

AN EMENDATION TO PLINY, *PANEGYRIC* 95.4

## ABSTRACT

*This paper suggests a new emendation to the text of the final passage of Pliny's Panegyric, where a small lacuna has long been suspected after substiti.*

**Keywords:** Pliny the Younger; Roman panegyric; Latin style; textual criticism

uos modo fauete huic proposito et credite: si cursu quodam prouectus ab illo insidiosissimo principe, ante quam profiteretur odium bonorum, postquam professus est substiti, <...> cum uiderem quae ad honores compendia paterent longius iter malui; si malis temporibus inter maestos et pauentes, bonis inter securos gaudentesque numeror; si denique in tantum diligo optimum principem, in quantum inuisus pessimo fui; ego reuerentiae uestrae sic semper inseruiam, non ut me consullem et mox consularem, sed ut candidatum consulatus putem.

cum *codd.*: <si> cum *Heumann*: <ac> cum *aut* <et> cum *dub.* *Schwarz*

All I ask is your support in my present undertaking and your belief in what I say. If then it is true that I advanced in my career under that most treacherous of emperors before he admitted his hatred for honest men, but was halted in it once he did so, [...] preferring a longer route when I saw what the shortcuts were which opened the way to office: that in bad times I was one of those who lived with grief and fear, and can be counted among the serene and happy now that better days have come; that, finally, I love the best of princes as much as I was hated by the worst: then I shall act not as if I consider myself consul today and ex-consul tomorrow, but as if I were still a candidate for the consulate, and in this way shall minister at all times to the reverence which is due to you all. (Plin. *Pan.* 95.2–5)

The asyndeton of *cum* without a grammatical connective ruins the flow of this otherwise elegant final flourish to Pliny's famous public oration in praise of Emperor Trajan, and thus at this point the text has long been considered lacunose by some editors.<sup>1</sup> Heumann's proposal <si> *cum*, which has found a supporter in Baehrens among others,<sup>2</sup> will certainly not do, as it vitiates the admirable tricolon structure of the passage by interjecting a fourth *si*. Schwarz hesitantly proposed an omission of *et* before *cum*, which was conjectured more assuredly by Keil and has since been accepted by Whitton.<sup>3</sup> However, with respect to palaeography, the arguments of Schwarz and

<sup>1</sup> For Pliny, I print or adapt the texts of R.A.B. Mynors (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum libri decem* (Oxford, 1963) and R.A.B. Mynors (ed.), *XII Panegyrici Latini* (Oxford, 1964), as well as the Loeb translations of B. Radice (ed.), *Pliny: Letters and Panegyrics*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1969). For Livy, I use the translation of J.C. Yardley, *Livy: Hannibal's War; Books 21–30* (Oxford, 2006). I thank Bruce Gibson and the anonymous reader of *CQ* for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

<sup>2</sup> C.A. Heumann, *apud* C.G. Schwarz (ed.), *C. Plinii Caecili Secundi Panegyricus Caesari imp. Neruae Traiano Aug. dictus* (Nuremberg, 1746), 487 (ad loc.); cf. E. Baehrens (ed.), *XII Panegyrici Latini* (Leipzig, 1874); R.C. Kukula (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum libri novem, Epistularum ad Traianum liber, Panegyricus* (Leipzig, 1912<sup>2</sup>); M. Olivar (ed.), *Plini el jove: Panegíric* (Barcelona, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> Schwarz (n. 2), 488, reluctantly suggesting either *ac* or *et* before *cum*; H. Keil (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum libri novem, Epistularum ad Traianum liber, Panegyricus* (Leipzig, 1870), independently conjecturing *et*; C. Whitton, 'Pliny's progress: on a troublesome Domitianic career', *Chiron* 45 (2015), 1–22, at 2, accepting Schwarz's *et* and also offering the alternative conjecture *cum<que>*; cf. R.K. Gibson, *Man of High Empire: The Life of Pliny the Younger* (New York, 2020), 101, 123 n. 126. The reading *et* had most notably been followed by T. Mommsen, 'Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius', *Hermes* 3 (1869), 31–139, at 87, although

Whitton are more difficult to defend in practice than in theory, because this simple omission of a small word is no more likely than Heumann's original *si*, which at least could have been lost after the last ligature *-ti* at the end of *substi-ti* in minuscule script; if *si* had similarly been written in ligature with a long-shafted *s*, the two would have resembled each other, while on the other hand the same cannot be said of *ti* and *et*.<sup>4</sup> The case for the loss of the particle *et* therefore remains fragile and, rather than accepting an option that is not especially compelling, it makes more sense simply to print the manuscripts' reading when the meaning of the passage is already clear, as Mynors did in his OCT, unless a better emendation may be offered.

Nor is Mynors's opposition to the existing emendations by printing the manuscripts' text as we have it an isolated incident. He had been anticipated by Müller, who was long ago sceptical of the proposals by Heumann and Schwarz, just as subsequently Durry, Schuster, Radice and Moreno Soldevila all showed equal discretion in balking from acceptance of either conjecture for their respective editions.<sup>5</sup> More recently, Vannini has again judged Schwarz's *et* in particular quite unsatisfactory, questioning the need for any emendation whatsoever and opting instead to take the whole of *cum ... malui* as a parenthetical restatement of what has come before within the same train of thought, and so punctuated.<sup>6</sup> Whitton would seem to agree with this characterization of the sentence's logic, despite his endorsement of Schwarz: it is precisely when Domitian disclosed (*profiteretur*) his hatred of good men to Pliny that the orator realized (*uiderem*) what sort of implied shortcuts to offices were available—that is, only those involving a different path of wickedness, in which he was unwilling to participate.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is difficult to see how the matter can be resolved with new punctuation alone, as proposed by Vannini; hence the support by some for Schwarz's emendation. But, if what we have here is truly an aside summarizing the first protasis of this conditional sentence, then the sense of our passage would call for some missing word signalling that aside. What is needed is more attention to diagnosis of the error before we attempt treatment.

Despite the explicit interpretation by both Whitton and Vannini that this section is an elaboration on the first of the three protaseis (*si cursu ... substiiti*), rather than a separate condition in itself warranting *<s>*, neither scholar pays any notice to how Pliny begins

it was later removed from the posthumous reprint, possibly by his literary executor who checked it against the text of a more judicious editor than the text read by Mommsen; contrast T. Mommsen, 'Zur Lebensgeschichte des jüngeren Plinius', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4 (Berlin, 1906), 366–468, at 421 n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. S.P. Oakley, *Studies in the Transmission of Latin Texts. Volume I: Quintus Curtius Rufus & Dictys Cretensis* (Oxford, 2020), 334–5 on Dictys Cretensis 3.19, where a corruption in the manuscripts has resulted from confusion of the ligatures *rt* and *st*.

<sup>5</sup> C.F.W. Müller (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum libri novem, Epistularum ad Traianum liber, Panegyricus* (Leipzig, 1903); M. Durry (ed.), *Pline le jeune: Panégyrique de Trajan* (Paris, 1938); M. Schuster (ed.), *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum libri novem, Epistularum ad Traianum librum, Panegyricus*, rev. R. Hanslik (Leipzig, 1958<sup>3</sup>); Radice (n. 1); R. Moreno Soldevila (ed.), *Plinio el joven: Panegirico de Trajano* (Madrid, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> G. Vannini, 'Due note al Panegirico di Plinio (34,2; 95,4)', *RhM* 160 (2017), 105–8, at 107–8, citing M. Gesner (ed.), *C. Plinii Caecilii Secundi Epistolarum libri decem eiusdem gratiarum actio sive Panegyricus* (Leipzig, 1739), 652 (ad loc.) on *cum ... malui* as an explanation of *substiiti*. Vannini prints the Latin text with parentheses in his own edition; see G. Vannini (ed.), *Plinio il giovane: Panegirico a Traiano* (Milan, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Whitton (n. 3), 2: '[Pliny] admits to rapid advancement under Domitian (*cursu quodam prouectus*) but asserts that, once things turned sour, he "halted" (*substiiti*). A strong statement—immediately modified and softened with a gloss, *longius iter malui*.'

similar side-notes elsewhere in the *Panegyric*, where they are usually introduced by a parenthetical conjunction or adverb (for example *nam*, *Pan.* 8.4, 89.2; *autem*, 66.4, 83.5; *tamen*, 86.4).<sup>8</sup> It is this point that ultimately weakens the argument for *et*, which like *si* is faulty on stylistic grounds. Since it is well known that *cum* was sometimes spelled *qum* (or *quum/quom*), let me suggest <*quippe*> *cum*, where *quippe* has fallen out before *qum* through haplography (*substiti qu[ippe q]um*), helped along perhaps by *scriptio continua*. The adverb *quippe* appears frequently throughout this speech (for example *Pan.* 1.5, 10.5, 18.3, 29.3, 32.3, 44.6, 45.6, 71.6, 77.7, 93.1), and indeed indicates just such an aside earlier in the *Panegyric* (13.1–2):

alacer uirtute militum et laetus, quotiens aut cassidi tuae aut clipeo grauior ictus incideret (laudabas **quippe** ferientes, hortabarisque ut auderent, et audebant).

You delighted in the courage of your soldiers and rejoiced whenever a heavier blow struck you on shield or helmet (**indeed**, praising your assailants and urging them on to greater deeds of daring—which they at once performed). (my emphasis)

The introduction of an explanation by means of an emphatic *quippe* is typical in Latin, especially to pick up on something that was mentioned just beforehand. We might compare the style of the following passage from one of Pliny's *Letters* (*Ep.* 8.6.4), where this word immediately begins a clarification (*offeruntur – quippe offeruntur ...*), just as in our passage:

mitto quod Pallanti seruo praetoria ornamenta offeruntur—**quippe** offeruntur a seruis; mitto quod censent non exhortandum modo uerum etiam compellendum ad usum aureorum anulorum (erat enim contra maiestatem senatus, si ferreis praetorius uteretur).

I say nothing of this offer of the praetorian insignia to a slave—**for** they were slaves themselves who made the offer; nothing of the resolution that he should not only be begged but even be compelled to wear a gold ring (it would, in fact, lower the prestige of the Senate for a praetorian to wear the slave's iron one). (my emphasis)

In particular, a causal particle such as *cum* often follows *quippe*. For the sequence of *quippe* before *cum*, a suitable parallel may be found in the words of Quintus Fabius during his speech to Scipio in Livy's Book 28: ... *quippe cum prae te feras temptare te magis quam consulere senatum* '... for you make it clear that you are sounding out the Senate rather than consulting it', 28.45.4.<sup>9</sup> Based on these comparisons, it is likely that a scribe's eye jumped immediately to *qum* from *substiti*, skipping over the conjunction *quippe* accidentally in his transcription of the speech's conclusion, especially when one considers that *quippe* could also be written as *qpp*.<sup>10</sup> This is the most plausible explanation of what happened to the end of Pliny's *Panegyric*, since

<sup>8</sup> On the similar use of connectives by Pliny's contemporary and friend Suetonius, see T. Power, 'Suetonius, *De grammaticis* 13.1', *CQ* 62 (2012), 886–8; repr. in T. Power, *Collected Papers on Suetonius* (Abingdon, 2021), 141–3. See also T. Power, 'Jesus' flight into Egypt in Suetonius', in T. Power, *Collected Papers on Suetonius* (Abingdon, 2021), 216–17 on Suet. *Claud.* 25.4, arguing for the reading *enim pulso orbe [Iudaea] Christo*; cf. Livy 31.7.5 *pulso Italia Hannibale*.

<sup>9</sup> See also e.g. Cic. *Att.* 7.13, 10.3, *Amic.* 8.28; Livy 4.24.8, 4.57.10, 26.39.9; Vell. Pat. 2.56.3; Apul. *Met.* 2.22. Another notable appearance of this word order (*quippe cum ...*) within a work of oratory is in Cicero's Third Philippic (*Phil.* 3.1.1), where, not unlike in Pliny's flamboyant closing passage, it has a prominent place in the rhetorical opening flourish; cf. also the preface to Nepos' *Lives of generals* (*praef.* 4).

<sup>10</sup> For the abbreviation *qpp* for *quippe*, see A. Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane* (Milan, 1929<sup>3</sup>), 312.

some word is widely thought to have dropped out, and the adverb is demonstrably part of the orator's typical vocabulary. Ergo, punctuate this part of the sentence with parentheses or dashes as suggested by Vannini, but read <quippe> *cum*.

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## CLAUDIUS' HUMILIATION AT SUETONIUS, *DIVVS CLAVDIVS* 8

### ABSTRACT

*Suetonius says that court jesters put slippers on Claudius' hands while he napped during Caligula's dinner parties so that he would rub his face with them when he awoke. Since touching someone with the sole of a shoe was an insult, the joke is that Claudius insulted himself when he unwittingly rubbed his own face with the slippers.*

**Keywords:** Claudius; Suetonius; insult; sole; slippers; *socci*; *coprae*

According to Suetonius (*Claud.* 8), Claudius suffered indignities at the hands of *coprae* ('court jesters') during Caligula's parties. One of these involved placing slippers on his hands when he fell asleep during dinner so that he would rub his face with them when he awoke: *solebant et manibus stertentis socci induci ut repente expergefactus faciem sibimet confricaret*. While commentators have made no attempt to explain this insult,<sup>1</sup> Mary Beard suggests three possibilities: the rough soles scratched his face; this type of footwear made him appear effeminate because it was worn by women; the *socci* made him look like a buffoon because they were part of the costume of Roman comedy.<sup>2</sup> An examination of the role of shoes in insults suggests yet another possibility.

The belief that it was an insult to be touched by the sole of a shoe was widespread in the ancient world. At Psalms 60:8 and 108:9, Yahweh says: 'Moab is my washbasin, upon Edom I cast my shoe, over Philistia I shout in triumph.'<sup>3</sup> This idea has survived in Arab cultures. For example, Iraqis insulted Saddam Hussein by striking his statue with their shoes, and an Iraqi reporter threw his shoe at George W. Bush during a press conference while shouting 'This is a farewell, you dog.'<sup>4</sup> Earlier, Saddam Hussein installed a floor mosaic depicting George H.W. Bush at the entrance to the Al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad so that guests would have to step on it whenever they

<sup>1</sup> H. Smilda, *C. Suetonii Tranquilli Vita Diui Claudii* (Groningen, 1896), 32 notes that *socci* were suitable for this practical joke because they did not have laces. Cf. Isid. *Etym.* 19.34.12 *socci—saccum habent, in quo pars plantae inicitur—nam socci non ligantur, sed tantum intromittuntur*. D. Hurley, *Suetonius Diuus Claudius* (Cambridge, 2001), 89 adds that they were 'worn by women, comic actors and effeminate men'.

<sup>2</sup> M. Beard, *Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up* (Berkeley, 2014), 143–4. See also W. Kierdorf, *Sueton: Leben des Claudius und Nero* (Paderborn, 1992), 86: 'Die *socci* sind leichte Schuhe, die in Rom nur von Frauen und Weichlingen getragen wurden.'

<sup>3</sup> This translation is from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York, 1973). See also J. Nacht, 'The symbolism of the shoe with special reference to Jewish sources', *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 6 (1915), 1–22, at 5–7.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/09/sprj.irq.statue/index.html> (accessed April 16, 2021) and <https://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/14/bush.iraq/> (accessed April 16, 2021).