

Villus

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 04 Mar 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3876>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Nigel Price — 04 Mar 2003, 11:14

In a rhetorical mood, Crush ruminates...

Still, it does show that ambivalent names should be taken seriously. Consequently, I don't know what to do with the ambivalent name "Villus." It's so obscure, the ambiguity must be intentional, but what does it mean?

Nigel, who, somewhat disturbingly, keeps a Latin dictionary by his side at all times, responds in a manner that is intended to be helpful, but which is probably intensely irritating...

"Villus" is a Latin word (2nd declension, masculine) meaning "shaggy hair". It is related etymologically to "pilus", the Latin word for "a single hair".

Nigel (who wishes he still had shaggy hair these days)

Che Monro — 04 Mar 2003, 11:55 · follows Nigel Price

At 11:14 AM 4/03/03 +0000, you wrote:
In a rhetorical mood, Crush ruminates...

Still, it does show that ambivalent names should be taken seriously. Consequently, I don't know what to do with the ambivalent name "Villus." It's so obscure, the ambiguity must be intentional, but what does it mean?

Nigel, who, somewhat disturbingly, keeps a Latin dictionary by his side at all times, responds in a manner that is intended to be helpful, but which is probably intensely irritating...

"Villine" is a Latin word (2nd declension, masculine) meaning "shaggy hair". It is related etymologically to "pilus", the Latin word for "a single hair".

Nigel (who wishes he still had shaggy hair these days)

Che looks on with interest and gives Nigel a puppy dog look. "As a puppy I devoured Shakespeare in a tasty leather binding."

Che

Ché Franz Joseph Monro -- <http://www.chemonro.com>
che at chemonro.com -- flirt at technologist.com

James Wynn — 04 Mar 2003, 15:31 · follows Che Monro

Nigel lends Crush a hand:

"Villus" is a Latin word (2nd declension, masculine) meaning "shaggy hair".

It is related etymologically to "pilus", the Latin word for "a single hair".

Crush responds:

Thanks Nigel! This is very useful to me. The confusing thing about "villus" is that it is a sexually ambivalent name. In biology it is a teeny hairlike projection in the small intestines. In botany it is a teeny hairlike growth on the leaves or stems of some plants.

What's the same in both senses is the quality of smallness, and Villus is the smallest "boy" at the palaestra. But, there are lots and lots of more common words that carry that quality. Wolfe was sure aware of the ambiguity of this word and selected it at least in part for that ambiguity. Why? This calls to mind Titi's sexually ambiguous name; Titi, the male counterspy whose specialty was female impersonation.

-- Crush