GREEK AND LATIN LETTERS

AN ANTHOLOGY, WITH TRANSLATION

EDITED BY

MICHAEL TRAPP

Reader in Greek in the Department of Classics, King's College London

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

http://www.cambridge.org

First published 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typefaces Baskerville 10/12 pt and New Hellenic *System* LaTeX 2ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 49597 0 hardback
ISBN 0 521 49943 7 paperback

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1 WHAT IS A LETTER?

What is a letter? As long as this question is treated as a request for an explanation, rather than for a watertight definition, it seems easy enough to answer it usefully, for ancient and more recent letters alike, by appealing to a combination of contextual and formal characteristics. A letter is a written message from one person (or set of people) to another, requiring to be set down in a tangible medium, which itself is to be physically conveyed from sender(s) to recipient(s). Formally, it is a piece of writing that is overtly addressed from sender(s) to recipient(s), by the use at beginning and end of one of a limited set of conventional formulae of salutation (or some allusive variation on them) which specify both parties to the transaction.[1] One might also add, by way of further explanation, that the need for a letter as a medium of communication normally arises because the two parties are physically distant (separated) from each other, and so unable to communicate by unmediated voice or gesture; and that a letter is normally expected to be of relatively limited length.[2] All the pieces anthologized in this collection (except for **73** and **75–6**) can be categorized as letters because they either have these characteristics, or somehow play at having them.[3] But behind this family unity there lies a very considerable diversity.[4]

The examples collected – forty-one in Greek, thirty-six in Latin, and one bilingual piece (**49**) – span something over nine hundred years in time. They originated in parts of the Greco-Roman world as widely separate as the Black Sea, Egypt, the North of England and Asia Minor, as well as in the cultural heartlands of the Italian peninsula and mainland Greece, and are available for us to read thanks to a number of different processes of creation and transmission. In thirteen cases, the text of the letter in question has

[1] For further discussion of epistolary formulae, see 34–8 below.

[2] See also 23 and 44 below.

[3] The question where the boundary is to be set between 'letters' and other pieces of writing that are in various ways comparable without qualifying as members of the family is not a trivial one, but lies beyond the scope of this introduction. Much depends on one's reasons for raising the question 'is this a letter?' in the first place, and one's keenness to press issues of genre and definition.

[4] Two classic surveys of the range of epistolary writing are those of Sykutris (1931) and Schneider (1954).

been preserved in its original form, inked or scratched on to the papyrus, lead or wood to which it was originally committed;[5] in three further cases (**62–4**), although the original physical missive is lost, what we have is an inscribed copy, made soon after the first sending, in which the message has been transferred to the more durable (and more public) medium of stone. These survive essentially as individual items, even though a good many such pieces were already collected together in some way in antiquity, into private or public archives. And they survive in spite of the absence of any original intention to bring them to the attention of anyone like us (a general 'readership', potentially far removed in time), even though the inscribed letters at least were thus being in some sense 'published'. With all the remaining items – the vast majority, that is to say, sixty-one out of seventy-eight – there is no such contact with the original missive as physical object. But (as if in compensation) a positive intent to make them available to a general readership has played a part. They survive in book form, as works of literature transmitted in the normal way for ancient writings, handed on down a family tree of manuscript copies from antiquity to the Middle Ages and Renaissance. And they survive not as individual items, but built into more substantial compositions, either letter-collections assigned to a single author or set of authors, or works of other kinds (speeches, histories, novels) that have reason to quote letters somewhere along the way.

Other distinctions too can be made, at least in order to give a first sense of the range of material collected together here. Besides being in two different languages, being composed at widely differing points in space and time, and being transmitted by different means, these letters are also the product of differing social and educational backgrounds, from the worlds of the modest (though modestly well-educated) provincials who wrote the items on papyrus, wood and lead, to highly cultivated and socially eminent correspondents of the stamp of a Cicero, a Pliny, a Basil or a Libanius; and they are, correspondingly, of many differing degrees of conceptual and stylistic sophistication, from the naïve to the exquisite. The balance of functional and aesthetic considerations – getting the message across and securing the required response to it, as against getting it across in a manner

[5] **1–5**, **15**, **21–2**, **26**, **35**, **46**, **56**, **61.** Of the other two papyrus items, one (**65**) is an official copy, not the original message, and the other (**49**) is a model letter. One letter (**1**) seems never to have been opened and read by its intended recipient.

that will itself give pleasure and excite admiration – differs accordingly from letter to letter.

Moreover, in what might at first seem the most fundamental distinction of all, these letters differ also in degree of closeness to actuality: some of them are 'real' and others 'fictitious'. That is to say, we seem to be able to distinguish (*a*) letters composed for sending by historical individuals (whether or not they are known from other sources besides), but never subsequently released in an edited collection (e.g. the items in this collection preserved on lead, wood and papyrus); (*b*) letters composed for sending by historical individuals, but subsequently also released in an edited collection for a broader readership, with perhaps some 'improvement' of the contents (e.g. the letters of Cicero, 'The Elder' ('John'), Pliny, Fronto, Julian, Libanius, Basil, Gregory, Jerome and Augustine; cf. also that of Catiline); (*c*) letters by and to historical individuals, but never physically sent as individual items in letter mode, because intended from the start more for a broader readership than for the specified addressee (e.g. – probably – the letters of Seneca, Horace and Ovid in this collection; cf. also the dedicatory epistles of Martial and Pollux); (*d*) letters purporting to be by (and sometimes to) historical individuals, but in fact the work of a later literary impersonator, again writing exclusively for a reading public ('pseudepigrapha', e.g. the letters of Chion, Aeschines (?), Diogenes, Crates and Phalaris); and (*e*) letters by and to invented characters, whether invented by the epistolographer, or inherited by him from earlier literature (e.g. the letters of Phoenicium (Plautus), 'Polyaenus' and 'Circe' (Petronius), Gemellus, Salaconis and Glycera (Alciphron) and the Exile (Philostratus)).

The letters in this anthology – and the category of 'the letter' in general – thus seem to span several significant divides, between reality and fiction, and between active engagement in the real world and passive aesthetic enjoyment. Letters are implicated in both life and literature, they can be both real and invented; indeed, they can be both 'real' and 'pretend' letters, either really sent, or never intended for sending, but meant from the start to be part of a literary work for a different kind of readership. Yet, as with all systems for pigeon-holing letters, these categories – and in particular, the underlying antithesis between 'proper' letters and letters that are somehow not so proper – should not be pressed too hard. There are indeed distinctions to be drawn in what can be called the degree of fictionalizing involved in the various letters in this collection; and these distinctions identify widely recognized types of letter in general. But how

useful a firm categorization constructed along these lines really is, is open to question. Too blunt a contrast between 'real' and 'fictional' ignores the fact that no letter is a simple, direct transcript of 'reality', a wholly transparent window, any more than any other piece of writing can be. Consciously or unconsciously, letter-writers select what they are going to say and what they are not going to say, and choose how they are going to slant what they do say, and thus construct a personalized version of the reality they are referring to. Similarly, in writing, letter-writers construct and project a persona which may bear all kinds of relationship (including a very slender one) to their character as perceived by others than their correspondent of the moment.[6]

This is not to say that all letters are in fact fictitious; rather that all letter-writing is liable to involve processes sometimes hastily taken as distinctive marks of fiction.[7] More generally, the drawing of any such lines unhelpfully distracts attention from what letters have in common: how any piece of writing that is recognizable as a letter (whether in a standard or a non-standard version, whether united with or divorced from physical sending) shares features not only of form but also of content and topic with other members of the class, and how alertness to these shared features helps us to appreciate each individual item. Drawing lines of this kind also detracts from an awareness of what we – any compiler and any reader of a collection of letters such as this one – are thus doing with letters: how the vantage-point of the subsequent reader, initially a stranger to the epistolary transaction (real or imagined), but now eavesdropping on others' conversation, can efface perceived differences between one category of letter and another, transforming an originally functional communication into a source of aesthetic (or other) pleasure.

More straightforward, at first glance, is another form of categorization, based on the observation that letters – into whichever of the groups sketched above they may fall – perform a wide range of specific functions. In the first place, one can distinguish 'public' from 'private' correspondence: both private individuals, seeking responses and effects in the context of everyday social interaction (or indeed in more fraught or unusual circumstances), and holders of public positions, seeking effects and responses in the formal business of villages, towns, provinces, kingdoms – and religious

[6] On the question of character-portrayal in letters see below, 32 and 39.
[7] Cf. Rosenmeyer (2001) 9–12.

communities – have recourse to letters to do so. And, secondly, on each of these (not always wholly separate) levels, the specific effects and responses aimed at are themselves hugely diverse. As one recent study puts it, 'letters are as varied in function as are the possibilities of social [and, he might have added, political] intercourse';[8] or, as another explains, more discursively, a letter can be used to 'order or request provisions, elicit a virtue or promote a habit of behavior, initiate a relationship with another person or group, maintain . . . end . . . [or] restore a relationship with a person or group, praise someone, cause someone to be sorry, give orders . . . , give a report of events, cause a group to share a common hope, elicit capacities for social bonding, threaten someone, console someone, mediate between individuals or groups . . . , give advice, request advice, express thanks, give honor.'[9] This diversity, too, seems to provide grounds for classification, in terms of both context and content of communication. But the promise is a slippery one, for the diversity is if anything too great to yield a tidy set of categories, and further problems are created by the stubborn refusal of actual letters to confine themselves neatly to just one communicative function apiece, and the difficulty of drawing a watertight distinction between public and private communication.[10] Certainly no exhaustive classification into kinds on this basis can be made (not that some ancient theorists didn't try: see pp. 44–5 below, and no. **76**). At best, only a limited number of stable and (sometimes) fairly single-minded forms can be distinguished along these lines, in cases where a particular individual function does seem to exercise a monopolizing effect, and generates a distinct set of formulae: notably the letter of recommendation, the letter of condolence or consolation, and (perhaps) the invitation.[11]

The letter, then, is clearly a diverse form of writing, and that diversity is reflected in the contents of this anthology. But mapping the diversity, and fixing labels on its various constituents, is interestingly problematic. These issues will remain in the air as we turn to further details of the writers and letters anthologized and the form in which they are working, and will be faced (and ducked) again in conclusion.

[8] Stirewalt (1993) 1.

[9] Stowers (1986) 15–16; some of the items betray the author's particular concern with Christian epistolography (cf. 17–21 below).

[10] See headnotes to sections AIV and B on 236 and 295–6 below.

[11] See headnotes to sections AIV, AVI and AIII on 236, 267 and 228 below.

2 THE LETTER-WRITERS, THEIR WORKS AND CONTEXTS

(*a*) *The letters from papyrus, wood, lead and stone*

The earliest physically surviving letters in Greek are three pieces scratched on to thin sheets of **lead**: the 'Berezan letter' (**1** in this anthology), *SIG*[3] 1259, from Athens (**2** in this anthology), and *SIG*[3] 1260, from Olbia.[12] The first dates from around the year 500 B.C., the other two from some time in the fourth century. How close the first takes us to the very beginnings of letter-writing as a practice in the Greek-speaking world is an intriguing question that is hard to answer confidently, though internal and external evidence suggests that it gets us quite close. Literacy of any kind was not widespread in the archaic period,[13] and the first historical correspondence referred to in our sources, that of Amasis and Polycrates,[14] dates from around 530–525. Moreover, the Berezan letter itself (see commentary) seems to show, on the one hand, a lack of familiarity with what are later to emerge as standard conventions of letter-writing, and on the other a sense that sending a message by this particular means is a measure for emergencies only.

Other evidence suggests that both the habit of writing in general, and the specific practice of letter-writing as a mode of communication, remained restricted down to the closing decades of the fifth century, but had become much more widespread and part of normal experience by the middle of the fourth.[15] The two fourth-century letters on lead seem to bear this out, in their use of the medium for much more mundane transactions, and their use of what begin to look like familiar epistolary formulae (see commentary on **2**). Lead was of course not the only, or indeed the most common material used for letter-writing in this period and subsequently. Potsherds (*ostraka* – a

[12] For the Berezan letter, see Chadwick (1974); for the other two, Crönert (1910).

[13] Harris (1989) 45–64.

[14] Hdt. 3.40–3. References to letters in mythological time (Phaedra's suicide-note in *Hippolytus*, Iphigenia's and Agamemnon's letters in *IT* and *IA* – for which see Rosenmeyer (2001) 61–97) tell us about the experience and assumptions of the author's own period. The interesting case in this connection is the celebrated folded tablet, scratched with 'many life-destroying things', sent with Bellerophon by Proetus in the story told by Glaucus in *Iliad* 6.166–70. The reference must be earlier than, say, 600 B.C., but does it betray familiarity with letter-writing as a contemporary activity, or rather a vague (and suspicious) awareness of it as something done only in the distant past, or in far off places?

[15] Harris (1989) 65–115; Stirewalt (1993) 6–15.

particularly cheap option, cf. Diog. Laert. 7.174), waxed or whitened wooden tablets and (initially, mainly for the well-to-do) papyrus were all used as much and more.[16] The use of lead is unlikely to have stemmed from the unavailability of other materials when needed (can potsherds ever have been unavailable?), but to have been a positive choice. A message on lead is tough, and has a good chance of avoiding obliterating damage in transit, even if roughly treated;[17] and it can be folded in such a way as to make tampering and unauthorized reading difficult. Moreover, thanks to its malleability, the same piece of lead can be used many times over.[18]

It is with the third century B.C. that the epistolary habit seems really to have established itself in Greek culture. And it is from this time on that survivals start to become numerous, thanks to finds of **papyrus** material, above all from Ptolemaic, and then Roman Egypt, dating from the 260s all the way to the end of antiquity. Up to a thousand papyrus letters now survive, spanning private, business and official correspondence, and publication continues at a steady rate.[19] They have been found both as separate items, and in the remains of organized archives (*P.Beatty Panop.* 1, from which item **65** below is taken, is one such), all excavated from heaps of waste paper abandoned to the encroaching desert in late antiquity.[20] The great majority are in Greek – the language of the overclass which assumed the running of Egypt after the conquests of Alexander and the foundation of the kingdom of the Ptolemies, and retained much of its power and status up until the Arab conquest in the seventh century A.D.; but there is also a good number in Latin, the language of the country's political masters following Octavian's victory at Actium in 31 B.C. and its incorporation as a province of the Roman Empire, and above all the language of their army.[21]

[16] Harris (1989) 94–5; White (1986) 213–14; Rosenmeyer (2001) 22–3.

[17] Complaints about damage to letters written on less durable papyrus can be found in *P.Col.Zen.* II 68, *PSI* IV 403, and Cic. *ad Q. Fr.* 2.10.4 (reporting Caesar).

[18] It is also worth noting that lead was the favoured material for two other kinds of message, to non-human recipients: questions to an oracle (as for instance at Dodona, cf. Parke (1967) 100–14, 259–73) and curses (see Gager (1992) 3–41). Whether this reflected (or created) any sense that such messages were like letters is an intriguing but open question.

[19] To give just one indicative figure, the nine volumes of the Oxyrhynchus series published between 1992 and 2001 (59–67) contained 49 new letters, 11 official and 38 private or business.

[20] See Turner (1980) 17–53; White (1986) 4–8.

[21] For the political and social background, see Bowman (1990), Lewis (1983), Rowlandson (1998), Alston (1995), Bagnall (1993), Haas (1997).

They are published – made available again to readers after centuries of oblivion – in a whole range of papyrological series, as well as in selective anthologies and commentaries based on those primary editions.[22]

Besides the simple thrill such letters give of direct contact with the ancient world and its people, at the level of everyday life and business, the physical survival of what was actually written and sent by the original letter-writers gives special access to questions about ancient letter making and sending.[23] We can see how writing-paper was made and prepared, how it was folded, secured and sealed for sending, and how addressed on the outside. We discover what written instructions could be added to help the messenger deliver to the right location.[24] We encounter measures taken to ensure that letters once arrived will be read out and if necessary translated to recipients who cannot read, or even speak Greek.[25] And we can make at least some headway with the question of who did the writing: the presence of particularly skilful hands, and of changes of hand between the main body of the letter and the final salutation, suggest just how often the bulk of the work, or all of it, was done by secretaries (for the affluent) and (for the less well-off) professional letter-writers.

Coming as they did from correspondents unknown to grand history, and from everyday milieux similarly ignored in the more formal record, papyrus letters (along with other documents on papyrus) opened up whole new chapters of ancient social history when they started to be excavated

[22] See the source information given for items **3–5**, **15**, **21**, **26**, **35**, **46**, **49**, **56**, **61** and **65**; there is a full list of papyrological publications and their nomenclature in Turner (1980) 154–79. Anthologies and commentaries include Milligan (1910), Witkowski (1911), Hunt and Edgar (1932–4), White (1986) and Chapa (1998). Latin papyrus letters can be found collected in *CPL* (nos. 246ff.) and Cugusi (1992).

[23] Cf. Parsons (1980) 3–6; White (1986) 213–17. Pictures of papyrus letters can be found in (e.g.) Turner (1980), Turner (1971), White (1986), and the relevant volumes of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, but the best and most informative images readily available are now to be found on papyrological websites (in a nice convergence of ancient and modern IT): http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk, http://odyssey.lib.duke.edu:80/papyrus, and http://www.lib.umich.edu/pap/welcome.html all make good starting-points. In this anthology, the dimensions of all papyrus items are given, as a reminder of their status as physical survivals.

[24] The most elaborate instructions are on *P.Oxy.* 2719; see also (e.g.) *P.Oxy.* 1678.28, 1773.40, *P.Mich.* VIII 490.24, and for something similar on lead, item **2** in this anthology.

[25] *P.Haun.* 14–15 + *P.Mich.* 679, discussed by Bülow-Jacobsen and McCarren (1985) = Rowlandson (1998) no. 246; the non-Greek speakers in question are women.

in bulk in the 1890s.[26] It is an intriguing aspect of twentieth-century scholarly history that much of the impetus to the study of this material, above all the letters, has come from historians of Early Christianity, seeking insight both into the humble social circumstances of the first Christians, and into the language and forms of early Christian writing (in which the letter played such an important role[27]). This particular interest has had its advantages (in the sheer volume of scholarly time and energy it has caused to be devoted to letters), and also its disadvantages, as scholars have forced the material in pursuit of their own very specialized ends. To give one of the most famous examples, Deissmann's general classification of letters as belonging either to the category *Brief* (real, unelaborated letters, such as are preserved on papyrus) or the category of *Epistel* (worked-up, sophisticated, 'literary' letters, such as come down to us in manuscript tradition) was aimed specifically at supporting a particular interpretation of the letters of St Paul (as the simple, sincere communications of a man of the people with the people), and thus also of the truest form of the Christian heritage.[28]

Letters on **wood** are represented in this anthology by one of the thousand and more tablets discovered since 1973 at the fort of Vindolanda (Chesterholm) on Hadrian's Wall (of which over 170 of the fully published items – nos. 21–48 and 210–353 – are letters). Postcard-sized or smaller, and between one and five mm thick, these miraculously preserved documents, dating from the twenty-five or thirty years after around A.D. 92, are part of the paperwork of a Roman frontier garrison and its associated civilians: military reports, orders and applications; accounts and lists; and the correspondence of the officers of the garrison and their wives.[29] The same sort of fascinating everyday detail is preserved as in the Egyptian papyri: worries about the beer supply,[30] lists of items of clothing sent from one correspondent to another,[31] contemptuous references to the local population.[32]

[26] Cf. the works cited in n. 21 above.

[27] Cf. 17–21 below, and Stowers (1986) 17–26.

[28] Deissmann (1927), discussed by Rosenmeyer (2001) 5–8.

[29] The tablets are published in Bowman and Thomas (1983), (1994) and (1996), all with photos. Briefer and less technical accounts, but with attention to the military, material, social and cultural background, in Bowman (1983) and (1994), also illustrated.

[30] Inv. no. 93.1544, Bowman and Thomas (1996) 323–6.

[31] Tab. 38. [32] Tab. 164 (*Brittunculi*).

Much official correspondence – letters of rulers and administrators to and from peers, colleagues, subordinates and subjects – of course survives either on papyrus or wood, or with the published letter-collections of individuals (e.g. Pliny, Trajan, Julian). Some, however, survives because preserved in the form of inscriptions in **stone**, made because the content of the letters concerned was felt to be of particular importance to the public life of the city where the inscription was set up – a letter from a king or emperor, for example, granting certain privileges or amending a piece of legislation, or one honouring a leading citizen.[33] The examples in this anthology are drawn from two published collections with commentaries: C. B. Welles's of 1934, containing seventy-five letters from Hellenistic monarchs, dating from between 311 B.C. and A.D. 21; and Joyce Reynolds's of 1982, containing sixty-seven inscribed documents from the theatre of the city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, from the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. in date, of which twenty-two or -three are letters.[34]

Collectively, all these kinds of primary, unreprocessed correspondence on lead, papyrus, wood and stone, are of huge value to the historian, affording a ground-level view of aspects of ancient life not always covered by other surviving documentation (such as the great narrative works of the Greek and Roman historians). Among other things, they preserve a notable quantity of writing by women, which is otherwise notoriously hard to come by in the ancient world.[35] They are also immensely important as documents for the history of the development of the Greek and Latin languages, telling us about both levels of literacy in general in different periods, and more specifically about the habits of spelling, pronunciation and grammar of their more or less extensively educated writers.[36] In connection with epistolography, they have further fascinations. They allow us to see by comparison both what is specific to educated, 'literary' letter-writing as it survives in the published collections, and what is characteristic of letter-writing across

[33] See Welles (1934) xxxvii–xli; Woodhead (1981) 35–47; Thomas (1992) 162–8. An early but eccentric set of instances is the messages carved on stone that Themistocles left for the Ionians at selected points on the shoreline near Artemisium (Hdt. 8.22). The most recent treatment of royal letters, with reflections on how they should be read and used as historical evidence, is Ma (1999) 179–242, with 284–372.

[34] Plates I, III, and XVIII–XXII in Reynolds (1982) all show inscribed letters.

[35] Items **22** and **46** in this volume; contrast item **71**, a 'woman's' letter in fact composed (and read out) by a man. See also Rowlandson (1998), nos. 45, 77, 92–9, 115, 172–3, 180, 205–6, 220, 225, 228, 231, 259, Cribiore (2001).

[36] For the Greek material, see Horrocks (1997) 65–70, 114–27; for Latin, Bowman and Thomas (1983) 72–4, Bowman (1994) 82–99, Adams (1977).

the board.[37] And they offer in a particularly intense form the pleasures and puzzles of eavesdropping that come with the reading of any letter intended for another's eyes, as we listen in to fragments of ancient conversations, filling in the gaps in our contextual knowledge as best we may, drawn in and at the same time tantalized by the incomplete hints and allusions that correspondents in the know can safely limit themselves to.

Note on conventions of transcription

The following conventions are used in the presentation of material transcribed from lead, wood, papyrus and stone:

[α]	letters removed by physical damage, but restorable
[..]	letters removed by physical damage, but not restorable
(α)	expansion of abbreviations/contractions by the scribe/writer
⟨α⟩	letters missed out by the scribe/writer and added by the editor
ọ	letters not decipherable with complete confidence
[[α]]	letters written but crossed out by the scribe/writer
ˋαˊ	letters added above the line
†	word/passage of which the editor cannot make sense

In these transcriptions word-division, punctuation and (in Greek) accents and breathings are all editorial additions, to help the modern reader; they are not to be seen in the documents themselves. The original spelling has however been preserved, both for its interest as evidence for contemporary pronunciation and for the educational level of the writer, and to retain as much of the flavour of the original as possible.[38] For fuller details of the standard papyrological and epigraphic conventions (as used in, e.g., the Oxyrhynchus volumes and Welles and Reynolds), see Turner (1980) 187–8 and 203, and Woodhead (1981) 6–11.

[37] It is striking, for instance, how much more functional papyrus letters are than even the least 'retouched' of the letter-collections surviving in a manuscript tradition. They focus very closely on the business of reporting recent events and issuing commands and requests, with very little space or energy left over for more general reflection or even friendly gossip. This may betray a class difference in familiarity and ease with letters as a medium of communication.

[38] An early experiment in trying to preserve eccentric spellings in the translations too was very sensibly vetoed by the series editors; for a sample of what such translations might look like, see Westermann (1919), and compare the letter of 1896 given as no. 245 in Kermode and Kermode (1995), 423 (inherited from E. M. Forster's *Commonplace Book*).

(*b*) *Edited collections – from utility to literature and monument*

Both senders and recipients have motives for keeping copies of their own and their correspondents' letters, either sporadically or in regular archives (single sheets of letter-papyrus, for instance, could be gummed together to make one or more large book-rolls of correspondence).[39] And both they, and outsiders to the original transactions, have motives for 'publishing' the resulting collections (i.e. under the conditions of ancient 'publishing', making a fair copy of the letter-set available to others for further copies to be taken[40]): to safeguard reputations and help in the building of personal monuments, to document a key period of history or set of events, to preserve the valuable lessons and/or the fine writing contained. Personal archives must go back a long way, but just when in antiquity a collection of letters was first published as a work for circulation in its own right is unclear. All the sets attributed to early correspondents are under more or less certain suspicion of being later fabrications. Those of the sixth-century figures Solon, Thales, Phalaris, Anacharsis, Heraclitus and the Pythagoreans, and the fifth- and fourth-century figures Themistocles, Artaxerxes, Hippocrates, Euripides, Socrates and the Socratics, Xenophon, Diogenes, Crates, Aeschines, Chion and Dion, are undoubtedly pseudepigraphic;[41] the status of Plato's and Demosthenes' letters has been fiercely debated, but they may well belong in the same category.[42]

On the available evidence, the earliest letters we can be sure were kept and circulated in something like this way seem to have been those of the philosopher Epicurus (341–270 B.C.). Although only three now survive in full, because quoted in the biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 10.34–135), fragments preserved in other ways show how many once circulated, chiefly but not exclusively among the Epicurean community.[43]

[39] See e.g. Cic. *Att.* 16.5 (= 410 SB).5.

[40] On ancient 'publishing', see Easterling and Knox (1985) 14 and 17–22, Kenney and Clausen (1982) 19–22.

[41] See below, 27–8.

[42] On pseudepigraphic letters, see below, 27–31. On the question of Plato's letters, see Morrow (1935) 11–22, Gulley (1972); on Demosthenes, Goldstein (1968) 3–34, 64–94.

[43] See Frr. 40–133 in Arrighetti's edition. The collection attested as being made by the second-century (B.C.) Epicurean Philonides (*P. Herc.* 1044, fr. 14) is unlikely to have been the very first; Plutarch, *Non posse* 1101 b testifies both to Epicurean circulation, and his own reading of the *Letters*. The continuing availability of the letters, and the possibility of re-presenting them in media other than manuscript, are best illustrated

Letters of Aristotle were apparently united into a collected edition with a preface by one Artemon not later than the second century B.C.[44] In Latin, we hear of collections by the Elder Cato (234–149 B.C.) and Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi (second century B.C.).[45]

The earliest collections now surviving, and perhaps the most influential both in antiquity and subsequently, are those of **M. Tullius Cicero** (106–43 B.C.).[46] 914 letters now survive (about ninety of them by other hands), 426 in the sixteen books of the *Ad Atticum* (covering the years 68–44 B.C.[47]), 435 in the sixteen of the *Ad familiares* (62–43), twenty-seven in the three *Ad Quintum fratrem* (59–54) and twenty-six *Ad Brutum* (all from 43 B.C.). At least twice as many were known in antiquity, including sets to Pompey, Caesar, Octavian, M. Cicero Jnr, and Q. Axius (cf. on **54** and **75** in this anthology). Collectively, these letters give an unparallelled insight into Cicero's career and attitudes, as well as into the social world and informal language of the Roman élite of the late Republic.

Cicero himself contemplated publication, from the archive kept by his secretary Tiro, supplemented from that also kept by Atticus,[48] but did not live long enough to see the project through. The actual publication of the *Ad fam.*, the *Ad Quintum* and the *Ad Brutum* seems to have happened during the reign of Augustus, probably thanks to Tiro, that of the *Ad Atticum* not until the Neronian period.[49] Evidence that would allow us to assess the extent of any editorial processing the letters underwent is thin,[50] though the arrangement of the *Ad fam.*, partly by correspondent and partly by type of letter,[51] suggests

by the inscription set up in the second century A.D. by Diogenes of Oenoanda, which quotes Epicurus' letter to his mother (frr. 52–3 Chilton = 125–6 Smith): cf. Chilton (1971) 108–13, Smith (1992) 312–16, 555–8.

[44] Demetrius, *Eloc.* 223; David on Aristotle, *Cat.* 24a28.

[45] C.f. e.g. Cic. *Off.* 1.37, *Brut.* 211; Cugusi (1970–9) 1 65–70 (LXVI) and 110–13 (CXXIV).

[46] Major commentaries: Shackleton Bailey (1965–70), (1977) and (1980a); his text and translation also in the most recent Loebs. Selective commentaries with useful introductions: Shackleton Bailey (1980b), Stockton (1969), Willcock (1995). Criticism: Hutchinson (1998), Griffin (1995). Life and times: Shackleton Bailey (1971), Rawson (1983), Scullard (1982).

[47] Though all but eleven date from 61 and after.

[48] *Att.* 16.5 (= 410 SB).5, *Ad fam.* 16.17 (= 126 SB).1; cf. Nepos. *Att.* 16.2–4.

[49] Shackleton Bailey (1965) 59–76, (1977) 23–4; cf. Hutchinson (1998) 4.

[50] Though at least one editorial deletion has been detected, at *Att.* 13.9 (= 317 SB).1.

[51] Book 13 consists of letters of introduction, 14 of letters to Cic.'s wife, 16 of letters to or about Tiro.

a desire to facilitate several different kinds of reading. However that may be, Cicero's letters rapidly became established as classics of epistolography,[52] read both for their information content (about the man himself and the times he lived through), and for their admired style. As a recent study has re-emphasized, this latter way of reading surely answers to at least some of Cicero's own expectations. Although the letters certainly contributed to building his political and social monument (e.g. in demonstrating the extent and weight of his friendships and alliances), they were also carefully contrived structures of words, consciously working at many different levels of formality, depending on the nature of the communication and the identity of the correspondent.[53] However much the letter may be thought of as an unofficial kind of writing, Cicero was never truly off duty, as stylist or as self-presenter.

The letter-collection of the **Younger Pliny**, **C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus** (A.D. *c.* 61–*c.* 112), comprises some 370 letters in ten books, nine of Pliny's own letters to family, friends and social contacts, and one of letters to and from the Emperor Trajan, written when he was imperial special legate in Bithynia-with-Pontus in 110.[54] Before his final appointment, Pliny – landowner, lawyer, administrator and man of letters – had been consul in 100 and Chairman of the Rome drainage-board (*curator aluei Tiberis*) in 104–7. Books 1 to 9, containing 247 letters, were published during Pliny's own lifetime, perhaps from A.D. 104/5 onwards, apparently at fairly regular intervals.[55] The contents are by and large noticeably more polished stylistically than the 123 letters (73 by Pliny himself) in Book 10, which may not have been published until after his death.[56] In contrast to Cicero's, the bulk of Pliny's letters were thus seen into general circulation in book form by the writer himself. It is therefore hardly surprising that they give the impression of a collection carefully calculated to show off their author in all the identities he prided himself on, as administrator, friend, husband, patron and benefactor of individuals and communities,

[52] Sen. *Ep.* 21.4 (cf. e.g. 97.3ff., 118.1–2), Quintilian 10.1.107, Pliny 9.2 (= **52** in this anthology), Fronto *Ad Ant. Imp.* 3.7–8 van den Hout (**54**).

[53] Hutchinson (1998) 1–24. One particularly strong indication of careful composition Hutchinson points to is the prevalence of rhythmical cadences (*clausulae*) in the majority of the *Ad fam.*

[54] Commentaries: complete, Sherwin-White (1966); selective, Sherwin-White (1969a), Williams (1990). Exegesis and criticism: Sherwin-White (1969b), Radice (1975), Shelton (1990), Rudd (1992).

[55] Sherwin-White (1966) 54–6. [56] Williams (1990) 2–4.

and man of learning and literary cultivation.[57] It is similarly likely, though not directly provable, that many of them were edited and improved for publication. A bonus of the collection is that it also preserves for us, in Trajan's contribution to Book 10, examples of one species of imperial correspondence, to set alongside those known from other sources.[58]

Yet another kind of collection is represented by the correspondence of **M. Cornelius Fronto** (A.D. *c.* 90/5–*c.* 167), who like Pliny was a distinguished orator and advocate, and holder of a consulship (as suffect consul in July–August 143).[59] Unlike Pliny, he added to his public distinction the honour of serving as tutor in Latin rhetoric to the future emperor Marcus Aurelius, from 139 to 145 (when Marcus became co-regent with his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius). Something over 220 letters and fragments of letters survive, from what was originally a still larger collection, now preserved on a single damaged palimpsest manuscript: five books (135 letters) to and from Marcus while still Caesar, four books (23) from the period after his accession, two books (140) to and from Pius' other adopted son, Lucius Verus, one book (10) to Antoninus, and two books (40) *Ad amicos*, plus some other rhetorical treatises in epistolary form. The letters to and from Aurelius reflect both the personal and the pedagogical aspects of their relationship, and are correspondingly varied in style and tone; some do and some do not embody their author's own stylistic doctrines for formal prose, which emphasized above all the fastidious choice of vocabulary, drawing on the full resources of classic Latin literature. External evidence suggests that the letters were not edited and circulated by Fronto himself, nor immediately after his death; they are not quoted at all in surviving literature until the early fourth century;[60] thereafter, citations

[57] Radicke (1997), Ludolph (1997). More even than Cicero's collected letters, Pliny's thus seem to offer themselves to the reader as a kind of (auto)biography, particularly in that ancient sense of 'biography' (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 1.2) that emphasizes revelation and analysis of character over simple narrative; see also 30–1 below, on Chion of Heraclea.

[58] See **66** in this anthology, along with **24**, **57** and **67** (Julian), **53–4** (M. Aurelius from Fronto's correspondence), and **64** (inscribed letter of Octavian). On the topic of imperial correspondence, see Millar (1977) 213–28.

[59] Commentary, van den Hout (1999), keyed to his Teubner text of 1988; the only full English translation, by C. R. Haines in the Loeb edition (1919–20), is unreliable. Works and stylistic ideas: Kennedy (1972) 592–602, (1989) 293–6. Historical and cultural background: Champlin (1980) and Holford-Strevens (1988) 93–9.

[60] Nazarius, *Paneg.lat.* 4.24 (A.D. 321) = Test. 20 van den Hout.

by the grammarian Charisius and the poet and epistolographer Sidonius Apollinaris testify to their belated popularity. As with Pliny's, the inclusion in the collection of a good number of letters from another, imperial hand gives it an added value.[61]

Julian, **Flavius Claudius Julianus** (A.D. 331–63, acceded 361), is celebrated as the Emperor who briefly suspended the official approval of Christianity accorded by Constantine († 337) and attempted to restore the primacy of the traditional pagan cults.[62] The surviving manuscripts of his epistolary output present us with a number of different collections, adding up to just over 200 items, embracing (*a*) imperial edicts or rescripts (written adjudications on points of legislation), (*b*) letters to priests, in Julian's capacity as Pontifex Maximus, and (*c*) private correspondence, mainly written after his elevation to the rank of Caesar in 355.[63] This combination seems to go back to several alternative ancient editions, presumably made after Julian's death on campaign, one of the letters to friends and fellow *literati*, answering to an interest in Julian as stylist and upholder of Hellenic literary culture, and one in which private correspondence was mixed with his more official letters and legislation, answering to an interest in his importance in the history of the Church and the rise of Christianity.[64] From the letters, the reader learns not only of Julian's efforts to revive old cults and foster proper values in those entrusted with their care, but also of his own literary learning and devotion to the classics of Greek literature and thought. Given what we know of the literary culture of the times (see below on Libanius), it is not unlikely that Julian envisaged eventual publication, even if he did not live long enough to see to it himself.

A close ally of Julian's in the defence of Hellenism[65] was the orator and teacher **Libanius** (314–*c.* 393/4), who having held the Imperial Chair of

[61] Cf. n. 58 above.

[62] Full set of letters and rescripts, Bidez and Cumont (1922); letters minus rescripts, with translation, Wright (1922); something in between, with French translation, Bidez (1960). Historical and cultural background: Browning (1975), Bowersock (1978), Athanassiadi (1992).

[63] Not all are genuine: 28 of the 207 in Bidez and Cumont (1922), 10 of the 83 in Wright's (1922) Loeb, are listed as suspect or spurious.

[64] Libanius in *Ep.* 1264 Förster (A.D. 364) speaks as if Julian's letters have not yet been published, but a complete collection seems to have been known to Zosimus (*Hist.* 3.2.4) in the second half of the fifth century, and is also quoted from by the historians Socrates and Sozomenus. See Bidez and Cumont (1922) v–xxi, Wright (1923) xxvii–xxx.

[65] See his laments for Julian in *Orr.* 17 and 18.

rhetoric at Constantinople from 349 to 354, taught for the last forty years of his long life in his home city of Antioch.[66] His huge surviving literary output (64 orations, 51 declamations, and a set of model progymnasmata) includes also over 1,500 letters.[67] The collection as we now have it in the fullest medieval manuscripts seems to derive from an edition put together by an editor after Libanius' death, to commemorate a great man of letters and the troubled times he had lived through, and to make his letters available as models to future generations of letter-writers and readers. But the core of this edition (Letters 19–607) seems to stem from an earlier six-book version, covering the years 355 to 361, drawn from Libanius' own files of letters sent, and very probably put together by Libanius himself, in part as an advertisement for his teaching.[68] The bulk of the collection (1,250 items) dates from between 355 and 365, with a further 270 from the years 388–93. It comprises correspondence with friends, pupils and their parents, and the great and the good of the social, political and religious life of the times, and is full of the concerns of a literary and pedagogic star, who enjoyed considerable moral authority among his peer group and his pupils, and was for a time the confidant of the Emperor. Stylistically, these letters are very self-conscious, which is hardly surprising in the light of the fact (*Epp.* 476–7) that Libanius was in the habit of summoning his friends to read aloud and discuss letters received, and must have taken it that the same would be done with his own.[69] The reputation that he enjoyed already in his own lifetime as a master epistolographer[70] was consolidated after his death; a supposed correspondence with Basil helped to cancel out the taint of association with Julian and so save him for Christian appreciation.[71]

Perhaps even more than for the members of the Greco-Roman pagan élite, and its administrators and rulers, the letter was a highly significant form for Christians, being a major tool for the propagation of doctrine,

[66] Full text: Förster (1921–2). Selection with introduction and translation, Norman (1992). Background and place in the history of rhetoric: Kennedy (1983) 150–63.

[67] 1,544 genuine and nine spurious items in Förster's edition, plus a supposed exchange with St Basil running to twenty-six letters.

[68] The year 361, the last in this hypothesized edition, sees Libanius at the height of his powers and fame in Antioch, and on the verge of his endorsement as a spokesman for Julian's programme of pagan revival. See Norman (1992) 35–43.

[69] For another, earlier instance of letters as material for public performance, see Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 44.

[70] *Or.* 13.52, *Ep.* 716.3.

[71] Eunapius, *VS* 496, John Rhakendytes, *Synopsis rhetorikes* 14 (*Rhetores graeci*, ed. Walz, III 55–9, cited by Mullett (1997) 42–3).

the maintenance of group solidarity in the face of worldly temptations and persecution, and the administration of the structures and processes of the young Church.[72] It has been calculated that over 9,000 Christian letters survive from the ancient world; of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, no fewer than twenty-one are letters (not counting the letters enclosed within a larger narrative structure in Acts and Revelation).[73] The earliest are those of Paul, which date from between *c.* A.D. 45 and 65 and show the apostle addressing moral and doctrinal teaching both to individuals and to the Church communities he himself had founded or fostered in his travels round the Mediterranean world. These were then followed by the letters of James, Peter, Jude, and **John**, performing by and large the same functions.[74] The collection of all this material into the authoritative compendium now known as the New Testament was a complex process, in which the final canon only gradually took shape.[75] But though the individual stages are obscure, the overall motivation for the preservation of the letters is clear: to be the bearers of what had won through as orthodox teaching, and at the same time, to give the young Church a gallery of role-models and figures of authority to support its sole founder, and a body of writings to match that of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets.

Thereafter, letters continued to be major tools for Christian teachers and administrators, and continued to be gathered into collections to perpetuate the memory of great individuals and preserve their learned teaching for the edification of posterity. Just as the early letters mirror the characteristic social status of the first Christians – generally unsophisticated, and lacking any high rhetorical or literary culture – so the later ones (from the third and fourth centuries A.D. onwards) reflect the new religion's progress up the social scale, into the world of the cultivated élite, and show a literary polish comparable with the best products of a Julian or a Libanius. The collections mined in this anthology are those of **St Basil**, **St Gregory of Nazianzus**, **St Jerome** and **St Augustine**, three at least of whom were figures of great influence in the history and development of the Church.

[72] Stowers (1986) 15. [73] Stowers (1986), Doty (1973).

[74] This role of helping to hold together a geographically scattered community, united by its shared values, is an interesting common element between early Christian letters and those of Epicurus (above, 12).

[75] See Chadwick (1967) 41–5.

Basileios (*c.* 330–79), St Basil, Basil the Great, the founder of Eastern monasticism, was born in Caesarea in Cappadocia, and educated in Constantinople and Athens.[76] Like Libanius, he won early renown as a teacher, holding the Chair of rhetoric at Caesarea from 356 to 358, before abandoning a worldly career. Baptized in 358, he established a monastic community at Neocaesarea, for which he composed the Rule which was to be so influential on Eastern monasticism in general, and through St Benedict on Western monasticism too. He was called back to the active business of the Church in 365, to assist the struggles of orthodox Christianity against what came to be branded the heresy of Arianism (*ODC*[3] s.v.), becoming Bishop of Caesarea in 370 and dying in office nine years later. The 365 surviving letters are divided in the standard edition into (*a*) letters written before Basil became Bishop, from the years 357–70 (1–46); (*b*) his letters as Bishop, from 370–8 (47–291); and (*c*) doubtful and spurious items (292–365). The majority of them show Basil in his public capacity, sorting out administrative details and good doctrine and morals for his flock, and for those who had otherwise called on his assistance as patron or political ally; some are more personal (e.g. 1, to the (pagan) philosopher Eustathius), but improving aims are never far away. The first collection we hear of going into circulation was made, probably only after Basil's death, by his contemporary and fellow-countryman, Gregory of Nazianzus (*Epp.* 51–4, esp. 53). It may be that the larger collections from which the surviving medieval manuscripts descend took this as their nucleus.[77] By Byzantine times, Basil had become established as a classic of Christian epistolography.[78]

Gregory of Nazianzus (*c.* 330–90), another Cappadocian,[79] was like Basil (and indeed, under his influence) torn between the monastic life and active participation in the affairs of the church.[80] Educated in Athens, he at first chose monastic retreat, but was made Bishop of Sasima (Cappadocia) in

[76] Text and translation: Deferrari (1926–34), Courtonne (1957–66). Life, times and controversies, Deferrari, xv–xl, Chadwick (1967) 148–51, 178–83.

[77] Bessières (1923) 146–51.

[78] He is listed along with Libanius in Rhakendytes's *Synopsis*, cited in n. 71 above; cf. also the forged correspondence with Libanius mentioned above, which besides co-opting Libanius for Christian appreciation and imitation, also implies a flattering view of Basil's own literary quality.

[79] He, Basil and Basil's brother Gregory of Nyssa are sometimes referred to as the 'Cappadocian Fathers'.

[80] Text: Gallay (1964–7) and (1969). Criticism: Guignet (1911). Background and thought: Ruether (1969).

372. Summoned to Constantinople to assist in the restoration of orthodoxy to a substantially Arian city, he came close to being elected Bishop there in 381, but withdrew in the face of determined opposition from hostile factions. Returning to Nazianzus in the hopes of retiring into semi-monastic retreat on his family's estates, he eventually achieved this ambition in 383, but not before he had been manoeuvered into serving a further two years in charge of the local Church. 249 letters now survive, dating from between 359 and the late 380s, not all by Gregory himself; twenty are to his close friend and ally, Basil. The first attested collection was Gregory's own work, in answer to a request from his great nephew Nicobulus – the same, in fact, as also contained the selection of Basil's letters mentioned above. What the relationship is between this and the direct ancestors of the medieval manuscript collection is unclear.

Of approximately the same generation, but in the Latin-speaking West, was the ascetic, scholar and teacher **St Jerome, Eusebius Hieronymus** (345–420), bracketed with Augustine, Gregory the Great and Ambrose as one of the four original 'Doctors of the Church' and compiler of the so-called 'Vulgate' Latin Bible.[81] Born in Stridon in Dalmatia (near Aquileia), Jerome studied in Rome, then lived a life of ascetic retreat in both Italy and the deserts of the East, before being ordained presbyter in Antioch in 379. The remaining forty years of his life were divided between Rome (382–5), where he presided over an ascetic circle largely composed of women, and began his definitive revision of the existing Latin translations of the Psalms and the New Testament, and Bethlehem, where he founded and administered a monastery, a convent and a church, and added a revised Latin Old Testament to his earlier work. Of the 144 items in his surviving correspondence, thirty-one are by other hands (including ten of Augustine's); his own range in length from a few lines to thousands of words. They can be roughly categorized as eleven on points of dogma, twenty-four exegetic, thirty on moral issues, eleven funeral orations (obituaries), thirty-one polemical, and a few private letters to friends. We know from Jerome himself (*De uiris illustribus* 135) that he kept copies of his own correspondence, in some kind of organized archive, in his personal library. They were thus theoretically available for copying and diffusion, but it is not known when the possibility was first realized;

[81] Text: Hilberg (1996), Labourt (1949–63). Full English translation, Fremantle (1983). Selections, with translation, Wright (1933); see also Scourfield (1993). Life and thought, Kelly (1975).