

In Part 2 ('Seneca: *Commercium Epistularum*: The Gift Refigured'), the analysis of gift exchange is subsumed to a study of *amicitia* more broadly. In ch. 5 ('From Practice to Metaphor'), Seneca is shown to reject social euphemism as inherently duplicitous and corrupting, and also to recast conceptions of ownership and exchange towards philosophical ends, such as repaying one's correspondent not with social or financial favours but gifts (*munuscula*) of maxims from the commonwealth of wisdom. Also in this chapter W. begins exploring the relationship between Seneca and his ever present, always silent correspondent, Lucilius, and argues that Seneca's repeated claims of indebtedness to his addressee are a rhetorical stratagem to prompt any reader, Roman or modern, to begin assuming the rôle of Lucilius as a responsive, engaged reader. This discussion of the strangely lopsided relationship between Seneca and Lucilius forms the basis of ch. 6 ('Rehabilitating Friendship'), in which W. resolves the paradox of how the sage can maintain friendship in relative seclusion from society.

Ch. 7 ('Redefining Identity: Persons, Letters, Friends') is perhaps the richest in insight and analysis. W. argues that an increase in the presence of exemplary models in the middle books (4–6) is a key stage in the process by which Seneca's epistles begin to coalesce as a continuous whole: insofar as the physical absence of these exemplars is analogous to the separation between correspondents, and insofar as distance should pose no barrier to learning from the words and experience of others, Seneca's epistolary corpus can become a sufficient proxy for Seneca the man, in contrast to Cicero's letters which present themselves as a palliative measure for his absence. Here W. precisely traces the rhetorical manoeuvres by which any reader of these letters is cast by Seneca into the rôle of Lucilius (especially 137–8). In ch. 8 ('Consolation and Community'), Seneca is shown to analogize conventions of letter writing to the act of dying. Reading Seneca's letters is tantamount to enjoying and continuing to learn from the memory of a deceased friend, and a community of friendship can be maintained even when an individual friend has passed on. W. does not chart the rest of Seneca's extant epistolary corpus in depth, but ends her work with a neat reading of Letter 63, in which Seneca uses the homonymy of the recently deceased Annaeus Serenus to cast himself in the rôle of bereaved, consoler and departed, and write himself into epistolary memory. If the counter-gift Lucilius/we can offer Seneca is no less the act of reading, then W.'s monograph deserves similar repayment with frequent rereadings.

Loyola University Chicago
 jmannering@luc.edu

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JONATHAN MANNERING

R. K. GIBSON and R. MORELLO, *READING THE LETTERS OF PLINY THE YOUNGER: AN INTRODUCTION*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 350. ISBN 9780521842921. £60.00/US\$79.00.

Gibson and Morello's volume offers a welcome contribution to recent scholarship on the letters of Pliny the Younger (Wilcox 2012; Shelton 2013). G. and M. adopt a two-pronged approach that (1) considers various strategies for reading and rereading the letters and (2) explores key themes and topics. They eschew the traditional 'mosaic' approach, which tends to compile small, thematic groupings of letters to create an overall 'picture' of the author and his life, instead advocating John Henderson's (2002) 'kaleidoscope' metaphor, which envisions an array of connections and thematic parallels apparent to perceptive readers. The result significantly advances the increasing appreciation of Pliny the Younger's sophisticated literary artistry and self-positioning within Roman epistolary literature.

Chs 1 and 2 provide the foundations for the rest of the book. Gibson focuses on Pliny's autobiographical reticence in Book 1, whereby as a literary strategy he omits certain life events to avoid detracting from the optimism of post-Domitianic literary freedom. Subsequently, the reader's reinsertion of previously omitted autobiographical details into 'pools of time' (27) proves crucial in appreciating key themes and Pliny's deliberate self-fashioning. G. then explicates a basic premise of the volume, namely that linear reading of the letters and rereading of the corpus illuminate Pliny's conscientious structuring and artistry — aspects too often undervalued by scholars. Ch. 2 offers a case study of Pliny's literary workmanship through a close reading of Book 6, analysing the book's structural design and introducing 'reading by cycle' (68), that is,

examining individual letters as part of a larger thematic series, either within the same book or among several in the corpus.

Ch. 3 extends the cyclical reading approach, investigating letters containing references to Pliny's epistolary rival Cicero. Morello fleshes out Pliny's nuanced allusions to Cicero, through whom he justifies his own amateur poetic activities. Yet, in delaying explicit mention of Cicero as letter-writer until Book 9, Pliny distances himself from his predecessor and asserts his own status as a superior epistolary exemplum.

Chs 4–7 form a loose quartet focusing less on methodology and more on the investigation of topics and themes. Chs 4 and 5 employ the 'reading by cycle' method to study Pliny's relationships with his elders (4) and his peers (5). This demonstrates, for example, how Pliny pays homage to his elders while revealing their limitations as models, enabling him to promote his own epistolary exemplariness. In this context M.'s sequential evaluation of the Tacitus cycle is especially insightful. Her close reading persuasively shows that when it comes to reputation, Pliny positions himself not just as Tacitus' equal, but his better.

Chs 6 and 7 pursue a similar line of comparative investigation, examining the theme of time management. Focusing on literary pursuits, M. suggests that Pliny's balance between *otium* and *negotium* is informed by Seneca's epistolary example. Pliny echoes Seneca's espousal of *otium* for the study of natural science and philosophy by detailing the lives of other people as if conducting a scientific study. In recording his own balancing act between work and leisure, Pliny's letter collection embodies his idealized practice as the letters mirror the variety and repetition of daily life and thus represent the successful outcome of time-management, the product of an *otium* perfectly spent.

In ch. 7 G. extends the time-management theme within the context of Pliny's villa letters (9.7, 2.17 and 5.6), effectively demonstrating that each letter contributes to Pliny's deliberate self-fashioning by creating an overall picture of his utilization of *otium* amidst the constant interruption of *negotium* and *officium*. Pliny's lengthy description of his Laurentine villa (2.17), for instance, serves as a 'counterweight' to the *negotium*-heavy topics of Book 2 and as a symbolic exemplum of Pliny's successful time-management skills.

The eighth and final chapter reviews the cohesion of Pliny's collection, suggesting that Pliny's comments on oratory and speech-writing may function as guides for how readers should approach Pliny's epistolary oeuvre, both as segmented parts and an interconnected whole. Notably, M.'s reassessment of Book 10 contributes to the growing evidence suggesting that Pliny acted as the architect and publisher of the book. Pliny's friendly correspondence with the emperor Trajan trumps his epistolary predecessors and helps further define his own epistolary authorship, while proudly proclaiming his important rôles in relation to the emperor's letters. Pliny's literary dialogue with Ovid further avows his self-assertions about his primacy among the canon of Roman letter-writers: Pliny's amicable communication with Trajan contrasts sharply with Ovid's unsuccessful letter-writing campaign from exile.

This book accomplishes its stated goals, providing a fresh perspective on Pliny the Younger's letters, though it should be noted that the volume is not an 'introduction' in the regular sense, rather an introduction to new reading methodologies. Those who will benefit most are readers already deeply acquainted with Pliny since the writing is occasionally dense and a full appreciation requires considerable foreknowledge of Cicero, Ovid and Seneca. For example in ch. 2, G. asserts an architectural symmetry for Book 6, citing as evidence 'understated' connections between letter pairings, verbal resonances and textual allusions to certain letters of Cicero. While this interpretation is certainly attractive, it is so nuanced that one wonders about the likelihood of readers independently recognizing such 'delicate signposting' (43) even when adopting the reading methodologies suggested and employed by the authors. Moreover, owing to G. and M.'s attention to audience and reading strategies, the study would benefit from a discussion about ancient readership and the reception of Pliny's letters as a whole, thereby highlighting the implications of sequential reading and rereading within historical contexts.

These criticisms should not detract from the book's overall value. The textual analyses will appeal to many and the highly accessible appendices are broadly useful, including: (1) Pliny's timeline and a discussion of the Comum inscription; (2) a catalogue of the content and addressees of Books 1–9; and (3) a helpful list of epistolary topics, relevant letters in the Plinian corpus and a preliminary bibliography for each topic. The greatest contribution of this volume may be the authors' insistence that (re)reading Pliny's letters *both* linearly and selectively will proffer the greatest appreciation for Pliny's conscientious attention to the organization and thematic development of

his epistolary collection. Moreover, G. and M.'s reading strategies will significantly benefit readers embarking anew on (re)reading the letters.

College of Charleston, South Carolina
Carmichaeln@cofc.edu

NOELLE ZEINER-CARMICHAEL

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C. A. WILLIAMS, *READING ROMAN FRIENDSHIP*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 378. ISBN 9781107003651. £65.00.

Friendship is a fluid concept. Not only does it vary in nature and prestige from culture to culture, but it is not to be identified by any legally recognized act or verifiable fact of birth or status. Rather than grapple with this Proteus, Williams has decided to limit his quest to Roman friendship in particular, and to the language employed rather than the social realities, 'reading *amicitia* as a system of labels and categories to be interpreted more than as a set of relationships and events to be reconstructed' (60).

In the long Introduction W. justifies his restriction to Latin-speaking areas of the Roman Empire, by noting that Greek *philia* has been more frequently studied, and by claiming that, via Cicero's *De amicitia*, Roman friendship has been more central than Greek to the history of Western friendship. He defends his concentration on the rhetoric of friendship, avoiding awkward questions of definition, by construing *amicus* and *amicitia* as performative utterances: whoever is called an *amicus*, is one; whatever is labelled *amicitia*, counts as such. This project, described as a more modest but more attainable goal (28), certainly avoids a number of problems. It allows W. to disregard the idealizing tradition of Latin texts in which types of friendship, notably those that Aristotle characterized as utilitarian, and friendships between social unequals, are rebranded as 'political friendships' and 'patronage' and denied the title of 'true friendships'. But there are still difficulties in discussing the Latin vocabulary of friendship. Should one make use of English terms, or confine oneself to Latin terminology? In an interesting discussion (30–5) W. points to salient differences: there is no Latin equivalent of 'just friends' or 'best friend' (*optimus amicus* means 'the best kind of friend', not 'the best of my friends'). In the end he sometimes leaves the Latin terms untranslated and sometimes uses English paraphrases, for which inverted commas are always to be understood and linguistic self-awareness advised (35). Then there is the fundamental problem of recovering ancient usage. As we have no opportunity for live encounters, and no access to unmediated speech, W. has recourse to what Bakhtin called 'secondary speech genres', ranging from traditional literary genres to inscriptional texts (37), adding a reassurance that there was no significant change in the vocabulary of social relations or in the ideal associated with them, between Republic and Principate.

The Introduction ends with an outline of the book's structure (60–2). Chs 1 and 2 deal with overall themes and problems. Ch. 1 shows that, whereas friendship is often represented in literary texts as a masculine prerogative, inscriptions and the letters from Vindolanda correct that impression. Moreover inscriptions use *amicus* and *amica* symmetrically, whereas in many literary genres, when a woman is linked with a man and called his *amica*, she is a sexual partner outside marriage (96). Ch. 2 explores the relation of love and friendship, showing that *amicitia* can be a subset of *amor*, which also covers erotic love, but that boundaries are very fluid between the two types of love. Chs 3 and 4 give closer readings of a selection of texts, both literary and inscriptional. The literary texts explored in ch. 3 are Catullus, Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Petronius, and the letters of Cicero and Fronto: Pliny, Statius and Ovid are not revisited. Particularly interesting is the discussion of *amare* and *amor* in Cicero and in Fronto's letters, where the differences from the usage of elegiac poets are clear. Benefiting from Hutchinson's 1998 study of the former's correspondence, W. points to *Att.* 9.10.2 where Cicero, explicitly invoking the Greek term τὰ ἐρωτικά, compares, in a simile, his disillusionment with Pompey to disenchantment with the tactless behaviour of a lover. The lavishly affectionate language that Cicero sometimes uses to his friends would not have been misunderstood as erotic by his readers; Shackleton Bailey is right to translate *amor* and *amare* in terms of affection, fondness and admiration (220). Fronto's correspondence with Marcus Aurelius surpasses Cicero in the use of such language, but W. succeeds in showing that here too what is really involved is affection and devotion (238–58). Not only are erotic relations sometimes marked as comparisons, explicitly