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An gravius aliquid scribam: Roman seniores write to iuvenes

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I USED TO WONDER WHEN READING HORACE SERMO 2.1 the fictive dialogue with the real-life jurisconsult, C. Trebatius Testa, why this expert advises the poet to oil up and swim the Tiber whenever the satirical impulse keeps him from sleep.¹ Although the exercise is certainly appropriate to young jocks of Augustan Rome, it seems like a frivolous antidote to the literary obsessions of a man almost 40. Unexpectedly the answer popped out at me from a letter that Cicero had written to a much younger Testa in December 54 while Trebatius was serving as a member of Caesar's camp in Gaul. Not Horace's athletic proclivities are in question, but those of Testa. More cautious in military than in judicial affairs, as Cicero styles him, Testa is a *studiosissimus homo natandi*, who has nonetheless balked at a swim in the ocean.² Undoubtedly, Cicero is referring to Caesar's first British expedition from which Testa had somehow managed to excuse himself. Either from him, or more likely from his brother Quintus, who was a member of the invading company,³ Cicero had heard of the soldiers' difficult landing. As Caesar reports, the soldiers of the tenth legion,

¹ Hor. S. 2.1. 7–9: "Hor: '... verum nequeo dormire.' Trebatius: 'Ter uncti transnanto Tiberim somno quibus est opus alto'..." ("Horace: 'But really, I just can't sleep.' Trebatius: 'Let those with a need for deep slumber oil up and swim across the Tiber three times...'"

² Cic. *Fam.* 7.10.2, Dec 54: "Sed tu in re militari multo es cautor quam in advocacionibus, qui neque in Oceano natare volueris studiosissimus homo natandi..." ("But you are much more cautious in military activity than in judicial affairs, as a man greatly devoted to swimming who didn't even want a swim in the Ocean.")

³ Quintus was, in fact, writing to him from Britain, and in the same month as this letter, June 54, Cicero was asking his brother to supply information that would enable him "to paint Britain in your colors" on behalf of his projected epic celebrating Caesar's conquests (*Q.fr.* 2.14).

unable to beach their ships, had obeyed the exhortation of their eagle bearer to jump overboard and charge ashore (Caes. *Gal.* 4.24–25). My notion that the passion for swimming derives from Cicero's letter to Trebatius is backed up by Horace's use within the satire of other terms and images found in this correspondence, as when Trebatius gives Horace a political warning, exaggerating his youth, "Puer," he says, "I fear for your life that someone of your mighty friends may zap you with a freeze."⁴ A "freeze" is a standard Roman metaphor for an unreceptive political climate, and one that Cicero generally seems to consider witty, but in the Trebatius letters, where he employs it three times with reference to Trebatius's interaction with Caesar, he takes particular delight in its extra dimension of applicability to the young Roman's discomfiture amid inhospitable Gaulish weather (7.10.2; 7.11.3; 7.18.2).

Recreational as Cicero's witticisms may seem, his teasing is interlaced with exhortations and reproof, since the young lawyer was not a happy camper in the Gallic tents. Consequently, Cicero's side of the correspondence reflects complaints he was receiving of neglect, boredom, and Trebatius's craving to be back in Rome, to which he responded with repeated admonitions to respect the multiple responsibilities and concerns of his most considerate commander and bide his time.⁵ A similar item figures in Horace's satiric dialogue. When his fictionalized Trebatius advises him to stroke Caesar's ego by imitating Lucilius's praise of Scipio, the poet responds how difficult it is to find the right time for securing favorable attention.⁶ Thus, what Horace has effected in his satire—a joke that Trebatius must greatly have enjoyed—is a reversal of roles. Where the young Trebatius had once been subjected to Cicero's advice on how to make it with Julius Caesar, Horace has let the mature lawyer, who by this date has made it with not one but two Caesars, advise him on the politics of adaptation to the current Caesar-oriented regime. Conceivably, Trebatius valued his packet of Cicero's letters not only for the prestige of their writer, but also their canny characterization of himself, so I think it most likely that

⁴ Hor. S. 2.1.60–62: "O puer, ut sis vitalis metuo, et maiorum ne quis amicus frigore te feriat."

⁵ Most similar to Horace's lines are the reminders in *Fam.* 7.17 to have patience with Caesar when he is busy. White 74–75 observes Caesar's strategic development of a "semiotics of brevity" in correspondence that is probably reflected in Cicero's allusion in 7.10 to a letter mentioning Trebatius.

⁶ Hor. S. 2.1.18–20: [...] nisi dextro tempore, Flacci verba per attentam non ibunt Caesaris aurem cui male si palpare recalcitret undique tutus." ("Unless the moment is propitious, the words of Flaccus won't enter a listening Caesarian ear, who, if you stroke ineptly, will kick back protectively on all sides.")

he shared them with Horace and also that it might have been he who delivered them over for inclusion in the collected *ad Familiares* as we have it.⁷

Indeed it was the element of personal representation that brought me to Cicero's letters from a career that began with Roman poetry. The turn was one that my younger self would never have envisioned, given that the most difficult course that ever I took at my beloved undergraduate institution was T.R.S. Broughton's class in Cicero's letters, an initiation, that is to say, into methods of Roman historiography very taxing for a delicate literary sensibility to wrap itself around. Even when, at a much later time, I reopened the letters, I was seeking nothing more profound than a taste in landscape or some evidence for domestic architecture, but what I came to recognize was a state of persona creation intriguingly analogous to the poses of writers better known for literary self-portraiture so that even the balancing act between cultural positioning and the parameters of literary genre could be compared.

Looking at Cicero's letters from a literary perspective, I find two particular kinds of affinity between the epistolary construction of self and the speaking voices in the first person poetic genres of elegy and lyric. First, and quite obviously, both poems and letters adopt strategies of direct personal address that write the profile of the recipient into their presentation not only acknowledging his/her separate identity but also opening the field for dialogue implicit or explicit, sympathetic or adversarial, as a way of looking at the self. Second, I find that Cicero's personal letters are parallel to the so-called personal genres of Roman poetry as a mode of expression that, unlike the high genres of hexameter poetry, enjoyed a certain lack of formal precedent so as to give speakers the freedom to make their own rules.

One does not need post-structuralist theory to rationalize a perception of self-conscious image creation in ancient letter writing, for the license to self-representation is actually embedded within the theory of epistolary rhetoric itself. The place approximately contemporaneous with Cicero in which to look for its principles is Demetrius's *de Elocutione*.⁸ Although there

⁷ This might explain why the collection includes Cicero's initial letter of recommendation to Caesar, but none of the several that Cicero mentions having written thereafter, since it would seem not unlikely that either Caesar or Cicero had given a copy of the first letter to Trebatius, but considered the others more confidential. As White's reconstructed time-table shows (93), the correspondence during the Gallic campaign was fairly extensive with at least 13 letters from Caesar and 8 from Cicero; however, we can't assume that Trebatius was a dominant topic within the exchange.

⁸ Malherbe 1988. My quotations from Demetrius are adapted from those in Malherbe's volume, which he, in turn, has taken from W. Rhys Roberts *LCL*, new ed. Cambridge 1932, except that I have reworded the relevant translations and especially have retained the Greek *êthos* in place of the translator's "character."

is no evidence for Cicero's actual knowledge of this treatise, the points about rhetorical self-representation it contains are nevertheless analogous with the Roman adaptation of *êthos* as we know it from Cicero's own writing.⁹ Beyond this, Demetrius's specifications lend themselves advantageously to our own contemporary perspectives. Using epistolography as an example of the "plain style" and taking Aristotle as model, Demetrius insists upon the immediacy of the personal voice, allowing, however, for an additional degree of formality inasmuch as letters are written and not spoken *ex tempore*. Citing Aristotle's editor Artemon, he stresses the dialogue aspect of a letter, or as we might phrase it, the attempt to bridge absence by the illusion of presence.¹⁰ Comparison with dialogue is the context within which Demetrius situates his counsel to deliberate self-revelation. "A letter should contain much that shows character, just as dialogue does. Persons write their own souls into letters. In every form of composition it is possible to discern the *êthos* of the writer but none so clearly as the epistolary" (frg. 227).

But for a reader wanting a comprehensive grasp of Cicero's letters, he may indeed seem to have as many *êthê* as he has correspondents. For dealing with the sheer quantity of the letters, scholarship offers a variety of approaches, of which the most practical, as represented by Tyrell and Purser's massive enterprise,¹¹ and likewise by Shackleton Bailey's commentaries on the *ad Familiares*, is to undo book structure in favor of chronological rearrangement. Chronology was the principle on which Bob Broughton programmed our historically challenging class with W. H. How's *Select Letters with historical commentary and appendix* as its base text. Leaving aside prosopographical coordination with the *CIL*, however, nothing so intriguingly reveals the variety of Cicero's epistolary *êthê* as a view of his simultaneously diverse presentations of one and the same events. Synchronicity is now the prevailing approach, but, in a fairly recent study, Mary Beard has argued for a different kind of insight to be gained by paying attention to the interconnections of theme, personality and

⁹ E.g. *de Oratore* 2.185–198. May 9–12 discusses Cicero's adaptation of the Aristotelian concept to the context of Roman *mos Maiorum* with particular emphasis on the orator's own character presentation. More recently Gunderson 2000: 187–222 examines the issue within the context of performance.

¹⁰ Among recent writers on versions of Roman epistolography, several have made this point: Gunderson 1997: 210–212; Leach 1999; Lindheim 18–25; but White 80–86 highlights also the dysfunctional effects of distance on interpretation of motives and opinions on either side.

¹¹ See Beard 2000: 106–117 for a combined appreciation and critique of the approach and its ramifications, asking finally the question "whether we have not lost as much as we have gained?" In all fairness, however, to Shackleton-Bailey, he himself (1977: 23) notes that "all the books show varying degrees of internal coherence."

historical context within individual books. Selecting the not so familiar Book 16, comprising a grouping of intra-familial letters centered mainly about the welfare and social situation of Cicero's secretary Tiro, which she characterizes as "one of the most important texts on slavery to have survived from the ancient world," she shows how expressions of ostensibly patronal affection ingurgitate language of servitude, even when used in jest. Her paper also engages the art of the letters in a manner that fronts upon another approach currently gaining critical respectability of analyzing the compositional and thematic integrity of the letters as deliberate literary productions, many of which, *pace* Shackleton Bailey,¹² were crafted for the inspection of eyes over and beyond those of their immediate recipients.¹³

But Cicero himself in a notable passage of a letter to younger Curio, often taken as an epistolary *ars poetica*, creates a kind of genre synkrisis between two kinds of letters that it pleases him to write:¹⁴ "The one familiar and witty" (*unum familiare et iocosum*); "the other serious and weighty" (*alterum severum et grave*). The division allows for personal expression and artful composition, but Hutchinson, observing that this polarity is too restrictive to encompass the variety of Cicero's letters, sets up a more diverse schedule, characterizing some according to genre types like recommendations or consolations, but others according to more thematic or modal definitions, such as letters from exile, narratives, temporal representations, and Cicero's own category of humor.¹⁵ At the same time he suggests that categories are less a determinant than Cicero's relationship to the recipient (8 ff.), to which he adds that virtually all the letters include an element of persuasion, with greater or lesser visibility, which, being perceived, confers meaning on details that might otherwise appear simply random (23).¹⁶

¹² Shackleton Bailey 1971: xii; but among others, Hall 391 and n. 52; Hutchinson 4 *et passim*.

¹³ As one interpretive pioneer, Rudd 18–26, does this with a focus similar to that which he elsewhere brings to analysis of the speaking voices of satire, but his somewhat uncharitable view of Cicero's self-presentation is modified by Hall in an analysis that positions the request within a context of contemporaneous social expectation.

¹⁴ Cic. *Fam* 2.4.1: "Reliqua sunt epistularum genera duo, quae me magno opere delectant, unum familiare et iocosum, alterum severum et grave. Utrum me minus deceat uti, non intelligo." In fact the pronouncement should seem less of a deliberate *ars epistolarum* than a political commentary, since he continues by declaring jocularity unsuited to the times, while his sentiments on the weightier topic of the *res publica* are too perilous to be committed to writing.

¹⁵ Hutchinson 8. Additionally p. 5, he cites a stylistic distinction in a Paetus letter between the familiarity of epistolary diction and the formality of speeches.

¹⁶ By contrast, Demetrius's recommendation that letters can be "beautified" by bits of advice or proverbs, but nothing too serious, is less purposeful (fr. 232).

By noting Cicero's relationship to the recipient, Hutchinson provides for the awareness that his own categories contain fully as much contrast as similarity. Recipients, although an essential consideration of rhetorical theory, are an item to which Demetrius gives minimal notice.¹⁷ Although one might understand a recipient beneath the surface of his comment on dialogue, by putting voice and receiver together one can achieve the idea that the character revealed within letters is actually one sculpted to the writer's image of the recipient or that there is in the recipient the reflected image of a desired self. While philosophizing on the topic of maturation in *de Officiis* 107, Cicero emphasizes the importance of individuality to the effect that bodily differences are matched by "variety" in *animis*. With a pronouncement resembling a kind of Lacanian mirror stage, he declares that every young person must form for himself an ideal image of what he might want to be.¹⁸ Given that the voice of this essay, which inscribes Junior Marcus as its addressee, is literally the "Voice of the Father" self-referentially prescribing the Roman symbolic code, we might pardonably conclude that this particular ideal self is impossible to attain.¹⁹ So drink and be merry; but even if a Roman aristocrat is not a famous father's heir apparent whose every act must withstand the glare of public scrutiny—in practice and under the pressure of events—the responsible Roman can find that self fragmented in many ways. Letters, however, by their very condition of absence, offer the opportunity to reconfigure and remake the elusive presence through the rubric of *êthos*.

¹⁷ What he does say (frg. 234) is simply formal: that letters to states or to royalty demand a more elevated tone.

¹⁸ Cic. *Off.* 1.117: "In primis autem constituendum est quos nos et quales esse velimus et in quo genere vitae, quae deliberatio est omnium difficillima. Ineunte enim adulescentia, cum est maxima imbecillitas consilii, tum id sibi quisque genus aetatis degendae constituit quod maxime adamavit." ("At the outset we must establish both who and what sort of a person we want to be and in what manner of life. This consideration is most difficult of all for it is while coming into adolescence when the faculty of counsel is at its very most resourceless, just then that each person determines what is the plan for conducting the kind of life that he most greatly admires.")

¹⁹ Cic. *Off.* 2.44: "Nam si quis ab ineunte aetate habet causam celebritatis et nominis aut a patre acceptam, quod tibi, mi Cicero, arbitror contigisse, aut aliquo casu atque fortuna, in hunc oculi omnium coniciuntur atque in eum, quid agat, quemadmodum vivat inquiritur, et, tamquam in clarissima luce versetur, ita nullum obscurum potest nec dictum eius esse nec factum." ("For if someone from life's very beginning has cause for celebrity taken either from family or from a father, which, as I judge, has happened to you, my dear Cicero, or even from some happenstance or some twist of luck, the eyes of all persons will be turned upon him, and it is inquired about him what he is doing and in what manner he is living, and inasmuch as he moves under the most revealing light, nothing can be hidden, neither what he says nor what he does." [One has to feel sorry for this boy!])

What I want to examine in the remainder of this talk is a categorically unexplored selection of letters in which the transformation of epistolary absence into a dialogue of presence is enforced by a second kind of distance: that between youth and age. As examples of this cross-generational dialogue, I select four of Cicero's junior colleagues with whom at various times he most extensively corresponded. In chronological order they are C. Trebatius Testa, the younger C. Scribonius Curio, M. Caelius Rufus, and L. Munatius Plancus.²⁰ Aside from the chronological overlap among some of them, these letters present many grounds for cross-comparison, including the fact that the Caelius and Plancus letters constitute the two most extensive sequential dialogue correspondences within the *ad Familiares*. All four involve on the part of one or another correspondent the distance of provincial commands. All four end as partisans of Caesar. At some point in all four letters, Cicero underlines his acquaintance with the recipient from boyhood, a claim no doubt true, but nonetheless recognizable as a form of positioning within the network of aristocratic society—a strategic gesture, as we may think it, when we see this paternalistic benevolence functioning as preliminary to some no less paternalistic form of exhortation or request. Understandably, in speaking of Ciceronian friendships, one must factor in the social distance resulting from his Arpinate background. Three correspondents share his status as *novi* of municipal origin, and some have seen marks of this social equivalence as a greater freedom or informality in their letters; yet circumstances partially override. The joviality of letters to Trebatius and Caelius stands against the urgency of those to Curio and Plancus. The difference between the two pairings might conform to Christopher Gill's distinction of personality and character,²¹ but, in view of circumstances, what emerges from each inscription is not simply a matter of composition or style, but also of the relationship of friendship and politics much in keeping with Brunt's pronouncements (381) that the "range of *amicitia* is vast" and "*amicitia* is ambiguous within

²⁰ Four younger correspondents, according to letter dates: 54–53 B.C.; 44 B.C., C. Trebatius Testa (*Fam* 7.6–22); 53–51 B.C., C. Scribonius Curio, Quaestor 54 or 53; Tr. Pl. Suff. 50; Propr. 70 Sicily and for the invasion of Africa 49 (*Fam* 2.1–6); 51–49 B.C. M. Caelius Rufus, Tribune Pl. 52; Aed. Cur. 50; Pr. Pereg. 48 (Cicero *ad eum*, *Fam* 2.8–16; *ad Ciceronem*, *Fam* 8.1–17); 44–43 B.C., L. Munatius Plancus, Leg. Lieut 54–46; Pr. 45? Procos. Transalpine Gaul 44–43; cos. 42 (*Fam* 10–1–24).

²¹ Gill 1990: 9–16 aptly defines character as a matter of "considered responses to certain key situations in which a clear choice of action is demanded of them," and personality as a certain kind of consciousness which we can subjectively share. The usefulness of this distinction seems to me to extend beyond its contextual formulation as a tool for reading Greek epic and tragedy.

this wide range" (367), as he in an analysis based in large part upon the letters shows how Cicero could use terms of intimacy or intellectual consanguinity couched in what would be the "spirit of the *Laelius*" to sweeten political expediency.²² Beyond this, on the premise that the relationship between members of the generations and the roles they play can cast some light on the conditions of contemporary society, for maximum contrast I touch upon Pliny's cross-generational letters, which are surprisingly few. If Pliny emerges somewhat disadvantaged from the contrast, please understand that he is the figure whom I consider more like myself than Cicero could ever be. The late John D'Arms once remarked, when still a department chair at Michigan, that Younger Pliny was a personage with whom any administrator could easily identify, and myself no less than he.

For us as readers, the Trebatius letters, when considered in chronological sequence, can display a certain narrative linkage extending from May 54 when the young man would seem to have arrived in Gaul through June of 53 when he has grown accustomed to being there. Being sent with Cicero's warm commendation as legal consultant to Caesar in fulfillment of an invitation, Trebatius's mission was to be useful, but, by this same token, to let his knowledge and personality make an impression. Here precisely is the cause of Cicero's anxiety, for this young emissary, in spite of his talents and judicious expertise, has much to learn about political diplomacy as a modifier of those seemingly high expectations concerning the manner of his reception and employment with which he set out. No doubt the scholarly urbanite anticipated entering into the commander's circle as a person of some importance and confidentiality, but instead found himself shivering with perfunctory attention in the Gallic winter. His combination of culture shock and ego picque are easily imagined from Cicero's responses whose inherent narrative shifts from earnest exhortation, to annoyance, to concession, and finally to almost chagrin because Trebatius has, in the long run, managed to adapt so well.

That Cicero himself would not have relished the situation into which he has sent Trebatius is of no consequence in what he expects the young man to accomplish. The first extant letter, sent in May 54, sharply rebukes Trebatius's ill-conceived *desiderium urbis et urbanitatis* with an exhortation couched in the language of Roman masculinity.²³ It was probably not without awareness

²² As a paradigmatic case, Brunt 356 points to Cicero's representation of his politically expedient relationship with Appius Claudius as one of pleasurable company and fruitful intellectual exchange.

²³ Cic. *Fam* 7.6.4–6. "Tu modo ineptias istas et desideria urbis et urbinitatis depone et, quo consilio profectus es, id adsiduitate et virtute consequere." ("Just you slough off that nonsense and cravings for city and citification, and pursue that plan upon which you embarked with persistence and manliness.")

of his use of such language that the letter borrows its hortatory quotations from Ennius's *Medea*. Trebatius's *virtus* however is not of the standard outdoor variety, and Cicero's teasing continues to play upon his unsuitedness to the rigors of camp and cold, dwelling upon the niceties of winter heating and the absence of military cloaks in a manner that stops just short of *mollitia*. Hearing a rumor of Testa's newfound interest in Epicureanism, he elaborates on the incompatibility of its principles with the practice of law, asking what will become of his clients back home or how oaths to Jove can be sworn by one who accepts divine indifference to human affairs (7.12). Claiming to find letters written on rubbed-out paper, he asks Trebatius what diffidence (*verecundia*) keeps him from requisitioning a proper supply of paper (10.18). What he does approve is the ambition of his protégée, which serves as a guard upon his honor; he is more concerned with advancing his reputation than his fortune. "It is all to your glory," Cicero writes, "that you would prefer being consulted by Caesar to being covered in gold (*inaurari*) (7.18; 7.10). In this confidence he defends Trebatius against his brother Quintus's suspicions of mercenary aims (*Q. Fr.* 3.1.9). At the same time, Cicero clearly reveals his concern for reputation as an outrunner of his own status, and Trebatius's interaction with Caesar as that of stand-in for himself. While he claims that he himself continues writing to urge Caesar's attention to Trebatius, his advice on tempering impatience is stern. Conscious of the favor he has done by his promotion, he expects compensation in the form of a consistent progress report. Breaks in the letter sequence flame his impatience, although these are ultimately revealed as the fault of the postal service. Thus by November 54 he reflects upon his response to Trebatius's *desiderium urbis* as a by-gone,²⁴ and by March of the succeeding year he is satisfied with Trebatius's maturation into a *vir fortis et constans* who has inured himself to military labor.²⁵

We can only be amused that the phrase *desiderium urbis* against which Cicero so sternly counsels Trebatius sounds repeatedly throughout the letters that

²⁴ Cic. *Fam* 7.17.1: "Nam primorum mensum litteris tuis vehementer commovebar, quod mihi interdum (pace tua dixerim) levis in urbis urbanitatisque desiderio, interdum piger, interdum timidus in labore militari, saepe autem etiam, quod a te alienissimum est, subimpudens videbare." ("For I was deeply disturbed by your letters of the early months because you seemed to me occasionally (begging your pardon) frivolous in [your] craving for city and citification, occasionally hesitant in military effort and often indeed, which is most foreign to you, disrespectful.")

²⁵ A brief epilogue renewal of this correspondence in 44 attests to the longevity of the friendship, especially as it avoids politics in favor of amicable philosophical discussion, however, from Cicero's two letter exchange with the mutual friend C. Matius we know that Trebatius had, after Caesar's death, conveyed a politically diplomatic message that led to Cicero's reconciliation with this lifelong friend of Caesar. (*Fam.* 11.27–28)

Cicero writes to Caelius from Cilicia,²⁶ epitomized in that ever-so-eloquent outburst, “urbem urbem, mi Rufe, cole et in ista luce vive”²⁷—words that resonate with any New Yorker. A corresponding request for recall is made to Curio in December 52 as he enters into office. Both young men, by virtue of their elective position, have acquired a modicum of influence; on Mary Beard’s thematic model, their juxtaposition as principal recipients of *ad Familiares* II makes this the book of the reformed scapegraces. Each sequence contains a letter of congratulation, wherein we may remark a new note of respect coloring Cicero’s tone, especially in the case of Caelius whose career can seem to have taken a decisively positive turn with this success. Caelius’s own letters, contained within a different book, also present a view of Curio’s tribunate which is probably the most reliably factual account that we have for what went on in the Roman senate during the debates concerning Caesar’s province. But otherwise the tone of humorous familiarity with which Cicero can express the fulfillment of his hopes for Caelius or chide the quality of information being sent from Rome is wholly absent from his letters to Curio.

Perhaps it was the jocular tenor of the letters he was concomitantly sending to Trebatius that Cicero had in mind when he wrote his epistolary synkrisis to Curio, but the dichotomy of *iocularis* and *severus* constitutes less of a rubric than a manner of calling attention to the ensuing declaration that neither content is suited to the present grim state of the *res publica*. The effect all the same is that he *might* have chosen humor or analysis, and thus of a particular confidential association, more familiar than in fact it would seem to have been, which intensifies his dire remarks about the condition of Rome. What he then proceeds to write under the rather formal designation of *clausula* is an open-ended exhortation to seek after the highest praise.

Indeed, we might wonder why Cicero was writing to Curio at all, save that our first extant letter indicates a continuing correspondence, interrupted perhaps, since Curio complains of infrequent letters. Was it true, as Cicero was later to assert in the second *Phillipic* that Cicero had intervened with a

²⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 2.11.1 “Mirum me desiderium tenet urbis” (“a remarkable longing for the city possesses me”); *Fam.* 2.13.3 “...miroque desiderio me urbs adficit” (“the city affects me with marvelous longing”); *Fam.* 2.14.1 “Ego res Romanas vehementer expecto et desidero...” (“I am intensely awaiting and craving for Roman affairs.”)

²⁷ To Caelius from military camp in approximately late April 50: Cic. *Fam.* 2.12.2: “Urbem, urbem, mi Rufe, cole et in ista luce vive! Omnis peregrinatio, quod ego ad adulescentia iudicavi, obscura et sordida est iis quorum industria Romae potest illustris esse.” (“The city, the city, dear Rufus, cherish it and live in its light! All foreign experience, which well I opined from early manhood, is murky and dingy for those whose diligence can shine out at Rome.”)

forbidding father outraged by his son's all-too-intimate friendship with Mark Antony (2.45.30)? Certainly at the time when elder Curio was supporting Clo dius, he was no friend of Cicero, but in these letters Curio's recently deceased father is represented as the recipient of Cicero's consummate *amor*.²⁸ Now he stresses not only family ties, but also Curio's discipleship from boyhood in a manner that makes it seem to be one of his ways of dealing with uncertain political situations and loyalties. Sensing Curio's ambition, his apparent strategy is to feed it with compliments and exhortations as a means of courting its alignment with his convictions. The letters anticipate Curio's return. Cicero is seemingly privy to the young man's plans for the funerary games (2.3.1), which he disparages with comments that we will later find echoed in *de Officiis* 2.55–59 about the superiority of political action to games. As the return comes closer, however, with affairs heating up and the interregnum, which also is mentioned to Trebatius (7.11), in force, the compliments begin to take meaning as solicitations. There is every reason, please, for Curio to throw his support to Milo's consular candidacy (2.6.3–5). When he writes his congratulations on the election to the tribunate, his compliments stress the independence of matured wisdom; no one can better give advice to Curio than himself (2.7.1). But there is also a service to ask; already in his military encampment at Pindenissum, Cicero is sufficiently acquainted with provincial life to conclude with an urgent request to expedite his recall ending in a great flourish of adjectival flattery to this already *nobilissimus ...et gratissimus adulescens*, newly ordained as a “defender of the laws and the senate's decrees.”²⁹

A noteworthy aspect of this very constructed association is the points that will later be made in the *de Officiis*, concerning the proper definitions of glory and praise. The point concerning the superiority of civic exertion to *munera* has already been included within the *de Republica*, where Cicero notes the economic modesty of his own aedilician games, but is reiterated in the *de Officiis* 2.55–59 with similar remarks. But as we know from multiple sources, Curio did sponsor a spectacle for which he constructed the infamous revolving double cavea, which elder Pliny notes as even more dangerous to the spectators who sat in it than to the gladiators who fought there (*NH*

²⁸ McDermott 406–411 outlines the identifiable vacillations of the relationship, including elder Curio's periods of opposition to Caesar and his possible support for Cicero's return from exile for which the evidence is only indirect.

²⁹ Cic. *Fam* 2.7.4: “Te, mi Curio, pro tua incredibili in me benevolentia meaque item in te singulari, rogo atque oro, ne patiare quicquam mihi ad hanc provincialem molestiam temporis prorogari.” (“You, my dear Curio, by virtue of your mind-boggling good will towards me and my own likewise in your direction, I request, and even plead that you will not suffer anything of the term of this provincial inconvenience to be prolonged”)

36.116–118) and for which he also imported such an abundance of wild animals that he was promising ten panthers as a gift to Caelius's games (8.9). If, as Shackleton Bailey conjectures (ad *Fam* 8.6.12 [p.417]), this generosity did not materialize, one might wonder if some cooling of collegiality attended the tribune's sudden inclination towards Caesar which Caelius reports with ostensible disapproval as a "light-headed" flight to the popular side (8.6). Cicero allows himself "punctured" by this news, in obvious contradiction of what his letters to Curio had purposed, yet his declaration that he, and he alone, had foreseen the tribune's conversion does much to explain his efforts in correspondence (*Fam* 2.13).

What version of Cicero do we see in his letters to Curio? I think we see this same figure later in the *de Officiis* when Cicero declares that maturing young men should select the best examples to imitate (1.122), or he advises that the soundest way for a young man to acquire a reputation for reliability is to frequent the company of men already considered wise and illustrious in their concern for the *res publica*, because their good credit would seem to appear by imitation.³⁰ With his remarks that Curio has heeded his advice from boyhood, Cicero seems to be representing himself as such a man and trying to make this premise work on behalf of his policies.

Adherence to Cicero as a role model is certainly one of the positive points that Cicero invokes in his judicial defense of Caelius Rufus (*Cael.* 4.9–10), but the Caelius of the letters is one who fulfills this promise. In his delight over the election of his protégée as aedile, he calls him (2.9) the "one whom fortune has given me as the *amplificator dignitatis meae*, the avenger not only of my enemies but even of my ill-wishers so as to make some of them regret their offenses and some of them their follies."³¹ All the same his support of the young aedile's career does not go so far as the provision of Cilician panthers that Caelius is repeatedly requesting for his forthcoming games (8.4; 8.6; 8.8; 8.9). To Atticus, Cicero explains that a commissioned animal hunt

³⁰ Cic. *Off.* 2.46: "Facillime autem et in optimam partem cognoscuntur adulescentes qui se ad claros et sapientes viros bene consulentes rei publicae contulerunt, quibuscum si frequentes sunt, opinionem adferunt populo eorum fore se similes quos sibi ipsi delegerint ad imitandum." (Most readily, however, are [those] young men known and rated in the most desirable category who resort to the company of outstanding and wise men full of good counsel for the state, with whom if they are in attendance, they will convey to the populace the notion that they themselves resemble those whom they cultivate for the sake of imitation.)

³¹ Cic. *Fam.* 2.9.2: "Te vero, mi Rufe, diligo, quem mihi fortuna dedit amplificatorem dignitatis meae, ultorem non modo inimicorum sed etiam invidiorum meorum, ut eos partim scelerum suorum, partim etiam ineptiarum paeñiteret."

would damage his reputation for administrative honesty in exactly the manner he wants to avoid (*Att.* 6.1), but his letter to Caelius conveys his reluctance more humorously. Panthers are scarce in Cilicia, and the few there, being the only inhabitants of Cilicia with complaints to be made against the fairness of Cicero's provincial administration (2.11), have now fled over the border into Caria. Since the dialogue counterpart exists, we can see how keenly Caelius wants the panthers, but moreover how his own cavalier exuberance is shaping the comic perspective from which even Curio's defection can be called laughable.³² In an earlier letter (8.5.1, September 51) Caelius had wished Cicero just the amount of military action he might need for triumphal laurels, which, after the fact, Cicero treats as an actual prediction in an account that echoes the economy of a triumphal banner, embellished with the reflection that his victory had taken place at the site of Alexander's defeat of Darius.³³ Habinek, in speaking of candor in friendship, observes that Caelius does not hesitate in his recreational letters from Rome to proffer advice on Cicero's affairs,³⁴ but three years later his political confidences have turned from irreverent biases and antipathies into urgent warnings based upon claims of inside knowledge. In March 49, he is still jocular, appealing to Cicero's rational judgement by disparaging the incompetence of Pompey's Republican leadership (8.15), but the tone of the subsequent letter perceiving Cicero's inclination to follow Pompey regardless is one of urgency as he beseeches Cicero in the name of gods, men, friendship, and all he values to join him in relinquishing the die-hard Republicans for Caesar's successfully destined party (8.16).

Although L. Munatius Plancus could scarcely at the time of his preserved correspondence, be called one of these young men looking to Cicero as a model for imitation, Cicero addresses him as if he has been one in the past.³⁵ Watkins

³² See Hutchinson's 144–48 remarks on the artful structuring of letters and their shift from the humorous to the sensational.

³³ Cic. *Fam.* 2.10.3. From camp at Pindenissum 14 December 51 B.C. "Interea cum meis copiis omnibus vexavi Amaniensis, hostis sempiternos. multi occisi capti, reliqui dissipati, castella munita improviso adventu capta et incensa. ita victoria iusta imperator appellatus apud Issum, quo in loco, saepe ut ex te audiui, Clitarchus tibi narravit Dareum ab Alexandro esse superatum." ("In the meantime with all my forces I harried the tribes of the Amani region, perpetual enemies. Many slain, captured, the remnants scattered, a fortified stronghold taken and burned by a surprise approach. So on the basis of this legitimate victory I was hailed as *imperator* near by the Issus, a place where, as often I have heard from you, Clitarchus told you that Darius was overcome by Alexander.")

³⁴ Habinek 174–179, as an example of the prerogatives of unequal friendship.

³⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 10.3.2: December 44 "Ego, Plance, necessitudinem constitutam habui cum domo vestra ante aliquanto quam tu natus es, amorem autem erga te ab ineunte pueritia tua, confirmata iam aetate, familiaritatem cum studio meo tum iudicio tuo constitutam."

argues that this claim to acquaintance through intimacy with Plancus's father stemmed from their being fellow Campanians, as makes sense from the situation of Plancus's tomb on Gaieta.³⁶ The correspondence begins in September 44 just following Cicero's return from the interrupted trip to Greece, allegedly intended as a visit to young Marcus and his subsequent delivery of the first Philippic. Plancus himself is in Gaul, but with the position of consul lined up for 42, he clearly appears to Cicero as one whose loyalty is strategically to be cultivated. Of all Cicero's cross-generational correspondences, then, that with Plancus is the most politically exigent, and central to his scheme of consolidating anti-Antonian forces to transform the incomplete work of the "liberators" into a restoration of the Republic. But unlike the two Brutii of whose disposition Cicero was certain, Plancus is an ambiguity, a swing vote and, like Curio, a man of whose own ambitions Cicero was wary, with an uneasiness only thinly veiled by repeated professions of trust and confidence.³⁷ However, the dialogue of the letter exchange shows the gradual easing of these suspicious tensions as the proconsul moved slowly towards an anti-Antonian joining with Lepidus. Watkins has mentioned overlap between Cicero's principled definition of friendship here and that bond uniting good men in common sentiments (*voluntatum studiorum sententiarum summa consensio*) in the *de Amicitia* (15), which he had just finished writing.³⁸ Yet, praises of like-minded bonding appear also at *de Officiis* 1.55–56, which was in progress at the time he was writing these letters of crisis. Given that Plancus was working out military operations at the same time that Cicero was working out his codes of service, the correspondence might be seen as Cicero's testing ground for the activation of his ideas.³⁹ One cardinal tenet

("I myself, Plancus, had established a close relationship with your family sometime before you were born, and furthermore my affection towards you, from the beginning of your childhood, now that you have come to maturity, has become an interassociation strengthened both by my interest and by your judgment.")

³⁶ Watkins 13–30.

³⁷ Watkins 67 comments that his personal association and familiarity with Plancus as his social counterpart was closer than that with the aristocratic Brutii and thus his address to the latter more formal.

³⁸ Watkins 58–59 remarks on the overlap both of time and ideas with particular emphasis on moral excellence and consensus concerning the good of the state. As Griffin has pointed out, the exchange of letters with Matius also embodies an idealistic view of friendship resonant of the *de Amicitia*. But Brunt 353 emphasizes both here and in the *de Officiis* Cicero's practical interpretation of "good" as the conduct of men to be considered good in the everyday world.

³⁹ Griffin 88 and 90 observes that Cicero formulated the moral conflict between friendship and virtue entirely in terms of obligations of friendship versus obligations to the

of the *de Officiis* is the alignment of the honorable with the beneficial (1.66). Cicero cites philosophical authority (Panaetius) in support of this desirable conjunction (2.9–11).⁴⁰ Accordingly, in the Plancus letters, a note of sternness colors the amiability, as when he writes in March 43 that “the honors so far achieved will become empty words unless you will unite yourself with the liberty of the Roman people and the authority of the senate” (10.6); a month later he proclaims that the greatest honor comes not in hope of future benefits but with the recognition of worthy deeds.⁴¹ Closely related to honor is *gloria* which the *de Officiis* treats as a matter of personal satisfaction that can only be gained through appropriate recognition and reception (2.36). Cicero enforces his exhortations with pointed reference to the definition of glory in philosophical terms. His January 43 letter to Plancus declares that nothing can so reward a person, “nothing in human affairs can be *praeclarior* or *praestantius* than deserving well of one’s country” (10.5). *De Officiis* 1.116 sets out the canonical Roman *genera laudis* with particular emphasis on arms and eloquence. On this basis, Cicero can conceive a complementary relationship with his self-styled protégée making *gloria* the carrot of compliance that his correspondence extends. At the very outset of the correspondence, he styles himself a long-standing partisan of Plancus’s *dignitas* (10.1; 10.3). As events in Gaul appear to be taking a positive shape, he begins to make good on the proposition, in April 43 declaring himself not merely a partisan (*fautor*), but also as a promoter (*amplificator*) of his *dignitas* (10.12.5). No letter of May 43 fails to mention such recognition in company with Cicero’s ability to work for it (10.13; 10.14; 10.16; 10.19; 10.20). Even more than the letters to Curio, the Plancus letters illustrate Brunt’s observation that the language of *amicitia* can be co-opted to create an appearance of friendship in the service of expediency. As declared in the *de Officiis*, friends are important, but the best friend of all should be the Republic (1.56–57), and as the narrative of Plancus’s military operations takes a favorable turn, Cicero seems to see evidence of this bond.

respublica. Rather than a struggle like that of the Matius letters the Plancus correspondence reveals more of an application or appropriation.”

⁴⁰ Cic. *Off.* 2.10: “Quidquid enim iustum sit, id enim utile esse [philosophi] censent, itemque quod honestum, idem iustum, ex quo efficitur ut quidquid honestum sit, idem sit utile.” (“Whatever may in truth be just, that indeed [philosophers] ordain as useful, and likewise whatever may be upright that same thing is just from which it comes about that whatever may be upright that same thing is useful.”)

⁴¹ Cic. *Fam* 10.10.1: “Is enim denique honos mihi videri solet qui non propter spem futuri benefici, sed propter magna merita claris viris defertur et datur.” (“This indeed in the last analysis seems to me seems to constitute honor which not from hope of future favors but because of outstanding deserts is conveyed and given to famous men”)

Thus, at the beginning of April we find him declaring, with another reference to longstanding family acquaintance, that he now places the life of Plancus over his own.⁴² Does he really believe that he is genuinely influential, or is this declaration merely another move in the game?

Given Pliny's demonstrable *aemulatio* of Ciceronian correspondence on many topics and even in specific letters, we may ask whether such comparisons can be made for his epistles to younger colleagues? In general Pliny is even more acutely aware of a succession of generations that structures his conspectus of contemporary society as a kind of hierarchy with attention to abilities and experience as well as to age.⁴³ Perhaps because of the more stable community of the moment, with no proscriptions to have creamed off the elders, generational levels were more visible although also more static than Cicero saw them. Placing himself in the middle of the generational hierarchy, Pliny writes it into his self-representation. With a kind of Janus-like vision, the totality of his collection incorporates through description a number of his own role models, both living and deceased, but also a look in the opposite direction towards his younger contemporaries on whose promise he frequently remarks with undisguised satisfaction in serving as role model for them.

He is proud, of course, of the school he has funded in Como, but it is the young men of Rome with whom he comes into contact during his daily rounds in whom he seems to see the mirror of self. He was gratified when students fell silent upon his entering a room (2.18). It is his oratorical reputation that inspires this homage, and Mayer rightly reminds us how important it is to the letters. Recording tributes is an aspect of self-assurance in which he with only modest embarrassment indulges.⁴⁴ In 4.27 he has been swept away by the complimentary verses recited by Sentius Augurinus. Since he makes the mistake of quoting these verses, we can see what pedestrian doggerel they are,⁴⁵

⁴² Cic. *Fam.* 10.10.2: "Ad eas enim causas, quibus inter nos amore sumus, officiis, vetustate coniuncti patriae caritas accessit; eaque effecit ut tuam vitam antefeream meae." ("To those grounds for affection existing between us as men who are joined by duties and old association, cherishing of the fatherland adds itself and thus brings it about that I place your life ahead of my own.")

⁴³ Syme 1979: 694 appreciatively makes the point concerning Pliny's range in time, "from several long-lived survivors who had come to manhood under Claudius and Nero to youths of predictable promise whose consulates would adorn the first years of Trajan's successor." Also 477, he summarizes Pliny's reflections in 4. 24 on the changes that had affected the lives and careers of many of his acquaintance.

⁴⁴ Riggsby 1998: 78 stresses "evaluation ... by the community" as Pliny's paramount consideration, but it is no less important that this approval should assign him a leadership role.

⁴⁵ (*Ep* 4.27.4): "Canto carmina uersibus minutis, / his olim quibus et meus Catullus / et Caluus ueteresque. Sed quid ad me? / Unus Plinius est mihi priores: / mauolt uersiculos foro

but Pliny can't say enough in praise of this admirer who has ornamented the age with his talent, "a youth whom old men can love." Recitations provide the major showcase for promising young writers and orators, but often Pliny expresses so depressive a view of the times and their dislocation of customs, that good examples stand out primarily by contrast. Describing for Spurinna young Calpurnius Piso's recitation of his astronomical poem, Pliny notes their mutual satisfaction when any member of the younger generation performs well (5.17). He identifies a sign of Piso's virtue in his modest blush, which, however, his contemporaries might recognize as more canonical than individualizing since Cicero also notes this sign of decorous self-awareness in the young (*de Officiis*) and likewise Pliny's own instructor Quintilian, 12.5.4, for whom any speaker's change of color acknowledges the challenge he faces. Given that Spurinna had recently lost his own very promising son, one might question the diplomacy of this matching of subject to recipient.

It is surprising then, in the whole conspectus of the letters, how very few are actually addressed to such promising young men, and beyond this, how very little sense of an interactive dialogue appears in their content to tell us about the recipients themselves. Granted that their *êthê* may be impeccable, their personalities, if they have any, are written over by Pliny's own. With help from Syme and Birley, I find three junior correspondents. One of these, Junius Avitus, called a "youth of excellent nature," receives Pliny's ruminations on false hospitality in a letter about a dinner party where social stratification programmed the quality of the wine (2.6). Conceivably Avitus might have received further letters save for his untimely death at the moment of being aedile designate. Pliny especially regrets his loss on account of his readiness to learn from and follow example, rare characteristics among the young as he gloomily adds (8.23). The others, Ummidius Quadratus and Fuscus Salinator, are two of his favorites, praised in 6.11 as outstanding "not only for our time" but also as future ornaments of literary art.⁴⁶ The characteristics that so recommend them are predictably those generic qualities of voice and bearing advantageous to oratory, but beyond that their looking to Pliny as

relicto / et quaerit quod amet, putatque amari. / Ille, O Plinius, ille quot Catones! / I nunc, quisque amas, amare noli."

By virtue of compressions and omissions, Betty Radice's translation of these lines (*Pliny: Letters and Panegyricus I*, Cambridge, L.C.L. 1969) is charitable, and therefore does scant justice to the badness of the original: "My verse is light and tender, as Catullus long ago, / But what care I for poets past, when I my Pliny know? / Outside the courts in mutual love and song he makes his name: / You lovers and you statesmen, to Pliny yield your fame."

⁴⁶ Syme 1985b

instructor and model more clearly than any other disciples.⁴⁷ But, these virtues are socially generic and we would know nothing further of Ummidius's individual profile were he not the subject of two paragraphs on the death of his octogenarian grandmother Ummidia in which we learn of his protected upbringing by the feisty old lady who never allowed his tender innocence to be corrupted by watching the troupe of actors she maintained in her house to alleviate the tedious constraints placed upon a woman's activity (8.24)—although the prohibition seems extreme in a family that had gifted its town both with a large amphitheater and a theater.

Significantly, all these letters have to do with oratory which Roland Mayer identifies as a key motif throughout the correspondence.⁴⁸ Looking to Pliny as a model is inscribed within the letters, which in all instances adopt the position of responding to an eager questioner. "Quaeris" is the first word of two letters to Fuscus and the third beginning "scribis pergratias" represents these letters as preliminary to further inquiry. The first letter to Quadratus addresses a question of the kind of cases an advocate ought to pursue, on which it would seem the recipient had asked questions (6.29.3: "Hos terminos, quia me consulisti, dignitati ac uerecundiae tuae statuo"). Quintilian had pronounced upon this topic from an ethical basis (12.7); but Pliny attributes his tripartite, socially conscious answer—helping friends, aiding those in need and setting examples—to Avitus Quietus who, in turn, referred it to the sanctified Thrasea Paetus. On his own initiative, however, he adds a fourth *optandum*, "cases conducive to glory and fame" (*claras et inlustres*), which he proceeds to elaborate with a series of autobiographical references that form their own brief index of his speeches.⁴⁹ The second of Quadratus's letters, a narrative of the prosecution of the informer who had driven Helvidius Priscus to his death, begins with the young man's having already studiously read

⁴⁷ Plin. *Ep* 6.11.2–3: "...atque inter haec illud, quod et ipsi me ut rectorem, ut magistrum intuebantur, et iis qui audiebant me aemulari, meis instare uestigiis uidebantur. O diem (repetam enim) laetum notandumque mihi candidissimo calculo!" ("and along with these matters is the fact that, because they themselves look upon me as a guide, as a preceptor, they appear to those who were hearing that I was an object of imitation to be placing their footsteps in my traces. Happy day (once again I say) to be marked out by me with the very brightest mark!")

⁴⁸ Mayer 229 argues that "the letters, as a consciously shaped body of revised or newly composed correspondence, are designed to focus on and secure an interest in Pliny as orator."

⁴⁹ In fact, the prescription might, in small compass, remind us of Aper's speech in *Dialogus* 5.5–8.1, which asks what other art is comparable in its fame and glory to that of oratory.

Pliny's previous treatment of the subject and seeking insistently (*impensius*) the hidden story, that which transpired either outside or around the books, which, in Pliny's retelling, does contain some revelations of his motivation and private thoughts.⁵⁰ But no further mention occurs of the recipient until the end where Quadratus is told that the letter he is reading is even longer than the books—suggesting that the previous account might simply have been Pliny's published speech. But to what extent might Quadratus as recipient be written into the letter? Its posture of confidentiality perhaps and the fact that it was a younger Pliny whose story is being told to youthful Quadratus—and for this character Pliny appropriates some of the qualities otherwise predicated for the decorous young: *modestia, constantia, etc.*

While the topics of Quadratus's letters are certainly directed towards the young man's actual practice as an orator, those to Fuscus have entirely to do with oratorical preparation, as the most profitable manner of spending leisure time. Letter writing is enfolded into these self-reflexive communications. Amid a schedule of practices beneficial to oratory we find the exhortation to write letters diligently, not even, it would appear, for the sake of communication, but rather, as a form of stylistic practice (7.9). Given that oratory does not always employ an historical mode, but sometimes requires almost poetic description, Pliny recommends letters as the most appropriate vehicle for diction (*sermo*) that is *pressus ...purusque*." When Fuscus conveniently inquires about the regimen for his villa *otium* (leisure), the agenda he receives in response might be taken as a blueprint for becoming Pliny himself, in which, to their credit, the two young men did succeed, both attaining under Hadrian to that short-lived honor of the consulship, which, unfortunately, Pliny did not live to see.

If this, as previously mentioned, seems disadvantageous to Pliny, he himself had no illusions. Call it apology or assertion, his intellectual and civic distance from Cicero is a tenet of his own self-portraiture.⁵¹ By the time he came to

⁵⁰ Plin. *Ep* 9.13.1: "Quanto studiosius intentiusque legisti libros quos de Helvidi ultione composui, tanto impensius postulas, ut perscribam tibi quaeque extra libros quaeque circa libros, totum denique ordinem rei cui per aetatem non interfuisti." ("The more zealously and attentively you have read those books which I composed about the requital for Helvidius, the more insistently you demand that I should write for you whatever things were outside or on the periphery of the books, and in sum the whole unfolding of the case at which you were not of an age to have been present.")

⁵¹ Plin. *Ep* 9.2.2: "Neque enim eadem nostra condicio quae M. Tulli, ad cuius exemplum nos uocas. Illi enim et copiosissimum ingenium, et par ingenio qua uarietas rerum qua magnitudo largissime suppetebat; nos quam angustis terminis claudamur etiam tacente me perspicis." ("Nor indeed is my situation the same as that of Marcus Tullius to whose

publishing letters, even the most Ciceronian events of his own life belonged to his past, and these no more than a couple of court cases, in one of which he claimed to have been endangered (7.33), and in the other liked to think he had been dangerous (9.13). In his new book *Empire and Memory* Alain Gowing argues that republican memory had regained some of its ethical and political clout within a climate which he calls “Trajan’s new past” (121), although with a meaning tamed and revised by intervening circumstances. For this “new past” some credit may be ascribed to Pliny’s own efforts in the “Panegyricus” of coding a senatorial princeps and a responsible aristocracy. Restoring dignity to the aristocracy gives meaning to imitation and to the positioning of role models. All the same, with no Cilician command to terminate, and no Antony to be defeated, the greatest favor that Pliny’s protégées could do for him was to take their places within this society. Why he did not write more letters to them is a question on which I wouldn’t begin to speculate, but what is certainly most Ciceronian in these letters is the advice that Cicero tenders in *de Officiis* to Marcus of finding an outstanding elder to imitate.

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example you summon me. For indeed he commanded as resources a talent of the richest kind and both a variety and expansive grandeur of events to match his talent; but you perceive even without my saying how narrow are the boundaries within which I am enclosed.”)

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