

## Networking Cicero's Legacy: Ancient History and Political Power in the Late Republic

This paper will apply historical network analysis of Cicero and his acquaintances to examine how ancient authors defined his legacy as a leader of the Late Republic. I will present network diagrams for Cicero and his acquaintances based on Sallust, Velleius Paterculus, Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio. By comparing these diagrams and measurements made from them, I will illustrate the differences and similarities in the way these authors situate Cicero in his own lifetime. Overall, these diagrams will show that Cicero's influence in Roman politics is easy to overestimate. He was influential within a circle of Roman elites within the Senate, but that form of power had become ineffectual with the emergence of figures like Pompey and Caesar.

Cicero is the dominant voice for Roman politics during the Republic because he was a uniquely prolific author. Therefore, evaluating his true impact on Rome can be difficult. Latin and Greek historians present a wider context around Cicero, but his career was controversial, prompting biased presentations that sometimes depicted him as a tyrant and sometimes as a nonviolent hero (Odahl 2010; Galassi 2014). Converting these accounts into network diagrams introduces a level of abstraction that eliminates biased language and allows scholars to quantify Cicero's relationships as presented in the sources, and compare these measurements directly.

My paper will employ historical network analysis, a term used to describe the practices of social network analysis applied to the often small and disjointed datasets provided by historical sources. This field has become increasingly prominent in Classics, featuring work on how elite networks were structured, how effectively information was spread in ancient societies, and exchange relationships in the Roman Republic (Cline 2020; Gilles 2020; Rosillo-López 2020). I

will highlight a measurement called power centrality to show how different authors present Cicero's influence on the people around him. Power centrality works in two directions: positive power centrality measures the number of connections one figure's associates have within a highly connected network, thereby giving them strong influence within that network. Negative power centrality, in contrast, shows a figure's ability to connect outside of a strong network by measuring how many connections that figure has without strong connections within a network (Bonacich 1987). Figures have both negative and positive power centrality, but Cicero was almost always depicted with high positive centrality and little negative centrality. This aspect of Cicero's power centrality is obscured when his own works are included in network studies, as he names many associates who are otherwise unmentioned by ancient authors. Christian Rollinger's 2014 survey of elite Roman networks highlights the importance of negative power centrality in the careers of Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar (Rollinger 2014). This paper will expand on Rollinger's findings by investigating the way ancient historians depicted Cicero's influence, demonstrating his use of positive power centrality.

I will track Cicero's connections in Latin and Greek historians separately, adding a historiographic level of analysis. This approach decenters Cicero, allowing a more nuanced view of his career, but it also highlights how different authors distorted his legacy (Pelling 1985; Westall 2016; Gowing 2007). Illustrating these areas of disagreement reveals the areas of consensus, showing Cicero's strong position within the elite Senatorial class, while confirming the Senate's growing inability or unwillingness to influence military and popular power in the Late Republic.

## Works Cited

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