PLINY AND THE ART OF SAYING NOTHING

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This paper examines Pliny's habit of "evasive display," a practice which exploits the *recusatio* to the full and produces the sense of endless deferral in the letters. Letters are generically fluid, covering a broad spectrum in style, content, length, and function. Social constraints, however, are considerable, since letters, both as physical objects and as intellectual artifices, form part of the currency of *amicitia*, to be exchanged with correspondents as (and with) gifts and representations of the absent friend. The social constraints help to generate, in Stanley Hoffer's word (1999), the "anxieties" of the letters, as Pliny must establish the value of his currency in a literary market in which the "gold standard," so to speak, is still set by the Ciceronian letter collections.

The paper looks first at the two letters which most clearly articulate this anxiety, 9.2 and 3.20, in which Pliny contrasts the paucity of his own material with the richness of Cicero's and develops strategies for successful trading even in a debased currency. The second part of the paper focuses on a type of letter with which Pliny participates most explicitly in reciprocal gift-exchanges: the "cover letters" sent to friends with copies of his speeches or poems. Many are remarkably uninformative, and this paper asks why they are so reticent about the literary works they accompany and examines their contribution to Pliny's activities in the *amicitia* market.

THE "NOTHING TO SAY" MOTIF

At 9.2, Pliny offers his readers a programmatic *recusatio*. Sabinus has apparently asked for more and longer letters; Pliny replies that he lacks material for such letters ("nec materia plura scribendi dabatur"). In contrast to his model, Cicero, whose career and circumstances offered an abundance

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of varied and important topics, Pliny and his generation are so constrained (*quam angustis terminis claudamur*, 9.2.3) that long letters may be only *scholasticae* and *umbraticae*.[1] Sure enough, Book 9 consists mostly of short letters ("every scrap that his optimistic nature considered worthy of immortality," in A. N. Sherwin-White's memorably catty judgement [1966.50]), with the exception of 9.13 and 9.26, the latter of which, a disquisition on oratorical style, is undoubtedly *scholastica*.

Letter 9.2 is an elegant piece and displays the characteristic sensitivity to potential mismatches between genre, content, and recipient which will be obvious in several other letters discussed in this paper: Pliny's material must be appropriate not only for lengthy exposition but also to the circumstances of the recipient. In this case, *umbraticae litterae* or news about *frigida negotia* (i.e., any accurate representation of the writer's circumstances) would be inappropriately addressed to a man on active military service in a hot, sunny climate (*sudorem pulverem soles*, 9.2.4).[2]

In 9.2, then, Pliny uses Cicero's letters self-deprecatingly as a foil for the inadequacies of his own letters. He also assigns to his addressee the espousal of Cicero as an appropriate model ("ad cuius exemplum nos *vocas*"), a natural strategy for a *recusatio*, and one which partially exonerates Pliny from the responsibility of *aemulatio* in the epistolary genre at least—he himself explicitly aspires to a Ciceronian model only in his oratorical works.

A similar anxiety about subject matter, also generated by the dominant Ciceronian model, appears at the end of 3.20, where Pliny says he has seized an opportunity (rare under the emperor's benevolent rule) to write about the *res publica*:

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1 The language of constraint and enclosure is a common feature of the collection. Pliny is "trapped" by business in 2.8. *Distringo* is a frequent verb (1.10.9, 2.14.1, 3.5.19, 5.5.3, 7.15.1, 9.2.1, 9.25.3). "Freedom" comes only with *otium* or with immortality after death; as Hoffer points out (1999.39 note 27), the metaphor of "freeing" someone from the oblivion of death occurs at 2.10.4 (Octavius) and 3.5.4 (Drusus).

2 Weische 1989.380 note16 ignores the contrast between heat and cold and says simply that *epistulae scholasticae* would be unsuitable for a military man; given that this particular soldier has been soliciting material and is later seen to have been eagerly reading Pliny's *libelli* (9.18), the scholastic quality of the letters seems less genuinely problematic. For the value of the campaigning soldier's approval, see 4.26.2 on Pliny's duty to provide Maecilius Nepos with worthwhile luggage. Cf. 9.25, in which Pliny sends the sparrows and doves of his poetic efforts to flutter among the legionary eagles under Mamilianus's care. On the "frigidity" and unliterary qualities of Pliny's natural subject matter—his daily occupations—see 1.9.3 and 1.10.9–10 (with Hoffer 1999.139).

> Haec tibi scripsi, primum ut aliquid novi scriberem, deinde ut non numquam de re publica loquerer, cuius materiae nobis quanto rarior quam veteribus occasio, tanto minus omittenda est. Et hercule quousque illa vulgaria? "Quid agis? Ecquid commode vales?" Habeant nostrae quoque litterae aliquid non humile nec sordidum, nec privatis rebus inclusum. Sunt quidem cuncta sub unius arbitrio, qui pro utilitate communi solus omnium curas laboresque suscepit.
>
> I have told you this primarily to give you some genuine news, and then to be able to talk a little about political matters, a subject which gives us fewer opportunities than in the old days, so none must be missed. Besides, hasn't the time come to give up the commonplace, "How are you? I hope you are well"? Our letters ought to contain something which rises above the trivialities and limitations of personal interests. Everything today, it is true, depends on the will of one man who has taken upon himself, for the general good, all our cares and responsibilities. (trans. B. Radice)

Here we find the same lament about the dearth of *materia* and a contrast between the scope of the past and the constraints of the present: the letters of public importance more typical of previous generations are rarer, and therefore more valuable and desirable, than the private everyday letters produced by Pliny and his friends (the common coin in the *amicitia* market).[3]

However, it is worth trying to unpack Pliny's complex agenda in 3.20, in particular, and his multi-layered allusions to Cicero, before focusing more specifically on the "nothing to say" motif. Above all, we must not lose sight of the fact that the most important person in the letter is not Cicero or Pliny or its addressee, Maesius Maximus, but the emperor, and that a letter that masquerades as the epistolary equivalent to *Dialogus* 40–41 (on the decline of oratory under the empire) actually contributes substantially to a

3 In 1.11, he has already illustrated the contrast between past and present by requesting from Fabius Iustus, in satisfaction of epistolary duty, no more than the formulaic beginning of traditional letters.

cumulative panegyric of the ruler, to which Pliny returns in another letter on the same subject to the same addressee (4.25).

The topic is the *lex tabellaria* and the use of the secret ballot in elections. At the beginning of 3.20, Pliny alerts his addressee and his reader to previous written treatments of the history of this contentious *lex*,[4] one of which is to be found in Book 3 of Cicero's *de Legibus*. At *de Legibus* 3.34, Cicero propounded the reasons for, and consequences of, the introduction of the secret ballot: the law attempted to limit the influence of over-powerful aristocrats (and, as such, was not desired while the people were free of such domination), but brought a risk of *vitiosa suffragia* by sheltering mischief-makers under the cover of secrecy. In 3.20, Pliny is describing a different but closely related situation: elections have become chaotic (thus providing ideal "Ciceronian" material for a letter), but the senate has unanimously favoured the secret ballot to limit public displays of influence, a choice which Pliny fears could, in future, provide cover for mischievous voting (3.20.8): "Sed vereor ne procedente tempore ex ipso remedio vitia nascantur. Est enim periculum ne tacitis suffragiis impudentia inrepat. Nam quoto cuique eadem honestatis cura secreto quae palam?" "Yet I am afraid that, as time goes on, the remedy will breed its own abuses, with the risk of wanton irresponsibility finding a way in. Very few people are as scrupulously honest in secret as in public."

His fear will "turn out" to have been justified (*factum est*) in 4.25, where he reports that someone has maliciously spoiled the ballot by inserting the names of the candidates' powerful supporters rather than those of the candidates themselves—a mockery of the original intentions of the law. However, in 3.20.9, Pliny emphasises that these particular elections have gone entirely to his satisfaction ("Thanks to the written vote, we shall have our public officials from the candidates who best deserve the honour"). Moreover, even the sense of epistolary restriction is eased for Pliny at the end of 3.20 by the beneficence of the emperor, whose *labores* actually generate material and occasions for letters (3.20.12)[5]: "Quidam tamen salubri temperamento ad nos quoque velut rivi ex illo benignissimo fonte decurrunt, quos et haurire ipsi et absentibus amicis quasi ministrare epistulis possu-

4 3.20.1: "You must often have read about the fierce controversy roused by the Ballot Act."

5 The *labores* of the emperor also have the last word in 4.25, where Pliny quotes Plato's *Phaedo* in support of a sympathetic observation that such behaviour only creates work (*multum laboris*) for the man who oversees the *res publica*.

mus," "Yet mindful of our needs, he sees that streams flow down to us from his fount of generosity so that we can draw on them ourselves and dispense them by letter to our absent friends."

Therefore, 3.20 does all of the following things: it talks about a contentious practice in terms reminiscent of Cicero's *de Legibus* and describes chaotic elections which, although deplorable, are good material for a "Ciceronian" letter on public life; it manages at the same time to make the (always respectable) distinction between present and past on the grounds that, unlike the *veteres,* contemporaries cannot talk about the *res publica* and are usually confined (*inclusum*) to private, everyday matters; finally, it shifts its ground in both areas to emphasise that the present is actually acceptable, in that (a) the right men have been elected (so the problematic secret ballot has been successful) and (b) the emperor provides material for letters (so contemporary epistolary constraints are eased). Moreover, this final tactic simultaneously neutralises any unfortunate—perhaps more Tacitean—intertext with *de Legibus* 3.34 ("quam populus liber numquam desideravit, idem oppressus dominatu ac potentia principum flagitavit," "Such a law was never desired by the people when they were free, but was demanded only when they were tyrannized over by the powerful men in the State," trans. C. W. Keyes). Pliny rather disingenuously formulates two problems and administers the same solution to both, thereby neatly ingratiating himself with the emperor. In 4.25, all difficulties are again to be alleviated by the actions of the single ruler. It is not surprising, then, that one of the few topics on which Pliny is elsewhere confident of abundant *materia* is panegyric of the emperor ("est enim ex virtutibus eius larga materia," 6.27.1).

However, Ciceronian allusion works on another level, too, in both 3.20 and 9.2, and shows Pliny being equally disingenuous in his use of the "nothing to say" motif. The contrast between Ciceronian abundance and everybody else's epistolary indigence goes back to Cicero's own correspondence; in *ad Familiares* 4.4, for example, he demurs politely at Sulpicius's self-deprecating deployment of the motif:

> Accipio excusationem tuam, qua usus es, cur saepius ad me litteras uno exemplo dedisses, sed accipio ex ea parte, quatenus aut neglegentia aut improbitate eorum, qui epistulas accipiant, fieri scribis ne ad nos perferantur; illam partem excusationis, qua te scribis "orationis paupertate" (sic enim appellas) isdem verbis epistulas saepius mittere, nec nosco nec probo, et ego ipse, quem tu

> per iocum (sic enim accipio) "divitias orationis" habere dicis, me non esse verborum admodum inopem agnosco (εἰρωνεύεσθε enim non necesse est), sed tamen idem (nec hoc εἰρωνευόμενος) facile cedo tuorum scriptorum subtilitati et elegantiae.
>
> I accept the excuse you make for often sending me identical letters, but I accept that part of it only in which you say that letters are not always delivered to me because of the negligence or dishonesty of those who take charge of them. The other part, in which you write that you often send identically phrased letters because of your "verbal poverty," I neither recognize nor approve. I myself, whom you jestingly (so I suppose) credit with verbal riches, acknowledge that I am not altogether unprovided with words (no need for false modesty!); but also, and with no false modesty, I readily yield the palm to the spareness and elegance of *your* compositions. (trans. D. R. Shackleton-Bailey)

Similarly, in *ad Atticum* 1.19.1, he writes in teasing reproach to his friend:

> Non modo si mihi tantum esset otii, quantum est tibi, verum etiam si tam breves epistulas vellem mittere, quam tu soles, facile te superarem et in scribendo multo essem crebrior quam tu. Sed ad summas atque incredibiles occupationes meas accedit, quod nullam a me volo epistulam ad te sine aliquo argumento ac sententia pervenire.
>
> If I had as much time as you, or even if I were willing to send letters as short as yours generally are, I should get the better of you easily enough and be far the more assiduous correspondent. But besides being excessively and incredibly busy, I don't choose that any letter should reach you from me without some content and purpose in it. (trans. D. R. Shackleton-Bailey)[6]

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6 Cf. *ad Fam.*15.16.1.

This dichotomy becomes canonical. In Seneca *Epistles* 118, both sides of the Ciceronian model (the comparative reserve of Cicero's correspondents and the bustling political and social commentary of the man himself) are available for Seneca's use in a letter replying (like Pliny 9.2) to a demand for more letters ("exigis a me frequentiores epistulas") (118.1–2):

> nec faciam quod Cicero, vir disertissimus, facere Atticum iubet, ut etiam si rem nullam habebit, quod in buccam venerit, scribat. numquam potest deesse quod scribam, ut omnia illa quae Ciceronis implent epistulas transeam: quis candidatus laboret; quis alienis, quis suis viribus pugnet; quis consulatum fiducia Caesaris, quis Pompei, quis arcae petat; quam durus sit faenerator Caecilius a quo minoris centesimis propinqui nummum movere non possint.
>
> I shall not do what Cicero, the most fluent of men, tells Atticus to do, that is to write even if he has nothing in his mind he wants to say. In writing to you, I never run out of ideas even though I bypass all the things with which Cicero fills his letters: which candidate is in trouble; who is contesting on borrowed funds, who on his own resources; who, in his bid for the consulship, is depending on Caesar, who on Pompey or his own cashbox; what a cruel usurer is Caecilius who won't lend even to his relatives at less than 12% interest! (trans. M. Wilson)

Here Seneca refers to just a single letter to Atticus from the 60s (*ad Att*. 1.12) in which Cicero himself is full of news, but invites Atticus to yield to friendship and send a letter about nothing, if necessary. The "nothing to say" motif punctuates the Atticus collection here and there in letters from the 60s to the 40s, almost exclusively in the service of light-hearted maintenance of epistolary *amicitia* or in order to gather news from Atticus.[7] In *ad Atticum*

7 E.g., *ad Att*. 5.5; *ad Att*. 7.15.1: "Since I left Rome I have not let a day pass so far without sending you some sort of letter, not that I have had a great deal to talk about but just to talk to you in absence." For a letter in which Cicero has "nothing to say" himself, but is demanding news, see *ad Att*. 10.3; cf. *ad Att*. 14.12.3.

14.12, for example, Cicero even uses the motif himself in order to elicit letters from his comparatively laconic friend ("quam dudum nihil habeo quod ad te scribam! scribo tamen, non ut delectem his litteris sed ut eliciam tuas").

However, since there is no Atticus figure in the letters of Pliny, I want to look more closely at Pliny's literary relationship to the *ad Familiares* collection. The results are intriguing and reveal that the Plinian nexus of motifs—having nothing important to say and falling back either on private banalities or on literary exchanges, particularly in the context of monarchical rule—is as distinctively Ciceronian as the full political commentary which Pliny represents as typical of the *veteres*. The motif of having nothing to say is strongly (though not exclusively[8]) characteristic of the letters Cicero wrote to the *familiares* under the Caesarian regime in 46 and 45 B.C., when he, too, was living *sub unius arbitrio*.[9] *Ad Familiares* 4.13, to Nigidius Figulus, is from this period, and is an important predecessor to both 9.2 and 3.20:

> Quaerenti mihi iam diu, quid ad te potissimum scriberem, non modo certa res nulla, sed ne genus quidem litterarum usitatum veniebat in mentem. Unam enim partem et consuetudinem earum epistularum, quibus secundis rebus uti solebamus, tempus eripuerat, perfeceratque fortuna, ne quid tale scribere possem aut omnino cogitare. Relinquebatur triste quoddam et miserum et his temporibus consentaneum genus litterarum. Id quoque deficiebat me.
>
> I have been asking myself this long while past just what to write to you, but nothing comes to mind—not any particular thing to say, not even a *manner* of writing normally

8 Two exceptions, from 53 B.C. (*ad Fam.* 2.4.2) and 43 B.C. (*ad Fam.* 11.25), are noted by Cugusi 1974.30 in his brief remarks on the "nothing to say" motif (though see note 11 below).

9 *ad Fam.* 4.10.1, 4.13.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1 (cf. 9.17.3: *nihil explorati haberem*), 6.6.1, 6.10.4–6, 6.22.1: "tamen inanis esse meas litteras quam nullas malui," 15.16, 15.17.2: "nos hic, ut tamen ad te scribam aliquid, P. Sullam patrem mortuum habebamus." Cf. *ad Fam*. 13.68 (Cicero feels he ought to write about the republic). On the relatively disconsolate and disappointing tone of the letters of this period, and the motif of having "nothing to say" in, e.g., *ad Att.* 12.27 and 12.30, see Shackleton-Bailey 1965.47.

> used in correspondence. Circumstances have taken away one element customary in the letters we used to write in happier days. Fortune has made it impossible for me to write or even think in that vein. There remains a gloomy, doleful sort of letter writing, suited to the times we live in. That, too, fails me. (trans. D. R. Shackleton-Bailey)

Ciceronian depression is not typical of Pliny, who seems, despite his protestations, well able to come up with the *genus litterarum usitatum*, but already in Cicero we find the familiar sense of a lack of material (here even a suitable category; cf. *ad Fam.* 6.10.4–6) for a letter and the lament that any letters which faithfully report the world around him can be only wretched affairs, reflecting in their restricted scope the sterility of the social and political environment. In general, he continues to write—even when writing at length—only in order to maintain the obligations of friendship.[10] In *ad Familiares* 15.16, he even writes rather generally (in a more "Plinian" fashion) about "spectres" and mental images—explicitly because he cannot write about the republic.

It seems, then, that the surviving Ciceronian letters of 46 and 45 provide a strong precedent and a peculiarly apt model for Pliny's use of the "nothing to say" motif. These were, after all, the years of one-man rule, in which Cicero's preoccupations were closer to those of Pliny's epistolary persona than at any other time in his life, as he showed, on the one hand, interest in maintaining *amicitia* even in constrained circumstances and, on the other, devotion to literary work.[11]

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10 *Ad Fam.* 4.10.1: "I have no news to give you . . . but since Theophilus is leaving, I could not let him go without something in the way of a letter"; 4.13.1, 6.3.1: "In my earlier letter, I wrote at considerable length, more out of friendly feeling than because the case required it." Cf. 6.4.1, 6.6.1, 15.18.1, cf. 4.4.4–5. On friendship in Cicero's letters, see Hutchinson 1998.17–18.

11 On Cicero's attitude to his literary work, see *ad Fam.* 5.21.2, 9.6.5. On Pliny's thorough familiarity with letters from 45 on Tullia's shrine, see Guillemin 1929.114. More generally on his borrowings from the Ciceronian collection, see Cugusi 1974.29–31. (Cugusi noticed some Ciceronian influence on Pliny's use of the "nothing to say" motif, although he sees no pattern of allusion. Gamberini 1983.169 rightly dismisses his argument in the case of *ad Fam.* 11.25 since Cugusi misses the particular joke of Cicero's teasing exchanges in 11.24 and 11.25 with a routinely over-terse Brutus).

PLINY SAYING NOTHING ABOUT HIS OWN WORKS

However, the differences in approach to letters about that literary work are intriguing in this context and closer examination reveals similar strategies of deferral: "saying nothing" and "evasive display," whereby Pliny withholds information in the letters about his works or manipulates a *recusatio* in the construction of his own persona and that of his audience. Given his apparent anxieties about *materia* and his emphasis on the world of leisured literary studies, one might expect that Pliny would take Cicero on at his own game in letters about his literary productions and so write in detail about current projects and intellectual activities. He certainly insists on the need to win immortality by assiduous publication, and, as he defines himself as the servant of *tetrica Minerva* in the law courts, the natural source of his fame is his oratory. His desire for renown, however, also drives him to publish poetry and letters, and it seems that *anything* would be acceptable if he could work it up and publish it. His advice to himself and others is "write *something*."[12] The *something* is usually something already in hand, but is not always further identified.

Pliny's vagueness, indeed, is extensive and is particularly puzzling given Roland Mayer's otherwise convincing argument in this volume that Pliny deploys his letters as advertisement and insurance policy for his published oratory and, presumably, for his reputation as the equal of Tacitus. His "cover letters," in particular, seem to waste valuable opportunities for publicising himself and his work. Like Cicero, he sends his polished speeches and other works to his friends, as gifts and as drafts for criticism, accompanied each time by an explanatory letter.[13] Read together with letters in which Pliny acknowledges receipt of books from his correspondents and offers his (uniformly positive) views on them, the set of cover letters contributes to the reader's impression of the cultured reciprocity of an environment in which

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12 *Aliquid* letters: 1.2.6, 1.3.4, 1.6.1, 1.13.6, 4.16.3: *dignum aliquid*, 9.3.3: *clarum aliquid*. In 9.29.1, he declares his decision to do many things *mediocriter,* as he feels himself unable to do *unum aliquid insigniter*.

13 Cover letters: 1.2, 1.8, 2.5, 3.10, 3.13, 4.5, 4.14, 5.12, 6.33, 8.3, 8.19, 9.4. Letters responding to the literary projects of others: 3.15, 4.20, 7.20 (where he is also awaiting comments from Tacitus on an unspecified work of his own), 8.4, 8.7, 9.35, 9.38. Related letters about his work, including promises to send unspecified multiple volumes: 4.26, 7.2, 8.13, 8.15, 9.16, 9.18, 9.25, 9.29. The unnamed *libellus* of 7.12 cannot be counted in this discussion, since one would not expect a speech composed for the use of another speaker to be publicly identified as originating from Pliny's pen.

the well-read and eloquent barter literary compliments and stylistic refinements.[14]

Four cover letters name the work in question: we know, for example, which ones accompanied the speech on the library at Como (1.8), the speech for Spurinna *de filio* (3.10), the *Panegyricus* (3.13), and the *pro Attia Viriola* (6.33), as well as a collection of poetry which Pliny sends in place of the (unnamed) speech which Paternus has been looking forward to (4.14). Other letters either indicate that a named speech has already been sent or published (*pro Clario*, 9.28; *de Ultione Helvidi*, 4.21, 7.30, and 9.13), or promise dispatch of a polished version at some later date (*pro Basso*, 4.9; *pro Vareno*, 5.20; more [?] poetry, 9.16). Still other types of letters about his professional activities publicize speeches from other cases in which he acted and which he could well (given his determination to waste no existing work) have intended to write up for wider circulation: the speech on behalf of Junius Pastor (1.18) which gave him his big break, those on behalf of Corellia (4.17), Priscus (6.12), and the Firmani (6.18), and that against Classicus (3.4 and 3.9).[15] This yields a respectable (if not Ciceronian) total of thirteen speeches identified in the collection, of which eight have already been written up, as well as at least one collection of poetry.

However, many of Pliny's formal cover letters are strikingly uninformative, and it is these on which the second part of this paper will focus.[16] The characteristic unhelpfulness of such letters is apparent already at 1.2, where Pliny alludes to a time (and a correspondence) before the beginning of the collection, saying that he is sending Arrianus the *librum* which he has promised in previous letters. He focuses on its style and models, on his

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14 Letter 5.12, for example, is mostly about this exchange of helpful suggestions among the literati. See Hoffer 1999.133 on the letters as "mutually beneficial exchanges of cultural value, of symbolic capital." Cf. Bütler 1970.37–38, Janson 1964.106.

15 In addition, in letter 7.33, he tries another route to fame by relating to Tacitus a *bon mot* of his which had caused a stir in the case against Baebius Massa.

16 Unspecific cover letters: 1.2, 2.5, 4.5, 4.14 (if one assumes that Paternus might have been expecting a particular speech), 5.12, 7.12, 8.3, 8.19, 9.4. Letters acknowledging receipt of books are, if anything, *more* unhelpful. Famously, we have no idea which works of Tacitus Pliny has been reading at 7.20 or at 8.7; at 9.31, we have no information about the work of his correspondent Sardus except that it discusses Pliny himself extensively. We are left to assume with Sherwin-White 1966 ad loc., and now with Mayer (below, p. 230), that the work was a treatise on oratory, although for all the information we are given, it could just as well have been a history of the centumviral court or even (however unlikely this may be) a work on minor modern poets. Pliny uses his own vagueness as a joke at 7.4.2 where he can give no further information about the play he wrote as a teenager: *tragoedia vocabatur*.

liking for highly-wrought passages in the Ciceronian manner (*Marci nostri* ληκύθους, 1.2.4), and on his desire to publish *something* ("est enim plane aliquid edendum," 1.2.6). In the same letter, he also mentions other *libelli* which have been available for some time and are doing well in the bookshops (1.2.6; cf. 9.11.2). The titles and subject matter of both *librum* and *libelli*, however, are left mysterious.

One of the most egregious examples of Pliny's vagueness is letter 5.12:

> Recitaturus *oratiunculam quam publicare cogito*, advocavi aliquos ut vererer, paucos ut verum audirem . . . Tuli quod petebam: inveni qui mihi copiam consilii sui facerent, ipse praeterea quaedam emendanda adnotavi. Emendavi librum, quem misi tibi. *Materiam ex titulo cognosces, cetera liber explicabit, quem iam nunc oportet ita consuescere, ut sine praefatione intellegatur*. Tu velim quid de universo, quid de partibus sentias, scribas mihi.
>
> I invited some friends to hear me read *a little speech which I am thinking of publishing*, just enough of an audience to make me nervous, but not a large one, as I wanted to hear the truth . . . I succeeded, and found people to give me the benefit of their advice; I also noticed for myself some corrections to be made, and, now that these are done, I am sending you the result. *The title will tell you the subject, and the text will explain everything else, for it ought by now to be intelligible without any introduction* (*praefatio*). I should be grateful for your opinion on the speech as a whole and in detail, for I shall be the more careful to withhold it or determined to publish, whichever way you pronounce judgement. (trans. B. Radice)

Pliny gives us no idea which "little speech" he is talking about, and teases us by pointing to a *titulus* we cannot see. If he wants his letters to be an insurance policy for the survival and continued readership of the speeches, why not at least offer posterity a title? The same question may be asked of letters 4.5, 7.12, 8.3, 8.19, 9.4, and also, perhaps, of 2.5, which used to be thought to refer to the speech on the library at Como, but which Sherwin-White 1966.151 ascribes to a speech *pro patria* in a civil suit. Fifty-seven

percent, then, of Pliny's cover letters do not identify the work they accompany, a figure which rises to almost sixty-two percent of the total number of letters which talk about his own projects or those of others.

This riddling vagueness might create for the modern reader a false sense of realism—an addressee with Pliny's book and letter in his hand would probably, one supposes, already have looked at the *titulus*; no one, having received a complimentary copy of a book, would look at the cover letter before the volume.[17] The cover letter is then no more than a courtesy.

However, this is certainly not the expectation in Cicero's cover letters or his letters about work-in-progress.[18] We have several of these, to Atticus and a small assortment of *familiares*, and—with the sole exception of one pair of letters exchanged between Cicero and Caecina—they all give a title and/or a subject for the book in question.[19] For example, in *ad Familiares* 9.8, to Varro, Cicero explicitly introduces the work (the *Academica*) which Varro has in his hands. In *ad Atticum* 2.1.3, Cicero even offers his friend a catalogue of his works:

> I'll send my little speeches, both those you ask for and some more besides, since it appears that you, too, find pleasure in these performances which the enthusiasm of my young admirers prompts me to put on paper. Remembering what a brilliant show your countryman Demosthenes made in his so-called *Philippics* and how he turned away from this argumentative, forensic type of oratory to appear

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17 On Pliny's supposed desire for "everyday authenticity" in his collection, see Gamberini 1983.163.

18 *Ad Fam.* 6.18.4 and 15.20 (*Orator*), 7.19 (*Topica*), 9.8 (*Academica*), 15.21 (on receipt of a collection of Cicero's own witticisms), *ad Att*. 1.19.10 ("commentarium consulatus mei Graece compositum"; cf. *ad Att*. 1.20.6), 2.1.3 (assorted, all named), 12.14 (the *Consolation*; cf. 12.28), 13.12 (assorted, all named), 13.13–14 (*Academica*; cf. 13.25 on Cicero's pride in the cover letter to Varro), 15.13a (*de Officiis*; cf. 16.11), 15.27 (*de Gloria*; cf. 16.6).

19 *Ad Fam*. 6.7 and 6.5 are about a book which is left unnamed specifically because Caecina fears danger from its free circulation and its association with his own name. There are also two relatively mysterious letters to Atticus, of which *ad Att*. 12.44 probably refers to completed sections of the *Academica* and *ad Att*. 4.5 refers to a "palinode," thought by Shackleton-Bailey to be the speech "on the consular provinces"; neither of these two are cover letters. The only unnamed speech in a cover letter from the Atticus collection is the one to which Cicero refers in his cover letter for the *de Officiis* (15.13a) as having already been sent some time previously.

> in the more elevated role of statesman, I thought it would be a good thing for me, too, to have some speeches to my name which might be called "consular." They are: (1) delivered in the senate on the Kalends of January; (2) to the assembly, on the agrarian law; (3) on Otho; (4) in defence of Rabirius; (5) on the children of persons proscribed; (6) delivered when I publicly resigned my province; (7) when I sent Catiline out of Rome; (8) to the assembly the day following Catiline's flight; (9) at a public meeting the day the Allobroges turned informers; (10) in the senate on the Nones of December. There are two further short pieces, chips, one might say, from the agrarian law. I shall see that you get the whole *corpus* and, since you like my writings as well as my doings, the same compositions will show you both what I did and what I said. Otherwise you shouldn't have asked—I was not forcing myself upon you. (trans. D. R. Shackleton-Bailey)

Atticus would surely have known all this, and Cicero's thoroughness is all the more surprising given that most of his letters were more obviously private than Pliny's carefully selected specimens. Pliny writes in comparable detail in only one letter (3.5), and there he provides Macer with a list not of his own works but of his uncle's.

Given the view (conventional since Janson 1964) that Pliny disapproves of epistolary prefaces, his vagueness could be understood as a genuine device for letting the *libellus* speak for itself, as he says it should in 5.12.[20] This, too, is unsatisfactory; several of the cover letters, both specific and unspecific, function like prefaces, and Pliny's objections to prefatory letters in 4.14.8, such as they are, are rooted in the sense that epistolary discussion and introduction *in extenso* may be inappropriate for his lighter works. He is also elsewhere sensitive to the potential ridicule to be earned by a letter which almost goes into more detail than the speech it accompanies. However, prefatory letters can be useful to Pliny. They can have a didactic agenda and instruct the reader how to read.[21] They can be, in effect, literary

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20 5.12.3: "It ought by now to be intelligible without any introduction." Cf. 4.14.8: "To excuse or recommend my follies in a long preamble would be the height of folly." See Coleman 1988.54–55.

21 E.g., 4.14.7. Cf. 9.4.2. Both these letters encourage the kind of "fractured" reading also fostered by letter collections.

commentaries or companions to reading; Pliny becomes, as Mayer puts it (below, pp. 230–31), his own Asconius (9.13, on the *de Ultione Helvidi*, is the classic example here). They can serve an apologetic function, as for example 4.14, in which Pliny defends his decision to send Paternus a set of poems instead of the (unidentified) speech he has been looking forward to. Pliny is, then, not averse to the epistolary preface, merely to the full disclosure of the titles of the works to be prefaced.

Indeed, Janson's stimulating parallel (1964.106–07) between the formal epistolary prefaces to Statius's *Silvae* and Pliny's discursive cover letters is particularly frustrating, precisely because Statius's prose prefaces are so specific as to be virtually "tables of contents."[22] The preface to *Silvae* 4, for example, tells its reader exactly what topics he will find in the collection and in what order: "Primo autem septimum decimum Germanici nostri consulatum adoravi; secundo gratias egi sacratissimis eius epulis honoratus; tertio viam Domitianam miratus sum, etc.," "First, I have paid homage to the seventeenth consulship of our emperor Germanicus; secondly, I have returned thanks for the privilege of attending his august banquet; thirdly, I have expressed my admiration for the via Domitiana, etc." (trans. K. M. Coleman). When the preface reaches the seventh poem of the series, that to Vibius Maximus, Statius not only tells us its contents, but refers to a separate work addressed to the same man, namely a (published) cover letter accompanying (and, apparently, talking about) a copy of his own *Thebaid*: "Maximum Vibium et dignitatis et eloquentiae nomine a nobis diligi satis eram testatus epistula quam ad illum de editione Thebaidos meae publicavi; sed nunc quoque eum reverti maturius ex Dalmatia rogo," "That Maximus Vibius is dear to us on the score of both his social distinction and his literary skill I had amply testified in the letter to him which I published about the production of my *Thebaid*; but now, in particular, I am asking him to return from Dalmatia in good time." If it was not absurd for an explanatory and cataloguing preface to appear alongside the poems it accompanied, Pliny's epistolary practice in his cover letters and his prefatory letters looks even less conventional.

Let us assume, therefore, that the individual literary works themselves are not always the main point in Pliny's letters. What, then, are the benefits of Pliny's evasiveness? He does not need to be specific about his

22 Pliny's uncle claims in his prefatory letter to Vespasian to be among the first to offer a handy index at the beginning of his work (though the index is separate from the dedicatory letter itself): *NH Praef.* 33.

literary work to reap the benefits of talking about it in his letters. In including a number of unspecific cover letters in the collection, Pliny suggests the existence of a rather large number of works; this is a useful strategy for a man conscious of the proportion of his public activity which could not interest posterity (2.14.1). Thus his vaguer letters also contribute to the self-constructed picture of a man with the potential to live up to his prolific uncle's example. Further, letters, as he himself writes to Ferox, could be evidence in themselves of the talent and occupations of the writer (7.13). They train the orator and intellectual in expression which is *pressus* and *purus* (7.9.8), and provide a sample of the *sermo* of the writer.[23]

The "evasive display" of *sermo* and talent in a letter may be exemplified by 5.8 (itself a distinctively Ciceronian letter, beginning as it does with echoes of the opening of the *de Legibus*[24]), in which Pliny resists Capito's encouragement to compose a history because he wants to work for the survival of his speeches and claims to feel unequal, despite his uncle's example and the encouragement of his friends, to composition in more than one serious genre. However, his resistance to historiography is not quite what it seems. As Rhiannon Ash argues in this volume, Pliny nevertheless elsewhere uses the fluidity of the letter genre to select and showcase the most attractive features of historiography, especially those suitable for epistolary exposition: biographical sketches, death scenes, or short narratives about memorable events like the eruption of Vesuvius. In 5.8, what is on show is his *eloquentia* and his range of potential.

In the first part of the letter, Pliny expresses his familiar wish for *diuturnitas* by means of a Vergilian quotation indicating two levels of achievement, the first relatively modest ("si 'qua me quoque possim tollere humo,'" *Georgics* 3.8–9) and the second triumphantly immortalizing ("victorque virum volitare per ora," *Georgics* 3.9). Attainment of the first level is guaranteed by history, because human curiosity makes even the most simply written historical works attractive; oratory is less appealing and cannot succeed without high standards of eloquence. There are, then, good reasons for the pursuer of fame to write history, especially as the point of history is always to extend one's own fame along with that of one's subject.

However, Pliny argues against history as a suitable road to fame for

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23 Cf. Quintilian *Inst. Or.* 1.1.6 on Cornelia's letters as revelatory of her highly educated *sermo*.

24 See Leeman 1963.334.

himself and asserts the prior claim on his attention of his oratory (the work he has already begun). He frames his argument in terms reminiscent of the major historiographical models (5.8.6): "Egi magnas et graves causas. Has, etiamsi mihi tenuis ex iis spes, destino retractare, ne tantus ille labor meus, nisi hoc quod reliquum est studii addidero, mecum pariter intercidat," "I have acted in certain important and complicated cases, and I intend to revise my speeches (without building too many hopes on them) so that all the work I put into them will not perish with me for want of this last attention." The wish to preserve the memory of men's deeds and grant them immortality is built into historiography from Herodotus onwards; here Pliny wishes to make sure that *his* work (the speeches) outlives him.

Then, in answer to the question, "Why can't you do both history and oratory at the same time?" Pliny becomes Quintilian for a few lines, contrasting the stylistic requirements of the two genres (5.8.9–10):

> Habet quidem oratio et historia multa communia, sed plura diversa in his ipsis, quae communia videntur. Narrat *illa* narrat *haec*, sed aliter: huic pleraque humilia et sordida et ex medio petita, illi omnia recondita splendida excelsa conveniunt; hanc saepius ossa musculi nervi, illam tori quidam et quasi iubae decent; haec vel maxime vi amaritudine *instantia*, illa tractu et suavitate atque etiam *dulcedine* placet; postremo alia verba alius sonus alia constructio.
>
> It is true that history and oratory have much in common, but they differ in many of the points where they seem alike. Both employ narrative, but with a difference: oratory deals largely with the humble and trivial incidents of everyday life, history is concerned with profound truths and the glory of great deeds. The bare bones of narrative and a nervous energy distinguish the one, a fullness and a certain freedom of style the other. Oratory succeeds by its vigour and severity of attack, history by the ease and grace with which it develops its theme. Finally, they differ in vocabulary, rhythm, and period-structure. (trans. B. Radice)

This passage presents a number of problems, not the least of which, as Federico Gamberini has pointed out, stem from a certain lack of clarity in

the pronouns. Do *illa* and *haec* refer to history and oratory respectively? If so, Pliny is reversing what we think of as normal practice, since *illa* would otherwise more naturally be read as referring to oratory (the first item) and *haec* to history (the second item). This is not unparalleled, and we could simply accept the commonsense reading (*illa*, i.e., history, requires the more grand style),[25] but then we find ourselves faced with a contradiction between §4, where history does not require eloquence to be attractive ("historia quoquo modo scripta delectat") and §9–10, which contrasts the everyday plainness of oratory's subject matter and style with the elevated glories of historiography. Pliny is arguing for achieving fame by his own expertise in a relatively unappealing genre, one which, one might think from the terms in which he describes it, is not ideally suited to a man whose motto is "si 'qua me quoque possim tollere humo,'" but he frames his argument in terms of the alternative genre, historiography—the one which guarantees success.

The distinctions between history and oratory (whichever genre goes with which pronoun) are also blurred by Pliny's deployment of stylistic terms from the historiographical sphere on both sides of the *illa/haec* dichotomy. As A. J. Woodman has pointed out, *instantia* ("pressure"), characteristic in Pliny's letter of oratory, was singled out by Quintilian as the dominant feature of Thucydidean style, while *dulcedo* is typical of Herodotus and, of course, of Livy, whom Ash (below, pp. 219–21) has posited as Pliny's model for history.[26] One might say that Pliny wants to be thought of as a "Thucydidean" orator.

Pliny's playfulness in his terminology is further developed at the end of this section, which also ends in classically historiographical terms (5.8.10–11): "Postremo alia verba alius sonus alia constructio. Nam plurimum refert, ut Thucydides ait, κτῆμα sit an ἀγώνισμα; quorum alterum oratio, alterum historia est," "Finally, they differ in vocabulary, rhythm, and period-structure, for, as Thucydides says, there is all the difference between a 'lasting possession' and a 'prize essay': the one is history, the other oratory." Which is the κτῆμα and which the ἀγώνισμα here? Clearly, Pliny has reappropriated for adversarial oratory the term (ἀγώνισμα) which Thucydides originally poached to describe, among other things, a new sort of history.

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25 See Leeman 1963.335–36 for an alternative interpretation.

26 Quintilian *Inst. Or.* 10.1.73: "Densus et brevis et semper *instans* sibi Thucydides, *dulcis* et candidus et fusus Herodotus," "Thucydides is compact in texture, terse, and ever eager to press forward: Herodotus is pleasant, lucid, and diffuse." See Woodman 1988.144.

However, Pliny's quotation of Thucydides still presents problems for our understanding of his choice between genres. On the one hand, Pliny the fame-seeker seems to favour ἀγώνισμα (oratory), although, in Thucydides, ἀγώνισμα (the Herodotean choice) is not the one directed ἐς ἀεί but ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν. On the other, if he were to write history, Livian model not withstanding, he suggests at the end of the letter that he would choose recent history (and, indeed, most of his "historical" letters deal with the events of his own lifetime. History, in this context, is what you can remember)—a Thucydidean choice.[27]

In Alfons Weische's view, Pliny simply misunderstood the term ἀγώνισμα.[28] Closer reading of the letter, though, makes it clear that his allusive strategies are very much more sophisticated than previously thought. Pliny has selected the grimmer, more adversarial option (oratory), which is the more challenging and potentially humdrum but not the more long-lasting of the two possibilities. However, his choice of the competitive term ἀγώνισμα is not only appropriate to the "agonistic" quality of his genre, but also picks up *victor* in his second Vergilian quotation and therefore holds out the promise of the better, longer-lasting sort of fame. In playing Thucydides off against Vergil, and ἀγώνισμα off against κτῆμα, Pliny is having two cakes and eating them both.[29] It should not be surprising then, that Pliny sums up this section of his argument by expressing a desire not to get in a mess (5.8.11–12):[30]

> His ex causis non adducor ut duo dissimilia et hoc ipso diversa, quo maxima, confundam misceamque, *ne tanta quasi colluvione turbatus ibi faciam quod hic debeo*; ideoque interim veniam, ut ne a meis verbis recedam, advocandi peto. tu tamen iam nunc cogita quae potissimum tempora adgrediar.

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27 Also, as Leeman 1963.334 points out, the likely Ciceronian choice.

28 Weische 1989.377 note 8. Weische follows Leeman 1963.336, who sees Pliny's reading of ἀγώνισμα (as "forensic battle" not as "show-piece") as "wrong but excusable," reflecting a widespread misconception also manifested by Quintilian *Inst. Or.* 10.1.31.

29 Pliny's desire to make the ephemeral permanent in this way is manifest also at the end of 7.17, in which he defends his habit of recitation.

30 He failed to convince Leeman that he is in control of his terminology here: "We must confess that Pliny makes an exasperating mess of his literary judgments!" (1963.336).

> For these reasons, I am not inclined to mix two dissimilar subjects which are fundamentally opposed in the very quality to which each owes its prominence, *lest I am swept away in the resultant confusion and treat one in the manner proper to the other*. And so, to keep to my own language, for the time being I apply for an adjournment. You can, however, be considering now what period of history I am to treat. (trans. B. Radice)

This *colluvio* is playfully illustrated in his own letter about choosing between history and oratory, and we are never quite sure which he is talking about. The letter couches the case in favour of oratory in language full of historiographical colour, but Pliny reverses his game at the end of the letter by using oratorical terminology to indicate his willingness to act as an "advocate" for history at some later stage.[31] This is sophisticated "evasive display," whereby Pliny substitutes, under cover of the epistolary form, one genre for another: writing up his cases becomes a matter of historical recording, writing history a matter of preparing a case.

In the final sections, Pliny asks Capito to suggest a suitable period for Pliny to write about in this history which he has spent so much time refusing to compose, and again displays his mastery of the historiographer's task by parading selected topoi of historical prefaces (e.g., the contrast between old material, which requires research into the works of others, and new material which causes offence, or the risks of praise and blame[32]). The possible topics either of the proposed history or of the speeches to which Pliny would rather devote his time are, of course, nowhere specified. Nevertheless, Pliny has amply demonstrated his mastery of the terminology and styles appropriate to both history and oratory, as well as his easy familiarity with classic lines of Vergil, thus doing nothing to diminish the desire of his readers and addressees for him to follow in his uncle's footsteps and offer the world a historical work. The letter closes no doors and even encourages Capito to send Pliny another letter talking in more detail about the same topic.

The fomenting of intellectual desire (to read Pliny) and the delayed

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31 Pliny's delay in writing history is for purely pragmatic reasons, and he wants Capito to help clear away any more practical hindrances against future historiographical work (5.8.14).

32 Cf., e.g., Sallust *Cat*. 3.2. See Leeman 1963.334.

gratification of that desire are key features, then, of Pliny's cover letters and prefatory/scholastic letters, perhaps more so than of anyone else's. The letters which narrate the circumstances of delivery of a named speech, and offer the story of the original event, persuade the reader that he will find the speech itself a vividly interesting recreation of history (even if the speech "recreates" history established by Pliny himself in a letter). 6.33, for example, shows Pliny in a frankly advertising mode (6.33.7): "Haec tibi exposui, primum ut ex epistula scires, quae ex oratione non poteras, deinde (nam detegam artes) ut orationem libentius legeres, si non legere tibi sed interesse iudicio videreris," "I have told you this so that this letter shall explain anything you cannot understand from the speech, and also (for I don't conceal my guile) because I thought you would be more willing to read the speech if you imagined yourself present at the actual trial."

Similarly, at 5.20.7–8, Pliny refuses to elucidate precisely the substance of his defence of Varenus so that Ursus will be eager to read the speech itself (*ut desideres actionem*, 5.20.8). The only danger is that a letter might give too much explanatory information, satisfying curiosity before the book itself is read (5.20.8): "Providendum est mihi, ne gratiam novitatis et florem, quae oratiunculam illam vel maxime commendat, epistulae loquacitate praecerpam," "I must be careful not to talk too much, or my letter will nip in the bud the bloom of novelty which is my speech's chief attraction."

Both 5.20 and 6.33 accompany an identified speech. Nevertheless, the principle of creating desire and delaying its gratification is the same for his more mysterious letters, and the results of an unspecific letter are epistolographically useful. Pliny can even show himself teasing his eager readership in his own letters to particular addressees, as he does to Sparsus in 8.3.3 ("Now I have roused your expectations, but I fear they may be disappointed when you have the speech in your hands") and especially to Iustus in 7.2, in which he refuses to yield to requests and send him any of his works because Iustus will be far too busy to read them until wintertime.[33] It is the rich hinterland of literary activity just at the periphery of the reader's sight which is the most important creation of the vaguer letters;[34] in the

33 Cf. 9.27.2: "Information withheld only sharpens men's curiosity to hear it"; cf. also 5.4.4: "That has made you prick up your ears, but now you will have to beg me nicely for a long time before you hear the rest of the story."

34 E.g., in 4.26, where Pliny suggests an already active correspondence between himself and Maecilius Nepos, who is now encouraging publication of unspecified *libellos*.

context of epistolography, desire for more information about this hinterland will always generate more letters and, therefore, will help to guarantee a bull market in epistolographic *amicitia*.

By means, then, of endless deferral, and by delaying gratification of the reader's curiosity, Pliny does to his correspondents what Cicero does to Atticus when he has nothing to say—he sends letters which say nothing (or, like 5.8, refuse to write something) in order to elicit other letters or further requests for copies of new or existing works. That this is precisely the point of Pliny's strategy by the time he reaches Book 9 seems to be indicated by the emphasis in 9.18 on the need for Sabinus to make an orderly progression through Pliny's complete *oeuvre* and by the evidence—exactly halfway through the book—that Venator has sent him a long letter entirely devoted to the discussion of Pliny's *libelli*.

Indeed, the whole of Book 9 is characterised by letters acknowledging and identifying Pliny's audience and reputation, and it contains a startling number of letters in which Pliny says to his correspondent, "You've been reading my work and writing about me": in 9.8, Pliny has been reading Auguratus's work about him; in 9.11, Geminus wants something of Pliny's to put into his own *libri* and has reported that Pliny's work is selling well in Lugdunum; in 9.13, Pliny gives his younger contemporary Quadratus (who has been making a particularly careful study of the speeches) more information about the Helvidius material; in 9.14, he writes to Tacitus confirming that they are on the right road for immortality (further confirmed by the anecdote in 9.23); in 9.18, he offers Sabinus (an eager fan of his) his complete works in manageable and carefully ordered instalments; in 9.19, Ruso has read his letter on Verginius Rufus's epitaph; in 9.20, Venator has written a long letter about Pliny's *libelli*; in 9.25, he promises (not for the first time, apparently) to send verses to Mamilianus as requested; in 9.28, he is being written up by Romanus, who has also been reading the *pro Clario*; in 9.31, he has been reading Sardus's writings about him; at 9.34, he has heard of his reputation for poor verse recitation; in 9.36, Fuscus has asked how he spends his day in summer, and, by 9.40, Fuscus has read 9.36 and wants to know how Pliny's routine changes in winter. Both of these last two letters, the second of which ends the collection of private letters, recall Pliny's description of his uncle's daily routine in 3.5 and confirm that the nephew is indeed a chip off the old block.

Pliny has, then, established that, potentially at least, he is as good as Tacitus, as his uncle, as Cicero, or as any of the *veteres*, and he has both solicited and demonstrated the enthusiasm of his friends and contemporar-

ies. It would be rather difficult to construct for Pliny, on the basis of the letter collection, the kind of suitably encyclopaedic bibliography that he makes of his uncle's works in 3.5, but if there were more books of Pliny's letters, it would be no surprise at all to find a correspondent eagerly soliciting a precise catalogue of the *libri* and *libelli*.[35] The epistolary currency of *amicitia* may seem debased, but Pliny has made the most of its purchasing power in order to develop a substantial market share; in 9.2, he claims to have no *materia* for more or longer letters, but, by the end of the same book, he has amply demonstrated that he himself has successfully provided *materia* for the literary and epistolary activities of his social circle.

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35 In 4.26, Pliny makes it clear that Maecilius Nepos has indeed tried to make a collection of his works (*quos studiosissime comparasti*). Leeman expresses the kind of desire I mean in his discussion of the letters exchanged between Pliny and Tacitus: "Unfortunately these letters never give actual criticism or detailed praise, and I should be glad to sacrifice all these vaguely complimentary epistles for one annotated copy of an exchanged book,—or for one of the return letters of Tacitus!" (Leeman 1963.337).