VATES

The Journal of New Latin Poetry

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of *VATES*. The aim of this journal is to encourage both the reading of but most especially the writing of new Latin poetry. Note that the key word is *poetry*: this is not a journal about scansion, metre, grammar or syntax. Important though they are, such things are means to an end – the end itself is something far more nebulous, far less easy to define than correct Ciceronian diction or the mechanical scanning of 'longs and shorts' – the end is *poetry*.

Whether the verses printed here qualify as poetry is something only you the reader can decide. Here you will find poems in various forms, some classical, some not. For however satisfying it is to compose metrically correct lines after the manner of the ancients, the process itself does not automatically guarantee poetic inspiration. *VATES*, then, is not prescriptive about what form your Latin muse should take.

You will also find here a variety of articles about Latin poetry – tips on how to write it, ideas about how to teach it, musings on poets and poems of earlier generations, and a great deal more – some serious, some less so, but all intended (hopefully) to prod your own creative muse into action.

The art of Latin poetry has a long and venerable history, but now that it is scarcely ever taught in schools or colleges it is an art threatened with extinction. In its own modest way, *VATES* hopes to change this situation by providing a forum for discussion and, vitally, for the dissemination of new Latin verse. Professors, teachers, students of all ages, and armchair enthusiasts are all welcome here – to read, to enjoy and, most importantly of all, to contribute. Without your poems, *VATES* cannot succeed. So what are you waiting for?

VATES needs you!

In order to find as broad a readership (and writer-ship) as possible, we ask that if you like what you see here please take a moment to forward this journal to all of your friends. If you write a blog or contribute to an online forum, please tell people about it. If you are in a school or academic department, why not print a copy and leave it in a prominent location for others to read?

Finally, *gratias maximas* to all the contributors without whose kind and generous support this journal would not be possible.

Mark Walker, Editor
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Carmina Latina

n.b. Latin spellings follow the orthography of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Only proper names are capitalised. See ***Matters Metrical*** (p. 43) for an explanation of the verse forms.

FOR A BEGINNER

Frank Lelièvre

The editor writes: In this poem Frank Lelièvre offers some words of advice for all those just beginning to write Latin verse. It is taken with the author's kind permission from *Across Bin Brook* (1992), a collection of poems by Professor Lelièvre and H. H. Huxley. It was also reprinted with the translation below in the editor's *Britannica Latina: 2000 Years of British Latin* (2009).

perstare, credo, Musa suos iubet,
utcumque chordis dulcisonos negat
cantus et, exoptata quamuis,
peruigilem refugit lucernam.

nascentis ipso germine flos rosae
celatur: ignem dura tegit silex:
et terra fulgorem smaragdi
condidit interiore saxo.

at pertinacem, sera licet, uirum
ditare gaudet: non silicis latet
scintilla percussae, nec omni
tempore flos Veneris moratur.

tu perge tantum, namque potes, modis

uerba experiri conuenientia.

te Musa quaerentem docebit

mente nova reparare carmen.

Metre: Alcaics

Editor's Translation:

The Muse, I reckon, tells her own followers to keep trying, even though she withholds sweet-sounding songs from our strings and, however much she is longed for, shuns our night-long labours. The flower of the growing rose is concealed in its own bud: hard flint hides the fire: and the Earth kept locked away in its inmost rock the brilliance of the emerald. But she rejoices, although tardily, to enrich the tenacious man: the spark of a struck flint is not hidden, nor is the flower of Love delayed for all time. You, carry on at any rate experimenting, for indeed you can, with harmonious words in your measures. The Muse will teach you while you are learning to amend your song with new understanding.

* * *

DE TE COGITANS

Ginny Lindzey

Ginny Lindzey writes: These lines were penned at a time when just the memory of a dear friend was enough to drive away the blues.

sola sedeo

tua in umbra grata

sed tu non ades.

Metre: Haiku

Translation:

'Thinking of You'

All alone I sit
in your comforting shadow
but you are not here.

* * *

AD AMBULATOREM VATES HORTANTEM

David Money

David Money writes: This was composed on 5 May 2010, in honour of *VATES* and its editor, Mark Walker. It plays with the various possibilities of the iambic metre, including its potential variations and ability to include words which cannot fit in dactylic hexameters or elegiacs (anything with one light between two heavy syllables, such as 'ambulator'). The aim is to be playful, and hopefully to suggest that metrical experiments can be quite fun, while encouraging participants in *VATES* towards a spirit of adventure, in whatever direction they may wish to travel. Light verse, then: not to be taken too seriously, but perhaps making some points as it trips along about the inspirational benefits of looking at other new verse, and the need for some kind of control, by both poet and editor. My apologies for the number of technical terms in these comments, for those who may not yet know them all: there is nothing frightening about them once one gets used to them. They are mostly just ways of describing alternative arrangements of heavy and light syllables: the small effort involved in getting to know the terminology of a slightly more 'exotic' metre can be quite worthwhile.

I treat the verse form like the trimeters of Greek tragedy: six feet (or three units of two feet each); the most common variant is a spondee instead of an iamb in the first, third, or fifth foot. I observe a *caesura* (as one must) in the third or fourth foot, and also Porson's law of the final cretic (no *caesura* in the fifth foot, if it is a spondee). The poem starts and ends with 'pure' iambics (lines 1, 2, 16), allowing no variants; then the normal variant, the spondee, appears (lines 3 to 8). Line 9 starts with a dactyl: less common, but fairly tame. Then the pace becomes frantic, allowing frequent anapaests (light-light-heavy) and tribrachs (three light syllables) in lines 10 to 14. Line 12 uses the word for 'tribrach', with a Greek nominative '-ys' ending. Line 13 is particularly wild, running as 'dactyl, tribrach, dactyl, iamb, anapaest, iamb' (note that I treat *temere* as three light syllables, *pace* Lewis and Short). The effect is deliberately jumpy, far from the steady walking pace signalled by more regular iambics. This concentration of variant feet, all allowable in themselves, is not something I would normally recommend: but I enjoyed trying to push the metre towards its limits. The poem winds down at the end from this bout of metrical enthusiasm: line 15 has steadying spondees in all three permitted places, and the final line at last returns to the initial wariness of all these risky variants. Have we completed the walk without tripping up? Let Walker and his readers be the judges of that.

quis Ambulator audet excitare uim
poeticam? quis urget, ardet, aut auet?
aut quis perenne carminis pignus noui
creare gressu gestit incedens suo?
fortasse uates quisque grata peruicax
incepta sumat ex recentioribus
diuersioribusque uatibus, legat
libenter omnes excitatorum sales,
denique resurgens aemulo uadat pede.
rapidis pedibus et uaria tractet artium
insolita currens loca et amore anapaestico
titubet, tribrachys aut si per aruorum uias
se temere tener insinuet, accipiatur in
gremium poetae. perge, nam passum tuum
laudo; ruentes more qui puro reget,
placebit ambulator omnibus uigil.

Metre: Iambic trimeters

Translation:

'To Walker, who encourages poets': Who is this Walker who dares to rouse the force of poetry? Who urges, burns, or desires? Or who longs to create an eternal memorial of new song, going on at his own pace? Perhaps each persistent poet may take welcome ideas from more recent and more diverse poets, and may gladly read all the wit of those who have been roused, and may finally rise up and walk forward with rivalry in his step. He may deal with varied and unusual backwaters of the arts, running with rapid feet; and he may stagger with love of anapaests; or if a tender tribrach rashly inserts itself among the country roads, may it be accepted into the bosom of the poet. Proceed, for I praise your pace. A watchful walker will please all, if he will rule in a pure manner those who rush onwards.

* * *

VESICA

Paul Murgatroyd

Paul Murgatroyd writes: This epigram was produced under the inspiration of one of my favourite poets: Ovid, specifically *Amores* 1.9.1-2.

cymbia, uina, calix nostrae sunt dulcia menti,

tristia uesicae cymbia, uina, calix.

Metre: Elegiac couplet

Translation:

Drinking-cups, wine, wine-cups are delights for our mind, banes for our bladder are drinking-cups, wine, wine-cups.

* * *

CARMEN NUPTIALE

Stephen Coombs

Stephen Coombs writes: This was written with my two nieces' weddings in mind, but it is pleasant for me as a resident of Sweden to think that it will be published around the time of the wedding of that country's Crown Princess Victoria in the summer of 2010. The story of the marriage in Cana is in St. John's Gospel ii. For the parallel between marriage and Christ's flock the Church (*ecclesia*, Greek *ekklêsia* from *ekkaleô*, to call forth, cf. *euocas* in line 38) see Ephesians v. The choice of metre was determined by the example of Catullus' pagan wedding song (61), where however it is only in some of the strophes that the fourth and fifth lines form a refrain. The refrain *CHRISTE LAUS …* is to be repeated at the end of each stanza.

de Deo genitum Deum

gressum in hanc hominum uiam

nate uirgine dicimus.

CHRISTE LAUS TIBI COPULAE

NUPTIALIS AMICO.

Canam iter faciens homo,

mira prima creans Deus,

nuntium retices tuum.

sperat obses adhuc diem

quo tributa sit illius

apparata redemptio.

quo dolore pudet domum
quae nequit dare quod bibant
nuptias celebrantibus!

mota corde petit statim
mater auxilium tuum
potione carentibus.

'remne consociabimus?'
inquis: 'officii mei
hora debita non erat.'

supplici tamen intimae
nobile auspicium lubens
filius pius adnuis.

hospitum prohibes sitim
dedecusque domesticis
nosque pergere nescios.

dein parens famulos iubet
quod poposceris exsequi
imperator oboediens.

‘uos replete hydrias aqua:
gustet architriclinus ut
iudicet.’ calicem ferunt.

sponsus arbitrium sciet:
‘uina qualia prompta sunt
praeferenda prius datis!’

iungitur mulier uiro
sicut upilio bonus
euocas ouium gregem.

reddis hanc hominum uiam
caelitum, triuialia
mira, tristia gaudia.

vita nostra caduca fit
sempiterna, leuat famem
optimus cibus ac sapor.

namque praeterita omnia
omnibus superaueris
quae tueris in exitum.
CHRISTE LAUS TIBI COPULAE
NUPTIALIS AMICO.

Metre: Glyconics

Translation:

Virgin's Son, our speech is of God born of God having entered on this path of humanity. PRAISE BE TO YOU, CHRIST, FRIEND OF THE MARRIAGE BOND. When you travel to Cana as man, when you bring about your first miracle as God, you keep silent about your message. The hostage [humanity] is still waiting for the day when the ransom prepared for her will be granted.

Such sorrow, such shame is caused when a house cannot provide drink for people celebrating a marriage. Your mother's heart is moved at once to seek your help for those without anything to drink. 'Are we to have this matter in common?' you say, 'it is not yet time for me to begin my service.' However as a loving son you willingly grant the familiar suppliant an illustrious sign. You prevent the thirst of the guests, disgrace for the household and our remaining ignorant [of who you are]. Next your mother tells the servants to do whatever you, the obedient commander, may ask of them. 'Fill the ewers with water, let the master of the feast taste so that he can say what he thinks.' They carry away the cup. The bridegroom is due to know the judgement: 'What a wine this is that they have brought out now, better than that provided earlier!'

Woman is joined to man in the same way that you, the Good Shepherd, call forth your flock of sheep. You make this path of humanity a path of heavenly beings, trivial things wonderful, sad things sources of joy. Our transitory life is made everlasting, our hunger is relieved by the best of sustenance and savour. For you shall surpass all things that have passed with all things that you are keeping until the end. PRAISE BE TO YOU, CHRIST, FRIEND OF THE MARRIAGE BOND.

* * *

FABULA VULPINA

Marc Moskowitz

Marc Moskowitz writes: This poem was written as a response to some recent political happenings in the USA.

fabula quam recitas, uulpecula, prouocat ignem.

osa es tu quercum, quercus nunc ecce perusta.

forte sed esuries, quondam, sine quoque patrono;

frustra per siluam quaeres uestigia glandis.

Metre: Hexameters

Translation:

The story you tell, little fox, incites a fire. You hated the oak, so now behold the oak in ashes. But perhaps you will hunger, someday, without all your patrons; in vain you will search through the forest for traces of an acorn.

* * *

4 HAIKU

Steven Perkins

Steven Perkins writes: About ten years ago I ran across the book *Tonight They All Dance: 92 Latin & English Haiku* (ed. Sacré and Smets, 1999). Since then I have incorporated Latin Haiku into my Latin III class. For more than two millennia, the Latin language and its literature have helped shape and reflect humanity. Haiku, a relative newcomer to the stage of world literature, is but a little over four hundred years old. Yet, their eventual joining seems inevitable. As the primitive settlement of Romulus expanded, it adopted and adapted elements of the surrounding cultures. Menander and Homer found their literary offerings recast in Plautus and Virgil, and Cicero would surely not have so endangered his life in the *Philippics* had he not had Demosthenes for a predecessor. Though the days of Roman territorial conquest are past, Latin does not weep with Alexander, for there are still literary worlds, if not to conquer, then to embrace. The beauty, clarity, and precise yet ethereal quality of Haiku have made it an attractive genre in which modern Latinists can try their hand.

(1)

emit puella

ignota ab omnibus

cibum in foro

(2)

in turba ludunt

pueri, oratore

habente causam

(3)

Autumno uirgo

dolet mensem Iunium

nouum transitum

(4)

seruus captus in

proelio prius miles

timeo noua

Metre: Haiku

Translations:

(1)

Ignored by them all
a young girl purchases food
in the marketplace.

(2)

In the crowd play young
boys as the orator pleads
his case in the court.

(3)

A maiden in fall
grieves that another season
of marriage has passed.

(4)

Captured as a slave
in battle, I, a soldier,
fear uncertainty.

Originally published in 'The Heresy of Latin Haiku', *Classical Bulletin*, Volume 78, Number 1, 2002, pp. 67-68.

* * *

CARMEN PORCINUM

Jim McKeown

Jim McKeown writes: The *Carmen Porcinum* was written to enhance the pig-motif in my book *Classical Latin*, and can be viewed (with sound-effects and artwork by Madison artist Danielle Kleijwegt) on the course website (see link below).

pastor aramque cani fido defendat et agros

imperat, exitio porcis et dulcibus agnis

ne ueniant apri ingentes et saeua lupum uis.

porcellus minimus, siluis qui primus in altis,

paruae molis opus, faeno sibi condidit aulam,

solus ibi secum graue olenti stratus in herba

iactabat pinguemque fimum caenumque profundum.

nil tamen aeternum superorum numina diuom

porcino generi dederunt: magnusque malusque

ecce lupus sanie spumans et sanguine rubro

stramineamque casam totumque a culmine tectum

aequat humi. pauidus procurris, porce, sed ille

grunnitu citius te corripit ore furenti.

at procul horribilem strepitum uix audit obesis

auriculis porcus maior: 'fratercule', grunnit,

'frater, ubi es? lacrimo mentemque suilia tangunt.

dulcia praepinguis cur liquimus ubera matris?'

Metre: Hexameters

Translation:

The shepherd orders his faithful dog to defend both the pig-sty and the fields, lest the huge wild boars and the savage violence of the wolves should come to destroy the pigs and the sweet lambs. The littlest piglet, who first in the tall woods established a palace for himself out of straw, a task of little labour, alone by himself there, wallowing in the foul-smelling grass, tossed about both the rich manure and the deep mud. But the will of the gods above has granted nothing everlasting to the piggy race. Behold, a wolf, both big and bad, foaming with gore and red blood, levels with the ground both the straw cottage and the whole shelter from its very top. Pig, you run out in fear, but the wolf, quicker than a grunt, snatches you in its raving mouth. But far off the bigger pig scarcely hears the dreadful din with his fat wee ears: 'Little brother', he grunts, 'where are you, my brother? I am weeping and our pigsties touch my mind. Why did we leave our wonderfully fat mother's sweet teats?'

* * *

TWO HOUSEHOLDS

Chris Kelk

Chris Kelk writes: I was inspired to make this translation of the Prologue from *Romeo and Juliet* after acting in the play five times – each time as Friar Lawrence, though once I also played the Chorus.

in domibus magnis simili uirtute duabus

quo manifestatur pulchra Verona, dolor

antiqui praesentia nunc fit facta cruoris

proeliaque ex odio sanguinolenta patent,

sic cuiusque ex inguinibus fatalibus hostis,

mors homines geminos eligit atque capit.

fortunisque malis, ea quae mactauerat omnes

(quam longe quis scit?) rixa sepulta suis,

quo fatalis amor procederet atque periret

perrueretque domos ira paterna duas

quae, nisi mors duplex, nulla est remouere potestas,

quisque actor uobis explicet arte bona.

sic audite, precor, noster conabitur illa

qualiacumque errent praeripuisse labor.

Metre: Elegiac couplets

Translation:

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.
(*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue)

* * *

5 SATIRICAL EPIGRAMS

Paul Murgatroyd

Paul Murgatroyd writes: These translations from Greek originals in the Palatine Anthology are an attempt to do justice to the Greek epigrammatists.

A.P. 11.68

Leuconoe, dicunt quidam te tingere crines;

sed coma nigra tibi nempe coempta foro.

A.P. 11.186

cum coruus cantat, pereunt ex omine multi;

cum Marius cantat, coruus et ipse perit.

A.P. 11.224

Victorem nudum uidit dixitque Priapus:

'me miserum, magno est numine maior homo.'

A.P. 11.226

sit tibi terra leuis, letum cum lumina claudet,

ut facile e terra te catuli rapiant.

A.P. 11.277

in somnis quondam segnissimus Atta cucurrit;

nunc uigilat, rursus currere non cupiens.

Metre: Elegiac couplets

Translations:

A.P. 11.68

> Leuconoe, some say that you dye your hair; but your black hair was doubtless bought by you in the forum.

A.P. 11.186

> When the raven sings, many die in accordance with the omen; when Marius sings, even the raven itself dies.

A.P. 11.224

> Priapus saw Victor naked and said: 'Oh dear, a mortal is bigger than a big divinity.'

A.P. 11.226

> May the earth rest lightly on you, when death closes your eyes, so that the dogs can easily drag you from the earth.

A.P. 11.277

> The extremely indolent Atta once ran in a dream; now he stays awake, not wanting to run again.

* * *

FEATURES

For Better or for Verse

Barry Baldwin on some surprising neo-Latinists and a possible patron saint for *VATES*

Leicester Bradner's *Musae Anglicanae* (1940) began with the cheery aim of treating Anglo-Latin verse (1500-1925) as 'a branch of the literature of England', but ended gloomily: 'We may safely conclude that its course is finished', his obituary for what a TLS reviewer (April 10, 1992) dubbed, 'that peculiarly English phenomenon'. I hope (via future issues of *VATES*) to extend Bradner's boundaries with (e.g.) a 1706 Virgilian-style cricket commentary, John Clark's 1845 Eureka machine for cranking out hexameters, and the four compositional methods adumbrated in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

Post-Bradner exegetes include A.C. Ainger, whose *Clivus* (1878) advocates re-arrangement of pre-scanned words into elegiac couplets, endorsed by Harry Schnur's *Do it Yourself: How to Write Latin Verse* (1957), rejecting translation of English passages as 'not composition', and C.J. Ellingham (one of Kingsley Amis' classics teachers) whose 'Apology for the practice of Latin Verse Composition' (*Greece & Rome* 4, 1935, 151-159) bemoans scansion problems caused by the names of ancient winds.

James Joyce displayed his gift of comic neologism in *Balia*, a poetic Latin version of the music-hall ditty *Unfortunate Miss Bailey*, discovered and published (*James Joyce Literary Supplement*, Spring 1991, 6-7) by R.J. Schork. Arthur Rimbaud's short-lived Muse burned bright at fourteen in Latin verses on classical and Christian themes (ed. A. Adam, *Pléiade* series, 1972). Virgilian scholar Herbert H. Huxley edited and contributed to *Corolla Camenae* (1969). Another delicious collection is R.W. Tate's *Carmina Dubliniensia* (1949), whose facility for Latinising the limerick on the young lady of Riga who went for a ride on a tiger – *sed locus interior, cum iam rediere, puellae / tigridis in uultu risus ouantis ear* – should both daunt and challenge us all.

The Letters of P.G. Wodehouse (1990) disclose that at Dulwich he 'did reams of Greek and Latin verse, and enjoyed it more than any other work'. I wonder if any survive? Perhaps a thesis here for some devotee, to supplement Plum's otherwise authoritative biography by Robert McCrum (2004). Same question applies to Wodehouse's fellow-Dulwichian Raymond Chandler (though their paths never crossed), who attributed his acclaimed English prose style to the school's classical training. Hard to think of two more persuasive horses' mouths than the creators of Jeeves and Philip Marlowe.

Goodly Godley

Bradner ended his book with A. D. Godley and A. B. Ramsay, not noting their friendship, disparaging the former's verses as too Oxonianly parochial, lacking the latter's 'subtle delicacy of feeling'. But if *VATES* were to have a patron saint, Alfred Denis Godley would be a front-runner.

Godley's (1856-1925) life and works are tersely described in *The Dictionary of British Classicists* (2004, vol.2, 377-378), more eloquently by C.R.L. Fletcher, editor of *Reliquiae* (1926), wherein many of Godley's Latin and Greek verses are preserved: others appear in diverse volumes, e.g. *Nova Anthologia Oxoniensis* (1899, edited by Godley & Latin Professor Robinson Ellis, memorably described by Housman as having 'the intellect of an idiot child'), *Q. Horati Flacci Carminum librum quintum* (1920), containing his Latin translations of Kipling and Graves, and various volumes of poetry, listed and available on-line, as are his Loeb translation of Herodotus and edition of Tacitus' *Histories*, the latter replaced by that of W.A. Spooner of 'Spoonerism' fame.

The undergraduate Godley displayed his vatic talents by winning the Chancellor's Latin Verse Prize and the Gaisford Prize for Greek Verse; he also snagged the Craven Scholarship and the Chancellor's Latin Essay Prize. His output in both languages, both translations and original compositions, lasted right up to his death. For present purposes, *Reliquiae* is the most convenient source. Especially as it also contains (vol. 2, 209-216) his 1917 lecture 'Verse Composition In Schools', a witty and convincing defence of this 'especially English' activity, albeit his gibe at 'the lack of feminine interest in verse-constructions' will not sit well in some modern quarters. Godley's pronouncement, 'A good teacher will show his pupils more of the essentials of style by the correction of copies of verses than they could ever learn from a course of lectures on the Sublime and Beautiful', both echoes the similar strictures of A.E. Housman and prefigures the pedagogy of Andrew Crocker-Harris in Rattigan's *The Browning Version*.

Bradner rightly singled out for rare praise Godley's rhyming verses on an 1886 Ball-Supper at Magdalen College and lines of thanks to Clarendon Press delegates for gifts of books, the latter in tone if not in metre echoing Martial's *Epigrams*. The first one runs:

noscat sibi quisque uina

horum nullum nomen do:

tantum dixi quae culina

ponat in conuiuio:

sequitur, Latinus parum,

codex rerum edendarum

'Let everyone get to know the wines for themselves, I give the name of none. I only say what the kitchen brings to the feast: a list, not in Latin, of things to be eaten follows.'

Food and drink brought out the best in Godley's trilingual (he knocked out reams of English verse) muse. A later Ball-Supper's menu (1888) was commemorated in Greek comic iambics. For oblique comparison and contrast to the Latin one, see the undergraduate Samuel Johnson's elegiac complaint on the poor quality of Pembroke College Ale (in my 1995 edition).

Bradner's other choice is one of three Godleyana addressed to the Clarendon Press wallahs:

grates ago Delegatis

pro libellis nuper datis,

cunctis magnae uenustatis,

editis a doctis uiris,

exornatis uere miris

typis, Indicis papyris.

dixi satis: precor tamen

ut florescant sicut gramen

omnes delegati. AMEN

'I thank the trustees for all the very charming books recently given, edited by learned men, decorated with truly wondrous figures, on Indian paper. I have said enough: I pray however that all the trustees may flourish as the grass. Amen.'

The second one's *Cui donas lepidum novum Catullum* neatly quotes the first line of the Roman bard's collection, whilst the third responds to complaints that the aforementioned *Nova Anthologia*

Oxoniensis had made a loss, contriving to put some blame on his fellow-editor: *Ellis et in culpa, non ego solus, erat.*

Godley's last datable (March 1925) effort just before his death was another thank-you, to Ramsay for his just-published *Ros Rosarum*, which along with *Inter Lilia* (1920), comprise two volumes of Latin verse descriptions of Eton schoolboy life. Too long to quote, it makes light-hearted play with Ramsay as a modern Orbilius, the cane-loving dominie immortalised by Horace. In cognate vein, Godley engaged in poetic one-upmanship contests with fellow classicist J.U. Powell's Latin poems on the etymology of the neighbouring village of Didcot, and on dawn breaking over Leafield. Again, far too long to quote (*Reliquiae*, 318-320). But this Godleyan *praegustatio* is better concluded by two lighter pieces. The first reports a disturbance in Hertford College, something designed to make Evelyn Waugh chortle, considering his dislike of that place and immortal 'the sound of the English Upper-Classes baying for broken glass':

clamant omnes Socii, experrecti toris,

'salua nos a filio pii Fundatoris!'

nemo sapit omnibus, sicut scimus, horis:

sed fenestras frangere non est boni moris.

'Woken from their beds all the fellows shout, "Save us from the dutiful son of the Founder!" No one is wise in every hour, we all know, but breaking windows is not the sign of good breeding.'

The second one may particularly suit *VATES* readers (no offence), being a macaronic exercise (1914) dedicated to his future editor Fletcher: 'It might be useful in schools – George might use it to teach Latin grammar'. This George could allude to a *Punch* parody (December 13, 1890) of the classicists caricatured in Matthew Arnold's *Friendship's Garland* and Thackeray's *Uses of Adversity*:

What is this that roareth thus?

Can it be a Motor Bus?

Yes, the smell and hideous hum

Indicat Motorem Bum!

Implet in the Corn and High

Terror me Motoris Bi:

Bo Motori clamitabo

Ne Motore caedar a Bo –

Dative be or Ablative

So thou only let us live: –

Whither shall thy victims flee?

Spare us, spare us, Motor Be!

Thus I sang; and still anigh

Came in hordes Motores Bi,

Et complebat omne forum

Copia Motorum Borum.

How shall wretches live like us

Cincti Bis Mortoribus?

Domine, defende nos

Contra hos Motores Bos!

Godley will have known that (e.g.) Swift wrote such macaronics. There may be parody of the grammatical mnemonics at the back of *Kennedy's Latin Primer*. These all look forward to the delicious bilingual puns perpetrated by Mr. Chips, who greeted Brookfield School's grisly new wartime rissole with '*carne abhorrendum* – meat to be abhorred', and entertainingly inculcated the *Lex Canuleia* (legalising intermarriage between classes) into his Roman history class with the Roman maiden admonishing an aristocratic cad who denied such nuptials were legal with the punchline, 'Oh, yes you can, you liar!'

* * *

Verse Comp in the Classroom

John P. Piazza on bringing back Latin verse in the classroom

Latin verse composition has never been very easy or popular, but it was always required – and for good reason. The best way to understand and appreciate the written word is to practice writing it, which is why most of the great English poets wrote Latin poetry before attempting verses in their own language.

I think the main obstacle to teaching any kind of composition today is the methodology, which traditionally has been overly difficult, boring and ineffective. Most prose composition books are merely collections of antiquated English passages which the student must translate into Latin. This is translation, not composition. Virtually all verse composition books use the same approach, requiring that lines of English verse be translated word for word into Latin. It is simply taken for granted that the student knows all the vowel lengths and syllable quantities. The result of this method is that the beginner is overwhelmed with having to do too many things at once: look up the Latin word, figure out the weight of all the syllables, and only then fit the words together.

I have only seen one work that has attempted to do something different. A. C. Ainger, in his two-volume *Clivus: Elementary Exercises in Latin Elegiac Verse* (1878), appended to the first volume a collection of introductory exercises which require the student to arrange lines of pre-scanned Latin words into the various parts of the elegiac couplet, beginning with the first or last parts of a hexameter or pentameter line, on up to a complete line or couplet. In the beginning exercises, the student must create only one or two feet of a line, and there are two possible correct configurations at most. After mastering the art of rearranging words to scan correctly, the student is then given English lines to translate, with pre-scanned nouns and verbs supplied but in the first person singular and nominative forms respectively. By the time he or she has reached the end of this short collection of exercises, the student is in a much better position to complete the more traditional exercises in the main part of the book with more confidence and success – or to go on and write their own verses!

Here is one related exercise that I have used successfully. It can serve as a 'warm-up' or be the focus of a lesson: For my Virgil class, I will choose a few lines from the day's reading and write each word from a given line, with long and short markings, on a small post-it note. Each student will then receive a set of post-it's for one line of verse and be required to arrange the notes so that the line will scan correctly.

* * *

Texan Eclogues

Karen T. Moore on how she has encouraged her students to write pastoral poetry

I have for many years taught Latin at a classical school in central Texas. This year I was also afforded the wonderful opportunity to assist with an ancient humanities class of students in grades 9-12. Their studies revolve around the reading of The Great Books, particularly those from antiquity. Included are works such as the *Iliad*, the histories of Livy, Suetonius and Plutarch, and the *Meditation*s of Marcus Aurelius. My favorite segment of this course, however, is Roman poetry. The students read the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

My own love affair with Roman poetry began in high school when my teacher introduced me to Horace, Catullus, and of course the master, Virgil. In college I was reprimanded for not studying more prose – but my heart longed for poetry. For me there has always been something magical about the manner in which Latin verse is composed. Latin seems to transcend the limitations suffered by English verse. I am not alone. The number of poets and artists inspired by Latin verse is endless. The opportunity to share such poetry with students is a task to be relished.

Our humanities text, aptly named *Omnibus*, suggested an assignment composing Latin verse. This might seem strange in an English-based classroom, but one must understand that every one of these students had already studied Latin for several years. Some students had even read the *Aeneid* in my AP Latin class during the preceding year. While they had all had experience *reading* Latin poetry, none of the students had ever attempted to *write* Latin poetry. This assignment was therefore met with a bit of fear and trembling mixed with a little excitement. The class was reading the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics,* so the assignment was to write a brief pastoral poem (5-10 lines) in dactylic hexameter. Although dactylic hexameter is usually reserved for longer poems, this was the style they had seen in Virgil, and it was the style that Ovid used for the next book they would read, the *Metamorphoses*. I wanted them to develop an appreciation for this particular style of poetry, and they certainly did. Requiring students to walk a few metres in Virgil's shoes gave them a new insight to the skill required in composing poetry. Lastly, I also required the students to incorporate at least two rhetorical devices into their poem.

We prepared for this composition assignment by first reading and discussing the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. The *Eclogues* tend to focus on shepherds frolicking. The *Georgics* marvel at the elements of nature: from the great celestial constellations down to the busy bees. The students were to take these as guides for their own topics. Next, we discussed a number of rhetorical devices. I required the students to identify a minimum of three such devices

in each of a selected group of the *Eclogues* without repeating a device. I then asked the same of the *Georgics*. This allowed us the opportunity to discuss what devices Virgil used, the effect they had on his poem, the images they created. Rhetorical devices are an important tool for the poet. Much like the artist uses colour and brush strokes to illicit an image or emotion, so the poet uses word choice and placement to the same affect. Lastly, we reviewed the rules for meter in Latin poetry, particularly where dactylic hexameter was concerned. Once all of these things had been reviewed and discussed, I divided students into small groups to begin crafting their poem.

I was more than pleased with the results. The students responded well and seemed to relish the opportunity to create. There was the occasional groan at the frustration of fitting their Latin to metre, but that was balanced by each triumph felt when a verse had been successfully completed. While the poems vary in style and skill level, and while no one has yet reached the level of Virgil, each and every student came away from this assignment with a greater appreciation and respect for his poetry. And, I believe, a sense of pride at having touched the hem of his toga.

The Poems

By students of the Grace Academy of Georgetown, Texas (Karen Moore, Teacher), written Spring 2010

www.graceacademy-gt.org

upilio in pratum pulcherrimum agens gregem omnem.

laetificum carmen affirmanti uoce cantat:

'o mi lanigeri amici cessate libenter

tempestiuo mane quod largiuntur gaudete

liberali di. dissoluunt hiemem radio auri

ueremque spargiunt ad agros artusque trementes.

Ver uerrit patulis pennis alarum auium horum.'

Translation:

A shepherd leading his whole flock into a most beautiful
meadow, sings a joyful song with reassuring voice:
'O my fleecy companions linger freely. Rejoice in
the ripe morning which the generous gods bestow.
They melt the winter with ray of gold and
spread the spring to trembling fields and bodies.
Spring sweeps with the outspread feathers of the wings of these birds.'

* * *

dic musa, spumo de Oceano Apollo quo

aethere transcenso ut aquae se submergit currus

bullent. dic insulam rauam luxuriosam.

Nymphae currunt saltant saxa et herbam in ora.

est hoc asylum et regia uxoris Hectoris feri.

Translation:

Speak muse, concerning frothy Oceanus in which Apollo, after
The ether had been crossed, submerges his chariot, so that the waters
bubble themselves. Speak of a lush grey island.
Nymphs run over the rocks and grass, they dance on the shore.
This is the sanctuary and palace of the wife of fierce Hector.

* * *

nunc in caelo clar' Aurora celeriter surgit.

aduocat iter in agrem rediret muner' agere.

ingens pello canis prope me ad pascula currit,

ualde pecumque salutamus, illos congregarimus.

hos potantes aquam placid' obseruo otiantes.

Translation:

Now Aurora rises quickly into the clear skies.
She calls again to return into the field and to do [my] duties.
My huge dog with his pelt runs alongside me to the pastures,
And we greet the herd immensely; we herd them.
I watch these, relaxing, drinking the water peacefully.

* * *

papilliones pulchras fructices bacas circum uolant.

siluam per incendo pluit atque et caelum cantat.

de caelo imber re faciens cadit musicam

incurrit. incurrit in uirides arbores fragilesque

flores. spissus poculum imber Proserpinum fundet.

Translation:

The beautiful butterflies fly around the berry bush.
I am walking through the forest and it rains and the sky sings.
Rain falls from the sky making music with the objects it strikes.
It strikes against green trees and soft flowers.
The heavy rain fills the cup of Proserpina.

Editor's note: Readers will doubtless wish to encourage this new generation of Latin poets – *floreant!* – while forgiving some uncertain scansion in these, their very first attempts at writing classical verse.

* * *

Vincent Bourne

Mark Walker on the 'most English of the Latinists'

In 1781 William Cowper wrote of Vincent Bourne (1695-1747):

> I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the Writers in his way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to him[1].

Cowper was not alone in his opinion of Bourne. Some forty years later, in an essay entitled *A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis*, Charles Lamb wrote:

> Well fare the soul of unfastidious Vincent Bourne, most classical, and at the same time, most English, of the Latinists – who has treated of this human and quadrupedal alliance, this dog and man friendship, in the sweetest of his poems, the *Epitaphium in Canem*, or, *Dog's Epitaph*. Reader, peruse it; and say, if customary sights, which could call up such gentle poetry as this, were of a nature to do more harm or good to the moral sense of the passengers through the daily thoroughfares of a vast and busy metropolis[2].

Vincent Bourne's collected Latin poems, entitled *Poematia*, ran to nine editions between its original publication in 1734 and 1840[3]. Bourne's popularity was still sufficiently high for Macaulay to write in 1843 of admiration for 'the noble alcaics of Gray … the playful elegiacs of Vincent Bourne'[4]. But, *tempora mutantur*, Bourne's popularity had begun to wane. As early as 1847, when Walter Savage Landor published his own collected Latin poems as *Poemata et Inscriptiones* there were signs of a change in taste – at least in Landor's opinion:

> *Vinnius autem (ita appellabant eum familiares) nihil admodum habet suum, et, aliena quum Latina faceret, frigida est plerumque concinnitatis affectatio*[5].
>
> 'But Vinny (for so his friends called him) has nothing entirely his own, and, since he expressed unfamiliar things in Latin, generally displays a frigid striving after elegance of style.'

Landor may have hoped to outdo his predecessor in popularity with his own copious Latin versifying (more about that in a future issue), but thereafter both poets' poems suffered the same almost total neglect. There were no more editions of Bourne until Estelle Haan's publication of selected poems in 2007[6].

But Bourne makes a fruitful case-study for aspiring Latin poets: Lamb's phrase, 'most classical, and at the same time, most English, of the Latinists', encourages the hope that in Bourne we shall find a modern poet who has successfully adapted classical models to suit his own cultural environment – not an imitator of the classics, but a graceful exponent of the classical style. Bourne

delighted in the sights and sounds of contemporary London life, the Billingsgate fishwives (*Schola rhetorices*) and the battling ballad-singers of Seven Dials (*Cantatrices*)[7], yet was able to depict them all using the vocabulary of Catullus, Virgil and Ovid. His achievement is to make that vocabulary seem fresh by applying it to contemporary situations – a valuable lesson for any Latin poet today. Leicester Bradner sums up the 'Englishness' of Bourne's Latin:

> Trained in the epigram, his natural taste brought to that form an almost lyrical delicacy of touch which makes his vignettes of contemporary life a new genre … in Bourne it is the exact and sympathetic observation of the particular contemporary scene which charms us. His work shows the final and complete emancipation of the eighteenth-century Latin poet from the theory of imitating the classics which had dominated the Renaissance[8].

More recently, Estelle Haan has commented:

> Bourne's methodology is governed by an author's rare ability to offer perceptive insights into animal, human, and civic behavior, while enshrouding the whole in a superficially simple style. It is a style that constitutes a fusion of the classical and the romantic, a fusion that makes him stand out from his neo-Latin predecessors and contemporaries[9].

The 'sweetest of his poems', the hexameter *Epitaphium in Canem*, provides a fair example of Bourne's liberation from 'the theory of imitating the classics' as well as his 'perceptive insights' of contemporary life. Although Bourne's vocabulary is strictly classical – even in places clearly modelled on specific sources – his use of allusion is more subtle than direct quotation. In some cases it is not at all clear that Bourne intends any allusion at all, simply that he is drawing upon the same fund of vocabulary as the Roman poets; in other cases, Bourne's reference to a classical predecessor is indirect and elusive, transforming the original by placing it in an entirely new context.

Epitaphium in Canem

pauperis hic Iri requiesco Lyciscus, herilis,

dum uixi, tutela uigil columenque senectae,

dux caeco fidus: nec, me ducente, solebat,

praetenso hinc atque hinc baculo, per iniqua locorum

incertam explorare uiam; sed fila secutus, 5

quae dubios regerent passus, uestigia tuta

fixit inoffenso gressu; gelidumque sedile
in nudo nactus saxo, qua praetereuntium
unda frequens confluxit, ibi miserisque tenebras
lamentis, noctemque oculis plorauit obortam.
plorauit nec frustra; obolum dedit alter et alter,
queis corda et mentem indiderat natura benignam.
ad latus interea iacui sopitus herile,
uel mediis uigil in somnis; ad herilia iussa
auresque atque animum arrectus, seu frustula amice
porrexit sociasque dapes, seu longa diei
taedia perpessus, reditum sub nocte parabat.
hi mores, haec uita fuit, dum fata sinebant,
dum neque languebam morbis, nec inerte senecta;
quae tandem obrepsit, ueterique satellite caecum
orbauit dominum: prisci sed gratia facti
ne tota intereat, longos deleta per annos,
exiguum hunc Irus tumulum de cespite fecit,
etsi inopis, non ingratae, munuscula dextrae;
carmine signauitque breui, dominumque canemque
quod memoret, fidumque canem dominumque benignum[10].

'Here I Lyciscus lie, while I lived watchful guardian of my poor master and support of his old age, loyal guide to the blind man; nor, with me leading, was he wont to wander the uncertain road, with his staff feeling the way this way and that through uneven places; but having followed my lead, which guides uncertain steps, securely he places his footsteps with unobstructed stride; and having found a chilly seat on an exposed stone, where the crowded mass of passers-by meet, there with pitiful laments he bewails the blindness and the dark that obscures his eyes. Nor does he lament in vain; one then another, upon whom nature has bestowed a good will and kind heart, gives a coin. Meanwhile I lie at my

> master's side asleep, rather watchful in the midst of sleep; ears and attention alert to my master's commands, whether in friendship he offered morsels and companionable feasts, or having endured the drawn-out tedium of the day, he was preparing to return home by night. These were the manners, this the life, while the fates allowed, while I was neither enfeebled by sickness, nor sluggish old age; which at last stole upon me, and deprived my blind master of his aged companion: but lest his regard for former deeds should wholly perish, obliterated through the long years, Irus erected this modest mound from turf, even though a small gift from a poor but not ungrateful hand, and he inscribed it with a brief poem, which recalls the master and his dog, the faithful dog and his gentle master.'

Bourne's use of classical allusions can be seen in the image of the faithful dog leading its blind master [5-6], which employs vocabulary from Catullus and Virgil, specifically references to the thread used by Theseus to find his way out of the Minoan labyrinth: Catullus 64.113, *errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo*, and Virgil *Aeneid* 6.30: *caeca regens filo uestigia* – the latter explicitly connecting the *filum* with guiding (*regens*) blind footsteps (*caeca uestigia*), hence perhaps Bourne's *regerent … uestigia* in the next line. But instead of the Roman poets' mythological setting Bourne grounds these words in the reality of daily life on the streets of London. The use of *fila* (a metrically convenient plural) alerts us to its metaphorical function, since a *filum* seems rather too insubstantial to function as a dog's actual lead. At the same time, Bourne's description also brings to mind the familiar image of the 'dog on a rope' still associated with beggars in the twenty-first century. *Fila* thus is carefully chosen to fulfil a dual role, providing both a concrete description of the guide dog leading the blind beggar through the streets by means of a rope or string, and a subtle metaphorical allusion to classical mythology.

Another key word, the diminutive *munuscula* [24], would not obviously be an allusion to classical predecessors were it not for the proximity of *non ingratae*, which suggests that Bourne is again looking to Catullus for inspiration (64.102: *non ingrata tamen frustra munuscula diuis*). But where Catullus refers to Ariadne's offerings, which are *non ingrata* to the gods, Bourne's *munuscula* is given a more 'earthly' context (literally, line 23 *de cespite*): this is the gift of the beggar's *non ingratae dextrae*, which has built the modest burial mound. Bourne's adaptation of the context makes his choice of this diminutive all the more poignant, providing a telling detail of the beggar's regard for his deceased companion.

Similarly, line 4's *praetenso … baculo* seems inspired by Ovid *Ibis*, 262: *praetemptes baculo, luminibus orbus iter*. But where in Ovid the phrase is a malediction, 'deprived of sight, may you find your way with a stick', in Bourne, the phrase instead conjures pity for the beggar, who would be almost helpless with just his stick alone to guide him. Context is the key to understanding these classical allusions: Bourne imparts a freshness to his adapted phrases thanks to the new setting in which he places them.

Bourne, then, seems to offer proof that it is possible to write contemporary poetry using the language of Ovid; and it is possible to make relevant classical allusions amid a scene of contemporary life. He is a classicist's neo-Latinist: an author whose idiom is that of the Roman poets, and who is best appreciated by those who know his classical predecessors well, but who offers something more interesting than pastiche. A modest Bourne revival is already underway among neo-Latinists – Estelle Haan's 2007 study is unlikely to be the last critical appreciation of his work – and only a new, fully annotated edition of his poetry is lacking in order to make him accessible once again to all Latinists.

Notes:

1. Quoted in Haan (2007), p. 15.
2. *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* (ed. Lucas, 1903), Vol. 2, p. 117.
3. Storey (1974), p. 122. Haan (2007), p. 8 – several spurious poems were introduced into the 1772 edition, and were not expunged until Mitford's 1840 edition.
4. T.B. Macaulay (1843), 'The Life and Writings of Joseph Addison' in *Macaulay's Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome* (1897), pp.66-7:
5. W.S. Landor (1847), *Poemata et Inscriptiones,* p. 300.
6. Haan (2007), Appendix 1, pp. 135-165.
7. Bourne (1838), p. 170 (*Schola Rhetorices*), p. 179 (*Cantatrices*)
8. Bradner (1940), p. 272.
9. Haan (2007), p. 4.
10. Bourne (1840), pp. 135-7.

A Vincent Bourne Bibliography:

Bourne, Vincent (ed. Mitford, 1840), *Poematia latine partim reddita partim scripta a Vincentio Bourne*: http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=9sVJAAAAIAAJ&dq=poematia+mitford&source=gbs_navlinks_s

Bourne, Vincent (1838 reprint of the 1772 edition with its spurious additions), *The Poetical Works, Latin and English, of Vincent Bourne*, Kessinger Publishing/BiblioBazar (print on demand paperback).

Bradner, L. (1940), *Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry, 1500-1925*, Oxford University Press – Bourne, pp.266-73.

Haan, E. (2007), *Classical Romantic: Identity in the Latin Poetry of Vincent Bourne*, American Philosophical Society.

Storey, M. (1974), 'The Latin Poetry of Vincent Bourne', in Binns, J. W. (ed.), *The Latin Poetry of English Poets*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 121-149.

* * *

Gradus ad Parnassum Redux

Marc Moskowitz on how to resurrect a poetical treasure-trove

Many discussions of writing poetry in Latin mention something called a *Gradus ad Parnassum*. For those who haven't yet come across this useful book, let me briefly explain what a *Gradus* is, indicate how to use one, and provide some information on acquiring your own copy.

A *Gradus ad Parnassum* is a Latin poetic thesaurus. Say you're writing a poem for your sweetheart and you want to write about their blue eyes, but you can't fit the word *caeruleus* into the meter. You pull out your *Gradus* and find the following entry:

> *caērŭlēŭs* vel *caērŭlŭs. Caērŭlēŭs frātēr jŭvāt aŭxĭlĭārĭbŭs ārmīs.* Ov. *Āttōllēntem trās ēt caērŭlā cōllā tŭmēntēm.* Virg. SYN. *Cyănēŭs, glaūcŭs, caēsĭŭs, vĭrĭdĭs, mărīnŭs.*

This gives you two examples of classical poets using the word, and then a list of possible synonyms. 'Aha!' you say, '*Viridis* fits perfectly!' So you use the word *viridis* in your poem, and your blue-eyed sweetie gets upset at you for saying that their eyes are green! Which is to say that like any thesaurus, it should be combined with a dictionary, but it is a helpful writing tool.

Since writing poetry in Latin is no longer part of a standard education, the various editions of the *Gradus* are all out of print, though you can find one at a used book store, or – more likely – from an online book search engine such as Bookfinder.com or Abebooks. But the same antiquity that makes them hard to find also means that they are in the public domain, making them very well suited for digitization projects like Google Books. And in fact, the one that I have is based on a book that was published in 1829, and borrowed from Harvard and digitized in 2007 (http://books.google.com/books?id=PRoAAAAAYAAJ). I picked this particular one from the many available on Google Books because it was entirely in Latin and didn't have obvious problems on a quick browse through its first few pages. But the quality of the scan varies somewhat, so it's not always very easy to read.

So now you have the content in electronic format. But it's more useful as a printed book (I don't have a e-book reader, but I suspect that browsing a dictionary-like work is still not one of their strengths). That's where print-on-demand (POD) technology comes in. There are more and more POD machines out there that can print paperback books from electronic files. I went with the Espresso Book Machine at Harvard Book Store, which is three miles from my house, but there are other locations around the world (www.ondemandbooks.com/our_ebm_locations.htm). I took the url of the book to the staff there, and 24 hours and 20 dollars

later, I had my book. (It was helpful to have the title and the author, Iulius Conrad, as well.)

I'm very happy with the physical book produced by this process. A *Gradus* is a large enough book that it needs to be split into two volumes, and I recommend splitting this particular edition before the beginning of entries under 'I' at the top of 331 or of 'L' at the top of 385, instead of – as I did by not specifying a split – randomly breaking between *intelligo* and *intemperandas* on pages 366 and 367. Each volume is a little smaller than a trade paperback, with high-quality glue binding and a plain gray cover with the title, the subtitle, and the volume on it. It seems to be of similar quality to other books I've purchased at bookstores.

So, although any *Gradus ad Parnassum* you find is likely to date from the nineteenth century, it is now more readily available than it used to be, thanks to the technology of the twenty-first.

* * *

Ex Libris

The editor selects some useful books for beginners

Piously we should always maintain that the very best way to learn how to write poetry is *to read* as much poetry as possible. But sometimes we need a bit of solid theoretical advice, too. So alongside your well-thumbed editions of Virgil, Catullus and Horace *et al.*, here is a suggested library of reference works to assist your poetical muse.

(1) Dictionaries and the Gradus

Oxford Latin Dictionary, ed. P.G.W. Glare: OUP

Lewis & Short's Latin Dictionary, ed. C.T. Lewis and C. Short: OUP

Cassell's Standard or *Concise Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary*, ed. D.P. Simpson: Casell.

Pocket Oxford or O*xford Desk Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary*, ed. J. Morwood: OUP

Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin (1995), ed. L.F. Stelton: Hendrickson Publishers.

Gradus ad Parnassum, (aka 'Carey's Gradus'), various 19th and early-20th century editions.

The best (that is, most up-to-date, most authoritative) dictionary for Classical Latin is the massive *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. You will, however, need to hunt further afield for later Latin words – anything, that is, from roughly the third century onwards. For ecclesiastical and a certain amount of medieval Latin, the *Dictionary of Ecclesiatical Latin* is a useful supplement to the OLD. Alternatively, the 19th-century *Lewis & Short* does include later Latin – which is one good reason not to throw your old copy away when you acquire the new OLD.

Both *Cassell's* and the *Pocket Oxford* (also available in hardback as a 'desk' edition) have an English-Latin section at the back, useful for both prose and poetry.

There is only one Latin thesaurus: the famous *Gradus ad Parnassum,* which is available in various editions – the nineteenth-century British version is often advertised by antiquarian booksellers as *Carey's Gradus*, from the edition best known to generations of Victorian and Edwardian schoolboys. In an ideal

world, there would be a new, up-to-date *Gradus* to go alongside the big OLD. For the time being, however, we must content ourselves with tracking down old copies or finding an e-copy via Google Books (see Marc Moskowitz's article above).

(2) *Writing Latin Prose*

Mountford, J.F. (ed.), *'Bradley's Arnold' Latin Prose Composition*, Bristol Classsical Press reissue (1998).

R. Ashdowne, R. and J. Morwood (2007), *Writing Latin*, Bristol Classical Press.

Minkova, M. (2001), *An Introduction to Latin Prose Composition* (2001), WPC Classics.

Minkova, M. and Tunberg, T. (2004), *Readings and Exercises in Latin Prose Composition,* Focus Publishing.

Before embarking on verse, it might be a good idea to try some Latin prose writing. One old warhorse still in print today is the so-called '*Bradley's Arnold'*, a detailed and comprehensive prose manual that will certainly help hone your Caesarian despatches from the front line, though may be of less value if you actually want to write Latin about something of relevance to your own life. Richard Ashdowne and James Morwood's 2007 *Writing Latin* is more user-friendly. More radical is Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg's *Readings and Exercises in Latin Prose Composition*, which actively encourages 'free' writing rather than simply translating set sentences: this is intended to be used in conjunction with Minkova's *Introduction to Latin Prose Composition*.

(3) *Writing Latin Verse*

Raven, D.S. (1965), *Latin Metre: An Introduction,* Faber and Faber.

Allen, W.S. (1965, rev. 1978), *Vox Latina: The Pronunciation of Classical Latin,* Cambridge University Press.

Califf, D.J. (2002), *A Guide to Latin Metre and Verse Composition*, Anthem Press.

Norberg, D. (1958, trans. 2004), *An Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification*, trans. G. C. Roti and J. de la Chapelle Skubly, Catholic University of America Press.

Brooks, C. (2007), *Reading Latin Poetry Aloud: A Practical Guide to Two Thousand Years of Verse*, Cambridge University Press.

D.S. Raven's 1965 manual *Latin Metre* remains as good an introduction as any to the varieties of classical verse forms. W.S. Allen's *Vox Latina* analyses Latin pronunciation and has much of value to say about word stress and the distinction between vowels (long or short) and syllable quantity (heavy or light). David Califf's 2002 *Guide to Latin Metre and Verse Composition* provides an abundance of practice exercises.

For anyone interested in the principles of medieval verse, including rhythmic or accentual verse, then Dag Norberg's 1958 *Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification* is indispensable.

A handy anthology of classical, medieval and neo-Latin verse is Clive Brooks' *Reading Latin Poetry Aloud*, which gives phonetic transcriptions alongside the Latin and English translations (and comes with two CDs of Brooks' rather deadpan recitations). The book also contains extremely helpful discussions of reading aloud, pronunciation and prosody.

(4) Online Resources

Several contemporary Latin poets – including many of those who have contributed to this issue – have an online presence. Just a handful of places to begin reading about this subject are:

Do-It-Yourself: How to Write Latin Verse (Harry C. Schnur)
http://www.suberic.net/~marc/schnur.html

What is the Point of Latin Poetry? (David Money)
https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0044197/BHP/whylatinverse.pdf

Otium Didascali (Armand D'Angour)
http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/staff/OtiumDidascali.pdf

Contemporary Latin Poetry (Marc Moskowitz)
http://www.suberic.net/~marc/latinpoetry.html#hacmachina

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De gustibus non est disputandum

Anyone attempting to write Latin poetry, either for the first time or after many previous attempts, must confront a variety of questions, many of which admit of no single answer – assuming there are any answers at all. Just some of the questions that might pop into your head, if they haven't already, are:

- Should my poetry be quantitative or accentual or neither?
- Should I imagine myself as an ancient Roman and write accordingly?
- Or should I write in a modern idiom (whatever that might be)?
- Can I invent my own metres, or abandon the very idea of metrical verse completely?
- Can I decide for myself what the 'rules' are?
- How do other poets make these decisions?

With these and many other imponderables whirling around your head, it's going to be a small miracle if you ever manage to get even one stanza down on paper.

But help is at hand in the friendly form of the *VATES* letters page. Got a question? Well, write to us – start a discussion, enter a debate, challenge received wisdom or support a cause. Do you believe that a Latin poem only makes sense if it has a clear classical antecedent? Or do you think that modern Latin free verse can work? How can we encourage our Latin-loving friends both to read and write Latin verse? We need your opinions on these and many other matters.

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* * *

MATTERS METRICAL

Quantitative verse

- Heavy syllables are marked ¯
- Light syllables are marked ˘
- *Anceps* (either heavy or light) are marked x

nota bene: Syllables are 'heavy' or 'light' (in contrast with vowels, which are 'long' or 'short'). *Anceps* refers to a syllable that can be either heavy or light, e.g. at the end of a line.

Common metrical feet

- iamb ˘ ¯
- trochee ¯ ˘
- spondee ¯ ¯
- dactyl ¯ ˘ ˘

- *Caesura* = word break within a metrical foot
- *Diaresis* = word break at the end of a metrical foot

Alcaics

Named after the ancient Greek poet Alcaeus of Lesbos, this stanza was frequently used by Horace. It consists of two hendecasyllabic lines in the pattern:

¯ | ¯ ˘ | ¯ ¯ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ x

The third line:

¯ | ¯ ˘ | ¯ ¯ | ¯ ˘ | ¯ ˘ x

The fourth line:

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ | ¯ x

The first two lines have a *diaresis* after the fifth syllable. In the Greek poets, the opening syllable of the first three lines is *anceps*, but in Horace it is almost always heavy.

Elegiac couplet

This couplet consists of a hexameter line (see below) followed by a pentameter:

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ x

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | x

The pentameter is split into two halves, each of two-and-a-half feet, with a *diaresis* in the middle. In the first half of the pentameter the two dactyls can be replaced by spondees, but not in the second half.

Glyconics

The Glyconic stanza consists of four lines in this pattern:

x x | ¯ ˘ ˘ ¯ | ˘ x

Followed by a single Pherecratean – which is the same as above but lacking the last syllable (*catalectic*):

x x | ¯ ˘ ˘ ¯ | x

Typically, the opening two syllables form a trochee, sometimes a spondee.

Haiku

The traditional Japanese Haiku consists of three lines, the first and the last have five syllables, the middle seven.

Hexameters

¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ ˘ ˘ | ¯ x

In the any of the first five feet the dactyl can be replaced by a spondee, though the fifth and sixth foot often form a characteristic cadence dactyl-spondee, in which word-accent and metrical stress coincide as in the English phrase, 'shave and a haircut'. A *caesura* typically occurs after the first syllable of the third foot or after the first syllable of the fourth foot.

Iambic trimeters

Unlike the dactylic hexameter, the unit of movement (*metron*) in iambic verse consists of two feet, not one. The 'pure' iambic line consists of three *metra* (hence *trimeter*) of two iambic feet each, i.e.

˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ | ˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ | ˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ |

Considerable variation is allowed, including treating both the first and last syllables as *anceps* (e.g. making the first foot a spondee) and substituting two light syllables for a single heavy syllable, thus forming a tribrach (˘ ˘ ˘), the equivalent of a triplet in music. See David Money's poem and his discussion of it for examples. A *caesura* typically occurs after the first syllable of the third foot.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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Stephen Coombs was born in Britain but has been resident in Sweden since 1967, initially to teach English, then music. In 1994 he co-founded a 'humanistic-Christian' private school (*Katarinaskolan*, St. Catherine's School) in Uppsala where he continues to teach Classical Language Tradition.

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David Money is Director of Studies in Classics at Wolfson College, Cambridge, where he is keen to encourage applications from mature students with an interest in Latin verse! He also teaches some Neo-Latin for the Modern Languages Faculty, and involves himself in international Neo-Latin activities, for example as a Visiting Professor at Leuven in Belgium; in April 2010 he was admitted as a Fellow of the *Academia Latinitati Fovendae* in Rome.

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Marc Moskowitz is a Latin poet, and the curator of the very neglected site Contemporary Latin Poetry (www.suberic.net/~marc/latinpoetry.html). By day he writes code for online publishing web sites.

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In the next issue:

New poetry, of course, and your letters, plus – *inter alia multa* – Laura Gibbs on Aesopic fables, Barry Baldwin examines an eighteenth-century Virgilian-style epyllion on Cricket, and the editor discovers how easy it is to annoy retired Classics professors by getting his verses wrong.

Look out for the next issue of *VATES* in Autumn 2010.

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