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PLINY
LETTERS
BOOKS VIII-X
PANEGRICUS



Translated by
BETTY RADICE

PLINY

LETTERS, BOOKS VIII-X

PANEGYRICUS

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WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

BETTY RADICE
藏 书 章



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CONTENTS

LETTERS

Book VIII	2
Book IX	80
Book X	166

PANEGYRICUS	317
-------------	-----

APPENDIX A	549
------------	-----

APPENDIX B	554
------------	-----

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX	557
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BITHYNIA AND PONTUS



C. PLINII CAECILII SECUNDI
EPISTULARUM
LIBER OCTAVUS

I

C. PLINIUS SEPTICIO SUO S.

- 1 ITER commodè explicui, excepto quod quidam ex
meis adversam valetudinem ferventissimis aestibus
2 contraxerunt. Encolpius quidem lector, ille seria
nostra ille deliciae, exasperatis faucibus pulvere
sanguinem reiecit. Quam triste hoc ipsi, quam
acerbum mihi, si is cui omnis ex studiis gratia in-
habilis studiis fuerit! Quis deinde libellos meos sic
3 leget, sic amabit? Quem aures meae sic sequentur?
Sed di laetiora promittunt. Stetit sanguis, resedit
dolor. Praeterea continens ipse, nos solliciti, medici
diligentes. Ad hoc salubritas caeli, secessus quies
tantum salutis quantum otii pollicentur. Vale.

II

C. PLINIUS CALVISIO SUO S.

- 1 ALII in praedia sua proficiscuntur ut locupletiores
revertantur, ego ut pauperior. Vendideram vinde-

¹ Evidently Tifernum. See V. 6. 6: 45-6.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

BOOK VIII

I

TO SEPTICIUS CLARUS

I HAD an easy journey, apart from the fact that some of my people were taken ill in the intense heat. Indeed, my reader Encolpius (the one who is our joy for work or play) found the dust so irritating to his throat that he spat blood, and it will be a sad blow to him and a great loss to me if this makes him unfit for his services to literature when they are his main recommendation. Who else will read and appreciate my efforts or hold my attention as he does? But the gods promise happier things. The haemorrhage has stopped and the pain is less severe; and he is a good patient, we are taking every care of him, and the doctors are attentive. In addition, the healthy climate here¹ and the complete rest and quiet can provide as much for a cure as for a holiday.

II

TO CALVISIUS RUFUS

OTHER people visit their estates to come away richer than before, but I go only to return the

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

mias certatim negotiatoribus ementibus. Invitabat
2 pretium, et quod tunc et quod fore videbatur. Spes
fefellit. Erat expeditum omnibus remittere ae-
qualiter, sed non satis aequum. Mihi autem egre-
gium in primis videtur ut foris ita domi, ut in magnis
ita in parvis, ut in alienis ita in suis agitare iustitiam.
3 Nam si paria peccata, pares etiam laudes. Itaque
omnibus quidem, ne quis " mihi non donatus abiret,"
partem octavam pretii quo quis emerat concessi;
deinde iis, qui amplissimas summas emptionibus
occupaverant, separatim consului. Nam et me magis
4 iuverant, et maius ipsi fecerant damnum. Igitur iis
qui pluris quam decem milibus emerant, ad illam com-
munem et quasi publicam octavam addidi decimam
5 eius summae, qua decem milia excesserant. Vereor
ne parum expresserim: apertius calculo ostendam.
Si qui forte quindecim milibus emerant, hi et quin-
decim milium octavam et quinque milium decimam
6 tulerunt. Praeterea, cum reputarem quosdam ex
debito aliquantum, quosdam aliquid, quosdam nihil
reposuisse, nequaquam verum arbitrabar, quos non
aequasset fides solutionis, hos benignitate remissionis
7 aequari. Rursus ergo iis qui solverant eius quod
solverant decimam remisi. Per hoc enim aptissime

¹ *Aeneid* V. 305.

poorer. I had sold my grape harvest to the dealers, who were eager to buy, when the price quoted at the time was tempting and prospects seemed good. Their hopes were frustrated. It would have been simple to give them all the same rebate, but hardly fair, and I hold the view that one of the most important things in life is to practise justice in private as in public life, in small matters as in great, and apply it to one's own affairs no less than to other people's. For if we say with the Stoics that "all offences are equal" the same applies to merits. Accordingly I returned to everyone an eighth of the sum he had spent so that "none should depart without a gift of mine."¹ Then I made a special provision for those who had invested very large sums in their purchase, since they had been of greater service to me and theirs was the greater loss. I therefore allowed everyone whose purchases had cost him more than 10,000 sesterces a tenth of anything he had spent above the 10,000, in addition to the original eighth which was a sort of general grant.

I am afraid I have put it badly; let me try to make my calculations clearer. Suppose someone had offered the sum of 15,000 sesterces; he would receive an eighth of 15,000, plus a tenth of 5,000. Moreover, in view of the fact that some people had paid down large instalments of what they owed, while others had paid little or nothing, I thought it most unfair to treat them all with the same generosity in granting a rebate when they had not been equally conscientious in discharging their debts. Once more, then, I allowed another tenth of the sum received to those who had paid. This seemed a

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

et in praeteritum singulis pro cuiusque merito gratia referri, et in futurum omnes cum ad emendum tum
8 etiam ad solvendum allici videbantur. Magno mihi seu ratio haec seu facilitas stetit, sed fuit tanti. Nam regione tota et novitas remissionis et forma laudatur. Ex ipsis etiam quos non una, ut dicitur, pertica sed distincte gradatimque tractavi, quanto quis melior et probior, tanto mihi obligatior abiit expertus non esse apud me <ἐν δὲ ἱῇ τιμῇ ἡμὲν κακὸς ἡδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός>.¹ Vale.

III

C. PLINIUS SPARSO SUO S.

1 LIBRUM quem novissime tibi misi, ex omnibus meis vel maxime placere significas. Est eadem opinio
2 cuiusdam eruditissimi. Quo magis adducor ut neutrum falli putem, quia non est credibile utrumque falli, et qui tamen² blandior mihi. Volo enim proxima quaeque absolutissima videri, et ideo iam nunc contra istum librum faveo orationi, quam nuper in publicum dedi communicaturus tecum, ut primum
3 diligentem tabellarium invenero. Erexī expectationem tuam, quam vereor ne destituat oratio in manus sumpta. Interim tamen tamquam placituram (et fortasse placebit) expecta. Vale.

¹ ἐν . . . ἐσθλός ai, om. Mθ.

² tantum Stout.

¹ *Iliad* IX. 319.

suitable way both of expressing my gratitude to each individual according to his past merits, and of encouraging them all not only to buy from me in the future but also to pay their debts.

My system—or my good nature—has cost me a lot, but it has been worth it. The whole district is praising the novelty of my rebate and the way in which it was carried out, and the people I classified and graded instead of measuring all with the same rod, so to speak, have departed feeling obliged to me in proportion to their honest worth and satisfied that I am not a person who “holds in equal honour the wicked and the good.”¹

III

TO JULIUS SPARSUS

You say that the book I sent you the other day has given you more pleasure than any of my other works. A learned friend of mine is of the same opinion, and this encourages me to think that neither of you is mistaken; for it is unlikely that you would both be wrong, and I like to flatter myself. In fact I always want my latest work to be thought my masterpiece; consequently I have turned against the one you have in favour of a speech which I have just published, and which you shall see as soon as I can find someone reliable to bring it. Now I have roused your expectations, but I fear they may be disappointed when you have the speech in your hands. Meanwhile wait for its arrival with the intention of liking it, and you may find you do so after all.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

IV

C. PLINIUS CANINIO SUO S.

1 OPTIME facis, quod bellum Dacicum scribere paras.
Nam quae tam recens tam copiosa tam elata, quae
denique tam poetica et quamquam in verissimis rebus
2 tam fabulosa materia? Dices immissa terris nova
flumina, novos pontes fluminibus iniectiones, insessa
castris montium abrupta, pulsum regia pulsum etiam
vita regem nihil desperantem; super haec actos
bis triumphos, quorum alter ex invicta gente primus,
3 alter novissimus fuit. Una sed maxima difficultas,
quod haec aequare dicendo arduum immensum,
etiam tuo ingenio, quamquam altissime adsurgat et
amplissimis operibus increseat. Non nullus et in illo
labor, ut barbara et fera nomina, in primis regis
4 ipsius, Graecis versibus non resultent. Sed nihil
est quod non arte curaue, si non potest vinci, miti-
getur. Praeterea, si datur Homero et mollia voca-
bula et Graeca ad levitatem versus contrahere ex-
tendere inflectere, cur tibi similis audentia praesertim
5 non delicata sed necessaria non detur? Proinde
iure vatam invocatis dis, et inter deos ipso, cuius res
opera consilia dicturus es, immitte rudentes, pande

¹ Trajan held triumphs in the winters of 102/3 and 106/7 to celebrate the ends of the two Dacian wars. Decebalus King of Dacia died by suicide in 106 after his capital, Sarmizegethusa, was captured. See *Pan.* 17, Dio, LXVIII. 14-15, and the scenes on Trajan's Column.

IV

TO CANINIUS RUFUS

IT is an excellent idea of yours to write about the Dacian war. There is no subject which offers such scope and such a wealth of original material, no subject so poetic and almost legendary although its facts are true. You will describe new rivers set flowing over the land, new bridges built across rivers, and camps clinging to sheer precipices; you will tell of a king driven from his capital and finally to death, but courageous to the end; you will record a double triumph,¹ one the first over a nation hitherto unconquered, the other a final victory.

There is only one difficulty, but a serious one. To find a style of expression worthy of the subject is an immense undertaking, difficult even for a genius like yours, though this is capable of attaining supreme heights and surpasses itself in each magnificent work you have produced. Another problem arises out of the barbaric names, especially that of the king himself where the uncouth sounds will not fit into Greek verse; but every difficulty can be reduced by skill and application even if it cannot be entirely resolved. Besides, if Homer is permitted to contract, lengthen, and modify the flexible syllables of the Greek language to suit the even flow of his verse, why should you be denied a similar licence, especially when it is a necessity and no affectation? So call the gods to your aid, as a poet may, without forgetting that divine hero whose exploits, achievements and wisdom you are going to celebrate; slacken your sheets, spread sail,

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

vela ac, si quando alias, toto ingenio vehere. Cur
6 enim non ego quoque poetice cum poeta? Illud iam
nunc paciscor: prima quaeque ut absolveris mittito,
immo etiam ante quam absolvas, sicut erunt recentia
7 et rudia et adhuc similia nascentibus. Respondebis
non posse perinde carptim ut contexta, perinde
incohata placere ut effecta. Scio. Itaque et a me
aestimabuntur ut coepta, spectabuntur ut membra,
extremamque limam tuam opperientur in scrinio
nostro. Patere hoc me super cetera habere amoris
tui pignus, ut ea quoque norim quae nosse neminem
8 velles. In summa potero fortasse scripta tua magis
probare laudare, quanto illa tardius cautiusque, sed
ipsum te magis amabo magisque laudabo, quanto
celerius et incautius miseris. Vale.

V

C. PLINIUS GEMINO SUO S.

1 GRAVE vulnus Macrinus noster accepit: amisit
uxorem singularis exempli, etiam si olim fuisset.
Vixit cum hac triginta novem annis sine iurgio sine
offensa. Quam illa reverentiam marito suo praestitit,
cum ipsa summam mereretur! quot quantasque
virtutes, ex diversis aetatibus sumptas, collegit et
2 miscuit! Habet quidem Macrinus grande solacium,
quod tantum bonum tam diu tenuit, sed hinc magis

¹ Probably Minicius Macrinus, father of Acilianus mentioned in I. 14.

BOOK VIII. iv. 5-v. 2

and now, if ever, let the full tide of your genius carry you along. (Why shouldn't I be poetical with a poet?)

Now I have a stipulation to make; send me each section in turn as you finish it, or better still send it unfinished in its rough draught as it is first put together. You will object that a collection of incomplete fragments cannot give the same pleasure as the finished whole. But knowing this I shall judge them only as a beginning, examine them as parts of a whole, and keep them in my desk to await your final revision. Give me this further pledge of your affection—let me into the secrets you would prefer no one to know. To sum up, I may perhaps be better able to approve and admire your work if you are slow and cautious about sending it, but I shall love and value yourself the more if you can send it without delays and misgivings.

V

TO ROSIANUS GEMINUS

OUR friend Macrinus¹ has had a terrible blow; he has lost his wife, one who would have been exemplary even in former times, after they had lived together for thirty-nine years without a quarrel or misunderstanding. She always treated her husband with the greatest respect, while deserving the highest regard herself, and she seemed to have assembled in herself the virtues of every stage of life in the highest degree. Macrinus has indeed the great consolation of having possessed such a treasure so long, though

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

exacerbatur quod amisit; nam fruendis voluptatibus
3 crescit carendi dolor. Ero ergo suspensus pro homine amicissimo, dum admittere avocamenta et cicatricem pati possit, quam nihil aequae ac necessitas ipsa et dies longa et satietas doloris inducit. Vale.

VI

C. PLINIUS MONTANO SUO S.

- 1 COGNOVISSE iam ex epistula mea debes, adnotasse me nuper monumentum Pallantis sub hac inscriptione: "Huic senatus ob fidem pietatemque erga patronos ornamenta praetoria decrevit et sestertium centies quinquagies, cuius honore contentus fuit."
2 Postea mihi visum est pretium operae ipsum senatus consultum quaerere. Inveni tam copiosum et effusum, ut ille superbissimus titulus modicus atque etiam demissus videretur. Conferant se misceantque, non dico illi veteres, Africani Achaici Numantini, sed hi proximi Marii Sullae Pompei (nolo progredi
3 longius): infra Pallantis laudes iacebunt. Urbanos qui illa censuerunt putem an miseros? Dicerem urbanos, si senatum deceret urbanitas; miseros, sed nemo tam miser est ut illa cogatur. Ambitio ergo et procedendi libido? Sed quis adeo demens, ut per suum, per publicum dedecus procedere velit in ea

¹ VII. 29.

² P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus, victor over Hannibal in 202 B.C.; L. Mummius Achaicus, captor of Corinth in 146 B.C.; Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus, victor at the siege of Numantia in Spain in 133 B.C.

it is this which makes his loss so hard to bear; for our enjoyment of pleasure increases the pain of deprivation. So I shall continue to be anxious about him, for I love him dearly, until he can permit himself some distraction and allow his wound to heal; nothing can do this but acceptance of the inevitable, lapse of time, and surfeit of grief.

VI

TO MONTANUS

You should have heard from my last letter¹ that I had recently seen a monument to Pallas with this inscription: "To him the Senate decreed in return for his loyal services to his patrons, the insignia of a praetor and the sum of fifteen million sesterces, but he thought fit to accept the distinction only." I thought it worth while afterwards to look up the actual decree of the Senate, and found it so verbose and fulsome in tone that the insolence of this inscription seemed modest and positively humble by comparison. All our national heroes put together—and I don't mean those of the past, with their titles of Africanus, Achaicus, and Numantinus,² but the Marii, Sullas, and Pompeys of recent times, to name no more—would still fall short of Pallas's fame. Am I to suppose this decree expresses the wit or the misery of its authors? Wit is unbecoming to the Senate; and no man's misery need bring him to this extremity. Then was it self-interest or desire for advancement? But who is so crazy as to desire advancement won through his own and his country's