



Latin Transition Primus: Week 11 Reading

Pliny, Epistula IX.6

Our old buddy Pliny the Younger is back with another letter – this time offering his own very different opinions on the chariot races and the Circensian Games. To give you a hint about his perspective, it is likely that were he alive today he'd be a proud user of the term "Sportsball."

C. Plinius Calvisio Suo S.

Omne hoc tempus inter pugillares ac libellos iucundissima quiete transmissi. 'Quemadmodum' inquis 'in urbe potuisti?' Circenses erant, quo genere spectaculi ne levissime quidem teneor. Nihil novum nihil varium, nihil quod non semel spectasse sufficiat. Quo magis miror tot milia virorum tam pueriliter identidem cupere currentes equos insistentes curribus homines videre. Si tamen aut velocitate equorum aut hominum arte traherentur, esset ratio non nulla; nunc favent panno, pannum amant, et si in ipso cursu medioque certamine hic color illuc ille huc transferatur, studium favorque transibit, et repente agitadores illos equos illos, quos procul noscitant, quorum clamitant nomina relinquunt. Tanta gratia tanta auctoritas in una vilissima tunica, mitto apud vulgus, quod vilius tunica, sed apud quosdam graves homines; quos ego cum recordor, in re inani frigida assidua, tam insatiabiliter desiderare, capio aliquam voluptatem, quod hac voluptate non capior. Ac per hos dies libentissime otium meum in litteris colloco, quos alii otiosissimis occupationibus perdunt. Vale.

S. – shorthand for "salutem dicit." Notice how Plinius is nominative but the recipient is in the dative case? The suo is a reflexive used as a term of affection

Calvisius Rufus was a wealthy friend of Pliny's from his hometown in Comum (modern Como) in N. Italy.

quies, -quietis (f) – rest, quiet, tranquility

transmitto, transmittere, transmissi, transmissum – pass, spend (time), send across (lit)

quaemadmodum (adv) – how

ne...quidem – not even

spectasse = spectavisse

sufficio, sufficere, suffeci, suffectum – be sufficient/adequate, suffice

tot (adv) – so many

miror is introducing indirect statement

pueriliter (adv) – childishly

identidem (adv) – repeatedly, over and over

insisto, insistere, insistiti – set foot on, stand (NB: This also has the added meaning of 'insist' as in urging the horses on)

currus, -ūs (m) – chariot

sc. et between equos and insistentes

velocitas, -tatis (f) – speed

ars, artis (f) – skill, art

non nullus = some

pannus, -i (m) – piece of cloth (this is a reference to the colored jerkins the charioteers wore representing their factions)

transeo, transire, transii, transitum – traverse, go over (to a side), pass over
sc. et (between illos and equos)

favor, -oris (m) – support, favor, good will

clamito (1) – shout violently, cry or shout frequently

gratia, -ae (f) – agreeableness, popularity, favor, appeal, support, thanks

vilis, -e (adj) – cheap, worthless

mitto – I send, I pass over – here the idea is “I do not mean”

gravis, -e (adj) – important, influential

recordor, -ari (dep) – recall, consider

inanis, -e (adj) – empty, pointless

frigidus, a, um (adj) – boring, trivial

adsiduus, a, um (adj) – constant, repetitive

insatiabiliter – (adv) – insatiably, endlessly

desido, desiderare, dissedi – sink down, settle down, (NB: Here it is close to our expression “be hooked on”)

aliquis – here not just something but something significant

voluptas, -tatis (f) – pleasure

litterae (from littera, -ae (f)) – in the plural can mean letters (epistles) or studies

colloco (1) = conloco (1) – here: spend, employ, (lit. place, set, arrange)