*The Classical Quarterly* 65.2 655–668 © The Classical Association (2015)
doi:10.1017/S0009838815000208


# READING CICERO'S *AD FAMILIARES* 1 AS A COLLECTION

## COLLECTIONS

Toward the end of the Republic, Cicero was not alone in planning to collect his own letters for publication (*Att*. 16.5.5). Most likely, Caesar (Suet. *Iul*. 55.1; Gell. *NA* 17.9) and Varro, among others, intended to do the same,[1] and Cicero had access to letters by the Elder Cato (*Off*. 1.36–7) and Cornelia (*Brut*. 211).[2] But it was not only authors or recipients who assembled and circulated letters.[3] In December 59, Cicero wrote to his brother Quintus, who was concluding his mandate as governor of Asia, and encouraged him to leave behind a positive image of himself (*relinque, quaeso, quam iocundissimam memoriam tui*, *QFr*. 1.2.8). In particular, Cicero did not hide his concern at some carelessness Quintus displayed in sending out certain letters (*litterarum missarum indiligentiam reprehensam*, 1.2.7): of those, Quintus should destroy the ones he was able to find (*tolle omnis, si potes, iniquas, tolle inusitatas, tolle contrarias*, 1.2.8), while nothing could be done about some collections which had already been circulated and criticized (*esse uolumina selectarum epistularum quae reprehendi solerent*, 1.2.8). In other words, both the authors (or their friends) and their ill-wishers selected, assembled and circulated letters. Who chose which letters mattered enormously, since collections had the power to enhance or damage a person's public image.

And yet, while individual letters by Cicero continue to be analysed, scholars have avoided the question of the impression made by the collections. One reason is that Cicero's letters are generally considered 'real', because 'they were not meant for publication', as those written by Ovid, Horace, Seneca or Pliny were. Hence we like to believe that in most cases reading a letter by Cicero is like overhearing a private conversation, where the author shamelessly exposes his 'true' self. For example, according to G.B. Conte, the letters 'show us an unofficial Cicero, who in private confidences reveals openly his sometimes far from edifying behind-the-scenes political moves, his doubts, his frequent uncertainties and hesitations';[4] similarly, according to Michael von Albrecht, 'Cicero's private correspondence … allows the reader to share directly

[1] On Caesar's letters, see P. White, 'Tactics in Caesar's correspondence with Cicero', in F. Cairns and E. Fantham (edd.), *Caesar against Liberty? Perspectives on his Autocracy* (Cambridge, 2003), 68–95 and J. Ebbeler, 'Caesar's letters and the ideology of literary history', *Helios* 30 (2003), 3–19; On Varro's letters, see P. Cugusi, *Evoluzione e forme dell'epistolografia latina nella tarda repubblica e nei primi due secoli dell'impero* (Rome, 1983), 178–9.

[2] See P. Cugusi, *Epistolographi Latini minores, I: aetatem anteciceronianam amplectens, 1: Testimonia et fragmenta* (Turin, 1970), 67–8, fr. 6, on Cicero and Cato the Elder; and 110, fr. 1, on Cicero and Cornelia.

[3] See J. Sykutris, 'Epistolographie', *RE Suppl*. 5 (1931), 197; M. Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology, with Translation* (Cambridge, 2003), 12–13; G.O. Hutchinson, *Cicero's Correspondence: A Literary Study* (Oxford, 1998), 4 n. 4.

[4] G.B. Conte, *Latin Literature. A History* (Baltimore, 1994), 203.

the writer's joy and sorrow'.[5] '[T]he sense in the external reader that s/he is "eavesdropping" upon a private world', however, is naturally created by the intimate tone and conversational style of letters and, as such, can be misleading.[6] Moreover, scholars have for a long time acknowledged that we have only a small percentage of all the letters Cicero wrote,[7] and recently Peter White has demonstrated that the collections we have were assembled according to specific criteria: 'The construction of series was at least potentially a filter … Material not pertinent to his [the editor's] rough-and-ready categories was perhaps liable to be discharged.'[8] White concludes his chapter on 'The editing of the collection' with a valuable warning: 'We cannot afford to forget that between us and Cicero's letters stands someone who did a great deal to determine how we read them.'[9] And one further factor has deflected interest from Cicero's collections as such: most probably, one or more editors other than Cicero were responsible for assembling and circulating them.[10] Understandably, generations of scholars have ransacked various letters, taking them *singulatim*, for the invaluable information they provide about Cicero, the Roman economy, the end of the Republic and so forth. The study of Cicero's letters as collections nevertheless remains promising.

Recently, Mary Beard has made a powerful case for treating them as collections, wondering whether by approaching them chronologically, as modern editors invite us to do, 'we have lost as much as we have gained'.[11] Beard not only shows that the collections have left a mark in the Roman tradition and that attention to the 'exquisite care' taken by poets has 'enormously enhanced our understanding of the poetry collections of

[5] M. von Albrecht, *A History of Roman Literature* (Leiden, 1997), 516. C. Edwards, 'Epistolography', in S. Harrison (ed.), *A Companion to Latin Literature* (Malden, MA, 2006), 270–83, at 271 is rightly more cautious: 'Cicero's letters have generally been seen as offering revealing insights both into the eventful period in which Cicero wrote and into the personality of their author'; and P.A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 2001), 4–5 has called attention to letters as self-conscious textual constructions. As a result, the 'ill-conceived quest to distinguish between "public" and "private" letters or between "literary" and "real" letters has been replaced by a more holistic approach', as noted by J. Ebbeler, 'Letters', in A. Barchiesi and W. Scheidel (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 464–76, at 470.

[6] R. Morello and A.D. Morrison (edd.), *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (Oxford, 2007), vi–vii.

[7] According to G. Achard, *La Communication à Rome* (Paris, 1991), 139, Cicero wrote an average of ten letters per day to fulfil his duties as patron and as politician; if this were the case, as Jon Hall notes, 'our extant corpus of around nine hundred letters would thus represent only one percent of Cicero's epistolary activity during his lifetime' (*Politeness and Politics in Cicero's Letters* [Oxford, 2009], 16).

[8] P. White, *Cicero in Letters: Epistolary Relations of the Late Republic* (Oxford, 2010), 56.

[9] White (n. 8), 61.

[10] The evidence is sparse. July 44 B.C. can be taken as a *terminus post quem*, since Cicero's intention to revise and publish about seventy of his letters (*Att*. 16.5.5) suggests that they were not in circulation before. For the *ad Familiares*, Seneca the Elder, writing in the thirties A.D., quotes from *Fam*. 15.19.1 (*Suas*. 1.5), proving that at least some of them were known around the time of Tiberius. As for the *ad Atticum*, Nepos, who died around 27 B.C., mentions *undecim uolumina epistularum* written to Atticus but possibly not yet published *in uulgus* (Nep. *Att*. 16.3). For an overview of modern scholarship on the publication of the *ad Familiares*, see K. Büchner, 'M. Tullius Cicero 29 (Briefe)', *RE* 7A[1] (1939), 1192–235, at 1216–23, who upholds the *communis opinio* that both the *ad Familiares* and the *ad Atticum* were not published until the time of Nero; *contra*, see A. Setaioli, 'On the date of publication of Cicero's letters to Atticus', *SO* 51 (1976), 105–20, who concludes that 'a fairly widespread knowledge of Cicero's letters to Atticus before Seneca's time is consistent enough at least to cast a doubt on the almost generally admitted theory of such a late publication date' (115); cf. Cugusi (n. 1), 172–3 and White (n. 8), 31–4 and 174–5.

[11] M. Beard, 'Ciceronian correspondences: making a book out of letters', in T.P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2002), 103–44, at 115.

the Augustan age'; but she also demonstrates especially that, although the collections we have do not necessarily reflect 'the design of the author', that fact 'does not mean that we are dealing with no design at all'.[12] I would paraphrase and press this point a bit further: collectors had agendas, and uncertainty about the role Cicero played in assembling a collection should not blind us to such an agenda. On the contrary, taking notice of books and asking which image of their writer they broadcast, rather than reading letters in isolation, puts us in a better position to understand them; and in turn when we are reminded that each letter, for all the sense of spontaneity it may convey, was in fact selected, edited, packaged with other letters and circulated, we are in a better position to understand the filter and the editor's goals.[13] Perhaps we stand to gain in understanding not only by taking into account which letters were more likely to be included in the collection (and which ones were more likely to be dismissed), but also by hearing the specific effects made by specific collections.

In this paper I plan to pursue this question by looking at the first book of the *ad Familiares*. In particular, I will consider two motifs. I will argue that, throughout the book, the conventional affirmation of the bond that joins writer and addressee grows into a story of loyalty and obligations, and that the arrangement designed by the editor enhances this story to Cicero's advantage. Thus Cicero uses the medium of letter-writing to project his self-defence, and the editor builds his collection around themes and ideas which bolster that self-defence. Secondly, I will suggest that the mutual loyalty of Cicero and Lentulus in the face of adversities establishes a comparison between them: this comparison, which develops as another motif throughout the collection, also supports Cicero's line of self-justification and buys him Lentulus' support. Lastly, I will propose a new reading of letter 10, arguing that this letter forms a powerful closure, although its meaning and place in the book have not been appreciated.

## LOYALTY AND OBLIGATION

*Ad Familiares* 1 consists of eleven letters (counting 5a and 5b as different), spanning the period January 56 to December 54. In these three years, Cicero experienced the jealousy of prominent *optimates* after returning from exile (cf. *Att*. 4.1.8), and hence felt forced to compromise his views and support Pompey (cf. *QFr*. 3.5.4). The first ten letters are addressed to L. Lentulus (Spinther), who was then governor of Cilicia, and the last one, probably dating to 54, is addressed to L. Valerius, after he was recommended by Lentulus. One can see the logic of this arrangement, which respects the two main criteria that Roy Gibson has observed in ancient letter collections, being broadly ordered by addressee and by theme.[14] Nevertheless, most modern editions do not publish them

[12] Beard (n. 11), 121 and 123–4.

[13] For the evidence about publication, see n. 10; on the manuscript tradition of the *ad Familiares*, see R.H. Rouse, 'Cicero: *Epistulae ad Familiares*', in L.D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), 138–42.

[14] R. Gibson, 'On the nature of ancient letter collections', *JRS* 102 (2012), 56–78, at 57. Gibson also shows that the arrangement of Cicero's letters *ad Atticum* is somewhat exceptional (59–61), and that in the arrangement by addressee and by topic 'internal chronology may be observed in the ordering of letters, but is just as often abandoned', at 64; cf. R. Morello, 'Writer and addressee in Cicero's letters', in C. Steel (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero* (Cambridge, 2013), 196–214, at 196–7. As for the *ad Familiares*, White (n. 8), 53 notes that 'what gives them their coherence is not simply that they have a single addressee, but that they are dominated by one or more sequences

together as a sequence, and readers are distracted from experiencing this (or any) book as a corpus.[15] In other words, we can read these letters individually or chronologically, as we often do; but if we approach them as a collection, as they have come to us, the recurrence of certain themes suggests some patterns, and these patterns make an impression different from the effects of individual letters. I turn now to two such themes which I outlined above, easily dismissed and arguably marginal, if we take these letters *singulatim*, but crucial for appreciating the collection as a whole.

The first letter—which, importantly, was passed to us as the first of the whole collection *ad Familiares*—opens with an expression of obligation and gratitude: 'In all my obligation (*officium*), or rather loyalty (*pietas*) toward you, I am doing enough according to everyone else, but never according to myself' (*ego omni officio ac potius pietate erga te ceteris satis facio omnibus, mihi ipse numquam satis facio*, *Fam*. 1.1.1). Having stressed his *officium* and his *pietas*,[16] with special reference to Lentulus' part in recalling him from exile, Cicero gives an update on the debate over the restoration of Ptolemy Auletes, which Lentulus hoped to lead. Scholarly attention has focussed on the machinations around this restoration and in particular on the role played by Pompey, Crassus and other *optimates*, but it remains that Cicero concludes his letter by restating his obligation to Lentulus: 'everyone will recognize my loyalty [*fides*], while you, from afar, and your friends who are here will also recognize my affection [*amor*] for you. If there were loyalty [*fides*] in those who ought to have it to the highest degree, we would not be struggling' (*nostram fidem omnes, amorem tu absens, praesentes tui, cognoscent. si esset in iis fides in quibus summa esse debebat, non laboraremus*, *Fam*. 1.1.4).[17]

According to the conventions for 'doing aristocratic business',[18] this first letter casts Cicero as a grateful and proper friend, bound by obligation and affection to Lentulus, and Lentulus as a worthy magistrate, anxious to see the Senate crown his ambitions. However, Cicero builds on conventional expressions of gratitude and loyalty and creates a variation on the theme: the first two occurrences of *fides* signify Cicero's loyalty, but the letter ends with a third occurrence, where this loyalty is contrasted with the lack of *fides* in other individuals (*nostra fides* vs *si esset in iis fides*). Thus, while insisting on his own *fides*, Cicero constructs his relationship with Lentulus by way of their common cause in opposition to other people, whose *fides* is instead lacking.

of topically related letters selected from a more diffuse exchange'; cf. Büchner (n. 10), 1218. Tellingly, it seems that Caesar's letters were also organized by addressee (Suet. *Iul*. 56.5-6; Gell. *NA* 17.9.1; Cugusi [n. 1], 177–8).

[15] The numbering by D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero Epistulae ad Familiares* (Cambridge, 1977); *Cicero Epistulae ad Atticum* (Cambridge, 1965–7) and *Cicero Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem et M. Brutum* (Cambridge, 1980) has been very influential in and beyond English-speaking countries; but the attempt to order the letters chronologically predates his work (cf. R.Y. Tyrrell and L.C. Purser, *The Correspondence of M. Tullius Cicero* [Dublin and London, 1904–33]; L.-A. Constans, *Cicéron. Correspondance* [Paris, 1934–5]), and extends to editions in other languages, e.g. J. Bayet and J. Beaujeu, *Cicéron. Correspondance* (Paris, 1967–2002). Welcome exceptions are a Latin and German edition and a Latin and Italian edition: H. Kasten, *M. Tulli Ciceronis. Epistularum ad familiares libri XVI* (Munich, 1980$^2$); A. Caverzere, *Cicerone. Lettere ai Familiari* (Milan, 2007).

[16] For a general treatment of *officium*, see J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république* (Paris, 1963), 152–63 and L.R. Lind, 'The idea of the republic and the foundations of Roman morality I', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. 5 (Brussels, 1989), 5–34, at 13–16; for *pietas*, see Hellegouarc'h (in this n.), 276–9 and V. Pöschl, 'Politische Wertbegriffe in Rom', *A&A* 26 (1980), 1–17.

[17] For Cicero setting his debt of gratitude towards Lentulus in the context of other senators' *inuidia*, see W.C. Schneider, *Vom Handeln der Römer* (Hildesheim, 1998), 172–7.

[18] Hall (n. 7), 29–77. On *fides*, see Hellegouarc'h (n. 16), 23–35.

This contrast built around kept and betrayed loyalty is evident throughout the book and falls into a narrative pattern as the collection unfolds. As noted by Schneider, Cicero continues to play by the rules and, according to the aristocratic code of politeness, regularly reassesses his loyalty and (honoured) obligation to Lentulus:[19] for instance, he promises all his 'care and diligence' in keeping Lentulus informed about the events in Rome (*de ceteris rebus quicquid erit actum scribam ad te et ut quam rectissime agatur omni mea cura, opera, diligentia, gratia prouidebo*, 1.2.4); and acts as a champion of Lentulus' cause (*nostra propugnatio ac defensio dignitatis tuae*, 1.7.2). This expected exchange of courtesy, which signals 'a polite but slightly stiff formality',[20] provides the backdrop against which Cicero sets the treachery of other individuals. Indeed, throughout the collection, Cicero bemoans the poor conduct of some leading *optimates*. For instance, in letter 4, he opposes his *studium* to other people's *iniuria*, and states: 'It is not up to me, I believe, to write to you either about my own zeal or about the injustice of some other individuals … why should I complain of the wrongs of others?' (*ego neque de meo studio neque de non nullorum iniuria scribendum mihi esse arbitror. quid enim ... de aliorum iniuriis querar? Fam*. 1.4.3); in letter 5a he talks about 'the treachery, *perfidia*, of certain persons' (*non nullorum hominum perfidia*, *Fam*. 1.5a.4); in letter 5b most consulars are 'secretly enemies or openly angry' (*ceteri sunt partim obscurius iniqui, partim non dissimulanter irati*, *Fam*. 1.5b.2); and in letter 6 the depravity of enemies and betrayers (*inimici* and *proditores*) is opposed to the countermoves of his friends (*ualde suspicor fore ut infringatur hominum improbitas et consiliis tuorum amicorum et ipsa die, quae debilitat cogitationes et inimicorum et proditorum tuorum*, *Fam*. 1.6.1). The language of Cicero's discontent grows harsher as the book advances. In letter 7 their *peruersitas* is beyond belief (1.7.7), and the same individuals hurt both Cicero and Lentulus. In letter 9, the last one written to Lentulus, Cicero concludes that Lentulus too had gained a lesson on the unreliable nature of human *fides* (*gaudeo eam fidem cognosse hominum*, 1.9.3).

Remarkably, Cicero builds on the treachery of some people and goes as far as telling Lentulus that the Senate, the courts and the whole state have radically changed (*Fam*. 1.8.4, dating to February 55).[21] The fault is that of the *optimates*, who have estranged the *equites* and Pompey from the Senate (*amissa culpa est eorum qui a senatu et ordinem coniunctissimum et hominem clarissimum abalienarunt*, 1.8.4). Moreover, Cicero's remark comes right after an invitation to Lentulus to rethink his approach to the transformed situation (*haec ego ad te ob eam causam maxime scribo ut iam de tua quoque ratione meditere*, 1.8.4). The following letter was written almost two years later (December 54), but the shape of the collection and the recurring themes elide real time, so that the chronological gap is bridged as we are invited to read these letters as a continuum. Cicero returns to the same thought, restating a point that must have become rather stale by the time Lentulus received this letter. He warns Lentulus that what awaits him upon his return from Cilicia is not what he left behind: *non offendes*

[19] According to Schneider (n. 17), 151, at least until *Fam*. 1.5a, Cicero's affirmation of his *pietas* and renewed commitment to fulfil his *officia* is the characteristic trait of the exchange; cf. A. Wilcox, *The Gift of Correspondence in Classical Rome* (Madison, 2012), 185 n. 13.

[20] Hall (n. 7), 36; similarly, Shackleton Bailey writes that Cicero's letters to Lentulus 'are in C.'s most orotund style, abounding in compliment and without any flavour of intimacy' (n. 15 [1965]), 2.158 = ad *Att*. 3.22.2.

[21] On this motif, see also J.-E. Bernard, 'Du discours à l'épistolaire: les échos du *Pro Plancio* dans la lettre de Cicéron à Lentulus Spinther (*Fam*. 1,9)', *Rhetorica* 25 (2007), 223–42, at 240–1.

*eundem bonorum sensum, Lentule, quem reliquisti* ... (*Fam*. 1.9.17);[22] and once again the ones responsible for the change are 'those who, when our state still existed, used to be called *optimates*' (*ii qui tum nostro illo statu optimates nominabantur*, *Fam*. 1.9.17). Later in the same letter Cicero adduces this general change of the public situation in Rome as a reason for his own change of policy (*neque permanendum in una sententia conuersis rebus, ac bonorum uoluntatibus mutatis, sed temporibus adsentiendum*, 1.9.21).

Recurrent themes in the book create a coherent narrative: the *fides* of Cicero and Lentulus is set in opposition to the *perfidia* of other people, who work at the destruction of Lentulus, of Cicero and of the whole state.[23] The collection enhances Cicero's affirmation of loyalty, transforming a conventional theme into a narrative. And, unsurprisingly, both *fides* and *perfidia* occur more frequently in this book than in any other of Cicero's letters.[24] These themes, which bridge the twenty-two months' chronological gap separating letter 8 from letter 9, remain visible throughout the book, if we read it as a collection, as it has come to us.

No other motif provides an equally pervasive unity to the collection. The struggles over the restoration of Ptolemy occupy most (but not all) of the book (seven letters out of eleven). And yet, as Cicero's account unfolds, details about the Ptolemy affair become rarer. At the beginning (letters 1, 2, 4 and 5a) Cicero acts as Lentulus' main informer, describing senatorial meetings and spelling out who did or said what;[25] in the middle (letters 5b, 6 and 7) he acts more as his advisor, explicitly relying on other people to provide the factual information (for example, 5b.1 and 6.1; cf. 8.1) and hence indulging in more philosophical considerations;[26] and at the end (letters 8, 9 and 10), the issue of Ptolemy disappears altogether. Letter 8 is mostly concerned with Cicero, with only one veiled reference to Lentulus' affairs (*quae coniunctiora rebus tuis sunt*, 1.8.5); letter 9 is Cicero's famous apology for his conduct after his exile and was written after Gabinius had restored Ptolemy; letter 3 is a recommendation for A. Trebonius, and letter 10 is not even addressed to Lentulus. In short, the editor did not construct the book around the theme of the restoration of Ptolemy. Similarly, Lentulus as addressee cannot be taken as the common thread. In fact, letter 10 is not addressed to Lentulus, and other letters to Lentulus were excluded from the collection.[27]

The theme of fulfilled vs betrayed obligations instead runs throughout the book as a unifying thread, and this thread must account for the ancient editor's decision to include letter 10, which is a letter acknowledging a recommendation. Letter 3 is also a letter of recommendation, which has nothing to do with Ptolemy,[28] but was included in this

[22] On Cicero's insistence on the transformed political scene in *Fam*. 1.8 and 1.9, see Schneider (n. 17), 231–3 and 239–44.

[23] The identification of his well-being with the well-being of the state is of course a motif much developed in the various *post reditum* speeches (e.g. *Red. sen*. 34; *Red. pop*. 14; *Dom*. 72; *Sest*. 109; *Prov. cons*. 45); see J. Nicholson, *Cicero's Return from Exile* (New York, 1992), 35–7 and A. Riggsby, 'The *post reditum* speeches', in J. May (ed.), *The Brill Companion to Cicero. Oratory and Rhetoric* (Leiden, 2002), 159–95, at 167–72.

[24] In the eleven letters of *Fam*. 1, *fides* scores thirteen occurrences and *perfidia* three.

[25] White (n. 8), 17 demonstrates that aristocrats relied on their own confidential entourage for factual information, so that peers could assume knowledge of the latest news.

[26] Cf. Schneider (n. 17), 190–2.

[27] Cicero wrote to Lentulus before 56 (*QFr*. 1.4.5; *Att*. 3.22.2) and after 54 (*Att*. 6.1.1 and 9.11.1, with White [n. 8], 52 n. 64); between 56 and 54 Cicero wrote other letters to Lentulus, which are not included in *Fam*. 1.

[28] Schneider (n. 17), 194–8 rightly underlines the importance of this letter, which demonstrates the type and quality of the relationship linking Cicero and Lentulus.

book, and not in Book 13 (which entirely consists of letters of recommendation), because it belongs to Book 1: it provides an elegant variation on the theme and looks forward to letter 10.

## CICERO AND LENTULUS

The common experience of Cicero and Lentulus is another motif running throughout the collection. From the beginning Cicero positions himself on Lentulus' side (*Hammonius, regis legatus, aperte pecunia nos oppugnat*, 1.1.1): he properly stresses that their cause is one and the same (for instance, *uidebatur enim reconciliata nobis uoluntas esse senatus*, 1.2.1), and one that sets them against the same enemies (for example, *res ab aduersariis nostris extracta est uariis calumniis*, 1.4.1). As noted above, Cicero expands on the conventional affirmation of a bond with the addressee by juxtaposing his and Lentulus' *fides* to the *perfidia* of other people.

Building on the characteristic affirmation of mutual obligation, Cicero creates a second motif: not only do the two friends share the same enemies, but these enemies' treachery especially establishes the basis on which to compare their sufferings. Indeed, Cicero's sympathy and his willingness to side with Lentulus naturally create a sense of a common cause, which highlights their similar experiences, and these experiences create a comparison, which becomes explicit in the middle of the collection. At *Fam*. 1.6.2 Cicero confesses: 'In the second place, the recollection of my experience, whose reflection I see in yours, readily gives me comfort' (*facile secundo loco me consolatur recordatio meorum temporum, quorum imaginem uideo in rebus tuis*); without hiding a competitive edge Cicero adds that Lentulus' *dignitas* was not damaged as much as his own (*nam etsi minore in re uiolatur tua dignitas quam mea adflicta est*), but he concludes by reaffirming the close similarity, *tanta similitudo*. The following letter builds on this *similitudo*, and Cicero restates that, 'though in a different situation, the parallel between your present and my past experience has been remarkably close' (*simillimamque in re dissimili tui temporis nunc et nostri quondam fuisse rationem*, *Fam*. 1.7.2); just as in Cicero's experience, Lentulus' enemies have displayed open hostility, but the ones he had supported 'have forgotten your valid help as much as they oppose your commendation' (*non tam memores essent uirtutis tuae quam laudis inimici*, *Fam*. 1.7.2).[29]

This ongoing *similitudo*, however, conceals a switch of focus. In the first part of the collection Lentulus is the main victim, and Cicero acts as informer and as advisor, but toward the middle, Cicero being Cicero, the focus gradually moves to Cicero himself: indeed, as the sequence unfolds, Lentulus decreases as much as Cicero increases. The shift is smoothed out by insistence on their shared experience of treachery, but Cicero's sufferings become more and more prominent. For instance, later in the same letter, Cicero writes (*Fam.* 1.7.7):

quamquam est incredibilis hominum peruersitas (grauiore enim uerbo uti non libet), qui nos, quos fauendo in communi causa retinere potuerunt, inuidendo abalienarunt; quorum maleuolentissimis obtrectationibus nos scito de uetere illa nostra diuturnaque sententia prope iam esse depulsos, non nos quidem ut nostrae dignitatis simus obliti sed ut habeamus rationem aliquando etiam salutis. poterat utrumque praeclare, si esset fides, si grauitas in hominibus consularibus;

[29] On Cicero's 'studied civility' in this letter, see Hall (n. 7), 50–1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838815000208 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sed tanta est in plerisque leuitas ut eos non tam constantia in re publica nostra delectet quam splendor offendat.

But people's malignity, and I prefer not to use a harsher word, is incredible; for by their favour they could have kept me in the common cause, but by their envy they have kicked me out. Thanks to their most malevolent disparagements you will realize that I have been almost dislodged from my famous and long-standing policy, not to the extent that I have forgotten about my *dignitas*, but I must at last take care of my own safety as well. These two things could splendidly go together, if only there were some good faith and consistency in our consulars. But such is the fickleness in most of them that they take offense at my distinction more than they enjoy my consistency in politics.

The theme of betrayed *fides* returns along with the indictment of some *optimates*, whose *peruersitas*, *leuitas* and envy (*inuidendo*) unnecessarily placed Cicero in a bind, forcing him to debase his *dignitas* for the sake of *salus*. This tough compromise, which returns later in the same letter and in the collection, once again prepares the ground for a comparison. Cicero, his letter continues, can write freely to Lentulus: he once thought that he struggled because he was a *homo nouus*, but observing Lentulus going through the same he must conclude that what drives their common enemies is pure envy (*Fam*. 1.7.8).[30] As observed above, however, this comparison also points to a difference, because Cicero and Lentulus had an unequal lot: Lentulus risked his reputation, but Cicero risked his own life (*gaudeo tuam dissimilem fuisse fortunam; multum enim interest utrum laus imminuatur an salus deseratur*, *Fam*. 1.7.8). Since he has suffered before and more than Lentulus, he can lecture even farther (*Fam*. 1.7.9):

… illa me ratio mouit, ut te ex nostris euentis communibus admonendum putarem ut considerares in omni reliqua uita quibus crederes, quos caueres.

… that consideration moves me to admonish you by virtue of our common experience to think twice, for the rest of your life, which people you should trust, and which people you should beware of.

Having established the ground for the comparison and having positioned himself above Lentulus by virtue of his greater sufferings, Cicero admonishes Lentulus to learn before it is too late what he (i.e. Cicero) has learned at his own expense (1.7.10), and the essence of his lesson is not to 'take thought for our safety without honour, nor honour without safety' (*neque salutis nostrae rationem habendam nobis esse sine dignitate neque dignitatis sine salute*, 1.7.10).[31] Thus Cicero returns to the theme of his *dignitas* compromised in pursuit of *salus*, and the language invites Lentulus (and us) to connect this maxim with what was stated above—*dignitas* and *salus* could have gone together (1.7.7).

To recap: the conventions of letter-writing invited the writer to stress his bond with the addressee, and from the start Cicero properly positions himself on Lentulus' side; throughout the collection, however, their mutual loyalty is consistently contrasted to the treachery of the same people, whose *inuidia* victimizes Lentulus just as it victimized Cicero before. Similar experience establishes a parallel between them, but throughout the book the focus gradually switches to Cicero's own sufferings; and by virtue of his greater sufferings, Cicero positions himself as an adviser to Lentulus, inviting him

[30] On *inuidia* in Cicero, see V. Pöschl, '*Invidia* nelle orazioni di Cicerone', in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Ciceroniani* 2 (Rome, 1961), 119–25, whose observations on the speeches apply also to these letters.

[31] On Cicero advising Lentulus from the point of view of his exile, see Schneider (n. 17), 215–18.

to accept his guidance and to think about his *dignitas* and *salus* without relying on unreliable people.

These themes culminate with letter 9, which is the longest and most famous in the collection, and the last one written to Lentulus. There are almost two years between letter 8, written probably in February 55, and letter 9, written in December 54, and these years witnessed some of Cicero's most inglorious compromises. In particular, his decision to defend Vatinius triggered a letter of inquiry from Lentulus (1.9.4); we do not have this letter, but letter 9 is Cicero's response. In this response Cicero, once again without hiding some competitiveness, returns to the themes considered above. As seen, Lentulus, just like Cicero, had to learn a harsh lesson 'on the unreliable nature of human *fides*', and Cicero, once again, does not miss his chance to remind us that he has suffered more (*Fam*. 1.9.3):

te autem, etsi mallem in meis rebus expertum quam etiam in tuis, tamen in molestia gaudeo eam fidem cognosse hominum non ita magna mercede quam ego maximo dolore cognoram.

Even if I would have wished that you had learned from my experience rather than from your own, still I am glad that in this annoyance you learned your lesson on the unreliability of people without paying the same great price as I did with the greatest suffering.

This reminder is strategically located right before Cicero begins his apologia, giving an account of his recent conduct. The account begins with his return from exile (for which Cicero, properly, does not forget to thank Lentulus once more, 1.9.4) and continues with the description of Cicero's failed attempt to maintain independence (1.9.6): the hatred or ambiguous support of some individuals (1.9.5) forced him to side with Pompey (1.9.10), who in turn forced him to side with Caesar (1.9.12) and Crassus (1.9.19). This story, which complements what we know from various *post reditum* speeches,[32] is packed with references to the specific addressee, Lentulus, and when Cicero comes to the thorny issue of his defense of Vatinius, he writes (*Fam*. 1.9.19):

cur autem laudarim, peto a te ut id a me neue in hoc reo neue in aliis requiras, ne tibi ego idem reponam cum ueneris. tametsi possum uel absenti; recordare enim quibus laudationem ex ultimis terris miseris; nec hoc pertimueris, nam a me ipso laudantur et laudabuntur idem.

Why did I praise Vatinius? I demand that you do not ask me about this defendant or about any other, lest I pose the same question to you when you come back. But in fact I can do it while you are still away. Just think about the people for whom you have sent praises from the most remote corners of the world. And do not worry: these same people are and will always be praised by myself too.

While accounting for his defence of Vatinius, Cicero may be thinking also about the fact that in October, a couple of months before writing this letter, he had acted as a witness, *laudator*, in the trials against Gabinius (*QFr.* 3.4.2–3, 3.7.1).[33] At any rate, these words serve a specific function in the letter, as Cicero gets to justify his actions after

[32] I further analyse *Fam*. 1.9 in relation to Cicero's self-defence in other *post reditum* speeches, and especially to *Pro Plancio*, in 'A double *sermocinatio* and a solved dilemma in Cicero's *Pro Plancio*', *CQ* 64 (2014), 214–25, at 223–5; see also Bernard (n. 21), 225–9; Nicholson (n. 23), 56–60; R. Kaster, *Cicero on behalf of Publius Sestius* (Oxford, 2006), 37–40; for a comparison between the goal and language of *Fam*. 1.9 and the *De Oratore*, see A. Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence* (Oxford, 2008), 225 and E. Fantham, *The Roman World of Cicero's* De Oratore (Oxford, 2004), 10–12.

[33] *TLRR* 296; J. Crawford, *M. Tullius Cicero: The Lost and Unpublished Orations* (Göttingen, 1984), 188–97.

stressing that Lentulus habitually does the same. Moreover, the position of letter 9 within the collection further supports Cicero's apologia: this apologia caps the narrative that previous letters designed. Letter 9 begins with a typical affirmation of Cicero's and Lentulus' bond, and the opening sentences display the whole array of proper words (for example, *pietas*, *beneuolentia*, *illud ipsum grauissimum et sanctissimum nomen pietatis*, *studia*, *merita* and *amor,* 1.9.1),[34] but, according to the observed pattern, this bond sets them together against the same enemies, and Lentulus made enemies precisely by observing his bond toward Cicero (*in iis uero ulciscendis quos tibi partim inimicos esse intellegis propter tuam propugnationem salutis meae* ..., 1.9.2). Then, as seen above, Cicero draws a parallel between their experiences of injustice (*te autem, etsi mallem in meis rebus expertum quam etiam in tuis*, 1.9.3); having established the comparison, he launches on his own self-defence. Hence letter 9 mirrors and brings to a culmination thematic patterns present in the previous letters: the themes which run throughout the collection—that of loyalty, of Cicero's and Lentulus' common enemies, of *dignitas* diminished for the sake of *salus* and their comparable sufferings—converge and peak with letter 9. Moreover, Cicero's use of *sermocinatio* corroborates this observation.

## CICERO AT THE FORK

In letter 9 Cicero further justifies his defence of Vatinius with a *sermocinatio*,[35] where he imagines having a conversation with the state (*Fam*. 1.9.10):

collegi ipse me et cum ipsa quasi re publica collocutus sum, ut mihi tam multa pro se perpesso atque perfuncto concederet ut officium meum memoremque in bene meritos animum fidemque fratris mei praestarem, eumque quem bonum ciuem semper habuisset bonum uirum esse pateretur.

I picked up myself and had a sort of dialogue with the Republic; since I had endured and accomplished so much for her, she allowed me to honour my obligation, mindful of my benefactors and of the word given by my brother; she allowed the one she had always held a good citizen to be also a man of integrity.

This exceptional and powerful rhetorical device[36] captures the main argument of letter 9, but it also provides a unitary point for looking at the narrative of the entire book. As seen above, in letter 7 Cicero laments being unnecessarily forced to choose between *dignitas* and *salus* (1.7.7; cf. 1.6.2), but in the collection this choice does not come as a surprise, as previous letters have provided the readers with a narrative pattern. Letter 9 continues this pattern, and Cicero solves his (and Lentulus') dilemma by having the

[34] Cf. Wilcox (n. 19), 73–4.

[35] I make no distinction between Latin *sermocinatio* and Greek *prosōpopoeia*, following Quintilian, who calls them both by the same name (*ego iam recepto more utrumque eodem modo appellaui*, *Inst*. 9.2.31-2; cf. H. Lausberg, *A Handbook of Literary Rhetoric* [Leiden, 1998], § 820–5). The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, however, calls *sermocinatio* only an imaginary dialogue between present people (4.55 and 4.65-6); the personification of absent people (such as Cicero does with Appius Claudius in *Cael*. 33–4) or of mute entities (as in *Planc*. 13) falls under *conformatio* (4.66).

[36] Cicero warns that *sermocinatio* is not suitable for every orator, being bold and requiring 'stronger lungs' (*Or*. 85); cf. *Rhet. Her*. 4.52.65 and Quintilian, who praised Cicero's use of *sermocinationes* (e.g. 9.2.31), arguing that these *fictiones personarum ... mire ... cum uariant orationem, tum excitant* (9.2.29); cf. Lausberg (n. 35), § 820–9. To my knowledge, this is the only *sermocinatio* in the whole corpus of Cicero's letters.

state itself reassuring him that, having chosen a safe course, he still remains a good citizen and a man of honour. The format of the letter implies that this reassurance reaches us via Lentulus, and the narrative of the collection has Lentulus vouch for Cicero's conduct.

The *sermocinatio* presents an intertextual connection with another *sermocinatio*.[37] In *Pro Plancio*, which Cicero pronounced about three months before replying to Lentulus,[38] Cicero more than once complains at having to defend himself as much as his client, since the prosecution charged him with enslavement to the triumvirs (for instance, *Planc*. 3, 29, 58 and 72). The Republic, however, feeling guilty for all that Cicero has previously suffered for her sake (*res uero ipsa publica, si loqui posset, ageret mecum ut, quoniam sibi seruissem semper, numquam mihi, fructus autem ex sese non, ut oportuisset, laetos et uberes, sed magna acerbitate permixtos tulissem*, *Planc*. 92), invites him to think of himself and to take care of his own interests (*ut iam mihi seruirem, consulerem meis*), reassuring Cicero that 'not only has she had enough from me, but she even fears that she has repaid me inadequately for what she had from me' (*se non modo satis habere a me sed etiam uereri ne parum mihi pro eo quantum a me haberet reddidisset*, *Planc.* 92). The similarities between these *sermocinationes* are unmistakable, and Cicero models both after Plato's *Crito*.[39]

These similarities, however, should not conceal an important difference, as the *sermocinationes* work differently in the *Pro Plancio* and in letter 9. In the oration the state invites Cicero to think of himself and to take care of his own (*ut iam mihi seruirem, consulerem meis*); in the letter the state argues that Cicero has found a way to pursue both his private interest and the public good, remaining both a good citizen and a man of honour (*eumque quem bonum ciuem semper habuisset bonum uirum esse pateretur*). In other words, with letter 9 Cicero gives his response to Lentulus, and the structure of the book presents this response as the solution to the dilemma traced by the narrative of the whole collection. Thus, the *sermocinatio* of letter 9 provides another privileged angle from which to look at the collection as a whole.

The collection assists Cicero in airing his apologia. He tells Lentulus, and us via Lentulus, pretty much the same story we read in many *post reditum* speeches;[40] in letter 9, however, Cicero cleverly banks on Lentulus asking the very question many people may have had in mind. Thus, by virtue of their bond and common sufferings, which previous letters have established, Lentulus is forced both to stand as a witness and to learn from Cicero. The letter's position within the book provides the reader with a literary context different from the historical context in which it was written. Specifically, the sequence created by the editor transforms Lentulus from a grumpy and potentially frightening inquirer into a companion of misfortune and a disciple of Cicero, called

[37] Bernard (n. 21), 225–9 finds many structural and thematic similarities between *Fam*. 1.9 and the *Pro Plancio*, but he does not mention the *sermocinationes*. The function of the *sermocinatio* in the *Pro Plancio* and the meaning of the intertextual link with *Fam*. 1.9 are discussed in Grillo (n. 32).

[38] The exact date of the trial is unknown (cf. *TLRR* 293 and N. Marinone, *Cronologia ciceroniana* [Bologna, 2004$^2$], 132.B9), but in September 54 Cicero wrote to Quintus that he had completed the speech (*QFr*. 3.1.11).

[39] In both cases Cicero seems to have in mind the *sermocinatio* in Plato's *Crito*, where the laws invite Socrates either to accept their verdict or to convince the people to change the laws, since breaking them is not an option. In fact, later in the letter Cicero mentions Plato with a reference to this passage from the *Crito*: *id enim iubet idem ille Plato, quo ego uehementer auctore moueo, tantum contendere in re publica quantum probare tuis ciuibus possis*, *Fam*. 1.9.18.

[40] Cf. n. 32.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838815000208 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to witness that, after all, his conduct is acceptable, and indeed must be accepted even by those who question it. In this way the same old story gains by being repeated, and especially by reaching us with Lentulus' imprimatur.[41] In other words, the location of letter 9 within the collection enhances Cicero's case: the previous letters have educated the readers about Cicero's and Lentulus' loyalty and their enemies' treachery, which has forced both men to relearn how to navigate a changed system. And as a result, the collector broadcasts Cicero's apologia with Lentulus' endorsement and without giving Lentulus a chance to utter a word. Remarkably, the letter that follows confirms such an endorsement.

## LETTER 10

A short note closes the collection informing Lucius Valerius that Cicero has thanked Lentulus on Lucius' behalf for a recommendation (*Fam*. 1.10):

M. Cicero S. D. L. Valerio iurisconsulto (cur enim tibi hoc non gratificer nescio, praesertim cum his temporibus audacia pro sapientia liceat uti). Lentulo nostro egi per litteras tuo nomine gratias diligenter. sed tu uelim desinas iam nostris litteris uti et nos aliquando reuisas et ibi malis esse ubi aliquo numero sis quam istic ubi **solus sapere** uideare. quamquam qui istinc ueniunt partim te superbum esse dicunt, quod **nihil respondeas**, partim contumeliosum, quod **male respondeas**. sed iam cupio tecum coram iocari. qua re fac ut quam primum uenias neque in Apuliam tuam accedas, ut possimus saluum uenisse gaudere. nam illo si ueneris tam Vlixes, cognosces tuorum neminem.

Cicero sends his greetings to Lucius Valerius, the expert in law (I do not know why I should not gratify you with this title, especially in these days, when one can employ boldness in the place of technical knowledge). I have properly thanked Lentulus on your behalf with a letter. But I should like you to stop using my letters and finally come and see me, and choose to be here where you are of some account, rather than there, where you seem *to be the only man of knowledge*. Nevertheless, some people who have come here say that you are proud, because *you give no response*, and others that you are insolent, because *you give bad responses*. But now I desire to laugh in your presence, so make sure that you come as soon as you can, without going to your beloved Apulia, so that we can rejoice in your safe arrival. And if you'll go there, just like Odysseus, you will recognize none of your own.

The mention of Lentulus establishes some continuity with the rest of the book, but the change of addressee, after an uninterrupted series of ten letters to the same person, represents a bold choice by the editor: what are the effects of selecting this letter and of placing it at the close?

This choice makes a clever end. After Cicero's uneasy self-defence, which capped a sequence of gloomy letters, the editor has the book conclude on a light note,[42] perhaps as another means to excuse his conduct. Similarly, the invitation to 'stop relying on my letters' (*sed tu uelim desinas iam nostris litteris uti*), itself a typical epistolary gesture, forms a second witty closural device: after both Cicero and Lentulus have displayed skill

[41] Lentulus was an ideal addressee for Cicero's apologia, because he was a respected and fairly conservative senator, and because he was on good terms with both Pompey (a law proposed by Lentulus had made Pompey responsible for the corn supply of Rome) and Caesar (who had supported Lentulus' candidature for consulate); cf. Shackleton Bailey (n. 15 [1977]), 1.307 on *Fam*. 1.9.

[42] Francesca Boldrer—in the edition of Cicero's letters by Caverzere (n. 15), 95—rightly notes that 'il tono scherzoso e amichevole dell'epistola 10 ravviva l'atmosfera malinconica e pessimistica creatasi dopo *fam*. 1,9'.

in letter-writing, it invites the readers to reflect on its limitations. Moreover, in a friendly and humorous tone, Cicero reveals that Valerius had more aspirations than skills. In this context, and in the context of the whole collection, the news that Lentulus had recommended Valerius takes on a different meaning and neatly proves what Cicero stated in the previous letter—that Lentulus himself had often 'defended the character' and 'sent testimonials from the ends of the earth' in support of not always worthy individuals. In other words, accepting Lentulus' invitation Cicero explains his behaviour with letter 9, but while giving an apologia he also invites Lentulus to recall his own conduct; and finally the deft collector, whoever he was, attaches the receipt to document Cicero's claim.

Reading letters as we have received them, as a corpus, can also help us to make sense of unclear passages. The conclusion of letter 10, that is the conclusion of the book, provides an example. Cicero invites Valerius to come soon, rather than to go to Apulia (where he was from): *nam illo si ueneris tam Vlixes*, *cognosces tuorum neminem*. What does this mean? Shackleton Bailey translates: 'If you go there after such an Odyssey, you won't recognize any of your folk'; and in his translation he explains in a note that '[i]n the *Odyssey* (as Cicero may not have precisely remembered) the returning hero recognizes his family and friends but they do not recognize him'.[43] In fact, in his letters Cicero quotes no author more than Homer: are we to believe that he completely misunderstood or forgot the last third of the *Odyssey*? Tyrrell and Purser give more or less the same explanation, but they cite a couple of passages where Cicero makes (practically insignificant) slips over the *Iliad*.[44]

There must be another explanation for Cicero's statement and for the editor's decision to end the collection in this way. This letter is filled with puns on legal language, and from the start Valerius is ironically saluted as a *iurisconsultus*: for instance, at line 4, there is a good-natured pun on *sapere*, meaning both 'to have a brain' and 'to have legal learning'; there is also another one on *respondere*, meaning both 'replying to letters' and 'giving a legal opinion', and one on *male respondere*, 'reply badly' or 'give poor legal advice'. Cicero also cracks a joke at the expense of Valerius for being a big fish in a small pond (*ibi malis esse ubi aliquo numero sis quam istic ubi solus sapere uideare*). In this context, and in the context of the whole book, I suggest that there is a pun also on *cognosces*. The expression *cognosces tuorum neminem* must mean both '[if you go to Apulia after such a long time] you will find your people changed' and '[if you go to Apulia after such a long time] you will investigate none of your people'.[45] This joke reinforces Cicero's irony at Valerius' limited skill: he will not recognize his people because he was long absent; but especially, after he surely forgot what a mediocre lawyer he is (*istic ubi solus sapere uideare*), Cicero warns him not to take a case for anyone dear to him.

Moreover, by attaching letter 10 to the end of the collection, the editor gives a further meaning to this pun. Valerius becomes the victim of a friendly joke about dangerously undertaking legal cases: this is precisely what led Lentulus to demand the explanation

[43] *Cicero's Letters to his Friends,* trans. by D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Atlanta, 1978), 57 n. 115.

[44] Tyrrell and Purser (n. 15), 2.232: 'Ulysses did know his friends, but was not recognized by them for some time. Cicero appears to have made a much greater slip here than in De Div. ii. 63, or Tusc. iv. 49.' In the former passage Cicero thinks of *Il*. 2.299 and mistakes Agamemnon for Odysseus, and in the latter he thinks of *Il*. 7.211 and mistakes Hector for the Trojans.

[45] For *cognosco* meaning 'investigate judicially', see *TLL* 3.1506.44–65 and *OLD* s.v. 4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838815000208 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that Cicero gave in letter 9. Thus, the tone of letter 10, the switch of focus onto Valerius and the proof that Lentulus was as much of a *laudator* as Cicero himself all provide a framework for Cicero's disputable conduct, and this framework helps to redeem the inglorious undertakings of Cicero, Lentulus and everyone.[46]

*University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill* LUCA GRILLO
lgrillo@email.unc.edu

[46] A shorter and preliminary version of this paper was given at a conference in King's College, Cambridge. I thank the organizers, Francesca Martelli and Ingo Gildenhard, the participants and especially George Huston and Michael Trapp for help.