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A Study of the Origins of Cicero's Consolatory Writings and Their Effectiveness in the Author's Own Life

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A STUDY OF THE ORIGINS OF CICERO'S CONSOLATORY
WRITINGS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS
IN THE AUTHOR'S OWN LIFE

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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VITA AUCTORIS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Acad. pr.</u>	<u>Academica Priora.</u>
<u>Att.</u>	<u>Epistulae ad Atticum.</u>
<u>Brut.</u>	<u>Epistulae ad Brutum.</u>
<u>Dom.</u>	<u>De Domo Sua.</u>
<u>Fam.</u>	<u>Epistulae ad Familiares.</u>
<u>Mil.</u>	<u>Pro Milone.</u>
<u>Phil.</u>	<u>Orationes Philippicae.</u>
<u>Plan.</u>	<u>Pro Plancio.</u>
<u>Post Red. ad Quir.</u>	<u>Post Reditum ad Quirites.</u>
<u>Post Red. in Sen.</u>	<u>Post Reditum in Senatu.</u>
<u>Quin. Frat.</u>	<u>Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem.</u>
<u>Sest.</u>	<u>Pro Sestio.</u>
<u>Tusc.</u>	<u>Disputationes Tusculanae.</u>

NOTE: All the above are works of Cicero, Teubner Edition, Leipzig, 1889-1896.

LCL Loeb Classical Library.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all Loeb editions will be those published by William Heinemann, London. Translator and date will be given in footnote.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis will treat the consolatory writings of Cicero. Its purpose will be to discover the content, the origin and development, and the personal influence on the author himself of those writings.

The first chapter will be devoted to the nature and history of consolatory writings. After that the doctrine of Cicero on consolation will be set forth in chapter two. In the third chapter the sources of Cicero's thought will be examined and the originality shown by the Roman will be demonstrated. Chapters four and five will then be devoted to a study of Cicero's own use of the theory he had so elegantly proposed in his writings.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF CONSOLATORY WRITINGS

Just as suffering has been the lot of mankind from the time of Adam's sin, so the need of consolation has likewise existed. For this reason it is natural that a considerable literature on consolation should arise as soon as men were advanced enough to cultivate letters. Hence arose the consolatio, first in Greek, then in Latin.

The consolatio may be described as a literary type written according to standard conventions which had for its purpose the alleviation of another's sorrow. A more intimate knowledge of the consolatio is best acquired by a brief study of the history and by analyzing an actual example of the type. Therefore this chapter will first develop the history of consolatory writings and then analyze one of the later Latin works which are the only conventional works still extant.

Let us begin then, with a brief history of consolatory writings. It must not be supposed that no consolatory writing existed before the advent of the formal consolatio. Actual consolatory writing--while not in the strict literary form of later centuries--goes back as far as Homer. In the

twenty-fourth book of the Iliad Achilles consoles Priam on the loss of his son by reminding him that sorrow is the lot of mankind because the almighty Zeus wills it so.¹

The tragedians of later times were not without passages calculated to relieve the grief of a distressed character. In Sophocles' Electra the chorus consoles Electra lamenting the death of her father, and exhorts her to be calm, to trust in the gods, and to hope for the return of Orestes.² Euripides likewise gives to the chorus the task of alleviating Iolaus' sorrow on the death of Macaria by reminding her that Fate's decrees are unavoidable and, secondly, by pointing out the glory of a patriotic death.³

Among the prose writers the consolatio did not spring up immediately into full bloom. At first it was not a formal literary type but consisted in the precepts of individual philosophers expressed in whatever form they chose. That these precepts were written by many of the ancients is proved from St. Jerome's letter to Heliodorus:

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- 1 Homer, Iliad, 24. 521-551, LCL, transl. by A. T. Murray, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1939.
 - 2 Sophocles, Electra, 135-184, transl. by R. C. Jebb in Sophocles, The Plays and Fragments, University Press, Cambridge, 1924.
 - 3 Euripides, Heracleidae, 608-638, transl. by E. P. Coleridge in Complete Greek Drama, W. J. Oates and E. O'Neill, Randam House, New York, 1938.

Legimus Crantorem, cuius volumen ad confovendum dolorem suum secutus est Cicero. Platonis, Diogenis, Clitomachi, Carneadis, Posidonii ad sedandos luctus opuscula percucurrimus qui diversis aetatibus, diversorum lamenta vel libris vel epistulis minuere sunt conati.⁴

The writers of these precepts can be traced as far back as Democritus.⁵ After Democritus all the Greek schools of philosophy cultivated the consolatio. For proof of this we need only to read Cicero in his Tusculan Disputations where he not only names each school but gives its line of argument in the matter of consolation:

Sunt qui unum officium consolantis putent malum illud omnino non esse, ut Cleanthi placet; sunt qui non magnum malum, ut Peripatetici; sunt qui abducant a malis ad bona, ut Epicurus; sunt qui satis putent ostendere nihil inopinati accidisse, ut Cyrenaici. Chrysippus autem caput esse censet in consolando detrahere illam opinionem maerenti, si se officio fungi putet justo atque debito.⁶

Naturally, when thinking of Greek philosophy, those two giants of the intellect, Plato and Aristotle, come to our minds. What did they do in the field of consolatory writings? Although in the paragraph quoted above St. Jerome testifies

4 St. Jerome, Epistulae, 60.5, in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, G. Freytag, Leipzig, 1910, LIV.

5 L. A. Seneca, Epistulae Morales, 98.9, 99.25, in Ad Lucilium Epistolarum Moralium Libri, N. Zanichelli, Bonn, 1927, XVI.

6 Tusc. 3.76

that Plato wrote consolatory literature, we have nothing of his directly addressed to any mourner. However, since he attacks Homer for portraying Achilles and the gods laboring under excessive grief,⁷ it seems that Plato considered extreme or protracted sorrow as something unworthy of men. Beyond that there is no further evidence.

But if one finds no consolatory writings in Plato but only germs of what he would have said, he is even less successful in his search through Aristotle. Cicero has already said that the peripatetics cultivated the consolatio, and in the spurious works of Aristotle we find arguments against grief,⁸ but Aristotle himself has not even a line on the subject. The best one can do is to interpret his doctrine on the mean as presented in the Ethics.⁹ According to it Aristotle would condemn excessive grief but would tolerate temperate mourning. What he would advise in consolation cannot be said, for he has left us nothing from which to conjecture.

Although Plato and Aristotle have bequeathed little or

7 Plato, Republic, 388. A-C, LCL, transl. by Paul Shorey, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1935.

8 Aristotle, On Virtues and Vices, 7. 13, LCL, transl. by H. Rackham, 1938.

9 Aristotle, Ethics, 1106B-1107A, LCL, transl. by H. Rackham, 1926.

nothing on consolation, nevertheless we do have the titles and some of the arguments of other Greek writers on the subject. This information was preserved for us by the Latin writers on consolation who flourished a century after Cicero. Diogenes of Sinope, the Cynic, wrote *περὶ Θανάτου*, and Epicurus, *περὶ Ἠγησιάνου τελευτῆς*.

But the peer of them all, to judge by the testimony of the ancients, was Crantor, the Academician. All our information about him is gathered from a short life by Diogenes Laertius,¹⁰ and from fragments of his writings in Plutarch,¹¹ the Commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus,¹² and the Adversus Ethicos by Sextus Empiricus.¹³

Born at Soli in Cilicia about 340 B. C., Crantor migrated to Athens while yet a young man, where he applied his philosophic acumen to the lectures of the Academicians, Zenocrates and Polemon. Mullach says of him: "Neque eiusmodi philosophus erat, qui in verba magistri iuraret..."¹⁴

Proclus credits Crantor with writing the first commentary on

10 Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, 4.24-27, LCL, transl. by R. D. Hicks, 1935.

11 Plutarch, Moralia, 101 F, 1012A, LCL, transl. by F. C. Babbitt, 1928.

12 Proclus, Commentary on Plato's Timaeus, 24A, 85A from F. G. A. Mullach, Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1881, III, 134, 139.

13 Sextus Empiricus, Adversus Ethicos, 51-59, LCL, transl. by R. G. Bury, 1936.

14 Mullach, III, 131.

the Timaeus of Plato¹⁵ but Mullach affirms that both Speusippus and Xenocrates had done so before him.¹⁶ No one, however, denies Crantor the honor of having first systematized in one work the arguments for consolation.

His περὶ πένθους, written to Hippocles on the death of the latter's children, presented all the consoling reflections which individual philosophers had been employing for centuries. Described by Cicero as "non magnus, verum aureolus, et ad verbum ediscendus libellus,"¹⁷ the περὶ πένθους was used for centuries by all those seeking to minister to souls diseased by extreme grief. The influence of Crantor during the subsequent centuries can be adequately measured by studying the consolatory writings of Cicero, Pliny the younger, Seneca, Plutarch, and others.

The history of the consolatio, however, is of interest only in so far as it gives the predecessors of Cicero, all of whom are Greeks. For the Roman consolatio as a formal literary type with its own subject matter and standard conventions of presentation did not exist until the advent of Cicero. But Crantor has collected the thought of all Greek

15 Proclus, 24 A, in Mullach, III, 134.

16 Mullach, III, 134.

17 Acad. pr. 2.44.

philosophy on consolation in his *περὶ πένθους*. Therefore, by studying and analyzing the fragments of the *περὶ πένθους* we acquire a more or less comprehensive view of Greek consolatory writings, the foundation upon which Cicero built his own work.

After Cicero the consolatio was developed by many Latin writers such as Pliny the younger, Seneca, Statius, and Boethius. During this development its form became stereotyped with similar subject matter and standard conventions of presentation. In order to get a comprehensive view of this standard we shall now study one of the examples that has come down to us. According to Duff:

Usually this structure consisted of an introduction, on the evil to be remedied; the main body of the consolation, on the cause of the affliction and the person afflicted; and a conclusion.¹⁸

Perhaps of all the extant Roman works on consolation, that most closely adhering to the standard conventions is the one which Seneca addressed during his exile to his mother, the Ad Matrem Helviam de Consolatione.¹⁹ Let the reader

18 J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome in the Silver Age, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935, 209.

19 L. A. Seneca, Ad Matrem Helviam de Consolatione, in Charles Favez, L. A. Senecae Dialogorum, Liber XII Ad Matrem Helviam de Consolatione, Payot et Cie, Paris, 1918.

understand here that the consolation to Helvia is chosen for no other reason than to exemplify the type. The error must not be made of believing that Seneca's work influenced Cicero in writing his Consolatio, since Seneca wrote nearly a century after the great orator.

In the exordium Seneca gives two reasons for writing the consolatio. First, by assuaging his mother's grief he can help free himself from the mournful burden weighing on him. Second, he fears that even though Fortune could not conquer him, it might overcome some of his family. He then mentions that he did not write sooner because he was afraid of merely irritating her grief. Furthermore there was no precedent for the one being sorrowed over to offer consolation to his friends. Before going to the consolation proper Seneca recalls to his mother the long list of sorrows she has undergone which have taught her to be courageous in overcoming her grief.

He now moves into the body of the consolation to treat according to the standard convention, first, the cause of the affliction, and secondly the person afflicted. In the first we have a most unique situation, for the person whose loss is mourned is comforting the mourner. Seneca says he feels he can conquer Helvia's grief, if he can prove: first, that he himself is not unhappy, and second, that her mis-

fortune, caused by his loss, is not severe. He points out four reasons why he is not unfortunate. He has been trained not to mind the loss of external blessings. Banishment is only a change of habitation which many have undergone for personal interests. Third, he argues that poverty of exile is no evil for really the wants of the body are few, and nature sees to it that no difficult conditions can hinder man from accomplishing those things he is obliged to do. Seneca then strengthens this third argument by very many examples, a device very common in consolatory writings. Finally, he argues that the disgrace of exile is only a matter of opinion.

Turning to the second general division of the body of the consolation, Seneca directly consoles the person afflicted, his mother. In the first part he has argued that she has no reason to grieve on his account. Now he argues there is no reason to grieve on her own account. He begins by saying that she mourns either because she has lost the protection of her son or because she cannot bear the separation. The first he rejects immediately since she has always been unselfish in dealing with her sons and has never demanded help or protection from them. He then sets himself to resolve the real cause of her grief, the pain of his separation.

First, he argues that his separation is a fine chance to display her own courage and fortitude as other valiant women have done whose examples he now cites. Then too, Helvia will have the study of philosophy to console her. Finally, he reminds her of the dear ones still left to her who should indeed prove a consolation, and especially, he recommends that she have recourse to her own sister, Seneca's aunt, who, because she has suffered extremely, will be a great source of consolation to Helvia.

Finally, in the conclusion, Seneca returns to the first division of the consolation proper and assures his mother again that he is happy in his study of the universe and in his light literary pursuits.

The Ad Matrem Helviam de Consolatione is, as was said above, very standard in its form. The exordium presents the reason for writing and a review of Helvia's past sufferings. Then follows the twofold division of the consolation proper wherein the arguments are always supported by numerous examples according to the best consolatory form. Finally there is the conclusion.

While he is faithful to the conventions Seneca has opportunity to display his personal genius in his use of rhetoric, in his Stoic contempt for the gifts of fortune,

which can be sensed all through the body of the work, and finally, in his delicate touch at the end of the consolation where he exhorts Helvia to take solace and delight in the dear ones left to her. It is these occasions, seized upon and used to best advantage, that enabled Seneca to go beyond the confining limits of mere convention and display his deep and sympathetic insight into human nature.

The purpose of this chapter has been to acquaint the reader with the origin, development, and nature of the consolatio. This information has been presented as an aid to the reader in his perusal of the next two chapters dealing with the content and sources of Cicero's consolatory writings.

CHAPTER II

CICERO'S CONSOLATORY WRITINGS

In the first chapter something was seen of the nature of the consolatio and its development before the time of Cicero. Now it is time to find out just what the consolatory writings of Cicero were. To find the orator's doctrine on consolation a variety of sources must be examined. His arguments are in scattered passages throughout the Tusculan Disputations, De Senectute, De Amicitia, the Philippics, Ad Familiares, one letter to Atticus, and various fragments of the lost Consolatio.

The earliest work of Cicero on this subject is a letter to a former client, Sittius,¹ written in 52. In this letter he is consoling Sittius on the death of his son. A second letter was written for a similar reason to an unknown person, Titius,² six years later in 46. In January 45, a month before Tullia's death, Cicero wrote another consolatory letter to the exiled Aulus Manlius Torquatus.³ In the last letter of Cicero on this subject written to

1 Fam. 5.17

2 Ibid. 5.16

3 Ibid. 6.4

Atticus,⁴ the writer, after expressing his grief over the death of their friend, Alexio, expands a bit of philosophy on accepting resignedly whatever falls to the lot of man.

Among the philosophic works the Consolatio was written the month following Tullia's death, March 45.⁵ The next year Cicero wrote first the Tusculan Disputations, then the De Amicitia and De Senectute. Finally, a last bit of consolatory writing, the fourteenth Philippic, was delivered April 43, eight months before the orator's death in December of the same year. To facilitate the understanding of the sequence of Cicero's works on consolation the following chronological table is presented.

Work or event:	Date:
1. Exile of Cicero.....	58
2. Letter to Sittius.....	52
3. Letter to Titius.....	46
4. Letter to Torquatus.....	45, January.
5. DEATH OF TULLIA.....	45, February.
6. <u>Consolatio</u>	45, March.
7. <u>Tusculan Disputations</u>	44, March?
8. Letter to Atticus.....	44, May?
9. <u>De Senectute</u>	44, July.
10. <u>De Amicitia</u>	44, November?
11. Fourteenth <u>Philippic</u>	43, April.
12. DEATH OF CICERO.....	43, December.

While the bulk of the writings on this topic was composed

⁴ Att. 15.1

⁵ Ibid. 12.14,20

in the year 45 and 44, it cannot be concluded from this that Cicero's thought was formed during those years, for even in the first letter, written in 52, Cicero uses three of the stock arguments for consolation. Six years later he uses the phrase consolatio pervulgata to describe what he has to say. Finally, it is known that there was little opportunity to gather much material for his formal Consolatio written after Tullia's death. For the work was finished and published in March 45 while Tullia only died on February 15 or thereabouts.⁶ Furthermore he was not able to do extensive work because of his shattered nerves which he describes in a letter to Atticus: "...interpellat fletus, cui repugno quantum possum."⁷ It would seem, therefore, that Cicero had more than an acquaintance with consolatory literature before the time of the Consolatio, and that he just gathered his arguments together and amplified them during the month following Tullia's death. This is further brought out by Cicero's reply to the harsh letter of Brutus chiding him for his conduct after Tullia's death. "...ea quae didiceram, legeram, acceperam, graviora duxi, tua auctoritate addita."⁸

6 Hannis Taylor, Cicero, A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago, 1918, 252.

7 Att. 12.15

8 Brut. 9

With his grammatical eye on the tenses of the first three verbs one knows that the writer had previously read the works which now he is reviewing more meditatively. That he did some reading and investigating however, is known from the above-quoted letter to Brutus, and from his letter to Atticus.⁹

With one possible exception, namely, the argument that neither gods nor men are pleased by our extreme grief, all the consolatory writings subsequent to the Consolatio, which include the Tusculan Disputations, De Senectute, De Amicitia, and the fourteenth Philippic, present no new doctrine but rather repetitions and amplifications of old ideas.

An examination and classification of all the arguments used in Cicero's various consolatory writings reveal six main categories of reasons for controlling one's grief in affliction. First, Cicero argues there should be moderation in grief because the contrary vice is both unbecoming a man and useless. Second, misfortune should not be unexpected for it is the lot of mankind. In the third place reason should bring about those things which time eventually will accomplish. Fourth, extreme grief comes from a false

⁹ Att. 12.15,20

supposition concerning misfortune, and, in the case of death, from a fear of displeasing the departed and the gods. Fifth, the only evil in life is moral guilt, and even death itself is no great evil, since it frees us from the misfortunes of life and ushers us into immortality. Sixth, the virtues of the departed one should be a consolation to us when death takes away a dear one.

An examination of each of the passages will now be made to get a better understanding of the arguments. The first argument states that there should be moderation in grief for excessive depression is unmanly and futile. The best passages are those in the third book of the Tusculan Disputations where he discusses methods of assuaging grief. Cicero gives a triplex consolatio for the philosopher in casibus adversis. The first and third will come up in the other divisions of the arguments. The second he puts very succinctly. The philosopher will be calm in adversity, "... deinde quod humana humane ferenda intellegit."¹⁰ Again in the same work, after naming many men who have lost sons, he writes: "Quid hos aliud placavit, nisi quod luctum et maerorem non putabant viri?"¹¹ We also find the argument

10 Tusc. 2.6

11 Ibid. 3.28

from futility twice in the Tusculans: The first occasion is in the same chapter as the previous quotation: "Quid est autem quod plus valeat ad ponendum dolorem, quam cum est intellectum nil profici et frustra esse susceptum." Finally at the end of the third book he writes: "Erit igitur in consolationibus prima medicina...altera...tertia summam esse stultitiam frustra confici maerore, cum intellegas nil posse profici."¹² Extensive research could find this first argument on unmanliness and futility nowhere in the other works of Cicero. Hence no growth of development in Cicero's thought on the matter can be discovered. Since--as shall be proved in the succeeding chapter--Cicero did follow Crantor here; and since from a letter to Atticus¹³ it can safely be said he had read Crantor before he wrote the Consolatio, it may be concluded that most likely the argument was in the Consolatio. However concerning the extent of its development nothing can be said.

The second argument is that evil and calamity should not be unexpected for they are the lot of man. The conclusion, of course, is that, if they are not a surprise to him, man can bear them more resignedly. To this end the

¹² Ibid. 3.32

¹³ Att. 12.14

ancients recommended meditation on the calamities of life. Cicero first uses this argument in writing to Titius at the death of the latter's son in 46. He says:

Est autem consolatio pervulgata quidem illa maxime, quam semper in ore atque in animo habere debemus, homines nos ut esse meminerimus ea lege natos, ut omnibus telis fortunae proposita sit vita nostra, neque esse recusandum quo minus ea, qua nati sumus, condicione vivamus, neve tam graviter eos casus feramus, quos nullo consilio vitare possimus, eventisque aliorum memoria repentendis nihil accidisse novi nobis cogitemus.¹⁴

Cicero has a variety of thought in this paragraph. He first recommends meditation of the following: man's life is exposed to many misfortunes; second, man must not endeavor to resist this condition, or be crushed by that which he cannot escape; the third, man should take heart from the example of others. The various divisions of this argument are found further developed in later works of Cicero.

His first thought to Titius was to recommend reflection on the miseries of life. In the Tusculans there is the triplex consolatio mentioned above, wherein, speaking of the wise man's conduct in adversity, he writes: "Quod (meaning adversity) posse accidere diu cogitavit, quae cogitatio

una maxime molestias omnis extenuat et diluit.¹⁵ This argument is more explicit now than it was in the letter to Titius. For then Cicero had only counselled meditation on the ever possible misfortunes of life. Now he gives the same counsel but also indicates the result of following the counsel.

The reason for the misfortunes of life, is given in one sentence from the Consolatio quoted by Lactantius. Speaking of Cicero's philosophy, the Christian writer says; "qui cum in principio consolationis suae dixisset luendorum scelerum causa nasci homines."¹⁶ This then is an advance on the statement of the mere fact of the misfortunes for it reveals what Cicero considered as the reason for them.

After counselling meditation on man's condition in life Cicero tells him not to struggle against that condition. This is stated very explicitly again in the Tusculans: "... Necessitas ferendae conditionis humanae quasi cum deo pugnare prohibet admonetque esse hominem...."¹⁷ Here again there is

15 Tusc. 3.16

16 Lactantius, Institutiones Divinae, 3.18.18 in Cicero, Fragmenta Philosophica, 16, Teubner Edition, Leipzig, 1890.

17 Tusc. 3.25

an advance. For in the letter Cicero said we must not fight against our condition in life. But in the Tusculans he gives more than just the fact. He has also the explanation behind the fact. To refuse our condition in life, and to struggle against it would be, according to Cicero, to contend with God.

The last recommendation to Titius that he recall the misfortunes of others is commonplace in all consolatory writings but the particular twist given to the argument by Cicero is his own and not to be found elsewhere even in his own writings. For instead of appealing to the examples of other men as an incentive to courage, Cicero merely says we should use them as a reminder that nothing new--nil novi accidisse--has happened to us, but rather we are suffering because it is the lot of mankind.

In summary it can be said that the second argument is first found at some length in a letter to Titius, but the thought of it grew in time, for various phases of the reasoning are found further developed in later works.

Next comes the thought why should not human reason achieve the assuagement which eventually time will bring about? This argument, like the preceding, is first mentioned in the letter to Titius:

Nam quod allatura est ipsa diuturnitas, quae maximos luctus vetustate tollit, id nos praecipere consilio prudentiaque debemus. Etenim, si nulla fuit umquam liberis amissis tam imbecillo mulier animo, quae non aliquando lugendi modum fecerit, certe nos, quod est dies allatura, id consilio anteferre debemus neque expectare temporis medicinam, quam repraesentare ratione possimus.¹⁸

The principle is simple enough without much room for amplification. In the Tusculans Cicero gives one explanation of why the sorrow wanes with time:

Sensim enim et pedetemptim progrediens extenuatur dolor, non quo ipsa res immutare soleat aut possit, sed id, quod ratio debuerat, usus docet, minora esse ea, quae sint visa maiora.¹⁹

Cicero charges that a man in grief exaggerates the greatness of his calamity and hence only in time does he see it more in proportion. This proper perspective regarding suffering can be more rapidly acquired by a rational appraisal of the suffering, than by giving oneself over to years of unmitigated grief. So he writes a few chapters later in the Tusculans:

Sed nimirum hoc maxumum est experimentum, cum constet aegritudinem vetustate tolli, hanc vim non esse in die positam, sed in cogitatione diuturna. Nam si et eadem res

18 Fam. 5.16

19 Tusc. 3.15

est et idem est homo, qui potest quicquam de dolore mutare, si neque de eo, propter quod dolet, quicquam est mutatum neque de eo, qui dolet? Cogitatio igitur diuturna nihil esse in re mali dolori medetur, non ipsa diuturnitas.²⁰

The fourth argument says that there is really no reason for grief in adversity, but that the anguish results from a false supposition that sorrow is by a natural necessity consequent on adversity, just as indigestion is by a natural necessity consequent on overeating. In the case of sorrow over the departed men are afraid that they will offend those who have passed away or even the gods themselves, if they do not manifest their depression. In the third book of the Tusculan Disputations there are several passages illustrating this thought. First, in speaking of putting grief aside he says: if man can put grief aside he can also not take it up, in other words there was no cause for grief to begin with. "Si igitur deponi potest, etiam non suscipi potest; voluntate igitur et iudicio suscipi aegritudinem confitendum est."²¹ Later in the same chapter he proves by an example that sorrow arises from a false supposition. His reasoning is that great philosophers who have not yet attained perfect wisdom consider

²⁰ Ibid. 3.30

²¹ Ibid. 3.28

themselves to be in the greatest misfortune. Yet they do not have great grief because the supposition that mourning must follow misfortune does not have place with this particular kind of misfortune.

Defatigatio igitur miseriarum aegritudines cum faciat leniores, intellegi necesse est non rem ipsam causam atque fontem esse maeroris. Philosophi summi nequedum tamen sapientiam consecuti nonne intelligunt in summo se malo esse? Sunt enim insipientes, neque insipientia ullum maius malum est; neque tamen lugent. Quid ita? Quia huic generi malorum non adfingitur illa opinio, rectum esse et aequum et ad officium pertinere aegre ferre, quod sapiens non sis, quod idem adfingimus huic aegritudini, in qua luctus inest, quae omnium maxuma est.²²

Although the argument is not used elsewhere in Cicero's works it is certainly frequent in the Tusculans. Besides the two passages already quoted three others occur. In a passage the first part of which we have already cited, Cicero says in speaking of men who lost their sons: "Quid hos aliud placavit, nisi quod luctum et maerorem esse non putabant viri? Ex quo intelligitur non in natura, sed in opinione esse aegritudinem."²³ Again in the next chapter where he enumerates three causes for grief, the first is, "...illa

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., Italics mine.

opinio mali, quo viso et persuaso, aegritudo insequitur necessario."²⁴ Finally two chapters later he sums up:
"Satis dictum esse arbitror aegritudinem esse opinionem mali praesentis, in qua opinione illud insit, ut aegritudinem suscipere oporteat."²⁵

Furthermore, this false supposition has its place also with respect to grieving for the departed, for many think they must be sorrowful either out of common decency, or from fear of displeasing the departed or the gods themselves. Again we find our text in the Tusculan Disputations. In the first he only mentions the fact that people consider weeping to be a duty, officium. "Sed ad hanc opinionem magni mali cum illa etiam opinio accessit, oportere, rectum esse, ad officium pertinere ferre illud aegre, quod acciderit."²⁶

Later he expressly mentions pleasing the departed and the gods:

Sed plures sunt causae suscipiendi doloris. Primum...; deinde etiam gratum mortuis se facere, si graviter eos lugeant, arbitrantur. Accedit superstitio muliebris quaedam; existumant enim dis immortalibus

²⁴ Ibid. 2.29

²⁵ Ibid. 3.31

²⁶ Ibid. 3.26, Italics mine.

se facilius satis facturos, si eorum
plaga percussi adflictos se et stratos
esse fateantur.²⁷

Next comes the fifth argument which says that the only justifiable cause of sorrow is moral guilt, culpa, for that is the only real evil in life, and furthermore death is certainly not to be grieved at since it frees us from the cares of life and leads us to immortality. Cicero first uses this thought in the letter to Sittius in 52, when the latter had lost his son. After recalling the various virtues of the boy and pointing these out as a source of consolation Cicero argues that, since the loss of the son has not been merited by his father, he really has no cause for grief. Speaking of the boy Cicero writes: "Quamobrem...maxime animi tua conscientia, cum tibi nihil merito accidisse reputabis et illud adjunges, homines sapientis turpitudine, non casu, et delicto suo, non aliorum injuria commoveri."²⁸

Again in the Tusculan Disputations there is the triplex consolatio contra casus adversos referred to above wherein the same argument occurs but more explicitly: "Primo...deinde

²⁷ Ibid. 3.29

²⁸ Fam. 5.17, Italics mine

...postremo quod videt MALUM NULLUM ESSE NISI CULPAM..."²⁹

At the end of the book he repeats the thought: "Tu enim de sapiente quaesieras, cui aut malum videri nullum potest, quod VACET TURPITUDINE, aut ita parvum malum, ut id obruatur sapientia vixque appareat..."³⁰ This argument does not advance during the intervals between its occurrence, although it does become more explicit.

The second part of this fifth argument states that death, often considered the worst of evils, is really no evil at all, for it liberates us from this vale of tears and leads us to immortality. To Titius on the death of his son he writes that, because conditions are so bad--especially at the present time in the state--it were better for children not to be born; or, if they are, it were better to lose them since death holds no threat, but only hope of immortality.

Neque hae neque ceterae consolationes,
 quae sunt a sapientissimis viris usurpatae
 memoriaeque litteris proditae, tantum videntur
 proficere debere, quantum status ipse
 nostrae civitatis et haec perturbatio
 temporum perditorum, cum beatissimi sint,
 qui liberos non susceperunt, minus autem
 miseri, qui his temporibus amiserunt, quam
 si eosdem bona aut denique aliqua re publica

²⁹ Tusc. 3.16, Italics mine

³⁰ Ibid. 3.33

perdidissent...nihil mali esse in morte,
ex qua si resideat sensus, immortalitas
illa potius quam mors ducenda sit, sin
sit amissus, nulla videri debeat, quae
non sentiatur...³¹

This thought consoles him at the time of Tullia's loss
whose goodness will surely merit for her an everlasting
reward:

Nec enim omnibus iidem illi sapientes
arbitrati sunt eundem cursum in caelum
patere; nam vitiis et sceleribus contami-
natos deprimi in tenebras atque in caeno
iacere docuerunt, castos autem animos,
puros, integros, incorruptos, bonis etiam
studiis atque artibus excolitos leni
quodam et facili lapsu ad deos, id est
ad naturam sui similem, pervolare.³²

In the Tusculans he again states death is better than
life: "Non nasci longe optimum nec in hos scopulos incidere
vitae, proximum autem, si natus sis, quam primum tamquam ex
incendio fugere fortunae."³³ Similar passages may be found
elsewhere in the Tusculans.

The argument then first occurs in the letter to Titius
and is later applied by Cicero to his own case at the death
of Tullia. It also occurs in the Tusculans, although there

31 Fam. 5.16

32 Lactantius, 3.19.3

33 Tusc. 3.19

is never any development of it.

The sixth and last argument also has reference to the death of another. It recommends that we weigh the eminent virtue of the departed one. First we have the letter to Sittius on the death of his son which we quoted before:

Sed tamen prudentissime facies, si illius pietatem, virtutem, industriam, ubicumque eris, tuam esse, tecum esse duces; nec enim minus nostra sunt, quae animo complectimur, quam quae oculis intuemur. Quam ob rem et illius eximia virtus summusque in te amor magnae tibi consolatione debet esse.³⁴

Then in the fourteenth Philippic he writes of the dead in the wars and says of their parents:

Quibus optima est haec quidem consolatio quod tanta rei publicae praesidia genuerunt, liberis, quod habebant domestica exempla virtutis, coniugibus, quod iis viris carebunt, quod laudare quam lugere praestabit, fratribus, quod in se ut corporum, sic virtutis similitudinem esse confident...³⁵

This reflection on the virtues of the deceased is commonplace in consolatory writings and scarcely capable of development. The work of discovering Cicero's doctrine in consolation is completed. A search through the varied works of Cicero has

34 Fam. 5.17

35 Phil. 14.13

revealed a considerable body of doctrine on the subject, which divides into six main categories. It now remains to trace that doctrine to its origins. The problem in this past chapter was: what did Cicero hold? The next problem is: whence did he derive his ideas?

CHAPTER III
SOURCES OF CICERO'S DOCTRINE

With six categories of arguments for consolation definitely established as Cicero's, it now remains to investigate the sources of the arguments. The purpose of the chapter is to trace the probable sources of Cicero's thought and, where it is possible, to point out how Cicero demonstrated originality in treating the arguments.

All of Cicero's arguments do occur, at least in part, in Greek literature. There can be no doubt that the Roman was influenced by the Greek Academician, Crantor. Three references to Crantor in Cicero definitely indicate that Cicero followed him. In one fragment of the lost Consolatio Cicero writes: "Crantorem sequor."¹ Then we have an argument in the Tusculans² quoted directly from Crantor which we shall cite later in this chapter. Finally, there is Cicero's beautiful encomium of Crantor's great book: "non magnus, verum aureolus et ad verbum ediscendus libellus."³ To support this evidence that Cicero followed Crantor there is the

1 Pliny, Natural History, Preface, The Delphin Classics, A. J. Valpy, London, 1826, 183.

2 Tusc. 1.48

3 Acad. pr. 2.44

similarity of four of Cicero's arguments to those of Crantor.

We shall now study each of the arguments in detail to determine whence they were or may have been derived and what originality Cicero displayed. The first argument established as Cicero's was that excessive grief is neither virile nor effective. The eighth fragment of Crantor reads:

Moerore autem ultra modum affici
et nimis augere luctum contra naturam
esse affirmo, et ex prava animi nostri
opinione nasci. Qua propter etiam hoc
ut damnosum et vitiosum et viros probos
minime decens vitandum, mediocritas vero
affectuum non est reprobanda.⁴

While this passage does not emphasize the futility of excessive grief, it surely reprobates it on the score of unmanliness and it would not be stretching the phrase, contra naturam, παρὰ φύσιν, to say that it indicates the futility of excessive grief. For φύσις is that which makes a being conformable to its end. παρὰ can mean in Greek "contrary to." If suffering therefore, is contrary to the end of man then it must be futile.

The next principle of Cicero was that grief should not

⁴ Plutarch, 102 D in Mullach III, 146. All references to Plutarch will be given according to the Latin translation in Mullach, with the traditional page number from the Xylander edition given first, and the page in Mullach after it.

be unexpected, for suffering is the lot of mankind. Cicero then went on to counsel frequent meditation on the misfortunes of life so that man could be prepared to bear those misfortunes calmly. Crantor too, believed suffering to be the lot of all men. He is quoted by Plutarch as saying:

Haec enim omnis illa vetus philosophia docet ac praecipit, quorum si quid aliud non probamus, id saltem nimis verum est, vitam nostram multimodis laboriosam esse et difficilem. Nam si natura non est talis, nostro certe vitio in hanc perniciem incurrit: et incerta ista fortuna elonginquo nos ac iam inde ab initio propter res minime salubres comitata est. Mali quaedam portio fatalis iam nascentibus nobis omnibus admiscetur.⁵

Later in the same passage Crantor excuses a digression on physical maladies with the following: "Cur vero aberravit oratio? nempe ut intelligamus, non inusitatum homini esse infortunium, sed omnes nos sub eodem casu esse subjectos."⁶

Further on in the same work the theme occurs again: "Multi enim, ut ait Crantor, licet sapientes viri non nunc primum deploraverunt res humanas, vitam esse supplicium iudicantes, et omnino nasci hominem summam calamitatem ducentes."⁷ From these passages it is clear that Crantor did hold suffering

5 Ibid. 104 C, 147

6 Ibid. 104 C, 147

7 Ibid. 104 C, 149

to be the normal thing in man's life. But the Academician does not go on to counsel meditation on life's miseries. He may have done so elsewhere in his work, but it is unlikely, since the first and second passages we quoted are from a very long fragment and no mention of meditation is made there. If the recommendation to meditate on life's evils is not in Crantor, it is quite probable that Cicero was original when he added the thought to consolatory literature. For Crantor incorporated all Greek thought on consolation in his *περὶ πένθους*, and Cicero was the first Latin writer on consolation. We conclude then, that Cicero's second principle on consolation was in Crantor, but seems to have received further development from Cicero.

The third argument of Cicero is not contained explicitly in Crantor. Therefore we shall pass over it for the present and return to it later.

The fourth argument states that men falsely suppose that sorrow is by a natural necessity consequent on adversity. The foundation for this thought is found in a fragment of Crantor already quoted. Cicero had summed up his argument by saying: "Ex quo intellegitur non in natura sed in opinione esse aegritudinem."⁸ Crantor is more forceful:

"Moerore autem ultra modum affici et nimis augeri luctum contra naturam esse affirmo, et ex PRAVA animi nostri OPINIONE nasci."⁹ Cicero had just used the word opinione; Crantor modifies it by prava which in the original Greek was φαύλης, an adjective whose root meaning is "worthless" or "trivial." To the mind of Crantor then, the opinion that sorrow is necessary is a worthless opinion, one to be ignored.

The fifth argument taken from Cicero's works can also be found in Crantor. We have heard Cicero vigorously contending in the previous chapter that the innocent sufferer has no cause for grief because in Cicero's own words "videt malum nullum esse nisi culpam."¹⁰

Plutarch states the principle as Crantor had it: "Nam haudquaquam sua culpa in miseriis versari Crantor magnum calamitatum levamen esse ait."¹¹ The argument is stated less vigorously, but basically it is the same reasoning. Cicero's argument is that there is no evil in life except moral guilt. Therefore only moral guilt should bring on grief. Crantor says a good conscience should lessen our grief.

9 Plutarch, 102 D, 146, Italicsmine.

10 Tusc. 13.16

11 Plutarch, 114 C, 149

The second part of the fifth argument can also be found in Crantor's fragments. Cicero had argued thus: the greatest evil in life is not suffering but sin, and even death itself is no evil, for it frees us from the cares of life and gives us immortality. The various steps in the argument may not be clear but it has already been seen that Crantor held that innocence was a relief to those in grief. For the second part of the argument referring to death there are two texts of Crantor. The first, which has already been used, is a passage from Plutarch where Crantor has few compliments for this life on earth:

Haec enim omnis illa vetus philosophia docet ac praecipit, quorum si quid aliud non probamus, id saltem nimis verum est, vitam nostram multimodis laboriosam esse et difficilem. Nam si natura non est talis, nostro certe vitio in hanc perniciem incurrit: et incerta ista fortuna e longinquo nos ac iam inde ab initio propter res minime salubres comitata est. Mali quaedam portio fatalis iam nascentibus nobis omnibus admiscetur.¹²

If he thought life to be so wretched surely he would not have considered death an evil. This conclusion could very safely be admitted even if there were no other explicit quotations. But both Cicero and Plutarch come to our aid with the same reference from Crantor. We shall take the one

¹² Ibid. 104 C, 147

from Cicero. It occurs in the first book of the Tusculan Disputations where Cicero is telling of the gods giving death to individuals who ask them for whatever was best for man. He then ends with this passage from Crantor, to which reference was made earlier in this chapter:

Simile quiddam est in Consolatione Crantoris; ait enim Terinaeus quendam Elysium cum graviter filii mortem maereret, venisse in psychomantium quaerentem, quae fuisset tantae calamitatis causa; huic in tabellis tris huiusmodi versiculos datos:

Ignaris homines in vita mentibus errant;

Euthynous potitur fatorum numine leto.

Sic fuit utilius finire ipsique tibi que.¹³

From this passage it is clear that Crantor believed that death certainly was no misfortune but rather a boon to anyone who could thus be delivered from this vale of tears.

Thus far we have discovered four of Cicero's six arguments to have been in Crantor's work at least in part, if not entirely. However the extant fragments give us nothing on the third and sixth arguments taken from Cicero. But approximations to these arguments can be found elsewhere in Greek literature. The third argument of Cicero states that

¹³ Tusc. 1.48

reason should accomplish those things which time will eventually bring about. As far as can be determined Cicero has developed this argument somewhat. The fragments of Crantor revealed nothing and all the other passages from Greek literature only admit that time will heal all wounds. The best passage is from Philetas, "but since time comes which is appointed by Jove to soften sorrow and it alone has a remedy for griefs."¹⁴ However neither this nor any of the other passages from the poets contains an exhortation to assuage grief now with the aid of reason instead of waiting for time to soothe it. Plutarch approaches closest to Cicero's reasoning when he tells his friends to consider the effect of time on the grief of others and then to apply that to his own grief which time will also assuage.¹⁵

However, nowhere has it been possible to find any statement recommending us to anticipate the effects of time by logical processes. The argument from Plutarch is very near to Cicero's reasoning.

What conclusions may be drawn from all this? First, it is known that Crantor was a reader of both Euripides and

14 Philetas, in E. Diehl, Anthologia Lyrica Graeca, Philetas 1, Teubner Edition, Leipzig, 1923.

15 Plutarch 115 A, not in Mullach, from Babbitt translation referred to above.

Homer,¹⁶ and therefore must have been familiar with their passages on time as the soother of grief. Since the thought was fairly commonplace in Greek literature he probably had seen it a great deal. Furthermore one can suspect that the argument as given by Plutarch is from Crantor since so many of Plutarch's points are taken from the Academician. The conclusion then is that Crantor probably had an argument for consolation based on time as the alleviator of grief. This conclusion is supported both by Crantor's familiarity with Euripides and Homer and by the likelihood that Plutarch's argument is from Crantor.

This brings the discussion down to Cicero. The most that can be said is that, if the argument was in Crantor, Cicero must have taken it from him and developed it a bit. For he does profess to follow Crantor. Otherwise we can only say that the notion of time assuaging grief is in Greek literature and Cicero probably first met it there, since he was familiar with Greek letters. In either explanation--and more so in the second--his use of the argument is an advance over previous writers. For no other writer exhorts his reader to assuage grief at the time of the calamity with the

¹⁶ Mullach, 3.133

help of logic.

Cicero's last argument states that the virtues of the deceased should be a consolation to the bereaved. In the passage we quoted above from the fourteenth Philippic¹⁷ he names the love of the deceased for his country as grounds for consolation. But the glory of a patriotic death is not his main point even in that passage. It was quite otherwise with the Greeks. Their consolatory writings are constantly returning to the glory of those who died for their country. No other virtues are ever mentioned. A passage typical of their attitude is this one from Lysias:

Now old age and sickness overcome nature; and fate, the arbiter of our destinies, is inexorable, so we ought to consider these most happy who end their days by risking their lives in the greatest and most noble deeds, not turning away from their own fortune, nor awaiting an ordinary death but choosing the most noble.¹⁸

Was there a passage similar to this in Crantor? Again it is not known. However, as in the third argument just

17 Phil. 14.34

18 Lysias, Orations, 2.78, LCL, transl. by W. R. M. Lamb, 1930.

treated, the thought is through all Greek literature,¹⁹ and therefore must have been seen often by Cicero. The further development he gave to the argument, to make it include all the virtues of the deceased, seems to be his own. For the extant works in Greek have no reference to this thought, but confine themselves to the virtue of patriotism.

The completion of the sixth argument brings us to the end of the third chapter of this thesis. We have attempted to discover the sources of Cicero's thought. In these matters of tracing sources we can follow Aristotle's principle, given in the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics, that certitude must be sought according to the nature of the subject being investigated. "It is the mark of an educated man to expect that amount of exactness in each kind which the nature of the particular subject admits."²⁰ Consequently, if we show with reasonable probability from Cicero's own admission, and from close similarity of ideas that some elements of Cicero's doctrine were in Crantor, that is the most certi-

19 Aeschylus, Agamemnon 919, transl. by E. D. A. Morshead in Complete Greek Drama.

Euripides, Troades 400, transl. by G. Murray; Hecuba 346, Heraclidae, 618, transl. by E. Coleridge, all in Complete Greek Drama.

Diogenes Laertius, Antisthenes 5.

Herodotus, 1.30, 32, LCL, transl. by A. Godley, 1926.

20 Aristotle, Ethics, 1094B. 23-25

tude we can expect to find in subject matter of this kind.

Furthermore, it seems that the Roman did use his originality to elaborate what he took from the Greek. Two arguments may have been in Crantor but they are not contained in the extant fragments. Nevertheless they both did have beginnings in Greek letters although they seem to have awaited Cicero for further development. In concluding this chapter then, it can be said that Cicero leaned heavily on the Greeks, especially on Crantor, for the genesis of his arguments, but demonstrated originality in his development of certain of these arguments.

CHAPTER IV
CICERO'S THEORIES IN PRACTICE
DURING HIS EXILE

Thus far the reader has seen the abstract theory to which Cicero subscribed, and which he employed to lighten the burdens of others. After culling the best that the ancient world had to offer he employed his own genius to develop and expand the doctrine. The question now arises, of what worth were these reflections to himself? Did they provide him with solace and strength in periods of extreme anguish and weakness? For the two most crushing calamities of his life the answer is a very emphatic no. At the time of his exile in 58 B. C. Cicero was utterly prostrate, and he was likewise overwhelmed at Tullia's death. It is only at his own death that we see him manifesting a "real assent" to the principles which for so many years he preached so eloquently.

We shall first study in detail Cicero's conduct at the time of his exile and then go on to the death of his daughter and finally to his own death. To insure an orderly procedure we shall observe the great orator in the light of each of the

principles relating to consolation. In treating the exile it is obvious that there will be no place for the second part of the fifth argument nor for the sixth, since these are consolations on death.

In criticizing Cicero's conduct during his exile it must be remembered that the principles by which his deportment is measured were not formally enunciated until after the exile. He went to Greece in April 58 but the first bit of his extant consolatory writing was penned in 52. However, as was argued in the second chapter, the fact that he had not written does not mean that these principles were not part of him early in life. There is very good reason to suppose this, first, because Cicero studied philosophy at Rome in his youth under Philo, the Academician, and Philo belonged to the same school as Crantor, whom Cicero admits he followed.¹ Furthermore Cicero did go to Greece and Asia and probably studied philosophy there as well as rhetoric. Finally it is known that he read philosophy all his life. So it is scarcely likely that he was not acquainted with and had not subscribed to the tenets of Crantor even as early as his exile. He must then have had some thought on consolation organized by the

¹ Pliny, Delphin Edition, 183.

time of his exile even though they were not at that time as formally arranged as later.

The first argument used by Cicero had an ironic touch indeed for it is the one which affected him least. Lack of moderation in grief, he argues, is unmanly and useless. However his spineless dejection over his exile is commonplace among all his biographers.

We fail to recognize the orator and statesman--the man who braved the fury of Catiline, and in the evening of his life hurled defiance at Antony--in the weeping and moaning exile. He was not deficient in physical courage; he met a violent death with calmness and fortitude; but he wanted strength of character and moral firmness to support adversity.²

Nor do these men merely conjecture and spin elaborate descriptions out of an historical imagination. Cicero vividly portrays for us his own extreme grief. His early letters in exile are filled with urgent requests to Atticus to follow him as soon as possible for in his utter dejection even his faculties fail him, and he is in dire need of his

² William Forsyth, Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero, Charles Scribner and Co., New York, 1865, I, 234. *Italics mine.* Cf. also: Taylor, 203, 204; J. F. Hollings, The Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero, Thomas Tegg, London, 1839, 192; J. L. Strachan-Davison, Cicero and The Fall of The Roman Republic, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1911, 238, 239.

friend both for physical support and prudent counsel.

Sed te oro, ut ad me Vibonem statim venias...eo si veneris, de toto itinere ac fuga mea consilium capere potero... Fac modo ut venias...intellexi ad iter id, quod constitui, nihil mihi³optatius cadere posse, quam ut tu ad me quam primum consequerere, ut...certum consilium de tua sententia capere possemus; quam ob rem te oro, des operam, ut me statim consequare...³

In five successive letters Cicero dwells on the suffering he is bearing. He tells Atticus:

...reliqua quam mihi timenda sint, video nec, quid scribam, habeo et omnia timeo, nec tam miserum est quicquam, quod non in nostram fortunam cadere videatur. Equidem adhuc miser in maximis meis aerumnis et luctibus hoc metu adiecto maneo Thessalonicae suspensus nec audeo quidquam...Ex epistolarum mearum inconstantia puto te mentis meae motum videre, qui, etsi incredibili et singulari calamitate adflictus sum, tamen non tam ex miseria quam ex culpae nostrae recordatione commotus;⁴

He even indulges in this unreasonable and useless grief to the point where he feels no one else has ever suffered the like.⁵ Naturally this incessant brooding and mourning takes a severe toll of his physical strength. He uses the

³ Att. 3.3,4,1

⁴ Ibid. 3.8, Cf. also 3.5,6,9.

⁵ Ibid. 3.7,12,15.

vigorous phrase, "conficior dolore"⁶ and another time speaks of himself as "perculso animo"⁷ and "quandam effigiem spirantis mortui."⁸ We have already seen how his brain was hindered by this extreme anguish from laying any plans. But the malady did not end there. He was not even able to write letters.⁹ To his family he writes: "Nec enim habeo quid scribam, nec hoc tempore quidquam difficilius facio; ad te vero et ad nostram Tulliolam non queo sine plurimis lacrimis scribere."¹⁰

Although he had been eagerly desirous of seeing Atticus he is unwilling for his brother to see him. For he feels that his broken condition will be too great a burden on Quintus.¹¹ Preferring to be alone in his broodings,¹² he even goes so far as to shun all intercourse.

This extreme occupation with his own lot became a source of concern to both Atticus and Terentia who vainly exhorted Cicero to take heart. Their efforts were useless how-

6 Ibid. 3.5

7 Ibid. 3.2

8 Quin. Frat. 1.3

9 Att. 3.7

10 Fam. 14.2

11 Att. 3.9, 10

12 Ibid. 3.12, 19

ever,¹³ and Cicero even unjustly censured Atticus because the latter was too aggressive in his suggestion that Cicero endeavor to overcome his grief.

Nunc, Pomponi, quoniam nihil impertisti tuae prudentiae ad salutem meam, quod aut in me ipso satis esse consilii decreras aut te nihil plus mihi debere, quam ut praesto esses, quoniamque ego proditus, inductus, coniectus in fraudem omnia mea praesidia neglexi, totam Italiam mire erectam ad me defendendum destitui et reliqui, meosque meis tradidi inimicis inspectante et tacente te, qui, si non plus ingenio valebas quam ego, certe timebas minus, si potes, erige adflictos et in eo non juva; sin omnia sunt obstructa, id ipsum fac ut sciamus et nos aliquando aut objurgare aut communiter consolari desine...¹⁴

The conclusion from the above must be that Cicero was extremely depressed by this calamity of exile. His arguments on the uselessness of grief and its unmanliness were of no avail in his own case. The burden was a heavy one and from his own confession it is clear that his shoulders were unable to bear it. His admission was: "ut ferre non possim."¹⁵

The second argument he advanced was that misfortune is

13 Ibid. 3.7,10-15,23

14 Ibid. 3.15

15 Fam. 12.3

not to be unexpected for it is the natural lot of mankind. In his broodings recorded for us by his own pen he never once adverts to this principle. He frequently contends that his trial is more severe than any ever faced by a fellow mortal, and perhaps this prevented him from ever considering his lot common to mankind. While he never explicitly stated it, he seems to contend that most mortals could bear their hardships, but his was beyond theirs in kind as well as degree.¹⁶ However if any man should be prepared for calamity and misfortune surely it must be the politician. Therefore, we should think that a politician of over a decade's experience would be prepared for the inevitable changes of fortune in that profession. However, the fact is that he was not prepared, and thus we see that another of his arguments had no influence in his own experience.

Perhaps the argument that Cicero, as a philosopher, esteemed most was the one we have placed third in the series, namely, that reason should bring about those things which time eventually will accomplish. First, we must say time never alleviated Cicero's grief one particle, and therefore he is not completely liable to censure for not employing this

¹⁶ Att. 3.7,12,15

argument. Although he was exiled in April he was still refusing to see people in September.¹⁷ Furthermore as late as November 25 we find him confessing to Terentia, "Non queo reliqua scribere; tanta vis lacrimarum est."¹⁸

Just as time did not effect anything toward lightening Cicero's own misery, so reason likewise failed. He frankly confessed to Quintus: "Neque enim tantum virium habet ulla aut prudentia aut doctrina, ut tantum dolorem possit sustinere."¹⁹ This is surely a rejection of the doctrine we have gathered from Cicero's works. His only escape, the only thought he ever had in the entire matter, is that it were better to die.²⁰ That was the best consolation his philosophy could offer him in a concrete situation, and he constantly reproached himself for rejecting it.

But reason could have offered him much. There were so many hopeful signs, so many bright lights shining on the horizon, if he could only have seen beyond his own shipwreck. Not only is his own vision impaired, but he spurns the guidance of others more clear-sighted than himself.²¹

17 Ibid. 3.19

18 Fam. 14.1

19 Quin. Frat. 1.3

20 Att. 3.3,4,7,19. Fam. 14.4. Quin. Frat. 1.3,4.

21 Att. 3.15

Among the matters that could have brought consolation to Cicero was the knowledge that the Senate, the knights, the young nobles, and all the towns of Italy were staunchly beside him. Furthermore he had the support of such friends as Lamia, Ninnius, Hortensius, Vibienus, Piso, Sestius, and Atticus in Rome, and was enjoying the warm hospitality of Sicca, Flaccus, and Plancius outside Rome. The services rendered by all these groups and individuals are astounding and so must be considered in any objective criticism of Cicero's conduct.

The Senate manifested their spontaneous protest against Cicero's exile by changing their garments to mourning as soon as the bill of Clodius against Cicero was passed.²² This was indeed most extraordinary for two reasons. First, it had never been known for the Senate to have acted thus in behalf of anyone, not even in its own periods of crisis.²³ Furthermore, it was an express violation of an edict from the consul, Gabienus.²⁴ Beyond this the senate is said to have given Cicero a libera legatio,²⁵ by which he could have travelled through the towns of Greece and Asia with the full rank and ceremony of ambassador.

²² Sest. 11. Post Red. in Sen. 31.

²³ Post. Red. in Sen. 31

²⁴ Ibid. 12,16. Sest. 14

²⁵ Taylor, 203. I cannot find a primary source testifying to this.

The efforts of the Senate to recall Cicero two months after his departure were thwarted only by the militant action of Clodius. However, they continued their efforts and finally succeeded in effecting his recall.

The young men of nobility to the number of twenty thousand under the leadership of the young Crassus also changed to mourning clothes and accompanied Cicero about the city both as a protection and a protest.²⁶ Later they were attacked by Clodius' mob and a number were either killed or wounded.²⁷ The Roman knights followed the example of the Senate and young nobles in changing their garb, and were likewise attacked by Clodius.²⁸ From their number too came Lamia who was exiled by the irate Gabienus for his overzealous efforts in Cicero's behalf.²⁹

The towns of Italy expressed their esteem for Cicero by sending delegations to Rome to support his cause against Clodius.³⁰ Besides this the southern towns from Vibo to Brindisi turned out in mass numbers to receive and honor the retreating exile, and all this despite threats of dire re-

²⁶ Post Red. ad Quir. 3

²⁷ Sest. 12

²⁸ Ibid. 11,12

²⁹ Post Red. in Sen. 12

³⁰ Sest. 14,16

prisals of sack and pillage from official Rome.³¹

Actions of groups are always due to inspiration of individuals and there were many persons who distinguished themselves in Cicero's defense. We have already had occasion to mention Lamia, the knight. The entire third book of the Letters to Atticus is a recounting of this devoted correspondent's unstinted efforts in Cicero's behalf. Among others, he who gave the most was Vibienus, the Senator, who lost his life in the riot when Clodius attacked the young nobles and knights with his mob.³² In that same riot Hortensius was severely wounded.³³ Sestius too, who undertook a mission to Caesar in Cicero's behalf,³⁴ and who proposed a bill for Cicero's recall, was at the same time attacked and left for dead by Clodius.³⁵

Outside the city Cicero had the consolation of such friends as Sica at Vibo who risked utter ruin to extend hospitality to Cicero.³⁶ Flaccus at Brindisi was likewise threatened with confiscation, exile and death for the services

31 Plan. 41

32 Mil. 14

33 Sest. 33

34 Att. 3.20

35 Post Red. in Sen. 7,20. Sest. 13.

36 Att. 3.4

he and his family rendered to Cicero.³⁷ Finally there was Plancius, the quaestor of Macedonia, who completely put aside the duties and honors of his office to attend on Cicero,³⁸ even to the point of sitting up nights to watch with the heart-broken exile.³⁹ Like the others he was undaunted by the threats from all sides which deterred the praetor of Macedonia from doing anything for Cicero.⁴⁰

To this catalogue might be added the litany of names Cicero recites in his oration to the Senate where he enumerates thirteen who were zealous for his interests. Indeed it was quite a tribute to Cicero to have the Senate, knights, young nobles, and all the towns of Italy interceding for him, led on by a number of devoted individuals of whom one was exiled, several were wounded, one left for dead, another murdered. Yet the consolation to be found in all this was never appreciated by him who argued that reason should alleviate grief. The man who presented the strongest case for the use of reason in adversity, the one whom reason offered the finest consolation, never once listened to reason in his own calamity.

37 Plan. 41

38 Post Red. in Sen. 35

39 Plan. 42

40 Ibid. 42

The treatment of the preceding argument has shown that Cicero, like most men overcome with sorrow, found no solace in any appeals to reason. On the basis of that conclusion then (it can be said that) the fifth principle availed him little. It states that grief over adversity arises from the false supposition that grief necessarily follows on adversity. The principle relies on a stoic indifference to circumstances which, while it is enunciated by Cicero as a principle, certainly could never be a norm of his conduct, for Cicero was too keenly sensitive to be a practising Stoic, whatever theoretic principles he may profess in philosophic works. The principle he will defend in the Tusculan Disputations he vigorously rejects in the Oration for His House.

Accepi, pontifices, magnum atque incredibilem dolorem; non nego neque istam mihi adscisco sapientiam, quam non nulli in me requirebant, qui me animo nimis fracto esse atque adflicto loquebantur. An ego poteram, cum a tot rerum tanta varietate divellerer, quas idcirco praetereo, quod me nunc quidem sine fletu commemorare possum, infitiamur me esse hominem et communem naturae sensum repudiare? Tum vero neque illud meum factum laudabile nec beneficium ullum a me in rem publicam profectum dicerem, siquidem ea rei publicae causa reliquisset, quibus aequo animo carerem, eamque animi duritiam sicut corporis, quod cum uritur, non sentit, stuporem potius quam virtutem putarem. Suscipere tantos animi dolores atque ea, quae capta urbe accidunt victis, stante urbe unum perpeti et iam se videre distrahi a complexu suorum, disturbari tecta, diripi fortunas, patriae denique causa patriam

ipsam amittere, spoliari populi Romani beneficiis amplissimis, praecipitari ex altissimo dignitatis gradu, videre praetextatos inimicos eris--haec omnia subire conservandorum civium causa atque ita pati, ut dolenter feras et sis non tam sapientis quam ii, qui nihil curant, sed tam amans tuorum et tui, quam communis humanitas postulat, ea laus praeclara atque divina est.⁴¹

One more argument remains to be considered in our criticism. It states that the only real evil in life is culpability, culpa. Provided our conduct is faultless, we have no other grounds for distress. On this score Cicero's record was perfect and he was constantly advertising his innocence. In a letter to Atticus he does use the phrase, "ex culpa nostrae recordatione,"⁴² but from the context we know that he is referring to an error of judgment. His constant theme through all the letters in exile is his own innocence of crime. To Terentia he writes from Brindisi less than a month after leaving Rome: "Viximus, floruimus; non vitium nostrum sed virtus nostra nos adflixit; peccatum est nullum, nisi quod non una animam cum ornamentis amisimus."⁴³ He repeats the same to Quintus a little later.⁴⁴ His only

41 Dom. 36,37

42 Att. 3.8

43 Fam. 14.4

44 Quin. Frat. 1.4

remorse comes from his lack of proper judgment which caused him to flee rather than either to remain and to fight or at least to destroy himself.⁴⁵ The real burden of the guilt he unquestioningly lays on his friends who either counselled him wrongly or actually betrayed him. These last, of course, he could never forgive.

...Quum ego iis, quibus eam salutem carissimam esse arbitrabar, inimicissimis crudelissimisque usus sum; qui, ut me paulum inclinari timore viderunt, sic impulerunt, ut omni suo scelere et perfidia abuterentur ad exitium meum...⁴⁶

However, as with all the previous principles, freedom from reproach offered Cicero no alleviation; it was good theory but it went no further.

The completion of the first half of the fifth argument of Cicero concludes the first half of the criticism. It has been seen that the exile was for him overwhelming and no principles drawn from consolatory writings were of any avail despite their obvious application to Cicero's misfortune. However the problem is not to discover whether

45 Ibid. 1.3,4. Att. 8.

46 Att. 3.13

Cicero is to be praised or blamed,⁴⁷ but rather to discover whether the principles he preached to others were of any avail in his own life. The answer with reference to the exile is no.

47 NOTE: This problem, which is a matter of appreciating human character and sensibilities, is treated by several of Cicero's biographers, but by none better than Strachan-Davidson, Cicero and the Fall of the Roman Republic, 238, 239, and Gaston Boissier, Cicero and His Friends, transl. by Adnah David Jones, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, n.d. 17 ff.

CHAPTER V
CICERO'S THEORIES IN PRACTICE
AFTER TULLIA'S DEATH

When studying Cicero's grief over the death of Tullia one finds him an improved Cicero from the man in exile thirteen years earlier. Then he was broken and prostrate, wailing most lugubriously. He had lost all perspective, and the appeals to reason from Atticus and others fell on deaf ears. Although he was acquainted with at least some of the arguments of the philosophers on consolation, he spurned them and abandoned himself to his extremely delicate emotions.

At the death of Tullia thirteen years later he acted differently. The arguments for consolation did not banish his grief but they did lessen it. They were an encouragement to him to struggle against his sorrow, and it seems that they were responsible for his intense activity during this period, a characteristic not to be found in the exiled Cicero. However, as we shall see later in the chapter, time was the principal factor in lessening the sorrow of Cicero.

But before treating the period after Tullia's death it were well to consider the political situation of the time. Caesar was liquidating the last remnants of resistance in Spain and although very zealous to cultivate Cicero, was nevertheless clearly indicating his intent to retain absolute power in the state. This meant the ruin of that to which Cicero had devoted his life, a free, democratic res publica, (i.e. an aristocratic democracy). It is the combination of these two blows which the orator constantly used as an excuse for his lack of self-control. Others had always found something to comfort them. With Cicero all had been taken away.

Tullia's death is first mentioned in a letter written to Atticus, March 7, 45 B. C.¹ It is not certain how long before that date she died. In a letter written in January 45 Cicero stated he was staying in Rome to await the birth of Tullia's child.² The next mention of Tullia announced her death.

Cicero reacted at first just as we would have expected.

1 Att. 12.13

2 Fam. 6.18

He became extremely despotent and shunned all intercourse.³ As he was most desirous of the company of Atticus during his exile, so now Cicero was constantly begging him to come, although he admitted he had lost all that Atticus used to love in him.⁴ But unlike the letters to Atticus during the exile, the notes dispatched after Tullia's death were most considerate and appreciative of the other burdens and duties pressing on Atticus. Only once did Cicero chide Atticus, and that was not for any lack of attention or interest in Cicero personally, but for failure to attend to some business affairs.⁵ This is indeed a different Cicero from the man who during the exile had constantly brooded over his mistreatment by everyone including Atticus.

In more than one respect was Cicero different from the exile of twelve years previous. Then he had surrendered himself entirely to the grief; now he was vigorous in resisting and very fertile in devising new means of carrying on the combat. Literary pursuits became his consuming interest. He read very widely and strove manfully to forget

3 Att. 12.13 ff

4 Ibid. 12.14

5 Att. 12.22

his sorrow by this distraction.⁶ Often he stayed up all night with his books because sleep was prevented by his vivid imagination.⁷

Besides the voluminous reading he undertook, Cicero also wielded his pen very industriously. It was during this period that he read all the works on consolation available and then set about writing a consolatio.⁸ When Atticus exhorted him to overcome his grief, and return to the active life of the forum lest his critics have too abundant grounds for reproach, Cicero replied that these same critics could not even read as much as he had written.⁹ Extreme grief he admitted, but his constant rejoinder was that it had not impaired his faculties. He was still vigorous of intellect, and constantly bragged about the work his intellect was accomplishing.¹⁰ Furthermore he did not care what people thought about him. His reason for not returning to public life was based on the conditions prevalent at that time and the people then frequenting public office. Both were a source of disgust to him.¹¹

6 Ibid. 12.21,23

7 Ibid. 13.26

8 Ibid. 12.21

9 Ibid. 12.40

10 Ibid. 12.28,38a,40

11 Ibid. 12.21,28

Besides providing a distraction the literary pursuits were also a consolation to Cicero for they provided him with a means of promoting the interests of the state. Because Caesar had made political activity impossible, he had to resort to writing, and the fact that he was thus able to accomplish something, was for him a great consolation.

Reading and writing were not the only escape that Cicero used during this period however. He carried on a good bit of business and also took great interest in the conduct of his son,¹² as well as in his friend's joys and sorrows.

The subject most frequently discussed throughout the period of depression was a shrine which Cicero planned to build and dedicate to Tullia. It was noted above that the first letter referring to Tullia's death was written March 7, 45. Only four days later Cicero mentioned the shrine.¹³ It occurred constantly from then on until the end of the summer and even a year later in June Cicero was still thinking of the matter. He had used his vast reading and writing as an argument that grief had not broken him by any means. He

12 Ibid. 12.27

13 Ibid. 12.18

could also use the care and diligence with which he promoted the shrine for a like argument. Letter after letter is full of details referring to the architect, the type of buildings, materials, and especially the site. This latter involved continuous and frequent interviews with various persons. Some of them were friendly to Cicero, others were quite indifferent, if not hostile. All of this was thought about by Cicero before he communicated to Atticus his design for the next move.

Such constant ruminating on the subject naturally tended to expand the notion so that in May Cicero ambited nothing less than deification of his daughter.¹⁴ Probably the incessant anxiety of Cicero tended to fatigue Atticus for toward the middle of May Cicero tells Atticus that while the latter may not approve of the project, yet he feels himself bound to prosecute this design to its conclusion. In fact the idea gripped him so strongly that he admits he would spend every last penny he had to see the shrine erected.

Besides the shrine Cicero also had business matters to arrange with his first wife, Terentia, and with his second wife, Publilia. These he attended to in no lackadaisical

14 Ibid. 12.36

attitude but with the same explicit and insistent directions. Marcus, his son, who was going to Greece to study, had to be provided with funds, and exhorted from time to time to mend his ways and watch his purse.¹⁵

Atticus' daughter, Attica, who was suffering recurring ill health was a constant object of loving inquiry in Cicero's letters. He even criticized those who were entrusted with caring for her.¹⁶ He had time to congratulate Trebonius¹⁷ on his return from exile, to counsel Servius¹⁸ on how to act in the existing political crisis, and also to reply to all letters sent him. Occasionally there was a letter to one of his friends burdened with news of all the happenings in Rome. In May other writings besides the consolatio begin to interest him, and requests for information about authors and their works were as frequent in the letters as were the references to the shrine.

With the passing of May Cicero gained composure more permanently, having only had it in passing during the pre-

15 Ibid. 12.27

16 Ibid. 12.33

17 Fam. 6.11

18 Ibid. 4.2

vious months. He still expressed a yearning for Atticus and he still prosecuted his plans for the shrine, but he was completely engrossed in his forthcoming books and there was no mention of his grief until July 11, when he wrote to Varro.¹⁹ The letter to Varro was strong and expressed a contempt for further life, but this feeling was caused by the state. There was no allusion to his own loss of Tullia at all. The trial of Tullia's death had not passed and Cicero was master of himself. It would not be too long before he would again be forced into the turmoil of politics struggling vainly against Antony at the cost of his life.

Now that the entire perspective of the period after Tullia's death has been seen, a rapid survey will be made to reveal what influence each of the six arguments had on Cicero during that time.

The first argument stated that excessive grief was unmanly and useless. This argument which was so completely disregarded during the exile seems to have been the most cogent at Tullia's death. For a while Cicero never indicated to us that he drew consolation from any argument. The fact

¹⁹ Ibid. 9.8

is that at this time he did fight off his grief, while during the exile he had done nothing to resist it. Furthermore despite his protestations to the contrary, he did attempt to conceal his depression from others. It would appear, therefore, that he considered his grief as unbecoming a man and, consequently, took measures to relieve it or at least, to conceal it.

The second argument stated that suffering was the lot of mankind and therefore misfortune should not surprise us and cause us undue grief. Cicero must have weighed this argument considerably for he reminded his correspondents that his lot was worse than that of the other mortals. He seemed to say: "Well I could undergo the ordinary misfortunes of men with little difficulty but this is more than ordinary. Most men have something in which they can find consolation, I have nothing. When the state was crumbling around me I could go to Tullia, with Tullia gone, I have no refuge. Therefore this argument cannot be expected to affect me."

The next argument contended that reason should bring about those things which time eventually would accomplish. Credit must certainly be given to Cicero for endeavoring to benefit from this argument. He took up all the philosophers

and read them. He even worked up his own consolatio, but while it helped, it certainly was not a lasting and permanent cure. At the end of March, he even confessed that his philosophy was weakening.²⁰ The fourth argument, that excessive grief arises from the notion that such conduct is naturally and necessarily consequent on adversity, was surely considered by Cicero during these months for it was in Crantor, whom he read at this time. Since he does combat his grief it can be argued that the Roman certainly had no false notion that the sorrow was consequent on Tullia's death by a natural necessity.

The fifth argument with its nullum malum nisi culpa had its place in consolations of exile and the like rather than in consolations of death. The second part which argued that even death is no evil since it gives us immortality, was duly appreciated by Cicero. He never doubted that Tullia was happy. He even wanted to deify her. But his grief was not over any possible misfortune of hers. Rather it was over his own separation and loneliness.

The sixth argument advanced the virtues of the deceased

²⁰ Ibid. 5.13

as grounds for consolation. The effect of this reasoning on Cicero was much the same as that of the preceding argument. Those very virtues of Tullia which were so pleasant to contemplate only impressed on him more deeply the pain of losing her.

In summary then it can be said that, while the six arguments for consolation were not entirely useless, as in the period of exile, nevertheless they were not of much avail. Cicero did use them, especially the first, second, and third, but they did not accomplish their purpose fully. Cicero's own words can be used to characterize his reaction to Tullia's loss. In a letter to Torquatus a month before Tullia's death Cicero had written of his grief over the fall of the republic in terms very different from those of the third argument on reason. "...meipsum (dolentem understood) consolatorem tuum, non tantum litterarum, quibus semper studui, quantum longinquitas temporum mitigavit."²¹ This phrase used a month before Tullia died could also be used by him four months later. "Reason, philosophy, letters, these availed little, but only time had healed the wound." The exact length of the time was four months, from February to

²¹ Ibid. 6.4

June.

In judging Cicero's conduct after Tullia's death, one is inclined to form a favorable verdict. First, it must be remembered that he was heartbroken because of the collapse of his ideal state immediately before Tullia died. Her sudden death crushed him completely and there was nothing to which he could fly for comfort, for the state which he loved so much was likewise gone. However the double calamity never took his spirit away entirely for he struggled manfully for four months, and certainly tried his best to use the arguments which he had defended. They helped some but time alone brought complete relief from his sorrow.

The critique of Cicero's conduct after Tullia's death completes the work of this thesis. Its purpose was to reveal the principles for consolation proposed by Cicero, to demonstrate their possible sources and the development given to them by the Roman, and finally, to discover how well Cicero reduced his theory to practice. That he did not succeed too well was not entirely Cicero's fault, but rather the fault of the theory--pagan theory. It remained for Christianity to simplify the art of consoling. For in the words of Father Farrar: "A Seneca, a Musonius Rufus, an Epictetus, a Marcus Aurelius might have been taught by the

simplest Christian child about a comfort, an example, a hope which were capable of gilding their lives with an unknown brightness, capable of soothing the anguish of every sorrow, of breaking the violence of every temptation, of lightening the burden of every care."²²

²² F. W. Farrar, Seekers after God, Macmillan Co., New York, n.d. 12.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Charles J. Brannen, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 24, 1949
Date

J. J. Doyle S.J.
Signature of Adviser