CLAUDIUS AELIANUS' *VARIA HISTORIA*
AND THE TRADITION OF THE MISCELLANY

by

DIANE LOUISE JOHNSON

B.A. University of Washington, 1971
M.A. Western Washington University, 1983
M.A. University of Washington, 1984

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department of Classics

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August 1997

© Diane Louise Johnson, 1997
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of **CLASSICS**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date **2/9/1997**
ABSTRACT

Claudius Aelianus was recognized by Philostratus and the author of the *Suda* as a participant in the literary and intellectual movement of the Second Sophistic. Philostratus' biographical sketch in the *Lives of the Sophists*, however, makes it clear that Aelian did not perform publicly as did the other sophists whom Philostratus described; Aelian's retiring and scholarly nature is emphasized by Philostratus, who implies that Aelian's choice of literature over performance followed a pattern established by Demosthenes and Cicero.

Most scholarship on the *Varia Historia* during the past 150 years addresses the question *how* Aelian made his collection, i.e. what sources he accessed. This directly reflects modern use of the *Varia Historia* as a quarry from which to mine information about the ancient world. Such scholarship must conclude that Aelian was not a modern research scholar with the goals, techniques, and readership of the modern "scientific" historian.

What then were his goals, techniques, and readership? The *Varia Historia* cannot be fairly assessed without taking into account its membership in the genre of the miscellany. The Imperial miscellanist concerns himself with a specific subset of traditional literature: the material which supplements the standard literary education and may be termed polymathic. The miscellanist assumes a readership with whom he shares certain
educative goals: specifically, further detailed education in literature beyond the primary level, including further work in the encyclic artes and a general increase in detailed information “for its own sake.” Because the miscellanist adopts the stance of a mature amateur scholar gathering data for a younger reader, he reveals a patronizing tone in his collection. The data the miscellanist offers his reader is presented in a manner characterized by ποικιλία or “variety”; as such it reflects the Imperial attitude toward the cultured person’s correct use of leisure.

An analysis of passages from the Varia Historia reveals that Aelian conceives his reader as a young person currently in the process of acquiring paideia. In his miscellany Aelian has provided this reader with material that conveys a moral message at the same time that it provides models of the correct way to respond to traditional literature.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Claudius Aelianus and the *Varia Historia* 6
- The Life of Claudius Aelianus 6
- The Text of the *Varia Historia* 21
- Scholarship Addressing the *Varia Historia*, the Imperial Miscellany, and Paideia 32

Chapter 2: Compilator and Compilanda 43
- Paideia and the Archive 52
- Selection (ἐκλογή) and Application (σπουδή) as Standards of Hellenistic Scholarship 76
- Πολυμαθία and Imperial Education 90
- Πολυμαθία and Γραμματική 91
- Πολυμαθία and Post-Primary Education 101
- The Miscellanist and Correct Πολυμαθία 113

Chapter 3: The Miscellany’s Readership 118
- Supplementary Reading and the Encyclic Arts 134
- The ὄλως πεπαιδευμένος 138
- The Imperial Miscellanist and the Adult Learner 156

Chapter 4: Miscellany Structure and Style 170

Chapter 5: The Ἀξιοσπούδαστα in Aelian’s Miscellany 192
- Moral Anecdote in the *Varia Historia* 193
  a) Minor Characters in Major Events 199
  b) Paideia-Icons in Anecdotal Situations 200
  c) Statesmen and Politicians 202
  d) Philosophers and Poets 204
  e) Musicians, Athletes, and Artists 208
  f) Ethnic Anecdote 210
  g) Characters not drawn from paideia 211
  h) Intended Readership 212
  i) Anecdote as Moral Modelling 214
- Epideictic Biography 219
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Concept</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecphraseis</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography and Νόμιμα</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural History</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradoxography in the Varia Historia</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicography</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Πίνακες in the Varia Historia</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aelian's Use of the Progymnasmata</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αφέλεια and the Varia Historia</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The purpose of the following study is to establish Claudius Aelianus’s *Varia Historia* within the tradition of the Imperial miscellany.

Although the similarities between the *Varia Historia* and a number of other surviving collections of material compiled from earlier literature and scholarship during the Imperial period have long been recognized, few attempts have been made either to analyze the qualities which the *Varia Historia* shares with these other collections or to consider the various ways in which it diverges from them.

Indeed, there has been little scholarly work done on the *Varia Historia* during the present century. Nor has Aelian attracted much attention from modern students of the Second Sophistic, who have tended to focus upon this period’s more productive and flamboyant contributions in the fields of rhetoric and philosophy.

Yet Aelian, too, forms a part of the intellectual culture of the second and third centuries AD. Consequently, in Chapter 1 I attempt both to place him within his social and intellectual context by considering the ancient witnesses to his life and influence and to review the recent scholarship which has addressed Aelian in terms of his own and his work’s place within the Second Sophistic. Also in Chapter 1, I consider recent scholarship on the Imperial miscellanists; as I shall attempt to demonstrate, this has generally avoided discussing the generic framework that has typed these authors. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 represent my efforts to establish and define this framework. Once understood, the generic conventions of the miscellany will serve as a means to analyze the content, structure, and style of Aelian’s *Varia Historia*; this topic will be the focus of Chapter 5.
It is my purpose to demonstrate that this work was not intended to be a random and careless omnium-gatherum of amusing irrelevancies, in which terms it has been ridiculed and dismissed by recent scholars. Rather, the Varia Historia provides, as do all Imperial miscellanies, (1) material which the composer has found especially relevant to himself and to a reader with whom he identifies, and (2) models for the correct reception and utilization of the material.

This compiled and miscellaneous material is drawn from paideia, the traditional literature, both curricular and secondary, which under the Empire forms the basis of all liberal culture. In a sense all Greek and Latin literature of this period provides its audience with both paideia-matter and models for its utilization. We can in fact construct a continuum of Imperial authors’ utilization of paideia as matter and model, based upon the author’s relation to his audience. The performing sophist, for example, reenacts paideia in a public venue; he himself becomes the model, while his μελέται recreate personalities and events enshrined in the literary tradition. The lecturing philosopher provides models through his use of paideia-sanctioned means for seeking philosophical truth — ἔλεγχος, dissertatio, διηaría — as well as through his paideia-sanctioned garb of long matted hair and careless dress; his discourse will contain such paideia-matter as anecdote, chreia, and historical allusion. In the epistles and moral essays of Plutarch and Lucian, the writer and his audience are individuals, single voices in a private setting. Yet not only is the writer’s thought supported, illustrated, and amplified through paideia-matter in the form of quotations, apophthegms, and allusions; it is also expressed through the imitatio of models drawn from the tradition, these mimetic reworkings thus providing further models
for the reception and recycling of the tradition. Thus all Imperial literature can be seen as sharing this twofold manner of incorporating paideia, differing essentially only in its conception of the audience as the community or as the private individual.

But whereas other genres draw in paideia-content and paideia-form as subsidiary and ancillary to the author’s purposes, the miscellany is paideia, in the form of data extracted more or less directly from the paideia-authors and scholars and recycled as a collection of compilations. What position does the creator of such a collection occupy upon our literary continuum of paideia-manipulation?

Briefly, the miscellanist is not a paideia-manipulator so much as a paideia-purveyor. It is not the efficacy of rhetorical skill and of philosophical acumen in the recreation and modeling of paideia that determines the success and value of his undertaking so much as the quality of his selection of data from paideia—that is, their value to the reader. In selecting according to the reader’s intellectual needs, the miscellanist shares some features with the creator of the pedagogic chrestomathy, textbook, and technical manual. But the miscellanist is not writing specifically for the classroom. His reader, like Plutarch’s and Lucian’s, has already acquired a basic liberal education. This reader has an adult relationship to paideia, with an adult’s needs.

The key to understanding the Imperial miscellanist’s selective process lies, I believe, in determining his view of his reader’s intellectual needs and requirements.

As I shall attempt to demonstrate, the Imperial miscellanist believes that his reader needs access to paideia-extracts which are wide-ranging, detailed, true (or at least authorized by an acceptable paideia-figure), and omnivalent. In creating a miscellany
consisting of such data he envisages two stages in the compilation process: concentrated industry and mature selection. His industry is occasioned by his tacit acceptance of the positive status of polymathy and scholarly labor and commitment (πόνος, σπουδή) as necessary activities of the polymath. But this polymathy has to be controlled and directed, for the miscellanist also believes that not all data contained in the literary tradition are equally valuable (άξια σπουδής, άξια λόγου, άξιοσπουδάστα). His selection of data to be included in his collection depends upon his views of the needs of his reader, whom the miscellanist considers as more or less identical with himself at an earlier stage in his intellectual development. This selection assures the value of the content of the collection.

In the process of providing this reader with relevant extracts from paideia, the miscellanist has also provided, in his own activity of compilation, a model for the correct response to paideia: selective industry. The miscellanist may then go on to multiply his paideia-models by presenting his data within a dramatic frame, allowing the modelling characters to act out, as it were, further correct responses to paideia, polymathy, and scholarly selection.

In discussing the generic framework of the Imperial miscellany I have depended upon the evidence provided by the surviving works of Aulus Gellius, Athenaeus, Macrobius, and Clement of Alexandria, as well as by fragments of other miscellanists such as Pamphila and Favorinus. Some of these writers provide direct and candid statements about purpose and readership. The works of others are described by ancient scholars as being accessed for purposes similar to those stated by the surviving miscellanists. It is
from such statements and discussions that the framework of the miscellany tradition can be constructed.

In the *Varia Historia*, however, Aelian provides neither a statement of purpose nor a discussion of how he selected and organized his materials. This collection lacks prologue, epilogue, and significant internal editorializing. But as is the case with the content of the other miscellanies, the chapters of the *Varia Historia* themselves provide evidence for Aelian's goals in creating his collection. By analyzing Aelian's subjects, his structuring of chapters, and his style, I have attempted to demonstrate that the *Varia Historia* fits into the Imperial miscellany tradition, providing a collection of relevant data and models for the correct reception of data, for a young adult reader needing guidelines to paideia's reception and relevance.
Chapter 1

Claudius Aelianus and the Varia Historia

In the present chapter I address three topics:

1. Aelian's position within the Second Sophistic as a writer who exhibits the general archaizing qualities of that cultural movement;

2. the present state of the text of the Varia Historia, insofar as this state affects our interpretation of the work as exhibiting the generic qualities of the Imperial miscellany;

3. recent scholarship on Aelian, the Varia Historia, the Imperial miscellany, and the role of paideia in Imperial society.

The Life of Claudius Aelianus

Although frequently dismissed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars as at best a marginal figure in the intellectual life of the second and third centuries AD,¹ Aelian was considered significant enough in antiquity to be included among the notable Imperial sophists in Philostratus' *Vitae sophistarum*, and to be provided with a biographical sketch by the author of the *Suda*.

Philostratus' account of Aelian must have been written shortly after the latter's death. The *Vitae sophistarum* was dedicated to Gordian before he became emperor, and

---

¹ Schmid, for example, found him a “winzige Persönlichkeit” (1893 vol. 5: 4), Dihle (1994) a “literary journalist.”
must therefore have been written before AD 238. At this time Aspasius, who had been one of Aelian’s fellow students, is described by Philostratus as still professionally active.

In fact, Aelian is one of the latest figures to appear in Philostratus’ work. Only the lives of Heliodorus and Aspasius follow the biographical sketch devoted to Aelian, and these three final figures were probably nearly exact contemporaries as members of the third generation of sophists after the seminal Herodes.

Philostratus lived at Rome for some time, and it is likely that he met Aelian there (Swain 1991: 188). According to his account, Aelian was a curiously reticent member of the Second Sophistic movement.

Aelian was a Roman, but he spoke Attic Greek as authentically as a native from the heartland. He seems to me to deserve commendation for two reasons.
First, through his own great efforts he acquired [such] purity of language while inhabiting a city which used a different tongue. Secondly, although he was given the title "sophist" by those currying favor, he did not believe what they said, nor would he flatter himself and let himself grow conceited at so great a name. Instead, having carefully examined his own abilities and found that he was not cut out for declamation, he turned to writing, and thereby won much admiration. His style consistently displays that simple straightforwardness reminiscent of Nicostratus. He occasionally takes his cue from Dio and that author's tone. Once Philostratus of Lemnos came upon him with a text in his hand, reading it with passion and intensity. Philostratus asked him what he was so involved in, and Aelian answered, "I have completed my 'Accusation of the Effeminate Man,' for by that title I refer to the recently deposed tyrant who shamed the Roman state with his vice." Philostratus responded, "I would admire you if you were making [such] an accusation of him while he was still alive." For anyone can trample a man when he is down and out; it takes a real man to aim a blow at a living tyrant. Aelian used to say that he had never gone abroad, had never even gone on board ship, and that he knew nothing of the sea. Hence he enjoyed a good reputation at Rome as a man who honored Roman customs. He was a pupil of Pausanias, and admired Herodes as the most versatile among the sophists. He lived past the age of sixty and died childless, having circumvented the acquisition of children by never taking a wife. Whether this is a blessed or a wretched state is a philosophical inquiry not suited to the present discussion. (VS 624)

Although he specifies two aspects of Aelian’s life which in his eyes are particularly worth noting, Philostratus in fact emphasizes three points about Aelian:

1. his peculiarly thorough mastery of Attic Greek, despite his Roman birth and residency;

2. his moralistic but timid response to social and political events;

3. his emotional bond to his native land.

Among the sophists whom Philostratus discusses in the Vitae Sophistarum, Aelian is the only Italian-born Roman citizen to merit inclusion among the native Greek speakers. His grasp of the ancient Attic dialect is especially worthy of note, Philostratus insists, because of its surprising purity. Aelian’s Greek was as untainted and as pristine as the language spoken by the people of the Attic interior. Elsewhere Philostratus describes this region as offering ἀγαθοὶ διδασκαλεῖοι ἀνδρὶ βουλομένῳ διαλέγεσθαι .... ἀμικτὸς
Although deprived of the spiritual stimulation of the mesogeia, indeed in the very
capital of the foreign empire, Aelian made up for these negative circumstances by effort
and concentration. Philostratus’ use of ἐκπονέω, “labor into completion,” in reference to
this achievement implies a positive assessment.²

Philostratus further maintains that Aelian was in a position to consider a career as
sophist, but that he rejected this option through an awareness of his own incapacity for the
μελέτη. Philostratus does not specify the details of this incapacity, whether, that is, it
arose from a physical or emotional inability to orate in public. However, Philostratus does
make clear that this rejection of public performance in favor of research and composition³
did not prevent Aelian from reacting publicly to a political event by composing with effort
and care (ἐκπεπονήτω) a formal accusation (κατηγορία) of a deposed “tyrant,”
presumably Elagabalus (Schoener 1873: 4-5).

Philostratus relates this incident in some detail, but the point of the anecdote is at
first hard to grasp. Is Philostratus faulting Aelian as a cowardly recluse? Considering the
political climate of the Severan era, if Philostratus’ reference to this incident is meant to be
critical of Aelian’s behavior, the Lemnian Philostratus’ attack seems hypocritical and

² For a native Latin speaker to compose in Greek was not without parallel during the Imperial period.
Suetonius wrote scholarly works in Greek. For L. Annaeus Cornutus, C. Musonius, and Marcus Aurelius,
Greek was the medium of philosophical inquiry (Lesky 1966:876). Babrius composed Greek verse.
Favorinus and Apuleius could declaim with ease in either language (Steinmetz 1982: 2).
³ ξύγγραφεν; the question of whether Aelian followed the sophistic practice of accepting students is not
addressed.
petty. Such criticism could be leveled at any intellectual in the early third century AD irate enough to express his politically motivated indignation. One could hardly expect even the most intrepid public figure to attack an emperor as unstable as Elagabalus. The cases in which Philostratus relates a sophist’s aggressive confrontation of a powerful public figure are not quite parallel, for the emperors involved in these accounts could be expected to display some magnanimity toward even the most presumptuous orator. A closer parallel to Aelian’s κατηγορία in the Vitae sophistarum might be Philostratus’ description of Dio’s declamation against Domitian—delivered after the latter’s assassination (VS 488). Yet Aelian’s peculiar position as a retiring Roman preferring literary composition to public declamation makes the comparison with Dio strained.

Is Philostratus’ intention to immortalize his kinsman’s witticism? Anderson suggests as much (1986: 86). Again, the triviality of the Lemnian Philostratus’ response hardly seems to justify this interpretation.

It may be, however, that Philostratus is attempting to align Aelian with traditional paideia-icons who had been involved in similar situations. As a practicing sophist, Philostratus was familiar with the creative use of typology, as he makes clear from his definition of Second Sophistic subject matter:

> ή δὲ μετ’ ἐκείνην, ἂν οὐχὶ νέαν, ἀρχαία γάρ, δευτέραν δὲ μάλλον προσφητέον, τοὺς πένητας ὑπευπώσατο καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς ἀριστέας καὶ τοὺς τυράννους καὶ τὰς ἓς ὁνομα ὑποθέσεις, ἄφ’ ὃς ἰστορία ἐγει.

The [authors of the] so-called Second Sophistic sketched out the types of paupers and rich men, of aristocrats and tyrants, and took scenes and events in history as their plots and background. (VS 481)

---

4 Favorinus and Hadrian (VS 489), Polemon and Antoninus (539), Alexander Pelopolaton and Antoninus (570). Pliny the Younger (Ep. 9.1) discusses the moral issues involved in orating against the recently deceased.
That Philostratus occasionally used such typical relationships in his biographies can be seen from his alignment of Herodes’ failed improvisational speech before the emperor with Demosthenes’ similar failure before Philip (VS 2.565). He may be suggesting some connection here between the figure of Aelian and the type of the patriot faced with the pragmatic reality of tyrannical power. The abuse of strength was certainly a **topos** which interested Aelian; the *Varia Historia*, as I shall demonstrate, abounds in anecdotes in which a tyrant brutally exerts his power over a virtuous private individual. Although Aelian’s vituperative κατηγορία, like a Ciceronian Philippic, has no immediate political effect, it still suggests something about the ethics of its composer (cf. Swain 1991: 149). Philostratus may be attempting to characterize Aelian as a talented, responsible, but politically frustrated individual.

If Philostratus is drawing upon types in this instance, he may have also done so in his discussion of Aelian’s rejection of a career as a public speaker. The turning away from politics in favor of a quiet life of scholarship and composition is an act associated especially with Isocrates. Just as early in the *Vitae sophistarum* Philostratus describes Isocrates’ decision to leave public life as influenced by an awareness of his own insufficient vocal power as well as by his fear of Athenian political φθόνος (VS 1.505), so Aelian sensibly retreats from the pressure and intensity of the sophist’s public career as well as from direct exposure to a tyrant’s vicious wrath.

If Philostratus’ description of Aelian’s language, career choice, and political responses defines his virtues as traditional and conservative, the discussion of his
education contributes to this image. Philostratus states that Aelian “was a pupil of Pausanias, and admired Herodes as the most versatile of orators.” As Philostratus has somewhat more to say about Herodes and Pausanias than he has about Aelian, a consideration of this material may shed some light upon Aelian’s position within the paideia of the Second Sophistic.

Herodes Atticus was indubitably a central figure in the intellectual world of the second century AD. For some, the entire Second Sophistic emanates from him (Anderson 1986: 108). Born into a wealthy Athenian family which had acquired Roman citizenship under Nero, Herodes cultivated the double persona of statesman and intellectual. He served as consul at Rome in AD 143 and made magnificent donations to a number of Greek cities, including Athens, Corinth, and Ilium (Graindor 1930: 10). More to our purpose, he was preeminent among the great virtuoso sophists of his day. His rhetorical ability attracted many pupils, a number of whom went on to become themselves orators and teachers in Herodes’ tradition.

What this tradition was in terms of Herodes’ intellectual contribution is somewhat difficult to determine with precision. The one surviving work attributed to Herodes, the Περὶ πολιτείας, is of very dubious authenticity; even assuming the work to be his, its style is disappointing in light of Philostratus’ descriptions of the beauty of Herodes’ compositions and style.  

Whatever the quality of the improvised performance and the finished document which resulted from Herodes’ declamation, however, it was influenced by his purposive

---

5 These descriptions, although ornate and intriguing, prove to be frustratingly uncritical and imprecise; at one point, for example, Philostratus describes Herodes’ style as χρυσόν ψήμα ποταμῷ ἀργυρόδηνη ὄρταύγαζον gold dust gleaming at the bottom of a silver-adding river (VS 564).
cultivation of τὸ ἀρχαῖον. Herodes insisted upon grounding his discourse in the paideia of the canonic past, through the analysis and imitation of the works of ancient speakers and poets. The classical figure of Critias was especially associated with Herodes' teaching and research. According to Philostratus, Herodes was personally responsible for discovering and promoting this speaker's speeches as classical models of rhetoric (VS 564).

In the next generation, Pausanias of Caesarea in Cappadocia, a member of Herodes' inner circle of special pupils, developed into a sophist of such prestige that he was appointed first to the Imperial chair of rhetoric at Athens, then to the analogous position at Rome. At the time of his installation at Rome in AD 192/3, Pausanias had reached the high point of his career (Avotins 1975: 324). Aelian, during these years probably in his late teens or early twenties, studied under Pausanias at Rome.

Philostratus asserts that, while Pausanias exhibited many of Herodes' other excellent qualities, his acquisition of his teacher's ability to extemporize, αὐτοσχεδίαζειν, was the most striking of these. Possession of this highly admired ability guaranteed Pausanias' success as a performer. But of more interest to an examination of Pausanias' contribution to Aelian's education is the archaic flavor attributed to Pausanias' work: οὐχ ὑμαρτάνει τοῦ ἀρχαίου He does not fail to attain an antique flavor (VS 594), Philostratus maintains, and assures us that the statement is easily verifiable; ὡς ὑπάρχει ταῖς μελέταις ξυμβολεῖν, πολλαὶ γὰρ τοῦ Παυσανίου κατὰ τὴν ἹΡώμην One can get access to his declamations, for many of Pausanias' works are in circulation at Rome (ibid.) Aelian no doubt encountered his professor's copious declamations at Rome and profited from their emphasis upon the ancient Attic paideutic traditions promoted through Herodes'
instruction, an emphasis which Pausanias in turn passed on to his own pupils through his creative work and teaching.

Aelian enrolled under Pausanias probably with the goal in mind of becoming a teacher of rhetoric and declaimer like his master. He would have already been fluent in Greek, and Pausanias’ tradition-based program must have broadened Aelian’s acquaintance with Hellenic literature. The profession of sophist required a mastery of manipulative and affective discourse, of techniques for the utilization and display of traditional poetry and prose committed to memory over a period of years, of the novelistic ability to sketch a person’s character and life experiences in speech or tract (ethopoeia) and, most difficult of all to attain, the power of improvisation, to which all these techniques contributed.

Pausanias’ other pupils too presumably aimed at sophistic careers offering opportunities to display some if not all of these abilities. But there were other career options for them besides the performance circuit. Some with advanced rhetorical training will have sought positions in the civil service, governmental bureaucracy, and senate. They may have looked to imperial secretaryships ab epistulis. They may have sought an outlet for their talents and education in diplomacy, the life of the ambassador and public spokesman (Bowersock 1969: 43-58). A few, like Aspasius (VS 627), would follow in Pausanias’ footsteps and become holders of chairs of rhetoric at Athens and Rome.

Aelian rejected all of these options. Though ranked among the sophists in Philostratus’ work, Aelian chose the path taken, Philostratus suggests, by Isocrates and by Cicero in retirement. He turned to literary composition and scholarship. Developing a style
striking in its directness and simplicity, he was admired, we are told, because of his
c contributions to literature. Yet through his education and attitude Philostratus’ Aelian is
representative of his period and can properly be considered a product of sophistic paideia
and a member of “a group that shared a distinctive set of cultural, social, and political
values” (Swain 1991: 149).

The third point about Aelian which Philostratus makes in his biographical sketch is
Aelian’s physical and emotional bond to his native land. Not only did he love Rome and
honor her traditions; he also never left the country. Indeed, we are told, he insisted that he
had never left Italy, that he had no knowledge of sea travel.

Some concern arises about the accuracy of this statement when we try to explain
the contradiction between it and a remark Aelian makes in the De natura animalium about
a five-hoofed calf which he claims to have seen at Alexandria.⁶ This problem has been
addressed in several ways. Wellmann suggested that the claim to autopsy was part of
Aelian’s source, not a personal statement on Aelian’s part (1893:486). Schmid assumed
that Aelian’s refusal to board ship and leave Italy was connected with his priesthood (see
below p. 16), quoting other scholarly opinion (GGL: 786 note 6) which suggested that
Aelian may have simply lied about the autopsy (ibid. note 7). Rudolph maintained that

---

⁶NA 11.40: ἑγὼ δὲ καὶ πεντάποδα βοῦς ἵππου ἑθεασάμην, ἀναθημα τῷ θεῷ τὸ ὄνομα ἔν τῇ πόλει τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ, ἐν τῷ φύλοιν τοῦ θεοῦ ἄλσει, ἐκεῖ πέρεσαί σύμφωνοι σκιάν περικαλλῆς καὶ ψύζιν ἀπεδεικνυτο, καὶ ἡν μόσχος ἔνταῦθα τῇ χρόνῳ κηρώ προσεικασμένος, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ὄμοι πόδα ἀπηρτημένον εἶχε περιεργον μὲν δοσι ἐπιρήματι, τέλειον δὲ δοσα ἐς πλασίνων καὶ ταῦτα µὲν δοκεί τῇ φύσει ὁμολογεῖν σῷ πάνι το, ἑγὼ δὲ δοσα ἐς ἐμῆν ὑπίν τε καὶ ἄκοπην σφικτον εἶπον. I myself saw a sacred five-footed ox, an offering to this god in the great city of Alexandria. It was in the celebrated precinct of the god; there the pasea trees made a lovely shade and freshness. There was a calf there, the color of honeycomb, and it had an extra hoof on its shoulder, quite superficial in terms of walking, but all the same perfectly formed. All this was quite unnatural of course, but I report what I saw and heard.
Aelian made the journey to Alexandria later in life, after he had told Philostratus about never having left Italy (1884: 11).

However, if we consider Philostratus's assessment of Aelian's Greek as being almost autochthonously pure, in combination with Aelian's position as a native Roman untainted by sea travel as a *topos*-symbol of the Iron Age, we might then interpret Philostratus' portrait as antiquarian with typological detail. In Philostratus' eyes, Aelian displayed ancestral Roman Republican virtues while discoursing in the language of Archaic and Classical Athens. Philostratus has thus created an image of a sober and sincere patriot of the old order, an image enhanced by the information that Aelian refused to listen to those who encouraged him to undertake a professional career as a sophist. He refused to flatter himself, to be so puffed up by a title that he did not trust his own judgment and careful self-assessment. Likewise, by emphasizing Aelian's refusal to leave his homeland, Philostratus reiterates in different terms Aelian's rejection of a sophist's career, a lifestyle which demanded much travel (Swain 1991:150). Philostratus maintains that by making this choice, Aelian enjoyed greater respect at Rome, ὡς τιμῶν τὰ ἡθη, as a patriotic antiquarian. Rather than being a failure as a performing sophist, Aelian was a success in the eyes of his contemporaries through self-knowledge and honesty.

After Philostratus' insistence upon specifying Aelian's marginality in terms of the Second Sophistic, the *Suda*-author's acceptance of Aelian as a sophist seems almost glib.

---

1 Cf. Seneca *Medea* 301-379.
tongued” or “honey-voiced.” He practiced sophistry at Rome in the period after Hadrian. (Suda alpha iota 178)

Given his extensive use of Aelian’s work, the Suda-author’s sketch is also surprisingly brief. The Suda is the richest source of testimonia to the Varia Historia, and Aelian one of the authors most frequently cited by name in that work (GGL 788). The Suda quotes four passages from the Varia Historia specifically, and attaches Aelian’s name (though without book title) to about 175 other quotations. There may be many more quotations from Aelian in the Suda which its author has failed to label (Dilts 1971: 6).

The Suda’s date for Aelian agrees with that of Philostratus. Hadrian of Tyre had preceded Pausanias the Cappadocian in the chair of rhetoric at Rome, and died in AD 193 (Gerth 1956: 753). Aelian’s participation in sophistic culture as suggested by the Suda’s term ὀοφιστική must be interpreted with Philostratus’ information in mind. The Suda’s attribution of the office of priest to Aelian substantiates Philostratus’ suggestion that Aelian took some responsible part in state business either at Rome or at Praeneste.

But how are we to deal with the honey-tongued and honey-voiced epithets? A word search reveals that these terms, part of high lyric poetry’s diction, were applied from the Archaic period of Greek literature to nightingales, Muses, Sirens, and to personified Song, but never to speakers or to writers of prose. Wellmann suggests that the Suda-author here repeats some term used by his sources in praising Aelian’s command of Athenocentric Greek (1893: 486); this position receives some support from the ancient connection between innate language ability and honeycomb.8

8 Cf. Aelian VH 12.45 and West 1966: 183 on the connection made in antiquity between honey and persuasive speech.
The *Suda*'s identification of Aelian's birthplace, coming at the beginning of so succinct a biographical sketch, tempts us to make further inferences about the man from the city itself. Located in the Apennine foothills some twenty-three miles southeast of Rome, Praeneste was an old Republican foundation with a colorful local history. As a summer retreat for Rome's aristocracy, the city enjoyed a social season. The oracle at Praeneste's temple of Fortuna Primigenia for centuries attracted both a local and an international clientele (Wissowa 1902: 209-210); that the oracle was still functioning during Aelian's lifetime is shown by the record of a consultation made by Alexander Severus (Radke 1954: 1555). Among the public buildings connected with Fortuna's sanctuary was one containing the enormous Nile Mosaic, a mural-sized replica of a Hellenistic painting, constructed at some time during the second century BC and filled with scenes displaying the flora and fauna of Egypt (Boardman 1993: 180-181). Scholars have not been slow to make connections between Aelian's comprehensive fascination with animal life and this extraordinary work (Lukinovich and Morand 1991: 167).

Do the sets of biographical data provided by Philostratus and the *Suda*-author supply any information about Aelian which could help determine his position within the Imperial miscellany tradition?

As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, the Imperial miscellanist speaks in a private, nonrhetorical voice. He does not present himself as a professional teacher (σοφιστής or γραμματικός), nor is his reader addressed as a pupil. Rather, the miscellanist represents himself as an ordinary person with social and professional responsibilities from which he has stolen precious moments to devote to the acquisition of paideia. He has in
this manner acquired considerable exposure to literature, he is ὁ λόγος πεποιθημένος; and precisely *because* he has other responsibilities, he is especially qualified to select from paideia material which is pertinent and useful for a younger person in a similar position.

If we assume that Philostratus even in part, and the *Suda*-author completely, drew their conclusions about Aelian's life from his writings, then I believe it is possible to account for their image of Aelian—a literary man with social responsibilities and a respectable position in society—as one conveyed by Aelian himself. If Aelian retired from the limelight of sophistic performance, we need not assume that he rejected a public career in general, but only the career of the μελέται-performing orator. He may have justified the *Suda*’s attribution of the title σοφιστής by taking pupils, by writing (unperformed) μελέται, or by composing material which suggested that he had interests similar to those of the performing sophists.⁹

Among Aelian’s writings, which are currently accessible to us? Three of Aelian’s compositions have survived in more or less complete form. These three are (1) the Ποικίλη ἱστορία *(Varia Historia)*, Aelian’s miscellany; (2) the Περὶ ζῴων ἰδιώτητος *(De natura animalium)*, accounts of animal (in some cases plant) behavior as mirroring human qualities and virtues; (3) the Ἀγροικικαὶ ἐπιστολαί, twenty brief and fictitious letters drawing upon scenes and characters from Old and New Attic comedy, self-consciously retailing Attic idiom and proverbs but likewise aligning purity and simplicity of thought with bucolic goodness.¹⁰

---

⁹ Or the *Suda*-author may have simply interpreted Philostratus’ inclusion of Aelian in the *Vitae Sophistarum* as reason enough for identifying him as a σοφιστής.

¹⁰ The final letter sums up Aelian’s position: *φίλητε ἐν τοῖς ἄγροις...καὶ δικαίωσον καὶ σοφροσύνη, καὶ ταύτα...δενδρών τὰ κάλλιστα καρπῶν τὰ χρησιμώτατα....ἔστι γάρ τις καὶ ἐνταῦθα σοφία Righteousness and
connected with two further titles: the Περὶ προνόιας and the Περὶ θείων ἐναργείων.

These titles may reflect two separate works, or two different titles applied to the same work; or one title may indicate the whole work of which the other title represents a subsection. The uncertainty arises because of the similarity in subject matter and tone in the fragments surviving under these titles. Both groups present anecdotes illustrative of deity’s involvement in human life.

In all the surviving work the same quality is apparent: Aelian works only in miniature. These documents consist of brief and independent units, each unit carefully structured and a self-contained whole. Of the surviving material which is not problematic (below, pp. 18-21) no topic’s treatment exceeds seven Teubner pages of print. Most occupy less than half a page; some consist of a single sentence.

The 'Αγροικικοὶ ἐπιστολαί shares this miniature quality with the other works. Each little letter attempts to sketch a single sentiment. In some cases (e.g. Opora in Letters 7 and 8, Callipides and Cnemon in Letters 13-16) the speaker or situation can be linked with a figure from some surviving comedy text, and we see Aelian delicately developing a dramatic potential inherent in the model. From the letters alone we can understand the connection Philostratus draws between Aelian and the Attic mesogeia. But in terms of subject matter we must set the epistolography aside to consider the large collections, which among themselves share some further similarities (cf. Schoener 1873: 12).

goodness grow in the country, and these are the fairest of trees and the most useful of harvests; and there is even here a kind of wisdom [20].

11 Cf. Schoener 1873: 6-7 note 2, in which the opinions of earlier scholars are reviewed, and ibid.: 60 Thesis II.
These similarities concern Aelian's attitude toward his material and his manner of forming collections from it, if we may judge from the editorial statements contained in the prologue and epilogue to the *De natura animalium* (Περὶ ζώων ἰδιότητος). This work contains the only explicit statements which Aelian makes at any place in the corpus explaining his purposes and goals, and I have made use of these statements as arguments for Aelian's position in the miscellany tradition. Whether in fact the *De natura animalium* can be included in the discussion of Imperial miscellanies must be considered in further detail below.

**The Text of the *Varia Historia***

The current state of the text of the *Varia Historia* complicates the attempt to assess its generic qualities. The work has neither prologue nor epilogue, unlike the *De natura animalium*. It also seems to have undergone some degree of scribal manipulation—primarily epitomization—at some point in its history. Lacking a direct authorial statement as to intent and readership, uncertain as to the complete contents of the work as it came from Aelian's pen, and with only a little biographical material through which we might construct a portrait allowing us to justify certain tastes and judgments on the part of the author, to what extent can we make any definite assertions about the genre of the *Varia Historia*?

This undertaking is further complicated by Aelian's own method of compilation, a technique observable in all his collections. Unlike Athenaeus and Gellius, for example, each of whom tended to copy out his compilation word for word, Aelian would either reword or condense his data. This situation threatens the effectiveness of analyzing
Aelian's sources, because when Aelian quotes an authority in the text we cannot be sure if in the process of compilation he has actually accessed the authority's text, or has quoted a secondary source which in turn quoted the authority.

A third complication arises from the great range of detail among individual chapters in the *Varia Historia*, a situation which does not arise in the *De natura animalium*. Some chapters of the *Varia Historia* are written in so condensed and hasty a style that, lacking an authorial statement explaining the purpose of the collection or even justifying its intentionality, we cannot tell if this material was meant to be worked up later or to stand as it is in the text. Some chapters, on the other hand, exhibit considerable care on Aelian's part, both in the elaboration of detail and in the arrangement of topics.

Because the majority of scholarship focused upon Aelian and the *Varia Historia* has been devoted to interpreting the state of the text and Aelian's relationship to his sources, at this point in the discussion we may consider how nineteenth-century scholars dealt with these textual and source problems.

The transmission of the text of the *Varia Historia* has itself not been unusually problematic. According to its most recent Teubner editor, M.R. Dilts, codex V (Paris. suppl. gr. 352) and x establish the main branches of the manuscript tradition upon which the current text is based (1974: v-vii). V and x both originated in thirteenth-century Byzantium and were brought from there to Italy, where they served as the basis for some twenty-one apographs before x disappeared from the Vatican collection at some time around 1527. The text in Dilts' edition is based upon these two branches, V + x (as reconstructed from the apographs), with additional material from Φ (Vatican. gr. 96), a
thirteenth-century codex representing excerpts from the *Varia Historia*, the *De natura animalium*, and the *Politiae* of Heracleides Lembus, two texts which also form part of V and x and which “follow the Ποικιλη ἱστορία like a suffix,” as Dilts says, throughout the tradition (Dilts 1965: 57 et passim).

The stemma then is reasonably clear and in itself does not offer a great deal of room for controversy. The difficulties which the text presents arise when scholars, trying to assess Aelian’s interests and purposes in writing this work, attempt to account for certain peculiarities present in all the exemplars of the *Varia Historia*. These peculiarities involve (1) the presence of doublets, that is, longer and shorter versions of some chapters involving primarily Books 12 and 14, (2) the use of the word ὁ τι to introduce a number of chapters beginning in Book 3, and (3) a rather striking stylistic variation among chapters, some carefully and deliberately narrated and others succinct and condensed.

We may consider the doublet chapters first. These occur in three “batches” in Books 12 and 14. The following is a list of these double occurrences.

**Batch One:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12.2</th>
<th>----</th>
<th>14.37</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Batch Two:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12.12</th>
<th>----</th>
<th>14.46a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.46b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.46c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.46d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14.47a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Batch Three:

12.22 —- 14.47b
12.29 —- 14.48a

In some cases the version of the material in the Book 12 chapters is shorter than the corresponding chapters in 14, and in some cases it is considerably longer. On three occasions (12.6, 12.12, 12.16) the earlier material is introduced by the word *on*; on one occasion (12.5/14.35) both chapters begin with *on*. There are several doublets which are so close to each other as to be nearly identical (12.6/14.36; 12.13/14.46b). The fact that, with one exception (14.37), the sequence of the doublets is the same in Book 12 and in Book 14 adds to the problem of explaining this peculiar situation.

The doublet chapters are not the only ones to challenge textual scholars with the presence of *on*. The *Varia Historia* contains about eighty chapters beginning with this particle, chapters which tend to be extremely succinct and condensed as opposed to fuller, more carefully written sections. But not all such paragraphs present a condensed style.

Nevertheless, H. Lübbe undertook to explain this situation, summing it up in this manner:

*Diversa scribendi genera in [Varia Historia] esse perspicuum fit:
alia enim capita scriptor luminibus rhetoricis largissime exornavit,
alia vero sine ullo cultu sunt et mira exilitate laborant. (1886:1)*

Earlier editors of the *Varia Historia* had assumed that the presence of *on* and the condensed style, in conjunction with the situation with the doublets described above, indicated that the work had at some time been epitomized. The problem with this theory, first pointed out by F. Rudolph, was the fact that (1) *on* was used at the beginning of some chapters in which Aelian made mention of his own reactions to the material he was
compiling (e.g. 12.17; 12.48), thus including editorial comment which we would expect an epitomator to omit; (2) ὅτι was used to introduce chapters which, in terms of content and sequence of material described, showed close similarities with passages in Athenaeus' Deipnosophistae, i.e. these passages had not been epitomized in Aelian's work even though ὅτι was present, (3) some of the doublets begin with ὅτι and yet offer longer texts than their counterparts, or contain descriptive or synonymous words and particles which one would expect an epitomator to have eliminated; (4) there is no substantial stylistic difference between the portion of the Varia Historia from 1.1 through 3.13 and all material found after 3.13, the point at which evidence for epitomization is claimed to begin (Rudolph 1884: 100-101).

Rudolph and Lübbe tried to explain the situation by suggesting that Aelian himself had added ὅτι at the moment of compilation. According to Rudolph's theory,

debetur illud ὅτι Aeliano ipsi fontium variae historiae epitomatori, qui eo praemisso argumenta inter legendum probata in codiciliis suis adumbravit...et ut forte libido excerpendi et adumbrandi praevaluerat, ita ὅτι particula usus nudis rebus adscribendis continebatur; quo magis autem quaeque fabella ipsi ariserat, eo fusius eam tractare suoque iudicio augere malebat. (Rudolph 1884: 101-102)

According to this interpretation ὅτι was part of Aelian's compiling process. As he went through the works he was excerpting and copied down passages, he began each compiled passage with ὅτι. When he came to an especially affective passage, he became so involved in the process of writing it up that he eliminated the particle. In connection with this theory Rudolph suggested that Aelian intended the Varia Historia for his personal use
only—a use which would suggest that the *Varia Historia* was meant to be a commonplace book—and that at his death the work was left unfinished.

Lübbe accepted Rudolph’s explanation of the ἐν but felt that Aelian’s more elaborately written chapters were not sufficiently accounted for by considering them to be simply notes. Lübbe suggested that the *Varia Historia* was substantially and purposively rewritten:

Cum...ex iis quae breviter adnotaverat opus suum conficeret, quae maxime ei arriderent, iis larga manu fucum induxit eaque non solum omni ornatu rhetorico distinxit, sed etiam additamentis auxit; quae vero minus ei placerent, ad ea exornanda minus studii laborisque attulit, sed iisdem fere verbis ea in opus recepit quibus antea breviter consignaverat. (Lübbe 1886: 6)

However, those scholars such as R. Hercher (Aelian’s first Teubner editor) who insisted upon the presence of epitomization in Aelian’s text could argue for epitomization by citing evidence outside of the manuscript tradition of the *Varia Historia*. Citations in several sources from late antiquity reveal the existence of a text rather larger than the text represented in the manuscripts. Stobaeus, whose anthology contains the earliest testimonia to the *Varia Historia*, includes fifteen chapters from our text and five fragments attributed to the *Varia Historia* but not included in our text. Of the fifteen chapters in common, three are nearly identical. Stobaeus cut seven of the present chapters short at the end; but there are ten chapters which Stobaeus presented in a fuller form than occurs in the manuscript tradition. “He doubtless had a fuller text of Ποικίλη ἱστορία than is preserved in our manuscripts,” Dilts concludes (1971: 4), which refuels the arguments for epitomization of the *Varia Historia*. More support for epitomization is offered by the *Suda*, which like Stobaeus expressly attributed to the *Varia Historia* four passages which
do not appear in our text. One further passage may reflect a fuller version of a chapter which our text contains (Dilts 1971: 5-6). Rudolph’s and Lübbe’s attempts to explain away these fuller texts as the results of misattribution and misquotation are not convincing. Proponents of the epitomization of the *Varia Historia* may add two further details to their argument: (1) All existing exemplars of the work lack any indication of a book division or a title for Book 6 (Perizonius 1701: *Praefatio* xxxi; 404), the current edition’s division at this point reflecting the arbitrary division of Book 5 made by Peruscus in his printed edition of 1545 (Dilts 1974: xii). (2) What looks like the note of an epitomator appears in the middle of *Varia Historia* 6.8:

\[\text{Translation:}\]
\[\text{When Bagoas the Egyptian eunuch plotted against him, they say that Artaxerxes surnamed Ochus was killed and chopped into little bits and thrown to the cats. Someone else was given a funeral and buried in his place in the royal tomb. [Ochus’ sacrilegious deeds are discussed, especially those committed against Egypt.] It was not enough for Bagoas just to kill Ochus…}\]

This puzzling addition was bracketed by Dilts in the current Teubner edition; it had been deleted in the previous Teubner by Hercher.

Complicating the issue of textual manipulation is the fact that Aelian’s title occurs in alternate forms. Stobaeus and the *Suda*-author both add to the text’s equivocal status in antiquity by quoting alternative titles for the *Varia Historia*. Stobaeus uses Σύμμικτος ἱστορία five times and ἱστορία three times, while the *Suda* uses both Ποικιλὴ ἱστορία and Ποικὴ ἀφήγησις (Dilts 1971: 5).
The study of Aelian’s relationship to his sources began with Perizonius’ edition of and commentary upon the text of the *Varia Historia*, a work first published in 1701. Perizonius drew his readers’ attention to the close similarities between chapters of the *Varia Historia* and passages in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*. Again it was Rudolph who began a detailed study of this relationship. In the 1884 study discussed above, Rudolph attempted to demonstrate that Aelian had compiled Athenaeus’ material directly, pointing out that the order in which data appeared in the two texts was almost identical and that Aelian had changed only a word or two in his rendition. Rudolph then proceeded to propose other sources for the *Varia Historia* by aligning Aelian’s data with those found in other authors such as Diogenes Laertius and Stephanus Byzantinus. By analyzing the shared data and linking them to sources quoted by these authors, Rudolph proposed a number of sources for the *Varia Historia* in addition to Athenaeus, including Favorinus and Pamphila (1884: 137). Several years later M. Wellmann challenged some of Rudolph’s assumptions in a series of studies analyzing other possible sources for Aelian’s material in both the *Varia Historia* and the *De natura animalium* (Wellmann 1890, 1891a, 1891b, 1892, 1895, 1896, 1916). Unfortunately for our present inquiry, his findings were most applicable to the zoological collection, for which he suggested as sources the lost works of Pamphilus, Sostratus, Juba, and others. However, Wellmann concluded that Aelian had not drawn his material in either of his collections from Athenaeus, as most of Perizonius’ successors had assumed, but rather that both Athenaeus and Aelian had accessed an unknown collection of material and that both had directly transcribed that author or authors (Wellmann 1893: 487).
In the end, an analysis of the sources of any of the miscellanists’ data can only elucidate the extent of scholarship accessible by the miscellanist. Even when the miscellanist quotes his sources, we cannot determine whether he is referring to the source he holds in his hands or to the source which his immediate source held in his. The series of unattested acts of compilation could be extended back for generations. Aelian for example quotes Aristotle and Theophrastus as casually as he states, “It is said that...” Reconstructing the precise bibliography for his or anyone else’s collection is an exercise in both patience and imagination.

Yet this casual attitude on the miscellanist’s part to documentation serves to emphasize his own peculiar attitude to the material he gathers into his collection. The miscellanist is primarily a collector. He does not compile with the intent of opening up and analyzing another’s ideas, but of making them available to his reader. If he specifies his criteria for collection, they may be aesthetic, moral, recreative, all or none of these; but the material which he cuts and pastes must be, for one reason or another, worth remembering. Consequently, if Aelian attaches the name of Theophrastus or Aristotle to data he records, it is because the name adds value and authority to the data. The immediate source of the compilanda is hardly relevant to their value as collectibles.

The problem of determining Aelian’s sources for the Varia Historia does not, then, seriously affect our analysis of the work as an Imperial miscellany. From at least the fifth century AD, when Stobaeus anthologized passages from the Varia Historia, it has itself served as a source for later scholars. We must assume, with Rudolph, a series of
collections of compiled material available to the Imperial period, not only to miscellanists but to any reader interested in research and composition.

Do the problems with the text of the *Varia Historia* affect the present discussion of the miscellany tradition? In this regard one must consider the implications of epitomization, at least insofar as they affect our interpretation of Aelian’s assumptions in creating this work.

In order to argue that in the *Varia Historia* Aelian was consciously working within the generic framework of the miscellany, it is a necessary assumption that he was writing for a reader. In his 1884 study, Felix Rudolph had argued that the *Varia Historia* represented not a finished work but rather the notebook, as it were, in which Aelian had been recording his compilations, itself neither ready nor necessarily intended for publication. There was no way to offer a counter-argument to epitomization for the state of the text, Rudolph maintained, unless we assumed that the

*Variam Historiam non esse opus perfectum, sed materiae collectionem futuris curis reservatam....Iam cur variis suis finem non imposuit [Aelianus]? Scilicet quia fato, antequam ea perficeret, abreptus est. Ergo hoc eius opus ultimum erat aut postumum et post historiam animalium exaratum est. (101-102).*

Rudolph could take this position because the individual chapters of the *Varia Historia* are in general much less structured, less stylistically homogeneous, and less detailed than those of the *De natura animalium*. Unlike the *De natura animalium*, the *Varia Historia* contains no internal cross-referencing to tie its data together and to show that Aelian was controlling the selection and placement of individual chapters. If the *De
natura animalium is taken as an example of Aelian’s writing style, then the Varia Historia is clearly the less carefully finished of the two.

By suggesting that the ὅτι which previous scholars had accepted as a sign of epitomization originated instead in Aelian’s own note-taking process, Rudolph relegated the Varia Historia to the level of a commonplace book. Is it possible to assert that Aelian had not purposely structured his collection in (more or less) the manner in which it has descended through the manuscript tradition?

We have abundant enough references to notebooks and to the process of compilation from the Imperial period to suggest that the keeping of a notebook for one’s private reference, created without the primary intention of publication, was a common enough practice among readers (cf. Steinmetz 1982: 278). Plutarch, for example, when on one occasion pressed for time and unable to create a polished essay, instead accessed his notebooks (ὑπομνήματα) and sent off transcriptions from them.12 When faced with a problem in terminology while studying dialectics, Gellius accessed L. Aelius Stilo’s Commentarium de proloquia in the Bibliotheca Pacis. The work was so succinct and opaque, however, that Gellius had to assume that Aelius’ text was a “reminder to himself” rather than a teaching text (NA 16.8; cf. S. West 1970: 290). Again, at his death Pliny the Elder bequeathed his nephew 160 closely written notebooks, electorum commentarios opistographos quidem et minutissime scriptos; qua ratione multiplicatur hic numerus

12 De tranq. an. 464.Ε.7 46: μὴτε δὲ χρόνον ἔχων, ὡς προηρούμην, γενέσθαι πρὸς οἵς ἐμβουλοῦμεν, συνοπτώσεί τε ἡμῶν ἁγιών ἀρτιών τίποτε ἀθανάτως ἐνδεχόμενον, ἀποδέχόμενον ... Εἰς τῶν ὑπομνήματῶν ἀν ἔμαντο πεποιημένος ἐτύχανον. Not having enough time to make a careful choice, and not being able to stand the thought of you beholding your man coming back with empty hands, I gathered together some things from my notebooks.
notes consisting of compiled passages, written on the front and back of the page and in a very tiny hand—in fact, they were doubled in length that way.(Pliny Ep. 3.5.).

It is as such a notebook, containing material clearly considered valuable but in a condensed, sketchy, or outlined form, that Rudolph would have us interpret the Varia Historia. The lack of prologue and epilogue contributes to this interpretation of the work as a relic of Aelian’s, left inchoate at the compiler’s death.

If the argument based upon the fuller texts of the Varia Historia in Stobaeus and the Suda is not accepted as proof of the epitomization of the text, then the only counter which can be made to Rudolph’s thesis must be based upon internal evidence for intentionality. That is, does Aelian imply in his chapters the presence of a reader and a desire to communicate with him?

As I shall attempt to demonstrate in Chapter 5 below, such intentionality can be traced both in the structuring of individual chapters of the Varia Historia as well as in the positioning of chapters within books. Despite the evidence for tampering with the text, which following Dilts I attribute to the hand of one or more epitomators, enough of the internal patterning of Aelian’s work is in place to reveal that Aelian was compiling his material and addressing himself to a specific kind of reader.

Scholarship Addressing the Varia Historia, the Imperial Miscellany Tradition, and Paideia

As I have attempted to point out, scholarship devoted to Aelian and the Varia Historia has been focused upon the text and its sources. Studies of the literature of the Second Sophistic, on the other hand, have had to include Aelian and his collections in a survey of the second and third centuries AD. How then has modern scholarship assessed Aelian’s literary achievement in relation to contemporary authors?
In this regard, two questions complicate an adequate assessment of Aelian’s work:

1. Is every writer whose work consists primarily of “recycled” compiled material to be included in one general assessment?

2. Is such a work as Aelian’s able to be assessed as a piece of literature?

Making paideia accessible to others is the goal of the miscellany author, but it is a goal shared as well by many other writers of this period. Here we must make a broad distinction between the compilator whose material is process-oriented and him whose collection is data-based.

The former category includes authors of *artes*, τέχναι, and encyclopaedias, and here may be mentioned by way of example Philostratus’ *De arte gymnastica*, [Plutarch]’s *De musica*, Martianus Capella’s *Nuptiae*, and the fragments of Varro’s *Disciplinae*. These technical exposés were intended to summarize the processes and the content of the arts which made up the ἐγκύκλιος παίδεια or general liberal education, becoming increasingly standardized during this period (Hadot 1984:99-100). Although these works could contain various forms of information in their discussion of the origins and development of individual *artes*, their primary goal remained the exposition of procedure.

The data-based collection may be termed “polymathic.” They cover a wide area of intellectual interests. In attempting to distinguish among works so diverse as for example Lucian’s *Demonax*, Diogenes Laertius’ *Vitae philosophorum*, and the lexica of Phrynichus, Moeris, and Harpocration, the author’s assumptions about his reader’s needs provide the most efficient means of distinguishing among these paideia collections.

---

13 The importance and assessment of polymathia during the Imperial period will be discussed in Chapter 2 below.
Thus we may eliminate from the present discussion of the Imperial miscellany such works as the Atticizing lexica and commentaries on specific authors, as well as literary works which were primarily referential and exegetical, intended to be consulted as aids to the reading of canonic authors or as authorities in some area of traditional literature. But even after such a categorization, there still remain a considerable number of authors whose works consist primarily of compiled data.

At this point, authors of modern assessments of Imperial literature have selected, from this still very broad spectrum of authors, those who for whatever reason strike the modern scholar as particularly worthy of note.

In the *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, Schmid distinguished the literature of the Imperial period formally, between poetry and prose. Having among the prose authors separated out the epideictic orators (including Lucian and Philostratus), he then divided up the remaining authors among those whose subjects were broadly historical in the modern sense (including geographers, ethnographers, and paradoxographers), and philosophical. Schmid was compelled to create a special section for a discussion of Aelian's *Varia Historia* and Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, a section which he entitled "The Buntschriftstellerei of the Sophists."

In this section of his study, Schmid attempted to analyze, categorize and understand the works of Aelian and Athenaeus.

Schon in der hellenistischen Periode bemerkt man ein Bestreben, bunte, insbesondere auch abgelegenen Wissensstoff, der bei den Forschungen der Fachgelehrten abfiel, zu Unterhaltungszwecken zusammenzustellen. ... Die Neusophistik hat sich dieses Gebiets bemächtigt, um der zwanglosen Stoffanreihung auch eine zwanglose oder zwanglos sein sollende sprachlich-stilistische
Einkleidung zu geben in [der] neumodischen αφέλεια (1924: 785-786)

Having offered a general introduction to this category of writers, Schmid went on to sketch Aelian’s biography and then to assess his writings.

Was wir von Aelianus besitzen, sind Auszüge teils geschichtlicher teils naturwissenschaftlich-paradoxographischer Art. An Kritik gegenüber seinen Vorlagen denkt er nicht ernstlich. Ihm ist es bloss um pikanten Inhalt, um Stilkunste im Sinn der modernen αφέλεια um eine gewisse erbaulich moralistisch-mystische Tünte zu tun (786-787)

Schmid then summarized Wellman’s work, referred to above, on Aelian’s sources.

Several peculiarities arise in the course of Schmid’s summary of “Buntschriftstellerei.” We are, for example, told of the connections between paradoxography, mythography (as represented by Ptolemy Chennus), λύσεις-collections (Plutarch’s Quaestiones conviviales), and the miscellany, although these categories of scholarship have quite distinct traditions of their own. We are reminded that all of these works consist of data uncritically gathered and artlessly put together, yet told of the “artificially informal” style which the miscellanist purposely assumes.

All of the main points about Aelian’s work which Schmid makes in the Geschichte der griechischen Literatur are touched upon in the section devoted to “applied” rhetoric in Reardon’s Courants litteraires grecs des IIe et IIIe siècles après JC. We find here the same insistence upon Aelian’s carelessness and artificiality, supplemented by a seemingly gratuitous desire to ridicule what Reardon believes is Aelian’s purpose in writing.
Reardon focused his discussion upon the *De natura animalium*. In describing the *De natura animalium* he states that

Cet...ouvrage est muni lui aussi d’un thème (on ne peut pas parler d’une structure) censé, selon l’auteur, justifier l’assemblage de ces curiosités saugrenues .... Nous avons droit à bien des bizarrerries...On est heureux de constater qu’il ne s’efforce pas de tirer trop de conclusions, mais se contente, la plupart du temps, du rôle de conteur. Dans l’histoire variée, il n’y a même pas d’excuse [i.e. presumably Aelian does not have a “theme” which justifies the quality of the compiled data] .... En somme, Elien ne tient pas trop, malgré ses pretensions, à développer un thème; les faits divers font son affair....Il veut plaire et (à sa façon) instruire; bref, il veut amuser. Notons qu’il croit le faire en employant un “style simple,” mais en fait son *apheléia* est très artificielle et plutôt fâcheuse. A condition de le lire par petites quantités, il est assez attachant. Mais il n’est pas sérieux ... sauf ... à ses propres yeux. (1971: 225-226)

Although he does not discuss his reasons for doing so, Reardon appears to dismiss the value of a miscellaneous collection of data (“il n’y a pas d’excuse”). Basing his general conclusions, as Schmid had done, upon the work on animal ethnology and applying them indiscriminately, Reardon repeats Schmid’s pejorative dismissal of Aelian’s work as “entertainment.” Yet he does not specify the manner in which these data, which are admitted to be “absurd,” “oddities,” and “curiosities,” can be expected to entertain. Reardon types Aelian as a “storyteller,” yet does not specify the difference (if indeed he recognizes one) between an anecdote (which is a true narrative) and a story (which need not be “true” in the historical sense).

14 Indeed, in his two-page discussion of Aelian’s work he quoted only once from one chapter of the *Varia History* -- the first chapter of the first book -- which raises the question of the extent to which he had examined the collection.
Given such assessments by Schmid and Reardon, it is not surprising that Anderson, in his 1993 survey of the literature of the Second Sophistic, should dismiss Aelian and his work in a very succinct manner. Of the miscellany he states,

Manuals of *Variae Historiae* and *Mirabilia* were at best the scrapbooks, and at worst the scrapheaps, of the educated. But pedantic trivia could acquire an entertainment value of their own (193).

Again, the categories of scholarship are mixed: is a paideia collection here seen as a technical “manual” to be used in a process-oriented educational experience? Is the paradox collection in fact the same as a miscellany? And how can “pedantic trivia” be entertaining? Anderson suggests that Aelian is incapable of understanding the value of his compiled data.

The least engaging writers are those who...often seem unaware of the real potential of the basic ingredients [drawn from paideia] and combine sophistic materials with naive moral platitude ... as in the case of Aelian (*ibid.*:188).

Anderson repeats Reardon’s attribution of naïveté to Aelian, but does not suggest the possibility that this is an affected simplicity rather than a basic simple-mindedness.

Is it possible to account for the three elements of disparity of treatment and content, entertainment potential, and naïveté, which Schmid, Reardon, and Anderson have isolated in their critiques of “Buntschriftstellerei”- authors and of Aelian in particular, by seeing these qualities as genre-bound rather than as faults of taste, judgment, or intellect?

In fact, studies of individual figures have proved more fruitful in this regard than have the surveys of literature. Peter Steinmetz’ 1982 analysis of the Latin authors of the second century AD, for example, contains a sensitive analysis of Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae.*
Although Steinmetz reviews the Greek miscellanists in what are essentially Schmid’s terms, when he comes to consider Gellius’ achievement in the *Noctes Atticae* he finds more specific and positive qualities to emphasize: a sense of focus and direction in terms of the reader and the reader’s needs (279), and a concern with providing means for the correct use of the reader’s leisure (290), in a careful structuring of material within chapters and of chapters within books (281-287).

Steinmetz considered Gellius’ achievement in the *Noctes Atticae* to be substantially different from that of the Greek miscellanists.

In der Auswahl des Stoffes, in der Auswahl der Exzerpte und Notizen möchte sich Gellius aber von den Gepflogenheit der Buntschriftsteller unterscheiden (280).

In adopting this position, Steinmetz was taking his cue from Gellius himself, who in the prologue to the *Noctes Atticae* complains of the lack of discrimination in selection of data shown by early miscellanists, both Greek and Roman. As I shall attempt to demonstrate in Chapter 2, however, Gellius did not differ qualitatively from the authors he rejected, but rather codified in his prologue the generic features of the miscellany as it was known to readers of the Imperial period.

In specifying Gellius’ goal as one of providing a “Wissenschaftspropaedeutic” (279), Steinmetz identified a quality apparent in all polymathic Imperial collections (cf. for example Pausanias 3.18.10), yet which is especially pertinent to the miscellany because of the miscellanist’s peculiar relationship with his reader. As Steinmetz suggested in the case

\[15\text{ “Vorstufen dieser Gattung finden sich...in den Sammelwerken...des aristotelischen und theophrastischen Peripatos...lehrreiche Unterhaltungsbücher...wird das Sensationelle (das paradoxon) zur Unterhaltung des Lesers genutzt...man dieses Unsystematische und dieses durch immer neuen Themen aus den verschiedensten Bereichen den Leser Verlockende also wichtigste Merkmale der Buntschriftstellerei ansah” (275-276).} \]
of Gellius, and as I shall attempt to demonstrate in the case of Aelian, the miscellanist conveys relevant information at the same time that he, and sometimes the characters in the material he conveys, model the appropriate way in which the data are to be received and applied to life situations. Relevancy and application are the two major concerns, then, of the miscellanist, and both depend upon the miscellanist's right relationship to paideia.

In this regard, recent scholarship analyzing the attitudes toward and transmission of paideia during the Imperial period throws light upon the miscellanist's position in the cultural tradition. Whether they concern individual authors, genres, or general cultural movements, all such studies must address the primacy of paideia in all areas of Imperial culture, especially the conveyance of paideia and the manner in which it provided the "cultural ecology" of the Imperial period (Anderson 1993: 242).

It is certain that the archaizing environment of second- and third-century literature and culture lies at the base of all interpretations of the period's cultural achievement.

Il n'y a pas de siècle qui soit plus conscient de la tradition que ne l'est le deuxième, et l'on ne devrait l’étudier autrement qu’en fonction de cette conscience (Reardon 1971: 5).

Yet in the process of emphasizing this pervasive importance of tradition-based paideia, it is possible to overlook the fact that literature did have a connection with daily existence, that the educated reader and writer during the early Empire had lives in the everyday world, to which they were expected to give their attention and energy. And although it is indeed true that the Imperial authors do not consider rhetoric-inspired literature the proper venue for a discussion or analysis of contemporary events, concerns, and circumstances (Schmid 1924: 666-667; Reardon 1971: 3-4), this convention does not
prevent literature from reflecting, however indirectly, the individual author’s and reader’s bonds with the quotidian (cf. Bompaire 1958: 477; Steinmetz 1982: 119, 289; Kaster 1989: 13-14).

It is in this area of interface between the paideia conveyed by a polymathic collection and the individual’s incorporation of paideia into his life in the present that the miscellany must be encountered. Therefore those recent studies of the Imperial period which have focused upon the place of education in Imperial society are especially pertinent here. Two works in particular may be mentioned.

H.I. Marrou’s 1938 study of depictions of paideia on Imperial sepulchral monuments directly addresses the role of education in the life of the individual. In Μουσικός ὄνημ, Marrou describes a social élite of educated and privileged individuals held together by a common culture acquired exclusively through the study of literature and the artes, and dominated by archaism of language and intellectual stance.

Recent studies by R. Kaster, building upon this conception of paideia’s social and spiritual primacy, emphasize the ideal formative function of a literary education in the moral life of the individual during the Imperial period. In his 1980 study of Macrobius’ dramatization of the grammarian Servius in the Saturnalia, for example, Kaster analyzed the way in which Servius’ attitude toward paideia (verecundia) mirrored the attitudes of the creators of paideia (e.g. Vergil) and of the current social order itself as reflected in the participants of the Saturnalian discussions. In addition, the Saturnalia became as a whole a kind of model of the ideal working of paideia.

The values and behavior elaborated in the dialogue become the well-spring of the dialogue’s substance. Macrobius chose to make a virtue out of a fact of life: the fragmentation of knowledge...is
redeemed here, not because knowledge is coordinated and redirected toward some new synthesis, but because it is endowed with the unity of the social order. The behavior of the participants goes beyond the polished good manners of *urbanitas*, to become inseparable from, and as important as, the information conveyed (248).

In *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity*, Kaster further developed his interpretation of the social and moral qualities imparted by and through paideia. Analyzing the role played in the establishment of a political and social elite by a traditional literary education, his work provides what I believe to be solid support for my interpretation of the Imperial miscellany as a *vademecum* for the proper utilization of that education.

My task in the present study is to position Aelian’s *Varia Historia* within the spectrum of demands made upon paideia and its transmission. As I have attempted to show in this review of recent scholarship, students of Imperial culture have demonstrated that paideia is not only a conveyance of data or of process, but entails a moral and ethical formation as well—in short, the creation of a human soul able to react correctly to the demands made by society. Aelian and the Imperial miscellany play a role in this transmission, but have been marginalized and, I believe, partly misunderstood in their relationship to paideia and the social demands made upon it.

Yet this inability correctly to assess the miscellany occasions difficulties with the further assessment of the entire literary experience of the culture. This is especially observable when the literature is seen as either escapist or even illusory (cf. Bowie
Anderson’s puzzlement in the face of one Imperial genre—the declamation—helps to explain his out-of-hand rejection of Aelian.\(^\text{16}\)

> It is difficult to arbitrate about the success of it all, since the criteria themselves are so elusive. But if the goal was to pretend to be in the fifth century BC, however contrived or perverse such an ideal might seem to us, then the Second Sophistic was well on its way to achieving it. If the aim was to invest present literature with a sense of continuity with the classical past, then again the illusion was largely successful (237).

As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, one of the means to an understanding of the interconnectedness of this literature, polymathic and otherwise, lies in determining the relationship not only between the composer and paideia, but between the composer and reader and between the reader and his reception of paideia. The following chapters discuss these relationships as they appear in the generic framework of the Imperial miscellany.

\(^\text{16}\) "It seem misleading to try to pull all the surviving material together, call it literature, and impugn its quality on that account. For a start we ought to be able to put aside material that seems purely preparatory, such as Aelian’s *Varia Historia*, or even for that matter Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*, which are in the nature of an informal commonplace book" (*ibid.* 242).
Chapter 2

Compilator and Compilanda

Before Aelian's *Varia Historia* can be analyzed as an Imperial miscellany, the generic qualities of the miscellany must be examined and a framework established within which to view Aelian's collection. This framework has three aspects which may be classified as: the compilator's attitude toward his subject matter (paideia); the compilator's relationship with his reader, including his conception of the reader's needs in the acquisition of paideia; the relationship between paideia and entertainment, including the role of style and structure in providing entertainment.

The present chapter deals with the first of these aspects. Here it is my purpose to demonstrate the following:

1. For Aelian and other Imperial compilators, paideia has two components, both of which must be addressed by the system of education:
   a. paideia-sanctioned skills, the τέχναι or *artes*.
   b. data, which we may summarize as *polymathia*.

2. The acquisition of paideia involves two successive processes, each demanding self-conscious zeal and dedication (σπουδή or *diligentia*) on the part of the reader/scholar:
   a. a formal literary education under a γραμματικός and perhaps a σοφιστής;
   b. the self-education of the educated adult, the ὁ λος *πεπαιδευμένος*.

3. The miscellany is created by a ὁ λος *πεπαιδευμένος* who, through his successful completion of formal education and his present correct approach to self-education, is in a
position to provide his reader with two valuable things: relevant πολυμαθία, and a good model for paideia acquisition.

Paideia as Education

Up to this point I have been using the term “paideia” in the sense of “liberal education,” “cultural tradition,” and “literature-based education.” This Greek concept now requires some unraveling.

No single word in English covers this range of meanings. “Culture,” for example, places an emphasis upon the contents at the expense of the process, while “education” shifts the weight in the other direction. And neither “culture” nor “education” implies the indoctrination in right values and social forms which “paideia” contains.

To position the miscellanist’s activity within the literary production of the Imperial period, however, all three aspects of paideia must be borne in mind: the process of acquisition, the contents of this process, and the results of the process through the acquisition of content.

The extent to which the miscellanist’s selections reflect the value system imparted by paideia, as well as the manner in which the miscellany furthers the process of education itself, will be dealt with in later sections of this chapter. The question which concerns me here is the content of paideia during the Imperial period. How is the material which the miscellanist compiles and preserves related to the subject matter of education?
The question is an important one in determining the generic framework of the Imperial miscellany. The scholarly assessments of the miscellany examined in the previous chapter emphasize the miscellany’s instructive or at least scholarly aspect.\footnote{e.g. Reardon: “[Aelian] veut plaire et ... instruire”; Schmid: “abgelegenen Wissensstoff, der bei den empirischen Forschungen der Fachgelehrten abfiel...”; Steinmetz: “lehrreiche Unterhaltungsbücher”; cf p. 33-38 above.}

Statements by the miscellanists themselves emphasize the pedagogic value of their material as well. Clement speaks of the ωφέλεια (Strom. 1.1.2) which he hopes men will derive from his undertaking. In the prologue to the De natura animalium Aelian prides himself on the ἀξίον μάθημα constituting his collection. Gellius’ assertion of educative value is the most explicit.

Ea ... sola accepi, quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestam eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem ... ducent aut homines ... a turpi agrestique rerum atque verborum imperitia vindicarent. \textit{(NA Prol. 12)}

1 included only those items which would direct ready and prepared minds to the proper desire for learning and a study of the useful arts, or would protect men from a shameful and boorish ignorance of language and information.

Gellius had already identified this material as anything which he had found to be memoratu dignum \textit{(Prol. 2)}; later in his prologue he adds to this general kind of material notice of another sort which he has included and which he requests his reader to treat with indulgence as it is a little more difficult to read and understand,

paeca quaedam scrupulosa et anxia vel ex grammatica vel ex dialectica vel ex geometrica, quodque erunt item paucula remotionaria super auguris iure et pontificis.

\textit{Some few items rather thorny and troublesome, from grammar, dialectic or geometry, some things -- even more widely ranging -- drawn, for example, from the law of the augur or pontiff. (NA Prol. 3)}
Gellius thus divides his paideia excerpts into two categories: those which are related to the *artes*, which may be a little challenging; and those which are in general worth remembering. In regard to the latter, more diverse kinds of excerpts, Gellius distinguishes his selection as represented in the *Noctes Atticae* from the miscellanies created by less discriminating compilators, quoting in judgment Heraclitus’ adage πολυμαθία νόν οὖ διδάσκει (*Prol.* 12). Gellius implies that νοῦς results from his collection, while the collections of other miscellanists foster only πολυμαθία.

Thus in terms of data which are pedagogically beneficial we are given a choice between those related to technical subjects and providing instruction in the *artes*, and those which, while not being related to the *artes*, yet run the risk of contributing to a mere πολυμαθία.

Is Gellius dismissing πολυμαθία as a desideratum for the miscellany? How does the material which Gellius relates, in its use of anecdote, chreia, and thematic list having many points in common with Aelian’s *Varia Historia*,\(^2\) avoid being labelled as polymathic? Does πολυμαθία have positive aspects, which Gellius has chosen to overlook here? Or is πολυμαθία a general risk run by all miscellanists in gathering relevant data, a quality or state to be avoided at all cost?

In fact, the term πολυμαθία was modified somewhat in connotation over the centuries. Gellius had tapped into its earliest occurrence when he cited Heraclitus, but Stobaeus quotes similar usages in Pythagoras\(^3\) and Democritus,\(^4\) suggesting that among

---

\(^2\) e.g. *VF* 8.12 and *NA* 8.9; *VF* 9.20 and *NA* 19.1.

\(^3\) τὸ δὲ πεπανδεδεχθαι οὐκ ἐν πολυμαθείᾳ λόγων ἀκαλήψει (*Stob.* 2.31.96). According to Diogenes Laertius 8.6, however, Heraclitus criticized Pythagoras’ polymathic scholarship: Πυθαγόρης Μηθόδρχου ἱστορίαν ἐποίησε τούτον σοφίην, πολυμαθείην, κακοτεχνίην.
philosophers there was a need to distinguish data (derived from research or from formal/sophistic education?) from wisdom (derived from one’s aristocratic nature? from experience? from age and virtue?); for the sixth and fifth centuries, the scrutiny of the wellsprings of excellence is a frequent literary *topos* (cf. Jaeger 1944: 5-14).

Plato and Platonic dialogues continue the negative assessment of πολυμαθία. At *Laws* 811, for example, occurs a discussion of the role of literature in the classroom, and whether a lot of time devoted to learning a number of poets fosters a child’s social and moral development, εἰ μέλει τις ἄγονθος ἡμῖν καὶ σοφός ἐκ πολυπειρίας καὶ πολυμαθίας γενέσθαι whether one might become good and wise from learning many skills and many things. The conclusion is that total ignorance is a better alternative than a polymathy associated with the overlearning of a great number and variety of poets and the incorrect learning of mathematics (819a).

In the Platonic *Amatores*, Socrates undertakes to demonstrate that φιλοσοφία is not the same thing as πολυμαθία. In the process he demonstrates that the polymath relegates himself to a position of inferiority by trying to *do* too many branches of knowledge.

They are not philosophers, nor is this pursuit of the arts and crafts, this life of prying and peering and learning many data, philosophy. No, rather it is something blameworthy, and those who have devoted themselves to the arts are called low technicians.

---

4 πολλοὶ πολυμαθές νοῦν οὐκ ἔχουσιν (Stob. 3.14.8).
The author of *Alcibiades II* likewise links together skills or processes (πολυτεχνία) and πολυμαθία (147a).

These passages do not suggest that πολυμαθία means learning quantities of data, the meaning which Gellius seems to convey in his use of πολυμαθία. Much learning in Academic terms appears rather to be the learning of many skills, ἐπιστήμαι and τέχναι.

Hippias, the polymath of the *Hippias Major*, is famed for his acquisition not so much of information as of τέχναι: arithmetic and geometry, “grammar” (rhetoric and poetry), music, astronomy (285b); we lack only dialectic to have the full battery of the seven liberal arts canonized in late antiquity. But these were not the only techniques which Hippias professed. According to the *Hippias Minor*, he was also an adept at jewelry-making, pottery, woodworking, cobbling, weaving, and macramé (368b). Granted that the author of these dialogues heaps together such sophistic accomplishments as rhetoric with the banausic crafts with some polemical intent, we can still see the technical, process-oriented side of traditional Greek education emphasized here.⁵

There is, however, one topic Hippias professes in this dialogue which does not represent a technical skill. This is his ἀρχαιολογία, information on genealogies and the foundations of colonies (*Hipp. maj.* 285b). Hippias insists that these data are real crowd-pleasers:

> οὐλήβδην πάσης τῆς ἀρχαιολογίας ἡδίστα ἀκρωτίναι, ὥστε ἐγώνε δι' αὐτούς ἣνάγκασαι ἐκμεμαθηκέναι τε καὶ ἐκμεμελετηκέναι πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα.

*What they altogether most dearly love to listen to is every kind of discussion about the past. They’re the reason why I’ve taken such pains thoroughly to research and master all such matters.*

⁵ Apuleius (*Flor.* 9.36) praises Hippias as *homo multiscius*, but carefully segregates his rhetorical skill from his skill in crafts: *quim ipse Hippian laudo, sed ingenii eius fecunditatem malo doctrinae quam supellectilis multisformi instrumento aemulari; fateorque me sellharias quidem aries minus callere.*
Such information, though it draws closer to Gellius’ assessment of πολυμαθία as content-oriented, is yet linked here with process. Its acquisition is a matter of learning by heart, and it is associated with the skill of public speaking. It is precisely this thorough learning of poetry (ὀλον ποιητάς ἐκμαθάνειν) that, Plato insists, exposes children to the dangers of becoming polymaths (Leg. 811a.1).

Xenophon too presents Hippias as the model polymath. At Mem 4.4.6 Hippias’ polymathy is again a kind of appendage to his rhetoric. And here again occurs the suggestion that πολυμαθία is linked, like ἀρχαιολογία, with content or data. Socrates is the speaker:

"Not only am I always saying the same things, but I’m always discussing the same subjects as well. But you, perhaps because you are a polymath, never say the same things about the same subjects."
"As a matter of fact, I really make an effort," he said, "always to have something new to say."

Yet this πολυμαθία too has negative connotations. Hippias always has something new to say because he knows a lot of things; Socrates always says the same thing because, it is implied, he knows the truth.

There is an ambivalence about the assessment of πολυμαθία in a quotation attributed to Aristotle by Plutarch (Quaest. conv. 734d5): τὴν πολυμάθειαν πολλὰς ταραχὰς ποιεῖν. Polymathy causes much confusion. As I shall discuss below, the transition from negative to positive πολυμαθία occurs during the Hellenistic period, when scholarship is deeply influenced by Peripatetic activity (see below p. 84 footnote 31). Does Aristotle
view the “confusion” arising from πολυμαθία as a necessary preliminary to further positive research and synonymous with ἀπορία, or does he interpret it as a negative, troubling state which prevents one from reaching clarity of vision? Either interpretation suggests that πολυμαθία is more “information” than “versatility,” especially given the empirical orientation of Aristotle’s own research.

Less ambiguous than Aristotle’s assessment of πολυμαθία but still expressing its author’s awareness of polymathy’s ambivalent qualities is a statement which Stobaeus attributes to Anaxarchus:

πολυμαθία κάρτα μὲν ὑφελέει, κάρτα δὲ βλάπτει τὸν ἔχοντα. ὑφελέει μὲν τὸν δεξίον ἄνδρα, βλάπτει δὲ τὸν ῥηθικὸς φωνεύντα πάν ἔτος καὶ ἐν πάντι δήμῳ.

Polyphony both benefits and harms the polymath. It benefits the clever man, but harms the man who speaks indiscriminately. (Flor. 3.34.19)

Polymathy is a two-edged weapon, one which requires respect and careful handling.

Positive assessments of πολυμαθία begin as early as Isocrates.

έαν ἥς φιλομαθής, ἔσει πολυμαθής, ἀ μὲν ἑπίστασαι, ταῦτα διαφύλαττε ταῖς μελέταις, ἀ δὲ μή μεμάθηκας, προσλάμβανε ταῖς ἑποτήμοις.

If you love knowledge, you will be a polymath. Preserve what you already understand through practice, and acquire through study what you have not learned. (Ad Dem. 18.1)

In a context of rhetorical efficacy, the emphasis still seems focused upon skills acquisition.

But with Strabo we find πολυμαθία as skills definitely giving way to πολυμαθία as data. Information in the form of factual details is needed by the man undertaking to study geography, and πολυμαθία is the knowledge associated with the empirical researcher.

πολυμάθεια, δι’ ἥς μόνης ἐφικέσθαι τοῦτο τοῦ ἔργου δυνατόν, οὐκ ἄλλου τινός ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ τὰ θεία καὶ τὰ ἄνθρωποι ἐπιβλέποντος (1.1.1).
Polymathy is the only means of accomplishing this work, and is the function of none but the man whose view encompasses the whole range of heaven and earth.

Strabo would increase this treasury of knowledge by adding, basically, all the information in the world.

To such a quantity of knowledge let us add research into terrestrial phenomena such as animals, plants, and the like, all the flora and fauna which the land and sea produce for good or ill.

Although Strabo traces such comprehensive factual knowledge back to Homer (1.2.20), we are dealing here with a concept of knowledge more empirical, more open-ended, more data-based than that discussed by Plato and Xenophon. Πολυμαθεία is more inclusive than the variety of poems and poets in Plato’s Laws, more empirical than the learning of skills in Xenophon, the [Plato] of Alcibiades and Amatores, and Isocrates.

It is this positive assessment of data which determines Imperial uses of the term πολυμαθεία. Unless an Imperial author is arguing for a specific philosophical or theological position,⁶ the word denotes a valuable and respectable trait, applicable both to scholars and paideia-icons alike. So Aristotle, Posidonius, Varro, Cicero, and a series of others are labelled πολυμαθής or πολυμαθέστατος by Plutarch and Athenaeus.⁷ But Athenaeus also extends the epithet to literary figures. At 1.24.28 he types Odysseus as the ideal polymath.

αἱ Σειρήνες δὲ ἄδουσι τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ τὰ μάλιστα αὐτῶν τέρψοντα καὶ πολυμαθεία λέγουσαι. ἵσμεν γὰρ, φασι, τὰ τ ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα γένηται ἐν χθονὶ πολυβοτηρῇ.

---

⁶ e.g. Philo De congressu 20.4, De somn. 1.206.1; Aristides 12.82.30; at Sacra parallela 96.93 Joannes Damascenus compares the pious individuals who are δικαίωμαθεῖς to the hypocritical πολυμαθεῖς.

⁷ e.g. Athenaeus 9.58.35, 11.112.41; Plutarch Luc. 22.2, Crass. 3.6, Comp. Dem. et Cic.1.3.
The Sirens sing to Odysseus those things which especially delight him, communicating with him through polymathy. "We know," they say, "many things, all the information in the world."

For later writers such as Eustathius, Photius, and the Suda-author, πολυμαθία and its related adjectives and adverbs are used consistently as terms of praise.

Although Gellius had insisted upon rejecting πολυμαθία as not fostering νοῦς in his miscellany, elsewhere πολυμαθία is found as a positive term in reference to miscellanies, sometimes used by miscellanists of their own work. Photius, for example, praises Sopater's twelve-volume Εκλογικι διαφοροι as a work both learned and convenient, εἰς πολυμαθίαν ἐκ τοῦ ἐτοίμου (Bib. cod. 161.105a). Clement describes the Stromateis as τῇ πολυμαθίᾳ σωματοποιούμενοι (Strom. 1.2.20).

When we examine the kind of material which miscellanists consider valuable for inclusion in their collections, we find that in fact it is all -- the contents of the Noctes Atticae as well --able to be considered πολυμαθία, as material over and above what the reader is expected to have acquired in the course of a more or less standard literary education. As a data-base, πολυμαθία represents material which builds upon a foundation in the artes, but includes, as well, information drawn from the paideia tradition and contributing, in the miscellanist's view, to the reader's intellectual improvement. It is πολυμαθία in this sense which is conveyed by the Imperial miscellany. How then is it seen as relevant and improving to the reader? What is the relationship between πολυμαθία and Imperial paideia?

An analysis of the relationship between this positive, relevant πολυμαθία and paideia during the Imperial period has two components:
1. The relationship between paideia and the text as an archive for data. The miscellanist creates an archival text through the selective manipulation of earlier texts which themselves stand in varying relationship to the literary tradition. What relevant data can such an archival text convey? Does such an archive mirror, supplement, or interpret paideia?

2. The purpose which text-based πολυμαθία serves in the enculturation process. What purpose does a data-base serve in paideia transmission? How is the miscellanist’s reader expected to utilize relevant πολυμαθία?

Paideia and the Archive

Greek paideia had always represented a blend of instruction in process and content, with literature, including literature set to music and performed in a community venue, as the vehicle of both. In his 1963 study of the effects of literacy upon classical Greek thought, Havelock coined the term “tribal encyclopedia” to denote this pedagogic quality of archaic Greek poetry. Poetry was encyclopedic in the sense that it transmitted all the cultural lore which this society deemed indispensable.

Poetic passages could enculturate an audience in data such as that conveyed by the Iliad’s Catalogue of Ships and the Odysseus’ Pageant of Heroines in the Underworld. M.L. West refers to such poetic material as “elementary brute facts” (1985:7), a term representing data which we, with differing concepts of literary decorum, prefer to store away as “history” rather than as literature.

But peoples for whom written records play a smaller part or no part at all, and with whom the scientific study of history is underdeveloped, often think very differently. They delight in factual knowledge for its own sake, especially where it relates to people
and places beyond their own limits of time and space (West 1985: 8).

It is this knowledge "for its own sake" which will in the Imperial period find a partial counterpart in the πολυμαθία of the miscellanists.

In these early centuries there exists another kind of knowledge codified in the "tribal encyclopedia" of oral literature and passed down through the generations. This consists of specific instructions on how to do things: how to sacrifice to the Olympian gods, how to win a chariot race, how to build a proper plow, when and whom to marry. And not only does the poetic literature provide a vehicle for these empirical tasks; it also provides instructions and proper models for behavior. Here I refer not only to the wisdom of proverb and saw contained in Hesiod, but to the moral content of elegiac and lyric verse and to the kind of character models provided by epic and lyric poetry as well (cf. Dover 1993: 14-15).

So long as community venues exist for the transmission of paideia, literacy does not substantially affect this balance of fact, process, and value judgment in the content of the cultural tradition. When, that is, public performances of poetry regularly instantiate paideia on the community level, all three aspects are experienced by and transmitted to the community as cultural consumer. These are the conditions prevailing during the sixth and fifth centuries BC, at a time when the poet can be considered διδάσκαλος, speaking directly to the Greek community at all levels of sophistication. It is this quality of classical literature which Reardon labels "la largeur de vue des siècles de la polis" (1971:3). We form the impression that the authors of this literature communicate directly with the
community, that the community responds to the author’s words directly and homogeneously.

During the centuries of the Imperial period audiences are still capable of responding under certain circumstances to ancient paideia. From Prusa to Carthage, people gather in great numbers to hear lecturing philosophers reiterate the values and declaiming sophists recreate the contents and processes enshrined in the epic and tragic poets. Judging from reports of such performances of paideia, half a millenium of wars and social change have made no substantial alteration in the way Greeks respond to their tradition.

By the second half of the first century AD declamation seems to have moved into the first rank of cultural activities and acquired an unprecedented and almost unintelligible popularity .... Its practitioners ... displayed their skill to enraptured or critical audiences, not only in their native places, but throughout the Greek world .... The favored themes of the sophists harked back constantly to the classical period. (Bowie 1970: 5-6)

Yet Plutarch witnesses to the importance of literacy in acquiring paideia, and to the fundamentality of the written text: ὅργανον τῆς παιδείας ἢ χρήσις τῶν βιβλίων. Books are the tool-box of paideia. (De lib. educ. 8b). Even more explicitly does Diodorus emphasize literacy not only as the sine qua non of all paideia, but as absolutely essential to civilized living.

τίς γὰρ ἂν ἑξιον ἐγκώμιον διάθοιτο τῆς τῶν γραμμάτων μαθῆσεως διά γὰρ τούτων μόνων οἱ μὲν τετελευτηκότες τοῖς ᾿Ωδοὶ διαμηνυμονέονται, οἱ δὲ μακράν τοῖς τόποις διεστώτης τοῖς πλείστοιν ἀπέχουσιν ὡς πλησίον παρεστώσι διὰ τῶν γεγραμμένων ὁμιλοῦν ταῖς τε κατὰ πόλειμον συνθήκαις ἐν ἐθέσειν ἢ βασιλείας πρὸς διαμονήν τῶν ὁμολογίων ἢ ᾧσφάλεια βεβαιοτάτην ἔχει πίστιν · καθόλου δὲ τῶς χαριεστάτας τῶν φρονιμοῦν ἀνδρῶν ἀποφάσεις ἑκαὶ ἑαυτῶν χρησμοῖς, ἐπὶ δὲ φιλοσοφιαῖν καὶ πάσαν παιδείαν μόνη τηρεῖ καὶ τῶς ἐπιγνωμένοις δὲ παραδίδουσιν εἰς ἄξαντα τὸν αἰώνα. διὸ καὶ τοῦ μὲν ζῆν τὴν φύσιν αἰτίαν ὑπολιπτέων, τοῦ δὲ καλῶς ζῆν τὴν ἔκ τῶν γραμμάτων συγκειμένην παιδείαν.
Who could compose an encomium truly worthy of literacy training? Through literacy alone the dead are preserved in the memory of the living, and those who are in very distant places communicate through written documents with those who are far away as though they were very near. When it comes to compacts made between nations or rulers in time of war, that security which arises from a written treaty carries the greatest confidence in terms of the continuation of the agreements. Literacy alone preserves the most pleasing pronouncements of wise men and of divine oracles. Moreover, it hands on uninterrupted to the next generation philosophy and all of culture. Therefore it also follows that while nature must be understood to be the cause of life, that paideia which consists in literacy must be assumed to be the cause of living well. (12.13)

Although paideia for the Imperial period had a performance aspect, its acquisition and transmission are now bound to the written text.

Scholars investigating the growth of literacy in archaic and classical Greece, in comparing the Greek phenomenon with that of other cultures, debate the validity of an “autonomous” as opposed to an “ideological” model of literacy in Greek society (Thomas 1989: 6-26).

In basic terms, the autonomous model of a society’s adoption of literacy attempts to demonstrate that a society’s mental capacities are shaped as a result of its acquisition of literacy. According to this position, literacy calls forth and fosters rationalism, science, logic, and systematic scholarship. Suggested here is a kind of philosophical and philological Darwinism, with the fittest being those most responsive to the mental requirements of literacy acquisition.

The ideological model of literacy, on the other hand, demonstrates how literacy allows a society to develop and foster certain tendencies innate within that society.

The skills and concepts that accompany literacy acquisition, in whatever form, do not stem in some automatic way from the inherent qualities of literacy ... but are aspects of a specific ideology. (Street 1984: 1)
The alphabetization of Greek culture was, according to this view, simply a tool which the Greeks, especially the Athenians, used to pursue certain cultural goals. Thomas focuses upon the opportunities literacy offered the developing Athenian democracy for creating for itself a new "tradition" able to compete with the oral and aristocratic one challenging its legitimacy (cf Thomas 1989: 71ff, 88ff, 108ff).

With the possibility of recording, comparing and preserving cultural material comes the additional mandate of getting recorded data right. Oral traditions can exist in several exclusive versions, all with claims to accuracy; they can all be "right" in the eyes of a society limited to an oral tradition. A society like the fifth- and fourth-century Athenian, which demands accuracy in terms of current social relationships (specifically in terms of establishing Athenian citizenship), may come as well to demand accuracy in the cultural material drawn from the past.

This demand for accuracy based upon written evidence becomes apparent in the Attic orators about the middle of the fourth century. References to archives, to inscriptions, to revelatory documents of various kinds appear in their orations, suggesting that the Athenian citizens as jurists have come to recognize written evidence as conclusive in determining the truth behind oral testimony. In regard to figures and events from the past, the same respect for written evidence can now be seen.

It is no longer enough simply to refer to the achievement of the ancestors, remembered in the old oral traditions. It was more impressive if their achievements could be documented with the written word, in fact by the precise texts of their decrees (Thomas 1989:88).  

---

8 An interesting result of this developing demand for written documentation is the fabrication of documents allegedly from the period of the Persian Wars (Habicht 1961: 13-15). So quickly can a new expectation be catered to.
When we consider the role of the text in paideia transmission, the ideological model of literacy in ancient Greece amounts to this: a scholarly element in the traditional literary culture can be developed to a much more elaborate and detailed extent, for society now sanctions and may even demand the use of written records to validate an oral statement. The text functions as an archive for the storage of a work of literature which before had existed potentially in the memory of the paideia transmitter, actively in the voice of the performer. The potential likewise exists for the manipulation of texts through compilation, epitomization, and interpolation, as well as for the unprogrammatic acquisition of written information for its own sake, i.e. detached from a specific work of literature.

Alphabetic texts in inscriptive form exist in Greece from the end of the eighth century. Scholars refer to the use of writing during the seventh and sixth centuries as “craft literacy,” however. Artisans, perhaps poets, learned to record information for specific purposes. But we are seeking a bond between paideia and a written text. When does paideia archived in a written text begin to enter the Greek community at large? In a sense, the ability to read and write never permeates to a level of general literacy such as we know it in industrialized countries in the twentieth century. Indeed, under the Roman Empire illiteracy throughout the Greek and Roman worlds may have exceeded 70% (Duncan-Jones ap. Kaster 1989:36).

However, evidence, primarily from Athens, for various kinds of writing on papyrus (βιβλία) and for their use in schools in which reading and writing were taught, including the physical representations of the acts of reading from papyrus rolls and writing upon
them, indicates that texts are at least beginning to impact the Greek community by the end of the fifth century BC. Birt's collection of depictions of books and readers in art provides a number of graphic scenes with pedagogic backgrounds. The schoolroom shown on the Duris Cup, for example, depicts a teacher holding up before the viewer a book containing a line of verse, while a young boy stands before him; the child is presumably reciting from memory (Birt 1907: 138 fig. 76). Are such books compilations of traditional poetry? "Originally no doubt they were," Robb suggests, "prepared by, and were a part of, the professional equipment of the paid teachers of the rich" (1994: 186; cf. Turner 1952: 13). The fifth-century Athenian "Sappho Vase" also depicts a figure with a book in hand, this time the poetess (she is identified by the painter) concentrating intently upon a closely written text which she holds propped up in her lap (Birt 1907: 147 fig. 83; cf Turner 1952: 14). Another fifth-century Athenian grave-stele (Birt ibid. 157 fig 90; cf Turner ibid.: 15) shows in deep relief the figure of a fine-looking young man reading a thick book; he sits comfortably on what looks like a low bench, his legs crossed at the ankle, slowly unrolling his text in deep concentration. A small dog lies quietly beneath his chair.

Evidence in fifth-century literature leads to the conclusion that the concept of the textual transmission of relevant data, as well as the importance of reading as a form of communication, is becoming familiar to the community as a whole. Significantly these references occur in a poetic format designed for public performance. Thus Pindar declares at Olympian 10.1, "Read out to me the name of the Olympic victor, Archestratus' son, there in my thoughts where it has been written," while dramatic poetry from the middle of
the fifth century contains references to books and the data stored in them. Aeschylus (Cho. 450, Eum. 275) and Sophocles (Trach. 682, Phil. 1325) refer to an idea written down in one's thoughts, or to a thought written down on a tablet. The author of the Prometheus Bound refers to the "retentive tablets of thought" at 789, and at 460 presents Prometheus discussing his invention of letters. References to texts in Aristophanes are more frequent and explicit. This author assumes that the use of books is so obvious to his audience that it has a humorous aspect. Both the Sausage Seller in the Knights (188/9) and Labes the dog in the Wasps (959/60) can read (though admittedly not very well). In the Frogs, Dionysus reminisces about reading Euripides' Andromeda while serving aboard ship (52/3); and Euripides takes his texts with him into the scales-pan in order to have his literary worth weighed (1409). At Frogs 1113/4 the chorus states that the members of the audience are holding texts during the performance,

ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι,  
βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἑκαστὸς μανθάνει τὰ δεξία.

"They have all seen active duty, each has his book in hand and has exquisite taste" (cf. Turner 1952: 22; Dover 1993: 34-35).

From the closing years of the fifth century come references to a book trade. References to the marketing of texts occur in Plato and Xenophon in connection with accounts of Socrates. In Apology 26D, Socrates, accused by Meletus of believing that the sun is a rock and the moon made of earth, deals with the charge by stating that everyone recognizes such ideas to be those of Anaxagoras, whose works can be bought in the Orchestra for a drachma. At Anabasis 7.5.14, in recounting his army's march through the coastal territory of the "Millet-Eating Thracians," Xenophon describes the scavenging
habits of these people. Treacherous shoals cause merchant ships to run aground and capsize in the area, and the Thracians pillage them and market their booty. Xenophon describes seeing “much furniture, many chests, many written manuscripts” acquired through such activity. Presumably some of the ships wrecked in this part of the Aegean were supplying the local book trade.  

But what information from this period throws light upon the teaching of literacy? We are trying to connect the literary tradition with the text itself, and with the act of accessing paideia in textual form.

In this regard we may consider a statement made at Memorabilia 4.2. Here Xenophon recalls a conversation Socrates had with Euthydemus. The young man was known to be collecting as many texts of learned men as he could find. Socrates mentions that he knows Euthydemus possesses all the poems of Homer, then goes on to inquire what his other books deal with: medicine? architecture? geometry? astronomy? The reference suggests that such subjects were being dealt with in the form of technical manuals or at least anthologies of matter relevant to these skills and available through the book trade (cf Harris 1989: 82), and that Euthydemus was acquiring them with the intent of using them as learning texts. He was looking at books qua texts; not texts as the voices of Homer, Pindar, or Hippocrates, but texts as objects which one can store up for one’s personal consumption at some future date.

9 Although Flory has argued against the use of this passage for evidence for the book trade (1980: 20 note 33), one may counter by asking why the Thracians would have been willing to fight and die for such booty, as Xenophon claims they were, if it consisted only of “business documents, letters, and state papers” of questionable resale value.
In this regard is Thucydides’ statement that he has created in his history a κτήμα ἐξ αἰώνων (1.22), a possession for always, not a Preislied for the moment; “in der Form des geschriebenen und veröffentlichten Buches beabsichtigt er sein Publikum zu erreichen, das Publikum der Mitwelt und einer später Nachwelt” (Kleberg 1967: 5). The text, that is, is not so much a recorded voice as an archive containing important matter able to be stored for later consumption.\(^\text{10}\)

Xenophon emphasizes this aspect of a written text at Memorabilia 1.6.14. Here Socrates is discussing the difference between his relationship with his friends and the sophists’ with their students. Socrates and his associates learn together as friends:

In English:

> Along with my friends I read the treasuries of the wise men of the past, the ones they bequeathed by writing them down in books; and if we find something good, we select it out.

Socrates uses the verb ἐκλέγομαι to select out for oneself. This word can also be translated excerpt; its nominal form will be used as the title of, among other authors’ works, the Eclogae of Stobaeus and Sopater. The text is viewed as a mother-lode of rich ore at the disposal of any reader with the industry to access it. Socrates’ circle is engaged in the perusal of texts for the purpose of extracting this useful material, precisely the activity which such a later author as Macrobius will describe himself pursuing as he collects the data written up in the Saturnalia (Praef. 2-3).\(^\text{11}\)

---

\(^{10}\) Gellius NA Prol. 21: quasi quoddam litterarum penus.

\(^{11}\) The context of friendly exchange and mutual benefit is important to keep in mind. It will become part of the background to the Imperial miscellanist’s program.
Xenophon provides one last reference to this early textual manipulation. At Symposion 4.27 Charmides is reminding Socrates that he too is subject to strong emotional responses when he is around young men like Critobulus:

αὐτὸν δὲ σε, ἔφη, ἐγὼ εἰδον ναὶ μά τὸν Ἀπόλλων, ὥτε παρὰ τῷ γραμματιστῇ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ βιβλίῳ ἀμφότεροι ἐμαστεύετε τι, τὴν κεφαλὴν πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ τὸν ὦμον γυμνὸν πρὸς γυμνῷ τῷ Κριτοβουλοῦ ὦμω ἔχοντα.

I saw you myself when you were at the schoolteacher's, and the two of you were looking something up in a book, your head next to his head and your bare shoulder next to his.

Plato's, Xenophon's, and Thucydides' readers are literate adults. They associate texts with recorded data, and are comfortable with such a form of access and manipulation. But what connection does the text as such a data-vehicle have with the process of childhood education?

The description of early childhood education in Plato's Protagoras is the earliest clear discussion of the subject. The account is focused upon indoctrination in skills: specifically, the acquisition of the techniques of reading and writing, of singing and of playing a musical instrument, and of moving the body rhythmically and effectively. Content in terms of empirical facts disassociated from the activity itself is not even mentioned as an education desideratum.

οἱ δὲ διδάσκαλοι ... ἐπειδὰν αὐ γράμματα μάθωσιν καὶ μέλλωσιν συνήσῃν τὰ γεγραμμένα ... παρατίθεσιν αὐτοίς ἑπὶ τῶν βάθρων ἀναγνώσκειν ποιητῶν ἄγαθῶν ποιήματα καὶ ἐκμαθάνειν ἀναγκάζουσιν .... οἱ τ' αὐ κιθαρισταὶ ... ἐπειδὰν κιθαρίζειν μάθωσιν, ἀλλων αὐ ποιητῶν ἄγαθων ποιήματα διδάσκουσι μελοποιῶν .... ἐτὶ τοῖν τοῦτοις εἰς παιδοτρίβου πέμπουσιν .... καὶ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν οἱ μάλιστα δυνάμενοι μάλιστα (μάλιστα δὲ δύνανται οἱ

12 E.g. the historical development of the lyre, a description of the stringed instruments used in Persia or India, or a discussion of Orpheus or Musaeus as early performers upon the lyre, as opposed to how to string and tune the instrument.
Plato’s discussion, which reflects a system in effect by the middle of the fourth century if not during Protagoras’ own time, clarifies two points: a written document as learning aid is a fixed part of the classroom setting; and such an education is capable of being extended, the wealthier parents giving their children a longer exposure to this formative process. Plato’s speaker, Protagoras, does not specify here whether a longer exposure to the educative process will introduce material differing in quality from what has gone before. The dialogue simply states that the material children read and sing is morally sound (ποιητῶν ἁγαθῶν ποιήματα, διέξοδοι καὶ ἔπαινοι καὶ ἐγκώμια παλαιῶν ἄνδρῶν ἁγαθῶν).

As discussed above (p. 47), Plato in the Laws is aware of a risk in making children “too learned” -- πολυμυθεῖς -- if too great a variety of poetic material by too many poets is introduced into their curriculum. Early childhood education is not a matter of data-transfer. It is a training in skills and traditional (oral) literature which is considered to be most effective in transmitting social values.

The extended education available to children of wealthy parents to which Plato’s speaker in the Protagoras refers is associated from the fifth century with training offered by the sophists. This secondary education implies excellence in doing something; in fact it
amounts to training in logical thinking and public speaking, mastery of processes rather than transmission of data. In what way relevant to paideia and the Imperial miscellanist’s activity did sophistic education utilize the written text? How, that is, was the sophist’s text related to paideia and the transmission of data?

It is the fifth- and fourth-century sophists who provide the Imperial miscellanists with their earliest models for paideia-compile in an educational context. From the surviving information concerning the texts created by sophists for educational purposes, two kinds can be distinguished, both related to the archival use of literacy suggested by Xenophon’s and Thucydides’ statements discussed above: those which convey models of discourse, and those which convey matter — ὑλή or copia — to be manipulated in composition.¹³

Some of the texts produced by fifth- and fourth-century sophists were referred to in antiquity as τέχναι. Despite the fact that the later systematic digests of the rules and methods applicable to a given craft were also called τέχναι (cf Fuhrmann 1960 ; LSJ s. v. III), these earlier works were collections of excerpts meant to illustrate rather than to summarize proper procedure. In considering the work of Alcidamas, for example, O’Sullivan states that

the earliest rhetorical τέχναι may not have contained abstract rules and theories, but rather have given expression to these in concrete examples (1992: 64 note 12) .... Such speeches were themselves called τέχναι by the ancient critics, and it has been argued that all early rhetorical instruction was carried on through this medium; the handbooks with their abstract rules and organized presentation of material were perhaps the invention of a later age (ibid 104).

¹³The purposes of sophistic education, whether it is ἐπὶ τέχνη or ἐπὶ παιδεία (Prot 312b), will be considered in Chapter 3 below.
Another example of such a collection may be Polus' Μονοειδα λόγων, referred to at *Phaedrus* 267b10 (cf Nestle 1952: 1425-6). Such collections of models may have provided Aristotle not only with the examples of sophistic discourse used as illustrations in his *Rhetoric*, but also with the material which he compiled in his Συνογωγή τεχνών (Diogenes Laertius 5.24). When Isocrates refers to the popularity of his own published speeches, the implication is that they are being studied at least in part as models of discourse (*Panath.* 251; Dionysius Halicarnassensis *Isoc.* 18.; cf Stemplinger 1927: 6, Turner 1951: 19-20).

Isocrates also suggests, through the manipulation of documents and of the works of earlier authors in his own discourse, that texts are being treated as archives of data (cf. for example *Paneg.* 72-121; self-compilation at *Antidosis* 194). Although he does not seem to have treated data-acquisition in any systematic way in the school he instituted at Athens in the 390’s, it is very likely that in his teaching Isocrates encouraged the incorporation of specific information into his students’ work. According to Richard Johnson,

> clearly there is no safe way of deciding exactly what subjects Isocrates taught besides formal rhetoric .... His “curriculum” was almost certainly ill-defined, within certain broad limits: he taught no mathematics ... still less the other sciences; he taught the technique of oratory; and his pupils learned the matter necessary to form their political, social, and ethical judgments and to provide content for their speeches (1959: 25-26).

From what source will Isocrates' students have acquired this content? Johnson suggests several possibilities.

---

14 It is likely that Isocrates used his own and his students' oratory as the basis of classroom instruction (Johnson 1959: 28-29). At *In sophistas* 19 Isocrates warns students away from "the so-called arites" of the earlier sophists.
The *historiae* of Thucydides and of Hellanicus were both books requiring no specialist knowledge beyond the ability to read ... yet from one book the pupils learnt history, from the other geography .... It seems likely that they were not so much taught to the pupil as read by him, and the knowledge employed in his composition .... [Isocrates] had no objection to his pupils’ learning material from books. There is certainly no evidence that he preferred the lecture method. Therefore it seems likely that as the pupils’ compositions came to require political knowledge or history, geography or an ethical message, Isocrates recommended the appropriate reading to them and supplemented this with his own knowledge or opinions (ibid. 30).

This suggests that students applied on an *ad hoc* basis to texts viewed as archives of information, to acquire data to be used for the corroboration of theses or as illustrative *exempla*.

The second type of sophistic work appears to be the data-archive suggested by Isocrates. Hippias' Συναγωγή may have been such a work. A fragment quoted by Clement (*Strom. 6.2.15*) may be the introduction to the Συναγωγή:

> τούτων ἰδιως εἰρήται τὰ μὲν Ὄρφεως, τὰ δὲ Μουσαίως, κατὰ βραχὺ άλλω ἄλλαξον, τὰ δὲ Ἡσιόδου, τὰ δὲ Ὀμήρου, τὰ δὲ τοίς ἄλλοις τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν συγγραφαῖς τὰ μὲν Ἑλληστικὰ, τὰ δὲ βαρβάρους· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐκ πάντων τούτων τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα συνθέσις τούτων καὶνόν καὶ πολυειδή τὸν λόγον ποιήσωμαι.

*Some of these things may perhaps have been said by Orpheus, some briefly here and there by Musaeus, some by Hesiod, some by Homer, some by others among the poets, some in prose writings whether by Greeks or by barbarians. But I will put together the most important and interrelated passages from these sources, and will thus make this present piece both new and varied in kind.* (Trans. Kerferd 1981: 48)

“This suggests,” Kerferd maintains, “that the Συναγωγή was a collection of various passages, stories, and pieces of information concerned with the history of religion and similar matters” (ibid.15) Snell insists upon the form because he is attempting to

Snell considered Hippias’ Συναγωγή to be a forerunner of Peripatetic-style doxography, with information about the opinions of early philosophers; he acknowledges, however, that it contained as well “was wir zur
demonstrate that Hippias' work was a doxography, a collection of philosophical opinions compared and contrasted; the genre will be one frequently met with in the literature of the second and third centuries AD.

It is tempting to view Hippias' compilation proleptically as scholarly research in the Peripatetic tradition (below, footnotes 22 and 32). This is not likely, as Pfeiffer has indicated. All the sophists, in his view, are working toward their rhetorical goals in the tradition of the Homeric rhapsodes (1968: 16ff). Just as Gorgias and Hippias dressed in purple robes and performed at PanHellenic festivals in rhapsodic manner (cf. Aelian VH 12.32), so their studies were still in a more immediately organic relation with the oral literary tradition. The old poets were for the sophists the authorities and repositories of language. Conversely Protagoras can claim that Hesiod, Homer, and all of the early cultural figures were in fact sophists incogniti (Plato Prot. 316d; [cf. O'Sullivan 1992: 67]). Similarly, Alcidamas refers to himself and Homer as ἴστορικοι (cf. Richardson 1981: 6). Thus traditional literature becomes of a piece with the sophists' own productions, and analysis of the poet's diction, prosody, and persuasive techniques is seen as providing valuable direction for teaching rhetoric in the present.

To summarize: by the fourth century, Greek society has accepted the text as a vehicle of paideia. This acceptance has taken two forms:

1. The text is seen as an archive for works of literature, allowing them to be accessed, read, and manipulated during the educational process in lieu of experiencing

Literaturgeschichte rechnen wurden -- vielleicht auch mancherlei Grammatisches" (1144: 181 ff). The varied quality of some of this other material is shown by Diels-Kranz Hipp. B.4, a quote from Athenaeus dealing with Thargelia of Miletus, a woman so beautiful that she married fourteen husbands. The later tradition will make her a powerful Ionian hetaera -- Plutarch sees her as a forerunner of Aspasia -- who manipulated Greek aristocrats into medizing.
them through oral performance. Such archives would include not only socially mainstreamed texts (e.g., Protagoras’ ποιητών ἄγαθον ποιήματα) but also new works designed as paideia models (e.g., sophistic oration; cf. also Pfeiffer 1968: 16).

2. The text can also archive useful data; that is, records that may prove useful to the student or to the educated man applying the learning he has acquired through literacy. Such texts would include, for example, the Ἐθνῶν ὀνομασίαι and the Ὀλυμπιανικῶν ἀναγραφῆ of Hippias, works associated with his ἀρχαιολογία (Pfeiffer 1968: 52, Kerferd 1981: 46–48), as well as his Συναγωγῆ; the works, for example, of Thucydides and Hellanicus, referred to above in relation to Isocrates’ school, would also function as such pedagogically effective archives of relevant data.

This material, which Greek society’s valorization of literacy has now made both storeable and physically portable (cf Robb 1994: 253; Goody and Watt 1968: 34), may mirror or supplement data which the community as a whole finds useful, the sort of data, for example, accessed and preserved by the Atthidographers. But they may also counter or challenge the community’s concept of the relevancy of paideia. Here, of course, arise charges such as Heraclitus’ πολυμαθήν νόμον οὐ διδάσκει · Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἄν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὖτις τε Ξενοφόντεα τε καὶ Ἐκαταῖον (Diels-Kranz 40D). It is significant that Heraclitus singles out Hesiod, with his scholarly catalogues and his “elementary brute facts,” to head the list; likewise that the early prose-writer Hecataeus should conclude it. Aristophanes’ portrayal of Socrates’ Phrontisterion (Clouds 92ff) speaks to the same issue: the pathetic irrelevancy of Socrates’ investigations into the activity of flea and gnat, the pointless gaping at the orbiting moon and at the opaque soil underfoot, the silly
attempts at eristics. When in other plays the same author brings on stage characters with books in hand, they carry texts full of empty nonsense: the Paphlagonian’s and Sausage-Seller’s archived oracles need confidence-men to interpret them (Knights 997-1097), the oracle-monger-to-the-birds manipulates his potted prophecies to his own more or less sinister advantage (Birds 959-991). The texts are dumb and meaningless until a speaker can valorize them. They are consequently ambivalent documents subject to manipulation for good or ill.

In such terms Plato addresses the value of the written record in the Phaedrus. In so doing he introduces a discussion of another paideutic application of literacy: the creation of ὑμνήματα, the individual’s personal notes or responses preserved in textual form.

The double issue of the potential for both irrelevancy and ambivalence in a written record arises at Phaedrus 275d-e. Here written discourse is treated by Socrates with patronizing contempt. The voice conveyed in a written document is defenseless and even naïve, Socrates asserts.

When discourse is once written down, it is tossed about in every direction and encounters both those who understand it and those for whom it is not fit. It does not know how to discriminate between those with whom it must speak, and those whom it must avoid. Wronged and unjustly abused, it needs its father’s help, for it is incapable of defending or helping itself.

The written discourse is identified at 276a9 as the εἰδωλον of the spoken, the latter being the true document “written in the learner’s soul” and therefore more real and meaningful.
to him. True knowledge is transmitted through the verbal exchange of dialectic, between
two parties one of whom has the truth within and who "implants" it like a seed into the
other’s soul. According to such a concept of the transmission of wisdom there is simply no
use for a written record. The written document at best can contain “reminders” -- Socrates
calls these ὑπομνήματα at 276d3 -- but not truths. To record data in written form is,
Socrates insists, a παιδία, a pastime, analogous to the planting of seeds in a “Garden of
Adonis” which will germinate quickly and just as quickly wither away and die (276b).

The terms Plato opposes in this section of the Phaedrus are παιδία and σπουδή,
amusement and serious attentiveness. Written words cannot be taken seriously, for they
are incapable of defending their own semantic content (ἀδύνατα ... σῦτοις λόγῳ βοηθείν)
and incompetent adequately to teach the truth (ἀδύνατα ... ἰκανοὺς τάληθή διδάξαι). All
they can do is to entertain.

τούς μὲν ἐν γράμμαισι κήπους, ὡς έοικε, παιδίας χάριν σπερεῖ τε καὶ
γράφει, ὅταν δὲ γράφῃ, ἐαυτῷ τε ὑπομνήματα θησαυρίζομενος, εἰς
τὸ λήθης γῆρας ἐὰν ἴκηται, καὶ παντὶ τῷ ταύτῳ ἔχως μετίστιν,
ηθῆσαι τε αὐτοὺς θεωρῶν φυσικῶς ἀπαλούς ὅταν δὲ ἀλλ᾽ παιδίας ἄλλας χρώται, συμποσίας τε ἀρδοντες αὐτοὺς ἐτέρους τε ὅσα τούτων ὀξείδα, τὸ τ᾽ ἐκεῖνος, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀντὶ τούτων οἰσ λέγω.

When he writes he will sow in the garden of literature, it seems, for the sake of
amusement, treasuring up notes (ὑπομνήματα) for himself when old age makes
him forget, and for everyone who follows after him. He will enjoy watching
their tender growth. And when others are amusing themselves in their various
ways, at symposia and the like, he will probably just keep on enjoying himself
as I have described. (276d1-8)

16 Ποῖαν ἐξοντι γεωργός, οὐν σπερμάτων κήποιτο καὶ ἐγκαρπία βοῦλοιτο γενέσθαι, πότερα
σπουδή ἀν θέρος εἰς Ἀδύνατος κήπους ἄροι χαίρων θεωρῶν καλοὺς εἰς ἡμεραίοις οἴκτῳ
γιγνομένους, ὡς ταύτα μὲν δὴ παιδίας τε καὶ εἰρητίς χάριν δρώῃ ὡς ὅτε καὶ ποιιοὶ ὅς ἐγὼ ὴς ἐπεσοῦσαν, τῇ γεωργίκῃ χρώμενος ἀν τέχνη, σπείρας εἰς τὸ προσήκον, ἀγορίζῃ ἐν ἐν γυδῶ κηπῆ
ὅσα ἐσπειρεῖν τέλος λαβόντα; (ΦΑΙ.) Οὕτω ποιεῖ ὁ Σῶκρατης, τὰ μὲν σπουδῆ, τὰ δὲ ὡς ἑτέρας ἀν
ἣ λέγεις ποιεῖ. (Phdr. 276b2-c3)
Plato does not distinguish subcategories of these ὑπομνήματα, but rather treats them as though they were all on the level of random notes to oneself. He allows Phaedrus to confess that the act of composing them is, at least in comparison to participation in symposia, a fine way to amuse oneself (παγκόλην λέγεις παρά φαύλην παιδιάν) but insists that Socrates stress the superiority (καλλίων σπουδῆ) of oral dialectic.\(^\text{17}\)

The ὑπομνήματα which Plato brings into the discussion of the impact of literacy on paideia introduce a subjective element into the text as paideia-archive. They represent an individual’s personal thoughts, reactions and assessment of what deserves recording. Insofar as ὑπομνήματα affect the interpretation of the role of πολιμαθεία in paideia, they require some analysis here.\(^\text{18}\)

The term ὑπόμνημα is drawn from the verb ὑπομνημάζω, meaning “to remind, to mention,” and in its earliest usages reflects the act of calling to mind, from which the word can concretize into “reminder” (eg Thucydides 4.126.1; Xenophon Ana. 1.6.3). “Memorial” is a rather more concrete use of the word found especially in inscriptions (e.g. κάλλιστον ὑπόμνημα αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸν ἄπαντα χρόνον IG 112. 677 from the early second century BC). Plato is the first to emphasize ὑπομνήματα in the sense of written notes or memoranda, a usage which in the fourth century BC takes two different directions. The

\(^{17}\) Intellectual activity as earnest παιδια, and the importance of σπουδῆ in approaching literature, are concepts which are addressed by the miscellanists. This passage from the Phaedrus is imitated by Clement Strom 1.1.14.

\(^{18}\) How do Plato’s own dialogues stand in relation to the value of the written record? Although Plato refuses to grant serious educational value to the written word, he clearly recognizes the value of paideia models. The dialogues are to be seen as dramatic presentations of a philosopher’s legitimate activity in dialectic. They are not registers of facts, but pictures of the process of truth’s acquisition (Hackforth 1952: 163-4; Lynch 1972: 58; Robb 1994: 236). As such, as written texts they are analogous to the early sophistic τέχναι, the collections of model discourses meant not as sources of data but as models to be imitated. As models of right philosophizing and of right orating the dialogues entered paideia, and became part of the system of Imperial secondary education (cf Quintilian 10.1.81, Gellius 17.20).
first of these is associated with the modern concept of personal memoirs, one’s own reaction to events in daily life. Υπομνήμα in this sense is first attributable to the journals of Aratus of Sicyon (Bömer 1953: 222). Polybius’ documentary sources for the composition of history are termed ὑπομνήματα (12.25a), while Strabo labels his own geographical study ὑπομνήματα (18.1.36) and his activity in creating it ὑπομνήματιζεσθαι (2.1.9). The emphasis seems to be upon personal experience. As Bömer’s study shows in detail, this usage issues in the Latin *commentarius*, applied both to Caesar’s accounts of the Gallic and Civil Wars, and to the chapters of Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*.

The second usage of ὑπομνήματα continues to convey a meaning which suggests a subjective recording of information, but here the material eliciting the response is related to the ὑπομνήματα as a primary text or object of study is related to a work of secondary scholarship. The Peripatos develops this usage into a more or less specific “research notes,” applied now to compositions attributable to Peripatetic authors; in other words, to the more or less amorphous “school literature” associated with the Aristotelian library and the *Corpus Aristotelicum* (cf During 1950: 58; Grayeff 1974: 80-81). Ὑπομνήματα in this sense become part of what Bömer describes as the “Schultradition” (ibid 218), from the Ἰστορικά ὑπομνήματα attributed to the Peripatetic researchers Aristoxenus, Theophrastus,

---

19 In his attack upon the methodology of Timaeus (12.25e1), Polybius establishes a three-part program for the writing of πραγματική ἱστορία: an analytic study of source materials, including both archival documentation and scholarly research (πολυπραγμοσύνη ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι, παραθέσεις τῆς ἐκ τούτων ὤλης), autopsy (θεα, which seems to include the examination of expert witnesses [cf Schepens 1974: 281-282]), and personal experience (πράξεως). Although for what may be purely personal reasons Polybius ranks the first of these as the least important [Walbank 1962: 10-11], the examination of written sources is still a valuable part of the process of compilatory scholarship. The memoirs of individuals who participated in the events subjected to the process of ἱστορία provide the raw material -- ὤλη -- for the finished account.
and Hieronymus of Rhodes through to the Alexandrian scholars and beyond (cf. footnote 32 below).

The word is first applied to a work of secondary scholarship explicating a work of “primary” paideia in the case of a study of Aristophanes' *Plutus* written by Euphronius, the teacher of Aristophanes of Byzantium (Pfeiffer 1968: 161 note 1). *Ὑπομνήματα* in this sense, i.e. of research scholarship characteristic of Alexandrian scholarship, acquired a recognizable form. Specifically, the *ὑπόμνημα* was expected to follow the order of lines in the primary text being studied, to which it formed a companion volume (Leo 1904: 391). Critical signs in the margins of a literary text were matched in the *ὑπόμνημα*, first by a quotation of part or all of the relevant text -- the lemma -- and then by an explanation of why the text had been marked with a critical sign at this point. The formula marking the transition between the lemma and the scholarly explanation was generally "the sign is placed because ..." : σημεῖον ὅτι. This formula became in time shortened to ὅτι (Turner 1968: 115-116).

The range of material which a researcher could incorporate into such a work of secondary scholarship reveals the extent to which, by the third century BC, the text had become the recognized vehicle of paideia. A scholar working at Alexandria had, first, the work of the author he was commenting upon, represented it may be by a number of manuscripts acquired through Ptolemaic agents and perhaps already edited by other scholars (cf van Groningen 1963: 15-16; for the διορθώσεις of the great Alexandrian philologists, cf Pfeiffer 1968: 87-231, Reynolds and Wilson 1968: 9-15; Turner 1968: 112-

---

20 S. West (1970) questions the validity of applying to these early works of research a term such as "commentary" or "monograph," more descriptive of modern works of scholarship.
From registers or *pinakes* of various sorts the scholar constructing the ὑπόμνημα could acquire information about other works by his author, their titles and lengths, performance information if they were scenic, and some basic biographical data (Schmidt 1922: 66-70, Blum 1991: 150-157). From the research of the glossographers the commentary could be supplemented by various explanations of words whose meanings were obscure either because they were old, dialectal, technically specific, or foreign. Obscurities in content could be researched through the λύσεις and προβλήματα collections which were abundant at Alexandria (Gudeman 1927: 2520; cf. Deas 1931: 6-7). Material referring to unexpected, surprising, or puzzling phenomena in the natural world might be compiled from the paradoxographers. Manuals to the τέχναι and other studies of the arts were also available to a scholar working at Alexandria. Euclid was one of the first of the foreign scholars at the Library. Aristarchus wrote on astronomy. Bolus of Mendes, “Hermes Trismegistus,” and a number of others produced many works on astrology during the Hellenistic period. The tradition of medical research was especially rich during these centuries at Alexandria and extended out to other Hellenistic states (Fraser 1972: 339-440). Historical research would have been assisted by such compilations as Istrus’ Ἀττικά, a συναγωγή of excerpts compiled from the various Atthides available at the library (“ein...Buch, in dem das von den verschiedenen älteren Ἀτθίδες gebotene Material zu Arbeitszwecken bequem vereinigt war,” Jacoby 1914: 2273).

An example of such a ὑπόμνημα found as a papyrus text of the first century BC illustrates a commentator’s use of compilation. The text being elucidated in POx 1086
(Pack 914) is the second book of the *Iliad*, the commentary to lines 751-826 is the portion preserved. Since the *Iliad* passage occurs at the end of the Catalogue of Ships and the beginning of the Catalogue of Trojan Allies, the commentator has geographic material to elucidate. Lines 49-51 establish the location of the “land of the Arimoi” (*Il. 2.783*), with a supportive quotation from Pindar (frag. 93). Lines 63-73 of the commentary explain why Aristarchus athetized *Iliad* 2.791-795. Line 100 of the commentary glosses the Homeric usage of *κολώνη*. At line 109 the commentator, seeking to pinpoint the meaning of *κοφοθαίολος* at *Iliad* 2.816, offers several suggestions and a brief illustrative quotation from Alcaeus.

In the same vein is POx 1087 (Pack 926) of the same approximate date as 1086, revealing further research possibilities for commentators. The author of this work quotes profusely: Pindar, the tragedians, Xenophanes and Archilochus, Alcaeus, Hesiod, and Stesichorus. His interests seem to be primarily lexicographical, for he shows a real interest in peculiar formations such as the *παρόνως* (Hunt 1911: 100). At line 65 the commentator begins a note on burial practices, unfortunately lost. Presumably he would be accessing ethnographic collections, Homeric *λόθεις* and *λεξεῖς*, for supporting material.

The Hellenistic commentary required, then, a variety of sources from which to compile its material. Its value could be assessed according to the standards applied to the use of those sources.

**Selection (ἐκλογή) and Application (σπονδή) as Standards of Hellenistic Scholarship**

Two standards are referred to by Hellenistic writers as important for accurate and effective scholarship: thoroughness and detailed application in gathering source material,
and the use of good judgment in its selection. Imperial authors may describe these two acts as σπουδή or πόνος, and κρίσις, ἐκλογή or their compounds and synonyms. As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, when paideia is preserved in textual format, these are seen as the correct steps in approaching paideia. They are applicable to the acquisition of primary and secondary education as well as to the adult reader’s leisure contact with culture.21

Hellenistic scholars, able to access large and disparate collections of paideia texts and secondary scholarship on those texts, are among the first to enunciate the importance of selection and application in carrying out effective research and in composing relevant scholarship.22 The potential for πολυμαθία has radically increased with royally funded library collections and the patronage of professional scholars, as the preceding examination of surviving fragments of ὑπομνήματα suggests.23 More important, the kind of knowledge which πολυμαθία fosters is becoming valorized for a culture which has transferred to the written text the respect it had once held for its oral paideia. Two examples of Hellenistic scholarship will suffice to show the necessity now felt for σπουδή and κρίσις in paideia.

21 The Imperial miscellanist’s success in his compilations from primary and secondary paideia will likewise be judged in terms of his σπουδή and κρίσις: σπουδή assures πολυμαθία, while κρίσις determines that the polymathic data are ἄξια μνήμης.
22 According to Strabo (13.1.54), Aristotle was the first to create a library, πρῶτος τῶν ἵσμεν συναγωγῶν βιβλία, and influenced the formation of the library at the Alexandrian Museum, διδάξας τούς ἐν Ἀιγύπτῳ βοσκέως βιβλιοθήκης σύντομα. Aristotle himself was well aware of the value of secondary scholarship, as he states at Topica 105b.
23 The books housed in the Alexandrian Library alone amounted to several hundred thousands, in “simple” and “mixed” formats (Aristeas ap. Eusebius Praep. Ev. 8.2.1-4). Ptolemy’s own grandiose σπουδή in undertaking this project is suggested by Aristeas’ statement of the commission Ptolemy gave Demetrius of Phalerum, τὸ συναγαγέν εἰ δύνατον ἀπαίτητα τὸ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην βιβλία.
Selection as a Standard of Hellenistic Scholarship

If the anecdote tradition reflects even dimly the quality of Ptolemaic text acquisition, the government-funded scholars at the Alexandrian Museum must have been working among veritable book dumps. Thus if we are to accept Bing’s assessment of the Library’s collection as “a kind of microcosm of Greece on Egyptian soil,” we shall have seriously to reinterpret the implications of a cosmos (1988:14). The sources give little indication of discrimination or selectivity in acquiring documents; anything written as a *volumen* seems to have been fair game for Ptolemaic agents and customs officials charged with amassing texts for the Library. Pliny’s story of the papyrus embargo against Pergamum (*NH* 13.70) and Galen’s account of the confiscation of books found in ships’ cargoes (*In Hipp. lib.* 17a606.8) suggest some degree of avarice and rapacity, with quantity alone as a goal, in the assembling of the collection. Galen mentions that as a result of their φιλοτιμία in acquiring book rolls, the Ptolemies were easy targets for forgers (*In Hipp. de nat.* 15.109). The term βιβλιοθήκαι itself implies no more than “box of book rolls” and could include the sense “archives of nonliterary documents,” a sense it retained in the Imperial period (Wendel 1940: 3). No guidelines for or principles behind the collection, that is, seem to be in effect. Specific bibliographical studies, works explaining or describing the acquisition of texts, will not appear until the first century BC, with Artemon’s Περὶ συνογωγῆς βιβλίων and Περὶ βιβλίων χρήσεως (*Athenaeus* 12.11, 15.49) and Telephus’ βιβλιακή ἐμπειρία (*Suda tau* 495).

---

24 Polybius at 12.27.4 seems to provide the earliest use of the term βιβλιοθήκαι to suggest the contents of the book boxes, that is, a collection of texts.

25 It is not until the second century AD, with the titles of Herennius Philo’s twelve-volume Περὶ κτήσεως καὶ ἔκκλησις βιβλίων and Demophilus of Bithynia’s Περὶ ἀξιοκτήτων βιβλίων and in discourses such as
One wonders how the earliest scholars working at the Library were able to find any given text, let alone submit it to a process of ordering or arrangement. Galen has stated that the only labelling done to new acquisitions at the library was to indicate the manuscript's immediate source; that is, whether it had come from a ship's cargo, from a previous individual owner, or from a city. Fraser suggests that there was editorial method behind this practice. It may be, however, that the early library organizers felt the need for some mark of identification of a manuscript and recorded the only information at their disposal, information easily acquired at the moment of the purchase or confiscation of a text.

It is therefore puzzling to see rather focused bibliographical purposes ascribed to the organizers of the Alexandrian Museum. When Fraser, for example, asserts that "the early organizers [of the Museum] aimed at a complete corpus of Greek literature" (ibid. 329) he implies that there was some concept of an established corpus or, for that matter, of "Greek" literature as opposed to the poems of Homer or Sappho or Alcman. Imperial authors like Aelian could indeed look back upon Greek literature as a more or less closed corpus of "Classics," but only after centuries of pedagogic practice had established a canon of school texts. That literature at the end of the Classical period was viewed as a more local and diverse produce is suggested by the anecdote related by Proclus, according to which Plato, desiring to read the poems of Antimachus, sent a student to Antimachus' hometown of Colophon to obtain a manuscript copy (In Timaeum Comm. I.90d).

Pfeiffer

Lucian's Πρὸς τῶν ἀπαίδευτων καὶ πολλὰ βιβλία ὕνομένοιν that we find a suggestion that discrimination should be exercised in the making of a library collection (Suda phi 447, delta 52; cf Callmer 1944: 145).

26 "In the task of establishing the history of a text, or of determining the superiority of one exemplar over another, the provenance would provide the only satisfactory form of description" (1972:327).
insists that at the beginning of the third century the Greeks "became conscious of a
definitive break between the mighty past and a still uncertain present" (1968:87), and "the
whole literary past, the heritage of centuries, was in danger of slipping away .... The first
task was to collect and to store the literary treasures in order to save them forever" (ibid.
102). Perhaps we can more accurately rephrase this in terms of an awareness on the part
of society in general that there was a literary heritage in written form and, for that matter,
that there were reasons why any kind of written transaction might be stored.

The new uses for written material discussed above will have become familiar to the
wider public as the boundaries of a Greek-speaking world expanded dramatically during
the last quarter of the fourth century. Greeks moving out into this new world will have
now developed expectations both concerning the availability of texts and about methods
for using those texts. They will also have become aware that the literature with which they
were familiar could be packed up and taken along to any new settlement as part of the
baggage. The cultural heritage which Pfeiffer describes as in danger of "slipping away" is
in fact now capable of slipping into any milieu. Literature in duplicable text form was now
being transported to the classrooms on the frontiers. Presumably the ships' cargoes, to
which the Ptolemies helped themselves so liberally in building the Alexandrian Library,
were supplying the needs of readers and pedagogues in these newly founded Greek
communities.

For a scholar working among the texts at third-century Alexandria, the potential
for disorder, miscalculation, false attribution, multiple or divergent copies of the same
text, and the general confusion inherent in such a large and expanding book collection
presented a serious problem. The selection was given immediate attention, for we have
information which suggests that, once these texts reached the hands of the Alexandrian
librarians, once they had been labelled according to their place or person of origin, they
underwent a process of classification. Information is scarce concerning this major
preliminary step of imposing taxonomy on documents; it is drawn from two sources only.
The first is Tzetzes' statement at the opening of the *Prolegomena to Aristophanes*.

> ιστέον ὅτι Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Αἴτωλος καὶ Λυκόφρων ὁ Χαλκιδεὺς ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου προτραπέντες τὰς σκηνικὰς διώρθωσαν βιβλίους. Λυκόφρων μὲν τὰς τῆς κωμῳδίας, Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τὰς τῆς τραγῳδίας. ὁλλὰ δὴ καὶ τὰς σατυρικὰς ... τὰς δὲ ποιητικοὺς Ζηνόδοτος πρώτων καὶ ἕστερον Ἀρισταρχος διώρθωσαν.

*Alexander of Aetolia and Lycophron of Chalcidice were appointed by Philadelphus to “straighten out” the dramatic texts, Lycophron the comedies and Alexander the tragedies and satyr plays .... Zenodotus first and then Aristarchus “straightened out” the poetic texts.*

This passage suggests a classification of texts into “poetic” and “scenic,” the latter falling
into three divisions: comedy, tragedy, and satyr-play.  

The one hundred and twenty volumes of Callimachus’ Πίνακες τῶν ἐν πᾶσι παιδείας διαλαμψάντων imply both a massive bibliographical research project and a set of
preconceived standards of relevancy in approaching the Alexandrian book-collection (cf.

The *Pinakes* was not a catalogue of the books contained in the Alexandrian
Library, although it presupposes that such a listing did exist which Callimachus could take

---

27 This system of classification does not reflect Aristotle’s in the *Didascaliae*. He had distinguished the plays according to festival, and included the satyr plays with the tragic trilogies (cf. Regenbogen 1950: 1415-1416).

28 The complete title of the work, assuming that this represents its original title and not simply a
description of its contents, is known only from the *Suda κappa* 227. Other information about the work
and its composition can be derived from references in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Diogenes Laertius,
Athenaeus, Harpocratio, Tzetzes, and various scholia (Schmidt 1922: 22-25).
as a starting point for his more ambitious project (Regenbogen 1950: 1420). It appears rather to have been a digest of information about writers and their works.

The authors treated in the Pinakes were divided first into writers of prose and poetry. The latter were then divided according to their distinctive metrical genre: authors of epic, elegiac, iambic, melic meters, and finally the tragedians and comic poets. Prose authors were arranged according to subject matter: historians (and presumably all "researchers" in the Peripatetic sense of ἰστορία), orators, philosophers, doctors, authors of νόμοι, and writers on miscellaneous subjects (παντοδιάποι; works dealing with such topics as cookery and fishing, in short all those works which could not be classified under the preceding rubrics). Once Callimachus had distinguished authors in this very general way, he alphabetized them in each category and then under each name listed their works in alphabetical order of title. He indicated for each work both its title and its opening words, its genre, and sometimes its dialect. Finally, he stated the number of lines each work contained, taking the dactylic hexameter as a standard in this regard (Herter 1973: 399). For each author in the Pinakes Callimachus provided a biography.

A work of this form and size would have required several stages of research. A comparison of various kinds of book lists both in terms of acquisition listings and of library catalogues probably gave Callimachus an idea of what was immediately available at the Library. He would have been able to access more data by consulting such Peripatetic works as Aristotle's Didascaliae. A study of this sort could inform him about the works

---

29 It is not clear whether these were compilers of νόμοι collections or themselves ancient legislators. Callimachus may have had both possibilities in mind.
which the Alexandrian Library did not contain. Callimachus probably acquired his biographical data on authors from various sources including the earlier compilations of the Peripatos, historians, local antiquarians and chronographers, and the authors' own texts (Fairweather 1973: 236-237).

The importance of the *Pinakes* for the present discussion of the relationship between paideia and πολυμοσθία lies in Callimachus' attempt to categorize the masses of texts accumulated at Alexandria. His one hundred and twenty volumes are not a tidy encyclopedia of standard school authors but rather a farrago of documents originating in many different social contexts and having served a variety of different purposes in their original contexts. Yet they all came together as paideia in Callimachus' pinacography, all put on a par and arranged, not by content but by medium (poetry or prose), and in alphabetical order. Only after this formal categorization had taken place were content and circumstances of composition taken into consideration, assuming that such data existed. In the case of Demosthenes' speeches, for example, Callimachus was able to make

---

30 That there was information available about the books which the Library did not contain is made clear by Athenaeus, who reports that, although he had himself made an ἐκλογή of the eight hundred Middle Comedies he had read, he still could not find a copy of Alexis' *Ἀσωτοδίδασκαλος* either at Alexandria or in the library register at Pergamum (8.15; cf Fraser 1972 vol 2: 486 note 179); yet Athenaeus knew that there was such a work in existence.

31 Callimachus was aware of other principles of arrangement and chose a different structure for the Πίνακες και ἄναγραφῃ τῶν κατὰ χρόνους καὶ ἀπ’ ὁρχῆς γενομένων διδασκάλων. This register contained the names of the Athenian dramatists and the titles of their plays, including the lost ones, from the earliest period of the scenic festivals. (A series of three fragments from a list of New Comedy authors found at Rome and probably drawn from Callimachus' register reveals the structure [Körte 1905: 443-446].) Callimachus listed each author chronologically under the date of his first victory. The poet's name was followed by a list of all his known plays, and these were arranged chronologically with an indication of each play's ranking by the respective judges in the Dionysiac or Lenaean festivals. Callimachus' arrangement is interesting because in it he reveals how he has drawn upon and then manipulated the material in Aristotle's *Didascaliae*. Aristotle had arranged his records of authors and titles by festivals. Callimachus, wanting to provide a register which would be more accessible to scholars who would have conceived of "Attic Drama" as a specialized body of literature, transformed the original data into a chronology of poets' names (Herter 1973: 401).
a finer classification. He could arrange the corpus into those speeches addressed to the assembly, those delivered in court, and purely epideictic works, the first two groups being large enough to allow a thematic division specifying, for example, those speeches which concerned Philip of Macedon (Regenbogen 1950: 1422).

But the very existence of this work and its creation at this time reveal the need felt for selectivity and judgment in approaching texts. First, the *Pinakes* exerted a selective control over the thousands of books in the Ptolemies' collection. In Callimachus' archival compilation there is focus upon authentication, standardization, and critical evaluation. The title by which antiquity referred to this work specifies this focus as οἱ ἐν πᾶσῃ παιδείᾳ διαλαμψάντες. Paideia, conceived now as a body of texts, contains its greater and its lesser lights deserving mention; presumably those figures who emitted no light at all were left out of the selection. Callimachus' listing of titles may itself have been a creative or selective act in the case of those works which had no title, or several. The quotation of opening (and sometimes closing) lines and the stichometry and volume count of individual works may also have had a prescriptive purpose.

**Zeal and Application as Standards of Hellenistic Scholarship**

As represented by the collections of texts at the Hellenistic libraries, Greek paideia had expanded radically with the recording and proliferation of cultural material in textual format. Callimachus' pinacography highlights the need for selectivity in dealing with an abundance of texts, each with a different provenance and each with a specific communal venue. In a work such as the *Mirabilia* of Antigonus of Carystus we can see the growing
awareness of the importance of scholarly application and diligence in approaching paideia, specifically through the self-conscious and purposive manipulation of sources.

Representing the scholarly community centered at Pergamum during the second half of the third century BC, Antigonus wanted to make clear that his compilation of θαὑμασίαι was a collection of earlier collections; that is, he was concerned that the reader understand that Antigonus did not consult a primary authority in the process of compilation. In taking this approach, Antigonus is aligning himself with Peripatetic empirical research. It is not therefore surprising to find Antigonus compiling the work of an author whom he believes to be Aristotle.

Antigonus very clearly states the sources he accessed for his compilation. His work falls into five sections according to the manner of citation. The surviving work begins with a group of brief excerpts from a series of authors (Mir. 1-26a). Then follows a lengthy

---

32 Aristotle's contributions to Hellenistic bibliographical methodology were mentioned above, footnote 22.

Aristotle had responded to Plato's developed theory of ideal forms by developing in his own terms a concept of form pervading nature on the level of the individual entity, a concept which, while universally applicable, depended for its further development upon an inductive approach to material reality (cf Brink 1940: 915; Jaeger 1948:337). Working under the conviction that ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν μᾶς τιν ποιεῖν (De caelo 171a33), Aristotle and his immediate pupils encouraged the study of phenomena in nature and in the areas of human activity to demonstrate the validity of this basic Peripatetic concept. Material acquired as a result of this research entered the Lyceum's library collection to serve as data for further research. Rather than systematically and routinely archiving texts in the manner of the Metroon at fourth-century Athens, however, the Peripatos actively participated in the creation of new texts which drew upon those older works which it had produced or acquired and subsequently preserved. Secondary compilation of early work, as well as the editing, study, and storage of various kinds of documents and records, will have formed part of this activity.

This concept of a community of scholars focusing their work upon the collection and storage of written documents consisting of both "primary" texts (e.g. a poet's or philosopher's book, or a transcription of archival material) and secondary studies and compilations of these (e.g. Theophrastus' digest of philosophical positions in the form of doxographical collections, or Aristotle's and Callisthenes' work on the victors at the Pythian Games) will have formed the basis of the system which, according to Strabo, Aristotle "taught" the Ptolemies (cf Blum 1991: 62-63; Blum here discusses Aristotle's own bibliographical principles as well). Alexandrian scholars working in this manner were sometimes labelled "peripatetic" in antiquity. "Hier wandert," Brink states, "der Name mit der Methode und dem Stoff. Aus dem Ausdruck Schulzugehörigkeit ist eine Gattungsbezeichnung geworden" (1940: 904; we must however limit the connections between the Peripatos and Alexandria to these "exoteric" circumstances, rejecting a close connection between Alexandrian and Peripatetic philosophy [Brink 1946: 26]).
section drawn from an author whom Antigonus identifies as Aristotle. In fact this is the author of *Historia animalium* 9, selections from whose work are quoted chiefly in the sequence in which they occur in *Historia animalium* 9 (Mir. 26b-60a). Antigonus then adds another selection (Mir. 60b - 114) compiled from various other books of the *Historia animalium*, in general following the order of material in the original books but not the sequence of books, the existence of this ancient sequence of books as used by Antigonus probably reflecting the instability of the tradition of the *Historia animalium* (Düring 1950: 47-50). Following this double compilation from Peripatetic texts, material which Antigonus took to be Aristotle's, is another section of excerpts from assorted authors (Mir. 115-128). The fifth and concluding section consists of excerpts from Callimachus' paradoxographic collection, preserved solely through its inclusion in Antigonus' compilation (Ziegler 1949: 1146-1147).

Of special interest to us are the second, third, and fifth sections of the *Mirabilia*, which represent texts which Antigonus prefaces with brief references to his compilations of another author's text. At section 26, for example, Antigonus notifies the reader that he is about to make selections from *Historia animalium* 9:

One could very precisely learn about the remaining instincts of animals, in battle, care of wounds, acquisition of life's necessities, affections, memory, from Aristotle's collection, from which we shall first of all make a selection.

33 The Περί θαυμασιῶν ἀκούσματων and Book 9 of the *Historia animalium* represent early Peripatetic scholarship. Though generally assumed by modern scholars not to have been written by Aristotle, large parts of them can be ascribed to Theophrastus (Düring 1968: 315), and they are certainly fairly early products of the Peripatos (Fraser 1972: 771).

Both *Historia animalium* 9 and Περί θαυμασιῶν ἀκούσματων compile material found in the Aristotelian portions of the *Historia animalium* (i.e. Books 1 through 6 and 8; cf. Düring 1950: 48).
Because the individual sections of *Historia animalium* 9 have a detached and succinct quality, making them easily transferable to another compilation, sections from this work show up both in the Pseudo-Aristotelian Περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκοουσμάτων and in Callimachus’ paradoxography. Antigonus likewise values the detail and accuracy of his source, which he emphasizes in introducing the compilation here.

Antigonus makes a similar brief statement about provenance and quality when he compiles Callimachus’ collection:

πεποίηται δὲ τινα καὶ ὁ Κυρηναῖος Καλλιμάχος ἐκλογὴν τῶν παραδόξων, ἢς ἀναγράφομεν δῶσα ποτὲ ἡμῖν ἐφαίνετο εἶναι ἀκοῆς ἅξια.

*Callimachus of Cyrene has made a paradox collection, of which we write up all those matters which seem to us worth hearing about.*

Again, Antigonus’ selection must have been fairly simple to put together, as the material had already been compiled once by Callimachus.

But Antigonus must explain his procedure in rather more detail when it comes to scanning the multivolume text of the genuinely Aristotelian portion of the *Historia animalium*. Because Antigonus presumably was not accessing this work in an epitomized or pre-compiled form, he had to exert more effort in acquiring relevant data.

ό γε Ἀριστοτέλης ... καὶ τοιαύτα τινα διεξέρχεται, πάνω πολλήν ἐπιμέλειαν πεποιημένος ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις αὐτῶν καὶ οίων ἔργων ή παρέργων χρὴμαν τῇ περὶ τούτων ἔξηγήσει, τά γοῦν πάντα σχεδὸν ἐβδομήκοντα περὶ αὐτῶν καταβέβληται βιβλία, καὶ πεπείραται ἐξηγητικότερον ἢ ἱστορικότερον ἐν ἐκάστως ἀναστρέφον. πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐκλογὴν ἑκτοιεὶ τῶν προηγημένων αὐτῷ τὸ ἔξον καὶ παράδοξον ἐκ τε τούτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιδραμεῖν.

*Aristotle also goes through such topics in detail, having expended upon most of them a very great deal of care and giving his undivided attention to his explanation. Consequently he has composed nearly seventy [better “nine”; cf. Ziegler 1949: 1146.61-63] books in all on this subject, and has attempted to conduct himself in each more like one delivering a continuous account than*
The point of Antigonus’ brief introduction lies in the phrase ἔξηγητικῶτερον ἢ ἰστορικῶτερον. If I am right, Antigonus found some initial resistance in removing the data which Aristotle had marshalled as evidence for the thesis he was developing at any given point in the original work; that is, his doctrine hung together like a continuous exposition, ἔξηγητικῶτερον, and the illustrative material required some teasing of the connective fibers before it could be presented as παράδοξα.

Antigonus enters his text as an editorial voice in introducing these sections of the collection. He also on occasion comments upon and evaluates his sources, a gesture which Aelian too will make when presenting data not able to inspire confidence. While excerpting Callimachus, for example, Antigonus intrudes into the collection long enough to complain that he has had to add a bit of relevant detail which his source had overlooked, τούτῳ δὲ καὶ Εὐδοξός καὶ Καλλιμάχος παραλείπουσιν (Mir. 161.2). Aristotle, on the other hand, is praised for the diligent professionalism he expends upon his ἱστορία (πάνυ πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν πεποιημένος ... οίνον ἔργων οὐ παρέργῳ χρώμενος τῇ ... ἔφηγήσει [60b.1.8]). In the sections in which he compiles short passages from a variety of authors, Antigonus is willing to apply to poetry for evidence or support, and in these cases the poet may be evaluated for his precision, accuracy, or attention to detail. So Homer, quoted as an authority on the behavior of dogs, is introduced as being ἰκανῶς ἐπιμελῆς καὶ πολυπρᾶγμων (24.1). Philetas too, in giving evidence for the spontaneous generation of bees, is ἰκανῶς ὧν περίεργος (19.2). Antigonus is less accepting of paradoxical material.
which takes the form of μῦθος, that is, a story pattern with a beginning, middle, and end. A critical term such as τερατώδης or μυθικός is generally applied to such material; thus sanitized, it can be compiled. When, for example, Amelesagoras’ Atthis is drawn upon for the information that a crow will not fly up to the Athenian Acropolis, Antigonus compiles the story of the birth of Erichthonius, to which is appended an αἰτία about a crow that becomes an avis non grata upon announcing to Athena the birth of the infant Erichthonius and is thus denied access to her precinct. 'Αμελησαγόρας ... ἀποδίδωσιν δὲ τὴν αἰτίαν μυθικός, Antigonus insists (12.2). The paradoxographer can thus make his pretension to sober accuracy and zeal at the same time that he adds variety to his material. But not all such data were admissible into the collection. Antigonus informs us that he might have compiled some material about ravens from Ctesias, but was compelled by his own standards to reject it:

Κτησίας ἱστορεῖ παραπλησιόν τι τούτως [an excerpt from Theopompus] διὰ δὲ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλὰ φεύγειν παρελείπομεν τὴν ἔκλογην, καὶ γὰρ ἐφαίνετο τερατώδης.

Ctesias gives information about something very similar to this. But because he is given to telling many lies, we left it out of our compilation. For it seemed fantastical and strange. (15b1)

As a responsible scholar working with a great range of written texts, Antigonus sees his contribution to this process in the diligence and accuracy with which he carries out his compilation. He makes similar demands of his source authors. Thus Antigonus praises Aristotle’s ἐπιμελεία, and points out that the poets he quotes are ἐπιμελής, πολυπράγμων, and περίεργος.34

34 πολυπράγμων, περίεργος, and their derivatives and synonyms, terms which are primarily political and ethical for the fifth- and fourth-century Greeks, for Hellenistic and Imperial scholars describe ideal research practices; cf Ehrenberg 1947: 46-62. Antigonus’ near-contemporary Polybius, for example, draws upon similar terminology to describe Timaeus’ literary research: ἐκ τῶν βουβλίων δύναται
Antigonus also shows a concern for selectivity. Material must be ἀξία ἀκοῆς (Mir. 129). This formula and its variants — ἀξία σπουδῆς and λόγου, ἀξία μνήμης and θαύματος, ἀξία μαθεῖν and ἀναγράφειν — are used frequently by later authors in presenting material acquired through selective compilation. Aware that he reveals his own scholarly ability through the quality of the material he selects for his collection, the compilator tends to attach the name of an authority to his information. Likewise he will quote his source’s authority when compiling a secondary compilation, Antigonus, for example, quoting Callimachus, also quotes Callimachus’ sources. A stage will arrive, clearly apparent in Aelian’s work, when the secondary source’s name has been dropped, the compilator being satisfied with citing the name of the primary source alone (Fraser 1972: 772).

Πολιμοσθία and Imperial Education

Literacy had its first impact upon Greek education in providing archives for school authors. Peripatetic and Hellenistic activity created an archival system of primary texts of paideia and of secondary scholarship explicating it, both supplemented by a diverse body of empirical data. All of these texts formed paideia for the Imperial period. To which aspects of this system can the term πολιμοσθία be applied? That is, to which areas of paideia does the miscellanist address himself?

Briefly, for Imperial authors πολιμοσθία represents that area of the traditional body of paideia which forms a significant and relevant supplement to the texts which have now

One is able to carry out intensive research in books quite free from danger and discomfort if one only takes care beforehand to have access to a city with an abundance of texts or a neighboring library. (12.17.4-5)
become standard school-authors. Πολυμαθεία still applies to the educational process, but now more specifically to the area of self-directed adult reading. Unlike Plato, Socrates’ Hippias, and Isocrates, who used πολυμαθεία in a context of primary and secondary skills-acquisition and the memorization of traditional poetry, Imperial authors do not apply the word to children or adolescents still in the process of acquiring a basic literary education. They use it rather in reference to the educated adult who has chosen to extend his paideia-related data-base beyond the ordinary to the remarkable.

How does the polymathic data-base function as a supplement to Imperial education? Here we must consider separately both the primary education of the child and adolescent, and the more advanced studies of the young adult.

Πολυμαθεία and Γραμματική

Since the end of the fifth century BC, a child’s basic education depended upon literacy acquisition; but the basis of education continued to be, as it had been from the beginnings of Greek culture, traditional literature. The skills of reading and writing constituted γραμματική, instruction in which began about the age of seven. The quality

---

35 Gellius’ negative reaction to πολυμαθεία is specifically occasioned by irrelevancy. The data he criticizes suffer from taudium et senium. (Prol. 11)

36 Most analyses of Imperial education (eg Marrou 1948, Clark 1957, Christes 1975: 228ff, Beck 1970) make fairly specific statements about children’s ages and “grades.” Steinmetz, for example, citing Marrou, Ziebarth, and others, assigns the seven- to twelve-year-olds to a γραμματική, the thirteen- to eighteen-year-olds to a γραμματικός. But cf. Kaster (1983), who demonstrates that this division was very fluid, sometimes nonexistent, between γραμματική and γραμματικός. Marrou recognized a varying degree of applicability of these terms, according to time period and location (1948: 223-224).

By “primary education” I mean in the present study all formal education in γραμματική, probably normally limited to the under-eighteens, and to whom Dionysius Thrax directs the content of his manual. The scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (Gramm. Graec. 3.164) had specified the two parts of grammar as πόλεμος and νεοτέρα, the former having as its primary goal εὐ γράφειν (not our expository writing but rather orthography [Quintilian 1.7, Dio 18.18]), the latter εὐ ὁνομαγγέλεσθαι or explication, a younger science. Cousin may be correct in assessing these as two components reflecting a change in the way the grammarian views himself (1975: 9); from being the pedagogue concerned with the teaching of
and extent of training which the child received in γραμματική was determined by the parent. We may accept these early years of training as the formative period of literacy acquisition and of an introduction to the basic paideia-authors. Secondary education in rhetoric, medicine, law, the more amorphous “philosophy,” in fact any organized technical discipline — “das Hochschulstudium im eigentlichen Sinn” (Steinmetz 1982: 80) — began after the individual attained his majority (though the parent may still be financing his education), and involved the training not of children but of young adults.

Although γραμματική is the primary τέχνη, during the Imperial period it demands a data-base. The τέχνη of Dionysius Thrax, composed at the end of the Hellenistic period, defines the province of the art in such a way that the need for secondary scholarship is clear:

\[
\text{Grammar is the skill which deals with the things said for the most part by poets and prose writers. (1.1)}
\]

Reading and writing have as their primary field of activity the works of traditional paideia. This represents little change from the school curriculum of Plato. But when Dionysius proceeds to define grammar’s parts we see clearly the point of access for philology and all the fields into which ιστορία has been introduced.

\[
\text{πρώτον ἀνάγνωσις ἐντριβής κατὰ προσῳδίαν, δεύτερον ἔξηγησις κατὰ τοὺς ἐνυπάρχοντας ποιητικοὺς τρόπους, τρίτον γλῶσσών τε καὶ ἰστορίων πρόχειρος ἀπόδοσις, τέταρτον ἑτυμολογίας εὕρεσις, πέμπτον ἀναλογίας ἐκλογίσμος, ἐκτὸν κρίσις ποιημάτων, ὁ δὲ κάλλιστὸν ἐστὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ.}
\]

1. Skillful reading in meter
2. Detailed explanation in terms of the predominant poetic devices

reading and writing to very young children, he has expanded his horizons to include the teaching of all materials which elucidate text-based paideia.
3. Ability to explain difficult expressions and to give background information
4. Tracing etymologies
5. Ability to explain morphological analogy
6. An evaluation of creative literature; this is the finest of all the techniques in the art of grammar. (1.1.5-1.1.6)

Dionysius' grammarian directly addresses a text in the first and fifth items on this agenda. The student must be able to understand and correctly to enunciate his poets, an increasingly difficult task as each generation's colloquial Greek grows farther removed from the archaic and classical poetic languages of his texts (cf. Browning 1969:44-52).

But for an exegesis of the poetic tropes, difficult vocabulary items and phraseology, and obscure references (ἰστορίαι) in the text, secondary information becomes necessary. The ὑπομνήματα, as well as various other scholarly works produced by Hellenistic researchers, supply such a data-base for γραμματική. In these introductory lines Dionysius has formulated the purpose for which grammar, a socially relevant skill, can and must access the paideia (primary texts and secondary studies) archived and created by the Hellenistic scholars associated with Alexandria, Pergamum, and other library facilities. Grammar both defines these scholars' work and becomes its reason for being.

Dionysius' definition of the province of γραμματική remained standard in Imperial schools (Cicero De or. 8.187; Quintilian 1.4.2-3). Building upon Dionysius' theoretical base, Quintilian in the early books of the Institutio oratoria provides a manual of what must and must not be actually taught in the classroom on a daily basis (Cousin 1935: 53, 73; von Fritz 1949: 337; Cousin 1975: 6-7).

The education in grammar which Quintilian describes begins at the nearly rudimentary stage. Although he assumes that the pupil has learned to recognize the letters
of the alphabet and to handle a stylus, he offers advice on the basics of reading and writing. For Quintilian, the *grammaticus* is both the elementary-school’s language-arts instructor and the more philologically sophisticated interpreter of literature (cf Kaster 1988: 447-452). Quintilian’s *grammaticus* places at the center of his professional activity the written text, not only expounding that text’s contents by first “emending” the written document itself but standardizing the pupil’s language performances both oral and written by judging them against the central text as a model of performance. For such a system of education, the text has become not, as Plutarch claimed, an ὁργάνον παιδείας, but in fact paideia itself.

Once the child had acquired the ability to read and to write with some fluency, the *grammaticus* could devote classroom time to the *enarratio poetarum*, the study of literature. Here Quintilian demonstrates that, during the years of childhood and early-adolescent education, it was the grammarian who channelled πολιμοσθία into the learning process. The grammarian’s ability to discriminate the relevant from the pedantic, otiose and morally offensive determined his excellence in imparting paideia.

According to Quintilian, the classroom analysis of a literary passage involved two processes, one involving systematic presentation of the rules of language and one focusing upon literary content: μεθοδική and ἱστορική. Quintilian details the range of the data-base required of the grammarian in describing the “methodic” process of *praeclectio*:

-deprendat quae barbara, quae impropria, quae contra legem loquendi sint .... id quoque inter prima rudimenta non inutile demonstrare, quot quaeque verba modis intelligenda sint. circa glossemata etiam, id est voces minus usitatatas, non ultima eius professionis diligentia est. enimvero iam maiore cura doceat tropos omnes ... praecipue vero illa infigat animis, quae in oeconomia virtus, quae in decore rerum, quid personae cuique convenerit, quid
in sensibus laudandum, quid in verbis, ubi copia probabilis, ubi modus.

He must point out those terms which are wrong, improper, and contrary to language rules .... It is very useful at the beginning to point out in how many ways certain words are to be understood. Peculiar expressions should receive plenty of attention right away. He must be very careful with all tropes. He should especially emphasize to the children the excellence in brevity, in ornament, in propriety, and what is praiseworthy in ideas and diction; and where abundance, where restraint of illustrative material is worthy of note.

(1.8.14-17)

The grammarian has to be able to deal with metrics, lexicographical detail, the different demands of poetic and prose usage and syntax, and some general concepts of the critical evaluation of literature (cf Degenhardt 1909: 7-60, Marrou 1948: 375).

Though much learning is required to meet these demands, it consists of the sort of standard material found, condensed and abstracted, in the various manuals written by grammarians and becoming increasingly available during the Imperial period. This professional knowledge is readily compiled and generously shared, viewed not as original intellectual property but as the revered contents of a tradition. Charisius, for example, describes his own Ars grammatica as sollertia doctissimorum virorum polita et a me digesta (GL 1.1), taking credit chiefly, it would seem, for the arrangement of material already “polished” by earlier scholars.

Phocas too explains and defends his utilization of earlier works:

[in hoc opere] nihil mihi sumam nec a me novi quicquam repertum affidirmabo. multa namque ex multorum libris decerpta concinna brevitate conclusi, ut nec ieiuna parum instruat condensata nec verbosa prolixitas fastidium legentibus moveat.

[In this work I shall neither claim anything as my own nor make any new additions. I have included herein much matter excerpted from many authors’ books with seemly concision, in such a way that neither a bare and succinct content gives too little instruction nor a wordy overgrowth dismays my readers.]
Phocas values his compiled sources because they have allowed him to excerpt effectively
(concinna brevitate) only the really relevant and clearly stated matter. He feels no personal
need to reformulate what they have already stated clearly.

Cledonius judges his sources similarly:

De diversis veteribus aptos huic operi sumpsi tractatos et his mea
quoque ut potui et quae potui ... copulavi ablatisque limitibus
campo plano dispersi, ut inoffensibili cursu fructus sibi lector
colligat maturatos usu.

I have accessed from various old authors passages which befit this present
work and have added what I could of my own material to these as I was able. I
have smoothed out the divisions and have arranged it all in an open field, as it
were, in order that the reader might harvest for himself with unhindered
passage these fruits which have ripened through use. (GL 5.9)

The πολυμαθία which concerns the Imperial miscellanist is of a different order.
This kind of learning is more like that described by Quintilian as necessary for the second,
"historical," portion of the enarratio poetarum. Now the grammarian must provide
background material to the characters, situations, mythic allusion, geographical points,
social and chronological relationships, authorial biography, in short to the imaginative
context of the reading selection. At this point the grammarian must be able to access a
wide variety of materials, in a range which allows us to describe these data as πολυμαθία.

It is in this "historical" portion of classroom work that the need for discrimination
in selection becomes clear. Quintilian specifies that the grammarian's enarratio
historiarum be

diligens quidem ... non tamen usque ad supervacuum laborem
occupata; nam receptas aut certe claris auctoribus memoratas
exposuisse satis est.

Carefully detailed, certainly, but still not busy to the point of being filled with
superfluous detail. It is enough to explain the "histories" related by the famous
authors. (1.8.18)
A few lines later we are sententiously informed that *mihi inter virtutes grammatici habebitur aliqua nescire* it seems to me that not knowing some things belongs among a grammarian’s excellent qualities. No such restriction had been placed upon the methodic *praefectio*.

Essentially, the Imperial grammarian must beware of fleshing out literature’s imaginative universe into one filled too full of distracting detail — that is, into a world too like the quotidian. Although the mature amateur scholar (cf Ch. 3 below) has the leisure, distance, and resources to approach a poetic text diachronically, the grammarian and his young pupils experience the text’s imaginative world immediately, synchronically. In the cases of Homer and Vergil, the temptation, or the burden, of metonymically “filling in” details will have always been present, requiring careful if selective erudition on the part of the *diligens grammaticus* but also restraint, balance, and taste.

Like the Imperial *artes* of grammar, handbooks appear during this period which answer the need for relevant *historiae*. The *Genealogiae* of Hyginus, for example, presented categorized lists of mythological and legendary figures and events, while [Apollodorus'] *Bibliothecae* of mythological data arranged a wealth of legends and folklore into a chronological narrative. Other texts provided a mixture of material suitable for classroom explication. Indeed, one advantage of a commentary like Servius’ on the *Aeneid* was that it could balance for the grammarian lexical, metrical, and purely

---

37 Especially considering that Antiquity did not provide literary texts geared to the schoolchild’s cognitive development; one is reminded of Rousseau’s stressful encounter with the imaginative world of La Fontaine.  
38 We can perhaps attribute at least part of Menander’s and Terence’s popularity in the classroom to the fact that, as realistic New Comedy authors, they do not require much historical, geographical, and mythical funding on the young reader’s part.
grammatical material with the potentially overwhelming *historiae*, providing a premixed “formula” of erudition for young students. By selecting and compiling only those excerpts from scholars and *clari auctores* which experience had shown were most useful and relevant to a given reading passage, a good commentary could help the grammarian avoid *supervacuus labor* and could thus function as a real teaching text. Of these supplementary commentaries, of which the Hellenistic ὑπομνήματα formed precursors and sources, the most useful parts would slip into the margins of codices and, like the Homeric scholia, be replicated along with the primary text.

That the Hellenistic and Imperial commentaries were honed down over the centuries to the form of marginal scholia reveals the limitations put upon πολυμαθία by an elementary education in γραμματική. The Imperial grammar school which taught the child language, literacy, literature and its encoded value system did not expect him to become a professional scribe or, for that matter, a grammarian.\(^{39}\) Hence Seneca emphasizes that the study of literature must be propaedeutic only: *non discere debemus ista, sed didicisse* these are things which we ought to have learned [as children], not to spend time now in learning (*Ep.* 88.2). Plutarch reiterates the grammar school’s lack of connection with the hard daily realities of βίος, πράξεις, and πολιτεία at *De audiendo* 42.

The Imperial grammarian, as Kaster has pointed out (1988: 205) limits himself to this propaedeutic though seductively manifold world of literature. His professional

---

\(^{39}\) The distinction between schools teaching literature as the basic art to children of the educated élite and those teaching craft literacy to the lower classes, has been given considerable discussion in recent scholarship. Booth, for example, has maintained that such schools existed in first-century Rome, the γραμματικός being the teacher of the lower social classes and the γραμματικής the teacher of the children of the élite; while Kaster insists that a similar arrangement can be assumed for later centuries as well (Kaster and Booth *ap. Kaster* 1983: 339-346).
attention is focused upon the presentation and explication of standard texts, year after
year, to children who may well outshine him in their acquisition of a broader education
and in their wider horizons. Within the schoolroom, the grammarian’s competence is,
probably rightly, unchallenged. Outside the school, exposed to the real world, he is more
vulnerable. Gellius’ miscellany abounds in anecdotes in which the grammarian is seriously
nonplused in questions of language and literature which demand that he function beyond
the canon, by men whose opportunities have allowed them greater intellectual scope. The
grammarian does not have even the comfort of being accepted as one whose craft is
applicable to society as a whole; Sextus Empiricus (Math. 1.97-98) maliciously reminds
him that his subject matter consists entirely of lies. Little wonder that the intelligent
grammarian funds that tissue of lies with detail where he can, and by the acquisition of
systematized information about it — πολυμεθία — gains intellectual power through the
control of that detail. In the eyes of the wider public this activity will indeed seem trivial
and supervacua. Seneca depicts the Alexandrian scholar Didymus as a sort of arch-
grammarian:

Quattuor milia librorum Didymus grammaticus scripsit. miserer, si
tam multi supervacua legisset. In his libris de patria Homeri
quaeritur, in his de Aeneae matre vera, in his libidinosior Anacreon
an ebriosior vixerit, in his an Sappho publica fuerit, et alia, quae
erant didiscenda, si scires.

Didymus the grammaticus wrote four thousand books. I would feel sorry for
him if he had had to read so many superfluous works. In these books he
researchs the fatherland of Homer, Aeneas’ real mother, the question as to
whether Anacreon was more lustful or more intemperate, whether or not
Sappho was a prostitute, and other matters which would have to be unlearned
if you knew them already (Ep. 88.37)

These subjects are to be rejected because they are irrelevant to life in the real world, and a
waste of time; as far as Seneca is concerned neither pupil nor teacher is improved by
discussing them. The grammarian thus must focus upon relevancy with morally paedeutic
material in his text. He must select.

Suetonius mentions several Imperial grammarians who committed their πολυμαθεία to writing. Aurelius, for example, composed many volumina variae eruditiones (Gramm. 6), while C. Julius Hyginus’ learning earned him not only the cognomen Polyhistor but also an appointment as director of the Palatine Library (Gramm. 20). L. Ateius Philologus left eight hundred books of compiled data. Gaius Melissus’ collection of assorted compilations amounted to one hundred and fifty papyrus rolls.

If these men published their polymathic collections with schoolchildren in mind, we can well imagine the need Quintilian and Seneca felt to speak out against such pedantry. But were these works, some of the titles of which sound very much like miscellanies (Ateius’ works was entitled ὸν, Melissus’ Ineptiae), in fact addressed to the classroom?

The possibility that Suetonius’ grammarians were directing their collections as paideia-supplements to a different audience is suggested by his description of the grammarian Valerius Probus. Compared with the works of Hyginus, Ateius, and Melissus, Probus’ published scholarship is not impressive: a few short studies, carefully researched.40 Kaster describes Probus as a “literary guru” who

self-consciously set himself apart from the ordinary professional grammarian: Probus had followers (rather than pupils), three or four of whom he would admit to his home of an afternoon (not meet in larger groups, in a classroom, in the morning), where he would recline (not sit in a teacher’s cathedra) and hold conversations (not deliver lectures). It is the picture of an intimate

40 Probus seems to have focused most of his writing upon textual criticism: multaque exemplaria contracta emendare ac distinguere at annotare curavit, soli huic nec ulli praeterea grammatices parti deditus (Suetonius Gramm. 24).
and elite coterie, gentlemen meeting in an aristocracy of letters (1984: 54).

Probus purposely removed himself from the *enarratio poetarum* and instead pursued the study of literature as an adult’s leisure activity, yet Suetonius insists all the same that Probus was in fact a grammarian. Implicit in Probus’ activity is a view of a social role of paideia extending beyond the classroom but yet more erudite (i.e. polymathic) than the public paideia-performance associated with drama and declamation. Suetonius’ description of Probus’ associates as *sectatores* prevents their being seen as friends or colleagues; they are in fact his graduate students (cf. Gellius *NA* 2.2.2; 3.1.5; 13.5.2; 19.51).  

It is implied here that the elementary study of literature is meant not only to have an impact *upon* adulthood, but to extend in some form *into* adulthood as well. How is this impact assessed? If the grammarian has avoided overwhelming the child with too much detailed erudition during the early years of reading the canonic authors, how does such a literary data-base concern the educated adult? Polymathic scholarship has been accumulating in textual form, as we have seen, since the library foundations of the fourth and third centuries BC. How does it relate to the educated adult’s experiences with literary culture?

**Πολυμορφία and Post-Primary Education**

Grammatical education was not standardized in antiquity. There was no evaluative testing to determine the completion of a preformulated curriculum. Dionysius Thrax set as the goal of γραμματική the correct κρίσις of literature, the ability to judge the worth of

41 "The bond is different from and more intimate than the exchange of cash for learning" (Kaster 1988: 59).
a piece of literature, to see its relevance to paideia. Presumably the person fully educated in γραμματική could demonstrate satisfactorily this ability to assess literature’s paedeutic value, and to integrate its relevant qualities into his daily life.

In determining the manner in which the educated adult used his primary grammatical studies in his mature approach to paideia, two aspects of this elementary education in literature must still be considered: the extent to which other artes were incorporated into the study of literature, and the moralistic component of the elementary study of literature. I shall argue that society’s expectation of certain basic skills and of standardized moral responses in the adult with a literary education encouraged a sense of group identity, of a cultural community with new demands made upon its members. Πολυμαθεία will be among those new demands.

An education in γραμματική ideally imparted all the skills detailed by Dionysius Thrax: the ability correctly to read, understand, explicate, and assess the traditional curriculum-authors. The repetition of grammar’s province by successive authors from Cicero to Martianus Capella indicates that these were at least conceptualized as the component skills of grammar.

From the earliest references to its content, Greek education had also included gymnastic and music; and during the Hellenistic period, training in other skills became increasingly available (Marrou 1948: 244). These came to be known as the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, the “common” or “standard” education.
Quintilian suggested that other *artes* might be necessary for the correct teaching of γραμματική.

neque citra musicen grammaticice potest esse perfecta ... nec si rationem siderum ignoret poetas intellegat ... nec ignara philosophiae.

*Grammar cannot reach completion without music; it can only make sense of the poets if it possesses a knowledge of astronomy; it cannot be ignorant of philosophy.* (1.4.4)

To the conclusion of his grammatical exposé in Book 1, Quintilian added a discussion an oratorí futuro necessaria sit pluríma artium scientia. He answered affirmatively, that the perfect orator must be familiar with the encyclic paideia, and was to begin the study of the *artes* during these early years. Quintilian did not however give detailed instructions on how or when they were to be incorporated into the basic grammatico-rhetorical curriculum. They are certainly not to be pursued during the time consecrated to grammar, but to *tempora velut subseciva* (1.12.13; cf Marrou 1948: 378).

Not to have this basic, “encyclic” acquaintance with the mathematical *artes* drew critical comment. Theon, with a passing nod to Aristotle (cf note 41 above), complains of ill-prepared rhetoricians who begin public speaking careers

---

42 Grammar’s propaedeutic status is emphasized by theorists. It provides both a finite skill and a means of acquiring the other arts:

*Ille ... per quam pueros elementa traduntur, non docet artes sed motx perscpientias locum parat.*

That art through which the alphabet is taught to children does not teach the liberal arts but instead prepares the place for the arts which are soon to be acquired. (*Seneca Ep. 8.20*) The concept of literacy as propaedeutic goes back at least to Aristotle: ἐπὶ δὲ καὶ τῶν χρησίμων ὁτι δὲ παντὶ παιδεύοντος τοὺς παιδας οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸ χρῆσιμον, οἷον τὴν τῶν γραμμάτων μάθησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ πολλὰς ἐνδεχομοί γινεθῆ ὁ δʼ αὐτῶν μαθησεῖς ἐτέρας, ... τὸ δὲ ἔστειν ποιεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρῆσιμον ἱκανόν ἀρμότει τοῖς μεγαλοφυσίοις καὶ τοῖς ἔλευθεροις. We are also entitled to say that the reason why some of the useful subjects ought to be taught to children — for example, reading and writing — is not only the fact of their being useful: it is also the fact that they make it possible to acquire many other branches of knowledge ... to aim at utility everywhere is utterly unbecoming to high-minded and liberal spirits. (*Pol. 1338a-1338b: translated Barker 1946: 337*)
Before undertaking in some manner or other the study of philosophy and imbuing the magnanimity to be derived from that source. Nowadays the majority are so ignorant of these basic concepts that they rush into oratory without even a basic grasp of the so-called encyclic subjects.

Plutarch, in discussing the raising of children, brings up encyclic education after he has given his views on proper rhetorical training.

The lack of a controlled curriculum and the extent to which the individual or his parent could personally select a program of study from a range of desirable artes are clear. Care, forethought, and selectivity must be exercised in such a situation, as the finished product, the fully educated adult, will prove the value of his curricular choice in his daily life as an adult.

If the first of society’s expectations of an education in γραμματική was a thorough grounding in the canonic authors, some level of acquaintance with the other artes of the ἐγκυκλιος παιδεία was the second. The third expectation was of a different order: a standardized, moralistic response to ethical issues contained in the curricular texts.

As literature had always been the vehicle for the transmission of Greek cultural values, it is scarcely surprising that Imperial grammarians would devote considerable time

---

13 I.e. music, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy. During the Imperial period the list varied with the author discussing it; cf Bompaire 1958: 95.
to the moral and ethical models which their texts conveyed.\textsuperscript{44} Recognizing such models formed part of the \textit{kpi\io\c} of literature which the educated person should have mastered (Marrou 1948: 234-235; Kaster 1988: 27-28).

Curricular authors provided models for language and thought (Bompare 1958: \textit{passim}). But they also conveyed to the student patterns of behavior which contributed to his moral development. Such models could function on the level of correct linguistic usage, with the text providing effective (i.e. correct, legitimate, proper) words and expressions. Since education in grammar dealt with language in its written mode, the text would be the primary source for models to imitate, in this case models of effective words and expressions. Quintilian sorted out these functions thus:

\begin{quote}
Sermo constat ratione, vetustate, auctoritate, consuetudine, rationem praestat praecipue analogia, nonumquam et etymologia, vetera maiestas quaedam .... auctoritas ab oratoribus vel historicis peti solet.... consuetudinem sermonis vocabo consensum eruditorum.
\end{quote}

\textit{Language is determined by reason, convention, authority, usage. Analogy especially and etymology frequently explain the rational portion of language. A certain archaic elegance, an authority, is usually sought from the orators and the historians} (1.6.1-2). \textit{I shall determine usage through the consensus of the learned} (1.6.45).

Quintilian is discussing primarily diction in this passage. Of correct diction's four sources, three are located in the canonic authors. Analogy and etymology are simply ways of defending or criticizing diction found within a text and analyzing it according to a norm which the child can understand (von Fritz 1949: 349-351). \textit{Vetustas} implies the charming dignity of archaic words, the \textit{maiestatem ... non sine delectatione} (1.6.39) which old words can contribute to discourse. We learn of this attraction from Gellius and Fronto too.

\textsuperscript{44}"L'\'etude grammaticale ... sa finalit\'e serait ... d'ordre moral, et en cela le grammarien ... reste bien dans la ligne de la vieille tradition, à la recherche, dans ces annales du passé, d'exemples héroïques de \textit{δρηθή}." Marrou 1948: 234.
(e.g. Na 13.21. 13-14; 19.7.12). Again, the text is both source and model for such terms. *Consuetudo*, usage, alone rests upon imitation of the spoken language, *nam fuerit paene ridiculum malle sermonem quo locuti sint homines quam quo loquantur* it would be almost risible to prefer outdated to current language (*Inst. orat.* 1.6.43). But here Quintilian curiously hedges his assertion: not everyone’s usage is to be imitated, but only that of the *eruditi*. The many’s linguistic models will not do, any more than will its moral examples, a *periculosissimum praecptum* indeed (*ibid.*). So in the end *consuetudo* too depends upon the imitation of the written text, for upon this the *eruditi* have modeled their usage.

Quintilian goes on to conjecture a second way in which the grammar school’s core texts can provide models for imitation. Not only do they provide correct language, but an inspiring moral tone as well: *et sublimitate heroi carminis animus adsurgat et ex magnitude rerum spiritum ducat*. Let the heart swell with the sublimity of heroic song, and draw its breath from the greatness of the enterprise. (1.8.5).

Yet the grammarian must also be warned to be careful of a text’s possible danger to the students’ moral development. Although the canonic school authors had undergone centuries of selection for educative purposes, they still represented high adult art. Antiquity did not “write down” to its children’s level of comprehension. Quintilian expresses the need to censor some texts to make them fit for the classroom, while other Greats must simply be omitted from the curriculum or at least postponed *ad firmius aetatis robur* (1.8.6) because of an indecent or lascivious component unsuited to the preadolescent. Plutarch worries that the texts themselves corrupt: poetry, the main diet of the schoolchild, is a fabric of lies; in fact, its charm lies in being

\[ \text{ιὺ πεπλεγμένη διάθεσις μυθολογίας, οὐκ ἴσμεν δ' ἀμυθον οὐδ' ἀφευδὴ ποιησιν.} \]
a finely woven tissue of fable; we do not know of a poem which is not fabulous, which is not false. (Quomodo poet. aud. 16b)

Consequently, it must be handled with intelligence and respect in the classroom:

Consequently, it must be handled with intelligence and respect in the classroom:

Quintilian, more pragmatic, states simply non modo quae diserta sed vel magis quae honesta sunt discant let them learn not only what is eloquently expressed but even more what is morally sound. (1.8.5)

If the Imperial grammarian needed more precise instruction on how and when to incorporate moral relevance into his enarratio, he could find it in various commentaries and ύπομνήματα to his texts. Degenhardt has collected a number of scholia containing brief moralistic summaries of a variety of passages from Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, and Terence. In the Quomodo poetae audiendi, besides the cautionary comments quoted above, Plutarch offers some concrete positive advice about scouting out opportunities in a text for introducing moral discussions. When reading the Iliad, for example, the child’s attention should be drawn to the fact that Achilles, though wrongly impelled to attack and kill Agamemnon (οὔτε πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ὁρθῶς οὔτε πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον), yet rightly restrained his anger (ὁρθῶς πολιν καὶ καλῶς 26d). Diomedes, a

As when fruit lies hidden, overshadowed by the leaves and branches of the vine, even so many beneficial and useful points escape the child as he reads poetry because they are overshadowed by the words and the fantasies. He must not miss them, and he must not wander from the subject, but must cleave especially close to those elements which are conducive to excellence and which shape his character.
model of discreet discourse, refrained from using free speech to his commanding officer in public, but spoke out manfully to him in private:

If such a detail is brought to the child's attention, it will teach him to consider moderation and freedom from arrogance to be proper, but to avoid conceit and boastfulness as base. (29b)

When ambiguity arises in a text, the child's response must be correctly directed toward the proper interpretation: Nausicaa's assertive manner of speaking to Odysseus, for example, must be interpreted in such a way as to avoid the conclusion that she is modelling behavior unacceptable in a young girl (27a; and cf. Basil of Caesarea De legendis gentilium libris 7-10). Thus literature which the twentieth century sees as too aesthetically complex to warrant such Aesop-like moralizing, for the Imperial period channels values and behavioral models to succeeding generation of grammar-school students.

During the Imperial period, then, the young person who had completed his education in γραμματική was expected not only to have studied the canonic authors, but to have picked up information from a number of supplementary fields of study as well, and to have developed a conventional, moralistic way of reacting to his school texts. Imperial authors may view such a literary education not as a preparatory training period in the processes necessary for carrying on adult activities, but rather as an initiation into a state of enculturation. It opened a door to an imagined, idealized past, viewed both as the emotional heartland from which the present had moved away, and as a source from which the reader was encouraged to draw moral foils and exempla relevant to his own life. Paideia thus viewed offered the educated person not an escape from the realities of his
daily life but an identity with the past, an identity which allowed him to reinterpret the present and thus more effectively to participate in it.

In Quintilian, an education in γραμματική is applicable to all stages of life, and in itself immensely satisfying: necessaria pueris, iucunda senibus, dulcis secretorum comes a requirement for children, a pleasure for seniors, a sweet companion in retirement. (1.4.5). Paideia was a valuable, lifelong possession, man’s best treasure and the element which marked him as truly human:

εὐγένεια καλὸν μὲν, ἄλλα προγόνων ἁγαθὸν. πλοῦτος δὲ τίμιον μὲν, ἄλλα τύχης κτήμα ... δόξα γε μὴν σεμίν᾽ μὲν, ἄλλ᾽ ἀβέβαιον. κάλλος δὲ περιμάχητον μὲν, ἄλλ᾽ ὀλιγοχρόνοιν. ὑγίεια δὲ τίμιον μὲν, ἄλλ᾽ εὐμετάστατον. ἰσχύς δὲ ζηλωτὸν μὲν, ἄλλα νόσῳ εὐάλωτον καὶ γῆρα .... παίδεια δὲ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν μόνον ἔστιν ἀθάνατον καὶ θείον.

High birth is a fine and good thing, but depends upon our ancestors. Wealth is valued, but it is in the hands of fortune. Reputation is fine but insecure. Beauty is admired by many but lasts only a short time. Good health is precious but transitory. Strength is longed for but easily removed by sickness and age. Paideia alone of our possessions is a thing both immortal and divine. (Plutarch De lib. educ. 5d)

But the study is not to be tainted with worldly concerns: ne velim quidem lectorem dari mihi, Quintilian insists, quid studia referant, computaturum. I would surely not want as my reader the kind of person who would reckon up what an education is worth (1.12.16; and cf Aristotle Pol. 1338b1).

---

46 Quintilian is echoing an earlier statement of Cicero: Haec studia adolescentiam agunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solacium praebent. Delectant domi, non impedient foris, pernoctant nobiscum, perigrinantur, rusticantur. These studies shape us in youth, delight us in age, are ornaments at the dinner table, offer refuge and solace in times of trouble, please us at home, are handy to travel with; they share our insomnia, our absences from home, our days in the country. (Pro Archia 16)
Thus conceived, paideia is a shibboleth, a union ticket, and a lifelong commitment. Idealized paideia on the adult level is regularly imaged in one of two ways: the ascension of the athlete and the ineffable state of one initiated into the Mysteries.

The use of imagery drawn from athletic training to illustrate the purposive focus of paideia acquisition occurs frequently in Imperial authors’ discussions of education. Galen, for example, conceived of the arts of the ἐγκόσκιος παιδεία as exercise for the soul, a means of strengthening its various functions as though they were so many muscles and sinews.

That such imagery was taken seriously by the educated élite is revealed by a number of funeral inscriptions in which a literary education is figured as ἀσκησις, the result of ἄσκειν (Kaster 1989: 17 note 11).

The shared connotations of athletic training and intellectual culture emphasize the effort required to attain paideia. But it is the transfigured state of the paideia graduate which is expressed by images suggestive of religious initiation. Marrou’s 1938 study of sarcophagi of learned individuals of the Imperial period graphically illustrates the transformation of the soul brought about by education. The educated individual as initiate is identified by Gellius with his reader and himself, while those unable to appreciate the value of his compilations are turned away from the Noctes Atticae as profane: ea ne attingat neve adeat profestum et profanum volgus a ludo musico diversum. Let that

---

47 Cf Gellius NA. Prol. 20; on civil employment for the literarily educated, cf Bowersock 1969:43-58, Bowie 1970: 6
uninitiated and impious mob, uncultivated in the activities of the Muse, neither touch nor approach this work. (*NA Prol.* 19-21). Terminology drawn from the Mystery religions is frequently used by Imperial authors to refer to literature as well as to a literary education. So the works of Homer and other poets -- Ὄμηρον ... καὶ συμπαντῶς τοῦ περὶ τῶν Ὅμηρον χόρον -- are referred to by Libanius, for example, as ἀπόρρητα (1.6.45); advanced students are οἱ τελωμενοὶ (*Or.* 15.27), and Photius quotes Olympiodorus on the “rites of passage” at a school of rhetoric at Athens (*Bib.* 80.b0b.14 ff; cf Kaster 1988: 16 footnote 7). Macrobius refers to the *penetralia* of Vergil’s poetry (*Sat.* 1.7.5; cf. Kaster *ibid.)*. Marrou refers to “le culte des classiques,” which “autant et plus que le néoplatonisme ... constitue le dernier bastion où la vieille religion se defend contre l’envahissement du christianisme” (1948: 411).  

Such imagery emphasizes not so much the potential religiosity of the educated élite, however, as their acquisition of a special status. Kaster’s assessment of such an educational experience as “a transfiguring revelation, a passive experience, an irreversible change “ (1989: 16 footnote 7) is particularly appropriate when taken in conjunction with the image of the educative processes as ἄξικης. After the sweat and labor of the childhood process comes an inexplicable and ineffable alteration of viewpoint which can only be acquired through paideia. The initiate acquires a trustworthy and accurate κρίσις which allows him to interpret and to utilize paideia correctly. The initiate’s status is made manifest by his successful performance of a new paideia-activity, now no longer the child’s classroom performance but rather a daily and ongoing life in paideia.

---

48 The roots of such a religious stance in relation to the arts and to learning in general may perhaps extend to the Muse cults associated with the fourth-century schools of philosophy at Athens as well as with the Alexandrian Museum (cf Fraser 1972: 305).
Such a performance has two aspects: the application of learning to daily life, and
the acquisition of more and relevant πολυμαθία. To both of these the miscellany
responds. In providing both a data-base of relevant πολυμαθία and models for its correct
application to daily life, the Imperial miscellanist sees himself as supplying a real need
arising from this peculiar concept of the role of education in adult life. The supplementary
data-base allows the educated adult to interpret paideia by intensifying his command over
literature and language. It further allows the educated adult to identify more fully with the
cultural elite of past and present, thus fostering the archaizing, exclusionary, and highly
conservative qualities of Imperial paideia itself. Such πολυμαθία cannot avoid a moralistic
bent, because in fact a literary education is seen in the Imperial period not just as fostering
but as the very foundation of the moral life.49

Knowledge was pursued not for its own sake but as a
predominantly social phenomenon, as an appanage of personal
relations and a token of accepted virtues .... The centrifugal force of
[polymathic] learning ... was balanced by the centripetal force of
mores, urging conformity to established values and behavior ....
Good learning and good mores are assumed to be inseparable ....
The union of qualities is part of the line of continuity in the classical
tradition from the early to the late empire and between literary and
social conventions. (Kaster 1989: 64-65)

The one who has acquired such an education -- who is πεποιθεμένος -- increases his moral
excellence with his polymathic fund (cf. Marrou 1948: 234).

A chief attribute of the professional [grammarians] ... is taken over
by the amateur literary tradition and regarded as a moral trait, one
of the attributes of the good man — his scrupulous attention to the
details of his cultural tradition (what impatient modern readers of

49Holford-Strevens attempts to separate moral response from aesthetic judgment in Gellius: "The
overriding concern for morality ... is true only of his philosophical chapters .... It is less important to him
than literary taste.... Gellius discusses moral problems ... but easily slides into antiquarianism" (1989: 28-
32). For cultural initiates, however, morality cannot be separated from any intellectual activity.
Macrobius and Gellius commonly call their “pedantry”). (Kaster 1989: 66)

The Miscellanist and Correct \( \pi \omega \nu \mu \alpha \theta \iota \alpha \)

The modern application of “pedantry” to \( \pi \omega \nu \mu \alpha \theta \iota \alpha \) represents our negative reaction to what we consider to be incorrect or irrelevant learning. For the miscellanist concerned with collecting relevant data from the entire cultural tradition, selection is as necessary as it was for the Hellenistic scholar ordering and evaluating his paideia archives.

What determines the miscellanist’s assessment of data as relevant? Basically, his selection rests upon his concept of his reader’s needs. The miscellanist knows these needs intimately because, as I shall attempt to demonstrate in Chapter 3, he can identify his reader with himself at an earlier stage of his own intellectual development. And he is able to provide relevant \( \pi \omega \nu \mu \alpha \theta \iota \alpha \) to satisfy these needs because he has himself adopted the correct approach to paideia: \textit{diligentia} or \textit{\sigma \pi \omicron \upsilon \varsigma \eta} with \textit{\pi \omicron \nu \omicron \zeta} in the acquisition of a polymathic data-base.

The miscellanists may themselves describe in several ways the zeal and labor with which they have compiled their collections. Gellius describes his notes as \textit{quasi quoddam litterarum penus} (Prol. 2) which he has “squirreled away” (\textit{recondebam}).

\begin{quote}
\textit{ego...ipse quidem volvendis transeundisque multis admodum voluminibus per omnia negotiorum intervalla in quibus furari otium potui, exercitus defessusque sum.}
\end{quote}

\textit{I wore myself out in leafing through and perusing a good many volumes in those spaces of time which I could steal from my duties to devote to leisure pursuits.} (Prol. 12)
Clement applies to his own activity, now the Biblical parable of the talents properly and zealously invested (*Strom. 1.1.3*), now the image of a hunter tracking down relevancies in the course of his compilation.

Just as one who is enamored of the hunt catches his beast after having searched, trailed, tracked and run with the hounds, so too it is clear that the truth is both hunted out with pleasure and conveyed through labor. (*Strom. 1.2.20*)

Aelian too, in the epilogue to the *De natura animalium*, utilizes hunting imagery to define his pursuit of meaningful facts.

Pliny the Elder details the extent of his scholarship with an almost avaricious glee.

In Pliny's case we have additional information about his *diligentia*. According to the younger Pliny, his uncle was obsessed with the need to fill every free moment with
sAdded scholarly labor. In a letter to an admirer of his uncle's, he draws the portrait of a man who literally immersed himself in books; the picture is consistent with the scholar's own description of his research considered above. The nephew reports that in autumn and winter Pliny would begin his day as early as midnight, in order to give himself extra time for study. He would work steadily through the small hours; then, after attending to his administrative duties after daybreak,

reversus domum, quod reliquum temporis, studiis reddebat. post cibum saepe ... aestate ... iacebat in sole, liber legebatur, adnotabat excerpebatque. nihil enim legit, quod non excerperet; ... frigida lavabatur, deinde gustabatur dormiebatque minimum; mox quasi alio die studebat in cenae tempus. super hanc liber legebatur, adnotabatur, et quidem cursim.

Once returned home, he would give any remaining time to his studies. After lunch in the summer he would often lie in the sun and have a book read to him; he would take notes and make excerpts. He compiled constantly ... He would have a wash, a snack, a little nap, then study until dinner, as though it were a new day. During dinner a book would be read, and he would even make quick notes while dining. (Ep. 3.5.9-11)

This was the regular daily schedule. The younger Pliny goes on to describe how, during vacations, his uncle would give his mornings too to study, and would even be read to while at the baths (15) and while riding in his sedan chair (16).

Pliny the Younger found his uncle's diligentia particularly admirable because of the way in which the Elder had managed to balance the responsibilities of his public career with his scholarship, all within a relatively brief life span.

Miraris, quod tot volumina multaque in his tam scrupulosa homo occupatus absolverit, magis miraberis, si scieris illum aliquandiu causas actitasse, dececssisse anno sexto et quinquagensimo, medium tempus distentum impeditumque qua officiis maximis qua amicitia principum egisse.

If you wonder how a busy man can have composed so many works, many of them carefully researched studies, you'll really be surprised to find out that for some time he acted as an advocate, that he died at the age of fifty-six, and that during the time in between these two events he was preoccupied with very high offices and with the friendship of the Imperial family.
In the epilogue to the *De natura animalium*, another thematically controlled compilation collection, Aelian prides himself on having resisted the temptations to a lucrative career to devote even more σπουδή to research:

οὐκ ἄγνω ἃ ἄρα καὶ τῶν ἐς χρήματα ὁρόντων ὑπὲρ καὶ τεθημένων ἐς τιμὰς τε καὶ δυνάμεις τινῶν καὶ πᾶν τὸ φιλόδοξον δε' αἰτίας ἔξουσι, εἰ τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ σχολὴν κατεθέμην ἐς ταῦτα, ἔξον καὶ ὑφρυσθαι καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀὑλαῖς ἐξετάζεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα προήκειν πλούτου .... ἀλλὰ οὐ μοι φιλον σὺν τοίῳ διὸ τοῖς πλουσίωσι ἀρίθμησθαι καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξετάζεσθαι .... βουλοῦμην γάρ ἄν μάθημα ἐν γονὶ πεπαιδευμένον περιγενέσθαι μοι ἢ τὰ ἄξονεν τῶν πάνω πλουσίων χρήματα τῇ ἁμα καὶ κτῆματα.

I am well aware that among those who are eager for material advancement and public office, power, and reputation, there are those who will find fault with me because I have devoted my leisure to the present work, when I could have exerted myself and proven my abilities in the public forum and made a lot of money .... I, however, had no desire to be numbered and assessed among the wealthy .... I would prefer to have one lesson well learnt than all the celebrated property and possessions of those wealthy individuals.

The Imperial miscellanist can provide his reader with a relevant polymathic database. Can he also provide him with the νοῦς or κρίσις which will allow the reader in turn to approach πολυμαθία correctly?

The miscellanist's data-base itself will not do so. The miscellanist simply offers up relevancies; it is up to the reader to apply them as needed. But the miscellanist is in a position to offer the reader correct models for paideia acquisition and for the incorporation of πολυμαθία in daily life. He may do so in his own person, by discussing his own experiences with πολυμαθία; or he may do so indirectly, by narrating circumstances and anecdotes which illustrate paideia acquisition and the application of πολυμαθία. Only models can point to real relevancy by showing paideia-initiates using their πολυμαθία in real-life circumstances.
These models, and the reader for whom they were presented, will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 3

The Miscellany’s Readership

To appreciate both the compilatory activity and the data collection of the Imperial
miscellanist, it is necessary to analyze his relationship with his reader. The miscellanist may
himself express his awareness of the reader and his conception of the reader’s needs. Here
Gellius and his compilator Macrobius are the most specific in describing this relationship.

In making his selection of data for inclusion in the Noctes Atticae, Gellius states
that he had a fairly specific program in mind.

volvendis transeundisque multis admodum voluminibus ... modica
ex his eaque sola accepi, quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad
honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplatione
celeri facilique compendio ducerent, aut homines aliis iam vitae
negotios occupatos a turpi certe agrestique rerum atque verborum
imperitia vindicarent.

In perusing very many books, I only admitted those data which either would
inspire quick minds to a desire for proper erudition through a rapid overview
and handy digest of the useful arts, or which would rescue men preoccupied
with daily business from a shameful and low ignorance of fact and language
usage. (Prof. 12)

Macrobius, borrowing from Gellius, insists that

nihil enim huic operi insertum puto aut cognitu inutile aut difficile
perceptu, sed omnia quibus sit ingenium tuum vegetius, memoria
adminiculatior, oratio sollertior, sermo incorruptior.

I have included nothing in this work which is of no intellectual use, nothing
hard to understand. I have instead compiled all that material through which
your memory may be better equipped, your oratory more flexible, your speech
more pure. (Praef. 11).

Clement opens the Stromateis with a long discussion, echoing Plato’s Phaedrus
(cf. p 70 above), on the utility of committing his πολυμαθεία to writing. He shows
considerable concern for his reader and the risks the reader runs in being exposed to
Hellenic (non-Christian) paideia.
In rekindling these [compiled data] in the form of ὑπομνήματα, I willingly omit some material from my selection, for I hesitate to record that which I guarded against even reading, not through ill will — that is immoral — but because I feared lest my readers might happen upon this material and be misled by it; thus I would be found to have offered “a sharp knife to a child,” as the proverb runs. (1.1.14)

Aelian in the De natura animalium is aware that readers have a variety of uses for πολυμαθία.

If this material appears useful to someone, he can go ahead and use it. If he doesn’t think it’s beneficial, let him give it to his father to cherish and study. People hold different opinions about what is fine and worthy of study. (Prol. 1)

The present chapter continues the analysis of the miscellany tradition by considering the manner in which the miscellanist’s selection of data responds to his reader’s needs. Here I shall attempt to demonstrate the following:

1. The miscellanist provides relevant data for a reader who must navigate a flood of available texts. Abundance and availability of literary resources must be dealt with by diligent study and by selection, the same activities seen as significant by Hellenistic scholars.

2. The reader is mildly patronized by the miscellanist. His interests in and uses for πολυμαθία are identical with those of the miscellanist, but he is viewed as a younger person who has not experienced polythic paideia to the same extent as the miscellanist.
3. The reader approaches paideia in a nonprofessional, elitist manner, with the expectations of an educated adult.

4. The miscellanist, in the process of providing the reader with a polymathic database, demonstrates the correct way for an educated person to use his leisure (σχολή, *otium*).

Bompaire has described Imperial paideia as based "sur les livres lus (άναγνώσις) ou dits (άκρόασις). La lecture est ... l'instrument essentiel de culture .... Il faut avoir beaucoup lu, beaucoup entendu, et chaque jour." Throughout later antiquity we constantly encounter "la persistance d'un goût profond pour les livres, indépendant de toute doctrine" (1958: 33-41). One senses that this constant close contact with the written text was not only a pleasant luxury for the leisured literary amateur, but an absolute necessity both for him and for the creative writer.

A free access to paideia was of course limited during the Imperial period to those fortunate enough to have acquired both basic literacy and an education in γραμματεία. One entered the ranks of the culturally initiated élite through such a preliminary education; but a reputation for excellence and a preeminence within that élite could only be attained through relevant πολυμαθεία acquired through further study of written texts.

From the first century BC, references are increasingly made in literature to the necessity of a written text for all forms of intellectual activity, including both original composition and secondary scholarship. The library is viewed as a source both for inspiration and for matter — οἶνος, *silva, doctrina* (Cicero *De or.* 3.8. 103, 125) — which funds intellectual creativity, a kind of stockpile of resources. The poet cannot create
without his books: ignosces igitur si ...haec tibi non tribuo munera .... nam, quod scrip torum non magna est copia apud me,hoc fit ....huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.

Forgive me if I don’t supply you with the gifts I owe. I haven’t a lot of documents with me, for when I came here I brought only one of my many book-boxes (68: 33-40)

Drawing upon Catullus’ frustration over his capsulae, Ovid describes a similar balk placed upon his own creativity by the lack of texts in exile: non hic librorum per quos inviter alarque / copia. Here there is no supply of books by which I may be enticed, on which I may be fed. (Tr. 3. 14. 37-38)

During the early years of the Principate, those authors involved in both amateur and professional scholarship and in paideia and its transmission also enjoyed an intimacy with written documents. “A considérer l’activité littéraire du premier siècle,” Salles states,

nous pouvons dire que c’est l’époque qui a intégré le mieux la littérature dans les activités quotidiennes et lui a donné une véritable fonction sociale .... Petit à petit la noblesse au premier siècle avait de la création littéraire l’équivalent d’une carrière politique avec ses charges et ses grades” (1992: 47).

The literary individual was not typed by his genre but by his use of literature to create literature: Pliny, for example, saw poetry, oratory, and history all as possible venues for his talent (Ep. 5.8), while Juvenal in his seventh satire decried society’s financial neglect of paideia by describing the mutual plights of the poet, historian, forensic orator, and teacher of rhetoric. All such practitioners shared one common feature: the written documentum, which in its etymological sense was the repository of doctrina both drawn from and concerning the past. Paideia was “le lien entre une formation littéraire telle que la donne l’enseignement, et la culture générale qui résume la civilisation” (Bompaire 1958: 94).

1 This might have been part of the burden of the doctus poeta, a development from the scholarly element in Hellenistic poetry. Callimachus had also insisted that ωμάρτρων ωδέν υείδω I sing nothing that has not its witness (fr 612 Pf; cf. Quinn 1973: 380; Marshall 1976: 251, 255).
The production, distribution, and acquisition of written texts in the first century BC appear to be not functions of commerce and systematic manufacture so much as a social gesture reflecting bonds of friendship and a sense of decorum. There are no significant data which make it possible to consider Atticus, for example, a publisher in our sense of the term (Starr 1987: 220-221 note 54). If a person in late Republican Rome wanted a text, he acquired an associate's copy and had it replicated either by his own hand or that of a scribe. Cicero never mentions going to a bookshop (Starr 1987: 225); he does, however, have quite a lot to say about private library collections, both his own and those of friends and associates: Quintus is building a book collection and needs advice (QFr. 3.4.5); given a complete library by someone in Greece, Cicero fusses about its transport to Italy (Att. 2.1.12). Friends sold books to friends. Marshall describes the manner in which Cicero bought up Sulla's library (1976: 259). *Ego ... pascor bibliotheca Fausti* I graze upon Faustus' book collection, Cicero wrote, graphically expressing his satisfaction at getting access to this collection (Att. 4.10). Faustus' texts represented personal wealth, some of them doubtless having formed part of the plunder Faustus' father brought to Rome from the sack of Athens in the preceding generation. Lucullus' library too consisted in part of such booty, in this case the texts which had formed Mithridates' royal library. It was all to be shared by friends, as Cicero indicates when describing how Lucullus generously opened his text collection to personal friends (Acad. Prior. 1.1).

---

2 Cf. Zetzel's assessment that "private enterprise and private interest are more significant than commerce in ... respect [to getting possession of a desired text]" (1981: 235).
Plutarch refers to Lucullus’ library as a kind of hostel at Rome for visiting Greek scholars, 
Μουσῶν τι καταγωγίαν (Luc. 41; Birt 1881: 563-564; Callmer 1944: 154-156).³

One’s personal book collection marked the extent of one’s learning, forming at times a kind of alter ego. Mark Antony’s pillage of Varro’s library must have been viewed as the ironic tragedy of this scholarly man’s career (Gellius NA 3.10.17). For the late Republican author, collections of books as physical objects were a mark of wealth, rank, status, and personal identity (Starr 1987: 223; Salles 1992: 197). Like exotic food, fish ponds, and country villas, libraries could become outward signs of an indulgence in luxuria, moral decline through material possessions. Plutarch had purposely to eliminate this connotation in Lucullus’ case when he insisted that, as far as Lucullus was concerned,

ἡ χρήσις ἢν φιλοτιμότερα τῆς κτήσεως τοῦ Ἱπποδόμου. He took more pride in the use [of his library] than in its possession (Luc 41).⁴

Texts and their acquisition are frequently referred to in the literature of the early Empire. Martial’s numerous casual references to bookshops and bookdealers allow us to build up a rather clearer picture of the Roman book trade than we could do for the Republican period. Martial identifies his poetic voice with the physical volumina containing it, and consequently insists upon the personal quality of his relationship with booksellers, naming their shops specifically as the places where “Martial” could be found. We hear of the booksellers Tryphon and Arectus, Secundus and Polius Valerianus (e.g.

---
³This element of individual sharing of paideia may be traced back to the second century BC. Aemilius Paullus kept only the booty from Perseus’ library, with the intention of sharing it out among his sons (Plutarch Aem. 28.6). Marshall points out that the friendship between Polybius and Scipio began with the loaning of texts (1976: 258).
⁴It was as patrons of the city of Rome that Pollio and Augustus opened their libraries to public use (Marshall 1976: 261).
1.2, 113, 117; 4. 72; 13.3), functioning as Martial’s editors, publishers, and distributors. For Martial seems simply to have entrusted these men with copies of his poems and allowed them to replicate the manuscripts according to their own judgments (Birt 1887: 357-359; van Groningen 1963: 3-4; Starr 1987: 219-221; Salles 1992: 156-170). Seneca mentions the shop of Dorus, who retailed Cicero and Livy (Ben. 7.6.1). Pliny refers familiarly to bibliopolae as his usual means of publication (Ep. 1.1.6).

During the second century AD the bookseller’s shop was occasionally depicted as a spot frequented by intellectuals, including authors. Gellius set three of his longer chapters in bookshops, locales where assertions made in the course of a discussion on literature or philosophy could be ratified or refuted by consulting an available text (NA 5.4; 13.31; 18.4). Athenaeus’ lexical scholar, Ulpianus, is described as a man who acquired his reputation διὰ τὰς συνεχεῖς ζητήσεις ἢς ἀνὰ πάσαν ὄραν ποιεῖται ἐν ταῖς ἁγιαίς, περιπάτοις, βιβλιωθείοις, βιλανείοις on account of the continual examination he would make at all seasons in the streets, porticoes, bookshops and baths. (1.2)

For Athenaeus this list must have been an exhaustive one in terms of the places where books and scholars might regularly be found. Does it also imply that booksellers at the end of the second century AD dealt in such lexical reference works as Athenaeus himself must have consulted in the course of composing the Deipnosophistae? Here the information is not so abundant as for contemporary belles-lettres and the canonic authors of paideia. Of the books Gellius refers to in the Noctes Atticae as being for sale in bookshops, we have only one reference to compiled texts. These were bundles, fasces librorum of raggedy used volumina which Gellius bought at a very low price at the
market in Brundisium (9.4), and which seem to have contained paradoxographical and geographical *mirabilia* from Aristeas, Isigonus, Ctesias, Onesicritus, Polystephanus, and Hegesias. Gellius does not indicate whether he was dealing with compiled excerpts or whole works. That he goes on to describe his own cautious use of the texts suggests that they were already *συναγωγαί* of compilations which had been streamlined into easily excerpted units — that is, polymathic compendia.

Although Imperial authors do not make frequent references to their sources for acquiring scholarly texts, they are clearly accessing the texts by some means. In a letter to a fan of his uncle's works who had asked for more bibliographical information, Pliny the Younger prepared an index of titles for him, remarking *tam diligenter libros avunculi mei lectitas ut habere omnes velis* (Ep. 3.1). Though Pliny did not indicate a source for his uncle's texts, these may have been available through the Pliny family, or copies which friends had earlier made from a family manuscript could be replicated in turn. This practice of copying from the author's autograph lent out to friends was, as van Groningen has shown, the ancient equivalent of our publication (1963: 3; he applies the term *διάδοσις* to this process; cf. Zetzel 1981: 233-237). However Gellius acquired access to the miscellaneous compilations he lists by title in his preface to the *Noctes Atticae* (6-9), he was familiar enough with them to dismiss them with some contempt, and felt that his reader was familiar enough with the genre to recognize their quality by title alone. Diodorus learned to his own regret just how readily available a work of scholarly compilation could be at Rome. Parts of his own universal history, he relates at 40.8, had been pirated before the whole work could be published, despite the overview of the entire
project which he included in his preface with the stated purpose of τοὺς δὲ διασκευάζειν εἰωθότας τὰς βιβλίους ἀποτρέψαι τοὺς λυμαίνεσθαι τὰς ἄλλοτρίας πραγματείας discouraging those in the habit of making compilations from spoiling other people’s work.

Of course friends and associates could freely offer their own works to others. A friend offered Gellius a manuscript of his own compilations for possible inclusion in the *Noctes Atticae* (14.6). Judging from the size of some recorded private libraries, there were individuals during the Imperial period who could afford to be generous with their texts. Persius left a library of seven hundred volumes (Suetonius *Persius*). SiliusItalicus spent so much money on his library and books (*ad emacitatis reprehensionem*) that even Pliny was shocked (*Ep.* 3.7.8). The *Suda* attributed to the grammarian Epaphroditus a library of thirty thousand book-rolls. Aelian’s contemporary Serenus Salmonicus bequeathed to Gordian sixty-two thousand rolls (Wendel 1940: 38). Even Symmachus, late in the fourth century, had enough material in his private collection to re-edit Livy (*Ep.* 4.18.5). Gellius mentions an occasion when Antonius Julianus *rented* an old copy of Ennius to check a manuscript reading (18.5.11); the owner of this text had evidently found a lucrative way to utilize his personal library collection.

When writers of the Principate and early Empire mention a source for scholarly texts, they refer frequently to copies in public libraries. Although we may question just how public such institutions were (Marshall 1976: 261, Starr 1987: 216 note 23), the social class which found in paideia the sole means of entry into the cultural élite must have seen in the public library an extension of the opulent personal collections of the wealthy statesmen of the Republic. The first public library at Rome had been established in 39 BC,
and several large institutions followed in the next few centuries. By the fourth century Rome had twenty-eight public libraries. Italian and provincial cities took Rome’s libraries as models and instituted their own, with the result that the existence of a public library was a primary sign of urban status (Wendel 1940: 45-55; Callmer 1944: 156-183).

Imperial public libraries were more than book repositories, considerably more central to a city’s political and social life than their Hellenistic counterparts had been. Gellius describes animated discussions among authors and the social élite in the library of the Domus Tiberiana (NA 13.20) and in the hall of the Aedes Palatinae, the latter discussion taking place in the midst of *omnia fere ordinum multitudo opperientes salutationem Caesaris* an enormous mob of clients of all ranks and classes waiting to greet Caesar (4.1.1). Tacitus describes a meeting of the Senate at this library *cum* temple summoned by Tiberius, (Ann. 2.37) where, according to Suetonius, Augustus himself had been in the habit of convening the Senate (Aug. 29). Authors frequently refer to the elaborate accoutrements of the public libraries at Rome, especially to the busts and statues of both contemporary and ancient heroes of paideia (e.g. Pliny HN 7.115). The furnishings sometimes, it appears, attracted more attention than the books. Pausanias, for example, describing the public library built at Athens by Hadrian, mentions the text collection itself as an afterthought.

*κατασκευάζατο μὲν καὶ ἄλλα Ἀθηναίοις ... τὰ δὲ ἐπιφανεστάτα ἑκατον εἰς κίονες Φρυγίου λιθοῦ. πεποίηται δὲ καὶ ταῖς στοιχὶς κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ οἱ τοίχοι. καὶ οἰκήματα ἐνταῦθα ἐστὶν ὀρόφῳ τε ἐπιχρύσω καὶ ἀλαβάστρῳ λίθῳ, πρῶς δὲ ἀγάλμασι κεκοσμημένα καὶ γραφαῖς κατάκειται δὲ ἔς αὐτὰ βιβλία.*

*Among the constructions he made for the Athenians, the most impressive are the [stoa consisting of] one hundred columns of Phrygian marble. The walls have been made just like these walkways. There are rooms here with gilded ceilings and with alabaster, fitted out with paintings and statues. And there are books deposited in these rooms.* (1.18.9)
The busts and paintings may in fact have been one means of locating texts, besides decorating the libraries and encouraging a canonic approach to authors and their works. But libraries could contain other fixtures as well — specimen collections, for example, inscribed tablets, and assorted antiquities — with the result that, as Salles describes it, the library "devient une sorte de ‘décor’ qui ... suffit à créer un univers imaginaire .... L’abondance d’ouvrage d’érudition de tout ordre, de curiosités diverses tant philologiques qu’historiques ou mythologiques rassemblés dans les bibliothèques publiques ou privées a favorisé la mode des œuvres de compilation, des abrégés et des anthologies." (1992: 185)

One might add to Salles’ list of connotations the simple concept of παίδεια or silvan: an abundance of paideia’s resources ready to be worked up into scholarship and art.

Despite the clutter of the decor and the crowds of people, study and research did take place at the public libraries, and it is significant that the first living author to be commemorated with a library bust was the polymath Varro (Pliny HN 7.115). All individuals involved with the creation of literature, whether belles-lettres or scholarship, were active in the public book collections; in other words, the library was as appropriate a milieu for the compilating research scholar as for the docti poetae. Quintilian describes in passing the opportunity for excerpting offered in a library setting. In responding to protests to his reading list for young orators, Quintilian invited negative critics to construct a list of their own favorite authors by compiling one from pinakes of names and titles located in a library collection.

nec sane quisquam est tam procul a cognitione eorum remotus ut non indicem certe ex bibliotheca sumptum transferre in libros suos possit.
Surely there is no one so unfamiliar with these [available authors] that he could not easily copy down into his books a list taken from a library. (Inst. 10.1.57)

We have more indications of the availability of texts of scholarly research for the library than for the book trade. Philological, historical, and philosophical studies are all referred to as available in the private library collections of the late Republic. Cicero represents himself in the De finibus looking up an Aristotelian *commentarium* in Lucullus’ library (3.3.10); elsewhere he refers to studies by Dicaearchus and Varro which he would like to have in his own collection (Att. 13.31; 4.14). During the early Empire we find evidence for such works in public libraries as well. Gellius refers to a number of scholarly texts which he has gotten access to in public libraries. Among these he names an archival collection of praetorian edicts (NA 11.17), a work which we know as the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* (19.5), and a handbook of the principles of logic by Aelius Stilo, the latter a collection of Stilo’s personal notes (Gellius types it as a *commentarium* sui *magis admonendi quam aliorum docendi gratia* more for the purpose of reminding himself than for teaching others (16.8.3). Less precise but more provocative is a passing reference to some sort of scholarly work which Apuleius makes in the course of his defense against a charge of sorcery. Having listed the names of some famous *magi*, Apuleius states that these names are easily found in any public library, *haec et multo plura alia nomina in bibliothecis publicis apud clarissimos scriptores me legisse* these and many other names I have read at the library in the works of the most well-known authors (Apol. 91). “Apuleius can hardly refer to magical treatises,” his commentators maintain, “which would assuredly not have

---

5 S. West has referred to such works of scholarship as being mostly privately owned documents made by individuals “for their own use” (1970: 290). If that is what Stilo’s work was, the text had by Gellius’ time managed to find its way into the *scriinia* of the Bibliotheca Pacis.
been kept in the public libraries. Such works were publicly banned in the third century BC
.... He must refer to learned works such as Pliny’s *Natural History*” (Butler and Owen 1914: 164); in other words, to compilatory scholarship.

Authors undertaking scholarship craved a quiet, well-stocked library and the
to opportunity to use it. To these Imperial authors Cicero’s description of Cato in Lucullus’
library seems particularly applicable: *in summo otio maximaque copia quasi helluari
libris, si hoc verbo in tam clara re utendum est, videbatur.* There he was, at his ease and
surrounded with abundant resources, having a binge of books — if I may use that term to refer to so noble
a pursuit *(Fin. 3.2.8).* Frequently forced by his public responsibilities to deprive himself of
texts, Cato becomes a paideia glutton once he has free time and unlimited access to a
library. Plutarch echoes this sense of abundance and resources offered by a large library in
the introductory lines to *De E apud Delphos.* Here Plutarch writes to his more fortunate
friend, the learned Serapion:

In sending to you and, through you, to others there who are interested in
information about the oracle these first fruits, as it were, I admit that I expect
longer and better accounts from you. After all, you do live in a big city, and
you have more free time for textual research and a variety of studies. *(384d)*

Living in Antioch, Serapion had access to the Seleucid library foundation in that city.
Plutarch elsewhere describes in greater detail his personal frustration in trying to carry on
research in a small town. Plutarch feels himself deprived at Chaeronea of the texts
necessary for research.
Although he recognizes the researcher’s need for reliable witnesses (in conformity with the ἱστορία-program established by Herodotus), Plutarch cannot properly begin his work without the library. Diadorus likewise values the library resources of a large city. He attributes the success of his history to ἕν Ἄρμη χορηγία τῶν πρὸς τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὑπόθεσιν ἄνθρωπων, ἀποδιδοι τὸ ἔργον. Ἡμεῖς δὲ μικρὸν μὲν οἰκούντες πόλιν.

The person who has undertaken a work with its attendant research depending upon passages from documents which one does not have on hand but many of which are at a distance and scattered in various locations, really needs first of all and especially a city which is glorious, discriminating, and populous. Here he has an abundance of all sorts of books and oral information, which though it has escaped written records still has been preserved in memory and is dependable, and which he could investigate. These things he needs to produce a work which is lacking none of the necessary ingredients. But as for me, I live in a small town. (Dem. 2: 1-2)

Imperial authors developed a cluster of expectations and conventionalized responses to their work and its relationship to the library. In an oration delivered at Carthage, Apuleius stated si erudita [mea verba] fuerint, [habetote] ut si in bibliotheca legantur. If my words seem to you learned, consider them as though you were reading them in the library (Flor. 18.85). The standard which measures Apuleius’ erudition is physically stored

---

Since the Hellenistic period there has been an interesting change of emphasis in favor of the role of the library collection in research. Polybius had faulted Timaeus for limiting his research to library collections (12.25e). Yet Cicero’s much more positive estimation of Timaeus as longe eruditissimus et rerum copia et sententiarum varietate abundantissimus (De Or. 2.58) suggests that this author is to be valued precisely because of that work in the library.
on library shelves. The public library has in this sense become a reference institution. From earlier associations with *luxuria* and the booty acquired in war (the two libraries which Trajan included in the Forum Traiani were inscribed EX MANUBIIS [Gellius *NA* 13.25.1; Callmer 1944: 162-164]), the library has come instead to represent the storehouse of authoritative learning. When the general contents of libraries are referred to by Imperial authors, as often as not the antiquity of the texts is the important point. So Athenaeus’ Larensis, a paragon of polymathic learning, surpassed even Polycrates, Nicocrates, Euripides and Aristotle in his collection of ancient Greek texts (1.4). Ammianus Marcellinus draws upon such an association in lamenting the decline of paideia in his own day, a time when *bibliothecae sepulchorum ritu in perpetuum clausae* libraries sealed up forever, like tombs (14.6.18) figure metonymically the falling off of a society’s bonds to the past and its irresponsible preoccupation with the ephemeral pleasures of the present moment. Some authors even extend the connotation of the library as a storehouse of ancient learning and apply the term to especially erudite individuals. Pliny’s Titus Aristo, for example, is described as

non unus homo sed litterae ipsae omnesque bonae artes ... quantum rerum, quantum exemplorum, quantum antiquitatis tenet ... mihi certe quotiens aliquid abditum quaero, ille thesauros est.  
*He’s not an individual man but the incarnation of literature and all the liberal arts. So much matter, so many exempla, so much antiquity he possesses! Every time I have a problem, he is a veritable treasure house of information.* (*Ep.* 1.22.1-3)

Eunapius’ description of Porphyry’s learned teacher Longinus is even more mannered and condensed. He was, Eunapius asserts, ἰππιθηὴ τὶς ... ἔμψυχος καὶ περιπατοῦν μουσεῖον

*A library incarnate, a walking shrine of the Muses* (4.1.3).
Books composed primarily through the compilation of earlier texts can themselves be entitled "libraries." Diodorus' Βιβλιοθήκη ἱστορική, for example, boasts in its title the comprehensive manipulation of earlier scholarship. Diodorus' introductory remarks refer both to the extensive labor and time — thirty years — which went into compiling the work, and to the advantage to subsequent research offered by a work which drew together under one roof, as it were, many earlier treatises.

Those undertaking to work through the histories of so many authors find first that it is not easy to get access to the necessary books; then, because of the diversity and the quantity of works involved, a comprehensive understanding of the events under consideration becomes, in the end, difficult and hard to arrive at. (1.3.8)

Diodorus' compilation, however, shares with a library’s book collection its ease of access and comprehensive selection of topics, τὴν μὲν ἀνάγνωσιν ἐτοίμην παρέχεται τὴν δ’ ἀνάλησιν ἔχει παντελῶς εὐπαρακολούθητον. It makes reading easy and facilitates comprehension (1.3.8). In the case of [Apollodorus]’s Bibliotheca we have not only the work itself but also an assessment of it by Photius. Photius' description attributes to [Apollodorus] the antiquarian emphasis of the public library, for the book περιείχε δὲ τὰ παλαιότατα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὡσα τε περὶ θεῶν καὶ ἡρώων ὁ χρόνος αὐτοῖς δοξάζειν ἔδωκεν. It included the most ancient statements of the Greeks, all those which they formulated over time about the gods and heroes. (186.142a)

7 Photius' own work is entitled Bibliotheca.
In analyzing the primacy of the text in cultural activity we have moved from the concept of library collection as booty to library collection as storehouse of paideia, through to the learned text or learned individual’s memory as like a library collection in its retention and storage of authoritative data. The common feature in all four of these Imperial-age formulations of the book collection is the image of matter, of stuff, assorted objects, miscellaneous materials acquired in the first instance through the physical act of the pillage of book collections, then through the scholarly practice of compilation. Libraries, learned texts, and polymathic minds are created by the amassing of relevant data, in a process involving two steps: acquisition and selection. Documents thus viewed are receptacles of literature seen as a kind of polymathic raw material, the ὅλη, *silva*, or *copia* of paideia.

The miscellanist’s reader must navigate this flood of texts, however, because he has paedeutic needs which must be met. We may begin with his need for further contact with the encyclic arts.

**Supplementary Reading and the Encyclic Arts**

Up to this point in the discussion I have been using the term “educated adult” to apply to those individuals who had completed their formal education in γραμματική. For most people this point probably arrived at about age sixteen (Beck 1970: 372, Marrou 1948: 223-225), but in terms of the miscellanist’s reader, the status which such an education gave lasted a lifetime; his reader may therefore be inclusively termed an adult,
though one expected to apply to paideia for both self-improvement and amusement over the years.\footnote{During the Imperial period, termination of grammatical studies marked the point at which one sought further training with a rhetor in a more or less formal school setting (cf. Kaster 1983: 323-324). There were other educational options for the older adolescent, however. The four chairs of philosophy established by Marcus Aurelius provided state-sanctioned studies in the major Greek philosophical sects. Gellius (NA 17.20.4; 18.10) reveals that young people studying abroad could seek instruction in both rhetoric and philosophy. Vespasian encouraged teachers of medicine at Rome (Singer and Wasserstein 1970: 662). There were well-established schools of law at Rome by the second century AD (Marrou 1948: 387-388). An edict of Valentinian I of 370 AD put the age limit at twenty for students from the provinces studying at Rome; in the time of Justinian, law students at Beyrut were required to finish their studies by age 25 (C. Theod. 1491; C. Just. 10.50; Marrou 1948: 403).}

The miscellanist’s reader is assumed, then, to be an educated person in need of a general rounding out in various areas, specifically in the encyclic arts other than those specifically devoted to language acquisition and manipulation. These he has already acquired in the form of grammar and rhetoric. Having gained control over language, he has acquired access to the manuals of \textit{artes} which are becoming increasingly available to the general reader from the first century BC. Varro’s \textit{Disciplinae} had included architecture and medicine among the \textit{artes}. Vitruvius (\textit{De Arch. Praef.} 3) and Galen (Προτερπτικός επ’ ιατρικῇ 9) had also insisted that these respective pursuits be considered liberal. Celsus added agriculture and military science to the list. These authors are in a position to treat the \textit{artes} in a summary way in their collections of technical manuals because the first century BC witnessed the composition of a number of such works using dialectic structure and definition to formulate the vocabulary, processes, and aims of the \textit{artes} μεθοδικῶς, systematically (Fuhrmann 1960: 156ff; cf. Cicero \textit{De Or.} 1. 187-188).

However, this codification of the \textit{artes} had not guaranteed their inclusion in the child’s standardized curriculum. Both Greek and Roman schoolchildren of the Imperial
period learned some arithmetic, at least enough to allow them effectively to *rem servare suam*, as Horace describes the process (*Ars P.* 329; Marrou 1948: 366; cf. Christes 1975: 170). But the competency thus acquired was minimal. As for the other *artes* viewed as liberal (that is, the performance of which did not produce money-making goods and services), they played apparently no fixed part in the young person's indoctrination in γραμματική. Quintilian assumed that the grammarian himself had some acquaintance with those *artes* such as astronomy or music, references to which might arise in a canonic author (1.4.4); and in a discussion *an orator future necessaria sit plurima artium scientia* (1.10). Quintilian affirms that the perfect orator must be familiar with the encyclic paideia, and is to begin the study of the *artes* during these early years. But as we have seen, Quintilian does not give details as to how or when these subjects are to be addressed in the basic grammatico-rhetorical curriculum.

In rounding out and supplementing the orator's education with the encyclic arts, Quintilian draws upon Cicero's concept of the *doctus orator*. In the dialogue in which he formulates his image of the ideal statesman as the educated speaker, however, Cicero himself traces his concept of complete education back beyond Isocrates to the archaic Greek statesmen and their concept of *sapientia*. The ancient Greek statesmen fulfilled their civic duties and, when time permitted, amused themselves with *artes*; circumstances or personal inclination determined the amount of time they could devote to them (*De Or.* 3. 56-58). So Isocrates, so Gorgias and Thrasymachus, so Socrates. And Socrates, through a disinclination to appear as a political figure, effected a *discidium*, Cicero insists, between the public figure and the private lover of learning, thus precipitating the
regrettable divorce of rhetoric from philosophy (cf. Schulte 1935: 37-46). Cicero essays to recreate the ancient model. The statesman needs a complete grounding in the art of rhetoric. But he needs much more than this, namely, a thorough familiarity with *has arites quibus liberales doctrinae atque ingenuae continerentur, geometriam, musicam, litterarum cognitionem et poetarum* those arts through which liberal learning is preserved: geometry, music, literature (*De Or. 3.127*). But even the *artes* are not enough in a society in which literacy has ensured information’s storage in textual format. Cicero’s ideal statesman now needs to know facts, data, antiquarian lore, *et illa quae de naturis rerum, quae de hominum moribus, quae de rebus publicis dicerentur* (*ibid.*); in short, relevant polymathic material from all the matter now collected into texts through a process of *istoria* (Schulte *ibid.* 60). From this larger, less structured field Cicero’s orator acquires the matter which feeds his discourse, a wide and varied knowledge of a world *cuius cognitio magnam orationis suppeditat copiam* a knowledge of which supplies a great fund of material for discourse (*Orat. 16*).

How and when is the orator to learn all these things? Cicero does not specify. If Cicero’s historic paradigm is consistent, the orator will acquire them in the moments he can spare from his public duties and responsibilities. Cicero’s description of his own education in *Brutus* 300-324 mentions training in rhetoric and dialectic only, while Crassus in *De oratore* admits that he himself had not had the time for a truly full education:

Fateor neque hodie ... nec ... ullum habuisse sepositum tempus ad discendum ac tantum tribuisses doctrinae temporis quantum mihi puerilis aetas, forensis feriae concesserint.

*I must admit that neither today [nor in the past] have I had any time especially set aside for learning, and have allowed to the acquisition of learning only so much time as my childhood years and public holidays have permitted.* (3.85; and cf. Rawson 1972: 35-37)
Vitruvius states at the opening of his handbook of architecture a similar conviction about the importance of an education in the *artes*:

Ut litteratus sit, peritus graphidos, eruditus geometria, historiae complures noverit, philosophos diligenter audierit, musicam scierit, medicinae non sit ignarus, respondit iurisconsultorum noverit, astrologiam caelique rationes cognitos habeat.

[The ideal architect] should be learned in literature, drawing, geometry; he should know a number of historical accounts, should have studied the philosophers with care, have learned music and a little medicine, be familiar with legal matters, and should understand celestial phenomena. (De Arch. 1.3)

The architect without this background will necessarily lack *auctoritas* (1.2), we are told, and we are given some situations in which the cultured architect will find his liberal training of great benefit. His polymathic knowledge of literary *historiae*, for example, will permit him to explain antiquities of design such as the origin of the Caryatid columns in an ancient war between Athens and medizing Caria. Detailed knowledge of the natural world will help the architect avoid such problems as air pockets in plumbing systems (1.5-7). But again, Vitruvius, does not explain how this πολυμαθεία is to be incorporated into the future architect’s program of study.

The ὅλως πεποιθεμένος

The historian and philosopher Nicolaus of Damascus was, according to the *Suda*, a prodigy of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, mastering grammar, rhetoric and music, attracting attention through his original dramatic compositions before turning as an adult to Peripatetic philosophy. The *Suda*, drawing presumably upon Nicolaus’ autobiography, attributes this thorough early education to Nicolaus’ father, a connoisseur of the *artes* (περὶ ταῦτα μᾶλλα σπουδᾶσαι). But Nicolaus’ own description of the liberal arts
suggests that most people acquired them in other ways, not in childhood as a result of broad educational curricula but irregularly and later in life. According to the Suda’s account,

\[\text{ἐφὶ δὲ Νικόλαος ὁμοίαν εἰναι τὴν ὅλην παιδείαν ἀποδῆμια. ὡς γὰρ ἐν ταύτῃ προσσυμβαίνει τοῖς ἀποδημοῦσι καὶ μακρὰν ὄδὸν διεξοῦσιν ὥσπερ μὲν ἐγκατάγεσθαι τε καὶ ἕναλλίζεσθαι μόνον, ὥσπερ δὲ ἕναριστάν, ὥσπερ δὲ πλείους ἐνδημεῖν ἡμέρας, ἔνιοις δὲ τῶποις ἐκ παρόδου θεωρεῖν, ἐπανελθόντας μέντοι ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἐνοικεῖν ἑστίαις, οὕτω καὶ διὰ τῆς ὅλης παιδείας διερχομένου δεῖν ἐν οἷς μὲν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐπὶ πλέον ἑνδιατριβεῖν, ἐν οἷς δ’ ἐπὶ ἐλαττὸν καὶ τὰ μὲν ὄντα, τὰ δὲ ἐκ μέρους, τὰ δὲ ἄχρι στοιχεῖσσεως παραλαμβάνειν καὶ τὶ ἑκείνων χρῆσομον κατασχόντας ἐπὶ τὴν ὥς ἀληθῶς πατρίδαν ἑστίαν ἐλθόντας φιλοσοφεῖν.}

Nicolaus said that the encyclic arts were like going abroad. When a person goes abroad and journeys far, he puts up for several days now at this place as in an inn, now at that place as though only stopping for breakfast. Some places he sees only as he travels by them. But in the end he comes back home and lives in his own house. In the same way, those who make their way through the liberal arts must spend more time with some of them than with others, studying some thoroughly and others only in part, of some acquiring just the major points and really practical parts; then, returning to their true home, they must practice philosophy. (Suda nu 393:28)

The sightseeing image is appropriate. One must learn as much as one can as opportunity permits and interests and time allow. The best that a realistic person can expect is the systematic overview, the casual acquaintance in some areas and more intensive study in others.\(^9\)

Cicero’s *orator doctus* was skilled in the technique of oratory and funded his rhetoric with material from the encyclic arts as well as the polymathic *copia* provided by history, philosophy, and Hellenistic scholarship. The educated adult of the Imperial period

---

\(^9\) Plutarch *De lib. educ.* 70 adopted the image of travel to figure an education in the *artes* in a similar discussion: ταῦτα μὲν ἐκ παραθυροὺς μαθαίνει ..., τὴν δὲ φιλοσοφίαν πρεσβεύειν ..., ὡσπερ γὰρ περιπλέουσαι μὲν πολλὰς πόλεις καλὸν, ἐνοικήσας δὲ τῇ κρατίατῃ χρήσιμον. [The student of the encyclic arts] should learn these things in cursory fashion ... but give primary attention to philosophy ... just as it is fine to sail around among many cities, but in the end to take up residency in the best.
inherits that model as well as the limitations which daily reality imposed upon it. Although
Cicero still considered political effectiveness to be part of the ideal statesman’s persona,
he was himself aware of the transitoriness of power, most of his own philosophical and
rhetorical works having been composed in more or less forced retirement. If he took
Demetrius Phalereus and Licinius Crassus as model statesmen, it was not because he was
ignorant of the personal disasters they had suffered in the course of their political careers.
Imperial authors were aware of Cicero’s, as they were of Plato’s and Xenophon’s,
discussions of the relationship between political power and education. But they also knew
that the system had changed significantly with the establishment of the Augustan
Principate. They did not imagine that the truly educated adult would affect politics in any
appreciable way, on the level, that is, of a Cicero, a Demosthenes, or a Scipio. Indeed,
when an emperor such as Hadrian or Marcus showed any interest at all in paideia, Imperial
authors reacted with a delight that must have originated in surprised relief.

These authors were nevertheless affected by the past’s model of the educated man
as politically responsible, to the extent that they incorporated political responsibility, be it
only a knowledge of jurisprudence or of the antiquities of public religious cult, into their
concept of the ideal educated man. The Imperial ὅλως πεπαιδευμένος highlights his social
responsibility in a twofold manner: by downplaying his actual political power while
upgrading his relationship with the state’s authoritative past. For the Roman, the fully
educated and socially responsible individual is learned in his country’s legal and religious
antiquities; for the Greek, he focuses his learning upon local (i.e. Hellenic) genealogical
and topical antiquities. Although he does not wield power, the educated man is yet publicly responsible as a guardian of the state’s authoritative past.

In addition to this political stance, the truly educated adult of the Imperial period must also display a personal responsibility to paideia as a whole. Here too he is seen as an example to others, since as a public figure he cannot avoid the public eye. A time will come when the public insignia fall away and only the paideia is left to mark the responsible statesman. In the fifth century, Sidonius will maintain,

\[\text{iarn remotis gradibus dignitatum per quas solebat ultimo a quoque summus quisque discerni, solum erit posthac nobilitatis indicium letters nosse.} \]

Now that there are no ranks of office through which each highest individual used to be distinguished from the lowest, henceforth the sole mark of nobility will be a literary education. (Ep. 8.2)

As a consumer of paideia, the educated and socially responsible individual must model the integration of paideia into daily life in a moral way. For the Imperial period shares with its classical past a profound desire to believe that right education has a direct and positive effect upon the individual soul.¹₀

During the Imperial period, the image of the young adult seeking further exposure to the encyclic arts and philosophy, and that of the young orator seeking further polymathic copia to fund his rhetoric, merge into the image of the mature and politically

¹₀Plutarch De lib. educ. 8a: τριῶν γὰρ ὄντων βιων ὅν ὁ μὲν ἔστι πρακτικός ὁ δὲ θεωρητικός ὁ δὲ ἀπολογιστικός, ὁ μὲν, ἐκλευτός καὶ δουλός τῶν ἠδονῶν ὃν, ζωόδης καὶ μικροπρινής ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ θεωρητικός, τοῦ πρακτικοῦ διαμαρτάνων, ἀνωφέλης, ὁ δὲ πρακτικός, ἀμοιρήσας φιλοσοφίας, ἀμωβος καὶ πλημμελής. πειρατέων ὁν εἰς δύναμιν καὶ τὰ κοινὰ πράττειν καὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ παρεῖκον τῶν καράν, οὕτως ἐπολιτεύεσθαι Περικλῆς, οὕτως Ἡρώτας ὁ Ταραντῖνος, οὕτω Διὼν ὁ Συρακοσίως, οὕτως Ἑπεμεινώνδας ὁ Θηβαῖος.

There are three basic lifestyle: the life of action, the life of contemplation, and the life of pleasure. The latter is dissipated and enslaved to pleasure, vulgar and bestial; the contemplative life, lacking an active component, brings no benefit; but the life of action without philosophy is bereft of culture and without aesthetic grace. One must therefore try one’s best both to function within the community and to participate in philosophy, as opportunity allows. This is how Pericles carried on his public career, as did Archytas of Tarentum, Dion of Syracuse, and Epaminondas of Thebes.
active adult at leisure. The ὀξυπεπαθεμένος knows how rightly to take advantage of these leisure moments.\textsuperscript{11}

If opportunity allows, he may participate in the public display of paideia offered by, for example, lecturing philosophers and declaiming sophists. Philostratus' descriptions of some of the successful sophistic showpieces reveal that these performances had a very dramatic quality about them, dealing with human issues from a given culture-hero's perspective after the manner of ancient tragedy (cf. VS 520, 589-590). The public image of the sophist as declaiming teacher melds into the image of the lecturing philosopher; these lectures, too, were paedagogic and often not seen as substantially different from a declamation. Favorinus and Dio are given equivocal treatment in Philostratus: are they philosophers or are they rhetoricians? Apuleius, whether defending himself in court or declaiming before the city of Carthage, insists that he is a philosopher. Even Lucian insists

\textsuperscript{11} The concept of the correct use of leisure (σχολή) as opposed to recreation (ἀναπαύσις) can be traced to Aristotle's discussion of education in Book 8 of the \textit{Politica} (1337b30-1338a13):

\begin{quote}

... μὴ μόνον ἀσχολεῖν ὄρθως ἄλλα καὶ σχολάζειν δύνασθαι καλῶς. αὕτη γὰρ ἀρχή πάντων μία · εἰ δ' ἁμφα μὲν δεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ αἰρετόν τὸ σχολάζειν τῆς ἀσχολίας καὶ τέλος, ζητήθεν δ' τι δεῖ ποιοῦντα σχολάζειν. οὐ γὰρ δὴ παιζόντας τέλος γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοῦ βίου τὴν παιδείαν ἡμῖν. εἰ δὲ τούτο ἀδύνατον, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐν ταῖς ἀσχολίαις χρηστῶν ταῖς παιδιώσις, ἡ δὲ παιδία χάριν ἀναπαύσιος ἔσται · τὸ δ' ἀσχολεῖν συμβαίνει μετά πόνου καὶ συντονίας,... τὸ δὲ σχολάζειν ἔχειν αὕτο εἶκεν ἤδην καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ τὸ ξίνω μακαρίως. τούτο δ' οὗ τοῖς ἀσχολοῦσι πάροικοι ἄλλα τοῖς σχολάζουσιν ... ὡσεὶ φανερὸν ὅτι δεῖ καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐν τῇ διανομῇ σχολὴν μανθάνειν ἢττα καὶ παιδεύεσθαι, καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τὰ παιδεύματα καὶ πῶς τὰς μαθήσεις ἔστιν ἐν τῷ χάριν, τὰς δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἀσχολίαν ως ἀναγκαίας καὶ χάριν ἄλλων. Our very nature has a tendency... to seek of itself for ways and means which will enable us to use leisure rightly, as well as to find some right occupation; indeed, it is the power to use leisure rightly... which is the basis of our life. It is true that both occupation and leisure are necessary; but it is also true that leisure is higher than occupation, and is the end to which occupation is directed. Our problem, therefore, is to find modes of activity which will fill our leisure. We can hardly fill our leisure with play. To do so would be to make play the be-all and end-all of life. That is an impossibility. Play is a thing to be chiefly used in connection with one side of life: the side of occupation.... Occupation is the companion of work and exertion: the worker needs relaxation: play is intended to provide relaxation.... The feelings which play produces in the mind are feelings of relief from exertion; and the pleasure it gives provides relaxation. Leisure is a different matter: We think of it as having in it self intrinsic pleasure, intrinsic happiness, intrinsic felicity. Happiness of that order does not belong to those who are engaged in occupation: it belongs to those who have leisure:... It is clear therefore that there are some branches of learning and education which ought to be studied with a view to the proper use of leisure in the cultivation of the mind. It is clear, too, that these studies should be regarded as ends in themselves, while studies pursued with a view to an occupation should be regarded merely as means and matters of necessity (trans. Barker 1946: 335-336).

The pleasure derived from the correct use of σχολή lies at the heart of the miscellanist's stylistic choices; cf. Chapter 4 below. That Nicolaus of Damascus made philosophy the ultimate goal of a broad encyclopic education probably derived from this Aristotelian position as well; cf. above n. 8.
upon his personal contact with both rhetoric and philosophy (Hermotimus 13). The audiences who gathered for the educational experience of listening to any public speaker do not seem to be absolutely certain whether they are being entertained or improved — or both. Seneca describes the audiences which came to hear Atticus as ranging from the intensely sincere (himself) to the appallingly nonchalant,

quos ego non discipulos philosophorum sed inquilinos voco. quidam veniunt ut audiant, non ut discant .... Magnam hanc auditorum partem videbis cui philosophi schola diversorium otii sit. These I would call not the philosophers’ students but their tenants. Some come to listen but not to learn. You will see many who think the philosopher’s class is a lounge. (Ep. 108.6)

Some attend such a lecture only to improve language skills: aliqui tamen et cum pugillaribus veniunt, non ut res excipiant sed ut verba. Some come with notebook in hand, not to write down concepts but just vocabulary items. Gellius’ Calvenus Taurus is likewise annoyed by students pursuing philosophical studies only to improve their rhetorical abilities (NA 10.19). Plutarch seems to be describing specialist philosophers when he advises the young autodidact to fit his questions to the lecturer’s capabilities, not for example challenging the ethics expert with questions on natural history, and vice versa (De aud. 43 b-c). Perhaps we may see in the Platonic, moralizing Maximus Tyrius, and in Apuleius with his Peripatetic zoological interests, examples of such diverging types of popular philosophers.

As Plutarch and Seneca stress, oral teaching is a group phenomenon, and as such brings with it all the disadvantages associated with such a setting: distractions, fixed format, restless audiences, acoustical problems, delays, and unexpected or last-minute changes of location or topic. At Florida 16 Apuleius describes a lecture interrupted
because of the rain, then further delayed when Apuleius (the featured speaker) sprained his ankle in the gymnasium.

But for the adult learner such drawbacks were all eliminated from the learning process when it was simply a question of the learner addressing his text. For one thing, the student could control his own time, not fit himself into a prearranged schedule. The eccentric study schedule of Pliny the Elder (being read to in the baths or while traveling, rising before dawn or staying awake late at night) was only possible because he had his own texts with which to work. Plutarch offers a description of Brutus epitomizing Polybius on the eve of Pharsalus (Brut. 4). Text-based learning was probably the only option most of the time for the adult involved in an active public career. Gellius imagines his Noctes Atticae being read interstitione aliqua negotiorum (NA Prol. 1). Indeed, Pliny the Younger even incorporated studies into more physically demanding athletic exercise; while out hunting ad retia sedebam, Pliny recalls, erat in proximo non venabulum aut lancea, sed stilus et pugillares. I was sitting there watching the nets, and nearby had neither my hunting spear nor my lance, but my pen and notebook (Ep. 1.6).

The adult learner of the Imperial period could not and would not subordinate himself to an instructor (although he would readily be instructed by a friend; cf. Dio Or. 18). He must, as an adult, judge what he needed to learn and the amount of leisure time he could reasonably allot each subject, given the realities of his career and social responsibilities. His texts in hand, he had more freedom to arrange his study schedule during his free moments, and the situation was the same in the case of the adult involved in scholarly or creative work as well: Caesar composing the De analogia on campaign (Suetonius Jul. 56.2-5; cf. Dahlmann 1970: 53), Horace packing up Greek comic texts to
use in the country (Sat. 2.3.11-12), Pliny the Younger on vacation and reveling in his freedom from urban distraction, drawing inspiration for his writing from the silence and solitude.

mecum tantum et cum libellis loquor .... O mare, verum secretumque μουσείον, quam multa invenitis, quam multa dictatis.

I speak to myself and my notes alone .... O sea, O shore, true and private Muse-shrine, how many ideas and words you inspire! (Ep. 1.9.6).

The processes of study and of composition are not viewed as different operations, nor is there a point at which the individual “shifts gears,” stops researching and studying, and begins to write. Both processes require texts, both require judgment on the part of the busy autodidact, and both require that he select with care the subjects he writes on as well as the subjects he studies. The results of the autodidact’s judgment and taste in selecting texts and topics appear in the public persona both of himself and of any scholarship which he writes up and makes public.

As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, it is to such a reader, ranging from the young student seeking further indoctrination in the liberal arts to the mature adult with an established public career, that the Imperial miscellanist addresses his work.

Once one is beyond the control of the grammarian and the paideutic curriculum, once one has finished a practical rhetorical education, he must acquire such learning as he can by seizing the opportunities which come his way. Artes and idropia in text form increase the number of encounters which the seeker after knowledge may have with paideia. As we have seen, under the Empire the literate adult could access information through the book trade and the public and private library. Varro and Celsus, and later Augustine, Martianus Capella, and Boethius, made collections of artes. Quodsi [quis] ...
minus instructus erit magnarum artium disciplinis, Cicero had maintained in the protreptic preface to Orator (1.4), teneat tamen eum cursum quem poterit If a person be less instructed in the fields of the liberal arts, still, let him make what progress he may. The self-learner may progress straight to the library, where he will find a variety of learned texts.

The person who completes his education through focused reading will probably not concern himself with poetry. He has presumably exhausted the canonic authors in grammar school, or at least drawn from them all he can practically use. During the Imperial period, the classical poetry of both Greece and Rome is peculiarly associated with juveniles and early childhood education (Colson 1914: 46). Canonic poets have become more authority-icons than sources of direct inspiration for creative poetry, and while for example Dio or Philostratus may react to Homer, he does so by rewriting Homer's account as a personal response to a challenge as in Philostratus' Heroicus or Dio's Troicus. Perhaps this association contributed to the relative neglect of poetry by creative writers during this period.

The studious adult must turn his attention to other sources more significant in terms of his status as an adult learner. Strabo for example recognizes in poetry the attraction of μῦθος (tale) and τὸ θαυμαστῶν (wonder) — the element of ψυχαγωγία, (amusement) which makes poets attractive to children and ἰδιωτὴς δὲ πάς καὶ ἀπαίδευτος every uncultivated individual — and, influenced by the Peripatetic doctrine, sees in this attraction proof that man is by nature φιλεδήμων, a lover of learning. But he also states that grown-ups need more substantial fare: ἀνάγκη ... προσούσης .. τῆς ἡλικίας ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων μάθησιν ἀγείν as one gets older one must turn to learning about the real world (1.28).
For ὁ πράττων, the man of affairs functioning in the real world, the kind of knowledge contained in Homeric verse may be ἔνδοξον καὶ ἴδι, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον γὰρ σπουδάζουσιν, ὡς εἰκὼς, περὶ τὰ χρήσιμα respectable and delightful, but not to be overdone: for [adults] are, properly, more interested in useful lessons. For Strabo, it is the geographer who is especially concerned with χρήσιμα, but ὁ πράττων too is expected to be concerned with utility drawn from ἱστορία and μαθήματα, καὶ γὰρ τούτων τὰ χρήσιμα ἀεὶ μᾶλλον ληπτέον καὶ τὸ πιστώτερον in fact one ought always to seek out the useful and more plausible elements contained in these. (1.1.19)

In his discourse Περὶ λόγου ἀσκήσεως (Or. 18), Dio undertakes to direct the private education of a wealthy, mature man who wants to participate in his city’s government. To be taken seriously as a statesman, Dio recognizes, his friend must have technical training (2). But the friend has already acquired a respectable level of paideia (4), and it is not as a forensic orator (οὔτε χρήζεις δικαιικὴς δυνάμεως te καὶ δεινότητος you aren’t looking for forensic capacity and force) that he wants to succeed but as a πολιτικός (5). This man has, in other words, already received a standard education in literature and in rhetorical technique, and wants to round out his background to become the kind of cultured politician whom Cicero praised. With such a goal in mind, Dio recommends that the only poets to be experienced are Homer, Euripides, and Menander. In the case of Euripides and Menander, they are to be listened to, absorbed, that is, as rhetorical phenomena, not read (6-7); other poets must be cut from the list:

μέλη δὲ καὶ ἐλεγεία καὶ ιαμβοὶ καὶ διόραμβοι τῷ μὲν σχολὴν ἄγοντι πολλοῦ ἄξια 𝘵ῇ δὲ πράττειν τε καὶ ὁμα τὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς λόγους αὔξειν διανοούμενοι οὐκ ἂν εἴη πρὸς αὐτὰ σχολὴ.
Lyric, elegiac, iambic and dithyrambic poetry are fine for the man of leisure. For the man of affairs who also wants to increase the range of his activities and his power of public speaking, there is simply no time for them. (8)

Dio’s list of helpful authors consists of orators and historians, in particular Xenophon, whose matter, style, and embedded oration cannot help but aid the self-taught statesman (14-17).

Drawing upon earlier representations of the perfect statesman, the Imperial period is attempting to form a concept of the fully educated and therefore socially and morally responsible individual. This concept as we have so far examined it consists of a person who has acquired literacy and a foundation in his culture’s paideia through a more or less standard training in the grammar school. He may have already built upon this primary education in the school of the orator, or is at least in the process of doing so. He now must use his own taste and good judgment in selecting further sources of paideia. Insofar as this paideia goes beyond the standard, it represents πολυμαθία.

Such a person must likewise find the time, opportunity, and energy to spend upon this additional education. He may, for example, choose to listen to the lectures of the philosophers as part of his adult education, as Seneca describes his own mature relationship with Attalus in his one hundred and eighth letter. This attendance must, however, be an act of personal choice and commitment; no longer a child under the control of a master, he still needs to commit himself to self-education with attention, energy, and drive.

Dio calls this approach to self-improvement φιλοκαλεῖν (18.1), Seneca studere (108.4). Others apply the term diligentia, diligens, the same term used above in the
Incredibile quo quantoque ardore principalium rerum notitiam celsam indagans per omnia philosophiae membra ... currebat ... poetica ... et rhetoricam Graecam diligentius tractans ... et nostrarum externarumque rerum historiam, multiformem. It was almost unbelievable with what great passion he would track out the lofty learning of foremost subjects, how he would work his way through all branches of philosophy, with even greater industry studying Greek rhetoric and the various histories of our own people and of others. (XVI. 5.6; cf. Ensslin 1923: 37)

For Nicolaus of Damascus the adult pursuit of learning and the arts is above all εὖδιάγγυν, “amusing” but also “educative” (cf. LSJ διαγωγὴ I.2). As we have seen above, (pp. 110-111), authors may liken the person who has received a literary enculturation to one initiated in the Mysteries. Diligence in further learning is the recognizable mark of such an initiate, and Gellius drives away from his *Noctes Atticae* all those unfortunate enough to fail to respond to its call.

It will be best that those stay far away from this work and seek out other amusements for themselves, who have never derived any pleasure from study, research, writing, note-taking, those who have never made any efforts, have never stayed up late at night in such vigils, who have not been filed smooth by struggles and disputes with those passionately involved with the same Muse, but who instead are filled full of petty anxieties and busy-ness. (Praef. 19)

What activities mark the Muse-initiate? All those, presumably, which serve to drive away the profane: reading and rereading, research, writing and note-taking, all
pursued with determined energy and at impracticable hours. Is Gellius describing himself or his reader? Is the person who can respond to Gellius’ work a consumer of paideia, or a creator of it in his hours of study? In fact he is both. The individual seeking knowledge as a learner is also in a position to extend that knowledge to others, to share, with his associates in paideia, the fruits of his labors. This communal relationship among self-learners is at the base of the miscellany, as I shall attempt to demonstrate.

Because he is working without a master, however, the adult learner’s text-based and self-selected paideia can have its dark side. The autodidact, unlike the child at grammar school, lacks the supervision of a competent teacher. There is a variety of errors, of false directions, and of misconceptions to which he might fall victim.

The grossest misconception involves the relationship between the learner and his text. Any fool with money, as Lucian mercilessly points out in his essay Πρὸς τὸν ἀπαίδευτον καὶ πολλὰ βιβλία ὄνομενον, can buy a whole library of beautiful and valuable texts. But τί δειλοῦ ... τοῦ κτῆματος οὔτε εἰδότι τὸ κάλλος αὐτῶν οὔτε χρησιμένω ποτε; What good is their possession when you can neither appreciate their beauty nor ever be able to use them? (2) Lucian’s victim seems to have lacked even a grammar-school education in literature (ταύτα μὴ μαθῶν ἡμῖν). Like Gellius, Lucian responds to this lack by adopting a tone of outraged religiosity at the man’s pretense. σοι καὶ μεμνήσαται Μουσῶν ἀνόσιον! For you even to mention the Muses is sacrilege! (3) A man who could assume that the mere ownership of texts brings paideia is of subhuman mental capacity, a monkey, a jackass, a dog (3.5).

The adult autodidact may, however, in all good faith be led astray by a corrupt society’s concept of paideia, of Ψυχοποιίαξ as the figure is allegorized by Cebes early in
the Imperial period (Ross 1970: 218). In the dialogue known as *The Pinax*, Cebes’ speaker describes a painting allegorizing modern society. Included is the figure of False Learning, a seemingly chaste and courteous female (δοκεῖ πάνυ καθάριος καὶ εὐπρακτός) whom those courting True Learning must first encounter before getting access to their true bride. Pseudopaideia is presented surrounded by her many deluded lovers:

οἱ μὲν ποιηταὶ ... οἱ δὲ ῥήτορες, οἱ δὲ διαλεκτικοὶ, οἱ δὲ μουσικοί, οἱ δὲ ἀριθμητικοί, οἱ δὲ γεωμετριαί, οἱ δὲ ἀστρόλογοι, οἱ δὲ κριτικοί, οἱ δὲ ἥδονοι, οἱ δὲ περιπατητικοί, καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι τούτοις εἰσὶ παραπλήσιοι.

Poets, orators, dialecticians, musicians, arithmeticians, geometers, astronomers, critics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and all those others like them.

Not only has False Learning ensnared practitioners of the liberal arts, but she has captivated proponents of several of the more popular Hellenistic philosophies as well. (Cebes’ omission of the Platonists and Cynics suggests his own philosophical position.) The Christian Tertullian will echo Cebes’ frustration with a stupid system which turns a blind eye to what these authors see as the world’s most obvious truths (Labhardt 1960: 216-218). It is significant that, as a Christian and a miscellanist, Clement had to specify the quality of his compilations from Hellenic paideia (e.g. *Strom.* 1.1.15.3, and cf. Mahat 1966: 333).

But even when society’s general conception of paideia goes unchallenged, there are still plenty of more subtle ways in which the adult supplementing his education can go astray. Either the individual reading and studying for self-improvement focuses too closely upon subjects and skills which are trivial and without meaningful application, or he allows himself to be warped from a balanced temperament by an overindulgence or wrongheaded application to his subject. These involve basic imbalances: the learner selects
the wrongs things to learn — irrelevant πολυμαθία — or he uses bad taste and judgment in incorporating his learning into his daily life.

Cicero had been aware of the dangers of being distracted by sheer curiosity about things which did not really deserve the busy and intelligent adult’s attention. In the *De finibus* he refers to this cupiditas discendi as the song of the Sirens: scientiam pollicentur quam non erat mirum sapientiae cupidus patria esse cariorem They promise knowledge, in the eyes of one desiring wisdom dearer (no surprise!) than the fatherland (5.49).

Seneca with greater panache dismissed all inane studium supervacua discendi meaningless zeal for unnecessary learning (*De brev. vit.* 13.3). All of the standard liberal arts come under attack by Seneca at some point in his work (Stückelberger 1965: 21). He found grammar, as we have seen, especially easy to attack, though none was immune (cf. especially *Ep.* 48.6-9 on dialectics; *Ep.* 88.9-17 on music, geometry, and astronomy); that it was not the inquiry so much as the triviality of the arts’ content to which Seneca objected is clear from his own essay into the natural sciences. However, the *Quaestiones naturales*, attempting to give rational explanations for nature’s more startling phenomena — lightning bolts, rainbows, earthquakes — rest upon the moralistic purpose of freeing people from the wrong explanation to these questions supplied by the superstitious and the misinformed. *Cum timendi sit causa nescire, non est tanti scire ne timeas? quanto satius est causas inquirere et quidem toto in hoc intentum anima.* Since the cause of fear lies in ignorance, is knowledge to prevent fear not a valuable thing? How much better to seek out causes with a total commitment (*QNat.* 6.3.4). Seneca’s eager approach to research may be compared to the σπουδῆ of the miscellanist. Labhardt points to a similar dichotomy of response to
empirical learning in Apuleius' work. Although in the *Metamorphoses* Apuleius' Lucius is a character who gets himself into trouble because of his *curiositas* about the magic arts, Apuleius himself in *Apologia* refers with pride to his research into species of fish, faulting his accusers for being so stupid as to mistake scientific analysis for sorcery and sacrilege (*Apol. 27.1-15; Labhardt 1960: 216*). Elsewhere in the *Apologia*, Apuleius insists upon his status as philosopher because of his scholarly contributions to taxonomy (38) and experiments in optics (15-16).

The self-learner could thus go astray if he were attracted to the wrong areas or subjects of study. But he could also fall short of his goal of a complete education by falling victim to certain imbalances in his own emotional response to the pursuit of learning. By definition the student — the zeal in Latin *studere* is echoed in Greek *σπουδάζειν* — pursues his goal with energy, diligence, and conviction. *Qui ingenuis studiis atque artibus delectantur*, Cicero states in *De finibus*,

> *nonne videmus eos nec valetudinis nec rei familiaris habere rationem omniaque perpeti ista cognitione et scientia captos et cum maximis curis et laboribus compensare eam quam ex discendo capiant voluptatem.*

*Just look how those who take delight in the liberal arts have no regard for health and property and in their passion for learning, suffer all things and compensate all that effort and labor with the pleasure they receive from learning.* (*Fin. 5.48*)

*Voluptas* can render the activity truly addictive.

Imperial authors are aware of the difference between balanced and obsessed students, and the miscellanists present them most effectively through the dramatized
portions of dialogues and through vignettes. Gellius, for example, draws a portrait of the scholarly neurosis of ὀψιμοθεία. The opsimath suffers from

vitium ... serae eruditionis ... ut quod numquam didiceris, diu ignoraveris, cum id scire aliquando coeperis, magni facias quo in loco cumque et quacumque in re dicere. 
A fault of late-born erudition, which makes you speak out as a thing of great importance and on absolutely any occasion what you were long ignorant of and just lately became familiar with. (NA 11.7.3)

The opsimath, delighted with the new words and ideas he has learned but not having the restraint and the patience to wait until he has learned their correct context, violates usage by displaying his new acquisitions in all the wrong places. The humorous side of ὀψιμοθεία is displayed later in Gellius' chapter, but a less pleasant encounter occurs at NA 15.30, where an over-confident opsimath actually lies to Gellius to defend his version of a word's etymology. Gellius later checks the word in Varro and discovers the cheat. A similarly neurotic bent is showcased in Lucian's Lexiphanes, the portrait of a man who has learned many impressive Attic words but uses them with unintentionally hilarious results (Lex. 2.1 - 15.7). Athenaeus' Cynulcus teases Ulpian with accusations of similar misbehavior (3. 52-53; cf. 9.29).

Another kind of scholarly imbalance is described at Noctes Atticae 1.10. Here Favorinus criticizes an adolescent who insists upon making colloquial use of words which he has come across in his reading but which no longer represent current usage. The speaker claims to have made a moral choice in selecting such diction, for the words carry with them antiquity's aura of righteousness and authority. Favorinus insists that clarity is

---

12 In the Characteres Theophrastus presented the first detailed picture of the opsimath (27). It is significant for the change in the concept of the contents of paideia that Theophrastus' opsimath learns primarily processes, i.e. how to sing the latest songs and execute newly-acquired gymnastic techniques.
to be preferred to age, advising the young man *vive moribus praeteritis, loquere verbis praesentibus* Base your life upon the morals of antiquity, but speak with the words of today. The sentiment struck Macrobius as particularly appropriate; he compiled it and worked it into the first book of the *Saturnalia*, where he has the abrupt Avienus use this phrase to mock the grammarian Servius’ discussion of archaic terminology (1.5).

These authors emphasize that the self-directed learner must exercise care over the kinds of subjects he studies and the extent of detail in which he pursues them. No author sets precise guidelines, but insists only that the autodidact pursue a balanced and socially responsible relevancy. Obviously such relevancy depends upon personal judgment; the same society that read Seneca’s attacks upon *supervacua studia* also read the abundantly detailed and diverse *Historia naturalis* of Pliny the Elder, and both authors were absolutely committed to relevancy (cf. Plin. *NH* 2.1). As we have seen, the term *πολυμαθεία* as used by authors under the Empire mirrors a flexibility of attitude toward knowing a lot of detailed information which appeared in Greek culture as early as Heraclitus. If the earlier centuries had distrusted *πολυμαθεία* as implying the learning of many skills and ways of explaining the world which were distracting and mutually exclusive or contradictory, by the first century BC authors like Strabo could praise *πολυμαθεία* as a necessary component of convincing scholarship (e.g. 1.1.1.; 1.1.12, 1.2.20; 16.2.10), while for Plutarch it had become a generally attractive quality and a term of mild praise.\(^{13}\)

From Athenaeus through to the Byzantine period, *πολυμαθεία* has become

---

\(^{13}\) On one occasion Plutarch found a mildly undesirable habit associated with *πολυμαθεία*. At *De garrulitate* 519c he notes that τῇ μὲν οὖν πολυμαθείᾳ τὴν πολυλογίαν ἔπεοθαι συμβαίνει (διὸ καὶ Ποδαγόρας ἔταξε τοὺς νέους πενταετῆ σωπτῆν, ἔχεισθαι προσαγορεύσας) .... ἀ γὰρ ἠδέως ἀκούοντιν ἠδέως λαλοῦσα, καὶ ἄ παρ’ ἄλλων σπουδή συλλέγουσι πρὸς ἑτέρους μετὰ χαρᾶς ἐκφέρουσιν. *Garrulity is a more or less natural consequence of polymathy. That’s why Pythagoras required of his young followers a five-year silence .... For*
a very positive assessment among people concerned with ancient Hellenic paideia, implying a thorough grounding in the classical authors and in sound scholarship, and the good character which Imperial society associated with paideia.14

From what source is the adult learner to find guidance in acquiring relevant πολυμαθία?

The Imperial Miscellanist and the Adult Learner

The Imperial miscellany conveys a polymathic data-base relevant to such needs. Whether this data-base funds further education in the liberal arts, provides copia for public discourse, or simply feeds the learner’s passion for information, it is relevant insofar as it bolsters and legitimizes his status, in the public forum as well as in private circles, as an educated, enculturated man.

The miscellanist is himself such an educated adult; his diligentia and κρίσις in amassing his polymathic collection substantiate his position. In undertaking to provide polymathic data for another such adult reader, the miscellanist assumes the patronizing tone of an older person addressing a younger. This implied personal bond between compillator and reader is one of the basic qualities of the Imperial miscellany, and more

---

what they delight in hearing, they delight in talking about, and what they gather together from some with industry, they exhibit in the presence of others with delight.

At De garrulitate 514c, the learner’s own eagerness may hinder him in gathering more information, especially if he is given to πολυλωγία: ἐν ἱστορίαις ὁ ἀναγνωστικός, ἐν τεχνολογίαις ὁ γραμματικός, ἐν διηγήμασι ξένοις ὁ πολλήν χώραν ἐπεληφθώς καὶ πεπλανημένος ... ἢ μὲν τις ἐμπέση λόγος, ἢ οὗ μαθεῖν τι δύναται καὶ πυθόνθαι τῶν ἀνγνωσμένων, τούτων ἐξοθεὶ καὶ ἐκκρούσαι, μισθὸν οὗτο βραχίων δούναι το σωπηθῆναι μὴ δυνάμενος. These individuals [are particularly subject to πολυλωγία]: the great reader when the conversation turns to historical research, the grammarian when details of his art are being discussed, and the world traveler when the topic is foreign affairs...If some discussion arises from which he might learn something of which he is ignorant, his inability to keep his mouth shut makes further learning impossible.

14 Athenaeus’ assessment of Chrysippus is a clear example of this association. At 13.18.6, Athenaeus prefaces a quotation from Chrysippus’ Περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς with the words, ὥσ ἡμαυτόν πείδω, μεμνήσομαι τῆς λέξεως χαίρω γὰρ πάντω ἂν ἀνδρὶ δίκτε μὴν ποιμάσαι καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἁθαντος ἠπεικεῖτο. I am quite certain that his words are appropriate here. I admire the man very much both for his polymathic knowledge and for the probity of his character.
than any other sets it apart from the other polymathic collections reviewed above as well as from the handbooks of *artes*.

Gellius and Macrobius dedicated their works to their sons, and in so doing took their places in a long and broad tradition, putting their accumulated wealth of learning and wisdom at their sons’ disposal as part of their patrimony. The literary convention ... is a compound of actual practice and normative pressure: it reflects both the fact that a father supervised his son’s education and the belief that such was the father’s proper role .... No professional grammarian we know in later antiquity dedicated a work to his own son .... The professional’s distinguishing mark was his stepping aside from his role as father. (Kaster 1988: 67-68)

Although the prologue to the *Stromateis* is missing, Clement too expresses a solicitude for his reader’s correct reception of his polymathic collection (e.g. 1.1.2.1.; 1.1.11.3; 1.1.14.4). As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, Aelian in the *Varia Historia* (a work also lacking a prologue) adopts toward his reader both a patronizing attitude and an ingenuous style.

The miscellanist’s adoption of a paternal attitude as opposed to that of a professional educator directly influences the polymathic content of the miscellany, because it aligns the data-base with the reader’s position within the cultural élite. In the miscellanist’s implied view, his compilation is as much a part of his estate as is his real property (referred to as a *κειμήλιον* by Aelian [*NA Epilogue*], a storehouse [*penus*] by Gellius [*NA Prologue* 21], a *scientiae supellex* by Macrobius [*Sat. Praef.* 2]); it is, figuratively speaking, as effective as a physical legacy in assuring the heir’s social status. The value of this intellectual legacy demonstrates not only the scholarly industry of the “father,” but his discrimination, good judgment, and sense of responsibility.
The miscellanist's paternal stance as opposed to that of the professional's can be taken one step farther. The professional grammarian or rhetorician is necessarily limited in scope, for his contact with his reader is in one area of paideia alone. The father, however, is concerned with the entire range of his son's paideia-acquisition, and especially with the son's successful adoption of paideia into his adult life. Hence arises the tone of intimacy and direction in many chapters of Gellius and Aelian.

The miscellanist's solicitude for the reader's correct use of paideia in adult life leads to the presentation of his compiled data-base in two basic forms: as directly compiled *copia* or Ὑλη per se, and as *copia* presented with a dramatic modeling of paideia-acquisition and paideia-utilization. The amount of attention the miscellanist gives to each, the stylistic treatment of individual chapters and discussions, and the extent to which directly compiled material is reworded or rewritten, will depend upon the miscellanist's own taste and judgment.

Gellius, for example, intersperses chapters consisting variously of anecdotes, lexicographical discussion, or direct compilation from philosophical, historical, or technical writers, with vignettes representing, he claims, his personal experiences in acquiring paideia. In these latter vignettes, Gellius may write himself into a scene in which people are constructively or incorrectly incorporating paideia into daily life (e.g. *NA* 9.9, 13.20, 13.25, 16.119.7), or into a scene in which a well-known paideia encounter is reenacted in "real" life to make its message more vivid and effective (cf. Holfred-Strevens 1989: 47-51, Steinmetz 1982: 283-285). At *NA* 19.1, for example, Gellius claims to have relived an experience related of Aristippus in a familiar chreia: the philosopher who
asserted that he was indifferent to danger and death had blanched during a rough sea-crossing, and needed to defend himself against a charge of hypocrisy (cf. Aelian VH 9.20).

In the case of Aelian's *Varia Historia*, as I shall discuss in Chapter 5, this presentation of anecdotes and chreia directed toward modeling correct paideia-responses is uppermost; Aelian, however, chooses to lecture the reader directly rather than to allow him to draw his own conclusions about the material's message. For Clement, on the other hand, paideia-models tend to be limited to lists and registers; for this miscellanist, Biblical figures carry more authority than Hellenic ones do (cf. Mahat 1966: 184-187).

Athenaeus and Macrobius (perhaps Pamphila too, cf. Chapter 4 below) preferred to construct a narrative framework of a banquet, symposium, or informal holiday

---

15 The function of paideia-modeling is discussed by other Imperial authors. Plutarch, for example, in *De profectibus in virtute*, refers to people who seek excellence through study: ἐνοι δὲ χρείαις καὶ ἱστορίαις ἀναλεγόμενοι περίπλουν ..., καὶ προχειρὰ γε δεὶ καὶ συχνὰ τῶν ἔπηφαν καὶ ἄγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔχειν ἀποφθέγματα καὶ μνημονεύειν πρὸς τοὺς διωυσώμας ..., καὶ ποιήσασιν ὁμιλῶν καὶ ἱστορίας παρασκύπτετε σεαυτὸν εἰ μηδὲν σε διαφέρει τῶν πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ἰδίους ἢ πάθος κυψείματος ἐμμελῶς λεγομένων. *Some people occupy themselves with gathering anecdotes and chreiae ... One must have many of the sayings of men recognized for their probity at hand, and mention them when confronted by those who would discourage us ... When you study poetry and history be careful that nothing escapes you which could benefit your character or lighten suffering.* (79c) Plato and Xenophon as particularly profitable sources of moral models: τοὺς μὲν γὰρ Πλάτων καὶ Ξενοφόντι χρηματιῶν διὰ τὴν ἀδελφίαν, ἔτερον δὲ μηδέν ἂν ἔχει τὸ καθαρὸν τε καὶ Ἀφαίδιον ὧσπερ δρόσον καὶ χωνίων ἀποδημομένους τινὲς τοὺς ἄλλους φαίνει γιὰς εἰς φαρμάκια τὸ μὲν εὐλάβες καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἀγαπάτων, τὸ δὲ ἀνώδυνον καὶ καθαροτέρα ἐπὶ προσεύχεται μηδὲ διαχείρισθαι ἢ μηδὲν ἔτερον εἰπότεραν συκόπτοντες οὐκ ἀπὸ λόγων μόνον ἄλλα καὶ θεαμάτων καὶ πραγμάτων πάντων φηλεῖσθαι δύνανται καὶ συνάχειν τὸ οἰκείων καὶ χρήσμων. *How would you describe those who make use of the writings of Plato and Xenophon for style alone, calling as it were nothing other than the pure Attic diction as though it were so much dew and blossom? Aren't they like those who would use a drug because it tastes or smells good and not because it relieves pain and removes impurities? So those who progress in virtue can benefit not only from the descriptive and lexical material [in Plato and Xenophon], but can also gather that which is relevant and useful to self-improvement.* (79d) Moral models can function as charms and spells: τοῦ τούτου παρέπεται τὸ ... πέπλεσθα πρὸς ὀφθαλμῶν τοὺς ὅντας ἄγαθοὺς καὶ γενομένους, καὶ διανοεῖσθαι τί δ' ἐν ἐπαγαγότιν ἐν τούτῳ Πλάτων, τί δ' ἐν εἰπέν τῷ Ἐπαμεινονδάς, ποὺς δὲ ἐν ἀφίτις Λυκούργος ἡ Ἀγαμήλος, οἷον τῷ πρὸς ἔσοφτα καμοῦντας ἄνωτος ἢ μεταρρυθμίζοντας ἢ φωνής ἀγνοετοῦντας αὐτῶν ἐπιλαμβανόμενους ἢ πρὸς τὸ πάθος ἀντιβαίνοντας ..., ἢ δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐπίνεια καὶ μνήμη ταχοποιημένη καὶ διαλαμβανόμενα τοὺς προκύπτοντας, ἐν πάσῃ πάθει καὶ ἱστορίας ἀπάσῃς ὁρθότης τη καὶ ἐπίτιτᾶς διαφυλάττετε. *After this one should set before the eyes examples of men who are virtuous or who are becoming virtuous, and one should consider carefully what Plato did, or what Epanomenidas said, what kind of man Lycurgus or Agesilaus was seen to be, as the dressing or practicing before a mirror, reprendering some unworthy  utterances or confronting some unpleasant experience ... The recollection of the models of good men, coming to the aid of and inspiring those advancing in virtue, keeps them on their feet and steady in all their sufferings and quandaries.* (85a-b)
gathering for the presentation of their miscellaneous collections. The potential which such scenarios have for modeling good and bad behavior was known at least since Xenophon (Flamant 1968: 303-319). At the relaxed social event, men could candidly demonstrate how they succeeded or failed at incorporating their expressed views or doctrines into their daily lives. For Athenaeus the desire to demonstrate the impact of polymathic learning upon man’s life as displayed in social interaction occasions the frame.

In the Introduction to Book 5 we read what may well stand as Athenaeus’ goal for the Deipnosophistae (cf., Düring 1936: 249):

\[\text{Τὸ μὲν πάρεργον ἔργον ὡς ποιοῦμεθα,}\\\text{τὸ δ’ ἔργον ὡς πάρεργον ἕκπονοῦμεθα.}\\\text{We hold our avocation to be our main concern,}\\\text{we labor at our work as though it were our avocation.}\]

The σπουδή / diligentia with which Athenaeus made his collection — he was probably compiling at the Alexandrian Library (Düring ibid.: 238; Schmid 1924: 788) is figured in the spontaneous and candid polymathy of his characters. And as Kaster has demonstrated, Macrobius, too, gives much attention to the ethical implications of polymathy in constructing his miscellany’s narrative frame (cf. Kaster 1980: 238-239; 1988: 60-62).

Here we may consider in more detail three models of the \(\deltaλως \piεπαϊδευμένος\) dramatized by Imperial miscellanists, characters who are presented as having made good paideia selections and enjoying the results of their educational choices in their current

---

16 Other kinds of polymathic collections during the Imperial period may use such a format, e.g. Plutarch’s Quaestiones convivales (a λίσσα -collection), [Plutarch]’s De arte musica (a technical manual).

17 Athenaeus apparently created the frame of the Deipnosophistae by first amalgamating several earlier polymathic dialogues and then supplementing these with liberal additions from his notebooks; cf. Düring ibid.: 237-241.
social positions. In all three cases we see these men in the context of relaxed conversation among friends, when they can behave most naturally, least self-consciously.

According to Gellius’ characterization, Cornelius Fronto wears his education, as it were, effectively and well. Although the chapters of the Noctes Atticae are, like those of Aelian’s Varia Historia, each distinct and independent of the others, Gellius yet manages to weave this character into five similarly structured chapters of the work. Each time that he appears, Fronto directs a conversational inquiry or quae stio into the precise meaning of a Latin word. In the first chapter in which he is featured (NA 2.26), Fronto is described as consularis, his prestigious position as a responsible political figure thus typing him as a learned amateur in opposition to figures such as Favorinus, specified in this chapter as a philosophus and therefore in career terms a public teacher-lecturer, or Sulpicius Apollinaris (NA 19.13), a professional grammarian. Fronto is, then, a learned but nonprofessional connoisseur of paideia. (Gellius makes no reference here to Fronto’s historical relationship as tutor at the Antonine court). But Fronto does have a political career, and as a statesman is aware of the demands upon one’s time which public responsibilities can make. At NA 19.8.14, for example, he dismisses his listeners gracefully: Quin his quoque ipsis, quae iam dixi, demoratos vos esse video alicui, opinor, destinatos But I see that you have other business, and have been delayed by my discussion, urging them to pursue their inquiry independently. Twice Gellius explains why Fronto himself does have the opportunity for such discussion: he is forced by an attack of gout to stay at home (NA 2.26; 19.10). Unlike Herodes’ moralistic dismissal of a posturing student (NA 1.2), Fronto’s approach to his inquiries consists not in extracting an ex cathedra textual
statement from a written authority, but in amassing instances of usage recorded in text form. (On the one occasion on which he consults the authority of Caesar’s *De analogia* [NA 19.80] he challenges his listeners to find exceptions to Caesar’s statement.) Fronto’s discussions of usage require a profound memory and an energetic commitment to exhaustive research. For he is engaged in these chapters not in a Formalist-style discussion of “levels of ambiguity” in Latin diction, but in something more exclusive and exact and in fact quite opposed to the ambiguous. Fronto wants not a range of connotations but a word’s precise denotation, honed by ancient usage and fixed irrevocably in canonic texts. The discussion of Latin color words (NA 2.26) is an exercise in precision, and no word is too trite or dull to escape a word-search in archaic usage (NA 19.10). In some chapters Gellius collects the lexical windfalls which result; the color words are, for us, a lucky acquisition. Elsewhere — *praeterpropter*, the etymology of *nanus*, the correct number of *harenae* — the results of the *quaestiones* are not so valuable as the example set by Fronto is protreptic. While Fronto’s conversations are themselves *purissimi* and *bonarum doctrinarum pleni*, the man in action is an inspiration to others.

Unlike Aelian and Gellius, Athenaeus constructs a dramatic setting for his entire work, and allows his characters continually to interact with one another. Among Athenaeus’ twenty-three *deipnosophistae*, only Larensis, the host of the dinners recounted in this text, can be considered an amateur of paideia. All the rest can be typed as poets, philosophers, grammarians, musicians, physicians. (Although Ulpian too is introduced as a statesman, his obsessive Atticism makes it difficult for us to see in him the individual who
has integrated his learning with a responsible public career.) Larensis is described by Athenaeus’ epitomizer in this way:

He eagerly gathered together many cultured men and gave them both a real feast and a feast of discourse, proposing some points of discussion that deserved examination, also finding solutions himself. He set the subject of these examinations not in an extemporaneous or unexamined manner but with as much judgment and Socratic spirit as possible, so that all wondered at the way he studied these inquiries. [Athenaeus] says that he had been appointed to certain religious offices by the emperor Marcus, and administered Greek no less than Roman public cult. He calls him Asteropaeus because he had an equal facility in handling both languages. He says that he was both expert in the priestly rites established by that Romulus who gave his name to the city and by Pompilius Numa, and that he was also expert in jurisprudence. He had learned all these things by himself by studying ancient decrees and documents, and further by making a collection of laws which they no longer teach ... but which have been silenced by the apathetic bad taste of the majority. His collection of ancient Greek texts was so great that it surpassed the collections of all those who have ever been admired for their libraries. Hence,

He glories even in the flower of culture,
in such amusements as we frequently delight ourselves with
when we men gather around the hospitable table.

As the Theban poet sings.

Larensis has all the social graces, kept in perfect balance. Athenaeus’ quote from Pindar is meant to link Larensis with Hieron, the king cultured enough to appreciate true paideutic merit (cf. Aelian’s depiction of Hieron at VH 4.15 and 9.1). As host Larensis welcomes
into his home both Greeks and Romans. He is συμποσιαρχος (4.50), in three of the twelve contributions he makes to the discussion, his statements conclude a book. His education in both Greek and Latin is flawless, putting him in the position of artistic critic as well, able to judge with discrimination and yet displaying no compelling tendency in any one art. Larensis knows enough about all the arts to direct learned discussion without appearing the expert in any one field of study. Athenaeus has noted his lavish library holdings with approval. These texts will have been the source of his rich fund of quotations displayed throughout the *Deipnosophistae*. Larensis has made a collection of obsolete religious and community laws, preserved through his τήρησις: careful study and observation. The same word is applied to Larensis’ care in formulating conversation topics, τῶν ζητήσεων τὴν τήρησιν. Because of this interest, Larensis is the spokesman for Roman historians and Latin terminology throughout the body of the text, but is as capable of quoting long passages of Greek poetry as is any of the guests. He wears his learning thoughtfully, socially, with good taste and discrimination (cf. Baldwin 1976: 37-38).

Like Fronto and Larensis, Macrobius’ *Praetextatus* is an historical reality (cf. Ammianus 22.7.6) written into the *Saturnalia*. Drawing upon Praetextatus’ position as a statesman to model the fully educated man, Macrobius dramatizes his social graces as an example of the learned amateur’s behavior in society. As in the *Deipnosophistae*, the contents of this miscellany are woven into the dramatic framework provided by the leisure of the Saturnalia. It is precisely because it is a public holiday that Praetextatus and the others can have these conversations. Macrobius’ work displays the educated individuals at a time when they can relax and candidly display their personalities as products of their
education. Like Athenaeus' host and guests, the celebrants of the *Saturnalia* represent various practitioners of the liberal arts. But of the twelve participants in Macrobius' text, half are prominent career-statesmen at Rome (Davies 1969: 4). The entire cast is referred to as *Romanae nobilitatis proceres doctique alii* (*Sat.* 1.1.1), and as *viri et docti et praeclarissimi* (1.1.4). As the first and most prominent host of the various gathering, Praetextatus not only throws his dining room and library open to his guests, but directs, as Larensis directs, the topics of conversation; indeed, even when the group gathers at the homes of others, Praetextatus still functions as master of ceremonies (e.g. *Sat.* 7.1.1, 7.4.1-2). Unlike Gellius' Fronto and Athenaeus' Larensis, however, Praetextatus does not so much initiate *quaestiones* as "access" people as information sources, as though they were themselves compilable texts. At *Sat.* 1.2.20, for example, he calls upon Caecina for information *verum quia te quidquid in libris latet investigare notius est quam ut per verecundiam negare possis* because it is too well known that you track down whatever information is found in books for you modestly to deny that fact, and Caecina then answers by enunciating within the framework of the conversation the information from Varro found in Gellius' *NA* 3.2.

As Macrobius had already excused this direct compilation of entire data-sources (*Sat.* Praef. 4-9), we must view Praetextatus' rather artificial manner of eliciting information, as well as the equally artificial response, as part of Macrobius' program. Macrobius is aware of the artificiality; at *Sat.* 1.11.1., for example, after Praetextatus has spoken at great length on the antiquities related to the Saturnalia celebration and drawn upon various earlier sources to do so, a guest accuses him of flaunting *ingenii sui pompam et ostentationem loquendi*. The other guests shudder in distress at such an unscholarly (and metafictional)
attack; Praetextatus, elegant and urbane, simply smiles and calmly takes a new tack in his
discussion of antiquities (on the smile as a gesture of scholarly superiority cf. Kaster 1980:
238-239; Pliny the Younger likewise refers to accessing information from a learned friend
as from a thesaurus, Ep. 1.22.2-3). His flexibility and charisma carry him across the
interruption. Like Larensis, Praetextatus is a master of Roman antiquities because he has
made a careful study of the sources for early Roman religion: sacrorum ... omnium ...
unice conscius (Sat. 1.7.17), he is the princeps religiosorum (1.11.1). The object of his
private studies reflects his personal piety and religious convictions, which are in turn
funded by the material he has studied. Another guest describes Praetextatus as nec in
moribus Socrate minor et in re publica philosopho efficacior not less than Socrates in
morality, more effective than that philosopher in politics. (Sat. 2.1.3)

The three examples of the ὄλως πεπαιδευμένος which we have here examined
display the fruits of their focused and consistent scholarship while enjoying the social
status which their active political careers have won them. They have developed both the
private (intellectual) and the public (moral and responsible) sides of their personalities, and
all three hold important positions in the Roman state. Though these three men are Romans
by birth, this circumstance is not a requirement to status as a fully educated individual. We
could, for example, include Gellius’ Herodes Atticus in their number, vir facundia et
consulari honore praeditus, whose approach to textual authority has been referred to
above. The important qualities they share, qualities which are being modeled in their
approaches to scholarship and the educational process in relation to their own careers and
personal responsibilities, are a serious and directed commitment to paideia, prodigious
memories stocked with data *worth* remembering, a taste and judgment which allow them to recognize the difference between trivial and meaningful scholarship, and an admirable personality influenced by the moral content of paideia. These are, interestingly, qualities to which both Gellius and Macrobius lay some claim in their prefaces. Although the *Varia Historia* is lacking a preface, Aelian's prologue and epilogue to the *De natura animalium* likewise claim similar qualities for this author, to be discussed in more detail below.

The dramatic scenes at the symposium, at the dinner party, in conversation with friends and acquaintances allow the educated individual to display his learning in a spontaneous manner. In the give and take of discussion, the speaker cannot have a dissertation prepared, and must access his learning in an ad hoc way. As readers we build up, metonymically, some concept of the vast range of reading and study carried out by the ὅλως πεπαιδευμένος. In a sense, his learning is more sincere, more selfless than that of the public teacher, sophist, or philosopher, who has a performance in script or sketch, or has at least a few moments to prepare an impromptu discourse. Philostratus speaks at length of the sophist's admirable powers of ἀὐτοσχεδιάζειν, improvisation. Quintilian insists that this ability is the final goal of an oratorical education (10.7.1; cf. Cousin 1935: 602). The educated men we have examined here display a similar ability in ἀὐτοσχεδιάζειν, but on the private, text-bound level. They can mentally reproduce data to respond to any given scholarly need, whether as fuel for a *quaestio* or as solicited background information in a discussion of antiquities or natural history. That this ability is limited to the ὅλως πεπαιδευμένος is displayed on the occasions when others fail to reach his level; the *semidocti grammatici* in Gellius' *NA* 4.1, 19.10, for example, become tongue-tied and
embarrassed through their inability to provide the necessary information to support their positions in an argument. That Athenaeus at least is playing with this concept of αὐτοφορία in a semiprivate context is suggested by his title; although most of his characters are not sophists in the professional sense, they all do get to perform at dinner like the great public virtuosi on stage.

How does this display of polymathic paideia on the level of the intimate paideia-gathering relate to its text-based status and the goals of the miscellanist to provide truly useful polymathic data? Being bound to a textual vehicle and representing a culture now nearly a millennium old, Greek and Roman literature were acquired, as we have seen, first by the child under a teacher's directions, a necessarily involuntary and public experience. The busy adult acquired further learning in literature, the other liberal arts, and the world in general, according to his own energies, drive, and commitment. The information and skills he acquired gave him pleasure and improved him as a person, but the latter growth did not become apparent until he interacted with others; material he learned would lie dormant until it took on a moral quality in social interaction.

Just as archaic and classical paideia as performed on the community level had educated the public through poetry, drama, and music, so the scholarly conversation, quaestio, and symposium were a more intimate educational experience for their participants. Polymathic data are derived through study by individuals and presented to the social gathering as a piece of text-based information, an ἔρανος τῆς πολυμαθείας. By becoming a clearing house, as it were, for each individual scholar's contribution to

---

18 Dionysius Hal. De imit. 31.1.27 Us.; Athenaeus refers to Larensis' banquets as supplying party-favors consisting of λογάρια (2.1).
knowledge, the discussion becomes a counterpart on the level of the personal and friendly gathering to the miscellanist's own solitary study session, better because representing the best of each participant's compilations from written texts. The element of selection determined by taste and good judgment is still operative, and the πολυμαθία conveyed to the reader of such a miscellany can therefore be only of the beneficial kind.
Chapter 4

Miscellany Structure and Style

In analyzing the generic qualities of the Imperial miscellany, the miscellanist’s approach to content and its selection was discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the miscellany’s reader was discussed, in particular the needs which the reader’s social position as a member of an educated class imposed upon the miscellanist’s selections and tone.

In the present chapter my purpose is to examine the third element in the miscellanist’s program: the miscellany’s structure and style. To what extent do the surviving miscellanies display a recognizable structure? To what extent do these features contribute to the readability of the text?

I shall attempt to demonstrate the following: (1) The miscellany shares, with a number of other works of Imperial scholarship, an origin in the process of compilation. (2) The miscellanist approaches the task of composing his compiled notes into a finished work by applying models of blending and cosmetic arrangement, drawn from nature and the arts. (3) The miscellanist purposely retains a quality of disarrangement and disorganization in his arrangement. It is in this quality of the finished work that the “entertainment” value of the miscellany is viewed as lying, and not in a trivialization of content.

Paideia in the form of canonic literary texts used in schools, works of scholarship contributing to the understanding of those texts, and the writings of generations of philosophers, scientists, historians, and other intellectuals made the Imperial miscellanist’s
task of selecting relevant polymathic data especially demanding of diligence. As we have seen, the flood of texts which the Imperial reader must navigate was daunting. To adopt a different image, there was much chaff among that crop of literary wheat, and the miscellanist needed to work hard to thresh out only relevant data for a reader with whose intellectual development he was really concerned.

Compilation had been a legitimate means of manipulating textual material since the appearance of the written text in classical culture. In the *Laws*, for example, Plato refers to a text of anthologized poetry (811e.1-5). Papyrus fragments of such reading primers have been found in the Fayum from the third century BC (cf. Guéraud and Jouguet: 1938). Aristotelian “school literature” as represented by significant portions of the current *Corpus Aristotelicum* was built up in part through a directed program of compilation of a variety of written documents (cf. Düring 1950: 58). We have examined examples of Hellenistic compilations and some of their authors’ responses to their sources. In some cases these sources are previous compilations; thus Antigonus of Carystus, for example, made selections from Callimachus’ paradoxographic collection of over a dozen identified authors (Giannini 1964: 108 note 45).

Scholars of the Imperial period did not hesitate to compile previous collections; indeed, much of the limited scholarship expended upon Aelian in the last century has been occupied with determining his sources. However, Imperial compilators treated these compiled authors each as a voice with its own authority irrespective of its context. The secondary vehicle of the voice may well be overlooked; Aelian quoted Aristotle frequently

---

1 Epitomization, a process of textual manipulation analogous to compilation, is first recorded in the fourth century BC, of Theopompus’ epitome of Herodotus (*Suda theta* 172; Bott 1920: 6-7, 11).
from secondary or tertiary compilations because Aristotle's was the voice whose authority he wanted to access, not that of Pamphilus or Juba.

Pausanias offers an interesting example of an Imperial scholar analyzing, manipulating, even wrestling with precompiled sources. In the course of his research into the antiquities of Helicon, Pausanias drew information from a poetic Atthis attributed to Hegesinus and compiled by Callias of Corinth. ταύτην τοῦ Ἡγεσίνου τὴν ποιήσιν οὐκ ἐπελεξάμην. Pausanias rather wistfully admits as he records in his own text the material he can use,

\[ \text{I didn’t read for myself this poem by Hegesinus, for it had been lost before I was born. But in his study of the people of Orchomenus Callipus quotes Hegesinus’ lines as corroborative evidence, and thus instructed by Callipus I quote them in turn. (9.29.1)} \]

The previous chapter’s discussion of the educated individual of the Imperial period focused upon this individual’s uses of πολυμαθία in a social context. In the miscellanies of Macrobius, Gellius, and Athenaeus, we see educated adults furthering each other’s intellectual development by funding discussions with πολυμαθία. Paideia is presented as an important element of social intercourse, and one which contributes to the spiritual well-being of the peer group.

But the educated adult’s most concentrated and meaningful encounters with paideia occur in private, faced with his texts and prepared to make the best use of the time at his disposal. Here the image we have of the Imperial ὁλως πεπαιδευμένος is that of the scholar with notebook in hand, extracting from his texts the material which in his own
judgment is most useful and relevant. His compilation reveals his judgment, for not all readers will find the same data equally relevant. Seneca refers to this process in Ep. 108, describing the manner in which people with different interests approach the same authoritative text:

non est quod mireris ex eadem materia suis quemque studiis apta colligere; in eodem prato bos herbam quaerit, canis leporem, ciconia lascetam.

You shouldn’t be surprised at the fact that each person gathers from the same material what suits his own interests. In the same meadow the cow heads straight for the grass, the dog for the rabbit, the stork for the lizard. (29)

Plutarch uses a similar image: as the bee, goat, and pig hunt out different foodstuffs in the same locale, so among reader of literature ὁ μὲν ἀπανθίζεται τὴν ἱστορίαν, ὁ δὲ ἐμφύεται τῷ κάλλει καὶ τῇ κατασκευῇ τῶν ὄνομάτων. This person plucks the flowers of history, that one is attracted by the beauty and the arrangement of words. (Quomodo poët. aud. 30c)

The reader’s notes thus become a kind of barometer of the reader’s responsible scholarship and taste, and rejection of offensive data may be as indicative of the reader’s intelligence as acceptance of relevant material. This situation arises particularly among Christian scholars faced with the compilation of Hellenic texts, as St. Basil emphasizes, using the same imagery as his pagan counterparts:

κατὰ πᾶσαν δὴ οὖν τῶν μελετῶν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν λόγων ἡμῖν μεθεκτέον. ἐκεῖνα τε γὰρ οὔτε ἄπασι τοῖς ἄνθεσι παραπλησίως ἐπέρχονται, οὔτε μὴν οἷς ἀν ἐπιτίθεσαν ὅλα φέρειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ἀλλ’ ὅσον αὐτῶν ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τὴν ἔργασιν λαβοῦσι, τὸ λοιπὸν χαίρειν ἀφήκαν· ἦμεῖς τε ἦν σωφρονώμεν, ὅσον οἶκεῖον ἡμῖν καὶ συγγενές τῇ ἀληθείᾳ παρ’ αὐτῶν κοιμοῦμενός, ὑπερβησόμεθα τὸ λειπόμενον.

In our intercourse with literature we must use as our image the activity of the bee. Bees neither approach all flowers indiscriminately, nor do they take everything they happen to find. Rather, they take only what suits them and is appropriate to the task at hand, leaving the rest behind. And we, if we use good sense, shall draw from literature what befits us and is consonant with our beliefs, and shall pass over all the rest. (De leg. gent. lib. 4.45)
Intent upon extracting from his reading all that is beneficial and meaningful, the adult learner of the Imperial period does so with notebook in hand, compilation being his primary means of ἀπανθίζεσθαι.

Gellius refers to his adnotatiuncula (NA 19.7.12), his notes ad subsidium memoriae quasi quoddam litterarum penus (NA Praef. 2). Herodes Atticus, Philostratus records, at his death left ἐγχειρίδια τε καὶ καίρια τὴν ἀρχαίαν πολυμάθειαν ἐν βραχεί ἀπιπνομένα (VS 565). Pliny the Younger refers to one hundred and sixty electorum commentarii...opisthographi quidem et minutissimis scripti, qua ratione multiplicatur hic numerus notebooks full of selected data .... They were written in a tiny hand, and on the backs of the papyrius, which means that their total number was multiplied (Ep. 3.5.17); these notes represented the “leftovers” from the Elder’s seven completed works. Sidonius deserves special commendation for his energy and diligent commitment. Having gone in hot pursuit, literally, of a man who he discovered was carrying books in his baggage, Sidonius finally caught up with him:

Capti hospitis genua complector, iumenta sisto, frena ligo, sarcinas solvo, quaesitum volumen invenio produco lectito excerpi.
I grasped and embraced my guest’s knees, I made the baggage train stop, I fastened up the reins, opened the pack, found the book I was looking for, drew it out, perused it, made excerpts. (Ep. 9.9.6-8; discussed at Starr 1987: 218)

He can, if he chooses, publish his notes in the sense that he can put them at the disposal of his friends. The educated individual has the Xenophontic and Platonic symposium as a model for this nonprofessional sharing of paideia among friends (cf. Marrou 1938: 210-214). He can relate to the image of the educated as initiates in a
mystery cult of the Muses, his personal research being a visible token of his membership among the elect (cf. Marrou *ibid.* 231-267). He may have a sincere desire to help a personal friend or relative with his private study, offering this person short cuts to polymathic knowledge which he himself required much more effort to attain.

We have been describing here miscellaneous, unspecified notes which the amateur has gathered from his study. If he has focused his reading with the purpose of acquiring material dealing with some specific topic, we would have to specify his work as *istoria*: directed and focused research.

The terms *istoria* and *istoria* have come to have a number of rather specific denotations in the Imperial period, from a statement of what is real as opposed to fabulous, through narrative accounts of past events, to anecdotes explaining the basis in reality out of which literature has created an imaginative construct (Dietz 1995: 95). Whether the object of research be the natural world, the “stories” behind epic and tragic art, or a given social and political entity, the common term is *istoria* as research. As Fornara defines the concept,

> when method designates a class of literary works it is obvious that the activity described is the sine qua non of the genre ....The method [of ancient historiography] consisted of piecing out the record in detail on the basis of a search for information from knowledgeable sources, and the resultant works attested to the diligence of the seeker. (1983: 47; cf. Press 1982: 70-72).

“Diligence” is a quality of the amateur adult directing his own education, and “knowledgeable sources” are the only kind such a responsible reader will consider worth compiling if he has taste and discrimination (*φιλοκαλία*). Likewise he expects to be judged by these qualities when his notes are written up and made public. As a process, *istoria* in
the Imperial period explains a phenomenon by accessing information about it and ordering that information in such a way that it will form a unified whole, a συγγραφή, with unity imposed by subject matter, chronology, geographical area, or any number of other things. For subjects which the researcher cannot know by autopsy, because they belong to the distant past, are geographically remote, or demand more skill or wisdom than the researcher commands, he will compile from a trustworthy source. Originality of view would be nonsensical under such circumstances, and the point of the research is not to be original but to give an accurate account of the subject being studied. Pliny the Younger, faced with the option of writing what we would call ancient history, hesitates to undertake such a project because of the vast amount of compilation it would require: *vetera et scripta aliis? parata inquisitio, sed onerosa collatio* You suggest that I write ancient history, subjects dealt with by others? My work is cut out for me, but the compilation is a burdensome task (*Ep.* 5.8).

The scholar’s readiness to compile in the course of creating a work of research can be seen in the preface to Dionysius’ first book of the *Antiquitates Romanae*. Having insisted upon the importance of diligence and judgment in gathering material for an historical account (*μετά πολλὰς ἐπιμελείας τε καὶ φιλοποιίας . . . σπουδὴς ἁξία 1.1.2-3*), having defended the value of and need for a balanced presentation of the political and social development of Rome for a Greek audience (*οὐδεμία γὰρ ἀκριβῆς ἔξεληλυθε περὶ αὐτῶν Ἑλληνικὸς ἱστορία μέχρι τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς χρόνων ὅτι μὴ κεφαλαίωδες ἐπιτομαί πάνυ βραχεία [1.5.4]*) Dionysius states the sources from which he has collected his information:

*τὰ μὲν παρὰ τῶν λογιστάτων ἀνδρῶν, οἷς εἰς ὁμίλιαν ἠλθον, διδαχῇ παραλαβόν, τὰ δ’ ἐκ τῶν ἱστορίων ἀναλεξάμενος ὡς οἱ πρὸς αὐτῶν*
Having been instructed in some information by the most trustworthy men whom I conversed with and having collected other data from the histories written by the authors respected by the Romans themselves, basing myself upon these sources I undertook the writing (I.7.3).

The program is conservative, based upon the guidelines established by Herodotus; but considering that Dionysius is writing the history of Rome down to the First Punic War, all of his data must come ultimately either from written texts or from Roman scholars — ὅλως πεπαιδευμένοι one would suppose — who have shared with Dionysius in the communal associations of scholarship which we have been considering here, material ἄξια σπουδῆς which they in turn have derived from texts.

The compiled notes of a scholar can thus be accessed and written up into a συγγραφή by a person involved in researching any given subject. Compiled information thus used as raw material for more polished and focused written accounts might be referred to as ὑλή, silva, copia, "stuff" or "supplies"; such polymathic data could fund oratory as well as written scholarship (cf. Cicero De Or. 8.103, 125; Orat. 16; Quintilian Inst. 8 Praef. 28). Photius can thus account for the rather disorganized λόγοι ἱστορικοί of Olympiodorus: αὐτὸς ἵσως συνιδὼν οὐ συγγραφήν αὐτῷ ταύτα κατασκευασθήναι ἄλλα ὑλὴν συγγραφῆς ἐκπορισθῆναι διαβεβαιοῦται. He himself has maintained that it was not with the intention of writing a complete work of historical research that he prepared this material, but of providing the raw material for such a study. (Bibl. 80.56b). Such ὑλή does not necessarily have to result in an historical account of the past. Photius uses the same term for the Atticist lexicon of Phrynichus: ἦστι δὲ ὁ συγγραφεύς, εἰ τις πολυμαθέστατος, ἄλλως δὲ λάλος καὶ περιττός...καὶ καλὸν καὶ ὑφαίον λόγον ὑλὴν ἄλλοις συναθροίζων. Although this author is
extremely learned, he is wordy and prolix; all the same, he collects a fine account to be used as a resource by other scholars (Bibl. 158.10lb). Plutarch uses these concepts rather suggestively in describing the activity of the Spartan Cleombrotus who, he relates, having acquired a comfortable income, used his leisure for research. He sailed beyond the Red Sea, συνήγειν ἱστορίαν οἶον ἔλην φιλοσοφίας. He collected [the results of] his research as raw material for philosophy (De def. or. 410b; cf. Babut 1975: 207-208).

A ὁλως πεπαιδευμένος may simply write up his notes, then, and make them public, allowing the reader in turn to use or reject them for his own research as he sees fit. Aelian, for example, seems to have done just this in the De natura animalium. And although we cannot know for certain, Aelian seems to have done likewise for the Varia Historia as well. But its Greek title, Ποικίλη ἱστορία, suggests that in some way Aelian's historia must result in a "piecing out of the record," as Fornara's definition above demands.

Perhaps we should refer to Aelian's polymathic activity in Varia Historia as a "piecing in," i.e. a supplementing, of the "record" rather than a comprehensive survey of areas of knowledge from which he compiled. The concept of a miscellaneous supplement is clearly typing Aelian's research as something different from, for example, the universal history of a Cassius Dio or the ἀρχαιολογία of a Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

The concept of ποικιλία or disparilitas is important for the Imperial miscellany. It is primarily this quality, sought by the miscellanist in arranging his notes, which distinguishes the miscellany from other polymathic collections of the Imperial period. Other polymathic compilations share with the miscellany an awareness of the adult

---

2 ὁτρ δὲ οὐ φανέται [ταῦτα λυπητῆ], ἐὰντω τῷ πατρὶ θᾶλπειν τε καὶ περιέπειν. (NA Prol.)
reader’s paideia-needs. Hesychius, for example, a professional grammarian working at Alexandria probably in the sixth century AD (Kaster 1988: 292), in the Συναγωγὴ παοῶν λέξεων κατὰ στοιχεῖον provided his reader with synonyms for hard words found in literary sources. Hesychius prided himself on having made a comprehensive compilation of specialist lexica from all the canonic genres. He mentions in particular the works of Aristarchus, Apion, Apollonius, Heliodorus, and Herodian, but especially the text of Diogenianus. Hesychius greatly admired Diogenianus, as one both σπουδαῖος and φιλόκαλος, the author of a work entitled Περιεργοπένητες, “Poor Men but Scholars.” The description which Hesychius gives of this work, which he seems to have taken as the core of his own lexicon and to whose alphabetical structure he added further compiled material, interests us here. Diogenianus had worked under Hadrian, and seems to have compiled not only the epitomized Pamphilus and specialist lexica, but material illustrative of medicine, the historical and antiquarian writers, and oratory as well:

I think that his intention was to provide useful material for rich and poor alike, material which could take the place of teachers if they could just get access to it in the course of comprehensive research. I must commend the man’s good judgment and scholarly industry. He elected to provide for serious scholars a most useful study and a body of material of immense benefit for every manner of paideia. (Praef.)

It is Diogenianus’ concern with getting polymathic resources into the hands of students working without teachers that places him beyond the range of the professional
grammarian and within the world of the adult self-learner. The Imperial period was aware of the needs of the individual who was autodidact from financial necessity as well as from the demands of a career and public service.

Collections of compiled passages speaking to the interests of students of the other artes — medicine, arithmetic and geometry, astronomy, music and dialectic — are referred to, and in some cases we have texts illustrating such material. [Plutarch]’s De arte musica, for example, compiles liberally from the works of Glaucus of Rhegium, Aristoxenus, and Heraclides Ponticus on the technical aspects of ancient Greek musical theory (West 1992: 5-6).

Collections of compiled passages published with the needs of rhetoricians and rhetoric students in mind interest us here, because of the relationship between public speaking and the concept of the fully educated statesman. As we have seen, Cicero’s model of the orator doctus influenced the ancient learner’s concept of relevant scholarship and compilation. The student of rhetoric was taught to draw upon canonic literature both for models of style and for matter. These are the ends for which Dio (Or. 18) and Quintilian (Inst. 10) provide lists of authors useful for the public speaker. Dionysius’ view of rhetorical mimesis as essentially a process of τὸν τῆς πολυμαθείας ἔρανον συλλέγειν, links the practice with the act of scholarly compilation. The “flowers” of rhetorical excellence may be culled and displayed in a collection, to be drawn upon for private or classroom use. Diogenes Laertius refers to the practice of marking with a letter X any
word or passage seen as χρήσιμον πρὸς τὰς ἐκλογὰς καὶ καλλιγραφίας (3.66), suggesting the development of a compiled literature of chrestomathies.³

The Imperial age recognized, then, the importance of much matter with which to fund rhetoric. Quintilian expects that the student lectione multa et idonea copiosam sibi verborum supellectilem compararit (Inst. 8. Praef. 28). Such copia is not for stylistic mimesis but for the acquisition of exempla, illustrative material with which to fill out and attractively to pad a declamation’s bare structure and outline. Here we shall find polymathy at its best, for such exempla must be not only morally effective and attractive, but also new to an audience whose taste may be jaded. We need only mention Valerius Maximus’ Factorum et dictorum memorabilia libri novem, specifically designed for the busy and committed student of exempla⁴ by being arranged first according to the nationality of the main character (Roman or externus) and then by theme (e.g. stratagems, justice, hard work, old age, anger). Several centuries later Johannes Stobaeus will prepare a similar copia-collection arranged thematically. In Stobaeus’ case, the passages are all compiled from earlier authors, most of them canonic, thus making the work an anthology. The pieces are arranged thematically, designed not so much as sources for exempla as easily accessed quotations. Both the Suda and Photius were familiar with Stobaeus’ work. According to the former it provided ἐνάρετα πάνα καὶ γέμοντα πάσης παιδεύσεως excellent [selections], chock-full of every kind of learning. Photius recognized the short cuts it offered to otherwise rather tedious slogging through whole authors to find striking quotations: διὰ συνεχούς αὐτῶν μελέτης οὐκ ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ πολλῶν καὶ καλῶν καὶ ποικίλων νοημάτων,

³ Proclus, however, is the earliest author to leave a work with this title (GGL: 881).
⁴ Breviter ... ab illustribus electa auctoribus digerere constitui, ut documenta sumere volentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit (I. Praef.).
Readers will reap a mental harvest, summary fashion, of many and various fine thoughts through brief but consistent work with them (Bibl. 167.115b). Photius adds that the collection is especially useful for speakers and creative writers.

These are all general collections of compiled material answering to the needs of students of specific artes. But there remains a great deal of material which does not fit into any of the artes, material which is worth knowing and worth noting down but which must be seen as simply polymathic stuff, ἕλη. The adult self-learner has acquired this material in the process of his pursuit of paideia, and it reflects his personal φιλοκαλία, σπουδή, and πόνος. It is this otherwise uncategorized harvest of amateur paideia-compilations which forms the basis of the miscellany.

Although Sextus Empiricus criticized such polymathic information because it could not be reduced to a dialectic-style outline method, being simply ὁμέθοδος ἕλη (Math. 1.266.1), the Imperial miscellanists saw this quality as a positive aspect of their collections. The dialectic τέχνη was a thing of the classroom, a device associated with the coercion, manipulation, and tedium of childhood education. But by focusing upon the unarranged, random, and various quality of their published notes, the miscellanists could offer the adult reader a different kind of learning experience: polymathic data presented in such a way that its consumption could be easily incorporated into the reader's lifestyle.

Because the miscellanists themselves insist upon the disordered, even random quality of their collections, it is easy to look upon the Imperial miscellany as a kind of dustbin or grab-bag. Gellius, for example, who prides himself upon the disparilitas of his work, yet criticizes the other miscellanists for “sweeping together” (converreabant) their
data like so much rubbish (NA Prol. 11). Yet when Imperial miscellanists describe their own activity, we find that they tend to structure their collections with several paradigms in mind. These are the paradigms applied to all uses of material compiled from paideia, models which suggest that the extracting of data from earlier works to create something new was viewed neither as a sterile and trite recycling of the past nor as an irresponsible pillaging of another’s literary property.

The first paradigm of compilation occurs in the fragmentary De imitatione of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In seeking to define his concept of stylistic mimesis, whereby an author literally constructs a style by culling the best elements from the great authors of the past, Dionysius relates the story of how Zeuxis created his famous portrait of Helen. Zeuxis persuaded the people of Croton to let him see their daughters naked, given access to a variety of models, he selected out of this larger group a number of young women each with a distinguishingly beautiful trait. One had, for example, especially lovely elbows, another excellent hands, another a beautiful throat and shoulders:

ο δὲ ἦν ἄξιον παρ’ ἐκάστη γραφὴς, ἐς μίαν ἡθορίσθη σώματος εἰκόνα, κὰκ πολλῶν μερῶν συλλογῆς ἐν τι συνέθηκεν ἡ τέχνη τέλειον εἶδος. τοιχαρών πάρεστι καὶ σοὶ καθάτερ ἐν θεάτρῳ παλαιῶν οἰκίων ίδες εξεπερεῖν καὶ τῆς εκείνων φυσῆς ἀπανθίζεσθαι τὸ κρεῖττον, καὶ τὸν τῆς πολυμαθείας ἔρανον συλλέγοντι οὐκ ἐξήτηλον χρόνως γενησομένην εἰκόνα τυποῦν ἀλλ’ ἄθανατον τέχνης κάλλος.

He incorporated into a single image each girl’s separate quality which deserved to be painted. This collection made from many parts his craft composed into one perfect form. So you too can seek out the images of ancient forms as if in a theater, and can cull what is superior from the spirit of each. In gathering together this contribution-banquet of scholarship, you will fashion an image which will not fade with time but which will represent art’s immortal beauty. (frag. 31.1 Us.)
As Zeuxis made a work of ideal and lasting beauty by abstracting the finest qualities from a large number of female bodies, so Dionysius encourages the author who wants to develop a fine style to research thoroughly (ἐξιστορεῖν) and to select with care (ἀπανθιζεῖσθαι, “pluck blossom”), not physical features, but the best assembly of scholarship (τὸν τῆς πολυμαθείας ἔρων) which authors of the past have to offer.

Lucian presents a model of compilation which, like Dionysius’, is drawn from the plastic arts. In Imagines, the speaker, Lycinus, struggles to describe to a friend a beautiful woman whom he has seen but whom he cannot identify. He finally succeeds in rendering her likeness by describing separate features from famous artists’ works and applying these features to her. Starting with the head of Praxiteles’ Aphrodite of Cnidos,

[Reason] will keep the hair, forehead, and the beautiful shape of the brow just the way Praxiteles made them. The cheeks and face will be taken from Alcamenes’ “Aphrodite in the Garden,” as will the hands; the proportion of the wrists and the slender, tapering fingers. The outline of the face, softness of the cheeks, the nose, Pheidias and the Lemnian Aphrodite will provide; Pheidias will use his Amazon as a model for the throat and mouth. (Im. 6)

So successful is Lucian’s collage that his addressee recognizes the referent immediately, and goes on to describe her spiritual and intellectual qualities using the same cut-and-paste method as has been applied to her physical beauty. Far from being an irresponsible or inefficient means of recreating an aesthetic experience, Lucian’s description constructed from “compiled” features displays and ratifies both the speaker’s great depth and range of
learning and the aesthetic sensitivity he has acquired through culture. He is successful at his description because he has the intellectual resources from which to extract its component parts.

Finally, we may consider a series of models for compilation offered by a miscellanist. In the prologue to the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius describes the benefit to be gained from reading a compilation such as his. Drawing upon material extracted directly from Seneca's eighty-fourth Epistula, Macrobius presents a series of six images which apply both to the process of constructing a miscellany and to the reader's experiencing of it. First, Macrobius' own activity in gathering and working up extracts from earlier authors is compared to that of bees extracting honey from selected blossoms to make the honeycomb (*Sat. Praef. 5*). Next, the mind which has absorbed diverse material from a compilation is described as a kind of pickling-vat or keeping-room, in which many condiments are steeped into a unity while each preserves something of its original flavor, *ut etiam si quid apparuuerit unde sumptum sit, aliud tamen esse quam unde sumptum noscetur appareat* so that even if you perceived the source of anything, it yet seems different from its recognized source (6). Again, the mind processes such various data in the same way as the body digests various kinds of food, and benefits from the variety in a holistic manner (7). The mind adds up information derived from a miscellany and arrives at a total, *omnia quibus est adiutus abscondat, ipsum tamen ostendat quod effectit* concealing all from which it has derived benefit while still revealing its effect (7), the way that we add up separate numerals to reach a final sum. Further, the process of assembling and reading various data is like that of mingling various scents to make a perfume (8). A compilation is also like a chorus
made up of many separate voices: *una [vox] tamen ex omnibus redditur* we hear one voice resulting from many separate voices (9). Macrobius summarizes both the process of compilation and its beneficial results thus:

*tale hoc praesens opus volo: multae in illo artes, multa praeccepta sint, multarum aetatium exempta, sed in unum conspirata.*

Such is my goal for this work: that it contain information and scholarship about many subjects compiled from authors from many periods, all of it crafted into a unity (10).

Macrobius insists upon the compilator's nurturing and responsible care and the compilation's benefits for the reader, all the while modeling the process by recasting Seneca's words to fit his new context.

As an ἔρανος τῆς πολυμαθείας, the data forming the miscellany are seen by the miscellanist as intrinsically valuable both to himself and to his reader. The miscellanist's contribution lies both in his selection of data for inclusion and in his arrangement. He has no desire to reduce the value of his data-base by trivializing it through simplification, and to this end Gellius must warn his reader not to be intimidated by the technical nature of some of his chapters. One should note that it is the quality of the selection of the miscellanist's κρίσις, his ἐκλογή and not the arrangement of data, which Pliny criticizes in his assessment of rival miscellanists.

Inscriptionis apud Graecos mira felicitas: Κηρίον inscripsere, quod volebant intellegi favum, alii Κέρας Ἀμυλαθείας, quod copiae cornu, ut vel lactor gallinacei sperare possis in volumine haustum; iam Ἡ Μούσαι Πανδέκται Ἐγχειρίδια Λειμών Πιναξ Σχεδίων: inscriptiones, propter quas vadimonium desiern possit; at cum intraveris, di deaeque, quam nihil in medio invenies!

The Greeks display a breathtaking facility for creating titles. Some have called their work "Honeycomb," others "Cornucopia," implying that you might find in it any number of extraordinary things. They also have titles like "Violets," "Muses," "Universal Compendium," "Handbook," "Meadow," "Register," "Impromptu." Such titles seem to need no other guarantee. But when you
begin to read them, how worthless they'll be found! (HN Praef. 24: cf. Gellius NA Prol. 6-10)

Pliny is quite specific about his own labors, as we have seen: he had extracted twenty thousand pieces of worthwhile data from two thousand books, and had reduced this extraordinary congeries to thirty-six *volumina* (HN Praef. 17). The effort he made in the rewriting is summed up thus:

res ardua vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem obsoletis nitorem, obscursis lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturae suae omnia.

It's a difficult business to give a new lustre to old things, to give authority to what is worn out, glamor to the commonplace, elucidation to the unclear, grace to the repellent, trustworthiness to the dubious, its own nature to everything and all of its own to nature. (HN Praef. 15)

In the prologue to the *De natura animalium*, Aelian likewise draws attention not only to his personal zeal in research but in composition as well:

ώς μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄτεροις ὑπὲρ τούτων ἐπούδασται, καλῶς οἶδα· ἔγω δὲ ἐμαυτῷ ταῦτα ὅσα οἶόν τε ἢν ἀθροίσας καὶ περιβαλὼν αὐτοῖς τὴν συνήθη λέξιν, κειμήλιον οὐκ ἀπούδαστον ἐκπονήσαι πεπίστευκα ... εἰ δὲ ἐπὶ πολλοῖς τοῖς πρώτοις καὶ σοφοῖς γεγόναμεν, μή ἔστω ζημίωμα ἐς ἔπαινον ἢ τοῦ χρόνου ληξίς, εἰ τι καὶ αὐτοὶ σπουδῆς ἄξιον μᾶθημα παρεξομήθη καὶ τῇ εὑρέσει τῇ περιττοτέρᾳ καὶ τῇ φιλίᾳ.

I am well aware that others have researched these subjects. But I am quite confident that I have labored to create a keepsake well worthy of serious attention, painstakingly gathering together all that I could and clothing the results of my research in a familiar style .... If I have been born later than many of the best and the wise, let my allotment in time not result in a stinting of my praise, particularly if I too have somehow provided a study worthy of attention in terms both of my more extensive conception and of my style.

The repetitive ἐπούδασται, οὖκ ἀπούδαστον, σπουδῆς ἄξιον make Aelian's point more than clear: both data and composition have required diligence and effort, and both contribute to the value of the *De natura animalium* as a κειμήλιον, an object of value to be treasured.
Part of this effort in composition consists of retaining or recreating the spontaneity of the original act of compilation. Gellius describes this aspect of the miscellany style as the *disparilitas quae fuit in illis annotationibus pristinis quas breviter et indigeste et incondite exauditionibus lectionibus variis feceramus* the random quality which those original notes displayed. We had made the notes quickly, in a disorganized fashion, from a variety of things heard or read. *(NA Prol. 3)* Photius describes a similar policy on the part of Pamphila, whose thirty-three volume *Ὑπομνήματα* provided material for Diogenes Laertius, Gellius, and Favorinus:

Everything that in her reading she found remarkable and worth remembering she presented as miscellaneous notes, not with each matter arranged under proper headings, but she wrote each one up just as she happened upon it. She herself states that she did this not because she had any difficulty in arranging her material into categories, but because she believed that miscellaneity and variety were more pleasant and charming than uniformity. *(Bibl. 175.119b)*

Pamphila’s program of composition appears to be the same as Gellius’; she wrote up each chapter *ὡς ἔκαστον ἐπῆλθεν*. She was recreating the experience of a *πεπαιδευμένη* using her leisure rightly, and attempting by this duplication to share with her reader her spontaneous *amor discendi*. 5

Photius attributes a similar *ποικιλία* to Sopater’s *Ἐκλογεῖ διαφοραί*, a twelve-volume work which he reviews at *Bibl.* 161.105a:

---

5 Photius also relates how Pamphila claimed that she acquired data from her husband, by listening to her husband’s dinner guests, and by compiling texts on her own. She has, that is, attempted to relate her polymathic data to the refined leisure of the educated elite.
This careful study provides readers with much useful material. When it comes to conveying a ready and comprehensive body of useful data, there is a wealth of material here for compilation with a goal to self-improvement and, as Sopater himself writes to his friends in his prologue, it makes a major contribution to rhetoric and scholarship. Consequently its value is established. His discourse shows "poikilia" and the style is varied.

All three aspects of the Imperial miscellany come through in Photius’ description: relevant and morally sound πολυμαθία, the miscellanist’s close connection with an adult reader (Sopater addressed his prologue to his “friends”), and variety of structure and style.

Clement, aware that he is working within the guidelines of an established tradition in his Stromateis, makes a similar claim to poikilia and spontaneity:

Unlike Gellius and Pamphila, Clement is not clear whether he has retained the original order of compilation; ώς ἔτυχεν suggests as much, yet ἐπίτηδες ἀναμίξεις implies that
Clement in fact expended some effort on arrangement in order to recreate the spontaneity of the original act of compilation (cf. Mahat 1966: 339-343).

Macrobius too mentions the labor involved in seeming to be spontaneous and natural in one’s scholarship. Taking his cue from Gellius, he adds an organic element to his description:

\[
\text{nec indigeste tamquam in acervum congressimus digna memoratu:}
\text{sed variarum rerum disparilitas, auctoribus diversa, confusa temporebus, ita in quodam digesta corpus est, ut quae indistincte atque promiscue ad subsidium memoriae adnotaveramus, in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent.}
\]

\[
\text{We have not piled up in a heap these memorable data; but the disarray of a miscellaneous collection drawn from a variety of authors and reflecting different times has been arranged into a kind of organic whole, in such a way that our random notes have come together into a coherent order, like the limbs of a body.} \quad (\text{Sat. Praef. 3})
\]

In the epilogue to the *De natura animalium*, Aelian makes his position clear in regard to the ordering of data within the miscellany. For this author, ποικίλια requires the expenditure of considerable labor, and there is a baroque quality to the description of the “anti-structure” in the *De natura animalium*:

\[
\text{οἶδα δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐκεῖνα οὕτω ἐπαινέσονται τινες, εἰ μὴ καθ' ἐκαστὸν τῶν ζῴων ἀπεκρίνα μου τὸν λόγον, μηδὲ ἰδίᾳ τὰ ἐκαστὸν εἶπον ἀθρόᾳ, ἀνέμιξα δὲ καὶ τὰ ποικίλα ποικίλως, καὶ ὑπὲρ πολλῶν διεξῆλθον, καὶ πῇ μὲν ἀπελίπον τὸν περὶ τῶν ἐποδέ λόγον τῶν ζῴων, πῇ δὲ ὑπέστρεψα υπὲρ τῆς αὐτῶν φύσεως ἐτερα εἰρυν...τῷ ποικίλῳ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως τὸ ἔφοιλόν θηρῶν καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων βδελυγμένων ἀποδιδράσκαν, οἰονεὶ λειμώνα τινα ἤ στέφανον ὑραῖον ἐκ τῆς πολυχροίας, ὡς ἀνθεσφόρῳν τῶν ζῴων τῶν πολλῶν, ψήθην δεῖν τὴν ὑφάναι τε καὶ διαπλέξαι τὴν συγγραφήν.}
\]

\[
I \text{know that there will be some who find fault with my work because I did not arrange my material according to subject, grouping all data in one section according to animal species, but rather mixed material up in a miscellaneous manner, now giving some a cursory review, now skipping over other matters and now retracing my steps and adding supplementary material. I believed I must interweave and implicate my study to achieve the effect of a meadow or of a garland made beautiful by varied hues, my many animals each contributing its blossoms. I was aiming at providing a pleasant reading experience through variety [τῷ ποικίλῳ] and at avoiding a repellent monotony.}
\]
Ποικίλια, then, is at the base of the Imperial miscellany tradition. Because the
miscellanists themselves see it as a positive quality, they claim it for their work. But
probably no other element has been more influential in lowering the ancient miscellany in
the estimation of the modern critic as this claim to attracting and pleasing the reader
through variety of content. However, to type these works as primarily
"Unterhaltungsbücher" (Schmid 1893 vol. 5:6), as trivial, childish, or silly is, I think, to
miss the point. The polymathic data-base of the miscellany provides for the needs and the
tastes of one who, as a ὀλος πεπαιδευμένος, recognizes the need for the study of his
literary culture but is also a responsible and functioning member of his society who must
limit his scholarship to rare moments of leisure. For such an individual, paideia is
experienced in small and varied units, without a consistent focus and goal but precious
nevertheless. The connotations of ποικίλια⁶ visually define such a person's encounters
with paideia. Ποικίλια implies the give and take of the symposium, the chance meeting of
friends and old teachers at the bookshop, a quickly copied-out passage from a windfall of
a text stumbled upon in a library. The miscellany does not answer the needs of the
professional philosopher or rhetorician who can devote his career to the rigorous and
attentive analysis of texts and examination of theses. When daily life must be largely
devoted to πρακτικά, however, the value of a ποικίλη ιστορία in providing preselected
data of proven worth is clear.

⁶Ποικίλια means variegated in the physical sense of a peacock's plumage or a dappled fawnskin, or in an
object of craftsmanship such as an embroidery of many hues. Figuratively the word can be applied to the
resourceful and omnivalent thoughts of an Odysseus or Prometheus. Ποικιλος can be used of a scholarly
work which has been compiled from many sources or which is applicable to several areas of study (cf.
Tolkien 1925: 2433).
Chapter 5

The Ἀξιοσπούδαστα in Aelian's Varia Historia

The three previous chapters have focused upon the generic qualities which give the Imperial miscellany a literary identity. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the miscellanist concerns himself with a specific subset of paideia: the material which supplements the standard literary education and therefore may be termed polymathic. The miscellanist assumes a readership with whom he shares certain educative goals; because the miscellanist adopts the stance of a mature amateur scholar gathering data for a younger reader, he may reveal a patronizing tone in his paedeutic collection. Finally, the compilation which the miscellanist offers his reader is presented in a manner which reflects the Imperial attitude toward the cultured person's correct use of leisure.

My purpose in the present chapter is to analyze Aelian's Varia Historia as an Imperial miscellany displaying these distinctive qualities. Because in dealing with a miscellany we are considering not so much an independent work of literary art as a collection of data accessed from a variety of kinds of written documents, an explication of the collection must therefore analyze the compiled data as reflections of the purposes, values, and goals of the collector in the act of selection. In the process of considering the categories of polymathic data which Aelian has gathered into this work I shall therefore attempt to isolate the moral tone which Aelian attempts to convey to his reader.

As an educated adult, a ὁλως πεπαιδευμένος of the sort described in Chapters 2 and 3 above, Aelian has undertaken a compilation of the past for the uses of the present. Like other Imperial πεπαιδευμένοι, however, he is constrained by his own circumstances
and by those of his reader to select from the secondary material available only what provides the greatest value in the briefest study time. An analysis of the contents of the collection should then reveal what Aelian has considered worthy of compilation and therefore worth including in the Varia Historia. For the purpose of this analysis we may divide this material very roughly into (1) anecdote, including here the chreia or apophthegm; (2) biographical sketches; (3) ecphraseis; (4) descriptions of the laws and customs of various peoples, including discussions of Greek states and of Rome along with barbarian nations; (5) natural history, which for Aelian consists both of anecdotes about and analyses of the behavior of lower life forms; (6) paradoxography; and (7) lexicography, consisting here of the explanation of etymologies and proverbs. Unifying this material is Aelian's particular standard of moral excellence, a paideia-based construct traceable at least in part to Isocrates, and which on occasion Aelian refers to as τὸ Ἑλληνικόν : the Greek way.

Moral Anecdote in the Varia Historia

Most of the chapters of the Varia Historia consist of historical anecdote, a term which for want of a better we may apply to all short narrative patterns which Aelian presents as true — that is, as reflecting events believed to have actually occurred at some time in the past.1 Aelian’s anecdotes are patterned in the sense that they have a definite beginning, middle, and end. Although he does not use the term ἀνέκδοτον, “unpublished” or “not made known,” in reference to these little stories (the etymology at the basis of our current usage [Grothe 1971: 4-10]), Aelian does aim at recording in the Varia Historia

---

1 Aelian may, however, include a story which he or others may consider only probable; if so, he informs the reader e.g. VII 3.27.
material which is fresh and novel, as he suggests at, for example, \textit{VH} 2.4 and 3.6. If he suspects that the reader has already encountered the anecdote, he will apologize, e.g. \textit{VH} 3.35. Having a plot-line, the anecdote is a \( \mu \nu \theta \omicron \zeta \); but it is a true \( \mu \nu \theta \omicron \xi \), at least in Aelian's usage. It relates an event the chief character in which is generally a well-known figure.

We may include with anecdote the \textit{chreia}, a narrative pattern which highlights not an event but a statement, one usually conceived as summing up in a sententious manner a speaker's character or a situation's import. As a narrative, the anecdote carries with it an immediate appeal. But it also suggests the presence of \( \tau \omicron \mu \nu \theta \omicron \delta \epsilon \zeta \), the quality which, as we have seen (pp. 88-89 above), turned the paradoxographers away from stories which one could judge to be fabulous. The tidier and more \textit{à propos} an anecdote and the more artificial it appears, the closer it approaches to a mythic sequence. We often find the same anecdote or \textit{chreia} applied to different characters by different authors. At \textit{VH} 3.20, for example, a story is told of Lysander which at Athenaeus 14.71 is told of Agesilaus. Ancient authors were aware of this situation, and sometimes mention when they have found an anecdotal sequence referred to other characters in different sources (e.g. Diog. Laert. 6.25, Plutarch \textit{Ti. Gracch.} 4; cf. Wehrli 1973: 195).

The reliability of the anecdote is not supported by the ancient grammarian's use of the term \textit{historia} to refer to any narrative-style explanation of a literary allusion or reference. As we have seen in Chapter 3, a major portion of the grammarian's lecture was devoted to \textit{historice}, the elucidation of a piece of literature's background stories, a potentially endless source of trivia if the grammarian did not limit himself to his pupils'
immediate needs. In this sense, any story in, for example, [Apollo


dorus]' Bibliotheca


would rank as historia; we may attempt to distinguish these background stories as more or less probable, i.e. not contradicting the known laws of nature, but we are still left with a less than straightforward approach to the truth (cf. Dietz 1995: 66-69). To complicate the situation is Gellius’ use of historia to mean an anecdote in the sense in which we apply the term to Aelian’s assumedly true short narratives (though not to the chreia). There are some sixteen chapters in Gellius entitled historia, all concerning events in the distant Greek and Roman past.

Although Gellius’ historiae and Aelian’s anecdotes are independent narratives related for their intrinsic interest, we do not usually encounter ancient anecdote in such an isolated context. Generally these brief stories are found as data supporting a developed argument, as illustration, or as evidence to support an assertion or thesis. They form the brief, digressive, often folkloric narratives — the gallant courtships, grisly acts of vengeance, noble gestures of friendship — that find their way into the works of the early historians, and are interpreted as part of the oral evidence necessary for comprehensive and responsible history writing. But anecdote had formed an integral part of traditional poetry as well, in a form which linked it with the rhetorical exemplum.

Aristotle had divided inductive rhetorical persuasion into that effected by true stories (παραβολαὶ) and by fables (λόγοι), the latter being easy to find, Aristotle asserted, but the former more effective because more realistic, i.e. acceptable, as persuasion. (Rhet. 1393a27-1394a8) Anecdotes to be used as rhetorical exempla were a compilable commodity in antiquity, as we have seen in the case of the collection made specifically for
declamation by Valerius Maximus (for other such collections cf. Litchfield 1914: 62-63). Much of the *copia* which Cicero and Quintilian urge the rhetorician to acquire through wide reading consists of such anecdotes.

For Aristotle the historicity of an anecdote made it more valuable because more persuasive and compelling. The speaker who introduces historical anecdote into his argumentation can thus expect that his discourse will be more convincing. Isocrates adds that by selecting certain kinds of anecdotes the speaker can indirectly contribute to his status as a responsible individual. In the *Antidosis* he asserts that the study of the art of rhetoric makes people better citizens; in the process of composing a speech

> τῶν πράξεων τῶν συντεινουσῶν πρὸς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐκλέγεται τὰς πρεπεδεστάτας καὶ μᾶλλα συμφεροῦσας· ὥς δὲ τὰς τοιαύτας συνεθιζόμενος θεωρεῖν καὶ δοκιμάζειν οὐ μόνον περὶ τὸν ἐνστώτα λόγον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας πράξεις τὴν αὐτὴν ἐξει ταύτην δύναμιν, ὥσθ᾽ ἀμα τὸ λέγειν αὕτη καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν παραγενησθαι τοῖς φιλοσόφοις καὶ φιλοτίμως πρὸς τοὺς λόγους διακειμένως.

*He will make a selection of exempla (πράξεως) supporting his argument which are especially fitting and appropriate. Such a speaker, growing used to examining and assessing such accounts, will acquire this same capability not only in terms of his immediate argument but concerning other cases as well, so that to those who approach speaking with the desire to become wise and to win glory will accrue both speaking and thinking effectively.* (277)

The *exempla* a writer selects and the use to which he puts them not only show how serious he is in the study of rhetoric but also increase his rhetorical and intellectual capacities. That is, the quality of the *exempla* types the speaker.

Aelian’s practice shows that he is aware how one can thus be judged by the range of his *exempla*. In the *Varia Historia* Aelian compiles, for example, several anecdotes about *hetaerae*: Phryne’s golden statue (9.32), an epithet of Lais (1.435), the clever way in which a young man escaped Lais’ clutches (10.2), and a witty rejoinder by Gnathaena
Similar stories can be found in Athenaeus' Book 13, the portion of the Deipnosophistae dealing with prostitutes. Athenaeus' stories, which claim to be drawn from a collection put together by Aristophanes of Byzantium, occasionally lapse into considerable ribaldry (e.g. 585a-c). Aelian's never do. A similar situation occurs in the case of Hippomachus the athletic coach. From references to him in Plutarch and Athenaeus, Hippomachus appears to have had a number of humorous anecdotes attached to his name. The one given by Aelian at VH 2.6 is relatively serious. Evidently Aelian purposely avoided those anecdotes about prostitutes or those chreiai which were particularly silly or irrelevant, and which would compromise the tone of his collection. In fact he seems aware that one can be judged by the type of behavior one mentions in a public forum. Commenting negatively upon the statue raised in honor of the voluptuous Phryne, Aelian qualifies his remark, insisting upon specifying exactly the object of his anecdote:

Φρύνην τὴν ἔταιραν ἐν Δελφοῖς ἀνέστησαν οἱ Ἑλληνες ἐπὶ κίονος εὖ μάλα ὑπηλοῦ. οὐκ ἔρω δὲ ἀπλῶς τοὺς Ἑλλήνας, ὥς ἂν μὴ δοκοῖν δι᾽ αἰτίας ἄγειν πάντας, ὡς φιλῶ πάντων μᾶλλον, ἄλλα τοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀκραστεστέρους.

The Greeks set up a statue of Phryne the hetaira upon a high column at Delphi. No, I shall not just say "the Greeks," to avoid incriminating them all (I am fondest of all the Greeks), but just those Greeks who were overly dissipated. (VH 9.32)

Can we determine more precisely the tone at which Aelian was aiming? An examination of the more general qualities of the anecdotes reveals certain tendencies in Aelian's selection of detail and manner of presentation, tendencies which in turn suggest both his view of the intrinsic worth of the anecdotes and the message he sought to convey in collecting this material. For although Aelian's anecdotes do not function like the
rhetorical *exempla* in forming supportive material for a general thesis which shapes an entire discourse, they still demand an inductive or metonymic interpretation. That is, by allowing each anecdote to take up a position in Aelian’s miscellany, we can begin to see a thematic pattern developing.

If we segregate the anecdotes from the material dealing with customs, *mirabilia*, natural history, and the rest, we notice immediately that Aelian is not primarily concerned with the specific details of his narratives in terms of precise dates, places, and sometimes even characters. An Olympiad date stated in reference to an event (e.g. *VH* 2.8) is a singular occurrence. Nearly all anecdotes are datable through their context alone, presumably because a precise date does not concern Aelian; he is satisfied with a general approximation to the anecdote’s correct time period. Moreover, few places more precise than the name of the city or state in which the anecdote occurs are given. Aelian must consider few to be very important. Even individuals may be referred to in a cavalier manner. At *VH* 9.9 Aelian mistakes Demetrius Poliorcetes for Demetrius of Phalerum; the recent editions of the *Varia Historia* do not hesitate to correct the text here. Aelian seems to have had particular trouble, or been particularly nonchalant, in keeping the Ptolemies straight. At 14.43 he begins an account of Ptolemy’s addiction to dice with the words ὁ μὲν Πτολεμαῖος φασίν (ὦποσος δὲ αὐτῶν, ἔναν δεῖ) κ.τ.λ. *They say that Ptolemy (whichever one he was does not concern us) etc.*

---

2 He repeats his parenthesis when dealing with another Ptolemy at *NA* 8.4: ὁπόστος δὲ ἢν οὗτος ἐκεῖνος ἔρεσθε. *Go ask somebody else which Ptolemy he was.*
a) Minor Characters in Major Events

Despite Aelian's reticence, most of his anecdotes can be located in time and place because they tend to cluster around major events which had, by the second century AD, long been enshrined as paideia-monuments. Characters can be immediately given a frame of reference by their connections with four major "theaters": the expansion of Persia and its interaction with the Greek world during the later sixth century BC, the Persian Wars, Athens and Sparta in the second half of the fifth and first half of the fourth centuries BC, and the campaigns of Alexander of Macedon. That is, many of Aelian's anecdotes expand upon details already treated in the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and the Alexander-historians. As we have seen, Aelian probably did not compile these authors directly. Although he cites Herodotus at VH 2.41, a glance at the parallel passage in Athenaeus shows that Athenaeus too quoted Herodotus in his text; Aelian and Athenaeus may have shared a source here. Again, chapters such as VH 6.1, an account of Athens' cleruchizing of the territory of the Chalcideans, differs enough from Herodotus' version (5.73-77) to suggest that Aelian was again accessing a source which had compiled Herodotus or referred indirectly to the passage in Herodotus' text. Aelian frequently relates situations and incidents to which the canonic historians may have only referred in passing: Xerxes' passion for a plane tree (VH 2.14), for example, Cyrus' relations with Aspasia of Phocis (VH 12.1), the low social status of Hyperbolus (VH 12.43), a near-death experience of Theramenes (VH 9.21), and a number of others. The impression here is that Aelian is supplementing the accepted historical accounts by highlighting deuteragonists
and tritagonists associated with events which have acquired an almost theatrical status. Only rarely in the *Varia Historia* does Aelian include a chapter completely devoted to characters and events thoroughly treated in a canonic historian. Chapter 3.25, for example, on the self-sacrifice of Leonidas and the Three Hundred, is exceptional in this regard, in fact more epideictic than anecdotal. In general, the anecdotes in the *Varia Historia* cluster around the above historical periods, only rarely focusing upon a prehistoric or legendary figure such as Neleus (*VH* 8.5), Lycurgus (*VH* 13.23), or Lepreus (*VH* 1.24). When Roman material is included (*VH* 7.16, 9.12, 12.6, 12.11, 12.14, 12.25, 12.33, 14.45) it does not deal with periods later than that of Augustus (*VH* 12.25).

b) Paideia Icons in Anecdotal Situations

In addition to those anecdotes focused upon secondary characters and incidents within important events and eras are anecdotes which take as their characters well-known figures in Greek culture. These figures may be statesmen and kings (both good and bad), poets, musicians, painters and philosophers. All are paideia-icons in the sense that they are encountered frequently in canonic literature.

However, these figures stand in two different relationships to that literature: either as themselves producers of works of art, or as the subject matter of that art; in some cases they appear as both. All incidents involving the kings of barbarian nations, for example, came to Aelian as the contents of other people’s histories. But in the case, for example, of figures like Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Critias, authors canonized as school authors for the student of rhetoric, Aelian will have both read of them in histories and studied their

---

3 Philostratus, we may recall, had defined the Imperial sophists’ subject matter as being ὑποθέσεις ἐδέχαντο ἑως ἢ ἱστορία ἔγειρεν plots drawn from material provided by history [VS 481]; cf. p. 7 above.
original writings, as did his immediate sources; Aelian’s own anecdotal material reveals that he encountered biographical scholarship and traditions of criticism in relation to such figures as Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus.

In considering the material which Aelian chooses to relate about these figures we must keep in mind two points: (1) Aelian is in most of these cases presenting a figure built up not only from a number of specific sources in traditional literature, but blended with an almost folkloric caricature derived from generations of mimetic literary treatment; (2) each figure derives his importance in Aelian’s eyes, his position as δίος μνήμης, from his relationship to paideia. That is, while anecdotes involve specific events, the figure in the anecdote is ultimately embedded within a multidimensional permanent record of paideia.

Thus Aelian’s paideia-icons perform and sometimes interact with each other on one plane, but do so surrounded by clouds of connotative tradition. We valorize the character as worthy of attention because of this aura of tradition, but we focus upon the simple incident and allow the incident either to arise out of the character’s tradition or to legitimize that tradition. An example might clarify Aelian’s anecdotes of this type. In the second half of *VH* 4.9, Aelian narrates the following:

(ὅπι) Πλάτων τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη ἐκάλει Πᾶλον. τί δὲ ἐβουλεῦτο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα ἐκεῖνο; δηλονότι ὥμοιον ὑπομόνηται τόν πᾶλον, ὅταν κορεοθῆ τοῦ μητρόφου γάλακτος. λακτίζειν τὴν μητέρα. ἤνιττετο οὖν καὶ δὲ Πλάτων ἀχαριστιὰν πινὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος τὰ μέγιστα εἰς φιλοσοφίας παρὰ Πλάτωνος λαβὼν σπέρματα καὶ ἐφόδια, εἰτὰ ὑποπληθεῖες τῶν ἀριστῶν καὶ ἀφηνιάσας, ἀντικοδόμησεν αὐτῷ διατριβήν καὶ ἀντιπαρεξήγαγεν ἐν τῷ περιπάτῳ ἑταϊροὺς ἐχὼν καὶ ὁμιλητάς, καὶ ἐγλίχετο ἀντίπαλος εἶναι Πλάτων.

[That] Plato called Aristotle “Colt.” What did he mean by giving him that name? Obviously the point is that the colt kicks its mother as soon as it has got its fill of her milk. So Plato was making an allusion to Aristotle’s ingratitude. In fact, Aristotle took from Plato the most potent elements of and means toward his own philosophy. Then, filled with these excellent things and
rebelling against Plato, he built up his own school in opposition to Plato. He would walk in the Peripatos with his own pupils and try to compete with Plato. His goal was to be Plato's adversary.

Aristotle's ungracious actions toward Plato are the point of the anecdote, but the import of the action is insignificant apart from the characters' biographical traditions. Protagues betray mentors frequently enough in daily life to make the incident trite. The event takes on more significance when we are familiar not only with the personal writings of each man involved (including an acquaintance with Aristotle's pragmatic definition of "friend," for example [EN 9.9], as opposed to Plato's sketches of Socrates' patience and loving kindness toward the young men who associated with him), but with their biographies and other authors' accounts of them, in which case the love/hate patterns such as those of Dionysius and Plato and Alexander and Aristotle also exert an influence upon a reading of the anecdote. This is, of course, precisely the way that the rhetorical exemplum operates, and the reason why the acquisition of a broad general culture was considered necessary for the ancient orator.

c) Statesmen and Politicians

The famous statesmen with whom Aelian deals in anecdote format are for the most part presented as either successful leaders or as tyrants; their historical records being in general so well known, it would have been difficult for Aelian to treat them in any other way. But by presenting anecdotal details of their lives Aelian not only fills out that record to make the figures more humane in their biographies; he also emphasizes their relationship to paideia (in this case, their positions in history) and thus the manner through which they are ἀξιοὶ σπουδῆς.
Thus non-Greek figures may be presented in incidents which emphasize their historical roles as aliens, as not having benefited from Hellenic paideia. Xerxes nearly dies of thirst because he cannot drink water like any other person (VH 12.40). Anacharsis despite his exposure to Greek culture still drinks too much liquor (VH 2.41). The King of Persia prefers whittling to reading (VH 14.12); the brahmin Calanus chooses a painful and ritualistic death on a blazing pyre to the discomforts of an infirm old age (VH 5.6).

When dealing with Greek statesmen, Aelian prefers incidents which contribute to the interpretation of an individual as a failure or success, either evaluation depending upon the larger moral point Aelian is trying to make. In general, a statesman’s success or failure is already apparent from the historical tradition. Aelian presents that success as a paedeutic model to follow, the failure one to avoid; but to do so Aelian may have to redefine the terms of the tradition.

Aelian tends to relate, for example, incidents in which statesmen make decisions or persist in some course of action which may be seen as injurious to themselves. Phocion is one of Aelian’s favorites in this regard. The tradition presents Phocion as a man of limited financial means involved in politics during a time of turmoil, finally put to death by the state on a charge of treason. Is he to be regarded as a success or a failure? Aelian almost perversely insists upon his success, precisely because he willingly suffered so many apparent failures: though abjectly poor (VH 2.43, 14.10) he rose to power through the force of his personality and not through the influence of others (VH 12.43), yet was so outstandingly virtuous (VH 4.16, 3.17) that he rejected all the temptations of wealth (VH 1.25, 11.9) only to die at the hands of an ungrateful public which he had served
thanklessly but faithfully (VH 3.47). Timotheus and Epaminondas too enjoy a number of such anecdotes (e.g. VH 3.47, 13.43, 11.9, 5.5).

As negative models Aelian consistently chooses tyrants, focusing upon anecdotes which reveal their basic lack of excellence. In this regard Dionysius I and II are given much attention, in terms of the evil deeds they perpetrate (e.g. VH 1.20, 13.34, 13.45, 6.12, 9.8, 12.47), of their personal viciousness (VH 2.41, 6.12), and of their inevitable demise (VH 4.8, 9.8, 12.60).

But in regard to both good and bad statesmen Aelian is especially interested in anecdotes which display political figures interacting with other paideia-icons. In this category we may include stories about statesmen’s encounters (1) with philosophers: Dionysius’ hospitality toward Plato (VH 4.18), Philip’s financing of Aristotle’s research (VH 4.19), Alexander’s gratefulness toward Anaxarchus (VH 9.30); (2) with poets: Dionysius condemns Philoxenus to the quarries for his criticism of the tyrant’s poetry (VH 12.44), Ptolemy builds a temple to Homer (VH 13.22); (3) and with painters: Alexander and Apelles (VH 2.3), Megabyzus and Zeuxis (VH 2.2). Aelian also relates a number of anecdotes dealing with a statesman’s personal acquisition of paideia (e.g. Hieron [VH 4.15], Hipparchus [8.2], Dionysius [13.18], Alexander [3.32]).

D) Philosophers and Poets

Philosophers function as the main characters in a number of Aelian’s anecdotes, but only rarely are their specific doctrines presented as closely related to the anecdotes in which they appear. Epicurus and his followers are the exception (VH 4.13, 9.12), Aelian showing himself in the Varia Historia as consistently negative toward this school as he is
in the fragments (e.g. fragments 10 and 61 Hercher). Only one chapter in the *Varia Historia* could be considered doxographic (Peripatetic doctrine on the physical location of the soul [*VH* 3.11]).

In other anecdotes featuring philosophers, Aelian is primarily concerned with displaying the effects of philosophy upon the individual’s daily life. He is especially concerned, that is, with incidents which show that an action motivated by the love of wisdom will be a correct one. Here we may consider not only practical actions such as Meton’s avoidance of conscription based upon his knowledge of the stars (*VH* 13.12) and the positive contributions made by a number of philosophers to the immediate needs of their homelands (*VH* 3.17), but the reactions of philosophers to the wrongheaded statements or acts of others: Socrates’ responses to Alcibiades (*VH* 2.1) and Apollodorus (*VH* 1.16), for example, or Plato’s to Anniceris (*VH* 2.27).

Diogenes the Cynic is a special favorite with Aelian in this regard. Doubtless the availability of *chreia*-collections made the compilation of this philosopher’s witty sayings much easier for Aelian (Stemplinger 1912: 222; Wehrli 1973: 195). His selection of only those *chreiae* of Diogenes which were sober and bitter (*VH* 4.11, 4.27, 9.19, 9.28, 9.34, 10.11, 12.56, 12.58, 13.26, 13.28, 14.33) rather than shocking and ribald (as seen e.g. in Diogenes Laertius), demonstrates Aelian’s interpretation of what was worth remembering.

Aelian may present a philosopher reacting positively to sickness or death (e.g. Socrates, *VH* 1.16, 2.6, 2.36; Epicharmus, *VH* 2.34, 8.14; Aristotle, *VH* 9.23), or he may recount a future philosopher’s conversion, the point in his life at which he chooses a philosophical career: Plato’s rejection of poetry for philosophy (*VH* 2.30) and of military
service for philosophy (3.27), Aristotle's enrollment in the Academy after a brief career as a pharmacist (VH 5.9), Diogenes and Antisthenes (VH 10.16; on such anecdote as emphasizing the moment of conversion cf. Nock 1933: 180-185). In this regard we could add Timotheus' wistful resistance of the temptation to become a philosopher (VH 2.10).

Aelian must have seen some literary potential in stories of philosophers interacting with each other within their communities, for two of his longer, more developed chapters are expanded anecdotes of this type. At VH 3.19 Aelian gives quite extensive treatment to the moment at which Aristotle is supposed to have thrown off his allegiance to Plato and driven the older man from the Peripatos, while VH 2.13 narrates the circumstances leading up to the performance of Aristophanes' Clouds as well as the occasion on which Socrates rose in the theater in order to acknowledge his identity with the figure in the play. Aelian's presentation of Aristophanes in VH 2.13 as a tool of the demagogues seeking to destroy Socrates is an unusually hostile one, as was Aelian's treatment of Aristotle in VH 3.17 and 4.9 (although elsewhere in Aelian Aristotle is presented in a more positive light). Aelian allows the demands of any given context to influence his portrayal of character.

In general his anecdotal treatment of poets, like that of philosophers, focuses not so much upon their work as upon those aspects and events of their lives which in some way throw light upon the interpretation of their work. Thus VH 2.13 offers an anecdotal way of dealing with Aristophanes' comic treatment of Socrates. 4

For many of these figures, Aelian could draw upon a rich biographical tradition built up over centuries of scholarship and dependent to a considerable extent upon

---

4 The event must have formed considerable material for grammatical commentary. We find the relationship between Socrates and Aristophanes discussed in a number of other authors as well (e.g. Maximus Tyrius 12.144; Plutarch De lib. educ. 10c12).
suggestions drawn from canonic literature, not necessarily from the works of the character
featured in the anecdote. Thus Aelian's portrayal of Aristophanes as βωμολόχος ἀνήρ καὶ
γέλοιος ὁν καὶ εἶναι σπεύδων at VH 2.13 probably reflects Plato's treatment of him in the
Symposium, as does Aelian's portrayal of Agathon as Pausanias' sweetheart (VH 2.21);
Agathon's treatment as Euripides' beloved (2.21, 13.4), on the other hand, may well be
derived from Aristophanes' innuendos in the opening scene of the Thesmophoriazusae.
Aelian represents Simonides here as the confidant and advisor of statesmen (VH 4.15, 8.2,
9.41, 12.25), perhaps drawing in part upon his treatment in the Protagoras as well as
Simonides' position as a parasite of wealthy leaders in the anecdote tradition (cf. Wehrli

Aelian's selection of anecdotes which tap into the biographical tradition is
especially clear in the case of the archaic Greek poets. His anecdotes reflect an
interpretation of the poets as derived completely from their poetry: Sappho was beautiful
and not to be mistaken as a prostitute (VH 12.19); Archilochus was bitter and disillusioned
(VH 4.14), and the source of his own bad reputation (10.13); Hipponax was short, thin,
and ill-tempered (VH 10.6); Anacreon had difficulty resisting beautiful children (VH 9.4).
With the single exception of Euripides at VH 2.8, Aelian discusses the history of a poet's
texts only in regard to Homer. Homer is given one personal anecdote (VH 9.15: the
Cypria was part of his daughter's dowry). With this exception, it is Homer's epics
themselves and their influence upon other men's lives that form subjects for anecdote: the
priority given to the poems by the Spartans (VH 13.19), the Argives (9.15), Alcibiades
(13.38), Plato (2.30), Ptolemy Philopator and the painter Galaton (13.22); the peoples of
India and Persia have translations of Homeric epic \((VH\ 12.48)\). Aelian mentions the contributions of Hipparchus \((VH\ 8.2)\) and Lycurgus \((13.14)\) in the transmission of the text, as well as the manner in which the epics used to be read (i.e. as episodes rather than as books: \(VH\ 13.14\)). Homer’s exceptional position not only in Aelian’s miscellany but in his thought is reflected in the readiness with which Aelian quotes from the epics in a variety of contexts (e.g. \(VH\ 3.9, 4.18, 6.9, 7.2, 10.18, 12.14, 12.1, 12.27, 12.64\)).

e) Musicians, Athletes, and Artists

The number of anecdotes which refer to musicians and painters reveals that Aelian saw these arts too as constituents of paideia. That is, the \(\text{oλως} \, \text{πεπαιδευμένος} \) was expected to respond to them with sensitivity and intelligence. This is the suggestion Aelian makes at \(VH\ 14.37\):

\[
\text{ϕιλώ δὲ μήτε τὰ ἀγάλματα ὄσα ἡμῖν ἢ πλαστικὴ δείκνυσι μήτε τὰς εἰκόνας ἀργῶς ὄραν· ἐστι γὰρ τῇ τῆς χειρουργίας σοφὸν καὶ ἐν τούτοις.}
\]

*I do not care to look upon sculpted or painted images in a lazy or indolent manner, for there is some wisdom of handicraft in these things too.*

The chapters of the *Varia Historia* in which Aelian presents his own descriptions of art works will be considered below. Here we may look at those anecdotes which reveal individuals reacting to art in the right or the wrong way, that is, according to the principles enshrined in traditional literature from the time of Pindar.

\(VH\ 2.6\) and \(14.8\), for example, narrate accounts of an athlete and a flute player responding to the wrong stimuli. By performing in such a manner as even to attract the applause of the vulgar mob, seen by Aelian as reacting to all the wrong things in art, they are rightfully reprimanded by their instructor.
Polyclitus in *VH* 14.8 reveals the same attitude toward popular taste. In this anecdote the sculptor makes two statues, one according to the suggestions of the crowd and the other according to his own taste and judgment. He then asks his critics to judge which is better. When the crowd itself selects the statue based upon Polyclitus' own judgment, the artist triumphantly makes his point: only the expert, the πεπαιδευμένος, has the right to pass judgment upon art. His κρίος has been hard won, his position as an "initiate" not to be contested. Pauson's painting is likened to Socrates' discourse at *VH* 14.15, with the suggestion that the audience of either must look beneath the surface to get the true meaning; again, the mysteries of paideia are implied. At *VH* 9.36, Antigonus is put in his place by a cithara player who insists that he is a better judge of his own art than is the king; right κρίος does not depend upon social privilege and rank but upon hard work and commitment. The οοφόν of music, that is, is not to be judged by the arbitrary standards of an autocrat but by the tradition-based skill of the artist himself. A high Persian official is mocked by Zeuxis' slaves at *VH* 2.2. The slaves showed their respect for the official, Zeuxis explains, so long as he kept his mouth shut and let his royal regalia do the talking. But as soon as he expressed an opinion that showed his ignorance of true art, he was fair game for mockery. Possession of that οοφία which brought a correct assessment of a work of art put the slaves on a level of paideia superior to that of the potentate. Education, that is, confers its own kind of power.

f) Ethnic Anecdote
We have so far considered anecdotes which feature minor characters participating in major events and major characters seen functioning in relatively minor incidents. Aelian presents in addition to these a number of chapters in which the main character is not a named individual but rather an anonymous person or group seen as representative of a state or nation.

In such anecdotes the unnamed individual becomes a racial or national type. Here we may consider *VH* 14.44, the story of a young Spartan punished with a steep fine for having speculated in real estate. His crime, Aelian maintains, consisted in being a Spartan more concerned with making money than befitted a citizen of that state. The stories of the murder of a citharode by a rioting mob of Sybarites (*VH* 3.43) and of a greedy Sybarite paedagogue (14.20) both aim at ethnic criticism and at describing a wrongheaded approach to paideia.

Here Aelian's Roman chapters may be considered; they are of special interest because of Aelian's Italian birth. Although Aelian does discuss a number of Roman customs, the Roman nation rarely occurs in an anecdote in the *Varia Historia*. At *VH* 12.33 the Roman Senate's rejection of an offer to poison Pyrrhus forms an exception. Schoener finds Aelian's scanty use of Rome as the subject of individual or ethnic anecdotes puzzling, and suggests that "pro eius Graecarum rerum studio videri potest" (1873: 17). More recently scholars point to a kind of literary propriety functioning among authors of the Greek Second Sophistic, entailing the avoidance of references to Rome. "Sauf certaines exceptions," Reardon states, "la littérature grecque de cette période ignore Rome" (1971: 17). One might also suggest that in Aelian's terms far fewer Romans had
become icons of paideia for the Imperial period than had the earlier Greeks, who could provide a number of incidents in which traditional culture was tested and proved to be of vital importance. Aelian does find a few such paideia-encounters for Rome: *VH* 7.21 and 12.25, for example. At *VH* 14.45 Aelian seems almost overwhelmed by the overabundance of positive Roman anecdotal material in relation to available Greek material on the same theme; he is clearly one of Reardon’s “certaines exceptions,” himself aware of his ambivalent position as a native of Praeneste writing in an Attic idiom (cf. also *VH* 2.38 and Chapter 1 above).

g) Characters not drawn from paideia

Finally, Aelian presents some anecdotes featuring named individuals who seem to be of no historical significance and who do not represent national types. The grisly divine vengeance suffered by Macareus of Mitylene (*VH* 13.2) is a case in point. The story is an object lesson, describing how a man who treacherously murdered his guest saw his wife and sons destroyed in a series of ritualistic murders. Anno the Carthaginian represents a similar — though less macabre — situation at *VH* 14.30. He trained birds to repeat the phrase “Anno is a god!” in order to spread his fame wherever they flew, only to see the birds immediately fly away home as soon as he opened their cage, preferring their freedom to their forced and unnatural “paideia”. Such anecdotes make good stories in themselves, and Aelian tells them well. He may have considered the anecdotes strong enough to exist independently, apart from the historical and literary contexts from which he drew so many of the others. Or he may have felt that their details allowed them to stand among the
anecdotes featuring more canonic figures because of the potential for moral interpretation shared by both.

h) Intended Readership

In fact, it is precisely the opportunity his anecdotes offer for drawing moral conclusions and conveying ethical messages which determines Aelian’s inclusion of them in the *Varia Historia*. Can we specify what this moral element is and its relationship to the *Varia Historia* as a miscellaneous collection? To do so we must first determine the extent to which Aelian conceives of a specific reader for his work.

The creator of a miscellany compiles earlier literature according to his own view of what deserves to be recorded. Once he has found a passage worthy of compilation, he may transcribe it directly. Gellius does so frequently in the *Noctes Atticae*. Book One alone, for example, contains substantial extracts (direct quotations) from Greek and Latin authors in Chapters 2, 3, 9, 16, and this list does not include shorter passages and phrases which Gellius usually cites quite carefully by naming author, title, and often section of a work. Athenaeus too extracts directly and generously, as his generally accepted position as a direct source for fragments of Attic comedy reveals (*GGL* 793). The ancient miscellanist did not, however, always feel the need to cite his sources completely. Macrobius, for instance, weaving his extracts into his dramatic frame, may compile directly without citing his sources (Gellius forming one of his most frequently accessed sources; *Wessner 1928: 182-183*). Aelian rarely compiles passages whole-cloth, however. *VH* 8.2 is an exception, reproducing the text of the pseudoPlatonic *Hipparchus* 228b/c quite closely. Aelian here cites his source by both author and title, exceptional for
Aelian who, if he cites at all, is usually content to give the ultimate source’s name only. When Aelian compiles a passage from Athenaeus or Athenaeus’ source (cf. p. 25 above), he rephrases the material to an extent sufficient to show that he is purposely reworking it to fit the needs of his text.

I would suggest that Aelian’s rephrasing of his sources reveals that he is writing specifically for a reader. As discussed in Chapter 1 above, the compiler of a miscellany forms his collection according to his own judgment of what deserves recording. But unless the compiler addresses the reader through editorial material in a prelude or epilogue to his work, we cannot finally determine whether or not he is gathering material for his private use only; the volumes of notes which the younger Pliny inherited from his uncle represent such a “commonplace” collection. We can only surmise the existence of an intended reader by analyzing the collection itself. Preservation of a commonplace book is in itself not a necessary statement of the author’s intent to communicate it to others. Though Jonson, for example, published his Silvae during his own lifetime, the blank pages of Milton’s commonplace book were used by others for personal memoranda after Milton’s death, and his collection was not made public until 1876 (Mabbott and French 1938: 505). Preservation in the case of an ancient miscellany that does not openly state its audience indicates only that some readers found it useful enough to duplicate.

In the case of the Varia Historia however, Aelian’s manner of writing up his compiled material reveals that he is writing for a reader. Although the current state of the text as described in Chapter 1 above certainly encourages the assumption that Aelian did not finally complete the process of writing up all of the chapters included in the miscellany,
those chapters which are stylistically developed show Aelian's intention to communicate his anecdotes to others in a very specific and relatively consistent manner. This manner is a moralistic one. Aelian's anecdotes and, as we shall see below, most of the other categories of material in the *Varia Historia*, are directed primarily at improving the reader's character by providing him with positive and negative moral models.

i) Anecdote as Moral Modeling

If we consider all of Aelian's anecdotes together we can observe certain patterns of behavior emphasized again and again, choices to be made or avoided, attitudes to be cultivated or rejected. We have examined already Aelian's descriptions of right and wrong stances in relation to literature, philosophy, and the arts. Aelian also has much to say about virtuous behavior in general. A number of anecdotes highlight the virtues of fortitude, constancy, and strength of purpose, and vices which are their opposites (e.g. *VH* 2.24, 3.21, 4.9, 5.6, 12.9, 12.43, 12.49). Others focus upon the beauty of moderation and the ugliness of intemperance and greed (*VH* 2.41, 5.1, 9.13). As we have seen, Aelian favors anecdotes which depend not so much upon an adult figure's accomplishments in the broad sense (his political achievements, philosophical doctrine, works of art) as upon his behavior in daily life and the manner in which his personality is revealed in his everyday interaction with others. That is, Aelian insists upon looking at the human side of his characters. From this angle Aelian focuses upon those particularly human responses — or lack of them — that constitute particularly humane behavior. From here he will take the further step of classifying this humane behavior in the real, daily world as being truly
Hellenic; in some cases he will also show that such positive behavior is connected with paideia-acquisition, i.e. is a mark of the educated individual.

In this regard Aelian is using anecdotes as *exempla*, but with no specific thesis to support other than the positive reality of paideia itself. Aelian’s characters step out of the literary tradition to provide models both for the right and wrong ways to react to and to assimilate that tradition. Once we react to paideia in the right way by viewing literary and historical figures themselves responding to the arts and philosophy (e.g. conversion stories, anecdotes in which a philosopher uses wisdom to solve a problem) and by acknowledging them as models (e.g. statesmen interacting with artists and philosophers), not only is our grasp of the cultural tradition extended but we are given a new insight into the role of paideia in daily life. Unlike anecdote with its intimacy and homely detail, history cannot retail material on the level of daily life and therefore cannot provide us with such personal insight. Isaac D’Israeli summarized the difference thus.

In histories there is a majesty, which keeps us distant from great men; in memoirs, there is a familiarity which invites us to approach them. In histories, we approach only as one who joins the crowd to see them pass; in memoirs, we are like concealed spies who pause on every little circumstance, and note every little expression. (1793: 13-14)

By “memoirs” D’Israeli means the sort of anecdotal narrative presented in Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* and in Johnson’s own *Lives of the English Poets*, works based in large part upon personal reminiscence and gossip — an oral tradition. In such works the narrator is conceived as withdrawing to the edge of the gathering of great minds (“like concealed spies”), recording their words and his own responses to them. The tone of such works appears also in the narratives that frame Plato’s Socratic dialogues and in Xenophon’s
Memorabilia. Here we are given not simply anecdote, but the meaningful anecdote which catches the featured individual in his most characteristic moments. Aelian stands several steps removed from the characters he tries to catch in action. Unlike Plato and Xenophon, he must listen to his characters' voices as they are recorded in the canonic texts, and must first animate them by conflating their several sources. Aelian's task here is closer to that of Pamphila's who, she tells her reader, wrote up the information she overheard at her husband's dinners and symposia under the title Ὑπομνήματα, or "memoirs" (Photius Bibl. 175). Like Pamphila, Aelian wants to view and to show to the reader his characters interacting on the individual level.

De Romilly has attempted to analyze a similar emphasis upon humanity, φιλανθρωπία, in the work of Plutarch. Plutarch, according to her interpretation, comprehends and generalizes in his work a tendency to identify kindness, tolerance, and goodheartedness with Greek civilization. According to de Romilly's analysis, this identification began to be made in fourth-century Athens with Isocrates' vision of Athens' civilizing mission in the Mediterranean world (e.g. Isocrates Paneg. 29.2) expanding to include Aristotle's treatment of human kindness as an ethical issue and Menander's dramatization of its presence in daily life.

La douceur ne cessait de gagner .... Bientôt les vertus qu'elle inspire devenaient le symbole de la civilisation et la signe même de la Grécité, opposée à la barbarie (1979: 4).

In de Romilly's view, Plutarch placed this general quality of φιλανθρωπία, πραότης, humanitas at the center of the concept of τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν. According to this interpretation, human kindness becomes not just one of the virtues along with courage, justice, and
wisdom, but the binding virtue which allows a great man like Alexander to function both as a hero and as a humane individual, on the daily level of family intimacy and as a public figure as well (ibid. 302).

It is the presence or absence of this virtue of *humanitas* which Aelian has his characters display in the majority of his anecdotes. It is also the element in the reader to which the anecdotes appeal, the element which education in the arts is supposed to cultivate. We may call this a sentimental appeal if we like, so long as we accept the fact that Aelian considers a positive response to sentiment not a sign of intellectual weakness but rather the mark of a complete and activated literary education. Aelian wants to point out to the reader the presence of ὕληνθρωπία in the great statesmen, the great philosophers, and the great poets of the past. He also wants to point out instances in which these figures appeal to this virtue in others. The reader is consequently told not of Antigonus Monophthalmus' battles and foundations but of an occasion when he urged his son Demetrius to treat the household staff ἡμέρως καὶ ὕληνθρωπος (*VH* 2.20); not about Xenocrates' contributions to Academic doctrine but the fact that he once cradled a frightened bird in the folds of his cloak (13.31); not about the *didascaliae* of Aeschylus' tragedies, but the fact that his brother Ameinias saved him from being stoned to death on a charge of impiety by appealing to the tenderness of the Athenian judges' hearts (5.19). Even a monster like Phalaris receives a kind word from Aelian because he too once felt compassion for the lovers Chariton and Melanippus (*VH* 2.4). Lack of tenderness, on the other hand, may well be punished even in the case of righteous men (e.g. *VH* 13.24).
Like Plutarch, Aelian takes the further step of connecting this tenderhearted compassion with Greek civilization itself. Thus the Greeks at Troy behave like real Hellenes in admiring Aeneas' tenderness toward his father (VH 3.22). Ismenias displays typically Greek behavior by devising a rather childish trick in order to allow him to keep faith with his homeland (VH 1.21). Conversely, ungentle and cruel acts are interpreted as being contrary to τὸ Ἑλληνικόν: Athens' treatment of Mytilene (VH 2.9) and Pellene (6.1), Sparta's treatment of Messene (6.1), the rejection of Lysander's daughter by her suitor after the father's death (6.4). The contents of Aelian's anecdotes thus identify Aelian's intention of conveying behavioral models for his readers to follow. We can define these anecdotes as moral in the sense that they reveal a right action or choice rewarded or a wrong one punished (cf. Plumb 1969: 50ff). Aelian considers the communication of this moral message of primary importance, as we can see from his manner of narration. Aelian often adds his own comment to an anecdote, insisting upon interpreting its message for the reader and thus guaranteeing that his point be taken in the correct way. Some examples will clarify this usage. At VH 3.24, an anecdote relating Xenophon's insistence upon a brave warrior's need for fine weaponry, Aelian sums up with the words φιλοκάλον δὲ ἐγώ ἂν φαίην εἶναι ἄνδρὸς τὰ τοιαύτα καὶ ἀξιούντος ἑαυτὸν τῶν καλῶν I would say that such weaponry befits a man of fine taste who values himself as one worthy of beautiful things, a remark drawing upon the paedeutic connotations of the term φιλοκάλος. At VH 2.23 Aelian terminates an anecdote about the athlete Nicodorus by mentioning his relationship with Diagoras of Melos, a notorious atheist. Diagoras gives Aelian the occasion to state εἰς τοσοῦτον διηνύσθω τὰ τοῦ λόγου. θεοῖς γὰρ ἔχθρος Διαγόρας, καὶ οὐ μοι ἡδίων ἐπὶ πλεῦν
μεμνήσθαι αὐτοῦ. Enough of this story. Diagoras was an enemy of the gods, and I take no pleasure in speaking of him any further. Again, at VH 9.13 Aelian narrates how Dionysius of Heracleia allowed himself to become so shamefully obese that he ended up covered in layers of nerveless fat, then comments πονηρὰν ὁ θεοὶ ταύτην ἐκεῖνος τὴν στολὴν περιαμπεχόμενος καὶ θηρίον φορίνην μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνθρώπου ἐσθήτα! Ye gods, what a shameful covering he put round himself; the thick hide of a beast rather than the garment of a man! Other examples of such editorial statement within anecdotes can readily be found (e.g. VH 1.21, 1.23, 1.28, 2.4, 2.24, 4.29, 7.12, 9.17, 10.9, 12.17, 12.62, 14.5, 14.28). On several occasion (e.g. VH 4.3, 5.8) Aelian’s comments become so dominant that they nearly smother the anecdote, which is reduced to just a few words.

Aelian’s moral directive is one of the most distinctive qualities of his miscellany. Aelian presents himself to us as one who, compared to Gellius, Macrobius, Clement or Athenaeus, seems nearly obsessed with the need to guide his reader’s choices and judgments. We can observe this directive operating not only in the anecdotes, but in the other kinds of material included in the Varia Historia.

Epideictic Biography

Most of Aelian’s anecdotes are brief and self-contained. In several chapters, however, he has chosen to enlarge his narratives into more detailed accounts of an individual’s life or career. In each of these cases Aelian maintains his moralistic tone. In the chapters we are examining here, that tone becomes identifiable as a specifically rhetorical one of praise or of blame.
Aelian is not writing oratorical discourse in the *Varia Historia*. But he is familiar with the standard techniques for constructing a speech designed to assess the value of any given individual, thing, or circumstance. The surviving rhetorical artes give detailed instructions for analyzing and tabulating certain features of a subject, arranging them effectively, and ornamenting them by aligning them with the cultural tradition through *exempla*, quotations, and tonal allusions (Russell and Wilson 1981: xii). If, as has been suggested above, Aelian is concerned in his miscellaneous chapters with conveying to a susceptible reader a series of moral paradigms, then we may consider such chapters as *VH* 6.12 and 12.1 to be extended biographical sketches meant to give moral directive by blaming and praising individuals who themselves are drawn from the literary tradition. Such sketches exist alongside the briefer anecdotes and contribute to the miscellany’s effect of *ποικιλία*, a quality examined in the previous chapter. Their greater length and more careful structure reveals that Aelian is seeking to convey his moral message in a different manner.

Dionysius II is the subject of *VH* 6.12. Aelian has used this character in eight other chapters of the *Varia Historia*, each narrating a single incident in anecdotal form. But in *VH* 6.12 he abandons the self-contained quality of the short narrative to arrange the events in Dionysius’ adult life in a nondiscursive, topical manner.
The dominion of Dionysius II was strong and secure. He possessed no fewer than four hundred quadriremes and quinqueremes, an infantry force of one hundred thousand, and nine thousand horse. The city of Syracuse had been provided with gigantic harbors and a very lofty wall. Syracuse had naval stores ready for an additional five hundred ships. One million medimnoi of grain lay stored up. The armory was filled with shields, swords, spears, many greaves, breastplates, and catapults. (The catapult was an invention of Dionysius himself.) And he had a great number of allies. Emboldened by his awareness of these resources, Dionysius believed his power to be bound in adamant. He killed his own brothers first. But he saw his sons slaughtered and his daughters first outraged, then stripped and murdered. Not one of his own family members received the burial which custom demanded; some were burnt alive, others cut to pieces and thrown into the sea. He met with this fate once Dio son of Hipparinus had assailed his power. He lived out the rest of his life in complete poverty and died an old man. Theopompus says that he ruined his eyesight through immoderate drinking, and as a result was very myopic; and that he would sit in the barbershops and crack jokes. Even in the heartland of Greece he continued in his disgraceful ways, enduring a most wretched life. Dionysius’ catastrophic fall from so proud a position to so lowly a lot was no ordinary demonstration of the importance in a person’s life of moderation and temperance.

Aelian arranges his information under three headings, each a list contributing data to the three points he is making about Dionysius: that Dionysius fell from a high level of prosperity and security, that he committed outrageous crimes, and that he suffered the same as or worse than he had inflicted. Aelian’s arrangement here shares with ancient biography a tendency to present information as tabulated lists rather than as
chronologically arranged narrative, while the parallels with an author like Suetonius reveal the influence of rhetorical structures upon other forms of prose during this period (Wehrli 1973: 194-195). But because his biography of Dionysius is limited to these few lines, Aelian insists upon a concluding statement which summarizes the moral point he is making, revealing his intent to give direction by holding up this figure as a negative δείγμα. In terms of style also, Aelian reveals that the epideictic oration is influencing his presentation. The first two sections of the chapter are written in the straightforward, almost childlike style labeled by ancient rhetoricians as ἀφελεία (cf. below p. 265). With its simple, nonperiodic sentences, polysyndeton and lack of ornamental diction, this style was considered appropriate for a number of epideictic contexts, especially when the speaker was assuming a more intimate stance with his audience (e.g. Menander Rhetor, sections 388-389); such, I would suggest, may be that of an older person giving advice and direction to a younger listener. In his final section Aelian attempts to add weight to his statement by quoting a canonic authority and by adding literary tags such as βίον διαντλῶν ἀλγεινότατον, and morally weighted diction such as μετάβολη and σωφροσύνη. In the case of this chapter, the biography of Dionysius rather than a single incident in his life has become the vehicle for the moral message.

In VH 13.1 Aelian presents a much more developed piece, structured chronologically as a narrative but clearly not meant to be anecdotal. This chapter is in fact the longest single discourse in Aelian’s extant works. Although arranged as biography, VH 13.1 is structured in such a way as to show that Aelian is working with the rhetoric of praise. Its subject is Aspasia of Phocis, one of those minor figures forming part of an era
which has become enshrined in the literary tradition. We have seen that Aelian used these minor figures as the central characters in a number of anecdotal chapters, allowing him to present the lesser known details of major events while considering their moral implications from an unconventional angle.

In the case of Aspasia, Aelian has selected a figure about whom canonic literature offered little scope for detailed biographical treatment. She played a very minor role in an era which Aelian’s reader would have associated more with Xenophon’s *Anabasis* than with the details of a Persian harem. Still, Aspasia must have been referred to in earlier literature, for Athenaeus mentions her once in a context which suggests that her name was not entirely unknown to his readers (13.32.15). Plutarch likewise includes her in a minor role in his biography of Artaxerxes (26.6), and discusses her relationship with her more famous namesake in his biography of Pericles (24.11). From these authors’ statements and Aelian’s laudatory chapter we can construct an account of her life. Aspasia was of free birth, given the name Milto as a child. She later changed her name to Aspasia to reflect her admiration for Pericles’ mistress, a gesture which suggests that she may have pursued a career similar to that of the earlier Aspasia. It was perhaps through this work that Aelian’s Aspasia found herself enslaved and sold to Cyrus’ agent. Aelian mentions only that her loss of liberty involved the capture of an unnamed city. If Aspasia had been working as an hetaera or as the directress of a house of prostitution in Asia Minor at the time of her city’s capture, Aelian has availed himself of the epideictic orator’s option of glossing over material unsuited to his purpose of bestowing praise. Whatever the circumstances, once Aspasia entered the harem of Cyrus she quickly rose to be her master’s favorite. She was
present at the battle in which Cyrus was killed, and formed part of the booty captured after Cyrus' forces were quelled. As such she entered Artaxerxes' harem and again became extremely influential. We learn from Plutarch that Aspasia had so magnetic a personality that she was later requested as a gift by Artaxerxes' son Darius on the occasion of his investiture. Aspasia was then transferred to Darius' harem, but soon afterward was appointed priestess to Artemis of Ecbatana.

The story offers considerable opportunities for treatment as romance and adventure, but Aspasia herself hardly appears the kind of woman whom Aelian would consider morally exemplary. However, Aelian seems to have selected her in part as a challenge to his epideictic skills. Orators occasionally selected for their epideictic orations rather paradoxical subjects, such topics as smoke, baldness, or salt, for example; Lucian has left a short work praising a housefly (cf. Pease 1926: 27-42). For Aelian to undertake the moral celebration of a Persian prince's concubine is perhaps no stranger than the fact that Gorgias and Isocrates wrote encomia of Helen. Aspasia will have provided Aelian with the novelty of subject matter to attract the reader's attention, while offering a real challenge to his ability to find material to admire.

Aelian divides the chronology of Aspasia's biography into three headings: childhood, relationship with Cyrus, and relationship with Artaxerxes. As was the case in *VH* 6.12, Aelian does not feel the need to impose an organic plot upon his material, with the result that the three sections are relatively independent of each other. The circumstances which brought Aspasia under Cyrus' control, like those of Cyrus' death, do not contribute to Aelian's goal of praising Aspasia, and so are passed over quickly. The
fact that she was Greek and born of a free father is, however, important to him, as is her later reputation and fame among Greek cities; consequently these points get more attention. Within each section Aelian praises Aspasia using several distinct devices: a descriptive catalogue of her virtues, the establishment of a typological or literary link with τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, and the inclusion of illustrative anecdote. Thus in his first section on Aspasia’s childhood, Aelian lists the specific qualities that make up her overwhelming physical beauty, not missing his opportunity to moralize on her sweetness of temper:

πολυπραγμοσύνης δὲ ἀπάσις γυναικείας καὶ περιεργίας ἀπήλλακτο. ὃ μὲν γὰρ πλοῦτος φίλεϊ χορηγεῖν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, πενεμένη δὲ ἐκείνη καὶ τρεφομένη ὑπὸ πατρὶ καὶ αὐτῷ πένητι περιεργον μὲν ὁδὼν οὐδὲ περιπτόν εἰς τὸ εἶδος ἡμᾶς.

Of womanish meddlesomeness and curiosity she was utterly free. For wealth tends to encourage such habits. But because she was a poor girl, raised under the authority of a father who was himself a poor man, she added to her beauty nothing superfluous nor distracting.

Poverty’s relationship to virtue and to Hellenic values is a subject which Aelian frequently treats anecdotally in the Varia Historia (e.g. 2.43, 5.5). His inclusion of it in this context reveals his intention of aligning Aspasia with such figures as Phocion, Epaminondas, and Socrates, whose poverty he praises as a positive moral choice rather than as an unfortunate accident. Aelian further aligns Aspasia with other models of Hellenic culture through the anecdote which dominates the first section and establishes the divine sanction given Aspasia’ future career. The literary predecessors of the dream scene and the epiphany of Aphrodite as well as a quotation from Homer help place Aspasia within the paideia-tradition associated with divinely beautiful Greek women such as Helen. In the second section, Aspasia’s Hellenic values and womanly modesty are again displayed both through a list of her virtuous deeds and through anecdotal treatment. Aelian again anchors
Aspasia in the Greek tradition, doing his best to legitimize a relationship of dubious sanctity with the assertion,

χρόνῳ δὲ ὦστερον ὑπερηράσθη μὲν ταύτης ὁ Κύρος ἀντιπρᾶτο δει καὶ ὑπὸ ἑκείνης, καὶ εἰς τοσούτον ἀμφοῖν ἡ φιλία προῆλθεν, ὡς ἐγγὺς ἰσοτιμίας εἶναι καὶ μὴ ἀπείδειν Ἐλληνικοῦ γάμου ὑμνοίας τε καὶ σωφροσύνης.

With time Cyrus developed a deep love for her as she for him. Their affection for each other advanced to such a degree that theirs came close to being a relationship between equals and was not in disharmony with the likemindedness and soundness of a Greek marriage.

Aelian’s peculiar use of the terms ἰσοτιμία, ὑμνοία, and σωφροσύνη to describe what we would interpret as the relationship between a foreign concubine and an Oriental despot seems remarkable. The terms carry with them political and ethical connotations acquired through their treatment in the philosophical canon. That Aelian uses them here demonstrates his efforts to anchor his subject in the Hellenic tradition. His illustrative anecdote in the third section functions similarly. Aspasia is presented in this case not as a helpless victim of war and rapine who is sexually exploited by her captor, but rather as a wise Hellenic physician to an Eastern monarch, a type of Democtes at the court of Darius (cf. Herodotus 3.130ff):

καὶ μόνη τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν οὐ γυναικῶν μόνον, φασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν τοῦ βασιλέως υἱῶν καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν παρεμνήσατο Ἀρταξέρξης, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῆς λύπης ἰάσατο πάθος, εἰξάντος τοῦ βασιλέως τῇ κηδεμονίᾳ καὶ τῇ παραμυθίᾳ πεισθέντος συνετῶς.

She alone of all the people of Asia, not just the women but also the sons and kinsmen of the king, consoled Artaxerxes and cured the pain of his grief. The king yielded to her solicitudes and was moved by her consolation.

With impressive determination Aelian has managed to make a Greek woman’s beauty, modesty, and virtue triumph over the King of Persia. In doing so he emphasizes the
desirability and superiority of the φιλοθρωπία associated with Hellenism and with the civilizing tendencies it engenders.

**Ecphraseis**

Aelian condenses his biographical sketches into a compass which allows them to fit into his miscellany while still providing moral direction. They draw their structures from epideictic rhetoric and to this extent share features with the next category of Aelian's chapters to be considered here: the *ecphrasis* or formal description.

At its most basic, epideixis itself is ecphrastic, for its primary function is to analyze an individual, thing, or situation into constituent parts which can then be admired or condemned statically and in isolation, as it were. The rhetorical *ecphrasis* is rather more focused than this. Rhetoricians recognized that the ability to render an effective description was an important part of a speaker's repertoire. Consequently the *ecphrasis* along with the encomium, an exercise in bestowing praise related to the epideictic biography we have been examining above, became one of a dozen standardized *progymnasmata*, the short preliminary writing exercises which formed the basis of the rhetoric school's curriculum. Aelian's more specific uses of the *progymnasmata* will be discussed below. Here, in analyzing the various categories in which material is presented in the *Varia Historia*, we may consider chapters 13.1, 2.44, and 3.1 as *ecphraseis* or formal descriptive passages. Like the anecdotes and epideictic biographies examined above, the *ecphrasis* too will contribute to the moral paradigms which Aelian constructs for his reader.
Although rhetoricians could cite Homer, Thucydides, Herodotus, Theopompus, Theocritus and a number of other canonic authors as models for *ecphraseis* (cf. Theon *Prog.* 68) the handbooks which discuss its composition describe an exercise much more pedestrian and standardized than a description of Calypso's grotto or of Thyrsis' goblet. Theon and Hermogenes provide lists of standard topics—seasons, exotic animals, weaponry, statues, battles and festivals, and a statement of ecphrastic virtues: clarity of language and vividness of description. Libanius presents some thirty samples of *ecphraseis* in his collection of *progymnasmata*. They cover descriptions of gardens, of festivals and public places, deities, mythic and tragic tableaux and characters, and fabulous beasts.

The chapters in Aelian's miscellany treated here as *ecphraseis* conform to these lists in terms of subject matter. He devotes *VH* 13.1, for example, to a long description of the legendary figure Atalanta daughter of Iasion. The vale of Tempe, an ecphrastic topic since the days of Herodotus, forms the subject of *VH* 3.1. In *VH* 2.44 Aelian describes a painting depicting a young warrior rushing into battle. The presence of the requisite elements of the *ecphrasis* in these chapters shows that Aelian had mastered the exercise. Certain other features in these chapters, however, reveal that he is manipulating the form for a purpose other than that of word-painting.

Aelian begins the description of Atalanta in *VH* 13.1 as though he were presenting another biography in the manner of Aspasia in *VH* 12.1. The facts of her life are summarized succinctly. Atalanta's father exposed her as a newborn on Mt. Parthenius in Arcadia. She was suckled by a bear, and later found and raised by huntsmen. When she
grew up she became herself a huntress, living in isolation on the mountain slopes and avoiding all human contact. Aelian seeks to align Atalanta, as he had done Aspasia, within the literary tradition by general references to that tradition. Thus her cave is like that of Homer’s Calypso, her garment like Artemis’. But the main focus here is upon the physical description of a place and a person. Aelian is trying to make his portrait as graphic as possible, not only by an appeal to the senses but by using striking images and by isolating his main figure against a physical background. Aelian is especially concerned with conveying the varieties of colors and scents of the grove: καὶ παρὴν τῇ τε ἄλλῃ πανηγυρίζειν καὶ κατὰ τὴν εὐωδίαν ἐστιάζει. One could both participate in the festivities of sight, and banquet upon the lovely scents. The abundance of growing things, the flowers, and the clusters of grapes attract his attention; he is especially concerned with conveying the chilly sweetness of the pure waters, which define both a mountainous place and the dominant qualities of Atalanta herself. When he comes to describes Atalanta’s physical beauty, he concentrates upon terms which suggest colors and the rapid coruscations of bright light:

Her hair was blond .... Her face was reddened by the sun's rays, which made her look as though she were blushing .... If she turned up unexpectedly in pursuit of some beast or while chasing off some intruder, she flashed like a lightning bolt and like a shooting star. And then a grove or a thicket or some other forested area in the mountains would hide her from sight as she darted through.

Although primarily concerned with physical description, Aelian manages to find the opportunity to weave a moral assessment into his picture of Atalanta: τι δὲ οὕτως ὤραξον
What flower could be as fair as the face of a girl who has been taught modesty? The term ἀνεδείσθαι πεπαιδευμένης rings a peculiar note in the context of a feral child. Atalanta’s αἰδώς is part of her nature, and that nature is a function of her idyllic environment: the heartland of the Hellenic paideia-landscape. Like Aelian himself, whose Greek according to Philostratus was as pure as that of the Athenians of the mesogeia (cf. above, pp. 8-9), Atalanta’s Hellenic virtues are autochthonous. To whom is the statement addressed? Aelian seems to imagine himself describing a scene for the benefit of a young person, to be directing the aesthetic response by eliciting a very sentimental interpretation of a single detail. This is the only explicit editorial statement Aelian allows himself in the course of the ecphrasis; other moral judgments are left to be drawn from the details of the concluding anecdote, the narration of an encounter with the torch-bearing centaurs whom Atalanta ambushes and destroys.

In VH 3.1, Aelian focuses his attention fully upon the ecphrasis of a place, the valley of the Peneius River known as Tempe, the frequent object of ancient ecphrasis since Herodotus (cf. 7.129). The sole subject of VH 3.1, Tempe is described through an appeal to all the senses. The place is an ὀφθαλμικών πανήγυρις; a festival for the eyes. The waters of the many springs and the air itself are pure and cold. The air is filled with the warblings of all kinds of birds καὶ μάλιστα οἱ μουσικοὶ, καὶ ἐστιῶσιν εὖ μᾶλα τὰς ἀκοὰς especially the melodious ones, and they provide a feast for your ears. The air of Tempe is likewise heavy with fragrance, καὶ τοῖς βαδίζοντι καὶ τοῖς πλέουσιν ὄσμαι συμπαρουμαρτοῦσιν ἡδισταῖ and the sweetest fragrances attend upon those both walking and sailing by. The fragrance is
that of the many sacrificial fires, for Tempe throbs with sanctity: οὗτως ἡ ἁρπα ἡ τίμη ἡ
dιαρκής ἡ περὶ τὸ κρείττον ἐκθεοὶ τὸν τόπον. The continuous service to the deity renders the place
holy. Tempe too is aligned with the literary tradition. It is the spot where Apollo’s special
laurel tree grows, the source of the victory garland Apollo wore after the slaying of Pytho
and the tree from which are made the garlands for the victors at the Pythian Games.

Aelian’s description of the mythic history of Tempe substitutes for the narrative
which concluded Atalanta’s ecphrasis. Aelian returns to the narrative form in VH 2.44.
But in this case Aelian undertakes to describe a painting; in doing so, he weaves the
anecdote into the description itself to provide an interesting dramatic effect. The painting
being examined depicts a young hoplite rushing to the defense of the fatherland. Aelian is
trying to convey a feeling of intense forward drive and concentrated energy by focusing
his description upon the figure’s facial expression:

The young man presents the vivid and inspired figure of one rushing into
battle; you might have said that he was possessed and maddened by Ares. His
eyes blaze terribly as he snatches up his weapons and rushes full speed at the
enemy, ... his eyes gleaming slaughter, making clear through his whole stance
that he will give no quarter.

The anecdotal material follows immediately upon the description of the painting, and adds
to this chapter too the appeal to other senses which we have seen made in VH 3.1 and 13.1.
At the painting’s unveiling, we are told, the artist, Theon, kept the work hidden until he
could devise a means to create just the right affect upon the audience. He made
arrangements with a trumpeter to stand ready behind the scenes and, at a given signal from Theon, the trumpeter played the signal for attack:

```
άμα τε οὖν τὸ μέλος ἥκουετο τραχὺ καὶ φοβηρὸν καὶ οἶον εἰς ὀπλιτῶν ἔξοδον ταχέως ἐκβοηθοῦντων μελωδοῦσι σάλπιγγες, καὶ ἐδείκνυτο ἡ γραφὴ καὶ ὁ στρατιώτης ἐβλέπετο, τοῦ μέλου ἐναργεστέραν τὴν φαντασίαν τοῦ ἐκβοηθοῦντος ἐπὶ καὶ μᾶλλον παραστήσαντος.
```

As soon as the harsh and frightening melody calling the hoplites to swift attack was heard, the painting was unveiled and the soldier met one’s eyes. The melody of the trumpet rendered the image of him attacking that much more vivid.

What do the *ecphraseis* contribute to our interpretation of Aelian’s collection? What effect are they meant to have upon the reader? Does this different stylistic treatment affect the moral paradigm Aelian is trying to create? To consider these questions we must again attempt to define the terms of Aelian’s relationship with his reader.

The *ecphrasis* as a school exercise was meant to teach the student how to compose descriptions which would form part of a larger oration. We can see *ecphraseis* as subordinate units of Imperial oratory in works such as Dio’s *Olympicus* (*O.r* 12), for example, which the speaker opens with a fine portrait of a peacock (2), or in his *Euboicus* (*Or.* 7) with its description of a cottager’s homestead (65-80). But there were situations in ancient oratory in which the *ecphrasis* could stand alone: the *prolalia*, a speaker’s opening remarks to his audience, could take the form of an *ecphrasis*. Apuleius for example has left a charming description of an Indian parrot (*Flor.* 12). And then there are the collections of descriptions of works of art. How do these fit into the rhetorical tradition?
Two collections of such descriptions of art objects have survived under the name of Philostratus, uncle and nephew. The fourth-century rhetorician Callistratus is likewise represented by an art collection. Can these works help define Aelian’s tone and purpose in the ecphrastic chapters of the Varia Historia? The elder Philostratus’ collection of Imagines consists of some eighty separate ecphraseis, all held together by a dramatic frame described in the prologue to the work (cf. Anderson 1986: 260-267). Here Philostratus tells us that his collection represents talks he delivered during a public holiday spent observing the paintings displayed at a stoa in Naples. Although he is attended by a group of young men who are invited to pose questions and comments during the talks — presumably these young people are his students of rhetoric — Philostratus states that the talks were purposely directed toward his Neapolitan host’s son, a little boy of ten, who accompanied him to the gallery:

He was quite young, and already willing and eager to learn. He kept his eyes fixed upon me as I approached the pictures, and he asked me to explain them. In order that he not think me rude, I said, “All right, I shall analyze them when the young men arrive.” And then when they came I said, “Let the boy go first, and let us direct the discussion at him. You follow along with us, both listening and asking questions if I do not interpret clearly.” (Imag. Prol. 5).

In the Imagines, then, Philostratus is demonstrating how a child is to be introduced to paideia through the correct viewing of works of art. In attendance and forming the background is the larger group of older and more advanced boys. The scenario may be a conventional one, for the younger Philostratus also introduces a boy as audience for the
echphrasis in his collection: ἔστω τις ὑποκείμενος, πρὸς δὲν χρη τὰ καθ' ἑκαστὰ διαρθρῶν, ἵνα οὕτω καὶ ὁ λόγος τὸ ἀριθμότον ἔχω. Let there be someone present, to whom the paintings are described one by one, in order that the discourse may function harmoniously (Imag. 862.31). The person to be present here is henceforth regularly addressed as παι. The effect is that of a learned man addressing a child and backed by a chorus of adolescents. We are probably to think of Platonic dialogues with similar settings — the Meno, Charmides, and Lysis, for example — as well as scenes from Xenophon's Memorabilia in which Socrates is placed in a similar setting.

The tone of the elder Philostratus' echphrasis is necessarily patronizing, for the speaker is depicted as explaining the adult-oriented contents of the works of art to a young child. The child's responses are sometimes pressed upon him by his instructor. He is urged time and again to look, to observe some detail, to smell the fragrance of flowers or fruits, to imagine the flavors of honey and wine or to listen carefully for the sounds of shepherds' pipes when looking at bucolic landscape scenes (e.g. Imag. 1.6, 1.12, 1.31). But the speaker shows himself also conscious of the responsibilities involved in presenting mature material to a child. He breaks off the description of Poseidon's rape of Amymone before the consummation of the "marriage," evidently to avoid raising uncomfortable issues (Imag. 1.8). Sometimes he feels the need to draw further explanations from natural history for the child's benefit, to elucidate for example the life cycle of the tuna fish (Imag. 1.13) or the feeding habits of sea gulls (2.17). He constantly draws moral responses from the child, especially those of compassion and tenderness. The child is urged, that is, to empathize with the emotional responses of the characters in the paintings: the grateful joy
of Andromeda (*Imag.* 1.29.3), Arrichion’s triumph in death (2.6.5), the gods’ delighted responses at the birth of Athena (2.27.1-2).

In a sense the speaker in Philostratus’ *ecphraseis* stands to the paintings as a grammarian to his canonic texts. He interprets the details they contain in order to allow the student access to their content, and thus is a kind of commentator. Because the majority of the paintings Philostratus describes are based upon the literary tradition in some way, his explanations are in the end literary and the object of his study is οοφιον, ὀπόση ἐς ποιητὰς ἦκει · φορὰ γὰρ ἢπι ἀμφοῖν ἢς τά τῶν ἠρων ἑργα καὶ εἰδὴ [There is in graphic art] fully as much craftsmanship as poets possess: for the works of both [poets and graphic artists] are of equal importance in terms of the deeds and forms of the heroes. But this speaker’s goal is protreptic as well as hermeneutic. He wants to show young people *how* to look for meaningful content in a work of art so that they will be inspired to do so on their own (*Imag. Prol.* 3). Philostratus often displays his own momentary reactions to a painting’s details as he models the correct way to address this medium (e.g. *Imag.* 1.10.3; 1.28.2; 2.23). He *is* an authority figure, and he must necessarily give the impression of talking down to the child, for that is precisely what he is doing. The child could not be expected to grasp the contents until they were scaled to his understanding. Antiquity knew of no juvenile literature, although Aesop’s fables must have come close to our concept of child-oriented reading matter. In this regard it is significant that the third chapter of Book 1 of the *Imagines* describes a picture of Aesop surrounded by his Μῦθοι, most having taken the form of animals ψφ ὤν τὰ παιδία μαθηταί γίνονται τῶν τοῦ βίου πραγμάτων *from whom children learn the facts of life.*
The tone which Aelian adopts for his *ecphraseis* is very close to that of Philostratus in the *Imagines*. Aelian is setting himself up as the interpreter of the paideia contained in his subjects, all of which are drawn directly from the cultural tradition. As such, Aelian images himself commenting upon the cultural content of Tempe, Theon’s hoplite, and Atalanta. Aelian’s own response to these three entities forms the paradigm in these chapters; for these *ecphraseis* represent the correct reaction to the tradition on the part of the ὁλως πεπαιδευμένος. This tone and this conception of his relation to the reader can, as we have seen, also be traced in the Aelian’s epideictic biography and in the more developed of the anecdotes, although the latter aim primarily at setting up simple moral models.

**Ethnography and Νόμιμα**

A number of chapters in the *Varia Historia* describe the peculiar laws, institutions, and customs of a people or a nation. Unlike the *ecphraseis* and biographical sketches, these chapters do not provide detailed analyses or rhetorically colored observations. Nor are they based upon a narrative structure as are the anecdotes. They are in general simple statements of phenomena, with or without Aelian’s morally directed summations. They nevertheless form some of the most morally focused material in the *Varia Historia*. Aelian’s collection also contains discussions of εὑρέται, the inventors or discoverors of certain cultural institutions, devices, or beneficial objects (e.g. the first poet to sing of the Trojan War [*VH* 14.21], the first person to return enemy dead for burial [12.27]), of antiquities (e.g. the Romans’ temple to Fever [12.11], and αἳνα (e.g. the annual cock-fight...
at Athens [2.28], a festival at Tarentum [5.20]). Since this information serves to define a nation’s ethos for Aelian, we may categorize such chapters here.

Brief descriptions of the non-Hellenic customs of other races had formed part of Greek historiography from its inception. Peripatetic research had compiled older material along with current observations, and this body of information fed Hellenistic scholarship through such acts of compilation as we have examined in Chapter 2 above. The Imperial authors could draw upon ethnographic studies that covered centuries of compiled scholarship. Along with anecdote, Imperial ethnography reveals the presence of standard handbooks, from which Aelian, Plutarch, Gellius, Athenaeus, Stobaeus, Clement and others drew their data. But these authors also acquired material, focus, and — perhaps most important for Aelian — a style and voice from such canonic authors as Herodotus and Xenophon, an influence to be examined below.

Aelian covers both foreign nations as well as Greek states in his ethnography. The Athenians and Spartans get most of the attention, as is to be expected in the case of an author who both draws from and elucidates the tradition. As with the other material he includes in his miscellany, Aelian is not concerned with establishing precise dates and eras for his νόμιμα. He uses present-tense verbs in some chapters, past-tense in others, and occasionally in longer passages he will mix tenses (e.g. VH 4.1). Nor does Aelian recognize the possibility that νόμιμα might in any given state evolve naturally. Judging from the material he presents, Aelian sees national laws and customs as established once and for all by a wise authority and effective so long as the nation being discussed practices

---

5 By way of comparison we may consider Plutarch’s preference for the past tense in his νόμιμα collections, although he uses a present tense frequently enough to suggest that its selection was a matter of stylistic variation.
virtue and self-restraint. Corruption and therefore change in custom and law arise, in Aelian’s estimation, from personal vice and self-indulgence, a condition he refers to most frequently by the term τρύφη.

Aelian adopts a scale of objectivity in writing up ethnographic data for inclusion in the *Varia Historia*. Some accounts are related quite simply, with no editorial comment. Aelian may find the peculiarities of human communal behavior intellectually amusing in the sense of paradoxography; such data formed a subdivision of Hellenistic paradoxography and occur in the Imperial authors such as Phlegon and Julius Africanus still working in that scholarly tradition (Giannini 1964: 129-130). The neutral tone of such chapters of the *Varia Historia* may be establishing a foil for those which have greater moralistic point. A chapter like *VH* 4.1, for example, illustrates this neutral tone of narration. Aelian succinctly describes an ethnic peculiarity of each of nine non-Hellenic nations. There is no thematic connection unifying the list. In fact, most of these pieces of information are included in Stobaeus, where they are attributed to Nicolaus of Damascus’ Περὶ ἔθνων. Although Aelian’s diction varies from Stobaeus’, there is no reason to reject the possibility that Aelian has accessed Nicolaus’ collection and restyled the material for inclusion in 4.1. This in fact is what he seems to have done in the case of a number of chapters which show a close similarity with sections in Athenaeus (Lübbe 1886: 27-30). Other chapters contain more specific detail but maintain the neutrality of tone. Here we may cite *VH* 2.33, a discussion of the various forms under which rivers have been worshiped as deities. In this case the material is thematically interrelated, the peoples referred to Hellenic for the most part. We may consider such accounts at one stylistic extreme, the other end of the scale...
represented by chapters heavily editorialized and conveying a strong moral directive. The material in *VH* 2.7, for example, illustrates Aelian’s moralistic tone:

Aelian is careful in his explanation of this law. He clearly states his own reaction to it as a positive relic of antiquity, it deserves to be brought to the reader’s attention, and Aelian wants to be sure that the reader understands wherein its value lies. He repeats himself with more detailed variants:

Between these two tonal extremes lie Aelian’s other ethnographic chapters. Most of them examine moral behavior in various ways, although they do not offer models of
behavior so much as past instances worthy of praise and blame. Aelian describes among his Lacedaemonian data the rationale, for example, behind the Spartans’ red military cloaks (VH 6.6), the reactions of Spartan mothers to the manner of their sons’ deaths (12.21), the Spartan restrictions upon gourmandizing (3.34), overeating (14.7), and recreation (2.5). Several chapters attempting to explain the role of pederasty in Spartan society suggest that Aelian is wrestling with an issue difficult but necessary for him to put in a moral context (cf. Plutarch’s recognition of the situation De lib. educ. 11d9). At VH 3.10 and 3.12 Aelian presents an ethnographic exposé of pederasty as he chooses to interpret it. VH 3.10 states that the Spartan ephors imposed fines both upon the handsome adolescent who preferred a rich lover to a virtuous one, and upon the virtuous man who did not love an adolescent:

δῆλον γάρ ὡς ομοιὸν ἄν ἑαυτῷ κάκεινον ἀπέφηνεν, ἵσως δὲ ἄν καὶ ὅλλον. δεινῆ γάρ ἢ τῶν ἑραστῶν πρὸς τὰ παιδικὰ εὖνοια ἁρετὰς ἐνεργάσασθαι, ὅταν αὐτοὶ σεμνοὶ ὤσιν.

He clearly would have rendered the other like to himself, and perhaps another as well. For the great good will which lovers feel toward their sweethearts is powerful in engendering virtue when they themselves are honest men.

The beloved boy’s behavior is discussed in VH 3.12. He considers his passion toward his lover an act of εἰσπνεῖν, “inspiration.” Aelian piously specifies that

Σπαρτιάτης δὲ ἔρως αἰσχρὸν οὐκ οἶδεν· εἰτε γάρ μειράκιον ἔτολμησεν ὑβρίν ὑπομένειν εἰτε ἑραστῆς ὑβρίσαι, ἀλλ’ οὐδέτερος ἐλυστέλησε τὴν Σπάρτην καταμίαν· ἡ γὰρ τῆς πατρίδος ἀπηλλάγησαν ἣ καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ θερμότερον τοῦ βίου αὐτοῦ.

Spartan passion does not know shame. Whether the youth dared to endure an outrageous act or the lover dared to commit one, it profited neither to bring shame upon Sparta. Either they left the fatherland or, even more precipitously, life itself.
Aelian interprets pederasty with a kind of cheerful idealism that suggests he is ignoring its reality and making a red herring of its cultural benefits. We may conclude from the treatment of this material something about the purposes of its compilator. Aelian had the option of omitting pederastic references from his miscellany. By including them he demonstrates his desire to interpret references to pederasty in the tradition in a certain manner. The manner of interpretation he models here is one which allows canonic literature dealing with this topic to be interpreted by a young reader in a socially acceptable way.

There are two vices Aelian singles out for repeated criticism in the ethnographic chapters: intemperance and τρύφη, the luxurious and self-indulgent lifestyle which renders an individual or a nation soft and flabby and which destroys the most carefully formulated constitution. Drunkenness is the characteristic vice of the Tapyri (VH 3.13), the Byzantines (3.14), the Argives, Tirynthians, Thracians and Illyrians (3.15), and the Tarentines (12.30). It respects neither Greek nor barbarian, but induces a riotous and immoderate behavior which on the national level leads to dangerous slackness (VH 3.14), on the individual level to obnoxious and disgraceful display (e.g. Alexander, VH 3.23; Antigonus Gonatas, VH 9.26; dozens of statesmen listed in 2.41). Even more corrupting to a state is the force of τρύφη. For Imperial authors its destruction of a nation’s ancestral mores has long been a commonplace. Aelian blames τρύφη for the destruction of the Sybarites (VH 1.19), for the decline of the Rhodians (1.28), and for a number of other cultural disasters. Again, the vice has parallels in its effect upon individuals (e.g. VH 7.2, 12.24, 9.24).
Natural History

The first fifteen chapters of the *Varia Historia* deal with the ethology of various animals, and to these we may add several other chapters scattered throughout the rest of the work (*VH* 2.40, 10.3, 12.20, , 13.35, 13.46, and the mythic series 12.39, 12.42, 12.45, 12.55, 13.33). The *De natura animalium* collection makes clear the interest Aelian took in animals and their behavior. Some of the *Varia Historia* material can be found in the animal collection as well.

In the epilogue to the *De natura animalium*, Aelian describes his attempt to increase readability through variety, and we can expect that the animal chapters in the *Varia Historia* will reflect this concern with avoiding τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὄμοιων βδελυγμίαν. They fall into two rather distinct types depending upon the presence or absence of an anecdotal structure.

The story of the serpent of Patrae in *VH* 13.46 represents the first type. A child buys a baby snake and raises it with loving attention, but is forced to part with it when his neighbors become alarmed at its full-grown size. The snake takes up residence in the forest outside of the city. Later the little boy, grown into a young man, is attacked by brigands in this very forest. The snake rushes to the rescue of his beloved human and saves the day. Such stories concern quite special animals who are not necessarily representative of their species. They function in their anecdotes rather as special humans function in theirs. A similar anecdote occurs at *VH* 1.13, the account of how Gelo's dog attempted to protect his master from a nightmare. The series of stories in *VH* 12 which Aelian treats as
Märchen because of their fantastical elements are formally anecdotal (VH 12.39, 12.42, 12.45, 13.33); Aelian's use of them will be discussed below.

The other type of natural-history material which Aelian deals with in the Varia Historia corresponds in structure and tone to his ethnographic material. Here animal species are treated as human nations and races. Aelian describes their various patterns of behavior in a manner similar to that used in his treatment of νῶμως. This is the form taken by most of the animal material in the Varia Historia.

The relationship between this material and the paradoxographical tradition is pertinent here, especially given such statements as Schoener's that fere in omnibus quae narrat [Aelianus] de animalibus aliquid mirabile et primo aspectu incredibile est (1873: 9). What is the connection between Aelian's zoology and the mirabilia collections? In Chapter 2 we considered Hellenistic paradoxography as essentially an outgrowth and specialization of Peripatetic natural history (cf. Giannini 1963: 257-259). Much of this material involved animal behavior which was θαυμαστόν, either because it seemed anomalous (e.g. that an octopus should devour its own tentacles, that the chamaeleon could change its hue) or because it seemed so close to human behavior that it challenged conventional ideas about the differences between human and bestial). As has been seen, the author of Books 8 and 9 of the Aristotelian Historia animalium collected instances of animals behaving in such humanlike ways. This material, supplemented with a mass of other such observations, formed a body of compiled paradoxography which authors of the Imperial period inherited from Hellenistic scholarship (tabulated by Giannini 1964: 127-138). The Imperial scholars added data which reflected their own interests (Tomberg
These are the sorts of texts which Gellius bought for a good price at Brundisium (NA 9.4). Although he found their contents inadequate (*nihil ad ornandum invandumque usum vitae pertinentis* [11-12]) he nevertheless scattered some of their more novel accounts (*scriptoribus fere nostris intemptata* [5]) among the chapters of his miscellany. The list of materials which Gellius says he rejected (6) contains few points of similarity with the contents of both of Aelian's collections, however. The *Varia Historia* contains paradoxographic material, but awakening a sense of τὸ θαυμάσιον is not Aelian's primary goal in the animal chapters.

In fact, Aelian's primary interest in the animal chapters of the *Varia Historia* as well as in most of the material of the *De natura animalium* is in the connection between human mores and animal behavior. In pursuing this interest, Aelian is returning to the primary focus of the Peripatetic *Historia animalium* 8 and 9. *Historia animalium* 8 had opened with the statement

In many animals there are traces of intellectual activity, both gentleness and fierceness, kindness and strictness, courage and cowardice, fear and courage, high heart and cunning and, in many, something approaching wisdom.

(588al8-25)

Aelian's prologue to the *De natura animalium* contains the following rather similar statement of intent:

*ἀνθρώπου μὲν εἶναι σοφὸν καὶ δίκαιον καὶ τῶν οἰκείων παίδων προμηθέστατον, καὶ τῶν γειναμένων ποιεῖται τὴν προήκουσαν φροντίδα, καὶ τρόφιμον ἑαυτῷ μαστεύει καὶ ἐπιβουλαῖς φιλάττεσθαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ὁσα αὐτῷ σύνεστι δῶρα φύσεως, παράδοξον ἰσως οὐδὲν ..., τὸ δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλογοις μετείναι τινος ἀρετῆς κατὰ φύσιν.*
Perhaps there is nothing very surprising in the fact that man is clever, righteous, most prudent and careful about his offspring, both in terms of taking proper care of them, of seeking out food for himself, of guarding against dangers, of all those other gifts of nature. It is a very interesting fact that animals too have a certain natural share in excellence, and have inherited many wonderful human qualities.

Other imperial authors show an interest in these humanlike qualities in the animal world as well. Pliny the Elder, for example, discusses examples of animal affections and righteous indignation (*HN* 10.96). And Gellius, although he eschews other *mirabilia*, is not above retelling the story of Androclus and the lion (*NA* 5.14), like Aelian’s serpent anecdote illustrative of the loyalty and trueheartedness of lower life forms. Plutarch too gathers data dealing with such behavioral patterns. Besides being a man who sincerely loved animals (de Romilly 1979:301), Plutarch was aware that it is precisely in a personal intercourse with beings weaker than himself — including beasts — that man’s humanity becomes most strikingly apparent:

*We see that kindness has a much wider range than righteousness. We naturally limit law and justice to human transactions. But when it comes to kindliness and gracious generosity, there are occasions when it flows forth from a gentle heart as though from an abundant fountain even to the animals. In fact, a kind person feeds his horses even when they are old and no longer of any use, just as he cares for his dogs not only when they are puppies but when they have grown old. (Cat. Mai. 5)*

We have already considered the role that kindness as a mark of Hellenic paideia plays in the work of both Plutarch and Aelian. We can thus expect that discussions of animal
behavior as it relates to paideia and its acquisition would be welcome in a collection like the *Varia Historia*. The moral message of the serpent anecdote is clear: the grown-ups at Patrae were unkind toward the snake in driving it away, as were the brigands who attacked the snake’s boy; but the snake’s loyalty and kindness, engendered by the child’s original act of kindness in raising it, inspired it to act more humanely than the humans. The model of enculturation and the force it exerts upon the adult’s moral behavior forms the basis of this little story. A similar model can be traced in the anecdotes involving a scene of instruction or of advice-giving by a paideia-icon (e.g. Socrates and Alcibiades [*VH* 2.1], Achilles and Chiron [12.25], Zeno and his pupil [9.33]).

How do we account for the paradoxographical element in “ethnographic” accounts of animal behavior? Giannini refused to consider Aelian a paradoxographer (1964: 132 note 206). If we compare one of his animal chapters with a corresponding passage in the paradoxographic tradition the differences between Aelian’s focus and that of an author such as [Aristotle] in the *Historia animalium* 9 become clear. In discussing certain kinds of fish, for example, [Aristotle] stated:

> aí ὰνομαζόμεναι ἄλογες ὅταν αἰσθοῦνται ὅτι τὸ ἀγκιστρον καταπεπώκασι, βοηθοῦσι πρός τοῦτο...ἀναδραμοῦσαι γάρ ἐπὶ πολύ πρὸς τὴν ὀρμίαν ἀποτρώγουσιν αὐτῆς.
> Whenever the fishes called sea-foxes perceive that they have swallowed a hook, they seek a remedy.... They run up the line and bite it off. (621a)

[Aristotle]’s point of interest is the fish’s calculated attempts to preserve its own life. Aelian makes the same point but in the following manner:

> ἡ ἀλώπηξ οὐ μόνον τὸ χερσαῖον θηρίον δολερόν ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ θαλασσία πανοφράγμα ἔστιν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ δέλεαρ οὐχ ὕφοράτα ὤδε ἀλλὰ μὴν φυλάττεται διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν τοῦτο, τοῦ δὲ ἀγκίστρου καταφρονεῖ καὶ πάνυ ἡ ἀλώπηξ. πρὶν ἤ γὰρ τὸν ἀσπαλάτεα σπάσαι τὸν κάλαμον ἢ δὲ ἀνέθορε καὶ ἀπέκειρε τὴν ὀρμίαν καὶ νικηται...
When it comes to the fox, it is not just the land-dwelling fox that is tricky. The sea-fox too is a rascal. As far as the bait is concerned, the sea-fox does not feel any sense of danger when it sees it. Nor is it on the qui vive, for it is a greedy thing. But as far as the hook is concerned, the sea-fox utterly disdains it. Before the angler can draw in his line, the sea-fox leaps up, sheers off the tackle, and then swims away. Often it gulps down two or three fish hooks, while the fisherman does not get to land and enjoy his catch.

Aelian has humanized his sea-fox considerably. Its actions are described as though motivated by human impulses. The fish displays disdain, greed, and naughtiness, and is δολερός, full of wiles. Most of the animal chapters which appear at the beginning of the Varia Historia show similar qualities. The octopus in VH 1.1 is describes as a clever hunter, using its tentacles as ‘self-generated hunting nets’ to snare its prey. The spider is a skilled weaver, admired for its craftsmanship in constructing its web (VH 1.2). The Egyptian frog and hound of VH 1.3. and 1.4 both possess τι οφόν in devising evasive manoeuvres which save them from the Nile’s beasts of prey. In VH 1.6 the sea tortoise displays both motherly solicitude and λογιστική, able to count up the days of her babies’ gestation. The wild pigs, deer, lions, and goats of VH 1.7-10 are ἰατρικής ούκ ἀπαίδευτοι; for they each have discovered healing herbs and natural medicinals to cure their wounds and diseases. Mice and ants, on the other hand, are μαντικῶτατοι (VH 1.11), skilled in μαντική (1.12). These data are frequently found in the paradoxographical tradition, made peculiarly human in Aelian’s treatment of them here. Aelian is working in a style suggestive of Aesop, for with the humanizing of animals comes an impulse to judge their

[Aristotle] at HA 9. 488b, in discussing animal character, had included the sea-fox among creatures which were πανούργα καὶ κακούργα.
actions on an ethical level. Yet these chapters contain no implicit directives for human behavior. How then are they functioning within this miscellany?

First, these animal chapters supply some basic empirical data about the natural world which Aelian wants to convey. But the fablelike treatment of the subjects also suggests that Aelian is himself as narrator offering a paradigm of the way in which the reader is to look at and to understand nature. Aelian is asking us to read the world as though it were animated by human qualities and responses. Scholars have interpreted this position of Aelian's as Stoic (e.g. GGL: 786). But perhaps these philosophical underpinnings are not really necessary in the case of this author. Like Philostratus' animal-Μοθοι in Imagines 1.3, Aelian's animals invite his readers to become μαθήται ... τῶν τοῦ βίου πραγμάτων (Imag. 1.3.1). They invite the reader to approach that world with delicacy, understanding, careful observation, and humanitas. The impression Aelian gives is of a sensitive adult speaking to an intelligent child and, like Philostratus in the Imagines, demonstrating the correct way to learn about nature. In this regard, we notice that VH 1.6, 1.14, and 1.15 deal with animals' sollicitude for their babies. We may add to this list VH 10.3, a chapter describing the behavior of newborn partridges, ducks, and lions. VH 12.42 lists people who as infants were said to have been suckled by kindly beasts, while 12.45 describes legends dealing with insects bringing food to infants and thereby signalling their future greatness. We should also notice that Aelian does not limit his animal chapters to mammals. Reptiles, arachnids, amphibians, and gastropods get as sensitive a treatment as horses, monkeys, and dogs.
As he has done with his other types of material, Aelian aligns some of his animal chapters with the literary culture. He does not fail to mention the connection between doves and Aphrodite, for example \((VH\ 1.15)\). He cites Hesiod for the behavior of nightingales, and refers covertly to the legend of the swallow and nightingale and “that unlawful banquet in Thrace,” avoiding, it would seem, a more specific reference to an unpleasantness that might disturb the reader \((VH\ 12.20)\).

**Paradoxography in the *Varia Historia***

Even accounting for the animal chapters in this way, we are still left with a number of passages in the *Varia Historia* which seem to present genuine *mirabilia*: Pythagoras addressed by the current of a river \((VH\ 2.26)\); a man who could stand in Lilybaeum and see ships leaving the harbor at Carthage \((II.13)\); the incredible appetite of Aglais the female trumpet-player \((1.26)\); the wearing-away of mountains \((8.11)\); the bitumen pits of Illyria \((13.16)\). We could probably isolate a dozen such chapters. We cannot, however, simply dismiss them as *Wundererzählungen* with no purpose other than the attracting of a jaded reader’s attention \((pace\ Reardon\ 1971: 225-226)\). All of Aelian’s paradoxography relates in some degree to the literary tradition. If Aelian presents some incredible aspects of Pythagoras at \(VH\ 2.26\), we must also bear in mind that in a number of chapters he praises Pythagoras as a teacher \((e.g.\ VH\ 3.17,\ 12.25,\ 12.59)\) and philosopher \((VH\ 13.20)\). Nature’s entropy is just human mortality writ large \((VH\ 8.11)\). The pits of Illyria are only part of a more extended description of the geography of that region and of the customs of its people.
The problem in categorizing Aelian's paradoxographical chapters involves determining his intentions in including the chapter in the miscellany. So much of the other kinds of material in the *Varia Historia* elicits a moral response that when we encounter a paradoxographical passage we look beyond the data to find some meaning in it. These chapters thus benefit from their contexts.

The problem is complicated by Aelian’s own response to his material. As we have seen, he considers it important to write the correct response into many of his chapters. *Mirabilia* are supposed to elicit a response of wonder and perplexity. But in the *Varia Historia* Aelian frequently responds to material he narrates with *wonder* in the sense of *admiration*, and does not necessarily distinguish between astonishment at a natural wonder and veneration of a human action or attitude: θαυμάζω defines both responses. Aelian can be astonished, that is, at the virtue of a Socrates and the vice of a Dionysius as well as at the uncanny way in which Marsyas’ skin responded to the strains of a flute playing the Phrygian mode (*VH* 13.21). This general sense of wonder is perhaps suited to a miscellany which addresses itself to a sensitive or young reader. In this regard we may note occasions when Aelian cues the reader’s response by describing the wonder or admiration of other characters within an anecdote: the Romans wondered at Marius for the glory of his deeds (*VH* 12.6); Perdicas aroused wonder at his singlehanded capture of lion cubs before the eyes of the lioness (12.39). On the other hand, the mob’s admiration is treated critically; the person whom οἱ πολλοὶ admire must *ipso facto* be doing something wrong (*VH* 14.8, 13.6). The collector and the reader are finally to be judged by the objects which arouse in them feelings of wonder and astonishment.
Lexicography

We may conclude this survey of the contents of Aelian’s *Varia Historia* by considering those chapters in which he takes as his subject the etymologies of words and the explanations of proverbs.

Compared with the attention they receive in Gellius’ and Athenaeus’ collections, these topics do not occupy many chapters in Aelian’s work. At *VH* 3.40 he derives an epithet for satyrs, *Tirupoi*, from the word referring to their chattering songs (*τερετίσματα*), while we are told that the word *satyr* itself comes from the word meaning *to grimace* (*σαίρειν*). The name of Silenus, on the other hand, is derived from *σιλάινειν*, *to mock*. The following chapter continues this lexical material with epithets of Dionysus (*VH* 3.41). Aelian gives a derivation of Electra’s name from her unmarried status (*ἀ-λέκτρον*) at *VH* 4.26. At *VH* 9.16 he ventures into Italic antiquities by discussing *Mares*, the name of an autochthonous Italic centaur. Aelian mentions a name-change at *VH* 5.3: the Pillars of Heracles used to be called the Pillars of Briareus, but their name was changed when people realized that Briareus had never done anything to earn such commemoration, while Heracles had.

This last example hints at an anecdotal treatment. That it alone among the chapters devoted to etymology does so, suggests a reason why Aelian did not give much attention to lexicography: it offered little space for moral and anecdotal treatment. The chapters in which proverbs are explained, however, show Aelian in his element, for proverbs imply a story behind the phrase. In the case of the proverb “He’s a second Heracles,” Aelian finds an opportunity not only to tell the story of Titormus the oxherd
and his incredible strength, but to paint an antique pastoral landscape and to make moralistic suggestions about overconfidence (\textit{VH} 12.22). Similar scope is offered by the phrase “The Hero in Temesa.” Here Aelian is able to narrate the eerie tale of the ghost which terrorized the Locrians and was finally laid by an athletic young hero (\textit{VH} 8.18). “Phrynichus cowers like a chicken” occasions a discussion drawn from the history of Attic tragedy (\textit{VH} 13.17).

As a \textit{διδασκαλικός ἀξονομένος}, Aelian contributed to paideia by compiling material which he viewed as \textit{ἀξιοποιόδαστα}, i.e. worthy of attention and study. An examination of this material has revealed that along with Aelian’s compilation has come exegesis. Can we extrapolate from this wide range of subjects and their treatment some general statements about this exegesis applicable to the \textit{Varia Historia} as a whole? Considering qualities which are apparent in all the categories contained in the collection, we might hazard the following as general statements conveyed by Aelian’s selections:

1. Good behavior is rewarded and bad behavior is punished, whether on the individual or the racial level.

2. The gods have established a set of universal laws to which all, both states and individuals, are subject, and by the recognition of which states and individuals are judged by future generations; transgression brings loss of glory, ruin, and unhappiness.

3. The world is full of a wonderful variety which man should approach with a loving heart and from which he should desire to learn.

If we are looking for profound truths profoundly expressed in Aelian’s work, we shall be sadly disappointed. If we are looking, however, for an author who can provide
lessons for young people which will help them make sense of the literary tradition they learn at school and inspire them both to study in greater detail and to read with greater breadth, Aelian will not fall too short of the mark. Aelian gathers into his miscellany material which directs the reader’s moral responses and choices. His frequent personal comments within his narratives display his insistence upon interpreting the material correctly. The tone is patronizing and protreptic. Considering the range of materials included and its relation to Imperial paideia, we must conclude that Aelian presents himself as a mature and learned adult — ὅλως πεπαιδευμένος — addressing young people undergoing the process of indoctrination into their culture. Schmid detected the tone, though not the implication, when he complained of Aelian’s “winzige Persönlichkeit” and his “ins Kindische ausartende Verherrlichung des Hellenischen...und Attischen (1893 vol. 5: 4 footnote 7).

Ποικίλια in the Varia Historia

As suggested by the purposive arrangement claimed for the De natura animalium, in the Varia Historia Aelian does not so much aim at a nonchalant and spontaneous nonarrangement under headings, but a varietas, an array of rhetorical formats for displaying data.

If we analyze the individual sections of the Varia Historia in terms of the rhetorical structure which Aelian imposes upon them, we find them falling into two rather rough categories: (1) chapters which form a pinax or register of data, and (2) chapters which assume forms representing the progymnasmata, the preliminary exercises in composition and arrangement taught in both upper-division grammar classes and rhetoric schools.
In the Varia Historia

We have already examined the catalogues, indices, and lists which formed one of the categories of Imperial philology. The πίνακες of Hyginus, consisting in many cases of simple digest-style lists of mythological names, form one extreme of such structures, while the more stylistically conscious work of Valerius Maximus with its extensive treatment of facta et dicta thematically arranged forms another pole of elaboration. Lists are found in the miscellanists as well. Gellius on occasion presents runs of historiae (e.g. NA 3.15: people who died from excess of joy). Athenaeus’ tendency to focus upon related data in given sections of the Deipnosophistae likewise encourages runs of excerpts and anecdotes; we have already considered, for example, the hetaera-anecdotes in Book 13, but we may add to these the stories of flatterers in Book Six and of chefs de cuisine in Book 7.

Aelian adopts a range of pinax-forms for a number of his chapters in the Varia Historia. He may group together series of anecdotes, νόμιμα, and discussions of animals. The anecdote lists are the most frequent, and vary in degree of internal detail. One of the most condensed of the pinakes is represented by VH 2.43:

πενέστατοι ἐγένοντο οἱ ἀριστοὶ τῶν Ἔλληνων ἀριστείδης ὁ Λυσιμάχου καὶ Φωκίων ὁ Φώκου καὶ Ἕπαμεινώνδας ὁ Πολύμνιος καὶ Πελοπίδας ὁ Ὄθησιος καὶ Λάμαχος ὁ Ἀθηναῖος καὶ Σωκράτης ὁ Σωφρονίσκου καὶ Ἐφιάλτης δὲ ὁ Σοφωνίδου καὶ ἐκεῖνος.

The best of the Greeks were the greatest paupers: Aristides son of Lysimachus, Phocion son of Phocus, Epaminondas son of Polymnis, Pelopidas the Theban, Lamachus the Athenian, Socrates son of Sophroniscus and Ephialtes son of Sophonides.
Aelian cannot compress his material more than he has done here. More complex and extended in form is *VH* 3.23: the individual accomplishments of Alexander. Here Aelian has ranked Alexander’s behavior according to whether it was worthy of praise or of blame, concluding with an evaluation of the reliability of the sources which related Alexander’s blameworthy deeds.

This treatment of several anecdotes or pieces of information which could be reduced to list format offered Aelian a stylistic variant to the chapter focused upon a single topic. On several occasions Aelian repackages material he has presented in anecdote form as part of a list. In *VH* 3.17, for example, a long list of philosophers who proved to be benefactors of their homelands, Aelian refers to some two dozen figures whom he could connect with patriotic achievement and philosophical activity. Xenophon, Pericles, Epaminondas win places in the list alongside Socrates, Solon, and Pittacus. Approximately half of the figures treated here are given anecdotes or *chreiai* of their own on one or more occasions throughout the *Varia Historia*, demonstrating paideia’s plasticity in the hands of this author.

Aelian’s Use of the *Progymnasmata*

It is frequently stated that Imperial literature is “rhetorical,” this assessment arising chiefly because passages in the creative literature of this period may fall into identifiable units of thought and structure which can be related to the authors’ rhetorical education. These identifiable units represent the *progymnasmata*.

The *progymnasmata* were preliminary exercises in creative writing. They entered the ancient grammar school’s curriculum at the point in the process of educating a child
when language instruction turned from passive literacy-acquisition to a more active exercise with language and its formulation and composition. They were exercises in form alone. Unlike the present language-arts class, which encourages children to write expositions of material generated by their personal experiences, the ancient course of grammar required that students draw the content of their creative writing solely from the school-authors. Libanius' model *progymnasmata*, published as a collection of samples for instructional use, drew nearly all their material from canonic poetry, with most of the characters and circumstances treated in these works deriving from the Trojan Cycle.

*Progymnasmata*, the term applied to these instructional forms, first appeared in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* in the fourth century BC. The exercises entered the Roman system by the first century BC, for both Cicero and the author of the *ad Herennium* refer to them (Clark 1957: 179). For Quintilian, the various forms of the exercises were an established part of the grammatical and rhetorical curriculum of his day. With the standardization of teaching methods and terminology fostered by grammatical and rhetorical τέχναι, not only the names of the exercises but their number and sequence became established during the early centuries of the Empire. Theon and Hermogenes in the second century both left artes of the *progymnasmata*, in which their definitions, arrangement, and titles were established. The system was the same two centuries later when Libanius and his pupil Aphthonius contributed handbooks to the literature in this field (cf. Hock and O’Neil 1986: 10-22).

Hermogenes categorized the twelve progymnasmatic exercises into three classes according to whether they drilled the student in deliberative, forensic, or epideictic
oratory. If we categorize them according to level of complexity, however, and in the order in which they were actually presented in the classroom, Aelian’s connection with them becomes clearer. We may begin with the simplest of the forms, those based upon a narrative structure. The one assigned to the children just beginning to compose in Greek and Latin was the μῦθος, the term used here specifically in the sense of fable. The child was asked to write in his own words an animal-story, the kind with which he was familiar from the fables of Aesop, in simple narrative form. The next exercise was the διηγησίς. This could be a narrative with a plot, but it could equally well be a summation of an extended description or exposition found in a canonic author. The διηγησίς could be based upon material which was fantastical or realistic, reflecting either an incident or background story from drama or an exposé related to political history or biography. The samples of this form offered up by Libanius for imitation include brief retellings of the stories of the death of Hyacinthus, the wrestling match between Heracles and Achelous, and Alpheus’ passion for Arethusa. Theon refers to models of διηγησίς in the canonic authors to which teachers can direct their students: Plato’s story of the birth of Eros in the Symposium, the description of Hades in the Phaedo, and Herodotus’ accounts of Cylon and of Cleobis and Biton. The chreia was the next exercise with which a child must familiarize himself. This form was an exercise in brevity and phrase subordination, for the point was to be succinct. The child stated in condensed form an apopthegm of a famous figure from literature. Hermogenes’ example runs, “Diogenes, observing a boy behaving rudely, struck his paedagogue” (Prog. 3. One might expect that the statements contained in cheiai would, like this one, tend to speak directly to the students’ sensibilities.) Once
the *chreia* had been formulated, the student would then rephrase it as indirect discourse, as a noun clause following an impersonal construction, or as some other syntactical variant. The fourth of the simpler, narrative-based exercises was the *γνώμη*. Like the *chreia*, it was to be condensed and pointed, but was of general application, like a proverb, rather than specifically linked to a named individual.

These four exercises are the simplest forms. They are the elementary building blocks, as it were, for the other *progymnasmata*, which draw upon the simple narratives as *exempla* and ornament to defend and amplify a statement or position. With the exercises termed *ἀνασκευή* and *κατασκευή*, the child is introduced to argumentation. At first he takes as his topic the ratification or the rejection of some simple proposal drawn from literature. Libanius' models here include "that the judgment of Achilles' arms really occurred" and "that it is against probability that Chryses came to the Greek camp." The child knows his material, for he has been reading the *Iliad* and hearing lectures on its background *historiae* in class. But now he is expected to reformulate the stories as evidence for or against a more abstract proposal. The level of abstraction increases in the exercise called *κοινὸς τόπος*, or "commonplace." This exercise teaches the use of *color*, the defining of the status of an argument. In the commonplace, the child formulates a predicate by defining, for example, the qualities of a tyrant or of a sacrilegious man. He is encouraged to use gnomic statements and *exempla* to ornament and support his portraits, thus building upon the earlier *progymnasmata*. Similarly the *σύγκρισις* demands that the student abstract from two entities points of similarity and difference around which he can structure his exposition. Libanius' models include a comparison of apples and quinces, and
of Ajax and Achilles. A similar ability to abstract and restructure information is required for the exercises in praise and blame, the ἐγκώμιον and ψόγος. The ἔκφρασις likewise implies not only a restructuring of information but some sophistication in terms of the literature associated with the traditional subjects of discourse. This familiarity with the content of the exercises is highlighted in the προσωποποιία. Here the student must conceptualize and compose a statement suited to the personality of a literary figure. Libanius’ samples present Andromache addressing the body of Hector, Achilles’ address to the dead Patroclus, and Ajax delivering a soliloquy before committing suicide. The final two proglymnasmata were the most extensive and challenging, because they expected the student to draw upon all the earlier forms to compose a work not only structured carefully but also displaying a variety of tones and viewpoints. These final exercises were the θεσίς, or arguing of a general proposition (a frequently quoted example is the question, “Should a man marry?”), and the νομοῦ εἰσφορά or proposal to accept or reject a piece of legislation. Models of the latter reveal that the student argued for or against an ancient law, not a contemporary one. Having mastered all of these shorter forms of composition, the student — now an adolescent and working in the orator’s school — was ready to take on the declamatio.

Aelian, like every other ancient student of rhetoric, mastered the proglymnasmata at an early age. The pages of his miscellany furnish matter for such exercises in the form of exempla and chreiai. But such matter could have been furnished by any competent grammarian in a classroom setting. In the Varia Historia, Aelian structures many of the individual chapters according to proglymnasmatic forms, especially those of the earlier
exercises: μύθος, διήγησις, χρεία, and γνώμη. In so doing, he may have attempted to provide his reader with rhetorical as well as moral paradigms (cf. Anderson [1993: 191] on the sophistic use of *progymnasmata* as literature).

We may begin a consideration of Aelian’s *progymnasmata* with the μύθος or fable. Aelian has not included much material in the *Varia Historia* which ranks formally as fable. I have suggested above that the tone given the animal chapters (*VH* 1.1-1.15) approximates that of Aesopic fable. But in progymnasmatic terms we may consider 10.5:

Φρύγιος οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἐστι γὰρ Αἰσθήτου τοῦ Φρυγίου. ὁ δὲ λόγος φησὶ τὴν ἑν, ἐὰν τὴς ἡμείᾳ αὐτῆς, βοῶν καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως· οὔτε γὰρ ἐρία ἐξειν οὔτε γάλα οὔτε ἄλλα τι πλὴν τῶν κρέων. παραχρῆμα οὖν ἄνειροπολεῖν τὸν θάνατον, εἰδώταν εἰς τι τοῖς χρησμοῦνις αὐτῆ πέσικε λυστηλῆς εἶναι. ἐόικας δὲ τῇ ὑ τῇ Αἰσθήτῳ οἱ τύραννοι ὑποτεύνοντες καὶ δεδοκίτες πάντας ἰσασι γὰρ ὃτι ὡσπερ οὖν αἱ ὁδεύκουσι καὶ ἐκεῖνοι τὴν ψυχήν πάσιν.

This is a Phrygian tale, for it belongs to Aesop the Phrygian. If someone grabs hold of a pig, it squeals with very good reason. For it has neither wool nor milk nor anything else except its flesh. It immediately predicts its own death, knowing for what reason it is valued by those who are about to make use of it. Tyrants, in suspecting and fearing everything, are like Aesop’s pig. They know that they, just like swine, are mortally accountable to everyone.

Aelian’s fable follows Theon’s structure to the letter. At *Progymnasmata* 73.4, Theon discusses opening and closing formulae for fables:

καλοῦνται δὲ Αἰσθήτου καὶ Λιβυστικοῦ ἡ Συβαριτικῆς τε καὶ Φρυγίου καὶ Κυπριανοῦ καὶ Κυρικοῦ καὶ Αἴγυπτος καὶ Κύπριος· τούτων δὲ πάντων μία ἐστὶ πρὸς ἄλληλους διαφορὰ, τὸ προσκείμενον αὐτῶν ἐκάστου ἴδιον γένος, οἷον Αἰσθήτου ἔτειν, ἡ Λίβυς ἄνηρ ἡ Συβαρίτης, ἡ Κύπρια γυνὴ …. ἐπιλέγομεν δὲ ὅδε, ὅταν μῦθου ῥηθέντος ἐοικότα τι νῦν γνωμικόν αὐτῷ λόγον ἐπισειρώμεν κομίζειν.

[Fables] are called Aesopian, Libyan, Sybaritic, Phrygian, Cilician, Carian, Egyptian and Cyprian. You can distinguish them only by indicating each one’s origin, for example “Aesop said,” or “a Libyan said” or “a Sybarite said” or “a woman of Cyprus said,” and so on. We tack on a moral when the fable is done, some statement which explains it.

Aelian, true to form, identifies his fable’s origin and adds the moral.
Aelian's fidelity to the progymnasmatic form becomes clearer when we compare his fable to that of another miscellanist. Gellius narrates a fable at *NA* 2.29. He too begins with a statement of origin (*Aesopus ille e Phrygia fabulator...*) and adds his gnomic moral. However, before Gellius begins the story he analyzes the particular virtues of both Aesop and the parable form of instruction. After the moral of the fable, Gellius goes on to quote a similar sentiment from the *Satirae* of Ennius. He is, in other words, interested in other material besides the correct rendition of the fable, while Aelian refrains from editorializing once the fable form has been correctly rendered.

*Varia Historia* 14.34 presents material which seems to begin as a fable, this time identified as an Egyptian tale:

> Αἰγύπτιοι φασὶ παρ' Ἑρμοῦ τὰ νόμιμα ἐκμουσωθήναι· οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐκαστοὶ τὰ παρ' ἑαυτοῖς σειμνύειν προήρημαί. δικασταί δὲ τὸ ἀρχαῖον παρ' Αἰγυπτίως οἱ ιέρεις ἦσαν· ἢν δὲ τούτων ἄρχων ὁ πρεσβύτατος, καὶ ἑδίκαζεν ἅπαντας. ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναι δικαίοτατον ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀφειδέστατον. εἰς δὲ καὶ ἄγαλμα περὶ τὸν αὐχένα ἐκ σαπφείρου λίθου, καὶ ἐκαλεῖτο τὸ ἄγαλμα Ἀλῆθεια. ἔγω δὲ ἡξίουν μὴ λίθου πεποιημένην καὶ εἰκασμένην τὴν Ἀλῆθείαν περιφέρειν τὸν δικαστὴν, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχειν αὐτήν.

Egyptians say that their laws were taught to them by Hermes. Thus have all nations chosen to glorify their own customs. In ancient times the priests among the Egyptians were judges. The oldest priest was their leader, and he passed judgment upon them all. It was necessary that he be the most righteous and the most merciless of men. He wore around his neck an ornament made of lapis lazuli. It was called Truth. I thought that a judge ought to wear Truth as an ornament within his very soul, not as an image formed out of a stone and likened to truth.

The opening statement of origin and the closing moral point to Aelian's intention to use fable form for this material. However, Diodorus Siculus had used this information at 1.78.6 of his history. This suggests either that Diodorus drew some of his data from fable literature, or that Aelian is recasting a legitimate νόμιμον in fable form. Given the ironic
tone of Aelian’s moral, the latter option seems to carry more weight. We might add to the
discussion of fables in Aelian a chapter in which Aelian models the use of a fable. *VH* 9.18
presents Themistocles likening his personal situation to an oak tree, telescoping the
narrative down to a *chreia*-sized anecdote.

Aelian’s *χρεῖοι* have been examined above, and conform to the progymnasmatic
models. However, given the widespread popularity of this form in Imperial authors, we
might get a clearer view of Aelian’s use of *progymnasmata* by considering his *διηγήσεις*. These include, but are not limited to, anecdote. We may here consider the anecdote a
subspecies of *διηγήσεις*, pared down to focus upon one event. As a school exercise the
*διηγήσεις* could be drawn from a variety of literary sources, including drama, history, and
poetry. That is, it need not be a true story, but it did have to be one found in the literary
tradition. Aelian clearly prefers that the material he includes in his miscellany be true or at
least descriptive of the truth. But in the case of *VH* 3.18, the story of Silenus and Midas,
Aelian narrates at length material which, in concluding, he warns is probably untrue. Why
then does he narrate it at all? Evidently *VH* 3.18 is meant to exemplify a *διηγήσεις*, and in
this case a well-known one as well. Theon in describing the ancient exemplars of the
*progymnasmata* had referred to Theopompus’ account of Silenus as though it were as
familiar to his reader as were Plato’s mythic narratives (*Prog*. 66). At *VH* 3.18 Aelian
begins and ends his account of Silenus and Midas by quoting Theopompus as his source.
This *διηγήσεις* is much longer than any of Aelian’s anecdotal chapters and almost purely
descriptive. It discusses a Utopia, telling of a land far away from the known world,
inhabited by wonderful beings, and endowed with amazing natural wonders (cf. Aalders
1978: 317-327). The chapter’s contents are discrepant in terms of Aelian’s other material, for although Theopompus’ piece can be read as allegory Aelian makes no attempt here to direct the reader toward any moral or parabolic message, as he does so frequently elsewhere. If we accept the chapter as offering a rhetorical rather than a moral model, we may be closer to Aelian’s purpose here. Even if he saw the primary value for the \textit{miscellany} in the form itself, he certainly was aware of the readability of the piece as one adding some appeal and variety to the collection. The δηγησις of \textit{VH} 3.18 is μυθική, according to Hermogenes’ division. The following chapter, \textit{VH} 3.19, presents a δηγησις which is ἰδιωτικόν, dealing with a private individual. It is in fact the story of Aristotle’s confrontation with Plato, discussed above as an anecdote. Here we may note the manner in which its more detailed and carefully written form (Düring 1957: 320) balances the mythic δηγησις which precedes it.

In the \textit{Varia Historia} Aelian does not give examples of all twelve \textit{progymnasmata}. Although there is a fine and succinct σφυκρις at \textit{VH} 3.16, the dramatic προσωποποιία and the two composite forms of θέσις and εἰσφορά νόμου would have required much space and argumentation. Aelian, as we have seen, prefers working in miniature. But we may now define the longer chapters as cast in this progymnasmatic mold. The sketch of the life of Aspasia at \textit{VH} 12.1 must be interpreted in this way. It is biographic, but its form follows almost to the letter the encomium form. A glance at Libanius’ sample encomium of Odysseus, for example (\textit{Prog.} 8.2), reveals the same structure, the same tone and, in fact, approximately the same level of detail as Aelian employs.
So with the *ecphrasis*, especially that of Tempe. Theon (*Prog. 65*) mentions Theopompus’ *Tempe-ecphrasis* as a particularly fine canonic specimen of this exercise. Although Aelian does not mention Theopompus as a source at *VH 3.1*, he may be drawing upon the historian’s stylistic reputation. Aelian at *VH 3.1* has in fact no reason to shift the onus of reliability from himself by quoting an authority, for there is nothing unbelievable or contrary to reason in his description of Tempe’s scenery as was the case with Theopompus’ *Silenus-διήγησις*. Nor is it necessary to assume that Aelian has here compiled Theopompus directly. Aelian’s introductory comment suggests a consciously instructional purpose in this chapter:

> φέρε οὖν καὶ τά καλούμενα Τέμπη τά Θετταλικά διαγράφομεν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ διαιπλάσωμεν ὑμολόγηται γὰρ καὶ ὁ λόγος, ἐὰν ἔχῃ δύναμιν φραστικήν, μηδὲν ἀσθενέστερον δόσα βούλεται δεικνύαι τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῶν κατὰ χειρουργίαν δεινῶν.

*Come then, let us paint and model with words an image of the valley in Thessaly known as Tempe. For language, if it have an expressive capacity, is no less capable than the plastic arts of depicting all it seeks to convey.*

Two comments added to the *ecphrasis* of Atalanta’s grove in *VH 13.1* likewise betray some pedagogic purpose on Aelian’s part. The first occurs at the beginning of the description of Atalanta’s grotto:

> τὶ γάρ ἡμᾶς λυπεῖ καὶ ἄντρον Ἀταλάντης ἀκούσαι, ὡς τὸ τῆς Καλυψοῦ τὸν ἐν Ὅμηρῳ;

*What harm is there in hearing of the cave of Atalanta any more than of the cave of Calypso in Homer?*

And again, as Aelian undertakes to describe Atalanta herself,

> φέρε δὲ καὶ τὸ εἴδος αὐτῆς, εἰ τι μὴ λυπεῖ, διαγράφομεν ὑμολόγηται δὲ οὐδὲν, ἐπεὶ καὶ ξυ τούτων προσγένοιτ’ ἐν λόγων τε ἐμπειρίᾳ καὶ τέχνη.

*Come then, if there is no harm in it, let us describe her beauty. And there is no harm in it, since even from these things arise skill and dexterity in narration.*
Judging from the cases in which Aelian consciously structures his material on progymnasmatic form, I would suggest that along with the models of behavior and instances of exegesis of the literary tradition, Aelian is offering his reader rhetorical paradigms as well. For a man whom the Suda remembers as μελιγλωσσος (above, pp. 16-17), the desire to present fine writing in forms relevant to students and former students of rhetoric is not surprising. Thus variety of matter and of rhetorical reworking contribute to the varietas of this miscellany.

*Αφέλεια and the Varia Historia*

In the prologue to his *De natura animalium* Aelian added style to scholarship in describing his achievement in this work.

> ἔγω δε ἐμαυτῷ ταῦτα δοσα οἶνον τε ἦν ἀθροίσας καὶ περιβαλών αὐτοῖς τὴν συνήθη λέξιν, κειμήλιον οὐ ἄσπούδαστον ἐκπονήσαι πεπίστευκα.

*Having gathered all the information I could and having expressed it in everyday language, I am fully confident that I have brought forth with much labor a worthy keepsake.*

Aelian closes his prologue by requesting the reader to find his work praiseworthy both for its learned content and for its style.

What was this style which, Aelian suggests, formed one of his claims upon the reader’s attention? Philostratus defines it in the biographical sketch he devotes to Aelian as ἀφέλεια, simplicity:

> ἥ μὲν ἐπίπαν ἰδέα τοῦ ἀνδρός ἀφέλεια προσβάλλουσα τι τῆς Νικοστράτου ὄρας, ἥ δὲ ἐνίοτε, πρὸς Δίωνα ὀρέα καὶ τὸν ἐκείνου τόνον.

*The general impression of his style was one of simplicity, an unaffectedness which contributed an element of charm like that of Nicostratus. Sometimes it had something of the quality of the style and intensity of Dio.* (VS 624)
We have none of Nicostratus’ work with which to make the comparison. He was a contemporary of Philostratus, mentioned in Hermogenes and provided by the Suda with a short biographical sketch. According to Hermogenes, Nicostratus’ style was similar to that of Xenophon and of Aeschines (Id. 329), while the Suda lists among his many works mythological collections, *ecphraseis* of art objects, and epistolography, showing some overlap with subjects treated by both Philostratus and Aelian. Athenaeus, in a passage dealing with music performed at symposia, identifies ἀφέλεια as a quality found in the poems of Alcaeus and Anacreon and in the old Attic scolia (I5.49). Dionysius of Halicarnassus associated it with the work of Lysias (Isoc. 16.15), Hermogenes with the women and slaves in Menander and with the simple country people in Theocritus:

\[
\text{ἔννοιαι τοίνυν εἰσίν ἀφέλειας ἀπλῶς μὲν εἰπεῖν αἱ καθαραί· αἱ γὰρ ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων κοιναὶ καὶ εἰς πάντας ἀνελθοῦσαι ἦ δόξαιαι ἀνελθεῖν καὶ μηδὲν ἐχουσαι βαθὺ μηδὲ περινευμένου δῆλον ὡς ἀφελεῖς ἄν εἴσαν ἠμῖν καὶ καθαραί ... ἰδίως δ’ ἄν λέγοιντο ἀφελεῖς αἱ τῶν ἀπλάτων ἠθῶν καὶ ὑπὸ τι νηπίων.}
\]

*Sincere thoughts simply expressed are the matter of ἀφέλεια. Those common sentiments of us all, which have occurred or seem to have occurred to everyone, with nothing deep, artificial, or contrived — these clearly would be ἀφελεῖς, these would be sincere ... On an individual level, these would be the sentiments of simple and of childlike people. (Id. 322).*

Hermogenes goes on to define its users as people whose thoughts are pedestrian and innocent, who speak of plants and animals (Id. 324.11-325.19) in the “leicht verständliche Sprache einfacher, unverstellter Menschen” (Hagedorn 1964: 59).

If this style seems particularly associated with private individuals committed to plain speaking and with a self-consciously non-rhetorical stance, it can also be associated with an expository prose designed to convey information without nuance or suggestion. In Schmid’s analysis it is the συγγραφικός λόγος, “composition style,” a rhetorically neutral
medium marked by the lack of periodic structure, digression, metaphor and ethopoeia (1893 vol 5: 1-2). We might on the whole consider the style content-oriented, non-rhetorical, and conveying the tone of a moral, sincere, and unaffected speaker.

For Aelian, this style, the συνήφης λέξις referred to in the prologue to the *De natura animalium*, represents the language of everyday written discourse (Lukinovich and Morand 1991: xvi). But we might also consider it the language of memoirs. Here the ὀφελής quality of Xenophon’s work may be playing a role in the stylistic assessment. As the style of memoirs, ὀφελήσι would be likewise suited to the miscellany. In fact Gellius, too, displays a similar straightforward, unornamented prose in the *Noctes Atticae* (cf. Steinmetz 1982: 287).

Aelian’s ὀφελήσι corresponds almost exactly with Russell’s assessment of its “arch naïveté and nursery syntax” (1964:160 ap. Reardon 1971: 226 n. 98); but this does not justify our dismissing the man himself as simpleminded. Aelian uses a style characterized by ὀφελήσι because he wants to convey information in a very clear and unmistakable fashion to a reader conceived as attending to it in a sincere and unassuming way: a child, or an adult who can remember the educational experience he went through as a child and can still respond with sympathy to Aelian’s protreptic and patronizing tone.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

Unless otherwise stated, abbreviations of titles of ancient works follow the usage of the second edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Please note the following:


With the exception of Aelian’s *Varia Historia*, all Greek works cited above are from the editions contained in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.


---. 1918. ibid. 75: 95-127.


