

Introduction

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1 Staging Literary Exchange

Pliny the Younger's letter collection is a polyphonic work of literature. Not at first glance, of course, as Books 1–9 contain only letters written by Pliny himself. It is not until Book 10 that we can finally hear the voice of a correspondent – and a most important one, to be sure: the emperor Trajan himself.¹ But still, there are many other voices to be heard in the letter corpus as a whole – one just has to listen more carefully. Although their letters have not been included in the collection, Pliny's addressees in Books 1–9 are frequently 'allowed' to speak in their capacity as interlocutors, their words, of course, being controlled by Pliny the 'stage director' of these epistolary dialogues. As is well-known, in ancient theory letters were considered one half of a dialogue, and letter writers often supplement the other half by anticipating their addressees' possible comments.² Apart from these interlocutors, on an intra-diegetic level we can also hear the words of the acting characters in various epistolary narrations, words which are reproduced by Pliny the narrator both in direct and indirect speech. Finally, there are the voices which Pliny (willingly or unwillingly) 'imported' into his epistolary universe from outside and which, as it were, generate a consistent 'background sound' throughout the oeuvre: the numerous texts, genres and discourses, both on and off the page, which are interacting with the letters. It is the aim of our volume to explore these intertextual 'background noises' and to 'excavate' the additional layers of meaning which are generated through the letters' intertextual dialogues.

As König and Whitton (2018a) have pointed out, Pliny's *Letters* are an especially interactive work of literature:³ not only because the epistolary

¹ For Book 10 see Stadter (2006); Woolf (2006); Noreña (2007); Lavan (2018).

² For the letter as the one half of a dialogue see Demetr. *Eloc.* 223; Thraede (1970) 27–38; for the interlocutor in ancient epistolography see e.g. Thorsteinsson (2003) 134–44.

³ König and Whitton (2018a) 18 with n. 66.

genre per se is based on interactivity through the written exchange between letter writer and addressees, but also because Pliny frequently narrates, describes or imagines various forms of social and cultural interaction in his letters. Literary activity and exchange are an important topic right from the outset of the collection: already the first epistle (1.1) suggests that the genesis of the letter collection results from a conversation (we do not learn whether it was an oral or written one) between Pliny and his friend Septicius Clarus who encouraged Pliny to collect and publish those letters which were written *paulo curatius*. Literary exchange is omnipresent in the so-called Parade Letters 1.1–8;⁴ in letter 1.2, Pliny sends a *liber* (probably a speech, though perhaps we should also think of the book of letters?), in which he follows the stylistic ideal of Demosthenes, Calvus and Cicero, to Arrianus Maturus for emendation. In addition to this exchange between the two correspondents as well as between Pliny and his literary models, the letter also envisages a broader public by mentioning the publication of the work (5 *editione*), the circulation of Pliny's *libelli* in public (6 *in manibus*) and on the book market (6 *bibliopolae*). In letter 1.3, Pliny encourages his friend Caninius Rufus to use his free time in his villa in Comum for composing a literary work and gaining immortality (4 *effinge aliquid et excude*).⁵ The atmosphere of friendship and mutual encouragement dominating letters 1.1–3 changes conspicuously in letter 1.5 where Pliny quotes from the invectives which Regulus and the members of the Stoic opposition under Domitian hurled against each other both orally and in written form (2 *ut librum recitaret publicaretque*; 3 *ut dixerit ei*; 14 *in epistula quadam*).⁶ Quite in contrast, *Ep.* 1.6 advertises Pliny's friendship with Tacitus who is depicted as having a giggle over Pliny's accidental success as a hunter while pursuing studies in the great outdoors. The next letter (1.7) is part of Pliny's correspondence with Octavius Rufus, a written exchange enriched with quotations from Homer and thus 'importing' the heroic world of epic poetry into a conversation over an extortion trial concerning the province of Baetica (4 *cur enim non usquequaque Homericis versibus agam tecum?*).⁷ A speech which Pliny had held in his hometown Comum on the occasion of the dedication of a public library financed by Pliny himself is the topic of letter 1.8. The addressee, Pompeius Saturninus, is asked to emend the speech which, according to Pliny, bears

⁴ A term coined by Ludolph (1997) in reminiscence of Horace's 'Parade Odes'.

⁵ See also Canobbio (Chapter 9) in this volume.

⁶ Amicable and hostile exchange in the context of the recitation is the focus of Roller (2018); for *Ep.* 1.5 and 1.6 see Neger (Chapter 13) in this volume.

⁷ For quotations from epic poetry (especially Homer and Vergil) see Schwerdtner (2015).

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the risk of appearing as too boastful in advertising Pliny's *munificentia* – thus, he is still hesitating over a publication.⁸ As it turns out, Pliny's hometown pops up twice in the opening section of Book 1 as a place where literature is produced, disseminated and read or listened to, be it in the private villa of Pliny's friend Caninius (1.3) or in the public library sponsored by Pliny and made accessible to the community of Novum Comum (1.8).⁹ With *Ep.* 1.9 to Fundanus we are back in Rome, witnessing Pliny as he struggles with the various obligations which members of the upper class have to meet day by day. Regarding these social and legal interactions in the metropolis, Pliny opposes the *otium* of his Laurentine villa which enables him both to pursue his studies (Pliny here depicts himself as 'speaking with his books' (5 *cum libellis loquor*) in peace and enjoy physical recreation.¹⁰

The list of letters where Pliny discusses various kinds of literary and cultural activities, both in a private and public context, could be continued *ad infinitum* (i.e. until the end of the collection). Within his oeuvre, Pliny depicts numerous spaces where literary exchange takes place: besides the public library in Comum, already mentioned above (*Ep.* 1.8), Pliny also refers to private libraries such as the one in his Laurentine villa (*Ep.* 2.17.8), the library of Herennius Severus who is planning to decorate it with portraits of Cornelius Nepos and Titus Catus (*Ep.* 4.28),¹¹ and the library in a building in Prusa which also contains a statue of Trajan (*Ep.* 10.81.7).¹² In letter 4.13 Pliny once more advertises his generosity towards his hometown, this time through his efforts to establish a school in Comum, most probably one for rhetorical education (and which, perhaps, would have met in Pliny's own new library); Tacitus, the addressee of this letter, is asked to recommend a suitable teacher from the crowd of his students (10 *copia studiosorum*).¹³ Various other letters refer to recitations, a praxis of literary exchange well-established in Imperial times,¹⁴ as well as private conversations and discussions about literary matters. For instance,

⁸ For the library in Comum see Dix (1996); for Pliny's reflections on self-praise see Gibson (2003); Neger (2015a).

⁹ Comum, in *Ep.* 1.3, is the first location mentioned in Pliny's letters; see Neger (2021) 80.

¹⁰ See also Tamás (Chapter 11) in this volume.

¹¹ Titus Catus is probably identical with the philosopher Catus mentioned by Quintilian in *Inst.* 10.1.124; Sherwin-White (1966) 307.

¹² For the known libraries in the Roman empire and the libraries existing in Pliny's lifetime see Neudecker (2004); Dix and Houston (2006); König and Whitton (2018a) 1–3; Pliny also mentions portraits and statues in libraries in *Ep.* 1.16.8; 3.7.8; cf. Sen. *Tranq.* 9.9.6–7.

¹³ For this letter see e.g. Manuwald (2003); Augoustakis (2005/06).

¹⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 1.5; 1.13; 2.10; 2.19; 3.7.5; 3.10; 3.15; 3.18; 4.7.2; 4.27.1; 5.3; 5.12; 5.17; 5.21.1; 6.6.6; 6.15; 6.17; 7.17; 8.12; 8.21; 9.1.4; 9.27; 9.34; see Binder (1995); Roller (2018).

in *Ep.* 5.3 Pliny summarises the content of a message from Titius Aristo who had written that, in his house, there had been a lively discussion about Pliny's poems (*Ep.* 5.3.1 *fuisse apud te de versiculis meis multum copiosum-que sermonem*), probably during a *cena* to which Aristo had invited his friends.¹⁵ A dinner is also the context for the exchange of anecdotes belonging to the realm of paradoxography in *Ep.* 9.33: it was during a symposium (1 *super cenam*) that Pliny had heard the story of the friendly encounter of a dolphin and a boy in Hippo Diarrhytus, Africa, a story which he passes on to his addressee, the poet Caninius Rufus.¹⁶ In Tuscany, where Pliny possesses one of his villas, old men are telling stories from the good old days (5.6.6 *audias fabulas veteres sermonesque maiorum*). Rhetorical tactics too have to be discussed in private conversations, and we find Pliny even interacting with Regulus, his favourite foe, about the question of whether a judicial speech should be extensive or concise (*Ep.* 1.20.14–15). There are several other occasions where Pliny refers to oral conversations regarding literary matters, whether real or fictitious, which he chose to embed into his letters. We have to assume that not only Pliny the epistolary narrator, but also the historical Pliny who wrote, collected and published his letters, was strongly influenced by the oral culture of his times. This aggregate of non-written intertexts which helped to shape his work is difficult, of course, if not almost impossible to track down almost two millennia later.

The better part of literary interaction as depicted in Pliny's letters belongs to the time after Domitian's death in AD 96, a temporal marker which frames the corpus of Books 1–9 (*Ep.* 1.5.1 *post Domitiani mortem*; 9.13.2 *occiso Domitiano*).¹⁷ As Pliny happily observes in *Ep.* 1.10 and 1.13, literature and science are flourishing again in the post-Flavian present of the *Epistles* (1.10.1 *si quando urbs nostra liberalibus studiis floruit, nunc maxime floret*).¹⁸ As an example for this renaissance of the *studia liberalia* in Rome, Pliny picks out the philosopher Euphrates to whom he dedicates a portrait in letter 1.10.¹⁹ Quite in contrast to this positive image, the dark era of Domitian (with the expulsion of the philosophers from Rome) is the

¹⁵ For this letter see Auhagen (2003); Morello (2007) 176–7; Power (2014); Neger (2021) 278–9.

¹⁶ See Hindermann (Chapter 6) in this volume.

¹⁷ See Whitton (2013b) 57; Neger (2021) 200–1.

¹⁸ Actually an insult to Statius, Silius Italicus, Martial and Quintilian; what is true is that senators, like Pliny and Tacitus, are now publishing freely for the first time.

¹⁹ See Whitton (2019) 75–8 and 423–4.

topic of conversation in *Ep.* 3.11.²⁰ Apart from the present and recent past, Pliny from time to time also intersperses anecdotes from earlier ages, often (but not only) concerning rhetorical matters. In *Ep.* 2.3, which praises the Greek orator Isaeus, Pliny narrates the famous anecdote of Aeschines, who read Demosthenes' speech *De Corona* to the Rhodians and praised Demosthenes' oratorical skills.²¹ The same letter also contains an anecdote from the time of Augustus about a citizen from Gades, who came all the way to Rome only to see Livy (the historian) and returned home immediately afterwards (8). Pliny's introduction to this anecdote (which is later narrated by Jerome in *Ep.* 53.1) insinuates that it existed in written form and that his addressee, Nepos, could have known it already (8 *numquamne legisti Gaditanum quendam* ...).²² An anecdote about the emperor Claudius, who unexpectedly visited a lecture by Nonianus on the Palatine, is narrated in letter 1.13.3 and *Ep.* 2.14.10–11 contains an account of Domitius Afer's speech at the Centumviral court, a story which Pliny had heard from his teacher Quintilian and which probably dates from the reign of Nero.²³ In letter 6.20 we encounter the eighteen year old Pliny reading Livy and excerpting passages from his work during the eruption of Vesuvius in the year AD 79.

2 Excavating the Text: Interdiscursivity and Generic Interaction

As the chapters in this volume will demonstrate, literary interaction is not only a recurrent topic within the epistolary collection, but also actively practised on the page of each letter. Considerable work has already been dedicated to Pliny the Younger's intertextual techniques by various scholars. The monographs by Marchesi (2008), Schwerdtner (2015) and Whitton (2019), as well as several articles,²⁴ have succeeded in showing that, on the one hand, we encounter in Pliny a large number of lexical overlaps, quotations and marked references to various Greek and Latin

²⁰ The banishment of the philosophers is usually dated to AD 93; for a discussion of letter 3.11 see Shelton (1987); Whitton (2015c) 5–9.

²¹ Cf. Aeschin. *Or.* 3.167; Cic. *De or.* 3.213; Plin. *Ep.* 4.5; Val. Max. 8.10.ext.; Plin. *HN* 7.110; Whitton (2013a) 100; Tzounakas (2015) 210–11; for *Ep.* 2.3 (together with 1.10) see also Pausch (2004) 129–41.

²² See Whitton (2013a) 98; as the anecdote is not extant in other sources before Jerome, it is also possible that Pliny invented it and the question *numquamne legisti* playfully points to this fact.

²³ See Whitton (2013a) 209; 'this anecdote probably dates from the late 50s'.

²⁴ See e.g. Hagendahl (1947); Neuhausen (1968); Görler (1979); Cugusi (1983) 91–6; Krasser (1993b); Wenskus (1993); Schenk (1999); Méthy (2004); Whitton (2015b); Mratschek (2018); Whitton (2018).

writers, but on the other, there are also numerous unmarked and indirect allusions in the *Epistles* which are much more difficult to identify. The arrangement of Pliny's *Letters* as well as his art of literary allusion has much in common with the literary strategies we are familiar with from Augustan poetry, and the *Epistles* have aptly been described as a kind of 'prose poetry'.²⁵ In May 2018, a conference entitled 'Pliny's Epistolary Intertextuality' was held at the University of Cyprus where Pliny's strategies of referring or alluding to various models were discussed. The present volume emerges from the ideas presented at this conference and attempts to focus on an aspect which has not yet been systematically examined in scholarship on Pliny: rather than viewing intertextuality as an end in itself, the volume focuses on the question of how 'generic enrichment'²⁶ and interdiscursive interaction are established in Pliny's letters and how the letters, as it were, 'absorb' other literary genres and discourses. The interactive potential of the *Epistles* is not limited to literary texts: on several occasions, Pliny also integrates non-literary or sub-literary texts in his work: for example, in *Ep.* 3.18, about the recitation of his *Panegyricus Traiani*, Pliny quotes from the invitation notes he had sent to his friends (4 'si commodum' et 'si valde vacaret').²⁷ In other letters Pliny either quotes from inscriptions or refers to them, such as in *Ep.* 7.29 (Pallas' prose epitaph),²⁸ 6.10 and 9.19 (Verginius Rufus' verse epitaph),²⁹ 3.6.5 (Pliny's name and honorary offices on the base of a Corinthian bronze statue of an aged man)³⁰ or 8.8.7 (various graffiti on the walls of Clitumnus' sanctuary).³¹ The wording of a *senatus consultum* from the year AD 52 is embedded into letter 8.6.³²

As a writer who constantly experiments with the generic boundaries between his prose letters and other forms of literature, both prosaic and poetic, Pliny the Younger can be compared to his older contemporaries Martial and Statius, whose *Epigrams* and *Silvae* are also distinguished through the art of incorporating elements typical of other literary genres.³³ As it seems, small forms (such as small-scale poetry and epistolography) are

²⁵ E.g. by Stevens (2009) 161. ²⁶ See Harrison (2007).

²⁷ For *Ep.* 3.18 see Marchesi (2008) 199–203; one might compare the invitation letter by Claudia Severa written around the same time (AD 100) and found among the Vindolanda tablets (*Tab. Vindol.* 291); see Hallett (2002).

²⁸ See Pigoñ (Chapter 12); Neger (Chapter 13) in this volume.

²⁹ See König and Whitton (2018a) 16–28.

³⁰ On this letter and its crucial role in Book 3 see Henderson (2002b).

³¹ See Neger (2021) 360–1. ³² See Pigoñ (Chapter 12).

³³ For generic interactions in Martial see, for example, Neger (2012); Mindt (2013); for Statius Newlands (2013); for both poets Baumann (2018).

particularly susceptible to generic enrichment and, at the same time, show a high degree of literary self-consciousness. The present volume covers a greater range of genres and writers than the monographs mentioned above of Marchesi (2008), Schwerdtner (2015) and Whitton (2019), albeit with a less intense focus than particularly Whitton. Whilst the single chapters offer close readings of Pliny's intertextual dialogue with various writers, the volume in its entirety demonstrates the large scope of genres and discourses which Pliny incorporates into his letters and shows how the epistolographer adapts these pre-texts to the communicative purposes of the respective letters.

The theory of intertextuality, meanwhile, adapted for literary studies by Genette and others³⁴ and initially applied by classicists to studies on Augustan poetry,³⁵ has also become an important tool for the interpretation of various prose genres.³⁶ The volume aims to add to these endeavours and significantly extend them by showing that Pliny, through referring and alluding to a broad range of writers, genres and modes of writing, absorbs various genres in his letters and, at the same time, creates a kind of epistolary 'super-genre'.³⁷ As Whitton states in his contribution to this volume, 'Pliny's *Epistles* are a work of many intertextual parts', covering both prose and poetry. What Pliny offers to his readers is a blend of genres and discourses within an epistolary framework, including, for example, typical elements of epigram, elegy, satire, lyric and didactic poetry, epic and drama as well as oratory, historiography, philosophy, technical writing, paradoxography and the novel. Rather than narrowing our investigation down to literary genres in the traditional sense, we also explore how discourses which transcend generic boundaries are being absorbed in the *Epistles* and adapted to the epistolary context: government, law, provincial administration, ethical didaxis, gender, reproduction, illness, death, grief and consolation, posthumous reputation, luxury, villas, (control over) nature, literary criticism and so on. In his letters, Pliny repeatedly approaches other literary genres and discourses both through quoting directly from and alluding covertly to various models, thus challenging his readers to read the *Epistles* against the background of a long literary tradition as well as a shared cultural space.

³⁴ Genette (1982); cf. Riffaterre (1978).

³⁵ See e.g. Conte (1986); Hinds (1998); O'Rourke and Peltari (forthcoming).

³⁶ See Joseph (2012); Tischer (2010), (2018) and (2019).

³⁷ We use the term 'super-genre' in a different sense from Hutchinson (2013) who refers it to large sets of genres with various subsets, for example the hexameter as a super-genre covering subsets such as epic and didactic poetry as well as satire and oracle.

At the same time, he demonstrates the generic mobility of epistolography.³⁸ The letters become a sort of 'vessel' which can be 'filled' with elements characteristic of other genres, or, to apply the image used by Harrison, the letters resemble a 'host' receiving various 'guests' whose status in the literary hierarchy can be higher, equal or lower than the 'host'.³⁹ In our volume, we will explore the possible purposes of intertextual allusions: are they drawing the readers' attention to parallels, changed context or differences? Are they supposed to confirm the readers' expectations, to cause amusement, surprise or even irritation? As a study on intertextuality, our volume does not only aim at investigating the phenomenon per se, but also at helping to understand better the cultural profile of the society Pliny was living in and writing for.⁴⁰

When modern scholars attempt to examine the phenomenon of textual relations in ancient writers, terms such as 'intertextuality', 'reference', 'allusion', 'reminiscence' and 'evocation' are often used interchangeably without regard to the semantic differences. As Hinds points out by referring to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a "reference" is "a specific direction of the attention"; an "allusion" ... is "a covert, implied or indirect reference".⁴¹ In her chapter on intertextuality in the work of Sidonius Apollinaris, Gualandri emphasises the semantic difference between 'intertextuality' and 'allusion' and argues that 'the concept of "allusion" ... rests precisely on the author's intention', whereas 'intertextuality' does 'not necessarily imply any authorial intentionality'.⁴² In this volume, we follow a pragmatic approach: the aspect of intentionality plays an important (although not exclusive) role in this volume's contributions which investigate Pliny's strategies of deliberately incorporating various genres and discourses into the epistolary context or, in some cases, of consciously blending out certain pre-texts. As Marchesi reminds us in her chapter, in addition to the familiar concepts of intra- and inter-textuality which suggest reading one text together with another, we also have to take those cases into account where textual dialogue is either not generated deliberately by the author (but perceived by the reader due to the common background of the texts, not necessarily in written form) or where the author even excludes or tunes out a parallel text. For these forms of textual

³⁸ For the 'generic mobility' of letters in terms of their proximity to autobiography see Gibson (2013).

³⁹ Harrison (2007) 16.

⁴⁰ See Onorato (2020) 38 on intertextuality in the work of Sidonius Apollinaris.

⁴¹ Hinds (1998) 22.

⁴² Gualandri (2020) 280; for the question how deliberate imitation can be distinguished from coincidence and commonplace see Whitton (2019) 37–50.

relations Marchesi suggests the concepts of extra- and alter-textuality.⁴³ König and Whitton (2018a) who focus on literary interaction between contemporaries in the age of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian, convincingly argue that interaction can be seen 'as a superset of which intertextuality is just a part'.⁴⁴ Whereas the majority of chapters collected in our volume will focus on the relation between Pliny's *Letters* and other texts, we will also take into account other forms of literary interaction. In her chapter on Book 10, König explores the large spectrum of interactions from 'allusions' to 'interdiscursivity', i.e. the evocation of whole genres and discourses instead of narrow lexical overlaps. Neither does intertextuality have to be traced only in one direction, i.e. from the older text to the younger. As Tamás demonstrates in his chapter, Pliny's interdiscursive methods can stimulate readers not only to regard Pliny's letters as informed by various source texts, but also to read these sources through the prism of Pliny's adaptation.⁴⁵

One type of intertextual reference which clearly rests on the writer's intention is the quotation, a 'prototype of intertextuality'⁴⁶ as it were. Ancient writers use various strategies of marking a quotation as a borrowing from another source:⁴⁷ sometimes the name of the model is mentioned explicitly,⁴⁸ sometimes a deictic pronoun indicates that a quotation follows (e.g. *illud*),⁴⁹ and in other cases readers can identify quotations as borrowings from other sources when poetic lines are integrated in a work of prose or when Greek is used in a Latin text. In addition to these instances, the so-called Alexandrian footnote, i.e. intertextual markers such as *dicitur*, *fertur*, *narratur*, *fama est* etc.,⁵⁰ helps to direct the reader's attention to literary models.⁵¹ Whereas in a quotation the original wording of the

⁴³ Langlands (2018) 331 defines extratextuality as 'allusion to a referent that is not in textual form, that reaches beyond intertextuality'.

⁴⁴ König and Whitton (2018a) 21.

⁴⁵ For the two sides of allusive art in ancient literature see O'Rourke and Pellari (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ Tischer (2010) 93: 'Prototyp intertextueller Beziehungen'; an extreme form of intertextuality where a text only consists of quotations is the Cento, explained e.g. by Ausonius in his preface to the *Cento nuptialis*; see Green (1991) 518–22.

⁴⁷ Tischer (2010) 103–6; cf. Schwerdtner (2015) 26–45; Neger (2021) 68–70.

⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. Plin. *Ep.* 2.3.10 (*illud Aeschini*); Martial 3.21; 4.14.5 (*verissimam legem, quam Catullus expresserit*); 4.27 (Sentius Augurinus).

⁴⁹ Cf. e.g. Plin. *Ep.* 1.18.4 *egi tamen λογισάμενος illud* ('but I carried on, believing that...'), introducing a quotation from Hom. *Il.* 12.283; unless indicated otherwise, translations of Pliny the Younger are by Radice (1969).

⁵⁰ See Ross (1975) 78; Hinds (1998) 1–5.

⁵¹ In Pliny for example in *Ep.* 7.9.15 *aiunt enim multum legendum esse, non multa* ('for the saying is that a man should be deeply, not widely, read'), recalling Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.59 *et multa magis quam multorum lectione formanda mens* and probably also Sen. *Ep.* 2.2; see Keeline (2013) 120–1.

source is usually maintained to a certain degree – as with *Ep.* 6.33.1 ‘*Tollite cuncta*’, inquit, ‘*coeptosque auferte labores!*’⁵² –, in other forms of intentional allusion only motifs, ideas and contents of a hypotext are evoked, for example, through the use of synonyms. In such cases, the literary knowledge of the reader is challenged to a much higher degree.⁵³ Apart from the ‘Alexandrian footnote’, other metaphors and images can serve as intertextual markers, such as memory, recognition, echo, *fama*, the path, footprints, the fountain, *silva/materia*, grafting, the figure of the father/parent, exchange, competitions, hospitality and so on. All these images can be read as symbolic references to various forms of interaction between texts and genres.⁵⁴ Closely related to the concept of memory is the idea of renovation, which appears, for example, in Pliny’s letter 6.10 on the tomb of Verginius Rufus in Alsium (1 *ipse mihi locus optimi illius et maximi viri desiderium non sine dolore renovavit*)⁵⁵ and indicates an intertextual link to Aeneas’ famous words at the beginning of *Aeneid* book 2 (3 *infandum, regina, iubes renovare dolorem*).⁵⁶ Pliny’s visit to the place where Verginius is buried thus resembles Aeneas’ emotionally loaded recollection of the *Troiae halosis*. Pliny’s memory is also explicitly mentioned in *Ep.* 3.7 on the death of Silius Italicus (10 *quod me recordantem*), a letter which interacts with Seneca’s *Dialogi* and other texts (as Tzounakas shows in his chapter). Pliny’s intertextual dialogue with Martial, on the other hand, is partially conducted in letters where aspects of the relationship between parents and children are discussed, as Marchesi shows in her contribution.

Although in antiquity a comprehensive theory of intertextuality was never developed, we can find scattered remarks of several writers concerning the art of quotation and literary allusion. One of the most famous passages is certainly Seneca the Elder’s anecdote about Ovid who is said to

⁵² “Away with everything,” he said, “and put aside whatever you have begun!”; here Pliny quotes from Verg. *Aen.* 8.439; for an interpretation see Schwerdtner (2015) 84–90.

⁵³ A good example is the first letter of Sidonius Apollinaris which alludes to Pliny’s *Ep.* 1.1 by using different vocabulary: *Diu praecipis . . . ut, si quae mihi litterae paulo politiores varia occasione fluxerint . . . omnes retractatis exemplaribus enucleatisque uno volumine includam* (Sidon. *Ep.* 1.1.1 ‘. . . you have this long while been pressing me . . . to collect all the letters making any little claim to taste that have flowed from my pen . . . and to revise and correct the originals and combine all in a single book’; translation by Anderson 1936) – *Frequenter hortatus es, ut epistulas, si quas paulo curatius scripsissem, colligerem publicaremque* (Plin. *Ep.* 1.1.1 ‘You have often urged me to collect and publish any letters of mine which were composed with some care’); cf. Köhler (1995) *ad* Sidon. *Ep.* 1.1.

⁵⁴ See O’Rourke and Pelttari (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ ‘The mere sight of the place revived all the grief and longing for that great and noble man’.

⁵⁶ See Neger (2021) 256; for further allusions to Vergil in Pliny’s letter 6.10 see Gibson (Chapter 2) in this volume.