

Someone is Missing the Pointing Here: Pliny, *Ep.* 1.11.1

Pliny's eleventh letter is short enough to quote in full. Here is Mynors' text:¹

C. Plinius Fabio Iusto suo s.

¹ Olim mihi nullas epistulas mittis. nihil est, inquis, quod scribam. at hoc ipsum scribe, nihil esse quod scribas, vel solum illud unde incipere priores solebant: 'si vales, bene est; ego valeo.' ² hoc mihi sufficit; est enim maximum. ludere me putas? serio peto. fac sciam quid agas, quod sine sollicitudine summa nescire non possum. vale.

Perhaps I am missing something, but the second sentence seems wrong. Surely it needs either quotation marks, or a different verb? Either:

'nihil est', inquis, 'quod scribam.'

You say, "I have nothing to write."

or

nihil est, inquis, quod scribas.

You say you have nothing to write.

Mynors' text seems to fall between two stools, a direct quotation punctuated as if it were an indirect one.² Nevertheless, more than half of the texts on my shelf agree with Mynors: these are the older Teubners of H. Keil (1892), C. F. W. Mueller (1903), E. T. Merrill (1922), and R. C. Kukula (1923), the old Budé (Guillemin 1927),³ the Loeb (B. Radice, 1972), the Catalan facing text (M. Olivar, 1927), and the school edition of Books I-II by J. Cowan (Macmillan, 1889).

On the other hand, S. E. Stout (Bloomington, 1962), the latest Teubner editor (M. Schuster, 1958), and the UTET (F. Trisoglio, 1973), BUR (L. Lenaz, L. Rusca, 2011⁵), and at least one of the Reclam editions (H. Philips, M. Giebel, 2012³) print the quotation marks. Of course, a bold emendator could continue to leave out the quotation marks and

¹ Text and variants are quoted from Mynors' Oxford Classical Text (1963).

² It could of course mean 'You say that I [=Pliny] have nothing to write', but that does not suit the context. Why should Fabius Iustus not write if he has something to say, just because Pliny doesn't?

³ I originally wrote 'both Budés' here, but just discovered that the shiny red paperback set of Budé Plinies I bought a few years ago was a matched set only in appearance. Volume I turned out to be a reprint of Guillemin, only Volumes II-III were what I thought I was ordering, Zehnacker's new edition (2009). (Volume IV had not yet appeared.) I will update this paper when I get hold of Volume I.

emend to *scribas*. However, that would be acting like a doctor who performs surgery when pills would have cured the problem just as well.