

Looking for a Few Good (Provincial) Men: Friendship and Flattery in Pliny and Dio¹

1. **Pliny, *Panegyricus* 85 1-2**, Trans. Warmington, 1969, Loeb

Iam etiam et in privatorum animis exoleverat priscum mortalium bonum, amicitia, cuius in locum migraverant assentationes, blanditiae, et peior odio amoris simulatio. Etenim in principum domo nomen tantum amicitiae, inane scilicet irrisumque, manebat. Nam quae poterat esse inter eos amicitia, quorum sibi alii domini, alii servi videbantur? Tu hanc pulsam et errantem reduxisti: habes amicos, quia amicus ipse es.

Furthermore, even in the hearts of ordinary men, humanity's former blessing of friendship had withered and died, and in its place had sprung up flattery and adulation, and worse even than hatred, the false semblance of love; while in the Emperors' palace nothing remained of friendship but the name, now empty and derided. For how could friendship survive between men thus divided, the one half feeling themselves the masters, the other half their slaves? It was you, Caesar, who brought her back from exile, to find a home again; you have friends *because you yourself are a friend*.

2. **Dio, *Oration* 3.94**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

μόνη δὲ τῆ φιλία συμβέβηκεν ἀπάντων μὲν εἶναι συμφωρότατον, ἀπάντων δὲ ἥδιστον.

To friendship alone has it been given to be both the most profitable of all and the most pleasurable of all.

3. **Dio, *Oration* 3.86-87**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

φιλίαν γε μὴν ἀπάντων νενομίκε τῶν αὐτοῦ κτημάτων κάλλιστον καὶ ἱερώτατον. οὐ γὰρ οὕτως αἰσχρὸν εἶναι τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν οὐδὲ ἐπικίνδυνον χρημάτων ἀπορεῖν ὡς φίλων, οὐδ' ἂν οὕτως τῆ χορηγία καὶ τοῖς στρατοπέδοις καὶ τῆ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει διαφυλάττειν τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ὡς τῆ πίστει τῶν φίλων.

Friendship, moreover, *he believes is* the fairest and most sacred of his possessions. *For he does not believe that to lack property is so shameful* or so perilous for a king as it is to lack friends, and that he maintains his happy state, not so much by means of revenues and armies and his other sources of strength, as by the loyalty of his friends.

4. **Dio, *Oration* 3.113**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

ἄνευ μὲν γὰρ συγγενείας οἱ φίλοι χρήσιμοι, ἄνευ δὲ φιλίας οὐδὲ οἱ σφόδρα ἐγγὺς ὠφέλιμοι.

For a man's friends are useful even without the family tie, but without friendship not even the most nearly related are of service.

¹ All texts are taken from the indicated Loeb volume. Translations are taken from the Loeb volumes with minor alterations made by me. All alterations are indicated with italics.

5. **Dio, Oration 3.120**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

καὶ τοὺς μὲν ὀρθῶς ζῶντας μάλιστα πάντων ἀγαπᾷ, τοὺς δὲ μὴ, οὐ φίλους ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους νενόμικεν.

And those kinsmen who live honorable lives he loves beyond all others, but those who do not so live he considers, not friends, but relatives.

6. **Dio, Oration 3.129-130**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

ὅς γὰρ ἐξ ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐκλέξασθαι τοὺς πιστοτάτους ὑπάρχει, καὶ σχεδὸν οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὃς οὐκ ἂν ἄσμενος ὑπακούσειεν αὐτῷ βουλομένῳ χρῆσθαι, πῶς οὐ καταγέλαστον τὸ μὴ χρῆσθαι τοῖς σπουδαιοτάτοις; οἱ μὲν γὰρ πολλοὶ τῶν δυναστῶν τοὺς ὀπωσδήποτε πλησίον γενομένους καὶ τοὺς κολακεύειν ἐθέλοντας, τούτους μόνους ὀρῶσι, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους πάντας ἀπελαύνουσι, καὶ τοὺς γε βελτίστους ἔτι μᾶλλον. ὁ δὲ ἐξ ἀπάντων ποιεῖται τὴν ἐκλογὴν, ἄτοπον ἠγούμενος Νισαίου μὲν ἵππους μεταπέμπεσθαι, ὅτι βελτίους εἰσὶ τῶν Θεσσαλῶν, καὶ κύνας Ἰνδικάς, ἀνθρώποις δὲ μόνοις χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἐγγύς. πάντα γὰρ ὑπάρχει τούτῳ δι' ὧν ἐστὶ φιλία κτητόν.

For when a man can select his most trustworthy friends from among all men—and there is scarcely a man who would not gladly accept his advances—surely it is ridiculous that he should not have the best. Most *rulers* have an eye only for those who get near them no matter how, and for those who are willing to flatter, while they hold all others at a distance and the best men more especially. *He (the king)*, however, makes his choice from among all men, esteeming it perverse to import horses from the Nisaeen plains because they surpass the Thessalian breed, or hounds from India, and only in the case of men to take those near at hand; since all the means for making friends are his.

7. **Dio, Oration 3.89**, Trans. Cohoon, 1932, Loeb

ὡς τοῖς μὲν τυχοῦσιν οὐκ ἀσφαλὲς εἰκῆ μεταδιδόναι δυνάμεως.

Consequently, it is not a safe policy for him to *give a share of his power carelessly to the men he happens upon*.

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