CICERO'S BANISHMENT: TEMPORA ET MORES*

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Introduction

Banishment, displacement and the return of the exiled constitute a consistent world-wide modern phenomenon, which ranges from the wanderings of Vietnamese boat-people, to the exile and return of Imelda Marcos, or of various members of Swapo and the African National Congress. Few displacements have, however, been so consistently and self-revealingly documented by the exile himself as Cicero's banishment from and return to Rome in the years 58 to 57 BC. Marcus Tullius Cicero was a prolific writer. During the last years of the Republic, he frequently offered consolatory arguments to exiled friends, but during his own banishment he was himself too miserable to draw comfort from them. Although discovery of his self-revelatory letters caused Petrarca great distress, readers at the end of the twentieth century are less inclined toward blind hero-worship of the ancients, and therefore are less shocked when the humanity of a protagonist such as Cicero is revealed in his own writings.

This paper examines Cicero's fluctuations of attitude to his banishment, in what may be termed 'Cicero's exilic corpus,' which comprises letters, speeches and poems. These together give a complex view of the psychological make-up of the banished consular, but very little factual or political detail about the years 58 and 57 BC.

Continued political manoeuvring by friends and foes alike, in Rome and elsewhere, is documented in twenty-seven of Cicero's letters to Atticus, and a handful of letters to his family and brother. These attest to his first fears of impending danger, and portray the almost day-by-day history of his seventeen months in banishment and his near-hysterical obsession with self, bewailing past mistakes and minutely analysing every report of political movement at Rome. Cicero's letters appeal for aid, mourn his altered state, and finally record his triumphant recall.¹ The focus is on the author: important verbs are in the first person, possessive adjectives 'meus' and 'noster' abound: the banished man is wrapped in a self-imposed cocoon of misery.²

After exile, Cicero rewrites history, tending to depict himself as enduring all vicissitudes of Fortune stoically, fortified by Philosophy. He presents his
public with a romanticized version of the sorry details of loneliness and hurt pride which speak from his exilic correspondence. The self-sufficient and courageous figure that emerges from the retrospective speeches held immediately after Cicero's return before Senate and people, on his house, and in defence of Sestius, bears as little relation to Cicero at Dyrrhachium, as the consuls of the year 58, Piso and Gabinius (who had allowed the decree of banishment to take effect), bore to the monstrous embodiments of vice portrayed by the returned exile in his speeches of bitter invective against his persecutors by default.

In what may be deemed a third aspect of his perception and consequent portrayal of his own banishment, Cicero turns to the embellishment of history in autobiographical commentaries, in Latin and Greek, meant as the basis for excursive historical works by his friends Lucceius and Posidonius. With these, and for the same reasons, he resorts to epic poetry, as the most suitable vehicle for the establishment of a 'myth of the banished hero and the return of the Saviour of the Republic.'

Ciceronian studies since 1865

Almost as prolific as Cicero himself have been those biographers who have in the last century and a quarter chosen to base extensive studies on the easily available and vast range of his extant works. Each, although obviously attempting, as a modern historiographer, to write 'sine ira et studi', is influenced in part by an own interpretation of both the general history of Rome against which the particulars of our protagonist unfolded, and by their own reactions to his solipsism in his exilic writings. They choose in turn to condemn, excuse, ignore, or sometimes to report factually, but in very condensed form, an incident that spanned a mere seventeen months' segment of a long and varied political life.

To any scholar quibbling that an attempt to re-assess Cicero's reactions to banishment must of necessity be crambe repetita, I can only quote from Karl Büchner's foreword to his monograph on the development in philosophical thought in Cicero's orations: 'Lasst sich etwas Neues über Cicero sagen? ... Wir können nicht genug Monographien haben ...' A rapid survey of earlier monographs will illustrate why this is so.

Since his own time, Cicero has been in and out of favour with writers, as Ferguson points out. Zielinski in 1912 gave a considered overview of changing attitudes to Cicero during the centuries. The well-known negative judgement of Cicero of nineteenth and early twentieth century historians is neatly summarized by Pierre Boyancé: whereas Boissier had emphasized Cicero's human weakness, Drumann and Mommsen had despised him, along with all other Italians, and Carcopino, not believing the evidence of his own senses, had ascribed the publication of Cicero's self-revealing correspondence to an enemy. Boyancé, in refuting these,
unfortunately created a new heresy: that the 'true Cicero' is to be found only in his 'great works'. I would contend that an important aspect of the 'true Cicero' is also the all too human egoist of the letters and of the speeches after his return.

As early as 1894 the American Strachan Davidson attempted to refute Drumann, and commented kindly on Cicero's egoism: 'To me it seems difficult to regard very sternly, or to take as a matter of very serious condemnation, a weakness so frankly and simply displayed. Cicero's vanity and love of praise make him less dignified, but they hardly make him less lovable.' By 1914 Sihler's biography appears as evidence of a general change of attitude. Sihler's discussion of Roman politics is strongly coloured by his interpretation of Cicero's political attitudes. For example, he postulates a continued and bitter enmity between Cicero and Metellus Nepos, and from that construes a publication which Cicero wishes to suppress (Att. 3.12) as an attack on the latter.

Petersson, writing some six years later, displays a solemn belief in every statement made by our protagonist. Although he attempts to be comprehensive, and accords due emphasis to each part of the consul's writings, the 'halo effect' of Cicero's by now largely refurbished reputation influenced Petersson to take literally the post-exilic assertion (Planc. 101) that Plancius, Cicero's host at Dyrrachium, had cried bitterly throughout Cicero's term of banishment, and had been comforted by Cicero himself. Petersson does allow himself to allude to Cicero's 'weakness in exile,' explaining that thoughts of suicide would probably 'not have been considered unseemly in the eyes of the Romans'.

An attempt by Otto Plasberg to research Cicero's self-display in his oeuvre devotes only a few pages to his banishment and return, concentrating largely on quotations from the letters. Discussion of the post-recall speeches is limited to a page, and Plasberg dismisses Cicero's attempt at heroizing his perilous times with the comment (p.96) that 'what is left of the poetry does not move us to desire more'. A study by G.C. Richards offers little that is new, except its emphasis on Cicero's dependence on the condescension of Metellus Nepos, which was needed to admit the 'new man' into the inner circle of Roman political factions, thereby placing in truer perspective Sihlers's over-emphasis on Nepos' 'enmity'.

The Real-Encyclopaedie article, also available as a monograph (1939), edited by Gelzer, with contributions by himself, Phillipson, Kroll and Büchner, remains the most sober and to date most thorough standard work on all aspects of Cicero's life, but its separate rubrics and generic differentiation make it difficult to distinguish only those parts pertaining to Cicero's banishment. Gelzer is satisfied neither to excuse nor to criticize the self-revelatory letters, which he designates as the 'unvergleichliche Einblick ... in das stürmische Auf und Ab seiner Gemütsbewegungen,
seiner Sorgen und Hoffnungen' (908). He is content to comment about Cicero’s Eigenlob (sui iactatio) to the effect that the ancients did not react differently to it ‘than we do today’, with the implication that ‘our’ reaction is negative (927).

Three frequently read critics chose to concentrate on Cicero’s politics, yet each has something to say about their protagonist’s emotions. Strasburger (1931) emphasizes Cicero’s psychological identification of his own personality with the ideals of the state. Considerably later, Smith, in his cursory analysis of the exile within the broader scope of Ciceronian politics, takes at face value the consular’s initial reactions to banishment, excusing even his tears with reference to tears shed by Winston Churchill on electoral defeat. Against these, Stockton’s political biography is scarcely tolerant of his protagonist’s perceived weakness. Cicero in exile, he says, gave way to “Latin” indulgence in flamboyant emotions, he was ‘blind’ to the ‘true reasons for his disaster,’ acting like a ‘petulant and self-indulgent child.' This is Mommusen using the vocabulary of the twentieth century. Stockton (p.196) emphasizes the political importance also of an apparently personal speech like the De domo sua, in which Cicero defends his proposal for a corn-commission for Pompey. It is important to remember that the pontiffs, before whom the speech was delivered, were also the leading politicians of the era.

As is to be expected from the pen of the most recent editor of Cicero’s correspondence, Shackleton Bailey’s monograph, appearing concurrently with Stockton’s, gives a more balanced overview of Cicero’s public appearances and private opinions. His observations (pp. 156–62) on the relationship between Cicero and his brother are valuable for their psychological insight, as is his final judgement on Cicero’s grief over the death of Tullia, which he finds (p.215) as symptomatic of an underlying ‘bitter hinterland of thwarted ambition and domestic failure.’ So, in the seventies of this century, we are at last guided toward viewing uncensoriously the inner workings of an often tortured psyche.

Elizabeth Rawson’s portrait of Cicero attempts to reconcile the public strengths and private weaknesses of the consular, dismissing his letters from exile as hardly reliable evidence of anything but the state of his mind, which, she guesses, was ‘very likely near a real nervous breakdown.’ His speeches on his return are dismissed as ‘highly rhetorical apologies’. Mitchell, in the preface to his study of Cicero’s early life, points out that the first two-thirds of the politician’s life are the least well-documented and therefore least discussed in modern biographies. Mitchell’s rectification of this omission is important for its judicious discussion of the legality of Cicero’s actions in the Catiline affair, and therefore the legality of his subsequent banishment. In Mitchell’s view (pp. 213–17) Cicero’s action within the spirit of the ‘consultum ultimum’ was approved by the Senate,
which had chosen not to appoint Cicero as 'dictator', thereby retaining that power which it must otherwise have ceded to him.

In her recent study of testimonia and fragments of lost or unpublished speeches, Jane Crawford discusses evidence for the suppression of some speeches, also those of the period after Cicero's recall, as well as his reasons for such suppression, thereby clarifying his political attitudes. Finally, for a complete view of Cicero's allusions to self, we need to turn to Graff's seminal compendium. Graff's references to Cicero's banishment are, again, part of a larger work devoted to a complete overview of the consular's view of self. Its existence does not preclude the need of a study, such as envisaged in this paper, devoted solely to the chronological vagaries of Ciceronian self-exposition, which become much clearer when the various parts of his exilic oeuvre are juxtaposed.

**Precedents for political exile**

The exile, or rather, banishment, of Cicero had many precedents. His own thundering accusation of Catiline appears to end somewhat lamely as an appeal 'to remove himself from within the walls of Rome'. Voluntary withdrawal into exile, often a pre-emptive for possible capital punishment or 'adrogatio', would here have shown up the conspirator's guilt. When Cicero himself fled from Rome in 58 B.C., he was following this convention, with a predictable result. Our Roman legal sources are late and codify practices which developed and became institutionalised in the centuries since Rome's beginnings. Livy (1.59.11-60 and 2.2.2) construes the banishment of the Tarquins as 'exile'. Republican Rome featured many notable exiles, such as Caeso Quinctius, the son of Cincinnatus (Livy 3.2), Galus Servilius Ahala (4.14) and Camillus (7.1.10). The flight into exile and triumphant return of Marius, only to end in premature death during his seventh consulate, became a frequently exploited literary topos.

The difference between self-imposed and state-enforced exile was recognised. Only after the Lex Tullia de ambitu, passed during Cicero's consulship, was exile officially designated as a penalty. Exile was defined as 'civitatis amissio'. Change of domicile caused immediate loss of civic status in the case of 'solum verte exilii causa', involving escape from capital condemnation or, as in the case of Cicero, if the sentence imposed was 'interdictio aqua et igni'. Loss of Roman citizenship commenced only on arrival at the imposed destination. A Roman 'exsul' could take up local citizenship. Capture by an enemy meant loss of civil status in Rome. Regulus was seen as the embodiment of civic loyalty, for refusing to escape from a position of 'non-citizenship' after his capture during the First Punic War.

Cicero's discussion of exile as a philosophical phenomenon (Tusc. 5.107), lists as involuntary exiles Greek philosophers who never returned to their
native cities, including his friend Posidonius. The fact of their ‘exile’, perhaps only removal to a cultural centre, seems to have loomed large in Cicero’s consciousness. The century preceding the Ciceronian era had produced many noble Roman exiles, who frequently resorted to temporary or permanent settlement in the provinces, often in the East, particularly Rhodes and Mytilene. Opirius, the consul of 122 BC, acquitted after the death of Gaius Gracchus, was nevertheless condemned, some ten years later, for intriguing with Jugurtha. He died in exile at Dyrrouchium, much later Cicero’s place of banishment. Opimius’ contemporary Metellus Numidicus, frequently cited by Cicero, went into voluntary exile to Rhodes rather than acquiesce in the agrarian reforms of Appuleius Saturninus and Glaucia.

Rutilius Rufus, exiled after 88 BC, was the first to devote the involuntary ‘otium’ resulting from enforced retreat from public life both to philosophic writing and to self-exoneration while composing a contemporary Roman history. The accusation against Rutilius was intrigue with the enemies of Rome. Unhelpfully brief fragments of his apology survive, of which none, except possibly Diomed. 1 p. 374, appears to refer to his exile.

Cicero’s banishment

Cicero’s consistent reluctance to leave the capital is well attested. For him, to be in Rome was to be at the hub of the universe, and all removal from it seemed ‘obscura et sordida’. Writing from Formiae in April 59 BC, he explains ‘Narro tibi, plane relegatus mihi videor, posteaquam in Formiano sum’ (Att. 2.11). This reluctance lay behind his recusation of the proconsulship in the year after the Catilinarian conspiracy, and it breathes from every letter written from Cilicia when he finally undertook the delayed proconsulship, admitting to Caelius Rufus, ‘vidisti quam abhorrerem ab urbe relinquenda’ (Fam. 2.16.3).

The events leading to Cicero’s banishment read like a catalogue of the forces of retribution mustering against a man intent on self-destruction. In 63 he allowed Cato to manoeuvre him into acquiescing in the death of Catilina’s fellow-conspirators. In the political climate at the end of his consulship in 63 not all at Rome shared Cicero’s own enthusiasm for his defeat of the Catilinarians. Soon after, Cicero earned the undying hatred of the aspirant tribune Clodius by his role in exposing Clodius’ masquerade in the Bona Dea scandal. Clodius’ peccadillo was seized upon by his enemies as an opportunity to undermine his influence in Rome, particularly to separate him from his still real influence in the Senate. A letter to Atticus on 25 June 61 (Att. 1.13.3) gives, with salacious amusement, the details of the Bona Dea affair.

Clodius was eventually vindicated. It suited him to concentrate his reciprocal invidia on a single senator, and Cicero, being a ‘novus homo’, was
easily sacrificed, largely by neglect, by the Senate to become the scapegoat and focal point of Clodius' increasing demagoguery. The feeling between Cicero and Clodius was in 59 largely overshadowed by senatorial unease over the triumvirs' encroachment of power. Cicero retired to Antium. The triumvirs were gaining in popular appeal. Clodius retained their confidence just long enough to be supported in his 'traductio ad plebem', after which he could become tribune. In Att. 2.15.2 Cicero admits to a certain grudging admiration of Clodius.

Cicero's letters indicate increasing unease. At first, the general state of the Republic is of greater concern than any danger threatening his person, real as it is: 'mortem et eiectionem quasi maiora timemus, quae multo sunt minora' (Att. 2.18.1). His fears, so far, are for the general good, and he himself feels brave: 'Non lubet fugere, aveo pugnare' (ibid. 3). He is aware of Clodian threats, and proposes to bear them 'summa cum dignitate.' Caesar's somewhat surprising offer of an appointment to a legateship to Gaul would have saved both Cicero's person and his face, but it was refused. He still relished fighting back (Att. 2.19.5).

In 60, when storm clouds had already started gathering, Cicero idly contemplated going to Egypt 'to get away from this part of the world where people are tired of me and to come back when they have begun to miss me a little.' One important consideration impeded him: 'Quid vero historiae de nobis ad annos DC praedicarint? Quas quidem ego multo magis vereor quam eorum hominum, qui hodie vivunt, rumasculos' (Att. 2.5.1). Such regard for the judgment, not only of history, but also of his contemporaries, gains in importance in his own perceptions, and eventually appears as a fixation.

In the latter part of 59 concern about the actions of the triumvirs, cautiously designated as 'eos, qui tenent omnia,' which threaten to engulfi the state, alternates with a growing concern about Clodius, who threatens 'new violence, now a law suit' (Att. 2.22.1). By this time Cicero is willing even to resort to arms (QF: 1.2.66). Every movement of the Clodian plot and counterplot is reported in guarded language. The author's moods swing with every letter. In October he confesses 'prorsus vitae taedet' (Att. 2.24.4). He begins to view his literary friends as a potential source of political support, which he tries to gain through praise of their scholarly efforts. Varro is his chief target, and his request to Atticus is candid: '... sed ego mallem ad illum scripsiisse mihi illum satisfacere, non quo faceret, sed ut faceret' (Att. 2.25.1). This observation bespeaks profound psychological insight. He is still confident: 'firmaestima benevolentia hominum muniti sumus ... ' (ibid.2).

Early in 58 BC Clodius as tribune passed four major laws, the last of which was aimed at revenge. The first three were not as 'revolutionary' as Cicero chose to present them later. Reinstatement of the right of as-
sociation, abrogated six years previously, revived erstwhile 'collegia' and established new ones, potentially useful political tools. \(^43\) Popularity was bought by providing for gratis grain rations, already heavily subsidized, and therefore no real threat to the public 'fiscus'. \(^44\) An amendment to the 'lex Aelia Fufia' restricted magisterial powers, safeguarding the assembly against political abuse of religious sanction, and limited the powers of the censor. \(^45\)

There was a stronger element of popular feeling against Cicero than he liked to acknowledge. After Clodius' bill 'de capite civis Romani', interdicting from fire and water anyone who had executed a citizen without trial, Cicero put off his brave front, trying to gain support as 'supplex', the whole Senate going into mourning with him. When this proved useless, he fled precipitately (Plut. Cic. 31). The triumvirs supported Clodius' measures by inaction, largely because they themselves were concerned to safeguard their own 'acta' of 59, and could not afford to alienate a powerful tribune. \(^46\) According to Dio Cassius (38.17.1) Clodius even managed to manoeuvre Caesar at a 'contio' into giving the plebs his opinion, of necessity negative, of the execution of citizens without popular trial.

A second bill 'ut M. Tullio aqua et igni interdictum sit' officially sanctioned as banishment Cicero's voluntary withdrawal. \(^47\) Clodius could legally attach Cicero's property. This second bill merits attention in the first of the hasty notes dispatched to Atticus by the southward-bound fugitive (Att. 3.1). The dating of these early missives and Cicero's route are problematical. \(^48\) He went where he knew he would be received by friends willing to brave prosecution for harbouring an 'exsul'. Perhaps he was tending vaguely towards Sicily, which was close enough to Italy for rapid recall, and potentially congenial (Planc. 95, 96). The early letters (Att. 3.1 to 3.5), however, indicate nothing of this. Cicero wanted to reach Epirus, hoping for his friend's continued support and hopefully real aid. En route to Brindisi from Vibo he noted from a copy of the bill that it stipulated banishment beyond four hundred Roman miles. Even Malta would have been too close.

These first notes reflect shock and misery, but very little factual detail. From Brindisi more formal letters of appeal go to his immediate family (Fam. 14.4) and Atticus (Att. 3.7), both dated 29 April 58. The practical details of the plans outlined in the two letters are inconsistent. To Atticus he mentions Epirus as a stopover on a possible journey to Athens, to his family he proposes journeying to Cyzicus via Macedonia. He admits to yearning for death. To his family Cicero confesses to being routed by his tears, to Atticus that he hardly wants to see the light of day and flees from company.

The letter to 'his family' becomes, during its course, a personal address to his wife Terentia, and parts of its prose seem to pre-empt the formulaic
woeful lover of later Roman elegy: ‘te quam primum, mea vita, cupio videre et in tuo complexu emori’ (1). Although the letter purports to be comforting his distressed wife, the focus is on Cicero’s civic self. Its lachrymose and sentimental tone reflects the misery of a fugitive from Rome more than the longing of a husband bereft of the company of his wife. Consciousness of rectitude is no comfort, but an added affliction, as he explains with an alliterated rhetorical flourish: ‘non vitium nostrum, sed virtus nostra nos affixit’ (5). His sin is none other than to have gone on living, but life away from Rome is not really living. His life is continued only vicariously, through Terentia: ‘si te habebo, non mihi plane videbor perisse’ (3). A later letter addresses his brother Quintus in vaguely similar terms, but the focus is on self and what he has lost: ‘an ego possum aut non cogitare aliquando de te aut unquam sine lacrimis cogitare? cum enim te desidero, fratrem solum desidero? ... quid mihi sine te unquam aut tibi sine me iucundum fuit?’ (QFr. 1.3.3).

Flight over the Adriatic came next. Soon Cicero is settled in Plancius’ house at Dyrrhachium. Appeals to Atticus follow in a constant stream, a psychological outreach for comfort. An anxious fifteen months or so were spent at the house of his patient friend. The distraught Cicero could not so much as decide whether or when to leave Dyrrhachium in order to join Atticus in Epirus.

Cicero’s letters from exile

Cicero’s informal correspondence reflects his physical and mental debilitation in exile and offers a paradigm for the articulation of the day-to-day emotional vicissitudes of exile, displaying those psychological aspects which ancient philosophical effort usually aimed at dispelling. Philosophy is inadequate: ‘no wisdom nor philosophy has the power to bear such great pain ...’ (QFr. 1.3.5). Cicero considers himself unique in his present suffering. Loss of his ‘patria’ is poetically termed ‘aerumna’. Similarly, his wife is ‘Terentia, unam omnium aerumnossissimam’ (Att. 3.23.8).

The exile is weighed down by a misery of mythical proportions: only full restitution can remove it. Thoughts of suicide occurred initially, but Cicero was no Stoic sage. Suicide might suit a Cato, but it was not for him. Later, in the retelling, avoidance of death was equated with ‘keeping the State alive.’ At first, however, Atticus is upbraided for having held him back, and death is a ‘desideratum’. Consciousness of culpability, but only for having allowed himself to be eliminated as a political power, alternates with fears for affecting the safety of others. He never admits that the irregular execution of the conspirators was a mistake, for he never sees it as such. Like another Socrates, he is certain that he should have received great honours for having saved the state.
Political aid is sought from others. Cicero again hopes for Varro’s support (Att. 3.15.1 and 3.18.1). He trusts that Atticus will be able to suppress an unfortunately timed political speech against Curio. If it is leaked, he hopes anxiously that it can be passed off as a forgery (Att. 3.12.2) and he continues to worry about it (Att. 3.15.3). In January 57 Cicero appeals to Metellus Nepos to keep his ‘relatives’ (Metellus Celer’s wife Clodia and her brother) from persecuting him (Fam. 5.4). After Cicero’s return from banishment, a letter of gratitude from Nepos, thanking Cicero for services rendered, reflects the efficacy of the appeal in restoring mutual friendship (Fam. 5.3).

On the occasion of Atticus’ adoption by and inheritance from an uncle, he forces himself to pen a more cheerful letter, acknowledging his friend’s assistance and his own petulance, but the general drift is morbid (Att. 3.20). The ‘me miserum’ of this letter (1) is repeated in a pleonastic phrase later ‘oro obtestorque te, ut Quintum fratrem ames, quem ego miserum misere perdidi’ (Att. 3.23.5). The exile’s letters to his brother are even more lachrymose (QFr. 1.3.2, 3); tears drop on letters from home and blot the words (Fam. 14.3.1); he lost all when he lost his family (Fam. 14.1.5).

Occasionally he escapes from his web of woe. The tatters of consolation offered his wife on 29 April 58 remind Terentia that they had experienced a full life together (‘viximus, floruiimus’), and had been laid low by their virtues, not by vice, and that he was ‘more moved by her misery than by his own’ (Fam. 14.4.5). To his brother, however, Cicero admits that he has lost all hope (QFr. 1.4.2).

In fine, Cicero articulates severe inner misery. His cry is not for temporary relief of pain, but for an end to it (Att. 3.7.2). His plans change with every letter, but none comes to fruition. He cannot face his brother (Att. 3.9.1), who is ‘too cheerful’ (Att. 3.18.1). Grief keeps him from writing (Att. 3.10.3 and 3.12.3). He reassures Atticus about the rumour that his mind has become unhinged through grief (Att. 3.15.2).

While still in Italy, early in April 58, Cicero assured Atticus that his loss of prestige had not changed him: ‘ego enim idem sum. Inimici mei mea mihi, non me ipsum ademerunt’ (Att. 3.5). This is philosophical equanimity indeed. After the ‘interdictio aquae et ignis’ his family are ‘dearer to him than life’; it is their loss that is unbearable (Att. 3.22.3). His cry, as exile, that loss of life means less than loss of his ‘patria’ (Att. 3.26) much later finds echoes in appeals to the exiled Marcellus to return to the capital, if only to die there. Yet when there is talk of return, his material losses loom larger: return to Rome and restitution ‘only’ of citizenship and rank would not be enough (Att. 3.23). Perhaps the key lies in Cicero’s apparent unawareness of a personal, private self separable from a civic self. Both are to him embodied in the material possessions, the support of his family, and the honour of which he has been stripped.
Anti-consolatio

The epistolary genre of 'consolatio ad exulem' was well-established, and in later years Cicero himself frequently resorted to the tradition in letters to political exiles. Consolation in exile can be traced to Greek origins, perhaps Bion and Ariston of Chios. It was practised by Teles (third century BC) of whose work fragments survive. Its themes are: all mankind is subject to the vicissitudes of Fortune, one place is as good as another, and exile is neither good nor bad, but a neutrum, and so too is the loss of all material goods. This tradition of sagacious self-sufficiency is traceable to Stilpo of Megara (c. 380–300 BC), who denied having lost anything after the sack of Aegina, 'as he still retained his eloquence and knowledge'. The later Roman tradition has many instances of consolatio-in-action, the successful and whole-hearted application of a philosopher's own creed to his own exile.

Because exile frequently served as pre-emption of or substitute for the death penalty, it was often portrayed in literature as the virtual equivalent of death. That Cicero was aware of the tradition of philosophical discussion of illness, death and exile and of formal consolation for all three, there can be no doubt. His fragmentary consolation, written as self-therapy after the death of Tullia in 45, bears witness to this. For him in 58 banishment meant civil death: loss of 'salus' meant both loss of health and loss of civic rights. Rational acceptance of exile, of the changeability of Fortune, of world-citizenship and of the neutrality of exile are the four recurrent elements of the exilic consolatory genre. More than one of Cicero's letters of 58 follow this ordered pattern, but in a negative vein.

A long letter from Thessaly, written in August 58 (Att. 3.15) in reply to consolation by Atticus, offers a complete palinode of the normal 'consolatio'. The exile begs his friend not to try to console him. In exile he has no opportunity for rational thought. If Atticus is missing him, what, does he imagine, are Cicero's feelings at having lost all? To recapitulate his losses would mean that Cicero himself was 'reopening his own wound.' This medical imagery (continued later with 'meis vulneribus'), is followed by a catalogue of ills: no-one before has ever lost so much: counting blessings is useless, for the thought of past happiness augments present misery. The usual philosophical assumption that passage of time will alleviate pain, is untrue, for 'Dies autem non modo non levat luctum hunc, sed etiam auget' (2). About half a page of discussion of political connections follows (3), after which Cicero turns to the contemplation of future happiness, when Fortune will 'aliquando' restore him to his friends and 'patria'. He promises then to 'be a better friend' (4).

Here Cicero admits that, although blameless, he has been his own greatest enemy, and that his political actions and reactions were shortsighted.
(4a). He should have remained firm, thereby gaining either freedom or death (4b). Cicero blames his friends and himself for their blindness in not having ignored Clodius' first bill, and for having gone into mourning when it was passed (5). He is concerned about his property and house. There can be no true restitution without recovery of these (6a). Cicero is unsure where to go: he wants to stay close to Rome in the hope that events may develop favourably, but desires seclusion on Atticus' estate 'ut neque videam homines, quos nolim, et te, ut scribis, videam' (6b). Normally, for him life away from Rome was no life at all: his words are symptomatic of severe depression.

The last page of the letter again criticizes Atticus for bad advice, and he blames himself for taking it: 'ego proditus, inductus, coniectus in fraudem omnia mea praesidia neglexi, totam Italiam mire erectam ad me defendendum destitui et reliqui, me meos, mea tradidi inimicis inspectante et tacente te' (7a). Atticus had allowed him to rush to his own ruin (7b). Such pre-emption of ruin brought misery. Finally, Cicero remains all too conscious of his loss of a good reputation, and of social and political power (8a). Cicero mourns, refusing all comfort: only restitution will bring him happiness (7b). A contrite rider ends the letter: Cicero hopes that his friend will realise that he blames himself most (8b).

Such lack of philosophical fortitude has left Cicero's readership uncomfortable over the centuries. One ancient author attempted to deal with it by means of a fictitious 'consolatio'. In a famous passage Dio Cassius (38.18–29) lays a dialogue in the mouths of the exiled Cicero and a 'Philiscus', a former acquaintance whom he meets again in Macedonia, and who offers him consolation.64 This dialogue should not be considered as factual. It may possibly have been based on the letter discussed above, which it appears to refute, point by point. Dio Cassius normally exploits the historiographical convention of including speeches or dialogue in his narrative, to convey character. The 'discourse' between 'Philiscus' and Cicero, after its initial conversational introduction, is in fact also a monologue.

In Dio's conversational opening 'Philiscus' assumes the role of a friend lightening a physical burden (38.18.1–4). He chides Cicero for his faint-hearted submission to woe (38.18.5). Dio's arguments fall in the conventional consolatory categories. Medical imagery is prevalent. The exile is exhorted to exhibit a rational attitude: first he should realize that the pain of banishment lies in the perception of the sufferer, and not in fact.65 'Cicero' here appears more conscious of the discrepancy between his philosophical background and his irrational woe than in any of his exilic letters. He is eager to be healed by the 'medicine of philosophy' (38.19.1). The exile is exhorted first to 'count his blessings': good health and possession of the ordinary necessities of life (38.19.2). 'Cicero' outlines his misery of spirit (38.20–1). 'Philiscus' demolishes this, reminding Cicero that his own
proven sagacity and sense of justice should comfort him now (38.22.1,2) 66 and emphasizing Cicero's own responsibility, for the tenor of his life and for his present mischance (38.22.2–4).

'Cicero' questions his friend about disenfranchisement and other discomforts concomitant with exile, and is countered with arguments about the universality of the human condition, and world-citizenship, based on the idea of man's adaptability and the fact of frequent voluntary exile (38.23). Choice of destination is limited to the suggestion that Cicero should find some small spot on the coast where he may enjoy his new-found 'otium' (a reference, no doubt, to the Tuscan villa). The creation of own ambience for a happy life is illustrated with 'exempla' from Greek and Roman history (38.26.3–27.3). He should devote himself to farming and historiography, as did Xenophon and Thucydides (38.28.1). Cicero, having once attained the high office of consul, could not add to his fame by repeating the feat: 'Would Cicero prefer to be himself, and alive, than to be Marius or Corvinus, long since dead, for all their multiple consulates?' (38.28.4).

Dio can, with auctorial hindsight, portray 'Philiscus' as winding up his discourse with the argument that present banishment may pre-empt an unhappy future. 'Philiscus' postulates some later, fatal punishment, decapitation, and abuse of Cicero's lifeless head by all, man and woman, who see it in the Forum (38.29.2,3). The argument is obviously based on the known facts of Cicero's fate, but stems ultimately from the traditional list of consolatory commonplaces refuting the idea of exile as an evil.

With this imaginary exchange Dio has given voice to the reactions of generations of readers.

**The exile returned: history rewritten**

When after more than a year the political climate changed, and it suited the triumvirs, particularly Pompey, and also the Senate, who probably saw in Clodius an increasing threat to their power, Cicero was recalled, more by default than by the universal acclaim he so fondly extolled. Cicero returned to Rome from banishment early in September 57 BC. Within the first week he publicly, in two separate speeches, thanked the Senate and the people for his restitution. The returned exile had a unique opportunity to comment on his experience: in various speeches after his return, hurriedly composed in the first flush of ebullient victory, Cicero rewrote history, giving an heroic colouring to his deeds and reactions, and offering an 'apologia pro vita sua', recasting the reasons for his withdrawal in a favourable light. 67 Cicero's speeches of thanks differ hugely from the despairing *cris-de-coeur* penned during exile. 68 A noble and heroic Stoic sage, who bravely bore all vicissitudes, emerges from the speeches. That his journey from Brundisium to Rome resembled a triumphal march (*Att*. 4.1) need not be doubted, but
this should rather be ascribed to the notorious fickleness of mob mentality
than to a conscious popular vindication of Ciceronian rectitude.

At the end of September Cicero spoke before the College of Pontiffs, ap-
pealing for the deconsecration of the site of his house, which had been razed
by Clodius, demanding that the 'impious' temple to Libertas that Clodius
had caused to be erected on the site should be removed (De domo sua).
The appeal was ultimately successful and the Senate ordered compensation
for the destruction of this house and others.

In the following years, in speeches defending those who had aided Ci-
cero, notably Sestius, charged with violence and bribery, in March 56, and
Gnaeus Plancius, arraigned for bribery in 54, we have essentially the same
themes, illuminated by dramatic overdrawing. Also in Cicero's invective
against his enemies (Pis., parts of Sest. and Dom.) history is rewritten.
The defence of Sestius is important for its general discussion of exile as a
political tool, its view of the conventions of 'amicitia', and of the politi-
cal use and abuse of augury. The view of Cicero's heroic, self-sacrificial
withdrawal to save the state from bloodshed is by now firmly established
(Sest. 49). The orator declares his willingness to return into exile with any
other of his former defenders, should they be similarly condemned (Sest.
144–147).

Cicero creates an almost formulaic referential web. Certain allusions are
established as virtual metaphors for his own heroism. The 'exemplum' of
the voluntary exile in 100 BC, to pre-empt civil war, by Q. Metellus Nu-
midicus, is frequently repeated. Cicero's famous 'apologia' for his change
of political front, written to P. Lentulus in December 54 BC, also refers to
Metellus, who, Cicero says, some aver was 'fracto animo et demisso'. His
enemies imagined the same about him: 'abiectiore animo futurum, cum
respublica maiorem etiam mihi animum, quam umquam habuissem, daret'
(Fam. 1.9.16). His 'greater courage', he adds, was 'because the whole state
wanted his return'.

Like his Catilinarian orations, Cicero's speeches before Senate, commons
and pontiffs, spoken in the first flush of his return, are adapted to the
susceptibilities of their respective audiences. Allusions to exilic exempla,
Opimius, Q. Metellus Numidicus and Gaius Marius, vary in their presenta-
tion, as do references to contemporaries. To the Senate Cicero emphasizes
the respective roles in his recall of the consuls Publius Lentulus Spinther
and Quintus Metellus Nepos, and the influential Pompey (Red. Sen. 6).
The people, again, are assured that their soft-hearted yielding to the tear-
ful pleas of Cicero's brother and his son-in-law Gaius Dolabella achieved
the restoration of the exile (Red. Pop. 7, 8). He assures the citizens that it
had been impossible for them to succumb before the tears of his wife and
children, because these were kept from them 'aut itineribus necessariis aut
magnam partem tectis ac tenebris ... ' (Red. Pop. 10). A pathetic tone sets
the key.

Marius, like Cicero a ‘novus homo’ from Arpinum, serves as particular ‘exemplum’ to the people. He was an autocratic revolutionary who ‘exercitu se armisque revocavit’ (Red. Pop. 7), in comparison with whom Cicero’s peaceful and popularly acclaimed return stands in noble contrast (ibid. 7–11). This exemplum can, however, not be wholly negative: Gaius Marius was, after all, a popular hero, and so he is portrayed as a Cicernonian prototype, also doomed to do battle against Fortune herself: ‘Vidi ego fortissimum virum, municipem meum, C. Marium — quoniam nobis quasi aliqua fatali necessitate non solum cum his, qui haec delere voluissent, sed etiam cum fortuna belligerandum fuit.—’ (ibid. 19). This paragon, Cicero says, was like the orator himself, never bowed down by his misfortune, remaining courageous until his circumstances changed. Cicero himself, however, was the better man, for he refrained from wreaking vengeance upon his enemies: his return occurred ‘in pace atque otio’ (ibid. 21). As the sagacious statesman, he promises that his sole revenge upon each of several classes of enemies will be ‘wise administration of the state, cautious wariness in dealing with erstwhile friends, devotion to glory and virtue, and prosecution of mercatores provinciarum’ — that is, his power restored, the hero promises to wield it justly (ibid. 22).

In Cicero’s speech to the Senate Marius is dismissed in a sentence ‘as a consular who all but abolished the Senate after his return’ (Red. Sen. 38). Here the magnanimity of the consuls of 57, who had worked for Cicero’s return, is compared with the villainy of those who had allowed him to be exiled. Topoi from the consolatory genre are adapted to the situation. If exile is death, then return is rebirth: the noble Lentulus, so the Senate is assured, established Cicero’s ‘day of birth’ when he restored him to the bosom of his family (ibid. 27). Gratitude to individual members of the nobility is spelled out, and the returned consular gives thanks to his former host in Macedonia, Gnaeus Plancius, who, ‘had I been a general, would (as quaestor) have been my “son”, but now he is my “father” … ’ (ibid. 34). Cicero’s brother and son-in-law receive their dues of praise, in much the same terms as in the speech before the people (ibid. 37, 38). Ties of blood and alliance merit identical treatment before Senate and people.

The process of sublimation

In the speech about his house, for which Cicero presumably had some three weeks to prepare, he thoroughly rewrites the subjective history of his banishment. The psychological process of sublimation is clearly at work. The argument depends largely on the question of the legality of Clodius’ enactments: Cicero begins by declaring Clodius’ adoption into the plebeian order as illegal (Dom. 32–42). So all his tribunicien enactments may be ruled out of order. Cicero puts a new construction on the enactments that
related directly to him, arguing that he never was a 'real' exile, for he had done nothing to forfeit citizenship (ibid. 72–92). It is clear that the term _exsul_, although technically never applicable to him, riled, and he expended much effort in dispelling all allusion to it. His 'exile' was a form of proscription, the result of Clodius' lusting after his property, which ended in expulsion rather than death (ibid. 51). On the other hand the younger Cato's honourable expedition to Cyprus is construed as 'exile' (ibid. 52). Legal issues are exploited in every possible direction: Lucius Cotta had shown that no new law establishing Cicero's reinstatement was needed, as his 'banishment' had been illegal (ibid. 68); the 'law' promulgated by Clodius, forbidding discussion of Cicero's case in the senate, had been void, and Lentulus had subsequently ignored it (ibid. 68–70); all at Rome had continued to name Cicero in civic and legal documents, thereby confirming his full civic status; Lucius Cotta, the ex-Censor, swore that, if in that time a census had taken place, he would have included Cicero's name on the senatorial roll (ibid. 84).

Discussion of the nature of exile takes place on two levels. Philosophically, Cicero reverts to the consolatory topos that exile is a 'nomen calamitatis, non turpitudinis' (Dom. 72). Legally, he emphasizes, a citizen who has left Rome voluntarily can lose citizenship only by an effort of his own will, by accepting the citizenship of a Latin colony, so Clodius' ruling had never amounted to Cicero's loss of citizenship, but merely to 'tecti et aquae et ignis interdictio' (ibid. 78). Publius Popilius and Quintus Metellus are cited as historical precedents. Clodius' own father had lost his command, and, by implication, his status, during the eighties, but 'nemo umquam sanus exsulem appellavit' — for it had occurred in turbulent times (ibid. 83–86).

So the _apologia_ continues. The illegality of Cicero's banishment was matched only by his innocence and renown. His flight is presented as voluntary withdrawal to save the state from turmoil (ibid. 87–96). This speech, delivered so soon after his return, candidly acknowledges Cicero's own grief during exile, his lack of philosophical resignation, and the insinuation by others that the orator had been totally broken in spirit. Justification follows these admissions, and the returned exile's sufferings are raised to the heroic level. If he had not felt thus, he says, at leaving family, hearth and home, 'patriae denique causa patiam ipsam amittere', his sacrifice for the welfare of the state would not have been so great. Had he been wholly in control of his emotions, philosophically immutable, his withdrawal would not have been so sublime. He had been willing to suffer in body and spirit to save his country from suffering. His grief served only to point to the greatness of his sacrifice (ibid. 97–98).

So, less than a month after his return, we may already discern the workings of selective memory: past pain is romanticized. That his memory of
past misery was conveniently dispelled by the happiness and triumph of his recall, is as much part of the statesman's psychological make-up as the misery itself. He was equally despairing after another personal tragedy, the death of Tullia in 45. The next step in the psychological process of dealing with the past is expurgation. Cicero's peroration conveniently forgets the exile's anguished cry, 'if I lose all I hold dear, what am I?' (Att. 3.19). Cicero, as a true philosopher, here contends that man's property is transient. Its loss offers the sage a chance to be steadfast. The loss of Cicero's house is evil and harmful only insofar as it symbolizes the disgrace and ignominy inflicted upon the state. The restoration of his house will, while restoring his physical comforts to Cicero, restore the honour of the Roman state (Dom. 147). And so it came to pass. The house was rebuilt at state expense. Cicero was vindicated, in his own eyes, if not in the eyes of others.

In the speech for Sestius, some months later, we may trace a further development in Cicero's view of the past. His banishment now is depicted as a time of heroic fortitude, when a gallant noble had willingly sacrificed all, including his personal comfort, to the preservation of the state from unnecessary bloodshed. This hero was cheerful and resourceful in exile, until his recall by all the best elements of Roman society. He never feared death for himself, but knew that his death would mean the death of the Republic. He promises to hold on to the power which was restored to him. Thanks to the integrity of his spirit, he was beaten, but never despairing (Sest. 36 ff, passim). The Cicero depicted in this speech is by no means the Cicero of the despairing letters of 58.

His own precipitate flight from Rome, after Clodius' first bill, is now construed as 'giving way to save the state from civil war' (Sest. 43–49). The implication is that all Italy, except a handful of persecutors, would have risen up in Cicero's defence, precipitating widespread bloodshed, if the noble hero, another Metellus, had not withdrawn, taking, as it were, the focal point of potential unrest with him. We need not doubt that Cicero by now fervently believes his own expurgated version, but here he has difficulty to justify his former eagerness to resort to arms to secure his return, which stands in unfavourable contrast with the willing continuation of his own exile by the heroic Regulus (Sest. 127–8).

By 54, in the speech defending Plancius, Cicero indignantly refutes a consistent innuendo by the prosecution that he had fled in 58 because he had feared death. Hindsight has by now construed Clodius' bill 'de civis capite Romani' as an indubitable and bloody threat of arms: had the hero stayed, and had he (inevitably) fallen by armed violence, he would have gained immortality through the sacrifice of his life in the interests of the state. Such a noble death would, however have robbed the state of 'id exemplum, qualis futurus in me restituendo fuisset senatus populusque
Romanus' (*Planc. 90*).

The defence of Cicero's former host offers his advocate a further opportunity for rewriting the past in virtually epic terms. His revision of the past has once again grown in stature. By now he claims that a total holocaust of cosmic proportions had threatened all Italy (*Planc. 95*). Cicero's heroism is equalled only by what he portrays as the heroic fortitude of the governor of Sicily, Gaius Vergilius, who had realized that his powers were too puny alone to assail the powers of darkness ranged against them (*Planc. 96*). Gnaeus Plancius' heroic efforts on behalf of the exiled Cicero are melodramatically portrayed. Both heroes are raised to a mythical level, with tears, groans and laments, vigils and superhuman watches: but it was Plancius, prostrate with sympathetic grief, who required encouragement from Cicero, 'vana quaedam miser atque inania falsa spe inductus' (*Planc. 101*). The exile had promised his sympathetic friend that, if ever he were restored, he would devote his life to grateful recompense for services rendered. At Plancius' trial this promise is being fulfilled. Now, for the first time, the moment has come that Cicero can resort to tears and laments, but these are vicarious, since Cicero's tears are for Plancius, now also threatened with exile. Cicero's final appeal is that the jury should devote some tears to Plancius, as they had had before shed them for him (*Planc. 104*). Gone is all memory of letters from home awash with his tears (*Fam. 14.3.1*). Throughout exile Cicero had remained dry-eyed. Others had wept for him: the implication is that he had remained steadfast.

**Invective against Piso, 'author' of his banishment**

Such portrayal of heroism, inevitably, needs a foil: the powers of darkness must bear a human face. It is psychologically necessary for the vindicated Cicero to externalize the blame for his own political downfall. Clodius is powerful: at first little public invective is aimed at him, and he merits only oblique references in the first months after Cicero's recall. By 56 Cicero could once more afford to attack his enemy openly. Other, less powerful enemies merited attack on a more extensive scale. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, consul in 58, proconsul of Macedonia in 57–55, was Julius Caesar's father-in-law. Together with his colleague Gabinius, he more than passively allowed Clodius to introduce the bill that precipitated Cicero's flight. Clodius' simultaneous second bill assigned Macedonia to Piso and Cilicia (later changed to Syria) to Gabinius, thus ensuring their neutrality. Cicero, after his return, was eager to call Piso to account.

On Piso's return from his province in 55, the antagonists clashed in the Senate. Cicero was particularly affronted because Piso had ridiculed his ignominious flight and his tactless, self-glorifying poetry. The balance of influence between Piso and Cicero was at this stage such that it was safe for Cicero to publish their altercation. The pamphlet alternates allusions
to the appearance, habits and deeds of the ‘monster’ with autobiographical passages portraying the heroic deeds of Cicero as ‘pater patriae’. It is known that Piso published a pamphlet of his own, and the In Pisonem was probably its rebuttal. The scurrilous so-called In Ciceronem of Pseudo-Sallust is sometimes ascribed to Piso. Fragment 20 of In Pisonem, quoted by Grillius (16 p. 72 Martin), may be from Piso’s pamphlet: ‘Non me debes lacerare, quia non ego te in exilium misi, sed Caesar et Pompeius.’

Power was an important factor. Pompey and Caesar had, by default, been equally instrumental in Cicero’s banishment, but were now increasingly influential, and Cicero clearly deemed it safer to avoid attacking them. They apparently ignored the publication of the pamphlet, but bided their time. Cicero was later ignominiously manoeuvred into defending Gabinius on a count of bribery.

The In Pisonem is interesting for the view that it gives of the psychological make-up of the returned consular. It borrows heavily from the tradition of comic invective, and the picture that emerges, of a drunken sot of servile origin, unprepossessing appearance, and base habits, is sheer fiction, in the worst tradition of random caricature. Cicero’s invective focuses in turn on the opponent’s antecedents, appearance, morals and personal habits, supposed avarice, pretentiousness, philhellenism and Epicurean philosophy. These are undoubtedly stock themes, employed elsewhere by Cicero, and on occasion by others against him (e.g. Pseudo-Sallust In Cic. 2.5). Focus on the supposed negative qualities of the antagonist alternates with exposition of the noble qualities of the heroic protagonist. Piso and his associates, family and ancestry all share in the conventional abuse of comic invective.

The whole speech may be seen as another means used for self-glorification by a man deeply hurt in his self-esteem. A look at Cicero’s use of verbs is illuminating. The first part of the pamphlet is fragmentary. A first person verb (‘viderem’) forms the psychological and syntactic climax to what is generally regarded as the introductory sentence of the oration: ‘Pro di immortales! qui hic inluxit dies, mihi quidem, patres conscripti, peroptatus, ut hoc portentum huius loci, monstrum urbis, prodigium civitatis viderem!’ Cicero is glad to see his enemy back from his province. Now he may call him to account. In fragment 18 repetition of key verbs in the first person serves for emphasis, but focus is more on the attacker than on the attacked: ‘Putavi austerum hominem, putavi tristem, putavi gravem; sed video adulterum, video ganeonem, video parietum praesidio, video amicorum sordibus, video tenebris occultantem libidines suas.’

The pamphlet proper, as we have it, begins with second person verbs, switching abruptly to the third person in the second paragraph. These verbal forms alternate frequently, a rhetorical ploy commonly used for variety, but also denoting contempt, often serving the same function as a comic
aside. Yet in the end second and third person verbs are subservient to the solipsism that colours all Cicero's writings on his banishment. Formal, rhythmical clausulae and elaborate alliteration give the oration the tone of prophetic denunciation, as in 9: 'Tacente te, a fatali portento prodigioque rei publicae Lex Aelia et Fufia eversa est ...' etc.

Piso's public life draws unashamedly subjective focus, with emphasis on first person pronouns: 'Is mihi gloriabatur se omnis magistratus sine repulsa adsecutum? Mihi ista licet de me vera cum gloria praedicare; omnis enim honores populus Romanus mihi ipsi non nomin detulit. Nam tu ... Piso est a populo Romano factus, non iste Piso ...' etc (Pis. 2). Cicero's own admirable participation in public life follows by contrast. 'Selbtkorrektur' focuses on the heroic autobiographer: 'miserum me! cum hac me nunc peste atque labe confero? ...' (3)

The greater part of the pamphlet (2-63) contrasts in detail the actions of protagonist and antagonist. Sections 4-7 deal with the main achievements of Cicero's consulship. The initial words of the sentences comprising sections 4, 5 and 6 are, in order: 'Ego', nine times in succession, then 'me', 'mihi' twice, 'ego' again, 'mihi' again. Concomitant verbs are in the first person. The personal pronoun 'me' and first person possessive adjective recur throughout. Cicero is portrayed as the prime mover in every event. Analysis of Piso's consulship (8-11), starting with the events of early 58, before the dire bill was passed, has subtly different emphasis. Events are drawn as happening by themselves, without apparent causality, or without Piso as agent. Again the protagonist's perception of events receives emphasis. This is not a rhetorical ploy, but evidence of psychologically urgent personal involvement with the man whom the returned exile blames for being the author of his misery.

The next section (12-21) deals with Piso's consulship. All the subjective bitterness only hinted at in the desperate letters from Dyrrachium now pours out in a self-centred attack on one who was at worst a neutral looker-on in the drama of Cicero's downfall. Piso has become a symbol, and therefore the focus of invective. Cicero's departure into banishment, always termed 'discessus' by the returned exile, 'fuga' by his enemies, is contrasted with Piso's departure for his province (sections 31-33). For Cicero his departure brought pain, but also glory (Pis. 31). Then follows a series of contrasts where Cicero in every case appears more laudable: all Italy stood transfixed with horror when he left; they were glad to see Piso go. Cicero's day of misery (32-330), his honourable recall (33-36) and his triumphant return (51-63) are the mirrors in which the supposed viciousness and ignominy of his enemy are reflected.

Cicero's perception of the fickleness of the mob mentality was apparently never strong. Distance in time lends further enchantment. The acclaim he
received on his way to Rome has here become ‘a Brundisio usque Romam agmen perpetuum’ (51–18). The description is vivid, the memory apparently more so. The letter of September 57 to Atticus (Att. 4.1) is redrawn, and exaggerated. One sentence gives the key to Cicero’s subjective perception of his own past: ‘Unus ille dies mihi quidem immortalitatis instar fuit quo in patriam redii, cum senatum egressum vidi populumque universum, cum mihi ipsa Roma prope convulsa sedibus suis ad complectendum conservatorem suum progredi visa est.’ This self-glorifying description is rounded off with Cicero’s subjective interpretation of the fact that the Senate uniquely voted to restore Cicero’s house at state expense (52).92

A scurrilous reference to the friendship between Piso and the Greek philosopher and poet Philodemus (68–72)93 leads to an expurgated account of Cicero’s relationship with Pompey (76–77) and Caesar (79–82). This picture of amicable friendship between the returned exile and the two most powerful men in the state differs from the fluctuations of anxiety depicted in the letters to Atticus, and from extant correspondence between Cicero and the triumvirs: ‘Me Cn. Pompeius, multis obsistentibus eius erga me studio atque amor, semper dilexit, semper sua coniunctione dignissimum iudicavit, ...’ (Pis. 76)94 About Caesar he is more candid: ‘Ego C. Caesarem non eadem de re publica sensisse quae me scio,’ but he goes on to reminisce about Caesar’s favourable attitude to him in 59 (79).

So the powerful is mollified, but there may be a hidden reason for the attack on Caesar’s father-in-law.95 The bitterness of Cicero’s onslaught on Piso reflects his inner attitude, also toward those enemies he dare not attack. Such passages cannot have strengthened Cicero’s position with the triumvirs. The weakness of Cicero’s public case against Piso is reflected in the fact that he refrained from any legal prosecution, content to resort to invective.96 Cicero’s explanations as to why he is not prosecuting Piso are flaccid (83, 95).97 He had no real case. The object of the pamphlet is to vent spleen. The final paragraph (99) reflects this emphasis, beginning ‘numquam ego sanguinem expetivi tuum’ and ending with ostensible threats ‘non moleste feram; ... fruar ... nec te minus libenter metuentem videbo ne reus fias quam reum, nec minus laetabor cum te semper sordidum, quam si paulisper sordidatum viderem.’ These are not threats of active retribution: verbs in the last sentence denote the speaker’s subjective sensation: ‘non moleste feram’, ‘I shall happily bear’; ‘fruar’, ‘I shall enjoy’; ‘videbo’, ‘I shall perceive’; ‘laetabor’, ‘I shall be overjoyed’; ‘si ... viderem’, ‘if I should have perceived’. One might enquire whether these are threats at all: would an antagonist really have been intimidated by the knowledge of future sensations in store for the speaker? Here again Cicero is identifying himself with the public weal. The invective of the In Pisonem is not the objective result of patriotic concern for the general welfare of the state, based on the proven or provable fact of corruption by the governor
of a province, but a manifestation of the returned exile’s subjective and embittered perception of a wrong done to himself as virtual personification of the state.

**Ciceronian historiography and epic**

There is thus a clear dichotomy between Cicero’s subjective perception of his banishment and the historical events that led to it. Epic was not traditionally a vehicle for personal emotion, yet the hexameter poetry composed by Cicero (on his consulship, of which some fragments remain, and probably also that on his banishment, which has been wholly lost) reflects this same subjectivity. Cicero was aware of the possibility, inherent in poetry, for heroizing persons and deeds.

Cicero wanted to resort to literature as a means of self-glorification. He completed schematic ‘commentarii’, in Greek and Latin, on his consulship, probably before his banishment. These were intended as working documents for a more florid approach by his contemporaries, the historiographer Lucceius and the polymath Posidonius, both of whom apparently declined to oblige. Cicero has been much censured for his request that Lucceius colour his biography (as opposed to sober historiography) more brightly than life, ‘plusculum etiam, quam concedat veritas’ (Fam. 5.12.4), ‘epistula enim non erubescit’ (1). His explanation offers a psychological key to the practice of historical hindsight: ‘Habet enim praeteriti doloris secura recordatio delictationem’. In Att. 2.1 he reports on Posidonius’ reaction to his ‘commentarius’ in Greek: its thoroughness, he said, had left Posidonius ‘detriritum.’ Similarly, he is puzzled (Att. 1.16.15) as to why his friend, the poet Archias, did not want celebrate his consulate in verse. He decides to do so himself (Att. 1.20). One may judge that all three authors found the task beyond their powers of straining veracity.

The quality of Cicero’s epic poem *De consulatu suo* has been much criticized, not least by Cicero’s contemporaries. The extant fragment, comprising some eighty verses, probably from its second book, seems largely to bear out this criticism.

Cicero’s reputation as poet could perhaps have stood higher with modern critics if more of his poetry on other topics had survived. His Latin version of Aratus’s *Phaenomena* is well-known for the direction it gave later imitators. An eighty-verse fragment from the *De consulatu suo* appears to draw upon Cicero’s own earlier interest in cosmology and celestial portents (1–41), Etruscan lore (42–54) and cult observance (55–70a). Much of the fragment is autobiographical, with emphasis on his early education and inclination towards poetry and statecraft (77–8). To the facts of the eventful closing weeks of 63, we have scant reference here. Other insignificant fragments survive, including the despised ‘O fortunatam ...’ and ‘Cedant
arma togae, concedat laurea laudi', which Cicero indignantly defends at 
Pis. 73,74.

After Cicero’s return from banishment, the complete story of his con-
sulate, banishment and restitution merited similar treatment, also under-
taken by the protagonist himself, for lack of an independent author. The
De temporibus suis was not, as has sometimes been suggested, an alter-
ate name for a reworking and updating of the De consulatu suo, which
had been published long before the second poem was completed.105

Unfortunately nothing of the exilic poem has survived, and we can only
attempt a reconstruction from allusions in letters106 and by means of com-
parison with the tone and thrust of the prose works we have considered
above, and the style of the extant fragments of Cicero’s other poems. The
poem would have been as redolent of heroizing epic and cosmic apparatus,
and equally bombastic, as the extant fragment of the De consulatu suo.
Similarly, its object would have been the rewriting of history in mythologi-
cal and heroic terms. Its raison-d’être would have been self-justification, in
similar vein to the various speeches after exile. The psychological impetus
that produced such a work would have been the same: the once powerful,
now stripped of his power, needed to restore himself in the eyes of the pub-
lic, perhaps also in his own. Allusions in various letters reflect, in turn, the
projected scope of the lost poem (Fam. 5.12.8), the poet’s own supreme
satisfaction with his composition and his brother’s concurrence of opinion
(QFr. 2.7.1), his early circulation of some parts of it (Quintus was asked
to give it to Caesar to read for comment, QFr. 2.13.2, 2.15.5), some of its
divine and mythological apparatus.

The poem was of modestly epic length, comprising three books, which
Cicero wanted Lentulus to publish. Büchner, RB 7.A.1 (1939) 1250–52,
referring to Fam. 1.6.2 and 1.9.23, and Sest. 58, conjectures that the content
of the three books would have been: 1, witness to Cicero’s merit, the names
of friends and enemies, perhaps also the Bona Dea affair;107 2, roughly the
content of QFr. 2.7.1 and 3.1.24, ending with a ‘concilium deorum’ where
Jupiter and Apollo discuss his enemies; 3, Cicero’s return.

That Cicero was probably very sensitive about criticism of his poetry
is suggested by Seneca, Dial. 5.37.5: ‘Cicero, si derideres carmina eius,
inimicus esset.’ At least part of Cicero’s vituperative ire was raised against
Piso’s apparent gibe that it had not been envy of Cicero, but ‘his bad
poem on his consulship’ that had led to his banishment. Cicero’s initial
reaction was to pretend to take the outrageous statement at face value,
refuting it with reference to the minuting of the Clodian bill which had
ejoined his interdiction from fire and water (Pis. 72). Yet the gibe must
have rankled. Cicero was never comfortable under criticism. His sensitivity
about the verse ‘cedant arma . . . ’ is attested by the fact that he defended
it on more than one subsequent occasion.108 The failure of Cicero’s verse
to impress may probably be ascribed to a failure to rise above the personal and particular. Ciceronian epic exuded bathos because it could not achieve universality.

Yet in the final analysis it is this subjective reflection of a myopic banishment, from his own consciousness, of what was, in favour of what could or should have been, that endears the all too human consular to his readers. People are seldom as noble as they would like to appear. Whoever has personally wrestled with this sad fact, can identify with the emotions revealed in Cicero’s prolific writings on his own banishment.

NOTES

* This paper is based on wider research on the literary depiction of exile in the ancient world, undertaken with the aid of a grant from the University of Stellenbosch. A major study, ranging from Homer to Boethius, will appear in the series Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.

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Chronology of details:

The journey: From Rome to Brindisi, March–April 58: Att. 3.1–3.7, Fam. 14.4; Thessaly, May–Oct 58: Att. 3.8–3.21, QFr. 1.3.1–4.4, Fam. 14.1–14.3; Dyrrhachium, Nov 58–Feb 57: Att. 3.22–3.27; then probably with Atticus, Epirus, until September 57.

Political manoeuvres at Rome: Att. 3.4–3.27; QFr. 1.3, 1.4; Fam. 14.1, 14.2.


Cicero’s possessions in Rome: Att. 3.5, 3.9, 3.19, 3.20, 3.23, 3.24, 3.27, 4.2; Fam. 14.4, 14.1; QFr. 1.3.

The return journey: Att. 4.1.

2. Designated ‘Heimwehkrankheit’, by Ernst Doblhofer: Exil und Emigration: zum Erlebnis der Heimatferne in der römischen Literatur. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1987, 99–178. Cf. F. Trisoglio, ‘La quotidianità dei rapporti sociali in Cicerone epistolografo,’ CCC 5 (1984) 125. As will be seen below, Cicero was not exiled, but ‘relegated’, that is, banished with retention of his property, but the terms are used indiscriminately by modern authors.


25. Cic. Dom. 32.86, Plut. Mor. 605 E.
31. Cf. Cic. Fin. 2.65, etc. For further references, see Erving R. Mix, Marcus Atilius Regulus: Exemplum historicum, The Hague, Mouton 1970, 35 ff. Mix postulates that the 'heroic Regulus' was a creation of Cicero's, on which he thereafter
I sustained himself. We should heed Mix's cautionary rider (38 n.59) that such a patriotic version was perhaps already current.

32. See Dougan and Henry, edd., Tusc. vol. 2, CUP, 1934, n. ad loc.
33. Of these, Aristippus of Cyrene wrote To the exiles, quoted in Diog. Laert. 2.84. Crantor's On grief influenced Cicero's lost Consolatio, so Jerome (Ep. 60.5.2). Cf. Diog. Laert. 4.24–7, Ac. Pr. 2.44.
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53. Probably his *In Clodium et Curionem* of 61, Crawford, 9–10 and 107–8. She suggests it was suppressed from respect for Curio, not fear of Clodius.


55. The defence of his host Plancius recasts Cicero’s past emotions: ‘non dicam miser nam hoc quidem abh~rret a virtute verbum,’ *Plane.* 77.


58. *Fam.* 4.7 to 12.


60. Klaus Döring, *Die Megariker: Kommentierte Sammlung der Testimonien*, Amsterdam, Grüner 1972, passim.


63. ‘si ... fortuna fecerit’: the phrase is followed by Fut. Simp. ‘exsequar’ indicating that ‘fecerit’ is here to be read as Perf. Indicative, showing confidence. Shackleton Bailey *ad loc* comments on ‘lack of taste’.


67. See Büchner, *Cicero* 1964, 193, for chronological order.

68. Trisoglio, 125–6.

69. The arraignment was by P. Tullius Albinovanus and T. Claudius, probably acting for Clodius. Sestius had, with Milo, formerly worked for Cicero’s return.

70. Andreas Therfelder, ‘Über den Wert der Bemerkungen zur eigenen Person in Ciceros Prozessreden,’ *Gymnasium* 72 (1965) 404, argues that Cicero was either aware that he had won the case before he said this, and so his ‘bluff’ could not be called, or that he added it only to the published version.

72. Guy Achard, *Pratique rhétorique et idéologie politique dans les discours ‘optimates’ de Cicéron*, Leiden, Brill 1981, 207. For detailed analysis, see Dietrich Mack, *Senatsreden und Volksreden bei Cicero*, Diss. Kiel 1935 = Würzburg 1935, repr. Hildesheim, Olms 1967, 18–47, 83–112 and 120. To the people the personal is emphasized, the style is emotional; in the Senate focus is less subjective. This is in accord with Cicero’s own rules of rhetoric, *De Or.* 2.333.


74. This was coloured by Cicero’s need to denigrate all Clodius’ enactments while conciliating the potentially powerful Cato by rewriting Cato’s involvement with Clodius, so Rundell, 315–6. Cf. Strabo 14.6.84.


79. See Nisbet, *Introduction*, for analysis of the events and relationships of 59–57, with references.


81. Koster, 210 and Nisbet, xiv.

82. C. Becker, ‘Sallust’, *ANRW* 1.3, 744, quotes this cogent theory as emanating from Reitzenstein and Schwartz (1898); Zielinski, 280, guesses as author Asinius Pollio; Koster, 177, does not venture an opinion.

83. Nisbet, 57, Koster, 223.

84. Gabinius returned from his province in 54, was prosecuted and acquitted on a charge of maiestas, then arraigned for bribery. Cicero’s enforced defence was unsuccessful. He was exiled, Nisbet, 191–2; Crawford, 188–197.


88. Nisbet, 51, suggests that 130–70 lines are missing from the introduction. Fragment 1 (from the *florilegium C*) may have been the opening words, so Quintilian and Diomedes.


90. Koster, 228, notes this phenomenon, and, 243, discusses a similar emphasis on self in *Pis.* 34: ‘me’, ‘me’, ‘me’, ‘ad meam’, ‘mei’, ‘de mea’, 35: ‘de me’, ‘de me’, ‘de me’.

91. For the abusive terms in the speech, also other circumstantially detailed comic invention, Opelt, 153–9, Nisbet, 196, Achard, 226, 288.

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92. Asconius 12 (on Pis. 52) quotes two cases (M. Val. Maximus and P. Val. Volesus) to whom houses were granted as reward for service to the state.
93. Nisbet, 183–6, Appendix III.
95. So Nisbet, xvi.
96. Although Cicero cites crimes such as crudelitas (83–85), avaritia (86–88), retention of war-booty and levying of warships beyond the legal number (90), accusation against Piso is vague and unreasonable, compared with the earlier precision of the Verrines.
100. Cf. Att. 1.19, Plut. Caes. 100.8; Carolus Muller, Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum, Vol 3, 1883, 297; Grasmück, 110–134.
101. See Büchner, RE 7.A.1 (1939) 1245, on the theory of Hafner and Drumann that the Latin version was never written.
102. It should perhaps not have been such a great problem. T.P. Wiseman, Clio’s cosmetics, Leicester, LUP 1979, Ch 2, offers a useful discussion of historical distortion as an accepted and discounted tool of rhetoric in ancient historiography. He also argues (Ch. 3) for the ancient view of the essential unity of history and poetry.
107. Büchner disagrees with Ewbank’s hypothesis that the consulate and a council of gods comprised Book 1.
108. Off. 1.22.77, Phil. 2.8.20.
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