

Handout 1 – Pliny *Ep.* 4.19.2-4 To Calpurnia Hispulla (Aunt)

In addition, this love has given her an interest in literature: she keeps copies of my works to read again and again and even learn by heart. She is so anxious when she knows that I am going to plead in court, and so happy when all is over! (She arranges to be kept informed of the sort of reception and applause I receive, and what verdict I win in the case.) If I am giving a reading she sits behind a curtain near by and greedily drinks in every word of appreciation. **She has even set my verses to music and signs them, to the accompaniment of her lyre, which no musician to teach her but the best of masters, love.**¹

Accedit his studium litterarum, quod ex mei caritate concepit. Meos libellos habet lectitat ediscit etiam. Qua illa sollicitudine cum videor acturus, quanto cum egi gaudio afficitur! Disponit qui nuntient sibi quem assensum quos clamores excitarim, quem eventum iudicii tulerim. Eadem, si quando recito, in proximo discreta velo sedet, laudesque nostras avidissimis auribus excipit. Versus quidem meos cantat etiam formatque cithara non artifice aliquo docente, sed amore qui magister est optimus.

Handout 2 – Pliny *Ep.* 6.4.2-4 To Calpurnia (Wife)

This is a time when I particularly want to be with you, to see with my own eyes whether you are gaining in strength and weight, **and if the pleasures of your holiday and the luxuries of the district are doing you no harm.** Indeed, I should worry when you are away even if you were well, for there are always anxious moments without news of someone one loves dearly, and, as things are, I have the thought of your health as well as your absence to alarm me with fluctuating doubts and fears. I am full of forebodings of every imaginable disaster, and like all nervous people dwell on what I pray fervently will not happen.

*Nunc enim praecipue simul esse cupiebam, ut oculis meis crederem quid viribus quid corpusculo appareres, **ecquid denique secessus voluptates regionisque abundantiam inoffensa transmitteres.** Equidem etiam fortem te non sine cura desiderarem; est enim suspensum et anxium de eo quem ardentissime diligas interdum nihil scire. Nunc vero me cum absentiae tum infirmitatis tuae ratio incerta et varia sollicitudine exterret. Vereor omnia, imaginor omnia, quaeque natura metuentium est, ea maxime mihi quae maxime abominor fingo.*

Handout 3 – Pliny *Ep.* 6.7 To Calpurnia (Wife)

You say that you are feeling my absence very much, and your only comfort when I am not there **is to hold my writings in your hand and often put them in my place by your side.** I like to think that you miss me and find relief in this sort of consolation. I, too, am always reading your letters, and returning to them again and again as if they were new to me – **but this only fans the fire of my longing for you.** If your letters are so dear to me, you can imagine how I delight in your company; do write as often as you can, **although you give me pleasure mingled with pain.**

*Scribis te absentia mea non mediocriter affici unumque habere solacium, **quod pro me libellos meos teneas, saepe etiam in vestigio meo colloces.** Gratum est quod nos requiris, gratum quod his fomentis acquiescis; invicem ego epistulas tuas lectito atque identidem in manus quasi novas sumo. **Sed eo magis ad desiderium tui accendor:** nam cuius litterae tantum*

¹ All translations are from Radice.

habent suavitatis, huius sermonibus quantum dulcedinis inest! Tu tamen quam frequentissime scribe, licet hoc ita me delectet ut torqueat. Vale.

Handout 4 – Pliny *Ep.* 7.4.9 To Pontius about his hendecasyllables

My verses are read and copied, they are even sung, and set to the cithara or lyre by Greeks who have learned Latin out of liking for my little book.

Legitur describitur cantatur etiam, et a Graecis quoque, quos Latine huius libelli amor docuit, nunc cithara nunc lyra personatur.

Handout 5 – Pliny *Ep.* 7.5 To Calpurnia (Wife) – Elegiac features discussed by Antonio Ramírez de Verger (highlighted)

You cannot believe how much **I miss** you. I love you so much, and we are not used to **separations**. So I stay **awake** most of the night thinking of you, and by day I find my feet carrying me (a true word, carrying) to your room at the times I usually visited you; then finding it empty I depart, as **sick and sorrowful** as a lover **locked out**. The only time I am free from this **misery** is when **I am in the court and wearing myself out with my friends' lawsuits**. You can judge then what a life I am leading, when I find my rest in work and **distraction** in troubles and anxiety.

*Incredibile est quanto **desiderio** tui tenear. In causa amor primum, deinde quod non consuevimus **abesse**. Inde est quod magnam noctium partem in imagine tua **vigil** exigo; inde quod interdium, quibus horis te visere solebam, ad diaetam tuam ipsi me, ut verissime dicitur, pedes ducunt; quod denique **aeger et maestus** ac similis **excluso** a vacuo limine recedo. Unum tempus his **tormentis** caret, quo **in foro et amicorum litibus** conteror. Aestima tu, quae vita mea sit, cui requies in labore, in miseria curisque **solacium**. Vale.*

Select Bibliography

- Baeza-Angulo, E. 2015. "Plinio y Calpurnia, un matrimonio elegiaco." *Revista Euphrosyne* 43: 69-82.
- Bodel, John. 2015. "The Publication of Pliny's Letters" In *Pliny the Book-Maker: Betting on Posterity in the Epistles*, edited by Ilaria Marchesi, 144–84. Oxford University Press.
- Carlson, Jacqueline Mary. 2009. *Pliny's Women: Constructing Virtue and Creating Identity in the Roman World*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibson, R., & Morello, R. (2012). *Reading the Letters of Pliny the Younger: An introduction*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- James, S. 2010. "IPSA DIXERAT: WOMEN'S WORDS IN ROMAN LOVE ELEGY." *Phoenix*, 64(3/4), 314-344,473.
- Marchesi, Ilaria. 2008. *The Art of Pliny's Letters: A Poetics of Allusion in the Private Correspondence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morello, Ruth. 2015. "Pliny Book 8: Two Viewpoints and the Pedestrian Reader." In *Pliny the Book-Maker: Betting on Posterity in the Epistles*, edited by Ilaria Marchesi, 144–84. Oxford University Press.
- Shelton, Jo-Ann. 2013. *The Women of Pliny's Letters. Women of the ancient world*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Sherwin-White, A. N. 1985. *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary*. Oxford, UK; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.
- Verger, Antonio Ramírez de. 1997. "Erotic Language in Pliny, Ep. VII 5." *Glotta* 74 (1/2): 114–116.