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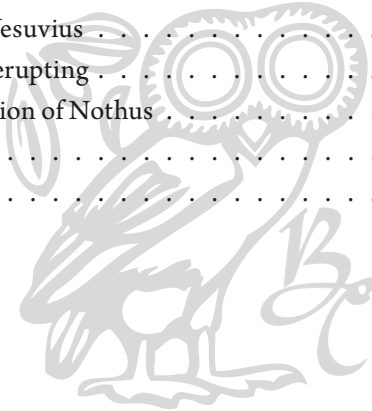
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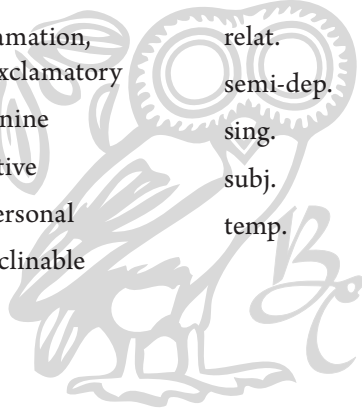
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# Abbreviations

abl.	ablative	indef.	indefinite
acc.	accusative	indic.	indicative
adj.	adjective	interr.	interrogative
adv.	adverb	m.	masculine
c.	circa	n.	neuter
concess.	concessive	pers.	person, personal
conj.	conjunction	pl.	plural
dat.	dative	poss.	possessive
defect.	defective	prep.	preposition
demon.	demonstrative	pron.	pronoun
dep.	deponent	reflex.	reflexive
exclam.	exclamation, exclamatory	relat.	relative
f.	feminine	semi-dep.	semi-deponent
gen.	genitive	sing.	singular
impers.	impersonal	subj.	subjunctive
indecl.	indeclinable	temp.	temporal



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# Introduction

## The Life of Pliny

**T**he man whom we know in English as Pliny the Younger was born in 61 or 62 CE. His affluent family owned several large agricultural properties in the Comum (modern Como) area of northern Italy (see Map 1). These properties were the source of the family's considerable wealth. Pliny was fondly attached to the Comum area for both sentimental and financial reasons and, throughout his life, remained proud to be identified as a northern Italian. He was, in addition, a generous benefactor to his hometown, donating funds for a school, library, public bath, and the care of children (see Letter 4.13). Roman benefactors expected their generosity to be memorialized by a grateful community. Pliny's gifts were therefore recorded and publicized by an inscription that was undoubtedly placed in a prominent location in Comum (CIL v. 5262). During the Middle Ages, the inscription was moved (for unknown reasons) to the church of St. Ambrose in Milan. Only a fragment now remains, but the text was preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript. This preservation has been significant because, aside from the writings of Pliny himself, this inscription and three smaller fragments (CIL v. 5263, CIL v. 5667, and CIL xi. 5272) are our only sources of information about Pliny and his career. (The texts of these inscriptions are available in the Appendix of Inscriptions.)

Pliny did not begin life with the name "Pliny" (Plinius). His father's name was Lucius Caecilius, and this was undoubtedly also the name that Pliny received as an infant. Caecilius was the name of his father's family. Men who were Roman citizens had at least two names (**nomina**). The first was a **praenomen**, such as Lucius or Gaius, which corresponded to our "first" or "personal" name. The second was a **nomen gentilicium** (or **gentile**), such as Caecilius, which identified the clan or extended family group (**gens**) to

which a person belonged. Many men also had a third (and even fourth) name, a **cognomen**, which identified different branches of a clan.

Women who were Roman citizens traditionally received only one **nomen**, the feminine form of their father's **nomen gentilicium**. Some women, however, also received a **cognomen**. We think that Pliny's mother's name was Plinia, which was the feminine form of the name Plinius. (See Genealogy Chart 1.) Both his paternal family and his maternal family belonged to the municipal gentry of Comum and were treated with deference by residents of lower status. From childhood, Pliny enjoyed a life of privilege but was expected to use his talents and resources to enhance the reputation of his family.

Pliny never mentions having siblings. His father died when he was a child, and his maternal uncle, Gaius Plinius Secundus, assumed an important role in raising him. Eventually his uncle adopted him and, at this point, our Pliny changed his name. It was customary for an adoptee to take the name of his adopter but to retain a reference to the family name of his natural father. Thus Lucius Caecilius became Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus. In English, the terms Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger are used to differentiate the two Plinys, uncle and nephew. In addition to receiving a new name, Pliny became heir to his uncle's substantial wealth, much of it in the form of real estate, not only in the Comum area but also throughout Italy.

Pliny may have received his primary-level education in Comum, but, as he recounts in Letter 4.13, his hometown lacked a school for more advanced studies. He was sent to Rome for what we would consider his secondary and college-level education. Among his teachers in Rome was the famous Roman rhetorician Quintilian. The focus of Pliny's education was the training required to enable him to have a successful career in law, politics, and government. No one in Pliny's northern Italian family had been a member of the Roman Senate or gained a position as a high-ranking official of the Roman state. Pliny was determined to do so. His achievement of these goals offers evidence that he was ambitious, talented, and diligent. It was impossible, however, for a man to advance far in Roman politics without the assistance of well-connected people. Pliny's uncle, who had had a distinguished career in the imperial administration, helped him, and several influential family friends who were senators advised and advocated for the younger Pliny. © Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc.

In his early twenties, he began his pursuit of a seat in the Roman Senate by serving as an attorney and establishing a reputation for skillfully handling legal cases. At the same time, he received appointments to several

minor public offices, including a term, in about 81 CE, as a **tribunus militum** (military tribune). (For this and other titles, see the Vocabulary at the end of the book.) He spent this term in the Roman province of Syria, where his duties included auditing the financial accounts of his army unit (see Letter 3.11). We have a record of the offices that Pliny held because of the four ancient inscriptions mentioned above. Unfortunately the inscriptions do not provide any dates for Pliny's terms of service. In 89 or 90 CE, he was selected to be a **quaestor**, a public office (or magistracy) that had a term of only one year, but which guaranteed lifelong membership in the Senate. Pliny had been nominated for the office of **quaestor** by the emperor Domitian, an indication that he had won the emperor's favor. He continued his climb up the political ladder with his selection as a **tribunus plebis** (tribune of the plebs) in 91 or 92, and then, in 93 CE, as a **praetor**. Both these offices also had one-year terms. Domitian played a role in Pliny's advancement to the praetorship, and, after his term as a **praetor**, Pliny was appointed by the emperor to a three-year term as a **praefectus aerari militaris** (prefect of the military treasury).

Some of Domitian's contemporaries denounced him as a ruthless tyrant. Because Pliny was the recipient of the emperor's patronage, some scholars have raised questions about his character. Domitian had become emperor in 81 CE, about the same time that the young Pliny was beginning his work as a lawyer and politician. His career flourished during the reign of Domitian. Other men, too, similarly enjoyed success in their senatorial careers. Not all senators, however, thrived under Domitian. After Domitian's death, Pliny described the emperor who had favored him as a monster (see Letter 4.11) and recorded stories of his persecution of his enemies (see Letters 3.11 and 7.19). The senator and historian Tacitus, who also outlived Domitian and wrote about him after his death, portrayed him as a cruel ruler who did not hesitate to silence his opponents by execution or exile. His opponents, in contrast, were depicted as high-minded men who resisted Domitian's schemes to deprive senators of their rights and privileges, and who risked their lives to defend their beliefs. It is difficult now, two thousand years later, to ascertain the veracity or the bias of these ancient accounts, or to grasp the motivations of either Domitian or his opponents. Some modern historians have challenged the ancient accounts. Citing information from Suetonius, a historian contemporary with Tacitus and Pliny, they argue that Domitian was a capable and conscientious ruler who strengthened a flagging Roman economy, fortified the defense of the borders of the Empire, tried to suppress corrupt behavior

among public officials, and was popular with the common people and the army. However, Tacitus's account gives scant attention to Domitian's accomplishments and instead emphasizes the antagonism between the emperor and some (though not all) members of the Senate. These senators believed that Domitian was an autocrat who refused to share with them the responsibility of shaping state policy. From the point of view of these senators, Domitian was denying them the role that senators had traditionally held. From Domitian's point of view, these senators were obstructing his attempts to establish an effective form of governing an empire. Each side became exasperated by the other's unwillingness to cooperate. When a conspiracy to overthrow him was discovered in 87 CE, Domitian thenceforth interpreted the words and activities of his opponents as treason and punished them severely. In 93 CE, several people whom Pliny claimed as friends were convicted. Some were executed, some sent into exile. (See Letters 3.11 and 7.19.) Because of the threats of punishment, the number of senators who openly expressed their hostility was relatively small.

Domitian was assassinated in 96 CE. We do not know who planned the assassination or how it might have been connected to senatorial hostility toward Domitian. The assassination was carried out not by senators but by members of the emperor's staff. Immediately after Domitian's death, however, members of the Senate rejoiced in his death and proclaimed one of their own, Nerva, as the new emperor.

Pliny's ability to gain and maintain the favor of Domitian might suggest that he had acted in a cowardly and sycophantic manner when others were putting their careers and lives in danger by criticizing the emperor. In fact, however, most of Pliny's senatorial peers had acted just as he had, vying for and serving in public offices while being very careful not to offend Domitian. Tacitus, for example, the historian whose devastatingly negative account of Domitian's reign has shaped modern opinions of that period, prospered as much as Pliny and was selected as praetor in 88 CE, the year after the conspiracy that had stiffened Domitian's resolve to destroy his enemies. Politically ambitious men like Pliny and Tacitus adopted a prudent policy of acquiescence. Most senators were unwilling to jeopardize their public and personal survival by expressing any hostility toward the emperor or any sympathy for his critics. After his assassination, however, they were quick to condemn Domitian and to try to justify their own behavior during his regime. They strove to convince one another that they had indeed made efforts to restrain Domitian and to support his more vocal opponents, but their efforts had simply gone unnoticed. For



example, nowhere in his writings (composed after the assassination) does Pliny mention the prefecture of the military treasury to which Domitian appointed him in 94 CE, just a year after the executions of his friends. This information has been preserved for us only in the inscriptions discussed above. Pliny apparently wanted people to forget that he had enjoyed Domitian's favor. In fact, despite the evidence that he had prospered under Domitian, Pliny later claimed that he had supported the emperor's opponents, that his own life had been in danger in the 90s, and that he had been forced to curtail his career plans. (See the introduction to Letter 3.11.) It is important, however, to remember that he was not alone in his attempts to put a positive, and imaginative, spin on his actions. Many of his senatorial colleagues played the same game.

Although there was some turmoil in the Senate in the aftermath of Domitian's assassination, Pliny seems to have emerged unscathed. He continued to enjoy professional advancement under Domitian's successors. Nerva's tenure as emperor was short; he died of natural causes in 98 CE. Before his death, he had appointed Pliny to a three-year term as **praefectus aerari Saturni** (prefect of the treasury of Saturn). In 100 CE, under the emperor Trajan, Pliny was selected to the office of **consul suffectus** (suffect consul) for the months of September to December. During this brief term, he delivered in the Senate a speech, the *Panegyricus*, in which he praised Trajan effusively for developing a style of governing that was a complete contrast to Domitian's repressive autocracy. Indeed in the speech, which he later expanded and published, Pliny portrays Trajan as the model of an excellent emperor. (The *Panegyricus* and the *Letters* are the only writings of Pliny that are now extant.) In truth, however, even under Trajan the role of the Senate in matters of state was much more limited than it had been in the time of Cicero, over 150 years earlier. The Senate's loss of power had, in fact, begun under the first emperor, Augustus. Several of Domitian's predecessors, moreover, had also been harsh in their treatment of critics. Trajan, for his part, did not allow the senators to regain the power held by their ancestors. However, he carefully cultivated a more cordial and respectful relationship with the senators than Domitian had, and for this reason, he was revered.

About 103 CE, Pliny was granted a position as **augur**, and, about 104 or 105, he was appointed **curator alvei Tiberis** (curator of the Tiber River), a position of considerable responsibility because of the frequent flooding of the river. He also served on the prestigious emperor's council (**consilium principis**), a select group of senators with whom the emperor occasionally

consulted. During this time, Pliny continued his work as a lawyer and was active particularly in the standing court that dealt with litigation about property and wills. He was also involved in several high-profile cases in the Senate, which served as a court of law to try senators indicted on criminal charges. At some time between 109 and 111 CE (the exact date cannot be determined), Trajan appointed Pliny to be governor of the province of Bithynia-Pontus, in the area of what is now northern Turkey. (See Map 3.) His official title was **legatus pro praetore consulari potestate** (legate of praetorian rank with consular power). The title **legatus** indicated that he was the emperor's direct representative in the province.

Trajan probably chose Pliny as his representative because of his expertise in some pertinent areas. For example, Pliny had served as prefect of two treasuries (see above), proved himself skillful in fiscal management, and handled court cases about property. In addition, he had been involved in several senatorial investigations of governors who had been charged with misconduct in the provinces, including two men who had been governors of Bithynia-Pontus.

Bithynia-Pontus was a prosperous province, but one plagued by financial corruption among civic officials. Pliny's assignment was to travel through the province, scrutinize the financial records of each city, uncover misadministration of funds, and reorganize public finance systems. He was also empowered to maintain public order and to hear and decide on legal cases that required a judgment by a Roman official rather than a local magistrate. During the period of about two years that Pliny served in Bithynia-Pontus, he encountered a wide range of problems, and he corresponded regularly with Trajan, reporting on events in the province and requesting advice. The letters between Pliny and Trajan form the contents of Book 10. They provide an excellent source of information about the administration of Roman provinces in the early imperial period. They demonstrate, moreover, that the emperor and his staff kept remarkably close oversight of what was happening in even the very distant regions of Rome's far-flung empire.

The correspondence ends abruptly. It is assumed that Pliny died while serving in the province.

Pliny was married three times. We don't know if the first marriage was ended by death or divorce. His second wife, about whom we know very little, died in 97 CE. His third wife, Calpurnia, was, like Pliny, a native of the Comum area. (See Genealogy Chart 1.) There is no indication that they had children. (See Letters 4.19, 6.4, 7.5, and 8.10.) She had accompanied

him to Bithynia-Pontus but returned to Italy to comfort her aunt when her grandfather died. The last letters in Pliny's correspondence (10.120 and 121, not included in this volume) are a report by Pliny that he had given his wife a special travel pass to expedite her journey back to Italy, and a reply by Trajan assuring Pliny that he acted correctly in issuing the pass.

## The Letters of Pliny

The extant collection of Pliny the Younger's letters contains 368 letters, written between about 97 and about 113 CE and arranged into ten books. Books 1 to 9 consist of letters to friends, relatives, and acquaintances on a wide range of topics. Unfortunately Pliny did not include any of the replies that he may have received. Book 10 is a different kind of collection, both because of its content and because it includes the replies that Pliny received. Published probably after Pliny's death, Book 10 consists of correspondence between Pliny and the emperor Trajan. Most of the letters were composed during the period of about two years that Pliny served as governor of the province of Bithynia-Pontus. As he traveled through the province, investigating fiscal mismanagement, adjudicating legal cases, and listening to local concerns, he wrote frequently to Trajan, to keep the emperor informed of events and to solicit his advice. Pliny's questions and Trajan's responses are a major source of information about how Roman provinces were governed in the early imperial period. Much of the correspondence indicates that both the emperor and his legate strove to address the needs of the province conscientiously and fairly. Nonetheless, the letters sometimes reveal an apprehension among Roman officials about the possibility of insurrection and the need to be firm in preventing disorder. (See Letters 10.33, 34, 96, and 97.)

The letters of Books 1 to 9 were published while Pliny was alive, and he served as his own editor. They consist of letters that the upper-class Pliny wrote to people mainly in his own social circle. Most of the addressees are men, but seven are women. Because Pliny included only his own letters, his is the only "voice" present in the nine books. The letters of Books 1 to 9 offer a wealth of information about many different aspects of life in Italy during the early imperial period. More specifically, the letters document the activities, interests, and concerns of a wealthy landowner from northern Italy who had achieved the privileged position of Roman senator. They inform us about his relationships with his wife and family, his cultivation of

# 1. Letter 1.1

In Letter 1.1, Pliny explains to his addressee, Septicius, his plans for publishing some of the letters he has written. He claims that he is following his friend's advice because Septicius had frequently urged him to publish letters that were particularly well composed. He reveals that he will not be arranging the letters in the order in which they were written, but rather in the order in which he is able to retrieve them. He also states that he reserves the right to add to the collection letters that he may write in the future. On the issues of why Pliny released his letters to the public and whether he edited them before publication, see "The Letters of Pliny" in the introduction to this book.

---

## C. PLINIUS SEPTICIO SUO S.

1 *Frequenter hortatus es, ut epistulas, si quas paulo  
curatius scripsissem, colligerem publicaremque.*

Collegi non servato temporis ordine (neque enim  
5 *historiam componebam*), sed ut quaeque in manus  
venerat.

---

**C. Plinius Septicio Suo S.:** Pliny uses this same form of salutation for all the letters of Books 1 to 9.

**C.:** an abbreviation for Pliny's **praenomen, Gaius**.

**Septicio:** dative of **Septicius**, the man to whom Pliny addresses this letter. The case is dative because **Septicio** is the indirect object of the (understood) verb **dat**.

**Suo** is in the dative case, modifying **Septicio**: *to his (dear friend) Septicius*. Latin sometimes gives the possessive adjective the additional meaning of *dear friend*. Compare **nostri** in Letter 3.11, Section 1.

**S.:** an abbreviation for the noun, **salutem** (in the accusative case), *greeting*. The verb **dat** is understood: *gives or sends greeting(s)*. (**Dat** is third person singular, present active indicative of **do, dare**.)

1 **hortatus es:** deponent verb: *to urge, encourage*. Supply **me** as a direct object.

**ut:** Translate as *that (I collect and publish)* or, less literally, *to (collect and publish)*. The conjunction **here** introduces a construction that takes the subjunctive mood. The term used to identify the construction differs, depending on the grammar book used. It is variously called *indirect command, final noun*

clause, *jussive noun clause*, *substantive clause of purpose*, or *noun clause of purpose*. In this commentary, the term *indirect command* will be used to identify this construction. Pliny is reporting, that is, stating indirectly, a command that his addressee issued directly: *Collect and publish!*

**epistulas:** the direct object of **colligerem** and **publicarem**.

**si:** *if*. The conjunction introduces a conditional clause.

**quas** (**indef. adj.**): *some, any*. The more common form of the indefinite adjective is **aliqui**, **aliqua**, **aliquod**, but **qui**, **qua**, **quod** are used after the conjunctions **si**, **nisi**, and **ne**. **Quas** is feminine plural in agreement with **epistulas**. It is the direct object of **scripsissem**.

**curatius:** comparative adverb: *more carefully*.

**scripsissem:** first person singular, pluperfect active subjunctive of **scribere**. The subjunctive here does not denote (as one might expect) a past contrary to fact condition. Instead, the subjunctive denotes a customary or frequent action in a general condition. This usage is not common.

**colligerem, publicarem:** first person singular, imperfect active subjunctive. The subjunctive mood is required because **colligerem** and **publicarem** are the verbs of an indirect command introduced by **ut**. On this construction, see the note above.

**-que:** an enclitic particle attached to the end of a word. It connects this word with a previous word or phrase. It is an alternative for **et**. Translate as *and*. Thus **colligerem publicaremque** = **colligerem et publicarem**.

**Collegi:** Supply **epistulas** as a direct object.

**servato . . . ordine:** ablative absolute.

**tempus, -oris (n.):** *time*. Pliny is here saying that he has not published the letters in the chronological order in which they were written. On the problems of establishing dates for the letters, see “The Letters of Pliny” in the introduction to this book.

**enim:** *for*. The conjunction **enim** is postpositive, that is, it is placed after the first word of its clause, although in English we put *for* as the first word.

**ut:** *as*. Contrast the use of **ut** here with the indicative mood, and above with the subjunctive.

**quisque, quaeque, quidque:** *each one*. **Quaeque**, the subject of **venerat**, is feminine because it agrees with an understood **epistula**.

**manus:** *hands*. Supply **meas**.

**venerat:** We do not know how the letters had come into Pliny’s hands. Perhaps he had kept copies of the letters he had sent or perhaps the recipients had returned the letters to him.

2 Superest ut nec te consilii nec me paeniteat obsequii.  
Ita enim fiet, ut eas, quae adhuc neglectae iacent,  
requiram et, si quas addidero, non supprimam. Vale.

- 2 **supersum, -esse, -fui, -futurus:** *to remain, be left.* **Superest** is being used as an impersonal verb, *it remains*, followed by a subjunctive clause introduced by **ut**. The **ut** construction is a noun (or substantive) clause of result. The entire **ut** clause expresses what will *result* or happen.

**paeniteat:** another impersonal verb, here in the subjunctive mood in the **ut** clause. The meaning of **paeniteat** is *it grieves, makes sorry*. The personal pronouns **te** and **me** are the direct objects.

The cause of the “grieving” is put in the genitive case, hence **consilii** and **obsequii**.

The meaning of the clause is *that it neither grieves you (makes you sorry) of advice, nor grieves me of compliance*. A less literal translation is *that neither you regret your advice, nor I regret my compliance*.

**fio, fieri:** *to happen, come to pass.* **Fiet** is third person singular, future active indicative. Here it is used impersonally and is followed by another noun (or substantive) clause of result introduced by **ut**.

**eas:** direct object of **requiram**; feminine plural accusative because it agrees with an understood **epistulas**.

**qui, quae, quod:** *who, which.* **Quae** (feminine nominative plural) is the subject of the relative clause whose predicate is **iacent**. The antecedent of **quae** is **eas**.

**neglectae:** perfect passive participle, feminine plural nominative, of **neglegere**.

**requiram:** first person singular, present active subjunctive of **requirere**. It is the first verb of the **ut** clause (noun clause of result).

**quas:** indefinite adjective used with **si**. See the note above on **quas**.

**addidero:** first person singular, future perfect active indicative of **addere**.

**supprimam:** first person singular, present active subjunctive of **supprimere**. It is the second verb of the **ut** clause. Supply **eas** as a direct object.

Pliny’s statement here is evidence that he published his letters in several volumes, at several different times.

**Vale** is second person singular, present active imperative of **valere**. Here it means *farewell, goodbye*. Pliny closes all his letters thus.





This commemorative Italian stamp, issued on the 1900th anniversary of the birth of Pliny the Younger, celebrates his legacy as a Roman statesman and author. The image on this stamp is a photo of one of two statues that are displayed on the façade of the Cathedral of Santa Maria in Como, the town in northern Italy that Pliny considered his hometown. (The other statue is a representation of Pliny the Elder.) The statues were created during the late fifteenth century CE and are the product of the artist's imagination, rather than historically accurate portraits. We do not know anything about Pliny's appearance. There are no surviving artistic depictions or literary descriptions of him done by any of his contemporaries. (© Shutterstock Images LLC)

## 2. Letter 1.6

Pliny owned many acres of agricultural land throughout Italy. These farms were a major source of his wealth, and he visited them occasionally to make sure that they were being managed profitably. Although other landowners enjoyed hunting when they visited their country estates, this activity was of little interest to Pliny, as the following letter reveals. The letter is addressed to the famous Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus, whom Pliny considered a friend. (For more information about Tacitus, see “The Life of Pliny” in the introduction.) Here, Pliny relates an amusing anecdote about his hunting experience. He apparently wanted to indicate to Tacitus that he found pleasure in literature and intellectual stimulation, not in rural diversions.

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### C. PLINIUS CORNELIO TACITO SUO S.

1 Ridebis, et licet rideas. Ego Plinius ille, quem nosti,  
 apros tres et quidem pulcherrimos cepi. “Ipse?” inquis.  
 Ipse; non tamen ut omnino ab inertia mea et  
 5 quiete discederem. Ad retia sedebam; erat in proximo  
 non venabulum aut lancea, sed stilus et pugillares;  
 meditabar aliquid enotabamque, ut, si manus vacuas,  
 plenas tamen ceras reportarem.

- 
- 1 **licet:** *it is allowed (that), permitted (that).* **Licet** is an impersonal verb, followed by the subjunctive (as here, without an introductory **ut**) or by an infinitive. Compare the use of **licebit** in Section 3.

**rideas:** second person singular, present active subjunctive, following **licet**.

**quem:** masculine singular accusative because it is the direct object of **nosti**. Its antecedent is **Plinius ille**.

**nosco, -ere, novi, notum:** present tense: *to learn (about)*, perfect tense: *to have learned (about)* and therefore *to know*. **Nosti** is a contraction (syncopation) of **novisti**, second person singular, perfect active indicative.

The meaning of the clause is *I, that Pliny whom you know (and would not expect to go hunting).*

**pulcherrimos:** superlative form of the adjective **pulcher**.



“**Ipse?**”: modifying an understood **tu**: *you yourself*. Pliny imagines that the addressee of the letter, Tacitus, is asking the question.

**inquis**: *you say, you exclaim*. **Inquis** is second person singular, present active indicative. The verb is defective, that is, it is missing many forms of conjugation.

**Ipse**: *(yes) I myself*.

**ut**: *so that*, introducing a result clause with the subjunctive.

**discederem**: first person singular, imperfect active subjunctive of **discedere** in the result clause introduced by **ut**. Pliny is stating that, although he participated in a hunting party, he did not totally depart from (abandon) his usual (and preferred) leisure activities: reading and writing.

**ad (+ acc.)**: usually means *toward*; here it means *at or near*.

**rete, -is (n.)**: *hunting net*. When wealthy landowners hunted, they did not pursue the animals. Instead, farmworkers stretched nets in a central location and then drove the animals into the nets. The “hunters” stood or, like Pliny, sat near the nets and killed the animals that were entangled in them. For many Romans, the pleasure of a hunt was the kill, not the pursuit.

**erat**: The verb is singular although there are several subjects.

**in proximo**: *in the nearest (position), in the immediate proximity*. The adjective is being used as a substantive. Compare the use in Letter 4.19, Section 3.

**pugillares, -ium (m. pl.)**: *writing tablets*. The Romans wrote on tablets made of wood covered with wax into which they inscribed the letters with a **stilus**, an instrument that had a pointed tip. See the image on page 65.

**meditabar**: first person singular, imperfect indicative of the deponent verb **meditari**.

**ut**: here introducing a purpose (final) clause with the subjunctive. The verb of the purpose clause is **reportarem**.

**si**: introducing the protasis of a future less vivid condition whose verb is not expressed, but is implied by the appearance of **reportarem**. **Manus vacuas** is the direct object of the implied verb: *even if (I should bring back) empty hands* (i.e., come home without a dead animal).

**plenas . . . ceras**: *full wax tablets*. He will come home with the notes he has made on his wax tablets. Note the careful juxtaposition of **vacuas - plenas**, *empty - full*. Compare Letter 9.36, Section 6, about returning from a hunt with a literary composition.

**reportarem**: first person singular, imperfect active subjunctive in the purpose (final) clause introduced by **ut**. The tense is imperfect because the sequence is secondary (historic).

2 Non est quod contemnas hoc studendi genus;  
 10 mirum est, ut animus agitatione motuque corporis  
 excitetur; iam undique silvae et solitudo ipsumque illud  
 silentium, quod venationi datur, magna cogitationis  
 incitamenta sunt. 3 Proinde, cum venabere, licebit  
 auctore me ut panarium et lagunculam sic etiam  
 15 pugillares feras; experieris non Dianam magis  
 montibus quam Minervam inerrare. Vale.

- 2 **Non est quod:** *There is no reason why* (or *because of which*). The phrase implies a category or group characteristic that the clause that follows does not share. Thus the construction that follows is a form of relative clause of characteristic and therefore requires a subjunctive, **contemnas**.

**studendi:** a gerund in the genitive case, formed from **studeo, -ere, -ui:** *to pursue, be busy with, apply oneself to*. Here it means *pursuing, keeping busy*, or less literally, *pursuit*.

**ut:** *how*. The construction is a form of indirect exclamation, which uses the same construction as an indirect question and therefore requires a subjunctive, **excitetur**.

**excitetur:** third person singular, present passive subjunctive of **excitare**. The subject is **animus**.

**silvae et solitudo . . . silentium:** the subjects of **sunt**, which appears at the end of the sentence. Note the alliteration.

**ipsumque:** the enclitic particle **-que**. **Ipsum** modifies **silentium**.

**venationi:** in the dative case after **datur**, *is given, granted to*. The implication is that hunting requires silence.

**cogitationis:** objective genitive.

- 3 **venabere:** the second person singular, future indicative of the deponent verb **venari**. (There also exists an alternative form: **venaberis**.)

**licebit:** future indicative of the impersonal verb **licet**, which is followed by **ut** and the subjunctive, **feras**. In Section 1, **licet** was not followed by **ut**.

**auctore me:** Both words are in the ablative case, in an ablative absolute construction. However, there is no participle in this instance (because Latin did not use a present participle of the verb **esse**). The phrase means *with me* (*being*) *your advisor* (or *model*). Or translate as *with me as your advisor* (or *model*).

**ut . . . sic etiam:** Here **ut** is used in a correlative construction: *not only . . . but even*.

**feras:** second person singular, present active subjunctive of **fero, ferre, tuli, latum**, *to carry, take*. The subjunctive is required by **licebit**. The phrase means *it will be permitted that you carry, or you may carry*.

**experieris:** second person singular, future indicative of the deponent verb **experiri**. It introduces an accusative infinitive construction in indirect statement. The accusative subjects are **Dianam** and **Minervam**. The infinitive is **inerrare**. Diana was the goddess of hunting; Minerva was the goddess of intellectual endeavors.

**non . . . magis . . . quam:** *not more than*.

**montibus:** an ablative of place without a preposition.

