

XXIX. The Chronological Order of Cicero's Earliest Letters to Atticus

RICHARD S. STEWART

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

The MSS. of Cicero's *Epistulae ad Atticum*,¹ although generally preserving the correspondence in its chronological order, so frequently depart from it in detail that no more than a presumption can be said to exist—and that a presumption frequently overturned—that the letters were written in the order indicated by the MSS.² Of the recognized disarrangements one of the most important and vexatious is the one disturbing the sequence of Cicero's earliest surviving letters, *Att.* 1.1–11, where chronological order has unquestionably been violated, where explicit dates in the text are suspicious or ambiguous, and where the matters discussed are rarely of such importance that they can be dated independently.³ In order to restore chronological order to these

¹ The critical text is H. Sjögren, *M. Tulli Ciceronis ad Atticum epistularum libri sedecim*, fasc. prim., libri 1–4 (Gotoburgi 1916). More recently, and with a new *stemma*, H. Moricca (and A. Moricca-Caputo), *Marci Tulli Ciceronis epistularum ad Atticum libri sedecim*, pars prior, libri 1–8 (Torino 1953), hereinafter cited as **Moricca**. Reference will also be made to R. Y. Tyrrell and L. C. Purser: *The Correspondence of M. Tullius Cicero*¹³ (Dublin 1904), hereinafter **Correspondence** 1³. Citations in Arabic numbers not otherwise qualified will refer in this paper to the text of *Epistularum ad Atticum liber primus*, edited by Moricca, employed with some minor changes in capitalization and spelling, and an occasional reversion to the reading indicated for the archetype.

² On disorders in the correspondence generally see now *Tabula epistularum secundum temporis ordinem digestarum* in Moricca, *Praef.* 3 (pages xxxvii–lvi), with the bibliography cited there; and K. Büchner in *RE* 7A (1939) 1195–96.

³ The chronological disorder of the first eleven letters of Book 1 was noticed by many early commentators. The problems were discussed and a version close to the modern order first suggested by Paulus Manutius in his commentary (*P. Manutii Commentarius in epistolas Ciceronis ad Atticum* [Venetiis 1547] 8–[10^a]) for the eleven-volume Aldine edition (*M. Tulli Ciceronis Opera* [Venetiis 1546–48]). His order was 5, 6/7 (he first suggested the division which subsequent editors have adopted), 8, 9, 10, 11, 4, 1, 2/3. This sequence had been improved to 5–6–7–8–9–10–11–3–4–1–2 by the time when C. G. Schütz first published the entire correspondence in chronological order (*M. Tulli Ciceronis epistolae quae extant omnes ad Atticum, ad Quintum fratrem, et quae vulgo ad familiares dicuntur, ordine chronologico dispositae*, 6 vols. [Halae 1809–12]). Schütz, however, divided *Ep.* 11 into two letters, of which 11b was supposed to precede 11a. This error was rectified by J. de Gruber ("Quaestio de tempore atque serie epistularum

letters and to discover the date when, or the limits within which, each one was written, critics must rely on their ability to arrange the letters in such a way that those topics of business that are continuously discussed are made to follow one another in a logical order of development. But it is the peculiarly vexatious character of the *Epistulae ad Atticum* 1.1–11 that every arrangement suitable for some of the continuous topics seems to disturb the most logical sequence for another topic; so that every hypothesis so far announced has raised new problems of its own contrivance.

The sequence most often adopted by recent editors was fully promulgated in 1889, when W. Sternkopf published his argument on behalf of the order, 5–6–7–8–9–10–11–3–4–1–2.⁴ The only important amendment to this sequence was proposed in 1934 by L.-A. Constans, who suggested that *Ep.* 6 was written prior to *Ep.* 5; therefore the theories of Constans and/or Sternkopf may fairly be said to constitute at present the definitive studies of the problem.⁵ But both studies are vulnerable to the criticism

Ciceronis,” *Progr. Gymnasii Sundensis* [Sundiae 1836] 1); but he in turn set afoot two misconceptions: first, that the order should be 5–6–7–8. . . (“earum series ex negotiorum descriptione facile cognoscitur. . . . Octavam praecedere nonam ex iis, quae de signis et de Attici expectatione in utraque scripta sunt, apparet.”), and, secondly, that all of the letters were addressed to Atticus at Athens (“Has undecim epp. Roma scriptas esse Athenas (excepta sexta, quam ex Tusculano se dedisse ipse profitetur), tum conjicitur admodum certo ex negotiorum, quae Cicero a se peracta dicit et quae Attico mandat, natura; tum diserte legitur in secunda et octava” [page 1]). The sequence 5–6–7–9–8–10–11–3–4–1–2 was taken by Tyrrell into the first edition of the *Correspondence* (1879) and was maintained by him as late as 1901 (in the index volume to his edition, page 137). But the notion that *Ep.* 9 should precede 8 was controverted by W. Sternkopf in 1889, whose view eventually prevailed (see below, note 4), while the second of de Gruber’s misconceptions, that all of these letters were addressed to Athens, was adopted by Sternkopf and even fortified by emendation, to his disadvantage (see below, pages 467–68).

⁴ W. Sternkopf: “Ciceros Briefwechsel mit Attikus in den Jahren 68–65,” *Gymnasium zu Elberfeld, Bericht ü. d. Schuljahr 1888–89* (Elberfeld 1889) 3–9; hereinafter, **Briefwechsel**. Sternkopf’s contributions to the solution of chronological problems in the correspondence are too many and too well-known to require review here: twenty-eight papers are listed by Klussmann, Lambrino, and Marouzeau. Sternkopf’s sequence has been adopted in the editions by L. Mendelssohn (1899), O. E. Schmidt (1901), finally by Tyrrell and Purser (in *Correspondence* 1³ [1904]), by E. O. Winstedt in the Loeb edition (1912), and by H. Sjögren in his editions for Teubner (1914) and Upsala (1916). The relationship of 7, 8, 9, to each other, after Sternkopf’s rebuttal to de Gruber in *Briefwechsel*, may be considered secure, although the order 5–6, which Sternkopf established in the same paper, has recently been questioned, inconclusively (see below, note 5).

⁵ L.-A. Constans, *Cicéron. Correspondance*, tome 1 (Paris 1934). The reading is discussed on pages 58–60. The notice, *pater nobis decessit a.d. viii Kal. Dec.* (6.2), was the origin of his change: why so brief, so unfeeling a statement? “Nur ein

that they satisfy a part of the evidence at the expense of the remaining testimony, and to the further complaint that they are founded on gratuitous emendation of the text, by Sternkopf in one place, by Constans in two.⁶ Neither hypothesis satisfies the object of chronological research, which is a sequence responsive to all the evidence, creating no new problems, relying nowhere on emendation of the text. Such an arrangement does in fact exist: it is the sequence 7-8-9-5-6-10-11-3-4-1-2.

The difference between the new order and Constans' arrangement is the more considerable, but Constans' is not the argument essential to discuss, for two reasons: first, because his elaboration of the accepted arrangement extends only as far as the relationship of 6 to 5, and, secondly, because it depends at two critical points on emendation. No reader of the correspondence will fail to observe that any editor, granted power to emend the text at any two points of his choice, could produce arguments for any sequence whatever. The question to be treated is not Constans' remedy for one problem created by Sternkopf's sequence, but Sternkopf's arrangement itself, and the several problems which it creates. The object is not to see what can be done by emending the text

Mensch ohne Gefühl so hätte schreiben können," Drumann had written in 1841 (*GR*¹ 5.213, note 54). And what of Asconius, *atque in PETITIONE patrem amisit* (page 73 KS)? Madvig proposed reading *discessit* in the letter (*De Q. Asconii Pediani et alior. vet. interpret. in Cic. cratt. commentarii* [Hauniae 1828] 71), which Drumann (loc. cit.) and Orelli (not in the ed. alt. of 1845, but cf. J. G. Baiter's edition of the *Epistolae*, Vol. 2, [1867] Praef. x, adn. crit. ad 6.2) improved to *pater a nobis discessit*, whence it was taken to the editions of Baiter and Wesenberg (1873). Boot (1886) reverted to Madvig's reading. The whole enterprise was overthrown by Tyrrell (*Correspondence* 1³.132, note), who put forward instead the suggestion that there had been a letter from Cicero to Atticus, now lost, recording (and duly lamenting) the death of *Cicero pater*; that Atticus had written asking the exact date of death; and that *Ep.* 6 was written in reply. Tyrrell, too, supposed that the text of Asconius was corrupt. Working from another point of view Sternkopf, who had already suggested that the text of the letter was not sound, thus vindicating Asconius (*WKP* 16 [1899] 880), now proposed emending *pater* to *frater* (*WKP* 36 [1919] 114-20). The notice would have referred to L. Cicero, whose death was lamented in 5.1; Atticus is presumed to have answered, What date? and Cicero to have replied casually. Finally Constans, not thinking that there was a letter from Atticus to which *Ep.* 6 made reply, urged that the emendation be retained, but that *Ep.* 6 be considered a preliminary notice and dated before *Ep.* 5. Moricca approved; Ciaceri (*Cicerone e i suoi tempi* 1¹ [Roma 1926] 180.4) at first held to Madvig but later sided with Tyrrell (1² [Roma 1939] 183.4). Constans' proposal is thus merely the latest in a long series of desperate remedies. There is a simpler remedy, conforming to the textual evidence (see below, note 14).

⁶ Specifically, for the sequence 7-8-9-10, on the arguments Sternkopf raised around the emendation *audieramus* (see below, page 468); and for the sequence 6-5, on the additional emendation of *pater* to *frater* (see above, note 5).

at one or two places, but to test whether sequential dating can be established, agreeable to each of the continuous topics and without resorting to emendation at all.

The problem can be simplified to a decision whether the group 5-6 should precede 7-8-9-10 or should be interpolated between 9 and 10, in order to restore the original sequence.⁷ Six letters only are involved, and the evidence which can be adduced does not by any means include the full texts of all six. The greater number of topics mentioned in these letters either are not resumed or are amenable to easy interpretation in whichever order they are read—that is, they are not explicitly sequential.⁸ Only two topics are both explicitly sequential and continuous in the groups 5-6 and 7-8-9: Cicero's requests that statuary purchased to ornament his *Tusculanum* be shipped to him, and the series of passages to be called the Lucceius notices. The former series, the requests for shipment, seem to be most intelligible when arranged in the order 7-8-9-10, without interruption; the latter, the Lucceius notices, are not intelligible unless the letters are arranged 7-8-9-5-6-10. The former is the more extensive series, and the one on which Sternkopf built his argument; the latter is the more explicit, and the one on which the argument ought to be founded.

Sternkopf arranged the sequence 7-8-9-10 for the requests for shipment noting that *Ep.* 7 promised payment for the goods ("L. Cincio HS XXCD constitui me curaturum Id. Februariis. Tu velim ea, quae nobis emisse et parasse scribis, des operam ut quam primum habeamus."); *Ep.* 8 certified that payment had been made ("L. Cincio HS CCIDDD CCIDDD CCCC pro signis Megaricis . . . curavi. Hermae . . . iam nunc me admodum delectant. Quare velim et eos et signa et cetera, quae tibi eius loci et nostri studii et tuae elegantiae esse videbuntur, quam plurima quam primumque mittas . . . Si Lentuli navis non erit, quo tibi placebit, imponito."); *Ep.* 9 reflected Cicero's eagerness to receive his purchases ("Signa Megarica et Hermas, de quibus ad me scripsisti, vehementer exspecto . . . Lentulus navis suas pollicetur.

⁷ Sternkopf's review of the reasons for dating 10-11-3-4-1-2 in that order (*Briefwechsel* 5-9) are convincing and need not be considered further. The testimony is explicit except for *Ep.* 3, and compelling even in that case.

⁸ For example, the notices referring to *Tadiana res* (5.6; 8.1) and *Acutilianum negotium* (5.4; 8.1; 4.1) may be read either in the order 5-8 or the order 8-5. Contrast the explicitly sequential Cincius notices.

Peto abs te, ut haec cures diligenter.”); *Ep.* 10 recorded the same anxiety (“Signa nostra et Hermeraclas, ut scribis, cum commodissime poteris, velim imponas.”). The request for shipment was reiterated, moreover, in *Ep.* 11; the shipment was reported to have arrived in Italy by *Ep.* 3; Cicero declared his intention to inspect it in *Ep.* 4. From Cicero's impatience to receive this statuary it is reasonable to suppose that his requests for its shipment were continuous, and therefore that the letters containing the requests were consecutive; Sternkopf supposed so, and considered these notices definitive for establishing the chronology of this series. *Ep.* 5 and 6, although displaying reminders to buy (5.7; 6.2), lack exhortations to ship; Sternkopf therefore assigned them to the beginning of the series, adducing as an additional reason the fact that *Ep.* 5 may refer to one of Atticus' early visits to Rome.⁹ By exploiting references to month and season found in the letters, a schedule of dates of composition, replies, and visits was reconstructed which can be summarized in this way for whole series:¹⁰

| 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| O N D | J F M A M J Q S S O N D | J F M A M J Q S S O N D | J F M A M J Q S S |
| Atticus at Rome | Atticus at Athens | Atticus at Rome | |
| *5*6*7*8 9 *10*11 3 * 4 | | | 1 2 |

⁹ Sternkopf's alternate argument was less substantial and can be dealt with summarily. He argued that *Ep.* 5.4 referred to Atticus' recent departure from Rome (“De Acutiliano autem negotio quod mihi mandaras, ut primum a tuo digressu Romam veni, confeceram”). Atticus was present for Cicero's *petitio consulatus*; hence no letters. He was not present for the praetoria (“De comitiis meis et tibi me permisisse memini, et ego iam pridem hoc communibus amicis, qui te exspectant, praedico, te non modo non arcessi a me sed prohiberi, quod intellegam multo magis interesse tua te agere, quod agendum esset hoc tempore, quam mea te adesce comitiis” [10.6]). He would have been present for the aedilicia in 70 (cf. Nepos, *Att.* 4.3: “Nihilo minus amicis urbana officia praestitit; (4) nam et ad comitia eorum ventitavit, et si qua res maior acta est, non defuit”). Therefore, the letter was written after his departure on that visit. The argument is inconclusive: we do not know how often Atticus visited Rome, so this letter may refer to a departure after any visit. Another letter, *Ep.* 7, may refer to a recent visit (because of his mother's health) if we choose to read it that way; so may *Ep.* 1, although there is no explicit statement (cf. Nepos, *Att.* 4.5). So long as the detailed schedule of Atticus' visits is inferred from the correspondence, it cannot be applied in reverse to dating the letters.

¹⁰ The numerals in the first line are years B.C., the letters in the second line stand for months of the Roman calendar, the statements in the third line indicate Atticus' (inferred) whereabouts, the numerals in the fourth line refer to Cicero's letters by number in the vulgate, and the asterisks to Atticus' (inferred) replies.

This schedule, while entirely probable when the requests for shipment are considered out of context, not only does not illuminate the other topics of the correspondence, but in fact raises several questions very difficult to answer, even if the answers are spun of purest hypothesis. Granted that there is no obvious alternative to Sternkopf's arrangement of the statutory notices, we must now measure our satisfaction on that score against the difficulties which have been created.

Observe how Sternkopf's scheduling supposes that Cicero's letters were unusually frequent during the last months of 68 and the earliest months of 67. Equally frequent are Atticus' replies. There are altogether nine letters at least within a period of five (or possibly four) months; at no other time was the pre-consular correspondence so assiduous. Therefore there is no more inappropriate place for Cicero's complaint, *Nimum raro nobis abs te litterae adferuntur*, to appear, than in the place where Sternkopf's arrangement makes it appear: in the first line of the last letter in this unusually busy series (9.1). Should 7-8-9, ending with this inappropriate sentiment, be crowded between 5-6 and 10, or were they written over a greater interval in less active months?

By avoiding a lapse in the series of delivery requests, Sternkopf's arrangement invented a lapse in another topic at least equally important. *Epp.* 5, 6, and 10 report to Atticus in detail about the progress of the turbulent marriage of Q. Cicero and Pomponia. In the last of these letters Cicero stated gingerly that an uneasy truce had been affected.¹¹ But Sternkopf arranged these letters in such a way that the series 7-8-9 intrudes between 6 and 10. In *Epp.* 7-8-9, no mention of the troubles of Quintus and Pomponia. In *Ep.* 8, moreover, it appears that Pomponia was living with her mother and Quintus with his brother, not because they were quarreling, but because they were not at that time married.¹²

¹¹ "Quod ad me scribis de sorore tua, testis erit tibi ipsa, quanta mihi curae fuerit, ut Quinti fratris animus in eam esset is, qui esse deberet. Quem cum esse offensorem arbitrarer, eas litteras ad eum misi, quibus et placarem ut fratrem et monerem ut minorem et obiurgarem ut errantem. Itaque ex iis, quae postea saepe ab eo ad me scripta sunt, confido ita esse omnia, ut et oporteat et velimus" (5.2); "Quintus frater, ut mihi videtur, quo volumus animo est in Pomponiam et cum ea nunc in Arpinatibus praediis erat" (6.2); "De fratre confido ita esse, ut semper volui et elaboravi. Multa signa sunt eius rei, non minimum, quod soror praegnans est" (10.5).

¹² "Apud te est, ut volumus. Mater tua et soror a me Quintoque fratre diligitur" (8.1). Tyrrell passed over the implication lightly: "Cic. refers to the household of

Did they really marry twice? Or should 7-8-9 not intrude between *Epp.* 6 and 10?

The final difficulty to be raised here is simply this: the most explicit series of notices, of any in the correspondence, have been rendered nonsensical by Sternkopf's arrangement. During these early years Atticus had some difficulties—the nature and origin are immaterial—with a man not named until *Ep.* 11, but at that time identified as L. Lucceius. There is no room for doubt that he is the person indicated by the earlier notices, however, and they may be referred to collectively as the Lucceius notices.¹³ Unlike most of the continuous topics in Cicero's correspondence, these references must be arranged in one, and only one, of the possible sequences.

The earliest of these notices must be the one in which Cicero informed Atticus, casually, that a difficulty might be brewing (8.1):

Ille noster amicus, vir mehercule optimus et mihi amicissimus, sane tibi iratus est. Hoc si quanti tu aestimes sciam, tum, quid mihi elaborandum sit, scire possim.

The matter was not mentioned in Cicero's next letter (9.1): "brevior haec ipsa epistula est, quod, cum incertus essem, ubi esses, nolebam illum nostrum familiarem sermonem in alienas manus devenire." But when correspondence was resumed, Lucceius' attitude toward Atticus found its place in a long letter, full of business; Atticus, it appears, had not been particularly disturbed by Cicero's first warning and had mentioned the problem deprecatingly, to which Cicero replied (5.5):

Quod scribis etiam, si cuius animus in te esset offensior, a me recolligi oportere, <teneo>, quid dicas, neque id neglexi, sed est miro quodam modo adfectus. Ego autem, quae dicenda fuerunt de te, non praeterii; quid autem contendendum esset, ex tua putabam voluntate statuere oportere. Quam si ad me perscripseris, intelleges me neque diligentiorum esse voluisse, quam tu esses, neque negligentiorum fore, quam tu velis.

Quintus, where Pomponia was the ruling spirit" (*Correspondence* 1³.134, note *ad loc.*). No such thing. Cicero had already stated his meaning more plainly: "*Apud matrem recte est*" (7.1). For the sequence and intimate temporal conjunction of these two letters, note again 7.1, 8.2: the arrangement with Cincius.

¹³ The identification is made by Tyrrell (*Correspondence* I³.129, note *ad loc.*) and Münzer (*RE* 13 [1927] s.v. "Lucceius" 6).

It is to be noticed how much more urgently Cicero now presents the difficulty than he did in the previous letter, how much more explicitly he asks for instructions. This letter, and not its predecessor, is much more likely to have evoked the response which one or the other did in fact obtain; for we read in *Ep.* 10.2:

Primum tibi de nostro amico placando aut etiam plane restituendo polliceor. Quod ego etsi mea sponte ante faciebam, eo nunc tamen et agam studiosius et contendam ab illo vehementius, quod tantam ex epistula voluntatem eius rei tuam perspicere videor.

Atticus' sudden anxiety, which every phrase of this notice reflects and endeavors to allay, is further confirmed by the opening words of the very next letter (11.1):

Et mea sponte faciebam antea et post duabus epistulis tuis per-diligenter in eandem rationem scriptis magnopere sum commotus.

The tendency of evidence is that Atticus' response was evoked by the emphatic statement in *Ep.* 5, not by the simple hint in *Ep.* 8; while his reply, "si cuius animus in te esset offensior, a me recolligi oportere," was made to the hint in *Ep.* 8. Perverse indeed would be the reasoning that Cicero's *Ep.* 5, which is emphatic, came first and made no impression, while *Ep.* 8, which is not emphatic at all, aroused the alarm and urgency reflected in *Ep.* 10-11.

In the chronology of the earliest letters, therefore, *Ep.* 8 must precede *Ep.* 5, and *Ep.* 5 precede *Ep.* 10. The matter was not discussed in *Ep.* 9 (which falls between 8 and 5) because that letter was uncertainly addressed (9.1); it was not mentioned in *Ep.* 6 (between 5 and 10) because that was written before Atticus had replied in full to *Ep.* 5: "Quid agas omnibus de rebus et quid acturus sis, fac nos quam diligentissime certiores" (6.2).

Therefore the sequence of these letters is 8-9-5-6-10; the sequence of the full series, due to unquestioned relationships between these letters and those omitted from consideration here, must run 7-8-9-5-6-10-11-3-4-1-2.

Not only does this arrangement place the Luceius notices in proper order; it solves the problems raised by the accepted version, namely, the problem of Cicero's statement in *Ep.* 9, "Nimium raro nobis abs te litterae adferuntur," and the difficulty raised by his statement in *Ep.* 8, "Apud te est, ut volumus. Mater tua

et soror a me Quintoque fratre diligitur.”¹⁴ The new order simply relocates one group of letters, 7–8–9, which belong, not to the earliest months of 67 B.C., but to the beginning of the previous year, 68. The contrast may be presented schematically:

| 68 | | | | | | | | | | | | 67 | | | | | | | | | | | | 66 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| J | F | M | A | M | J | Q | S | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | Q | S | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | Q | S | S | | | | | |
| Atticus at Athens | | | | Atticus at Rome | | | | Atticus at Epirus | | | | Atticus at Athens | | | | Atticus at Rome | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *7*8 | | 9 | | | | | | *5*6 | | | | *10 *11 | | | | 3 * 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | *5*6 | | | | *7*8 | | 9 | | *10 *11 | | | | 3 * 4 | | | | (Sternkopf) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Sternkopf's argument from the shipment notices is still to be confronted outright. It is the only difficulty remaining for the revised arrangement to meet.

Sternkopf supposed that 5–6, as well as 7–8–9–10, were sent to Atticus at Athens.¹⁵ In the latter group, letters which were sent to Athens, Cicero made urgent pleas for the shipment of statuary purchased by Atticus; Sternkopf therefore regarded these letters as consecutive. Since there is no mention of shipments in 5–6, we may suppose that Sternkopf would raise that objection against redating 5–6 to the months between *Epp.* 9 and 10.

This argument would apply if *Epp.* 5–6 had in fact been

¹⁴ If the dating established by this paper be allowed, another controversy may at long last be abated. The obituaries in the early correspondence were sent in this order: L. Cicero, at length and with conventional sympathy, in an elaborate and chatty letter (5.1); Cicero *pater*, with disturbing brevity in a brusque and petulant letter (6.2); *avia Attici*, within a year and with incomprehensible levity, concluding with the sarcasm, “Eius re consolationem ad te L. Saufeium missurum esse Arbitror” (3.1). Cicero had received a letter from Atticus between *Epp.* 5 and 6, because he does not repeat his uncertainty over Atticus’ whereabouts (cf. 5.3); a short letter, because not even the Lucceius difficulty was discussed (5.5; cf. 10.2). Let us simply suppose that the contents of this short note were what we should expect from Atticus: an Epicurean remonstrance, however gentle, at conventional expressions of grief for the dead. In the interval between the two letters, however, Cicero’s father had died, and in the same interval Atticus’ remonstrance was received. Unnecessary to insist that Cicero was grieved by his father’s death and irritated by the letter; he replied, “Pater nobis decessit a.d. viii Kal. Dec. Haec habebam fere, quae te scire vellem.” His resentment was durable: hence the irony of 3.1, the apologetic remembrance of Sositheus in 12.4, the resentful aside, “Dolemus, non ut Saufeius et (sc. Epicurei) vestri,” as late as 56 (4.6.1).

¹⁵ *Briefwechsel* 5.

addressed to Atticus at Athens, whence the shipments were to be made. In that case Cicero's silence would be extremely difficult to explain. But *Ep.* 5 was sent to Atticus in Epirus, as we are informed by the words (5.3):

Numquam enim a Pomponia nostra certior sum factus esse, cui dare litteras possem, porro autem neque mihi accidit, ut haberem, qui in Epirum proficisceretur, nequedum te Athenis esse audiebamus.

Cicero's careful use of epistolary tenses throughout the passage shows that *nequedum te Athenis esse audiebamus* must be interpreted: "and we have not yet heard that you are at Athens." Sternkopf met this obstacle to his assumption by emending *audiebamus*, the reading of all MSS., to *audieramus*: "and we have just heard that you are at Athens." Editors have not generally accepted the emendation, but they have failed to see the implication of the MSS. reading: this letter was sent to Epirus, where Atticus had *otium ad scribendum* (5.4); also sent to Epirus was *Ep.* 6, echoing the same expression (*in tanto otio*) and sent soon afterward, when only a cursory reply had been received, containing no other news of Atticus' movements and plans (6.2):¹⁶ "Quid agas omnibus de rebus et quid acturus sis fac nos quam diligentissime certiores." Cicero heard of Atticus' removal to Athens only in a later letter, a reply to *Epp.* 5–6, as we can see from his opening lines in *Ep.* 10.1: "Cum essem in Tusculano—erit hoc tibi pro illo tuo *cum essem in Ceramico* . . ." And with *Ep.* 10 the requests for shipment recommence (10.3). There had been no reason for Cicero to urge shipment of his purchases in *Epp.* 5 and 6: they could only

¹⁶ The contents of the letter which Cicero received in reply to his own *Ep.* 5 have already been deduced from the temper of the obituaries (see above, note 14). They can also be inferred independently, with very considerable probability, from a comparison of the topics taken up in *Ep.* 5 and again in 6. Cicero had received a short note, not responsive to much of his news; he repeated his report on the marriage of Quintus and Pomponia (5.2; 6.2), his resolution to uphold his end of the correspondence (5.3; 6.1), his demand that Atticus do the same (5.4; 6.1), and reiterated his satisfaction with his *Tusculanum* and his desire for works of art to ornament it (5.7; 6.2). These matters were not acknowledged, therefore, in Atticus' letter, nor were any matters of business mentioned, for despite Cicero's urgent request for instructions in the Lucceius affair (5.5) he did not receive them until some time later (10.2). But in the second of these two letters Cicero has not only put aside all the endearments of the first; he has been persuaded that one topic is not to be raised again: his grief over the death of L. Cicero and over the death of his own father. Atticus' letter, therefore, had been only a reply to the first obituary and had provoked the tone of the second.

be shipped from Athens, and Cicero knew that Atticus was not at Athens when these letters were sent. When Atticus was at Epirus it was no use to ask. From the time when this shipment was first promised (*Ep.* 7) until the time when it was received (3.2) Cicero indeed urged Atticus to make haste, whenever his agent was at Athens, but not when Atticus could do nothing about it at all. It is therefore not at all troublesome or objectionable to read 5-6 between *Epp.* 9 and 10, where by every other indication they ought to be read.¹⁷

In summary, the sequence 7-8-9-5-6-10-11-3-4-1-2 should be adopted in order to conform to the tendency of the evidence; Sternkopf's arrangement should be abandoned, and the emendation that he supplied to fortify it henceforward should be excluded from texts.

The corollary findings are not without interest, perhaps not lacking in significance. We are more precisely informed about Atticus' visits to Rome during these years. According to the new sequence, there was a stay ending in 69, followed by a separation in which *Epp.* 7-8-9 were written; another visit in the summer of 68, terminated by departure for Epirus (where *Epp.* 5-6 were sent) and then for Athens (*Epp.* 10-11-3-4); a visit from the spring of 66 until the fall of 65, a trip to Athens during which *Epp.* 1-2 were sent, and then the long stay at Rome from January (?) 64 until December 62. New limits are imposed for the date of Quintus Cicero's marriage: it must fall between *Epp.* 9 and 5, that is, during the summer of 68, probably during Atticus' visit (see above, p. 462). The troublesome features of Cicero's obituary notices are considerably mitigated by restoring the context in which they were written: we need not regard the

¹⁷ When the letters were edited for publication, they were arranged in such a way that they seemed to begin with Cicero's canvass for the consulship; Nepos, *Att.* 16.3, must be held to confirm this in his clumsy way. *Ep.* 6, containing the obituary of Cicero's father, appeared to follow the commencement of Cicero's *petitio consulatus*, to precede the *annus mirabilis*; hence Asconius, who had neither Manutius nor Sternkopf and Schmidt to guide him: *atque in petitione patrem amisit* (page 73 KS). The text of Asconius is correct; his inference was mistaken. Had he obtained the information from any other source imaginable he would not have erred, at least not in this particular way; and lest this seem an unparalleled blunder for a learned person to make, I remark that Professor William Ramsay, of the University of Glasgow, in the article he wrote on M. Tullius Cicero *pater* for Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* 1 (London 1844) 708, made exactly the same error, and cited the same source. It would be perverse any longer to maintain the view that Nepos and Asconius had not seen the *Epistulae ad Atticum* in their edited form.

avia tua notice either as a code or as a flippancy, the reading *pater nobis decessit* is sound, and by no means unfeeling, while Asconius' statement, *atque in petitione patrem amisit* (page 73 KS) is also a correct reading, but not an accurate statement of fact (see above, notes 5, 14). Far from challenging Cicero's text, Asconius' statement supports it; and because the error is, in origin, an incorrect inference from the order in which the letters stand in our MSS., Asconius must have seen the correspondence (see above, note 17). Finally, Nepos had seen such a collection of letters as we possess, and seen it in the lifetime of Atticus (see above, note 17); the chronological disturbance of the earliest letters is not an accident of transmission but (on the assumption that the letters were preserved, or could well have been arranged, in chronological order by Atticus) an editorial choice—as M. L. Mongault had seen in 1714—in which 7–8–9 were passed over, and 5–6 brought forward to stand in front of them, 10–11 passed over, and 3–4 brought to the head of the collection, then last of all 1–2 chosen as an introduction to the whole correspondence. Motives have been suggested, but their consideration belongs elsewhere; moreover, neither the precise date of issue nor the political reasons behind it, if any, are settled—*pace* Carcopino. But a new order for Cicero's earliest correspondence with Atticus supplies new and serious evidence that the collection we have was prepared by Atticus, whether or not we suppose that he himself gave it out for publication.¹⁸

¹⁸ The writer is glad to acknowledge the helpful comments of Lily Ross Taylor, made when an oral version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in New York, in 1960; and to express his thanks for thoughtful communications from S. Dow and M. Hammond (Harvard), A. L. Boegehold (Brown), M. Chambers (UCLA), W. M. Calder, III, and J. A. Coulter (Columbia), and R. Syme (Brasenose, Oxford), all of whom read the typescript. Their views sometimes differed from mine, however, and from each other's; and they bear no responsibility for defects that may remain.