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Dinter, Martin T.; Reitz-Joosse, Bettina

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Martin T. Dinter*, Bettina Reitz-Joosse*
Introduction

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Abstract: This introduction outlines the meaning of ‘intermediality’, both with respect to the prefix ‘inter’, which does not only hint at interactions ‘between’ media but also at commentary about and phenomena within media, as well as to the concept of ‘media(lity)’. In so doing, it explains and critiques, for those new to intermedial analysis, the major schools of thought which define this field, drawing on Rajewsky, Elleström, Bruhn, Wolf, and their peers. It also demonstrates why intermediality is a useful framework for Classics research using Roman comedy as a case study, and contains chapter summaries for the special issue as a whole.

Keywords: Intermediality, Medialities, Media, Medial theory, literature survey, introduction

The purpose of this special issue is to test and establish intermediality as a theoretical framework for the study of the ancient world in general, and ancient literature in particular. In recent years, intermediality has been studied from a variety of angles and in just about every imaginable context: from guidebooks and novels to television programmes and musical symphonies.¹ In this special issue, we explicitly address and problematise the historical dimensions and cultural specificities of intermediality, by investigating its manifold manifestations in ancient Roman literature – something that has hardly been attempted to date.² As the individual contributions demonstrate, viewing ancient texts through an intermedial lens not only allows us to test and refine the instrumentarium of intermediality from a historical perspective, but also opens up new insights about the literary design of ancient texts, their contemporary reception, and their cultural context.

We begin this introduction with a short overview of intermediality theory, focusing in particular on the range of definitions available for both ‘intermediality’ and ‘medium’, as well as on the implications of those definitions. We then

¹ See respectively Ryan 2010, 21; Baelo Allué 2007, 148; Voigts 2015, 311; Dayan 2018.

² Exceptions include Ambühl 2016a; Dinter 2011, 2013a, 2013b, and 2013c; Bettenworth 2016.

***Corresponding authors:** Martin T. Dinter, E-Mail: martin.dinter@kcl.ac.uk;
Bettina Reitz-Joosse, E-Mail: b.l.reitz-joosse@rug.nl

turn specifically to intermediality in ancient literary texts, reflecting briefly on the various ways in which Roman literature is able to create connections between itself and other media, and on the specific challenges and affordances of analysing intermediality in Roman literature. Finally, we offer short summaries of individual contributions, paying particular attention to the particular use and value of intermedial theory in each article.

1 Defining Intermediality

An influential definition of intermediality, offered by Rajewsky, characterises intermediality as a catch-all category for phenomena which cross the borders between media and are accordingly – as the prefix *inter* indicates – located in some way or other between media.³ Such an interpretation of ‘intermediality’ also lies at the heart of Elleström’s declaration that intermediality involves ‘crossing borders’ and ‘bridging gaps’, and of Pethő’s perception of intermediality as ‘something that “happens” in-between media rather than rather than simply exists within a given signification’.⁴

Not all scholars, however, agree with the assumption that intermediality is only to be found in the liminal space ‘between’ media. As Bruhn observes in a study focusing specifically on intermediality in literary texts:

The prefix ‘inter’ [seems to restrict] the object of study to a specific, limited group of texts, as opposed to the ‘normal’, ‘pure’, or ‘monomedial’ phenomena. [...] all texts, including literary texts, inevitably reflect a mixed constellation. Mixedness characterises all medialities and all specific texts. Mixedness comes first, so to speak: the monomedial purity of any specific medial object is the result of an active purification.

(Bruhn 2016, 14–15)⁵

Both types of approach to intermediality are relevant to our project. We acknowledge the essential medial ‘mixedness’ of ancient texts that Bruhn stresses, and

³ Rajewsky 2002, 12. For her response to critiques of this type of definition, see also Rajewsky 2010.

⁴ Elleström 2010, 38; Pethő 2011, 1.

⁵ Jensen 2016 likewise challenges the idea that intermediality has to take place ‘between’ media by extending its definition into three parts. He suggests that while many intermedial interactions do indeed occur when different media are simultaneously deployed, they are not solely catalysed by reactions and correspondences between these media: the mere co-existence of different media in a single product is also a type of ‘intermediality’, as is any commentary on the relationships shared by various media.

therefore the universal applicability of intermedial approaches to literary texts. However, the fact remains that comparatively clear instances of medial border-crossing (such as ekphrases or quotations from different types of medial products such as inscriptions), and conscious reflections on such crossings in literary texts, offer, for the contributors to this volume, the most fertile material for exploring intermediality in the Roman literary cosmos.

While the above debate concerns the significance of ‘inter’ in ‘intermediality’, the second half of the term – ‘media(lity)’ – is equally contested. Wolf conceives of a ‘medium’ as ‘a conventionally and culturally distinct means of communication, specified not only by particular technical or institutional channels [...] but primarily by the use of one or more semiotic systems in the public transmission of contents.’⁶ In Wolf’s terms, therefore, the medium of a novel is ‘literature’, while the ‘book’ itself would be a specific ‘channel of communication’ and instead categorised as a ‘sub-medium’. The key factor differentiating one medium from another is its semiotic system, that is, the collection of signs by which it generates meaning. As a result, ‘literature’, which is formed out of letters of the alphabet arranged in recognisable patterns, is distinct from ‘music’, which is composed of sound units varying in pitch, volume, and tone. The building-blocks of ‘visual art’, which range from colour to texture and shape, likewise distinguish it as a medium of its own.

Media are not, however, always separated into categories based on the signs upon which they rely. Another school of thought, propounded by Jensen, views media as ‘chronological-thematic’, dividing them into media of the first, second, or third degree according to their complexity. For example, handwriting is a medium of the first degree because it is small-scale and rarely conveyed through media other than that of the original writing-paper, while another form of writing – the newspaper – is a second-degree medium, as it converts typewritten or handwritten reports into print and can therefore be disseminated widely as well as impersonally to a diverse audience. Third-degree media (also sometimes called ‘metamedia’),⁷ are tools which enable media to be transformed, combined, and interactively received (such as a personal computer, upon which writing can be performed but also downloaded, altered, and forwarded, not to mention converted into videos and sound clips).⁸

⁶ Wolf 2011, 2. Cf. Wolf 1999, 40 and Schaefer 1997, 216 on medial approaches in philological analysis and thought.

⁷ Jensen 2011.

⁸ Jensen 2010, 84 has recently added to this tripartite division by noting that media of the fourth degree now exist in the form of ‘ubiquitous computing’: communication is no longer used merely to depict objects, but rather embedded into the objects themselves. The human body is one such

In both Wolf's and Jensen's schemata, media are large-scale phenomena: 'writing' and 'literature' constitute categories containing a near-infinite variety of individual medial products. Elleström, by contrast, advances a small-scale approach to this concept by dividing a 'medium' into three complementary aspects: basic, qualified, and technical media.⁹ The basic medium is the main element which qualifies an object as 'communicative' to begin with: examples include image, word (either written or spoken), and sound. A qualified medium is the means by which a basic medium is expressed, and can be understood in broad terms as the 'art form': poetry, dance, painting, and sculpture. The technical medium corresponds most closely to the artistic understanding of the word medium in that it refers to the materials which 'realise' and 'display' basic and qualified media. The technical medium of a letter is the paper, and that of a statue might be marble, metal, or gold.¹⁰

These three sets of ideas about media are not competitive but cumulative; they can be used fruitfully in combination so as to allow for an in-depth analysis of a particular medial product. Wolf acknowledges the value of working with flexible definitions by allowing for a 'plurality of possible uses of the concept "medium" in the study of literature.' In his view, for example, drama could potentially be looked at as an 'individual medium, a literary sub-medium or as a plurimedial form of representation'.¹¹ To delve further into this example, we might consider the numerous media which make up a Roman comedy. It belongs to the medium of 'literature' in Wolf's framework, for even though performed plays harness the visual medium for communication and Roman comedies historically consisted of a combination of spoken and sung elements, in the only form in which they have been preserved to the present, the semiotic system of Roman comedies consists primarily of letters, both those written for readers and those pronounced for spectators. The specific genres to which it belongs – *palliata* or *togata* – can then be thought of as its sub-media. Jensen's and Elleström's conceptualisations help us understand exactly how Roman comedies are plurimedial. According to the former a modern television broadcast of a Roman comedy would be a second-degree medium, since it is neither small-scale like a first-degree medium nor interactive like a third-degree medium. Added to these possibilities are Elleström's classifications, which further divide a Roman comedy into the basic media of spoken word, image, and sound, whether of music or spoken

object – the final frontier of medial communication – which, as science progresses, might soon sprout screens, transmitters, and keyboards of its own.

⁹ Elleström 2010, 12.

¹⁰ Our interpretation of Elleström's medial theory corresponds to that of Bruhn 2016, 19–20.

¹¹ Wolf 2011, 4.

lines. Depending on the emphasis of the narrative, one of these media might be emphasised more than the others. In all cases, however, the comedy's qualified medium would be drama, and the technical medium the papyrus, manuscript, printed book, disc, or other storage mechanism upon which the play's content is stored, along with the mediating channel of the stage which 'frames' the action in the same way as a modern computer or television screen.

'Inter' and 'medium' are not the only definitional bones which scholars must chew on when considering intermediality. The term 'mediality' has been identified as an alternative to 'medium', as it places more emphasis on what the process of mediation involves rather than on what exactly individual media might be. Bruhn recommends that the concept of mediality be used instead of medium, as the former is 'more closely related to the process of mediation in communicative situations', whereas the latter carries with it 'implied conceptual connotations of object-hood.'¹² Not all interpreters, however, conceive of mediality as a replacement for the word 'medium'. In Voigts' view, mediality instead refers to 'a set of characteristics that define a medium, i. e. the specific technical, textual, but also cultural conditions of various media.'¹³ When used in this manner, medialities are synonymous with 'media forms and protocols': in the case of a comic performance, elements contributing to mediality might include comic costumes or slapstick routines.

2 Forms of Intermediality in Roman Literature

Scholars have often distinguished three groups of intermedial phenomena:¹⁴ medial transposition (*Medienwechsel*), also sometimes referred to as medial transformation; media combination (*Medienkombination*), and finally intermedial references (*intermediale Bezüge*). Examples of medial transpositions are the film adaptation of a novel, or, to offer an ancient example, the translation of a literary narrative into a visual medium, as in the case of the famous Odyssey frieze on the Esquiline.¹⁵ Media combinations (also called multimedia or mixed-media forms) occur when two or more media together make up a particular form: con-

¹² Bruhn 2016, 16.

¹³ Voigts 2015, 307.

¹⁴ Rajewsky 2010, 55.

¹⁵ Vatican Museum Cat. 41013, 41016, 41024, 41026. On this frieze, which date to the middle of the first century BC and originally consisted of eleven panels on the life of Odysseus, see Pollitt 1986, 185–187.

temporary examples include musicals or comics, and ancient examples range from illustrated manuscripts to drama. Finally, intermedial connections occur when one medium references another: for example, a fresco representing a flute player references music in visual language. In the case of literature, some of the most well-known examples include ekphrases or the evocation of inscriptions in literary texts.

The chapters in this special issue all attempt to tease out the specific ‘how’ and ‘why’ of such intermedial phenomena encountered in and around Roman literary texts. This turns out to be a productive though deeply challenging exercise. The texts analysed were produced in a world populated by very different media from those surrounding us today, in terms of their materiality, mode of production, audience, and cultural associations. Our instinctive understanding of their valences is therefore necessarily both limited and skewed. For example, what Andersen has called literature’s ‘body language’ – i. e. the ways in which literature was ‘embodied’ in antiquity in terms of handwriting, format, price, or in terms of performance, voice, setting etc. – is extremely difficult for us to recover, even though these aspects all contribute to the intermedial impact of ancient literature.¹⁶

Confronting such challenges, this volume’s contributors access the valences of ancient media by tracing *intermedial* constellations in ancient texts. At the fault-lines between media, in the grey area where one medium attempts to evoke another or where transitions from one medium to another take place, ancient media gain a subtle plasticity which can otherwise be difficult to access. Our task is therefore to tease out these subtle relationships and gradations between media. Mannerling, for example, outlines Roman authors’ reflections on the materiality of letters, which receives particular emphasis and detail precisely where it is only fictionalized and simulated. Tischer’s analyses show the ‘oral’ ring of quotations in Latin prose writing, while Spielberg and Palmer both demonstrate how authors problematize the authoritative power of inscriptions. While we have to take into account that literary representations and encapsulations of other medial products are often dominated by a construction of the superiority of the written literary text (as Dinter and Spielberg reveal), attentive examination of intermedial phenomena in Roman authors’ works can nevertheless contribute to fleshing out the medial universe of ancient Rome’s writers, readers, viewers and listeners. It can also show Roman authors’ literary techniques and ambitions in a new light, allowing for fresh insights into individual texts and media, as demonstrated by the following summaries of this volume’s chapters.

16 Andersen 2015, 82.

Mannering considers intermedial phenomena in three prominent Roman letter-writers: Cicero, Horace, and Ovid. He identifies and analyses key elements in these authors' epistles – oral quotations, handwriting, and human tear stains – by demonstrating their role as intermedial connections. Accordingly, each element interacts with one of our senses: oral quotations engage with hearing, since they reintroduce the characteristics of spoken discourse into written reports, while handwriting is visual and necessitates sight for recognition and interpretation. Tear-stains and smudges on papyrus, both actual in Cicero's original missives and purported in Horace's and Ovid's literary letters, are in turn geared towards the recipient's sense of touch, since they alter the letter's surface. Mannering also explores how these intermedial connections have different implications upon prose and poetry epistles, concluding that they enable the former to transcend the very category of 'letter', but instead confine the latter within the epistolary genre by reaffirming their material qualities. Through this analysis, Mannering shows how intermedial theory enhances the significance accorded to narrative and epistolarity while simultaneously showcasing their constituent communicative elements. Moreover, he sensitises us to the epistolographic and material qualities of letters by emphasising the involvement of eyes, ears and hands in interpreting this source type.

By shining a spotlight on quotation practices in Latin prose, **Tischer** picks up on these connections between medium, communication, and genre. Her analysis, which spans Cicero, Suetonius, Gellius, and Servius, explores the role of literary quotations as covert intermedial representations bridging verbal and written texts. In investigating this phenomenon, she dissects the effects of verbal introduction formulae (e. g. *dixit*), demonstrative pronouns (*illud*, *haec*), and conjunctions (*ut*, *sicut*), while also suggesting how we should approach texts in which quotes are 'shaped' and 'staged' as oral situations rather than explicitly marked as such. In so doing, she adduces the concepts of 'intermedial reference' and 'intermedial transposition' (or 'remediation') as frameworks for describing the specific ways in which oral and written features influence quotations in Roman literary works. By categorising the 'couplings' of oral and written language as 'basic media', she draws attention to the benefits of reading Classical literature in terms of its own nexus of medialities.

Spielberg investigates one specific prose genre – historiography – for its intermedial connections. When drawing upon historical documents as sources, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus do not always reproduce the information which they contain: they often read these texts 'against the grain', emphasising what they do not say instead of their intended message. These subversions take place in diverse contexts: both where the historians has actually seen the monument in question, as in Thucydides' Peisistratid digression, and where the monument has

not been examined or may not exist as a tangible product, as in Livy's analysis of the 493 BC Latin treaty and Tacitus' discussion of the senate-decrees on Germanicus' funeral. Through these reinterpretations, the sources in question transcend their semiotic function and take on a commemorative significance, which enables them to negotiate the borders between historiography, memory, and authority. Competition with one's literary sources and predecessors is fundamental to ancient historiography, and it is therefore only natural that it should exist between historians and their 'primary sources'. Within the framework of intermedial theory, however, Spielberg argues that this competition does not merely manifest on the level of individual sources, but also more generally in the form of commentary on the commemorative potential of sources. This tussle is complicated by the inability of historiographical intermediality to cross over into a truly multimedial form; an inscription, even if it did exist for the author who cites it, is never actually present within the text itself. Intermedial gestures therefore conjure up another medium 'as if' it were present, but stop short of rendering a historiographical text multimedial.

Livy in his *Ab Urbe Condita* uses the word *monumentum* to denote a range of medial products, from temples and statues to inscriptions and literary works. At times, the boundaries between these items are blurred further through inscriptional intermediality, a literary technique characterised by the intermixing of visual and textual media. **Palmer** traces key manifestations of this technique in Livy by examining how he simultaneously converts inscriptions into text and preserves their defining material attributes. Moreover, she outlines how Livy's inscriptions are often grounded within real-world environments and how, positioned in this way, they invite readers to visualise the epigraphic landscapes of ancient Rome. By following these lines of inquiry, she demonstrates how the specific balance of literary, linguistic, and topographical details in each ekphrasis leaves the reader with a unique impression of individual artefacts, which, depending on the immediate context of their depiction, are presented with more or less veracity and characterised by varying degrees of inscriptionality. In so doing, Palmer teases out the workings of intermediality with an eye upon the details of Livy's language. For example, she points out how he introduces an inscription into his text with the systemic pointer *tabula ... cum indice hoc posita est* (Livy 41.28.8) and how this rare usage of *index* to refer to an inscription foregrounds the visual qualities of the monument.

Dinter complements these articles with an intermedial analysis of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The leitmotif of transformation which runs through the *Metamorphoses* renders it a particularly fertile source for transpositions between media, which are typified and defined. The implications of 'creation' – where a medial product is woven, painted, or sculpted – and human-to-media metamor-

phoses are also outlined along with their effects on the intradiagetic level. These re-readings suggest that intermediality highlights tensions in the narrative and often features as a marker or even a precursor of violence or death. The *Metamorphoses* brim, moreover, with intermedial communication through the processes of weaving, writing, and engraving, the latter of which conforms particularly well with Ovid's vision of his poem as a monument to himself. These diverse manifestations of intermedial phenomena are bound throughout with the thread of 'meta-intermediality', a term referring to instances where Ovid problematises the concept of medial communication and uses interactions involving media as a way to comment metatextually on literary genres, the craft of poetic composition, and the permanence of authorial renown.

Latin battle narrative in prose as well as in poetry exhibits a predominantly visual focus, which manifests not only as the eye of command but also as the gaze of combatants or onlookers. However, a wider range of sensory perceptions also come into play in literary representations – or rather fictional reconstructions – of war, including the sounds and smells of battle. **Ambühl** focuses on the senses of taste and touch, which until now have been relatively neglected in studies of battle narrative. While they are not media in the strict sense, there is room for sensory notions in definitions of mixed media or heteromediality. This chapter analyses gustatory phenomena such as 'biting the dust' (e. g. Hom. *Il.* 2.418) along with tactile experiences such as Jocasta's bare breast being scratched by Poly-nices' armour (Stat. *Theb.* 7). On the one hand, these appeals to sensory perception render the experience of war more tangible for the audience; on the other, they constitute alienating effects which underline the fundamental 'untellability' of war. Such phenomena can be approached not only through the narratological and cognitive concepts of immersion, enactivism, and embodiment, but also interpreted within the specific framework which intermedial theory provides. Conceptual metaphors which apply sensory perceptions to the target domain of language and literature are thus considered for their role within 'associative quotations'. These facilitate the transfer of sensory notions from the text to the audience by introducing altermedial sensory perceptions within literary texts.

Stocks rounds off this special issue by drawing attention to the juncture between intermediality and remembrance. Her examination of the memory sanctions applied to the emperor Domitian after his death, as related by Suetonius, centres on how physical artefacts serve as battlegrounds for the parallel processes of commemoration and censorship, and by extension act as windows from the present into the past. This function is shared by modern video-games, in particular one which Stocks co-designed about Vindolanda, an Imperial-era Roman fort at Hadrian's Wall. By converting that site into an interactive playground and challenging players to solve a fictional murder mystery, this game creates a plau-

sible and user-focalized narrative through which present-day schoolchildren do not merely learn about the past but are challenged to co-create this past through intermedial engagement with it. This format proffers diverse possibilities for shaping memory, since game creators can insert a multitude of objects and texts that appeal to all of the senses, thus inviting players to experience history from a first-person perspective.

We hope that the contributions to this special issue will inspire our readers to experiment with intermedial theory themselves, to apply it to new and different sets of ancient intermedial phenomena – for example beyond the confines of literature – and to explore further the issues that intermedial approaches bring into sharper focus. In this respect, we are grateful to the participants of the Intermediality Workshop (27–28 June 2018), co-organised by the editors, for their engaging and stimulating discussions. This event was hosted by the Morphomata International Center for Advanced Studies and the University of Cologne, and generously supported by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) through their funding of the VENI-project ‘Landscapes of War in Latin Literature’. In addition, a number of external peer reviewers have assisted us speedily and diligently in the editing process – our profound thanks to them. Astrid Khoo has provided valuable assistance with the copyediting and deserves our thanks and praise. Gareth Slack and English Heritage have kindly given permission to reproduce the images used in Claire Stock’s chapter. We are also grateful to the general editors of the *Trends in Classics* journal for accepting this special issue, to Alessia Ferreccio for guiding the manuscript through production, and to the publishing house, De Gruyter, for speedily producing this publication.

Martin T. Dinter, King’s College London
Bettina Reitz-Joosse, University of Groningen