

Parental Gifts: Father–Son Dedications and Dialogues in Roman Didactic Literature

FANNIE J. LEMOINE

Introduction

Literary dedications are designed either to acknowledge a bond between the author and the dedicatee or to attempt to establish such a bond. In the Latin didactic tradition authors frequently present themselves as fathers giving their educational treatises to their sons or composing fictive dialogues in which they act as the teacher and the son as the pupil. The dedications and dialogues reflected historical practice and reinforced patterns of paternal and filial behavior through literary example.

Father–son dedications and dialogues also serve formal literary ends. They help the author speak in a more intimate, yet authoritative voice and create a sense of reciprocal obligation between composer and reader. The dedication or the dialogue establishes the context within which the author presents his literary gift.

The five aims of this study are: (1) to trace a brief history of father–son dedications and dialogues in Latin didactic literature, (2) to examine the formative contributions made by Cato and Cicero, (3) to argue for a distinctly Roman character to the tradition, (4) to illustrate the conventional presentations of authorial personality and subject matter found in later introductory prefaces, and (5) to show how the conventions dealing with persons and subject matter are subverted by two late Latin paternal authors, Augustine and Martianus Capella. The article concludes with a brief discussion of the influence of this pattern of familial instruction upon didactic texts in the Middle Ages.

Ancient rhetorical theory advocated finding the material for introductions either from the personalities involved (*ex personis*) or from the subject matter itself (*ex rebus*). Close examination of two types of Latin usage in these prefaces, occurrences of the word *munus* and metaphors for eating, will both demonstrate conventional presentations of personality and subject matter and suggest how those conventions are overturned.

The Latin word *munus* is a term regularly used to describe the literary work itself, the service the father has performed for his child, and the

relationship which fulfilling such an obligation, usually responding to a child's request, acknowledges. The word is prominent in Cicero's writings, where it serves as a significant trait in the presentation of the author as responsible and benevolent.

Winning the goodwill of the audience through favorable presentation of the personality of the speaker is a cardinal rhetorical rule for *exordia*. The *ex personis* approach to a beginning is one Cicero himself frequently uses and which he discusses and recommends in the rhetorical handbook he prepared for his son. Acceptance of the *munus* implies accepting a role for father and son which would ordinarily be seen as good and virtuous. The term and this sort of presentation of the paternal author appears in other works of later periods. Yet at least one of our fathers, Augustine, emphatically rejects the role and the implications associated with it.

Metaphors for food or eating, the second type of Latin usage examined in this paper, are regularly employed in this didactic tradition to describe the subject matter or the manner of its preparation, the part of the introduction drawn *ex rebus*. The metaphors become especially prominent in the fatherly gifts of two late Latin authors, Macrobius and Martianus Capella. Macrobius expands on the conventional metaphors; Martianus Capella calls them into question. In both cases, the metaphoric usage indicates attitudes toward education which contrast sharply with present-day views.

This study is suggestive, not exhaustive in its treatment of the topic. The article underscores the importance of the family in the history of Western education and contributes to greater understanding of tradition and originality in Latin didactic literature. The choice of topic is an acknowledgment of the respect I have for the author to whom this volume of essays has been dedicated.

Fathers and Sons in Roman Didactic Literature

Many years ago Rudolf Hirzel¹ noted how unusual father-son dialogues are among the Greeks and how common they are among the Romans. Among the Latin paternal authors, he cites Cato, Cicero, Livy, Seneca, Asconius, Quintilian, the Jurist Paulus, Martianus Capella, Macrobius, and Tiberius Claudius Donatus. On the other hand, he mentions that among the many dialogues of Socrates only one is held with a family member, a dialogue between Socrates and his oldest son Lamprocles. More recent scholars, such as Tore Janson and Robert Kaster,² have also noted how popular the practice

¹ R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog* (Leipzig 1895) 429-30 and 429 n. 4.

² For example, see T. Janson, "Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions," *Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis* 13 (1964) 117; R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1988) 66-68; B. A. Marshall, *A Historical Commentary on Asconius* (Columbia, MO 1985) 37-38.

of dedicating textbooks to sons was throughout antiquity and have discussed some of the characteristic features of such dedications.

Many later Greek examples could also be cited. The work Stobaeus prepared for his son Septimius comes immediately to mind as a fifth-century Greek parallel.³ Yet in Latin letters the dominance of this form of introduction or composition for didactic treatises is clear and deserves study precisely because of its frequent occurrence. Although it shares similarities with traditions of parental advice on morals or conduct, whether Greek, Latin, or vernacular, the Latin works examined here focus more exclusively upon certain technical or encyclopaedic aspects of learning. Philosophical and religious currents also strongly influence some of the later Latin works and establish the supporting framework within which more technical material is set. For example, in the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* Martianus Capella combines elements of Platonic dialogues, the priestly colloquies of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the Latin didactic conventions of a paternal author.⁴

Hirzel⁵ speculated that the difference between Latin and Greek authors might be attributed to the greater power and responsibility the Roman father was expected to exercise over his son. He would have found some support for his argument in other literary comparisons. The *Aeneid*, Roman comedies, and some other Latin works which borrow from Greek models seem to give greater prominence to the relationship between father and son than did the Greek originals.

Responding to another's request for a work is a common device Latin authors use in order to accomplish the difficult task of making a beginning. Tore Janson⁶ has gathered a series of Roman authors who claim to write at the urging of relatives, friends, or publishers and has outlined the words and phrases conventionally used to describe the requests and their fulfillment. Sons are prominent among such claimants.

Although the sons may, in fact, have been unwilling recipients of such fatherly attention, the claims in the dedications should not be dismissed as mere adherence to literary convention. They reveal what kind of relations were considered appropriate between father and son and what kind of attitudes

³ An earlier Greek medical parallel would be Oribasius's dedication of medical writings to his son Eustathius, who was himself archiaterus in the East in 373-74. A still earlier philosophical parallel is provided by Gentilianus Amelius, who recorded Plotinus's lectures for his adoptive son Hostilianus Hesychnus. The Alexandrian astrological writer Paulus offers a late fourth-century example of a surviving astronomical work dedicated to his son Cronamon. Artemidorus's dedication of Books 4 and 5 of the *Onirocriticon* and Basil's dedication of his essay on Greek literature to his nephews provide additional examples of familial dedications of Greek writings which are somewhat analogous to the didactic textbooks of the Latin tradition.

⁴ See D. Shanzer, *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii Book I* (Berkeley 1986) 51.

⁵ Hirzel (above, note 1) 429 n. 4.

⁶ Janson (above, note 2) 27-32 and 116-20.

family members voiced about giving the gift of learning to the next generation. They demonstrate as well the special responsibility Roman fathers were expected to adopt toward their children's education and the perceived value of the educational undertaking itself.

The value placed on learning can be seen in explicit statements and in metaphors found in some of the dedicatory prefaces or the exchanges which form the opening or conclusion of a dialogue. Quintilian, for example, in the preface to the sixth book of the *Institutiones oratoriae*, calls his work the best part of the inheritance he had planned to leave his child:

Respiciens tamen illam curam meae voluptatis, quod filio, cuius eminens ingenium sollicitam quoque parentis diligentiam merebatur, hanc optimam partem relicturus hereditatis videbar ut, si me, quod aequum et optabile fuit, fata interceptissent, praeceptore tamen patre uteretur. (6 pr. 1)

The principles of grammar, rhetoric, or medicine the father preserved for his child constituted a major inheritance and an indispensable entry into a powerful and privileged elite. In antiquity the number of people who participated in such an elite, and the specific rewards participation was likely to bring, varied from age to age and from place to place. Yet, overall, few can doubt William Harris's conclusion in his work on ancient literacy:

The written culture of antiquity was in the main restricted to a privileged minority—though in some places it was quite a large minority—and it coexisted with elements of an oral culture. This written culture certainly helped to widen class differences, as well as having the overwhelmingly important effect of enabling empires to be built. Access to the privileged world of writing was automatic for some and variously difficult for others. . . . If fortune set the individual among the literate, that was a golden gift.⁷

By giving such a gift to their sons, fathers transformed the bonds of authority into ties of affection, not simply because of the instrumental value of the gift as an entree into a privileged world. Certain intrinsic characteristics of the educational gift were likely to reinforce an attitude of reverential respect. These texts affirm the value of the personal bond between teacher and pupil and underscore the widely held ancient opinion that good learning and proper moral behavior are inextricably linked.

The prefaces and the father-son dialogues provide literary models of the proper caring and respectful exchanges expected to characterize relationships between fathers and sons. They also highlight the ethical qualities which ancients found far more essential to the definition of a well-educated man than the modern attributes of intellectual talent, critical inquiry, or technical

⁷ W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA 1989) 337.

skill.⁸ A well-educated man was expected to conform to established values and to form his own identity by responding to accepted familial and social obligations.

The didactic material also tends to be bounded by set texts, excerpts of which were inserted directly into the author's work. For example, fixed textual structures—such as a set of Ciceronian speeches or works of Virgil, or fragmentary recollections of literary precedents, or distillation of earlier technical handbooks—literally determine the horizon within which inquiry occurs and necessarily limit education to interpretation and reproduction of received opinion. Good education was seen as a combination of these “quiddities” and personal behavioral attributes. In different ways and, no doubt, for different reasons, Augustine in the *De Magistro* and Martianus Capella in the *De nuptiis* challenge that normative picture. They sketch different relationships between father and son and arrange their didactic material within literary frameworks which undermine wholehearted acceptance of paternal instructional authority. Yet, the tradition as a whole conveys a certain attitude toward education and prescribes roles for author and reader which had a strong influence on education throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern world.

Imagines apud maiores

In the *Natural History*⁹ Pliny describes the wax facial masks of family ancestors which were kept in the atria of Roman houses and carried in a clan's funeral processions. These family images and family trees served to remind members of their past and reinforce allegiance to the clan for the future.

The following chart of Latin fathers (page 343) illustrates a somewhat analogous literary relationship. It provides a partial list of Latin authors who either dedicated a didactic work to a child or wrote an educational treatise in the form of a dialogue between father and son. Literary borrowings, echoes of influence, and direct quotations show that many of these works are closely connected. For example, the influence of the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius upon the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius is salient and easily discernible upon first reading of the prefaces to the two works. The African peripatetic Nonius Marcellus quotes Cato and Apuleius and obviously used Gellius in his own *De compendiosa doctrina*. Flavius Sospater Charisius, in the five books of his *Ars grammatica*, includes a number of quotations from Cato's speeches.

⁸ For an insightful discussion of these educational assumptions and the implications they had for ancient students, fatherly teachers, and professional grammarians, see Kaster (above, note 2) 50–70.

⁹ Pliny, *NH* 35. 6.

This list is not definitive nor does it make any claim for any sort of direct traceable lineage through the entire series of works. It does, however, illustrate the prevalence of this form of dedication or composition in Roman educational handbooks and suggest how widespread this practice was in antiquity. History, philosophy, or verse might be written for friends or distinguished patrons; but, the field of more humble didactic letters is dominated by handbooks which are prefaced as fathers' gifts to offspring or by literary dialogues between a younger and an older interlocutor, usually a father and a son related by blood or marriage. Although the literary forms are different, the relationship presupposed between author and reader is similar. In both, the reader is expected to assume the role of the son, the respectful junior partner who is frequently pictured as initiator, consumer, and custodian of the literary effort.

The chart shows that fathers addressed educational treatises to their sons on a wide range of topics, from early examples of practical and moral advice to discussions in late antiquity of grammar, rhetoric, literary and historical commentary, medicine, geography, arithmetic, orthography, philosophy, music, and liberal education. The catalogue would be considerably longer if published letters of advice and moral exhortation addressed by fathers to their sons had been included.¹⁰ Such letters are related in form and intent to the dedicatory epistles that preface educational and moral treatises. The list also includes only treatises with explicit references to the son as the recipient and some indication of the reason for the request beyond a conventional formulaic greeting. A few names of paternal authors are included whose works do not survive or survive only in fragments. The prominence of an author such as Livy and the importance of Cato in initiating and fostering the tradition account for their inclusion.

For example, our limited knowledge of Livy's epistolary essay for his son is drawn mainly from a quotation Quintilian includes in the tenth book of the *Institutiones oratoriae*.¹¹ In the passage cited Livy advises his son to read Demosthenes, Cicero, and other orators who most closely resemble those masters. Livy's essay was probably written to assist the son in his rhetorical studies and may have contained comments on Sallust and the rhetorician Miltiades. Seneca the Elder¹² in the rhetorical work he prepared for his own three sons attributes such comments to Livy. Since Livy's son became a writer and was cited as an authority by Pliny the Elder in the fifth and sixth books of the *Natural History*, Livy's instruction seems to have borne good fruit.

¹⁰ Sid. Ap. Ep. 3. 13 is an excellent example of this sort of moral advice in open epistolary form.

¹¹ Quint. 10. 1. 39.

¹² Sen. *Controv.* 9. 1. 14 and 2. 26.

PATERNAL AUTHORS
Latin Dedications and Dialogues Between Father and Son

200 B.C.	M. Porcius Cato	<i>Ad Marcum filium</i>
100 B.C.	M. Tullius Cicero	<i>Partiiones; De officiis</i>
A.D. 1	Titus Livius L. Annaeus Seneca (Rhetor) Q. Asconius Pedianus M. Fabius Quintilianus (by intention, not in actuality)	<i>Controversiae; Suasoriae</i> Historical Commentaries on Cicero's Speeches <i>Institutiones oratoriae</i>
A.D. 100	Lucius Apuleius Aulus Gellius	<i>De Platone et eius dogmate; De mundo</i> <i>Noctes Atticae</i>
A.D. 200	Julius Paulus Anonymous and multiple	<i>Disticha Catonis</i> (approximate dating) <i>De compendiosa doctrina</i>
A.D. 300	Nonius Marcellus Sulpicius Victor (to son-in-law Milo) Flavius Sospater Charisius Vibius Sequester (?)	<i>Institutiones oratoriae</i> <i>Ars grammatica</i> <i>De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, paludibus, montibus, gentibus per litteras libellus</i> <i>Interpretationes Vergilianae</i>
A.D. 400	Ti. Claudius Donatus Macrobius Theodosius Marcellus Aurelius Augustinus Mallius Theodorus Martianus Capella Cassius Felix Martyrius (with the inspiration and assistance of his father Adamantius)	<i>Saturnalia; Commentary on Somnium Scipionis</i> <i>De medicamentis</i> <i>De beata vita; De magistro</i> <i>De metris</i> <i>De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii</i> <i>De medicina</i> <i>De B muta et V vocali</i>
A.D. 500	Boethius (to father-in-law Symmachus)	<i>De Sancta Trinitate; De arithmetica</i>

Cato and Cicero: *Imago patris et munera*

The chart reveals how frequently father-son instruction appears in Roman didactic letters. The following discussion argues for its distinctively Roman quality and for the particular relationship such father-son dedications tended to portray and to foster in real life. In order to make that argument, greater attention must be given to the two fathers at the head of the tradition, Cato and Cicero. The two contribute quite different features to its subsequent development.

Both in substance and literary form Cicero is a major contributor. His works to his son Marcus have been studied and imitated by countless epigones. On the other hand, Cato's actual literary contributions are much more difficult to assess. Only fragments of his work to his son survive, and the historical and cultural circumstances surrounding its composition are not completely clear. However, his influence as a model, an ideal type of Roman father, was assured by his own actions and by the example later authors made of his life. Therefore, any examination of father-son dedications in Roman educational literature must begin with Marcus Porcius Cato's *Ad filium* or, as it was commonly known, *Ad Marcum filium*.

Cato prepared this collection of practical precepts on various topics for his elder son, Marcus Porcius Cato Licinianus, born to Cato and Licinia in 190 B.C. Cato probably undertook his didactic work during the 170s, when his son would have been old enough to benefit from his instruction. The nature of this collection and the extent of its learning has been the subject of some debate. Alan Astin in his 1978 work *Cato the Censor*¹³ has argued against labelling Cato's work a comprehensive encyclopaedia made up of separate books on topics such as rhetoric or medicine. Rather he sees the work as a miscellaneous collection of precepts on agriculture, military affairs, religious law, with little extensive treatment of rhetoric or medicine.

The collection Cato prepared for his son probably had the same terse and elliptical character as his extant work on agriculture. Harris¹⁴ suggests that the rough style and poor organization found in the *De agri cultura* may be the result of oral composition or dictation to a secretary. Since Cato learned Latin letters—i.e., the more formal study of Latin language and literature—only later in life,¹⁵ oral exposition or dictation may have been his preferred method of composing, even though he apparently kept careful written records of his speeches.

Fronto's well-known description of Cato preparing his speech *De sumptu suo*¹⁶ provides us with evidence for Cato's use of both oral and written compositional techniques. The orator incorporated written material

¹³ A. E. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978) 182–83, 332–40.

¹⁴ Harris (above, note 7) 173.

¹⁵ Val. Max. 8. 7. 1.

¹⁶ Fronto, *Ad A. Imp.* 1. 2. 9.

from an earlier speech but relied heavily upon the assistance of a scribe in preparing the new written text. The passage describes Cato listening to his previous words and then dictating word-for-word insertions and deletions. Dictation was a usual manner of composition in antiquity and would certainly not be remarkable in and of itself. Yet in this period of the Roman Republic other signs, such as the growing number of inscriptions, mark a noticeable transition from a predominately oral to an increasingly literate society.¹⁷ Thus, Fronto's description lends evidence for Cato's role in a key transitional period in the development of Latin literacy as well as in the development of Roman literature. His model of careful notetaking and dictation may well have served as an exemplar for the preparation of texts in the later tradition.

Whatever the case, the disjointed quality of his pronouncements and their archaic diction probably added to the authority which later authors attributed to his work. His precepts were delivered in a style which Pliny, Seneca the Elder, and Columella describe as oracular. Seneca the Elder, in the dedicatory preface to the *Controversiae*, gives special weight to the words and the moral authority which the figure of Cato had come to embody:

Erratis, optimi iuvenes, nisi illam vocem non M. Catonis sed oraculi creditis. Quid enim est oraculum? nempe voluntas divina hominis ore enuntiata; et quem tandem antistitem sanctiorem sibi invenire divinitas potuit quam M. Catonem, per quem humano generi non praeciperet sed convicium faceret? Ille ergo vir quid ait? "Orator est, Marce fili, vir bonus dicendi peritus."¹⁸

The elder Seneca includes this observation as a part of his denunciation of decadent trends he found so detrimental to the growth of eloquence in his own day. Although Seneca assumed a far more intimate and urbane style in addressing his own sons, Cato's ethical and stylistic model—especially the link between character and learning, between what the words said and Cato's moral authority—influenced the later author and served as prelude and counterpoint for the paternal advice and rhetorical memories he preserved for his children.

Cato did much to foster the image of himself as a moral authority. From the swimming lessons in the Tiber to the practical precepts for successful public life in the forum and private life on the farm, Cato not only established himself but also advertised himself as a model for an education he saw as both family-centered and father-dominated. The reasons for this are many and various, but certainly both assimilation and rejection of Hellenic educational patterns play some role.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Cato's use of notes and prepared texts, see Astin (above, note 13) 134–36. Astin's careful treatment of Cato does not consider some of the broader implications of oral and literate practices in Roman society of the period.

¹⁸ Sen. *Controv.* 1 pr. 9.

Cato's consciously adopted lifestyle and his carefully publicized educational program seem to have been carried out at least in part as a reaction to the type of Hellenic influence in education to which Cato objected and which he also appropriated in developing his own educational plan. It was noted earlier that Cato received little formal education early in his life. Later on—although he owned a slave, a *grammatistes* with some instructional ability—he chose not to subject his son to a slave's discipline but to teach his child himself, following an unusual parental course that involved great expenditure of time and effort.¹⁹ In addition to the collection of precepts, he even prepared a Roman history in large letters in order to teach him to read, and later had continued correspondence with him, a part of which came into circulation and was cited by Cicero and Plutarch. In other words, our earliest well-documented example of a fatherly educator is, to a certain extent, a conscious creation in reaction to the Hellenic patterns of the gymnasia, professional experts, and a diminished educational role for both parents.

The Roman pattern may be compared to the Jewish reaction that led to the more violent Maccabean revolt. In both cases contact with Hellenic culture shaped the conscious identity of the other people and gave birth to a more widespread recognition of the distinctive characteristics of Jewish or Roman society. That statement by no means implies a one-dimensional portrait of an anti-Hellenic Cato, fathering a simplistic, reactionary literary tradition. Cato's "Romanitas" is far more complex than such a picture would suggest, and his contributions to the educational tradition must be seen as part of the reaction, adaptation, and adjustment to Hellenic culture which caused a ferment in the Roman upper classes throughout the last two centuries of the Republic.

In sum, Cato's writings for his son, the Roman history, the oracular precepts, and the letters, start literary traditions which serve a number of propagandistic functions. The dedication to the son, the ongoing "public" concern for the son's development, give concrete expression to the father's role as the most important teacher and identify both the literary model and the historical personages who conform to the literary model as virtuous and "Roman."

Later paternal authors cite Cato prominently and account in great part for the fragments of his work which are now extant. Cicero, Livy, Seneca, and Quintilian provide some references, but a vast storehouse of quotations comes from sources like Aulus Gellius, Charisius, Nonius, and Macrobius. Although Festus, Priscian, Servius, and many others add more to the *corpus*, citations by paternal authors are sizeable and, in some instances, seem to have special significance for the quoting author.

For example, Macrobius, at the end of the preface to the *Saturnalia*, mentions that he may need his readers' indulgence because he was "born

¹⁹ Plut. *Cat. mai.* 20. 5.

under an alien sky and his words might lack the polish of the native Roman tongue."²⁰ He then ends his preface by suggesting that he might merit the neat rebuke Cato gave to Aulus Albinus who had composed a *History of Rome* in Greek and then begged pardon for faults of arrangement and style because he was a Roman, born in Latium, and the Greek language was completely foreign to him. Cato rebukes Aulus for apologizing for an error rather than avoiding a mistake which was neither done unwittingly or under compulsion. The quotation from Cato aptly fits the occasion and at the same time demonstrates that Macrobius the foreigner is in firm command of his Roman literary predecessors.²¹

Cato's work can be seen as not only the first but also the exemplar which later tradition would redesign to fit its own needs. Conservative Cato can be credited with fathering a literary tradition which gains adherents, in part, because of its claim to be an old family custom. Much of the Greek learning which passed into the Latin didactic tradition came through this "Old Roman" route.

In fact, other evidence would suggest that in many ways Italy of the second century B.C. was backward in its educational practices and that fathers were not notable for their care in educating their children. Cicero mentions that Polybius accuses the Romans of negligence in educating their offspring and himself concedes that the Romans had no firmly established and commonly accepted educational standard.²² At the same time the great increase in the number of inscriptions during the second century B.C. and the influx of Greek teachers suggest a rise in literacy and a growing recognition that formal education was going to play a more important role in the lives of the prominent. The figure of Cato, the father-educator, arises in that time, but only acquires its distinctive character and influence through the colors Cicero, Seneca Rhetor, Plutarch, and other authors add to the portrait.

²⁰ *Sat.* 1, pr. 11: ... *sed omnia quibus sit ingenium tuum vegetius, memoria adminiculatior, oratio sollertior, sermo incorruptior, nisi sicubi nos, sub alio ortos caelo, Latinae linguae vena non adiuvet.* The entire passage about Cato runs from 12 to 16.

²¹ A similar but less compelling argument could be made for Flavius Sospater Charisius. Charisius dedicated a work on grammar in five volumes to his son, probably some time during the middle of the fourth century, and included a number of quotations from Cato's speeches. Since in the introduction he urges his son to perfect by industry the eloquent Latin he could not obtain through birthplace, it seems likely that Charisius was not Italian. Yet, he believed that, by practice and good example, his son could become as eloquent as the native born.

²² *Cic. De rep.* 4. 3: *disciplinam puerilem ingenuis, de qua Graeci multum frustra laborarunt, et in qua una Polybius noster hospes nostrorum institutorum negligentiam accusat, nullam certam aut destinatum legibus aut publice expositam aut unam omnium esse voluerunt.*

Munera Ciceronis

More modern readers are forced to view Cato and earlier Roman educational tradition through Cicero's eyes and to understand the Latin dedicatory tradition as it has been shaped by Cicero's words. Cicero's example as father-educator was a major influence upon Asconius, Quintilian, Ambrose, Macrobius, Augustine, and many lesser lights, and the picture Cicero sketches of himself as teacher and chief architect of his son's academic and moral advancement becomes the model from which later parental portraits are drawn.

Of the two works Cicero addressed to his son Marcus, the *Partitiones* and the *De officiis*, the *Partitiones* is the more technical and schematic. It draws heavily upon the rhetorical precepts of the Middle Academy and was in turn quoted frequently by Quintilian and later rhetoricians. It is presented in a simple question and answer format with Cicero *pater* acting as the respondent to the questions posed by his son Marcus. As his son indicates in the beginning of the work, this is a reversal of their usual roles and a change of their usual language, for Cicero customarily drilled his son on rhetorical matters by asking him questions in Greek.

The date of composition is uncertain. The most likely possibilities are 53 or 46 B.C. In a letter to his brother in 54 B.C.,²³ Cicero comments upon his nephew's fine progress in rhetorical studies and mentions his desire to give him additional instruction when they are in the country and at leisure. The type of systematic handbook Cicero produced in the *Partitiones* might well be the concrete fulfillment of that wish undertaken for his own son who would then be just beginning his elementary training in rhetoric. Later, in 46 B.C., Marcus *filius* would have been nineteen and ready to leave for Athens to finish his studies. At that time Cicero would have had enough leisure to write such a work, and the letters of the period and the subsequent composition of the *De officiis* in 44 B.C. show how concerned Cicero then was about his son's academic and moral development. Cicero does not specify any setting for the dialogue, but the intimate tone and references to leisure suggest a scene of retirement and relative tranquillity in his Tusculan villa.

In constructing the dialogue's opening exchange Cicero follows precepts for *exordia* he gives in the *Partitiones*. Introductory passages, as he says in 28. 3, are derived *ex personis aut ex rebus ipsis*, and they are used for three purposes: to win a friendly, intelligent, and attentive hearing. He recommends capturing the goodwill of the audience by presenting the speaker's personality in the most virtuous and favorable light and gaining the audience's understanding and attention through a clear exposition of the planned treatment of the subject and an indication of its importance.

²³ *Ad Q. frat.* 3. 34.

As might be expected, the opening exchange between father and son is in a pleasant, relaxed style; but, it sums up in an unambiguous way the importance of a father's attention to his son's education. It begins with a request from the son:

Cicero filius: Studeo, mi pater, Latine ex te audire ea quae mihi tu de ratione dicendi Graece tradidisti—si modo tibi est otium, et si vis.

Cicero pater: An est, mi Cicero, quod ego malim quam te quam doctissimum esse? Otium autem primum est summum, quoniam aliquando Roma exeundi potestas data est; deinde ista tua studia vel maximis occupationibus meis antefferem libenter. (*Part. 1*)

Janson, in his examination of the preface of the *Orator*,²⁴ discusses the many bilateral connections which formed the basic social fabric of ancient Rome. These relations could link an inferior and a superior, as *patronus* and *cliens*, or equals in bonds of friendship or mutual self-interest, as *amici*. The maintenance of such relations rested upon the ingrained expectation that an honorable person would feel the obligation to repay any services received and would, when needed or requested, show gratitude by direct action. Thus, the *topos* of responding to a request, which is such a frequent device in these Latin prefaces, stands within an intricate network of relationships that defined individuals and their roles in society. The *topoi* also served to further types of behavior and educational expectations which are consonant with the combination of learning and ethical values discussed above. In short, the literary framework used to pass on the *doctrina* supported and strengthened the *mores*, the ethical qualities which formed a fundamental part of the education itself.

Cicero's use of the device, however, has some noteworthy features. The father who inhabits the world of this dialogue is ready and willing to put all his other business aside in order to educate his son. In fact, Cicero turns to services he can perform for his son when his opportunity for public service has been limited. When his role in the state has been circumscribed, he is still able and eager to fulfill responsibilities which, he asserts, are more important than civic duties. His awareness of his own personal situation and the implications he draws from it can be seen in an examination of his use of the word *munus*, especially in his discussion of Scipio in Book 3 of the *De officiis*.

Before examining that passage and others in which he mentions *munera* in this connection, another important feature of the introduction of the *Partitiones* needs to be reviewed. The son's request immediately introduces the reader into a bilingual and bicultural world of learning, the special domain of an international elite, who are equally comfortable speaking either language and familiar with the pressures of major public and private business.

²⁴ Janson (above, note 2) 43–44.

Most of the paternal authors who form part of the later didactic tradition can be identified as learned members of a fairly high social class. Although some came from the aristocratic elite, others probably originated from the middle to upper-middle class and based their careers and livelihood on enterprises other than education. Robert Kaster, in his discussion of the development of professional grammarians, argues that no known professional grammarian in late antiquity dedicated a work to his own son and that such familial dedications are the characteristic mark of amateur litterateurs.²⁵ His basic point is sound, although it is possible to quibble slightly with his claim, for the paternal author Augustine was certainly a professional teacher of grammar and rhetoric early in his career at Thagaste.

The fathers who form part of this tradition are men like Nonius Marcellus, Mallius Theodorus, or the Marcellus of medical fame. Nonius Marcellus is either related to or identical with the Nonius Marcellus Herculeus of *CIL* VIII 4878, who in 324 restored destroyed buildings and repaired streets in Thubursicum Numidarum. The honor such an inscription records gives some indication of the wealth and status of the family to which Nonius is assumed to belong. Mallius Theodorus wrote a treatise on metrics, *De metris*, for his son Theodorus. He was the consul of 399 and was celebrated by Claudian in his panegyric. Augustine praised him in both the *De beata vita* and the *De ordine*, and regrets having praised him too much in *Retractationes* 1. 2. Marcellus, a Gallic Christian, served as *magister officiorum* under Theodosius. *De medicamentis*, the work he prepared for his sons, contains over 2,500 entries of various remedies and concoctions, and is prefaced by a series of letters on medicine, the first of which is also a letter addressed to his sons by a certain Largius Designatianus. Although many of these paternal authors have left few prosopographical traces and one is so unknown that the authenticity of his name has been questioned,²⁶ those who can be identified either come from a social class which had the means and leisure necessary for reading and study or could aspire to membership in such a class.

The importance Cicero ascribes to educating his son finds parallels in a number of the later texts.²⁷ Calling attention to the use of both Greek and Latin material is also a common feature of the later tradition and underlines the badge of culture and the "Romanitas" of the Latin speaker. References

²⁵ Kaster (above, note 2) 68.

²⁶ It has been suggested that Vibius Sequester, the author of the *De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, paludibus, montibus, gentibus per litteras libellus*, is a fictive construct from Cicero, *Pro Cluentio* 8. 25. See Schanz-Hosius IV.2 121 for a discussion of the "actuality" of the author.

²⁷ For example, Aulus Gellius, in his introduction to the *Attic Nights*, gives a clear statement of his priorities in managing his business, educating his children, and completing the volumes of commentaries for their entertainment and edification: *Quantum autem vitae mihi deinceps deum voluntate erit quantumque a tuenda re familiari procurandoque cultu liberorum meorum dabitur otium, ea omnia subsiciva et subsecundaria tempora ad colligendas huiusmodi memoriarum delectatiunculas conferam* (pr. 23).

to Greek material or sources inevitably make a reader aware of what is non-Greek in the work at hand. The Roman father's selection and interpretation of both Greek and Latin material is regularly mentioned in the later tradition and provides a distinctive cast to the father's role in the presentation of the material.

The education Cicero gives Marcus in the *Partitiones* might be aptly characterized as a translation exercise and summary review. Schematic and reductive, it shows many similarities to the announced objectives and types of material presented by later authors. Other works in the paternal didactic tradition also draw upon Greek material and make explicit references to translating aspects of Hellenic learning into a Roman family gift. The father-teacher frequently assumes the role of translator or interpreter of one text or of an entire body of learning and describes his subject matter and his approach to that subject matter in terms of assimilation, selection, and transmission. In a very basic sense, he "familiarizes" the material taken from a different language, culture, or historical period as an inheritance for his child.

The *De officiis* provides a grander and more comprehensive example of Cicero's role as interpreter of and contributor to Greek learning. The three books of this work Cicero wrote in 44 B.C. and directed to his son Marcus who was then studying in Athens. He begins the first book of the *De officiis* with an appeal to Marcus to combine Latin and Greek philosophical and rhetorical studies. To support that appeal, he cites his own work and underscores the service he has provided others, both those fellow countrymen who know and those who do not know Greek letters. But he is careful to point out that he is not simply a translator but that he draws from his sources according to his own judgment and decision:

Sequimur igitur hoc quidem tempore et hac in quaestione potissimum Stoicos non ut interpretes, sed, ut solemus, e fontibus eorum iudicio arbitrioque nostro, quantum quoque modo videbitur, hauriemus. (1. 2. 6)

In sum, at the beginning of both the *Partitiones* and the *De officiis*, Cicero calls special attention to his indebtedness to Greek sources, places that philosophical or rhetorical debt within a personal and familial context, and indicates how his own educational values and judgment have shaped the work. By citing the Hellenic debt, Cicero subtly asserts his own independence and illustrates how his Roman ways depart from the Greek.

Similarly, many Roman authors in the later tradition call attention to their careful perusal and selection of Greek sources for incorporation within a Latin work and a Roman family setting. Serving as a Latin translator and interpreter of Greek material was no doubt both fashionable and useful in Cicero's day and later. And later authors continue to cite their reliance upon both Greek and Latin material and to describe their service for their sons in terms of translation, selection, and interpretation. Notable reference to

Greek material occurs both where it would be obviously expected and where it seems to serve other ends than mere necessity.

For example, the Platonist Apuleius, when writing about Plato and addressing his son Faustinus on the chief end of moral philosophy, would be expected to begin with interpretations of Platonic thought. His brief introductory reference to Plato is, however, far from the elaborate listing of Greek and Latin works found in authors like Aulus Gellius or Macrobius.²⁸ In introducing the *Attic Nights*, Aulus Gellius provides a long list of Latin and Greek sources, reiterates the time and effort he expended in their perusal, and stresses that his notetaking and excerpting were far more selective than the voluminous and tedious commentary characteristic of some of the Greeks.²⁹ Macrobius's introduction to the *Saturnalia* shows a noticeable dependence on the introduction to the *Attic Nights* and a clear desire to separate his product and manner of composition from that of his predecessor, but he employs many of the same commonplaces, including explicit reference to perusal and judicious selection from diverse works written in Greek and Latin (*Sat.* pr. 2). Less well-known paternal authors, such as the Gallic *magister officiorum* Marcellus and the African physician Cassius Felix, medical writers of the fifth century, stress their own careful attention to Greek sources and their own roles as translators, at least partly in order to warn of the serious errors negligence can produce.³⁰

Although Cassius Felix himself admits that his collection of treatments for 82 illnesses is largely excerpted from Greek practitioners, especially Galen's Θεραπευτικὰ πρὸς Γλαύκωνα, he often cites Roman practice with approval and knows Punic names for medicinal herbs. His identification with Roman culture is especially interesting in view of his apparent knowledge of Punic and the linguistic peculiarities of his Latin style.

To be sure, there is a world of literary and cultural difference and almost five centuries of time between Cicero and Marcellus and Cassius Felix. The

²⁸ Apuleius, *De Platone 2 init.*: *Moralis philosophiae caput est, Faustine fili, ut scias, quibus ad beatam vitam perveniri rationibus possit. verum † ad beatitudinem bonorum sine ante alia contingeret ut ostendam, quae de hoc Plato senserit.*

²⁹ Aulus Gellius, *Noc. Att.* pr. 3–14.

³⁰ Marcellus, *De medicamentis, epist. ad filios 5*: *Nam licet attentissime species et mensuras specierum remediis quibusque adscripsero et ipsarum mensurarum notas vel ponderum qualitates secundum Graecam traditionem et medicorum veterum consuetudinem seorsum libello huic inseruero et non solum Romana, sed etiam Graia expositione digessero, tamen ex re est, ut haec eadem cum peritioribus conferantur ac saepius retractentur et quae confecta fuerint vel parata medicamina sub signaculis semper habeantur, ne aut casus incidat aut malignitas alicuius obrepat, quae benivole et sincere parata corrumpat, sitque de remedio venenum et de salubritate perniciis culpeturque medicina, cum peccarit incuria.*

Cassius Felix, *De medicina, init.*: *cum diuturno tempore sedulus mecum volvendo, carissime fili, de medicina tractassem, omnipotentis dei nutu monito placuit mihi ut ex Graecis logicae sectae auctoribus omnium causarum dogmata in breviliquio Latino sermone conscriberem.*

latter are translating technical works for readers somewhat removed from the liberally educated, sophisticated audience Cicero could expect. The son of Cassius Felix no doubt needed a translation of the Greek and may also have needed his father's admonition that he neither add nor subtract anything from the given text. Yet almost all of these paternal authors assume the role of cultural and historical intermediary and limit their own original contribution to the setting, selection, and arrangement of previous texts.

At the conclusion of the *Partitiones* Cicero again sets his schematic outline of rhetorical theory in a context which identifies transmission of learning with performing a service, a personal obligation which arises out of affection and is reinforced by family tradition. The conclusion of the dialogue follows rhetorical precepts in that it contains both recapitulation and amplification. Cicero places the dry and bare presentation of rhetoric in the wider framework of moral philosophy and ends with an exhortation to follow what the dialogue has presented as a guide for more important matters. The dialogue ends with the son's acknowledgment of the service Cicero has rendered: *Ego vero ac magno quidem studio, mi pater, multisque ex tuis praeclarissimis muneribus nullum maius exspecto* (Part. 140).

The word *munus* which Cicero uses here to characterize his service also appears at the end of the *De officiis* and at other key points within that text. Cicero employs the term frequently to describe literary services and to highlight special relationships established by this type of gift-giving. The important connotations of the word can be most easily seen in an examination of its use in the *De officiis*. In the conclusion of that work, Cicero employs the term but in a far more artful and moving address to his son: *Habes a patre munus, Marce fili, mea quidem sententia magnum, sed perinde erit, ut acceperis* (*De officiis* 3. 33. 121).

Cicero then continues his conclusion with personification of his instruction as three books who are to be received as fellow-guests and who are to speak in his own voice as he would speak with Marcus were he able and as he hopes soon to do—a wish of course never fulfilled for Cicero—but his son fortunately escaped the proscription because he was in Athens. The personification shows how the father's gift becomes the substitute for the father himself and reveals how intensely personal, almost physical, the educational bond could be which surrounded the selected didactic material contained in the gift.³¹

Munus, the Latin word which Cicero uses regularly to describe what he has done for a recipient, is usually translated by the more general English

³¹ *De officiis* 3. 33. 121: *Quamquam hi tibi tres libri inter Cratippi commentarios tamquam hospites erunt recipiendi; sed, ut, si ipse venissem Athenas (quod quidem esset factum, nisi me e medio cursu clara voce patria revocasset), aliquando me quoque audires, sic, quoniam his voluminibus ad te profecta vox est mea, tribues iis temporis quantum poteris, poteris autem, quantum voles. Cum vero intellexero te hoc scientiae genere gaudere, tum et praesens tecum propedem, ut spero, et, dum aberis, absens loquar.*

terms "service," "duty," "obligation," "tribute," "gift," or by the more concrete "work" or "book." It is of course the proper term for the last office for the dead and, especially, the gift of funeral games or public monuments to celebrate the memory of a family member, such as Augustus's gift of the Theater of Marcellus and Octavia's gift of the library in memory of her son. The frequency with which this term is used in dedications and the eagerness with which the multiple connotations are explored by some Latin authors suggest that the term, at least from Cicero onward, held special meaning and should not be dismissed as a banal convention of literary dedications.

The public, personal, reciprocal nature characteristic of the literary service that Cicero describes as *munus* is as evident in the conclusions of the *Partitiones* and *De officiis* as it is in Cicero's much more playful use of the term in his letter to Varro of July 11 or 12, 45 B.C. The letter was sent as a reminder that the treatise which Varro had promised to dedicate to Cicero (probably the *De lingua Latina*) was, like many scholarly works both now and then, some four years overdue. The letter begins with a pun upon *munus* as both a gladiatorial show and a literary gift. Cicero then refers to his dedication to Varro of the four books of the *Academica posteriora*, four immodest reminders of the literary obligation Varro owes him. In his subsequent word-plays upon *munus* and *remunerari* Cicero stresses the reciprocity of the bond of affection and study that is given formal, public expression through such gifts:

Etsi munus flagitare, quamvis quis ostenderit, ne populus quidem solet, nisi concitatus, tamen ego exspectatione promissi tui moveor, ut admoneam te, non ut flagitem. Misi autem ad te quattuor admonitores non nimis verecundos. Nosti enim profecto os adulescentioris Academiae. Ex ea igitur media excitatos misi, qui metuo ne te forte flagitent; ego autem mandavi, ut rogarent. Exspectabam omnino iamdiu, meque sustinebam, ne ad te prius ipse quid scriberem, quam aliquid accepissem, ut possem te remunerari quam simillimo munere. (*Ad fam.* 9. 8. 1)

Cicero uses the word frequently in other dedications or prefaces, as, for example, in the dedication of the *Paradoxa Stoicorum* to Brutus, or in the famous proemium to Book 3 of the *De officiis* on the leisure and solitude of Scipio Africanus. There he employs the term in both the narrow meaning of "literary work" as well as in its broader sense:

Sed nec hoc otium cum Africani otio nec haec solitudo cum illa comparanda est. Ille enim requiescens a rei publicae pulcherrimis muneribus otium sibi sumebat aliquando et e coetu hominum frequentiaque interdum tamquam in portum se in solitudinem recipiebat, nostrum autem otium negotii inopia, non requiescendi studio constitutum est. Extincto enim senatu deletisque iudiciis quid est quod dignum nobis aut in curia aut in foro agere possimus? . . . Quamquam Africanus maiorem laudem meo iudicio assequatur. Nulla enim eius ingenii monumenta mandata litteris, nullum opus otii, nullum

solitudinis munus exstat; ex quo intellegi debet illum mentis agitatione investigationeque earum rerum, quas cogitando consequabatur, nec otiosum nec solum umquam fuisse; nos autem, qui non tantum roboris habemus, ut cogitatione tacita a solitudine abstrahamur, ad hanc scribendi operam omne studium curamque convertimus. (*De officiis* 3. 1. 2-4)

In this passage Cicero draws an explicit comparison between himself and Scipio. Scipio, known for his outstanding gifts (*rei publicae pulcherrimis muneribus*) to the state, had no need to erect literary monuments or perform a service of solitude (*nullum solitudinis munus*). Cicero does not have such strength of mind nor ability to sustain himself when alone. Instead, as he himself admits, he devotes himself to performing this service for his son and to other literary efforts.

Hidden in that explicit comparison is the tacit admission that Cicero can only sustain his isolation and affirm his self-worth by fulfilling services which will win him the respect and gratitude of his son or of others for whom his writings are destined. The senate is dead, the courts are effaced, no worthy service is possible there, because there is no worthy recipient of such service. But Cicero, in writing the *De officiis* for his son, creates a memorial, a public gift commemorating himself and calling for acknowledgment of his role as paternal benefactor by his son Marcus and by all subsequent readers.

The literary work becomes the concrete fulfillment of an obligation, whether of family or friendship, not dissimilar from the recognition for services rendered to the gods or the state. As such, the dedication or the dialogic frame becomes a way of asserting and affirming the author's own identity and worth as a valuable member of the state or the family community. The work itself preserves and commemorates the author and affirms his and his son's identity by incorporating historical, literary, or scientific monuments from the past into a literary family portrait. Cicero does this subtly with his portrait of Scipio and his service to his son. Many of the authors on the list handle their gifts with far less finesse. Still, works in this tradition can be called *munera*, in more than one sense of the word. They are literary monuments which incorporate old and new material in a celebratory structure. They might be compared to visual monuments, like the Arch of Constantine, where the deliberate inclusion of past material signals an attempt to foster an identity and establish a bond between the best of the past and the present.

The Use of *Munus* by Later Paternal Authors:
Seneca, Boethius, and Augustine

Later authors in the didactic tradition use *munus* or similar words for gift-giving as a regular part of the introduction. Just as Cicero draws the comparison between a gladiatorial show and his *munus* for Varro, so Seneca the Elder in the preface to Book 4 of the *Controversiae* draws the same playful comparison between his own activity and the stage managers of gladiatorial shows and indirectly reinforces the connection between his literary *munus* and a show in commemoration for the dead.³² Although Seneca's reference is playful, his usage seems apt, especially since so much of his work is devoted to celebrating and preserving in memory the accomplishments of rhetors and orators long departed.

One of the most elaborate examples of the repetition of *munus* is found in the dedicatory preface to the *Arithmetic* of Boethius. There the role-reversal of son-in-law dedicating a *munusculum* to his father-in-law adds an extra degree of point to the theme of giving and receiving service. The submissive tone of the preface comes in part from the role-reversal of dedicator and dedicatee, but it also conforms to the practice more common in late antiquity of stressing the humility of the author and the exaltation of the recipient of the gift.³³ Boethius's preface repeats and amplifies a number of the *loci communes* expected in late Latin dedicatory prefaces, such as the responsibility of the dedicatee to examine, improve, and approve of the work before it is submitted to others, the transmittal of Greek riches into a Latin treasury, the questionable competence of the author, the amount of labor expended in preparing the work, the diminutive and unfinished results (*munusculum, novi operis rudimenta*), as well as a long excursus on the plastic arts and the appearance of attenuated food-metaphors throughout.³⁴

Munus appears four times in this relatively short dedicatory letter. It opens the address (*in dandis accipiendisque muneribus*), it appears in the playful description of the work as a *munusculum*, intensified by the

³² Sen. *Controv.* 4 pr. 1: *Quod munerarii solent facere, qui ad expectationem populi detinendam nova paria per omnes dies dispensant, ut sit quod populum et delectet et revocet, hoc ego facio: non semel omnes produco; aliquid novi semper habeat libellus, ut non tantum sententiarum vos sed etiam auctorum novitate sollicitet.*

³³ See Janson (above, note 2) 120.

³⁴ Boethius, *Arithm.*, pr. 3. 1–16 Friedlein: *In dandis accipiendisque muneribus ita recte officia inter eos praecipue, qui sese magni faciunt, aestimantur, si liquido constabit, nec ab hoc aliud, quod liberalius afferet, inventum, nec ab illo unquam, quod iucundius benevolentia complecteretur, acceptum. Haec ipse considerans attuli non ignava opum pondera, quibus ad facinus nihil instructius, cum habendi sitis incanduit, ad meritum nihil vilius, cum ea sibi victor animus calcata subiecit, sed ea, quae ex Graecarum opulentia litterarum in Romanae orationis thesaurum sumpta conveximus. Ita enim mei quoque mihi operis ratio constabit, si, quae ex sapientiae doctrinis elicui, sapientissimi iudicio conprobentur. Vides igitur, ut tam magni laboris effectus tuum tantum spectet examen, nec in aures prodire publicas, nisi doctae sententiae adstipulatione nitatur.*

fortifying pun, *sed huic munusculo non eadem quae ceteris imminent artibus munimenta constituo*,³⁵ and it is repeated in two instances near the end of the dedication which stress Symmachus's role as the worthy recipient of the gift because of his learning and his ability to correct the faults of the author.³⁶ The repetition links the son-in-law with the fatherly reader in a tight bond of personal obligation and almost seems to compel the reader's service and partnership in producing the learned work. The bonds of personal service and relationships affirmed in the Boethian dedicatory letter stand in stark contrast to Augustine's use of the word *munus* in his discussion of the *De magistro*, one of the two dialogues in which he and his son Adeodatus appear.

In recalling the *De magistro* in Book 9 of the *Confessions*, Augustine uses the word *munus* so prominently and with such insistence that the passage clearly reads as a profound rejection of the traditional didactic relationships celebrated in father-son dialogues and a concomitant rejection of the *munera* by which fathers and sons established their identities and affirmed their worth in the Roman world. The nominal subject of that chapter is Augustine's baptism at Milan with Alypius and Adeodatus, his fellow catechumens who were receiving baptism at the same time. Yet what the reader may notice immediately is how little of the chapter is concerned with the rebirth of the three *coaevi*, Alypius, Augustine, and Adeodatus, and how much of the chapter is concerned with Augustine's reflection on his own lifegiving, parental role:

Adiunximus etiam nobis puerum Adeodatum ex me natum carnaliter de peccato meo. Tu bene feceras eum. Annorum erat fere quindecim et ingenio praeveniebat multos graves et doctos viros. Munera tua tibi confiteor, domine deus meus, creator omnium et multum potens reformare nostra deformia: nam ego in illo puero praeter delictum nihil habebam. Quod enim enutriebatur a nobis in disciplina tua, tu inspiraveras nobis, nullus alius: munera tua tibi confiteor.

Est liber noster, qui inscribitur "de Magistro." Ipse ibi mecum loquitur. Tu scis illius esse sensa omnia, quae inseruntur ibi ex persona conlocutoris mei, cum esset in annis sedecim. Multa eius alia mirabiliora expertus sum. Horreri mihi erat illud ingenium: et quis praeter te talium miraculorum opifex? (*Conf.* 9. 6. 14)

Running through this passage is the refrain *munera tua tibi confiteor, domine deus meus*. It is apparent that Augustine repeats the refrain almost as a ritualistic acknowledgment of thanksgiving for God's gifts. It is equally apparent that at the same time he is rejecting the conventional role

³⁵ Pr. 3. 20-21 Friedlein.

³⁶ Pr. 5. 7-10 Friedlein: . . . *tu tantum dignus eo munere videbare, eoque magis inerrato opus esse intellegebam*; 5. 21-23 Friedlein: *Tu tantum paterna gratia nostrum provehas munus. Ita et laboris mei primitias doctissimo iudicio consecrabis et non maiore censebitur auctor merito quam probator.*

of the Roman father as instructor, educator, nourisher, and bestower of gifts. God is the father; Christ, the teacher. Men like Augustine may assist, but the gift of life and true learning is divine. Augustine makes the same point on the divine origin of wisdom and the inner, personal nature of learning in the *De magistro*, and he repeats the same admonition elsewhere, notably, for example, in Letter 266. The Bishop of Hippo wrote this letter to his spiritual daughter Florentina, a girl of serious, studious inclinations. Florentina's mother had introduced the girl to Augustine and had requested the Bishop's instruction for her. Augustine replied to the request willingly enough, but he concludes his letter with this caveat:

... admonendam te his litteris credidi secundum supra dictas optiones, ut quaeras, quod vis, ne sim superfluous, si conatus fuero docere, quod scis, dum tamen firmissime teneas, quod, etsi aliquid salubriter per me scire potueris, ille te docebit, qui est interioris hominis magister interior, qui in corde tuo tibi ostendit verum esse, quod dicitur, quia neque qui plantat, est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat deus. (*Ep.* 266. 4 = *CSEL* LVII 650. 13–20)

The quotation from 1 Cor. 3. 7 picks up on the theme of instruction from the Apostle Paul developed earlier in the letter and underscores the limited role a human being can play in providing nourishment or instruction if the human lacks divine help and guidance.

Augustine's rejection of the traditionally understood and accepted role of teacher is reaffirmed in *Retractationes* 1. 11, where he again discusses the *De magistro* and stresses that the one teacher is Christ.³⁷ That he chose the dialogue between father and son as the literary vehicle for this discussion of teaching and that he refers to that work and his son so prominently in the baptism chapter of the *Confessions* are two signs of the radical departure Augustine takes from the traditional patterns and claims of paternal authorship sketched earlier in this article. Augustine rejects the paternal role considered normative in this educational tradition and, in its place, substitutes a much more profound dependence upon the inner man's relation to God. Augustine's comments in the *Confessions* and the position on teaching he outlines in the *De magistro* question the very basis of a father's educational authority. For Augustine, legitimate instructional authority stands on religious and theological grounds which differ profoundly from the familial model espoused by Cato, Cicero, and other Roman paternal teachers.

³⁷ *Retract.* 1. 11: *Per idem tempus scripsi librum, cuius est titulus "de Magistro," in quo disputatur et quaeritur et invenitur magistrum non esse, qui docet hominem scientiam, nisi deum secundum illud etiam, quod in evangelio scriptum est: "Vnus est magister vester Christus."*

Digesta et Indigesta

Metaphors for food and digestion are often used in these prefaces to characterize the discovery, ordering, or presentation of the subject matter. Since the father-son didactic tradition shares some features with symposia and literary feasts, it is not surprising to find occasional metaphors comparing intellectual sustenance to food, but in the *De nuptiis* of Martianus Capella, these metaphors overturn rather than support the role of the paternal author as a competent provider.

Many authors use *digerere* or *digesta* to describe the process of arrangement and interpretation they have used in preparing their works. When the term is used without metaphoric elaboration, it does not call up strong associations between food and subject matter or between intellectual activity and eating. For example, Vibius Sequester uses the word twice in the opening seven lines of the *De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, paludibus, montibus, gentibus per litteras libellus*.³⁸ Charisius describes the *Ars grammatica* he is giving his son as a gift *a me digestam in libris quinque*.³⁹ Marcellus in the introductory letter to his sons repeats the digestion-metaphor at two points when he describes what he has included from Latin and Greek sources and what he has appended to the *De medicamentis*.⁴⁰

On the other hand, in the preface to the *Attic Nights*, the comparisons are somewhat more apparent. Aulus Gellius ascribes to his finished work the same disparity of subject matter he had included in his first short and undigested notes.⁴¹ He also characterizes his work as the first fruits or appetizers of the liberal arts, *sed primitias quasdam et quasi libamenta ingenuarum artium*.⁴² When Macrobius writes his introduction to the *Saturnalia*, he echoes the words and phrasing of the preface to the *Attic Nights*, but he sharply distinguishes his practice from that of his unacknowledged predecessor. In describing his method and its intended result, he places far greater emphasis upon the comparisons between intellectual and physical digestion. For example, he asserts that he has

³⁸ *Quanto ingenio ac studio, fili carissime, apud plerosque poetas fluminum mentio habita est, tanto labore sum secutus eorum et regiones et vocabula et qualitates in litteram digrens. . . . fontium etiam et lacuum, paludumque et montium, nemorumque et gentium, . . . huic libello in litteram digesta nomina subieci.*

³⁹ *Amore Latini sermonis obligare te cupiens, fili karissime, artem grammaticam sollertia doctissimorum virorum politam et a me digestam in libris quinque dono tibi misi.*

⁴⁰ See note 30 for quotation of Marcellus's first usage.

⁴¹ Pr. 3: *Facta igitur est in his quoque commentariis eadem rerum disparilitas quae fuit in illis annotationibus pristinis, quas breviter et indigeste et incondite ex auditionibus lectionibusque variis feceram.*

⁴² Pr. 13. At the end of dedicatory preface of the *De arithmetica* Boethius uses the same analogy (*laboris mei primitias*).

brought material from diverse authors and disparate times together into a coherent whole:

nec indigeste tamquam in acervum congesimus digna memoratu: sed uariarum rerum disparilitas auctoribus diversa, confusa temporibus, ita in quoddam digesta corpus est, ut quae indistincte atque promiscue ad subsidium memoriae adnotaveramus in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent. (*Sat.* pr. 3)

He then develops five comparisons to describe his method of composition and the resulting form of the work. His composition imitates the bees' production of honey, nature's transformation of food into blood and bodily strength, the combination of single numbers into a finished product, the blending of scents to make a single perfume, and the blending of voices to form a choir.⁴³

Macrobius borrowed this section of his preface from the eighty-fourth letter of Seneca. In that letter Seneca endorses the usefulness of extensive reading and argues for excerpting material from others and transforming it into one's own possession. With only minor revisions, Macrobius lifts the five comparisons given in sections 3–10 of Seneca's letter and juxtaposes the Senecan excerpts with the echoes from Aulus Gellius cited above. In other words, the text in which Macrobius describes his method of composition is an example of the appropriation method he claims for his text. He advocates seamless synthesis as an author's major task and endorses verbal regurgitation both by precept and in practice.

Martianus Capella uses eating- and regurgitation-metaphors as major elements in the literary frame in which he sets the *De nuptiis* and in the narrative of the second book of the myth. By calling attention to the literary functions these metaphors fulfill, Martianus subverts his persona's narrative authority and raises questions about the principles of seamless synthesis and verbal regurgitation which Macrobius so effectively demonstrates.

The *De nuptiis* is written as a Menippean Satire, a classical genre which has no well-defined literary canon, but is usually thought to include a

⁴³ *Sat.* 1, pr. 5–10. The first two comparisons run as follows: *Apes enim quodam modo debemus imitari, quae vagantur et flores carpunt, deinde, quidquid attulere, disponunt ac per favos dividunt et sucum varium in unum saporem mixtura quadam et proprietate spiritus sui mutant. nos quoque, quidquid diversa lectione quaesivimus, commitemus stilo, ut in ordinem eodem digerente coalescat. nam et in animo melius distincta servantur et ipsa distinctio non sine quodam fermento, quo conditur universitas, in unius saporis usum varia libamenta confundit, ut, etiam siquid apparuerit unde sumptum sit, aliud tamen esse quam unde sumptum noscetur appareat: quod in corpore nostro videmus sine ulla opera nostra facere naturam: alimenta quae accipimus, quam diu in sua qualitate perseverant et solida innatant, male stomacho oneri sunt: at cum ex eo quod erant mutata sunt, tum demum in vires et sanguinem transeunt. idem in his, quibus aluntur ingenia, praestemus, ut quaecumque hausimus non patiamur integra esse, ne aliena sint, sed in quandam digeriem concoquantur: alioquin in memoriam ire possunt, non in ingenium.*

mixture of prose and verse, journeys to the underworld or the heavens, and a questioning of the authority of the narrator and the decorum of literary conventions. The work contains nine books, the first two devoted to the myth of the marriage between the god Mercury and the human maiden Philology, and the last seven devoted to presentations by the personified Liberal Arts: Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Music. The entire work is surrounded by a literary frame in which Martianus, the white-haired father, retells for his son Martianus the story Satura had told him.

In the opening prose section, Martianus attributes the entire work to the personification of the genre, Satura, and includes her as an important figure in the subsequent development of the literary frame. She interrupts Martianus at the beginning of the eighth book and at the end of the work in order to protest angrily about his authorial incompetence. The word *satura* was thought to derive from a type of stuffing,⁴⁴ and Martianus seems to play upon that derivation in his final poem describing the work. In the poem Martianus describes the fable Satura told him as an indigestible mixture of contrasting ingredients (997–98):

habes senilem, Martiane, fabulam
 miscilla lusit quam lucernis flamine
 Satura, Pelasgos dum docere nititur
 artes cathedris vix amicas Atticis,
 sic in novena decidit volumina.
 haec quippe loquax *docta indoctis aggerans*
fandis tacenda farcinat, immiscuit
 Musas deosque, disciplinas cyclicas
 garrere agresti cruda finxit plasmate.

At this point Satura can no longer contain her rage at the hash the author has made of her tale. Swelling with rage and bile (999 *turgensque felle ac bili*), she interrupts and attacks him viciously, and concludes her remarks to the son or reader with these words (1000):

ab hoc creatum Pegaseum gurgitem
 decente quando possem haurire poculo?

The narrator uses similar language in the interchange with Satura at the beginning of the eighth book on astronomy. At that point in the wedding some of the guests have lost interest in the presentations given by the Liberal Arts and have turned their attention elsewhere. Silenus has fallen into a drunken sleep, and Cupid rudely awakens him. Satura cannot

⁴⁴ Varro's derivation is recorded by Diomedes in the third book of his *Ars Grammatica* as follows (Keil, *Gramm. Lat.* I 485 ff.): *sive a quodam genere farciminis quod multis rebus refertum saturam dicit Varro vocitatum. est autem hoc positum in secundo libro Plautinarum quaestionum "satura est uva passa et polenta et nuclei pini ex mulso consparsi."*

stomach such levity (807 *nondum stomacho senescente*), she attempts to call the narrator back to his senses with a poem on a loftier plane, but the narrator responds with a spirited defense of his efforts which include a series of playful questions and a final piece of advice which reinforces the connection between tasting and being wise: *ride, si sapis, o puella, ride.*⁴⁵

The concluding poem and the interchange at the beginning of Book 8 contain a strong admixture of farce (incidentally, another literary term which derives from stuffing). These episodes portray the process of composition as awkward and interrupted, and they stress that the finished product is not a sweet and pleasant blend, like the honey to which Macrobius alludes, but an indigestible collation, impossible to sip or even to be contained in a fitting cup. When describing his own work or the disposition of Satura, Martianus frequently uses words which imply breaking apart or breaking through barriers of constraint. This language, the disparate subject matter, and the variation from lofty religious speculation to low farce give the entire work a degree of ambiguity not found in most of these didactic texts, and reveal doubts about the competence of the cook and the quality of the educational feast.

Such doubts may have arisen from the religious or spiritual beliefs to which Martianus⁴⁶ gives dramatic enactment in Book 2 of the *De nuptiis*. Before the human maiden Philology can make her ascent to the stars, she is forced to vomit up a large number of heavy texts lodged in her breast. These books the Muses hasten to gather up and preserve for earthly use.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ 809: *Talia adhuc canente Satura, vetitus ille ac durissime castigatus denuo me risus invasit. "euge" inquam, "Satura mea, an te poetriam fecit cholera? coepistine Permesiaci gurgitis sitire fontes? iamne fulgores praevides et vultus deorum? ubi illud repente discessit, quod irrisoria semper lepidaque versutia inter insana (semper) deridebas vaturn tumores, dicabulis cavillantibus saleque contenta nec minus [poetarum] rhetorum cothurno inter lymphatica derelicto, et quod rabido fervebas cerebrosa motu, ac me Sileni somnum ridentem censorio clangore superciliosior increpabas? ergone figmenta dimoveam, et nihil leporis iocique permixti taedium auscultantium recreabit? Paeligni de cetero iuvenis versiculo respisce, et ni tragicum corrugaris, ride, si sapis, o puella, ride."*

⁴⁶ The extensive religious speculation in the *De nuptiis* would suggest that the author was a well-educated and devout pagan.

⁴⁷ 134-38: *et "heus" inquit "virgo, praecepit deorum pater hac regali lectica in caeli palatia subveharis, quam quidem nulli fas attrahere terrigenae, sed ne tibi quidem, si ante nostrum poculum, licet." et cum dicto leniter dextra cordis eius pulsum pectusque pertractat, ac nescioqua intima plenitudine distentam magno cum turgore respiciens, "ni haec," inquit "quibus plenum pectus geris, coactissima egestionem vomueris forasque diffuderis, immortalitatis sedem nullatenus obtinebis." at illa omni nisu magnaue vi quicquid intra pectus pensenserat evomebat. tunc vero illa nausea ac vomitio laborata in omnigenum copias convertitur litterarum. cernere erat, qui libri quantaque volumina, quot linguarum opera ex ore virginis diffuebant. alia ex papyro, quae cedro perlita fuerat, videbantur, alii carbasinis voluminibus implicati libri, ex ovillis multi quoque tergoribus, rari vero in philyrae cortice subnotati; erantque quidam sacra nigredine colorati, quorum litterae animantium credebantur effigies, quasque librorum notas Athanasia conspiciens quibusdam eminentibus saxis iussit ascribi atque intra specum per Aegyptiorum adyta collocari, eademque saxa stelas appellans deorum stemmata praecipit continere. sed dum*

Martianus dwells upon the outer, physical characteristics of the books Philology disgorges and provides a catalogue of works of differing languages written on various materials and with quite differing outer forms. The scene is an unforgettable presentation of a mystical insight. It simultaneously stresses the value of human learning and the necessity for its ultimate rejection if the human hopes to gain a vision of the divine.

Both Apuleius and Macrobius act as interpreters of philosophical and religious matters for their sons. Apuleius's *De Platone et eius dogmate* and the *De mundo* and Macrobius's *Saturnalia* and *Somnium Scipionis* contain revelation and religious speculation which the father explains and clarifies for his child. Those paternal authors do not overtly question either the nature of their work or their competence to undertake it. Their role is to translate difficult philosophical concepts into understandable form.

Martianus follows a different course. He creates a myth, sets didactic discourses within unfamiliar surroundings, and subverts his paternal authority by open abuse of his authorial persona. He uses comparisons between his literary effort and food, but his comparisons stress indigestibility and ejection. Throughout his work Martianus stresses the underlying unity of opposites and his own inability to achieve it. Augustine challenges the tradition by rejecting the basis for paternal educational authority. Martianus undermines it by suggesting that all the disparate elements of knowledge cannot be brought together into one smooth mixture humans can swallow.

In general, the digestion-metaphors in ancient didactic texts present a somewhat unappetizing vision of the subject matter either as disordered tidbits or already processed pap. While such a vision may be offensive to a modern reader, the repetition of the metaphor in the ancient authors suggests that they held a different view. They saw themselves as processors and preservers of intellectual nourishment which could be used to sustain the next generation.

Roman Models and Medieval Textbooks

The influence of father-son dialogues and dedications extends far beyond the ancient world. Two brief examples from Cato and Cicero will illustrate how the tradition continued into medieval textbooks. Cato influences the development of the tradition, not so much through the survival of his words as through the exemplary portrait later authors made of his life. Cicero shapes and develops the father-son didactic tradition through the direct

Italia virgo undanter evomeret, puellae quamplures, quarum Artes aliae, alterae dictae sunt Disciplinae, subinde, quae ex ore virgo effuderat, colligebant in suum unaquaque iltarum necessarium usum facultatemque corripient. ipsae etiam Musae, praesertim Vranie Calliopeque, innumera gremio congersere volumina.

influence of his writings and the indirect influence which derived from his reputation.

Thus, it is not the actual, historical Cato, but the Cato of romance, the typical wise old Roman father who is the voice of the popular *Disticha Catonis*. These two-line hexameter maxims were purportedly directed by Cato to his son Marcus. The kernel of the collection of moral aphorisms originated well before the third century A.D., although the collection continued to grow and change in the course of its later use as a primary text. As one of the basic texts for the elementary study of Latin during the medieval period, the *Disticha* spread the influence of Cato and the father-son educational model widely. To be sure, the *Disticha* were not without rivals in the medieval classroom and were supplanted to some degree by the *Monosticha* of Eugenius and, later especially, by the study of the Psalter. Still, the number of extant manuscripts and the references to maxims from other sources attest to their currency from the fourth century onward. The very attribution of the collection to Cato and its subsequent popularity not only furthered the literary convention but also fostered a memory of an educational practice which was centered upon the father teaching his son.

Cicero's two works for his son provide models for imitation throughout the later tradition. Of the many followers and imitators, Ambrose deserves special mention because his work marks a turning point in the tradition's development. In his three books *De officiis ministrorum* Ambrose uses the Ciceronian literary model in order to address the young clerics of the diocese for whom he is the spiritual father. His work exemplifies the transition between the dedication of moral instruction to children of the flesh and the deliverance of moral precepts to children of the spirit.

Three observations may be gleaned from a quick retrospective of the catalogue of authors: (1) the prominence of the father-son dedication in authors of the late fourth and fifth centuries; (2) the large number of Latin paternal authors who were not born under Italian skies and, in some instances, call attention to their foreign origins (Seneca, Aulus Gellius, Apuleius, Nonius Marcellus, Charisius, Macrobius, Augustine, Martianus Capella, Marcellus, Cassius Felix, and Martyrius could be included in such a group); and (3) the number of important educational texts of the early and later Middle Ages which are prefaced by father-son dedications or are constructed as a father-son dialogue. By manuscript count alone, the *Disticha Catonis*, the *De nuptiis*, and the *De arithmetica* would rank among the most widely distributed texts. Others on the list are not far behind in count, although a few are preserved in a unique manuscript or only in fragments.

Ancient education depended very much upon the possession, preservation, and transmission of actual texts. Such education can be characterized as highly literary and almost slavish in its adherence to earlier textual authorities as an abstract generalization. It was also bounded by the

scrolls and books, the concrete physical signs and the means by which learning was passed from one generation to the next. Moderns live in a world of multiple copies, easy duplication, and quick obsolescence; and modern education must teach the ability to search and synthesize. Not even the wealthiest readers in antiquity faced comparable problems of textual proliferation and intellectual plenty. Owning and displaying the scrolls and books themselves were signs of the owner's participation in the cultural tradition.

School texts in the late Middle Ages, for example, show a number of signs of the pride of ownership.⁴⁸ Paul Gehl has discussed examples of Tuscan production of small books for children. These texts gave the child simultaneously a set of moral goals, instruction in Latin, and a tangible, attractively decorated artifact of book culture. In a similar way, the earlier Latin texts in this tradition represented an actual physical gift, a scroll or codex which the father intended as a more permanent, outward expression of the learning he hoped to transmit. The father's role in educating his child then becomes not so much an act of discovery for the future but a monument to past learning, digested and assembled into a conventional literary structure which celebrated family relations and accomplishments.

The literary convention of father-son dedication so prevalent in the Roman encyclopaedic tradition may thus be linked with a conscious identification in the author's mind between the type of learned work and virtuous attributes. The prevalence of this form of dedication in late antiquity should not be seen as meaningless repetition of an outmoded convention but rather as a badge, a consciously assumed marker of participation within Roman culture. The subject matter taught (the ethical and practical precepts of agriculture, rhetoric, religion, and politics) also served similar aims and was, like the conventional dedications, both descriptive and prescriptive.

To be sure, the major subject matter of the educational treatise, the basic text of the handbook, usually proceeds without frequent references to the reader, whether addressed as son or not. Yet the frame which the dedication or dialogue provides sets up a fictive educational model and pattern of identification which subsequent readers are forced to recall or even, to a limited extent, to assume. In short, the texts themselves contain reminders of the primary role of the parent in educating his offspring. Although Bishop Eucherius's dedication of religious writings to his sons Salonius and Veranius, and Boethius's dedication of the *De sancta trinitate* to his father-in-law indicate how subject matter and catechetical expectations were changing in the later period, the instructional patterns and the familial format remain remarkably constant. The ancient model for teaching and learning accompanies the subject matter taught and retains some influence in

⁴⁸ See P. F. Gehl, "Latin Readers in Fourteenth-Century Florence: Schoolkids and their Books," *Scrittura e Civiltà* 13 (1989) 396-98, 410.

the later period, if only as the fictive, textbook setting for instruction or the imagined context by which the author establishes a bond with his reader.

It is misleading to read these ancient dedications and dialogues as if the literary forms served the same functions as modern dedications. Such a reading fails to acknowledge the source of the author's authority and the relationships which define the work's purpose and execution. Modern didactic authors, relying on their membership in a professional class, use their works to demonstrate their authority in the field. Dedication to a husband or child is a brief recognition of other aspects of the author's life. Ancient authors draw their didactic authority from the family relation and construct their works as celebratory monuments of that relationship. The works confirm the family's identification with a cultured class in Roman society and stand as visible, public testimony of personal commitment to virtue and learning.

University of Wisconsin, Madison