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CONTENTS

Kaarle Hirvonen	Cledonomaney and the grinding slave woman, Od. XX, 91—121	5
Jorma Kaimio	The nominative singular in -i of Latin gentilicia	23
Iiro Kajanto	Tacitus on the slaves. An interpretation of the an- nales XIV, 42—45	43
Saara Lilja	On the nature of Pliny's letters	61
Olli Makkonen	Waldterminologie im Latein	81
Päivö Oksala	Das Geschlecht des Attis bei Catull	91
Tuomo Pekkanen	Finnicus Afnius	97
Heikki Solin	Analecta epigraphica	101
Jaakko Suolahti	Legatio libera	113
Holger Thesleff	Genitive absolute and Platonic style	121
Toivo Viljamaa	Ciceros Bildersprache und die Quellenfrage von Tusc. disp. I, 26—81	133
Maarit Vuorenjuuri	Vocative singular addressing the chorus in Greek drama	147

ON THE NATURE OF PLINY'S LETTERS

S a a r a L i l j a

The most recent studies dealing with the letters of Pliny the Younger are Klaus ZELZER's paper »Zur Frage des Charakters der Briefsammlung des jüngeren Plinius» in *Wiener Studien* 77, 1964, 144—161, and A. N. SHERWIN—WHITE's historical and social commentary on *The Letters of Pliny*, Oxford, 1966, where the first two chapters of the Introduction deal with the authenticity of the letters as correspondence.¹ Since ZELZER gives a lucid and soundly critical account of the earlier work done on the subject (pp. 144—149), no details are needed here. In short, the great majority of modern scholars think that the letters of Pliny — the private letters included in Books I—IX, as distinct from the official letters of Book X — are purely literary, intended for publication from the very beginning and, accordingly, written for a large audience. This view is represented by SCHUSTER, in his RE article on Pliny the Younger, and by many writers on the history of Roman literature.² Of the very few scholars who regard Pliny's letters as genuine private letters, written and sent to a particular correspondent, HANSLIK should be mentioned first.³

In a study which deals with the character of letters the fundamental question is how to define a letter. Let us for the present be content with making the rough distinction indicated above between normal (i.e. real, genuine) letters of an intimate character, which the writer sends to a particular person for a particular purpose, and purely literary (i.e. fictitious, invented) letters meant to be pieces of literature, which the writer composes solely with regard to a large audience. If letters of the former type, for example Cicero's letters to Atticus, are published, they constitute works of literature, but they do not

¹ There are important notes on the character of the letters scattered in the Commentary as well.

² For example SCHANZ and HOSIUS, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* II, 4th ed., Munich, 1959 (*Handb. d. Altertumswiss.*, VIII 2), 663, 669 and 851. SCHUSTER's article can be found in RE XXI (1951), 439—456; see esp. col. 448.

³ In addition to his »Forschungsbericht» in *Anzeiger f. d. Altertumswissenschaft* 8, 1955, 1—18 (esp. col. 1), see now also his article on Pliny the Younger in *Lexikon der Alten Welt* (1965), 2377 f.

become fictitious on that account. The very concept of 'fiction', however, consists of many nuances: Ovid's mythological verse letters, *Heroides*, are purely fictitious, whereas his *Epistulae ex Ponto* are addressed to his friends, but intended for publication from the very beginning. The fact that a letter is poetical does not determine its character decisively — at least not when we are concerned with an author like Ovid, to whom the writing of poetry was easier than that of prose, as he says in his autobiography (*Tr.* IV 10, 23—26).¹ It is even more difficult to find precise criteria for defining a prose letter as literary or non-literary. We may consider Plato's and Seneca's letters as indisputable instances of a scientific treatise in the letter form, but in the case of Pliny we have to ask where the lines of demarcation lie. The matter has further complications — to which KOSKENNIEMI refers² — in that the ancients did not clearly distinguish between the genuine private letter and the literary letter. ZELZER, in the above-mentioned paper, puts special emphasis on this attitude (p. 146), and still proceeds to prove that Pliny's letters are part of a genuine correspondence (p. 161). This slight inconsistency is justifiable, for we must not be content with ancient classifications should they fail to bring out all the necessary details and differences.

SCHANZ and HOSIUS define Pliny's letters as purely literary, because »der Adressat steht nur selten in einem Verhältnis zum Gegenstand des Briefes» (*Gesch. d. röm. Lit.* II, p. 851). An investigation into the relations between the recipient of a letter and its subject can be expected to elucidate the character of the letter, though it should be remembered that genuine letters by no means always take into special consideration the addressee — and that the possible 'consideration' may be an invention. DRAGIĆEVIĆ, in his doctoral thesis *Essai sur le caractère des Lettres de Pline le Jeune* (Mostar, 1936), analyses the largest groups of Pliny's letters and shows that his letters to Tacitus (eleven) and Suetonius (four), those to his wife's grandfather (nine) and those to his wife (three)³ are personal in tone and different in character, appropriate to the different addressees. The letters to Voconius Romanus (eight), on the

¹ What about this invented situation: I compose a little poem, by no means intended for publication, and send it in an envelope to a friend. Is it a letter or a poem or both?

² Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr., Helsinki, 1956 (*Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, B: 102,2) 50 f.; the influence of the Greek rhetorical theory on the Roman letter is discussed on pp. 31—33.

³ These letters are compared with the elegy in an interesting way (pp. 103—107); cf. GUILLEMIN, *Pline et la vie littéraire de son temps*, Paris, 1929 (Collection d'Études Latines, 4), 139—141. Pliny may have used the very same themes in his own poems, which Calpurnia so well knew, as we see from IV 19,4.

other hand, are impersonal and highly stylized — all but one, IX 28, in which Pliny praises his correspondent's skill and elegant style in letter-writing, as he does in II 13,7. Thus, even in this group of letters Pliny seems to have been influenced by the addressee's tastes and inclinations.¹ ZELZER, too, examines Pliny's relations to his correspondents, discovering further individual differences in characterization.²

SHERWIN—WHITE has presented a good deal of new material in his masterly commentary on the letters of Pliny, and now it would be possible for investigations into the relations between letters and their recipients to be carried on. There is, however, another aspect of the problem which might turn out more fruitful. I mean an examination of those passages in Pliny's letters where he himself gives some hints as to their character. Such passages have perhaps been misinterpreted, or even entirely escaped the scholars, so far. Furthermore, the question is worth considering as to whether the private letter was in Pliny's time already regarded as an established genre of literature; if it was, there would be more ground for supposing that his letters are purely literary.

Pliny's teacher Quintilian mentions the letter in passing in *Inst.Or.* IX 4,19: *est igitur ante omnia oratio alia vincta atque contexta, soluta alia, qualis in sermone et epistulis, nisi cum aliquid supra naturam suam tractant, ut de philosophia, de re publica similibusque*. The important conception here is *natura sua*. While the plain style, *oratio soluta*, naturally belongs to normal letters, a more developed style, *oratio vincta atque contexta*, is required when the letter deals with something *supra naturam suam*. This passage shows that, after all, a certain difference was felt between the genuine private letter and the literary letter. The literary letters which deal with philosophy (*ut de philosophia*) remind us of what Quintilian says about Seneca (*Inst.Or.* X 128 f.): *tractavit etiam omnem fere studiorum materiam, nam et orationes eius et poemata et epistulae et dialogi feruntur*. Here *epistulae*, literary letters on philosophical topics, are mentioned as a particular genre of literature.

Pliny twice speaks of the letter as belonging to the autonomous genres of literature. In VII 9 his young friend Fuscus gets advice on how to pursue his stylistic studies during his leisure time away from Rome. After recommending

¹ For all details as to these groups of letters see DRAGIĆEVIĆ 67—116. GUILLEMIN's remark to prove the conventional nature of Pliny's letters, «on trouve dans le recueil presque autant de dédicataires qu'il y a de lettres» (Pline 58), is exaggerated, for there are 247 letters, but not many more than above one hundred addressees.

² ZELZER's study has been mentioned in the opening sentence of the present paper.

several exercises, such as translation, Pliny continues: *poteris et quae dixeris post oblivionem retractare* (5). The words *quae dixeris* probably refer to a forensic *actio*, which, when revised, becomes an *oratio*.¹ History and letter-writing are mentioned together: *volo interdum aliquem ex historia locum adprendas, volo epistulam diligentius scribas* (8). History is important because the orator must often employ the historical style, and letters teach him *pressus sermo purusque*, the equally important concise and plain style. Last comes poetry: *fas est et carmine remitti* (9).² In I 16 the genres of literature in which Pompeius Saturninus excels are the same. Pliny first sounds his friend's praises as a forensic orator: *audivi causas agentem . . . polite et ornate* (2) and *placent si retractentur . . . orationes eius* (2 f.). Then come history and poetry: *idem tamen in historia magis satisfaciet . . . praeterea facit versus* (4 f.). Immediately after a description of Saturninus' poems Pliny says: *legit mihi nuper epistulas; uxoris esse dicebat* (6). These letters³ are so splendid that he is inclined to believe that Saturninus has written them himself.⁴ In any case, he adds politely: *pari gloria dignus, qui aut illa componat, aut uxorem . . . tam doctam politamque reddiderit*. The qualifiers *doctam politamque* certainly characterize the letters as well, of which Pliny says that he thought *Plautum vel Terentium metro solutum legi*. Saturninus, *veterum aemulus*, uses *verba antiqua* in his forensic speeches (2 f.) and in poetry imitates Catullus and Calvus as his great masters (5), so that he became a predecessor of the archaizing movement which was prevalent in later times. Pliny mentions both Plautus and Terence as the archaic representatives of the plain style, *oratio soluta*, which Quintilian, as we have seen, prescribes for letter-writing — we are used to associating the *sermo purus* (VII 9,8 quoted above) only with Terence.

In the first of these letters, VII 9, the *epistula* is recommended, together with oratory, history and poetry, as a rhetorical exercise for improving the style. It is to be noted that Quintilian does not mention letter-writing among such stylistic exercises.⁵ In I 16 the letter seems to be considered as a particular genre of literature after the others, which again are oratory, history and

¹ For the distinction between *actio* and *oratio* see I 16,2 f. (quoted later on in this paragraph) and especially I 20,9 f.

² What Pliny in this letter says of the difficulty of writing poetry as compared with prose is typically Roman: *inest . . . carminibus utilitas, quod metri necessitate devincti soluta oratione laetamur, et quod facilius esse comparatio ostendit, libentius scribimus* (14). Ovid was one of the exceptions (see above, p. 62).

³ Or 'this letter'; the neuter plural in *qui aut illa componat* perhaps places first the possibility of *epistulas* being a *plurale tantum*.

⁴ He was a busy letter-writer, as *aliis super alias epistulis* in VII 8,1 shows.

⁵ This may mean that the Greek method (see KOSKENNIEMI, Studien 29) was now gaining ground more decisively.

poetry. However, the sentence *legit mihi nuper epistulas; uxoris esse dicebat* can be interpreted in a simpler way: Saturninus' wife may have been away from Rome and she may have sent her husband letters so well written that he wants to boast of her skill to Pliny. To the modern mind it is indiscreet for a husband to show his wife's letters to a third person, but the ancients were not so particular about it — Pliny, for instance, published three letters he had written to Calpurnia.¹ The word *mihi* in the above sentence is important: Saturninus read the letter(s) only to his friend. In fact, Pliny never refers to a public recitation of letters, not even a less formal one held for an inner circle of intimates.

One might object that, according to VII 17, the recitation of speeches, a practice introduced by Pliny, was also something new, and that until then only history, tragedy and lyric poetry had been recited publicly: *horum recitatio usu iam recepta est* (3). Pliny, however, defends his innovation by remarking that *orationes quoque et nostri quidam et Graeci lectitaverunt* (4). After briefly stating why he wants to recite his works before publication — *ut si quid me fugit . . . admonear*² — he expounds in detail later on in the same letter his various methods of revising: *primum quae scripsi mecum ipse pertracto; deinde duobus aut tribus lego; mox aliis trado adnotanda, notasque eorum, si dubito, cum uno rursus aut altero pensito; novissime pluribus recito, ac si quid mihi credis tunc acerrime emendo* (7). Pliny's passion for revision is revealed in many other passages,³ but never does he speak of correcting and recorrecting his letters before publication. The thin expression *collegi* in the dedication to Septicius (I 1) of the first collection of letters does not allude to any complicated procedure of revision.⁴ SHERWIN—WHITE has sought for possible juncture-points in Pliny's letters, but there are few that are detectable.⁵

On the other hand, when Cicero was planning to publish a collection of his

¹ He certainly wrote more (*cottidie singulis vel etiam binis epistulis* in VI 4,5 indicates lively correspondence), but perhaps they were more personal in character. For the fact that the ancients did not know the letter secrecy, see PETER, *Der Brief in der römischen Litteratur* (*Abh. d. Kgl. Sächs. Gesellsch. d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. Kl.*, 20: 3, 1901) 40.

² In V 3,8 he gives the following reasons for reciting his verses: *primum quod ipse qui recitat aliquanto acrius scriptis suis auditorum reverentia intendit; deinde quod de quibus dubitat, quasi ex consilii sententia statuit*. See also V 12,1 and VIII 19,2.

³ Very seldom is there a warning like *nimia cura deterit magis quam emendat* (IX 35,2); cf. V 10,3 and VIII 21,6. The remark in VII 12,1, *tempus emendandi . . . id est disperdendi*, is a special case being directed against an extreme Atticist.

⁴ Note, however, that it is the dedication of only the first collection — even perhaps, if we think of Pliny's general cautiousness, only the first book.

⁵ Or did Pliny so carefully follow his own advice to Fuscus *nova velut membra peracto corpori intexere nec tamen priora turbare* (VII 9,6)?

letters, he wrote to Atticus: *eas ego oportet perspiciam, corrigam; tum denique edentur* (XVI 5,5). How can we explain the fact — if it is a fact — that Pliny, who was so passionate in correcting his speeches, did not revise the letters before publication? DRAGIĆEVIĆ answers: »les lettres de Pline n'ont pas besoin d'être corrigées, elles sont du premier coup *accuratius scriptae*» (Essai, p. 36). But Pliny's elaborate method described above (VII 17,7) went on far beyond the stage of speeches being *accuratius scriptae*. Why did Pliny not revise and polish his letters in collaboration with others before publication? I am tempted to answer: because the genuine private letter was not yet recognized as an autonomous genre of literature.¹ This answer would also explain Pliny's complete silence about the public's reception of his letters — and yet he seized every opportunity to speak of the successes of his speeches and verses. DRAGIĆEVIĆ assumes that Pliny's silence about his letters bears evidence of their unfavourable reception (Essai, pp. 11 f.), but then the publication of ever new collections would be difficult to account for.

DRAGIĆEVIĆ has gathered all passages in Pliny's letters which, in his opinion, show that Pliny considered his letter-type as a fully established genre of literature. The most important of them, in my opinion, gives evidence against that view: *aliud est enim epistulam aliud historiam, aliud amico aliud omnibus scribere* (VI 16,22). The only natural way of understanding this sentence is that a historical work — VI 16 on the eruption of Mount Vesuvius was sent to Tacitus to provide him with material — is written *omnibus*, for a large audience, and a letter *amico*, to a friend. Pliny could not have revealed more clearly the essentially intimate character of his letters. His remark *haec nequaquam historia digna* (VI 20,20) at the end of the other Vesuvius letter means that he and his mother had not done anything outstanding, suitable for narration by Tacitus.² What he jocularly adds, *tibi scilicet qui requisisti imputabis, si digna ne epistula quidem videbuntur*, simply expresses his fear to have disturbed his learned friend with a long story which may not interest him at all.³ At the beginning of III 14, *rem atrocem nec tantum epistula dignam Larcius . . . a servis suis passus est*, the words *nec tantum epistula dignam* can be explained as referring to the very limited audience of a letter (cf. *amico* above); what has happened is so extra-

¹ Which did not prevent the letters of Pliny, not speeches, from becoming his lasting contribution to literature; cf. GUILLEMIN, Pline 49.

² Compare *interim Miseni ego et mater — sed nihil ad historiam* in VI 16,21.

³ Pliny's apologies for undue length are discussed below, pp. 74—77. Though he wrote the two Vesuvius letters only *amico*, they are stylistically excellent and show that he might well have followed his friends' advice to write a historical work (V 8,1).

ordinary that it is worth becoming known more widely (*omnibus*) in a literary form. This letter should be compared to the dolphin story, a poetical theme proposed for Caninius Rufus: *incidi in materiam veram sed simillimam fictae, dignamque isto . . . poetico ingenio* (IX 33,1).¹

These passages gathered by DRAGIĆEVIĆ cannot be said to prove that Pliny considered his letter-type as a particular genre of literature. One passage is yet to be discussed. Pliny has told Rufinus *omnes fabulas urbis* and wishes for a reply: *invicem tu, si quid istic epistula dignum, ne gravare* (VIII 18,11). DRAGIĆEVIĆ does not notice that the conception *epistula dignum* is explained in the sentence that follows: *nam cum aures hominum novitate laetantur, tum ad rationem vitae exemplis erudimur* (12). Pliny is here concerned with the purpose of the letter. At the beginning of the present paper I roughly defined genuine letters as those that the writer sends to a particular person for a particular purpose. A subject which is *epistula dignum* ought to be important either to the writer or to the addressee or to both.² My next task is to examine what Pliny says of the purpose of his letters, because it can be expected to illustrate their character — provided that he does not place himself in a fictitious situation as a letter-writer in order to pretend that his letters are real.

We just saw that in VIII 18 a subject *epistula dignum*, worth being told to a friend in a letter, is *novitas*, but not a *novitas* of any kind. The important thing, as is expressed by means of *tum* after *cum*, is that it morally teaches the addressee by virtue of example: *ad rationem vitae exemplis erudimur*.³ In this letter Pliny tells Rufinus *fabulas urbis* and wants to know *si quid istic*, namely in the countryside, *epistula dignum*. Similarly, he says to Arrianus: *habes res urbanas; invicem rusticas scribe* (II 11,25).⁴ This time the *res urbanae* refer to what has taken place in the senate, while the friend has been away from Rome. At the beginning of the letter Pliny, showing consideration for the addressee, gives the following reason for his detailed account: *solet esse gaudio tibi, si quid acti est in senatu dignum ordine illo*. In III 20, which also deals with the senate, he explains: *haec tibi scripsi, primum ut aliquid novi scriberem, deinde ut non numquam de re publica*

¹ The words *dignam isto poetico ingenio* are explained at the end of the letter: *haec tu qua miseratione, qua copia deflebis ornabis attolles*.

² Cicero is content with the first two alternatives: *si quid esset, quod eos scire aut nostra aut ipsorum interesset* (*Fam.* II 4,1).

³ Here the virtuous example is Domitius Tullus, who has left a testament *quod pietas fides pudor scripsit* (VIII 18,7).

⁴ When Pliny has left Rome, it is his turn to write: *tu consuetudinem serva, nobisque sic rusticis urbana acta perscribe* (IX 15,3).

loquerer, cuius materiae nobis quanto rarior quam veteribus occasio, tanto minus omittenda est (10). We again see that *aliquid novi* is not a sufficient reason for a letter — news must be something out of the ordinary. Wanting, in IV 11, to know what has happened in the correspondent's town, Pliny inserts a similar remark: *solent enim quaedam notabilia incidere* (16).

A good example of Pliny's indifference to everyday home life is found in VI 2,10: *Nunc respiciamus domos nostras. Ecquid omnia in tua recte? in mea novi nihil.* In III 20,11 this indifference is pronounced very clearly and strongly: *Et hercule quousque illa vulgaria? 'Quid agis? ecquid commode vales?' Habeant nostrae quoque litterae aliquid non humile nec sordidum, nec privatis rebus inclusum.* It goes without saying that *fac sciam quid agas* is an important thing to know when friends live far apart: *Scribe . . . solum illud unde incipere priores solebant: 'Si vales, bene est; ego valeo.'* *Hoc mihi sufficit; est enim maximum.*¹ What Pliny means is that it should not be the only thing one writes to friends beyond distant and perilous roads; there ought to be something in a letter that is *notabile*. When Sabinus wishes for more and longer letters, Pliny gives the following reason, among others, for his silence: *praeterea nec materia plura scribendi dabatur* (IX 2,1).² He himself explains what *materia* here means: *neque enim eadem nostra condicio quae M. Tulli.* Sabinus well knows, as far as affairs of state are concerned, *nos quam angustis terminis claudamur*, when compared with Cicero.³

The essential purpose of letters to friends is communication not only of deeds and words, but also of thoughts and plans. Pliny's letter to Voconius Romanus, which deals with his possible measures against Regulus, ends with these words: *haec tibi scripsi, quia aequum erat te pro amore mutuo non solum omnia mea facta hictaque, verum etiam consilia cognoscere* (I 5,17). The very same reason — *omnes cogitationes meas tecum communicare* — is given in IV 24,7,⁴ but also *vel praeceptis vel exemplis monere*, which purpose is known to us from VIII 18,12 (see above, p. 67); it should be noted that in IV 24,7 Pliny uses the explicit formula *quae ratio huius epistulae fuit*. Admonition is stated as the purpose in many other

¹ These quotations are from I 11, which, in spite of its Ciceronian notes, can be a spontaneous piece of correspondence. What is more natural than communicating with a friend of whom one has not heard for a long time in this way? III 17 is a similar letter.

² The other reasons also illustrate the character of Pliny's letter-writing: *partim quia tuas occupationes verebar, partim quia ipse multum distringebat plerumque frigidis negotiis quae simul et avocant animum et comminuunt.*

³ This thought is familiar to us from III 20,10: *ut non numquam de re publica loquerer, cuius materiae nobis . . . rarior quam veteribus occasio.*

⁴ Further examples: *habes quid timeam, quid optem, quid etiam in posterum destinam* (I 22,12) and *haec ego tecum quae cottidie mecum* (IX 3,3).

letters: *quod tibi scripsi, ut te . . . praemonerem* (VI 22,7) and *quae tibi scripsi . . . ut te non sine exemplo monerem* (VII 1,7), to take just these examples.¹ Another type of communication is mentioned in V 1,12: *haec tibi scripsi, quia de omnibus quae me vel delectant vel angunt . . . tecum . . . loqui soleo*. Here it is his delight Pliny wants to share with the friend: *durum existimabam te . . . fraudare voluptate quam ipse capiebam*.² His purpose in VII 24, *gaudium scribendo retractare* (8), is more selfish, but he also shows consideration for his correspondent: *quia soles si quid incidit novi non invitus audire*.³ Similarly, after a detailed description of the wondrous lake at Ameria, Pliny says to Gallus: *haec tibi scripsi, quia nec minus ignota quam mihi nec minus grata credebam* (VIII 20, 10). The second of these reasons is explained by the remark *nam te quoque ut me nihil aequae ac naturae opera delectant*, the theme of the letter being in this way closely related with its recipient.⁴

We have seen that it is quite often that Pliny expressly states the reason — or reasons because he usually gives more than one — why he has written his letter, and that he does so by means of set phrases, such as *quae ratio huius epistulae fuit*, *haec tibi scripsi quia*, and *haec tibi scripsi ut* (or *ne*), which is often specified as *primum ut . . . deinde ut*.⁵ Is this peculiar feature to be understood as Pliny, intentionally placing himself in a fictitious situation as a letter-writer, trying to relate his literary letters with his addressees? I think that an entirely sufficient explanation is Pliny's systematical disposition trained by thorough studies in rhetoric and jurisprudence.

Cicero, when he speaks of *epistularum genera* in *Fam.* II 4,1,⁶ mentions first the original type, *illud certissimum, cuius causa inventa res ipsa est*, whose purpose is defined as follows: *ut certiores faceremus absentis, si quid esset, quod eos scire aut nostra aut ipsorum interesset*. In a wide sense, Pliny's *facta dicta consilia cogitationes communicare* belongs to this class. The simplest form of communication, and very natural in a correspondence between friends who live far apart, is ex-

¹ For some others see II 6,6, VII 26,4, VIII 24,1& 10, and IX 12,2.

² In VIII 16, which deals with those things that *angunt*, Pliny speaks of *dolendi voluptas . . . si in amici sinu defleas* (5).

³ This *novum* is combined with a moral teaching: *gaudeo enim pietate defunctorum*. We have had a parallel in VIII 18,12: *cum aures hominum novitate laetantur, tum ad rationem vitae exemplis erudimur*.

⁴ Note also how Pliny introduces the description of his Tuscan villa: *accipe temperiem caeli regionis situm villae amoenitatem, quae et tibi auditu et mihi relatu iucunda erunt* (V 6,3).

⁵ For example in III 20,10 (quoted above, p. 67), VI 33,7 and VII 1,7. The same formula *primum ut . . . deinde ut* (or more often, instead of *ut*, either *quod* or *quia*) is frequent in other contexts, too; a third member is added by means of *postremo*, *praeterea* or *in summa*.

⁶ For a detailed treatment see KOSKENNIEMI, »Cicero über die Briefarten (genera epistularum)«, *Arctos*, N.S. 1, 1954, 97—102.

pressed in the phrase *fac sciam quid agas*. Pliny has only few examples of this type which, *privatis rebus inclusum*, is discarded by him as *humile* and *sordidum*. To him, news — *aliquid novi, novitas* — means events which are somehow *notabilia*, preferably affairs of state. This type approaches Cicero's second class, *genus severum et grave*, which is above all represented by Pliny's letters of admonition (*vel praeceptis vel exemplis monere*). Admonition also forms the core in letters where Pliny's purpose is *delectare*. It is only seldom that we find something resembling Cicero's third class, *genus familiare et iocosum*. One of the few examples is VII 12, whose purpose is formulated very clearly: *ut inter istas occupationes aliquid aliquando rideres* (5).

Cicero's *epistularum genera* are thus applicable to Pliny's letters, but never does Pliny himself speak of a classification of letters. There is another difference to be noted. Cicero could send a letter without any particular reason — *non quo haberem magno opere quod scriberem, sed ut loquerer tecum absens*, he says to Atticus (VII 15,1) — whereas Pliny refrained from writing if there was no *materia* worth being told in a letter. To him the letter was a poor substitute for personal contact, as we see from his remarks *quantum tamen epistula consequi potero* (II 18,3), *quia non contigit coram, per epistulam* (VI 17,1), and *scribam vel (quod malo) coram indicabo* (VI 27,1).¹ Such remarks might be understood in a vaguely general sense, were it not Pliny himself who gives us an accurate interpretation: *sermonem vultus gestus vox ipsa moderatur, epistula omnibus commendationibus destituta malignitati interpretantium exponitur* (V 7,6). His outspoken opinion that writing was singularly difficult is clearly expressed in IX 29,2: *an ceteris artibus excusatio in numero, litteris durior lex, in quibus difficilior effectus est?*²

In order to avoid the *malignitas interpretantium*, the letter had to be written clearly. The rule of *σαφήνεια* was one of those prescribed by the rhetorical theory of letter-writing,³ but Pliny means something else, when he speaks of carefulness in writing a letter. What it is can be seen from VII 9,8, where *volo epistulam diligentius scribas* is mentioned as a rhetorical exercise for improving the style, and from I 1,1, where the phrase *si quas paulo curatius scripsissem* refers to those of Pliny's letters that are worth publishing. The words *diligentius* and *curatius* in these passages are concerned with the style more widely, not merely with the *σαφήνεια*.⁴ GUILLEMIN's translation in each case is »une

¹ Cf. VI 2,9, VIII 22,4, and IX 26,13.

² See also VI 17,5; Pliny's modesty rings true when he writes: *cum lego, ex comparatione sentio quam male scribam* (VII 30,4). Cf. SHERWIN-WHITE 333.

³ See KOSKENNIEMI, Studien 27 f.

⁴ Note that *diligens* in V 5,3 characterizes the style of Fannius' biographical work.

lettre d'art» (Pline, pp. 133 f.), but if we adhere to Pliny's words in I 1,1, we should simply speak of letters which have been written with a little more care than usual. These letters are in I 10,9 contrasted with *inlitteratissimae litterae*, which are nothing more than barren official letters. One passage, however, makes the matter more complicated: in IX 28,5 the *litterae curiosius scriptae* of Romanus is contrasted with his three other letters described by Pliny as *elegantissimae* (1).

A possible solution is found in VII 13, a reply to Ferox, who has complained of having no time for literary studies. Pliny is not ready to believe him, because his letter is *tam polita quam nisi a studente non potest scribi* (2), but if he is right, Pliny's conclusion is: *aut es tu super omnes beatus, si talia per desidiam et otium perficis*. Even if this were mere courtesy towards Ferox,¹ Pliny cannot have invented what slips from him unawares — that he was not able to write a polished (*polita*) letter in idleness, since to him writing meant continual stylistic exercises, *cura* and *diligentia*.² The use of *politus* in I 16 is interesting: Pompeius Saturninus makes his forensic speeches *polite*, and his wife, who writes letters in Plautus' and Terence's style, is called *docta* and *polita*.³ This same quality may suffice to make Romanus' above-mentioned three letters *elegantissimae* as distinguished from his *litterae curiosius scriptae* (IX 28); Pliny's praising comment on Romanus' letters in II 13,7, *ut Musas ipsas Latine loqui credas*, need not mean more than that they were 'elegant'. Pliny seems to make a certain distinction between the *polita, elegantissima epistula*, which is a friend's praise in general terms, and the *epistula curatius* (or *curiosius* or *diligentius*) *scripta*, which presupposes serious work.⁴ It is important to add that the special *diligentia*, the care given to the outward form, does not prove such letters to be fictitious. When the letter-writer had Pliny's rhetorical education and many years' practice as a forensic orator, his normal private letters must have been stylistically irreproachable.

Another difficult problem is: what Pliny does mean when, after complaining that he has no *materia* for long letters to Sabinus because the times they lived in are politically insignificant, he adds: *nisi forte volumus scholasticas tibi atque, ut*

¹ SHERWIN—WHITE remarks that »there is nothing to be said about this courtesy note» (417).

² In IX 32 Pliny also says that letter-writing was incompatible with idleness. For his view that writing was singularly difficult, see above, p. 70.

³ It may be noted that Pliny's appreciation of his own wife's letters was more emotional: *cuius litterae tantum habent suavitatis, huius sermonibus quantum dulcedinis inest* (VI 7,3).

⁴ Note, however, Pliny's judgement on Silius Italicus — *scribebat carmina maiore cura quam ingenio* (III. 7,5) — which can be understood in the light of his warning *nimia cura deterit magis quam emendat* (IX 35,2).

ita dicam, umbraticas litteras mittere (IX 2,3). Such letters were not befitting to Sabinus,¹ who was at the time living amidst *arma* and *castra* and all things that pertain to military life, *cornua tubas sudorem pulverem soles*. The word *soles* forms a contrast to the adjective *umbraticus*, which here has the same sense as Cicero's *umbratilis*.² In Pliny's description of the rhetor Isaeus' *vita umbratilis* (II 3,5 f.) — *adhuc scholasticus tantum est . . . schola et auditorium et ficta causa res inermis innoxia est* — the adjective *inermis* contrasts the *ficta causa* of the *scholasticus* with the forensic orator's activities *in foro verisque litibus*; in the same way *scholasticae litterae* are regarded as improper for Sabinus' *arma*. The phrase *ficta causa* brings to mind the idea that *scholasticae litterae* might mean fictitious letters, such as Seneca's treatises. SHERWIN—WHITE says that Pliny sharply distinguishes his own letters from »the Senecan essay in epistolary form, *scholasticas litteras*» (p. 3), but in his comment on IX 2,3 (p. 483) a similar remark »the letters of Seneca may serve as an example of *scholasticae litterae*» is followed up by the unexpected example »such as Pompeius Saturninus, or his wife, may have written». This example from I 16,6 is unexpected because the letters of Saturninus' wife are described by SHERWIN—WHITE (p. 124) as *epistulae curatius scriptae*, which is precisely how Pliny defines his own letters — and a type which Seneca rejects.³

The interesting passage in IX 2,3 is worth quoting once more in its context: . . . *nisi forte volumus scholasticas tibi atque, ut ita dicam, umbraticas litteras mittere. Sed nihil minus aptum arbitramur, cum arma vestra . . . cogitamus*. As a matter of fact, Pliny does not say that he never writes *scholasticas litteras*; he only says that it is improper to send one to Sabinus, who now, having a military commission, is living his life »in the midst of arms and encampments». I think that Pliny here happens to give us a clue as to the character of his letters: one type is the *scholasticae litterae*, impersonal and highly stylized letters, perhaps such as those addressed to Voconius Romanus. These letters, which also seem to have a clear relation with the addressee (see above, pp. 62 f.), would not interest Sabinus immersed as he was in a life of action.

ZUCKER, in his paper »Plinius epist. VIII 24 — ein Denkmal antiker Humanität»,⁴ gives two reasons for his opinion that all Pliny's letters are purely literary.

¹ The words *nihil minus aptum* clearly express Pliny's consideration for the addressee.

² The form *umbraticus* is used in a disparaging sense by Plautus, Petronius and Seneca, whereas Cicero's *umbratilis* has no pejorative nuance.

³ Sen. *Ep.* 75,1: *Minus tibi accuratas a me epistulas mitti quereris. Quis enim accurate loquitur, nisi qui vult putide loqui?*

⁴ *Philologus* 84, 1929, 209—232. VIII 24 is a letter of advice to Maximus, who was sent as imperial legate to Greece.

The first is that each letter is confined to a single theme and the second that an individual case is frequently treated from a general point of view (pp. 220 f.). The latter reason is easily explained if we think of Pliny's theoretical disposition fostered by his studies in jurisprudence and rhetoric.¹ The habit of treating one single subject in a letter has a certain connection with the third characteristic of Pliny's letters to which ZUCKER refers, namely the stylistic rule of brevity he had created for himself (p. 219). I shall first investigate what Pliny may himself have revealed concerning the themes of his letters.

In II 1, which is written in memory of Verginius Rufus, Pliny says to Romanus: *volo tibi multa alia scribere, sed totus animus in hac una contemplatione defixus est* (12). SHERWIN—WHITE remarks that Pliny here, when observing the rule of the single theme, makes a virtue out of necessity (p. 4). Pliny's words are, however, psychologically to be expected when one considers his close relations with the deceased: *praeterea* (after several other reasons) *quod ille mihi tutor relictus adfectum parentis exhibuit* (8). This same psychologically natural feeling is expressed in VIII 23, which celebrates the memory of Iunius Avitus: *in tantis tormentis eram cum scriberem haec ut haec scriberem sola; neque enim nunc aliud aut cogitare aut loqui possum* (8).² It is more difficult to interpret the following passage which is from III 14,6: *Verum haec hactenus. Quid praeterea novi? Quid? Nihil, alioqui subiungerem; nam et charta adhuc superest, et dies feriatus patitur plura contexi*. Does Pliny here jocularly imply that he would be bold enough to disobey the rule of the single theme, if there were some news to be related?³ In that case VIII 18,11 could also be explained in that Pliny playfully refers to the unity of the theme: *habes omnes fabulas urbis; nam sunt omnes fabulae Tullus*. For my part I would prefer to understand both these passages literally, without suspecting that the writer is making subtle hints at rhetorical rules.

It is well known that Pliny does have letters which are not confined to one subject. SHERWIN—WHITE analyses them briefly (pp. 3 f.), making several happy remarks about the unity of different themes, but there is something he overlooks. I pick out one example, V 14, on which he comments: »The account of Cornutus' career and that of Pliny's vacation are linked by a reference to Pliny's official leave of absence from his own post.» This is true, but does not give an accurate idea of the contents of the letter. After copiously expressing

¹ See above, p. 69. The playful beginning of IX 7 illustrates Pliny's desire to be rational in everything: *Aedificare te scribis. Bene est, inveni patrocinium; aedifico enim iam ratione quia tecum*. See also the end of the letter.

² The passage is textually uncertain, but the sense is clear. Compare the beginning of the letter: *omnia mihi studia, omnes curas, omnia avocamenta exemit excussit eripuit dolor*.

³ The fact that the anecdote Pliny adds concerns the principal character of the letter indeed supports that view. It is quite natural, though, that the ominous accident occurs to him.

his joy at his friend's new position, Pliny continues (§§ 7 f.): *In infinitum epistulam extendam, si gaudio meo indulgeam. Praevertor ad ea, quae me agentem hic nuntius deprehendit. Eram cum prosocero meo, eram cum amita uxoris, eram cum amicis diu desideratis, circumibam agellos, audiebam multum rusticarum querellarum, rationes legebam invitus et cursim (aliis enim chartis, aliis sum litteris initiatus), coeperam etiam itineri me praeparare.* These different topics form the very kind of chat about everyday home life, so common in letters in general, which Pliny normally shuns (see above, p. 68). DRAGIĆEVIĆ examines another letter with various subjects, I 7, and refers to its wealth of lifelike details (Essai, pp. 48 f.). Of course, all these details could have been invented for the purpose, but let us ask with DRAGIĆEVIĆ: «Pourquoi supposer que tout cela est inventé, alors qu'il est beaucoup plus simple et beaucoup plus naturel de supposer que les choses se sont passées comme Pline nous les décrit?» (p. 50).¹

Two passages in Pliny's letters show that speaking about the rule of the single theme may be justified, after all. In the description of his Tuscan villa Pliny says: *primum ego officium scriptoris existimo titulum suum legat atque identidem interroget se quid coeperit scribere* (V 6,42). The term *titulus* need not mean that Pliny used to invent actual titles for his letters, for he is here speaking of Homer, Vergil and Aratus. It is only later on that he modestly adds: *similiter nos ut 'parva magnis'*. The other passage is more important. After a report upon the prosecution of Varenus, before proceeding to deal with another criminal trial, Pliny inserts the following remark: *quid enim prohibet, quamquam alia ratio scribendae epistulae fuerit, de studiis disputare* (VII 6,8). This is, in my opinion, an undeniable proof of the existence of a rule that each letter had to have one single *ratio*² — not without exceptions, as we have seen. Before seeking for possible sources of this rule, I shall discuss the alleged convention against long letters.

Quite often Pliny speaks of the length of the letter. He himself wants to receive letters as long as possible: *plurimas et longissimas* (II 2,2), *aeque longam* (II 11,25), *quales istinc redire uberrimae possunt* (II 12,7), *non minus longa* (IV 11,16),³ *longiores epistulas* (IX 32), and *tanto mihi iucundior fuit quanto longior*

¹ SHERWIN—WHITE also points out that «the letters dealing with Pliny's business affairs and domestic arrangements are full of precise and particular details that can hardly have been invented» (p. 12). His comment on I 7,6 that *paene praeterii . . . accepisse me careotas optimas* «may be a literary convention» (p. 102) gives rise to the question as to whether it was so unheard of for Pliny to receive such gifts and thank the givers (cf. V 2,1, VII 21,4, etc.).

² For the part played by *ratio* in letters and all else, see above, pp. 69 and 73.

³ Note here the playful touch: *ego non paginas tantum sed versus etiam syllabasque numerabo.*

erat (IX 20,1). In the second of these passages Pliny takes for granted that Arrianus also wishes for long letters: *nisi aequae longam epistulam reddis, non est quod postea nisi brevissimam exspectes*. Sabinus is another one who likes letters to be long: *facis iucunde quod non solum plurimas epistulas meas verum etiam longissimas flagitas* (IX 2,1).¹ When Pliny apologizes for excessive length, his remark mainly springs from the situation, as in VII 9,16: *tam immodice epistulam extendi, ut dum tibi quemadmodum studere debeas suadeo, studendi tempus abstulerim*. Phrases such as *in infinitum epistulam extendam, si gaudio meo indulgeam* (V 14,7) and *finem epistulae faciam, ut facere possim etiam lacrimis quas epistula expressit* (V 21,6) are simply a neat way of finishing a letter. At the end of III 5 Pliny shows consideration for the addressee's wishes: *extendi epistulam cum hoc solum quod requirebas scribere destinassem . . . confido tamen haec quoque tibi non minus grata . . . futura* (20).²

Two passages, however, seem to support the view that there was a definite rule against excessive length in letter-writing: *iam finem faciam ne modum, quem etiam orationi adhibendum puto, in epistula excedam* (II 5,13) and *habes epistulam, si modum epistulae cogites, libris quos legisti non minorem* (IX 13,26). In each case the letter — also *epistularum angustiae* in IV 17,11 — is contrasted with the forensic speech.³ The length of the forensic speech is thoroughly discussed by Pliny in I 20. After a fictitious argument against excessive length — *optimus tamen modus est* — he vigorously brings forward his own opinion: *non minus non servat modum qui infra rem quam qui supra, qui adstrictius quam qui effusius dicit* (20).⁴ The other fictitious argument *at est gratior multis actio brevis* is warded off with this biting remark: *si hos in consilio habeas, non solum satius breviter dicere, sed omnino non dicere* (23). In letter-writing, on the other hand, we may note Pliny's desire to avoid loquaciousness: *vitasse iam dudum ne viderer argutior* (V 6,41) and *providendum est mihi, ne gratiam novitatis . . . epistulae loquacitate praecerpam* (V 20,8).⁵ One probable reason is that in the same way as there were many who disliked long speeches,⁶ there must have been many who disliked long

¹ Here, as in VII 2, Pliny expressly explains why his letters are shorter than usual. Note the end of IX 2: *est enim summi amoris negare veniam brevibus epistulis amicorum, quamvis scias illis constare rationem*.

² Similarly, in VI 20, he is afraid of having molested Tacitus with a long and perhaps uninteresting story (see above, p. 66).

³ A further instance is found in IV 5,4: *oportet enim nos in hac (sc. epistula) certe in qua possumus breves esse, quo sit excusatius quod librum . . . extendimus*.

⁴ Compare V 6,43, where Pliny says *brevis . . . uterque est quia facit quod instituit* of Homer and Vergil and *modum . . . servat* of Aratus.

⁵ See also VII 26,4 and VIII 16,5.

⁶ In addition to the fictitious argument in I 20,23, see II 5,4, VI 2,5 f., and VI 33,7. It is only once, in IV 16, that Pliny praises his audience's patience.

letters. The addressee's fictitious comment in III 9,27 — *non fuit tanti; quid enim mihi cum tam longa epistula* — strikes one as being typical.¹ Pliny defends the length of this letter by the remark *memento non esse epistulam longam, quae tot dies tot cognitiones tot denique reos causasque complexa sit*. In the description of the Tuscan villa we find a similar apology: *cum totam villam oculis tuis subicere conamur . . . non epistula quae describit sed villa quae describitur magna est* (V 6,44).²

When Pliny apologizes for the length of a letter, it is frequently, as we have seen, out of consideration for the addressee's precious time.³ Before seeking for sources of a particular *modus epistulae*,⁴ I refer to VIII 6,17, where the same phrase is used in a different sense: Pliny is afraid of having given vent to his indignation *ultra epistulae modum*. A similar instance is found in V 7,5, where the difficulties encumbering the written word are contrasted with the easier oral delivery: *verebam ne modum, quem tibi in sermone custodire facile est, tenuisse in epistula non viderer*. It is in several other things, such as *laudes* (III 11,8) and *cena* (III 12), that Pliny expects to have a definite *modus*.

GUILLEMIN rightly points out that the conception of the letter is different in different times: »elle est en grande partie affaire de mode et s'harmonise avec l'allure de la vie de société» (Pline, p. 128). Unfortunately, no other letters are preserved from Pliny's time, but we know from Martial how impatient the contemporary Roman public was, blaming as they did his — to us short — epigrams for excessive length.⁵ GUILLEMIN thinks that Pliny consciously took Martial's epigrams as a model for his letters, one of her arguments being that he adopted Martial's manner of repeating the opening line at the end of an epigram (Pline, pp. 147 f.). In letters, however, the final repetition of an important matter presented at the beginning⁶ is so natural that the adoption of this device may rather have moved in the opposite direction, from letter-writing into poetry.⁷ Besides, the occurrence of literary influences would not

¹ Note as well VII 2,3: *abunde est si epistulae non sunt molestae; sunt autem et ideo breviores erunt*. In II 5, which deals with a forensic speech, Pliny complains about *fastidium legentium deliciasque* (4).

² Compare what Pliny says in IV 5,4 about a forensic speech: *librum ipsum, non tamen ultra causae amplitudinem, extendimus*.

³ A jocosely variety is found in I 20,25, where Tacitus is permitted, if he agrees with Pliny, to answer *quam voles brevi epistula*, the difference of opinion calling for a *longissima epistula*.

⁴ For this phrase see II 5,13 and IX 13,26, both quoted above, p. 75.

⁵ Mart. *Epigr.* I 110, II 77, VI 65, X 59, etc.

⁶ A typical remark is *illuc enim unde coepi revertor* (III 11,8). See as well III 16,13, V 6,44, and VIII 24,10.

⁷ GUILLEMIN does note a kindred phenomenon — that the opening formulae of letters, such as *quaeris*, *rogas* and *petis*, were adopted by elegists and by Martial (Pline 145 f.).

prove the literary character of Pliny's letters. For one thing such instances might be occasional coincidences; for another even the true ones can equally well occur in real letters.¹ As regards Martial's influence in particular, Pliny's protective and even slightly supercilious tone in his *in memoriam* to the poet (III 21) does not give the impression that a disciple is paying homage to his master.

On several occasions we have noted how anxious Pliny was to show consideration for his correspondents' wishes. Such wishes tend to reflect the customs and habits of the society of the time, one of which conventions was the demand for brevity. It was all the more natural to follow the public's general taste in this respect, because the rhetorical theory of letter-writing had established the rule of *συντομία* on a par with that of *σαφήνεια*.² It seems to me, further, that this very tendency for brevity and conciseness sufficiently explains Pliny's preference to treat one single theme in a letter.³ There may be, however, an additional reason for that habit. Pliny's official letters included in Book X are also limited to one subject, and though the rhetorical theory clearly distinguished the private letter from the official one, some sort of interaction might be assumed, especially in the case of Pliny, to whom both categories were equally familiar.⁴

I have tried to show in the present paper that Pliny did not regard his letters as an autonomous genre of literature. Since he never mentions a recitation of letters, since he does not speak of revising his letters before publication, in collaboration with friends or alone, and since he is completely silent about the success of those of his collections that had come out, it is hard to believe that he would have written his letters with the sole object of publishing them.⁵ Pliny does not speak of the different *genera epistularum* which we know from

¹ See SHERWIN—WHITE 16—18. The reminiscences of Cicero to which GUILLEMIN refers (Pline 114—117) are not convincing, but Cicero's example in publishing letters certainly influenced Pliny, as DRAGIĆEVIĆ (Essai 35) and HANSLIK (Lexikon der Alten Welt, col. 2378) point out.

² For *σαφήνεια* see above, p. 70; *συντομία* is discussed by KOSKENNIEMI, Studien 28.

³ Pliny himself closely associates the theme with the length: *sciatque (sc. scriptor) si materiae immoratur non esse longum, longissimum si aliquid accersit* (V 6,42).

⁴ For the distinction between official and private letters see KOSKENNIEMI, Studien 48—50. Pliny describes his official letters as *inlitteratissimas litteras* (I 10,9), but many of those included in Book X are stylistically excellent.

⁵ I would like to repeat: with the sole object of publishing them. At the moment of writing a letter to a friend Pliny may have thought of possibly publishing it later on, just as Cicero may have done — but neither Cicero's nor Pliny's letters are purely literary on that account.

Cicero's letters, but he often expresses the function — or functions — of a letter. The use in this of set phrases, such as *haec tibi scripsi ut* (or *ne* or *quia*), reflects his theoretical mind and his inclination for systematization. Pliny's predilection for confining a letter to one single theme, assumed to prove the literary nature of his letters, can be explained as a consequence of the general tendency to brevity in letter-writing and, possibly, as an influence exercised by official letters, which were also limited to one subject.

The fact that Pliny often expresses the purpose of his letter by way of an explicit formula is understood by some scholars to mean that he artificially placed himself in the situation of a letter-writer in order to pretend that his fictitious letters are real. Without convincing proof such a forced interpretation must remain in the air. Similarly, if the wealth of lifelike details in Pliny's letters cannot be definitely proved to have been invented, it is simpler and more natural to assume that everything was as he describes it.¹ This assumption is also justified when we examine Pliny's consideration for his correspondents' inclinations and tastes. The significance of the absence of such 'consideration' in some letters must not be exaggerated, for people do not usually think very much of the person to whom they write — they are selfishly talking about things that interest themselves, only a couple of conventional phrases, at the beginning and end of the letter, having more direct reference to the addressee.

Although it is a dangerous practice to explain away difficult problems by speaking of 'simple' and 'natural' reasons, I take up one further 'obvious' argument for the view that Pliny's letters are real ones. His whole correspondence bears witness to the fact that in his time the writing of letters was a social custom even more firmly established than before.² Pliny had friends who lived far away in his native town of Comum or elsewhere in the vast empire; those who lived in Rome frequently visited their country-houses, as he did himself. Correspondence was the only means of communication between them in a time when travelling was difficult and there was neither telephone nor telegraphic communication. It would seem strange indeed if Pliny had purposely excluded from his collections all those real letters.³ SCHUSTER, in his RE article on Pliny, regards his letters as purely literary, since private letters »in formeller

¹ Of course, the use of *figurae extemporales* (see I 20,10) is possible in letters, too.

² This *consuetudo* (IX 15,3) was part of the system of *beneficia* (cf. *habesne quo tali epistulae parem gratiam referas* in IV 7,6), which is discussed by GUILLEMIN, *Pline* 8–12.

³ For the habit that letters received and copies of those sent to others were kept in family archives, see PETER, *Der Brief* 29–33. Pliny gives an interesting example in III 1,12: *idque iam nunc apud te subsigno ut . . . in ius voces ad hanc epistulam meam.*

und inhaltlicher Hinsicht völlig anspruchslos wären» (col. 448), but this is a very inadequate view of the nature of genuine letters. If the writer had Pliny's thorough rhetorical education and forensic practice of many years, his everyday private letters must have been carefully stylized, all the more because the recipient usually had the same rhetorical background.

Pliny's private letters included in the first nine books are for the most part real letters. I have suggested that the term *scholasticae litterae* (IX 2,3) might refer to more impersonal and stylized letters, such as those addressed to Vocius Romanus. It is, of course, very difficult to draw precise lines of demarcation between Pliny's everyday private letters and those of a more literary character. Only so much can be said here that in collections subsequent to the first we may expect to find a relatively greater number of letters that were originally intended for publication — but we do not even know how many books the first collection contained.¹

¹ Perhaps only one, as has been suggested above (p. 65, n. 4); cf. SHERWIN—WHITE 54.