

Russell's Anthology of Latin Prose

Text 12: Cicero to Atticus (Cicero)

NOTES

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a) Source:

Ad Atticum 1. 14. 1-5.

b) Background (synopsis quoted from Russell's book):

"In 62 BC Publius Clodius was caught in disguise at the celebration of the women's cult of Bona Dea at Caesar's house. The consuls promulgated a bill (*rogatio*) for the appointment of an extraordinary commission to deal with the case; the praetor who was to preside was himself to select the jurors. Only one of the consuls, Valerius Messalla, was in earnest about the matter; the other, Pupius Piso, was not; there was also support for Clodius from survivors of Catiline's party, and optimates like Cato weighed in on the other side. Cicero describes all this to Atticus; he was himself involved in the subsequent trial as a witness against Clodius, who became his implacable enemy. The style, often elliptical and sprinkled with Greek, is typical of the letters to Atticus, which were never meant for publication. We give the beginning."

c) Language comment:

This text is a mixture of judicial language (the Latin equivalent of expressions such as "to pass a bill") and Greek words. Maybe the most difficult part is the passage in which Cicero describes his own rhetoric techniques. Of course, the fact that he is addressing a second person makes the language more vivid than if it were in a narrative.

d) Content:

Cicero is really angry with the events that have taken place due to a bill that should be passed in the Senate, as some of the senators seem to have behaved in a way that

could be considered contrary to what was expected, even trying to boycott the legal procedures. Cicero criticizes them, of course, but at the same time he praises those who acted correctly. He describes all of the legal procedures that took place.

e) Distribution of content:

(numbers refer to the lines in the printed edition)

1-8:	Cicero, a busy man.
4-14:	First speech by Pompeius.
14-18:	Second speech by Pompeius.
18-27:	Crassus' speech.
27-32:	Pompeius regrets his own speeches.
32-41:	Cicero's speech.
41-49:	Events on the streets.
49-53:	Speeches in the Comitia.
54-64:	Events in the Senate.

f) Notes for help:

1) "sim": subjunctive because it is indirect style.

2) "ut": result.

"tantulae epistulae": dative.

6) "frigebat": from "frigeo" = "to be cold", don't confuse it with "frigo" = "to fry".

"impulsu": ablative, "due to the incitation of".

9) "nundinarum": this genitive depends on *πανήγυρις*.

10) "quo": attraction of the relative to the case of the antecedent, it should have been "quorum", even the number has changed.

"uteretur": subjunctive because it still depends on "quaesivit".

11) "religione" = "sacrilegium".

14) "hic multis verbis": supply "dixit".

16) "ut": consecutive.

"illius ordinis": it means the senate, of course.

19) the "quod" sentence explains the "eo".

19-20) "ei consulatum meum placere": direct object of "suspicaretur".

21) "se": it is the subject of "referre" in line 22.

21-22) all of these "quod" depend on "referre", which infinitive depends on "diceret".

22) "acceptum referre" = "to register (the "quod" sentences) as received"

- 24) "videre": it also depends on "diceret".
 "locum" = "ornament" (here).
- 26) "nosti" = "novisti".
- 28) "hominem": subject of "moveri".
 "moveri" = "to be disturbed", and supply "for the fact that".
- 29) "libenti senatu": ablative agent of "laudarentur".
- 30) "eo minus" = "even less".
- 31) "perstringere" = "to criticize slightly".
- 32-33) "aperte tecte": two consecutive adverbs, meaning "sometimes openly, sometimes coveredly".
- 34) ἐμπερπερέυομαι = "to show oneself light".
 "novo auditori" = "who listens for first time" (to me).
- 35) the greek words mean rhetorical devices: "periods, transitions, reasonings, structurations".
- 36) "illo tempore": supply "id fuit".
- 38) "intermortuis" = "moribund".
- 39) "vilitas" = "low price" (of everything in general, it seems that Rome had in that moment a very low inflation rate).
- 40) "ut": consecutive.
 "sim": translate it by a future.
 "quod": causal.
- 41) "putem": remember that in a causal subordinate, the verb in subjunctive may mean "alleged cause".
- 42) "se habent" = "are in this state".
 "senatus": supply "est".
- 44) "rogationi...ferendae", "ex...consulto"; "consultus" = "decree", so it will mean "according to the decree".
- 45) "filiola": it refers insultantly to a man.
- 47) "operae" = "gangs" (here).
- 48) "occuparant" = "occupaverant".
 "ut": consecutive.
- 48-49) "uti rogas" = "as you ask for" (positive vote).
- 49) "tibi": ethic dative.
- 50) "vox" = "speech" (here).
- 52) "opera": of course, nothing to do with "gangs", here it means "performance".
- 54) historic "cum".
- 54-56) "frequenti senatu", "pugnante Pisone", "accidente Clodio": ablatives absolute.
- 56) "ut": subject of "decerneretur".
- 57) "accipiendam": gerundive.

57-58) "nullum...consultum": direct object of "facienti".

58) "adsentio": usually it is "assentior" dep., and goes with a dative, which is "Curioni..
facienti".

"facienti": more or less, it means "who wanted to do".

61) "tantum" = "solum".