

2.2. **How history-writing “manipulates” letter-writing**

In his portrait of Seneca, Tacitus does not seem to be interested in mentioning the philosopher as a literary author (but see *ann* 12.8.2). In fact, the historian never characterizes Seneca as a letter-writer. However, Ker shows how Tacitus, within and even beyond depicting Seneca in his historiographical writings, “appropriated many words, phrases, colors, and thoughts from the writings of Seneca ... Tacitus makes intertextual allusions to Seneca that are not robotic but creative, integrating Seneca’s language and thought into his own work” (p. 314). Such a literary principle of an imitative remodeling is reflected by Seneca himself (*ep mor* 84.5). How does Tacitus make sense of it? In various Tacitean writings, for instance, *ep mor* 70 is echoed and remodeled (see *ann* 15.57 and *ep mor* 70.19ff.; *ann* 15.61f. and *ep mor* 70.5, 27) without being mentioned as such. Ker even goes so far as to claim that “Tacitus infuses his Senecan episodes with the complexity of Seneca’s writing, both as a stylistic and conceptual reservoir and as a form of communication that served as a component of the historical Seneca’s actions” (p. 316). *Ep mor* 70, which reflects the “different factors influencing one’s deliberation about suicide” (J. Ker, p. 324), certainly becomes important for how Tacitus depicts the report of Seneca’s *exitus* (*ann* 15.61f.; *ep mor* 70.5, 27). In *ann* 15.62.1, it is not only Seneca’s literary work as such but rather his “life and ... the lessons of his writings” that Tacitus alludes to as an exemplar (J. Ker, p. 324).

Moreover, Tacitus provides a variety of allusions to Seneca’s writing without quoting them or making them explicitly visible to his readers. One reason for this must be that Tacitus does not want to quote literary works since he considers them to be already known to the public. In *ann* 15.63.3 Tacitus explains this very phenomenon to his readers: instead of reciting the ultimate discourse Seneca dictates to his secretaries shortly before his death, Tacitus refrains “from modifying” since it “has been given to the public in his own words” (… *in vulgus edita eius verbis invertere supersedeo*). As indicated earlier, Luke alludes several times to Pauline letters in and beyond Acts 20:18ff. We could even see in the very end of Acts, in 28:31 (παρρησία) an echo of Paul’s language used in Philippians (Phil 1:20; but also: 2 Cor 3:12; 7:4). In terms of semantics and specific motifs, Paul’s letter to the Philippians

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20 “Epistula” only occurs 57 times in the Tacitean corpus – see D. R. Blackman/G. G. Betts (ed.), *Concordantia Tacitea*, 504 – from which 13 references are to be found in the Annals (1.30.4; 1.36.3; 2.26.2; 2.70.2; 2.78.1; 3.44.3; 3.59.2; 4.34.5; 4.70.1; 5.2.2; 6.2.3; 6.24.1; 16.8.1).

21 I mean literary works except historiography here, which Tacitus uses and quotes as “sources” and competitive forerunners, see F. Rusticus above.