

In the summer of 56 Cicero informs Atticus, with considerable satisfaction, that a library has been installed and arranged in his Antium villa: *postea vero quam Tyrannio mihi libros disposuit, mens addita videtur meis aedibus* (*Att.* 4.8.2, SB 79). The expression *mens addita*, as has recently been explained by A. R. Dyck (*RhM* 146 [2003] 425), alludes to the creation of “a living organism out of inert matter.” The metaphor is apt: books bore fruit in Cicero’s writings, obviously, but also in his friendships and political career. The present paper focuses on Cicero’s use of literary allusions as a form of social glue, with particular attention to his exchanges—correspondence, mostly—with Caesar. It adds a dimension to Peter White’s excellent “Tactics in Caesar’s Correspondence with Cicero” (in E. Fantham, ed., *Caesar against Liberty?* [Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2003] 68-95).

Cicero’s reading was broad and in some areas deep: in the correspondence he quotes Greek poets (e.g., Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Menander) and Roman ones (e.g., Plautus, Terence, Ennius, Lucilius, Accius, Turpilius), cites Greek and Roman historians (Polybius and various annalists), characterizes the style of past orators, and summarizes (or parodies) the arguments of a whole raft of philosophers (see, recently, M. T. Griffin, “Philosophical Badinage in Cicero’s *Letters to His Friends*,” in J. G. F. Powell, ed., *Cicero the Philosopher* [Oxford: Clarendon Press] 325-46). There is no sign that he read for pleasure; he reads to write, or to connect with contemporaries, or both. When at Atticus’ urging in May of 45 he attempts a “Letter of Advice” to a Caesar fresh from his final victory in the civil wars, he first musters models: the Cynic Antisthenes’ *Cyrus II on Kingship* (*Att.* 12.38a, SB 279), and *Letter(s) to Alexander* by both Aristotle and Theopompus (*Att.* 12.40, SB 281). Reading and writing go hand in hand: *ea lego, ea scribo* (*Att.* 12.40.2). Cicero’s Συμβουλευτικόν seems to have fallen on the sponge (see White 75 n. 26), but in a letter of recommendation (and simultaneously of self-exculpation; see SB ad loc.) sent to Caesar later in 45 literary props are much in evidence: a line from Euripides to describe his state of mind, 2 separate lines from the *Odyssey* to critique and defend his conduct, a couplet from the *Iliad* to present a heroic model, back to Euripides for the counsel of prudence (*Fam.* 13.15, SB 317, Sept. 45). When he meets Caesar face to face shortly thereafter they avoid politics and discuss literature (φιλόλογα multa: *Att.* 13.52.2, SB 353, Dec. 45).

Cicero contrasts his utilitarian approach to books with that of Atticus, who reads and recommends a book on Homeric accentuation about which Cicero himself is polite but clearly unenthusiastic. What Atticus values for its nourishment (*scire enim vis, quo uno animus alitur*: *Att.* 12.6, SB 306, May 45), Cicero regards as *tam tenuis* θεωρία, “so rarefied a study” (one of Shackleton Bailey’s many inspired translations). For Cicero, books, in both the consuming and the producing, were work, not food, and demanded active engagement on his part. Consider his adaptation of Zeus’ advice to Aphrodite at *Iliad* 5.428: where Aphrodite was to leave war aside and concern herself with the tasks of marriage (ἔργα γάμοιο), Cicero imagines Atticus advising him, after Caesar’s assassination, to concern himself with the tasks of λόγος (ἔργα λόγοιο, *Att.* 14.13.2, SB 367, April 44). ἡμερόνεντα, “delightful,” is Zeus’ characterization of the tasks suitable for Aphrodite, but the reading matter in which we can see, and share, Cicero’s delight is not literature at all but letters: *o suavis tuas litteras!* (*Att.* 13.44, SB 336, July 45).