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The correspondence of M. Tullius Cicero

arranged according to its chronological order

Cicero, Marcus Tullius

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Einleitung

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PART III.

THE Letters of Cicero's exile begin in April, 696 (58), and end in August, 697 (57). The first is a letter written to Atticus on Cicero's journey to the estate of his friend Sicca, near Vibo, in Bruttium. The enactment forbidding him to live within 500 miles of Italy forced him to leave Vibo. He would have preferred to spend his exile in Athens; but Autronius and other Catilinarian conspirators were there, and he feared their hostility. Athens was also rendered ineligible by the fact that there was some doubt whether it was not less than 500 miles from Italy. This consideration, however, cannot have had much weight with him, for he spent a considerable part of his exile at Thessalonica, which is not so far as Athens from Italy. He was at Thessalonica from June 1 to the beginning of November. He was invited by Atticus to stay at his house at Buthrotum; but he rejected the offer, feeling (among other motives) that the associations of the place would be too painful in the absence of Atticus. It was through the kindness of his friend Plancius, whom he afterwards defended so well, that he was enabled to live in security in Thessalonica. Cicero went to Dyrrachium in the end of November, 696 (58), so that he might be nearer to Italy, and might avoid meeting Piso, who was appointed governor of Macedonia. Cicero appears to have apprehended molestation from him and his soldiery. He left Dyrrachium on the 4th of August, 697 (57), on the day on which the bill for his recall had passed the *comitia centuriata* (1, 4), arriving at Brundisium on the next day. There he was met by Tullia. It happened to be Tullia's birthday (*ibid.*). On

the 8th he heard of the success of the bill for his restoration; and at once set out for Rome, where he arrived on September 4, 697 (57). Cicero's letters from exile are full of complaints about the perfidy of Hortensius and Pompey and the supineness of Atticus; and indeed all his friends do not seem to have stood very staunchly by him (Dio Cass. xxxviii. 17, 6). Again and again he declares that he should never have left Rome, as he did, before he was assailed by name; but should have appealed to force against Clodius, in which case, he says, *aut occubuissem honeste, aut victores hodie viveremus*, 73, 4. His leaving Rome he calls *turpissimum consilium*, and, somewhat weakly, upbraids Atticus and his other friends for not dissuading him from such a step. Dio Cassius tells us that Cicero actually endeavoured to raise the mob, but was dissuaded by Cato and Hortensius, ἐπεχείρησε μὲν ὄπλα ἄρασθαι . . . κωλυθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ τε τοῦ Κάτωνος καὶ τοῦ Ὀρτησίου, μὴ καὶ ἐμφύλιος ἐκ τούτου πόλεμος γένηται, τότε δὴ καὶ ἄκων μετὰ τε αἰσχύνῃς καὶ μετὰ κακοδοξίας, ὡς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ συνειδότης ἐθελοντῆς πεφευγῶς, μετέστη (xxxviii. 17, 4). But the whole tone of this extract shows the *animus* of Dio Cassius against Cicero. There is no evidence that Cicero ever seriously sought to appeal to violence before his banishment; though during his absence he often says that it would have been better to have lost his life in opposing Clodius than to languish in exile. His boast in the *Orat. pro Sest.*, § 45, that he was deterred by patriotism from resisting Clodius by arms, *me propter salutem meorum civium, quae mihi semper fuit mea carior vita, dimicationem caedemque fugisse*, must be looked on as an afterthought; for the whole tenor of his letters in exile shows equally clearly that he never contemplated an appeal to force before his exile; and that after his exile he never ceased to regret that he had not made such an appeal. Indeed, a passage in 83, 5, when rightly understood, seems to show that he suggested, to bring about his restoration, the use of that violence which he might have used to avert his exile; the

multitudo comparata there spoken of is probably the band of bravoos with which Milo did such good service, when *μονομάχους τινὰς . . . ἀθροίσας ἐς χεῖρας τῷ Κλωδίῳ συνεχῶς ἦει, καὶ σφαγαὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν πόλιν ἐγίγνοντο* (Dio Cass. xxxix. 8, 1). But there can be little doubt that, if he had really sought to raise the mob in his behalf and to bring to the city his numerous supporters among the rural populations, he would have found less difficulty in averting his banishment than he afterwards found in effecting his restoration. This he saw clearly when too late, as may be gathered from two letters to Terentia, 82, 2 *intellego quanto fuerit facilius manere domi quam redire*; and 84, 2 *elicere nos magnum fuit, excludere facile est*. Next to his *turpissimum consilium* in leaving Rome, he regrets his want of resolution in not having at once destroyed himself when he saw that his exile was an accomplished fact; and he hints that, if the attempts made in the beginning of 697 (57) should fail, no course will remain for him but to take his own life.

Plutarch (Cic. 32) speaks with grave censure of Cicero's faint-heartedness during his exile as unworthy of a man so well educated and cultured. He says *ἀθυμῶν καὶ περιλυπὸς διῆγε τὰ πολλά, πρὸς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, ὥσπερ οἱ δυσέρωτες, ἀφορῶν καὶ τῷ φρονήματι μικρὸς ἄγαν καὶ ταπεινὸς ὑπὸ τῆς συμφορᾶς γεγωνὸς καὶ συνεσταλμένος, ὡς οὐκ ἂν τις ἄνδρα παιδείᾳ συμβεβιωκότα τοσαύτη προσεδόκησε*.

We meet a remarkable statement in 63, 3 *ego et saepius ad te et plura scriberem, nisi mihi dolor meus cum omnis partis mentis, tum maxime huius generis facultatem ademisset*; and we do find in the letters from exile a carelessness and inaccuracy of expression which contrast strongly with the style of his happier days. See *Introd.* II., § 2.

Of the letters in exile, twenty-seven are addressed to Atticus, two to his brother Quintus, four to Terentia and the other members of his family at Rome, and one to the consul Metellus Nepos,

begging him to forget their former misunderstanding and to aid in his restoration. The period of Cicero's exile is (as might be expected) destitute of literary and oratorical remains.

Atticus left Rome in the end of 696 (58), and did not return till the beginning of 698 (56), when he married Pilia, February 5th, 698 (56), at the age of 53. Of this marriage the only issue was a daughter, born 703 (51), who was married to M. Agrippa. Their daughter, Vipsania Agrippina, was the wife of Tiberius before he was Emperor.