

THEMISTOCLES IN CICERO'S LETTER TO LUCCEIUS*

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ABSTRACT

After a brief introduction to modern literature on Cicero's famous letter to Lucceius (*Fam.* V, 12 [SB 22]) and its importance for Cicero's idea of history, the paper focuses on the two mentions of Themistocles in the letter. In both instances, the correctness of Cicero's statements is hard to defend, and previous attempts to explain this have been unpersuasive. It is possible that Cicero was simply mistaken, but on balance it seems more likely that his mistakes were intentional, made to provoke Lucceius to correct him. Had Lucceius done so, Cicero could have claimed that Lucceius was rude, and used it as further leverage on Lucceius to deliver the laudatory monograph on Cicero's conduct from his consulship up to his return from exile.

Keywords: Cicero; Themistocles; ancient letter writing; ancient historiography; reception of ancient Greek culture in ancient Rome

The letter sent by M. Tullius Cicero to L. Lucceius (perhaps) on the 12th of April 55 BCE, with the aim of persuading Lucceius to write a historical monograph celebrating Cicero's conduct from his consulship up to his return from exile,¹ has been much discussed for its bearing on Cicero's understanding of history. *Inter alia*, the orator wrote to Lucceius: *leges historiae negligas gratiamque ... , si me tibi uehementius commendabit, ne aspernere amorique nostro plusculum etiam, quam concedet ueritas, largiare.*² This sits ill with the *leges historiae* Cicero put in Antonius's mouth in roughly contemporary *De*

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¹ Cic. *Fam.* V, 12 [SB 22]. Aside from traditional references to books, I follow, e. g., White (2010) in referring also to the numbers of Cicero's letters in Shackleton Bailey's commented edition (Shackleton Bailey 1965–1970, 1977a, 1977b, and 1980). For the date of the letter, see Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 319) and Marinone, Malaspina (2004: 123) with references.

² Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 3 [SB 22].

oratore.³ The following explanations have been suggested: (1) The letter is, in fact, in accord with Cicero's ideal of historiography, for Cicero was asking for an ornate but honest account of facts.⁴ To my eyes, this interpretation flies in the face of the words *amorque nostro plusculum etiam, quam concedet ueritas, largiare*.⁵ (2) There is no contradiction, because the *leges historiae* Cicero asked Luceius to disregard were pertinent only to grand works of pragmatic history, not to monographs that were closer to or even identical with encomia; in other words, Cicero did not ask Luceius to transgress the rules of the genre he was going to write in.⁶ I believe that Cicero did *not* ask for an encomium and that consequently, if one followed the rules laid out in the *De oratore*, the *leges historiae* should have been observed.⁷ (3) The contradiction is only apparent, because the letter was not meant seriously. The proponents of this view point to Cicero's admission that his request was outrageously impertinent,⁸ and they take it either as a polite compliment to Luceius's impartiality,⁹ or as a sign of a healthy self-irony on

³ Cic. *De orat.* II, 15, 62–63: *quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? deinde ne quid ueri non audeat? ne quae suspicio gratiae sit in scribendo? ne quae simultatis? haec scilicet fundamenta nota sunt omnibus ...* This text was finished in November 55, see Cic. *Att.* IV, 13, 2 [SB 87]; Cic. *Fam.* I, 9, 23 [SB 20]; Marinone, Malaspina (2004: 126–127).

⁴ Shimron (1974); Cizek (1988: 20–22); Valencia Hernández (1997: 24).

⁵ I find it very hard not to read this as an invitation not just to suppress unwelcome facts, but also to falsify outright in order to put Cicero in a favourable light. For different interpretations of *amorque ... largiare*, see Reitzenstein (1906: 86, n. 2); Guillemin (1938: 99); Shimron (1974: 239–240); Cizek (1988: 22); Fleck (1993: 35–36). See also my discussion of the interpretation of *ueritas* by Woodman (1988) below, p. 83.

⁶ Guillemin (1938: 99–103), elaborating on Reitzenstein (1906: 84–87); Ullman (1942: 44–53, *passim*); Paladini (1947: 335–344); Petzold (1972: 273–275); Mandel (1980: 22–23); Marchal (1987: 56); Salamon (2009, esp. §§ 11–13).

Remarkably, the proponents of this explanation have been divided as to the difference between a historical monograph and an encomium: Paladini (1947) and Mandel (1980) have not differentiated the two genres, but Ullman (1942) and Salamon (2009) have. The difference was also stressed by Defourny (1953) or Avenarius (1956: 13–16, with references to ancient sources).

The cornerstone of this interpretation has always been Polyb. X, 21, 6–8, on the contrast between his *Histories* and his *Life of Philopoemen* (note esp. 8: ὡς περ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ τόπος [sc. of the *Life*], ὑπάρχων ἐγκωμιαστικός, ἀπῆτει τὸν κεφαλαιώδη καὶ μετ' αὐξήσεως τῶν πράξεων ἀπολογισμὸν, οὕτως ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας, κοινὸς ὢν ἐπαίνου καὶ ψόγου, ζητεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ τὸν μετ' ἀποδείξεως καὶ τῶν ἐκάστοις παρεπομένων συλλογισμῶν). I would read this passage as describing an ornate (note αὐξήσις) account of facts, with some whitewashing and suppression of truth, but no outright lies, unlike Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 3 cited above; Polybius does *not* say that he went beyond ἀλήθεια in the *Life*.

It should be observed that in Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 2 [SB 22], Cicero is adducing as an example Polybius's *Numantine War*, not his *Life of Philopoemen*. Now Cicero's mention is the only testimony on Polybius's *Numantine* monograph we have, and with regard to Cicero's cavalier treatment of history elsewhere in the letter (see below), I am not certain that the monograph existed and that the reference should not have been to the *Life*.

For the same reason, it might not be necessary to emend the text of Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 2 [SB 22] *Calisthenes Troicum bellum* to *Callisthenes Phocicum bellum*, as has been done since Westermann, see Oppermann (2000: 96, n. 1).

⁷ Similarly, Shimron (1974: 242–243), Nicolai (1992: 167–174) with many more references, or Fantham (2004: 157–159), and cf. more generally Brunt (1993), De Vivo (2000: 193), and Petrone (2003).

Note that Cicero encourages Luceius to exercise his free judgment in Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 4 [SB 22]: *reprehendes ea, quae uituperanda duces, et quae placebunt, exponendis rationibus comprobabis*; but it has to be admitted that Cicero would hardly ask Luceius to write about him if he thought that the historian would find his actions *uituperanda*.

⁸ Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 3 [SB 22]: *sed tamen, qui semel uerecundiae finis transierit, eum bene et nauiter oportet esse impudentem*.

⁹ Guillemin (1938: 98–99); Fleck (1993: 36).

Cicero's part.¹⁰ I would agree that Cicero was not *entirely* serious throughout the letter, but that does not mean that he did not want Lucceius to write a monograph about his consulship that would extol and whitewash his actions, and therefore disregard the *leges historiae*. Other scholars (4) have admitted the contradiction is there, but have sought to adduce extenuating circumstances, either by stressing that the letter is not a treatise on historiography,¹¹ or by emphasising that at the time of writing, Cicero was in a difficult situation, both politically and psychologically.¹² In comparison, explicit condemnations of Cicero's conduct (5) have been few.¹³

Very important for the overall interpretation of the letter is Anthony Woodman's suggestion that the Romans understood *ueritas* in historiography not as truth in our sense, but as impartiality.¹⁴ However, in the context of the letter, this would mean that Cicero would first have exhorted Lucceius not to be impartial (*gratiamque ... , si me tibi uehementius commendabit, ne aspernere*), and immediately afterwards he would have said basically the same in different words (*amorque nostro plusculum etiam, quam concedet ueritas, largiare*).¹⁵ I think the passage makes better sense if we stick to the traditional interpretation of *ueritas* as opposed to lies and fiction. If this is correct, Cicero would exhort Lucceius to shy away *neither* from bias (*gratia*), *nor* from outright fabrication (*plusculum ... , quam concedet ueritas*). I am far from suggesting that *ueritas* never connotes impartiality, let alone that ἀλήθεια and *ueritas* meant to the ancients exactly the same as "truth" means to contemporary historians; but I do put forward the claim that this shade of meaning is *not* prominent in the passage cited at the beginning of this paper.

Be that as it may, I would like to concentrate on another aspect of the letter that has not been neglected, but has received perceptibly less scholarly attention: The letter stands out by the number of ancient Greek exempla it includes. Judging from the extant corpus, no addressee of Cicero's had to cope with ancient Greek exempla as frequently as Lucceius.¹⁶ Two of the exempla found in the letter to Lucceius concern Themistocles.¹⁷ I would sug-

¹⁰ Fox (2007: 256–263). The presence of irony has been detected already by Matthiae, Mueller (1849: 87) or Stüpfle, Boeckel (1893: 141), and more recently by Petrone (2003: 135 and 139).

¹¹ Rambaud (1953: 14–18); Marchal (1987: 56); De Vivo (2000: 194–195). Similarly, Woodman (1988: 105–106, n. 40): "Cicero clearly knew that his request to Lucceius contradicted *De Or.* 2.62 ... he hoped that his delightful and captivating style ... would enable him to get away with it; if not, he could always pass it off as a joke." Cicero's concentration on his public image has also been emphasized by Valencia Hernández (1997).

¹² Leeman (1955: 190–191); Leeman (1963: 174); Douglas (1968: 22–25). Cf. also Boyancé (1940: 390); Dugan (2014: 16).

¹³ Esp. Henze (1899: 27); Carcopino (1951: 249–251); and Rudd (1992: 25).

¹⁴ Woodman (1988: esp. 70–75, 82–83, 105–106, n. 40, and 109–110, n. 91). He has been followed by Mellor (1999: 26); Nicolai (2001: 107 and 116–117); Dunsch (2013: 165); or Stok (2021: 20). He has been criticized by Northwood (2008: 239–241), but see Woodman (2008: 24–30).

¹⁵ A very similar situation would be in Cic. *De orat.* II, 15, 62, as understood by Woodman (1988: 82 with n. 39).

¹⁶ Oppermann (2000: 126 and 313, table 9.4). Oppermann (2000: 95–105) has discussed well how Cicero used exempla in the letter in order to convince Lucceius, but she has not discussed whether the letter could have been meant seriously and what it would mean for Cicero's idea of history. Hall (1998: 316) rightly points out that the casual manner in which Cicero lets fall the names of Greek historians is a further nod to Lucceius's learning, but that is certainly not their only function. An anonymous reviewer suggests that the frequency of Greek exempla might be connected to Cicero's contemporaneous writing of the *De oratore*; it is possible, but certainly it was not the only motivation.

¹⁷ For modern readings of Cicero's mentions of Themistocles, see R. Schütz (1913: 26–28); Berthold (1965); and more recently van der Blom (2010: 213–216) or Montecalvo (2013: 108–116, *passim*, and

gest that they may be important for our understanding for Cicero's strategy in the letter, and by extension for his attitude to history in general.

Commenting on various ways of writing history, Cicero adduces a string of classical Greek figures in order to promote a monograph centred around one towering personality; the final piece is the following:

Cuius studium in legendo non erectum Themistocli fuga †redituque† retinetur? etenim ordo ipse annalium mediocriter nos retinet quasi enumeratione fastorum: at uiri saepe excellentis ancipites uariique casus habent admirationem expectationem, laetitiam molestiam, spem timorem; si uero exitu notabili concluduntur, expletur animus iucundissima lectionis uoluptate ... (Cic. Fam. V, 12, 5)

Themistocles's *fuga* certainly does not refer to his ostracism; most likely, the subsequent hunt for him is meant – it was vividly described by Thucydides (and, later, with much discussion of other sources, by Plutarch).¹⁸ Much less clear is what Cicero could possibly have meant by Themistocles's *reditus*.

Attempts have been made to explain the text as it stands. It could refer to the return of all Athenians to their homeland following the Persians' retreat from the city;¹⁹ but this would undermine Cicero's promoting of monographs on famous personalities – Themistocles would serve only as a *pars pro toto*. Or, Cicero may have alluded to the return of Themistocles's dead body to Attica;²⁰ however, in the only parallel for this use of *reditus* that I am aware of, the context is much more helpful in preparing the reader for the unusual usage.²¹ Or, Cicero may have relied on a tradition according to which Themistocles returned to Athens after his exile.²² However, our only source for Themistocles's activities against the Areopagus in collaboration with Ephialtes does not suggest Themistocles's return from exile; on the contrary, it clearly situates the events *before* Themistocles's exile, which seems impossible to me.²³ It has also been suggested that

121–123). Themistocles is mentioned forty times in Cicero's extant oeuvre – a decent amount. Of all classical Greeks, Plato is the one Cicero mentions most often, more than two hundred times. Socrates got more than a hundred mentions, Demosthenes the famous orator sixty-three, Pericles twenty-five, Epaminondas nineteen, Alcibiades ten, and Cimon only one; and there is no mention at all of the unfortunate general Nicias, not even in the *De diuinatione*.

Four of Cicero's mentions of Themistocles are piled up in one passage, Cic. *Brut.* 10, 41–11, 43, where Cicero and Atticus are discussing the limits of rhetorical license on the example of the deaths of Themistocles and Coriolanus. As for what the passage says about Cicero's relationship to history, I very much prefer Berthold (1965: 47, just before n. 2) to Fleck (1993: 36–37).

¹⁸ Thuc. I, 135, 2–137, 3; Plut. *Them.* 23, 4–27, 5. For another suggestion as to what the *fuga* might refer to, see the following note.

¹⁹ Macan (1908: 60, n. 3); Laurand (1911: 28, n. 6); R. Schütz (1913: 28–29, n. 20). On this interpretation, the *fuga* in Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 5 would refer to the evacuation of Athens before the battle of Salamis.

²⁰ This possibility, raised but dismissed by C. G. Schütz (1809: 89–90), was accepted by Berthold (1965: 41) or Oranges (2018: 259). For the return of Themistocles's body, see esp. Thuc. I, 138, 6, with Gomme (1945: 445–446) and Hornblower (1991: 224–225).

²¹ *Epiced. Drusi* 125–126: *tumulo portaris et igni. / haec sunt reditus dona paranda tuos?*

²² Üre (1921: 176–178), followed by Constans (1935: 188–189).

²³ [Aristot.] *Ath.* 25, 3 (note esp. ἐμῆλλε δὲ κρῖνεσθαι μηδισμοῦ), with Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 321). The historicity of the episode has been almost universally condemned, Üre (1921), Lang (1967: 273), and Carawan (1987: 197–200) being the rule-saving exceptions; more recently, Oranges (2018) tries to defend it, placing the events in early 470s, but I am unconvinced. *Pace* Oranges (2018: 260–261), I find it very hard to see how ταῦτα in [Aristot.] *Ath.* 25, 3 could *not* apply to *the whole* of [Aristot.]

Cicero sacrificed historical accuracy in his desire “to achieve mastery over his traumatic experiences through their repetition through representation,”²⁴ or that he was “carried away by the potential parallel to his own career.”²⁵ However, as I hope to show shortly, Cicero was not obliged to use Themistocles as an *exemplum*, and there might have been a better role model for him.

Many scholars have agreed that “the paradosis cannot be plausibly defended.”²⁶ Generally speaking, three ways have been tried. Some have emended Themistocles away; thus, Tyrrell or Purser suggested that we should read *Thrasybuli fuga redituque*. However, this “would be more attractive if anything dramatic had been recorded about Thrasybulus’s *flight*.”²⁷ Alternatively, other Greek exiles could have been added to the sentence. Thus, C. G. Schütz proposed *Themistocli <exilio aut Alcibiadis> fuga redituque*;²⁸ however, the renegade Alcibiades would be a rather poor Greek model for Cicero.²⁹ R. Y. Tyrrell suggested *Themistocli fuga, <Coriolani fuga> redituque*;³⁰ but one might very well doubt that “Coriolanus’s approach to Rome, which he did not re-enter, would be described as *reditus*.”³¹ All in all, it has been the most popular solution to replace *reditu*, either by *interitu*, as suggested by Ferrarius (Johannes Eisermann, † 1558),³² or by the synonym *exitu*.³³ “A certain awkwardness remains, however, in that we might have expected Cicero to mention someone who, like himself, was exiled and returned alive.”³⁴

So, neither the explanations offered so far nor the emendations are quite persuasive. I think it is not absolutely necessary to emend the text; before I venture to put forward my suggestion, let us look at the other mention of Themistocles in the letter, which should throw some interesting light on the problem.

After an exposition on various kinds of glory, in the course of which Cicero flatters Lucceius assiduously, among other things by comparing him indirectly to Xenophon, Cicero explains why he wants to be praised by Lucceius rather than any other:

Ath. 25, 2. She suggests it concerns only the first part of the paragraph, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἀνεΐλεν πολλοὺς τῶν Ἀρεοπαγιτῶν, ἀγῶνας ἐπιφέρων περὶ τῶν διωκμένων; but in that case, I would expect ἐκεῖνα at the beginning of [Aristot.] *Ath.* 25, 3.

²⁴ Dugan (2014: 20).

²⁵ Lintott (2008: 216).

²⁶ Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 321). Oppermann (2000: 98) agrees; Oranges (2018: 257–258) cautions against emending the text.

²⁷ Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 321); his italics. Tyrrell’s suggestion was apparently made in a second edition of the second volume, unavailable to me.

Tyrrell (1886: 53–54) says, “It has ... been proposed to read *Alcibiadis* for *Themistocli*,” but this seems to be an incorrect report of C. G. Schütz’s emendation (see the following note). Even if it is not, it would be very difficult to explain how such a scribal mistake could arise.

²⁸ C. G. Schütz (1809: 89–90): “sane mirum videri potest Ciceronem h. l. Alcibiadis mentionem haud fecisse, cuius fuga reditusque ad suam ipsius fugam reditumque similitudine quam proxime accedebat”, which apparently influenced Süpfle, Boeckel (1893: 142): “mehr Ähnlichkeit mit Ciceros eigenem Schicksal (*reditu!*) würde allerdings das des Alkibiades bieten.”

²⁹ See below, p. 87, for a better parallel.

³⁰ Tyrrell (1886: 54 and 249).

³¹ Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 321). Indeed, I failed to find a parallel for this usage.

³² This is the preferred solution of Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 321), followed by the translations of Woodman (1988: 72) and Rudd (1992: 24).

³³ Matthiae, Mueller (1849: 87) and Süpfle, Boeckel (1893: 142); the proposal was originally made by Kayser.

³⁴ Rudd (1992: 219, n. 8).

Hoc praestantius mihi fuerit et ad laetitiam animi et ad memoriae dignitatem si in tua scripta peruenero quam si in ceterorum, quod non ingenium mihi solum suppeditatum fuerit tuum, sicut Timoleonti a Timaeo aut ab Herodoto Themistocli, sed etiam auctoritas clarissimi et spectatissimi uiri et in rei publicae maximis grauissimisque causis cogniti atque in primis probati ... (Cic. *Fam.* V, 12, 7)

The first example is unproblematic – Timoleon was praised quite exorbitantly by Timaeus.³⁵ Things get more complicated with Herodotus and Themistocles.

This is the only mention of Herodotus in Cicero's epistolary corpus.³⁶ I agree with the recent assessment that "it would be foolish to assert that he only had poor knowledge of Herodotus. However, it is quite possible that this knowledge concentrated on episodes of book 1 and on Herodotus's role as a stylistic model."³⁷ And it was rightly pointed out long ago that "if he [Cicero] had read the last four books of Herodotus, his memory played him false when he refers to Herodotus as a panegyrist of Themistocles."³⁸ I think it goes too far to accuse Cicero of "omitting Herodotus's portrayal of Themistocles as a self-serving and greedy man in books 7–9"³⁹ or to claim that "la trattazione della personalità e delle gesta dell'Ateniese che si dipana lungo gli ultimi tre libri di Erodoto è del tutto ignorata";⁴⁰ but the best one can reasonably say is that Herodotus's portrayal of Themistocles is ambiguous;⁴¹ Cicero would not have wanted to be portrayed by Lucceius in the manner Herodotus depicted Themistocles.⁴² It was Thucydides whose judgment of Themistocles seems close to a panegyric (that apparently struck a chord with Cicero);⁴³ indeed, Thucydides's portrayal of Themistocles has been seen as a reaction against Herodotus.⁴⁴

I see two ways of handling these two oddities related to Themistocles. First, there is the simple possibility that Cicero made a mistake in both sentences. In the first passage, con-

³⁵ See Polyb. XII, 23, 4–7 [= Timae. *FGrHist* 566 F 119a] with Walbank (1967: 377–378); Plut. *Tim.* 36, 2 [= Timae. *FGrHist* 566 F 119b]; Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 27 [= Timae. *FGrHist* 566 T 13].

³⁶ There are eleven references to Herodotus in Cicero's extant writings; for discussion, see now esp. Dunsch (2013); Racine (2016); Matijašić (2018: 49–55); Gazzano (2022).

³⁷ Racine (2016: 201). Dunsch (2013) is much more sceptical, emphasising the ubiquity of compendia and other kinds of indirect tradition, see esp. Dunsch (2013: 193–194).

³⁸ Hallward (1931: 226–227). Similarly, Oppermann (2000: 102): "Timaios soll Timoleon ... übermäßig gelobt haben. Über Herodot und Themistokles lässt sich Vergleichbares nicht sagen," or Dunsch (2013: 181): "So sehr die Aussage, Timoleon habe in Timaios einen Verherrlicher seiner Taten gefunden, zutreffen mag, so wenig liegt sie auf einer Ebene mit der Behauptung, Herodot habe für Themistokles dasselbe geleistet."

³⁹ Racine (2016: 201).

⁴⁰ Gazzano (2022: 231); retracted by Gazzano (2022: 233–234) herself.

⁴¹ The best analysis I know of is Baragwanath (2008: 289–322). More recently, Moggi (2013: 149–153) has concluded that Herodotus's portrayal of Themistocles is of "carattere complessivamente positivo".

⁴² For this reason, I cannot agree with Oppermann (2000: 102–103): "Vielmehr kommt es darauf an, dass, wie Cicero selbst zuvor gesagt hat, auch die Geschichtsschreiber mit ihrem Können dazu beitragen, die von ihnen geschilderten Personen und Taten berühmt zu machen." More interestingly, Gazzano (2022: 234) suggests that Cicero wanted Lucceius to imitate Herodotus's *methodology*. However, I doubt that of all Herodotean characters, Herodotus's treatment of *Themistocles* is distinguished by the blend of *historia* and *fabula*. Herodotus's Croesus or Polycrates would have been better examples of that.

⁴³ See Cic. *Att.* X, 8, 7 [SB 199], citing Thuc. I, 138, 3, obviously from memory, as it contains several *lectiones faciliores*.

⁴⁴ See Patterson (1993) or de Bakker (2013: 29). I am not persuaded, and I believe that Thucydides's judgment of Themistocles is not as unreservedly positive as the majority of scholars have read it, but this is not the place to pursue this topic further.

cerning Themistocles's *fuga* and *reditus*, Cicero might have written *Themistocli* instead of *Aristidi*.⁴⁵ Aristides's ostracism was famous because of the story that he wrote his own name on a shard for an unlettered fellow-citizen;⁴⁶ as for his return, it took place in the context of the invasion of Xerxes (surely sufficient to *retinere studium in legendo*): Aristides was recalled from exile by a popular decree before the statutory time of ten years had elapsed.⁴⁷ All this would constitute a much better parallel for Cicero's fate than the exile of Themistocles (or Alcibiades). Furthermore, Cicero might have confused Themistocles and Aristides in another letter too.⁴⁸ In the second passage, concerning *Themistocli ingenium suppeditatum ab Herodoto*, he may have written *ab Herodoto* instead of *a Thucydide* – at least in 49, Cicero remembered the Athenian historian's tribute to Themistocles quite well.⁴⁹ This would mean that Cicero was quite cavalier with historical facts, even when writing to an historian, and it would cast a shadow of doubt on the many pieces of historical information attested exclusively (or for the first time) in Cicero's writings. However, it is hard to believe that Cicero would have been so content with a letter containing such slips, and that he would have recommended it to the attention of Atticus, of all people;⁵⁰ after all, some years later, he was willing to make "careful enquiries on quite minute points", soliciting Atticus's help "for the *mise-en-scène* of certain dialogues or for historical allusions."⁵¹

This leads to the suspicion that the mistakes might have been intentional. Although it would seem to be out of character for Cicero to feign ignorance,⁵² it would be perfectly in tune with his continuous self-deprecation that has rightly been detected throughout the

⁴⁵ This has been suggested by Ball (1890: 20, n. 101), and Shuckburgh (1908: 229, n. 1).

⁴⁶ Plut. *Arist.* 7, 7–8 and *Mor.* 186a. In Nep. *Arist.* 1, 3–4, Aristides does not write his name himself, but he sees an Athenian writing his name on the shard.

⁴⁷ Nep. *Arist.* 1, 5; Plut. *Arist.* 8, 1 and *Them.* 11, 1.

⁴⁸ Cic. *Ad Brut.* I, 15, 3 [SB 23]: *haec quidem sententia non magis mea fuit quam omnium, in qua uidetur illud esse crudele, quod ad liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, poena peruenit. sed id et antiquum est et omnium ciuitatum, si quidem etiam Themistocli liberi eguerunt; et si iudicio damnatos eadem poena sequitur cuius, qui potuimus leniores esse in hostis?* Now, although Themistocles's property in Athens was confiscated, his children certainly were not destitute, for he had considerable funds abroad (Thuc. I, 137, 3; Plut. *Them.* 25, 3, citing Theopomp. *FGrHist* 115 F 86). In the end, his son minted coins of his own in his principality (under Persian suzerainty) in Magnesia; see Kallet, Kroll (2020: 73–75). Aristides's sons, on the other hand, were allegedly too poor to pay for his funeral (Demosth. XXIII, 209; Plut. *Arist.* 27, 1; Ael. *Var. hist.* XI, 9; but see Nep. *Arist.* 3, 2: *ut qui efferretur uix reliquerit*) and had to be granted a significant amount of land and money (Demosth. XX, 115; Plut. *Arist.* 27, 2), while Aristides's daughters were supposedly granted dowries by the state (Aeschin. III, 258; Nep. *Arist.* 3, 3; Plut. *Arist.* 7, 2). I sympathize with scepticism of several modern scholars regarding these testimonies; see, e.g., Davies (1971: 51–52); Gygax (2016: 177–178), or Macgregor Morris (2022: 146); yet, Cicero, for his part, even in the unlikely case that he shared their doubts, would not care, for Aristides would fit his overall argument better: he was a less controversial figure than Themistocles (let alone Alcibiades), and the contrast with Antony was correspondingly greater.

⁴⁹ See n. 43 above.

⁵⁰ Cic. *Att.* IV, 6, 4 [SB 83]: *epistulam Luceio quam misi, qua meas res ut scribat rogo, fac ut ab eo sumas – ualde bella est.*

⁵¹ Brunt (1993: 186). See esp. the long series of letters concerning the embassy to Corinth in 146 BCE: Cic. *Att.* XIII, 30, 2 [SB 303]; XIII, 32, 3 [SB 305]; XIII, 33, 3 [SB 309]; XIII, 6, 4 [SB 310]; XIII, 4, 1 [SB 311]; XIII, 5, 1 [SB 312]; and XII, 5b [SB 316]. See also Badian (1969), who prefers the order SB 303, 305, 309, 312, 310, 311.

⁵² He certainly adopts the contrary posture in Cic. *Phil.* IV, 1, 3: *Multa memini, multa audiui, multa legi, Qui-rites>; nihil ex omnium saeculorum memoria tale cognoui.* In his letters to Atticus, he was much more willing to concede he did not know everything about history. Aside from the letters cited in the previous n., see, e.g., Cic. *Att.* XII, 20, 2 [SB 259] and XII, 22, 2 [SB 261] or XVI, 13a, 2 [SB 424].

letter.⁵³ The mistakes may have been planted with the intention of prompting Lucceius to correct Cicero's blunders. If Lucceius succumbed to this temptation, his criticism would thereby have threatened Cicero's face, and Cicero could then use this damaging of good manners to intensify his pressure on Lucceius.

This might strike us as cold-blooded pragmatism on Cicero's part, hardly compatible with a friendly relationship. It is exceedingly hard to measure the degree of closeness between Cicero and Lucceius, but it would seem that the two men were friends (of sorts) in 45.⁵⁴ We know that Lucceius promised to carry out Cicero's request,⁵⁵ but as far as we can tell, he never delivered.⁵⁶ It does not seem to have hurt his relationship with Cicero fatally, no more than Cicero's passing over Atticus's exhortation to write history⁵⁷ disrupted the friendship between Cicero and Atticus.

To support my interpretation, I have spent quite some time looking for parallels for such an unscrupulous use of historical exempla on Cicero's part, but the only outcome was that I realised just how unique the Cicero's letter to Lucceius was. It was, to the best of my knowledge, unparalleled for Cicero to use an *exemplum* in asking something quite substantial from a historian who was not Atticus.⁵⁸ However, there is an instance of Cicero's admitting his *neglegentia* and using it to reaffirm his friendship with the addressee.⁵⁹

⁵³ Hall (1998: 310, 312, 317–319).

⁵⁴ Hall (1998: 315–316) saw Cic. *Fam.* V, 12 [SB 22] as a celebration of "their intellectual kinship and camaraderie". Deniaux (1993: 519) suggests the two men were not close, pointing to formal letter headings in the correspondence between Cicero and Lucceius, but see White (2010: 72 and 73) for other – in my view, quite convincing – explanations of the apparent formality. The sources for the relationship between Cicero and Lucceius are very complex. There are numerous references to a Lucceius throughout the corpus of letters to Atticus, but it is not immediately clear how many of them refer to the historian and how many to one L. Lucceius M. f. (the historian was Q. f.) – see Shackleton Bailey (1977a: 319) against McDermott (1969), and the cautious discussion of Deniaux (1993: 516–519).

Furthermore, there are Cic. *Fam.* V, 13–15 [SB 201, 251, 252]. In Cic. *Fam.* V, 13 [SB 201], written in 46 – see Shackleton Bailey (1977b: 358) and Marinone, Malaspina (2004: 204) with references –, Cicero thanks Lucceius for a consolation and makes some comments on the state and his family. In Cic. *Fam.* V, 14 [SB 251], written in 45, the only letter written by Lucceius available to us, Lucceius expresses surprise that he did not meet Cicero in Rome lately, consoles Cicero on the death of Tullia, and urges him to devote himself to literature. Cicero's warm reply, Cic. *Fam.* V, 15 [SB 252], aside from pronouncements about his possible meeting Lucceius, his grief and literary activities at the time, includes the words *uetustas, amor, consuetudo, studia paria – quod uinclum, quaeso, deest nostrae coniunctioni?* (Cic. *Fam.* V, 15, 2).

Then, there are recommendations of (one) Lucceius to the proconsul Lucius Culleolus: Cic. *Fam.* XIII, 42, 1–2 [SB 53] and XIII, 41, 1–2 [SB 54]; alas, neither the year nor the province of Culleolus's proconsulship are known for certain; see Marinone, Malaspina (2004: 279) and Díaz Fernández (2011) with references.

Finally, in the *Pro Caelio*, delivered in 56, Cicero had L. Lucceius's testimony read to further his case, and accordingly went to great lengths to praise him: in the course of Cic. *Cael.* 21, 51–22, 55, Lucceius is twice called *sanctissimus homo*, once *integerrimus*, and once *grauissimus testis*.

⁵⁵ Cic. *Att.* IV, 6, 4 [SB 83].

⁵⁶ In spite of the pressure exerted on Lucceius by Atticus: Cic. *Att.* IV, 9, 2 [SB 85].

⁵⁷ Cic. *Att.* XIV, 14, 5 [SB 368] and XVI, 13a, 2 [SB 424].

⁵⁸ One might compare Cic. *Fam.* IX, 8 [SB 254], reminding Varro of his promise to dedicate a work to Cicero, see, e. g., Hall (1998: 317–318); but there are no historical exempla in the letter.

⁵⁹ Cic. *Fam.* II, 1, 1 [SB 45]: *me nomine neglegentiae suspectum tibi esse doleo, tamen non tam mihi molestum fuit accusari abs te officium meum quam iucundum requiri*. Cf. also Cic. *Att.* XIII, 33, 1 [SB 309], where the fact that *neglegentia* is freely admitted must be a sign of a close friendship.

I believe it requires no wild strain of imagination to suggest that Cicero would be able to plan to use his *neglegentia* to reaffirm his request.

If I am right, the oddities concerning Themistocles in the famous letter to Lucceius should not be explained away, ignored, or emended. The mistakes serve as quite powerful rhetorical tools, and they show how skilful Cicero was in handling historical exempla. It is, I think, unnecessary to look for irony in the sentence cited at the beginning of this piece; Cicero just wanted to see the monograph written. Whether his political and psychological situation at the time entitled him to this conduct, I leave it to the readers to decide. In any case, I would expect no different attitude to truth from a politician.

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THEMISTOKLÉS V CICERONOVĚ DOPISE LUCCEIOVI

Po krátkém úvodu do moderního bádání o Ciceronově slavném dopise Lucceiovi (*Fam.* V, 12 [SB 22]) a o jeho významu pro Ciceronovo pojetí historie se článek soustředí na dvě zmínky o Themistokleovi v dopisu. V obou případech je správnost Ciceronova tvrzení těžko obhajitelná a dřívější pokusy o jejich objasnění nejsou zcela přesvědčivé. Je možné, že se Cicero prostě mýlil, ale působí pravděpodobněji, že se Cicero chyb dopustil záměrně, s cílem vyprovokovat Lucceia k opravě. Kdyby to Lucceius udělal, Cicero by ho mohl označit za nezdořilého a využít toho jako další páky k tomu, aby Lucceia přesvědčil k sepsání oslavné monografie o Ciceronově jednání od jeho konsulátu po jeho návrat z vyhnanství.

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