

Un-Parallel Lives? The Younger Quintus and Marcus Cicero in Cicero's *Letters*

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Introduction

In ancient texts, a crucial narrative technique for enriching characterisation is foiling. This is when two (or more) figures are set against one another to sharpen individual personality traits, adding colourful nuances by playing with contrasts between characters. Ancient authors regularly exploit foiling for deepening characterisation in various ways. So Plutarch offers formally offset *synkrisis* ('comparison') in his parallel lives, while Tacitus exploits the device creatively, for example by intertwining the contrasting personalities of Tiberius and Germanicus over *Annals* 1-3, or introducing paired obituaries; and Suetonius sometimes opens biographies with oscillating miniature sketches of contrasting successive generations within a family.¹ Artfully constructed letter-collections, with multiple addressees, kaleidoscopic subject-matter, and scope for expressive juxtaposition, offer particularly rich potential for foiling.²

¹ On Plutarch's closing *synkriseis* (present in all but four of his pairs of parallel lives) see Duff 2011, 253-9. Strunk 2017, 52-4 discusses the foiling of Tiberius and Germanicus. Tacitus *Annals* 3.30 is one example of a paired obituary (Volusius Saturninus and Sallustius Crispus). See further Syme 1970, 79-90, Pomeroy 1991, Woodman and Martin 1996, 268-9, and Strunk 2017, 170-9. Suetonius *Nero* 2-4 shows bad and good qualities alternate over successive generations. 'In the scope of the *Lives* Suetonius cannot present a full history of imperial ancestry, so he selects the most significant individuals and episodes...in such a way as to shed light on his imperial subject' (Wardle 2014, 79).

² Gibson and Morello 2012, 234-64 explore such patterns in Pliny the Younger's letters.

This article will consider the foiling of two intertwined figures from Cicero's letters, namely the younger Marcus (Cicero's son) and Quintus Cicero (Cicero's nephew).³ These cousins, so close in age, eventually met dramatically different fates, as the dying republic lurched violently towards the new imperial system. This pair's portrayal also shadows, mirrors, and develops in intriguing ways the relationship between their fathers, Cicero and his brother Quintus, introducing further layers of foiling and complexity.⁴ Wrapped up in these wider family relationships is the practical issue of overlapping nomenclature and how to distinguish crisply between these fathers and their eponymous sons. In this discussion we will therefore call the sons Quintus and Marcus, and their fathers Quintus senior and Cicero. As we will see, the trajectories of the boys' lives, initially so closely entwined and unfolding in parallel, gradually diverge: the firecracker Quintus becomes increasingly alienated and angry, while the jovial Marcus, constantly indulged by his father, can apparently do no wrong, despite unwitting hints in the letters about him not being the paragon that Cicero assumes him to be. The contrast between their personalities is especially sharp in the final stages: very soon after Cicero was killed in 43BC, the hot-tempered Quintus dies (together with his father) in violent circumstances, which left the 'last man standing' as the mild-mannered Marcus, who survived into Augustus' principate.⁵

Assembling the fragmented parts of these two vivid portraits depends on nuggets of information scattered throughout the letter-collections. The letters to Atticus have the

³ Stinchcomb 1933 offers an overview. On the younger Marcus Tullius Cicero, see *OCD*³ and *RE* 30. On the younger Quintus Tullius Cicero, see *OCD*³ and *RE* 32. Translations from Cicero's letters *passim* are by Shackleton Bailey in the relevant volume of the multi-volume Cambridge commentary.

⁴ Henderson 2016a and 2016b helpfully analyses this relationship between the brothers Cicero and Quintus.

⁵ Appian *BC* 4.4 and Cassius Dio 47.10 describe both Quintus' impressive deaths during the proscriptions.

lion's share of the evidence for both boys, especially Quintus, reflecting his identity as the nephew of both Cicero and Atticus (and so a shared obligation). Hence, the boys' profiles (within the Ciceronian *corpus* at least) would have remained rather impressionistic for some time after Cicero's death, since the letters to Atticus and *ad Fam.* were both published posthumously. As Martelli observes of the *ad Fam.*, 'Only organized into books and collections and published as such by unidentified editors at some unknown date following Cicero's death, these letters are also inescapably an imperial (and post-imperial) publication'.⁶ It was only as late as 44BC that Cicero contemplated publishing some of his own letters (*Att.* 16.5.5; cf. *Fam.* 16.17.1), which were not originally written for publication.

This raises a methodological question. Our information about the two boys is scattered widely around the letter-collections and embedded in letters which eclectically assemble a miscellany of material, so that Quintus and Marcus are not always prominent. Reassembling the disparate fragments to create biographical narratives therefore involves artificially 'mining' the letters to align chronologically disparate material.⁷ Some might see this approach as problematic. Yet since these letter-collections were published posthumously, extracting material from them like this shows less disregard for the author's intentions in Cicero's case than it might (say) for Pliny the Younger.⁸ Pliny's authorial vision for his letters' arrangement as a collection is clear, but such artistic

⁶ Martelli 2017,1. Hutchinson 1998, 4, with n.4 usefully discusses the evidence for publication: 'Ad Att. was published after Nep. *Att.* 16.3-4 (and redivided into 16 books to match *ad Fam.*?)'. Murphy 1998, 495 offers some cautionary remarks about the difference between publication and dissemination in the ancient world. Gurd 2007 analyses Cicero's way of preparing texts for publication.

⁷ See too Riggsby in this volume.

⁸ See Marchesi 2008 for such Plinian artistry and Whitton 2015 for such techniques in *Epistles* Book 2.

arrangement is less visible in Cicero's collections, even if tangible signs of an intelligent editorial mind are still present.⁹ There is good precedent for this approach in Malcolm Willcock's commentary (1995) on Cicero's letters from January to April 43BC, where chronological order is reimposed on disparate letters to create a linear narrative of a crucial period.¹⁰ In analysing Quintus and Marcus, we must still be sensitive about the original epistolary setting of our evidence. As Hutchinson observes: 'Although the letters stand closer to reality in some respects than Cicero's other works, it would be misguided to see them as unmediated reproductions either of the external realities that they describe, or of those realities as perceived by Cicero, or of Cicero's feelings'.¹¹ Someone reading Cicero's letter-collections in a linear way might not perceive the miniature biographies of Quintus and Marcus so clearly, but the broad-brush sense of the pair's strongly contrasting personalities would still emerge cumulatively.¹²

⁹ Beard 2002 resists dismembering books of Cicero's letters and instead advocates engaging with the editorial mind which selected the material, taking *ad Fam.* 16 as a case-study. See too White 2010, 31-62, Martelli 2017, 1-2. Cf. the random arrangement of Catullus' poems (reflecting the manuscripts' tangled state) vs Propertius' meticulously structured *Monobiblos*.

¹⁰ Siani-Davies 1997, 424 liked the rearrangement of Willcock 1995: 'The real strength of W.'s work lies in the fact that he draws into this single volume all the surviving correspondence of these few months, both the epistles received by Cicero as well as those written by him'.

¹¹ Hutchinson 1998, 23. All in this volume, see Hutchinson on the letters to Atticus as organized and skillful writing ('It would be simple-minded to think that a lack of formality means an absence of shaping intelligence and verbal design.'), Morello on the unknown editor as the most important 'further voice' in the collection, Whitton on the guiding mind shaping *ad M. Brutum*, and Gibson on the editorial conception of *ad Fam.* 4.

¹² A linear reader would encounter 247 letters in Pliny *Epistles* 1-9 and 121 letters Pliny *Epistles* 10 (368 letters in total) and in Cicero's collections 26 *Epistulae ad Brutum*, 27 *Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem*, 397 *Epistulae ad Atticum*, and 392 *Epistulae ad familiares* (so 842 letters in total, even if the unity of some individual Ciceronian letters is not clear). Some collections of Ciceronian letters are no longer extant,

Quintus and Marcus: the Early Years (67BC-51BC)

Classical authors' portrayal of children is a complex field which has attracted considerable scholarly attention.¹³ One important perspective is Plato's notion that children essentially lacked capacity for rational thought – a problem which education could correct.¹⁴ Alternatively, others highlight the paradigm of the child as 'miniaturised version of the adult self', such as when Suetonius presents Nero as a child at school talking passionately about chariot-racing and then having to fool his teacher by pretending that he was talking about Homer's Hector (*Nero* 22.1). Literary portrayals of children in the ancient world can be complex and contradictory. As Harlow and Laurence observe, 'adults perceived children both as savages in need of civilising and simultaneously as individuals with the virtues and qualities of grown-ups'.¹⁵ Ambühl has explored the concept of the 'invention of childhood' in Hellenistic poetry, increasingly marked by realistic, lifelike portraits of children which contrast with the dominant images of children in earlier Greek poetry.¹⁶

Cicero's presentation of the childhood of Quintus and Marcus is an illuminating case-study in the context of these wider debates. The slightly older boy, Quintus, born at

including letters to his son Marcus (Quintilian 1.7.34). Hutchinson 1998, 3 assembles further facts and figures about the Ciceronian corpus of letters.

¹³ Néraudau 1984, Wiedemann 1989, Evans 1991, Bradley 1991, Rawson 1991, Eyben 1993, Dixon 2001, Harlow and Laurence 2002, Uzzi 2005, Cohen and Rutter 2007, and Caldwell 2015 are important studies of children in the Roman world.

¹⁴ Plato *Republic* 441a-b; *Timaeus* 44a-c; cf. *Leg.* 808e on incomplete rationality. See Aristotle *Politics* 1260a31-33 on the teacher's role. Bloomer 2011 considers Quintilian on the educability of children.

¹⁵ Harlow and Laurence 2002, 34.

¹⁶ Ambühl 2007, 373.

some point between 67-66BC, was the first and only child of Quintus senior and Pomponia, while Marcus, born (probably in 65BC) to Cicero and Terentia, was the significantly younger brother of Cicero's beloved daughter Tullia (born at some point between 79-75BC).¹⁷

Let us consider in turn what we can learn about these two boys from Cicero's letters. Quintus first appears in a letter of December 60BC (written perhaps at Antium) when Cicero urges Atticus to look after Quintus, then about 6 or 7 years old. Calling him *Ciceronem nostrum* (where the possessive adjective suggests both affection and the shared avuncular status of Cicero and Atticus in relation to the boy), he uses him as a springboard for a Greek pun: *ei nos θεῖοι υἱεσμεν*, 'To him we uncles seem divine' (*Att.* 2.2.1).¹⁸ The tone is affectionate, if benignly condescending, and the detail may be more expressive about the affectionate relationship between Cicero and Atticus than about Cicero's relationship with his young nephew.¹⁹ As Shackleton Bailey empathises, 'Middle-aged, important uncles may indeed seem supernatural beings to a boy of six or seven'.²⁰ Cicero's jovial divine imagery positions the relationship between the uncles and their young nephew along the vertical plane, suggesting distance.

¹⁷ Cicero married Terentia at some point between 80-77BC (and divorced her in 46BC before his brief marriage to Publilia). Quintus senior married Pomponia in c.70BC and divorced her by 44BC; Quintus was born 67-66BC, while Marcus was born in 65BC.

¹⁸ *θεῖος* means both 'divine' and 'uncle' (*LSJ*).

¹⁹ On this closeness with Atticus, Cicero's 'soul brother', see Henderson 2016a, 440.

²⁰ Shackleton Bailey 1965, 353. Shackleton Bailey (himself an uncle) was the youngest of four siblings. Thomas 2008, 6-7 writes: 'Shackleton Bailey had an intense and genuine dislike of family life, particularly of children, whom he tolerated with difficulty and with strained artificiality in the case of family and academic friends'.

Other extracts from the early years focus on Quintus' health, which went through a bad spell for a few months in 56BC. So on April 9th, 56BC, Cicero wrote to his brother soon after a dinner to celebrate his daughter Tullia's betrothal to Crassipes.²¹ He mentions that he subsequently went to see little Quintus (c. 10 years old), who was recovering from an illness: 'On April 6th I gave a dinner for Crassipes to celebrate the engagement. Your and my boy Quintus (a very good boy) could not come because of a very slight indisposition [*quod perleuiter commotus fuerat*]. On the 8th I went to see him and found him quite recovered. He talked to me at length and in the nicest way [*perhumanum*] about the disagreements between our ladies. It was really most entertaining [*nihil festiuius*]' (QF 2.6.2). This is an intriguing snapshot. Firstly, Cicero's description that his nephew was 'very slightly' (*perleuiter*) indisposed hints that the boy was behaving a little badly in refusing to attend this family celebration, although as a kind uncle he also offers a plausible pre-emptive excuse to the boy's father, striking just the right note (Quintus is ill – but not seriously so). His inclusion of precise dates contributes further to the reassuring impression that the illness was minor. Secondly, when Quintus, physically recovered but emotionally unsettled, confides in his uncle about the recent ructions between 'our ladies' (Quintus' mother Pomponia and aunt Terentia), Cicero sums up that the boy's concern really was 'most entertaining'. Perhaps the tone of *nihil festiuius* is a touch condescending, but more likely it is sarcastic, accentuating the dispiriting gulf between the recent happy family party and the squabbling in-laws having such a bad impact on the boy.²² Cicero's description *perhumanum* for the long conversation with his nephew about these family problems conveys how seriously the empathetic Quintus is taking the family

²¹ On this betrothal, see Clark 1991.

²² *OLD festiuius* 2b stresses the ironic usage.

discordiae.²³ The fact that Cicero alerts the boy's father suggests that the situation is delicate and that he wants Quintus senior (currently away from his family, serving as Pompey's legate in Sardinia)²⁴ to monitor it. Moreover, if Quintus senior's current posting was a direct result of the debt incurred from securing Cicero's return from exile, it could explain the tensions between the two men's wives – and Quintus' reluctance to participate in a family occasion.²⁵

Cicero raises concerns about Quintus' health in 56BC with another recipient too just a few days later (c. April 13th, 56BC). After writing to Quintus senior about Quintus (*QF* 2.6.2), Cicero also writes from Arpinum to Atticus on the same topic:

'Nothing could have been more *à propos* than your letter, which has greatly relieved my anxiety about our nephew Quintus, good boy that he is. Chaerippus had arrived two hours previously with the most horrifying reports [*mera monstra nuntiarat*] . . . No more, except to ask you to look after the boy and keep a soft spot in your heart for him, as you do' (*Att.* 4.7.1, 4.7.3). Cicero receives this alarming verbal report from Chaerippus (a family friend or client of Quintus senior) very soon after himself seeing the boy and noting his recovery from a mild illness (*perleuiter commotus*, *QF* 2.6.2). In the current letter, the summary *mera monstra* ('the most horrifying reports') is very broad-brush: it

²³ *perhumanus* is attested only in Cicero (*TLL* 1445.40-45; *Att.* 16.12, *Fam.* 13.21.1).

²⁴ Shackleton Bailey 1980, 4. Quintus senior was already in Sardinia by February, 56BC (*QF* 2.3.7), a posting associated with his efforts to secure Cicero's return from exile: 'it is clear that Quintus' legateship in Sardinia was not looked on as a long-term investment for a possible future attempt on the consulship, but as an unavoidable service to Pompey for his help in the recall, a debt which was to be paid off as quickly and painlessly as possible' (Wiseman 1966, 111).

²⁵ The family atmosphere in which Quintus (an only child) was growing up certainly remained challenging, as Cicero's grimly memorable letter *ad Att.* 5.1 (May 5th or 6th, 51BC) about the deteriorating relationship between Quintus senior and Pomponia reminds us. See Hutchinson 2008, 124-31 on this letter.

could suggest Quintus' physical ill-health (a relapse?), but might imply his ongoing emotional turmoil. The worried Cicero may even have asked Chaerippus to monitor the situation and update him in person. Yet Atticus has also been keeping an eye on Quintus – we can see that Cicero's relieved letter is a reply. Taken together, the verbal update from Chaerippus and the letters exchanged between Cicero and Atticus suggest that Quintus' troubles are serious and that his uncles are discreetly observing their nephew during his father's absence in Sardinia.

A few months later (June 56BC), Cicero again writes to his brother, who had expressed concern about interrupting him from his writing – a gambit which only irritates Cicero, who recalls when Quintus senior previously wriggled out of seeing him: 'You put up an unanswerable excuse the first time, the ill health of our little Cicero [Quintus]; so I held my tongue. Then again it was the boys, and I said nothing' (*QF* 2.9.1-2). If this letter looks back to the circumstances of *QF* 2.6, then Cicero seems to acknowledge that back in April, Quintus had been suffering from a more serious malaise than his letter to Quintus senior at the time had suggested. Yet he may also be rapping his brother across the knuckles: rather than using Quintus' illness as a convenient excuse not to see him, Quintus senior should be a better father, since they both know that the tense family situation is making his son miserable.²⁶ This reading reflects the general tone of a letter containing various elements designed to niggle at his brother.²⁷

²⁶ At *QF* 2.6.2, Cicero had candidly said that Pomponia had complained to him about Quintus senior, but he postpones discussing this in a letter ('We will talk about this when we meet face to face'). Quintus senior perhaps wanted to avoid an uncomfortable conversation and Quintus' health was a convenient excuse.

²⁷ Henderson 2016a, 455 draws out the various notes of estrangement between the brothers in this letter.

The other prominent aspect of Cicero's focus on Quintus over this same period involves his nephew's education.²⁸ In mid-March 56BC, he writes enthusiastically from Rome to his brother about the boy's achievements at school ('Your son Quintus, an excellent boy, is flourishing at school. I notice this now more because Tyrannio is teaching at my house', *QF* 2.4.2). Nonetheless, Cicero is not complacent about his nephew's intellectual progress. Subsequently, in May 54BC, he explains to his brother that on a daily basis he will personally supervise and contribute to the boy's education ('My greatest concern will be to see our boy Cicero [Quintus] every day, which goes without saying, and to look into what he is learning as often as possible. If he is willing to accept it, I shall even offer my services as his teacher, having gained some practice in this employment in bringing our younger boy forward during this holiday season', *QF* 2.13.2). Cicero's proposed level of involvement here in Quintus' education is striking for a man currently working on his next big literary project, the *de Republica*, as he pointedly explains to his brother earlier in this same letter.²⁹ However, the intervention may not be completely altruistic, given that Cicero embeds in the *de Republica* a dialogue between Laelius and Scipio about education.³⁰ In this context, Quintus may be a kind of guinea pig. Meanwhile, Quintus senior is on his way to Gaul to serve with Caesar.³¹ One brother takes the role of military man of action, while the other carves out his literary legacy

²⁸ See Treggiari 2015, 245-50.

²⁹ A father's personal involvement in educating his own son is an ideal (cf. Cato the Elder, Plutarch *Cat. Mai.* 20.5-6) taken on by Cicero for Quintus.

³⁰ The dialogue features in the now fragmentary *De Republica* Book 4 (including 4.3.3, praising flexibility and lack of uniformity in the Roman educational system). The work projects a happy uncle-nephew relationship at 1.14 when Scipio enjoys a visit from his nephew Tubero.

³¹ Quintus senior left for Gaul in spring 54BC (Shackleton Bailey 1980, 4) and stayed there until 52BC, when he left to become his brother's legate in Cilicia.

(more foiling). In such circumstances, Quintus senior might not straightforwardly have appreciated his brother intervening and avidly serving as substitute father to Quintus.³² In the next letter where the boy features prominently, written in September 54BC, Cicero's possessiveness regarding his nephew and his education comes across strongly: 'I pardon your continual enquiries about young Cicero [Quintus], but I hope you on your side will pardon me if I refuse to admit that you love him any more than I do myself. I only wish he could have been with me these days at Arpinum, which he wanted and I no less. So I'd like you to write to Pomponia, if you see fit, and ask her to come with me when I make an excursion and bring the boy. I shall do wonders if I have him by me on vacation – in Rome there isn't a moment to get one's breath' (*QF* 3.1.7). Cicero's peremptory tone (instructing his brother to contact Pomponia and tell her where to spend her time) and his wearied protests at his busy life in Rome seem at best undiplomatic and at worst callous. After all, Quintus senior is still serving with Caesar in Gaul after spending the summer campaigning in Britain and he is about to confront the rebellious Nervii.³³ In such circumstances, writing to his wife along the lines Cicero suggests might not be his highest priority.³⁴

³² Henderson 2016a, 457.

³³ Cicero is well aware of Quintus senior's whereabouts: at *Att.* 4.15.10 (written on July 27th, 54BC) Cicero explains that he suspects his brother is already in Britain. For Quintus' activities see Caesar *BG* 5.24 (Quintus senior is given a legion to control the Nervii) and 5.38-41 (the Nervii are spurred on by Ambiorix to attack Quintus senior's winter-quarters), including 5.40: 'Cicero himself, though he was in very frail health, left himself not even the nighttime for rest until at last he was actually forced to spare himself by the protests of the soldiers, who crowded around him'. The fact that Caesar embeds a positive account of Quintus senior's conduct is campaign is another marker of his standing in 54BC: Caesar will be markedly cooler in *BG* 6 about Quintus' leadership skills (Wiseman 1966, 114 explains why).

³⁴ Later in the same letter, Cicero continues to focus on Quintus' education which he is monitoring closely: 'Our boy Cicero [Quintus] has not been idle with his tutor in rhetoric during my absence. You need have no

Yet perhaps the letter's most extraordinary section is the following: 'After I had written these last lines which are in my own hand, your son came over to us for dinner, as Pomponia was dining out. He gave me your letter to read, which he had received shortly before – a charming, serious letter, upon my word, in the manner of Aristophanes. I was quite delighted with it. He also gave me the other letter, in which you tell him to stick close to me and regard me as his teacher. How pleased these letters made him, and me likewise! He is the most charming boy, and no one could be fonder of me. I dictated the above to Tiro at dinner, in case the different handwriting may surprise you' (*QF* 3.1.19).³⁵ This is an intriguing situation. Quintus, apparently left to his own devices, visits his uncle for dinner since his mother is dining out (although details are omitted, which may be meant to stir Quintus senior's curiosity).³⁶ Then Quintus immediately hands over private letters from his father for his uncle to read.³⁷ It seems that even in Quintus senior's personal correspondence with his son he cannot exclude his brother from the equation: letters were of course always susceptible to being shown to third-parties for many reasons (and indeed, some were probably artfully written with that in mind).³⁸ It may also suggest

anxiety about his progress, for you know his abilities and I see his keenness. All else that concerns him I take upon myself and regard as my responsibility' (*QF* 3.1.14). Further vigilance features in a letter from October 21st, 54BC: 'The boys are well, keen at their lessons and conscientiously taught. They love us and each other' (*QF* 3.3.1).

³⁵ Shackleton Bailey 1980, 210 speculates whether Cicero originally wrote *Aristoteleo* rather than the transmitted *Aristophaneo*. Hutchinson 2008, 187 comments on Quintus senior's fondness for joking in writing to those close to him, although Cicero's humour is generally more muted in letters to his brother.

³⁶ See Stein-Hölkeskamp 2005, 198 on Pomponia going out to dine in her husband's absence.

³⁷ See Leach 2006 on such correspondence from *seniores* to *iuniores*.

³⁸ See Riggsby in this volume on Cicero's 'advisory' letter *QF* 1.1 ('It is hard to see this document as anything but an attempt to circulate a favorable description of Quintus' performance to a broad (elite) audience in the guise of a letter, perhaps trading to some extent on the "private", "internal" associations of the genre').

the emotionally vulnerable Quintus' need to show his family that his father cares for him, despite his prolonged absence. Finally, there is the striking detail that Cicero dictated this part of the letter to Tiro at the dinner-table: Quintus (with others) was therefore listening to the dictation, including Cicero's implicit criticism of his mother and the literary critique of his personal letter from his father.

Despite this apparently harmonious relationship between uncle and nephew on the surface, Cicero hints at some underlying tensions in a subsequent letter to Quintus senior (December 54BC): *Ciceronem et ut rogas amo et ut meretur et debeo. dimitto autem a me et ut a magistris ne abducam et quod mater †porcia non† discedit, sine qua edacitatem pueri pertimesco. sed sumus una tamen ualde multum.*³⁹ 'I love your son as you ask and as he deserves and as I ought, but I am letting him go because I don't want to take him away from his teachers and because his mother is leaving for her own house (?). Without her I am terrified of the young fellow's appetite! Yet we are a great deal together all the same' (*QF* 3.7.9). Cicero's concern about Quintus' education is a polite but conventional excuse for sending him away (even if his interest in the boy's teaching is genuine).⁴⁰ Yet the departure of the boy's mother stands out as the much more striking reason for letting him go. Does that imply that Quintus (now about 12 years old) is unusually attached to his mother Pomponia and protective of her? Likewise, Cicero's jocular exclamation that he is terrified of the boy's 'appetite' is also intriguing. Perhaps *edacitas* implies Quintus' voracity for his uncle Cicero's company (evoking the earlier letter where he joked that the

³⁹ Shackleton Bailey 1980, 225 suggests *proprium in domum* as the best solution to the textual crux.

⁴⁰ As a letter written on October 21st 54BC implies, Cicero had recently dismissed Quintus' favourite teacher, Paeonius the rhetorician (otherwise unknown) for being insufficiently scholarly (*QF* 3.3.4, '...when I take him away with me somewhere in the country, I shall introduce him to my method and practice. You have offered me a big fee, and it won't be my fault if I don't earn it').

boy saw his uncles as ‘divine’), whether as a teacher or companion.⁴¹ However, that devotion might not be straightforwardly positive, since it reminds us that Quintus was again deprived of the company of his father (now absent as Caesar’s legate in Gaul).⁴² Alternatively *edacitas* may open up a different register. Elsewhere satirists were cast as biting or chewing their subjects, so much so that Persius later presents Lucilius even breaking a molar.⁴³ Cicero’s description of Quintus’ *edacitas* might reflect his nephew’s sarcastic tone or the depth of his worries.⁴⁴ At any rate both readings are made more intense by the mock hyperbolic compound verb *pertimesco*, which hints at something troubling about Quintus’ interaction with his uncle.

Over these early years, Cicero’s language describing Quintus is often superficially affectionate: so he is *optimus* and *suauissimus*, and nothing could be *suavius* or *amantius* than this boy (*QF* 3.1.19).⁴⁵ Yet at the same time, those letters featuring Quintus suggest a somewhat vulnerable boy. This is an only child, deprived of his father’s company and affection during long absences in Asia, Sardinia (probably resulting from Quintus senior’s intervention to help the exiled Cicero) and Gaul (where Quintus senior faced real dangers).⁴⁶ During that time, he is entrusted to his well-meaning but sometimes rather

⁴¹ Treggiari 2015, 246 says that *edacitas* is a joke (but does not give details).

⁴² Cf. Suetonius *Nero* 6.3 on the damage done to another boy (Nero) permanently deprived of his father at an early age.

⁴³ Persius *Satires* 1.114-18, with Tzounakas 2005, 562.

⁴⁴ *pace TLL* 60.73-4 (listing this instance as non-figurative), although the cognate adjective *edax* is used figuratively for gnawing cares (*OLD edax* 3). See Wilcox in this volume on Cicero exploiting the satiric mode in his letters.

⁴⁵ *Cicero noster* (*Att.* 2.2.1; *QF* 2.13.2); *optimus* (*Att.* 4.7.1; *QF* 2.4.2); *Cicero suauissimus* (*Att.* 4.9.2).

⁴⁶ Asia 61-59BC (Quintus governed his proconsular province ‘for the unusually long period of three years, longer than he himself desired’. Shackleton Bailey 1980,3); Sardinia (as Pompey’s legate) 56BC; Gaul (as Caesar’s legate) 54-52BC. Quintus senior writes to Cicero from Gaul in May or June 53BC expressing

insensitive uncle Cicero for matters of education. The deteriorating relationship between Quintus senior and Pomponia must have enhanced their son's sense of insecurity, particularly given that he seems to have been close to his mother. Her status seems to have become increasingly uncertain as the relationship between husband and wife deteriorated.

So what about the depiction of his younger cousin Marcus? In July 65BC, Cicero proudly announces his son's birth to Atticus: 'With Lucius Julius Caesar and Gaius Marcius Figulus being consuls, I have the honour to inform you that I have become the father of a little son. Terentia is well' (*Att.* 1.2.1).⁴⁷ Yet despite this fanfare, Marcus remains rather shadowy in these early letters compared with Quintus. There is some overlap with Quintus in Cicero's affectionate terminology. So in an early letter (January 20th 60BC), Cicero calls Marcus (then about four years old) *mellitus*, his 'honey' (*Att.* 1.18.1).⁴⁸ Subsequently, in a letter written on June 13th, 58BC while in exile he speaks fondly of his son: 'Then at the same time I miss my daughter, the most loving, modest, and clever daughter a man ever had, the image of my face, speech, and mind. Likewise my most charming, most darling [*uenustissimum mihi que dulcissimum*] little boy, whom I, cruel brute than I am [*ferus et ferreus*], put away from my arms. Too wise for his years, the poor child already understood what was going on. Likewise your son, your image, whom my boy loved like a brother and had begun to respect like an elder brother' (*QF*

hope that he will see Cicero, Quintus, Tullia, and Marcus, but his son is enumerated within a wider family group and he is not picked out for special affection (*Fam.* 16.1.1).

⁴⁷ Shackleton Bailey 1965a, 296 suggests that Cicero combines two pieces of information (his son's birth; the result of the elections) in a joke.

⁴⁸ Cf. *mel meum* (Plautus *Poen.* 367); *melilla* (Plautus *Cas.* 135), Catullus' sparrow *mellitus* (3.6) and the *melliti oculi* of Iuuentius (Catullus 48.1; *mellite Iuuenti*, 99.1).

1.3.3). There is certainly here some emotive engagement with the enforced separation between father and son: as Hutchinson observes, ‘the pathos is evident; but the stress on the agony of actually parting also suits the themes of the letter and the coming argument’.⁴⁹ Yet the alliterative jingle of Cicero being cruel and iron-hearted (*ferus et ferreus*) in abandoning his son undercuts the sense of spontaneity.⁵⁰ Moreover, Marcus is overshadowed by Cicero’s special fondness for his much older sister, Tullia. Striking too is that although Cicero empathises with Marcus’ enforced separation from his beloved cousin Quintus, he says nothing about the impact on his young nephew. This stands out because one of Cicero’s aims in this letter is mollifying his brother Quintus senior who (travelling back from Asia) is upset that the exiled Cicero has apparently avoided meeting him in Greece.

In another letter from exile (November 29th, 58BC) written to Atticus, Cicero calls his son ‘poor little boy’ (*misellus*) and laments that he leaves him nothing but ‘my hated and dishonoured name’ (*inuidiam et ignominiam nominis mei*, *Att.* 3.23.5). Yet this comes at the finale of a letter where Cicero clearly seeks to stir pity for himself by talking as if his death is imminent; and the careful assonance and paranomasia of *inuidiam et ignominiam nominis mei* again mutes the sense of raw emotion regarding Marcus. Similarly when writing to Terentia and Tullia from Brundisium earlier that same year (April 29th, 58BC) just before leaving Italy, Cicero wishes always to have Marcus in his embrace (*Fam.* 14.4.3). However, Cicero’s wife Terentia exercises the main gravitational

⁴⁹ Hutchinson 1998, 44 (38-44 on the whole letter).

⁵⁰ Tibullus pushes Cicero’s resonant pairing even further when berating the inventor of swords: *quam ferus et uere ferreus ille fuit!* (1.10.2).

pull on the emotions in this letter, and in comparison Marcus remains rather tangential.⁵¹ Cicero primarily seems to use Marcus as an emotive device. We can compare the *peroratio* of the fourth *Catilinarian* (December 63BC) when he ostentatiously commends his very young son to the senate, expressing relief that, whatever happens to himself if his enemies prevail, at least Marcus will be safe in the arms of the *re publica* (*Cat.* 4.23).⁵²

In a later letter (June 14th, 51BC), written at Actium to Atticus when Marcus is about 15 years old, Cicero happily piles up affectionate superlatives about his son: *Cicero meus, moderatissimus et suauissimus puer, tibi salutem dicit*, ‘My boy Cicero [Marcus], the most moderate and sweet-natured boy, sends you his greetings’ (*Att.* 5.9.3). What is striking here is the circumstances of this letter, written when Cicero is travelling to Cilicia to serve as proconsul. Cicero brings Marcus with him to the province, despite his worries about incursions from the east by the Parthians.⁵³ At a similar stage, Quintus (by contrast) stayed at home when his father went out to Sardinia (although both Quintus senior and his son now accompany Cicero to Cilicia).⁵⁴

As with Quintus, we see concern over education – and signs that Cicero takes his son’s early schooling very seriously. So, he writes to Atticus (July 27th, 54BC), expressing eagerness that his friend should return with his learned freedman M.

⁵¹ Hutchinson 1998, 28-33 helpfully draws out Cicero’s techniques for emotively presenting and engaging with Terentia in this letter.

⁵² Dyck 2008, 239.

⁵³ ‘Most of his correspondence from his time in Cilicia describes his fears about them...and his reaction to their invasion of Syria’ (Zarecki 2012, 54). The boys were escorted to Galatia by Deiotarus while their fathers were on military campaign (*Att.* 5.17.3; cf. 5.18.4 on the possibility of sending them to Rhodes; Treggiari 2015, 247).

⁵⁴ Treggiari 2015, 247 describes the likely attractions of the journey. Cicero and his entourage returned to Italy in autumn 50BC (Shackleton Bailey 1980, 4).

Pomponius Dionysius so that Dionysius can instruct Marcus (*Att.* 4.15.10), and in another letter (late October 54BC), he says: ‘Believe me, I do not find it easy to be without you – and no wonder I miss *you*, when I miss even Dionysius so keenly. My boy Cicero [Marcus] and I will both be demanding him from you when the time comes’ (*Att.* 4.18.5). Cicero’s keen engagement in his son’s education also emerges when he explains to his brother (54BC) that ‘I am writing this on October 24th, the opening day of the Games, as I leave for Tusculum. I am taking my boy Cicero [Marcus] with me to work [*in ludum discendi*], not to play [*non lusionis*]’ (*QF* 3.4.6). This rather stern approach from Cicero is a sign of things to come. Yet there are also intriguing hints that Marcus is rather more self-assured than his cousin in taking control of his own education and serving his own interests. So in early April 59BC Cicero writes to Atticus: ‘Cicero [Marcus] instructs you to give Aristodemus the same answer about him as you gave about his cousin, your nephew’ (*Att.* 2.7.5). Aristodemus is presumably the boys’ tutor ‘to whom Atticus is asked to make excuses for Marcus’ absence’.⁵⁵ The image of the six-year old Marcus casually passing on instructions to his tutor via his father and his father’s friend suggests a rather more self-confident personality (and indulgent father) than his cousin had.

Finally, Marcus’ ill-health crops up in an intriguing context. In a rather cantankerous letter to his brother in Gaul (November 54BC), Cicero closes down a sensitive topic (Quintus senior’s potential for being indiscreet in his letters from Gaul) by saying: ‘I shall write to you at greater length when, as I hope, my boy Cicero [Marcus] is himself again’ (*QF* 3.6.2). The vague allusion to his son feeling out of sorts is a convenient rhetorical gambit, and one which mirrors Quintus senior’s strategy of using

⁵⁵ Shackleton Bailey 1965a, 367.

Quintus' illness as an excuse (*QF* 2.9.1-2, discussed above) – for which Cicero took him to task.⁵⁶

In general, Cicero's representation of Marcus' childhood lacks colour. There are none of those vivid, idiosyncratic details which mark out Quintus' portrayal. Marcus' most distinctive role is his emotive appearances in the letters from exile to elicit sympathy for Cicero's cause, rather like those disshevelled family-members on display in courtrooms during trials. Yet there is a paradox here. Why does Quintus (the nephew) in the early years garner more (and more distinctive) attention from Cicero than Marcus (the son) does? We might expect the level of coverage to be reversed. Perhaps this imbalance simply reflects the reality of the two boys' different personalities and their contrasting family situations, so that we are presented with a particular kind of foiling: edginess (Quintus) offsets blandness (Marcus). The discrepancy may also be triggered by the fact that Marcus was overshadowed by his older sister, Tullia (Cicero was exceptionally fond of her), whereas Quintus is an only child. Cicero's paternal focus is therefore split (unevenly) between his daughter and his son. Another factor may be the relationship between Cicero and his brother Quintus senior: Cicero perhaps wants to show his brother (who apparently had his volatile side; cf. *Att.* 1.17) that he is equally committed to his nephew and his own son. The regular focus on Quintus may be intended to foster familial harmony. Finally, the trajectory of Cicero's own life and career must be relevant. Since Tullia was born (c.79-75BC) well before the pivotal moment of Cicero's confrontation with Catiline (and his subsequent exile), whereas the early childhood of Marcus (born 65BC) coincides with that extraordinary period, it may simply be that Cicero got to know

⁵⁶ See Fulkerson 2013 for Cicero's inconsistency more generally.

his daughter much better than his son. All these factors together may shed light on the different early portrayals of Quintus and Marcus in the letters.

The Later Years (51BC-43BC)

As the two boys get older, Cicero's coverage of them understandably increases in volume and complexity, as their lives become progressively more elaborate and their public profile more visible.⁵⁷

As in the early years, many more fluctuations and challenges hit Quintus than his cousin Marcus. Those early hints of trouble to come now become more tangible. During Cicero's proconsulship of Cilicia (from summer 51BC to summer 50BC) both boys accompanied him. So, writing to Atticus (December 19th, 51BC) Cicero says that he is 'under instructions to give your sister's son Quintus his white gown' (*ego...Quinto sororis tuae filio togam puram iubeor dare*, Att. 5.20.9) when he reaches Laodicea.⁵⁸ The tone of *iubeor* hardly conveys much enthusiasm for the impending rite of passage, and the distancing formula 'your sister's son' *sororis tuae filio* stands out – Quintus is

⁵⁷ The volume of material necessitates selectivity, but the relevant references are (in chronological order): **QUINTUS:** Att. 5.20.9, Att. 6.1.12, Att. 6.2.2, Att. 6.3.8, Att. 6.7, Att. 6.9.3, Fam. 16.7, Att. 7.2.3, Att. 10.6, Att. 10.7.3, Att. 10.12.3, Att. 10.15.4, Att. 11.7.7, Att. 11.8, Att. 11.10.1, Att. 11.13.2, Att. 11.15.2, Att. 11.16.4, Att. 11.23.2, Att. 11.20.1, Att. 11.21.3, Att. 12.5, Att. 13.29.3, Att. 13.9.1, Att. 13.37, Att. 13.39, Att. 13.41, Att. 13.42, Att. 14.13, Att. 14.14, Att. 14.17.3, Att. 14.20.5, Att. 15.19.2, Att. 15.21, Att. 15.22, Att. 15.29.2, Att. 15.1.4, Att. 16.1.6, Att. 16.3.3, Att. 16.5.2. **MARCUS:** Att. 6.2.10, Fam. 14.5, Fam. 16.12.6, Att. 9.6.1, Att. 9.19.1, Fam. 14.7.3, Fam. 14.11, Fam. 14.15, Att. 11.17a.1, Att. 11.18.1, Fam. 13.11.3, Att. 12.7.1, Att. 12.8, Att. 12.24.1, Att. 12.27.2, Att. 12.28.1, Att. 12.32.2, Att. 12.49.3, Att. 12.52.1, Att. 13.1, Att. 13.24.1, Att. 13.37.2, Att. 14.7.2, Att. 14.11.2, Att. 14.13.4, Att. 14.16.3-4, Att. 14.17.5, Att. 14.20.3, Fam. 12.16, Att. 15.16, Att. 15.15.4, Att. 15.17, Att. 15.20.4, Att. 16.1.5, Att. 16.3.2-4, Fam. 16.21, Att. 15.13a.2, Att. 16.11.4, Att. 16.15.5, Brut. 2.3.6, Brut. 2.4.6, Brut. 2.5.6, Brut. 1.5.3, Brut. 1.12.3, Brut. 1.14.2.

⁵⁸ The garment is called the *toga pura* because it is all white, without the purple border associated with the *toga* of boyhood.

Cicero's nephew too of course (cf. *Cicero noster*, *Att.* 2.2.1; *QF* 2.13.2).⁵⁹ Does the designation imply some irritation? In the same letter Cicero's promise to control Quintus more carefully suggests some dubious incident or other in the background ('I will keep him on a tighter rein', *Att.* 5.20.9).⁶⁰

Cicero's next reference to Quintus assuming his *toga uirilis* (planned for March 17th, 50BC, the usual day of the year for the ceremony)⁶¹ comes in a letter to Atticus written at Laodicea (February 20th 50BC): 'The boys [Marcus and Quintus] are fond of one another, are learning their lessons and taking their exercise. Yet as Isocrates said about Ephorus and Theopompus, one of them needs the rein [Quintus] and the other the spur [Marcus] [*sed alter, ut Isocrates dixit in Ephoro et Theopompo, frenis eget, alter calcaribus*]. I propose to give Quintus his white gown at the Liberalia, as his father has asked me to do [*mandauit enim pater*]. I shall keep the day on the assumption that there has been no intercalation. I at least am delighted with Dionysius. The boys say he has a furious temper; but nobody could be more learned or high principled or more attached to you and to me' (*Att.* 6.1.12). As in the previous letter, Cicero emphasises that he has been instructed to conduct the ceremony, with the same hint that it is a little burdensome. The broad connection between horse-imagery and young men is familiar in Classical literature.⁶² Yet Cicero adds a twist by casting Quintus metaphorically as a horse to be

⁵⁹ Cf. Augustus in a letter to Livia pointedly referring to Claudius as *nepoti tuo*, 'your grandson', when he is also Augustus' great-nephew (Suetonius *Claudius* 4.1).

⁶⁰ Cf. the more enthusiastic verbs *uellem* (*Att.* 9.6.1) and *uolo* (*Att.* 9.17.1) about Marcus' prospective assumption of the *toga uirilis* (49BC). In early April 49BC, he reports positively about this ceremony at Arpinum: 'that was welcome to my fellow-townsmen' (*Att.* 9.19.1).

⁶¹ Cf. Ovid *Fasti* 3.771-90, with Heyworth 2019, for the ceremony.

⁶² Such imagery marks (e.g.) Homer *Iliad* 6.506-11, 15.263-9, Ennius *Ann.* 535-9, and Virgil *Aeneid* 11.492-7. See too Paschalis 1994, 119-20. The *lusus Troiae* shows strong links between horsemanship and

reined in and Marcus as one needing to be spurred on.⁶³ This also opens up associations with Plato's *Phaedrus* 246a-257b where Socrates compares the soul to a chariot pulled by two horses, one ugly, black, and unruly, and the other beautiful, white, and obedient – except in this case both 'horses' are problematic.⁶⁴ Neither boy emerges positively (or gains much depth: as Stinchcomb observes, 'Cicero reduced the two boys to an epigram').⁶⁵ The early idealized portraits of the two become more complex as their adult personalities emerge.

After Quintus has assumed his adult toga, a difficult family situation emerges. Writing to Atticus (late April 50BC), Cicero (still in Laodicea) discusses Quintus senior's angry outbursts and his deteriorating relationship with Pomponia. Cicero has apparently taken up the challenge of reconciling the pair, helped by Quintus, no longer a *puer*, but now an *adulescens*, as Cicero calls him. Yet the young man's personality is hardly suited to the task, as Cicero concedes: 'He does seem to me to be very [*ualde*] fond of his mother, as he should be, and extraordinarily [*mirifice*] fond of you. But the boy's nature, though great [*magnum*], is complex [*muliplex*], and I have plenty to do in guiding it [*quod ego regendo habeo negoti satis*]' (*Att.* 6.2.2). Cicero's diplomatically different adverbs (*ualde* and *mirifice*) to express Quintus' love for his two parents (and suggesting that he loves his father more than his mother) hints at the delicate state of Quintus senior's

male rite of passage: the earliest attested performance dates to Sulla's dictatorship (Plutarch *Cat. Min* 3.1-2).

⁶³ Cicero reprises material from Isocrates used at *De Oratore* 3.36 (written in 55BC). See Mankin 2011, 127, also citing *Brutus* 204 (where the maxim focuses on Cotta and Sulpicius), the Elder Seneca *Contr.* 4 pr.8 (the orator Haterius speaking with a freedman present giving signals to spur or restrain him), and Diogenes Laertius 5.39 (Plato and Aristotle using the language of 'spurs' and 'reins' about some of their pupils).

⁶⁴ See Belfiore 2006 on the *Phaedrus* imagery.

⁶⁵ Stinchcomb 1933, 443.

emotions, while the interlaced alliteration of *magnum* (positive) and *multiplex* (negative, but somewhat euphemistic) suggest a young man out of his depth.⁶⁶ The notion that Cicero has plenty to do in ‘guiding’ him perhaps recalls the imagery of Quintus as a recalcitrant horse (*Att.* 6.1.12; cf. *OLD rego* 3).⁶⁷

The next letter in this sequence (late May or early June, 50BC) is a truly extraordinary window onto the family’s private life: ‘I think, indeed I am sure, that the boy [*puer*] Cicero [Quintus] has read a letter addressed to his father. He is in the habit of opening them and does so at my suggestion [*de meo consilio*], in case there might be something we ought to know about. This particular letter contained the same item about your sister which you wrote to me. I could see that the boy was dreadfully upset. He cried as he lamented over it to me. In fact I was greatly impressed by the dutiful, affectionate, thoughtful way [*pietatem, suauitatem humanitatemque*] he spoke. It makes me the more hopeful that nothing untoward will happen. So I wanted you to know’ (*Att.* 6.3.8). In this setting, Cicero’s use of *puer* for Quintus (who has now assumed his *toga uiril*) may be intended to hint at his vulnerability.⁶⁸ Yet this awkward situation has been entirely triggered by Cicero himself instructing Quintus secretly to read his father’s mail, and there is a certain awkwardness in his revelation to Atticus. As a result Quintus has come across one letter in which (presumably) the possibility of a divorce between his parents is mentioned. Quintus is dreadfully upset and cries in front of Cicero, who is impressed at

⁶⁶ See *TLL* s.v. *multiplex* 1592.61-1593.2 for usage connected with *ingenium* or *natura*. Cicero uses *multiplex* of Catiline’s personality (*Cael.* 14), but it can have more positive associations (*Leg.* 1.22).

⁶⁷ Things did not improve in the relationship: ‘*rego* is a characteristic verb in April to May 49BC’ (Hutchinson 2008, 118).

⁶⁸ Dickey 2002, 191-5 discusses the implications of *puer* as a term of address in relation to age (noting Cicero’s use of it even for men as old as 30, *Fam.* 2.15.4). Context is important (cf. Cicero’s own frequent use of *puer* for Octavian (cf. *Phil.* 13.24)).

his *pietas*, *suavitas*, and *humanitas*. Leaving aside the shocking detail that Cicero has commandeered his own nephew to spy on his own brother, Quintus' highly emotional response to the impending family crisis suggests his passionate nature (and the importance of his relationship with his uncle). Yet his pangs of distress trigger him to act, and in July 50BC Cicero writes to Atticus with good news: 'Young Quintus has certainly acted like a good son in reconciling his father's mind towards your sister, not it is true without a good deal of encouragement from me, but I was spurring a willing horse [*currentem animum*]. Your letter too has greatly stimulated [*excitarunt*] him, Altogether I am satisfied that the matter stands as we wish' (*Att.* 6.7.1).⁶⁹ The fifteen-year old Quintus' reluctance to intervene in the crisis which has hit his parents' marriage is understandable, and Cicero seems to cast his nephew as a convenient agent, without expressing much concern for his wellbeing after the tearful encounter described in the previous letter. Again, we have hints of equine imagery (made explicit in Shackleton Bailey's translation of *currentem animum* and *excitarunt*), as Cicero develops further the metaphor of Quintus as an over-enthusiastic horse.⁷⁰

Subsequent letters plot a deteriorating trajectory. It is crystal clear that Quintus continues to cause Cicero concern, but a 'Rubicon moment' in the relationship comes in a letter (April 14th, 49BC) written at Cumae after Caesar had invaded Italy, triggering a civil war (Cicero was waiting to leave Italy).⁷¹ Cicero expresses intense distress about something which Quintus has done: 'O what a wretched business! For nothing more bitter

⁶⁹ See *OLD curro* 1c for the proverbial usage 'to spur a willing horse' (liked by Cicero: *Att.* 5.9.1, 13.45.2, *Fam.* 15.15.3, *QF* 1.1.45, 2.14.2, *De Or.* 2.186, *Fin.* 15.6, *Phil.* 3.19).

⁷⁰ See *OLD excito* 1 for the verb's application to animals. See Treggiari 2015, 248.

⁷¹ Shackleton Bailey 1968, 428-37 offers a detailed timeline of Cicero's activities between January 16th and May 19th 49BC.

has ever befallen me in all my life' (*Att.* 10.4.5). Cicero's pain is accentuated by hyperbaton as he makes this interjection, also blaming himself for spoiling Quintus by indulgence (*indulgentia*) and regretting Quintus senior's mild treatment of his son (*lenitas*). The details are elusive, but Quintus has written to Caesar in hostile terms about his uncle and then compounded this by a face-to-face denunciation: 'So much I know, that after an interview with Hirtius he [Quintus] was summoned by Caesar, and spoke to him about my thorough hostility to his interests and my design of leaving Italy. Even this I write with hesitation. But it is no fault of ours, nature is the enemy' (*Att.* 10.4.6). Clearly whatever motivated Quintus to approach Caesar, Cicero feels hurt and betrayed: in 49BC Quintus went too far. In a subsequent letter to Atticus (April 20th 49BC), Cicero expresses his exasperation: 'It is a great task [*magnum opus*]. There is much in him that is extraordinary, but an utter lack of straightforwardness and sincerity [*nihil simplex, nihil sincerum*]. I wish you had taken the young man in hand [*uellem suscepisses iuuenem regendum*]. His too indulgent father undoes all my disciplinary measures. Without him, if that were possible, I could govern the lad [*regerem*]. For you, it is possible. But I don't insist. As I say, it is a great task [*magnum, inquam, opus*]' (*Att.* 10.6). Once again Cicero uses the verb *rego* (a leitmotiv in letters about Quintus), but the subjunctive mood of *regerem* suggests that Cicero's capacity to control Quintus has virtually evaporated.⁷² The tone is defeatist, and Cicero wearily blames both Atticus and Quintus senior for neglect and bad parenting.⁷³ The epanalepsis of *magnum opus* hammers home the pessimism.

⁷² Cf. *Att.* 6.2.2, 10.7.3. See Hutchinson 1998, 118.

⁷³ He has already blamed the *patris . . . lenitas* (*Att.* 10.4.6). Elsewhere Cicero urges indulgence of young men: 'Let some playfulness be allowed to young people; let youth have more freedom' (*pro Caelio* 42).

Two days later (April 22nd, 49BC), Cicero writes again to Atticus about their nephew and returns to the question of nurture versus nature: ‘I gave young Quintus a rough reception. I see it was greed and the hope of a handsome largesse. That is bad enough in all conscience, but I hope there was no such villainy [*scelus*] as we feared. I think that you will agree that this vice does not proceed from indulgence on our part but from nature. However, I govern him with discipline’ (*Att.* 10.7.3). Cicero presents Quintus in increasingly unattractive terms, casting his nephew as motivated by greed. However, he now resists the idea that Quintus’ upbringing is at fault, and the sharp tone of distress tangible in the earlier letters from April 49BC has become more muted. In another letter (*Att.* 10.12.3; May 5th, 49BC) Cicero even urges Atticus to destroy any letters containing negative comments about Quintus, in case one day they leak out.

After the momentous events at Pharsalus in August 48BC and Pompey’s assassination, Cicero expresses himself in powerful and emotional terms about Quintus in letters from 48-47BC, making it clear that he still feels resentment. So, in one letter (December 23rd 48BC), he explains that Quintus senior had sent his son to Caesar in Egypt ‘not only to make his own peace but to accuse me as well’ (*Att.* 11.8.2). Quintus is now caught up in worsening hostility between Cicero and Quintus senior, but he takes his father’s side.⁷⁴ Not long afterwards on January 19th, 47BC, Quintus says to a third party in Ephesus that he is ‘most hostile’ (*Att.* 11.10.1) to Cicero, and he shows off a book-roll

⁷⁴ See Shackleton Bailey 1971, 179-85 for the fraternal strife; Wiseman 1966, 114 on the wider circumstances of Quintus and his son denigrating Cicero to win favour with Caesar. After Pharsalus, reconciling with Caesar was an unpleasant but necessary move for former Pompeians; Cf. Cicero’s *pro Marcello* (46BC). Quintus was in Spain with Caesar at the end of the campaigning season of 46BC (Treggiari 2015, 249).

allegedly containing a speech against his uncle which he plans to deliver before Caesar.⁷⁵ We can see here Quintus' spiteful side: the third-party is Terentius, a friend of Cicero, so Quintus knew that word would reach his uncle. The adversarial relationship between uncle and nephew continues to feature. In one letter (*Att.* 11.13.2; mid-March 47BC), Quintus is said to write to Cicero *spurcissime*, 'in the most indecent language'; in another (*Att.* 11.15.2; May 14th, 47BC), he writes to his uncle *mirifico odio*, 'with extraordinary hatred'; and in a third (*Att.* 11.16.4; June 3rd, 47BC), Quintus writes *acerbissime*, 'with tremendous vitriol'. All those affectionate superlatives of the early letters have switched to the other end of the spectrum.

Yet despite Cicero's distress, ultimately he refuses to be intimidated by Quintus. By 45BC, we see Cicero turning the tables by using a technique familiar from oratory: he goes on the offensive and shifts to a comedic voice, defusing Quintus' power to hurt him by making him a figure of fun.⁷⁶ Cicero now casts Quintus as a stereotypical louche young man, constantly needing money and getting into scrapes about his possible marriage.⁷⁷ So at *Att.* 13.37 (August 21st, 45BC), the predominant location for Quintus' bad-mouthing of Cicero is at dinner-parties (a setting which itself detracts from his credibility).⁷⁸ As Wilcox observes, 'Table talk, of course, including commentary on who

⁷⁵ Quintus' political awakening and the resulting clashes with Cicero can be seen in a wider context of perceived inter-generational conflict during the late republic. Isayev 2007 deconstructs and adds nuance to this model.

⁷⁶ See Leigh 2004 for an analysis of this technique in the *pro Caelio*.

⁷⁷ Cicero divorced Terentia in 47 or 46BC, but towards the end of 46BC he had married Publilia (*Fam.* 4.14.3, to Plancius, **with Gibson in this volume**), herself divorced by July 45BC.

⁷⁸ Yet posterity accentuates hedonism in Marcus, not Quintus. Seneca the Elder presents Cestius Pius dining with Marcus, so drunk that he forgets his guests' names and even has Pius whipped (*Suasoria* 7.13). Pliny the Elder shows Marcus draining masses of drink in one sitting, rivaling even Antony's reputation as a

was at dinner, what they said, what there was to eat and drink and how it was served, was satire's standard fare even before Cicero'.⁷⁹ In another letter (*Att.* 13.41, c. August 18th, 45BC), Cicero mentions Cana, a possible future wife for Quintus, and in a letter from July 44BC, Cicero describes Quintus proposing marriage to a rich lady called Tutia. When Quintus senior asks Cicero about her, his reply is wittily cutting – there is nothing wrong with her *nisi de ore et patre*, 'apart from her mouth and her father' (*Att.* 15.29.2). In these later letters, Quintus' capacity to hurt is slowly but surely defused by humour. The most sustained comic piece is *Att.* 13.42, written at Tusculum (end of December 45BC) and infused with the playful atmosphere of the Saturnalia. This elegantly staged letter shows Quintus, about to set off to join Caesar's Parthian campaign, visiting Cicero to wheedle some money from him:⁸⁰

'He [*ille*] came to see me, "right down in the mouth". I greeted him with "You there! Why so pensive?" [*καὶ μάλα κατηφής*]. *et ego* "σὸ δὲ δὴ τί σύννους;"]. "Need you ask?", was the answer, "Considering that I have a journey in front of me, and a journey to war, a dishonourable journey too, as well as a dangerous one?". "What's the compulsion?", I enquired, "Debt", he answered, "and yet I haven't so much as my travelling expenses". At that I borrowed some of your eloquence – I held my tongue. He went on: "What distresses me most is my uncle [*sed me maxime angit auunculus*']". "How so?" "Because he's annoyed with me".

drinker (HN 14.147). Dio 46.18.5 recreates Calenus' hostile speech (43BC) attacking Cicero and suggesting that Marcus is constantly drunk.

⁷⁹ Wilcox in this volume.

⁸⁰ Hutchinson 1998, 120-4 offers a subtle reading of this letter.

“Why do you let him be annoyed? I prefer to say ‘let’ rather than ‘make’”. “I shan’t any more”, he answered. “I shall do away with the reason”. “Admirable”, I said. “But if you don’t mind my asking [*sed si graue non est*], I should be interested to know what the reason is”. “It’s because I couldn’t make up my mind whom to marry. My mother was displeased with me, and so consequently was he. Now I don’t care what I do to put things right. I’ll do what they want”. “Good luck then”, I said, “and congratulations on your decision. But when is it to be?”. “The time makes no odds to me”, he said, “now that I accept the things itself”. “Well”, I said, “I should do it before I left if I were you. That way you will please your father too”. “I shall take your advice”, he replied. Thus ended our dialogue’.

The mimetic form of this lively conversation, opening up associations with Roman comedy, accentuates the polarised characters of uncle and nephew: where the diplomatic Cicero wheedles and cajoles with detached good humour, Quintus comes across as bumptious, mercurial, childish, and self-indulgent. The opening pronoun *ille* is deft: Cicero does not even have to name his now notorious nephew for Atticus, and, as Hutchinson notes, Cicero’s deployment of language from Greek New Comedy ‘brings a sense of detachment’.⁸¹ Quintus himself (their shared joke) is consistently blunt, and at one point there is an amusing ambiguity when he asserts that his ‘uncle’ (*auunculus*) is angry with him: Quintus means Atticus, but failing to name him reminds us that Cicero too has not had an easy relationship with his nephew – but he is not provoked. Cicero’s over-studied politeness in ‘If you don’t mind me asking’ is also witty, as is Cicero’s

⁸¹ Hutchinson 1998, 120. Shackleton Bailey 1966, 397 suggests that the Greek quotes are from Menander.

gambit of congratulating Quintus on deciding to marry, without bothering to ask him the identity of his prospective bride.⁸² Cicero is totally in control, wryly using measured questions to put Quintus in his place and refusing to be provoked by his impetuous nephew. This letter's comic twists are very different from the overwrought tone of the anguished references to Quintus in the letters from 47BC.⁸³ Perhaps Cicero was already contemplating publishing some epistles and thus reinventing the troubled relationship with his nephew for wider public consumption.⁸⁴

So how does this portrait compare with Marcus in the later years? The number of references to Marcus (above, n.57) is slightly misleading: many are skeletal, as Cicero sends Marcus' love to other family members or reports briefly on his whereabouts. Marcus is an affable, but low-profile presence in the letters, overshadowed by his older sister. That changes only in 45BC, when Marcus' education in Athens becomes prominent in correspondence which really brings Marcus to life and illuminates the relationship between father and son.⁸⁵ In an important sequence (March 45BC), Cicero discusses practical and financial arrangements about Marcus' upcoming journey to Athens (*Att.* 12.24.1; *Att.* 12.27.2; *Att.* 12.32.2). One letter (March 28th, 45BC) conveys Cicero's

⁸² It would be interesting to know when precisely Quintus senior divorced Pomponia. Cicero mentions Quintus senior's difficulties in repaying Pomponia's dowry (*Fam.* 14.13.5; April 26th 44BC)

⁸³ Leigh 2004, 302 discusses the errant *adulescens* as a stock type from the comic stage. Aeschinus in Terence's *Adelphoe* nicely exemplifies the type (with some subtlety: Gratwick 1987, 29-30). 'These *adulescentes* remain foolish to the end, while their fathers generally keep their dignity' (Goldberg 1986, 217).

⁸⁴ Their relationship seems to have improved somewhat after Caesar's assassination, when Quintus aligned himself more closely with Cicero and Brutus (Hall 2009, 40-41).

⁸⁵ Significantly, Tullia's death in February 45BC leaves Marcus the sole focus of Cicero's paternal attention. See Treggiari 2015, 249-50 on Marcus' education and Gibson in this volume on *Fam.* 4.5 (Servius' letter of consolation to Cicero on Tullia's death).

delicate balancing-act between encouraging Marcus' frugality and facilitating his access to money:

'Would you please propose to Marcus, that is if you think it not unreasonable, that he should balance his expenses abroad with my rents from the Argiletum and the Aventine, which would easily have been enough to content him if he had taken a house in Rome, as he had in mind; and having made that proposal, would you please yourself make all of the necessary arrangements as to how we are to supply him with the money he needs from these rents . . . There would certainly be no need for a pack-animal in Athens, while for his use on the journey there are more in my stables than will be needed, as you too observe' (*Att.* 12.32.2)

We have already seen comic notes in Quintus' portrait, but Marcus too has (unintentionally) comic resonances, as the gulf between his anxious father's high expectations and the day-to-day reality of hedonistic student life in Athens emerges. When Marcus arrives in Athens (conveniently distant from his father), he indulges himself fully in the city's delights, not prioritising his education. Despite occasional tough talk, Cicero has multiple blind-spots about his son. He seems excessively grateful just to receive one long, well-written letter (April 15th 44BC):⁸⁶ 'I have had a letter from Marcus, really classically phrased and pretty long. Other things can be assumed, but the style of the letter shows that he has learned something, Now I earnestly request you (we were talking of it the other day) to see that he wants for nothing' (*Att.* 14.7.2). Since

⁸⁶ Cf. *Att.* 15.16.1 (June 11th, 44BC): 'At last a courier from Marcus!'. Cicero also praises this letter as well-written. Cf. Quintilian 1.7.34 on Cicero demanding rigid correctness of speech in his son's letters.

Marcus has only just arrived in Athens, he has hardly started his education and Cicero's enthusiasm about his son's achievements seems premature. Indeed, two months later, Cicero even says that Marcus' letter is so wonderful that it should be read out before an audience (*Att.* 15.17.2, June 14th, 44BC).

Less than a week later (*Att.* 14.11.2; April 21st, 44BC), Cicero again asks Atticus to make further financial provision for his son. The insistence and timing suggest an unhealthy transactional dimension: Marcus writes a letter to his father, who then promptly sends him money. Marcus throws his father crumbs (gratefully received) and then secures financial rewards. Indeed, Cicero repeatedly urges Atticus to keep Marcus in funds.⁸⁷ Despite Cicero's stern assessment that his brother Quintus senior has over-indulged his son Quintus, the letters about Marcus' education in Athens suggest that Cicero is culpable on exactly this charge.⁸⁸ Cicero can still be rather thin-skinned about Marcus' wayward tendencies, as when he expresses surprise about his son's whereabouts (*Att.* 13.24.1, July 11th, 45BC): 'What's this that Clodius Hermogenes tells me about Andomenes telling him that he saw Marcus at Corcyra? I should have thought that you

⁸⁷ We see Marcus' desire for handsome financial support in directly asking his father for *liberalitas* to fund a projected trip to Spain (*Att.* 12.7.1, October 46BC). Cicero's willingness to fund Marcus in Athens features before his departure (*Att.* 12.24.1, March 20th, 45BC; *Att.* 12.27.2, March 23rd, 45BC) and soon after his arrival (*Att.* 14.11.2, April 21st, 44BC; *Att.* 14.17.5, May 3rd, 44BC). Then Marcus complains to Tiro about not receiving any money after the Kalends of April (*Att.* 15.15.4, June 13th, 44BC). Finally, Atticus has spent a whopping 100,000HS on Marcus' expenses (*Att.* 15.17.1, June 14th, 44BC). The theme of Marcus and money features repeatedly (*Att.* 16.1.5, July 8th, 44BC; *Att.* 16.3.2-4, July 25th, 44BC; *Att.* 16.15.5, after November 12th, 44BC): Treggiari 2015, 249.

⁸⁸ Cicero emphasizes that in his view, Marcus should be indulged (*Att.* 15.17.2). Brutus uses Cicero's fondness as *captatio benevolentiae* (*Brut.* 2.3.6, April 1st, 43BC, **with Whitton in this volume**): 'Your son Cicero earns my approval by his energy, endurance, hard work, and unselfish spirit, in fact by every kind of service. Indeed, he seems never to forget whose son he is'.

would have heard of it. Didn't he give a line even to Andromenes? Or did he not see him? Please enlighten me'. Cicero's wounded tone perhaps reflects his expectations from repeatedly making financial provision for his son over this period, so considerable that he had to postpone a trip of his own (*Att.* 15.15.4, June 13th, 44BC).⁸⁹

So how does Marcus react to his father's treatment? One letter to Tiro hints that the attention can sometimes be overwhelming: 'my father always [*semper*] writes to me in detail [*perscribit*] about his good-will towards me' (*Fam.* 16.25.1; autumn 44BC).⁹⁰ The compound verb *perscribo* and the adverb *semper* imply that Cicero's letters are a little too detailed and frequent for Marcus' tastes. Early in another spirited letter to Tiro (*Fam.* 16.21; August (?) 44BC), Marcus describes his intense unhappiness about some unspecified misdemeanour, which may have occurred soon after arriving in Athens.⁹¹ This seems to lie behind Cicero praising Atticus for striking the right tone in an earlier letter to Marcus ('Your letter to Marcus is exactly right, grave and gentle at the same time – just what I would have wished', *Att.* 13.1, May 23rd, 45BC). The incident may indicate a young man letting off steam after escaping his father's supervision. Star-struck Marcus certainly writes affectionately to Tiro about his tutor Cratippus ('I can tell you that Cratippus and I are very close, more like father and son than teacher and pupil. I enjoy hearing him lecture and quite delight in his own pleasant company', *Fam.* 16.21.3). Cratippus' joviality and jokes allow a more relaxed relationship than Marcus has with his own father. Likewise too, we can detect Marcus' regret about losing his declamation tutor

⁸⁹ Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 41.3 and Dio 46.18.3 for Cicero marrying Publilia (46BC) from financial difficulties and wanting her dowry (Plutarch cites Tiro as the source).

⁹⁰ Morello in this volume discusses the non-Ciceronian letters as valuable 'further voices' in the collection. Cf Henderson in this volume: 'Equally, when Cicero writes 'How you doin'?', it means Write Back'.

⁹¹ Hall 2005 discusses Marcus' strategies of politeness in this letter.

Gorgias (a party professor) – Cicero, ever vigilant about his son’s education, had told Marcus to dismiss him immediately.⁹² The high educational standards demanded by Cicero are not endorsed by Marcus slightly peevisly asking Tiro to send a Greek note-taker, because ‘I waste a lot of time copying out my notes’ (*Fam.* 16.21.8).⁹³ Finally, there is the financial angle. Despite Cicero’s generosity, Marcus petulantly describes helping Bruttius as best he can ‘out of my own meagre funds’ (*Fam.* 16.21.4).⁹⁴ Cicero had high expectations about Marcus: his plan to address *de Officiis* to his son maintained the pressure of high achievement (*Att.* 15.13a.2, c. October 28th, 44BC; *Att.* 16.11.4, November 5th, 44BC).

Conclusion

We might have expected the portraits of the coeval cousins Quintus and Marcus in Cicero’s letters broadly to mirror each other and to show some similarities. Instead, the two personalities increasingly diverge, as the two are progressively marked out by contrasts which cumulatively accentuate their different outlooks and priorities. Quintus and Marcus also have much to tell us about Cicero’s epistolary personality and concerns. Although foiling is often seen as a stylised literary device, Cicero still exploits it in his selection of material about the two boys and in his projection of their differing characters, particularly as their idealisation as small children gives way to more flawed portraits once they approach and enter adulthood. Outside the context of Cicero’s letter-collections,

⁹² Cicero dismissed Gorgias for leading Marcus into ‘pleasures and drinking-parties’ (Plut. *Cic.* 24.6).

⁹³ Some reports about Marcus are positive: e.g the proconsul Trebonius visits Athens and sees Marcus devoted to liberal studies and conducting himself in an exemplary way (*Fam.* 12.16, May 25th, 44BC).

⁹⁴ See above n.87. Marcus did not receive his money as a lump sum: Atticus’ agent in Athens, Xeno, disbursed it ‘very sparingly and stingily’ (*Att.* 16.1.5; cf. 16.3.2).

their depiction touches on central questions about how young aristocratic Romans growing up at the end of the republic were expected to behave and how Cicero constructed his own life and elite relationships in epistolary terms.

One attraction of reconstructing their lives is the voyeuristic pleasure of glimpsing behind the public facade of Cicero's family into a murkier reality (or half reality), where tensions and imperfections are visible. Whether through nurture or nature (or a combination of both), Quintus and Marcus developed sharply contrasting personalities, although in different ways and despite some challenges, Cicero is fond of them both: Quintus emerges as trenchant and passionate, an emotional character who often acts first and thinks later, whereas (the longer-lived) Marcus is affable and enjoys life, but is not (it seems) hugely ambitious. Cicero's extensive focus in the letters on the troubled Quintus as opposed to the genial Marcus reflects the greater range of problems presented by the former's upbringing and (sometimes caustic) personality. Perhaps if Cicero had exerted authorial control and shaped his letter-collections, some fascinating material might have ended up on the cutting-room floor, as Quintus' and Marcus' positive traits were accentuated and their flaws covered.⁹⁵ Still, the letters as they stand allow us considerable scope to recreate the fascinating trajectories of two ultimately 'unparallel lives' despite the fragmented epistolary setting. Engaging with these portraits adds considerable complexities to Cicero, both as a human being and as a narrator, and to our perception of his family.

⁹⁵ Some censorship has already been imposed, for example, Quintus' 'many unspeakable and unutterable deeds', excised from a letter of June 45BC (*Att.* 13.9.1). Shackleton Bailey 1966, 362 suggests that the kindly Atticus deleted the passage where Cicero outlined an incident known to the whole army.

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