other types of societies and political systems. This thesis further contributes to the development of public relations research by defining and refining the toolkit that can be used to study political actor-public relationships, on which there is no real consensus among scholars.

Finally, I anticipate that this research will not just lead to a better understanding of modern political public relations theory, but might also bring forth a new perspective on the practice of modern political strategists, who, in turn, could take advantage of looking at the ancient roots of their craft. It seems to me that the significance that is given to the relational perspective has declined in political practice in recent years. In the previous century, people were more tied to a political party through social status, education, socialization, and networks. Today, that is no longer the case. As political parties have professionalized and, ironically, expanded their public relations divisions, they have become more geared towards communication and marketing, but less to relationships. Slick ads may be effective for communicating political messages, but they may not build a relation of trust and a sense of connectedness. Could this be one of the reasons why citizens' trust in politics is dramatically low, why election results fluctuate every year, and why we witness the rise of what is called 'populism'? What this research can thus contribute to our contemporary society is holding out a mirror from the past. In any case, the significance of relations in politics could be on the verge of a revival, as social media is bringing the importance of relationships with voters back to the attention of scholars and

³⁵ Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011a), vii; Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011b), 2-11.

³⁶ Iyengar & Simon (2000); Gherghina & Silagadze (2019); Spenkuch & Toniatti (2018); Simon (2002), 29-30.

³⁷ Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011a), vii-viii; Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011b), 7; Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2013), 6; Kiouisis & Strömbäck (2011).

politicians.³⁸ In sum, this research aims to demonstrate the explanatory power of the concept of political public relations for the study of Antiquity and highlight the significance of political research.

Outline of the thesis

First, I shall address the question whether or not we can regard the *Commentariolum* as an authentic source. To give us a good grasp of the context, chapter 2 is about elections in the Roman Republic, while chapter 3 deals with the careers of Marcus and Quintus Cicero and the election of 64 BC. In the third chapter I also reflect on the nature of Cicero's campaign strategy. I use the model of insider vs. outsider and hope vs. fear to see which of these four ideal types gives the best qualification of Cicero's election strategy.³⁹ Does the candidate defend or challenge the status quo, and does he have a hopeful or a pessimistic message? These questions lead to a descriptive model that can be used to grasp and classify the strategic choices of a campaign. These sections have a descriptive nature and serve as a basis for the analytical part of my research. Chapters 4 and 5 are the analytical core of this thesis. For these chapters, I follow the dual division that Quintus comes up with himself in the *Commentariolum*: the art of canvassing consists of *studia amicorum* and *popularis voluntas*.⁴⁰ This is actually in line with the classification that Astrid Zipfel comes up with. She differentiates between internal public relations (directed at the members of an organization) and external public relations (directed at the public and external stakeholders).⁴¹ Chapter four is about the internal PR management, where I examine how friends, relatives, and volunteers made up the 'campaign staff' and how their support was best employed according to Quintus Cicero. The fifth chapter deals with the strategy for the management of the external political public relations of the campaign with the voting public. In the conclusion, I evaluate what the consequences of this analysis are for our understanding of the *Commentariolum petitionis* and Roman elections.

³⁸ Cf. Enli & Skogerbø (2013). Strömbäck, Mitrook & Kiouisis (2010), 85 contend that the relationship between a political organization and its public should now be more important than it used to be because of a decrease in party identification, an increase in electoral volatility, and rising political distrust.

³⁹ Hilhorst (2015), 148-150.

⁴⁰ *Comm.* 16.

⁴¹ Zipfel (2008), 678-679.

Chapter 1: The authenticity of the *Commentariolum petitionis*

There is a longstanding debate on the authenticity and authorship of the *Commentariolum petitionis*. Due to several troubling issues in and surrounding the work, some scholars are of the opinion that the *Commentariolum* is a fake.⁴² They attribute it to a forger from the first century AD who engaged in literary impersonation (*prosopopoeia*), since this period witnessed great expertise and interest in Ciceronian literary imitation.⁴³ The most cogent case against Quintus' authorship has been put forward by Henderson, while Balsdon has been the strongest proponent of Quintus' authorship.⁴⁴ In this chapter, I lay out what the doubts regarding the authenticity are, I examine them, and I see whether they convince or can be resolved. I want to do so by approaching the text in a hermeneutic way. First I address the purpose of the treatise, then the manuscript tradition, after that the similarity with a speech by M. Cicero, subsequently some potential anachronisms, and finally the style of the handbook. There is no definitive proof in favor of, or against the authorship of Quintus Cicero, but I deem the authenticity of the work to be the most plausible option, which is what the current scholarly consensus seems to incline to.⁴⁵

Purpose of the treatise

The *Commentariolum* was written by Quintus in order to advise his brother Marcus in his capacity as consular candidate. It is a handbook in the form of an epistle. Quintus' reason for writing the booklet was that he wanted to put forward a comprehensive overview of his ideas on the canvass. Still, in a falsely modest fashion, he acknowledges that his notions are not revolutionary, yet he identifies the coherent focus as the added value of his work. In his own words:

'I thought it in keeping with our affection to write in full to you what has been coming into my mind as I think day and night about your canvass – not that you would learn anything new from it, but for the sake of bringing into one focus, by logical classification, matters which in real life seem disconnected and indeterminate.' (*Comm.* 1; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972])

'I thought, not that I knew all this better than you, but that, considering how busy you are, I could more easily pull it together into one whole'. (*Comm.* 58; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972])

One may wonder whether it makes sense to publish an internal campaign memo, especially one containing many personal considerations. In other words, how should we qualify this document? Quintus writes that his advice is only applicable to the election campaign of his brother, yet he asks Marcus to amend the work, which suggests he intended to publish it:

'Although it is written in such a way that it applies not to all who are seeking office but to you in particular and to this canvass, still, please tell me if you think that anything should be changed or struck out altogether, or if anything has been left out. For I want this handbook of electioneering to be considered perfect in every way.' (*Comm.* 58; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972])

If that is the case, who was the intended audience of the essay? For this question, we need to look at the ancient practice of book publication. Publishing a book meant spreading it among friends and family, who would circulate it further among a small educated elite.⁴⁶ The *Commentariolum* must have

⁴² Eussner (1872); Hendrickson (1892); Henderson (1950) and (2002; [1972]); Nisbet (1961).

⁴³ For the dating between Augustus and Trajan, see Henderson (1950), 20-21.

⁴⁴ Henderson (1950) and (2002; [1972]); Balsdon (1963).

⁴⁵ Cf. Tatum (2018), 67-68.

⁴⁶ Potter (2007), 29-35.

been read by a similar semi-private audience. Thus, it was primarily written for Marcus Cicero and secondarily for acquaintances and relatives, who may have been involved or interested in the campaign.

Some scholars see the purpose of the *Commentariolum* stated by Quintus as an argument for its inauthenticity.⁴⁷ They deem it unlikely that the famous Cicero would need the advice of his little brother, with Quintus himself admitting that he told his brother nothing new. However, it is very well possible that Quintus took upon him the task of writing down his vision on the campaign, even if it involved stating the obvious. Indeed, there are strong indications in favor of this. In 60/59 BC, it was Marcus who wrote Quintus a treatise in the form of a letter to instruct him on his gubernatorial tasks in Asia.⁴⁸ Marcus even admitted that his advice would not teach Quintus anything he did not already know.⁴⁹ This parallel proves that it was not uncommon for the Cicero brothers to give each other advice on public business through personal or semi-private correspondence. In fact, the epistolary treatise of 60/59 BC may have been a *quid pro quo* for the *Commentariolum*. We have another parallel that can be informative in this context, namely a letter written by M. Terentius Varro addressed to consul Pompey (71/70 BC). In this letter-handbook, Varro educated Pompey on the procedures of the Senate, yet he did not write anything that would be unknown to the consul.⁵⁰

In sum, we may conclude that the *Commentariolum* is not to be dismissed because of Quintus' stated purpose, since it is in line with a tradition of epistolary treatises that did not necessarily contain information that was new to the addressee. Its objective was to give a summary and overview of prevalent ideas.

Manuscript tradition

The *Commentariolum* is transmitted along with the *Epistulae ad Familiares* of M. Cicero, which were probably published by his secretary Tiro shortly after Cicero's death.⁵¹ Several manuscripts, ranging approximately from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, contain the *Commentariolum*, which in general have a reputation to be fairly reliable among the experts.⁵² However, the *Commentariolum* is not transmitted with the Codex Mediceus 49.9 (ninth century), which is considered to be the oldest and finest manuscript of Cicero's correspondence. Besides this, the *Commentariolum* sometimes comes after the spurious *Letter of Cicero to Octavian*, which certain scholars see as guilty by association.⁵³ For these reasons, some scholars have discredited the integrity of the *Commentariolum*.⁵⁴ However, these are weak and unconvincing arguments. Since the manuscript tradition is acceptable by all standards and raises no major difficulties, I do not think this is solid evidence to deny Quintus' authorship either.

Similarity with *In toga candida* by M. Cicero

In toga candida was the pre-election speech held by M. Cicero at the end of the campaign, days before the votes were cast (July 64 BC).⁵⁵ It was called this way because Cicero wore a white toga, as was customary for candidates for office.⁵⁶ The speech was directed against Cicero's opponents. We have no more than a few fragments of the speech as part of a commentary by Q. Asconius Pedianus, the

⁴⁷ Henderson (1950), 16-21; Nisbet (1961), 84.

⁴⁸ Cic. *QFr.* 1.1. The authenticity of this letter is not doubted, see Shackleton-Bailey (2002), 4.

⁴⁹ Cic. *QFr.* 1.1.18.

⁵⁰ Gell. *NA* 14.7; Balsdon (1963), 245.

⁵¹ Shackleton-Bailey (2001), 2.

⁵² Van der Wal (2017), 17-18; Watt (1958), 32-44; Till (1962), 325.

⁵³ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 397; Watt (1958), 32.

⁵⁴ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 397; Nisbet (1961), 84.

⁵⁵ See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the content of this speech.

⁵⁶ Hence the word 'candidate'.

first-century AD Ciceronian scholar. The problematic issue is that there are several cases of such close verbal resemblance between the *Commentariolum* and *In toga candida*, that one of them must have drawn on the other.⁵⁷

Most of the contested passages are from *Comm.* 8-12, a rhetorical section on the shortcomings of Cicero's electoral opponents. I give three examples to illustrate the verbal reminiscence between the two works. The first example is about the beheading of M. Marius Gratidianus by Catilina in 82 BC. *In toga candida* and the *Commentariolum* use comparable expressions.

Tog. Cand. 9, Asc. 87C: '*Populum vero cum inspectante populo collum secuit hominis maxime popularis quanti faceret ostendit.*'⁵⁸

Tog. Cand. 19, Asc. 90C: '*Quod caput etiam tum plenum animae et spiritus ad Sullam usque ab Ianiculo ad aedem Apollinis manibus ipse suis detulit.*'⁵⁹

Comm. 10: '*Quid ego nunc dicam petere eum tecum consulatum qui hominem carissimum populo Romano, M. Marium, inspectante populo Romano vitibus per totam urbem ceciderit, ad bustum egerit, ibi omni cruciatu lacerarit, <vix> vivo <et> spiranti collum gladio sua dextera secuierit cum sinistra capillum eius a vertice teneret, caput sua manu tulerit.*'⁶⁰

In another case, we read an accusation against the opponent Catilina of alleged incest in 73 BC with a Vestal virgin, Fabia. She was, interestingly, a sister of Marcus' spouse Terentia, we learn from Asconius' commentary, which is why Cicero adds there may be no guilt.

Tog. Cand. 22, Asc. 91C: '*Cum ita vixisti ut non esset locus tam sanctus quo non adventus tuus, etiam cum culpa nulla subesset, crimen afferret.*'⁶¹

Comm. 10: '*Qui nullum in locum tam sanctum ac tam religiosum accessit in quo non, etiam si in aliis culpa non esset, tamen ex sua nequitia dedecoris suspicionem relinqueret.*'⁶²

In the third instance, we come across a metaphor of the Republic being assaulted with blades, aimed at Cicero's opponents. The Spanish stiletto is Cn. Calpurnius Piso, rumored to be an accomplice in the Catilinarian conspiracy of 66/65 BC. According to Asconius' commentary, Cicero's rivals Antonius and Catilina were the two daggers.

⁵⁷ This was first demonstrated by Eussner (1872), who significantly weakened his case by including many dubious instances of correspondence with other works. The similarities between *Tog. cand.* and *Comm.*, however, have been generally accepted.

⁵⁸ 'How great is his regard for the people he demonstrated when in full sight of the people he severed the neck of a man who was a favourite of the people.' (Cic. *Tog. cand.* 9, ap. Asc. 87C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006).

⁵⁹ 'Which head, while still full of life and breath, he himself carried to Sulla in his own hands all the way from the Janiculan Hill to the temple of Apollo.' (Cic. *Tog. cand.* 19, ap. Asc. 90C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006).

⁶⁰ 'Need I go on? He to be running for the consulship with you – he who scourged Marcus Marius, the Roman People's darling, all around the town before the Roman People's eyes, drove him to the tomb, mangled him there with every torture, and with a sword in his right hand, holding his head of hair in his left, severed the man's neck as he barely lived and breathed'. (*Comm.* 10; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972]).

⁶¹ 'For your life has been such that there has been no place so sacred that your arrival there, even if there was no underlying guilt, did not occasion criminal charges.' (Cic. *Tog. cand.* 22, ap. Asc. 91C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006).

⁶² 'He who could not enter any place so sacred and holy that he did not leave it under suspicion of being polluted by his mere wickedness, even if other people were guiltless'. (*Comm.* 10; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972]). '*Si in aliis*' can also be read as '*si alia*', as proposed by Tyrrell and Purser (1904), 116: 'even if he did not actually profane the sacred place, such was his vile character that he always left behind him the suspicion of having polluted it.'

Tog. Cand. 27, Asc. 93C: 'Qui postea quam illo quo conati erant Hispaniensi pugiunculo nervos incidere civium Romanorum non potuerunt, duas uno tempore conantur in rem publicam sicas destringere.'⁶³

Comm. 12: 'Quis enim reperiri potest tam improbus civis qui velit uno suffragio duas in rem publicam sicas destringere?'⁶⁴

We know that Quintus cannot have written the *Commentariolum* after *In toga candida*, since this speech was delivered in the final days of the campaign. Some scholars have taken this as evidence that a hypothetical forger used *In toga candida* to write the *Commentariolum*.⁶⁵ There is, however, another option, since Marcus may plausibly have used the advice of his brother in his speech.⁶⁶ We might even add a third option, since Quintus could have amended his work after the election, which was his intention according to *Comm.* 58, by incorporating the words of his brother in the advice.

Potential anachronisms

There are multiple factual issues in the *Commentariolum* that pose problems. I will discuss the most important ones and consider how these can be resolved. In *Comm.* 2, Marcus is praised because he is deemed worthy of defending ex-consuls, but we know that he did not do so until 63 BC, when he defended C. Piso.⁶⁷ This could be taken as evidence that the *Commentariolum* was made by a forger who made an anachronistic mistake. However, it could also mean that M. Cicero was already enlisted by Piso in 64 BC, who quit his work as governor in that year, or that he is merely said to have been capable of defending ex-consuls.⁶⁸ In fairness, these possibilities contain less plausibility, but they cannot be discarded.

Henderson thought that there was another anachronism in *Comm.* 8, where the *bona proscripta* of Cicero's rival Antonius are mentioned.⁶⁹ She mistakenly assumed that these words had to refer to Antonius exile (59 BC), but Balsdon has demonstrated that they refer to the forced sale of goods of Antonius (70s BC).⁷⁰

Catilina is accused of sisterly incest in *Comm.* 9, while Clodius Pulcher is confronted with a similar allegation in a speech by M. Cicero in 56 BC.⁷¹ This could be another case of an anachronism by a hypothetical forger, who mistakenly used the details he had read in *De haruspicum responso* for the *Commentariolum*.⁷² However, there is a simpler solution: charges of incest were a commonplace invective in Antiquity, and it is easy to imagine that Quintus would deploy them as such.⁷³

Another potential anachronism, in *Comm.* 19, concerns the meaning of the word *sodalitas*. The text says that four *sodalitates* supported Marcus because of his legal assistance to their leaders, who are said to have influence in the canvass. Originally denoting a social or religious fellowship, the term *sodalitas* gradually got an additional significance, that of an election bribery club. The latter meaning was allegedly introduced in 58 BC by Clodius, which could entail another anachronism by the author

⁶³ 'Those persons who, after they failed with the Spanish stiletto by which they made the attempt to slit the sinews of Roman citizens, are now attempting to unsheathe two daggers at once against the state.' (Cic. *Tog. cand.* 27, ap. Asc. 93C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006).

⁶⁴ 'Can there be a citizen so vile as to want to unsheathe, with one vote, two daggers against the State?' (*Comm.* 12; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972]).

⁶⁵ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 398; Hendrickson (1892), 204-212; Nisbet (1961), 84-87.

⁶⁶ Richardson (1971), 441; Van der Wal (2017), 17; Balsdon (1963), 242-243; Nótári (2010), 38.

⁶⁷ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399.

⁶⁸ Nisbet (1961), 84-85.

⁶⁹ Henderson (1950), 10-11.

⁷⁰ Balsdon (1963), 247; Nisbet (1961), 84; Till (1962), 323.

⁷¹ Cic. *Har. resp.* 42.

⁷² Henderson (1950), 10; Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399-400; Hendrickson (1892), 209-210.

⁷³ Richardson (1971), 437-438; Balsdon (1963), 246-247.

of the *Commentariolum*.⁷⁴ Yet there is no reason why both meanings of *sodalitas* could not already have been current in 64 BC.⁷⁵ Besides, it is probable that *sodalitas* in *Comm.* 19 does not even refer to bribery clubs, but was used in its meaning of social club, denoting the friends and family of the four leaders. This is especially likely since this meaning is undoubtedly used in *Comm.* 16, as well.⁷⁶

One of the four leaders defended by M. Cicero was Q. Gallius.⁷⁷ His trial for *ambitus* (election fraud, probably committed during the praetorian election in 66 BC) took place after *In toga candida*, we know from Asconius, yet the *Commentariolum* seems to suggest that it had already happened.⁷⁸ However, if we look at the text of *Comm.* 19, we do read that Cicero had been hired by the four men, but not that the trials had already taken place.⁷⁹ Ramsey has argued that Gallius hired Cicero in 66 BC when his illegal canvassing had become known, while the trial had to be delayed to after his praetorship of 65 BC, as the holder of this office enjoyed temporary immunity.⁸⁰ This interpretation conciliates both the information from Asconius and the *Commentariolum*, as the legal proceedings would have taken place in late 64 BC.⁸¹

Humanitas (the things that make us human, encompassing cultivation, kindness, and philanthropy) is the subject of *Comm.* 33.⁸² Henderson has challenged this as another anachronism by stating that *humanitas* only became an attribute of M. Cicero in the 50s BC, when he started working on philosophy.⁸³ Her argument, however, is incorrect, since Marcus himself wrote of his *humanitas* in the late 60s BC.⁸⁴ Moreover, the attribute *humanitas* in *Comm.* 33 is primarily about the support among the youth for Cicero.⁸⁵

It is strange that the 'conspiracy of Catilina' (65 BC) is not once brought up in the *Commentariolum*, especially since it is in *In toga candida*.⁸⁶ Henderson has submitted that a hypothetical forger would not have been impressed by a failed plot to murder the consuls, therefore choosing to leave it out. Conversely, she thinks that Quintus, had he written the *Commentariolum*, would surely have included it, as the conspiracy happened in the year before.⁸⁷ However, it is possible that Quintus wrote before the news on the conspiracy broke, as stipulated by Henderson.⁸⁸ Moreover, we can reverse the argument. If we follow the theory that the hypothetical forger wrote the

⁷⁴ Henderson (1950), 12; Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399.

⁷⁵ We have evidence of Cicero speaking of *sodalitates* as bribery clubs in 56 BC (*QFr.* 2.3.5) and 54 BC (*Planc.* 37), which proves that this meaning was indeed current in the 50s BC. However, there is no compelling reason why this meaning could not have been in use a few years prior.

⁷⁶ Balsdon (1963), 247; Ramsey (1980), 404. *Comm.* 16-24 is about the role of friends, allies, and volunteers in the canvass.

⁷⁷ The (dates of the) trials of the other three, C. Fundanius, C. Cornelius, and C. Orchivius, are not disputed.

⁷⁸ Asc. 78C; Henderson (1950), 11; Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399; Balsdon (1963), 248; Nisbet (1961), 84; Ramsey (1980), 408-412. Some even date the trial to the 50s BC. This is based on M. Cicero's praise for the oratorical skills of his opponent, M. Calidius, in Cic. *Brut.* 247-249. It is thought that this would only make sense after Calidius had made a career since becoming *praetor* (57 BC), but this is not a compelling reason. Also, this would be very far removed from the date of the crime, which in all probability took place in 66 BC: see Ramsey (1980), 411-412.

⁷⁹ *Comm.* 19: '*in causis ad te deferendis*'.

⁸⁰ Ramsey (1980), 406, 412-414.

⁸¹ Ramsey (1980), 414; Balsdon (1963), 249.

⁸² *Comm.* 33: '*habes tecum ex iuventute optimum quemque et studiosissimum humanitatis*'. 'You have with you those of the best breeding and highest culture among the young generation'. (*Comm.* 33; transl. M.I. Henderson, Loeb-ed. 2002 [1972]).

⁸³ Henderson (1950), 13.

⁸⁴ Cic. *Att.* 1.1.13; Cic. *Fam.* 5.2.9. Cic. *Flac.* 78 attributes Quintus with *humanitas*.

⁸⁵ Tatum (2002), 394-398; Balsdon (1963), 247.

⁸⁶ Cic. *Tog. cand.* 25, ap. Asc. 82C.

⁸⁷ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399; Henderson (1950), 13-14.

⁸⁸ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 399.

Commentariolum based largely on what he had read in *In toga candida*, then we would certainly expect a reference to the conspiracy.⁸⁹ The fact that there is none, is therefore an argument *e silentio* in favor of Quintus' authorship.

Another positive argument for the authenticity of the *Commentariolum* has been delivered by a French team of researchers. In 1973, they set out to review the potential problems of the work and approach it from a prosopographical point of view. They investigated the identity of all 26 individuals that are mentioned in the *Commentariolum*. Some of these were famous persons, such as Pompey and Catilina, whom a hypothetical first-century AD forger must have known. However, many other persons who are mentioned in the *Commentariolum* were relatively unknown people: they must have been known to their politically interested contemporaries, but it is highly unlikely that a forger who lived a century later was aware of them. The French researchers proved that all 26 figures mentioned in the *Commentariolum*, even the most obscure ones, were indeed men of flesh and blood who lived in the 60s BC.⁹⁰ The fact that all 26 persons have credible identities is a forceful argument in favor of the authenticity of the *Commentariolum*.

Style

A final argument that has been used against the authenticity of the *Commentariolum* is the writing style. It has been suggested that the rather dull and pedagogic way of writing cannot have come from Quintus' pen, as he has once been praised by his brother for his eloquent style.⁹¹ Hendrickson went farthest of all critics by submitting that the *Commentariolum* was a mere classroom exercise.⁹² The fact is that we have no more than four short letters remaining of Quintus' hand, one to Marcus and three to Tiro.⁹³ This means that the style of the *Commentariolum* is not a valid argument against its authenticity, as we do not have enough material to make a useful comparison of Quintus' prose. The fact that Marcus praised Quintus' style may simply have been a compliment from sibling to sibling. Lastly, it does not seem obvious for a hypothetical forger to employ a dry style, since this would diminish the attractiveness of the forgery.

Conclusion: the *Commentariolum* as a historical source

It is not easy to decide whether the *Commentariolum* is genuine or not. There are multiple legitimate doubts, but, as Henderson herself has admitted, none of these 'can be carried to the length of formal proof'.⁹⁴ Furthermore, all of them can be resolved, as has been demonstrated above. In other words, there is no solid, convincing evidence of inauthenticity, while some lines of critique are even invalid. On the other hand, coming up with positive evidence of the authenticity of the *Commentariolum* is not easy, either. Scholars in favor of authenticity, such as Balsdon, have for the most part argued their case by responding to criticism. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for thinking that Quintus wrote the handbook, such as the habit of writing letter-handbooks by the Cicero brothers. If the *Commentariolum* were a forgery, its author would have been remarkably well informed. Since the reservations of some scholars, legitimate though they are, are unconvincing and Quintus' authorship is more than defensible, I deem it very likely and highly plausible that the *Commentariolum petitionis* is authentic.

⁸⁹ Richardson (1971), 436-437, 441; Balsdon (1963), 247.

⁹⁰ David et al. (1973).

⁹¹ Cic. *De or.* 2.3.10; Hendrickson (1892), 202-203; Henderson (2002; [1972]), 397-398.

⁹² Hendrickson (1892), 202.

⁹³ Cic. *Fam.* 16.8, 16.16, 16.26, 16.27.

⁹⁴ Henderson (2002; [1972]), 400.

Chapter 2: Elections in the Late Republic

The Roman system of holding elections was a complex one that knew many changes over time. In this chapter, I focus on consular elections in the Late Republic, while still paying heed to historical developments in earlier stages of Roman history that shaped the electoral process of Cicero's days. This will give us an idea on how Roman elections worked, so that we can put Quintus' strategy in context. I first discuss the outset of an election campaign. Second, I go into the electioneering process and third, I discuss how the popular assembly that elected consuls, the *comitia centuriata*, was organized and how it voted. Finally, I look into the practice of *ambitus* (election fraud).

The outset of the election

Elections for magistracies were a yearly recurring feature in the Roman Republic. At least since the constitutional reforms of Sulla, elections were always held in July, plausibly because this suited the agricultural calendar. The official procedure started with the announcement of the election date by the presiding magistrate, who was, in the case of consular elections, one of the current consuls. On the set date, the *comitia centuriata* was called together by the presiding magistrate. The announcement had to take place approximately three weeks in advance, a period of time called the *trinundinum* (three market days).⁹⁵ It seems that the *trinundinum* was intended to give people the opportunity to make arrangements to travel to Rome and to enable them to be informed about the candidates. The number of dates that the presiding magistrate could choose from, was in fact limited: because the popular assemblies did not convene on dates that were marked as festival days on the *fasti*, there were only 195 possible *dies comitiales*.⁹⁶ This meant that there were only slightly more than a dozen possible assembly days left in July.

The act of proclaiming one's candidature was called *professio*. The candidate had to make this known to the presiding magistrate in person and in Rome.⁹⁷ Probably, this had to happen before a certain date, but we are not informed about the specifics of this. We do know that candidates could start their campaigns a long time before the actual election. It becomes clear in a letter dating from July 65 BC by Marcus Cicero to his friend Atticus, that candidates could start their campaigns more than a year ahead of the election. Writing before the consular election of 65 BC had even taken place, Cicero tells that he has already decided that he was going to run for consul in the following year, while another contender had already openly declared his candidature.⁹⁸

After the *professio*, the presiding magistrate was supposed to check and approve each candidacy. Most importantly, a candidate needed to have gone through the ranks of the *cursus honorum*, the prescribed sequence of public offices, and be of a certain age (42 years for the consulship). Besides this, there were certain criteria regarding property, military service, lineage, and behavior, as a result of which only *equites* were eligible.⁹⁹ While every Roman citizen of seventeen years of age or older could cast his vote (*ius suffragii*), only citizens with a fortune of 400,000 sesterces or more were allowed to run for office (*ius honorum*).¹⁰⁰

Electioneering

⁹⁵ Staveley (1972), 144-145; Tatum (2018), 13.

⁹⁶ Feig Vishnia (2012), 106-107; Staveley (1972), 143-145.

⁹⁷ Staveley (1972), 146-147; Feig Vishnia (2012), 107. Cf. Livy 26.18.7.

⁹⁸ Cic. Att. 1.1. Cf. Staveley (1972), 193-194.

⁹⁹ Feig Vishnia (2012), 107.

¹⁰⁰ Yakobson (1999), 44, 47; Feig Vishnia (2012), 124. This property criterion applied to all offices of the *cursus honorum*, beginning with *quaestor*.

There is not much information on election campaigns in the Roman Republic besides the *Commentariolum petitionis*. Perhaps starting from his *professio*, a candidate wore a white toga in order to be recognizable when canvassing, because his face was not familiar to many voters in the absence of multimedia.¹⁰¹ Since consular hopefuls had gone through the *cursus honorum*, all of them had experience with canvassing (*petitio*). This gave them a certain name recognition to start with, though not all candidates will have had the same level of fame and exposure. There were no large-scale political rallies in Rome. Instead, a candidate went to the Forum Romanum to meet and greet people and shake hands. By his side was a *nomenclator*, a slave who whispered the names of people he met in his master's ear, so as to be able to charm people and win them over.¹⁰² When going to the Forum, a candidate made sure that he was accompanied by a multitude of followers, in an attempt to make the impression that he enjoyed much support, hoping to attract new voters. It should be noted that these followers, as well as the people that he would meet and greet, were sometimes hired.¹⁰³ This practice made that money could play a big role in elections, especially during the Late Republic. Candidates relied on their own capital, as well as their friends' money and loans.¹⁰⁴

Election contests in ancient Rome were not driven by ideology, but by personality and status.¹⁰⁵ Citizens voted for persons, not for ideas. The traditional view is that Roman elections were apolitical.¹⁰⁶ Yet, candidates sometimes did discuss legislation and policy in campaigns.¹⁰⁷ There were no political parties in ancient Rome, either. Modern scholars have pointed to the *populares* and *optimates* as parties, but the consensus nowadays is that these groups were too loose in terms of ideology and organization to qualify as such.¹⁰⁸ Instead of parties, personal networks were the primary vehicle through which a candidate would seek to get elected. People from one's network would promote their candidate and canvass on his behalf. This has to be seen in the light of the mutual obligations of the *patronus-clients* relations that were so pervasive in Rome.¹⁰⁹ It was of course helpful if these were eminent persons. Another term that is highly relevant here is *amicitia*. In a general sense denoting 'friendship', this word also meant a political alliance based on mutual respect, loyalty, and help.¹¹⁰ To what extent this was really a matter of trust and admiration is questionable; it may be that opportunistic, short-term considerations were more important. In any case, it was recommendable for a candidate to have as many *amici* as possible in election time. The term *factio* was used to cast an *amicitia* in a bad light, usually carrying connotations of an evil conspiracy.¹¹¹

Besides the help of friends and relatives, it was important to attain the backing of *sodalitates* (associations) and *collegia* (priestly colleges) because of their influence in society.¹¹² Respectable lineage was an important factor, too. But the personal qualities and skills of the individual candidate counted as well, especially for *homines novi* like Cicero, who could not boast patrician family ties. Some

¹⁰¹ Tatum (2018), 32-33; Feig Vishnia (2012), 112.

¹⁰² Cic. *Mur.* 77; Feig Vishnia (2012), 112. Cf. *Comm.* 28, 42.

¹⁰³ See the section on *ambitus* below.

¹⁰⁴ Feig Vishnia (2012), 111.

¹⁰⁵ Staveley (1972), 191-192; Feig Vishnia (2012), 111; Yakobson (1999), 148-152.

¹⁰⁶ Mouritsen (2001), 92-93; Feig Vishnia (2012), 111. Cf. Yakobson (1999), 148-155.

¹⁰⁷ This mostly related to ad hoc problems and promises on how to tackle them, such as foreign policy. For example, Marius was elected consul for 107 BC by attacking the Roman decision making in the Jugurthine war and by advocating his own military strategy for the war against Jugurtha, see Plut. *Mar.* 8.3-9.1. Feig Vishnia (2012), 111; Staveley (1972), 191-192; Yakobson (1999), 13-19.

¹⁰⁸ Yakobson (1999), 148; Feig Vishnia (2012), 114.

¹⁰⁹ Staveley (1972), 192-197; Yakobson (1999), 65-78; Feig Vishnia (2012), 112-113.

¹¹⁰ Feig Vishnia (2012), 116-117; Yakobson (1999), 217.

¹¹¹ Sall, *Iug.* 31; Feig Vishnia (2012), 117.

¹¹² Feig Vishnia (2012), 114; Yakobson (1999), 23-25.

candidates engaged in *coitio* (literally ‘walking together’). This meant that they struck a deal to make sure they were elected together, hoping to double their chances by doing so.¹¹³

Voting in the *comitia centuriata*

There were three popular assemblies in Rome: the *comitia curiata*, the *comitia centuriata*, and the *comitia tributa*. The *comitia curiata* was the oldest one and had a merely symbolic function in Cicero’s time, while the *comitia tributa* passed laws and elected several magistrates.¹¹⁴ However, the *comitia centuriata* has our interest here, since this was the assembly that elected consuls. Its origins date back to the military reforms attributed to the king Servius Tullius in the mid-sixth century BC, who supposedly organized the army in five property classes alongside an elite group of *equites* (cavalry).¹¹⁵ The soldiers who comprised the original *comitia centuriata* were most likely asked to approve their commander by acclamation. In the Republic, when the consuls headed the army and the centuriate assembly evolved from a military organization to a political gathering, this practice continued: the assembly came to elect the consuls, praetors and censors.¹¹⁶ The assembly voted by group and in total, it consisted of 193 *centuriae* that were (unevenly) divided over the five property classes. From the end of the third century BC onward, every *centuria* of the first class corresponded to one of the 35 geographical tribes (*tribus*).¹¹⁷ Also in the first property class (and perhaps in the others), there was a division on the basis of age.¹¹⁸ Thus, in the first *classis* there were 35 *iuniores centuriae* and 35 *seniores centuriae*, so that there were in total 70 centuries in the first class. The *equites* had 18 *centuriae*, which did not correspond to tribes. We do not know exactly how many centuries each of the other property classes had. The weight of each voting unit was irrespective of the number of people in it. It is clear that the first *classis* and the *equites*, together accounting for 88 of the 193 *centuriae*, far exceeded the weight of the other property classes, even though the latter must have represented more people.¹¹⁹

Rank	<i>Centuriae</i> (total: 193)
<i>Equites</i>	18
<i>Classis I</i>	70 (35 <i>iuniores</i> + 35 <i>seniores</i>)
<i>Classis II</i>	20-30?
<i>Classis III</i>	20-30?
<i>Classis IV</i>	20-30?
<i>Classis V</i>	30-40?
Non-combatants	5

Table 1: possible structure of the *comitia centuriata* in the Late Republic.

The *comitia centuriata*, because its military origins did not allow it to convene inside the *pomerium*, assembled outside of the city on the *Campus Martius*, which used to be a training ground for the army. The assembly took place in the *saepa*, a temporary wooden structure or fencing that was built again every year. The presiding magistrate started by taking *auspicia* with the *augures* before dawn. If the signs were positive, the meeting started immediately at sunrise, since all business had to be finished

¹¹³ Staveley (1972), 205-206; Feig Vishnia (2012), 117-118.

¹¹⁴ Sandberg (2013); cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.31.

¹¹⁵ Livy 1.42-43; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.16-21. Staveley (1972), 123-124; Feig Vishnia (2012), 119; Yakobson (1999), 54-59.

¹¹⁶ Staveley (1972), 125, 128.

¹¹⁷ Whether this also applied to the other classes is unknown.

¹¹⁸ Staveley (1972), 126-127; Taylor (1966), 85-87; Feig Vishnia (2012), 122; Tatum (2018), 10.

¹¹⁹ Feig Vishnia (2012), 94-96, 113-114, 127-128; Staveley (1972), 135.

by sunset. The assembly started as an unofficial *contio*, but became an official *comitia* when the voting started.¹²⁰ We do not know how many citizens voted in the *comitia centuriata*. Estimates of the physical capacity of the *saepa* vary from 30,000 to 70,000 people.¹²¹ Since there were 910,000 citizens under the last census of the Republic in 70 BC, we can conclude that only a small fraction of the citizenry was involved in the consular elections.¹²² For many people, it was not worthwhile to give up a day's labor for an election. As we shall see, the vote of the poor citizens was relatively irrelevant anyway and for many citizens outside of Rome it was unfeasible to travel to the city.¹²³

Since the *lex Gabinia* of 139 BC, voting was conducted in writing.¹²⁴ Before this, every individual in each voting unit made his choice known orally to a *rogator*, who would keep score on a wax tablet.¹²⁵ After 139 BC, every voter received a wooden wax tablet on which he had to inscribe the names of the candidates he wished to elect, dependent on how many magistrates needed to be elected. After doing this, the voter walked over a wooden ramp (*pons*) to deposit his ballot in an urn (*cista*).¹²⁶ The vote counting was called *diribitio*.¹²⁷ The presiding magistrate was in charge of declaring the results (*renuntiatio*) and calling the winners. The voting stopped as soon as enough candidates (two in the case of the consulship) had received the support of a majority of voting units (97 out of 193 *centuriae*).¹²⁸ In theory, this meant that the election could stop while a losing candidate would still have a chance to finish inside the top two.¹²⁹ Thus, it was not about who would get the most votes, but about who would get past the threshold first. If a candidate was supported by all of the first 97 voting units, as was the case for Cicero, he was elected by *omnes centuriae*.¹³⁰ This system also ensured that the votes of the lower classes were almost never called upon.¹³¹

One of the *iuniores centuriae* of the *prima classis* was always the first to cast its vote. This voting unit, called the *centuria praerogativa*, was appointed by lot. After the *centuria praerogativa* had voted, its results were announced immediately.¹³² Therefore, this voting unit could exert great influence on the course of the election. After this, the other 69 *centuriae* of the first class and the 18 *centuriae* of the *equites* voted simultaneously. When they were finished, these votes were counted and the results were declared.¹³³ Since 88 of the *centuriae* had now voted, and 97 were needed for a majority, a lot depended on the first few *centuriae* of the second *classis*. It is likely that all the *centuriae* of this class voted at the same time, while it was determined by lot in which order their results were declared, in which way the election was usually decided.¹³⁴ The winners were sworn in immediately, even though the consuls-elect would only take office in January.¹³⁵

Ambitus

¹²⁰ Taylor (1966), 47-54; Staveley (1972), 149-150, 153; Feig Vishnia (2012), 119-120.

¹²¹ Taylor (1966), 54: 70,000; MacMullen (1980), 454: 55,000; Mouritsen (2001), 30: 30,000.

¹²² Feig Vishnia (2012), 125-126.

¹²³ Feig Vishnia (2012), 113-114.

¹²⁴ Cic. *Leg.* 3.33-39.

¹²⁵ Staveley (1972), 158; Taylor (1966), 34.

¹²⁶ Feig Vishnia (2012), 120, 129-130, 133-134; Staveley (1972), 159-160; Taylor (1966), 35-36.

¹²⁷ Cf. Varro, *Rust.* 3.5.18. Taylor (1966), 55.

¹²⁸ Feig Vishnia (2012), 121-122; Staveley (1972), 177-180.

¹²⁹ This is well explained by Staveley (1972), 180, who illustrates this with a mathematical example.

¹³⁰ Asc. 94C; Taylor (1966), 98; Feig Vishnia (2012), 129.

¹³¹ Feig Vishnia (2012), 113-114. Cf. Yakobson (1999), 48-54.

¹³² Staveley (1972), 155; Feig Vishnia (2012), 123; Taylor (1966), 92-96.

¹³³ Feig Vishnia (2012), 123; Taylor (1966), 96-98; Staveley (1972), 169-171, 177-179.

¹³⁴ Staveley (1972), 169-171, 177-180.

¹³⁵ Feig Vishnia (2012), 122-123.

Election candidates could go to great lengths to shore up support. The Romans saw the need to establish legal bounds in order to keep criminal and other unwanted behavior at bay. They called illegal means of soliciting votes *ambitus*, literally meaning ‘going around something’. The first law against *ambitus* dates from 359 BC, according to Livy.¹³⁶ The second century BC saw an increase in *leges de ambitu*, but the real peak came in the first half of the first century BC.¹³⁷ These laws covered practices such as fraud, corruption, and bribery. What is interesting is that these laws became increasingly strict and laid down ever harsher punishments.¹³⁸ This suggests that *ambitus* was widespread and that legislation was unsuccessful in putting an end to it. Feig Vishnia points to the enrollment of Italian citizens after the Social War (91-88 BC) as a major reason for the rise of electoral bribery in the Late Republic, since they formed new, potentially unaffiliated, voters who sought ways to enter into the Roman elite.¹³⁹

What exactly constituted *ambitus*? We do not have a comprehensive catalogue of all things that were covered by *ambitus*. We know that it in general denoted electoral fraud, but from Cicero’s speech *Pro Murena*, held in 63 BC in defense of the successful consular candidate L. Licinius Murena who was accused of *ambitus*, we can infer some of the specific provisions of the *leges de ambitu* of Cicero’s time. For example, it was forbidden for a candidate to pay people to await and greet him.¹⁴⁰ It was also prohibited to indiscriminately give away tickets to games and dinners to people outside one’s own tribe.¹⁴¹ However, it was legal when one of the candidates’ friends did it in his own tribe on the candidate’s behalf.¹⁴² This shows there was a thin line between *ambitus* and traditional patronage. Social relations in Rome depended on mutual *beneficia* and *officia*. It was normal practice for the elite to bestow benefactions on less wealthy people in return for political support.¹⁴³ *Largitio* (largesse) was also something that was expected of candidates.¹⁴⁴ *Ambitus*, though, was seen as a twisted form of *ambitio*, apparently making abuse of traditional customs of patronage. However, there were not only moral reasons for invoking *ambitus*. Trials for *ambitus* were very much a means of attacking political rivals, both as a preemptive measure for future runs and as revenge for past defeats.¹⁴⁵

With this general background on Roman elections in mind, let us now delve deeper into our case study, namely the consular election of 64 BC, and our main protagonists, Marcus and Quintus Cicero, which are the focus of the next chapter.

¹³⁶ Livy 7.15.12-13.

¹³⁷ Staveley (1972), 202; Feig Vishnia (2012), 135-136.

¹³⁸ Feig Vishnia (2012), 136.

¹³⁹ Feig Vishnia (2012), 143-147.

¹⁴⁰ Cic. *Mur.* 68.

¹⁴¹ Cic. *Mur.* 72.

¹⁴² Staveley (1972), 202-205; cf. Cic. *Mur.* 73.

¹⁴³ Yakobson (1999), 138-147; Staveley (1972), 192-197.

¹⁴⁴ Yakobson (1999), 26-43; cf. Feig Vishnia (2012), 138.

¹⁴⁵ Feig Vishnia (2012), 145.

Chapter 3: Marcus and Quintus Cicero and the election of 64 BC

This chapter consists of two parts. The first deals with the biographical background of Marcus and Quintus Cicero, so as to develop an impression of the historical actors that are the subject of this study. Since the success of an election strategy is determined by the circumstances, it is imperative that we have an understanding of the political situation of Cicero's time.¹⁴⁶ The focus is not on Marcus' and Quintus' whole lives, but is tailored to their political careers. I pay particular heed to the aspects of their careers that can be – either chronologically or thematically – linked to the consular election of 64 BC. Since the material on Marcus' career is overly abundant, I limit myself to his political activities leading up to his candidature in 64 BC. No such limitation is necessary for an overview of Quintus' career, which was less prominent and less extensively covered in our sources. Besides that, I examine the relationship between the two brothers throughout their lives.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the consular election of 64 BC. I discuss the political circumstances of the period under consideration, Cicero's rivals for the consulship, and his core message in *In toga candida*. Finally, by implementing Hilhorst's (2015) model of hope vs. fear and continuity vs. change, I analyze the nature of Cicero's campaign. All this serves to put in place a contextual framework of the political situation in 64 BC and to get a good grasp of how the election played out.

Marcus Cicero's career before 64 BC

Marcus Tullius Cicero was not born into a patrician family, yet it was an old and wealthy one.¹⁴⁷ He was born in 106 BC in the Italian town of Arpinum. As an ambitious young man, he did not follow the usual road to glory – service in the military – but pursued a career as an orator. He proved to be very skillful at this and acquired fame and gratitude by demonstrating his abilities. Two of the earliest speeches he gave – and wanted to publish – in his career are *Pro Quinctio* and *Pro Roscio Amerino*. Cicero later confessed to Brutus that he sought the spotlight by looking for big cases.¹⁴⁸ It would be too much to go into the details of these cases, but it suffices to say that he applied himself to forensic oratory. In this way, Cicero made a name for himself and built a network around him of – often influential – people that he had successfully defended in court, who thus became indebted to him.¹⁴⁹

In 76 BC, he took the first step of the *cursus honorum* by getting elected as *quaestor* for the year 75 BC. Cicero achieved this at the youngest legal age, and was one of the first candidates to get enough votes, which was a matter of great pride to him.¹⁵⁰ The function of *quaestor*, dealing with financial administration, gave Cicero senatorial rank. He served in Sicily, where he worked for the interests of the *nobiles*, according to Plutarch.¹⁵¹ Back in Rome, he continued pleading cases in the courts. One of the most important of his career was *In Verrem*, the trial against the Sicilian governor C. Verres for corruption and extortion in 70 BC. While the trial was running, it drew a lot of attention, and Cicero was elected as *aedilis* in the same year at least partly as a result of this, again at the youngest legal age and as the top vote-getter.¹⁵² After his election, he won the case against Q. Hortensius, the

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Strohmeier (2013).

¹⁴⁷ Tatum (2018), 83.

¹⁴⁸ Cic. *Brut.* 318.

¹⁴⁹ Tatum (2018), 82-85.

¹⁵⁰ Cic. *Pis.* 2.

¹⁵¹ Plut. *Cic.* 6.2.

¹⁵² Cic. *Pis.* 2.

lawyer of Verres who was regarded as the best orator of the time.¹⁵³ As *aedilis*, Cicero was in charge of organizing public games, something that he did not do lavishly, according to his own account.¹⁵⁴

In the meantime, Cicero was busy building relations in the Italian countryside by spending time there and engaging in business transactions, specifically buying villas there.¹⁵⁵ In 67 BC he was elected as *praetor*, a magistracy that was about supervising the jury courts. Again, Cicero was the first to be elected and again did so at the youngest legal age.¹⁵⁶ Around the same time, he gave his daughter Tullia in marriage to a nobleman, C. Calpurnius Piso.¹⁵⁷ We can infer from this that Cicero was successfully making his way into the political elite of Rome. He tried to align himself with Pompey, a mighty figure in Rome, for example by supporting his command in the war against Mithridates and by defending allies of Pompey in court.¹⁵⁸ In this way, he came to be on a good footing with Pompey's circle. By now, Cicero was a serious candidate for the consulship. In 65 BC, he confided to Atticus that he wanted to announce his candidacy in July that year.¹⁵⁹ Cicero had plans in 65 BC to engage in *coitio* with Catilina, which is ironic given the later battle between them that would define the legacy of both, but eventually Catilina and Antonius would form a partnership.¹⁶⁰

Quintus Cicero's career and his relationship with his brother

The exact birthdate of Quintus Cicero is unknown, but since he took up the magistracies of *aedilis* (65 BC) and *praetor* (62 BC) four years after his brother, it is assumed that he was born in 102 BC.¹⁶¹ Quintus followed the same education as Marcus, as they both travelled through Greece and Asia on a *Bildungsreise* during the years 79-77 BC. The core of their education consisted of rhetoric, law, literature, and philosophy.¹⁶² Around the year 70 BC, Quintus married Pomponia, the sister of Atticus, who was Marcus Cicero's good friend. The marriage was arranged by Marcus. At least one son was born from Quintus' marriage in 67 BC. Pomponia was probably older and richer than Quintus.¹⁶³ We are informed that the relationship between them was not a great one, and they divorced in the mid-40s BC.¹⁶⁴ This may have caused some friction between the Cicero brothers.

Quintus had a bad temper. Marcus confronted his brother with his impetuous behavior when the latter was governor in Asia during the years 61-58 BC. He advised him not to lose his temper too often, so that the reputation of both brothers would not be tarnished.¹⁶⁵ For the rest, Quintus did a

¹⁵³ Tatum (2018), 86-87.

¹⁵⁴ Cic. *Off.* 2.57-59.

¹⁵⁵ Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3, 1.5.7, 1.6.2; Plut. *Cic.* 8.3-4; Plin. *NH* 22.12. Cicero's good relations with broad sections of the Italian elite are also manifest in Cic. *Clu.* 197-198, where he called on many of them to stand as witnesses at a trial in 66 BC.

¹⁵⁶ Cic. *Pis.* 2.

¹⁵⁷ Cic. *Att.* 1.3.3. Piso was *quaestor* in 58 BC and died the following year.

¹⁵⁸ On the mutual support between Pompey and Cicero, see Plut. *Cic.* 8.7. Cicero addressed a public meeting (*contio*) outside the courtroom as senator for the first time in 66 BC, delivering the speech *Pro lege Manilia*, also known as *De imperio Cn. Pompei*, to argue for Pompey's command in the Mithridatic War. Tribune C. Cornelius was an ally of Pompey who was defended by Cicero in court. There was some controversy surrounding the trial of Pompey's ally Manilius, as many people accused Cicero of not helping him enough as *praetor*, see Tatum (2018), 93-95. Plutarch acknowledged this criticism, but tried to exonerate Cicero, see Plut. *Cic.* 9.4-7. In any case, Cicero remained close to Pompey.

¹⁵⁹ Cic. *Att.* 1.1.1.

¹⁶⁰ Cic. *Att.* 1.2; Asc. 83C.

¹⁶¹ Van der Wal (2017), 16; Tatum (2018), 76; cf. Cic. *Att.* 1.4.1.

¹⁶² Cic. *De or.* 1.1-6, 1.23, 2.1-3, 2.10, 3.1-4; Van der Wal (2017), 16.

¹⁶³ Tatum (2018), 76.

¹⁶⁴ Van der Wal (2017), 16.

¹⁶⁵ Cic. *QFr.* 1.1.37-39, 1.2.4. Quintus' inflammable temper is also manifest in one of his letters to Tiro, *Fam.* 16.26.

solid job as governor of Asia.¹⁶⁶ When Quintus returned to Rome in 58 BC, Marcus was exiled for one year by P. Clodius Pulcher because of his harsh handling of the Catilinarian conspirators in 63 BC.¹⁶⁷ After his governorship in Asia, Quintus became a legate to Pompey in 57-56 BC. He was stationed in Sardinia to oversee the supply of grain to Rome.¹⁶⁸ In 54-53 BC, Quintus served as legate to Julius Caesar during the Gallic War.¹⁶⁹ When Marcus became governor of Cilicia in 51 BC, Quintus used his experience to help his brother with military and administrative issues.¹⁷⁰

The civil war presented them with conflicting loyalties: Marcus wanted to side with Pompey, while Quintus wanted to join Caesar's cause. For Marcus' sake, they chose to ally themselves with Pompey, a decision they both came to regret after Pompey's defeat in 48 BC. This led to a rupture between them, but Atticus was able to reconcile the two in 47 BC.¹⁷¹ Marcus and Quintus were both killed during the triumvirate in the 43 BC proscriptions.

The political climate

The political climate of the 60s BC was quite volatile. The Republic had gone through multiple civil wars at the beginning of the first century BC, but their consequences could still be felt. It were mainly the economic circumstances that were troublesome. The Sullan proscriptions had had a major disrupting effect on the social-economic situation of the Republic. In Rome and throughout Italy, there were many debts, particularly of Sullan veterans who had profited from the proscriptions but exhausted all their money afterwards, which caused instability and uprisings. Both the elite and the urban poor suffered because of this. Most notably, the economic malaise and high burdens of debt gave rise to the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63 BC, when desperate and ambitious (young) men joined Catilina in his failed coup d'état.¹⁷²

Corruption and distrust were rife in the political sphere. There was a government that could not be relied upon to do its work properly. For example, both in 65 and in 64 BC the censors failed to conduct the census, due to infighting between themselves and with the tribunes. Besides that, election fraud was widespread and on the rise, as discussed earlier.¹⁷³ Both consuls-designate were found guilty of electoral bribery in 66 BC, which must have been a blow to anyone who believed in fair and honest elections. In 64 BC, the Senate banned multiple *collegia* (social-religious clubs) out of fear for their role in political corruption and violence. The combination of a malfunctioning government, escalating election fraud, and corruption led to themes like integrity and competence becoming key issues in the election of 64 BC.¹⁷⁴

The opposing candidates in 64 BC

When Marcus Cicero informed Atticus of his plans for the coming consular election in his letter dated to July 65 BC, he also made fun of another candidate who had already started running. For this man, P. Servilius Galba, this did not work out well, as he got rejected by voters, at least partially because they were under obligation to Cicero.¹⁷⁵ We know that Galba was a patrician and served as *praetor* in

¹⁶⁶ Tatum (2018), 77; Van der Wal (2017), 16.

¹⁶⁷ Tatum (2018), 77-78.

¹⁶⁸ Tatum (2018), 78.

¹⁶⁹ *Caes. B.Gall.* 5.38-52.

¹⁷⁰ *Plut. Cic.* 36.

¹⁷¹ *Cic. Att.* 11.5-13, 11.15-16, 11.21-23.

¹⁷² See Kay (2014), esp. chapter 10; Tatum (2018), 102. See *Cic. Leg. agr.* 2.8 for an – albeit exaggerated – characterization of the dire situation of Rome in 63 BC.

¹⁷³ See the section on *ambitus* in chapter 2 above.

¹⁷⁴ Tatum (2018), 102.

¹⁷⁵ *Cic. Att.* 1.1.1.

66 BC.¹⁷⁶ He was praised as a modest and excellent man by Cicero in one of his speeches, while Asconius, the highly reputed first-century AD Ciceronian scholar, called him an upright and irreproachable man.¹⁷⁷ According to Cicero, Galba lacked esteem and popularity (*gratia*).¹⁷⁸

Other opponents, who joined the race later than Galba, were Q. Cornificius, L. Cassius Longinus, and C. Licinius Sacerdos. Cornificius had been a tribune in 69 BC and *praetor* in 66 BC.¹⁷⁹ His candidature was already predicted as a certainty by Cicero in 65 BC. However, Cicero did not have a high opinion of Cornificius, as he expected Atticus to either laugh or sigh about his candidacy.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, according to Asconius he was a decent and temperate man.¹⁸¹ Cassius had been *praetor* in 66 BC. He came from an old and noble family, but was said to be fat and stupid.¹⁸² Sacerdos was presumably older than the rest, as he had been *praetor* a decade before his consular run (75 BC). In the early 60s BC, he had served as a legate in Crete.¹⁸³ Cicero later praised Sacerdos for his strength and perseverance, while Asconius described him as being beyond reproach.¹⁸⁴ There were several other candidates who I will not discuss here, as they did not have much of a chance and dropped out along the way.¹⁸⁵

The most fearsome rivals were Gaius Antonius Hybrida and Lucius Sergius Catilina. Both men came from distinguished families. Antonius' family had only recently been made great by his father, the consul, general and orator M. Antonius (143-87 BC).¹⁸⁶ C. Antonius was the uncle of the future triumvir Mark Antony (83-30 BC). Catilina, in contrast to Antonius, came from an old patrician family whose glory had been in decline for several generations.

Neither Antonius nor Catilina had an unblemished track-record. As an officer of Sulla in Greece in the mid-80s BC, Antonius had committed many deeds of violence and extortion against the local population. In this way, Antonius got the *cognomen* Hybrida, meaning 'half-blood', which was not a favorable qualification.¹⁸⁷ He was tried for his acts in 76 BC, but was acquitted on procedural grounds. However, in 70 BC he was dispelled from the Senate after all, because of his past misdeeds. In 68 BC, Antonius became a tribune and returned to the Senate, after which he was *praetor* in 66 BC.¹⁸⁸ Catilina was an officer under Sulla as well, being involved in the many proscriptions that occurred under the regime, from which he profited greatly. He became *praetor* in 68 BC. After that, Catilina was governor of Africa during the years 67-66 BC. When he returned to Rome, he was indicted for extortion and corruption. The trial, which took place in 65 BC, prevented him from running for the consulship in that year.¹⁸⁹ Cicero wrote in July of 65 BC that he regarded Catilina's candidacy a certainty for the next year,

¹⁷⁶ Tatum (2018), 97, 186.

¹⁷⁷ Cic. *Mur.* 17; Asc. 82C.

¹⁷⁸ Cic. *Mur.* 17.

¹⁷⁹ Tatum (2018), 99.

¹⁸⁰ Cic. *Att.* 1.1.1.

¹⁸¹ Asc. 82C.

¹⁸² Cic. *Cat.* 3.16; Asc. 82C; Tatum (2018), 100, 186.

¹⁸³ Tatum (2018), 99-100.

¹⁸⁴ Cic. *Planc.* 27; Asc. 82C.

¹⁸⁵ See Tatum (2018), 99.

¹⁸⁶ Tatum (2018), 188. Cicero was an admirer of M. Antonius, whom he used as one of the main protagonists in *De oratore*.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Plin. *NH* 8.213: *hybrida* was a qualification that was used for half-savage, half-tame beasts, particularly pigs.

¹⁸⁸ Tatum (2018), 100-101, 188-189.

¹⁸⁹ Tatum (2018), 100-101, 189; Van der Wal (2017), 14.

provided that the jury would conclude ‘that the sun does not shine at noon’.¹⁹⁰ In a way, that was exactly what happened.

Cicero making his case during the campaign: *In toga candida*

The political and economic conditions of the time and the nature of his opponents provided Cicero with a recipe for a negative, attacking campaign. At the time of Cicero’s consular run, feelings of despair and fear were easier to tap into than hope or optimism. Given that his two major competitors were vulnerable to attacks due to their personal history, it is understandable that Cicero would take an aggressive course.

This becomes evident in the speech that he gave shortly before the day of the election, *In toga candida*, of which parts are preserved in Asconius’ commentary. The occasion of this key speech was a *lex de ambitu* that the Senate had passed, but which was vetoed by the tribune Q. Mucius Orestinus.¹⁹¹ When the Senate debated Orestinus’ (ab)use of his veto power, Cicero, in his white toga, took the floor to unleash a fierce rhetorical attack against his rivals, Catilina and Antonius. Here I submit a concise analysis of *In toga candida* to find out how Cicero chose to step into the spotlight on the eve of the election, giving his final electoral plea to the highest body in Roman politics. In the next section, I give a characterization of Cicero’s campaign on the basis of this analysis, using the model of insider vs. outsider and hope vs. fear.

The speech *In toga candida* is directed only against Cicero’s two main rivals, Catilina and Antonius. Apparently, the other candidates were not capable of mounting a credible bid for the consulship, wherefore Cicero left them out of his speech. Cicero’s focus is on the scandals from his opponents’ past, and he aims more attacks at Catilina than at Antonius. He confronts both at the beginning of his speech by casting their actions in a bad light. He insinuates that they are engaging in a conspiracy with the help of a rich nobleman. Asconius adds that Catilina and Antonius did indeed form a *coitio* and suggests that their wealthy donor may have been M. Licinius Crassus or C. Julius Caesar, since they saw their influence threatened by Cicero’s rise.¹⁹²

Antonius is attacked for his severe misdeeds in Greece. He had plundered the Greek allies and, when he was brought to trial for this, he escaped his verdict on procedural grounds.¹⁹³

‘[W]hom can he count as a client, he who claimed that in his own state he could not contend with an alien in a fair trial?’ (Asc. 84C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

Cicero also reminded his audience of the fact that he was elected first as *praetor*, while recalling that Antonius needed Cicero’s help to move from last place to third.¹⁹⁴ Cicero addresses him personally and accuses him of ingratitude for this favor:

‘Do you not realize that I was made praetor in first place, but you (only) by compliance of our competitors, whipping in the votes of the centuries, and in particular the good turn that I did you, were tacked on in third place instead of last.’ (Asc. 85C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

Another line of attack against Antonius is that he debased himself by chariot-riding and acting like a gladiator, for these things were considered to be shameful for a freeborn person.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Cic. *Att.* 1.1.1. Cicero meant that Catilina was guilty by all means, but that he would probably be acquitted by a jury that was bribed by him.

¹⁹¹ Asc. 83C.

¹⁹² Asc. 83C.

¹⁹³ Asc. 84C, 88C.

¹⁹⁴ Cicero addresses this issue in Asc. 85C and revisits it in Asc. 92-93C.

¹⁹⁵ Asc. 88C, 93C.

The effect of these invectives against Antonius is to – indirectly, for it is not mentioned explicitly – contrast him with his father, Marcus Antonius, who stood in high renown. It was this man who had brought the *gens Antonia* to fame, power and prominence. Anyone who listened to Cicero’s speech on the Senate floor, however, had to conclude that Gaius Antonius was not so great and not up to the standard that his father set. Thus, the focus of Cicero’s plea is on merit, which he contrasts with his rivals’ descent. He wants his audience to judge the candidates on their merit and track-record.

Catilina is even more severely attacked than Antonius. He is accused of the murder of many citizens, which happened during the civil war between Sulla and Marius. Cicero specifically goes into the case of M. Gratidianus.¹⁹⁶ He was a close friend of Cicero and a favorite of the people, who was murdered in cruel fashion by Catilina in 82 BC:

‘How great is his [Catilina’s] regard for the people he demonstrated when in full sight of the people he severed the neck of a man who was a favourite of the people.’ (Asc. 87C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

‘That head, even then still showing signs of life and breath, he brought to Sulla in his own hands all the way from the Janiculum to the Temple of Apollo.’ (Asc. 90C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

Catilina is furthermore confronted at length with his extortion and oppression as governor of Africa:

‘Why should I stress the violence you did to your province? For I hesitate to tell of your conduct there, since you were found not guilty. I must suppose that Roman knights told lies, the written depositions of a most honourable community were falsified, that Q. Metellus Pius told lies, that Africa told lies; that those jurymen who adjudged you innocent saw something or other (in your favour). What a wretch, that you should not perceive that by that judgement you were not so much acquitted as preserved for some sterner court-hearing and greater punishment.’¹⁹⁷

Cicero reminds the Senators that they reprimanded Catilina for these acts.¹⁹⁸ He implies that Catilina’s acquittal was in fact coordinated with the prosecutor P. Clodius:

‘He [Catilina] found out how effective the courts were on his acquittal—if that (process) can be called a court or that (verdict) an acquittal.’ (Asc. 85C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

Lastly, Cicero accuses Catilina of sexual misconduct and incest:

‘Whenever you were caught in adultery, whenever you caught adulterers yourself, when arising from the same act of gross indecency you found yourself a woman to be both wife and daughter.’ (Asc. 91C; transl. R.G. Lewis, OUP 2006)

Does Cicero go into the matter at hand at all, the *lex de ambitu* that was vetoed by the tribune? Yes, he does, briefly. He implies that the tribune, Q. Mucius Orestinus, vetoed the bill to please Catilina. Cicero makes it a personal argument with the tribune by reminding him that Orestinus asked Cicero to defend him when he was accused of robbery, which Cicero did. Cicero therefore deems it strange that Orestinus has recently claimed that Cicero is unworthy of the consulship. If the tribune thought that Cicero was the best defender of his own cause, why does he not want the republic to be in good hands?¹⁹⁹ This is not only ungrateful, but it also makes no sense, according to Cicero.

Cicero ends his oration by metaphorically calling his rivals ‘two daggers that are drawn against the republic’.²⁰⁰ The overall tone of the speech is heavily negative. Asconius adds that Catilina and

¹⁹⁶ Asc. 83-84C, 87C, 89-90C.

¹⁹⁷ Asc. 86-87C.

¹⁹⁸ Asc. 85C, 89C.

¹⁹⁹ Asc. 86C.

²⁰⁰ Asc. 93C.

Antonius both replied to Cicero by criticizing him for being a *homo novus*.²⁰¹ We can conclude that Cicero's case rests on merit and, in large part, in a negative way. His rivals are unsuitable for the job because of their low capacities and immorality. The direness of the situation, however, calls for a capable and trusted leader. Thus, Cicero hopes to make up for his absence of noble lineage by emphasizing his own qualities and his opponents' lack thereof.

Running as a negative outsider

The model of insider vs. outsider and hope vs. fear is a simple yet effective way of characterizing an election campaign. If we know the nature of Cicero's campaign, we can make hypotheses about the accompanying election strategy. I take the model from the Dutch political scientist and former politician Pieter Hilhorst, who uses it in his memoir on his failure during the local election of 2014.²⁰² The model consists of two questions, which can lead to four different outcomes. Does the candidate run as an insider to defend the continuity of the status quo, or does he run as an outsider to challenge the status quo and advocate change? Does the candidate have a positive message of hope and optimism, or a negative one of fear and pessimism? The four options that are the result of these questions are laid out in the quadrant below (Table 2). Although these are mere ideal types, they can serve as a heuristic tool to understand an election campaign. The model is not normative, but descriptive: it helps us get a grasp of election campaigns, without judging which strategy ought to be followed.

Let me illustrate the model by giving some examples. A case in point of a hopeful campaign that defended the status quo, is that of the Dutch prime-minister Ruud Lubbers (CDA) in 1986. The economy was on the rise since he had taken office in 1982, wherefore the slogan was *Laat Lubbers zijn karwei afmaken* ('Let Lubbers finish his job'). This was a campaign that stressed how good things were going and that wanted to keep it that way. Another example is the campaign of the Turkish prime-minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AKP) in 2007. His party was in power and pointed to its successes by using the slogan 'Don't stop, keep going on', therefore building on optimism and continuity.

Defending the status quo can also be done in a negative way. This was the course taken by the German chancellor Konrad Adenauer (CDU) in 1957 by adopting the slogan *Keine Experimente* ('No experiments'). He had already been in office since 1949 and the aim was to scare voters away from the alternative candidates. Another example is the 1997 campaign of the British Conservatives under prime-minister John Major. They coined the slogan *New Labour, New Danger*, which was printed on a poster that showed Labour leader Blair with demon eyes. The Tories wanted to hold on to their power by creating fear for their rivals.

When a candidate stresses how bad current affairs are, he can use pessimism and fear as a way of challenging the status quo. A good example of this is Donald Trump (Republican) in 2016. As a businessman and TV personality, he was the ultimate outsider, constantly stressing how bad things were going and that drastic change was needed to turn around all the catastrophes that were unfolding. Another case is the 2015 campaign of the extreme-left Greek politician Alexis Tsipras (Syriza). At the height of the Greek debt crisis, he ran against the status quo that was represented by the Greek government, the European Union, and the international financial institutions. He pointed to the financial suffering in Greece, tapped into people's despair, and advocated a radical departure from the status quo.

Challenging the status quo can also be done by offering a hopeful alternative. A good example of this is Democrat Barack Obama's campaign in 2008, a relative outsider as an unknown black Senator, who advocated hope and change in a positive way (*Yes, we can*). Another example is the campaign of

²⁰¹ Asc. 93C.

²⁰² Hilhorst (2015), 148-150.

Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, who criticized the status quo of the 1970s, which included a declining economy, by advocating change and optimism.

	Defending status quo	Challenging status quo
Hope	Lubbers 1986 Erdogan 2007	Reagan 1980 Obama 2008
Fear	Adenauer 1957 Major 1997	Tsipras 2015 Trump 2016

Table 2: model for characterizing an election campaign, based on Hilhorst (2015), 148-150.

Where would Cicero fit in this quadrant? Since he stresses negativity and pessimism and is fighting as an outsider against candidates that represent the status quo, I would place him in the bottom right corner. First, he runs on a platform of pessimism, provoking fear for his rivals and fear for what would happen if he were not elected. This becomes amply clear in his speech *In toga candida*, which is discussed in the section above. Thus, Cicero’s arguments to persuade voters have a profoundly negative point of view.

Second, he challenges the status quo as an outsider, though this deserves some nuance. Cicero is not mounting a challenge to the traditional order of Roman society. This is not to be expected either, since the ancient Romans, unlike many modern Western citizens, valued tradition, order and continuity over change and revolution. In fact, one could make the case that Cicero is trying to *defend* the *res publica* against his rival candidates. Yet defending the status quo would imply some sort of incumbency and building on what has already been achieved, which is not really the case for Cicero. What he does is presenting himself as the alternative to his rivals. Cicero runs as the outsider, as a *homo novus* who wants to conquer his place in the political establishment of Rome. Because of their noble descent, Catilina and Antonius represent, to a certain extent, the status quo and the establishment. Since Cicero, as a fresh face, is stressing his difference from them, I put him in the bottom right category.

Could we be audacious and identify common patterns between Cicero’s campaign and modern campaigns that challenge the status quo by way of fear? For example, are there instances in which Cicero is Trumpian? Notwithstanding all the aspects in which they are different, we can see some similarities. Both were outsiders: Cicero was a *homo novus* from a plebeian family with his birth roots outside of Rome, while Trump had no experience in politics whatsoever. Following from this, they both looked to beat establishment candidates and presented themselves as a singular alternative to those candidates. Trump and Cicero both used fear as a main argument for getting people to vote for them. Both focused greatly on the flaws of their opponents, stressing their immorality and incapacity. Coupled with this, Trump and Cicero were both masters in using rhetoric to forcefully characterize their rivals in a negative way. Examples of how Cicero did this are abundant in *In toga candida*, while the nickname ‘Crooked Hillary’ summarizes Trump’s habitual usage of personal attacks. These are some elements that show a comparison between the two is possible.

Now that we have established that there are, at least some, common patterns between Cicero’s campaign and Trump’s campaign, we can go a step further, so that we can hypothesize about Cicero’s campaign strategy. What all the election campaigns in the bottom right corner seem to have in common, is that they are of a populist mold. I define populism as a brand of politics that comes from outside the establishment, that is superficial concerning content, and that has as its essence saying what people like to hear in order to gain popularity. This is manifest in the two examples given above, Trump’s presidential run in 2016 and Tsipras’ campaign for the parliamentary elections of 2015. Both made a strong claim to represent the will of the people in their quest to defeat establishment candidates and managed to tap into what the voters wanted to hear. Another example is the Italian Five-Star Movement (M5S), that won a major electoral victory in 2018 by denouncing corruption in the

establishment and by promising people free income. It is therefore my hypothesis that Cicero's campaign can be qualified as populist, so that his campaign strategy would include him tapping into people's dispositions, condemning the opposition candidates, and devoting little attention to a program of content.

With this context, characterization, and hypothesis regarding the election of 64 BC in mind, let us now turn toward the political public relations strategy that Quintus advises for his brother's campaign in the *Commentariolum petitionis*, which is the focus of the next two chapters.

Chapter 4: *Studia amicorum*: managing the internal public relations

Chapters 4 and 5 form two sides of the analytical coin. This chapter is concerned with the internal PR management, whereas the next is about the management of the external relations with the voting public. Having a good campaign organization is essential for running a good campaign. Likewise, it is paramount to have a thorough grasp of the internal organization of the campaign in order to understand the management of the campaign's external public relations. As stated at the beginning of this thesis, I use a functional approach to political public relations. That means that I study how the political relations with key publics were built and established and what their function was in the election campaign. In my analysis, I apply six modern relationship criteria – honesty, trust, dependency, reciprocity, intimacy, and common interests – to Quintus' relations strategy, and I assess whether the candidate-friends relationships are of a personal, professional or community type.

Quintus puts what we would call the campaign organization under the heading *studia amicorum*, the efforts of friends.²⁰³ In this chapter, I apply a close reading to the paragraphs 16-40 of the *Commentariolum petitionis*, which are devoted to the *studia amicorum*.²⁰⁴ The method of close reading enables us to get insight into the content and meaning of the text in a critical way. Quintus, roughly taken, tackles three issues in this section: how to retain existing friends (*Comm.* 16-24), how to acquire new friends (*Comm.* 25-33), and how to deploy the attendance of friends in the campaign (*Comm.* 34-38). I follow this division in order to find out who Cicero's friends are in the campaign, how their support can be solicited, and how Cicero's friends are expected to contribute to the campaign.

Maintaining relations with existing friends

We saw in chapter 2 that 'friendship' (*amicitia*) could have a broad definition in election time. That is exactly the point that Quintus stresses in the *Commentariolum*, distinguishing between *amicitiae* in normal life and during a battle for political office:

'During an election campaign, however, the definition of the word "friend" is broader than it is in the rest of life. Indeed, if anyone shows you any goodwill, seeks your company, or makes a habit of visiting your home, that man should be counted as one of your friends.' (*Comm.* 16; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

This implies that Quintus, under regular circumstances, would only value an authentic, intimate, philosophical friendship, which was an ideal relation based on virtue and affection.²⁰⁵ He expects his brother Cicero, and any other possible readers from their circle of acquaintances and relatives, to agree with him that authentic friendships are superior, as becomes manifest in his explicit explanation that a campaign requires different friendships than normal life.²⁰⁶ Examples of authentic friendships that Quintus gives, are relations through blood, marriage, or social fellowship. Quintus pays heed to this ideal and might therefore presuppose Cicero to have a certain reluctance to engage in strictly utilitarian friendships.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ *Comm.* 16.

²⁰⁴ Quintus does not completely stick to this organization, as he also talks about friends in the section on gaining the goodwill of the people (*Comm.* 41-53), which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

²⁰⁵ Tatum (2018), 221-222. Quintus calls this *amicitia ex causa iustiore* (*Comm.* 16).

²⁰⁶ On the intended readership of the *Commentariolum petitionis*, see chapter 1, specifically the section 'Purpose of the treatise'.

²⁰⁷ Quintus marks his transition from utilitarian to authentic friendships with the words *sed tamen*, which can be taken to signal that he regards normal friendships as superior to utilitarian ones.

In normal life, engaging in such relations could be seen as ridiculous (*absurde*).²⁰⁸ However, an election campaign is an extraordinary situation, according to Quintus. This has implications for a candidate's friendships. Because of the exceptional nature of election campaigns, friendships of the utilitarian kind are perfectly justifiable (*honeste*).²⁰⁹ In fact, being able to have these kinds of socially inferior friendships is one of the few advantages of running a campaign.²¹⁰ This reveals that, even though they were not well thought-of philosophically, these relations could be very effective from a practical point of view.

Furthermore, Cicero should see to it that he is on a good footing with members of his household and close relatives, including his fellow tribesmen, neighbors, clients, freedmen, and slaves.²¹¹ For they are, according to Quintus, the principal source of rumors and thereby of one's reputation. Therefore, Cicero should make sure that they love him and want him to succeed.²¹² For this category of people, who are also Cicero's friends in a non-electoral context, intimacy and affection are thus of the utmost importance.

How did Cicero himself think about *amicitia*? In his philosophical work *De amicitia*, he unfolds his notions on friendship. He defines it as a relation of goodwill, which he traces back to the etymology of the word: *amicitia* would be derived from *amor* ('love').²¹³ Although the reciprocal exchange of services is part of it, utility, calculation, or profit can by no means be the *raison d'être* of friendship. Instead, it arises out of love and affection.²¹⁴ Everything in a friendship is genuine and honest, according to Cicero, there is no room for pretension.²¹⁵ However, it seems like Cicero is holding out an idealized version of friendship, as he admits in *De finibus* there is another kind of friendship, namely *mediocres amicitiae* ('ordinary friendships').²¹⁶ These are relations with acquaintances, supporters and allies for utilitarian purposes. Cicero also mentions these kinds of relations (*comites et adiutores*) in a letter to advise Quintus on his governorship of Asia.²¹⁷ In sum, Cicero presents himself as a firm believer in authentic, intimate friendships, yet is no stranger to the utilitarian version of *amicitia*.

All types of friends, whether genuine or utilitarian, should be assiduously cultivated. At the beginning of his discussion, Quintus gives Cicero some general guidelines on how to obtain their support:

'The support of friends (*amicorum studia*) ought to be obtained by means of favours and the reciprocation of favours (*beneficiis*), the proper observance of one's own responsibilities (*officiis*), long-standing familiarity (*vetustate*), and an accommodating and agreeable nature (*facilitate ac iucunditate naturae*).' (*Comm.* 16; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

In this lapidary quote, Quintus briefly lays out what will follow. Long-standing familiarity and congeniality can be linked to the relationship parameter of intimacy, and hence invoke high-standing notions of authentic friendship. However, they barely feature in Quintus' treatise. The lion's share of Quintus' advice is devoted to *beneficia* and *officia*. It is therefore no coincidence that these are mentioned first. It is my opinion that these *beneficia* and *officia* involve businesslike reciprocity,

²⁰⁸ *Comm.* 25.

²⁰⁹ *Comm.* 16, 25.

²¹⁰ *Comm.* 25.

²¹¹ Not much attention is paid to clients by Quintus. Since Cicero was no nobleman, he did not have an extensive network of patronage. Instead, as a *homo novus* he had built a network of connections and people who were under obligation to him because of his work as a forensic orator. See Tatum (2018), 228.

²¹² *Comm.* 17.

²¹³ *Cic. Amic.* 26.

²¹⁴ *Cic. Amic.* 27, 31.

²¹⁵ *Cic. Amic.* 26.

²¹⁶ *Cic. Fin.* 2.84.

²¹⁷ *Cic. QFr.* 1.1.11.

dependency and trust, wherefore the candidate-friend relationships can be called professional, as I seek to demonstrate below.

A good illustration of the professional nature of Cicero's friendships is the case of four men who are tied to him because of his legal assistance to them:

'For, during the past two years, you have put under an obligation to yourself four religious fraternities (*sodalitates*), whose memberships include men of immense influence in elections (...). I know what these men's fellow members pledged and promised to you when they brought you their cases, for I was there.' (*Comm.* 19; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

It is telling that Quintus ranks as Cicero's friends people who he has put under obligation to him. Because of their business relation, namely the legal assistance that Cicero provides them, there is a bond that Quintus feels free to call friendship. Furthermore, the substance of these people's friendship consists of their promises to contribute to Cicero's canvass. We are not informed, sadly, about the details of their pledges and promises. All the information that we do have, though, points toward a professional relationship. Friendship is defined by what each party can deliver for the other. There is no reason to assume there is any intimacy in the relation between Cicero and the four religious leaders, as Quintus writes about them from a purely professional standpoint. Moreover, he attaches no importance whatsoever to any personal connection that may exist between them, as Quintus instead focusses on the *organizations* that these men lead and what these have to offer. The electoral support of the *sodalitates* is part of an impersonal business agreement, a classic *quid pro quo*.

Whereas intimacy is absent, the dimension of dependency does come very strongly to the fore in this passage. Quintus is clear that the four men are dependent on Cicero, since they have come to him for legal help and have thus been 'put under an obligation'.²¹⁸ Dependency is therefore a source and bedrock of friendship, with one party being bound by the other. This means that the two sides are not on equal terms, but that there is a plain relation of power. However, the dependency seems, at least up to a point, to cut both ways, since these men have something to offer to the candidate in return. Quintus writes they have proven to be skilled and experienced in helping people get elected, which is obviously something that Cicero could use. We can again infer from this passage in the *Commentariolum* that the relations between the candidate and his friends are fundamentally professional. Quintus adds that he was present when these deals were made, proving that he played an important part in organizing and managing Cicero's campaign.

In *Comm.* 18, Quintus discusses other friends that can play a role in this way. He advises his brother to be seen with distinguished men on the campaign trail. Even if these men, who carry great renown because of their lineage or office, are not very active in canvassing for Cicero, they will still give him prestige (*dignitas*) and, above all, they will bring an element of pageantry (*species*). This seems to me to be, *mutatis mutandis*, identical to the way that modern candidates seek to associate themselves with movie stars and other famous persons, hoping to improve their image by introducing a show element. Cicero is also advised to ensure himself of the backing of incumbent magistrates, especially consuls and to a lesser extent tribunes, for they supervise the election and can protect Cicero's legal rights (*ius*) during the process.²¹⁹

Finally, Cicero should certify the support of men who have influence in the tribes and the centuries, for they can deliver him the votes (*centurias conficere*). He should give them something in return, since these men are eager for advancement.²²⁰ Quintus, in *Comm.* 24, refers to wealthy people

²¹⁸ These four men were: C. Fundanius, Q. Gallius, C. Cornelius, and C. Orchivius. See chapter 1 for the controversy on the trial of Q. Gallius.

²¹⁹ *Comm.* 18.

²²⁰ *Comm.* 18. These were probably Italians who had influence in their communities and were making their way to the top of Roman society. The principle of reciprocity is also highlighted here.

who are influential in their communities, yet have never canvassed for any candidate before. Since the number of people that engaged in canvassing was quite small, these people could make a difference.²²¹ Cicero has to cultivate (*inservire*) these men so that they know exactly what he expects them to do on his behalf. This shows that it was Quintus' strategy to target people through others and in clusters. We can see this as a parallel to the deployment of surrogates in modern campaigns. We saw in chapter 3 that it is common practice in modern election campaigns to put forward high-profile staff members, such as a communications director, or prominent personalities to make the candidate's case. One of the reasons for this is practical: a candidate cannot be everywhere at the same time and address every audience. But another reason is that it allows the candidate to tap into his surrogate's authority or influence over other people. The effect of this tactic is that people will vote for a candidate because they trust the persons who openly support him. This is the result that Quintus is after. The same effect can be applied to another modern campaign routine that we see reflected in this part of his advice, namely the issuing of endorsements, which means that prominent, authoritative figures, mostly fellow politicians, put their weight behind a candidate by declaring their support for him. Thus, Quintus envisages his brother to gain supporters through a chain of influential friends.

According to Quintus there are three ways to incentivize friends to support the campaign: favors done to them, the expectation of future favors, and personal affection. Some friends are won over because of favors that Cicero has done them in the past:

'[I]t is owing to the most trivial of favours that men are led to believe that they have a satisfactory reason to support a canvass. All the more (...) those men whom you have actually saved from ruin'. (*Comm.* 21; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

It does not matter whether Cicero's benefactions have been large or small, as people are driven by the same moral duty to reciprocate. The principle of reciprocation is thus equally valid for all friends, irrespective of the size of the favors that Cicero has done, since they have become dependent on him. Since Cicero's friends are under obligation to him, they should pay him back by supporting his campaign. Most of these friends are people that Cicero has defended in court, with Quintus even saying that these relations form the bedrock of the campaign: 'your campaign is stoutly fortified by the kind of friendships that you have acquired by defending others in court'.²²² Through his labors in forensic oratory, Cicero has tied these friends to him and should therefore be able to count on their loyalty and their services. Quintus expresses confidence that these friends will turn up and support Cicero, because no one will ever respect them if they forsake their moral responsibility to reciprocate in this crucial time of an election. '[I]f men were sufficiently grateful, all of this should already be arranged for you, just as I am confident that it has been arranged.'²²³ Nevertheless, Cicero is advised to explicitly ask them for their help and make them believe that they are doing him a great favor.²²⁴ He should stress the urgency of his request by pointing out that he has never before asked his friends for their help, and that there will be no better opportunity for them to show their gratitude.²²⁵ We clearly see from this passage that the dimensions of reciprocity and dependency go hand in hand in the candidate-friends relationships.

Secondly, friends can be swayed by the promise or expectation of future favors. People who fall in this category are more dutiful, according to Quintus. They do not have as much of a moral responsibility to reciprocate as a practical need – hence dependency – to secure Cicero's favor, wherefore they will be inclined to work harder. Cicero should readily indicate to them that his *auxilium*

²²¹ Mouritsen (2001), 92-100; Tatum (2018), 236.

²²² *Comm.* 20; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018.

²²³ *Comm.* 19; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018.

²²⁴ *Comm.* 21.

²²⁵ *Comm.* 19-20.

(both legal help as lawyer and protection as consul) is available to them. Cicero should also point out that he is keeping an eye on their efforts: this can be both a positive encouragement and a warning against laziness.²²⁶ The incentive of future favors, along with the emphasis on gratitude in the paragraph above, confirms that there was a strong social norm of reciprocity in Rome. It entails that a repayment of debt does not end a relationship, but in fact strengthens and continues it, meaning that Cicero, in his turn, will have to reciprocate his friends for their support in the campaign.

Thirdly, friends who are voluntary supporters are incentivized by personal affection. Cicero has to encourage them by expressing his gratefulness and goodwill. He needs to treat each according to his own motives, show them that he has strong sympathy for them and thus give them hope that a real friendship may grow.

‘You will need to encourage their loyalty by showing them your gratitude, by adapting your conversation with each individual to the particular motives that lie behind his support for you, by displaying how your goodwill towards them is as strong as theirs towards you, and by leading them to expect that their friendship with you will lead to real intimacy.’ (*Comm.* 23; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

This is an easy category of friends to maintain and to deploy, since they are already favorably disposed to the candidate. They should be treated with familiarity to give them the impression that intimacy may arise, yet with a professional intention, as Quintus adds that Cicero should carefully judge individually how valuable these people really are and give them tasks according to their capacities.²²⁷

While Quintus stresses that his brother should separate the useful from the useless supporters, he should treat them both equally friendly.²²⁸ The fact that the candidate has to distinguish between reliable and unreliable friends, means that there should be a degree of trust in order for a friendship to blossom. It is my conviction that this trust is not of a personal nature (having confidentiality and goodwill towards the other), but of a professional type (knowing that the other party is capable of and willing to meet his obligations), as becomes evident in the following passage:

‘There are other men, however, who are ineffectual or even odious to their fellow tribesmen and lack the character or skill to be relied on in a pinch. See that you recognize these men for what they are, lest you repose too great a hope in someone only to get too little assistance in return.’ (*Comm.* 24; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

This again proves that friendship in the context of an election campaign is of a professional nature, centered around the question of how much friends can deliver, with the level of investment on the part of the candidate being based on a rational cost-benefit analysis.

In line with this, Quintus warns his brother for false friends. He says that campaigns are full of deceit (*fraus*), treachery (*insidiae*), and faithlessness (*perfidia*). He is afraid that Cicero’s unmatched moral qualities have led some of his friends to envy him. In that way, they have become false, unreliable friends.²²⁹ Quintus urges Cicero to never openly question anyone’s loyalty, even if they are manifestly disloyal, because suspicion hampers friendly relationships. Honesty is thus not recommended in this case, since it is not subservient to good relations. This is a contrast to what Cicero himself said on friendship, who wrote that there can be no pretension or dishonesty in a friendship, as we saw above. This proves that the campaign is founded on utilitarian relations where genuine feelings of intimacy are of no more than secondary importance. Still, while not communicating his suspicions directly, Cicero should have a very clear distinction in his mind of reliable and unreliable supporters.²³⁰

²²⁶ *Comm.* 22.

²²⁷ *Comm.* 23.

²²⁸ *Comm.* 24.

²²⁹ *Comm.* 39.

²³⁰ *Comm.* 35.

What does this tell us about *amicitia*? The great Roman historian Syme went as far as to say that ‘*amicitia* was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality’.²³¹ Although there is truth in his statement, it does not do justice to the esteem that Quintus expresses toward authentic and intimate friendship, as we saw earlier in this section. Syme is correct, in my opinion, in arguing that intimacy or congeniality is not the most important element of *amicitia*. However, intimacy cannot be indiscriminately ruled out for every friendship. Quintus explicitly draws a line between regular friendships and electoral friendships. Whereas genuine intimacy can be virtually absent from utilitarian relationships, it is certainly present in more authentic friendships (such as family relations and close acquaintances), so that it still is an important, pursuable aspect of the Roman notion of friendship. Even in utilitarian relations, intimacy is a lofty ideal, as Cicero should convince his utilitarian friends that their alliance is not only for the duration of the campaign, but can grow into an intimate friendship, as becomes evident in the quote from *Comm.* 23 above. While Syme has set the tone in the debate on *amicitia*, recent scholarship has become more nuanced by allowing for congenial sentiments in Roman friendly relations.²³² My analysis contributes to this more nuanced take on *amicitia*, yet also partly vindicates Syme in the sense that the candidate-friends relationships in the *Commentariolum* are of a profoundly professional nature, revolving primarily around the reciprocal exchange of services, with intimacy being of secondary importance.

Building relations with new friends

When he begins his discussion of establishing relations with new friends, Quintus briefly revisits the morality of utilitarian friendships, which he had already discussed in *Comm.* 16. He says that a candidate for office is not only able to make utilitarian friendships, but is in fact expected to do so on a large scale.²³³

Quintus assumes that anybody would be willing to become Cicero’s friend. The reason for this lies in the promising prospect of being able to count on Cicero’s favor. Therefore, we see that reciprocity is not only the basis of maintaining friendly relations, but also of acquiring them. Cicero is urged to make this clear to people he wants to win over. He should moreover stress that a friendship with him may grow into a permanent relation, as was the case with existing friends:

[T]here is nobody (...) whom you could not easily convince (...) that by his doing you a favour he could gain your friendship (*promereatur se ut ames*) and put you under an obligation to him – provided he was made to understand that you hold him in high esteem, that you are sincere (*ex animo agere*), that he is making a good investment for himself (*bene se ponere*), and that out of this will come a friendship that is secure and lasting (*firmam et perpetuam amicitiam*) instead of one that is temporary and sought only for the purpose of winning his vote.’ (*Comm.* 26; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

It is possible that Quintus gives the advice to make utilitarian friendships enduring and stable, because this brings a connotation of affection and intimacy. Estimation, sincerity and, above all, the verb *amare* confer a sense of affection and personal friendship. The prospect of intimacy would evoke lofty notions of genuine friendship, which would induce people to become Cicero’s friend. However, I do not think Quintus’ first priority is intimacy. My interpretation of this passage is that Quintus has a professional relationship in mind. This comes most strongly to the fore in his notion that friendship materializes in a friend putting Cicero under obligation. That makes *amicitia* a relation of power, dependency, and need fulfillment. The professional focus is also visible in the manner Quintus tries to sell friendship as a way of making a good investment for oneself. This implies that friendship is an alliance for self-advancement. That is why I think Quintus’ *firma et perpetua amicitia* does not mean a durable,

²³¹ Syme (1939), 12.

²³² Cf. Tatum (2018), 222, who calls Syme’s view ‘excessive’ and ‘reductive’.

²³³ *Comm.* 25.

intimate relationship, but, on the contrary, a stable and enduring businesslike partnership, which carries a connotation of intimacy.

Quintus contrasts his brother's good standing and reputation with that of his rivals. Since most people wanted to avoid friendship with his rivals, Quintus says, they are drawn to Cicero and are happy to become his friend.²³⁴ Since the other rivals had rather unblemished records, Quintus must be limiting himself to the main rivals Catilina and Antonius. He claims that they were too immoral for people to even consider a utilitarian friendship with them. However, we should take this statement with a grain of salt, as Antonius succeeded in getting elected and Catilina came very close.²³⁵ We learn from this that Quintus' essay is extremely partisan, not that of an independent counselor.

Not only are Cicero's rivals immoral, but Antonius is also said to be bad at one of the basic conditions of campaigning, namely recognizing people and remembering their names (*nomenclatio*). In Quintus' opinion, this is a very important aspect of canvassing, as voters will not back a candidate they do not know, unless he is extremely qualified. Quintus aims to be realistic when it comes to his brother's chances, as he does not put him in the category of exceptionally excellent men who do not need to canvass. Instead, he underlines Cicero's merit, virtues, and hard work in the campaign. 'Indeed, nothing seems stupider to me than believing that a man whom you do not even know favours your candidature.'²³⁶ Thus, a basic level of familiarity is required, and this entails knowing people's names. This tells us that voters want to be courted and that they want the candidate to put in a real effort for their vote. Whether this amounts to an intimate relation, is severely doubtful. Rather, *nomenclatio* seems to be about giving the *impression* of intimacy and accessibility. I think this practice is very similar to glad-handing like we know it today, when a candidate is shaking hands with people, smiling, exchanging a few words, and taking selfies. The result of this is that voters feel noticed by the candidate, witness a glimpse of intimacy, leave with a good, sympathetic feeling, and are won over by personal charm.

What kind of friendships should Cicero seek to acquire? Quintus says he should strive for many varied friendships so that he can shore up the support of all the centuries. A diverse coalition of friends is consequently seen as the best path to winning over many voters and, hence, gaining electoral victory. This again underscores that Cicero should not just engage with people he would align himself with in normal life, but with all sorts of people from different ranks and backgrounds. It also implies that there is no one group, whether senators or the urban masses, that can deliver outright victory in the election. The first and most obvious people that Cicero should court are the senators and the *equites*. Quintus gives no argumentation for this, but it is evident that these were the most influential groups in Roman politics.²³⁷ Furthermore, he advises Cicero to acquaint himself with industrious and influential men in all the other orders. A specific mention goes out to active and influential city dwellers and freedmen who are to be found on the Forum. There is a debate on the exact influence of freedmen in elections, since we do not know for sure in which tribes they were enrolled. If they were enrolled in the four urban tribes or among the non-combatants, their votes were not worth much. In any case, their activities during an election campaign were seen as important. We do not know exactly what activities they undertook, but they had a reputation of being politically connected, since they often served as their ex-master's political deputy.²³⁸ Cicero needs to do his utmost best to persuade all these industrious and influential people, both by his own efforts and through common friends.²³⁹

²³⁴ *Comm.* 27.

²³⁵ *Asc.* 94C; Tatum (2018), 238.

²³⁶ *Comm.* 28; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018.

²³⁷ Quintus will return to the *equites* in *Comm.* 33.

²³⁸ See Tatum (2018), 240-241; Mouritsen (2001), 94; Yakobson (1999), 86. Cf. Livy 45.15.1-3 for exceptional cases in the tribal distribution of freedmen.

²³⁹ *Comm.* 29; Yakobson (1999), 86-87.

Likewise, Cicero has to become friends with men are influential in parts of the city. He is told to get to know the leaders and active members of all the clubs (*collegia*), boroughs (*pagi*), and neighborhoods (*vicinitates*) in Rome. When these people are on Cicero's side and campaign on his behalf, he can reach the urban masses through them. This scheme is quite ambitious, as Quintus aims at the whole of the city.²⁴⁰ Without too much imagination, we can see the PR technique of advertising at work here. Whereas modern campaigns utilize different media to broadcast their advertorials (direct mail, radio, TV, internet, etc.), the campaign of Cicero did not have such news media outlets at its disposal. Instead, it relied on persons to carry the message and spread it to others. This means . The candidate seeks to persuade people by directly engaging with them and gaining further support by the resulting chain effect of these people's interpersonal contacts. What are the effects of such a PR technique? Advertisement by word of mouth is harder to control than mass media advertising. The latter is uniformly devised and scripted by campaign operatives, but the former is formulated by every individual supporter. Furthermore, it is not easy for a campaign to determine how many people can be reached through mouth-to-mouth ads, although Quintus claims his outreach extends throughout the entire city. However, the upside is that its effect can be more powerful than modern media advertising, since people hear the 'ad' from a person they know and trust, not through an impersonal radio or newspaper.

Quintus applies the same logic of acquiring support to the Italian countryside. Cicero should memorize every district and tribe in Italy and should ascertain himself of the enthusiastic backing of local leaders. Quintus is no less ambitious in this regard than he is concerning the city: Cicero needs to work to make sure that he is amply supported in every municipality, colony, and prefecture of Italy, so that not a single locality is left out. In every region, Cicero should seek men, probably local magistrates, who have influence (*gratia*) in their communities and are eager to become friends with Cicero because of their own political ambitions.²⁴¹ Their role seems to be comparable to that of modern grassroots activists, campaign operatives who hold credibility with other people in their local communities, going door-to-door to solicit support. Once again, we see that the election strategy of Quintus entails targeting voters in clusters and through intermediaries. The ambassadorial function of these surrogates goes so far that Quintus calls them *quasi candidati*.²⁴² Cicero and these men do not seem to have any shared goals or common interests outside their joint desire for self-advancement.

Cicero is encouraged to speak to them personally and shore up their loyalty. To this end, he needs to approach them with a combination of intimacy and professionalism. First, he should show that he is devoting time and energy to them, recognize them, and have familiar interactions with them. '[M]en from the municipalities and from the countryside consider themselves our friends if they are simply known to us by name. (...) Without this degree of familiarity, friendship is impossible.'²⁴³ Subsequently, Cicero should hold out the promise of his protection for them as consul. This means that he is offering to put himself in a position of obligation to his Italian friends-to-be, hence to make himself dependent on them. By promising to reward their services, Cicero makes the relation reciprocal. 'However, familiarity alone, though important, is insufficient unless it entails the expectation of a friendship that is truly advantageous (*spes utilitatis*).'²⁴⁴ Thus, whereas intimacy is required for finding an opening and getting a foothold in the relationship, the element of dependency is about giving the friendship substance, making it a predominantly professional relationship. The combination of these two tracks will be sufficient reason for the ambitious local magistrates to accept Cicero's friendship and support his candidacy.

²⁴⁰ *Comm.* 30.

²⁴¹ *Comm.* 30-32.

²⁴² *Comm.* 31.

²⁴³ *Comm.* 31; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018.

²⁴⁴ *Comm.* 32; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018.

With the *equites* being a key constituency in Roman elections, Quintus choses to specifically focus on the young Roman knights. The knights had 18 centuries in the *comitia centuriata*, of which young noblemen were also part. Quintus says that the young *equites* are easy to become friends with, because they are young. Another practical advantage is that their number is limited, which makes it quite feasible for Cicero to get to know them all. Quintus writes that Cicero already enjoys the support of many of the best young men, as they are interested in high culture (*humanitas*). Cicero himself was of the equestrian order, which will have helped in this regard. Furthermore, this also ensured that he enjoyed the backing of the equestrian order in general. Similarity is thus favorable to a good relationship. Nevertheless, Quintus says that he should still work to secure the 18 equestrian *centuriae*, not just by the general goodwill of the order, but by friendship with individual *equites*. As a general motivation for Cicero to court the young *equites*, Quintus writes that the zeal of the young people is good for a candidate's prestige by canvassing, by making visits to meet voters, by spreading news and rumors, and by accompanying a candidate.²⁴⁵ This is a strategy that is still followed by modern PR strategists: young people can bring a sense of enthusiasm, convey the impression that he represents their interests, and persuade their peers to back the candidate.

Finally, there are also people who are not friends, but enemies (*obtrectatores atque adversarii*). Can they be won over? In order to answer this, Quintus splits the enemies into three categories. First there are people whom Cicero has offended, most plausibly by standing against them in court. These people could be won over by saying that Cicero was merely doing his duty to his friends and by holding out the prospect that he can do the same for them as friends. The second category consists of people who dislike Cicero for no reason. These could be persuaded to join the campaign by doing them a favor or promising to do so, or by showing that Cicero does have sympathy for them. Finally, there are people who are friends of Cicero's rivals. These are perhaps hard to win over, but Cicero should still treat them in a friendly way and show that he is well disposed towards his rivals. In sum, Quintus attributes Cicero's enemies with natural but surmountable motives.²⁴⁶

Attendance of friends during the campaign

In the two sections above, we have seen that one of the main contributions of friends to the campaign is functioning as an ambassador of the candidate to other groups of voters. Having friendly relations with men of influence ensures that a candidate indirectly has a relation with numerous other voters who are connected with this influential person, especially when these voters are connected to him as a group. The other major manner in which the help of friends is deployed in the campaign is attendance (*adsectatio*). This practice involves people waiting for a candidate, greeting him, and accompanying him. Quintus tells his brother to make use of it every day. Usually, these are people who are under obligation to a candidate or want some favor of him.²⁴⁷

Quintus makes it clear that Cicero's crowd of followers should be as large as possible. People from all ranks, orders, and ages are welcome to participate in the *adsectatio*. This again shows how broad the definition of friendship is during an election campaign. All these different people, from varied backgrounds and not personal confidants of Cicero, are discussed under the heading *studia amicorum*. According to Quintus, the quality of the people who accompany Cicero is irrelevant. It is their sheer quantity that is decisive. Quintus says that the scale of a candidate's attendees is indicative

²⁴⁵ *Comm.* 33.

²⁴⁶ *Comm.* 40.

²⁴⁷ Yakobson (1999), 72 argues, correctly in my opinion, that the *adsectatores* are not necessarily clients, but citizens who do the candidate a favor by visiting him in the hope of reciprocity. Still, the *adsectatores* profess their dependency on Cicero and are often under obligation to him, see *Comm.* 37-38. Cf. Mouritsen (2001), 109, 116, who identifies the *adsectatores* as clients. Whether *adsectatio* is a *beneficium* or an *officium* is perhaps not as important as the intended reciprocity.

of the backing that he will have on election day.²⁴⁸ We should not necessarily take this to mean that Quintus equals the amount of Cicero's followers to the amount of his voters, since a candidate had to win voting units instead of individual votes. Rather, Quintus points out that a candidate with many followers is seen to have a great extent of *gratia* (influence and popularity), which will in turn lead many voters from all classes to vote for him.²⁴⁹

Quintus' treatise on *adsectatio* is actually an instance of event management *avant la lettre*. This modern PR tactic is about staging events and getting positive attention for them. It comprises different aspects that are required for making an event successful, ranging from planning and logistics to communication and media coverage. Quintus' PR strategy entails making canvass rituals into events for which many people will turn out and which will generate positive attention and rumor. For example, by urging his brother to indiscriminately turn people into his friends, Quintus aims to drive up the number of people that attend Cicero's campaign events, which results in voters noticing his campaign and being impressed by the amount of his followers.

Adsectatio can be divided into three common canvass rituals: *salutatio* (morning greeting), *deductio* (escort to the Forum), and *prensatio* (glad-handing and procession through the Forum).²⁵⁰ These activities formed the core of campaigning.²⁵¹ Quintus maintains a similar division of attendees: morning greeters, escorts to the Forum, and escorts throughout the day.

The act of *salutatio* was a central institution in Roman society that reinforced the existing hierarchy. It was an opportunity for the needy to solicit help, while it provided the rich and powerful with the chance to be generous, gain followers, and enhance their status. In this way, it was an advantageous system for both sides that underpinned the status quo. In the early morning, people would wait at the *domus* of a member of the elite to greet him and ask him for help. In many cases, these people were poor common folk, but they could also come from elite circles.²⁵² The circumstance of an election campaign gave the greeters more social leverage over a candidate whose help they solicited, since he was expected to show his benevolence and could use their support.²⁵³ In recent times, Quintus complains, many *salutatores* make a visit to multiple houses.²⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, their unwillingness to commit themselves to one person came out of economic necessity: by going to many different houses, they hoped to increase their chances of being granted help. Quintus encourages Cicero to clearly express his gratitude to his greeters and their relatives, so that they will devote themselves to him and become his loyal supporters:

'Make it clear that this very simple service of theirs is exceedingly gratifying to you. Give unmistakable signs that you notice who visits your home. Make your gratitude known to their friends, who will repeat it to them. Tell them yourself – often. It frequently happens that, when men greet several candidates and realize that one of them pays greater attention to their services than the others do, they devote themselves to that one candidate, forsake the others, and soon become his loyal supporters instead of merely joining everyone's morning audience: they become genuine partisans instead of sham ones.'
(*Comm.* 35; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

During an election campaign, a *salutatio* could take the character of something like a campaign rally, at which the candidate and his followers could confirm and substantiate their commitment to each

²⁴⁸ *Comm.* 34. This is also one of the reasons why, in *Comm.* 35, Quintus tells Cicero never to turn against false friends, since their presence, even if they are not genuinely supporting him, will add to the number of people around him, which will reflect positively on his *gratia*.

²⁴⁹ Tatum (2018), 249-250.

²⁵⁰ These activities could also take place outside a canvassing context.

²⁵¹ Feig Vishnia (2012), 112; Nicolet (1980), 357.

²⁵² Cf. Yakobson (1999), 72; Mouritsen (2001), 109, 116.

²⁵³ Tatum (2018), 252-253.

²⁵⁴ *Comm.* 35.

other. Quintus wants to monopolize the people who are currently hedging their bets by giving them attention, so that they become exclusive followers of Cicero. Quintus' strategy of event management thus entails building a loyal group of attendees on which the candidate can rely.

Deductio to the Forum was a greater service than *salutatio*, according to Quintus.²⁵⁵ This makes sense, since people had to sacrifice a working day to escort a candidate to the Forum, while a *salutatio* only took place in the morning before business starts. Additionally, whereas people could visit multiple houses to greet people in the morning, they could only escort one person to the Forum. Therefore, *deductio* required more commitment from supporters. It is possible that it were therefore mostly poor unemployed people who escorted candidates to the Forum, as they had more to gain and less to lose.²⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the escort will also have included members from the elite, since their wealth gave them the leisure time to contribute to the campaign. Anyhow, *deductio* was a strong indicator of political support. A large crowd of attendees makes a great impression (*opinio*) on the public and confers prestige (*dignitas*) on the candidate. Since their effort is greater, Cicero's appreciation of them should also be greater.²⁵⁷ Quintus' event management strategy hence involves rewarding attendees according to the extent of their service, in which way he hopes to stimulate and incentivize people to become more active in the campaign. Moreover, it entails staging events and instituting regularity while doing so: Cicero is advised to go to the Forum at regular hours, so as to make it easier for his supporters to accompany him.²⁵⁸ This is a simple yet effective technique to boost attendance records.

The third category of attendees consists of people who follow the candidate during the entire day. Quintus attaches great importance to the permanent attendance of supporters, since this is an essential element of the campaign. Activities that these supporters attended are walking around on the Forum, meeting and greeting voters, and asking for their support and endorsement, in short: glad-handing.²⁵⁹ To the people who attend him throughout the day as volunteers, Cicero should articulate that they are doing him an enormous service and that he owes them greatly. Of those who are under obligation to him, however, Cicero should demand that they attend him as much as possible. If they are not able to do so because of their old age or other activities, he should press them that they send a relative in their stead.²⁶⁰

This shows that Quintus PR strategy entails a strict attendance policy for the candidate's followers, since the size of the audience makes or breaks an event. It will bring Cicero renown (*laus*) and prestige (*dignitas*) if men who he has defended in court, follow him on the campaign trail. Since he saved them from ruin through hard work, he should plainly make them understand that there will never be a better opportunity for them to repay their debt.²⁶¹ It is possible these include prominent people, which would add a degree of pageantry and prestige to Quintus' event management strategy. In any case, he aims to use campaign events as venues to display the candidate's qualities and capabilities: the cases Cicero has won in court are ample demonstrations of the fact that he can lead the republic, saving it from harm as he has saved fellow citizens throughout his career.

Conclusion

Quintus' internal PR strategy is based on the central premise that Cicero should engage in friendships with anyone, not excluding or discriminating against anyone. Whereas he would normally only engage in authentic, affectionate friendships, a candidate for office can feel free to partake in utilitarian

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Comm.* 35, where *salutatio* is called a *minimum officium* by Quintus.

²⁵⁶ Tatum (2018), 255-256.

²⁵⁷ *Comm.* 36.

²⁵⁸ *Comm.* 36.

²⁵⁹ Tatum (2018), 257-258.

²⁶⁰ *Comm.* 37.

²⁶¹ *Comm.* 38.

friendships with all sorts of people, wealthy or poor, young or old, well-behaved or ill-behaved. The first step towards maintaining or building such a relation is often intimacy. People want to be noticed by the candidate and sense his affection, so that they get the feeling that they matter to the candidate. The substance of these friendships, however, does not consist of affection or intimacy. The relationship materializes in mutual support and exchange of services, which carry an intensely reciprocal character. The candidate should give out tasks to his friends according to the level of trust he poses in them. In many cases, one of the two parties is dependent on the other because of an obligation or the promise of obligation. This confirms the prevailing notion that *amicitia* is principally a political alliance.

The result of indiscriminately making utilitarian friends, is that the candidate comes to have a greater number of friends at his disposal, hence a diverse coalition. That is important, since Quintus' PR strategy makes them staff members and ambassadors on the candidate's behalf to all the rest of the Roman citizenry. They act as his surrogates, a tried and tested PR tactic which uses the surrogate's authority, standing, eloquence, or influence to persuade citizens to support the candidate. A more modest way of fulfilling one's function as ambassador is by the PR technique of issuing endorsements, which entails throwing one's weight behind a candidate by publicly supporting him. Thirdly, the candidate's ambassadors spread oral advertisements for the campaign.

The candidate's friends not only function as ambassadors, Quintus also puts them to work as attendees at campaign events: *salutatio*, *deductio*, and *prensatio*. Quintus' event management strategy is aimed at boosting the size of the audience. He does this by instituting regular hours, by morally obliging friends who are under obligation to be present, and by affectionately luring wavering supporters into becoming loyal ones. Large crowds are important to the campaign strategy, since they are a reflection of the candidate's influence and popularity (*gratia*), as still is the case today.

The ultimate result of this PR strategy, making many utilitarian friends and deploying them as ambassadors and attendees, is that it improves the candidate's reputation across the Roman voting populace, which should lead people to vote for him. We can conclude from this that the candidate's relationships with his friends are of a professional nature, centered around the mutual exchange of obligations and services. The PR strategy entails hard work, since Cicero has to entreat many people to become his friends. However, the rewards are greater, since he can reach exponentially more people through the efforts of his friends. The PR strategy also entails an ingratiating, populist manner of campaigning, as the candidate has to cater to anyone's wishes and go whichever way the wind blows. The effectiveness of Quintus' PR strategy lies in knowing people who know people, hence, in relations. It is plausible to see its effectivity for ancient Roman society, in which clientelism was dominant, in which people felt tied to social groups and connections, and in which there was a limited number of people that engaged in canvassing. Its success in a modern Western democracy would be less obvious, where there are many millions of voters and many stakeholders, and where voters are individualistic and cannot be told by social connections what to vote.

Chapter 5: *Popularis voluntas*: managing the external public relations

Quintus devotes paragraphs 41-53 of the *Commentariolum petitionis* to the management of the *popularis voluntas*, the goodwill of the people. Again, Quintus takes a relational perspective by focusing on interpersonal relationships. The advice is about how Cicero should conduct himself in his interactions with voters, while also instructing him on how he should manage his reputation with the public. This part of the *Commentariolum* is a lot shorter than the section on the efforts of friends (13 paragraphs vs. 25 paragraphs), but we should not necessarily take this to mean that the one is more important than the other, since mere length is a weak indicator of significance. In announcing his twofold division in *Comm.* 16, Quintus is clear that he regards both *studia amicorum* and *popularis voluntas* as indispensable parts of canvassing.²⁶²

Quintus, continuing his didactic approach of classification and instruction, distinguishes seven sub-topics in *Comm.* 41 that are relevant to gaining the goodwill of the people: knowledge of names, flattery, assiduity, generosity, publicity, pageantry, and promise for the state.²⁶³ In this chapter, I address these topics one by one to figure out what Quintus' strategy is for winning over voters and what role relations play in this regard. My focus is on which actions and causes can, according to Quintus, convince voters to vote for Cicero, and by which PR tactics and techniques this can be achieved. As in the previous chapter, I analyze Cicero's relationships with the voting public along the lines of the six political public relations parameters and three relationship types. I contend that the candidate-voters relationships are of a community type, in which the candidate champions common interests with key constituencies in a populist fashion.

Acquiring the goodwill of the people

What is first of all striking are the elements that are *not* treated by Quintus. For example, if we compare his advice to Cicero's account of acquiring glory in his moral philosophical work *De officiis*, a few notable differences catch the eye. According to Cicero, glory can be won through benevolence, trust, and esteem. What all three have in common, he writes, is that they involve justice. Justice is the ultimate way towards popularity.²⁶⁴ In Quintus' exposition, such a moral notion is totally absent. We can conclude from this that while Cicero, who wrote in 44 BC as a philosopher who was no longer active as a politician, based the road to glory on philosophical ideals, Quintus was more practically inclined and was first and foremost interested in how things actually worked, as he laid out a roadmap to win an election in real life.

As is the case with enlisting the support of friends, intimacy is involved in acquiring the goodwill of the people. Specifically, an inkling of intimacy is required for opening up people's hearts. To this end, Cicero should master meticulously the skill of *nomenclatio*. What it entails is recognizing people and knowing their names, thus being able to address them in a familiar and direct way. This was hard, since it involved a great deal of effort and mental capacity to memorize the names of hundreds of citizens. Therefore, if a candidate would be able to recognize people on his own merit, without the help of a *nomenclator*, this would earn him the praise and esteem of the people, as it shows he is really making an effort. Cicero is urged by his brother to practice this skill, so that he can improve and expand his proficiency. According to Quintus, *nomenclatio* is a very effective way of winning people over, since

²⁶² Morstein-Marx (1998), 263; Tatum (2018), 264.

²⁶³ I follow the text edition of Shackleton Bailey in the Loeb edition of 2002: <*speciem*>, *spem in re publica*. Cf. Tatum (2018), 264-265.

²⁶⁴ Cic. *Off.* 2.9.31-11.38

it is extremely gratifying for voters to be recognized by a candidate.²⁶⁵ This confirms the classic adage that knowledge is power.

In *Comm.* 28, we saw that Quintus also recommends the skill of *nomenclatio* to his brother when it comes to building relations with new friends, which I compared to modern glad-handing. Its effectiveness lies in that it is a simple and functional way of getting on familiar terms with someone. We can conclude from this that a certain level of familiarity, even as superficial as knowing people's names, was not only needed or recommended in convincing friends to support Cicero, but also in soliciting voters for their backing.

In the previous chapter, we saw that Quintus identified as one of the few advantages of running a campaign the fact that one can unembarrassedly make friendships with whomever one pleases, which was thought to be shameful under regular circumstances.²⁶⁶ This same juxtaposition of the extraordinary circumstances of an election campaign vs. normal life is also to be found in *Comm.* 42. Here Quintus addresses the disparity between natural character and simulation. Whereas in normal life one's natural character will always prevail, a candidate for office is encouraged to incorporate a degree of simulation into his character and behavior, which is thought to be feasible by Quintus since a campaign only lasts a few months.²⁶⁷ 'Honesty is the best policy' is certainly not one of Quintus' maxims. In his world view and conceivably of many other Romans of his time, social relations are more important than the truth. That is why lying and being dishonest are acceptable, as long as they serve the purpose of building and strengthening valuable relationships. Cicero would have no problem disseminating fake news, since honesty is subservient to extracting benefits from relations. We may conclude from this that Quintus is discouraging his brother to engage in relationships of a personal type, which revolve around affection, honesty and genuineness.²⁶⁸

Therefore, what Cicero needs to do, at least for the duration of the campaign, is to simulate flattery or ingratiation (*blanditia*). Quintus acknowledges that this kind of behavior is objectionable in real life, since it involves dishonesty, deception, and inconsistency. Still, he stresses that it is essential for a successful election campaign. In this way, by circumspectly addressing the issue, Quintus manages to raise the assumption that his brother is naturally inclined to behave properly, yet is responsible enough to do what it takes to win. He writes that Cicero already possesses ample *comitas* (good, affable manners, in particular dignified accessibility), but that is not enough:

'But you very much need an ingratiating manner, which, however base and sordid in the rest of life, is nevertheless crucial when canvassing. (...) And it is truly indispensable to a candidate, whose expression and looks and conversation must be adapted and accommodated to the mood and disposition of everyone he meets.' (*Comm.* 42; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

This is a rather opportunistic way of campaigning, which was regarded as a social humiliation and necessary evil by many aristocrats.²⁶⁹ However, Quintus justifies it by saying that people will become friendlier to an ingratiating candidate, again holding out lofty notions of friendship in the context of the utilitarian indignities of campaigning.²⁷⁰ What this quote tells us is that Quintus advocates a rather populist manner of campaigning. As laid out in chapter 3, I define populism as a brand of politics that comes from outside the establishment, that is superficial concerning content, and that has as its

²⁶⁵ *Comm.* 42.

²⁶⁶ *Comm.* 25.

²⁶⁷ This sentence is originally in *Comm.* 1. However, since it, based on its content, does not fit there and fits rather seamlessly into *Comm.* 42, many editors have placed it there. Cf. Tatum (2018), 161-164 for an overview of the possibilities that have been suggested.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Cicero's opinion on true friendship in *De amicitia*, which is discussed in chapter 4.

²⁶⁹ Tatum (2018), 267.

²⁷⁰ *Comm.* 42.

essence saying what people like to hear in order to gain popularity. This is indeed the way Cicero has to behave himself in interpersonal relations with voters: as a weathercock, who does not stand firm on the basis of his convictions, but who accommodates himself and his discourse to anyone he meets. In Quintus' PR strategy, ingratiation is thus the route to gaining popularity, a method we know can be successful, if we look at the rise of populism in the twenty-first century.

Cicero should furthermore exhibit constant commitment and tenacity (*adsiduitas*), never taking a step back from the campaign. In particular, he is advised to never leave Rome, which Quintus' thinks is self-evident. This ensures that the candidate is always visible, approachable, and active on the campaign trail, just like modern candidates seem to be in constant campaign mode. Visibility is, evidently, an essential requirement for a PR campaign to be successful. Cicero has to campaign assiduously, calling on the same people over and over again, so that nobody can say that Cicero did not solicit his support with thoroughness and diligence.²⁷¹ The statement that Cicero should beseech the same people continuously suggests there was perhaps only a select group of voters that was of real interest to him. The notion that Cicero must not leave Rome means that he could not campaign outside of the city. While the Italian countryside could have a significant say in the consular election, Quintus' strategy did not include his brother canvassing there in person, perhaps because he did not deem this feasible in the span of a few weeks or months. Instead, the plan was to leave this to others, influential local people who acted as the candidate's ambassadors, as is discussed in the analysis of *Comm.* 30-32 in the previous chapter.

Generosity (*benignitas*) is the topic that is treated the most extensively by Quintus in the section on gaining the goodwill of the people. It was something that was expected and required of a political candidate. It was a common practice of building one's reputation and acquiring gratitude and influence. Quintus takes up three aspects of generosity. The first is liberality in private affairs. Examples of the kind of private liberality that Quintus has in mind can be found in his brother's treatment of the subject in *De officiis*, for instance being accommodating with regards to property rights and hospitality, and trying to avoid enforcing one's rights through litigation.²⁷² Even though these acts of generosity only concern a few individuals and not the whole populace, it will enhance Cicero's reputation with the masses through the praise that he will receive:

'Although this does not affect the common people directly, it influences them nonetheless when your generosity is praised by your friends.' (*Comm.* 44; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

The effect that Quintus aims to achieve could thus be dubbed 'trickle-down generosity'. As spin-doctor, Quintus is very aware that the private life of a candidate is public. This was as true then as it is now, even without tabloids. By encouraging his brother to be generous, Quintus aims to employ the candidate's private relations for public relations purposes. At the same time, we can infer from this passage that the candidate's reputation is the ground for many people to vote for him or not.

The second way for a candidate to practice generosity is by giving away banquets and dinner parties (*convivia*). Cicero should see to it that these are organized by him as well as by his friends, both for their fellow tribesmen and for people from other tribes.²⁷³ The added stipulations on how and to whom Cicero has to supply banquets, have everything to do with the Roman *leges de ambitu* that ensured that candidates could not give away food and parties unlimitedly and indiscriminately.²⁷⁴ This practice of feasting voters appears to be on the edge of buying votes. Quintus tacitly acknowledges this by adding provisions on how to circumvent the *ambitus* laws. Interestingly, modern candidates also take part in dinner parties with supporters. However, the flow of money in these modern

²⁷¹ *Comm.* 43.

²⁷² *Cic. Off.* 2.18.64.

²⁷³ *Comm.* 44.

²⁷⁴ See chapter 2, in particular the paragraph on *ambitus*.

fundraising dinners goes the other way: the candidate receives contributions from his guests in return for lending them a willing ear. The difference is that a *convivium* was a rather public event at which the candidate had to show his generosity, whereas a modern fundraising dinner is a private gathering at which a candidate can discreetly give people access to his influence. We learn from this that Cicero's dinner parties are about creating the image that he cares for his supporters and invests in their wellbeing, which points to a community type of relationship.

The third way of practicing generosity is through providing services. Cicero himself was of the opinion that this form of generosity was better, nobler, and more challenging than simply handing out gifts, since it requires more effort, commitment, and character.²⁷⁵ The primary kind of service that Quintus has in mind is legal assistance in the courts. He urges his brother to make his services to others known to all people:

'Generosity finds expression especially through services to others, services that you must advertise widely and make available to all.' (*Comm.* 44; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

Whereas we saw in chapter 4 that providing services was a way of putting friends under obligation and therefore part of a professional relationship, it serves a different purpose in the relation with voters. It is not so much a way of making people dependent on the candidate as it is about highlighting his willingness and ability to take care of people. That is why Cicero is urged to advertise his good deeds, not just practice them. This PR technique of advertising presents an instance of reputation management. Generosity gives the candidate a good reputation among the voting public and proves he is fit for the job as consul. Cicero's self-promotion of his generosity would seem a counterproductive PR tactic to modern eyes, as it could signal self-interest and self-congratulation. However, we can conclude from the *Commentariolum* that, to Roman eyes, royal generosity was a source of justified pride. Cicero should make it clear that his legal help is available to everyone, indicating that his generosity extends to all Roman citizens. This is further evidence that the candidate-voters relationships are inclusive and of a community type.

Quintus metaphorically tells Cicero to not only open the door of his house, but also the door of his heart, namely his facial expression:

'Every means of approaching you must lie open, both day and night. By this I mean not only the entrance to your house but also the look on your face, which is the doorway to your mind. If your facial expression suggests that your true feelings are concealed and hidden from view, then it hardly matters that your front door is open. For men do not simply want to receive promises—particularly when they are asking a candidate for something—they want to be made promises with a courtesy nothing short of lavish.' (*Comm.* 44; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

It is very important to give people the impression that Cicero is open to helping them, and when promising them his services he should do so gladly and in a royal, courteous way.²⁷⁶ Being kind and gracious not only applies to assenting to people's demands, but also to denying appeals for help. Quintus writes that there can be certain requests for assistance that go against their honor or interests, for example when someone asks them to take up a trial against a friend. In such a case he presents Cicero with two options: say 'no' graciously, or do not say 'no' at all. The first route is the correct behavior of a good man, while the second is seen as the correct behavior of a good candidate. Quintus assumes that Cicero will find this hard, as he is naturally inclined to conduct himself properly. Quintus writes that he can refuse someone's request graciously by pointing to the obligations of friendship that prevent him from taking up the request, by showing regret, and by convincing the asker that he will

²⁷⁵ Cic. *Off.* 2.15.52-53.

²⁷⁶ *Comm.* 44-45.

make up for it by helping in another way.²⁷⁷ In a letter to Atticus, Cicero describes how a gracious and cautious refusal of a request could take place, which in practice meant accepting a case under many provisions and conditions (*'si potero', 'si ante suscepta causa non impediar'*), while he also indicates that an abrupt refusal was a sign of contempt and disrespect.²⁷⁸ The most important thing, according to Quintus, is to show grace, as a candidate wins over more people by a facial expression matching his kind words than by his actual deeds.²⁷⁹

The other option, not refusing an unwelcome request at all, will be even more difficult for Cicero to practice, Quintus suspects, since he is an adept of Plato.²⁸⁰ Some people will understand if their request is refused based on ties of friendship, but others will not and will become angry. According to Quintus, it is much better to lie to these people, both for their own sake and for the candidate's.²⁸¹ In these sections, Quintus again calls upon Cicero to show ingratiating behavior. One's attitude and demeanor are as important as anything when it comes to a candidate's reputation. Hence, it is important to act nice. It involves being courteous and exhibiting unwavering enthusiasm. This ingratiating behavior even goes as far as to knowingly present lies to people. Honesty, the hallmark of genuine affection according to Cicero himself, is once more absent, because it is subservient to beneficial social relations. A rational cost-benefit analysis leads Quintus to the view that dishonesty is opportune. Deceit is therefore seen by Quintus as an acceptable technique to bolster a politician's reputation. His advice, which looks to gain popularity by deceiving the public and spreading fake news, is thus a plain instance of demagoguery and populism.

Quintus explains this by way of an *exemplum*. He uses the example of C. Aurelius Cotta (124-74 BC), a nobleman who was famous as a politician, intellectual and orator. As Quintus notes, he had a reputation of being a master at the art of canvassing, which made him a weighty authority to rely on. In general, *exempla* were deemed to be excellent models of instruction by the Romans. Since Cotta was admired by Cicero and was also a Platonist, he was the perfect case to illustrate Quintus' argument, who pretends to use Cotta's own words.²⁸² Cotta promised his help to anyone who asked for it, yet in reality he delivered his services to only a few. He got away with promising more than he actually did, since it turned out that people in many instances did not need his help anymore after a while. If a candidate would only take up as many cases as he thinks he can handle, he will never get his house filled with supporters. The worst thing that could happen, according to Quintus in the words of Gaius Cotta, is that a limited number of persons will be angry, perhaps at a later date when the election will be over.²⁸³

On the other hand, if a candidate were to refuse people's requests outright, many more men will become angry at him immediately, which will ruin a candidate's reputation and severely damage his chances of getting elected. Quintus concludes by stating that there are generally more people who ask for a favor than there are who actually use it. He thinks that people will be less angry if they understand that it turns out a candidate cannot help them because of certain circumstances or obligations, even though he would have wanted to.²⁸⁴ Showing good intentions thus goes a long way towards getting people's sympathy.

Publicity (*rumor*) is an element of campaigning that Cicero should be maximally devoted to, because it defines his reputation. Moreover, it is related to everything that Quintus has discussed

²⁷⁷ *Comm.* 45.

²⁷⁸ *Cic. Att.* 8.4.2.

²⁷⁹ *Comm.* 46.

²⁸⁰ For Cicero's sympathies for the Platonic Academy, cf. *Cic. Off.* 2.2.7-8; *Plut. Cic.* 4.1-3.

²⁸¹ *Comm.* 46.

²⁸² Tatum (2018), 273-274.

²⁸³ *Comm.* 47.

²⁸⁴ *Comm.* 48.

earlier. Though *rumor* entails everything that is said about someone, it is clear that he means positive publicity. Thus, his advice can be seen as an exercise in framing. Framing is a modern communications technique that entails spinning a message through suggestive use of language to subtly nudge the reader or listener in a certain direction.²⁸⁵ For example, one of the major frames put forward by Quintus for Cicero's campaign is the latter's successful career as an orator. This is not just about Cicero being an eloquent man, but Quintus wants to frame it in such a way that it makes him uniquely qualified for the job: he has spent his life saving people from ruin, which is exactly what the republic needs, namely a leader that can steer it in safe waters. Another piece of framing in the *Commentariolum* is the contrast that is drawn between the virtuous Cicero and his immoral rivals: by this comparison, Cicero looks like the ideal candidate. A third example is the practice of *nomenclatio*, which in reality is about having a good memory, but is framed by Quintus as displaying a warm character and intimate feelings. This can be applied to all the other things that Quintus has discussed earlier, ranging from the attendance of young people to displaying generosity, which can all contribute to Cicero's good reputation. These issues should be framed in such a way that they highlight Cicero's hard work (*labor*), skill (*ars*), and earnestness (*diligentia*). Quintus stresses that the people should not only hear good things about Cicero through his supporters, but that they themselves should also be committed to him and have a relationship with him.²⁸⁶

Related to the issue of good publicity, Quintus also mentions Pompey's backing of Cicero. He calls on his brother to publicly peddle this to everyone. By having Pompey on his side, Cicero was assured of the support of the urban masses, as well as the persons who control the public meetings (*contiones*).²⁸⁷

'You must also make sure everyone knows that Pompeius' goodwill towards you is total and that your success in this election is entirely in keeping with that great man's plans.' (*Comm.* 51; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

He had earned Pompey's approval by supporting his command in the Mithridatic War, by assisting Pompey's friend C. Manilius, and by taking up the legal defense of Pompey's ally C. Cornelius.²⁸⁸ This passage shows the force of an endorsement by a powerful person. An endorsement, as we saw earlier, is a PR technique that rests on letting an authority in the field, in this case an influential politician, make the candidate's case. This can be very effective, depending on the endorser's reach and credibility. Pompey definitely fits the bill as a high-ranking endorser, who is potent to sway large numbers of voters. The endorsement is not given for free, but is part of a political deal: Cicero's help for Pompey and his associates.

In combination with the popularity among the urban masses, Cicero should also seek the goodwill of the distinguished classes, to which men like Pompey himself belong.²⁸⁹ Apparently, it is this combination of popularity that really matters, rather than popularity with any single group. So Cicero's coalition of voters is built on comprehensiveness and diversity above all else. His PR campaign should therefore be inclusive and, at the same time, tailored to several different forms in order to appease separate groups, as we will see below.

²⁸⁵ Classic and groundbreaking publications on this subject are Lakoff (2002, 2004). George Lakoff is a cognitive linguist and philosopher who contributed to put the issue of framing on the map, especially around the time of the U.S. presidential election of 2004. For the linkages between framing and public relations, see Hallahan (1999).

²⁸⁶ *Comm.* 50.

²⁸⁷ *Comm.* 51. Cf. *Cic. Att.* 1.1.2, 1.2.2, where Cicero expresses the feeling that he is not yet fully assured of Pompey's support.

²⁸⁸ See chapter 3.

²⁸⁹ *Comm.* 51.

Quintus tells Cicero to treat his campaign as a grand spectacle that attracts attention, is notable, and appeals to the masses:

'Finally, see to it that your entire campaign is full of pageantry (*pompae*), that it is brilliant (*inlustris*), distinguished (*splendida*), and appealing to the masses (*popularis*)—that it is carried out with the utmost display (*speciem*) and prestige (*dignitatem*).'²⁹⁰ (*Comm.* 52; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

Entertainment and theatricality are thereby part of Quintus' PR strategy. I think this should be applied in first place to campaign events. As we saw in the previous chapter, canvass rituals like *salutatio*, *deductio*, and *prensatio* had to be staged as full-blown events. As part of this, they could be livened up by a special visual setting or guest appearances by celebrities. But Quintus says that the *entire* campaign has to be full of pageantry. That means that Cicero's speeches as well should be pompous and attractive, not tedious; indeed, his entire behavior ought to be stirring, enthusiastic and inspiring. As Cicero was a brilliant orator, he must have been capable of delivering animated speeches, suitable to the occasion and purpose of a campaign. A striking comparison that comes to mind is with Donald Trump's campaign rallies, who, as a former host of a reality TV show, has been able to introduce an element of entertainment into politics in a way few people can. His rallies and speeches are unconventional, in the sense that he is more blunt and less held back than other politicians, and are (therefore?) attractive to a lot of people, including those who would not normally attend political events. In this way, his demeanor adds an element of spectacle and excitement, which can make the campaign events entertaining to watch or attend. Thus, it is clear that spectacle and entertainment can be a successful PR tactic for getting attention, being on people's lips, and acquiring new followers.

The campaign-as-a-spectacle approach also has a negative side. Quintus incites his brother to launch a barrage of negative campaigning against his rivals, if any ground to do so presents itself, making sure there is constant scandal surrounding them:

'Furthermore, if it is at all feasible, see to it that each of your competitors is traduced by a smear fitting his character, whether it is defamation for wickedness or lust or bribery.'²⁹¹ (*Comm.* 52; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

This strategy entails a PR tactic that we know today as opposition research. Since the organizations that are active in public relations, whether they be companies or political parties, frequently operate in a competitive environment, their attainment of success is often dependent on beating the opposition. This is especially true in politics and elections in particular, which can be seen as a zero-sum game: if one party wins, another has to lose. In order to beat the opposition, a candidate needs to know things about the opposition. That means doing research or hiring professionals to do so. What it then comes down to, is using the information and dirt that has been dug up, for example in negative attack ads. We see a lot of negative campaigning in politics nowadays. That is because it is an effective and maybe even necessary tactic. A candidate needs to stand out from the field, and negative reasons can be very compelling reasons for voters.²⁹⁰ Moreover, every person has flaws. We saw that it was Cicero's major focus in *In toga candida*, using the frame of comparing himself to his rivals that we identified above. This is a tactic which the former American vice-president Joe Biden phrased as: 'do not compare me to the Almighty, compare me to the alternative.'²⁹¹ It does not guarantee victory, but, since every opponent has flaws, and Cicero's rivals had major ones, this is a tactic that is highly likely to bear fruit.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Damore (2002); Trammell (2006); Benoit (1999), 251-252; Cho & Benoit (2005, 2006).

²⁹¹ MSNBC, 'Transcript: Rachel Maddow talks with Vice President Joe Biden' (version September 15, 2010), http://www.today.com/id/39200598/ns/msnbc-rachel_maddow_show/t/full-transcript-rachel-maddow-talks-vice-president-joe-biden/ (accessed June 26, 2019).

Quintus takes for granted that these matters for which he vilifies his brother's rivals, are part of the status quo, as Rome is said to be full of evils, including treachery, haughtiness, and malignity.²⁹² However, he does not envisage his brother taking part in these immoral practices. Instead, Cicero is urged to excel as an orator, to be vigilant, and to keep a watchful eye on his opponents so that he can threaten them with a judicial trial.²⁹³ This shows that Quintus seriously reckons with the possibility that the opposing candidates would engage in *ambitus*. In fact, he seems to presume that *ambitus* is rampant in most elections, when he says that no election is so perverted by bribery that not at least some unbribed *centuriae* will vote for the candidate they are most attached to.²⁹⁴ Quintus's plan to go negatively after the opponents does suggest that negative campaigning is very much part of the Roman way of campaigning.

As a matter of conclusion on how to canvass for office, Quintus offers his brother some political advice, though it has often taken to be apolitical. As I seek to demonstrate, this is a key passage in the *Commentariolum*. Quintus writes that Cicero should display that there is great promise and hope (*spes*) for the state in him. This does not entail an ideological vision on the future of the republic, but is about his personal qualifications, capacities, and loyalties. Quintus advises his brother to tread a careful path:

'However, during your canvass, you must avoid matters of state, both in the senate and in public meetings. Instead, let these be your aims: that, on the basis of your life's conduct, the senate deems you a guardian of its authority; that, on account of your past actions, the knights and prosperous classes believe you are a man devoted to tranquility and stability; that the masses accept that you will be favourably disposed to their entitlements, because, at least in your speeches in public meetings and in court, you have championed their interests.' (*Comm.* 53; transl. W. Jeffrey Tatum, OUP 2018)

In this important passage, we come across PR tactics that we could call, in a modern way, dethematization and personalization. Dethematization is a tactic that aims to forego political discussions on content, while personalization is about making the campaign revolve around the candidate's persona.²⁹⁵ It is clear that both can be related: when a campaign opts to avoid (certain) matters of substance (dethematization), it makes sense to instead shift the focus to the candidate's persona (personalization). That is exactly what Cicero is advised to do in the *Commentariolum*: he should shun public policy debates and instead persuade voters to trust him as a good leader.

Again, we see that Quintus wants to approach voters as part of a collective. The senators, *equites*, and the masses, different groups of Roman society that together make up all of the Roman citizenry, are tackled one by one and have to be convinced by appealing to their particular interests. This underscores, like we saw before, that Quintus tries to build a diverse coalition of voters. It is essential for a campaign to target the right people, namely voters who might be receptive to the message and would contribute to a path to victory. To this end, campaigns employ the PR technique of voter targeting, which entails identifying and targeting the right voters. Who the 'right voters' are, depends on the race, the candidates, the issues, and many other sociopolitical factors. For Cicero's campaign, Quintus focusses on politically powerful groups for whom there is something at stake: for the senators, their authority; for the wealthy, stability; and for the masses, their entitlements.

These groups of voters can be won over by persuading them that Cicero cares and fights for their interests. Common interests are therefore of central importance in the relations between the candidate and voters. It is key for the candidate that the voters perceive that they share the same goals. I put emphasis on the perception of voters, since that is what Quintus does: it is not primarily about what the candidate stands for, but about what the public *thinks* he stands for. However, a

²⁹² *Comm.* 54.

²⁹³ *Comm.* 55-57.

²⁹⁴ *Comm.* 56.

²⁹⁵ See Zipfel (2008), 679.

qualification is necessary here: since Quintus points to his brother's career over the years, he is clear that voters can judge him on his track-record, wherefore Cicero really has to be able to prove his defense of their interests. Consequently, the candidate's relationships with voters are of a community type. The fundamental question is what direction the candidate wants to go with the interests of different communities and how he can advance or defend these interests.

Significantly, this means that Roman elections were more political than has been thought. Indeed, we see no political ideologies as we know them in ancient Rome, which is not surprising since these only started to originate in the eighteenth century. But once we realize that interests can be just as political as ideas, we see that there is a markedly political dimension to Cicero's campaign. Mouritsen and Feig Vishnia have defended the traditional stance that Roman elections were entirely apolitical. Yakobson has gone the other way by advocating that there was room for ideology in Roman elections, though his evidence is thin.²⁹⁶ I offer a new solution by reinterpreting common interests as a political dimension to elections, since politics, to quote the standard definition of the influential political scientist Lasswell, is about 'who gets what, when, and how'.²⁹⁷

The PR technique through which the public's key interests can be adopted by the candidate as his own is political marketing. Marketing entails researching what the public wants, and adjusting one's supply according to the demands of the public.²⁹⁸ What Cicero does, is therefore political marketing in optima forma. By having a relation with the public, he can find out what it wants and how he can satisfy its needs. In recent years, politics has become more market-oriented, which has partly effectuated that political parties are increasingly consulting and hiring professional marketers.²⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the *Commentariolum* proves that a marketing approach was already viable without paid staffers and party apparatus. One can imagine that the way in which this can be done, must be by having interpersonal relations and contacts in different constituencies, hearing them out on the issues that matter to them. As it seeks to directly cater to the public's wishes, marketing is a method that can deliver success, yet it also brings in an element of volatility and inconsistency, since it is not based on stable principles, but shifts according to the latest trends.

Finally, this crucial passage from *Comm.* 53 prompts us to reflect on the populist nature of Cicero's campaign. This is directly related to the method of marketing, which is in itself a rather populist approach, as both are in essence about catering to what the public wants. In order to get the support of important constituencies, Cicero has to appease each one of them according to their stakes, concerns, and interests. Thus, to conclude, the key to Cicero's electoral victory is running as a populist.

Conclusion

Contrary to the relations with friends, dependency and reciprocity have a minor role in the relations with voters. Hence, the relationship between the candidate and the voters is not in the first place a professional one, as there is no real exchange of services. Cicero is indeed advised to generously lend his services to people, but this is not because of any obligation or reciprocation, but to enhance his reputation and demonstrate that his leadership will be beneficial for the community. Intimacy and honesty, hallmarks of a personal relationship, take a backseat as well. Addressing people by name (*nomenclatio*) is necessary for giving an impression of intimacy and familiarity, whereas honesty is not of the slightest importance.

Instead, Cicero's relation with the public is primarily a community relationship, revolving around question whether he has the best interest of various groups in society at heart. The most

²⁹⁶ Mouritsen (2001), 92-93; Feig Vishnia (2012), 111; Yakobson (1999), 148-155.

²⁹⁷ Lasswell (1936).

²⁹⁸ See Strömbäck, Mitrook & Kioussis (2010); Bannon (2005); Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy (2007); Wring (1997).

²⁹⁹ Strömbäck (2007).

important element in the candidate-voter relationships are common interests. In order to get voters' backing, it is paramount that they are convinced that the candidate agrees with them on issues and shares their goals. What kind of things do the candidate and the voters have to agree upon? These are issues that the voters have a stake in. For the senators, this concerns the authority of the body they are part of; for the *equites* and the wealthy, this concerns stable conditions for their wealth; for the masses, this concerns their powers and sovereignty. Quintus identifies several groups of voters according to their political position and engagement, which results in a diverse coalition. Each of these constituencies should believe that Cicero cares for their interests and will take a stand for them. To make voters believe this, the candidate can play into their sentiments to give them the impression of shared interests, but he needs to be able to back it up with credentials from his career.

Crafting the candidate's reputation in order to persuade voters requires a strategy that involves a number of PR techniques. It starts with voter targeting, identifying the right voters, which is necessary for making sure the campaign plows in fertile, receptive ground. Quintus targets three major groups of stakeholders: the senators, the *equites* and the wealthy, and the masses. Another precondition for an effective PR campaign is visibility and publicity. That is why Cicero should never leave Rome and be in constant campaign mode.

Quintus is adamant that the private life of a candidate is part of his public relations. For that reason, he has to be ingratiating in his personal contacts and always act nice, even if this involves lying and insincerity. In his private affairs, Cicero should furthermore display generosity. Through word of mouth, the recognition of his generosity will trickle down and boost his reputation and popularity with the public. Generosity should also be practiced in *convivia*, even going on the edge of illegality, to show the candidate's investment in the community. The same goes for Cicero's legal services to people: his generous character and behavior should be advertised by himself and by others, because they contribute to a positive reputation of him being involved in helping the community forward. The strategy of being generous to as many people as possible and hoping for a positive trickle-down effect to one's reputation, is only feasible among a rather limited pool of citizens and voters. By way of comparison, there is no way it could be done in a modern Western democracy with millions of voters: private generosity on the part of the candidate would only affect a very small percentage of the voting population and would not convince voters that he is qualified to lead the state. However, it can work in a society as clientelist as the Roman one, in which the scale is smaller and benefactions are of greater importance.

Another matter that Cicero should advertise is the endorsement of high-ranking people, most notably Pompey's. This allows him to slipstream Pompey's influence, winning over many voters from the urban masses without having to persuade them himself. In order to attract attention, Cicero has to treat his campaign as a spectacle full of entertainment. This measure should specifically be pursued for the purpose of popularizing the candidate with the masses. A common and effective way of adding fireworks to the campaign, is through the tactic of opposition research. This results in Cicero being able to relentlessly attack his opponents, which is a proven method to damage the opposition. In fact, following from his rivals' flaws and his position as a negative outsider (see chapter 3), this is a very clever tactic that is likely to bring success.

One of the most important PR techniques in the *Commentariolum* is framing, which entails spinning a message in a way that is favorable to the speaker or writer. Practically all of Cicero's acts should be framed in such a way as to demonstrate that he is capable and willing to devote himself to the welfare of the community. Perhaps rather surprisingly to modern eyes, Quintus pairs this approach with an advice to shun policy debates, which is the tactic of dethematization. A modern campaign without policy debates would be quite unimaginable. Dethematization is nowadays most commonly applied to one or two risky topics. Quintus, however, applies it more broadly, which is not odd, since Roman politics was less ideology-driven than current politics. He wants the focus of the campaign

strategy to be on Cicero's persona, adopting the tactic of personalization. It is Cicero's personal reputation that should qualify him for the consulship. Quintus proposes a marketing approach in order to find out what the public wants and how Cicero can frame these issues as interests that he shares. In this way, he can cater to the public's demands, getting people's vote through a tailor-made appeal to their preferences.

In sum, the candidate-voter relationships in the *Commentariolum* are of a community type, defined by common interests. The effect of Quintus' PR tactics hinges on the successful framing of Cicero's reputation as a benefactor of the community. These PR techniques amount to a strategy in which the candidate seeks to ingratiate himself with the public, letting himself be guided by whatever the public wants to hear. This reveals a rather populist nature of the campaign strategy. As the main selling point of Cicero's campaign rests on the adoption and advocacy of common interests, we can conclude that there is a markedly political dimension to his campaign. This significantly nuances the traditional view that Roman elections were apolitical.

Conclusion

The election strategy in the *Commentariolum petitionis* is divided in two parts: the efforts of friends (*studia amicorum*) and the goodwill of the people (*popularis voluntas*). I have studied this advice from the viewpoint of political public relations with a relational focus. Using six relationship parameters and three relationship types to analyze the PR strategy of Quintus Cicero, I have looked for new patterns and modern PR tools in the *Commentariolum*.

In the absence of a party apparatus, friends make up the campaign staff. M. Cicero's relations with his friends are of a professional nature. Although some level of intimacy and affection is often required to placate someone and enter in a relationship, *amicitia* is primarily a utilitarian alliance. The main feature of *amicitia* is the reciprocal exchange of services. This does not occur on the basis of a spontaneous choice or deep-felt affection, but because of obligations or promises of obligation. For this to work, there needs to be trust – in the sense that each will honor the agreement – between the candidate and his friends.

As a candidate for office, Cicero is permitted and even expected to make friendships with all sorts of people. This gives him a broad coalition of supporters who can be employed in the campaign as ambassadors and attendees. As ambassadors, the friends issue their endorsements in favor of the candidate, act as surrogates for him, and promote his candidacy through oral ads. The success of this PR strategy depends on how many social connections these friends have and on how much credibility they have with these people. As attendees, the friends are present at the campaign events of *salutatio*, *deductio*, and *prensatio*. Their function is to drive up attendance numbers, which enhances the candidate's reputation. In principle, the deployment of friends as ambassadors and attendees is an effective method of spreading the candidate's *petitio* across the citizenry while drawing on the influence of his friends, provided that the candidate is capable of attracting a large number of friends.

The candidate-voters relationships are of a community type. Common interests are the defining feature of these relations: the candidate adopts the concerns and preferences of key constituencies as his own to demonstrate that he wants to improve the welfare of the community. This is evidence that Roman elections were not apolitical, since politics is about finding a balance between the manifold interests and wishes that exist in society. Quintus' PR strategy is geared towards framing Cicero's reputation as the man whose leadership will be beneficial to the Republic. Quintus targets a diverse coalition of voters, specifically political stakeholders who will be susceptible to Cicero's advocacy of their interests.

As part of the PR strategy, Cicero has to utilize his private affairs for his public campaign for office. He should always be kind and ingratiating, accommodating his behavior and discourse to people's dispositions so as to make himself popular with voters, at the cost of honesty. Cicero should display multiple kinds of generosity, because this enhances his reputation as benefactor of the community. Besides, he needs to tout the endorsement of authoritative figures like Pompey, because that man's influence will win him the support of the masses. Quintus wants to add an element of spectacle and entertainment to the campaign, which is an effective tactic to gain attention from a PR point of view. Another effective PR tactic is doing opposition research and launching attacks against the rival candidates. Cicero should dethematize policy debates, which is a tactic to get an issue off the agenda, so that his personality becomes the center of the campaign. His personal qualifications need to link up with voters' expectations and preferences, which shows that Quintus thinks like a political marketer.

Taken together, these PR tactics amount to a campaign in the populist mold. The combination of spreading fake news, ingratiating himself with anyone, and saying what the people want to hear makes that Cicero is advised to run as a populist, as I hypothesized on the basis of Hilhorst's model in

chapter 3. It is patterns such as these that the conceptual framework of political public relations has been able to bring to light. My analysis shows that the PR tools of today were apt for winning an election in ancient Rome, as well. The effectivity of the PR strategy in the *Commentariolum* ultimately lies in the quality of the candidate's relations: if he has sufficient, capable and reliable supporters and allies, he is in a position to persuade enough voters to win the election. This, coupled with a successful frame of Cicero's qualifications, negative attacks on his opponents, and a marketing-oriented approach to the voters' interests, makes Quintus' PR strategy a successful one. To conclude, we see that modern PR tools are reflected in the *Commentariolum*, and that a relational focus is a paradigm with promising explanatory power.

Nevertheless, modern PR tools do not work the same way in Antiquity as they do now, nor can we expect them to have the same results. That is because there are, evidently, major differences between both time periods. Let me highlight three relevant – and related – differences. First, there is a discrepancy in scale. Whereas the pool of Roman voters consisted of some tens of thousands of citizens (see chapter 2), modern Western democracies have many millions of voters. Second, there is a contrast in communication media. In Rome, spreading news and campaign messages had to be done orally through interpersonal contacts, while Western citizens are informed through a variety of mass media. Third, there is a difference in social cohesion. Roman society was characterized by clientelism, meaning that people were socially, politically and economically tied to others, whereas modern societies are shaped by individualism, meaning that voters care for their free self-expression and thus make their own individual decision at the ballot box. These differences effectuate that, unlike in modern Western democracies, it was feasible in ancient Rome to win over enough voters by means of personal contacts and connections, so that the hard work of a few individual campaigners could have a significant influence on the outcome of the election.

Future studies would do well in making relationships the primary focus of public relations research, both in studying the past and in studying the present. Further research could take up the question whether, since Roman politics was not shaped by ideology, every candidate for office could be called a populist. A good place to start might be the candidatures of L. Licinius Murena and Ser. Sulpicius Rufus, which Cicero compares in *Pro Murena*. As I investigated how relations can help a man gain power, it would be exciting to bring the relational paradigm, including the toolkit of relational criteria that I defined, to the execution of power. Since we have moved past the notion that emperors were autocratic rulers who could impose their will without constraints, it would be interesting to see how their execution of power was shaped by the persons around them. This would allow us to go further than, for example, a prosopographical approach (gathering biographical data of a connected group of people) or the use of network theory (visualizing the connections between people in graphs), as political public relations studies how political actors purposefully manage their interactions with other people in order to achieve their goals.

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