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Economic goods or solidarity? Two different approaches to liberality

Bens econômicos ou solidariedade? Duas abordagens diferentes sobre o conceito de liberalidade

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will compare the Aristotelian and the Middle-Stoic concepts of liberality as stated by Cicero in the *De Officiis*, which refers to Panaetius. For both concepts, liberality is a principal virtue of socio-political life, but they start from different premises: the individual life in case of Aristotle, and social bonds in the case of Middle-Stoicism. I will try to point out that Aristotle, led by the dualism of reason and passions, is bound to think of liberality as an individual character virtue that prevails over the natural attachment to wealth and assets. Because of his dualism, Aristotle must exclude non-economic beneficence from the domain of liberality. In comparison, the Middle-Stoic approach is mainly based on the idea of sociability. This model does not undervalue goods, but it states that virtues mature from the balanced development of natural impulses, based on the combination of sociability and self-preservation, rather than from an ascetic effort. More particularly, the virtue of liberality originates from the social dimension of moral good. The liberal citizen can make virtuous use of money in certain cases, but he does not necessarily need it. The social sense is crucial, and it leads to the personal support of others, thereby creating and strengthening social bonds.

KEYWORDS

Economic Goods; Solidarity; Liberality; Aristotle

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RESUMO

Neste artigo, vou comparar os conceitos aristotélico e estoico médio de liberalidade, tal como indicado por Cícero em *De Officiis*, que se refere a Panaetius. Para ambos os conceitos, liberalidade é uma virtude principal da vida sócio-política, mas partem de premissas diferentes: a vida individual no caso de Aristóteles e os laços no caso do estoicismo médio. Eu vou tentar demonstrar que Aristóteles, guiado pelo dualismo de razão e paixões, é obrigado a pensar em liberalidade como uma virtude de caráter individual que prevalece sob o apego natural à riqueza e a bens. Por conta de seu dualismo, Aristóteles tem que excluir beneficência não econômica do domínio da liberalidade. Em comparação, a abordagem estoico-média é baseada principalmente na ideia de sociabilidade. Esse modelo não subvaloriza bens, mas estabelece que virtudes amadurecem a partir do desenvolvimento equilibrado de impulsos naturais, baseado na combinação de sociabilidade e autopreservação, mais do que a partir de esforço acético. Mais particularmente, a virtude da liberalidade se origina da dimensão social do bem moral. O sentido social é crucial e leva ao suporte pessoal de outros, deste modo, criando e fortalecendo laços sociais.

PALAVRAS CHAVE

Bens econômicos; solidariedade; liberalidade; Aristóteles

1.

There can be no doubt about the relevance of liberality (*ἐλευθεριότης*) in Aristotle's practical philosophy. In the *Rhetoric* he mentions liberality alongside courage and justice, for example, as being among "the highest kind" of virtues which are "most useful to others" (Rhet. I, 9, 1366 b 3). Furthermore, Aristotle thinks that citizens should learn to be liberal and not only to be just, that is they should give with liberality, not only to each his own. (SWANSON, 1994, p. 14). This high regard for liberality depends on the way people who are liberal act, as if they have regulated the common aspiration for and the pleasure deriving from wealth. According to Aristotle, liberal people "spend freely and do not dispute the possession of wealth, which is the chief object of other men's desire." (*εἶτα ἐλευθεριότης: προΐενται γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἀνταγωνίζονται περὶ τῶν χρημάτων, ὧν μάλιστα ἐφίενται ἄλλοι,* Rhet. I, 9, 1366b 6). It is clear that Aristotle associates liberality and wealth, so it comes as no surprise when, in the Nicomachean Ethic, he defines liberality as "the mean with regard to wealth" (*δοκεῖ δὴ εἶναι ἡ περὶ χρήματα μεσότης,* Eth. Nic. IV, 1119b 22). By "wealth" Aristotle does not mean just money but also economic goods and properties that have a market value and which can be bought and sold and valued in terms of money. (CURZER, 2012, p. 25) As a result, liberality is the virtue of dealing with economic goods and wealth in the right way (Eth. Nic. 1119b 23; 1120a 8 – 23); while, on the contrary, illiberality (ἀνελευθεριότης) is the vice of people who accumulate wealth and do not spend money on others (Rhet. 1366b 16-17).

Aristotle's theory is deeply rooted in the ancient Greek tradition yet contains, at the same time, new elements. It is common knowledge that the aristocratic concept of

liberty in the Homeric world – the exact opposite of slavery - is influenced by possession of lands and valuable assets; property and wealth are also believed to be the prerequisite for the development of moral qualities and virtues. (AUSTIN; VIDAL-NAQUET, 1977, p. 16) Aristotle refers positively to this aristocratic idea, but he transposes it into the context of the polis and civilizes it.[2] Property and wealth are required for liberal gifts, but there is no need to be rich. Aristotle's ideal citizen is liberal without great wealth and expensive gifts for friends; actually, "it is not easy for the liberal man to be rich, since he is not apt either at taking or at keeping, but at giving away, and does not value wealth for its own sake but as a means to giving." (*πλουτεῖν δ' οὐ ῥᾴδιον τὸν ἐλευθέριον, μήτε ληπτικὸν ὄντα μήτε φυλακτικόν, προετικὸν δὲ καὶ μὴ τιμῶντα δι' αὐτὰ τὰ χρήματα ἀλλ' ἕνεκα τῆς δόσεως,* Eth. Nic. 1120b 15). The desire to do good and use wealth for others is crucial. This is believed to be a more recent ethical achievement in ancient Greek history, so that the combination of old and new gives the sense of economic beneficence to Aristotelian liberality. "Liberal" can be used, therefore, to describe the citizen who takes and gives wealth in the right way.

There are many implications to this argument. As we will see, it implies that the gift of non-economic goods is not a proper act of liberality, but rather a sign of goodwill and friendship. Also, the political aspect is relevant: liberality requires an institutional order in which individual property is allowed and promoted. In Plato's virtuous Republic, the State administers liberality, so goods are shared and there is no space for individual liberality. In defense of this individual right, Aristotle argues against Plato in his treatise on Politics (Pol. II, 5, 1263b 1-14).[3] He entrusts individual liberality with a significant role as it has to move economic goods and let them circulate in the polis.[4] This is the reason why the liberal citizen is said to make the best use of wealth; he does not take wealth as an end per se, instead he cares for his property and uses it, with discretion and in the right way, as a means to benefit others. By doing so, he adjusts the economic flow in and out of the polis and contributes to social and political wealth.[5] Public happiness depends on liberality which, in order to grow, needs wealth

[2] Hare (1988, p. 19-32) has argued that Aristotle, in his concept of liberality, puts together two different and unrelated things, possession of wealth and usage for other people. On the contrary, I refer to Curzer's interpretation of liberality as the whole of taking care of and giving wealth as it seems to me to be closer to Aristotle's interpretation of economical life. (CURZER, 2012, p. 92).

[3] According to Judith Swanson (1994, p. 16), "Aristotle is the first philosopher not only to count liberality among the primary virtues, but to note that communism does not clearly or necessarily preempt the need for it, since communal ways of life tend to be Spartan, if not inhumane." Indeed, Plato does not regard individual liberality as the main virtue needed for a virtuous life in public institutions, whereas Aristotle treats private ownership as a basis for the moral growth of the citizen, since one can take pleasure in giving to others only if he has something to give. Also, – as we shall see – he believes that private ownership indirectly represents a condition for a good public life.

[4] "In Aristotelian language - so writes Nancy Sherman (1997, p. 342) -, liberality requires that we act as a steward of our inflow and outflow – typically of wealth, but we might also add, of time."

[5] Swanson (1994, p. 7) has found two motivations in Aristotle's liberal man. The first one is the need for bodily protection: according to this motivation, the liberal man gives away wealth for self-preservation and "his beneficence appears to be for the sake of civic peace or justice"; but Aristotle also stresses a second

just like the soul needs nourishment (De An. 421b 5-11). Wealth as such is not enough since virtue is a disposition that comes about as a result of work upon a part of the soul. In the case of liberality, it is training that transforms the natural attachment to goods into a rational pleasure in giving. This explains why Aristotle does not recognize non-economic beneficence as true liberality; if economic goods are not given, the soul does not regulate the attachment to property and no superior political good is achieved.

One might wonder what the right way of receiving and giving wealth is. Aristotle's answer to this question would be that no exact answer can be given. His ethical treatises claim that moral choices can only be intuitive and context-bound. There can be no universal rules for virtuous action because "virtue and the good man seem to be the measure of every class of things" (*ἔοικε δέ, καθάπερ εἴρηται, μέτρον ἑκάστων ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ σπουδαῖος εἶναι*, Eth. Nic. 1166a 13-14). This is no pleading for relativism. Ethical inquiries can describe virtues and outline how a liberal citizen who has matured his attitude in practical situations would act. Still, the moral choice is not a theoretical matter; it does not consist, as Aristotle says metaphorically, of theoretical abstractions about the properties of a circle, but in the act of indicating the center. Virtuous actions are similar to the concrete act of pointing at the center of the circle, and every discussion about them is, in some way, necessarily imprecise. Though, Aristotle gives some indications about the general form of virtuous conduct: he believes that "virtuous actions are noble and done for the sake of the noble". Therefore, in the domain of economic life the virtuous man, the liberal man, "will give for the sake of the noble, and rightly; for he will give to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving; and that too with pleasure or without pain; for that which is virtuous is pleasant or free from pain — least of all will it be painful." (*αἱ δὲ κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεις καλαὶ καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα. καὶ ὁ ἐλευθέριος οὖν δώσει τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα καὶ ὀρθῶς· οἷς γὰρ δεῖ καὶ ὅσα καὶ ὅτε, καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα ἕπεται τῇ ὀρθῇ δόσει· καὶ ταῦτα ἡδέως ἢ ἀλύπως· τὸ γὰρ κατ' ἀρετὴν ἡδὺ ἢ ἄλυπον, ἥκιστα δὲ λυπηρόν*, Eth. Nic. 1120a 22-27). The context is imprecise in the above-mentioned sense, but it makes clear that the beautiful moral action is "convenient" in relation to a good public end and gives pleasure to the moral actor. In the case of the liberal man, this means taking pleasure in giving economical help to others and leaving "little for himself", "not to look at himself" (*ἐλευθερίου δ' ἐστὶ σφόδρα καὶ τὸ ὑπερβάλλειν ἐν τῇ δόσει, ὥστε καταλείπειν ἑαυτῷ ἐλάττω· τὸ γὰρ μὴ βλέπειν ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἐλευθερίου*, Eth. Nic. 1120b 5-7). His virtue has transformed the natural pleasure for goods into pleasure deriving from social bonds. This does not mean that he will dissipate his property for humanitarian purposes; rather, the liberal man acts politically, integrating dianoetic and ethical virtues. He "sees" in each situation how

motivation: the desire of the rational part of the human soul to be active and to promote the development of social life. In this sense, liberal gifts "might help others not only to stop stealing and looting, but also to become self-sufficient and thus free to live reasonably or virtuously."

he can benefit other citizens with money and economic goods, and does it with pleasure, but without putting at risk his own assets.

Also, the above-mentioned passage indicates that liberality is not universal, but particular. It is based on the selection of people, of forms, of circumstances and of quantities. Aristotle says that the liberal citizen "will not give to the wrong people nor at the wrong time, and so on." (*οὐ μὴν δώσει γε οἷς οὐ δεῖ οὐδ' ὅτε μὴ δεῖ, οὐδ' ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα,* Eth. Nic. 1120b 20). Now, who are the right people? The beneficiaries of liberal gifts are mainly "the perfect friends", that is the citizens that the virtuous man recognizes as "good, and alike in virtue" (*τελεία δ' ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων*, Eth. Nic. 1156b 7).[6] It takes time before one can feel "friendship and love" for another person in this specific sense and regard him as "another self" (*ἔστι γὰρ ὁ φίλος ἄλλος αὐτός,* Eth. Nic. 1166a 32). The first step towards friendship – with no significant difference between citizens and foreigners (Eth. Nic. 1166b 32, Eth. Nic. 1156a 32) - is the goodwill that arises suddenly "when one man seems to another beautiful or brave or something of the sort" (Eth. Nic. 1167a 20). Over time, the relationship can develop as familiarity grows, leading eventually to friendship. It is then concluded that liberality is not based on immediate empathy or spontaneous compassion; its condition is rather a long process of selection and identification. Only true friends mirror each other in virtue and take a pleasure in mutual recognition that has primacy over goods. This also clarifies why Aristotle emphasizes *ἕξις*, the right attitude with respect to one's wealth (*οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῷ πλήθει τῶν διδομένων τὸ ἐλευθέριον, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ τοῦ διδόντος ἕξει, αὕτη δὲ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν δίδωσιν*, Eth. Nic. 1120b 10 cf. also Met. 5.1019b 5-10 and Met. 5. 1022b 4, where ἕξις has the sense of active disposition which can induce affections and change things. In this sense, it is similar to causes or principles), as the key to liberality. The liberal gives with pleasure because he gives to a friend with whom he self-identifies.

Pleasure in giving can be seen as a general condition for Aristotelian liberality, but it is not enough, as the case of prodigality shows. The prodigal man too seems to take pleasure in giving, but this is not true. As Aristotle demonstrates, the prodigal is unable to restrain himself and acts rather on an impulse, which reveals a sense of unease. The prodigal, he writes, "is neither pleased nor pained at the right things or in the right way" (*ὁ δ' ἄσωτος καὶ ἐν τούτοις διαμαρτάνει· οὔτε γὰρ ἥδεται ἐφ' οἷς δεῖ οὐδὲ ὡς*

[6] Vegetti (1990, p. 194) has extensively discussed Aristotle's concept of friendship; he has rightly pointed out that Aristotelian friendship par excellence is among equals. It is founded on self-love and a desire for mirroring oneself in the virtue of the friend. "Il sentimento d'amicizia - so writes Vegetti - si esprime al suo meglio, secondo Aristotele, quando esso si scambia tra pari: la migliore amicizia è una forma di eguaglianza. E il suo fondamento non può essere — in questa morale tutta mondana — che una retta forma di egoismo. Si ha certo bisogno di amici per l'azione virtuosa cui essi collaborano; ma si ha soprattutto bisogno di riconoscere in loro, come in uno specchio, in un altro se stesso, la virtù che è in primo luogo nostra propria. Solo i buoni possono dunque propriamente dirsi amici perché il loro egoismo, fondamento di questo vincolo, è legittimato dalla virtù. Nel filosofo, l'egoismo è ulteriormente valorizzato dal fatto che egli ama in se stesso la parte più nobile dell'io, quella pensante, e questa amicizia con sé gli rende dolcissimo il tempo trascorso nella riflessione."

δεῖ οὔτε λυπεῖται, NE 1121a 8). Prodigality is based on a sort of emotional incompetence and dystonia, which is also accompanied by other vices such as intemperance. (HARE, 1988, p. 20) The reason why the prodigal person does not feel real pleasure in giving depends on a deeper lack of pleasure in living. Compared with the liberal, the prodigal man is not fully responsible for his actions: he is, rather, a "fool" (*ἠλίθιος,* Eth. Nic. 1121a 27), who squanders his wealth by donating it more than he should.[7] Also, he remains bound to external things such as money and wealth and cannot see them as a means to superior moral ends.[8] Prodigality, though, is not generally as serious as illiberality; in fact, the prodigal man can be "easily cured both by age and by poverty, and thus he may move towards the middle state." (*εὐίατός τε γάρ ἐστι καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀπορίας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέσον δύναται ἐλθεῖν*, Eth. Nic. 1121a 20-21). This is the best scenario, but there are also other, more serious cases of prodigality. If a prodigal man runs out of resources and does not repent, he will possibly try to manipulate other people in order to find some. In this case, his behavior is similar to that of the illiberal man (Eth. Nic. 1121 a33) since both tend to take unjustly. Aristotle excludes these forms of conduct from the domain of liberality and states that prodigal giving "is not noble, nor does it aim at nobility, nor is it done in the right way." (*οὐ γὰρ καλαί, οὐδὲ τούτου ἕνεκα, οὐδὲ ὡς δεῖ*, Eth. Nic. 1121b 4-5).

Indeed, the case of the illiberal man is far worse since it is the opposite of liberality. The illiberal man is *philochrematos* (Eth. Nic. 1121b 15), attached to wealth (Eth. Nic. 1122a 2–3 and Eth. Eud. 1232a 11–12). These people accumulate wealth and do not spend money on others (Ret. 1366b 16-17). Illiberality is a complex state and contains both "greed" (excessive desire and pleasure in taking) and "avarice" (inability to give and grief for the loss of property). Aristotle refers to the whole complex with the word "*aneleutheriotes*", which suggests an attitude of moral slavery.[9] In fact, pleasure from possession but without use (Eth. Nic. 1121b 17, 1122a 13) or anxiety about giving money or valuables are not "civilized" passions and lead to antisocial and even self-destructive behavior. The illiberal – says Aristotle – "benefits no one, not even himself." (*ὃ μὲν ὠφελεῖ πολλούς, ὃ δὲ οὐθένα, ἀλλ' οὐδ' αὑτόν,* Eth. Nic. 1121a 30). Tyrants act in this way as do all those who despoil the polis of its wealth. (COX, 1987,

[7] Hadreas (2002, p. 363-364) offers an in-depth discussion of Aristotle's concept of prodigality and he concludes that "the resolute prodigal is trapped in a topsyturvy ordering of external goods."

[8] In regard to this Antony Kenny (1992, p. 15) observes that "if in one person's system virtue is for the sake of wealth, virtue is only a useful good, not a noble one, because wealth is something merely useful. If, in another person's value-system, wealth is for the sake of virtue, then wealth too acquires the nobility which virtue has." The prodigal represents the first case as he has not noble ends; rather, the liberal makes available his wealth to a noble end such as public happiness.

[9] The term ἀνελευθεριότης is sometimes translated as greed in opposition to generosity (ἐλευθεριότης). Both translations are not satisfactory as "generosity" is not immediately connected with liberty like the original Greek term (ἐλευθερία); and "greed" is on the other hand only a part of ἀνελευθεριότης. "Illiberal", "illiberality" are not usual concepts, but it is preferable to use them for two reasons: they immediately give the idea of the opposite of liberality and they preserve the link between moral sense (the individual character does not incline to liberality) and political sense (the form of government tends to tyranny). This is precisely what Aristotle means when he states that tyrants are illiberal as they take with no respect for individual property.

p. 130). Like any other human being, they strive for happiness but fail in this end because of their injustice. It is interesting that Aristotle attributes this failure to a bad relationship with oneself. He says that the bad man "does not seem to be amicably disposed even to himself, because there is nothing in him to love" (*οὐ δὴ φαίνεται ὁ φαῦλος οὐδὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν φιλικῶς διακεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἔχειν φιλητόν*, Eth. Nic. 1166b 25-26). In short: the illiberal man is not a friend to himself as he is not an integrated man and feels pleasure neither in living nor in virtue.

2.

We can have a better understanding of Aristotle's liberality by comparing it with another virtue of economic life, magnificence (*μεγαλοπρέπεια*). This virtue is involved in giving as a second-level virtue with liberality as its first level. Scholars have long been discussing the relationship between the two, yet interpretations are controversial. They tend either to radically separate liberality from magnificence with the argument that the latter does not deal with the getting and giving of wealth, but rather with the suitable financing of public works; (HADREAS, 2002, p. 373) or even to reject the distinction between the two of them, arguing that magnificence should be better interpreted as a form of "heroic" liberality, that is as an extraordinary virtuous action in ordinary conditions or as a virtuous action in extraordinary conditions in which a vice would be excusable. (CURZER, 2012, p. 6). From our point of view, we can clearly admit a relation of logical inclusion between the two. In fact, every magnificent man is liberal too and some liberal men are also magnificent. However, if liberality covers the whole domain of economic life, it does not seem self-evident as to why Aristotle feels the need for another virtue. (PAKALUK, 2011, p. 38) The specific role of magnificence has, then, to be cleared up.

That magnificence is a virtue in its own right, and not simply a reflex of liberality, Aristotle also states in the Eudemian Ethics. Here, he treats magnanimity, magnificence and liberality together as "middle states" (*ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ μεγαλοψυχία καὶ ἡ μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ ἡ ἐλευθεριότης μεσότητες*, Eth. Eud. 1231b 29). "Magnificence" suggests, apparently, a certain affinity with magnanimity as the word includes the idea of greatness (Eth. Eud. 1232a 30), but magnanimity concerns the greatness of soul that contemplates or does important things; it does not have primarily an economic aspect. On the contrary, magnificence is presented in the in-depth discussion in the Nichomachean Ethics as a virtue regarding wealth (*δοκεῖ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ περὶ χρήματά τις ἀρετὴ εἶναι*, Eth. Nic. 1122a 20). It is not by coincidence that Aristotle discusses magnificence after liberality as both pertain to the domain of economic life. For this reason, some scholars have been tempted to ascribe private small donations to liberality and great public expenses to magnificence. (GARVER, 2006, p. 251) Even if such distinctions make sense in some way, they should not be taken too rigidly. Aristotle's notion of liberality does not mean private charity, but it is rather a political concept that refers to a bond of friendship in the context of public relations, and

magnificence too has its unique quality. Even a relatively small expenditure, for a personal gift, for example, can be magnificent; neither the amount of money paid nor the public utility make it so, but the fact of being great depends on it being "convenient", that is highly appropriate and fitting to the situation.

In his ethical treatises, Aristotle offers some indications regarding the difference between liberality and magnificence. The former applies to the taking and the giving of wealth, so that it covers the entire sphere of economic life, while magnificence only covers "greatness in expenditure" (*ἐν μεγέθει πρέπουσα δαπάνη ἐστίν*, Eth. Nic. 1122a 24), as Aristotle says, playing on the term μεγαλοπρέπεια, which includes precisely the two ideas of greatness and convenience. A liberal gift can be of different amounts according to the financial situation of the donor. As we know, the liberal citizen is hardly rich because he likes to give; but if he is rich, his donations will eventually be more conspicuous. Still, it is not the monetary value of the gifts that make him liberal, but rather the ability to manage the flow of wealth correctly. On the other hand, wealth does not imply magnificence. If one spends inadequately on an important occasion, such as a wedding to the woman he loves, this is not magnificent but niggardly (Eth. Eud., 1233b 2), and if one spends more than necessary, it is vulgar (Eth. Nic., 1123b 20). The magnificent spends appropriately and in a splendid way, for magnificence is "splendour in adornment, and adornment does not come out of casual expenditure, but from expenditure that goes beyond what is strictly necessary." (*τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρέπον ἐν κόσμῳ ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ κόσμος οὐκ ἐκ τῶν τυχόντων ἀναλωμάτων, ἀλλ ἐν ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐστίν,* Eth. Eud., 1233a 34-35). It should be noticed that in defining the convenient Aristotle speaks of κόσμος, a concept that suggests an aesthetic order. (HARE, 1988, p. 23) So the magnificent man appears great because his expenditure has aesthetic impact, i.e. it is splendid. We read, for example, that "the most beautiful ball or bottle is magnificent as a gift to a child, but the price of it is small and mean" (Eth. Nic. 1123a 15). In such cases, the gift may have a modest economic value, maybe less than that of a liberal gift given by the same person, but the magnificent expenditure is precisely that which is so perfectly fitting to a situation that it appears likely to be hard to beat.[10] Liberal gifts are motivated by benevolence and friendship and usually provoke gratitude. The magnificent man has other motivations. Whether in private or in public expenditures, his gifts are perfectly set up to arouse emotions such as surprise and admiration. These are two completely different situations. This is why the liberal, as Aristotle points out, "is not necessarily magnificent" (Eth. Nic. 1122a 29), while the contrary is always true - the magnificent man is also liberal, "for the liberal man also will spend what he ought and as he ought; and it is in these matters that the greatness implied in the name of the magnificent man — his bigness, as it were — is manifested, since liberality is concerned with these matters; and at an equal expense he will

[10] The Jesuit Silvestro Mauro clarifies this aspect of magnificence: "*omne opus magnifici tale est in suo genere, ut in eo difficile possit superavi*". Silvestro Mauro, *Aristotelis Opera quae extant omnia brevi paraphrasi ac litterae perpetuo inhaerente explanatione illustrata* a P. S. M., 6 vol., Roma, 1668. Edited by F. Ehrle, B. Felchlin and F. Beringer, Paris, 1885-1887, 4 vol., vol. II, 94.

produce a more magnificent work of art." (*καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἐλευθέριος δαπανήσει ἃ δεῖ καὶ ὡς δεῖ: ἐν τούτοις δὲ τὸ μέγα τοῦ μεγαλοπρεποῦς, οἷον μέγεθος, περὶ ταῦτα τῆς ἐλευθεριότητος οὔσης, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης δαπάνης τὸ ἔργον ποιήσει μεγαλοπρεπέστερον,* Eth. Nic. 1122b 10-12). We see better now the affinity and the difference between the liberal and the magnificent man. Both of them spend in a right and proper way, but the liberal helps friends wisely, taking care that his estate is not compromised, whereas the magnificent does his best to make his expenditure great and splendid in every situation. We understand better now the sense of the relation of logical inclusion between magnificence and liberality. The class of magnificent men includes the class of liberal men because every magnificent man is not only liberal, but also his giving is distinguished by something specific. In short, magnificence is giving with greatness.

We can have a more precise notion of this greatness by analyzing the examples that Aristotle mentions. Expenditure for private situations includes weddings and other events that occur only once, gifts for foreign guests, for the house as visible manifestation of magnificence, for long lasting assets. The magnificent spends greatly on business of public importance such as offerings to the gods and the construction of buildings for religious purposes, and, what is more remarkable, he sustains the liturgies. These are relevant community services such as arming a ship, setting up a choir, equipping a body of riders, organizing an embassy or even offering a public banquet. From these examples we understand that magnificence is mainly oriented towards the public. As is clearly stated in the text, the magnificent "spends not on himself but on public objects, and his gifts bear some resemblance to votive offerings" (*οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἑαυτὸν δαπανηρὸς ὁ μεγαλοπρεπὴς ἀλλ' εἰς τὰ κοινά, τὰ δὲ δῶρα τοῖς ἀναθήμασιν ἔχει τι ὅμοιον*. Eth. Nic., 1123a 5-7).

Considering these examples quoted by Aristotle, some scholars have interpreted magnificence as a sort of philanthropy, (GOTTLIEB, 1994, p. 82; PAKALUK, 2005, p. 178) but this not accurate. In the ordinary modern usage of the term "philanthropy" there is a suggestion that makes it more fitting to the universalistic ethics of Kant, not to that of Aristotle. In fact, Aristotle uses the concept of philanthropy rarely and in a rather bland way. In the Poetics this notion justifies why the public can feel the emotions represented in the scene (Poet. 1452b 38 and 1456a 21); human sympathy for those who suffer is the basis of catharsis in the tragedy (Poet. 13, 1453a 3, 18; 1456a 23). Also, Aristotle speaks of philanthropy when he discusses the affinity between the members of humankind that we can be aware of by travelling (Eth. Nic. 1555a 20-23). However, the practice of giving is not founded on the unity of humankind, but rather on a psychological process of projection and identification which makes us feel benevolent towards people whose qualities we appreciate (Eth. Nic. 1167a 18-20). This very process creates the basis for friendship and political relations. Liberality is, consequently, not motivated by humanitarism, but by ethical-political bonds, and expenditure for liturgies are political phenomena. Scholars refer to the established practice among wealthy citizens of taking on of large expenses for public works in order to support the community as evergetism. (cf. VEYNE, 1990) As already mentioned, this does not exclude that magnificent action may also have private

purposes or take place in a special circumstance and cost relatively little. Aristotle does not stress the different situations, which are variable and relative, but the "fitting" that arouses admiration for its perfection.

In drawing an identikit of the magnificent citizen, sociological considerations can help. Aristotle states explicitly that magnificence does not suit poor people as they do not have the necessary means, but neither does it correspond to the profile of the liberal man. All citizens can learn to be liberal as abundant riches are not needed for liberality; on the other hand, magnificence requires plenty of financial resources and assets and strives systematically for elegance and style in every situation. It will be reasonable then to assume that it is the virtue of elites who can bear the costs of expenditure for public use.

Still, birth or wealth do not guarantee greatness. Magnificence is neither waste nor pomp, it is a second-level virtue, and, like the other virtues, it is a result of specific training. Sir David Ross wrote that magnificence is largely a matter of good taste, (ROSS,1995, p. 212) but his view, while not false, can be misleading. The aesthetic dimension of magnificence should not be overstressed as the virtue is mainly the result of precise judgment and action that arouse admiration for their perfection. (HURSTHOUSE, 1995, p. 105) In the text, we read that "the magnificent is then like an experienced man; for he can see what is fitting and spend large sums tastefully." (Ὁ δὲ μεγαλοπρεπὴς ἐπιστήμονι ἔοικεν: τὸ πρέπον γὰρ δύναται θεωρῆσαι καὶ δαπανῆσαι μεγάλα ἐμμελῶς, Eth. Nic. 1122a 35). It has to be noted that Aristotle uses here the term ἐπιστήμονι (from ἐπίσταμαι), which suggests the possession of a prudent wisdom and an almost scientific knowledge. The magnificent "sees" (θεωρῆσαι, just like Pericles was able to recognize in every situation what was the best for him and for the State) what is appropriate to a situation and knows how to act ἐμμελῶς, i.e. in a suitable and well-proportioned way. His good taste should be seen as the ability to perfectly judge a situation and to act in harmony with the circumstances. The vices related to magnificence concern this very lack of ability to "see" what is appropriate. According to this, vulgarity and niggardliness are a lack of intellectual virtue which causes one overspend when one should spend little (vanity and arrogance are also involved here) or spend a lot, but in a clumsy and improper way and without that splendour that is the true trait of magnificence. In fact, the niggardly man (μικροπρεπής) spends a lot for public purposes, but lingers on or regrets the money he has spent or even tries to save money, i. e. neither his actions nor his attitude are suited the the situation and his social status. In short, even the niggardly man is not a friend to himself, although his behavior is not as socially harmful as that of the illiberal man.

If we compare liberality with magnificence from the point of view of their related vices, we eventually see that they are connected yet different. Vices of liberality are something serious; they can squander assets and ruin families or, far worse, lead to forms of antisocial behavior such as meanness. Every good citizen should guard against them. On the contrary, vulgar ostentation or niggardliness are minor vices in giving; "they do not bring disgrace" says Aristotle, "because they are neither harmful to one's neighbor nor very unseemly." (Eth. Nic. 1123a 32). They reveal confusion and

bad taste, but they do not damage the polis. The reason for this is that magnificence is a second-level virtue that does not apply to every citizen, but only to wealthy elites who can take responsibility for public expenditure on a grand scale and in a manner that is commensurate with their social status. This interpretation is entirely consistent with Aristotle's situational approach to ethics. According to this approach, different social roles require specific virtues as we read in the *Politics*, where it is stated that "the goodness of all the citizens is not one and the same, just as among dancers the skill of a head dancer is not the same as that of a subordinate leader (…) Now we say that a good ruler is virtuous and wise, and that a citizen taking part in politics must be wise." (Pol. III 1277a 13). Wealthy elites are not in the same situation as ordinary citizens who cannot practice evergetism. They have to be liberal and magnificent, not just liberal, i.e. great in expenditure.

One can summarize what has been discussed up to now by saying that Aristotelian liberality is a virtue that concerns the whole domain of economic life. It does not require those abundant riches which distinguish social elites nor does it require "taste" and high social expectations, as in the case of magnificence. Liberality is about caring of one's wealth and property and providing social support to selected friends. As a virtue, it is necessarily imprecise, but the liberal man will choose intuitively the right conditions for social action (who to give to, when and how to give and so on). In Aristotelian terms, he can be said to be a friend to himself since the various parts of his soul are in harmony (Eth. Nic. 1166b 20); he feels a pleasure for life and his thoughts and actions correspond to this feeling so that he accomplishes his duties (Eth. Nic. 1169a 16) and has "nothing to regret" (Eth. Nic. 1166a 30). When it comes to helping friends with money and other valuable goods, the liberal man gives away wealth with no complaint and with the same pleasure for life that prevents him from being self-destructive. His friendship with himself rests on the integration of *φρόνησις* and ethical impulse towards others. One can say, in other words, that liberality implies individual and social integration. Liberal men can sustain others as they are integrated individuals. They know themselves and feel a pleasure for life which opens them up to social life. The liberal form of virtuous giving to others is actually made possible by disciplined self-love and correct judgment. Without them, even a man of great qualities will not develop his individual and social potential. This is precisely the point; Aristotle believes that only the friend to himself can truly benefit other people and be a supportive friend to them. In other words, altruism requires integrity and pleasure for life. This notion of friendship with oneself or, as I would be tempted to say, true generosity, refers, then, to an "ascetic" integration between passion and reason which comes out after a hard work upon the soul that involves discipline, imitation of good social models and personal reflection.

There are many assumptions in this conception. In the first place, Aristotelian liberality is a virtue of the individual economic life, i.e. it requires at the same time wealth and individual training. Surely – as Aristotle points out, there is no need to be rich to develop liberality; still, one should have some wealth. It is perfectly coherent in a dualistic approach to human nature like that of Aristotle's that there must be

something material, wealth and assets, so that a different moral attitude to it can be worked out. For this very reason Aristotle must, consequently, exclude non-economic beneficence from the domain of liberality and he can think of it merely as an act of friendship. Also, the social basis of Aristotle's approach to virtue is very limited since liberality is accessible only to few who have undergone strenuous training. This applies even more in the case of magnificence, a liberality of second grade, which is much more exclusive.

3.

I now turn to the Stoic concept of liberality, as it is stated principally in Cicero's *De Officiis*, which refers to authors of middle Stoicism, and primarily to Panaetius of Rhodes. Since the Stoics speak of liberality as a *kathekon*, a duty of solidarity between human beings, it is firstly necessary to remark upon the concept of *kathekon*. This concept had a significant role in Stoic ethics from the beginning as it was introduced by the founder of the school, Zeno of Citium, who applied it "to that for which, when done, a reasonable defence can be adduced, e.g. harmony in the tenor of life's process, which indeed pervades the growth of plants and animals. For even in plants and animals, they hold, you may discern fitness of behaviour." (Ἔτι δὲ καθῆκόν φασιν εἶναι ὃ πραχθὲν εὔλογόν [τε] ἴσχει ἀπολογισμόν, οἷον τὸ ἀκόλουθον ἐν τῇ ζωῇ, ὅπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ ζῷα διατείνει: ὁρᾶσθαι γὰρ κἀπὶ τούτων καθήκοντα, DL 7. 107). For the human being, *kathekon* is thus the appropriate or the responsible and right action that may be justified from the point of view of the *logos*. (cf. POHLENZ, 1967, p. 410) The fully virtuous action (a *teleion kathekon* or *kathortoma*, *officium perfectum*) is characteristic of the sage; on the other hand, the not fully virtuous action, the "common duty" (*meson kathekon*, *officium medium*), is shared between wise and ordinary man. The latter does not possess that pure intention and *phronesis* which distinguishes the conduct of the sage. Cicero himself let us understand the sense of the above-mentioned distinction: to repay a loan is a common duty, but to do it in the right way, i.e. with perfect intention is a perfect duty.[11] The content of the action in both cases is the same, but the quality of the intention is quite different: in the case of the sage it is totally adherent to the rational *logos*.

Panaetius of Rhodes, the main source for Cicero's *De Officiis*, had emphasised the importance of the *mesa kathekonta* and we should keep in mind some facts about his Stoic teachings. Panaetius was a reformer of the Stoa,[12] who denied, for instance, the

[11] Cicero, *De finibus*, III, XVIII 59. In the crisis of late Republic, Cicero defended common duties as the basis of moral orientation. He believed that an ethic of common sense could encourage the municipal élites to sustain the Republican institutions. It should be noted, however, that he had to make use of the concept of "liberal intention" (*liberalis voluntas*) to distinguish true liberality from manipulative demagogy, and this concept pertains rather to the domain of *kathortoma*. (cf. GIAMMUSSO, 2017).

[12] Panaetius was scholarch of the Stoa in Athens from 129 b. C. to 110 a. C. For a chronology of his life in the context of the Stoic School cf. T. Dorandi (1999: 37-42); on his philosophical thought cf. M. Pohlenz (1970) and

classical Stoic view of the cyclical conflagration of the universe. His conception of the eternity of the world (DL 7, 142) came rather close to the academic and the peripatetic schools. Also, in the ethical discourse he showed some affinities with the peripatetic school; like Posidonius, he believed that not only virtue but also health, strength and some means of living have their importance as regards happiness, (ὁ μέντοι Παναίτιος καὶ Ποσειδώνιος οὐκ αὐτάρκη λέγουσι τὴν ἀρετήν, ἀλλὰ χρείαν εἶναί φασι καὶ ὑγιείας καὶ χορηγίας καὶ ἰσχύος, DL 7, 128). This idea corresponded to another innovative concept, that of individuality. While early stoicism had stressed the common membership of humans to a single genre, Panaetius considered individuals as if they were actors who have various roles to play. According to his theory, everyone in life plays four roles: the first is that of a human being who shares with other human beings the same rational *logos*; the second is given by the individual character; the third by the social role and the circumstances of birth; finally, the fourth depends on the free will. [13] Panaetius gave importance to individual industriousness and he thought that it was possible to live in accordance with the *logos* and progress morally also by playing one's role in one's working life well. (cf. EDELSTEIN, 1966, p. 48; cf. SEDLEY, 2003, p. 20-24) In his treatise, there had to be a part dealing with perfect duties (*kathortomata*), those relating to practical reasoning, the *phronesis,* of the sage. It could not be otherwise for a Greek stoic, moreover an admirer of Aristotelian *phrónesis*, as Panaetius was. However, his theory of goods and his theory of individuality, which we can reconstruct from the sources, were coherently oriented towards a revaluation of individual roles and of individual profit. The testimony of Seneca stating that Panaetius had considered the actions of not fully virtuous in everyday life appears to be correct (Seneca Ep. 116.5). In his treatise on proper actions (*Perì tou kathekontos*), Panaetius wanted to stress that in everyday life there can be no real conflict between the "honourable" (*kalon*) and the "beneficial" (*sympheron*) since the moral good is also beneficial and, on the contrary, the practice of appropriate actions according to the individual circumstances can be also a factor of moral development toward virtue.

No wonder Cicero follows Panaetius, "a most respected Stoic" (II, 51), as he calls him. [14] Cicero too is convinced that appropriate actions are both honourable and beneficial. Also, Panaetius had come to Rome in 149 BC, where was introduced into the Scipionic circle. This was of some relevance to Cicero; he wrote the *De Officiis* in 44 BC, after the death of Ceasar, and in in the midst of an extremely critical situation both for the Roman republic and for himself. By referring to Panaetius, Cicero could offer to the late republican élites an understandable model, which reminded them of

M. Van Straaten (1946); about the relationship between Cicero and Panaetius' work cf. also A. Dyck (1979: 408-416), who reconstructs the likely structure of the treatise, which Cicero used as a source for his own *De officiis*.

[13] For more extensive explanations, cf. De Lacy, (1977, p. 163-172), and Puhle (1987), who reinterprets Panaetius on the basis of modern theories of social role and personality; for Cicero's reception of this theory cf. Ch. Gill, (1988, p. 169-199).

[14] For the English translation of the *De officiis* I follow the edition of M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins, Cicero (1991, p. 82).

the pristine republican virtues. He believed that the Panaetian theory of *kathekonta* (*media officia* in Cicero's translation) was still suitable for the Roman elites. In fact, it did not require having to behave like perfect sages, but rather seeking to combine the moral good and the beneficial. Thus, Cicero reinterprets personalities such as the African as models of admiration not for their perfect virtue, but rather "for the usual observance of intermediate duties" (III, 16) and for the application with which they practiced the teachings of the wise (De re pub. III, 7). According to Cicero, the republican heroes were a model of action because of their common moral sense which various emerging social groups could still learn. On the other hand, the fully virtuous action of the sage is rather an elitist phenomenon, which is incomprehensible to most people. Following Panaetius, Cicero could shift the focus of ethical studies from the ideal virtue of the sage to a shared moral common sense. His ambition, though, was to bring Panaetius'arguments to a more complete form, and to include a discussion of aspects that Panaetius had not treated. For this part, Cicero used other Stoic sources such as Posidonius of Apamea (whose lessons Cicero attended in Rhodes during his stay in the year 79 BC) and Hecato of Rhodes, Panaetius' disciple. In the tradition of the Stoic treatises on *kathekonta*, (cf. SEDLEY, 1999, p. 137) Cicero could then find solid ground for his political and philosophical goals.

According to scholars, it is almost impossible to reconstruct exactly how Cicero used Panaetius. For our purposes, suffice to say that Cicero himself admits that he did it to a considerable extent (Ad Att. XVI 11; De off. I 10). There is, however, no evidence that Cicero's work was limited to just copying Panaetius' treatise. Moreover, right from the opening of his treatise, Cicero claims autonomy. Among other things, Cicero criticizes Panaetius because he did not define the concept of duty, and because he did not even take the discussion to its conclusion. We know that Panaetius lived thirty years after the drafting of his *Perì kathekon*, but he preferred to leave the work unfinished. On the contrary, Cicero intends to offer a complete treatment of the matter, dealing also with the cases in which the honourable and the beneficial seem to conflict and suggesting how to reconcile the conflict. He takes the scheme of his arguments from Panaetius, but, at the same time, he creates a work which reinterprets and re-configures Panaetian concepts, adapting them to a different political situation.[15] For example, it is not hard to recognize in the Panaetian ideal of the *megalopsichia* the model for Cicero's thesis that the exercise of leadership is a service to the community itself. Based on Panaetius' concept of *megalopsichia,* Cicero can legitimize the aspirations of the Roman elites to social control and political glory, and reconcile them with a "common" moral virtue. However, Cicero had experienced firsthand in the agitated stages of late republic the harmful and destructive consequences of a magnanimous

[15] I fully agree with Narducci, when he writes that Cicero's originality is to be found in the way he reinterprets Greek material and proposes it to republican elites. «Cicerone – he writes - sottopone a rielaborazione originale i materiali che trae dalle sue fonti: la rielaborazione non concerne tanto i contenuti concettuali e dottrinari, quanto la loro ricomposizione nel quadro di un ideale di vita adatto a essere proposto al pubblico romano e delle classi dirigenti dell'Italia». (cf. NARDUCCI, 2009, p. 332).

search for glory, not limited and not regulated by other virtues. This makes it easy to understand why he expresses doubts about *megalopsichia*. According to Cicero, *megalopsichia/magnanimitas* can turn into an insatiable quest for power and degenerate into tyrannical injustice. This was precisely the path followed by Caesar.[16] Cicero's perspective then could no longer be that of Panaetius, although he takes the conceptual framework from him.

Something similar can also be said about the treatment of *eleutheriotes/liberalitas*. Panaetius had treated *eleutheriotes* in the context of the social virtues, because solidarity was a Stoic value. Cicero paraphrases Panaetius when he writes that for the Stoics "everything produced on the earth is created for the use of mankind, and men are born for the sake of men, so that they may be able to assist one another." (I, 22). Cicero takes up from him the concept of the social nature of human beings and of *eleutheriothes* as the corresponding virtue, but the political emphasis that he gives to the contrast between *liberalitas* and *prodigalitas* is his original contribution. (LEVÈFRE, 2001, p. 80) Not even in Aristotle, who regards prodigality with some benevolence, do we find these nuances. Aristotle had mentioned the illiberality of some prodigal tyrants, but in the hands of Cicero this matter acquires a very special form. The concept of a just *liberalitas* is constructed in opposition to the populist spirit of the *prodigi*; these are not moved by a moral purpose, but by mere political ambition and subversive designs that expose the traditional republican structure of the State to danger.[17] This distinction involves too the theory of goods. Can it be said that the beneficence is always good? As we shall see, Cicero's answer is that it is an appropriate act only in certain limited cases; otherwise it is neither indifferent nor desirable, but also an element of corruption in private and public life. Because of his political experience Cicero has given a particular interpretation to Panaetius' conception of social life.

4.

Let's deal in the first place with Cicero's reformulation of the Panaetian theory of the virtues. His argument moves from the concept of *oikeiosis*. The term is difficult to translate, but it refers to the process by which one identifies with something, recognizes something as one's own and evaluates it positively as belonging to oneself.

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[16] In a letter to Atticus dating to the February of the year 49 b. C. Cicero speaks of Caesar as an insane and miserable man who has never even seen the shadow of moral good and has acted only for his personal prestige. (*Utrum de imperatore populi Romani an de Hannibale loquimur? O hominem amentem et miserum, qui ne umbram quidem umquam τοῦ καλοῦ viderit! Atque haec ait omnia facere se dignitatis causa. Ubi est autem dignitas nisi ubi honestas?* Cicero, [1998, p. 634-635]). This last line has to be remarked upon. It means that the search for personal power and dignity cannot be separated from the moral good; this is the main theme of *De officiis*.

[17] In the oration *Pro Caelio* of the year 56 b. C. Cicero sketches a profile of Catiline, bringing to the fore his manipulative prodigality: «Who was more greedy in stealing - says of him Cicero - and more generous in donating?" (*quis in rapacitate avarior, quis in largitione effusior*?). *Pro Caelio*, § 12, in Cicero (1978, p. 552-553). Similarly, Sallust portraits Catiline as "*alieni adpetens, sui profusus*". *De Cat. con.*, § 5.

For this reason, it is usually translated with "appropriation." (cf. RADICE, 2000; LEE, 2002) Cicero alludes to this concept when he states that human beings share some features with all living being, including the instinct of self-preservation (the search for food and safety, avoidance of suffering), sexual desire and care for offspring. All these impulses are natural and correspond to a first form of *oikeiosis*. However, a human being is not only moved by sensation; he also has a specific rational function. Through reason we know the causes of events, and we predict the consequences of actions and structure our time. (I, 11) In particular, another special form of *oikeiosis* towards others originates from the rational nature of human beings.

"The same nature - we read in the text -, by the power of reason, unites one man to another for the fellowship both of common speech and of life, creating above all a particular love for his offspring. It drives him to desire that men should meet together and congregate, and that he should join them himself; and for the same reason to devote himself to providing whatever may contribute to the comfort and sustenance not only of himself, but also of his wife, his children, and others whom he holds dear and ought to protect. (I 12).

Rational nature pushes human beings towards communication and social living which has the family as its elementary social group. According to this approach, sociability is based on *oikeiosis*, the natural tendency to regard relationships with others in the same way as we consider our relationship with ourselves. In tandem with this social sense, we also have a natural impulse to knowledge, to independence and to *decorum* and harmony. In the interplay of these four natural impulses Cicero recognizes four different aspects of the "honourable" (1, 14), which translates Panaetius' "*kalon*".

Among the social virtues Cicero stresses justice and liberality in particular. Justice is the virtue of the limits, between individuals on one side, and between individuals and the State on the other. It ensures that no offenses to individuals and their properties are committed, and that no common goods are misappropriated. In other words, justice limits anti-social tendencies that stem from greed and inordinate desire for goods. It may seem that Cicero assigns a fundamental role to justice, as if it were the foundation of the other virtues. In the third book, he states that justice is "the mistress and queen of virtues" (III, 28). But formulations of this kind should not be taken too literally; justice has no absolute value because in Stoic ethics virtues interact. For example, magnanimity can be useful to the state and society; prudence is useful to social and political virtues; and liberality is not only connected to justice, but it also moderates it. In fact, Cicero does not recommend demanding justice in too harsh a way, "For it is not only liberal – he says -, but sometimes may even prove fruitful, occasionally to concede a little of one's right." (II, 64). In this context liberality, justice, moderation and that which is beneficial are closely related. Liberality should be right, otherwise it is prodigality, or even worse, avarice; but liberality too has influence on justice: the true gentleman is not pedantic in demanding his rights, but he is "liberal", i.e. he is, in some way, detachted and tolerant, and this, indirectly, also comes in handy because it gives rise to goodwill. Justice and liberality are equally relevant, though

their functions are different. The former protects the natural right to property and the boundaries of social space, the latter creates and strengthens social bonds, and this *oikeiosis* toward others is, for the Stoics, as natural as the *oikeiosis* toward oneself. Cicero fully endorses Panaetius' view of our social destination as human beings and states that we were born to exchange services, goods, relationships, in short, to "serve the common advantage" (I, 31). Hence, then, the thesis that "nothing is more suited to human nature" (I, 42) than liberality: it is the virtue of establishing relationships based on gifts and exchanges within the limits of justice.[18]

There is something "light" and benevolent in this concept of liberality. It is possible that both Panaetius and Cicero, kept in mind what Aristotle had said of the liberal man, namely that he gives without effort and with pleasure. For Cicero too, the liberal man gives with a smile and good humour,[19] but, overall, his Stoic approach to liberal giving is different. Aristotle intends liberality as a virtue of character, something active, an excellence in the individual disposition, which makes "fair" use of money. On the other hand, Cicero takes from Panaetius the idea that justice and liberality are both essential parts of one of the four sources of the "honourable", specifically the one that corresponds to the social nature of man and to the need to create community bonds. I will discuss the difference between the two approaches at a later point in this paper, but some principle differences should be noted here. According to Aristotle, liberality requires money and economic goods; without them gifts are at most an act of friendship, i.e. they are not virtuous in a proper sense. Instead, the use of money does not appear strictly related to the Stoic concept of liberality. In fact, Cicero does not exclude it, but recommends rather other forms of solidarity, which are closer to the human need for social support. In particular, Cicero lays down three requirements in order to distinguish proper liberality.

According to Stoic theory, not every donation is a *kathekon*. "Nothing is liberal – says Cicero – if it is not also just" (*Liberal nihil est enim, quod non idem iustum*, I, 43). "Just" can be said of a gift that respects some conditions. Firstly, it should not harm the people who receive it nor others. This first criterion applies, for instance, to manipulative behavior such as that of Silla, who donated goods that he had confiscated from his opponents to his followers. That a gift does not damage anyone is, however, a minimal condition. Secondly, a donation should be also commensurate with our possibilities. This condition traces a line of demarcation between liberality and prodigality. Cicero considers prodigality in more negative terms than Aristotle, who treated mild forms of prodigality with some benevolence as he believed that the prodigal man could easily mend his ways in some cases by, for example, depleting his wealth or just by getting older. Cicero sees a vanity in the attitude of the prodigal man;

[18] It is remarkable that Cicero assumes "beneficientia", "benignitas" and "liberalitas" as synonyms. (cf., 20).
[19] H. Kloft (cf. 1970, p. 40) emphasizes a passage in the text where Cicero speaks about Lucius Cassius Longinus in these terms: "*homo non liberalitate, ut alii, sed ipsa tristitia et severitate popularis*." (Cic. *Brut*., p. 97). Kloft argues that Cicero's *liberalitas* would imply a "light" and benevolent atmosphere. This is little more than a conjecture, but it seems coherent with the social function that Cicero attributes to liberality.

something which Aristotle did not focus on very much. In many cases the actions of the prodigal "appear to stem not from goodwill, but from ostentation. Such pretence is closer to sham than to either liberality or honorableness."[20] (I, 44) The downside of this vanity is that a citizen who wants to appear more liberal than he could afford - this is actually the case of *Prodigus* -, commits injustice to his family from whom he indirectly takes away goods. However, this prodigality is also accompanied by "a greediness to plunder and deprive unjustly, so that resources may be available for lavish gifts" (I, 44). Cicero's Stoic conception is not completely new since Aristotle had already identified some traits shared by the prodigal and illiberal man who acts as a tyrant. They are both manipulative and unjust. But Cicero is subtler when he denounces the manipulative tendencies of a *Prodigus* like Caesar. He thinks that Caesar's donations were not explicitly tyrannical, as were those of Silla, and had something reminiscent of true virtue, the act of giving and distribute goods; but they were not truly virtuous since Caesar's financed his donations with borrowed money and his real intention was to buy the people's favour and good reputation for himself.[21] In other words, Caesar's donations could rely neither on just means nor on just intentions. For this reason, they were rather corruptive. Thirdly, a true donation should not only be not unjust or prodigal: it should be selective. Cicero gives some criteria to evaluate the *dignitas* of the receivers:

> Here we should look both at the conduct of the man on whom we are conferring a kindness, and at the spirit in which he views us, at the association and fellowship of our lives together, and at the dutiful services that he has previously carried out for our benefit. It is desirable that all such considerations should come together. If they do not, then the more numerous and more important grounds will carry more weight. (I 45).

Cicero proposes benefitting mainly just and moderate people in order to promote the goal of sociality: these are virtues which result from the social impulses of the human being and which consolidate them. In the above quoted passus, Cicero also refers to other people who show us goodwill and who have rendered us service in the past. In this case, it is appropriate to reciprocate the goodwill that is shown in a continuous manner and to pay particular attention to reciprocating the benefits "for no duty is more necessary than that of requiting gratitude" (*nullum enim officium referenda gratia magis necessarium est*, I 47). It has to be noted, however, that the acts of

[20] In Roman society, the quest for prestige through the ostentation of socially recognized behaviors such as liberality would have to be rather widespread if Seneca - in changed political conditions - will say almost the same thing: giving for the sake of one's own social image is an obstacle to the achievement of true liberality.
[21] Caesar had little personal wealth and was heavily indebted to cover the expenses associated with his office as aedile; though, it should be remembered that contracting debts to finance one's career and ingratiating the electorate was customary practice among the aristocrats. Cicero too had done it during his aedile to finance the *Ludi Romani*, the *Megalenses* and the *Florales*. (WARDE, 1910, p. 83; NARDUCCI, 2009, p. 59).

liberality - benefits to be conferred or acts of gratitude – should exclude any second intention. Finally, Cicero refers to the "*communitas ac societas vitae*" as a positive criterion of selection. He means the different types of social bonds and community in which everyone is included, describing gradually wider circles, from the first natural society - the conjugal society, based on the instinct of procreation - the children, the house, the relations of brotherhood, friendship and up to the supreme form of commonality, which is that binds us to the state (par. 54-57). As regards to friends, various forms of moral support will be sufficient.

5.

With these criteria Cicero tries in the first book to define what an appropriate donation, a *kathekon*, would look like according to a common moral sense, and how it could be preferred to another appropriate action. In the second book, he changes perspective and considers appropriate actions as a species of the beneficial. (COLISH, 1990, p. 149) Cicero's goal is to make it plausible to his audience that virtue is more useful than malice since only virtue allows success and a lasting social influence.[22] The discussion of the glory, the supreme political good, has a leading position in this argumentative strategy. In its essence, glory is nothing but people's love, trust and admiration. According to Cicero, glory cannot be conquered with physical strength, but it can only be achieved through the virtues; and, first of all, with moderation, which is the first step to glory. (*Prima igitur commendatio proficiscitur a modestia, cum pietate in parentes, in suos benivolentia*. II, 46). It is no wonder that Cicero appreciates moderation (or temperance) so much. In the *Tusculanae Disputationes* (III, 17) and in the *De Finibus* (II, 45-47) it appears as the fourth virtue, the virtue that prevents a man from doing, thinking or saying anything against other virtues. In short, a moderate man is "decent". The category of "*decorum*" (which translates the *Prepon* of Panaetius) circumscribes a virtuous domain in which unjust, imprudent and cowardly actions cannot take place. A decent moderation is an alternative to the use of force, to manipulation and deception. The glory that ensues from moderation is true and lasting because it is obtained thanks to qualities that produce consensus and popular favour. In particular, prudence and justice arouse trust; patience and fortitude are admired, but it is only thanks to donations that benevolence is attracted (II, 32-33). Liberality, and even the intention to benefit, attract people's love, which is moved by mild virtues. This is very beneficial and appropriate for those who aspire to glory and political success. More than any other virtue, liberality creates a "warm" atmosphere that strengthens social bonds. Cicero does not doubt that glory presupposes liberality, but he points out that true liberality benefits people, it does not buy people's support.

[22] By this argument, Cicero wants to make virtue attractive - as did Panaetius - and civilize the Roman passion for power and intrigue putting it at the service of the honourable. (cf. DYCK, 1996, p. 354).

To remove any ambiguity from the concept of liberality, in the second book Cicero makes (par. 52-72) a significant move; he reduces the role of money and states that the act of giving should relate to virtues. As well as the bestowal of money, he speaks of a different kind of liberal action, that of working in favour of others. Both "involve a liberal willingness to gratify others; but the one draws upon a money-chest, the other upon one's virtue." (*quamquam enim in utraque inest gratificandi liberalis voluntas, tamen altera ex arca, altera ex virtute depromitur, largitioque, quae fit ex re familiari, fontem ipsum benignitatis exhaurit.* II, 52). As mentioned above, Cicero does not completely reject donations of money. The point is that there should be a real liberal intention, i.e. the true intention of doing something good for other people. However, he argues that work done for others "is both more brilliantly illustrious, and more worthy of a brave and notable man" because it is directly derived from the root of social morality. The emphasis is here primarily on *liberalis voluntas*. In other words, Cicero appeals to an intentional element to restrict the field of liberal donations; he wants to exclude that consent can be bought by liberal donations. In his view, liberality requires as its main element a real desire to do good to selected people in their best interest, and not for personal gain. Under this condition, even money is allowed in limited cases, but volunteering one's competences and work is preferable to *largitio* because it does not draw from a poor source such as money, but rather from the very social nature of human beings, which is inexhaustible.

Cicero brings examples of liberal actions that refer to the traditional values of solidarity of the equestrian order. According to him, economic support should be granted to those most in need (I, 49), if they are not fallen in disgrace because of their vices, and also to deserving people without means (II, 62-63). Also, he considers true liberal men those who by their wealth "ransom captives from bandits, or assume their friends' debts, or help them to finance their daughters' marriages, or give them assistance in acquiring or enlarging their property." (II, 56). As beneficiaries of the economic liberality, Cicero suggests to wisely choose people in need and who are deserving – with no distinction between citizens and foreigners -, who then will also be grateful for the benefits received. The emphasis on the gratitude of the beneficiaries as a criterion of selection is consequent, given that Cicero's approach to the complex of "common duties" is a free variation of Panaetius attempt to demonstrate that the moral good and the beneficial are not in opposition. In this case, "anything that is granted to a man who is good and grateful bears fruit both in him, and also in others." (II, 63). But, as mentioned above, Cicero stresses engagement in personal support, especially free patronage in legal disputes (II, 65). He means a set of volunteered services ranging from consulting to heritage protection and direct representation in court, which represent the highest form of virtuous liberality as an alternative to the donations of money.[23] It is not hard to admit that this conception was to some extent

[23] Gabba argues that the ideal of the liberality of the work would be a form of "paternalistic patronage by the political class in the spheres of legal competence", but this is a rather narrow view. It seems to me that it overlooks Cicero's effort in the field of ethics to assert that economic goods such as money are less relevant

pro domo sua. In fact, Cicero had, effectively, carried out work of this kind and he could, therefore, promote himself as the true liberal man in opposition to the prodigal Caesar. This does not detract, however, from the originality of his theory which is Greek-Stoic and, at the same time, entirely Roman. It takes the treatment of liberality from the points of view, respectively, of moral good and the beneficial, from Panaetian stoicism,[24] but it leads to conclusions that re-contextualize the *mos maiorum*, based on solidarity, thrift and respect for property. In continuity with this tradition, Cicero argues that the liberal act par excellence needs, first of all, a *liberalis voluntas* and then action that correspond to virtue; in delimited cases, financial support and material aid, but, above all, the gift of one's own work, especially free legal patronage. This is beneficial primarily to those who offer it as they can preserve heritage and, at the same time, generate benevolence thereby creating a vast network of clientes. This form of liberality is appropriate and convenient for those aspiring to a role in public life, but it is also beneficial to the State which is protected from the corruptive power of money. Cicero's arguments seem to suggest that wealth is an asset if it is used with the right intention, otherwise it can have harmful effects on public life. Actions of solidarity on a volunteer basis are, therefore, a preferable form of liberality.

6.

Cicero's Stoic approach to liberality introduces some new elements into the theory of virtues which Aristotle could not have accepted. From an Aristotelian point of view, liberality is exercised primarily through money or economical goods. (EN IV, 1119b 22) Against the stoic model, Aristotle could have argued that Cicero's free legal patronage is also an economic good since it can be measured in money. Or that, in the end, it represents an act of friendship that does not confute the main point of his theory of liberality: in fact, friendship is implied in virtue, but it is not really a virtue since it does not correspond to a specific part of the soul. On the contrary, liberality is a true virtue (one of the most important virtues for both private and public life) because it regulates the individual passion for money and, at same time, the economic flow the polis. According to this conception, the liberal man is the one who has become free from attachment to wealth and gives it wisely (in other words, without ruining his assets) to the friends that he recognizes as "perfect". He likes to give for the sake of public happiness and, therefore, is hardly rich. However, his virtue requires at least some wealth to work upon. In the Aristotelian conception, money and economic goods occupy, indeed, a main place, and without them an excellent quality such as liberality cannot be developed. Moreover, the latter demands a hard and exclusive personal

than those forms of action which more directly correspond to the social nature of the human being and to the *oikeiosis* towards the others. (cf. GABBA, 1979, p. 129).

[24] For the treatment of liberality in the second book of the *De officiis* (cf. DYCK, 1996, p. 436).

training which includes the observation of good models, experience, reflection and social selection.

Compared to the Aristotle, Panaetius and Cicero sketch a broader theoretical and practical model. They believe that virtues do not develop from an ascetic effort, but rather from the balanced development of natural impulses. More particularly, the virtue of liberality originates from the social dimension of moral good and not from wealth and assets, as the Aristotelian model claims. Their liberal man can make virtuous use of money in certain cases, but he does not necessarily need it. The social sense which leads one to personally support others is essential. In modern terms, we can say that Stoic liberality matures from "moral", and not from economic competence. As a virtue, liberality is part of moral development which is based on the combination of sociability and self-preservation, according to the model offered by the concept of *oikeiosis*. This model does not undervalue assets. It is well known how important they were to Cicero personally, as he was in extreme distress due to his experience of exile and the loss of his material goods and prestige. Cicero trusted in common sense, considering an evil that can happen or the deprivation of a possessed asset as not "indifferent"; consequently, he could not follow rigorous Stoicism when it stated that only virtue brings happiness. In *De Finibus* he had said it directly: the virtue of the wise man who acts in conformity with the *logos* is not enough for a happy life, or, in other words, regarding any two sages, one may be happier than the other if he enjoys certain goods such as health, economic resources and benevolence. It comes, then, as no surprise that Cicero aligns himself with the moderate Stoicism of Panaetius in which he finds a solid theoretical framework that attributes value to assets and material goods. In this way, his approach to the question of goods comes quite close to the Peripatetic school.

Still, in contrast to Aristotelianism, Cicero believes that desirable objects are not in themselves goods. They really become goods only if they are gained through virtue. Despite all the similarities, this is a quite different conception. It is the interplay of virtues that makes a desirable object a true good. Virtues of autonomous areas of experience such as knowledge, sociality, political life and aesthetic dimension should interact with each other in a harmonious way in order to moderate actions. Only actions which originates from this dynamic field of the main virtues are honourable and beneficial. Also, only objects achieved in honourable way can be considered as goods.

Some examples may serve to illustrate Cicero's line of argument. The aspiration to indipendence (*appetio principati*) is a natural impulse and, if regulated by prudence, liberality and justice, it is a good. *Magnanimitas* as virtue is based upon this interplay with other virtues. Without regulation, the noble impulse to independence will not only create conflicts, but also will it be self-destructive. Similarly, liberality derives from the natural impulse to social life, but this impulse should be lead by prudence, justice and moderation, otherwise it will bring waste and – what is worse - vanity, manipulation and injustice. Cicero, indeed, believes that donations of money tend to corrupt those who give and receive (II, 21-22), not to mention the fact that magnificent

expenses for banquets, shows and games do not bring real benefits to the State and are intended to buy people's favour. Even in magnificent expenditure for the construction of temples, theaters and porticos, Cicero recognizes self-celebration of the client rather than a liberal intention.

Cicero knows from experience that a momentary success and a social credit can also be attained for some time through such manipulative practices. Indeed, actions that pursue merely the useful but without virtue can bring some ephemeral success, but they will increase the level of vice more than that of virtue and, overall, they will damage the quality of public life and the institutions. Cicero suggests that personal dignitas and political success are not necessarily what they seem; they look like glory, but they are not. If the means by which they were procured do not correspond to just intentions and other virtues, they cannot be really considered goods. In this conception, virtue comes first and only in the field of virtues do money and riches appear as appreciable goods. A sustainable liberality represents a practicable alternative to the donation of money, although it is not necessarily required for the practice of virtue, and, furthermore, it has a corruptive power which is best kept in balance and governed by virtues. Liberal action, therefore, should not buy anything and have no other purpose than to form and consolidate the natural impulse to sociality. Actions like the volunteering of one's talent for others are then appropriate as they require effort and personal engagement, but they also produce more lasting effects arousing deep feelings of gratitude.

I would like to conclude with a remark from a modern point of view. Aristotle's concept of liberality appeals to the individual seeking the unity and integration of the available forces which, as stated in his concept of friendship with oneself, is the basis of all moral life. His model is intriguing as he speaks of virtue as an attitude which emerges from working upon the irrational part of the soul. As the case of the illiberal man shows, no ethical-political good life can be conducted without moral development which prevails over natural attachment to wealth and assets. As a virtue of economic life, liberality does this job. It sets one free from a natural attachment to wealth and makes of one a citizen opens to social and political life. Liberality integrates, while vice makes dualism between passions and reason persistent. The liberal citizen takes care of wealth and property and gives it wisely to selected friends with pleasure for a superior moral end, public happiness. He benefits others, while the non-liberal man is dominated by irrational attachment to wealth and benefits no one, not even himself. As fascinating as Aristotle's theory may be, it is based on some assumptions that are not obviously founded. Firstly, Aristotelian liberality is a virtue of individual economic life, i.e. it requires wealth and personal training at the same time. We know that the liberal citizen is not rich, although he should have some wealth. It is perfectly coherent as regards a dualistic approach to man, such as Aristotle's, that there must be something material (in the case of liberality, wealth and assets), so that a different moral attitude towards it can be worked out. For this very reason, Aristotle must consequently exclude non-economic beneficence from the domain of liberality. He can think of it merely as an act of friendship. Also, the social

basis of Aristotle's approach to virtue is very limited, for liberality is accessible only to the few who have undergone a very selective moral training. Furthermore, this applies in the case of magnificence, a second level of liberality, which is much more exclusive. The most problematic aspect in Aristotle's theory of liberality is that it is restricted to the area of economic goods. In short, Aristotle's concept of liberality is far too reductive and selective for modern terms. As modern men, we tend towards a more extensive concept of liberality. In line with a general conception, we refer to a man who benefits others in various ways as "liberal", regardless of his wealth and of his moral training. In other words, a man who lives and lets others live. It was the great merit of middle Stoicism to show that liberality is a main virtue that corresponds to the social nature of man. As such, it is best expressed not by money, but by personal help and social engagement.

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