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0521607000 - Cicero: Epistulae Ad Quintum Fratrem Et M. Brutum

Edited by D. R. Shackleton Bailey

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## INTRODUCTION

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## I

Born in the family home at Arpinum between 105 and 102,<sup>1</sup> Q. Tullius Cicero shared his brother's education and kept him company on his travels in Greece and Asia (79–77). No more is heard of Quintus until 70 or thereabouts, when he married a lady several years older than himself, the sister of his brother's life-long friend T. Pomponius (Atticus). Marcus is said to have made the match. It was not a success for the principals, but it lasted about twenty-five years and in 67 produced its only known child, Q. Cicero junior.

Though no orator, Quintus had political ambitions. He will have begun his *cursus honorum* as Quaestor, perhaps in 69<sup>2</sup> and doubtless with Marcus' encouragement and support, which could have been in part a reward for his amenability in his choice of a wife. The next step was the Plebeian Aedileship in 65, the office held by his brother four years previously. The Praetorship duly followed in 62. As Consul in 63, Marcus may have presided over the elections. This turned out to be the final stage of Quintus' political career. Any hopes of a Consulship were doomed by the decline in Marcus' political fortunes and the Civil War.

Quintus' proconsular province was Asia, an important and attractive post. He governed there for the unusually long period of three years, longer than he himself desired. On his brother's showing his administration was a model of probity and beneficence, marred by chronic irascibility and undue reliance on a confidential slave, Staius, whom he manumitted in defiance of Marcus' wishes. His return to Rome in 58 was overclouded by Marcus' exile and abortive threats of

<sup>1</sup> For source-references see Münzer's article on Q. Cicero in *RE*.

<sup>2</sup> Münzer (*RE* VIIA.1287.58) seems to put the Quaestorship in 68 (cf. Broughton, 139). But if Quintus was expected back from a quaestorian province in November of that year, he will have gone out as Quaestor in the spring of the previous one.

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a prosecution, presumably *de repetundis*. But he took a leading part in the campaign for Marcus' restoration, sometimes at great personal risk. Shortly after that event, in 56, Pompey as Director of Corn Supplies made Quintus his Legate and stationed him for several months in Sardinia. A longer absence began in the spring of 54, when he joined Caesar, a friend of his early years, as Legate in Gaul, in time to take part in the second British expedition. In the winter of 54–53 he held an independent command in modern Belgium. Caesar in his *Commentaries* does ample justice to Quintus' epic defence of his headquarters against the insurgent Nervii, qualified, however, by criticism of a subsequent piece of negligence which nearly ended in a military disaster. Quintus was probably glad to leave Gaul in 52 in order to take yet another Legateship under his brother in Cilicia. His service had not brought him the riches he had expected nor yet the favour of his commander-in-chief and brother officers; so at least one of them told Marcus several years later (*Att.* 220 (xi.9).2). Quintus' ferocious comments on Hirtius and Pansa in *Fam.* 352 (xvi.27).2, though characteristic of his style, fit in with this chance piece of information.

Contributing military and administrative experience which Marcus conspicuously lacked, Quintus gave valuable help in Cilicia, which does not seem to have been too generously acknowledged. The brothers returned to Italy in the autumn of 50 and left again some six months later to join Pompey's forces in Greece. After the republican defeat at Pharsalia, a violent quarrel broke out between them, and they went separate ways, Marcus back to Italy while Quintus remained in the East. In the autumn of 47 both returned to Rome by Caesar's permission. The quarrel was nominally reconciled. The rest of Quintus' career was uneventful, until it ended in the Proscriptions of 43.

Quintus shared his brother's cultural and literary interests, specializing in poetry, a sphere in which Marcus acknowledged his superiority (*Q.fr.* 24 (iii.4).4). He worked both in

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epic and tragedy, adapting in the latter from Greek originals; the quality may be judged from the rapidity of their composition (*Q. fr.* 25 (III.5).7). He is found contemplating a history in *Q. fr.* 16 (II.12).4, but his only known prose work, if its authenticity be granted, is the *Commentariolum petitionis*. The *Annales* of *Att.* 36 (II.16).4 may well have been verse.

As traditionally represented, the relationship between the two Ciceros was one of life-long affection and harmony, broken only by occasional fits of irritability on the part of the younger and by one serious but temporary falling-out. The truth, to be deduced from the elder's correspondence with Atticus (sometimes interlinearly), was otherwise. The quarrel in 48 had origins reaching far back into the past, and the reconciliation was only superficial. For details I must refer to my biography, from which I quote this summary: 'The deplorable marriage, which Marcus Cicero had made and striven to keep in being for his own reasons, friction over Staius, disappointments in Gaul, untoward incidents in Cilicia, Quintus' strange passivity in the early months of the Civil War – all this and much more of which we are not informed may have gone to nourish an ulcer in Quintus' mind: the mind of a small man, irritable, querulous, and weak; a severe magistrate, who spoiled his son and let himself be run by a slave; a good man in a battle or a riot, but a rabbit in front of his wife; ambitious, but inhibited by a distrust of his talents, which were not of the first order, and handicapped by the unlucky accident of birth, which had made him a bigger man's younger brother.'<sup>1</sup>

Nothing of this comes out in the extant 'Letters to Brother Quintus', except in 2 (I.2), which reveals friction and dissatisfaction with some aspects of Quintus' record in Asia. This letter and its precursor, which is not really a private letter at all, belong to 60–59. They are followed by two letters from exile, the first particularly lacrimose. The rest of the series date from the end of 57 to the end of 54, during

<sup>1</sup> *Cicero*, 184.

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which period the two were on uniformly excellent terms. Cicero's tone is generally relaxed and cheerful, and he writes with a freedom he could use to no other correspondent except Atticus.

## II

The friendship between Cicero and M. Brutus (Q. Servilius Caepio Brutus), which began in the late fifties with Atticus' encouragement, may make the subject of a separate study. The interest of their extant correspondence is historical rather than personal. Apart from a few letters of recommendation in the *Ad familiares* collection, it falls within a period of four months, March/April–July 43, when both writers were heavily preoccupied with public concerns. Such private items as crop up are self-explanatory, lacking ulterior implications.

In August 44 Brutus and his brother-in-law Cassius sailed for the East, leaving the tripartite power-struggle between Antony, Octavian, and the Senate to work itself out in their absence. They may ostensibly have been proceeding to their allotted provinces of Crete and Cyrene, but their departure looked more like a retirement into exile (cf. *Att.* 372 (xiv.19).1; 373 (xiv.18).4). If any of the sequel was already in their minds, they do not seem to have spoken of it to Cicero. By the following spring, however, Cassius had won control over the entire armies of the East, taking the Caesarian Dolabella and the anti-Caesarian Caecilius Bassus in easy stride. Brutus for his part spent some time in Athens, but in December the outgoing governor of Macedonia, Q. Hortensius, who happened to be his cousin by adoption handed the province over to him instead of to the lawful successor, Antony's brother Gaius – lawful insofar as the decree of an intimidated Senate conferred legality. Joined

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by a number of distinguished young republicans on the spot, including Cicero's son, Brutus soon made himself master of the province and the troops in the area, capturing C. Antonius himself in Apollonia. Meanwhile the war in Italy was nearing its crisis. Antony's forces besieging D. Brutus in Mutina were threatened by three republican armies under the two Consuls, Hirtius and Pansa, and Octavian.

So matters stood when the extant correspondence began about the end of March<sup>1</sup> with a letter from Cicero (Letter 1). Its opening words ('the crisis is thought to be upon us') set the tone. Letter 2, from Brutus, written from Dyrrachium on 1 April, covers a variety of topics, including his perplexity as to what should be done with C. Antonius and a request for reinforcements in men and money. Cicero's next letter (3) of 11 April reflects continuing anxiety about the military outcome, but is mainly taken up with a senatorial wrangle between the writer and P. Servilius Isauricus. Letter 4 of 12 April is Cicero's answer to Letter 2, written in haste during his morning levée. The most important item (§4) is an unequivocal rejection of Brutus' request for reinforcements. This letter is followed by another (5), written after a meeting of the Senate on 13 April at which a communication from Brutus and another from C. Antonius (brought by Atticus' brother(?) -in-law, the former Caesarian Pilius Celer) were read out. Antonius' assumption of the title 'pro consul', despite the Senate's cancellation of his appointment on 20 December 44, and the mildness of Brutus' language with respect to his prisoner so outraged Cicero and like-minded Senators that they professed to think Brutus' letter a forgery, though that was clearly not Cicero's real opinion. Hence a lengthy remonstrance. The beginning of Letter 6 of 20 April, in reply to a lost letter of Brutus, has disappeared. Most of what remains presses home the message, *salutaris severitas vincit inanem speciem clementiae*. Shortly afterwards the

<sup>1</sup> On the dates of this and other letters see the introductory notes in the Commentary.

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news of the republican victory at Forum Gallorum reached Rome, making a greater day for Cicero than the Immortal Nones. His solemn exultation is movingly expressed in Letter 7, which ends with another admonition: the three brothers Antonii are all in the same galley. Further tidings from the scene of battle – the second victory at Mutina, the death of both Consuls, Antony's flight – produced the brief Letter 8. Letter 9 of 5 May reports a Senate meeting on 27 April. The first half concerns the question (already out of date, had Cicero known it) whether Brutus should follow Dolabella into Asia, the second envisages a Pontificate for Cicero's son, now one of Brutus' most distinguished officers.

Letter 10 of *c.* 7 May is Brutus' reply to Letter 7. From defence of his conduct towards C. Antonius it passes to a counter-offensive, reproving Cicero for unwise and excessive advancement of Octavian. The end is missing. Within a few days of despatching it Brutus and his army set out eastwards from Dyrrachium along the via Egnatia towards the Chersonese. Letter 11 of 15 May, despatched from camp *en route*, also lacks its opening. What remains is an outspoken development of the view put forward in Letter 10, taking Cicero to task for the honours granted Octavian and warning him that the young man's ambition might extend even to one of the vacant Consulships. Presumably the writer thought that after the rout of Antony Octavian could and should have been cut down to size – perhaps he said so in the missing part of the letter. Another letter (12) from Brutus, written in camp *ad imam Candaviam*, deals with private matters, including Cicero junior's priesthood (answering Letter 9); and Letter 13 from Cicero is *commendaticia*. The extant part of Letter 14, generally dated *c.* 20 May but probably written about ten days earlier, replies to a lost letter of Brutus', ending with a reference to a mutiny in Brutus' army. It had been drastically put down, and the soldiers in the zeal of recovered loyalty had tried to do away not only with their ringleaders but with the alleged instigator, C. Antonius – for

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which Cicero commends them. Letters 15 and 16 from Cicero and Brutus respectively are *commendaticiae*. In an important letter (17) of mid June Cicero writes of his anxiety about the situation in Rome and his doubts about Octavian. For the first time he appeals to Brutus to return to Italy and to urge Cassius to do the same. The conclusion of Letter 18, a condolence on the death of Brutus' wife Porcia, returns to the point: 'We are waiting for you and your army, failing which it seems hardly likely that we shall preserve our liberties, even if all else goes as we desire' (i.e. militarily).

A letter from Brutus (19) about vacancies in the priestly colleges is followed by another (20) of 1 July, an appeal for Cicero's good offices in protecting the children of M. Lepidus and the writer's half-sister Junia from the consequences of their father's anticipated junction with Antony, which had in fact already taken place. Letter 21 from Cicero, written about the same time or shortly afterwards, might have been a rejoinder. Lepidus had been declared an enemy of Rome on 30 June and Cicero, who had been approached by Junia and her mother on behalf of the children, defends his refusal of their plea, winding up with yet another appeal to Brutus to come to Italy at the earliest possible moment. Letter 22 of 14 July, largely concerned with priesthoods, is even more urgent: 'Come to our aid in the Gods' name, and lose no time.' In a long letter (23) a little later in the same month, after an opening section on the virtues and talents of young Messalla Corvinus, Cicero sets himself to answer the criticism levelled at him in Letter 11. Then follows the usual appeal for a speedy return to Italy. The last paragraph is an assurance that after all and at whatever cost in consistency he is doing all he can for Brutus' young nephews. Last in the authentic series is Letter 24 of 27 July. The themes are mostly familiar: the urgent need for Brutus' presence, gloomy prognostications about Octavian, stringency in the public finances, care for Lepidus' children: 'For there shall never be any matter on which I shall not speak and act in accord-



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ance with what I take to be your wish and concern, even at the hazard of my life.'

## III

The Cicero–Brutus collection as a whole, first impugned by a Cambridge scholar, John Tunstall, in 1741 and for a long while generally believed to be spurious, is now universally accepted as genuine. During the last century controversy has mainly been limited to the two long letters of similar content, 25 (24 (1.16): Brutus to Cicero) and 26 (25 (1.17): Brutus to Atticus), arraigning Cicero for his encouragement of Octavian's ambition – rhetorical 'blow-ups', so to speak, of the view expressed in 11 (12) and 12 (14) (they are therefore of little historical importance, apart from the poor impression they give of Brutus' intellect and personality). In recent decades little has been heard of the problem of their authenticity, but there is a prevailing disposition to take it for granted.<sup>1</sup>

Plutarch refers to them in his lives of Cicero (45) and Brutus (22).<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, however, he implies that some extant letters attributed to Brutus were forgeries, and in one instance at least he was himself in doubt: *Brut.* 53 φέρεται τις ἐπιστολὴ Βρούτου πρὸς τοὺς φίλους . . . εἴπερ ἄρα τῶν γνησίων ἐστίν. In two MSS one or both of them are found apart from the rest of the collection: Bodleianus Canonicus Lat. 244 and Bodleianus 197. The former has them after *Ad*

<sup>1</sup> As by Moricca in his preface, referring to the entire series: 'Quare nunc igitur tam solido fundamento rationes nituntur eorum qui veras esse epistulas docent, ut, si quis adhuc in contrariam partem disputaturus prodiret, is quidem stultus, immo sanitate vacans, merito atque optimo iure putaretur.' Less aggressively Kasten (p. 166): 'Heute bezweifelt niemand mehr ihre Echtheit.'

<sup>2</sup> See note on 26 (25).4.

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*familiares*, the latter has 26 (25 (1.16)) only, between *Somnium Scipionis* and an *ars metrica*.

O. E. Schmidt<sup>1</sup> produced six reasons for declaring them apocryphal: (1) the use of the name 'Octavius' for Caesar's heir;<sup>2</sup> (2) poverty of thought; (3) the impossibility, as he contended, of fitting them chronologically into the series; (4) their political tendency as 'Schmähbriefe' against Octavian; (5) linguistic grounds: most of the linguistic objections raised against the collection refer to these two letters; and their periodic style is in contrast to the style of Brutus' genuine letters; (6) their separate appearances in the two Oxford MSS.

Some of these arguments are more substantial than others, but their total force has been found insufficient to establish the case in an unfavourable climate of sentiment. It would serve no good purpose to go over this ground afresh. Attention should rather be directed to a different sort of evidence, which Schmidt left unnoticed. In the letter to Atticus the first paragraph gives the forger away. Cicero is said by 'Brutus' to have vilified Brutus' friend Casca for participating in Caesar's murder. He implies that Cicero had called Casca an assassin (*sicarius*), thus reprobating the glorious deed (*pulcherrimum factum vituperabit*). Nothing is heard elsewhere of a quarrel between Cicero and Casca. In November 44 Atticus had written to the former that Casca's forthcoming entry into office as Tribune would test Octavian's attitude to the 'liberators', and Cicero made the same point to Oppius.<sup>3</sup> Casca reappears in the following year, when on 25 July Brutus' mother invited Cicero to her house for a conference. He found Casca and two other friends of Brutus' already there.<sup>4</sup> The quarrel, if there was one, had presumably been made up.

'Mirari autem satis non possum, Ciceronem Caesaris necem obiecissee Cascae; et id tamen Bruti verba declarant.'

<sup>1</sup> *Neue Jahrb.* 129 (1884), 630ff.

<sup>2</sup> See note on 25 (24).6.

<sup>3</sup> *Att.* 426 (xvi.15).3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Brut.* 24 (26).1.