



Pliny the Book-Maker: Betting on Posterity in the Epistles

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What did it mean - in terms of social, cultural, and literary negotiations - to publish one's own work in Rome at the end of the first century CE? What kinds of traces has the author's work as editor left on the text as we read it? How can we interpret them? What kind of well-choreographed balancing act was needed to ensure immediate availability and success for one's work in terms of its historical contemporary audience, while guaranteeing its long-lasting appeal with a hypothetical one?

These are the key questions behind the essays in this collection, as they address Pliny the Younger's complex self-editorial strategies, and what they were intended to achieve. The individual studies use philological and interpretive arguments to reveal that Pliny's nine-book collection of private epistles is a carefully arranged work designed, ultimately (and primarily), to address that peculiar kind of audience that we have come to conceptualize as posterity. In doing so, they suggest that in the collected form of the *Epistles* meaning is produced by the interplay of multiple factors. Immediate context, placement in the book, linkage achieved by way of formal or thematic patterns, recurrence of addressees, happenings, and dates all impact individual texts in Pliny's collection and charge them with sense.

Pliny the Book-Maker is intended as a contribution to the larger recent re-orientation of Pliny studies, which looks to shift the focus of analysis from strictly socio-historical data-mining to a literary re-evaluation of Pliny's texts.

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